


SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

# Disgust and the duel: Aristocratic violence, the *scienza cavalleresca*, and feeling rules in early modern Italy

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## Abstract

Many early modern Italian nobles were obsessed with duelling. Despite bans from secular authorities and the Council of Trent, the violent honor complex was veiled in part under the title of the *scienza cavalleresca*, the knightly science, which provided rules for the conduct of conflicts between aristocrats and those with noble aspirations. Such rules were both concerned with emotions and the object of emotions. Using the tools of the history and sociology of emotions, this article contributes to the emotional history of the *scienza cavalleresca* through examining the rules proposed both as feeling rules in themselves and as objects of emotional judgment. Toward the turn of the eighteenth century, more aristocrats began rejecting such codes with explicit objections to the *scienza cavalleresca* and its ethical basis. One such noble was Paolo Mattia Doria (1667–1746), a notorious duellist in the closing years of the Spanish regime, who renounced the vendetta and expressed disgust with its practitioners. A zealous convert against the noble vengeance system, he will serve as an example to explore the wider struggle over emotional values in early modern Italy and, more generally, in societies with high levels of violence. The article traces the role of emotions in the *scienza cavalleresca*, the taste for dispute through one genre (letters of challenge or *cartelli di sfida*), then explores the case of Doria. From these three stages, the article argues for the significance of adopting approaches from the sociology of emotions to analyze elite cultures of violence.

**Keywords:** duel; Paolo Mattia Doria; violence; Naples; feeling rules

In 1740, the aristocrat, philosopher, and adoptive Neapolitan Paolo Mattia Doria (1667–1746) reflected on his youth, at the age of 73 years, and liked little of what he recalled. He ruminated, with particular gall, on his youthful adventures as a vengeful gallant noble, of the sort typical of the last decades of Spanish rule of the Kingdom of Naples. He had been a devotee of the *scienza cavalleresca*, “the knightly science,” the codes of the cult of honor that taught the proper response to insult. Such cultivated sensitivity to affront led him to fight several duels and involve himself one way or

another in many others; insult was an obsession. In retrospect he was disgusted with this “vain science” and the passions it nurtured in him (Doria 1982: 412).

Such violence was a prevailing hazard, sometimes a beguiling one, for the aristocratic men of early modern Italy. Hemmed in by the expectations of honor, the desire to protect their names, and the ubiquity of deadly rapiers, stilettoes, and firearms, men born to noble blood were often propelled toward the duel or other forms of fatal violence. Some praised the knightly defense of honor with lyrical grace; fewer derided the bloodthirsty and punctilious status quo. The noble elite were not the only part of early modern Italian society ensnared in dilemmas of violence, but they were grasped firmly in the trap that equated blood and honor with its armed defense. But the actual clashing of swords or spilling of blood were only one part of the broader cultural complex of the *scienza cavalleresca*. The rights and wrongs of cases of honor were the subjects of vast amounts of written opinions and evaluations, whether from experts (the so-called duel doctors or professors of honor) or from noble peers who enjoyed and relished involvement in the intricacies of cases of affront (Cavina 2014). Such written survivals must be only a fraction of the vast amount of conversational treatment of issues of honor in the period.

The duel looked both back and forward: it was partially the descendent of the medieval trial by ordeal, but it was also reborn as a contemporary craze in the sixteenth century. By around 1550 the renaissance of the duel led to a new standardization of cultural practices of affront. From 1550 to 1563 (the ending of the Council of Trent) 27 books were published regarding matters of honor and dueling (Donati 1988: 94). In reaction to its new popularity, the duel was outlawed at the Council of Trent. This ban came after many secular authorities had proscribed the duel such as Naples in 1540, Venice in 1541, and Mantua in 1543 (Angelozzi 1996). To escape the censors of the Index, the Roman Inquisition’s list of prohibited books, and to evade excommunication, many books about the *scienza cavalleresca* claimed to be opposed to the duel, instead outlining supposedly Christian and honorable ways out of dispute without violence (Donati 2001). For the case of Bologna, Angelozzi and Casanova (2003) have argued that the *scienza cavalleresca* performed a disciplinary function, creating new bounds for honorable masculinity that combined expertise in the ins and outs of the science with a grace in its performance. More recently the claim of a tight relationship between the *scienza cavalleresca* and the disciplining of the nobility have been placed in question, for example by Colin Rose’s (Rose 2019) study that established the persistence of violence in seventeenth-century Bologna and by Stuart Carroll’s (Carroll 2016, 2023) counterargument that the *scienza* in fact sustained the culture of dueling, even if individual authors may have disliked the often chaotic reality of honor violence.

In this article, the social worlds of the *scienza cavalleresca* will be explored through two closely related lenses: feeling rules (Hochschild 1979, 1983) and feelings about norms. The history and sociology of emotions has regularly explored the nature of rules and regimes of feeling (Reddy 2001; Rosenwein 2007; Stearns and Stearns 1985).<sup>1</sup> One result from this research is that a full treatment of emotions as social phenomena requires the study of norms about what is appropriate to feel, by social station and situation, the gaps that may exist between prescribed or advised

<sup>1</sup>See also the introduction to this special issue.

feelings, and the effort required to either meet or deviate from such guidelines (Hochschild 1979). Feeling rules often take the form of “shoulds” and “shouldn’ts” narrated by self or others about past, future, or hypothetical social exchanges. As Hochschild noted, “we often talk about our feelings or those of others as if rights or duties applied to them” (ibid.: 564). Francesco Buscemi’s (2019: 220) work on the French Revolution has demonstrated the analytical value of connecting feeling rules to violence to understand motivations of actors and the meanings of practices such as, for his case, oath-taking, which he shows to have prepared revolutionaries for violence through public commitment. This article makes an argument that this connection can be extended to the practices of aristocratic dispute in early modern Italy.

Social norms of obligated feeling were core components of the cult of honor in early modern Italy. There were many narrated “rule reminders” for the Italian elite of the early modern period. Such rules of performance, both emotional and corporeal, were not static constructions: living with norms involved (and involves) much more complex emotional dynamics than simple application or rejection of rules. Whether a man could live up to the demands of an emotional regime or not produced emotional reactions in turn. The dynamics of living with rules involved debated transgressions, retrospective loosening or tightening of regulations, and esthetic experiences of attraction or repulsion toward these structures as a whole or toward individual maxims. Emotion work, in Hochschild’s sense, was then required to live up to or to move away from feeling rules. This work involved all practices that accomplished “the act of evoking or shaping, as well as suppressing, feeling in oneself” (Hochschild 1979: 561).

