

CHAPTER 11

EDUCATION TO MAGNIFICENCE:

Aristocratic Schooling and College Academies in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Rome

Aldo ROMA

École française de Rome - ERC PerformArt project

Abstract

This contribution investigates the fundamental role that Roman colleges played in aristocratic schooling and, in particular, in the education of gentlemen to magnificence, a process discussed here as the transmission and acquisition of a set of techniques that are socially defined and shared. Using documents related to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Roman colleges, this essay sheds light on the ways in which the techniques of magnificence were imparted to students. In particular, it considers how the spaces in which students lived exemplified magnificence, and how the activities they engaged in as part of their education, such as the chivalric arts and theatre, functioned to train and shape their bodies, voices, and gestures. In addition, this chapter shows how students' participation in gatherings and performances of academies in the college context provided them with the opportunity to acquire and experiment with ceremonial and behavioural skills and protocols. After college, the young gentlemen would have acquired the cultural models that were fundamental to the social behaviours, cultural production, and consumption systems effective in early modern court society.

1. Introduction: Education to Magnificence

In seventeenth-century sources, the word *magnificenza* often recurs as a moral quality or virtue characteristic only of 'grandissimi personaggi' (*very important people*),¹ or as a property attributable to a grandiose event that arouses stupor and wonder. Historiography, in turn, has considered magnificence as an aesthetic and sociological category, useful for understanding the universe of norms and values that underlie the social behaviour and systems of cultural production and consumption of court society, subject, as Norbert Elias points out, to 'the type of constraint to display and of aesthetic sensibility characteristic of this society in conjunction with status competition'.² From this perspective, magnificence can be seen as the aesthetic result both of a specific mode of comportment (that is, a cultural model), and of the production of cultural artefacts of court society. Furthermore, the codes of the forms through which magnificence expresses itself are ascribable to specific cultural models, that is, shared systems of symbols, values, actions, and dispositions that, in a particular society, regulate relationships with the self, the other, and the social milieu. Even in its constant fluidity, and in addition to its more or less conscious application to social life, a cultural model is

kept alive also by processes of cultural transmission and acquisition that are more or less formalized. Two fundamental points are derived from this: first, magnificence can be taken as a set of socially defined and shared techniques, necessary to implement an efficient communicative strategy and meant to stabilize, display, and eventually boost one's own social status (the word *technique* in this context is to be understood as it is used by the anthropologist Marcel Mauss, who defines the notion of 'techniques of the body' as 'the ways in which from society to society men know how to use their bodies').³ And secondly, to envision magnificence as a set of techniques is to examine its processes of transmission and acquisition, that is, those processes that are for the most part subconscious and linked to lived experience – *acquisition* is different, then, from simple *learning*, which involves conscious processes of knowledge and content transmission.⁴ Despite the modern terminology, it is in this sense that one can speak of 'education to magnificence': a process of acquisition of values, norms, and behavioural patterns indispensable to the early modern individual's understanding of how to act in society.⁵

1. Tesauro 1654, pp. 512–13.

2. Elias 1983, p. 77. See also Veblen 1899.

3. Mauss 1973, p. 70. See also Winthrop-Young 2013 for a debate on the concept of *Kulturtechniken* (cultural techniques); interesting reflections on the 'techniques of the spectacular' have been recently advanced by Traversier 2018.

4. The reference is to Stephen Krashen's 1982 linguistic study on the differences between the processes of language acquisition and those of language learning, and to neuroscientific processes derived from the intuitions of the cognitive psychologist Arther S. Reber (1967 and 1993) regarding implicit learning.

5. For the concept of 'techniques' and in particular of 'techniques of disciplinary methods', see Foucault 1995, pp. 135ff.; see also Turrini 2006, who reiterates Foucault's argument that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a specific technique was developed 'for constituting individuals as

In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Rome, as is well-known, the education of the offspring of the European aristocracy was entrusted to numerous training colleges, distinguished from each other by the type of instruction they offered, by the geographic or socioeconomic provenance of their boarders, or by their position in social and cultural networks. These contingencies could also vary based on a particular pope's inclination towards the religious order that ran the college,⁶ or on the specific requests of the nobles who at times contributed to the establishment of certain colleges in order to set up an institution where they could send their own sons to study.⁷ In addition to courses in grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, mathematics, theology, law, astronomy and geography, the young nobles also received religious education through the practice of spiritual exercises carried out in the context of the congregations.⁸ Other skills, however, were thought to be suitable to the complete and perfect formation of the *buon signore* (proper gentleman), and the colleges became the environments in which such abilities were refined.

This chapter aims to investigate the substantial role played by the Roman colleges in the education of the aristocracy. Through a reading of primary sources, it will examine the function of spaces designated both for the acquisition of the techniques of magnificence and as repositories of signs of the magnificence of the colleges themselves. It will then analyse the modalities and contexts of the acquisition of such techniques, with particular reference to the practice of the chivalric arts, theatre, and academic activities as privileged areas in which the skills, as well as the ceremonial and behavioural protocols used in court society were acquired and immediately put to use in the field.

2. Magnificence in the Spaces of the Colleges

Printed pamphlets, generically entitled *Informazione* (Information) or *Istruzione per l'ingresso de' convittori* (Instructions

on the entrance of boarders; **Figs 1-2**) and intended for the families of prospective students, are useful sources for reconstructing the *curricula* of early modern colleges. These pamphlets, periodically reprinted, are precious, yet biased sources, given that they were meant above all to serve as publicity and promotion for the college's scholastic activities.⁹

When comparing the surviving examples of this type of documentation produced by various colleges, differences emerge in terms of the academic concentration of the curriculum offered to potential new boarders. However, what these texts have in common is a specific rhetorical construction meant to transmit a precise image of each institution, its history, and the uniqueness of the activities offered to its boarders. The Seminario Romano's *Informazione*, for example, refers to popes, cardinals, and political figures of the time who owed to that institution 'la loro splendida, e virtuosa educazione alle regole di ben vivere' (*their splendid, and virtuous education in the rules of living well*).¹⁰ The frontispiece of the Collegio Clementino's pamphlet declares that the institution was founded by Pope Clement VIII 'Per il buon allievo de' soli nobili' (*For the good breeding of nobles alone*).¹¹

An analogous rhetorical strategy was used also in the construction, furnishing, and decorating of the interior and exterior spaces of the colleges.¹² The attention reserved for the construction and maintenance of the façades of college buildings had its roots – to draw on the analysis offered by Amedeo Quondam of Giovanni Pontano's treatise *De magnificencia* (1493) – in the desire to 'edificare magnifico per pubblica utilità e a gloria del liberale benefattore [...] ma soprattutto per ragione di bellezza' (*construct magnificently both for public benefit and to glorify the generous benefactor [...] but above all for reasons of beauty*).¹³ It was in this spirit that in 1720, during ordinary maintenance, the noble façade of the Collegio Nazareno was 'imbiancata col colore celestino'

correlative elements of power and knowledge' (Foucault 1995, p. 194): 'Il soggetto individuale si costituirebbe così come una realtà fabbricata da quella tecnologia specifica del potere che si chiama "la disciplina"' (*The individual subject would be created in the same manner as a reality that was fabricated by that specific technology of power that is called 'discipline'*; Turrini 2006, p. 213).

