

**“Economists’ Historical Archives:
Economic Theory and Policy in Economists’ Papers”
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**Economics, history and politics
in the Southern Italy Archives**

The Southern Italy Archives

My group has produced about 1200 records which have been put into the database. I will start this talk with a quick overview of our findings, before going on to examine one of the archives recorded.

- **Abruzzo.**

The institutions visited were the Teramo Provincial Library, the Teramo State Archive, the Salvatore Tommasi Library and the State Archive, both in L’Aquila. The work carried out in Abruzzo led to the uncovering of a vast body of documents hand-written by the well-known philosopher, politician and economist Melchiorre Delfico. Through them it has been possible to throw new light on aspects of Delfico’s thought and political activity, which can be traced both in the manuscripts and in his correspondence with Ludovico Bianchini, Giuseppe Ceva Grimaldi, Vincenzo Comi, Luigi Dragonetti, Giuseppe Palmieri, Nicola Santangelo and Davide Winspeare. They bear witness to his activity as Counsellor of State, his ideas on the organization of the University, on taxes related to industrial projects and rents, on the promulgation of municipal laws by the King, on the poverty of the Kingdom, on the circulation of goods and on agrarian assemblies.

- **Puglia.**

- The material from the Library of the Economics Faculty of Bari University has just been recorded, containing the archival fund of the former ‘Regia scuola superiore di commercio’ (Royal business college). This material consists of “grey” literature which I was alerted to by Lilia Costabile and Rosa Capolupo. Records were made of the printed materials with a very limited circulation, such as the college *Yearbooks*. These were particularly interesting for the teachers’ bio-bibliographic data, for the addresses at the opening of the academic year delivered by the president of the year (one of whom was Maffeo Pantaleoni), and for the contributions by other teachers like Rodolfo Benini, Angelo Bertolini, Giovanni Carano Donvito, Sabino Fiorese, Angelo Fraccacreta, Renzo Fubini, Gino Luzzatto. In the same place, printed booklets were found in which the same names appear, along with other noted economists like Boccardo, De Viti de Marco, Tommaso Fornari, Augusto Montanari, Pareto, Alessandro Rossi and many others.

- In Puglia we also recorded the Salandra Archive, which contains Antonio Salandra's papers from 1914 to 1931. These papers not only cast light on previously ambiguous aspects of his intellectual and political biography in the peak years of his political involvement, *i.e.* from his taking over the position of Prime Minister in March 1914 until his death in 1931, but they also untangle some crucial knots in the feverish national and international financial and economic-political events marking the period of the first World War and the initial post-war years. They therefore represent important pieces in the puzzle of the many-sided debate underway in those crucial years on sensitive matters of economic and financial policy, as well as on strategic decisions in foreign policy. The documents examined reveal the positions taken not only by Salandra, but also by the circle of economists and members of the Italian business and financial elite surrounding him, *i.e.* by Bonaldo Stringher, with whom there was a particularly frequent exchange of letters, by Francesco Saverio Nitti, Luigi Luzzatti, Sidney Sonnino, Giulio Rubini, Maffeo Pantaleoni, Antonio de Viti de Marco, Luigi Einaudi, Paolo Boselli, Rodolfo Benini. The papers testify to the heated debate between interventionists and neutralists in the summer of 1914, the delicate balancing-act in international relations aimed at ensuring access to the fundamental source of energy (coal), the debate with the major credit institutions and industrial groups over the financial policy measures to be introduced because of the impact on the market of the war in progress, the need to stem the spreading unemployment (denounced in numerous letters by the Minister for finance Rava and by Pietro Bertolini), the threats by the socialists and the plots in Parliament against Salandra (openly denounced by Maffeo Pantaleoni). Antonio Salandra was engaged in debate with these figures and his own political and personal life became entwined with theirs in the crucial years when the dramatic effects of the participation in the war began to be felt on the country's economy.

- I will now look more closely at the third Apulian archive that we have put into the data base, that of the publisher Laterza.

Laterza publisher

The Laterza publishing house, in operation since 1901, was a centre of attraction for fine minds, the promoter of a network of contacts between intellectuals, and a cultural driving force in the South. Its archive in Bari goes from 1901 to 1959. The papers it contains take us on a journey through a whole century of history: the beginning of the 1900s (in Giustino Fortunato's letters), the Great War (in the letters of Nitti and Barone), the Soviet revolution (in those of Pantaleoni), Fascism (in those of Umberto Ricci and Gino Luzzatto), the second World War and the Resistance (in Luigi Einaudi's letters), the post-war economic problems (in those of Ernesto Rossi).