According to the *scienza cavalleresca*, certain internal motivations, today most often referred to as emotions, such as resentment, were understood to make claims on the truth behind disputes. An honorable man’s anger was a vehicle of truth, and the conduct of a dispute (including its emotional tenor) could be probative. To some early modern commentators, such as Fabio Albergati (1583: 46), the clash between aristocrats in word or deed was understood as being analogous to philosophical disputation. The complex reality of human interaction and emotional response was often understood as having necessary relations to truth. Yet despite this ideology of the truth-establishing possibilities of noble feeling, in practice final truths were rarely agreed upon by the parties to dispute. Lying and accusing others of having lied – giving the lie – were some of the most significant elements of dispute. In the case of the *scienza cavalleresca*, controversy was therefore at the very core of its application, disagreement on the facts and meaning of a dispute was a normal but not tranquil element of chivalrous interaction.

The theory of the *scienza cavalleresca* and the practice of dueling combine to make an instructive case study that illustrates how norms of emotions are placed in deeply emotional narratives about the past and future, both in the sense of personal histories between the disputing parties and in larger narratives about historical progress and civilization. This case then demonstrates an important part of the experience of emotion norms: their connection to temporality. Norms around feeling possess general temporal qualities, whether the principles feel modern or out-of-date. As Margrit Pernau (2021: 3) has argued “[e]motions and temporalities – that is, the relations between the past, the present, and the future as imagined and

experienced by the actors – are closely interwoven.” These temporal qualities of emotions play important parts in the quest to understand Doria’s journey from passionate duelist to disgust-filled critic of ritualized affront.

The temporal quality of the emotions of the *scienza cavalleresca* applies both to the code’s internally, that is, how its own rules were applied, and externally, that is, how it became increasingly identified as a social problem in itself. The *scienza cavalleresca* did not only prescribe actions and feelings but also became an object of judgment, an assessment that was both emotional in tenor and damning of the sentiments that the *scienza* cultivated. Emotional standards or feeling rules are objects of debate during the periods in which they change and form. This is especially true for formalized or semi-formalized systems of regulation such as the *scienza cavalleresca*, which was a particularly clear example of an emotional disposition trained, in part, through specially produced literature. Such debates often took place via temporal or historical narratives that evaluated social custom. For instance, tropes of decline or the need to purge out-of-place elements were regularly part of contests over what emotions were appropriate and how they should be expressed across history (Pernau 2021: 21–22). For instance, critics of the *scienza cavalleresca* (Maffei 1710) deployed the discourse of barbarous vestiges to delegitimize the noble culture of affront, recasting it as a relic from a more savage time.

The aim of this article, therefore, in the light of this discussion of feeling rules and emotional norms, is to understand how Paolo Mattia Doria came to find the duel, and his former life as duelist, to be an object of disgust. This serves as a case that offers a new way to look at the role of emotions in the history of violence and debates over violence in early modern Italy. The article performs this by looking first at the duel and the feeling rules of noble honor, then by turning to a particular aspect of this culture, the *cartelli di sfida*, or letters of challenge, and finally by using this to return to Doria’s account of his addiction to the duel in detail.

### Disgust for the law and the feeling rules of the *scienza cavalleresca*

Doria’s disgust for the duel was, in one sense, the mirror image of another kind of disgust that was more common in the century preceding his birth: the reputed aristocratic disdain for the pursuit of dispute within the courtroom (Ajello 1996: 286). While the fact that nearly every aristocratic clan was immersed in unending lawsuits perhaps belies this impression of a total rejection of the tools of the law, culturally the noble disdain for the criminal law was one important lodestone of honorable identity. Despite this common attitude, it would be wrong to claim that all nobles had nothing to do with using the tools of criminal law. The apparent rejection of criminal law as a solution to dispute was rather an element of noble self-fashioning. This section explores this disgust and connects it to a belief in the truth claims of aristocratic emotion.

This profession of honor had expanded in the sixteenth century beyond those who exercised the traditional profession of cavalier as soldier. Amidst the Italian Wars (the intermittent warfare between 1494 and 1559), the duel was still tightly connected, in discursive terms, to those nobles who were directly involved in military service (Donati 2001). In its origins as a form of trial by ordeal, the duel was

single combat to establish the truth of a claim (Bartlett 1986). This connection between combat and truth persisted in the ideal of the duel.

Toward the end of these bloody wars, the duel was taken up and expanded by philosophers and other literary men such as Girolamo Muzio and Antonio Possevino who were often trained lawyers (Donati 2001). This expansion of the duel meant that it became more attractive to those who sought the distinction of nobility outside of military service. While there was a general move to aristocratic closure of patrician nobilities (the prohibition of admitting new families to the status of nobility) during this period in Italy, the nobility was by no means static (Muto 2007). In certain places, the feudal land market was reasonably open and those who became rich by other means, such as through the exercise of law or as financiers, could enter the ranks of the aristocracy, at least in title. The feudal land market was notably open in the Kingdom of Naples, and many rich families became ennobled, such as leading Genoan merchant families (Delille 1988). Prejudices remained, but often these new entrants enthusiastically adopted the code of honor. To embody the culture of affront was one way to make it as an upstart. Even beyond direct involvement in honor-based violence, there were many opportunities to be involved as a commentator or supporter of the enmities of others by providing judgments, acting as a second or merely reading and discussing the ins and outs of an affront or dispute among friends and others.

The characteristic features of noble violence can be seen in evidence from the Kingdom of Naples. Nobles were involved in a range of forms of violence. A Neapolitan critic of the nobility from the respectable non-noble citizenry Vincenzo D'Onofrio (who wrote under the anagrammatic pen name Innocenzo Fuidoro) held that "they grow up ignorant, duelists, vicious in every way" (Fuidoro 1934: 50).<sup>2</sup> The chronicles of life in seventeenth-century Naples by Vincenzo d'Onofrio (1934) and Domenico Confuorto (1930) provide much information on noble violence. Five duels occurred within a single week in February 1638 (Reumont 1854: 206). In 1666, sixteen men fought against each other leading to the death of Don Antonio Suardo (Confuorto 1930, 2: 33). Even brothers dueled: in April 1672 Vincenzo and Orazio Sanseverino fought over a financial matter (Capasso 1895: 545). Two sons of the prince of Cursi Cicinelli and the son of the prince of Scalea Spinelli dueled "not for any other reason but for cap not doffed in time" (Capasso 1895: 545). They fought but were only lightly wounded (*ibid.*). Conflicts emerged over direct or indirect insults; the latter were often based on dispute over who owed whom signs of respect.