6. On the peculiarities of papal power and its consequences on the political administration of the Papal States, see Kantorowicz 1957, Paravicini Bagliani 1994, Visceglia – Brice 1997.
7. On the *seminaria nobilium* (seminaries for nobles) in central-northern Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries see Brizzi 2015. For the case of the Collegio dei Nobili in Parma see Turrini 2006; fundamental information on the Collegio Tolomei in Siena can be found in Borello 2016.
8. On the Marian congregations, see Châtellier 1987, *ad indicem*. On the congregations of the Roman colleges, see García Villoslada 1954, pp. 130ff. (for the Collegio Romano); Pucci 1980 (for the Collegio Nazareno).
9. Among the documents of the Collegio Nazareno are two payments: 2.5 *scudi* to the printer Mario De Martini for the *tiratura* (print run) of 'duecento fogli stampati di informazioni per quelli che devono venire in collegio' (*two hundred printed sheets of information [pamphlets] for those coming to college*, I-Rcn, b. 343, unfoliated; 18 Jan. 1713), and 2.05 *scudi* to Giovanni Zempel 'per la stampa di n.º 300 istruzioni nell'ingresso de' signori convittori' (*for the printing of three hundred [copies of] instructions for the entering gentlemen boarders*, I-Rcn, vol. 92, p. 102).
10. *Informazione Seminario* 1735, p. [1]: This source explicitly cites four popes and sixty-nine cardinals, fifteen of whom were alive at the time, in addition to 'moltissimi degni prelati di Santa Chiesa' (*many worthy prelates of the Holy Church*), secular clergy, military generals, and 'supremi governatori di provincie e repubbliche' (*supreme governors of provinces and republics*). For a description of the source and a complete list of people cited therein, see Database PerformArt, D-143-490-121.
11. *Informazione Clementino* 1689, p. [1].
12. On the relationship between rhetoric and architecture see Braghieri 2013 and Ramacciotti 2006.
13. Quondam 2004, pp. 21-22.

(*painted a pale blue*).¹⁴ On the other hand, the façades of buildings, permeable barriers between inside and outside, became surfaces to decorate in order to mark an institution's participation in religious and political events in the city: at the Collegio Nazareno, the *festarolo* Filippo Fornari took charge periodically of hanging 'damaschi [...] alle tre ringhiere del collegio e tafetani cremisi a tutte le finestre' (*damask banners [...] on the college's three railings and crimson taffeta drapes on all the windows*) on the occasion of the procession of Corpus Domini organized by the neighbouring church of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte;¹⁵ to solemnize the coronation of the new Pope Benedict XIII (regn. 1724-30) in June of 1724, the windows of the college were illuminated for three evenings with 'candele di sego' (*tallow candles*).¹⁶

Common spaces and rooms where visitors were entertained – like the *salone* (reception hall), the galleries, and the chapel –

were occupied by a notable number of images, epigraphs and other works of art that literally surrounded the boarders. The walls of the *salone* of the Seminario Romano and of the *salone grande* of the Collegio Nazareno were covered with portraits.¹⁷ The fencing hall, too, was decorated with 'i ritratti principalmente de' marescialli, ed altri personaggi tedeschi' (*portraits mainly of the marshals and other German personages*), as were three other rooms of the Collegio Clementino, 'la prima fregiata dei ritratti dei Cardinali, la seconda dei dogi, la terza dei ministri di Stato e guerrieri, che hanno qui ricevuta l'educazione' (*the first adorned with portraits of the cardinals, the second of the doges, the third of ministers of State and warriors, all who received their education here*).¹⁸ These were portraits of the 'soggetti riguardevoli' (*distinguished individuals*) who had studied within those walls; paintings or sculptures donated to the colleges by

14. I-Rcn, vol. 72, p. 35 (9 June 1720, Carlo Domenico Francesconi and Antonio Petroni, painters).

15. I-Rcn, vol. 72, p. 36 (record of payment on 14 June 1720; similar payments appear more or less annually).

16. I-Rcn, vol. 72, fol. 78^v.

17. See *Informazione Seminario Romano* 1735, p. [1]; Negro 2004. The account books of the Nazareno mention some portraits intended for the *salone* and the gallery. The following table summarizes the most relevant information sorted by date:

ARTIST	PAYMENT DATE	SUBJECT OF THE ARTWORK	PAYMENT INFORMATION	SOURCE
Filippo Contestabili	1718-10-22	Cardinal Giandomenico Paracciani* (1646-1721)	Painting (6.70 <i>scudi</i>)	I-Rcn, vol. 16, <i>Libro mastro</i> 1693-1718, fol. 385 ^{8x} ; vol. 72, p. 10
—	1718-12	Card. Alessandro Albani (1692-1779)	Painting (1.50 <i>scudi</i>) frame (1 <i>scudo</i>)	I-Rcn, vol. 82, fol. 43 ^r
Giuseppe Lironi (ca. 1691-1746)	1719-4	St José de Calasanz Cardinal Tonti	Two stucco busts (21 <i>scudi</i>)	I-Rcn, vol. 82, fol. 44 ^v
Paolo Morelli	1719-4	Pope Clement XI Albani ('illustrious benefactor of the college')	Marble bust (40 <i>scudi</i> , paid by the rector's salary as a teacher at the Sapienza)	I-Rcn, vol. 82, fol. 44 ^v
—	1719-4		Over sixty paintings and several door panels 'to avoid the expense of decorating twice a year [i.e., for academic gatherings] that came to 36 <i>scudi</i> ' (188 <i>scudi</i>)	I-Rcn, vol. 82, fol. 44 ^v
—	1719-10	Card. Fabio Abati Olivieri (1658-1738)	Painting (2 <i>scudi</i>) frame (1 <i>scudo</i>)	I-Rcn, vol. 82, fol. 46 ^r
—	1719-11	Vincenzo Galeffi (noble from Cesena)	Frame (0.60 <i>scudi</i>)	I-Rcn, vol. 82, fol. 47 ^r
—	1724-5	Andrea di San Sebastiano (ex-General of the Piarists)	Copy made in 1722 from the original in Florence for the gallery on the ground floor (2 <i>scudi</i>)	I-Rcn, vol. 82, fol. 73 ^r
Andrea Piserni (1685-1760)	1733	Cardinals G. Paracciani, Fabrizio Paolucci (1651-1726), and A. Albani	Three portraits	I-Rcn, vol. 82, fols 123 ^r , 124 ^v

* In 1718 Paracciani was the first Cardinal Vicar to become the protector of the college, taking the place of the deans of the *Sacra Rota* (see I-Rcn, vol. 17, *Libro mastro* 1719-1796, fols [i]ff.).

On painters Contestabili and Piserni, see Borroni 1968; Petrucci F. 2003, p. 108; Carloni 2004; Parretti 2008. On Lironi, see Sinagra 2005. Morelli, an artist from Como, was active in Rome from 1679 to 1719 (see Manfredi 2008b, p. 45).

