

ty, however, she faced challenges to her authority: a regent's power was never considered equal to that of a crowned adult prince, and challengers could claim legitimacy by posing as defenders of the young prince's true interests against the regent. Yolanda was unpopular, for she was perceived by the Savoyard nobility as unduly favorable to the interests of her brother, King Louis IX of France. In 1476 Amadeus IX's ambitious younger brother, Philip of Bresse – known also as Philip Lackland – rebelled against the regent. He immediately moved to capture Turin, in order to control its castle with its store of weapons and artillery, and the ducal administration that functioned there. A year later, Duchess Yolanda retook the city from him by force. In 1483 her son Charles I came of age, and immediately took possession of Turin. Then on his death in 1490 his widow, Blanche of Monferrato, acting as regent for their young son Charles John Amadeus, quickly seized control of the city. When the boy died in 1496 it was the turn of Philip of Bresse to take over the city once again, this time as duke in his own right, but he reigned for only a year. His young son Filibert succeeded him, but his reign too was destined to be short. Only in 1504, with the accession of his younger brother as Duke Charles II, did the sequence of brief, troubled reigns and disputed minorities come to an end. Throughout these conflicts all the contending parties sought to control Turin as the key to controlling the principality of Piedmont.

This prolonged instability had an adverse effect on the tenor of life at Turin. Public order, tenuous at the best of times, was undermined by the constant, often violent changes of ruler. Yet the city's cultural and religious life does not seem to have been negatively affected. Professors came and went at the university, and the ducal court continued to commission works of art. The painter Gian Martino Spanzotti, originally from Vercelli, came to Turin in 1494 at the request of the Duchess Yolanda. He established a workshop and produced paintings for the city's churches, including altarpieces and a fresco for San Domenico. Macrino d'Alba, another representative of the school of Vercelli, was active at the same time fulfilling commissions for various local churches and monasteries. Spanzotti's pupil, Defendente Ferrari, who worked in his Turinese studio in the 1490s, would become the leading painter of the next generation in Piedmont. Inspired by the influence of Cardinal Domenico della Rovere, ecclesiastical patronage of the arts increased. His successors as bishops of Turin, his nephew Giovanni Ludovico della Rovere, and then the latter's nephew Giovanni Francesco, continued the family tradition of artistic patronage.

The growth of ecclesiastical patronage of the arts at the end of the