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# Papafeio epistolary corpus<sup>1</sup> as a resource in teaching LSP

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## Abstract

*The paper is about the challenge of approaching the teaching of economic and cultural (Italian) issues through a nineteenth century resource. What could be a reliable material to build the intercultural bridge necessary to a translator, specialized in economics and history? Papafeio Archive and its epistolary Italian corpus can be useful under various respects. The letters are very interesting to the modern reader, since they show a cultural cross section of the nineteenth century Maltese, and generally Mediterranean, society. At first sight this conspicuous (598 letters) material could be considered obsolete, but in fact it is both productive and reliable in order to teach LSP. There are at least three main reasons for that. 1) The language itself: Italian and, more precisely, Italian language in the Mediterranean basin, that is Southern Italy and Malta, during nineteenth century. 2) Cultural models: they are stronger in epistolary corpora. 3) Specialized language: Papafis himself was a broker, and his letters often deal with business transactions in a strongly connoted cultural context. The paper shows how what we consider obsolete material can cover the cultural gap contained in an economic/historic text. Moreover it demonstrates the necessity for a deep intralinguistic intertemporal perception and knowledge of the Italian language cultural system as a primary instrument for the mediation process that a (Greek) translator should provide.*

**Keywords:** Epistolary corpus, nineteenth century, Italian language, economics, culturemes

## Introduction

Cultural aspects in teaching economics might appear of minor interest. One has to wonder how useful they can be so as to develop a real competence in LSP. Is intercultural mediation involved in teaching aids as a list of words within a text, accompanied by different class strategies, or realia as texts from a newspaper or magazine? As they both refer to the contemporary cultural world, it is a teacher's choice, in the frame of the cultural awareness, to support students to reach intercultural competence: from the cultural shock to the identification and mediation. In a changing globalized world, is it necessary for a student of economics who learns a foreign language to discover the nuances in values which might seem similar? Many lemmas can be an effective transposition of words, not involving any cultural difference or conceptual meaning related to different cultures. In fact, if we look at a nowadays bulletin of European bond yields and at a bulletin in Papafeio archive<sup>2</sup>, we can see how the two pages represent a mirrored bulletin, yet they refer to different historic periods. Any student of economics could grasp the general content and deduce what the Papafeio page is about, but words and expressions, having a diachronic dimension, need to be translated through their historic and cultural interpretation and collocation.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.papafeio.gr/arxeio.jsp> (last visited 12/12/2015).

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. letter to Papafis, 26 June 1856, it.IT6.278.doc, *Papafeio Archive*, Thessalonika, Retrived 12/12/2015 from <http://www.papafeio.gr/viewdocument.jsp?docID=1762>.

# 1 The Papafeio Archive letters, Papafis<sup>3</sup> and his historic environment

## 1.1 The Papafeio Archive letters

The Papafeio Archive letters show a cultural cross section of nineteenth century. From a historic and linguistic point of view, they refer to the intercultural Maltese society of that period. The letters contained in the Papafeio Orphanage website Papafis's Archive (598 in Italian language<sup>4</sup>), were written, during most of that period, by people of various social and institutional roles and interests. The Archive importance is well known in Greece and Malta, though the letters do not regard only these two countries, but the whole Mediterranean basin, as well as some Northern Countries, such as England and France.

Actually, translation researchers continuously develop a metadata base, regarding different languages. As for the original Italian letters, my PhD Research topic is the introduction of Italian lemmas and phraseology in the metadata base<sup>5</sup>. At least half of the about 600 letters concern commercial exchanges: receipts, bills, bonds bulletins, investments through different agencies in Europe, mostly in England and the Kingdom of Naples, and theoretical-practical discussions about import taxes. The reason for this being Papafis' investments and expertise in economy.

