

1367: The Founding of the Spanish College at Bologna

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The subject of my talk today concerns one aspect of the history of medieval education. I have limited myself to a minor chapter of this history, that of the college because, although the rise and development of the medieval universities have been widely studied, and monographs have been published on the origins of most of the great European institutions of higher learning, the colleges have been neglected.¹

The meaning of the words university and college has changed since the Middle Ages and I shall use them today in their medieval acceptance. *Universitas*, or university, which simply means a whole or a union, was, in academic circles, applied to the union of students and/or masters. The purpose of the university, or association, was to afford legal protection to students and masters residing in lands other than their own.² At Paris the majority of masters as well as students had come from other places and, soon realizing the helplessness of individuals isolated in foreign lands and the collective powers of guilds, they united into a well organized university under the leadership of the masters. This type of association was imitated by most of the northern institutions. At Bologna, where the professors were citizens of the town, the foreign students alone, who attended their lectures in vast numbers, needed this legal protection. The doctors of Bologna, therefore, as well as the students originating from the city, were excluded from the association or university. What we call university was then the

studium, if it lacked some faculty, or *studium generale* if it offered training in all of them. Thus, other things being equal, The University of North Carolina, lacking the school of theology, would have been a *studium*, Duke, on the other hand would have been a *studium generale*.

Now a college, or *collegium*, was a very different thing. In Roman law, *collegium* meant a corporation and, in medieval scholastic centers, the word had come to be applied to an endowed residence for a body of generally impecunious scholars. Their need was obvious. The medieval student, like his modern successor, was faced with the necessity of finding board and lodging at reasonable prices. In towns famous for their *studium*, landlords were apt to make extortionate charges, in spite of constant efforts on the part of university officials, especially the rectors and councilors of the *universitas*, to control prices. Theological students could stay in monasteries. Students with sufficient means often got together in small groups, rented a house where they lived as a community and which they used as a sort of eating club. These voluntary associations are the prototypes of American fraternities.

But, unable to afford the expense of renting a house, buying furniture, and hiring servants, poor students often lived in squalid conditions. Wealthy patrons, therefore, began to establish endowed residences for them.³ It is of this institution of the endowed residence for poor scholars, the college, that I shall speak briefly today. My talk will be focused mainly upon a college established for the benefit of needy students from Spain who had come to study in the famous *studium generale* of the city of Bologna; all of them were to be secular, no member of a religious order could be admitted. This Spanish college was set up by the last will and testament of Cardinal Egidio Albornoz in 1367, exactly six hundred years ago. It is as part of the celebration of its six hundredth anniversary this year that I have chosen to speak of this college, which has succeeded in surviving all the vicissitudes which beset the European continent during the six centuries of its existence.

I shall compare it briefly with a number of similar founda-

tions endowed before the fifteenth century in Paris and Bologna. Though several survive today in the British Isles, the Spanish College alone on the Continent still functions in much the manner specified by the founder, and in the very buildings erected for it originally. In this, the Spanish College at Bologna is unique on the European continent, the sole survivor there of a medieval college.

I shall first discuss the origin of the earliest colleges, and the motives which prompted medieval men in general, and Cardinal Albornoz in particular, to found such institutions. I shall go on to examine some provisions in college charters, and in the Spanish College especially, with regard to the requirements for admission and the length of tenure of the scholarship. We shall glance at some of the statutes regulating the conduct of the students during their residence in the Spanish College. Finally, in view of the almost total disappearance of this type of institution, we shall consider some of the provisions made by the Cardinal and by other college founders to ensure the survival of their foundation.

The idea of founding what may be called the very first college came to an Englishman when, on his return from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1180, he saw a room set aside in a Paris hospital for a few poor clerks. Let me quote the charter of this very simple foundation: "I Barbe d'Or, dean of the Church of Paris, and the entire chapter of the same church. We wish it made known to all present, or to come, that when Sir Jocius de Londoniis of London returned from Jerusalem and inspected with extreme zeal of devotion the administration of the hospice of the blessed Mary at Paris, for the poor and sick, he saw there a certain room in which, by an old custom, poor clerks were lodged. He acquired it, in perpetuity, from the proctors of the same house for the use of the said clerks at a cost of 52 pounds, by our advice and that of Master Hilduin, Chancellor of Paris, then a proctor of the same place, on this condition, that the proctors of the same house forever provide sufficient beds for eighteen scholars and clerks and each month twelve *nummi* from the alms collected in the hospital chest.

The said clerks should take turns at carrying the cross and holy water before the bodies of those who die in the same house, and each night celebrate the seven penitential psalms and the due prayers instituted of old. Moreover, that this remain firm and stable, the said Jocius ordered this charter of our constitution to be drawn up for the said clerks, and he demanded that it be confirmed by the mark of our seal. Done publicly at Paris in our chapter, the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1180 . . . (the names of the members of the chapter follow).⁴

By 1231 this earliest college had moved to a house of its own, and was known as the Collège des Dix-Huit or College of the Eighteen. It lasted until the French revolution.

Though not so ancient, the most influential college on the Continent was the foundation of Robert de Sorbon, the *domus Sorbonica* or Sorbonne. Its history was outlined here in Chapel Hill by Professors René Hardré and A. Gabriel on the occasion of its septicentennial celebration in 1953—the Sorbonne antedates the Spanish College at Bologna by slightly over a century.⁵

This differs in various important points from other colleges, including the Spanish College. The main difference is the stress which Robert de Sorbon placed upon teaching in the house and the concentration upon the study of theology. The scholars, who already held the degree of Master of Arts, were all working toward the doctorate in theology. Resident masters were to provide lectures in this discipline to the bursars, whereas in most medieval colleges the students attended lectures given at the *studium* and were not taught in the college which, however, often had a resident-master who acted as a kind of *repetitor*. Thus Robert de Sorbon's college combined the functions of a house providing free board and lodging to poor scholars and residence to a community of secular priests who did not belong to the mendicant orders and who gave tuition-free lectures in theology to the scholars.

This determined the future course of the foundation which, as is well known, functions today in a manner totally different from that of a medieval college. Early additional gifts and the growing fame of its teachers made it possible for the Sorbonne

to attract other distinguished theologians from the Paris *studium*. It soon was recognized as the center of the theological studies in Christendom and by the end of the fourteenth century was the seat of the most important of the Parisian faculties, that of theology, which it had absorbed. Henceforth it became a building, in which lectures were held, rather than a college. By that time colleges were found in most university towns. In Paris there were thirty before the end of the fourteenth century.

