INTRODUCTION

In the waning hours of 1672, a fierce scuffle broke out in the middle of Bologna between students from the Spanish College and the Montalto College. Angry words under the portico were followed by fisticuffs and the threat of weapons, as the students battled over the perennial question of *precedenza* (precedence), or who should have right-of-way in the street. Although nobody was injured during this melee, both sides viewed the incident as an important barometer of their stature within the city. Both colleges claimed that their respective privileges granted them priority over the other; both appealed to powerful patrons in Bologna and elsewhere for support; and both pursued a negotiated settlement while remaining ready to rumble at the next opportunity. That opportunity arose two months later when the two sides met again, this time in a local church during Lent. Once again verbal and physical conflict ensued as the student rector of each college took offense from the actions of his counterpart. Although the scuffle again ended without injury, subsequent petitions and appeals demonstrated the importance of the disagreement to each side. The papal legate felt compelled to intervene and even threatened to bring in artillery to re-establish the peace. The case was remanded to Rome to be settled by a
group of Cardinals in 1675; even after that resolution, the tension continued to simmer for at least another decade.

As the oldest and most prestigious college in early modern Bologna, the Spanish College demanded deference from other institutions in the city\(^2\). The student rector of the Spanish College displayed this arrogance in his description of this 1672 conflict when he noted that «a well-born man should never give way to one of lesser standing»\(^3\). One century earlier another rector of the Spanish College had engaged in a fierce argument with the rector of the University about the identical issue of *precedenza*\(^4\). For their part, the Montalísti were inordinately proud of the privileges that Sixtus V had granted them in 1585, which provided almost complete exemption from the jurisdiction of other civic, judicial, and ecclesiastical institutions\(^5\). The Montalto students were also fond of pointing out that their college had been founded by a pope, while the Spanish college was endowed by a mere cardinal (albeit more than two centuries earlier). Both colleges enjoyed the benefit of a Cardinal Protector who looked out for their respective interests; both had an ample endowment and significant land holdings. Both colleges had a permanent residence within the city, ironically (and importantly) just a few blocks apart from each other.

As this issue of the journal exemplifies, conflict among university students is a common topic in university historiography\(^6\). Cases range from verbal sparring and individual duels to larger riots and mass disorder that could result in substantial mayhem or destruction. For the early modern period in Italy, Jonathan Davies and Paul Grendler have examined cases of «academic violence» in Padua, Siena, and Pisa, while Peter Denley previously considered cases of student transgressions and disorder. Ilaria Maggiulli’s contribution here describes specific cases and causes of Bolognese student violence. On a broader


\(^3\) Biblioteca e Archivio Real Colegio di Spagna (BARCS), De Rebus Gestis, f. 120 (anno 1672): «no debe dar un hombre bien nacido a quien non consta que lo sea».


\(^6\) For a broad geographical and chronological overview of student violence, see the forthcoming two volumes Student Revolt, City, and Society, cit., note 1 above.
level, Donald Weinstein and Ed Muir have used an anthropological lens to consider cases of violence in Lucca, Friuli, and across Italy; literary historians like David Quint have analyzed violence through a mixture of archival and literary sources. These historians are intrigued by these cases for what they can reveal about honor, hierarchy, identity, and agency.

The question of «honor» in early modern Italy, and in the Mediterranean more generally, is a subject that has received much scrutiny from social historians in recent years. Donald Weinstein and Thomas Cohen have each employed microhistorical techniques to explicate the pervasive concern with honor in late Renaissance Italy. Trevor Dean and Giancarlo Angelozzi have analyzed the specific case of honor in Bologna. Benvenuto Cellini’s autobiography, Castiglione’s Book of the Courtier, even the prickly temperaments of Michelangelo or Julius II: all of these testify to the exaggerated importance of honor in Cinquecento Italy. Similar preoccupations with honor were evident elsewhere in early modern England, Spain, and France. Nor were such conflicts over honor, precedence and hierarchy restricted to early modern colleges: for example, guilds, confraternities, and noble families also squabbled about questions of priority in civic and ecclesiastical events. The University of Bologna, too, found itself in the middle of similar arguments: between 1467 and 1487, for example, the University Rector and the Archdeacon of the Cathedral disagreed over whom should march first in an Easter procession, while in 1491 a

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similar dispute arose between the University Rector and the legate of the Duke of Milan\textsuperscript{11}. In 1567 a debate broke out in Pisa about whether those wearing a doctoral gown should march ahead of those without gowns. In this case, the robed scholar (Matteo Morteo) used literary and legal references to bolster his case while his opponents – a trio of knights – complained that they preferred to settle the issue with arms rather than letters. In the event, the four men left the city center and subsequently «attacked each other with such ferocity that serious injuries were only avoided by the brave intervention of bystanders»\textsuperscript{12}.

Closely related to the questions of honor and precedenza was the issue of student privileges. Such privileges – including the right to travel freely, to wear a sword, and to be exempt from taxes – had been jealously guarded by students since Frederick Barbarossa had first defined the identity and privileges of students around the eleventh century\textsuperscript{13}. The foundation of universities in Padua (1222), Siena (1357), and Ferrara (1391) occurred after a student exodus from Bologna on account of privileges; a similar story exists for Oxford and Cambridge. Among the most relevant examples of Italian pupils’ privileges in the sixteenth century, we can look to events of 1560, 1562, and 1564, when the students of Bologna rioted and then left the city in protest of police brutality and violation of student immunity\textsuperscript{14}.

