

**HISTOIRE & MESURE**  
**2015, Volume XXX-Numéro 2**  
**coordonné par Joël FÉLIX**  
**Before Fiscal Transparency**

Today, transparency is hailed as a key to good governance and economic efficiency, with national states implementing new laws to allow citizens access to information. It is therefore paradoxical that, as shown by a series of crises and scandals, modern governments and international agencies frequently have paid only lip-service to such ideals. Since Jeremy Bentham first introduced the concept of transparency into the language in 1789, few societal debates have sparked so much interest within the academic community, and across a variety of disciplines, using different approaches and methodologies. Within these current debates, however, one fact is striking: the lack of historical reflection about the development of the concept of transparency, both as a principle and as applied in practice, prior to its inception. Accordingly, the aim of this special issue is to contribute to historicising the ways in which communication and control over fiscal policy and state finances operated in early modern European polities.

*Introduction de Joël FÉLIX – Paths to Fiscal Transparency: Control, Knowledge and Communication in Early-Modern Polities. Les chemins de la transparence fiscale. Contrôle, savoir et communication dans l'Europe moderne.*

*Limits to fiscal transparency in parliamentary monarchies*

BAUGH, Daniel – Parliament, Naval Spending and the Public: Contrasting Financial Legacies of Two Exhausting Wars, 1689-1713. *Le Parlement, les dépenses navales et le public. Conséquences financières contrastées d'une longue période de conflits, 1689-1713.*

WINTON, Patrik – Parliamentary Control, Public Discussions and Royal Autonomy: Sweden, 1750-1780. *Contrôle parlementaire, débat public et autonomie royale en Suède, 1750-1780.*

*Provincial estates in composite polities*

FEENSTRA, Alberto – Hiding in a Twilight Zone: Credible Commitment in the Dutch Republic and Groningen's 1680s Default. *Tirer profit de l'équivoc. L'engagement crédible des Provinces-Unies et le défaut de paiement de la province de Groningue en 1680.*

LOISEAU, Jérôme – From Blind Obedience to Informed Consent. Financial and Administrative Knowledge as a Political Tool in some French Provincial Estates during the *Ancien Régime*, 1751-1789. *De l'obéissance aveugle au consentement éclairé. Le savoir financier et administratif comme instrument politique dans quelques États provinciaux de la France d'Ancien Régime, 1751-1789.*

*Control and intermediation of corporate bodies*

MURPHY, Anne L. – Inspection and Efficiency at the Eighteenth-Century Bank of England. *Inspection et efficience de la Banque d'Angleterre au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle.*

MARRAUD, Mathieu – Mastering Guilds' Debt in Eighteenth-Century Paris: Royal Publicity, Liberation and Coercion. *Maîtriser la dette des corporations parisiennes au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Publicité monarchique, effets libératoires et coercitifs.*

*Publicity and communication in absolute monarchies*

TORRES SÁNCHEZ, Rafael – Absolutism and Fiscal Transparency in Eighteenth-Century Spain. *Absolutisme et transparence fiscale dans l'Espagne du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle.*

CICCOLELLA, Daniela – False Transparency. Disclosing Financial Data, between Enlightenment and Absolutism (Naples, 1780s). *Entre Lumières et Absolutisme. Fausse transparence et publicité financière. L'exemple du royaume de Naples dans les années 1780.*