In Bologna, colleges were never as numerous as they were in Paris. One reason may be this: many men already through the liberal arts course, which was a prerequisite for admission to its famous faculties of medicine and law, came to Bologna for advanced training.⁶ They were often men of substance, engaged in lucrative positions, who had no need of financial help.

Nevertheless, numerous youngsters in the arts and in the other faculties came from far away and had no means of livelihood. A Bolognese Bishop of Avignon, Zoen Tencarari (1242-61), made provision to take care at Bologna of eight youths from Avignon. Guglielmo Corvi of Brescia founded in 1326 the Collegio Bresciano, modeled on the Sorbonne. Again in 1362, the college of Reggio was established by a physician of Reggio, Guido Ferrarini, for students from the region of Reggio Emilia. Only a few years later the Spanish College was founded by Cardinal Albornoz (1367) while Pope Gregory XI established his *collegium gregorianum* in 1371, which in 1436-37 absorbed the colleges of Avignon and of Brescia.

There is no time even to sketch the life of this Spanish Cardinal, a brilliant diplomat and militant ecclesiastic, one of the greatest and most fascinating figures of the fourteenth century. An authoritative biography of him remains to be written and there is much unpublished material about him in the Bologna archives as well as in Spain. Born of noble parents, in youth he battled the Moors in his native Spain and spent the latter part of his life as Papal Legate in Italy, fighting military and diplomatic campaigns to regain the Papal State and restore the Pope to the throne of Saint Peter, after the long exile in Avignon.⁷ That the struggle was successful is due in large part to

his energetic and shrewd leadership. By an irony of fate, Pope Urban V had left Avignon and already reached Italy on his way back to Rome, when Cardinal Albornoz, who was so largely responsible for the Pope's return and was preparing to join him for the last stretch of the triumphal procession to Rome, fell ill and died near Viterbo on August 23, 1367. In his testament he left as his residuary legatee the college in Bologna, the buildings of which, still in use as a Spanish College today, were almost completed when he died.⁸

Colleges are among the most characteristic charitable foundations of the Middle Ages, and founders of such institutions were moved by the love of God, by the most devout intention to act according to the spirit of the Gospels, and by a sincere and humane concern for the welfare of poor scholars. But men's motives are seldom entirely pure and disinterested. From what we have seen so far, it is clear, first of all, that the privilege of admission to a college was in general restricted to students originating from the same land, diocese, or town as the founder. Guido of Reggio for instance had limited his benefaction to students from Reggio Emilia. The Collège des Douze Médecins, which Pope Urban V had founded in Montpellier with his brother Anglic, received only students from their own town and diocese.⁹ Students at the Collège de Pélegrin in Paris must be legitimate children and come if possible from lands owned by the founder's family, or at least from their immediate neighborhood. The Treasurer of the Church of Rouen wished that the scholars admitted to his college in Paris should be, if possible, either from Grand-Caux or from Petit-Caux, otherwise from the diocese of Rouen. In Montpellier, the Collège de Pézenas (March, 1338) was to take care of poor relatives of Bishop Trigard, the founder, and of boys from his town of Pézenas. Pope Gregory's foundation, the *collegium gregorianum* admitted twenty scholars from his city of origin, Limoges (or from the diocese of Limoges), and ten in addition from the Papal State in Italy. Unlike the majority of college founders, however, Cardinal Albornoz was not motivated by narrowly regional patriotism. His was a broader, if still national, vision.

He defined Spain as comprising, not only Castile and Aragon, but as the whole Iberian peninsula, including Portugal.

Some founders who restricted admission to candidates from their own town of origin also wished to express their gratitude by admitting to their foundation boys from the town or diocese which had honored them with high office. We saw that Zoen Tencarari, a citizen of Bologna, had made provision for boys from Avignon, because he was Bishop of that city. The French Pope Gregory XI, for instance, by admitting boys from the Papal State as well as from his native Limoges, stressed the fact that, as Pope and temporal ruler of the newly recovered Papal State in Italy, he had reached the highest position in Christendom. Thus, in their colleges, founders united their names with those of their own towns of origin and with the places where they had received honors. In so doing they built for themselves a living monument more eloquent by far than the dead stones on which ancient Roman officials had recorded their *cursus honorum*. For they believed that, in their college, generation after generation of scholars would, in perpetuity, remind posterity of themselves and of their careers.

None, to my knowledge, was ever more punctilious in this than was Cardinal Albornoz. He set up a detailed procedure whereby one scholar or more were to be selected and presented by each one of the places where he had at any time held office or received benefices. Thus of the twenty four scholars (by 1372 the number had been raised to thirty, so ample had the endowment been) four were to be presented by the city and diocese of Toledo where he had been archdeacon and archbishop, one to study theology, two canon law, and one medicine. From the city and diocese of Cuenca, where he had held his first ecclesiastical benefice and where he was still archdeacon when he died, four scholars also, of whom two were to study canon law, one theology, and the other medicine. And so on through every place with which he had ever been connected: Compostella, Saragossa, Daroca, Avila, Arevallo, Salamanca, Burgos, Leon, Palencia, Osma, Siguenza, Lisbon, Oviedo, Cordova. This list

of patron churches reads like a summary of the cardinal's official biography, his *cursus honorum*.

Moreover, San Clemente in Rome had been his titular church, so the college chapel was to be named in honor of St. Clement. He was from Castile and had ended his career as Bishop of Sabina. So he placed the college, for all time, under the care of the incumbent Spanish Cardinal originating from Castile; or if, at any time, there were no such Spaniard in the college of cardinals, under that of the incumbent cardinal of Sabina.

Not only was the college to be the living monument of a great career, and the cardinal's expression of his gratitude to all the places which had supported and honored him, it must also perpetuate his own and his family's name. One way in which this was done was the specification that two scholars, who were to study canon law, were always to be elected by a member of the house of Albornoz. The cardinal added: ". . . But if, which God forbid, the house of Albornoz should be entirely extinct, the Church of Toledo shall act as its successor for the presentation of one student, and the Church of Cuenca for the other."¹⁰

Special privileges were decreed for the admission of poor members, and descendants of members, of the house. Careful provision was also made for the reception with due honor, and the entertainment by the college, of any member of the family who should at any time visit Bologna; and for special privileges, especially attendance at the meetings of the college corporation, to be granted any nonresident member of the family studying at Bologna.¹¹ Although the manner of selecting the scholars has altered drastically, the house of Albornoz and its descendants are still active today in the councils of the college and the Junta under which it operates.