There are multiple causes – then as now – for student violence, disorder, and conflict. A partial list for the Seicento would include: abundance of alcohol; single-sex universities and the resultant machismo; lack of an adequate police force within university towns; deference of town governments to foreign students (especially Germans) who insisted on carrying weapons with them; little disciplinary authority of student organizations; and the increasing popularity of duels\textsuperscript{15}. William Courtenay has suggested that the practice of

\textsuperscript{11} Cortese, \textit{L’Università di Bologna e il Collegio di Spagna}, cit., p. 221, in addition to the above, cites the disagreement between the Rector of the Spanish College and the Rector of the Wool Guild of Bologna, beginning 1496 and enduring until the intervention of Leo X between 1517 and 1520. Most of his article concerns a clamorous argument between the Rector of the Spanish College and the University Rector ca. 1565 (234 ff.).

\textsuperscript{12} Cited and quoted in Davies, \textit{Culture and Power}, cit., p. 163.

\textsuperscript{13} See Museo Europeo dello Studente (MEuS) in Bologna, exhibit room no. 1.


disputatio – which was at the heart of the academic enterprise in the university – subtly reinforced the idea that students (and even professors) must engage in combat, both rhetorical and physical, in order to emerge victorious. International rivalries as well as traditional town-gown divides also contributed to the profusion of violence. Perhaps the Venetian rector of Padua, Tommaso Contarini, summarized it best when he wrote in 1609: «It is certain that nothing has contributed more to the decline of the University than the misbehavior of the students and the fights that occur between them. The students are the first and worst of all those who behave poorly, because they have little intelligence and less property».

THE CASE(S) OF 1672-1673

In 1672-73, Bologna was a city on edge. In addition to a series of acrimonious disputes between the papal legate (Lazzaro Pallavicini), civic officials (the Assunti, the Senate) and the judge of the criminal court (the Torrone), the city had witnessed several violent confrontations involving students. In reflecting upon these events a year later, the members of the Assunti had written to the Bolognese ambassador in Rome: «Unfortunate accidents keep raining down upon this city». One of those incidents occurred on 26 March 1672 when the legate’s chief security officer (bargello) Innocenzo Mancini assaulted two noble German students at the university with an arquebus, and arrested some of the German servants for failing to produce a license to carry a sword. As a result of this and similar incidents in previous months, complained the officials of the Assunti to the ambassador, more than thirty German students had left Bologna to return home. When the legate demanded proof of the assault, the Assunti officials replied that the injured students had already gone home and those that remained would neither identify other victims nor speak further about the case owing to fear of additional persecution from Mancini.

An even more serious event occurred three months later, and once again involved students in conflict with the papal legate. The prior of the law

16 William J. Courtenay, Schools and Scholars, pp. 29-30, referring to impugnatio, adaembratio, and evasio, as cited in Davies, Culture and Power, cit., p. 162.
17 Quoted and translated in Grendler, Universities, cit., pp. 500-501, nn. 92, 93: «È certo che da nessun cosa è cagionata maggiormente la declinazione dello Studio fuorché dall’inquietudine delli scolari et dalle risse che seguono fra loro. Li scholari sono i primi et più transgressori degli altri, perchè hanno poco cervello e manco robba».
18 Archivio di Stato di Bologna, Assunteria di Magistrati, Lettere dell’Assunteria, registro 15, 15 April 1674, as cited in Angelozi, Casanova, La giustizia criminale, cit., here at 341: «piovono a diluvio sopra di questa città gli accidenti infausti».
19 Ivi, p. 327.
students, the Milanese count Sommaglia, had apparently persuaded someone to file a complaint against a staff member of the vice-legate’s office after that staff member had tried unsuccessfully to shoot the victim in the chest on the steps outside the legate’s office. (The attempt was unsuccessful only because the pistol failed to fire.) The bargello Mancini quickly arrested count Sommaglia in mid-June. A dozen other scholars, including the student prior of the Arts faculty, additional law students, and the university beadle, petitioned the Torrone judge and the legate to free Sommaglia but both refused to intervene. The Assunti wrote an angry letter to the legate pointing out that the arrest of such a distinguished person («personaggio così qualificato») could have provoked a large number of students to abandon the city and thus lead to the ruin of the university. When the legate again refused their request, the Assunti came in person, and were summarily thrown out of the legate’s office. The prior was ultimately freed from prison on 29 June after the Torrone judge, Giovanni Domenico Rainaldi, mediated the conflict.

However, on the very same day, the prior of the Arts faculty was arrested under suspicious circumstances. He had been walking with several companions to visit a prostitute and had found her being interviewed by the police. When he returned several hours later, the police – hiding both in the house and under the portico – snatched him as he knocked on the door. He was imprisoned for three days before a successful petition from the law school prior convinced the legate to let him out. Nor did the difficulties end there. Two days later a group of students verbally abused a pair of police officers, hurling «very bitter words» («parole alquanto aspre») from an upstairs loggia. Led by Innocenzo Mancini, the police returned in force, only to find that the students had already left. When an unfortunate lone young man happened to walk through the courtyard, Mancini shouted insults at him and threatened that if the young man were a student he would be badly beaten by Mancini’s club.

