

a successful if limited policy of territorial expansion, and established his lordship over several nearby cities and territories, notably Ivrea, Fossano and Savigliano. Meanwhile he left the day-to-day administration of Turin to his Vicario and Judge, who resided in his new castle and governed in conjunction with the city council. The records of the council's deliberations have been preserved from 1325 onwards (with some gaps), so that from this time we can begin to see in detail how the city was actually run. But these records give no hint of the relations between the council and the prince's officials, or of the attitude of the ruling families to their new lord. On the surface all was apparently calm, but some families within the urban oligarchy still evidently resented the imposition of Savoyard rule. The basis of their hostility can be traced back to the middle of the previous century, when the civic elite had split into pro-Savoyard and anti-Savoyard factions, which fought one another bitterly. These fissures persisted after Thomas III seized control of Turin in 1280; some of the powerful urban clans that had opposed Savoyard rule remained unreconciled to their new ruler, and looked for ways to overthrow him.

These ancient enmities burst out in 1334, when two of Turin's most powerful families, the Zucca and the Sili, conspired to overthrow Philip of Achaëa and install his rival, Marquis Frederick of Saluzzo. The ring-leader was Giovanni Zucca, provost of the cathedral chapter, who enlisted the support of a fellow-canon from the Sili family. Their plan was secretly to gather a band of armed men loyal to their families, seize one of the city's gates, and admit Frederick and his troops while Philip of Achaëa was absent from the city on campaign. But in May 1334, just as the plotters were about to act, Philip returned unexpectedly to Turin, forcing them to postpone putting their plan into action. The delay proved fatal, for details of the plot began to leak out. Early in September Giovanni Zucca gathered his men once again, ready to seize one of the gates as soon as Frederick of Saluzzo's troops appeared outside the city. But the troops failed to arrive on time, and meanwhile the gathering of armed men at Zucca's house had aroused suspicion. A general hue and cry was raised; the bell of the commune was rung, summoning the citizens to arms; the conspirators' attempt to capture the city gate was foiled, and they tried to flee. Some were arrested; others managed to join Frederick's troops when they arrived, too late. In the aftermath of the plot some of the less significant conspirators were executed, while Giovanni Zucca, his elite co-conspirators, and the entire Zucca and Sili families were banished, together with several non-noble families who had backed them.