

sociation was dissolved. Yet although it might on occasion act as an informal police force, it also subverted the public peace. Its members attacked the duke's unpopular Savoyard men-at-arms in the streets, and fought with the university students – in each case, it seems, the intent was to defend the honor of Turin's citizens against outsiders. The Abbey also took it upon itself to uphold its own version of public morality, through the crude popular rituals of the *charivari*, designed to humiliate and ridicule – often very brutally – those who contravened the norms of accepted behavior, especially in sexual matters. Widows who married younger men were subjected to coarse insults and serenaded with “rough music”; cuckolded husbands, or men deemed to be under their wives' thumb, were humiliated by being made to ride backwards on an ass; young women who left to marry outside the city were made to pay a tax to the Abbot and his Fools; widowers who remarried were compelled to pay the cost of a banquet for the members of the Abbey.

6. *The End of Savoyard Rule, 1465-1536.*

From the mid-fifteenth century Turin's role as the capital of the Savoyard lands in Piedmont helped stimulate its economic and demographic growth. By the time a lasting peace settlement between the warring Italian states was signed at Lodi in 1454, the dukes of Savoy were in control of most of Piedmont, from the Val d'Aosta in the north, to Mondovì and the Genoese border in the south. Equidistant between the northern and southern frontiers of the Savoyard possessions, and astride the road from Lombardy to the provinces west of the Alps, Turin was now the strategic and governmental center of the Principality of Piedmont. Within the Savoyard lands as a whole it was still overshadowed by the old capital at Chambéry, where the ducal court usually resided, but the center of gravity of the Savoyard state was now shifting inexorably eastwards. Turin's importance rose as the dukes came to recognize that their Italian provinces now constituted the demographic and economic heart of their state: Piedmont was wealthier, more populous, and more urbanized than their mountainous domains to the west. It was also the gateway to the rich plains and cities of Lombardy that they coveted. In the final stages of the wars with Milan, Duke Ludovico I directed his campaigns from Turin; he and his successors convened the assembly of Estates that represented their different lands there with increasing frequency; the personnel of the ducal council – now officially known as the “Council Resident at Turin” – grew in size as it acquired