This context of violence, police brutality, and fierce administrative rivalry between Bolognese officials was thus the context in which the students of the Montalto and Spanish colleges found themselves at odds a few months later in the year 1672.

The origins of this squabble between the two collegiali date back to 1591, less than a decade after the Montalto College had been founded. After an unspecified incident (event) on 10 November, students from both colleges were sequestered within their respective buildings. In a letter dated 13 November 1591, the Montalto students acknowledged that a reasonable person might conclude that the Spanish College was senior and thus more important; nevertheless, declared the Montalto students, they still considered themselves to

\[20\] Ivi, p. 331.
\[21\] Ivi, p. 332.
be equal. And the Montalto letter left little doubt about who was responsible: «the chief cause from which all of this unpleasantness was born […] was the desire of the Spanish College that we must concede precedence to them». This account appears in a letter from the student leaders of the Montalto college to their cardinal patron in Rome. The issue was resolved the following month by sending the rectors of each college to Rome, after which they seem to have lived in convivenza for most of the seventeenth century.

Just before New Year’s Eve of 1672, however, tensions were rekindled when two Montalto students had an altercation on Friday evening with a pair from the Spanish College. As noted previously, the ostensible cause of the spat was the question of precedenza. The Bolognese chronicler Antonio Francesco Ghiselli, who wrote exhaustively about all aspects of life in Bologna in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, briefly describes this conflict too. In an entry on New Year’s Day 1673, Ghiselli observed that «this disagreement was born because of [an argument about] the wall, and from it I know that he who possesses the wall must keep [close to] it, while still observing the precept to not bump into others». Ghiselli is careful not to assign blame to either side, describing the encounter as a «scuffle between the students» and using neutral language like «The Spanish College students came to blows with those of the Montalto». Ghiselli further comments on how such incidents often provoked a series of escalating responses: «Although they each had their own place, neither they nor their adversaries ever stopped walking around in a troop, hoping to fire their arquebuses at each other; but they did not meet again, and the matter rested there». As we shall see later on, the bad blood
between these two groups was not easily settled in either the short-term or the long-term. Accounts of this event, and of subsequent negotiations, are also preserved in the respective archives of each college. Not surprisingly, they offer contrasting narratives. The events of that night and of the following months can be examined through careful juxtaposition of the collegiate sources and of relevant civic sources too.

According to the Montaltisti, they were taking the most direct route home from the church of S. Francesco (near the modern Piazza Malpighi) when the Spanish students suddenly appeared and blocked the road, exactly where a sacra immagine of the Virgin marked the end of the sidewalk. Clearly the Montalto students (Alessandro Leopardi, Emmanuele Pantoni) were proceeding south along via Barberia until they reached the porticoes of the Palazzo Marescotti. This street and palazzo, along with the fresco, are still extant today. The Montalto students, per previous agreements among the various colleges after similar scuffles, hugged the right-hand wall and spoke courteously to the Spanish students, even doffing their hats in a sign of respect. However, noted the Montalto students in their account, the Spanish pair moved impulsively to the same side of the road and «disharmonious» words were exchanged. When the Spanish students realized that the Montalto students would not cede ground, one of the Spanish students (in the words of the Montalto narrator)

dared to pick up by force the Vice-Rector of the Montalto College and hurled him suddenly to the other side of the street. Then he spoke commandingly and with proud words to the servant that was following, who had a sword in his belt and thus presumably was well-armed, and he insulted them with these exact words: «Beat these boys who wish to take the wall away from us».

[...] The Montalto students finding themselves overmatched, and doubting that any greater insult could be given, and seeing themselves outnumbered, and seeing some students from the Collegio Dosi standing on the doorstep of their own college across the street to observe events, they hurried to relate these events to Senator Sampieri [...].