The high incidence of all forms of honor conflict resulted in the death of Neapolitan aristocrats and their servants. In 1660, the 21-year-old Marquis of Castelvetere, a member of the illustrious Carafa clan, and first-born son of the Prince of Roccella, went to Santa Lucia del Monte with a retinue and some noble friends to duel with Giuseppe Gaetano, the brother of the duke of Laurenzano. During the duel, Castelvetere was wounded in the chest and died a few days later (Fuidoro 1939: 43–44). The diarist Vincenzo d'Onofrio described the young Castelvetere's scrupulous desire for revenge. Both a personality inclined to

<sup>2</sup>All translations from early modern and modern editions of Italian language primary sources are my own, except when quoted directly from an English language secondary source.

vengeance and one inclined to duty could promote dueling. Certain individuals tallied insults more meticulously and received injuries more heavily than others. Castelvetero was described as a “young man predominated by bile” and d’Onofrio talked of him being gnawed for days with thoughts of revenge (Fuidoro 1939: 43). As Gaetano himself withdrew his offensive words, Castelvetero’s father begged his son to retract his challenge. But he refused to do so, saying: “Your Excellency forgive me this act of disobedience, because I’ve given my word [*fede*] to not retract” (ibid.: 43–44). In other cases, explanations for nobles who refused pacification focused on their “vigorous youth” (Valmarana 1619: 37). Youthful cohorts of brothers, friends, and cousins were often involved in the giving of offense and the pursuit of revenge.

Duelling could easily be violent, and it did result in death. Outside of formal or semi-formal duels, nobles were often ready to draw their swords and fight. When nobles gathered in large numbers, the risk of a perceived slight or a shove led meant violence could ensue; there is evidence of others restraining those who drew swords in the journals of Confuorto and d’Onofrio (Confuorto 1930: 79; Fuidoro 1939: 92). The numerous theaters, many of which were private performances in noble palaces, were also flashpoints for violence. In 1636 the prince of Forino, member of one of the leading aristocratic families of Naples (a Caracciolo of the *Rossi* branch), was killed just after a performance of a comedy at the palazzo where the viceroy was staying on the riviera of Posillipo (Capecelatro 1849: 47). Despite all these instances of confrontation, it was recorded by d’Onofrio that most duels tended to stop at the stage of calling each other out in spoken or written words before blood was drawn (Fuidoro 1939: 43). However, the high frequency of at least potentially violent confrontation indicates a conflictual urban society.

It also makes little sense to separate out formal duels from the messier and blurrier pattern of urban confrontation. Dueling was not a separate, highly formalized, form of dispute resolution that tamped down the violence of the vendetta. It was part of a spectrum of violence and the boundaries between the duel and other forms of confrontation, such as ambush, were often blurred. Any separation between the duel and other forms of violence was idealized and ignores the continuity between everyday status conflicts and highly formalized encounters, as Stuart Carroll (2016, 2023) has emphasized.

The duel, however, was not just prompted by the vengefulness of young men, but also had a vast ancillary literature. An entire genre of works elaborated the *scienza cavalleresca*, the science of chivalry, from which, together with other forms of literary production, had relation to the feeling rules around noble violence. Out of the chaotic violence of the streets, there was a belief in a logic that could be properly applied to such clashes.

One problem was clear to some early modern Italian commentators, for instance priests such as Paolo Segneri (Broggio 2021: 352), who considered the causes of violence: too many nobles scorned the institutions of justice, preferring to resolve their differences through arms. Many of the traditional aristocracy, cavaliers with direct or historical connections to military prowess, held as a maxim that it was ignoble to pursue wrongs through the law (Carroll 2023: 138). Satisfaction had to be sought through arms, not with the *scientia juris*. Prejudice toward those of ignoble birth and a suspicion of political motives led to widespread elite mistrust of the expanding institutions of justice and governance in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries. Being able to pursue satisfaction honorably was a characteristic of nobility, and those who failed to defend themselves from offense were liable to be reputed as low and vile (Angelozzi and Casanova 2003: 290).

The dilemma was that, as a Bolognese manuscript on the duel from the early seventeenth century held:

It seems that in those cities where duel rules the citizens must necessarily practice it not to look dishonored and even impious in the face of others; and this is mainly because soldiers, knights and all honoured men do not think that in such cases it is acceptable to step back . . . they also believe that to call the magistrates and the Prince is by all deemed unworthy of a honoured man but only suitable for women, who do not have any strength whatsoever in them and therefore protect themselves under the shield of justice, a shield which is shameful for soldiers and men of honour, whose trial is that of the arms alone. (Savoia 2019: 52)

The fear of shame, then, was identified by contemporaries as undergirding a general tendency toward violence. The noble disdain toward the law and promotion of self-help was a common observation. For instance, in 1585, Annibale Romei, a Ferrarese commentator, wrote that “the man who returns injury, even if he takes revenge in cold blood, is held in much more honor than he who has recourse to the magistrates” because such a recourse “arouses the suspicion of little valor and impotence” (Quint 1997: 250). Of course, events unfolded in many ways that diverged from such stark, idealized divisions between honorable and dishonorable.

Along with the fear of shame, came the cavaliers’ desires for setting themselves above their contemporaries. As Domenico Mora (1589), in *The Cavalier* (*Il cavaliere*), argued “everybody seeks distinction, one mark of which is to offend fearlessly” (Bryson 1935: 28). Incentives existed for men to venture insult. Audacious offense was therefore prized among gentlemen as a means of social distinction and a route to status.

Aristocrats therefore operated with a set of rules – albeit always flexible ones – concerning which were honorable and which were dishonorable solutions to insult. At the same time, options remained to reject the entire game and, for instance, to become a pious cleric (although taking orders by no means guaranteed a retreat from violence) or merely accept a reputation for cowardice.

The status conflicts that produced most of the fatal violence among the aristocracy were underpinned by deep currents of prestige and power formed in part by stories of the glorious origins of aristocrats, the praiseworthy deeds of ancestors, and the meritorious actions of contemporaries. The obsession for publishing on the history and genealogy of noble houses in early modern Italy was a natural extension of the vituperative debates over the relative status of noble houses. One of the leading examples, published first in 1580, and re-printed throughout the seventeenth century, was Scipione Ammirato’s *On the Noble Families of Naples* (*Delle famiglie nobili napoletane*) (1580). Indeed, Ammirato’s book claimed to solve some of the problems of noble precedence, as the subtitle runs: “for avoiding every challenge of precedence, which have been placed in confusion” (Ammirato 1580: i).

One of the most interesting aspects for the emotional history of the *scienza cavalleresca* is the belief that through *risentimento* (resentment or revenge), the reality of things could be conclusively established. Emotions, not only *risentimento*, but also anger, could be tools of truth and justice; this was a form of emotional knowledge that tied individual emotions to claims that established truth, dependent upon the status of those involved. The elaborate, complex texts that formed the *scienza cavalleresca*, despite the apparently widespread noble disdain for legal solutions (although of course nearly every noble spent their life enmeshed in patrimonial and seigneurial lawsuits), partook in the same complex definitional and case-based logic as early modern jurisprudence. Despite the rejection of law courts, there was a demand for elaborate systems of classification. While the *scienza cavalleresca* drew much of its content from real clashes on the streets, at the same time the products of this intellectual culture cannot serve as an exact map of the daily realities of honor conflict. But nor was the literature totally unconnected to lived experience: it was because of the ubiquity of honor conflicts and violence adjacent to them that there was a demand for creating rules and classifications of insults, passions, and other aspects of honor culture.

