There is another argument not to dismiss the university’s opposition in 1617 as just another proxy war against princely absolutism. Academics had good reason to portray themselves as the champions of the papacy. In the first half of 1617, no fewer than three delegations of the university and the States of Brabant to the nuncio had expressed their gratitude to the Holy See for its benign intervention in the *Negotium Romanum*. For on 1 December 1616, three decades after Danielis had been summoned by Orazio Borghese, his brother, Pope Paul V, had, by virtue of the plenitude of power, confirmed academic prerogatives in the clerical job market. The bull *Regimini Universalis Ecclesiae* of 1616 was the last grand nomination bull figuring in the 18th-century editions of academic privileges. Amended in 1673 by a papal brief of Clement X, it would remain in force until the French Revolution.

In light of the evidence in the previous chapters, the representation of the 1617 conflict as a typical *exemplum* of academic opportunism is flawed. There simply was no single legal definition of the university that provided university men with sufficient legal tools to frame their multi-tied interests. This hybridism also applies to *Regimini* itself. The bull would often, yet not exclusively, be referred to by the academics in the next two centuries as the Pauline Concordat. Seen from this perspective, it was in effect a treaty among the Archdukes, in their quality

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1 Gesualdo to Borghese, 21 January, 17 February, and 10 June 1617, in ASV, *Fondo Borghese*, II, 113, respectively 26r, 54r, and 180r. The nuncio was treated again, with reference to the “Question,” by the university and the city at the occasion of his visit to Louvain in August 1617. Cf. *Acta Universitatis*, 3 August 1617, RAL, *OUL*, 64, 55v–56r.
2 *Privilegia*, 154–79; the original bull is preserved in UAL, *OUL*, 76.
3 On this episode, read Ceyssens, “L’université de Louvain et la suspension de son privilège.”
of sovereign princes and natural protectors of the university, the States of Brabant, as the warden of the land’s privileges, the academics, and the papal prince. Not surprisingly, the preamble to Regimini tells a very different story. Great popes such as Paul V, who under the pressure of renewed studies in ecclesiastical history had to live up to the example set at Canossa by Gregory VII, did not compromise with princes who owed them filial obedience. From their point of view, Regimini was a privilege granted by virtue of papal grace. In it, the Archdukes were the first among a series of pious supplicants—the States of Brabant, the University of Louvain, and the Faculty of Arts—duly prostrating themselves at the feet of the pontiff and imploring him to remedy their ailments. At this stage, humble academics had ceased to figure as proverbial violators of ecclesiastical liberty in the general instructions to the nuncios of Flanders and were lauded instead for their “solita pietà, et osservanza” towards the Holy See.

An alternative view was aired by Philip Maes, lord of Rodegem and archducal resident in Rome, during the 1617 row between the papal nuncio and his brother, the president of the Privy Council. He scolded the academics for their ingratitude to the prince, who (via his agent at the curia) had dissolved the Gordian knot of the Negotium Romanum for them. The resident’s outcry not only made the (Brussels interpretation of the) entanglement between academic reform and archducal commitment in Rome explicit. It also bears testimony to how the Roman Question became a matter of diplomacy from 1612 onwards. Until then, Brabanticity as a legal repertoire had been routinely applied in the causae privatae of individual nominees, with the Council of Brabant blocking violations of Eximiae in their favour. After 1612,

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5 E.g., the university to the Archdukes, 7 January 1617, Liber dictatoris, RAL, OUL, 103, 173r–174v.

6 Cf. Instruttione per Mons. Morra arcivescovo d’Otranto (...), 27 June 1617, ed. Cauchie and Maere, Recueil des instructions générales, 71. Scathing comments on the academics’ nasty legal practices in beneficialibus had already disappeared from the instructions to Morra’s predecessor Gesualdo as well; cf. Instrituttione per Monsignor Gesualdo (...), 23 October 1615, ed. Cauchie and Maere, Recueil des instructions générales, 38–56. This is probably to be ascribed to Bentivoglio’s influence.

7 “Je suis fort esbahij dentendre ce que mescripvez par vostre lettre derniere du 9e de ce mois de l’universite de Lovain, que si ainsi est, comme je croij, ilz nont raison se formalizer contre les ordres du prince, et seroit une ingratitude trop grande, veu mesmes ce que naguerres aij icij obtenu de la part de Son Alteze a prouffict de ladicte universite.” Maes to Della Faille, Négociations de Rome, 30 November 1617, AGR, Audience, 451, 250r.