## 1.2 Ioannis Papafis: life

Ioannis di Niccolò Papaffy<sup>6</sup> (Greek: Ιωάννης Παπάφης) was born in 1792 in Thessaloniki and died in 1886 in Malta. At the time, Thessaloniki was under Ottoman occupation. At the age of 16, he went to Smyrna, to be in charge of the family's enterprise. After his father's death, his uncle I. D'Anastasis, who was the Swedish Ambassador in Alexandria of Egypt, entrusted him with his new enterprise in Malta, offering Papafis the chance to become a well-known broker and political personality in the Maltese society of the period, famous for its commerce with Levant and Europe. Papafis's personal commercial activity started with wheat commerce. In 1822 he became King George's public broker of wheat commerce for Malta and its colonies.

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<sup>3</sup> There are different spellings for the Greek Παπάφης. Here we use Papafis, as to the transliteration table ISO 843 1997 TL, though in English and in the letters corpus we find Papaffy, Pappaffy and Papaffi.

<sup>4</sup> For the use of the Italian language in Malta and in the Mediterranean area at that time, see Bruno, F. (1999) *Discussioni, Italiano all'estero e italiano sommerso*, presented for the *II Congresso dell'Associazione per la Storia della Lingua Italiana (Storia della lingua e storia Catania, 26-28 ottobre 1999)*. Particularly, on page 233, we read "A Malta, dove la lingua materna, una varietà dell'arabo, godeva di un prestigio minore di quello del greco nelle isole ionie, l'italiano era da secoli la lingua degli usi elevati e, in particolare, come nelle isole ionie, era la lingua del diritto e dei tribunali, dunque degli avvocati e dei giudici. Non è eccessivo affermare che la storia politica, prima ancora che culturale, di Malta e delle isole minori corre, per buona parte del l'Ottocento e del Novecento, sulla linea del conflitto tra un partito italofilo e uno anglofilo, rispettivamente il Partito antiriformista (poi Partito nazionale), e il Partito riformista [...]" Retrieved 10/09/2015 from [https://www.academia.edu/9810857/Francesco\\_Bruni\\_Italiano\\_allestero\\_e\\_italiano\\_sommerso\\_una\\_lingua\\_senza\\_impero](https://www.academia.edu/9810857/Francesco_Bruni_Italiano_allestero_e_italiano_sommerso_una_lingua_senza_impero)

<sup>5</sup> My PhD Research in the area (*Historic research and translation analysis of the epistolary contained in the Papaffy Archive*) is undertaken with the supervision of Professor Eleni Kassapi, teacher of Translation Studies at the Aristotle University of Thessalonika, School of Italian Language and Literature.

<sup>6</sup> For Papafis's life, see Papafeio Archive website <http://www.papafeio.gr/papafis.jsp> (last visited 12/12/2015), and ΤΑΓΑΡΑΚΗΣ, Ι. (1992), *ΤΟ ΦΙΛΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΚΟ ΕΡΓΟ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΑ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ (1840-1928)*, Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης (ΑΠΘ), from <http://www.didaktorika.gr/eadd/handle/10442/2235> (last visited 12/12/2015).

He had personal contacts with Ministers of the British Government or statesmen (e.g. sir George Cornwall Lewis), as well as Ministers from other countries, like Raeli (Kingdom of Italy), Antonelli (Papal States). Private and public donations started very soon (he was only 35 in 1827, when the first donation to the new Greek government was made with Mr Kapodistrias as governor), and many others followed. In 1836 he fell seriously ill and left the wheat commerce to start dealing with banks and investment traders, mostly located in Paris and London, Rome and Naples as well. He had a superb education (he could communicate in several languages, although, as he himself declares in one of his letters, he preferred Italian) and because of his position he was able to have his ideas in several fields (taxes, religion, import and export laws, policy) respected and published in journals like “The Economist”; he also started writing various booklets about currency and generally economic issues, such as the essay “The Merchants and the Currency of Malta” (G. D N. Pappaffy, 1851), published in Malta in 1851<sup>7</sup>.

He died in 1886 at the age of 94 and was buried in Malta, his second homeland, under his will. In fact, since he was born under Ottoman occupation, he held only Turkish citizenship and later on he acquired the English one. When, in 1866, he had asked for Greek citizenship, the Greek minister of Foreign Affairs denied it to him, as he hadn’t lived at least two years in the free Greek Nation.