Here I will present the correspondence with the economists who had the greatest contact with the publisher, not of all those who have been included in the ASE data-base. Following the criterion set for this research project, we will refer only to the economists' letters, and not to the publisher's replies. There is a considerable amount of correspondence, and in this presentation I will simply mention only some of the letters by each author.

Giustino Fortunato (1848-1932)

Giustino Fortunato's correspondence with Giovanni Laterza lasted for twenty years (from 1911 to 1931) and includes more than a hundred letters sent to the publisher. From 1909 Fortunato was no longer a member of parliament but continued to work tirelessly towards his goal of "being useful to the cause of the South". Laterza was one of the tools he used to re-launch his 'meridionalist' battle (another was *L'Unità*).

In 1911 he published the political speeches he had delivered in thirty years as a parliamentarian (1880-1910): this book is considered the most important for an understanding of his thought. He published it at his own expense and asked for the proceeds to be donated to the 'Association for the interests of the South'. This was common practice: one of the ways Fortunato expressed his militancy in favour of the South was in fact that of footing the entire bill for publication and then transferring the sales proceeds to various Southern institutions. Also the lists of people to receive a free copy were compiled by Fortunato with the criterion of identifying "those who, I believe and hope, may be of use to the South".

In 1915 he edited a collection of Salandra's speeches and his letters to Laterza give an insight into his selection criteria. But Fortunato's letters to Laterza were not confined to issues connected to publishing: in 1916, for instance, he commented on the global tax on income which in his view would be detrimental to the South, and expressed the hope for a publication on the unfairness of taxation, aimed at eliciting legislative measures that would penalize the South less.

From 1923 to 1930 there was a quarrel between Fortunato and Laterza, later settled by Benedetto Croce. Fortunato's great friendship with Croce is in fact evident throughout the correspondence. In 1930 Fortunato drew up the plan of the book *Appunti di storia napoletana dell'Ottocento* (published in 1931), the last work about which he corresponded with Laterza and which enables us to follow his decline, almost until his death. In his final years Fortunato was in fact a tired, pessimistic man: on top of health problems due to age there was the additional bitterness of the advance of fascism.

Francesco Saverio Nitti (1868-1953)

In this case, too, the correspondence covers almost twenty years (from 1901 to 1919); there are about fifty letters. When he started writing to Laterza, Nitti was already meridionalist in his scientific and political interests (*Nord e Sud* was written in 1900), and in 1902 he signed a contract with the publisher for the editing of a series of works on Southern Italy, which however was not followed up.

It is perhaps a little known fact that it was Nitti, in 1904, who first sponsored the economist Carlo Cassola, and enabled him to publish his first book on *I sindacati industriali (cartelli, pools, trusts)* (1905).

After publishing *Il capitale straniero in Italia*, in 1916 Nitti chose to consult Giovanni Laterza himself to decide where to deliver the famous speech in which he announced that he had given up his previous neutralist position. He wrote that he had still not decided whether to deliver it in Milan, Turin or Muro Lucano, the main town in his constituency: "I fear, speaking in the north of Italy, - he writes - that I would seem to be performing for the succession, which is what I really do not want ". However, he adds, as "in a speech one cannot say everything and above all one cannot document anything, I thought I would publish a small book ... in which the origin of the war and the present situation would be

illustrated on the basis of diplomatic and political documents noteworthy but mostly little known, badly known or unknown". In the next letter Nitti refuses Giovanni Laterza's invitation to give his speech in Bari, "because - he writes - I would seem to be acting as a foil to Salandra, which at the moment I do not wish to do". Nitti foresaw that such a publication would stir up a hornet's nest of controversy and discussion, above all regarding the documents in the appendix: "This will be - he writes - the most talked-about book on the war, both in Italy and outside Italy". The speech, given at Muro Lucano and then in Naples, was in fact published under the title of *La guerra e la pace*.

In 1919, as Prime Minister, Nitti warmly thanked Laterza for the political support he had received.

Maffeo Pantaleoni (1857-1924)

Pantaleoni's letters to Laterza also number fifty-odd, but written in a span of only seven years (from 1917 to 1924). It is well-known that after Caporetto and the Soviet revolution Pantaleoni was obsessed by the "Bolshevik peril".

The correspondence deals with the publication of four collections of political writings, some of which had previously been censored. Worth noting is the great tribute paid by Pantaleoni to Pareto's "genius and culture".