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27 Arch. Demaniale, 74/7295, ff. 83v-84r (3 Jan. 1673), and repeated ibidem, 13/7234, int. 2.
28 Arch. Demaniale, 74/7295, ff. 83v-84r (3 Jan. 1673): «Quando vedendo lo Spagniolo non succedergli la ritirata dei Montalisti dalla parte della strada, osò di prorompere in atti incivili pigliando il S. Vicerettore per forza e tirandolo dalla parte della strada impetuosamente. Pocia passato comandare con parole orgogliose al Servitore che lo seguiva con spada in cintura, e che si poteva anche presumere armato, che svillaneggiasse i Montalisti con queste precise parole: Bastona lo coloro che vogliono il muro da noi. [emphasis in the original] [...] Vedutisi così impetuosamente soverchiati li Montalisti e potendo dubitar insulto maggiore [e] per vedersi a fronte di forza superiore e sentendo tale aggravio tanto maggiore quanto penava la qualità del loro e la vista di alcuni Signori collegiali de Dosi che stavano sulla porta del loro collegio, ivi di rimpetto al collegio ad osservare». 
The Cardinal Vice-Protector Francesco Giovanni Sampieri was roused from sleep and hurried to hear the tale; then he adjourned with the students to the house of the Archbishop Geronimo Boncompagni. The Archbishop was hardly a neutral party, for he served as the Cardinal Protector of the Spanish College. Perhaps to lend weight to their case, other Montalto officials were summoned to the archbishop's house too. According to the Montalto account, the Archbishop spent much of the night doing shuttle diplomacy between the two groups while hosting them in separate apartments inside the episcopal palace. In a verbal sleight-of-hand, he suggested that «the words uttered by the Spanish students have a different meaning with Spanish pronunciation than they would in Italian». The archbishop suggested that the Spanish student had not intimated beating the Montalto students with a club as one might do to a common peasant but rather that this student «intended to use the point and flat of the sword», thus implicitly recognizing the Montalto students as social equals. Furthermore, said the archbishop, «those threatening words spoken in anger would be true only if the other side had denied the appropriate act of courtesy due to a teacher of the university, which this Spanish student is». In other words, the Montalto students had initiated this dispute by not recognizing the superior academic status of the Spanish student. In conclusion, said the archbishop, he and the Spanish students withdrew those angry words, and stated that they had every respect for the Collegio Montalto and its students.

The Spanish perspective of this event is quite different. The secretary of the Spanish college in 1673 happened to be a budding historian, and he had taken it upon himself to scour the college’s archive and to compile a narrative chronology of events within the college from 1378 to his own day.

29 The Montalto accounts suggest that the negotiation and resolution all took place that same night, whereas the Spanish accounts suggest that it took nearly a week.

30 Arch. Demaniale, 74/7295, ff. 83v-84r (3 Jan. 1673): «E passate diverse parti con interposizione di ga-gliardi officij vicendevolmente e sopra ciò tenute diverse consulze con totale sua applicatione; ascoltando piu volte in diversi congresi tanto il sudetto Sig. Senatore quanto gli Giudici, l’Avvocato, e Sindico del Collegio Montalto ascoltati li motivi d’ambe le parti et proposti et esaminati diversi partiti: finalmente vene in senso di conciliare per hora gli animi facendo correre satisfatione per parte degli aggravanti in questa forma, cioè chiamati a se li Alunni dell’uno e dall’altri collegi e trattenuti honorevolmente ciascuni in diversi appartamenti del suo palazzo, e proposti diversi espedienti, e fatto correre diverse ambasciate si portò all’aggiustamento del aggravio con far comparire alla sua presenza ambe le parti con l’intervento del Sig. Vice-Protettore presenti anche Monsig. Vicario Generale et il Sig. Canonico Pini; et ivi fatta dichiaratione per li Signori Collegiali di Spagna che le parole da essi proferite nella pronuncia spagnola non portavano quel senso litterale in lingua italiana ma significano punta e taglio di spada».

31 Arch. Demaniale, 74/7295, ff. 83v-84r (3 Jan. 1673): «quale minaccia in esso atto di colera intendeva havesse loco solo in caso che dall’altra parte li fosse negato l’atto di cortesia dicevole alli Lettori del pu-blico studio, quale esso è. E queste medesime parole egli fuori del primo impeto ritrattava per l’eccesso loro protestando invece ogni stima anzi viver servitore del Collegio Montalto e Sig. Alunni al qual buon termine corrisposero con la dovuta cortesia i Montalisti, passando in fine fra essi vicendevole promittione accettata da Sua E. e di non offendere ne far offendere».
This volume, *De Rebus Gestis*, usually contains a paragraph or two describing important events of each year. In 1672 and 1673, however, there are six pages devoted solely to this conflict with the Montalto, a sign of its importance (and of the eyewitness involvement of the author). The opening paragraph of this extended account makes clear that the students within the Spanish college had been informed of the Montalto’s behavior, and that the *bolonios* were spoiling for a fight:

The Rector of the college, having learned from a gentlemen of Bologna that the students of the college of Montalto had claimed precedence from the students of this college, the following was resolved: that our students be forewarned to not give the wall to those of the Montalto college; that if they were to meet the Montalto students again they should admonish those students, with courtesy, that they may not claim that place; that it does not belong to them; and finally that if the students of the Montalto college insist in their attempts, then our students must resist them in deed.

This student – Juan Bernardo de la Fitta y Jimenez – then confirms that on 30 December he and the rector Francisco Gil Ortiz y Castanera were headed to the church of S. Barbaziano. Under a portico they encountered two Montalto students whom he described as «stuck to the wall» («arrimado alla pared»). Since the Spanish students too were hugging the wall, they asked the Montaltisti to move: «May it please you, sirs, to relinquish your position». The elder Montalto student responded simply, «Signore, No». The Spanish secretary repeated his request «with every refinement and courtesy» («con toda urbanidad i cortesia»). The situation quickly grew more tense: the Spanish account relates that the rector grabbed the Montalto student by the arm, or by the...