Pappaffy's views on politics, economics, and social fairness derived from a broader worldview, according to which stability and peace were indispensable preconditions for economic and social progress (Moutafidou, 2013: 191).

### 1.3 Historic environment

Papafis started his activity in Malta in 1810. In 1798 the Order of Saint John, after 258 years of permanence on the Island, surrendered to Napoleon. This *sterile rock*<sup>8</sup> had a strategic position (close to Egypt) for the French and the British Empires<sup>9</sup>. The years in which Papafis started to act as an investor or simply a merchant were crucial for the changes in colonialism policy and for the central role played by Malta and Gibraltar during the Continental Blockade (1806-1812)<sup>10</sup>.

British exports to Malta and the commercial interests of English merchants increased very much. In 1812, 25% of British exports towards Europe passed through Malta’s harbour, and from there, via Sicily, went to Italy and Central Europe<sup>11</sup>. At that time, the first commercial banks, the

<sup>7</sup> Retrieved 10/09/2015 from [https://books.google.gr/books?id=qMsNAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover &hl=it &source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.gr/books?id=qMsNAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover &hl=it &source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>8</sup> L’origine della dominazione inglese a Malta, (p. 377). *Archivio Storico di Malta*, 28 luglio/28 ottobre 1938, Retrieved 10/09/2015 from [http://melitensiawth.com/incoming/Index/Archivio%20storico%20di%20Malta/ASM.09\(1937-38\)4\(28Luglio-28Ott.\)01%20L'origine%20della%20dominazione%20inglese%20a%20Malta.pdf](http://melitensiawth.com/incoming/Index/Archivio%20storico%20di%20Malta/ASM.09(1937-38)4(28Luglio-28Ott.)01%20L'origine%20della%20dominazione%20inglese%20a%20Malta.pdf). According to this font, the appellation was given by Napoleon, but many traces of its use by British travelers can be found throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century. E. g, see Elwood, A.K. (1830). *Narrative of a journey overland from England by the continent of Eroppe, Egypt and Red Sea, to India*. Vol. 1, (p.105). London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley.

<sup>9</sup> In the dispute between the two countries there was a third country asking for the recognition of its rights over Malta: the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily. Since 1530 the Island was a feud concession by Charles V.

<sup>10</sup> See Heckscher, E. F. (1922) *The Continental System: An Economic Interpretation [1918]*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. From <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/327> (last visited 12/12/2015).

<sup>11</sup> Aaslestad, B.K. & Joor, J. (eds) (2014). *Revisiting Napoleon’s Continental System: Local, Regional and European Experiences*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Anglo-Maltese Bank and the Banco di Malta were also set up on the Island<sup>12</sup>. Malta then became a Crown Colony in 1814 as a result of the Treaty of Paris. Since that time, it struggled to keep a kind of financial independence<sup>13</sup>, opposing to the custom duties for foreign ships and the import taxes, as well as language (Italian) and religion (Catholic) independence. The Maltese kept trading with other countries, despite the plague and the quarantine regulations. During the transition period, which lasted from the French invasion (1798) to the complete change of currency<sup>14</sup> in 1855<sup>15</sup>, the Maltese population struggled for more financial independence, trying to keep the crucial position they had had, as merchants, in the Mediterranean basin.

## 2 Using the corpus in an economics/history micro-lingual class

There are at least three main reasons to consider the corpus both productive and reliable material in order to teach LSP economy: 1) the language itself: Italian and, more precisely, Italian language in the Mediterranean area, that is Southern Italy and Malta, during nineteenth century; 2) cultural models: they are stronger in epistolary corpora since epistolary genre has, so far, preserved some ritual characteristics and formulas, developed as stereotypes conventionally recognized, as well as other phraseological topics which are constantly repeated to evoke the presence of the message addressee; 3) specialized language: economics is present as lemmas and phraseology in context.