18. Paltrinieri 1795, pp. 114, 121.



Fig. 1: Title page to *Informazione de' requisiti per l'ingresso de' cavalieri nel Collegio Clementino di Roma*, 1698.



Fig. 2: *Informazione per l'ingresso de' signori convittori nel Seminario Romano diretto da' Padri della Compagnia di Gesù*, 1735.

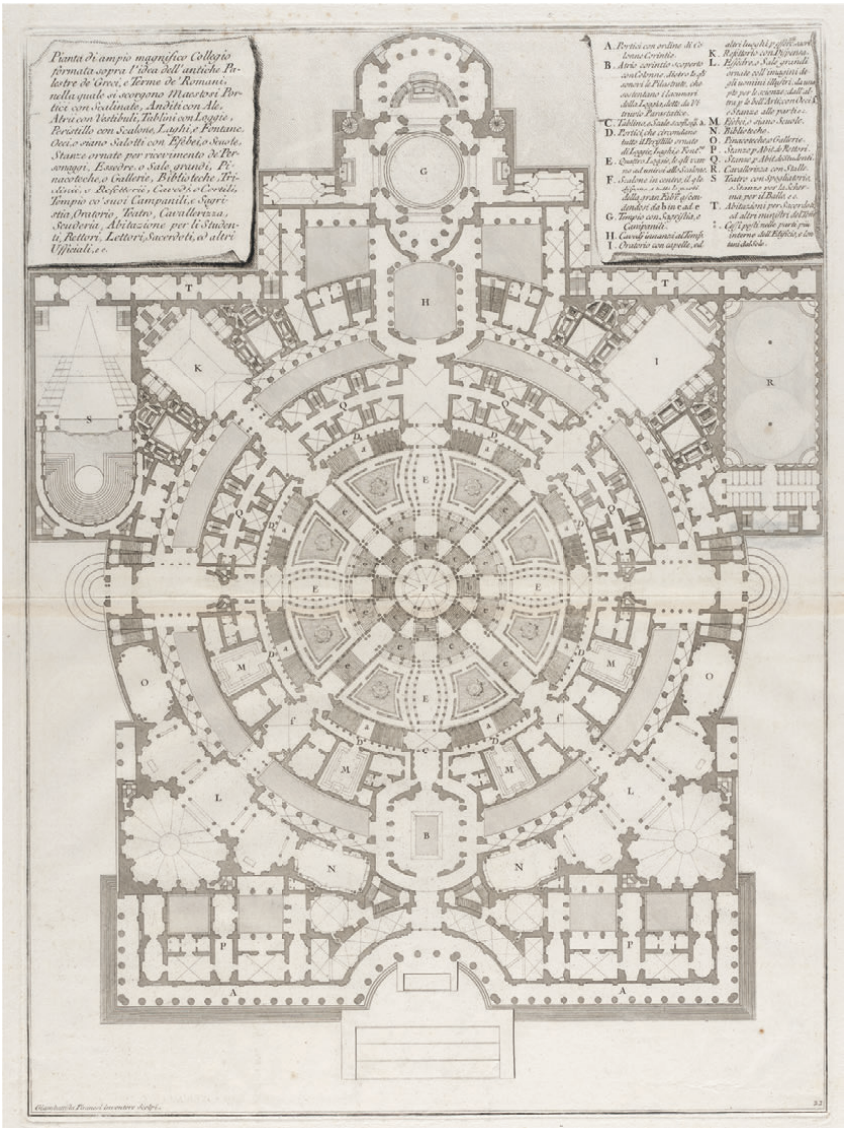


Fig. 3: Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 'Pianta di ampio magnifico collegio' ('Map of a large, magnificent college'), in *Opere varie di architettura, prospettiva, grotteschi, antichità*, 1800.

illustrious figures (popes, cardinal protectors, ambassadors, and visiting foreign sovereigns);¹⁹ and solemn inscriptions that immortalized salient moments in the history of the institution and highlighted their relations with religious and secular power. In addition to making a show of the images of their subjects, these images were expressly flaunted before the eyes of ‘i loro successori’ (*their successors*) as good examples to both venerate and imitate.²⁰ It is important to remember, moreover, that the decorative projects adopted for the embellishment of these spaces are comparable, in terms of thematic patterns and programmatic intentions, to contemporary projects used in the display halls of noble palaces.²¹ In this way, a continuum was created between the domestic and collegiate environment, which, in its circularity, facilitated the familiarization of the *giovin signore* (young gentleman), determining the formation of his aesthetic taste through these images that functioned as vehicles for representation of power.²²

Students’ extra-curricular activities were also held in these spaces (Fig. 3). In large part, these activities were necessary for the acquisition of fundamental tools used in the techniques of magnificence mentioned at the outset. These techniques will be the subject of the following discussion.

The etching, conceived for the Clementine Architecture Competition announced in 1749 by the Accademia di San Luca (see Bevilacqua 2008), depicts the plan of an ideal building intended to house a college. In particular, for the matters discussed here, note the presence of spaces designated for: ‘Oratorio con cappelle ed altri luoghi per essercizii sacri’ (*Oratory with chapels and other places for sacred practices*; letter I); ‘Essedre o Sale grandi ornate coll’immagini degli uomini illustri’ (*Exedras or large halls decorated with images of illustrious men*; letter L); ‘Cavallerizza con stalle’ (*Horseback riding, with stalls*; letter R); ‘Teatro con spogliatorio e stanze per la scherma, per il ballo etc.’ (*Theatre with dressing room and rooms for fencing, for dancing, etc.*; letter S). It is significant that the shape of the theatre’s *platea* is based on the ideal Renaissance model, later adopted, for example, by Giovanni Battista Aleotti for the hall of the Intrepidi in Ferrara and the well-known Teatro Farnese in Parma.

3. Practices of Magnificence in the Colleges: Modalities, Contexts, Tools, and Protocols

Once out of college, these young noble lads were supposed to be capable of managing the social relations and ceremonial protocols of the court. This meant having acquired the skills needed to play an active role in public ceremonies and social events. The tools that made up the courtier’s behavioural kit included knowledge of how to move and speak in public, dance, use a sword, and ride a horse. A few of these skills were taught formally, but there were also specific contests and events that on the one hand allowed students to show off the skills they had acquired and on the other, to test their skills in the field. The experience of putting oneself to the test in a ceremonial context was governed by rigid protocols imposed by etiquette. Nonetheless, the college environment was a privileged context in which to experiment with these protocols, because, at least in theory, it allowed for the possibility of error.²³

* *The Chivalric Arts and Acting*

Dancing, fencing, and horsemanship were the disciplines of the chivalric arts that every good *giovin signore* had to practice and master, along with ‘suoni’ (that is, playing music) or singing, drawing, foreign languages, and the art of public speaking.²⁴ In the didactic programs of the colleges, this training was not necessarily included in the regulation of free time (the so-called *recreazioni*), but could be considered an integral part of the curriculum. There were also events, as we shall see, that called for the participation of the general public as well, such as theatrical performances during Carnival, public academic gatherings, and *conclusioni* (Fig. 4), during which boarders who were concluding their studies were asked to publicly defend their dissertations.²⁵

The sources that document the practice of the chivalric arts in the colleges discussed here reveal at least two significant points: first, not all of these disciplines were practiced in all of the Roman colleges; and second, not all of the students of a particular college had access to all of the lessons in the chivalric arts.