The *scienza cavalleresca* took several concrete forms. One was printed books on the principles and theories of dispute, whether under the general theme of reconciliation or honor. Due to the banning of the duel at the Council of Trent, works that described themselves as concerned with the duel were rare. Another was printed or manuscript collections concerning particular disputes that gathered, most often from the perspective of a single side, expert opinions from the so-called professors of the *scienza cavalleresca* and perhaps also leading princes or other leading aristocrats.

While it was later criticized as part of the honor code, many authors including Fabio Albergati (1583) and Francesco Birago (1623) argued, at the time, they were doing useful work in generating such complex schemes of definitions. These writers held that working out proper arithmetic of status would promote peace and reconciliation, and they criticized the excesses of the circulating ideas of honor that so readily led to violence. The aim was that by formalizing the rules around insult, violence could be reduced.

The Milanese nobleman Francesco Birago (1562–1640), who wrote extensively on cases of honor, described his task in writing on issues of honor as “for the universal benefit of all, but most of all to *Cavalieri*, that for reasons of honor come to encounters [*quistione*], and to enmities that they may easily find the way of uniting again in concord and true love with honor” (Birago 1623: vii). Another example is the Papal diplomat Fabio Albergati’s *On the Way to Reduce Private Enmities to Peace* (*Trattato di Fabio Albergati, gentiluomo Bolognese, del modo di ridurre à pace l’inimicitie private*) (1583), which was a very popular example of the handbooks for peace-making. For Albergati, the crucial part of peace-making was its reliance upon satisfaction (*la sodisfattione*), that restored things to balance. It was opposed to punishment (*il castigo*) that was based on inequality (Broggio 2005: 78). Albergati tried to therefore draw a bright line separating private peace-making from the practice of vendetta. Yet such ideal distinctions often fell apart on the streets. Such writers on honor often found themselves in a difficult situation. They set out to



defend the *cavalleresca* mode of dispute but felt obliged to admit that the way it was taking shape led to a lot of violence.

Even among the writers on honor, the noble preference for self-help and non-judicial arbitration of disputes in early modern Italy hampered attempts to restrict violence. Equivocation started at the top: the princes of Italy were often involved in such conflicts and were not separated from the class of violent aristocrats. Albergati argued that Italian princes had been complicit in spreading a “false idea of honor” that gave prestige to the notion that it was a “honorable thing, that private persons may and should address their differences with arms, and that it would be a shameful thing to run to the magistrates” (Albergati 1583: 309). The requisite political will was therefore rarely present to tackle this problem at its roots. Additionally, in the early modern Italian case, as in many others, feelings of dissatisfaction with justice as it existed were widespread. Bribery, false witnesses, and abusive usage of the law courts were common. In comparison with mercenary justice, which itself was often used with vindictive aims, violent self-help did not appear as dishonorable to many elite men (Ajello 1996: 286).

The hope was that honor conflicts could be brought under control through a legalistic approach to issues of social disparity and insult. In the nineteenth century Kenelm Henry Digby, the Anglo-Irish writer on matters of honor, characterized the early modern *scienza cavalleresca* as a school of thought in which “insults are classed and subdivided, and the proper quantum of revenge laid down” (Digby 1876: 111). One consequence of such careful accounting of harms done was that the causes of conflict were given additional significance: they were raked over, examined, and re-examined. The generation of subtleties of honor through such rigorous inspection did not pass uncriticized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One example of contemporary criticism is the Spanish Jesuit Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (1595–1658) who, in his international publishing success *On the Difference Between Time and Eternity*, argued that “regarding honor, men have reduced things with so many punctilios and subtleties, that if really and truly they were all mad, they would not have been able to come to worse conclusions” (Nieremberg 1643: 202).

The body of thought and practice around offense and reaction to it, the *scienza cavalleresca*, could be approached in numerous ways. In this article, a trio of perspectives helps to reach the rounded view the complex phenomenon requires. The first is to see the *scienza cavalleresca* as, in part, an attempt to map the existing emotion rules of noble conflict. This approach has been the focus of this section. The second, and closely related, approach is to consider the *scienza cavalleresca* as a collection of different attempts to propose rules for feelings and behavior that did not only react to an outside reality but creatively extended existing practice. The third approach is to see the *scienza* as an object of emotions and emotional judgments itself. It is these two approaches that the next two sections of this article explore.

### **A taste for insult: *cartelli di sfida***

One aspect of the culture of honor conflicts that combined rule with practice were the *cartelli di sfida* or letters of challenge. These were written challenges laying out the nature of the dispute and the perceived rights and wrongs. As they capture the

creative use of the *scienza cavalleresca* in practice, they are particularly useful examples of how the notions of correct behavior and feeling were utilized in practice beyond the textbooks of honor. Further they serve to illustrate how the honor norms of the *scienza cavalleresca* were themselves objects of emotional investment and interest. *Cartelli di sfida* could be hand-written or printed and attached as posters or delivered as letters. They often involved an attempt to pull the noble public into the dispute. Indeed, entire conflicts could be held through the exchange of *cartelli* as well as bolstered by expert opinions given by duel doctors and commentaries by leading princes.

Before the outlawing of the duel, such *cartelli* were licit parts of politics. The manipulation of the insult and the process of exchanging *cartelli* were part of the highest politics of Italy. During the power struggles of the sixteenth century, they played a major role in the murder of Pier Luigi Farnese, the Duke of Parma, in a conspiracy orchestrated by the Governor of Milan Ferrante Gonzaga, and supported by Emperor Charles V. In a letter to Charles V, Ferrante Gonzaga outlined how he planned to exploit the maxims of the *cavalleresca* code through a pretended affront. He outlined his plot that he would instruct one of his servants to insult a trusted man, who would, to escape Gonzaga's instant reprisal, flee to Crema. From Crema, this trusted man would then send *cartelli di sfida* to Gonzaga. Receiving these letters, Gonzaga would then deem them an unacceptable presumption and make known his intention to take revenge through assassins. This plot would be apparently uncovered, and the trusted man would flee instead to Piacenza, from whence he would send further challenges and *cartelli*. Then, Gonzaga would send men to Piacenza who would be allowed entrance by some well-disposed Piacentine nobles who would judge it a fair revenge mission. Rather than assassinating the decoy, this group would instead assassinate Pier Luigi Farnese (de Leva 1867: 357–58).