But the main concern of college founders was the salvation of their souls. They trusted that, since they provided poor scholars with the means to study for many years with decorum, this meritorious act of charity would confer upon them some

benefit after death. They hoped also that their next of kin would participate in these benefits.

Thus Cardinal Angély Grimoard, who founded the Collège St. Ruf in Montpellier, in 1364, expressly states that he established it on behalf of his soul and that of his kin.¹² Such statements are found in practically all acts establishing a new college. More than this, however, founders provided for pious intercession within the college on behalf of their souls, and in perpetuity. Provision was always made for at least one chaplain (the Spanish College had four) to say Mass and prayers on their behalf and to celebrate daily the divine offices, attendance to which was compulsory for all students. Scholars had, for all time, the obligation to repay their debt of gratitude to the founder. I quote from the thirty-fifth statute of the Spanish College: "... Because the aforesaid scholars are under an obligation to show gratitude for the great benefits which they shall receive in the college, we urge and entreat them in the Lord always devoutly to commend to God, in their prayers, the souls of the said lord Cardinal of Sabina and of his kin. And in order that they may offer some repayment for the favors which they have received in the house of the said lord, we ordain and decree that on behalf of the aforesaid souls, each one from the said college shall, if he is a priest, celebrate Mass in reverence to the most Holy Trinity at least three times a month. . . . But all the others, who are not priests, shall be required to read through the seven penitential psalms every week, with the litanies and all the prayers. If anyone, suffering from the vice of ingratitude, should fail to observe this salutary statute, he shall be punished according to the judgment of the rector, and he shall absolutely be required to say the prayers which he had omitted. . . ." And from the sixteenth statute: "at the end of grace, both at the mid-day and the evening meals, all shall be required to stand up and pray, especially in commemoration, and on behalf of, the souls of the Lord Cardinal Egidio, our benefactor, and of his kin. They shall say a *Requiem Aeternam* with the psalm *De Profundis* and the prayer 'O God who wast pleased to raise thy servant to the dignity of the Episcopate' and also 'O God the

Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful. . . ." In almost the same words, Pope Gregory provided, in the statutes of his own Gregorian College, for the intercession of his scholars, present and future, on behalf of his soul and those of his kin.¹³ In the Collège des Douze-Médecins likewise, all residents were to say special prayers for the souls of the lord founder both at dinner and at supper.¹⁴ Every Sunday, the scholars of the Collège de Rodez must hear Mass and pray on behalf of the founder's soul and of those of his family.¹⁵ The Mass of the dead must be said in their college annually, *in perpetuo*, for Raymond de Pélegrin and for his brother on the anniversary of their deaths; and the residents must also pray in the church of St. Andrew in Cahors, where the founder's parents were buried before the high altar.¹⁶ The statutes of the Spanish College also provided for a commemorative service on the anniversary of the cardinal's death which is celebrated in the college chapel today.

Why did he select Bologna rather than some other *studium*? Spain was out of the question: It had been torn asunder by wars against the Moors; and its *studia* had declined. Much of his life had been spent in Italy where no *studium* could compare with that of Bologna, which still held the primacy in civil and canon law. Among the thousands of foreign students who flocked to Bologna there had always been numerous Spaniards. Though the cardinal himself had studied law at Toulouse,¹⁷ his nephews, one of whom he made rector or governor of the city, had been trained in the Bologna *studium*. It was his intention that there an elite of distinguished Spaniards should be trained, who could fill administrative posts in Church and State with high competence, and supply with skilled men the depleted professions of medical doctors, jurists, teachers, and theologians.

Furthermore, Bologna was in many respects a key city in his plans for the rebirth of the Papal State. Geographically so situated on the Via Emilia, at the convergence of many roads, as to be of the greatest political significance, it had already received many benefactions from the cardinal. Moreover, its *studium* was beginning to show signs of decline, and it was imperative to retain there the population of foreign students which had

contributed so much to making it a flourishing center of higher studies, first and supreme in law and, over-all, second only to Paris. A few years later Pope Gregory XI established there a college for poor students, for many of the same reasons which had prompted Albornoz to select Bologna.

Let me digress a moment in order to account in part for this decline which Pope and Cardinal were so anxious to arrest, by founding colleges for foreign students. Living expenses had risen to a point where masters as well as students found staying in Bologna almost intolerable. Moreover, although the town had declared itself a strong supporter of the Guelph party, there were factions and frequent dissensions, against which the church had to take strong measures. The Interdict in particular pronounced by Pope Benedict had so disrupted the *studium* that many students had left for those of Padua, Naples, and Pavia; and many others had gone home; the *studium* was in danger of losing its pre-eminence. In order further to appreciate the serious situation of the *studium*, we must briefly consider the position of the professors there, as it appears in the statutes of the municipality and of the university, various provisions of which are quoted by Rashdall. Held in the highest esteem, they were granted many privileges by the commune. They had organized themselves into a closed corporation, the college of doctors, which turned the profession almost into a caste. They had succeeded in making it practically impossible for a man who was not a graduate of the *studium* and a citizen of Bologna, to become a professor there. The position had, in addition, become almost the hereditary possession of a few Bolognese families. Yet though they were rich and respected, their lot was not enviable.

Since the economic prosperity of Bologna depended in large measure upon the vast population of foreign students attracted by the fame of the Bologna doctors, it was imperative that the city keep them there. They received lucrative offers from other *studia* and when anyone of them left, his students were apt to follow him. The terror of the Bologna Commune was the students' sudden departure from the city. It therefore passed

decrees absolutely forbidding the professors to leave. Those who contravened were severely punished. We hear, for instance, of a certain professor of medicine who had moved to Pisa to teach. After recalling him in vain four times, it was decreed by the authorities that if he were ever captured, he would be beheaded as a traitor to the Commune.