19. In the summer of 1721, the new Cardinal Alessandro Albani donated an ancient statue of Julius Caesar to the Collegio Nazareno, still in the college’s collection today. To thank him, the Piariists gave the Cardinal ‘due libri in foglio reale ligati in francese che contengono la vita e il ritratto di cento uomini illustri di Francia, che fiorirono nel secolo passato’ (*two books printed on extra-large folio and bound, in French, that contain the lives and portraits of one hundred illustrious Frenchmen who flourished during the past century*; I-Rcn, vol. 82, fol. 55^r; 8 *scudi*). The sculpture is also mentioned in two letters sent from Milan to Pietro Verri to his brother Alessandro (29 April 1767, in Verri 1980, p. 413; 10 April 1771, in Verri 1919, p. 178), in which, among other things, he reveals his terrible memories of the Collegio Nazareno.

20. The term *imitazione* (imitation) recurs in *Informazione Seminario Romano* 1735, p. [1].

21. See for example the chapter ‘Come si dispongono i quadri’ (*How to place paintings*) by Giulio Mancini (c. 1620), cit. in Montanari T. 2013, pp. 498–500; see also Feigenbaum 2014a; Magnani 2013; Gozzano 2004; Cappelletti 2003; Debenedetti 1991; Haskell 1980.

22. See Bodart 2001.

23. The importance of errors as part of the educational process is also present in the pedagogy of Fénelon (1651–1715); see Pancera 2003 and bibliography therein.

24. On the teaching and practice of music in the colleges see Lorenzetti 1997 and Murata 2004.

25. See Pampalone 2015.

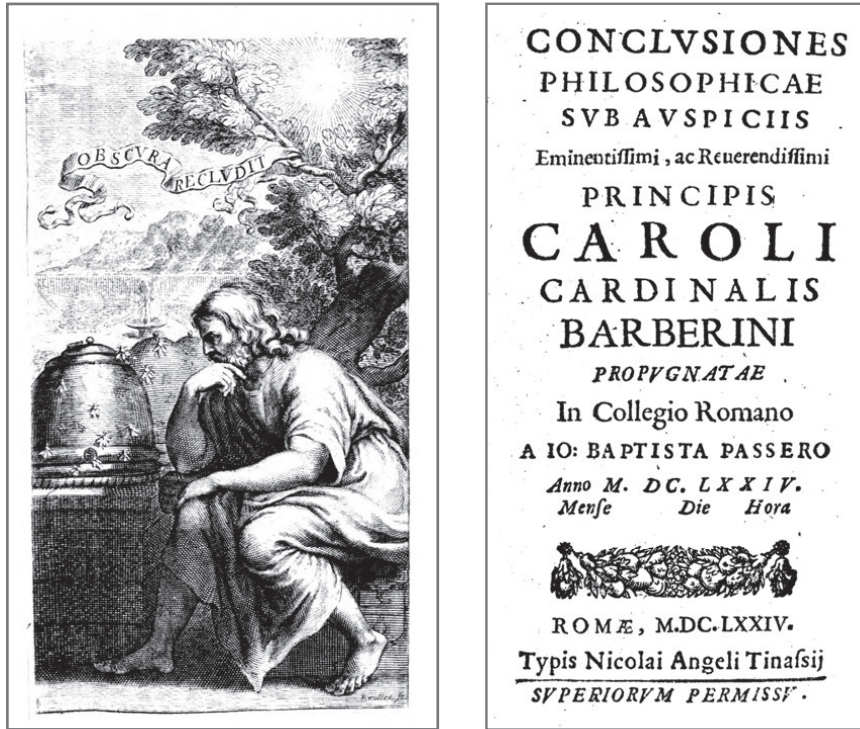


Fig. 4: Giovanni Battista Passeri, *Conclusiones philosophicae sub auspiciis eminentissimi ac reverendissimi principis Caroli Cardinalis Barberini propugnatae in Collegio Romano*, 1674.

Frontispiece engraved by Jean Louis Rouillet (p. [1]); title page (p. [3]) of Passeri's conclusions presented in 1674. Note that the title page of the pamphlet, printed before the date of the graduation ceremony was established, has a blank space after the words 'Mense' (month), 'Die' (day) e 'hora' (hour), to be filled in later by hand.

Dancing and fencing were without a doubt considered to be indispensable in the education of noblemen, and the colleges hired several expert dancing masters to teach their boarders full-time.²⁶ At the Collegio Clementino, fencing and dancing lessons were scheduled every day during the recreation period, but boarders were also permitted 'l'imparare suono, canto, disegno, saltare il cavalletto, scrivere, conti, varie lingue, fortificazione, matematica etc. quando la condizione di qualcheduno' (to learn music playing, singing, drawing, vaulting, writing, accounting, foreign languages, fortification, math, etc., when any student's social status) required it. In addition, riding lessons were planned on holidays and during the fall vacation period, so as not to interfere with academics.²⁷ The Seminario Romano, on the other hand, allowed its students, with the consent of their parents, to choose freely whether or which of the chivalric arts to practice among 'ballo, scherma, cavallerizza, suoni, canto, disegno, volteggiare il cavalletto, picca, bandiera, linguaggi, fortificazione, geografia, istoria etc.' (dancing, fencing, horsemanship, playing music, singing, drawing, vaulting, pike tossing, flag throwing, foreign languages, fortification, geography, history, etc.).²⁸

The issue of choosing or having the economic possibility to take lessons in the chivalric arts had significant repercussions

on the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that were created among those who, for example, took dancing or fencing lessons and those who, on the contrary, did not have the possibility to access them. In the same vein, the practice of the performing arts in the context of a college education also emerges as a marker of the social status of those who were admitted to the school of magnificence in contrast with those who were excluded from it. This can be clearly observed in the case of the Collegio Nazareno.

The institution was set up in 1630 thanks to a bequest of the Cardinal Michelangelo Tonti (1566-1622), who had left part of his estate – including his private palace – to José de Calasanaz (1557-1648), founder of the order of the Piariists.²⁹ The Nazareno was intended to house a small number of twelve- to eighteen-year-old boys who, despite being unable to afford a suitable education, demonstrated an inclination to study.³⁰ When financial difficulties arose around the middle of the 1640s, paying boarders, who came mainly from the ranks of aristocracy and the merchant class, were also admitted. This brought radical changes in the curriculum offered by the college, evidently caused by the new educational requirements of the noble elite. The introduction of the teaching of the chivalric arts probably dates back to this second phase.

26. For a comparison with the case of the Collegio dei Nobili in Parma, and in particular on the important role of dancing there, see Giordano G. 2018.

27. *Informazione Clementino* 1689, p. [4].

28. *Informazione Seminario Romano* 1735, p. [3].

29. On the Collegio Nazareno see Leonetti 1882, Vannucci 1998, Manodori Sagredo 2004, Cianfrocca 2007 and 2010.

30. Cardinal Tonti's will set the minimum number of students at twelve, but this varied greatly depending on the economic conditions of the college; see Vannucci 1998, pp. 93 ff.