The exchange of letters of challenge became legally murky in the post-Tridentine period, as they were so tightly connected to dueling. So, for instance, Panfilo Persico (1629: 202) in his book of advice on letter-writing and other secretarial matters, *On the Secretary (Del segretario)*, refused to provide any instructions for their composition. But the format was very popular both before and after Trent, as it could be denied that a duel was the goal of the exchange and princely control over such exchanges was always incomplete. The Jesuit Domenico Gamberti criticized the obsession in Modena for “all the pens of the court” to write *cartelli* that drew them into “bloody disputes” that were not necessary and therefore risked public safety (Gamberti 1659: 183). The genre was a particular site for the creative exploration of emotion rules around honor conflict. One part of such discussions was criticism of how others wrote *cartelli*. The criticism of style and behavior in pursuit of a dispute was a common feature of the system: many pointed to trespassed rules of decorum and proper emotional expression (Quint 1997: 257). Indeed, one central tactic were attempts to paint opponents as unreasonable, outrageous, or liars. Accusing others of violations of rules was part of the game, albeit at times a very serious one.

In the composition of such *cartelli*, aristocrats could turn to concrete advice given in the manuals of the *scienza cavalleresca*. Giuseppe Campanile's (c. 1650–1670) *Come si devono formare li cartelli di giostra, e di steccato* (How One Should Write Letters Of Challenge, or Of Combat), a seventeenth-century manuscript, was a guide

to writing such letters of challenge. Campanile, like many commentators, disparaged current trends. The notion of a perfect form of honor that was being besmirched by current improper practices was a regular trope, involving a corrupted present and a perfect past. Campanile's advice was that the "knightly profession" should only be the pursuit of those who want to display "justice and fortitude" (ibid.: 1<sup>r</sup>). In fact, Campanile's work was rather critical of the current fashion of writing *cartelli*. He argues that they should, ideally, be "very honest, courteous, and respectful to those they address" (ibid.: 2<sup>r</sup>). Putting on the airs of a gladiator (*fare il mirmillone*) was legitimate in "burlesque theatre" but not in the written statement of an honorable lord (ibid.). Campanile related having seen challenges that attempted to adopt an exaggerated style, which he compares to the figure Rodomonte from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, who was a blustering duelist. Such actions "reduced those who wrote them to disgust, not only ridicule" (ibid.). The vision of an ideal time of honor from which the contemporary age had lapsed was strong in Campanile's account. He stuck closely to the ideal of the sword-wielding noble as an arbiter of justice. He criticized those "vain noble brains" who "don't know what the weight of a sword is, nor why the belt became fitting for the notable personage to wear"; that is, who do not understand the value of restraint (ibid.). Such "worldly youths" use the sword not for the defense of justice but as "cutthroat braggarts" (ibid.).

Campanile's short treatise argued that the true value of honor and of dueling was abused. Whether it is best to take Campanile's avowed love of the aristocratic version of honor at first appearances is debatable. Born in Diano, Principato Ultra, in the Kingdom of Naples, he was a producer of various literary and pseudo-academic texts. A member of the *Accademia degli Oziosi*, a literary-scientific academy in Naples, he lived among the high aristocracy of the Kingdom. As an orbiter of the Neapolitan nobility (de Tejada 1964: 352), his literary output was guided by the twinned vices of the courtier: mockery and flattery. In the end, his aristocratic ventures ended badly as he was imprisoned for undertaking a project of forged genealogy, and he died in the prisons of the *Vicaria* in Naples. While it is difficult to ascertain Campanile's own assessment of aristocratic conflict from a treatise that satisfied a lively demand for written material on honor in seventeenth-century Naples, his discussion of appropriate standards of expression in aristocratic conflict at least reveals an area of debate. It is also notable that Campanile deploys the discourse of a lost golden age besmirched by the new innovations of a young generation who do not truly understand the grace and weight of honor. This shows an important connection between temporality and emotion in the case of honor conflict.

Other evidence can be found of similar reflections on the *cartelli* in the post-Tridentine climate. Giuseppe Ansidei (1691) in his *Knightly Treatise Against the Abuse of the Upholding of Private Enmities* (*Trattato cavalleresco contra l'abuso del mantenimento delle private inimicizie*) argued that, in the absence of princely support for dueling, the exchange of *cartelli* had become an exercise in vanity. This was due to the frequency with which duels would either not take place at all, and therefore the exchange of written threats was nothing but empty boasting, or would take place in a location that lacked the necessary license (*franchigia del campo*) and were thereby shameful (ibid.: 145).

While the imagined medieval perfection of the duel had passed, its romantic image lingered and played a crucial role in the taste for dueling. The persistence

influence of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* was one of the major sources for the aristocratic imagination. Drawing on the story of the Frankish knight Roland during the war between Charlemagne and the Saracens, the multivolume work was published between 1516 and 1532. These fantastic images of chivalric glory were of great importance for early modern Italians. Indeed, *Orlando furioso* was engaged with by the authors of the *scienza cavalleresca* who interpreted the events of the poem with the tools of this science. In 1566 a Venetian edition of *Orlando furioso* was printed that included *pareri in duello* – opinions on matters regarding duels – on the events narrated by Ariosto (Erspamer 1982: 19). In 1650 these were extracted and published separately (Pareri in duello 1650). In 1710, Scipione Maffei recounted that this version “only for a few lines” was worth a huge amount on the antiquarian market (Maffei 1710: 264). Ansidei's (1691: 105, 153–4, 257–8) treatise on enmities cites examples from *Orlando furioso* to make knightly points. The *scienza cavalleresca* was object of a passionate demand. It was a fashionable and attractive set of practices.

While honor and violence in these contexts often had a serious and heavy air, in practice there was often a large amount of humor and irreverence in the emotions around such conflicts. In the actual *cartelli di sfida*, the genre is revealed to be, at least in some cases, a site of considerable inventive usage of the language and concepts of the *scienza cavalleresca*. The collection of *cartelli di sfida* held by the *Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio* in Bologna testify to a culture with substantial playful elements that were closely related to the pursuit of love and to inventive poetic creation. Such texts discourage reading the honor culture as purely tedious punctiliousness: excitement and play were important elements of the culture of challenge and riposte beyond only anger and the tiresome arithmetic of honor. In fact, the fine gradations of the *scienza cavalleresca* provided a rich range of pigments to depict conflict with personal flair.

The existence of some very staid honor-bound men could also be an opportunity for entertainment. The genre could be parodied and sent-up at the same time as honor conflicts and violence troubled the cities of early modern Italy. There was no contradiction between these modes of serious and ludic engagement. The *cartello* that begins *BARBAROUS Cavalier* (“BARBARO Cavalier” 1636) is presented in an ingenious design of a shell. Playing with form, the *cartello di sfida*, was an opportunity to show not only a devotion to honor but also a lightness of touch, and a modern grace.

