

by Pope Leo X, who separated it from the archbishopric of Milan, to which it had been subject since the days of St Maximus. The promotion was clearly attributable to political rather than spiritual motives. In 1511 Pope Julius II had elevated the bishopric of Saluzzo to the rank of archbishopric at the request of its ruler. The result was a serious loss of authority and revenue for the bishop of Turin: fifty-five parishes were transferred from his see to the new archbishopric. Determined to make up for this loss, and determined not to be outmatched by his rival the marquis of Saluzzo, Duke Charles II successfully petitioned Leo X to make Turin an archbishopric too. The new archbishop did not hold sway over an extensive area; he was given only two subject sees, Ivrea and Mondovì. But Turin's elevation to archiepiscopal status was a further indication of the primacy the city had now achieved in Piedmont. In 1517 a distinguished prelate, Claude de Seyssel, was appointed archbishop. Like his predecessors for most of the past century, he came of aristocratic stock, but he was not a scion of the Piedmontese nobility, as they had been: his family ranked high among the feudal elite of the duchy of Savoy. He had had a long career, first as a student and teacher of the Law at the University of Turin, then as an adviser at the French court. He was a distinguished scholar, connected to the Christian humanists in France associated with the great Lefèvre d'Étaples. He was the author of a number of theological works and an important political treatise, *La grant monarchie de France*. Late in life he grew disillusioned with politics and the court, and decided to devote himself to spiritual concerns and pastoral work. Once elevated to the archiepiscopal throne he showed himself to be an exemplary prelate. During a famine in 1519, a year before his death, he organized poor relief measures and presided over the establishment of a municipal pawnshop, the Monte di Pietà, to advance loans to the poor at minimal interest. The Monte however was destined to have a short life: it would succumb to the political turmoil that was shortly to engulf Turin and Piedmont.

In 1494 the relative political calm that had followed the Peace of Lodi in 1454 was shattered by a French invasion of Italy, which initiated a cycle of wars between France and Spain for dominance in the Italian peninsula that would last until 1559. This long-drawn struggle confronted the dukes of Savoy with an insurmountable dilemma. France was too close and too powerful to permit them to remain neutral, as they wished. They became pawns in the struggle, because Turin and their lands in Piedmont constituted the natural avenue for French armies marching into Italy, and so their states became a battleground for the two great powers. Again and again French armies crossed the Alps into Pied-