CHAPTER FOUR

TENSIONS WITHIN THE STRUCTURES OF ACADEMIC POWER

Under the grand dukes, power at the Studio pisano and the Studio senese was distributed between the three main structures: the administrators (including the grand dukes); the students; and the professors. Unsurprisingly this led to numerous tensions, particularly over issues such as appointments, salaries, teaching, examinations, status, Protestantism, and protectionism. But these were not simple conflicts between a centralising government and peripheral institutions determined to protect their privileges. As disputes arose, the administrators (including the grand dukes) would sometimes side with the students whilst at other times they would favour the professors. Occasionally the administrators disagreed with each other, as the students and professors could also be divided amongst themselves.

APPOINTMENTS

With regard to appointments, the Studio senese was the focus of tension. Since the early fifteenth century the hiring of professors in Siena had been entangled in the city’s factional politics. This was exacerbated by the significant number of professors who were active members of the Sienese political elite, the riseduti.1 The close ties between the professoriate and the ruling class continued after the Medici took control of the city in 1557. Of all the Sienese who taught law between 1589 and 1609, only one, Adriano Guasti, did not come from a leading family. However, this anomaly was remedied by making him a riseduto. Amongst those Sienese teaching arts, the riseduti were also in the majority. Again there were co-options such as Lorenzo Billò, who taught logic, and Girolamo Minetti, who taught anatomy.2 Inevitably

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1 For professors and factions in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, see Denley, Commune and Studio, pp. 219–223.
2 Marrara, Lo Studio di Siena, pp. 41–42.
these connections could have an impact on appointments. For example, in 1565 the governor of Siena reported that the Studio had been so seriously disturbed by factionalism that negotiations with professors had had to be conducted in secret.³

The influence of the factions was revealed again following the 1589 reform of the Studio senese which brought a major overhaul of the appointment system. The reform was intended to bring much needed organisation to the Studio, following the piecemeal approach of Cosimo and Francesco.⁴ The Balìa had repeatedly sent supplications to Florence asking for the restructuring of the Studio and the increase of professors’ salaries.⁵ But it was not until 8 August 1589 that Ferdinando appointed a commission to produce a plan.⁶ Within a month, the commission submitted its proposal to the governor, Giulio Del Caccia, who forwarded it to the grand duke together with his comments.⁷ Once Ferdinando had consulted with the auditore dello studio pisano, Giovan Battista Concini, and received further details from Del Caccia, the reform was published by the Balìa on 8 October.⁸

Under the terms of the reform, appointments to most chairs were to be decided by competitions (concorsi) in the form of public disputations. Those aspiring to a position had to apply to the grand duke asking to be included in the concorso. The choice, based on the results of the concorso, would be made by the grand duke. In order to be eligible, candidates for chairs of law had to meet fixed requirements: for ordinary chairs, they had to have had an extraordinary chair in canon or civil law or the Institutes; for extraordinary chairs, candidates had to have had a doctorate for at least four years. The concorsi for the chairs in law were to be conducted by a commission which included the capitano di giustizia, the judges of the rota, the giudice ordinario, and the prior of the Balìa. For chairs in arts, the disputations were to be held in the presence of the ordinary chairs of philosophy, the archbishop,

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³ Cascio Pratilli, L'Università e il Principe, p. 22.
⁴ For the policies of Cosimo and Francesco towards the Studio senese, see Chapter Three.
⁵ See Chapter Three, n. 38.
⁶ The commission consisted of the deputati di Balìa and the capitano di giustizia, Lorenzo Usimbardi, see Marrara, Lo Studio di Siena, pp. 8, 167–168.
⁷ For the text of the proposal and Del Caccia’s comments, see Marrara, Lo Studio di Siena, pp. 168–170.
⁸ For the texts of this correspondence, since Marrara, Lo Studio di Siena, pp. 170–174.