

For much of the past century, Turin's fortunes have been tied to that of another dynasty, the Agnelli family, and – as with the House of Savoy – this relationship brought many benefits, but was also fraught with multiple tensions. Through Fiat, the automotive manufacturing company they founded, the Agnelli family spearheaded Turin's transformation into an industrial metropolis, initiating decades of explosive economic and demographic growth. For much of the twentieth century Fiat and the Agnelli family dominated every aspect of the city's life, but over the past couple of decades Fiat has entered a period of prolonged decline, calling into question Turin's position as a dominant center of manufacturing in Italy and Europe. The death of the last great patriarchs of the Agnelli family, Gianni and Umberto, in the first years of the new millennium thus fittingly mark a turning point in our story, as Turin now enters a new, uncertain post-industrial era. By hosting the Winter Olympics of 2006 Turin is seeking to relaunch itself as a different kind of metropolis, by drawing on its rich history and culture. The directions that this renewal will take are only just beginning to be imagined and explored. In this book we have tried to provide an overview of Turin's distinctive historical development. We think our account demonstrates that – like any great city – Turin has experienced cycles of decline and recovery, but that it has emerged stronger from each crisis, forging a new identity for itself in the process. This story of adversities surmounted is our contribution to the initiatives now under way to revitalize Turin, a city to which we are linked by many close personal friendships.

GWS

ALC

Los Angeles and Chicago, September 2005.