In the letters of 1918 Enrico Barone appears: Pantaleoni suggests that Laterza publish a book by him on the military history of the Great War up to Caporetto; the project however was temporarily blocked while waiting for the outcome of the Commission of Enquiry set up by the government after the defeat.

In 1918 Pantaleoni expressed satisfaction that his "little treatise on economics" had been translated into Spanish. This letter is important, because it implies that in 1918 Pantaleoni was still happy with his *Pure economics*, despite the new paths he had taken since 1890.

Dated 1920 are some letters from Fiume, where he was Minister of the Treasury in D'Annunzio's venture. In the same year he talked about searching for and finally finding the lectures given by Ferrara in Torino in 1856-57 and then also those given in Venice "when he was very old". Along with Pareto, Ferrara was the economist that Pantaleoni greatly respected: for him Ferrara was "the only great economist that Italy has produced up to Pareto". He asked Laterza to publish the Turin lectures, but it was not to happen.

In 1921 Pantaleoni wrote a collection of issues, problems and exercises in economics, which would be published in 1923. In 1924 he published the first volume of his *Erotemi*; interestingly, the volume was sent to Argentina (to Ugo Broggi). When the next volume of the *Erotemi* was in preparation, the correspondence suddenly broke off because Pantaleoni died unexpectedly. Umberto Ricci looked after the collection of the material (again, as we shall see, in correspondence with Laterza).

Luigi Einaudi (1874-1961)

The correspondence with Luigi Einaudi lasted over thirty years (from 1915 to 1948), with more than seventy letters.

The first exchanges concerned projects which would not be carried out (Einaudi's proposed collaboration in the series "Biblioteca di cultura moderna" (Library of Modern Culture), the plan for Laterza to become the publisher of *La riforma sociale*). In 1919 Einaudi was a senator and wanted to collect both the articles written in the form of letters to Luigi

Alberini (*Lettere politiche*, which Faucci calls “among the most inspired of Einaudi the politician”), and a series of writings on the war-time economy (*Prediche*).

In 1922 Einaudi offered the publishing house a book on the economic history of the first World War in Italy (*La guerra e il sistema tributario italiano*), the result of his experience as president of the national committee for research into the economic history of the War, a project launched by the Carnegie Foundation for international peace coordinated by J. T. Shotwell. Another work written for this research (*La condotta economica e gli effetti economici della guerra italiana*) was published in 1933.

Many letters attest to Einaudi’s love of history of economic thought. Let me quote three series: 1) Einaudi wants to write a bibliography for the new-born *Rivista di storia economica* and comments “But economists are always slow to discover the old, being drawn to the new. One should remember at every turn the need to remember what the dead said” (17 June 1936). 2) Einaudi asks Laterza to find him a rare edition of Adam Smith translated into French by Germain Garnier. 3) He also asks the publisher for a reprint of Ferdinando Galiani’s treatise *Della moneta*, published by Laterza in 1915, to give his students practice without using his own copy.

In 1943 he informs Laterza of his transfer from Turin to Dogliani, after the 1942 bombardments. In the single precious letter of 1945 from Rome, where he had returned after his stay in Switzerland, Einaudi (Governor of the Bank of Italy) reminds Laterza’s children of the old custom that he had with their father (who had died in 1943) of receiving publications to review or to have reviewed in his *Rivista di storia economica*. He writes that he does not expect this custom to be continued, above all following the suspension of the journal, and announces however that it will start to be published again as soon as northern Italy, too, has been liberated from the German occupation.

The last group of letters that are available are from 1948. After being at the Consulta and then a Deputy in the Constituent Assembly, in that year Einaudi was Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for the budget until 11 May, when he was elected as President of the Republic. In this group of letters he urges the publisher Franco Laterza to agree to include, in a publication in favour of federalism, two letters from his 1920 book *Lettere politiche*. “I would very much like – confesses Einaudi – to give this authorization, which would underline the fact that as far back as 1918 there was someone in Italy who had put forward a thesis which after many years has gained a certain popularity and is still supported by many”.

Gino Luzzatto (1878 -1964)

The correspondence with Gino Luzzatto, founder of studies on the economic history of Italy, spans nearly forty years (from 1919 to 1957) and the letters number about fifty.

In 1919 he translated Rathenau’s *L’economia nuova* for Laterza. In 1924 he pushed for the publication of a book by Gustavo Del Vecchio on the economic events of Trieste from the Armistice to 1924, which Laterza did not publish.