The first evidence of dancing at the Collegio Nazareno goes back to 1697 and 1711, when ‘Antonio maestro di scherma’ (*Antonio the fencing master*) and Francesco Cortella were paid, respectively, 15 and 21 *scudi* ‘per li balli’ (*for the dances*), perhaps as part of the Carnival entertainments.³¹ Dancing was probably taught even earlier, although it was not until 1717–18 that the college began to keep more comprehensive administrative records.³² It was in March 1718 that a contract was stipulated between the College and Giuseppe Castellani, defined in the document as ‘maestro di ballo presentemente del Clementino’ (*dancing master presently at the Clementino*).³³ With this contract the dancing master committed to teach one-hour lessons, twice a day, to prepare boarders to dance during Carnival, and to dance himself, in the finales of operas or in the intermezzi, and to compose the dances, paying particular attention to the ‘orchestra’ and to ‘dirigere col suono l’arie de’ balli’ (*direct the playing of the dance tunes*) – and these words can perhaps allude to the playing of a *pochette* when the boarders danced.³⁴ The contract was exclusive in nature, forbidding him to teach in other colleges or to work in public theatres (although there is no evidence that he respected this clause). Finally, the document reveals that he was expected to ‘dare lezzione a tutti li signori convittori, ma non agl’alunni’ (*give dancing lessons to all the gentlemen boarders, but not the [non-paying] students*).³⁵ This clause indicates that dancing lessons were reserved for paying students (the *convittori*, or boarders), while the *alunni* (that is, the not-wealthy boys who were admitted to the college at no charge) were excluded. On the other hand, a similar contract, drawn up in March 1720 with Giuseppe Minelli, seems to go beyond the distinction between students of the Nazareno, obligating the new dancing master to ‘dar lettione di ballare alli signori collegianti, tanto convittori quanto alunni’ (*give dancing lessons to all of the gentlemen of the college, both to the convittori and to the alunni*).³⁶

The teaching of the chivalric arts as part of college curriculum found its *raison d’être* in the intersection with courtly cul-

ture as it had been defined since the treatises of the Renaissance humanists and also in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century reformulations.³⁷ According to John Locke (Fig. 5), dancing, fencing, and horsemanship were among the ‘other *accomplishments* necessary to a Gentleman’, whose training should include intellectual, moral, and physical education.³⁸ Dancing, taught without affectation, was held to be useful in that it ‘gives graceful motions all the life, and above all things manliness,



Fig. 5: George Vertue after a painting by Godfrey Kneller, *John Locke Esq.*, 1738.

31. I-Rcn, b. 341, fasc. 1697, unfoliated; b. 343, fasc. 1707-1711, unfoliated.

32. One of the motivations that may have been behind the increase in attention to maintaining the archive was the transfer of the protectorate of the college from the *Sacra Rota* to the Cardinal Vicar *pro tempore* in 1718 (see Vannucci 1998, p. 114). From that moment on, the Cardinal Vicar would supervise the administration of the college, periodically certifying its accounts; see *infra*, note 17.

33. I-Rcn, b. 296, fasc. A, sottofasc. 6, unfoliated (see Database PerformArt, D-133-750-157): contract dated 15 March 1718, also signed by Father Cassio di San Luigi, who had been appointed the prefect of chivalric exercises by the Rector, Virginio di San Silvestro. Cassio, Luigi Blandolisi in the secular world (or Brandolisi; Narni, 1682–Rome, 1751), was affiliated with the Accademia dell’Arcadia, under the name Levisio Odeatico, beginning in 1705 (see *Catalogo degli arcadi* 1711, p. 365; Crescimbeni 1730, pp. 396, 425; Erolì 1858). He was the Procurator General of Piariists and a missionary in China. Castellani was active in the circle of theatrical impresarios; he created the dances for two operas performed in 1727 at the Teatro Capranica, *L’Amor generoso* (libretto by Apostolo Zeno, music by Giovanni Battista Costanzi) and *Il Cid* (libretto by Giovan Giacomo Alborghetti, music by Leonardo Leo); see Franchi 1997, pp. 222–23, 228, 230–31.

34. On the use of the *pochette*, see Lebet 2014.

35. The sources use two different words to refer to the different status of boarders: a *convittore* was a paying student; an *alunno* was a not-wealthy student, admitted to the college at no charge if considered to be gifted for studying.

36. I-Rcn, b. 296, fasc. A, sottofasc. 6, unfoliated (see Database PerformArt, D-133-830-182): contract dated 4 March 1720, signed by Father Paolino di San Giuseppe (Domenico Chelucci in the secular world; Lucca, 1681–Rome, 1754), Rector of the College.

37. See Donati 1995, pp. 291 ff.

38. Locke 1693, p. 234 (italics in the text).

and a becoming confidence to young children' and 'a freedom and easiness to all the motions of the body'.

Similarly, Locke judged fencing and horsemanship 'as necessary qualifications in the breeding of a gentleman' as they were 'marks of distinction' of court society.³⁹ Locke seems to suggest that the practice of the chivalric arts had, in reality, an aim that went beyond the simple act of learning, for example, a sequence of dance steps or a combination of fencing positions and moves. In other words, for schoolboys the practice of the chivalric arts was a vehicle to acquire other skills as well, namely, those techniques of magnificence defined in the opening paragraphs of this essay, necessary in order to take part effectively in the society of the time, and to ensure either good comportment, or the respect of etiquette and of the rules of social status and honour.⁴⁰

The role of theatre in student colleges has been the subject of considerable scholarly reflection.⁴¹ The *Informazioni* of the Roman colleges declare that theatrical performance was intended to help students to 'avezzarsi a parlare in pubblico' (*get used to speaking in public*) and create opportunities for challenging their rhetorical abilities.⁴² In fact, these occasions were fundamental moments for the construction of noble identity in a society, like that of the court, in which the

language of convention was subject to reason, and interpersonal relationships had to adhere to predetermined rules.⁴³ Theatrical practice, then, was introduced in collegial education right from the beginning. The correspondence of the Aldobrandini family suggests that the demands linked to the production of a theatrical performance at the Clementino had even led to the early entry into the college of Ippolito, a Florentine patrician descended from the family of Pope Clement VIII, who had founded that institution.⁴⁴ Ippolito, almost eleven years old, entered the College on 30 December 1673, earlier than planned, because he was 'destinato a recitare in una commedia che fanno questo Carnevale' (*destined to act in a play they are doing this Carnival season*).⁴⁵

The theatrical production of the Roman colleges should also be examined, however, in relation to the specific context of the city, where public performances were sometimes forbidden by papal authorities.⁴⁶ Even so, the colleges seem to have escaped papal bans.⁴⁷ This is perhaps one reason that the colleges were among the spaces used for private patronage by the curial aristocracy, as evidenced by the cases of Cardinals Pietro Ottoboni (1667-1740) at the Nazareno,⁴⁸ Benedetto Pamphilj (1653-1730) at the Clementino⁴⁹ and Nuno da Cunha e Ataíde (1664-1750) at the Seminario Romano.⁵⁰ Like the

39. Locke 1693, p. 239.

40. See Vigarello 2004, who highlights the strategies of differentiation put in place by the aristocracy in regard to the bourgeoisie. See in particular p. 82 for a discussion of the example of the strategy of ridicule in Molière's *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670): a dancing master and a fencing master take advantage of the bourgeois Monsieur Jourdain, who makes the extent of his awkwardness plain by not understanding how to use the courtly 'skills' that he purports to flaunt. On the birth of chivalric science at the middle of the sixteenth century related to the theme of honour, and on its crisis in the eighteenth century see Donati 1995, respectively pp. 94-112 and 296-314.