Not only were the professors subject to this pressure from the commune. The students' university, entirely democratic as far as its own members were concerned, voted and enforced statutes to regulate the teaching and even the private lives of the professors, who were as we say excluded from the association. It had developed powerfully in spite of the joint opposition of the commune and of the regent doctors. The students had won the battle by the constant threat of secession and now played a very large part in the administration of the *studium*. They imposed their will in matters concerned with the curriculum and the professors' methods of teaching. Every year some students were charged by the rector of the university with spying upon the professors. They reported any failure to observe the statutes on the part of the teachers, who had been forced to swear allegiance to them, even though they had had no hand in framing them. Professors had to take an oath before the students' rectors that they would fulfill their teaching duties conscientiously. If a teacher arrived late to class, or if he kept his students after the bell had rung, he was fined. If in his lecture he failed to treat certain points at the precise date set for them, if he did not complete his program by the end of the term, or if he failed to use the prescribed method of disputation, he was likewise penalized. The students' rectors even at times sat in on the examinations. A professor must ask their permission to absent himself from Bologna, even for a short time. No wonder that when a political upheaval gave them the chance they were tempted to go elsewhere, and that at the time of the founding of the Spanish and of the Gregorian colleges, the schools and faculties were partly depleted. The new foundations helped to arrest for a time the decadence of the *studium*.

Let us now return to the colleges. I have several times

mentioned the statutes of the Spanish College. The earliest version of these has disappeared, but we know from various documents that it must have existed; and before any college could operate, it was necessary for such an instrument, however brief and simple, to be approved by the Pope, usually through a cardinal delegated by him to inspect the house and the provisions made for its organization. In the case of a college such as that founded by Raymond de Pélégry at Cahors, the Prince of Wales, as Duke of Aquitaine, also had had to approve the foundation in 1368.¹⁸

We do have a very early revision made less than ten years after the opening of the Spanish College, extant in one manuscript, now in the Gordan collection in New York, and an incunabulum at the British Museum. I shall now quote a few fragments from my edition and translation of it, in order that you may realize the provident care with which the cardinal and his executors attempted to anticipate and legislate about every contingency that might arise in the future. Although all statutes are based on the conventional formulae set down in the textbooks of the notaries, those of the Spanish College are more searching and detailed than most of the ones with which I am acquainted. I find in them an extraordinarily subtle combination of the excessively democratic organization of the Bologna university, and of the authoritarian and hierarchical dispositions, which regulated life in the religious houses. The scholars selected their rector, generally from their own ranks, by secret ballot, as well as their councilors. Like the student rectors of the university, the college rectors held great powers and heavy responsibilities, administrative, financial, and disciplinary. All important business, however, must be decided only after consultation with the whole college chapter whose members each had one vote. The college was a self-governing body, democratic in character since the authority was vested in the fellows and in the officers elected by them. They dealt with large sums of money and vast estates, as the heirs of the cardinal, during their residence.

But their authority was limited in various ways, specified by

the statutes. A system of checks and counter checks, borrowed in part from monastic rules, ensured against the danger of laxity and abuse of power. The main difference between the college and the university was the fact that no member of the college, nor the whole college corporation, even if unanimous, had the power to introduce any new legislation or to make any exception to the rules. They did not make the statutes under which they lived and could not alter a word of the original constitution. This could only be done after an appeal to the Pope or the cardinal protector, who might order a revision made by a specially appointed Papal delegate.

Before admission, an examination into the candidate's qualifications (origin, poverty, character, and competence) was usually required,¹⁹ to be taken in most cases orally before the whole college corporation. It covered the prerequisites, elementary grammar and reading in the case of young boys, as for instance at the Collège Rodez, where the scholars must be over nine years old and know their prayers and the psalter. Before they could be enrolled, more advanced students were examined in the subjects of the arts' course, grammar and rhetoric mainly. Cardinal Alborno, aware of the difficulties that a youngster would encounter in Bologna if, after being presented by one of the patron churches and having come such a long way, he were refused admission, made humane provisions to help such candidates outside the college, until they could gain admittance.

The Seventh Statute of the Spanish College states: "Although, for those who wish to study well, a period of seven years is usually sufficient . . . because students are more remiss today than they used to be; and in order that they may make better progress, we ordain and decree that those studying in the aforesaid college may remain there for eight continuous years; for in such a long period they may well, if they so wish, rise to the honor of the master's degree."

The scholarship or *bursa* was generally held for seven or eight years. At the Collège des Douze-Médecins it was held for nine years, which included supervised practical training or *pratica*. At Pélégry they were entitled to all the scholars' privi-

leges for seven years, but if they went on to study law they were granted an additional three years. At St. Ruf, students of canon law received an eight-year fellowship, but if they went on to study theology, they could hold it for twelve years. At Rodez, the length of tenure was no longer than five years.²⁰

Upon admission to the Spanish College, each student was given a room which, unlike scholars in most other institutions, he shared with no one else. Statute 18 reads: "Each one of the above shall also have a room furnished at the expense of the college with one bed equipped with a mattress or a cover, a feather quilt, and sheets of coarse linen, a bench, a desk, and the straw necessary for the bed. And when these wear out they shall be replaced at the expense of the college, patched and repaired as the rector and the councilors shall see fit."²¹

They also received further supplies: According to the same statute ". . . every year the rector and each of the scholars and chaplains shall be given at the beginning of the school year one new academic gown adequately furred with sheepskin, such as the students at Bologna are normally accustomed to wear, and every year on the first of May, another unfurred gown of cloth of the statutory color, and a hood of the same color, or suitable cloth, worth twenty-five *solidi* (sous), at the expense of the college. They shall wear these clothes and no others, whenever they go to the schools or to the fee estates, this under the penalty of a fine of one *anconitanus* for each infraction, which they shall incur *ipso facto*.²² Their clothes shall be decent, and they shall not wear unsuitable robes and garments or shoes with pointed toes, under the penalty of one *anconitanus* for each infraction. . . ."

The students were well fed: (Stat. 17): ". . . the rector as well as the scholars and chaplains, the manager and steward shall receive, every day on which the use of flesh meat is not forbidden, one pound of mutton or veal of ordinary quality, or other good meat, varying as the rector shall see fit, according to the requirements of the season. This shall be served along with some suitable dish, as the rector shall decide to ordain. The larger portion of the meat shall be served at the midday meal,

the smaller at the evening meal. . . . They shall have wine mixed with water at the rector's discretion and as much bread and salt . . . as they may want and decorum permit. . . . But on feast days and on other days on which the use of flesh meat is not allowed, as much shall be spent on eggs and fish . . . as would otherwise have been spent on meat." (Stat. 16): "In the dining hall itself, the rector shall see to it that the food and other necessities are served to those who are seated in orderly and becoming fashion. . . . And during the meals, decorum, temperance and modesty shall be observed, and silence kept, during the second as well as the first course. For it is our will that, at that time, from the beginning of the blessing of the meal until all who have eaten rise from the table, a scholar or a chaplain shall read the Bible as is the custom of the religious orders . . . each one reading for a week, in turn, according to the seating order. He shall read in a loud voice and without haste, so that what he reads may be easily heard by all."