The rhetoric of another *cartello* which opens with the line “Pirodamante Cavalier Sanguè, E Foco a Cavalieri Bolognesi” (“Pirodamante Cavalier Sanguè” 1550–1700: 1<sup>3</sup>) is also worthy of note.<sup>3</sup> The language is full of convoluted metaphor, lifting up personal rivalries into epic poetic struggles. The author, describing his rise from provincial origins, writes: “the inhospitable and savage rigors of my unknown land could not hinder the progress of my warlike endeavors; and the sweeping and steep peaks of my astounding lands were vile trenches compared to my glorious and magnanimous undertakings” (ibid.: 1<sup>3</sup>). Such elaborate language was typical of the Bolognese genre. At the same time, Bologna's nobility was highly violent (Rose 2019). The vocabulary of

<sup>3</sup>These two *cartelli* as well as many others can be accessed here: <http://badigit.comune.bologna.it/foglinfesta/sfida.htm>.

chivalry was rich and could be used in various ways, many of these *cartelli* used mythical characters or legendary figures. While such playfulness seems to be the sort of vain composition of *cartelli* that Campanile criticized. The *cartelli di sfida* could be associated with carnival festivities and masked celebrations.

The existence of strong moralizing rules over appropriate feelings and behaviors coexisted with the ability to use the component parts of such systems in creative ways. The *scienza* could be approached with esthetic flair and provided rich forms of satisfaction. In this way, I would identify it as a set of objects or situations that could be appreciated through the techniques of taste in the sense of Antoine Hennion (2007: 19), that is, as an active process: “to taste is to *make feel*, and to *make oneself feel*, and also, by the sensations of the body . . . to *feel oneself doing*” (ibid.: 101). The *cartelli* are but one trace of practices that were not just literary but also corporeal. The next section pursues the duel as an object of taste through a single case study.

### Disgust for duelists: challenging honor codes around 1700

At the turn of the eighteenth century a growing number of denunciations of the culture that sustained honor conflict emerged. These repudiations were often colored by severe distaste, demonstrating frustration, grief, and revulsion at the status quo. Such disgust toward the duel and the ideology of the *scienza cavalleresca* that underpinned it is instructive as it sheds light both on the feeling rules related to the *scienza cavalleresca* and potential factors in its decline.

The first major critical examiner of the *scienza cavalleresca* was Scipione Maffei (1675–1755). Maffei was a prolific scholar and antiquarian, a vocation he pursued after military service in his youth. In 1710, a few years after his service in the Spanish War of Succession, he published his excoriating criticism *On the So-Called Knightly Science (Della scienza chiamata cavalleresca)*. One main aspect of Maffei’s argument was that resentment, contrary to what the *scienza* held, was a product of interior passion not a tool that contained or revealed truth. Resentment did not have the quality of law or virtue, rather it “emerges nowhere but from our passion, and it has nothing to do with the truth of past events” (Maffei 1710: 466). Maffei argued that the entire system of the *scienza cavalleresca* made grave errors in attributing to the worst aspects of human nature (being resentful, easily offended, and vicious) the glories of the best. In the eyes of Maffei, it was a category error to have hitched probative qualities to emotion.

He surveyed many of the works of this science, arguing that they promoted the violence of vendetta even when they argued against it. He made a historical argument that such habits of mind had been formed by barbarian rule, and what Italian society needed was to revive the true moral tenets of antiquity (Maffei 1710: 466).

Maffei also made the important observation that “where everyone writes about peace, there is no peace”, meaning that the *scienza cavalleresca* was associated with higher levels of violence. Moreover, he argued that drawn-out, bloody feuds only existed in cities where this supposedly “pacifying science” was practiced (ibid.: 488). This was an early example of the identification of peace with the feud, the notion that peace-making was not antithetical to feuding but central to it, that would later be an important part of anthropology (Gluckman 1955). For Maffei, this science

should be reviled as the survival of a barbarian past: “How is it possible, that while we would be utterly ashamed of every little trace of the barbarian, which may remain in architecture, or in the figurative and ingenious arts, we still don’t bother to be ashamed of these so great vestiges, in our innermost selves, and in the most essential part, they still remain, that is, in our opinion and in our customs” (ibid.: 505). The criticism of contemporary practices involved the mobilization of shame for another purpose for Maffei: to promote shame for the failed process of civilization that allowed for brutality to remain in the streets and piazzas while the buildings that surrounded them had been purged of such grotesqueries.

As well as Scipione Maffei, another important critic of noble culture at the turn of the century was Paolo Mattia Doria (1667–1746). Born a Genoan noble, he moved to Naples as a young man. Here he made a career as a lawyer and, later, as a philosopher. Doria emerged as a fervent critic of aspects of the aristocratic culture of the late seventeenth century, and especially the deleterious effects of Spanish rule in the Kingdom of Naples during the preceding two hundred years. Doria made arguments about the historical nature of the problem of violent revenge, narratives that would grow in strength in the reform thinking of the Neapolitan Enlightenment and that were deeply connected to emotions. Doria’s work also depicts how changing aristocratic customs toward the end of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century were interpreted by contemporaries.

In Paolo Mattia Doria’s (1973) *Maxims of the Spanish Government* (*Massime del governo spagnolo*), written around 1710, he aimed to uncover the so-called maxims that underpinned Spanish policy of the previous two centuries, he characterized the Neapolitan aristocracy during the period as punctilious, vengeful, self-regarding, and vain. According to Doria, the Neapolitan nobility was so “vain, and so proud” for two reasons (Doria 1973: 32). First, they regarded the “majesty of their lineage . . . that they display with notions of the most ridiculous vanity” as greater than all the other nobilities of Europe and, second, due to their unrivalled feudal rights: “the authority they possess over their vassals” (Doria 1973: 32). They were left with no virtue “(if one can call it a virtue) but punctiliousness in duelling, and skill in knightly arms” (ibid.). For Doria, this problem had been intentionally exacerbated by the Spanish regime.

This belief in the negative effect of Spanish government was shared by others such as the noble Tiberio Carafa, the prince of Chiusano, who wrote in his memoirs that the combination of “the spirit of vainglory” that “was suckled by Neapolitans almost together with milk” was combined with “the spirit of Envy and Discord cultivated in their souls by the Spanish government” (Carafa 1733: 14). This was a very common interpretation during the Austrian viceroyalty and at the beginning of the Bourbon period. During the closing years of Spanish rule, Carafa himself had participated in the 1701 conspiracy of the Macchia launched after the death of King Charles II of Spain in 1700 and was forced to flee to the imperial court of Vienna. Such arguments that the duel was product of foreign exploitation also picked up on the long-standing attribution of the duel to the Germanic tribe of the Longobards.