Having considered above the historic period, we can follow with the examination of cultural models and media. Letters constitute a kind of asynchronous communication. Poyatos defines epistolary communication an interactive delayed communication, in the form of intelligible signs of a culture in communication with sensible signs (Poyatos, 2002: 4, 9). The genre, widely spread in nineteenth century, found in Italy a codification of its formal characters in the essay “Nuovo Segretario” -1829 (cfr. Tasca, 2002) as regards the space between the heading and the letter body, the greetings formulas and the signature size. Moreover it helped, especially in Italy from the end of the 18th to the beginning of the 20th century, with the diffusion and condision of a written Italian language, closest to oral speech inclusive of expressivity and elicitation, as well as popular idioms due to the media, the genre itself, which supposedly created a direct dialogical form of communication. Among others, merchants’ letters contributed much more to this process, since the 13th century, making use of a code which allowed dialectal or foreign words, commonly accepted within the merchants’ activities.

This cultural heritage obviously brings in itself some difficulties we need to analyze (in class as well), before proceeding with lessons:

- Linguistic variations<sup>16</sup>, contained in the corpus and related to the sociolinguistic competence, as the samples below:

<sup>12</sup> *History of the National Bank of Malta*. Retrieved 10/09/2015 from <http://user.orbit.net.mt/fournier/MNhistory.htm>

<sup>13</sup> See <https://vassallohistory.wordpress.com/892-2/maitland/> (last visited 10/09/2015).

<sup>14</sup> See Martinez Oliva, J.C. & al. (eds) (2012). *Banking and Finance in the Mediterranean: A Historical Perspective*. Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

<sup>15</sup> As written above, Papafis edited in 1851 *The Merchants and the Currency of Malta*.

<sup>16</sup> For a definition of linguistic variations, see Coseriu, E. (1973). *Lezioni di linguistica generale*, Torino: Boringhieri; Savy, R. & Cutugno, F. (2009) CLIPS, Diatopic, diamesic and diaphasic variations in spoken Italian. In M. Mahlberg, V. González-Díaz & C. Smith (eds.), *On-line Proceedings of 5th Corpus Linguistics Conference*, Retrieved 10/09/2015 from [http://people.na.infn.it/~cutugno/new/mypdfs/liverpool\\_clips.pdf](http://people.na.infn.it/~cutugno/new/mypdfs/liverpool_clips.pdf). See also

diachronic

Serve **primieramente** la presente ad avvisarvi che **jeri rimisi alli** (lett. code it.IT9.459)

diaphasic<sup>17</sup>

Per causa di assenza che ho dovuto fare da Salonicco, **non mi fu dato poter fornire riscontro al suo pregiato foglio** (lett. code it.IT9.476)

diatopic

Sotto **coverta** del **Barque** Nominato "Speranza" (lett. code it.IT6.238) **Butiro**<sup>18</sup> (lett. code it.IT7.322)

diastratic

Mi recò non poca sorpresa il sentire, che Ella abbia avuto parte in un articolo comparso sull'ultimo Malta Times (lett. code it.IT9.450).

- As to the cultural models, there are at least three facets of cultural gap to consider. They regard the culture distance:
  - a. among letter composers, as to the geographical space in the text itself (the senders and the receivers are from different countries)
  - b. between the original and the reader, as to the temporal space
  - c. between the original and the reader, as to the geographical and social space.

We can see here below two examples of cultural gap, from letter code it.IT4.82:

**i piaceri di Napoli**

(what were Naples pleasures for the Maltese community at that time?)

Col **prossimo di Sauthampton**

with the **next** steam boat to **Southampton** (in bold word-to-word translation).

### 3 Lesson types using the corpus

Two lesson types will be presented: economics vocabulary and historic/economic samples. In this context, the specific lesson strategies will not be dealt with, rather how useful the material can be. The choice of learning paths (e. g. learning strategies, teaching approaches and methods, class group or self-learning) are left to student's needs and teacher's experience and interaction within the classroom.

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<http://www.italis.it/lunit%C3%A0-didattica-alla-luce-del-modello-di-comunicazione-linguistica-del-quadro-comune-europeo> (last visited 10/09/2015).