Sick students seem to have been well taken care of. They were visited daily by a doctor; servants looked after them and the cook was ordered to prepare special meals for them according to the regime ordered by the doctor; and a heated room was set aside in the college or outside to serve as an infirmary. During their illness they received in cash twice what would have been spent on their food if they had been in good health. But statute 19 warned: "the rector shall give careful and cautious attention to the possibility that some student might pretend illness when there is none." And a little later: "But because physical illness is often caused by sin, we ordain and decree that any sick person if he is strong enough and able, shall be required to confess within three days, at the most, from the time when he has taken to his sick bed. He shall confess all his sins purely and fully . . . otherwise, from that moment until he shall have obeyed our ordinance, he shall be suspended from all the aforesaid privileges."²³

All sorts of precautions were taken to keep the boys out of harm's way. As in all colleges, the gates were locked every evening and a boy returning, after this was done, was put on

bread and water.²⁴ If this occurred several times, he would first be suspended, then excluded from the college. Anyone who spent the night out was put on bread and water for three days, and, in addition, lost half of his year's scholarship. He was dismissed if he absented himself without permission for ten days. Statute 34 adds: "But if, after the gate has been locked, he should leave the house either through the window, or by some other machination, he shall forfeit all the rights which he has in the college and shall be expelled irrevocably."

Since lack of discipline had ruined many a college, penalties of all kinds were specified, from small fines to the stocks, an unusually harsh punishment, which is seldom found in college constitutions.²⁵ This was reserved for brawlers who had come to blows and were condemned to spend five days with at least one foot in a wooden stock, "and the day on which they shall be set free, they shall do penance by eating bread and water on the ground, in the sight of everyone" (Stat. 46). Playing dice was forbidden, and also playing instruments, though the statutes add: "with the exception of those who may wish to do so in their own rooms, for the sake of relaxation, without detriment or annoyance to their fellows" (Stat. 51). Bearing arms, even if worn in such a way as not to be visible, was severely punished (Stat. 43).²⁶ Receiving women was of course strictly forbidden (Stat. 29).

Soon after admission, the scholars must go on a tour of inspection of all the college holdings, farms, woods, lands, houses, shops, stalls, etc., both within and outside the walls of the city. This brings me to my last point, the preservation of college property and the survival of the Spanish College for which, as the joint inheritance of the scholars, they were singly and severally responsible. There is no time to go into the numerous ways in which the statutes attempt to safeguard the integrity of the college, the detailed accounts which the manager and the steward, the cook, and others must render daily or weekly. The bookkeeping was prescribed, and at the end of each year the books were audited and signed by the rector and councilors. Many of these dating from the very first years are still found in

the archives of the college, which contain a great deal of interesting unpublished material. The monies, legal instruments, and other written acts of the college were to be carefully preserved in a chest which could only be opened by several persons together, each of whom held one of the necessary keys. One of the most interesting statutes deals with the care to be taken of the books left by the cardinal to the college. These are called the students' most precious treasure. They must be chained, a list of them established, to which is added every book newly acquired by the library, out of which they are never allowed to be taken.²⁷ We still have the list of the books willed by the cardinal, a fairly long one, which contains many legal and theological treatises. Many of these are still kept today in the rare book room of the college.

Yet it is less difficult to find reasons for the total disappearance of all colleges founded before the fifteenth century on the continent,²⁸ than to account for the survival of the Spanish College alone. Many declined because their revenues were inadequate and soon dwindled. Most of the remaining Parisian colleges were closed at the time of the Revolution. They were not reinstated later because, after the reform of the French University, their functions were performed by different types of institutions.

Several of the Bologna colleges were merged with the Gregorian College soon after its foundation. But Pope Gregory's college itself lasted barely a hundred years, being suppressed in 1472. Others disappeared about the same time. In Germany, Italy, and elsewhere, endowed foundations like colleges were always in danger, not only from wars and other upheavals, but from powerful neighbors. Archives in many cities contain documents, many of them unpublished, in which the officials of medieval colleges institute proceedings, or appeals, against governors or consuls of cities, bishops, monasteries, and others. Thus the Collège des Douze-Médecins in Paris was long in difficulties with the Abbot of Valmagne, and the dispute had to be settled by the Roman Curia.²⁹

Some founders looked to persons in high positions to

guarantee the safety of their college. In 1384, King Charles VI placed the Collège Pélegry under his protection. And in 1393, the same King sent a *lettre de sauvegarde* placing under his protection the Collège des Douze-Médecins which had been established some ten years earlier.³⁰

Cardinal Albornoz and his executors tried to leave nothing to chance. First, the college was placed under the protection of the authorities of Bologna. In the words of the sixtieth chapter "... since the said house, which shall perhaps have weak rulers, may in the course of time find itself in precarious circumstances, if it is not sustained by the favor of powerful and good men, we call upon the rectors, *podestà* and elders of the city of Bologna. Thanks to their justice, praiseworthy government, and the gracious favors which they have ever paternally bestowed upon the students, this holy *studium* has, from the distant past, ranked first among the schools of both branches of law. On account of all these reasons our aforesaid lord, the Lord Cardinal of Sabina, elected this city of Bologna for this, the work of his devotion. He trusted that, to show their reverence for God and their love of the said Lord Cardinal, the citizens of Bologna, who are much obligated to him, would protect this, his college, from the treachery, violence and oppression of evil men . . . etc."

Yearly visitations of the college were next provided for and entrusted to the Bishop of Bologna and to the Prior of St. Michel de Busco who were given very broad powers of investigation, correction, and punishment. Stat. 39, however, gives this warning: "But since we have seen by experience that Bishops of Bologna then in office seized possession for themselves of the property of colleges similar to this one, if any bishop should attempt anything of the kind against the property of this college, not only such as is immovable, but also the movable goods, we command the rector, the councilors and each one in the college, under the penalty of perjury and of the privation of his rights in the college, which they shall incur *ipso facto*, to set aside all delay and straightway to bring an action before our Lord Pope and before the Lord Cardinal under whose protection we shall, in a later statute, place this college. Two of the most distin-

guished members of the whole college shall be in charge of this action, and they shall prosecute the affair to the end."

If the Bishop and the Prior failed to make the visitation, the Lord Archdeacon was to substitute for them; and he received for his trouble, "up to two ducats' worth of malmsey wine and sweetmeats (in *maluasias et confectionibus usque ad duos ducatos*)."