41. See Scaduto 1967, 1969; Peyronnet 1976; Brizzi 1981; Valentin 1978, 1990, 1996; Filippi B. 1994, 2001; Doglio – Chiabò 1995; Zanlonghi 2002; Piéjus 2007, 2008; Demeilliez 2010; Cappelluti 2011; Murata 2012a; Casalini – Salvarani 2013; D'Amante 2013; Demeilliez and others 2018.

42. *Informazione Clementino* 1689, p. [3].

43. See Vigarello 2004, p. 76 ff.

44. Ippolito Alessandro Aldobrandini was born in Florence on 1 March 1662 (I-Fd, Registri dei battesimi, Archivio delle fedi di battesimo di San Giovanni, reg. 53, fol. 123^r) to Giovanfrancesco (1618-97, son of the senator Silvestro) and Camilla Pasquali. He had at least eight siblings: Olimpia (born 1659), Silvestro (b. 1660), Eleonora (b. 1663), Maria Teresa (b. 1664), Maria Francesca (b. 1665), Margherita (?), Alessandro (1667-1734, who became a Cardinal) and Carlo (b. 1668). Ippolito embarked on a military career and was named governor of Pitigliano and Sorano by Cosimo III de' Medici. He died before 15 September 1713, when a new governor was nominated (see Tondini 1782, pp. v-vi).

45. I-FRAa, Archivio Aldobrandini, Lettere, b. 11, fasc. 266, letter from Michelangelo Lapi to Giovanfrancesco Aldobrandini, sent from Rome to Florence on 30 December 1673 (see Database PerformArt, D-002-390-138). I thank Giulia Veneziano for describing the content of this and the following documents from the Aldobrandini Archive, which she located and transcribed. In the letter, the emphasis placed on Ippolito's early admission to the college is understandable, since the college year usually started in November, and the month of October was dedicated to vacation. Lapi, who from Rome kept the boy's parents apprised of his education, wrote to them on 10 February 1674 with the following description of one of Ippolito's performances: 'Non solamente ha benissimo recitato, ma anco si è portato valorosamente nel duello a spade con la sua sorella [i.e., il personaggio di Moralba], tirandosi l'una l'altra molti colpi con grandissima franchezza, in modo che non pareva fossero principianti nella scherma che con il ballo imparato, ma provati' (*Not only did he act very well, but he also comported himself gallantly in the duel with his sister* [i.e., the student playing the character of Moralba], *each of them striking blows at each other with great boldness, so that it seemed as if they were not beginners in fencing and dancing, but experienced ones*; I-FRAa, Archivio Aldobrandini, Lettere, b. 11, fasc. 70; see Database PerformArt, D-041-070-149). They were certainly performing Giovanni Battista Salvati's 'opera regicomicca,' *Fortuna e dormi*, in which Ippolito played the part *en travesti* of Flavia (a copy of the printed scenario is *Fortuna e dormi* 1674 [V-CVBav, Stamp.Barb.JJJ.IX.41]; see Franchi 1988, pp. 467, 481). On the genre of *opera regia* see Rosand 1991, p. 35.

46. See Ciancarelli 2014, p. 21.

47. During the Carnival season in 1701, for example, public theatres were closed and entertainments in private palaces were banned due to the political situation, which had deteriorated after the ascent to the Spanish throne of Philip V Bourbon; nevertheless, at least five shows took place at various colleges that year: at the Collegio Nazareno, *Il console in Egitto*, an opera dedicated to Maria Kazimiera, Queen of Poland; at the Seminario Romano, two tragedies by Pierre Corneille and a comedy by Molière; and at the Collegio Clementino a tragedy by Corneille (see Franchi 1997, pp. 1-7).

48. See Roma 2021; Chirico 2003, 2011 and 2014; Staffieri 2006.

49. See Lorenzetti 2002; Montalto 1955.

50. See Franchi 1997, p. 183.

aforementioned portraits, the presence of figures of this calibre contributed to the magnificence of the institutions that hosted their sponsorship of the arts. Furthermore, through the performance itself,⁵¹ they also offered boarders a substantial example of appropriate use of the tools of magnificence.

* *The Academies*

Among all of the contexts in which boarders engaged in informal learning during their stay at college, the academies are a particularly interesting case. As Quondam has revealed, academic practice, modelled after the 'onesti trattenimenti' (*honest entertainments*) delineated by Baldassarre Castiglione in his *Cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*, 1528), called for a series of 'esercizi e pratiche' (*exercises and practices*) aimed at the construction of noble identity. This dramaturgical approach to academic events called for the deployment of the rhetorical tools that had been learned by the young gentleman during his studies and were necessary 'per tutti i casi della sua futura vita quotidiana, per poter essere sempre e ovunque, in società, un nobile completo, intero' (*for every situation in his future daily life, in order to be, always and everywhere, in society, a complete and whole nobleman*).⁵²

In examining a series of documents related to the activities of the academies of the Roman colleges, we find several similarities between them: first and foremost, the existence of a ceremonial that was predetermined and constant. This can be deduced above all from the numerous printed booklets (Figs 6-9) or manuscripts that contain the academies' minutes and memorials. From both types of sources it is possible to extract, although perfunctorily, a narration of academic protocol.⁵³ Each gathering usually began with one or more orations, which were followed by the recitation of several poems, in Latin or in the vernacular. Depending on the academy's theme or type, these could be followed by displays of the skills acquired by the boarders in the chivalric disciplines: dances, duels, drills on horseback, musical performances, or debates on a given topic. This scenario is, in essence, the one that was used by the academies for 'adults' (so to speak).⁵⁴ For students of the colleges, understanding the dramaturgical structure of an academic gathering and acquiring the skills that were needed to actively participate in, or even simply attend one, meant acquiring the appropriate cultural skills necessary for mastering one of the forms of sociability of the time.

