

emperor and the pope. In 1209 Emperor Otto IV had been crowned at Rome by Pope Innocent III, but the amity between them broke down almost at once. Otto was bent on reviving Frederick Barbarossa's grand design for effective imperial rule over the Kingdom of Italy, which posed a direct threat to the pope's interests as ruler of the Papal State. Innocent therefore championed the claims of the young Frederick II of Hohenstaufen to the imperial crown, and helped foment the opposition that defeated Otto in 1214. Frederick II was crowned emperor in the following year, and was quickly recognized as overlord by the bishop of Turin, Giacomo di Carisio, reaffirming the traditional link between the bishops and their imperial protectors.

Count Thomas I of Savoy pointedly did not acknowledge Frederick II as his lord, and instead joined in a league against him with Vercelli and Milan, the traditional foe of imperial power. Turin and Bishop Giacomo perceived this league as directed not only against the emperor but against themselves, and so in 1222 allied against Thomas with his rival the marquis of Saluzzo. Fighting broke out, which was ended two years later in a treaty mediated by the city of Asti. This treaty contained a clause very detrimental to Turin's commercial interests; the merchants of Asti abandoned the use of Turin's bridge over the Po in favor of another crossing a short distance upriver at Carignano, which Thomas had recently acquired. They would then cross the Alps on roads passing through his territory and no longer pay tolls at Turin. This treaty foreshadowed a formal alliance between Asti and Count Thomas, by which the two parties would work together to extend their influence in Piedmont, and by which Asti recognized the Savoyard claims over Turin. This web of alliances extended Thomas's influence in Piedmont and threatened to encircle Turin. Meanwhile Thomas was constructing a wider web of alliances with other European rulers. One of his many sons, also named Thomas, married the heiress to the rich county of Flanders; another son became archbishop of Canterbury; one of his daughters married the count of Provence. She in turn bore four daughters, who would all marry kings: Louis IX of France; Henry III of England; his brother Richard Earl of Cornwall, who was elected King of the Romans (the title given to the designated heir to the Holy Roman Empire); and Charles Duke of Anjou, who would conquer the kingdom of Sicily. Backed by this network of alliances, the House of Savoy was fast becoming an international power. The wealth, military force and diplomatic influence that these alliances brought with them made the counts of Savoy a formidable factor in the politics of northwestern Italy.

Thomas's plans to dominate Piedmont and annex Turin were tem-