To return to the *Maxims*, Doria (1973) reflected upon the changing customs toward the end of the seventeenth century when a new freedom of conversation between aristocratic men and women had opened up. According to Doria (the cite goes here in this case; you can put the date and page) this new spirit of gallantry that

this created in Naples was not a positive historical development (ibid. 33). Rather, according to him it created more opportunities for feelings of betrayal and violence. The taste for romantic intrigue led men to betray other men by pretending to be friends to get close to their kin or even their wives (ibid.). Doria argued that the duel by this time had become more often a practice of exchange of words than blades, but even earlier in the period it was always the case that violent deaths were only the visible part of a vast iceberg of conflict.

He criticized that the perversion of the duel which “had been invented by barbarous races as a proof” into a set of customs that produced “infinite lies” (Doria 1973: 57). Doria argued that, while in its barbarous origins the duel might have been uncivilized, it wasn’t as mired in intentional lying as the lengthy exchanges of letters that characterized the culture of the duel in his time. Participants in this culture turned to the *scienza cavalleresca*, which they make “a most profound state mystery,” which he argues is more an “art of the heart” than a “science of the mind” (ibid.: 57–8). In this they “reduce it to the most subtle legal articles” and that “to twist the article in their favor, they resort to thousands of lies in the narration of the facts” (Doria 1973: 58). For Doria, the promotion of lying was a result of Spanish exploitation of the vices of the nobility. Rather than a passion for liberty, the Neapolitan nobility generated “the vainest science of duels” (Doria 1973: 60). It was a science that promoted lying through the misrepresentation of the facts, a feature that offended Doria’s philosophic tendencies.

A principal reason why Doria is such an interesting commentator on issues of aristocratic honor is that he underwent a conversion process from a devoted duellist to a critic of noble punctiliousness. Moreover, in another work, his manuscript treatise, *The Art of Understanding Oneself* (*L’Arte di conoscer se stesso*) (Doria 1741), he described the emotional difficulties of such a transition. This makes his life story particularly demonstrative of the possible routes for noblemen in this period and underscores how feeling rules can shift as well as the role emotion work plays in such shifts (Hochschild 1979).

In *The Art of Understanding Oneself* (1741), written five years before his death, Doria provided an account of his own life as part of an endeavor to understand himself. In it he described the forces that coalesced to make him a *Petit Maître* (little master), a dandy who followed the French fashions of the time. He explains himself as a lover of glory and honor from the time he was a young boy. He describes himself as a curious boy, “a little melancholic but lively,” who always wanted to know the reasons behind things, such as what stars were or what God was and where he was (Doria 1982: 412).

He was from a young age envious of men of achievement in war or science. He also labeled himself “excessively scornful and resentful” even as a young boy (Doria 1982: 413). His proof for this tendency was that he resorted to attempting to murder a priest who, reprimanding him during a lesson, struck him. Doria (ibid.) recounted attacking the priest with a knife and, when this attempt failed, tried to throw himself out of a window rather than acquiesce to punishment. For Doria, this juvenile misadventure was proof of a constitutional sensitivity to resentment which would be exacerbated by circumstance.

From a very young age, he recalled that he was in love with honor and glory and feared dishonor and shame. Praise and criticism affected him equally hard in his

schooling, with the latter leading him to tears. As a child he loved to watch military exercises and going to watch the galleys in the port of Genoa (Doria 1982: 413). The old cavaliers who organized exercises and went aboard the galleys tried to scare the infant Doria through displays of bellicose ferocity, but he apparently was not afraid, and the cavaliers praised him for his bravery to his mother. However, he was very critical of the education he received that was “vain and defective,” like, in his opinion, that of all nobles of the time (ibid: 414). One of the main problems was that it instilled in him, in his opinion, a lifelong fear of death. As, to dissuade from sin, his teachers had “planted in my mind a horrible and terrifying idea of death” (ibid.). Such cautionary tales only served to make him fearful.

He regretted not being given a proper Platonic idea of death in his education, in which the soul survives. He described his education as being full of a fear of death, with not enough talk of paradise (although in the manuscript he discusses Plato far more than Jesus), and the strange addition to the preponderance of fear was a gallant education in the practices of the nobility. His mother wished for him to be “adorned with nonchalant (*disinvolve*) noble manners, as well as genteel, lively and graceful in conversation” (Doria 1982: 416), in sum: “one of those oh-so fashionable and nonchalant *Petits Maitres*” (ibid.). Again, he criticizes being raised with the idea that “riches form the essence of man” but never being taught how to be prudent with such riches, setting him up, in his opinion, for a lifetime of prodigality (Doria 1982: 416).

On his arrival to Naples, Doria dedicated himself to three things: academic study, litigation in the law courts, and the lifestyle of the *scienza cavalleresca*. He writes that: “because I have always been eager to imitate the virtues of Men, having seen that in Naples the Nobles professed to follow the Science of Knighthood in Duels, and that they held the honor of courage in arms much more than in riches, I became enflamed with the spirit of the acquisition of glory” (Doria 1982: 420). In Naples, then, Doria became “a nonchalant, studious, litigious, sensual, dueling, scornful, and vengeful Petit Maitre”; a complex mix of different emotional styles (ibid.). He provided an account of the situation in Naples:

In Naples then, due to the fact that in that city the following knightly maxims (*Massime di Cavagliero*) were followed, that is, that it would be a dishonorable and shameful act not to punish a man who was inferior to you if you had received an offence from him, and that to forgive in a generous manner was shameful . . . . In Naples it was [also] a maxim of extreme shame if after having received an offence the offended party did not call an equal to fight a duel, on this the *Scienza Cavaglieresca* made a school of metaphysics, and of punctilios, I was so used to this vain knightly sciece (*Cavaglieresca Scienza*) that I became so sensitive to the honor of the duel and so in less than three years I fought three duels myself. (Doria 1982: 421)

The situation was such that the science was necessary to hash out the very difficult questions of precedence and who owed what to whom, what would be shameful, and what would be noble. This led to Doria gaining a sensitivity for insult that, he wrote, would stay with him for life. The obsession for “maxims” regarding glory trained him to be “so sensitive” (*così sensitivo*) to issues of glory and insult (Doria 1982:



422). Rules or maxims became objects of such emotional and cognitive investment that they generated this disposition.

But Doria provided a very complex account of his own selfhood that did not reduce him only to the duel-sensitive noble. He also recounts other habitual practices that, in the long run, provided him a path out of his obsession for dueling. The saving grace for Doria was that at the same time as he “was following the profession of *Petit Maitre Cavagliero Duellista*, romantic, *Ciscibeo*, and litigator” he also dedicated himself to studying day and night (Doria 1982: 421).<sup>4</sup> He described using heavy study as a way to shift emotions in his own head. When he found himself preoccupied with romance, the love of a woman, or questions of honor, he was able to shift this preoccupation after three days of solid hard study (ibid.).

Moreover, for Doria it was particularly important for this study to be abstract: “I studied this method freely and with pleasure, using it I was brought to a state that the pleasure of the senses served me as a relief from the fatigue that abstract studies bring, and abstract studies served me as a brake on the impetus and violence of the passions that I felt in my soul because of my unregulated and ill-governed senses” (Doria 1982: 423). In his telling, study was an emotional practice that allowed for passions to be dampened, especially those that could provoke aggression.