<sup>17</sup> The diamesic variation (see Mioni, A. (1983). Italiano tendenziale: osservazioni su alcuni aspetti della standardizzazione, in AA.VV., *Scritti linguistici in onore di Giovan Battista Pellegrini*, (pp. 495-517). Pisa: Pacini), often related to the diaphasic, is not considered here. In fact, though in the corpus we find also bills and receipts, the communication media can be considered the same.

<sup>18</sup> All bolds are mine.



### 3.1 Identification and presentation of lemmas and phraseology in context.

#### 3.1.1 We can consider two obsolete lemmas as *stadera*, *salma*.

*Stadera*, lett. code it.IT16.02 540 is a steelyard or weigh-beam<sup>19</sup>. Looking the word up in an Italian encyclopedia, we learn that there was a

**Gabella della s.** Era così detto in varie parti d'Italia, specialmente nella Sicilia normanna, il diritto di peso e misura/">misura e anche l'ufficio apposito; altrove equivaleva a un dazio d'importazione<sup>20</sup>.

Thus, we understand there was a duty on using this balance, which was also like a duty on import.

*Salma*, lett. code it.IT15.50 (10 luglio 1856) Papafis, writing to an agency in Naples, about a load of wheat that had arrived in Malta from Tangarok [Tanganrog], says that it was sold *per salma* and in lett. code it.IT10.523 (9 maggio 1856) they write about the *salma* of olive oil from Gallipoli (a town in southern Italy, Apulia region). We can find *salma* in private letters among Maltese citizens, meaning that this measurement was in use in Malta as well, at that time, and was used differently for grains, solid and liquid<sup>21</sup> goods. Apart from the interest of types of measurement<sup>22</sup> (which can be found in the following site along with the calculations [http://www.claredot.net/it/sez\\_Conversioni/conv\\_superficie\\_agraria.php](http://www.claredot.net/it/sez_Conversioni/conv_superficie_agraria.php)), the wheat from Tangarong and the olive oil from Gallipoli<sup>23</sup> give us an idea of the extent of the commerce in the area we are analyzing.

#### 3.1.2 Phraseology

has not changed very much in respect of economy. Much of the obsolete phraseology, which needs to be identified and classified, regards epistolary greeting formulas. On the other hand, without phraseology identification it's difficult to understand the kind of situation, the register of the communication and all the other communication variables necessary to a full comprehension of the text. In this case though, only economics phraseology will be dealt with.

The consideration that economics phraseology has substantially remained the same, leads to the discovery of a rich world of investment and commerce, broker agencies, banks, much similar to the actual world. The intercultural dimension of these commercial activities is present all over

<sup>19</sup> Retrieved 10/09/2015 from

<http://booksnow1.scholarsportal.info/ebooks/oca5/28/nuovodizionarioio00bracuoft/nuovodizionarioio00bracuoft.pdf> p.358 and <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/it/traduci/italiano-inglese/stadera>.

<sup>20</sup> Retrieved 10/09/2015 from <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/stadera/>. Also: "La Bagliva o Baliva era una tassa prelevata dalla Autorità pubblica preposta all' applicazione di bolli alle staderabilance, alle stadere e alle caraffe, in base alle unità di misura usate nel luogo. Tale tassa, non sempre periodica, era associata al controllo da parte della Pubblica Amministrazione degli attrezzi utilizzati per il peso degli aridi, il volume dei liquidi e ciò a salvaguardia dei diritti dei consumatori nei confronti dei venditori e reciprocamente". Retrieved 10/12/2015 from [http://armentani.altervista.org/Il\\_Principato\\_di\\_Taranto/Principato%20di%20Taranto/B%20A%20G%20L%20I%20V%20A.htm](http://armentani.altervista.org/Il_Principato_di_Taranto/Principato%20di%20Taranto/B%20A%20G%20L%20I%20V%20A.htm).