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32 BARCS, *De Rebus Gestis*, f. 117: «Propuso el Senor Rettor en el Colegio, que havia entendido de un Cavallero de Bolonia, que los Colegiales del Colegio de Montalto pretendian la precedencia de los SS. Colegiales deste Colegio, i se resolvio que los SS. Colegiales fueran prevenidos de no dar la pared a los del Colegio de Montalto, i que se se encontraban con estos les amonestaran, con cortesia, que no pretendieran tomar el lugar, que no les tocaba, i finalmente que si los Colegiales de Montalto insistian en su atentado, devieran los nuestros resistirles de fecho, i pasar en toda maneras por el puerto que de derecho pertenecía». I am grateful to Valentina Tikoff, Areli Marina, and Maria Matz for their assistance with the translations of the Spanish account. Here and elsewhere, modern Spanish uses «y» for the conjunction «and», but in all these documents the author uses «i» and so I have followed that usage.

33 The church of S. Barbaziano was located at the intersection of via Barberia and the modern via Cesare Battisti, just a few steps from where the fight occurred. S. Barbaziano was rebuilt in the early 17th century by Pietro Fiorini and deconsecrated in 1797.

34 BARCS, *De Rebus Gestis*, f. 118: «yendo pues, el día 30 de Xbre, el Señor D. Francisco Gil Ortiz de Castañera, i yo a la Yglesia de S. Barbaciano encontramos junto a ella, debaxo un portico a dos Colegiales de Montalto, que venian muy arrimados a la pared, arrimamamos tambien nosotros a ella para hacerseles ceder, i estando ya contiguos les dixe: Signori Collegiali loro si compiaciono d’andare per il suo luogo. Respondi lo mas antiquo dellos (que era el Viceretor, i no havia entonces Rettor en su Colegio), Signore, No». The Italian text is underlined in the original account.
neck, and moved him away from the wall. Then the Spanish student whirled around and declared, «What do you think you are doing? If you cannot learn to be courteous, I will have my servant beat you with the sword that he is carrying!». To which the Montalto students responded simply, «We shall see».

According to the Spanish account, the students then went their separate ways. The two Spanish students remained in the church of S. Barbaziano and had weapons brought there, after which they traveled safely to the Spanish college.

Initially Archbishop Boncompagni (as we have seen, simultaneously the Protector of the Spanish college) was very sympathetic, declaring his «great interest» in the matter and announcing that it was his responsibility to resolve the situation in favor of the Spanish college. He implored the Spanish students to remain within their college until the matter was settled, and, according to the Spanish chronicle, soon «demonstrated his strong feeling that the Montalto had displayed great cheekiness». However, Boncompagni also chastised Fitta y Jimenez for commanding to his servant the instruction to «Beat them»; in the archbishop’s view, this had crossed the line of gentlemanly behavior and given the Montalto the right to ask for an apology.

Fitta y Jimenez responded by writing several letters to Boncompagni in order to justify his own actions. He did so in three ways: first, he was a Reader (Cathedratico) at the university and thus other students were required to make way for him; secondly, his statement about beating the students with a sword had been «a conditional proposition, which carried no authority or weight»; and finally, that he could never have carried out the threat because he did not even have a sword with him. Fitta y Jimenez also claimed that his words were not immodest, and had been exaggerated by the other side; furthermore, he said, if his words had in fact offended the other side, they could easily have borne the pain of such an insult. He flatly refused to issue an apology, «for I understood that an apology must not be offered given the inequality of the parties involved».

Even when the archbishop offered to have one of own staff convey the message, Fitta y Jimenez would not relent.

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35 BARCS, De Rebus Gestis, f. 118: «Insisti en amonestarles que se apartassen de la pared con toda urbanidad i cortesia, i viendoles siempre resistentes, assì a decho Viceretor, por un brazo, o por el cuello, i con su cuerpo di al del compañiero de manera que los hize desviar bien de la pared, y boliyemdo [turning myself around] a ellos dixe: Che novità è questa; se un'altra volta non hanno imparato cortesia, vi farò bastonato da questo mio cameriere colla spada che porta. Respondieron los Montaltos: Ci vedremo.»

36 BARCS, De Rebus Gestis, f. 118.

37 BARCA, De Rebus Gestis: «a mi como Cathedratico de la Universidad, que como a tales conocia nos devian ceder la precedencia en virtud de su estatuto, que dispone, que auctoribus omnino cedant locum» (ff. 122-3); «era una proposicion condicional, que nihil ponebat in esse» (f. 120); «i ultimamente que el haver yo dicho que haria dar, i no que daria personalmente, era porque no zinendo yo espada, no podia decir que daria con ella» (f. 120).

38 BARCS, De Rebus Gestis, f. 119: «[…] i que quando dechas palabras fueran en alguna manera ofensivas, podrian tolerarse per razon del justo dolor»; «pero no en manera alguna para dar satisfaccion, la qual entendia no dever dar por la desigualdad de las parte».
the apology so that Fitta y Jimenez would not have to be present, the student stubbornly declined: «this solution was not acceptable because it would be to offer an apology, something that a well-born man must not do to one of lesser standing».

Negotiations continued throughout the month of January to settle the issue. The Spanish account declares that in order to prevent the two groups from meeting, the Montaltisti would either be restricted to their rooms or required to travel about the city in a carriage; interestingly, the archbishop noted that the latter requirement must remain a secret in order to protect the dignity of that college. Repeated complaints from the Spanish students make clear that the Montalto students did not honor this part of the agreement but were wandering about the city. Eventually the Archbishop, Cardinal Legate, Cardinal Protectors, and various Senators hammered out a compromise that satisfied all parties. The larger question of what to do about precedence between these (and other) colleges was sent to Rome, but no quick answer was received.