Most of all, the founder entrusted his college to future cardinals, the incumbent Spanish cardinal originating from Castile if, when problems arose, there should be one in the college of cardinals, or to the incumbent cardinal of Sabina. It is significant to note that through the centuries revision after revision of the statutes show these cardinals active in college affairs.

In the third statute it is stated that the Cardinal hoped, by founding his college "to obviate the ignorance of the Spaniards, for among them, because of the crises of wars and the innumerable other disasters which befell this province in his own time, the knowledge of letters and the number of trained men have been much reduced." In this the cardinal showed extraordinary foresight. For centuries, many alumni of the Spanish College have returned to the homeland, to make famous names for themselves, in law and the sciences, in the arts and theology. Outstanding contributions to the cultural life of Spain have been made, and continue to be made, by the *proles Egidii*, the foster sons of Cardinal Egidio Albornoz.

NOTES

1. The most comprehensive study of the medieval colleges and universities is Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*. eds. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden (Oxford, 1936) which will hereafter be referred to as Rashdall. For the history of medieval colleges and further bibliography, see: H. Denifle, *Die Entstehung der Universitäten des Mittelalters bis 1400* (Berlin, 1885); H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (Paris, 1889-97); A. Germain, *Cartulaire de l'Université de Montpellier*, I (1890), II (1912); M. Fournier, *Les Statuts et Privilèges des Universités françaises*, I (Paris, 1890), which will hereafter be referred to as Fournier; James John, *The College of Prémontré in Mediaeval Paris* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1953); A. Gabriel, *Student Life in Ave Marie College* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1955); J. H. Beckmann, *Statuta Collegii Sapientiae* (Freiburg in Breisgau, 1957); F. Pegnes, "The Fourteenth Century College of Aubert de Guignicourt at Soissons," *Traditio*, 15 (1959) 428-43; Stephen D'Irsay, *Histoire des Universités françaises* I (Paris, 1933). Many of the documents concerning the founding of medieval colleges in France and Italy (I have limited myself in this paper to material relating to colleges in these two countries) are published in the various collections of papal bulls, privileges, etc., as for instance: Coquelines, *Bullarum Privilegiorum ac Diplomatum Romanorum Pontificum amplissima Collectio* (Rome, 1739); Lynn Thorndike, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1944).

2. On the nations, loosely organized companies of students coming from the same general area, see Pearl Kibre, *The Nations in the Mediaeval Universities* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948).

3. Although most medieval students were clerks, that is were tonsured and wore the clerical garb of those in minor orders, and were therefore entitled to ecclesiastical benefices, these benefices were hardly sufficient, in general, to provide poor youngsters with the bare essentials. College founders attempted to remedy this situation by providing for the students' sustenance as well as housing. For the Collège de Pélegru: pro eorum victu et sustentatione duo sextaria et una emina frumenti ad mensuram de Caturco [= Cahors] et duodecim barrilos sive sextaria vini . . . ; et pro coampanatgio et bursa pro quolibet pre dictorum, in qualibet septimana, unum crosatum argenti vel eius valorem, computando duodecim crosatos pro uno bono floreno. . . . Fournier I. For the Collège de Rodez: pueris illis dentur seu administrentur vite necessaria regulate et modeste, et pro vestibus et calceamentis cuilibet annuatim tres floreni cum dimidio. . . . If a student received substantial benefices, or inherited specified sums of money, he was in general required to leave the college. See Fournier I, 104^a (St. Ruf), 557^a (Pelegru) etc. See also Du Cange, *Glossarium*, s.v. portatum. Collegium Gregorianum, Stat. 17 (in *Bullarum . . . Collectio*, see n. 1 above), referred to hereafter as Coll. Greg.: "Statuimus quod si quemquam ex dicti collegii scholaribus contingat in antea beneficium seu beneficia ecclesiastica valoris annui quinquaginta librarum . . . aut in patrimonio tantum obtinere . . . de dicto collegio recedere et alteri cedere teneatur."

4. The Latin text of this document is published in the *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (n. 1 above) I, 49. I quote from the translation of Lynn Thorndike, *op. cit.* (n. 1 above) 22.

5. *The Septicentennial Celebration of the Founding of the Sorbonne College* ("Proceedings and Papers" [Chapel Hill, 1953]); A. Gabriel, "Robert de Sorbonne," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 23 (1953), 475-514. See also Fournier, and H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, *op. cit.* (n. 1 above).

6. On the various colleges at Bologna see L. Frati, *Opere della Bibliografia Bolognese*, I (Bologna, 1888) nos. 6735-6907; C. Ghirardacci, *Historia di Bologna* (Bologna, 1669) II, 72, 302 f., 307 f., 603; M. Sarti and M. Fattorini, *De claris Archigymnasii Bononiensis Professoribus saeculo XI usque ad saeculum XIV* (Bologna, 1769, new ed. 1888-90), I, 414 ff.; G. Guidicini, *Cose Notabili della Città di Bologna*, (Bologna, 1873) V, 23-30; G. Zaoli, "Lo Studio Bolognese e Papa Martino V (anni 1416-1420)" *Studi e Mem. per la Storia dell' Università di Bologna* (Bibl. dell' Archiginnasio) ser. 1, III (1912) 107-88; A. Sorbelli, *Storia dell' Università di Bologna* (Bologna, 1940) I, 133 ff.; Rashdall, I, 197 ff.; P. Copeti, *De regali Almo Ancharano Collegio* (Bologna, 1763); A. Dallolio, *Il Collegio Comelli in Bologna* (Bologna, 1932); *Capitoli da osservarsi dalli Collegiali che pro tempore saranno aggregati al Collegio Comello* (Bologna, 1666); G. Buffito and Fr. Fracassetti, *Il Collegio San Luigi dei PP Barnabiti in Bologna* (Florence, 1925); *Constitutiones auctoritate S.D.N. Sixti Papae V confirmatae collegio Montis Alti in civitate Bononiae ab eo erecto praescriptae* (Bologna, 1627); P. Guerrini, "Guglielmo da Brescia e il collegio Bresciano in Bologna," *Studi e Mem. per la Storia dell' Univ. di Bologna*, VII (1922), 57-116. See also G. Zaccagnini, *La Vita dei Maestri e degli Scolari a Bologna* (Geneva, 1926). Many documents are published in the various volumes of the *Chartularium Studii Bononiensis* (Imola, 1907). See also Vicente de la Fuente, *Historia de las Universidades, Colegios y demás establecimientos de enseñanza in España* (Madrid, 1884).