The picture of academic activities that emerges from financial records, in the cases in which these are available and accessible, is more complex. Academic meetings, and in particular, public academic gatherings, took place within the framework of a larger event, of which academic activities were only a small part. A few days before the solemn gathering held at the Collegio Nazareno in September of each year for the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a few boarders, accompanied by a college father, called on the 'signori Cardinali, prelati, ambasciadori, principi e persone di qualità' (*cardinals, prelates, ambassadors, princes, and persons of quality*) to deliver invitations to the ceremony.⁵⁵ At the same time carpenters, glaziers, painters, and *festaroli* readied the spaces that would receive the guests, with the collaboration of an 'ebreo' (*Jew*) who rented 'sedie nobili di velluto' (*elegant chairs upholstered in velvet*), 'sediole piccole' (*small chairs*), 'sgabelloni e sgabelloncini' (*large and small stools*), 'portiere

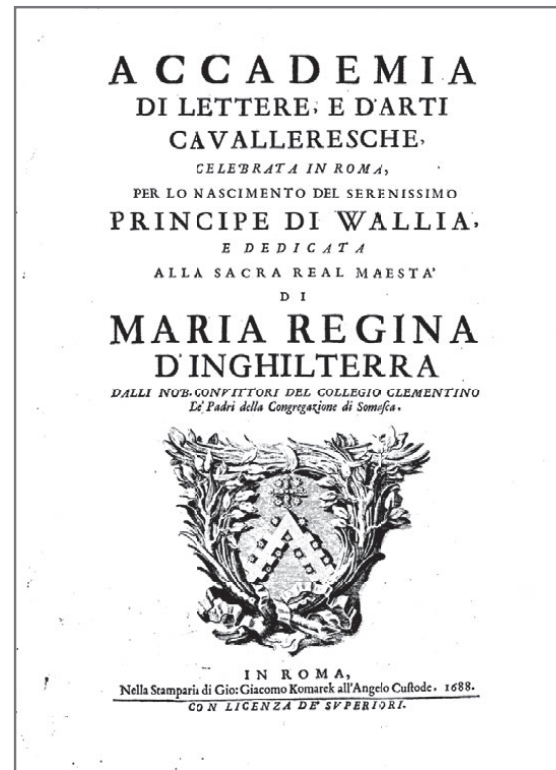


Fig. 6: *Accademia di lettere e d'arti cavalleresche celebrata in Roma per lo nascimento del serenissimo Principe di Wallia e dedicata alla Sacra Real Maestà di Maria Regina d'Inghilterra*, 1688, title-page. Commemorative pamphlet of the meeting held in the last quarter of 1688 (the dedication by the Accademici Stravaganti to Queen Mary of Modena is dated 1 October) to celebrate the birth of James Francis Edward Stuart (also known as the Old Pretender).

51. On this concept in the context of PerformArt research, see Berti 2021.

52. Quondam 1982, p. 876; see also Brizzi 2015.

53. See for example the printed sources by the Stravaganti 1678, Incolti 1693, Ravvivati 1716, or the manuscript memoirs of the Incolti in *Monumenta Academiae Incultorum*.

54. For the case of the Accademia dell'Arcadia, see Sarah Malfatti's chapter in this volume.

55. I-Rcn, b. 13, fasc. 1756/2, p. 25, partially cited in Lanfranchi – Careri 1987, who examine the production context of the cantatas composed and performed specifically for the occasion.

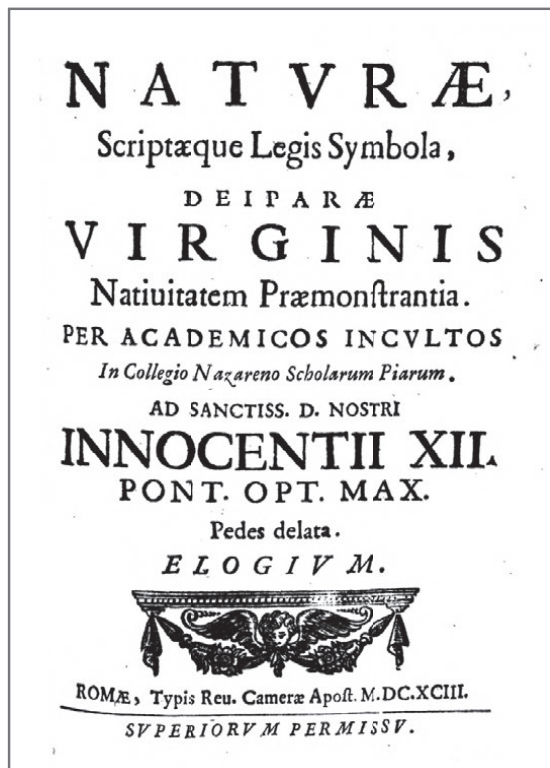


Fig. 7: *Naturæ scriptæque legis symbola, Deiparae Virginis Natiuitatem præmonstrantia. Per Academicos Incultos in Collegio Nazareno Scholarum piarum ad Sanctissimi Domni Nostri Innocentii XII Pontificis Optimi Maximi Pedes delata, 1693.*



Fig. 8: *Letterati e cavallereschi esercitamenti degl'Accademici Stravaganti del Collegio Clementino in occasione d'accogliere l'eminentissimo Principe il signor Cardinal Pignatelli l'anno MDCCIV nel solito semestre estivo, 1704. Cardinal Francesco Pignatelli (1652-1734), a Theatine, was created cardinal on 17 December 1730.*



Fig. 9: *Il genio alle belle arti ravnivato dal benefico aspetto di quindici stelle. Accademia di lettere e d'armi fatta da' signori convittori del Seminario Romano nel presente anno MDCCXVI e dedicata a quindici eminentissimi principi cardinali di Santa Chiesa presentemente viventi e già convittori del medesimo seminario, 1716.*

The meeting, held in the courtyard of the Seminario Romano on 30 August 1716 (see Franchi 1997, pp. 120-21, 123), was dedicated to the cardinals Niccolò Acciaioli (1630-1719), Ferdinando D'Adda (1650-1719), Giacomo Boncompagni (1652-1731), Lorenzo Casoni (1645-1720), Lorenzo Corsini (1652-1740, the future Pope Clement XII), Orazio Filippo Spada (1659-1724), Carlo Agostino Fabroni (1651-1727), Niccolò Grimaldi (1645-1717), Giuseppe Vallemani (1648-1725), Agostino Cusani (1655-1730), Benedetto Odescalchi Erba (1679-1740), Niccolò Caracciolo (1658-1728), Pietro Ottoboni (1667-1740), Annibale Albani (1682-1751), Fabio degli Abati Olivieri (1658-1738).

di velluto e [...] di damasco' (*door coverings of velvet and [...] of damask*), and 'arazzi' (*tapestries*).⁵⁶ The day of the party, the guests were gifted small bouquets of flowers, of different types according to their rank. The academic gathering was followed by a 'solenne rinfresco' (*solemn reception*), consisting of, for example, 'acque gelate' (*flavoured ices*), sorbets, 'biscottini di Savoia' (*Savoy biscuits*) and chocolate.⁵⁷ Although college students' participation in academic gatherings, in addition to the financial contribution that was required of all of them,⁵⁸ could sometimes be limited to their presence alone, these events had a fundamental influence on their education: for the young gentlemen, they were an opportunity to field test the techniques of magnificence, that is, as the historian Benedetta Borello has pointed out, to try their hands at 'primi esercizi di ospitalità' (*beginning exercises in hospitality*) to 'mettere a punto saperi sul comportamento in pubblico' (*develop an understanding of public comportment*) and 'apprendere i primi rudimenti sull'utilizzo degli accessori materiali della socialità aristocratica' (*learn the rudiments of how to make use of material accessories in aristocratic society*).⁵⁹