Simmering tension remained, however, and in late February at the Carmelite church of Santa Maria delle Grazie (next door to the Montalto College) another fight broke out, beginning with words and proceeding to fisticuffs and then to drawn swords. Once again we have two accounts. In their «pura e distinta relazione», authored by secretary Alessandro Sinibaldi, the Montalto students explained that they had moved their chairs into the church on the last day of Carnival in order to listen comfortably to the cycle of Lenten sermons. When they returned the following day to listen to the preacher, they were informed that the rector of the Spanish College had taken one of these seats for himself. The Montalto account emphasizes their restraint and patience in finding the Spanish rector another chair. A few days later, on 3 March, two Montalto students wearing their collegiate cloaks entered the church to hear another sermon; seeing that the chair reserved for the Spanish rector was vacant, they noticed that he was again in the seats reserved for the Montalto students. Mindful of the warnings from the Legate and from their own Cardinal Protector, and «to avoid any scandal that could possibly occur», the two Montaltisti left the church. Three days later (6 March), a Montalto group returned for the next sermon and found the Spanish rector once more in their seats, displaying «great arrogance» («tanta arroganza»). When verbal negotiations failed, the Montalto students forced him to stand up. He responded «with

39 BARCS, De Rebus Gestis, f. 120: «respondio que no podia admitirse este partido porque seria dar satisfacion, que no debe dar un bien nacido a quien non consta que lo sea».

40 BARCS, De Rebus Gestis, ff. 121-126, esp. f. 121.

41 Arch. Demaniale, 74/7295, ff. 100v-101r (n.d., but between 11-31 March 1673).

42 Davies, Culture and Power, cit., pp. 165-166, recounts a virtually identical story from Pisa in 1566.

43 Arch. Demaniale, 74/7295, f. 101r: «per evitare ogni scandolo che fosse potuto succedere».
abusive words», and when his servant reached for a weapon, the Montalto students punched the servant in the face, all the while (they claimed) keeping quiet so as not to disturb the sermon44!

The Spanish account, on the other hand, claims that their rector «had been invited by the Prior, and had been assured by the Prior that he could attend the sermons with the same convenience and liberty that he had enjoyed the year before, when he came incognito to listen to the sermons in that church»45. Another document from the same year pointed to the «audacity of the Montalto students» («audatia scholasticorum Montis altos») for the trouble (molestia) they had caused, and the resultant «great injury» («magna iniuria») suffered by the college as a result of this incident46. Indeed, the Spanish College sent out dozens of letters to ecclesiastical and royal officials alike, explaining how they had been wronged47. The Spanish College also produced several treatises and legal briefs defending their position; one of these contains seventy-seven puncti explaining in detail why the Montalto students were inferior48. Among the many points listed by the Spanish author, he emphasized the numerous privileges that the Spanish College enjoyed, and the corresponding lack of such privileges for the Montalto College, as well as the fact that the Montalto had less stringent admission requirements, and could not appoint its students to prestigious positions within the university and the city.

Given the animosity between the two sides, and the investment made by each to promote their case, it is not surprising that the conflict continued to rumble for some time. This particular squabble between the Montalto and

44 Arch. Demaniale, 74/7295, f. 101r: «il lunedì che fu alli 6 del suddetto, ritrovassimo alla predicha et arrivati di sopra alli nostri lochi vedessimo sedervi il sopranominato Rettore. Maraviglati [sic] non meno che sdegnati di tanta arroganza ne lo facessimo levare e accompagnandolo ancora con qualche parola ingiuriosa, che ne fece dire la colera cagionataci da una risposta che lui ne diede, e molto più ancora da un atto temerario che fece, come anche il suo cameriere di voler mettere mano all’armi che per ciò fu dato ad detto cameriere un pugno; con tutto che noi fossimo tanto accesi da questa temerarieta facessimo il tutto tanto cautamente e con tanto riguardo che Santa Chiesa non ne succedesse scandalo veruno non interoppendosi [sic] la predica ne altro».

45 BARCS, De Rebus Gestis, f. 125 (a. 1673): «Llegado ya el dia 6 de marzo de 1673 fue el S.or [Signor] R.te [Rettore] desta S.ta [Santa] Cassa a oyr un sermon (que era quaresma) al Coro del Convento de las Gracias, convidado del Prior, i asegurado del mismo que podia estar con la comodidad, i libertad, que havia tenido al año antecedente, yendo en habit incognito a oyr los sermones a dho [dicho] Coro».

46 BARCS, Libri Decretorum, vol. 4/10 (anni. 1660 May 3 – 1701 Mar. 1), f. 77r (6 March 1673): «die 6 Martij 1673. Nos Rector et consiliarij et cetera cum audatia scholasticorum Montis alti ad tantam molestiam pervenerit, et in illustrissimum dominum Rectorem nostrum (secrete sermonem quadragesimalem audientem in choro ecclesie Beatae Marie gratiarum, vulgo de las gracias, fratrum carmeletanum, huius civitatis) violentiam iniicerint, ita ut vi, armis, et verbis contumeliosis ab eis eictus fuisset de dicto choro (quod clarius ex libro de gestis apparebit) ex quo magna injuria affectum fuit hoc nostrum collegium [...]».