7. For the biography of Cardinal Albornoz, and further bibliography, see H. J. Wurm, *Cardinal Albornoz, der zweite Begründer des Kirchenstaates* (Paderborn, 1892); F. Filippini, "La riconquista dello Stato della chiesa per opera del Cardinale Egidio Albornoz," *Studi Storici*, ed. Amedeo Crivellucci, vols. V-VIII (1896-1900), and *Il Cardinale Egidio Albornoz* (Bologna, 1933); A. Jara, "Don Gil de Albornoz," *Rev. hist. y geneal. española*, II (1913); G. Mollat, "Albornoz," in Alfred Baudrillart, *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, I (Paris, 1912) cols. 1717-1725, and *Les Papes d'Avignon* (1305-78), ed. 9 (Paris, 1949), 212-39, 248-58 *passim*; Figueroa y Torres, Conde de Romanones, *El Cardenal Albornoz* (Madrid, 1942); Juan Beneyto Perez, *El Cardenal Albornoz de Castilla y Caudillo de Italia* (Madrid, 1950); V. Fanelli, "Roma e il Cardinale Albornoz," *Studi Romani*, VI (1958) 413-21; "Il Cardinale Albornoz nel VI Centenario delle 'Constitutiones'" (1357-1957), *Studia Picena* 37 (1959); J. Glénisson and G. Mollat, *Gil Albornoz et Androin de la Roche, Correspondance des Légats et Vicaires-généraux*, *Biblioth. Ecoles françaises d'Athènes et Rome*, 203 (Paris, 1964).

8. On the Spanish College see: J. G. Sepulveda, *Brevis Bononiensis Collegii Hispanorum descriptio* in the edition of his collected works (Madrid, 1780) IV; G. Giordani, *Cenni Storici dell' almo Real Collegio Maggiore di San Clemente della Nazione Spagnola* (Bologna, 1855); Hermenegildo Giner de Los Rios and D. Pedro Borrao, *El Cardenal don Gil de Albornoz y su Colegio de los españoles en Bolonia* (Madrid, 1880). Miguel Angel Ortiz Milla, "El Colegio de España," *Bol. de la Real Acad. de la Historia*, 69 (1916) 426-36; Giorgio del Vecchio, "Il Collegio di Spagna a Bologna," *Annuario della cult. Ital.* (1923), and *Il Collegio di S. Clemente degli Spagnoli a Bologna* (Bologna, 1933); Edward Armstrong, "The Spanish College in the University of Bologna," *Italian Studies* (London, 1934), 273-94; V. Beltran de Heredia, "El Colegio de San Clemente de Bolonia y los Colegios Mayores de España," *An. Cult. Italo-Español*, I (1941); Berthe M. Marti, *The Spanish College at Bologna in the Fourteenth Century*, Edition and Translation of its Statutes, with Introduction and Notes (Phila-

delphia, 1966); J. R. Jones "The Six-Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the Spanish College at Bologna by Don Gil de Albornoz," *Hispania*, 50 (1967), 555-58.

9. At the Parisian College of Rodez bursars must come from Cahors, Fournier, II, 562: "de civitate seu diocesi Mimatensi de qua diocesi idem dominus fundator et nos originem duximus" (They must be legitimate children, and in addition have no physical defects). See Fournier, II, 139. Only students from the diocese of Rouen, and if possible, from either Grand-Caux or Petit-Caux were admitted to the college founded in Paris in 1268 by William of Saône. This was true of other colleges in Bologna. In his will, Zoen Tencarari, a Bolognese Bishop of Avignon, made provision for the care of eight youths from the diocese of Avignon, three to be selected from among the canons of the Cathedral, two from among the secular clergy of Avignon and one from within the diocese; Guido Bagnoli of Reggio established his college for students from the district of Reggio Emilia.

10. Stat. 3. All the quotations from the statutes are from my edition and translation (see n. 8 above).

11. Most college statutes contained similar provisions to honor members of the founders' families. See the statutes printed in Fournier. At Rodez, for instance: si aliqui habiles et docibiles pueri in genere nostro reperiantur ad discendum dictam scientiam seu scientias, undecumque sint oriundi, quod ipsi preponantur. . . .

12. Unde praefatus dominus Anglicus, episcopus Avinionensis, pro anima sua et parentum suorum et pro remissione suorum peccatorum, *ibid.* II, 106; II, 141.

13. Collegium Gregorianum (hereafter referred to as Coll. Greg.), Stat. 17 (*Bullarum . . . Collectio*, see n. 1) "Denique singuli scholares, quamdiu in praefato collegio moram traxerint, singulis diebus, quamdiu vixerimus, versum solum *salvum fac servum tuum* cum oratione *Deus omnium fidelium* etc., et post mortem nostram psalmum *De profundis clamavi ad te* etc., cum oratione *Deus qui inter apostolicos* etc., dicere teneantur. Item singuli non sacerdotes qualibet septimana septem psalmos poenitentiales cum laetaniis semel, sacerdotes autem quolibet mense unam specialem missam de *Sancto Spiritu* nobis viventibus vel de *Requiem aeternam* nobis vita functis, et psalterium quolibet anno, quamdiu ibi erunt, dicere sint astricti. Cf. also Stat. 12, 13.

14. Founded by Pope Urban V. For its statutes promulgated in 1380 by Cardinal Anglic, his brother, see Fournier, II, 137.

15. . . et pro animabus nostra et parentum ac consanguineorum nostrorum altissimum rogare, Fournier I 562b.

16. From the statutes revised in 1389: (Three resident priests) qui habeant specialiter rogare Deum in predicta missa pro animabus dictorum fundatorum et benefactorum suorum et dicti collegii et quod omnes scholares in dicta missa interesse debeant, *ibid.*, I, 354b; cf. 555a.

17. For bibliography about the university of Toulouse, see J. Puget, "L'université de Toulouse," *Annales du Midi* 42 (1930), 345-81.

18. On February 9, 1368, Fournier, II, 553.

19. From the statutes of the Collège de Pélegru revised in 1389: . . . si sufficientes et de legitimo matrimonio reperiantur . . . nec recipiatur . . . nisi adminus addiscat partes et bene competenter legat psalterium, et hoc ante receptionem videatur et probetur per magistrum et gubernatorem, Fournier II, 555b. For Rodez, *ibid.*, II, 561: habiles tamen ad discendum grammaticam et logicam in studio Caturcensi [Cahors].