For Doria, the impact of such an upbringing, education, and socialization was very strong. He remained rather pessimistic about the general scope for thorough and permanent alteration of ways of feeling learned early in life. The rather lofty goal he sets for a person who wished to achieve such change, even in part, was for such a person to become a metaphysical philosopher. He followed Plato’s doctrine arguing that a person must know the truth to recognize errors. Yet even such recognition only went so far: he argued that “I knew that the *Scienza Cavaglieresca* was entirely founded on vain and false principles, but with all this I could not refrain from doing what the other *Cavaglieri* did when there was some occasion for a punctilio of honor” (Doria 1982: 424). An intellectual appreciation of the vacuity of the justification of honor conflicts did not lessen their emotional resonance or appeal. Self-knowledge was necessary but not sufficient for the escape from honor sensitivity.

Doria used his own case to argue his view that it is very difficult to extinguish the errors instilled in childhood, even with a knowledge of why they are false. Instead, a constant vigilance is required to avoid backsliding. The only hope for rescue is the very rocky path toward philosophy, but even a proven philosopher often relapses into childhood errors. Doria explains some of the tactics he uses when old vices flare up, such as how he uses reflection on truth when he is “assaulted by false sensations of the fear of disdain” (ibid.: 425). Such reflections, he argued, gave him succour and the ability to withstand them better.

Doria provided a vituperous critique of the Neapolitan passion for honor conflicts and in his works of political theory, most notably *On the Civil Life* (*La Vita Civile*), would provide a model for a society that would dethrone the cult of honor. Doria’s disillusionment and use of abstract study to dislodge honor sensitivity was not a representative case, in fact it was rather unusual. Nonetheless, it is possible to identify in his experiences a disgust toward the *scienza cavalleresca* and the

<sup>4</sup>A *cicisbeo* was a man who served as a gallant companion of a high-born gentlewoman, who was married to someone else (see Stapelbroek 2008: 134).

formality of dispute that would be of great significance in the course of the eighteenth century. This disgust was all the more vivid for Doria as it was born out of an intimate knowledge and adherence to the duelists' culture of violence and affront, which required active emotion management to counteract. His account of his transition to an austere Platonism is also instructive. Philosophy for Doria was not only an intellectual activity but a profoundly emotional one: because it was emotion work, in Hochschild's (1979: 561) sense, that aimed at the suppression of certain feelings. The devotion to a different form of philosophy and his self-identification as a philosopher was vital for his self-transformation. While Doria was critical of many aspects of the reform movements of his age, the emotions of revulsion toward the punctilious aristocracy, and their violence, would be of great import in anti-feudal critique later in the century.

For the majority of Doria's lifetime, dueling remained a challenge for governance. The passion for dueling outlived the Spanish regime and continued to trouble the Austrian viceroyalty as well as the early years of the Bourbon dynasty. For instance, in the 1720s a dangerous and disruptive feud between the Count of Conversano and the Marquis d'Oyra culminated in a duel. Both men were representatives of the rural baronage and their ancestors had fought a similar duel in the 1660s in Ostuni in Puglia. A printed manifesto of the "*quistione cavalleresca*" ("knightly challenge") that existed between the Count of Conversano and the prince of Francavilla was printed anonymously in the 1720s (De Tipaldo 1840: 446) highlighting the continuity of such prepared manifestos. For the Kingdom of Naples, it would be the reign of Charles VII (between 1734 and 1759) that achieved better control of aristocratic duelling. Especially important was the foundation of the Order of St. Gennaro, the members of which swore oaths not to duel each other. Article seven of the order's constitution committed the members "neither to challenge nor to accept duels or challenges for whatsoever reason; but remit every offense and affront to Our Grand Master to await of it his Royal decision and, instead, to work with industry and dexterity to impede and avert duels even between those who are not part of the Order" (Istituzione 1740: 17). This was part of an engaged campaign of the Bourbon monarchs to take control of the hierarchy of nobility (Montroni 2000: 30–1) by rewarding state service.

## Conclusion

Both for the passionate supporters of the *scienza cavalleresca*, and the critics, contemporary violence told a story: a story about how human passions were shaped and channelled into violence over time. Such stories told about honor and violence revealed the perceived historical development of early modern Italy, especially putative barbarian influence on norms. Coming to find the duel an object of disgust was a complicated process requiring, in Doria's case, emotional work to overcome acquired punctiliousness.

The *scienza cavalleresca* provided a range of fine distinctions and definitions that both formed emotions and provided a range of information about status conflicts. The content of the *scienza* could be engaged with intellectually and emotionally. The dispositions trained by such engagement could have deep roots. Doria (1982)

provided vivid testimony of how difficult emotional transformation away from this was after an emotional socialization in the culture of honor. For him, the escape out of the dilemma of violence relied upon metaphysical reflections and the prioritization of an austere Platonism and, nonetheless, he remained sensitive to insult and affront. The disgust toward the duel was in part a continuous self-hatred, an opposition to a habitus that was, for Doria, impossible to eradicate and could only be tempered through constant internal effort. The case of Doria demonstrates that to understand large-scale emotional change, such as long-run shifts in elite usages of violent self-help, it is important to attend to the contradictory details of how such shifts unfolded in particular people. For the case of Doria, this is the inner tensions of a disgust for duelling never quite dislodging a taste for insult.

The recent historiography of elite violence in early modern Italy (Broggio 2021; Carroll 2016, 2023; Rose 2019) has demonstrated important connections between the practice of the *scienza cavalleresca* and violence. The account of Doria's sensitivity to insult provides another case study in favor of seeing the *scienza cavalleresca* as encouraging more than restraining violence. The role of emotions in the history of homicide has mostly dealt with issues of trust in government and the contribution of cultures of honor to the incidence of homicide (Eisner 2001: 13; Roth 2009: 13). While not disputing the importance of feelings toward judicial and ministerial authority, I have sought to emphasize how historians can profitably look at the emotional attractions and repulsions of the culture of affront. Honor did not just compel nobles toward violence out of obligation, the culture surrounding it could be satisfying, attractive, and an object of esthetic engagement. Therefore, this article has sought to demonstrate how to bring theoretical approaches from sociology (Hennion 2007; Hochschild 1979, 1983) to the task of understanding the emotional dynamics of elite violence in the early modern period. It is also important to remember that participation in the ancillary activities of duelling, commentating, reading, and discussing the merits of honor conflicts was a deeply attractive and practical aspect for nobles, as Doria's passion for the duel makes clear. This is a reminder that while the *scienza cavalleresca* could be distant from the actual unfolding of violence on the streets, it nonetheless had passionate and significant investments.

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