47 BARCS, Privilegia, n. 18, «Littera regis Catholici, et alia documenta in causa adversus Sodales Collegii Montisalti circa precedentiam an. 1673».

48 BARCS, Privilegia, n. 18, «Razones», ff. 67r-82r.
the Spanish had the misfortune to become intertwined with other events in Bologna, notably a fierce manhunt for the assassins who had gunned down the hated bargello Mancini in full daylight on Easter Sunday, 1673 (2 April) near the gate of S. Mamolo as he and his men were returning from Mass at the church of the Annunziata. According to the report of the Assunti, there were at least ten men involved in this well-planned and well-coordinated attack, who isolated Mancini from his supporters by raising the drawbridge and then methodically fired again and again before making a calm escape through the gate of S. Felice⁴⁹.

In mid-April the legate Pallavicini ordered the new bargello to arrest Alessandro Maggi on suspicion of participation in the attack on Mancini. Maggi’s house happened to be located very close to the Spanish College. When the troops arrived, they found not only armed students and servants from the respective colleges on hand (and on edge), but also a significant number of tradesmen who were similarly armed in an effort to either keep the peace or to defend their preferred college. Perhaps unaware of the full situation, the Spanish opened fire on the police, who responded in kind and wounded two innocent bystanders. The Spanish students then threw up barricades to block the street and protect themselves. Infuriated by this lack of respect and by the evident desire of the students to protect Alessandro Maggi, the legate Pallavicini immediately informed the Senate of his intention to bring in 400 soldiers from the Romagna countryside, as well as the necessary cannon and artillery pieces, in order to restore order and arrest all of the students⁵⁰. The Assunti sought to mollify the outraged legate, and the Senate agreed to follow his lead, although both the Assunti and the Senate gently suggested less rigorous measures. In the end, the legate agreed to mediation by the archbishop, who once again demonstrated his diplomatic skills by finding an agreement. In this case, the archbishop found evidence to suggest that the police had perhaps fired first, and that they had recently arrested several other shopkeepers near the college without any interference from the students, thus absolving the collegiali of some of the blame.

In the case of the Montalto-Spagna conflict from March 1673, unlike the previous incident in late December 1672, the fault does seem clearly to have lain with the Montalto students, for they were subsequently banished from Bologna by the papal legate and forced to offer a humiliating apology. A draft agreement of an apology was penned by Marchese Malvezzi in early September 1573; it clearly blamed the Montalto students for their «indecorous and punishable» behavior. The draft agreement – we do not know if it was ac-

⁴⁹ Angelozzi, Casanova, La giustizia criminale, cit., pp. 337-338.
⁵⁰ Ivi, pp. 341-342.
tually signed – contained additional language about how much the Montalto respected the rector of the Spanish College.

The Montalto’s Cardinal Protector Paolo Savelli Peretti needed all of his diplomatic skill to win the release of the students from their country villa, and the students were not readmitted until July 1674. In 1675 the issue of precedence was taken before a commission of Cardinals in Rome, and a tentative compromise was reached. Ten years later, however, there was still active discussion of this issue.

Nor was this conflict about precedence limited to these two colleges in Bologna. The Montalto experienced similar disputes with the Ancarano College in 1650 and 1662, which took nearly twenty years to resolve. In this case, both the Ancarano students and the Montalto students took to traveling in packs and to carrying a harquebus with which to defend themselves. Similarly, in 1675 and again in 1682 the Montalto had a conflict with the students of the Hungarian-Illyrian college, who shoved the Montalto students and chanted «We Are Hungarian!» while claiming the whole street. In 1682 the Montalto experienced conflict with the Ferrero college. Even the clerics of the Seminary were not immune to this problem; both in the 1670s and again in the early eighteenth century conflicts ensued there too with the Montalto students.

The Spanish College had a dispute in 1673 with the Ancarano pupils, and with the Hungarian-Illyrian college in 1742. In each case, the ostensible issue was who should have the right of way when representatives of the different colleges met in the street. The common-sense solution adopted by the Cardinals in 1675 – that each side must «tenere il muro a destra», or hug the wall to his right – worked well in some cases but not in an open piazza or at the junction of several streets or in a classroom.

In conclusion, what are we to make of this series of conflicts and claims for precedence? And why do they seem to be concentrated in the second half

51 BARCS, Privilgia, n. 18, «Prima Scrittura data dal Sig. Marchese Malvezzi», ff. 53r-55v: «indegna e punibile».

52 Arch. Demaniale, 17/7234, «Diritto di Precedenza» contains a variety of documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries about conflicts over precedence. For Montalto/Ancarano disputes, see ibidem, int. 1 and int. 2; for Montalto/Ungaro-Illirico disputes, see ibidem, int. 4, and Cagni, Il Pontificio Collegio, cit., p. 81 n. 265, as well as Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna (BUB), Ms. 1948, opus 48 & 49, ff. 159-163; for Montalto/Seminary disputes, see Arch. Demaniale, 17/7234, int. 3, and Cagni, Il Pontificio Collegio, cit., p. 81 n. 265; for Montalto/Ferrero disputes, ibidem, int. 4 and Cagni, Il Pontificio Collegio, cit., p. 81 n. 265. See also BARCS, De Rebus Gestis, vol. 1, f. 138 (original numbering, top corner) about a precedence dispute between the Ancarano and Spanish colleges; and BARCS, Res Gubierni, «Statuta et Acta Visitationum», Caja II, b. 60 (1742) for the Spanish-Hungarian «disputas».