4. Conclusions

Within the theoretical framework of magnificence as a virtue to be pursued and learned, the study of the colleges, contexts distinctive to aristocratic education, reveals the dynamics of transmission and acquisition of cultural role models for court society. From this point of view, the Roman colleges are not unique examples when compared to similar institutions across the Italian peninsula. Also in terms of their relation-

ship to political power, and how this relationship played out in the context of celebrations and performances, the Roman colleges do not diverge from, for example, the Collegio dei Nobili in Parma, supported by Ranuccio I Farnese.⁶⁰ However, the Roman context is necessarily more complex to analyse, given its peculiar polycentrism caused by the presence of numerous micro-courts, whether stable, like those of the native or non-native aristocratic families, or transitory, as in the case of Christina of Sweden, Maria Kazimiera Sobieska or the Stuarts.⁶¹ But Rome was also the capital of the Papal States and the seat of the generalates of the religious orders who were entrusted with running the colleges. A characteristic specific to the Roman context, and furthermore to the aesthetic results of magnificence, should be sought in the strongly religious connotation of education in Rome. One need only to consider the series of Marian-themed academic gatherings held at the Collegio Nazareno, or the well-known case of Cardinal Ottoboni's project, never realized, to found the Accademia Albana, which would have remedied 'al solo difetto di questa gran Corte, che unicamente applicata alla disciplina degl'ecclesiastici' (*the sole defect of this great Court that, having applied itself only to the discipline of clergymen*), seemed to neglect 'del tutto la buona educazione dei secolari' (*completely the proper education of laymen*), as the prelate lamented in his petition to the Pope.⁶²

The reading of primary sources offered here has shown how college boarders acquired both the skills and protocols necessary for the sociability of the time, and the rules for using them effectively. In addition to actual instruction, the Roman

56. I-Rcn, b. 13, fasc. 1756/2, p. 27.

57. I-Rcn, b. 13, fasc. 1756/2, unfoliated.

58. The expenses for academic events and theatrical performances were covered by the colleges only in name: in fact, the students made a periodic *contribuzione* (contribution) in addition to the fees for room and board. From the *Istruzioni*, parents were notified in writing of boarding costs before their sons entered the college. Parents, however, sometimes complained about their sons' requests for money. See, for example, the letter of 18 February 1726 that Teresa Buondelmonti, wife of Silvestro Aldobrandini (the father of the Ippolito mentioned above), sent from Florence to Madrid to her brother-in-law, Cardinal Alessandro Aldobrandini, in which she remarked ironically that 'fra la contribuzione di Carnovale e un abito da scena' (*between the contribution for Carnival and the stage costume*) for her son Giuseppe, she had to provide 32 *scudi*, while her own theatrical entertainment during Carnival had only cost her one *testone* (I-FRAa, Archivio Aldobrandini, Aldobrandini di Firenze, Lettere, b. 18; see Database PerformArt, D-043-810-108). One month later, the cardinal sent a letter to his sister-in-law from Madrid in which he acknowledged that 'queste sono di quelle cose che non si possono scusare, e bisogna accomodarsi a quello che fanno gli altri per non dar occasione d'ammirazione' (*these are the kinds of things that one cannot get out of, and it's necessary to do what the others do so as not to create a scene*). And he added, in his own hand: 'Veramente è un poco troppa la spesa fatta per la commedia, ma quel collegio [Clementino] ha questo nome di far spendere troppo in danari straordinari, onde conviene dissimulare giaché tutti gli altri faranno l'istesso' (*The expense for the comedy is really a bit too much, but that college [the Clementino] has the reputation for charging too much for extraordinary expenses, and thus it's appropriate to play along, since all the others will do the same thing*; I-FRAa, Archivio Aldobrandini, Aldobrandini di Firenze, Lettere, b. 18, fasc. 27; see Database PerformArt, D-043-860-160). It is possible that Teresa was trying to put pressure on the cardinal to send a *mancia* (gratuity) to support his nephew's studies, as often happened. On that subject see the case discussed by Fioretti 2005, pp. 241-43, in relation to the correspondence between Francesco and Sigismondo Chigi, boarders at the Collegio Tolomei in Siena from 1747 to 1757, with their uncle, Cardinal Flavio (1711-71). Born in Florence on 8 August 1710 (I-Fd, *Archivio delle fedeli di battesimo di San Giovanni*, reg. 78, fol. 47^v), Giuseppe Aldobrandini had entered the Clementino in 1723.

59. Borello 2016, pp. 135-36. On the concept of *ospitalità* (hospitality), see the essays by Sarah Malfatti and Chiara Pelliccia in this volume.

60. See Turrini 2006; Giordano G. 2018.

61. See Formica 2019, pp. 122 ff. and bibliography.

62. I-Ra, Archivio dell'Arcadia, ms. 16, fols 386-89: 387^{rv} (July 1703), petition of Cardinal Ottoboni to Pope Clement X (see Database PerformArt, D-108-360-116, entry by Sarah Malfatti). The plan was for the institution to be housed in what is today Palazzo Corsini, through the fusion of the Accademia dell'Arcadia and the Accademia di San Luca; in honour of the Pope, it was to be called the Accademia Albana. This document was noted in Della Seta 1982, pp. 133-34; see also Manfredi 2007 and 2008a.

colleges were expected to provide a well-rounded education; as shown by the historian Donatella Fioretti, this meant

[...] [l']educazione alle convenienze sociali, a riconoscere e ossequiare nelle forme dovute il ruolo delle gerarchie, a muoversi con eleganza disinvolta secondo l'etichetta in un mondo di relazioni regolate da precisi cerimoniali.

[...] *instruction in social conventions, in recognizing and paying homage in an appropriate manner to the role of social hierarchies, and in comporting oneself with a self-assured elegance, according to etiquette in a world of relationships regulated by precise ceremonials.*

Every boarder acquired a set of behavioural norms that, 'per essere costitutive dell'identità familiare e di ceto, passavano da una generazione all'altra innanzitutto attraverso l'esempio e il suggerimento dei maggiori' (*in order to be constitutive of familial and class identity, [norms] were passed from one generation to the next, above all through the example and the suggestions of elders*).⁶³ This formative process began at

home, but in college it was implemented with the exploration of codes of conduct and the practice of activities aimed at developing specific abilities.⁶⁴ Learning how to play a role in a theatrical performance, how to dance, how to fence, was in reality a way of shaping one's body, one's voice, and one's gestural expressiveness with the goal of 'produrre fenomeni di automatismo del comportamento' (*producing phenomena of automatism of behaviour*).⁶⁵ These abilities fell into the category of 'technical skills' intended to produce 'ammirazione e lode' (*admiration and praise*) – in other words, the goal of magnificence. This set of technical tools was to be used in an informed aesthetic pursuit that has been considered the distinctive aspect of magnificence in the early modern era. The use of these tools was perfected in the collegial context through emulation and experimentation in the field.⁶⁶

Translated from the Italian by Courtney QUAINANCE

63. Fioretti 2005, p. 242.

64. See Ago 1989, 1996 and 2001.

65. Borello 2016, p. 146; see also Foucault 1995, pp. 162 ff., Arcangeli 1994 and Natalia Gozzano's essay in this volume.

66. Quondam 2004, pp. 21-22; see also Borello 2016, p. 147.