

a large crowd of plebeians demonstrated before the city hall, demanding his release. These undercurrents of tension help explain why Prince Amadeus of Savoy-Achaea, who had ruled Turin since coming of age in 1378, approved the refoundation of the armed association of commoners, the Società di San Giovanni Battista. In 1389 he approved the statutes for the new association; it was apparently a revival of the armed association formed in 1336, which had fallen into disuse. The avowed purpose of the new association, like the old, was to maintain public order, and to protect plebeians from the violence of the urban nobles. To this end it could mobilize a force of 400 armed men, all from the lower classes, led by their own officers. They stood ready to assemble in an emergency, when summoned by the ringing of the society's own bell. The Società di San Giovanni Battista was clearly a lower-class organization; pointedly, its statutes denied entry to any members of the city's six leading noble families.

Prince Amadeus died in 1402, to be succeeded by his brother Ludovico. By this time the Achaea princes were choosing to reside at Turin rather than at Pinerolo. Shortly after his accession Prince Ludovico took a step that would further enhance Turin's importance in comparison to the other Piedmontese cities; he established a university there. His decision seems to have been prompted by a temporary migration of professors and students from the University of Pavia, fleeing the fighting that was then threatening their city. In 1404 Ludovico acceded to their request and created a university, or *Studium generale*, for them at Turin. He then secured a Bull from Pope Boniface IX and a charter from the Emperor Sigismund authorizing the new institution. It was intended to train students from the Savoyard states, but it also attracted foreigners from other parts of Italy, and eventually from France, England, the Low Countries and Germany. The first three decades of its life were marked by uncertainty and frequent interruptions, however, as the students and professors migrated periodically to other cities. Sometimes they did so to escape the plague, but they also moved around in response to tempting financial offers, for their presence, the rents they paid and the purchases they made, represented an economic windfall for any city that played host to them. So the community of students and professors who formed the university transferred itself to Chieri in 1427, then to Savigliano, before settling definitively at Turin in 1436. The new university's main strength was its faculty of Law, whose professors outnumbered all the other faculties combined. Turin's faculty of Theology, usually the dominant part of any medieval university, was relatively small, because the teaching of this discipline was entrusted to clerics from