53 Christopher Carlsmith, «Siam Ungari»: Nationalism, Students, and Misbehavior at the University of Bologna in the Late Seventeenth Century, in «History of Universities», 26/2 (2012), pp. 113-149.

Christopher Carlsmith

of the seventeenth century, especially in the 1660s and 1670s? And why are the Montalto students involved in a disproportionate share of the violence? In addition to the factors mentioned previously (e.g., lack of police force, alcohol, prevalence of weapons), two simple explanations for the conflicts would include local instantiations of international rivalries, and the pressure to defend institutional traditions and primacy. It is no coincidence, I think, that «foreign» (i.e., non-Italian) students were so often involved in these events, particularly those associated with a college or a nation to back them up. A similar phenomenon has been noted by other scholars for Padua, Siena, and Pisa. In addition, I suggest that the different colleges in Bologna were quick to perceive weakness in their opponents. The Montalto suffered administrative and financial difficulties from the 1640s through the 1670s when an unfriendly pope, falling agricultural prices, student unrest, and a protracted argument between two powerful cardinals hobbled the college’s ability to function effectively. Other students saw this opportunity as a chance to usurp privileges from the Montalto. Similarly, the Spanish College had to face the reality of an unpopular Spanish king (Charles II) and internal difficulties of its own. Furthermore, the second half of the seventeenth century was challenging for the Bolognese, as it was for all Italians, as the nexus of European commerce shifted toward northern Europe. The University of Bologna, too, is typically seen as experiencing a marked period of intellectual decline in the Seicento before rebounding in the eighteenth century with a new focus upon the sciences. The combination of these factors would have left the students and their colleges feeling on shaky ground, and eager to establish themselves more firmly.

Such explanations may help us to understand the spate of conflicts over precedence in the later seventeenth century. Students doubtless wished to exercise their independence and to demonstrate their agency to each other during these years away from parental supervision. The codes of honor that governed duels in early modern Europe sometimes pushed these students (and their superiors) toward conflict rather than toward negotiation and compromise. Happily there are very few instances of student death resulting from these disputes over precedence and honor. But that does not diminish their importance then or now, for these disputes were central to the students’ self-identification within the colleges and the university.

55 Cagni, Il Pontificio Collegio, cit., pp. 67-81, describes the «crises» of 1641 and 1668-1671.
Sommaro / Summary

COLLEGIATE CONFLICT: TWO BRAWLS IN BOLOGNA BETWEEN THE COLLEGIO DI SPAGNA AND THE COLLEGIO MONTALTO, 1672-1673

Violence in early modern Bologna was nothing new; the records of the Torrone criminal court testify to frequent assaults, thefts, and other forms of physical violence, and chroniclers regularly cite fistfights in the streets. This paper examines violence among members of Bologna’s storied university; specifically, between the residents of two of Bologna’s most significant student colleges. Bad blood had existed between the Spanish College (San Clemente) and the Montalto College since 1591, but matters came to a head in 1672, when a pair of back-to-back incidents resulted in significant verbal and physical altercations, both in the street and in the chapel of the Montalto College. In a society consumed with social status and hierarchy, as well as maintenance of one’s reputation and honor, such slights were no small item. This paper compares the accounts from each college’s archive, as well as other, neutral sources, in order to create a holistic picture of this example of «collegiate conflict».

SCONTRI IN COLLEGIO: DUE RISSE A BOLOGNA TRA IL COLLEGIO DI SPAGNA E IL COLLEGIO MONTALTO, 1672-1673

Episodi di violenza nella Bologna della prima età moderna non erano un fatto raro; gli atti del Tribunale criminale del Torrone testimoniano di frequenti scontri, furti e altre forme di violenza fisica, e i cronisti menzionano regolarmente aggressioni in mezzo alla strada. Questo articolo esamina casi di violenza tra membri dello Studio di Bologna: nello specifico, tra residenti di due dei più importanti collegi bolognesi. Tra il Collegio di San Clemente e il Collegio Montalto si erano instaurati cattivi rapporti fin dal 1591, ma la questione divenne particolarmente seria nel 1672, quando un paio di incidenti ravvicinati diedero luogo a significativi conseguenze sia sul piano verbale che su quello fisico, sia in strada che nella cappella del Collegio Montalto. In una società dominata dall’importanza attribuita al ceto sociale e alla gerarchia, come pure al mantenimento della propria reputazione ed onore, simili affronti non erano poca cosa. Vengono qui confrontati i resoconti tratti dagli archivi di ciascuno dei due collegi e anche fonti «neutrali», al fine di creare una rappresentazione olistica di questo esempio di «conflitto collegiale».