

independence for decades and were unwilling to submit to him; he, as their supreme overlord, could not countenance their insubordination. The ideological gulf between the emperor and the Italian communes was summed up by Bishop Otto of Freising, the emperor's uncle and close confidant, who wrote a history of the early part of his reign. The Italian cities, he noted with alarm, defied their bishops and forced the nobles of their surrounding territories to acknowledge their authority. They did not observe accepted social distinctions, for they granted knight hood to men of inferior status, or even to "workers in the mechanical arts", as Otto disdainfully observed. But he had to conclude that they now surpassed "all other states" in wealth and power. Their riches, their military strength, and their lack of respect for social hierarchies all made them a formidable threat to the feudal order embodied by the emperor.

Turin was only peripherally involved in this epic struggle, whose storm-center lay further to the east, in Lombardy. But Bishop Charles was a staunch ally of the emperor, and was caught up in the thick of the conflict. The bishop looked to the emperor for support in maintaining his authority over the ecclesiastical principality comprised by the city and his diocese, and in return was ready to give him unwavering loyalty, even against the pope. As a reward for this loyalty Barbarossa issued a charter in January 1159 confirming the bishop's rights over his diocese, which was defined as including all the territory in a radius of ten miles around Turin. The diocese thus comprised some neighboring towns, notably Chieri, which by then had established its own commune and was trying to break away from the bishop's overlordship. Furthermore, the charter denied any Savoyard rights over Turin. It is important to note too that although the charter was granted to Bishop Charles, it also benefited the citizens of Turin, for the diocese corresponded to the territory the city claimed for itself: by legitimizing the bishop's authority over this territory the charter also legitimized the city's claims to it. The citizens and their bishop thus shared a common interest in establishing their undisputed legal right to this territory, in trying to bring Chieri and the other towns to heel, and in excluding the count of Savoy.

At first, fortune favored Barbarossa's Italian campaigns. In March 1162 he conquered the rebellious city of Milan and laid it waste. In August he entered Turin in triumph with his consort, was crowned with her in the cathedral at the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, and then departed. But resistance soon sprang up again. Pope Alexander III resolutely opposed the expansion of imperial authority, and Milan quickly recovered. In 1167 it formed an alliance with other north Italian com-