20. Fournier, II, *passim*.

21. See for examples the statutes of Pélegru, revised in 1389: duo et duo dormiant in uno lecto qui sibi de lintheaminibus habeant providere; in culcitra et pulvinari et cooperturis per administratorem et sumptibus collegii eiusdem provideatur. Que quidem lintheamina, cum exhibunt collegium, pro usu servitorum dimittere teneantur. *Coll. greg.* 35: . . . camera fulcita ad modum scholasticum de tribus scannis, uno disco cum rota quatuor librorum et lettica cum culcitra, pulvinari et lodice consignetur, et ista perpetuo expensis collegii manuteneantur.

22. *Coll. greg.* 34: . . . Si quis autem praesumptuosus ita esset, quod pannum statuti in veste superiori alterius coloris quam alii deferre tentaret, ipso facto toto anno expellatur. On the proper clothing for college students see *Morale scoliarium*, trans. R. F. Seybolt (Cambridge, Mass., 1921) p. 78; Rashdall, III, 386 ff.

23. *Coll. Greg.* 37: Mandantes etiam scholaribus universis, quatenus ante omnia advocent animae et salutis medicum, saepe et saepius confitendo . . . ut postquam fuerit eidem de spirituali salute provvisum, ad corporalis medicinae remedium salubrius procedatur, et in debitam sanitatem velocius instaurentur.

24. The rector of the Collège des Douze-Médecins closed the gate "in prima noctis hora," Fournier, II. At Pélegru, the chaplain or rector himself must close and open the gate, cum clavi de sero et de mane et aliis temporibus opportunis, et claves portarum principalium singulis noctibus custodiat . . . ; *Coll. Greg.* 43: ulterius mandamus rectori, quod diligenter hora concedenti, videlicet in tertia campana noctis iubeat portam communem claudi, et de mane in campana diei et non ante aperiri, penes se continue claves de nocte retenturus. . . .

25. *Coll. Greg.* 30: punitio etiam cum ligneis compedibus singulorum famulorum. . . . According to Rashdall, I, 202, punishment in the stocks is not mentioned in English or Parisian colleges till the sixteenth century. Expulsion at the Gregorian college was decreed against those who stayed six days away from the college. If they stayed away without permission one day and night, they were put on bread and water the next day; and for other offenses, see Stat. 41, 44, 45.

26. For further information on academic discipline, see H. Maack, "Grundlagen d. studentischen Disziplinarrechts," *Beitr. Freib. Wissenschafts und Univ. Gesch.*, 10 (1956). Many college statutes specify the punishments to inflict for each type of infraction. See for instance the Collège des Douze-Médecins (Fournier, II, 140b: (expulsion was decreed) si criminis qualitas hoc exegerit. The students were forbidden to own dogs (nisi unum canem communem si utilis videatur, pro custodia dicte domus), to play dice, carry weapons (portare ensem, gladium seu gladios ultra mensuram unius palmi), to introduce women into the house, etc. Expulsion was decreed at St. Ruf: Studentes, si non essent dociles et conversationis honeste . . . a dicta domo libere valeant amovere et amotorum loco seu locis alios honestos et dociles surrogare. . . . Expulsion from Pélegru, see Fournier, II, 568a.

27. In the Collège des Douze-Médecins there were as many keys to the library as there were resident students; the books, chained, were never allowed to be removed. For gifts of books to colleges, see Fournier, *passim*. A detailed list of such a gift of twenty-six books to Pélegru in 1395, for instance, *ibid.* II, 576a. *Coll. Greg.* 54: . . . statuimus et mandamus omnes libros in dicta libraria reponendos, cuiuscumque facultatis seu valoris existant, sub bonis clavibus perpetuis temporibus inchatenari. . . . See also Thorndike, *op. cit.* (n. 1) p. 168.

28. It has been suggested that colleges on the continent disappeared as a

result of the strongly centralized administration of the universities which gradually absorbed both the teaching staffs and the colleges. The opposite process of decentralization of the functions and life of the university in England served to preserve the colleges which almost entirely replaced the university.

29. Fournier, II, 158, 183^a, 191^b, 214, 235^b, etc.

30. Texts in Fournier, II, 158^b, 566^a. After placing the college of Rodez under the protection of Jesus Christ (quem in eis facimus et constituimus principalem et defensorem) the founder of Collège Rodez called upon the consuls of the city of Cahors to look after its interests, *ibid.* 562^b. *Coll Greg.* 56: . . . speciales protectores seu defensores, videlicet episcopum Ostiensem vice-cancellarium Romanum ac unum vel duos alios Cardinales, si qui sint de genere nostro vel de diocesi Lemovicensi, successive duximus ipsi collegio deputandos . . . ; Stat. 58: . . . nostros successores Romanos pontifices ac collegium cardinalium Romanae ecclesiae, praecipue legatos de latere in partibus illis vices Romani Pontificis gerentes, necnon omnes praelatos, barones, nobiles, et quoscumque officiales Ecclesiae, qui pro tempore erunt inibi degentes, ac etiam universitatem Studii Bononiensis . . . obsecramus, quatenus collegium . . . favoribus et praesidiis confovere.

The Alliterative Morte Arthure, the Concept of Medieval Tragedy, and the Cardinal Virtue Fortitude

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The alliterative *Morte Arthure*, among the most impressive Middle English poems, comes to us from around the end of the fourteenth century. It runs to 4346 lines, and exists in a single version as a part of the Thornton Manuscript, "a collection of poems and treatises on various subjects, some in English, some in Latin." This manuscript is in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral in England. A note at the end of *Morte Arthure* indicates that the hand is that of Robert Thornton, a Yorkshireman who was Archdeacon of Bedford in the diocese of Lincoln about the middle of the fifteenth century. We have, however, no shred of evidence concerning the authorship of the *Morte*.

The poem was five times edited between 1847 and 1915, and in late years notices have appeared of two new editions presently underway. Despite all of this editorial activity, however, surprisingly little analytical commentary concerning the poem—other than general praise—had appeared until recently. In 1960, William Matthews published a book-length work on *Morte Arthure*, called *The Tragedy of Arthur*. In a thorough new source-study Matthews showed that although the bulk of the poem comes from the chronicle tradition found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, Wace's *Roman de Brut*, and Layamon's *Brut*, plus material from the French Arthurian tradition, important additions are from the widely popular medieval story of Alexander the Great, particularly