<sup>21</sup> Retrieved 10/09/2015 from [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/salma\\_\(Enciclopedia-Italiana\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/salma_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)/)

<sup>22</sup> We can find a lot of useful source about measurement in south Italy. See *Codice metrico-siculo diviso in due parti*, (1812).(pp. Ciii-civ). Catania: Stamperia dell'Università degli Studi. In English, this useful site <http://sizes.com/units/rotolo.htm> (last visited 12/12/2015).

<sup>23</sup> As to the olive oil from Gallipoli, see also Mssafra, A. (1984). *Campagne e territorio nel Mezzogiorno tra Settecento e Ottocento*, (pp.287 and 291). Bari: Edizioni Dedalo.

the Archive, because, as mentioned above, the activities run from Malta to Naples (Kingdom of two Sicilies), to Rome (Papal States), to Paris, to London. Following this path, the student can approach the financial world of nineteenth century and understand not only the vocabulary, but also the historic roots of what is happening today, as they are mirrored with language being the only medium.

In letter code it.IT1.274, for example, we find *rendita per £50 ----- annue nei Consolidati napoletani*, which is the annuity for investment in Consolidati Napoletani<sup>24</sup> (but we find also very often in other letters Consolidati Romani), Neapolitan Consols or Neapolitan Consols annuity<sup>25</sup>. Also, in letter code it.IT5.109, *Certificati di Credito del pubblico Tesoro*<sup>26</sup>.

We find also, less frequent, obsolete phraseology:

Lett. code it.IT5.116

*A tutto questo mi permetterete  
di aggiungere, che avendo voi affidato ai S.B. & Co.  
l'ammonto di circa \$85000, sebbene **abbiate già tirato**  
**sopra di essi** circa i due terzi, fintanto che le v(ost)re tratte  
non siano estinte, il rischio vostro sapete bene che  
non diminuisce affatto.*

**abbiate già tirato sopra di essi**>**abbiate già incassato da essi**<sup>27</sup>; is comprehensible by the context and it represents a normal financial transaction.

### 3.2 Identifying facts of economics history.

In this phase, learning vocabulary and phraseology are presented as a secondary aim, increasing students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation<sup>28</sup>. The first aim will be to understand some economic issues like import and export taxation during the important phase of British colonialism in the Mediterranean basin.

To proceed, we analyze the situation and intention of each text, with the due application to our written form<sup>29</sup>.

In letter code it.IT14.16, we read about a Governmental Decree on measurement unit (salma, cf. here par. 3.1.1, obsolete lemmas). The Decree imposes the abolishment of a kind of this

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<sup>24</sup> I titoli del debito pubblico si distinguono in consolidati e redimibili: i titoli del debito pubblico consolidati sono emessi in base ad un contratto di rendita semplice tra lo Stato, quale debitore della rendita, e l'investitore [...]. Retrived 10/09/2015 from <http://www.enciclopedia-juridica.biz14.com/it/d/titoli-del-debito-pubblico/titoli-del-debito-pubblico.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> Consol, British government security without a maturity date. The name is a contraction for Consolidated Annuities, a form of British government stock that originated in 1751. Retrieved 10/09/2015 from <http://www.britannica.com/topic/consol-economics>.

<sup>26</sup> Government bond, treasury bill (US), Retrieved 10/09/2015 from <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/italian-english/certificato-di-credito-del-tesoro>.

<sup>27</sup> You have already cashed from these [my translation].

<sup>28</sup> Ryan, M. R.& Deci. E. L., (2000) Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions, Contemporary, *Educational Psychology*, 25, 54–67 doi:10.1006/ceps.1999.1020, Retrieved 10/09/2015 from [http://www.selfdeterminationtheory.org/SDT/documents/2000\\_RyanDeci\\_IntExtDefs.pdf](http://www.selfdeterminationtheory.org/SDT/documents/2000_RyanDeci_IntExtDefs.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Immediately related to the cultural background is the communicative situation as described by Jakobson's model of communication (Jakobson, 1960) and C. Nord: the factors of the communicative situation, such as time, place, and medium, or what we know about the sender, constitute pragmatic indicators of the intended function(s) (Nord, 1997: p. 36).



measurement (salma colma) and the confirmation of the other kind (salma rasa) as already applied in the Kingdom of Sicily (1812)<sup>30</sup>:

*i dazj d'importazione sui grani,  
legumi e semenze, pagabili per salma, sono regolati dalla  
dogana con misura rasa [...] l'uso di vendere grani  
e legumi con misura colma, è ormai abbandonato in tutti i paesi commerciali*

and further, in the same letter:

*tutte le compre e vendite per salma, all'ingrosso in dettaglio e al minuto, di tutti i grani  
legumi e semenze (tranne le fave grandi di Sicilia e di Malta) dovranno farsi a misura rasa, restando  
per i detti generi abolita la salma colma.*

Letter code it.IT15.202, is addressed to the Maltese journal “La Fenice”, edited by Nicholas Zammit, a Maltese intellectual<sup>31</sup>. In Papafis’s letter we read about some views concerning the price of bread

*La Fenice asserisce che il prezzo [[del pane]] sia troppo alto comparativamente [in quanto] al prezzo dei  
grani al mercato,*

and expresses his ideas on the subject

*Però, lungi [[di credere]] [io creda] che la discussione  
nei giornali [[sia]] inutile, nessuno più di mè apprezza il vantaggio  
[[che la stampa può recare a qualunque soggetto]] delle discussioni della stampa tendenti a dimost=  
rare una verità. Frattanto, osservando i diversi prezzi dei grani che si  
vendono al mercato, ed avendo consultato [qualche] persona intelligente in questa  
materia, sono intimamente persuaso che il [[prezzo del]] pane [[sia mag]]  
[[giore di ciò che]] si potrebbe vendere [meno degli attuali prezzi]*

and his doubts regarding free trade, when applied to small countries such as Malta.

*Non è affatto mia  
intenzione di gettare [alcun] dubbio sulle grandi verità del Libero Traffico,  
e di negare che [il miglior mezzo per tenere moderato il prezzo]  
di qualunque articolo sia la concorrenza [vi è però]  
qualche incertezza intorno  
alla generale applicazione dei principi  
in un piccoli paese, quanto lo sono  
del Libero Traffico, cioè –Se gli effetti di una limitata concorrenza siano tanto efficaci.*

This topic, which remains of great importance nowadays, is discussed in other letters, related to the wheat price and tax. It indicates how contemporary economic concepts of the century are, and, even better, how far cultural and historic roots of our contemporary economy can go.

## Conclusion

Historic realia involving financial activities and economic ideas can be an important medium to teach the language of economics in LSP classes. Moreover, they should be used in order to give cultural self-awareness, intercultural perspective and tools to the students, who are asked for a flexible approach to a prismatic world, where the mere knowledge of specialized lexical items and vocabulary are not sufficient to cover the demand of true comprehension of the reality. The

<sup>30</sup> *Codice metrico-siculo diviso in due parti*, (1812). (p.38 and table CLXXV.). Catania: Stamperia dell’Università degli Studi.

<sup>31</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas\\_Zammit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_Zammit) (last visited 12/12/2015).

Papaffeio Archive, rich in interesting material, could be one of these realia provided it is properly considered and managed.

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**Gianfranca STORNELLI** graduated in Foreign Languages and Literatures (Russian-English) in Bari. She spent long periods abroad and mostly in Greece, where she was teacher for the Italian Institute of Culture and the Italian School of Athens (1993-2004). As examiner in various Italian Certificates, she published the handbooks ABILITA' PARLARE 1 and 2. She specialized in teaching with two MAs: Italian Language and Culture Teaching and Diffusion and Dyslexia and Learning disabilities, and two courses in didactics. From 2013 she's a PhD Translation Studies student at Aristotle University, School of Italian Language and Literature. During the winter semester 2014-15, she taught, as external teacher, Translation from Italian into Greek for the Master class of the same School. Among her articles: Alcune poesie di Vysockij, Il sito Navigaroma, Feta o cacioricotta pugliese and Politically correct names of jobs, Η θανάσιμη παγίδα της ταυτότητας (coeditor) and Forma e contenuto. I viaggi della parola psyche (coauthor).