The contacts continued, with suggestions for translations and translators, when in 1938, he even offered to act as a translator himself, in sad circumstances: “I will have to content myself with an anonymous job” he wrote. In fact, due to the 1938 anti-Jewish laws, Luzzatto was forced to leave work and was forbidden to carry out any form of public activity. He asked to be allowed to translate the “really excellent” American book on the history of the Risorgimento by Greenfield. The payment he asks for in exchange for the translation seems reasonable to him, appropriate for the work of a “translator who can no

longer work for glory, but who will not be too demanding"; the letter closes on another bitter note against the fascist regime which prevents him from publishing his writings.

And we find him again in 1956, now retired, finally as an author: with Laterza he discusses Armando Saitta's request to transform Luzzatto's lectures on the history of the Italian economy into a book. Luzzatto likes the idea, since in his view "the book would have a significance that would not only be scientific, but mainly cultural, in a very deep and far-reaching sense" (*Per una storia economica d'Italia. Progressi e lacune*).

Umberto Ricci (1879-1946)

The correspondence with Umberto Ricci covers nine years (from 1919 to 1928), with a little over twenty letters. Ricci wanted to publish a collection of his writings in two volumes before the elections in 1919, one volume devoted to politics and the war-time economy (which would not be published), the other of pieces on *Protezionisti e liberisti italiani*. Ricci, a militant of the right wing of the Liberal party, had drawn up the electoral programme for the "national-liberal" group at the elections.

In 1920 he suggested, with words of great esteem for the young economist killed in the war, that Laterza publish a collection of economic and political essays by Alberto Caroncini.

We have already mentioned the letters of 1924, after the death of his mentor Maffeo Pantaleoni. His last letter is dated 1928. He had in fact been abruptly dismissed from teaching and forced to seek exile in Egypt. Ricci, who had at first supported the fascists, had become their opponent after Mussolini's speech to the Chamber of 3 January 1925, and intended to stay firmly inside the "bounds of liberalism".

Ernesto Rossi (1897 - 1967)

Ernesto Rossi wrote about thirty letters to the publisher Laterza, in the span of only a year and a half (1951 - 52). Rossi was an essayist and investigative journalist for *Mondo*, and it was in this role that we meet him, in a period of frenetic activity. He suggests that Laterza publish a collection of his articles denouncing "parasitical industries, monopolies and the corporations". The articles had already been published in *Mondo*, a magazine which however "very few were able to find in the newstands, because most issues had been 'bought up' by the interested parties".

The aggressive title that Rossi, overcoming the publisher's understandable hesitation, managed to push through was *Settimo: non rubare/Seventh: Thou shalt not Steal*. The book is moreover dedicated to the president of the Confindustria (Association of industrialists) Angelo Costa, who had publicly denied the existence in Italy of monopolistic industries, declaring that in the few cases of super-profits due to monopolies, the State would eliminate them. The book was so successful that it was soon reprinted with the addition of further articles on the "problem of controlling trusts and holding-companies".

Future projects

The work of the researcher also envisages the possibility of not finding. This is what happened to us in the case of Basilicata. We have searched in the State Archive and in the Provincial Libraries of Matera and Potenza; we have produced only about twenty records, which I have not yet sent to Naples because I would like to continue the search.

There are some Salentine archives whose existence we are aware of, but to which we have not yet been able to gain access. For instance the copious production of memoirs, essays, and letters between the members of the 'Società economica' of Lecce, the other provincial 'Società economiche' and the Regio Istituto d'Incoraggiamento of Naples, has gone into the historical archive of the present Lecce Chamber of Commerce, the direct heir of the 'Società economica'. This archive, without being inventoried, has been bundled up and forgotten in a storeroom that is inaccessible to the public. There are papers of Filippo Maria Briganti in a private archive held by the lawyer Bardoscia in Galatina, inaccessible to the public. The *guardia di finanza* have recently found the archive of Michelangelo Schipa, with documents signed by Giustino Fortunato, Francesco Saverio Nitti (*La Repubblica* of ...).

But what I mainly aim to achieve is a complete survey and recording of the manuscript material of Antonio de Viti de Marco. De Viti de Marco's papers are scattered through the archives of many of his correspondents: Croce in Napoli, Salandra in Lucera, Cambray Digny in Florence, Salvemini and Gaetano Mosca, as well as Seligman in America; there are documents in the Einaudi Foundation in Turin, in the Verona Library and in many other archives. Tracing all the hand-written material will entail many hours of painstaking work which I think is worth doing and on which I would like to focus the next research for the ASE data-base.