

as his personal emblem, and henceforth it became the heraldic device of the House of Savoy, passed down from generation to generation to the present day. Amadeus died a year later in Cyprus, where he had escaped after the crusading army suffered humiliating defeats in Syria. Another minority ensued, and it would be some time before his young son, Humbert III, could reassert the House of Savoy's claims over Turin and its diocese.

The bishop however now faced a challenge from another quarter: the citizenry. By mid-century there is clear evidence that a fully-fledged commune had been established at Turin. It probably consisted of the wealthier citizens, backed by elements of the lower classes, who however would have had no say in the government. The first mention of the commune's chief officials, who rejoiced in the grand Roman title of "consuls", appears in a notarial act of 1149 sealing an alliance between Turin and a neighboring lord. Another document from the same year records an alliance between Turin's "citizens" and the communes of Asti and Vercelli, directed against the new count of Savoy, Humbert III. At this juncture the emerging commune seems to have been acting in concert with the new Bishop Charles, who had succeeded to the diocese in 1147, and who would dominate the city until his death in 1169. An interval of two decades elapses before the consuls reappear in the historical record, probably because the bishop's forceful personality thrust the commune and its officials into the background. They finally reappear in 1170, after Charles's death. Until then it seems clear that the bishop was once again the supreme arbiter of Turin's political life.

The power and influence of the Church were evident too in the flowering of monastic life. The twelfth century saw the foundation of a number of important monasteries in the region around Turin. Some of these – as we have seen – were Alpine houses founded or sponsored by the counts of Savoy, but other pious benefactors endowed foundations in the Piedmontese plain within a short radius of the city. Many of them also functioned as hospices for the pilgrims who frequented the Frankish Road in growing numbers, bound for Rome or even in some cases for the Holy Land. Such were the monasteries of San Giacomo, whose hospice stood close to the crossing over the river Stura a little way north of the city, Santa Maria di Pozzo Strada west of the city, and Sant'Antonio di Ranverso, a few miles further west on the road to the Alps. This latter house was founded in 1156 as an offshoot of the Order of Hospitalers of St Anthony from Vienne in Provence. The Order specialized in treating the disease known as St Anthony's Fire, a painful in-