

ential nature of its membership (it attracted many noblemen and high state officials), set it apart from the common run of Turin's religious brotherhoods. And unlike the other confraternities, it was destined to prosper in a distinctly worldly way. Through its charitable activities it attracted many rich bequests, so that by the eighteenth century it had grown into a well-endowed financial institution. Unlike many of Turin's confraternities, it survived the upheavals of the French Revolution and, by an extraordinary quirk of institutional evolution, subsequently hived off its financial operations to create a bank, while still preserving its original identity as a devotional brotherhood. Today the Compagnia di San Paolo still exists, together with its offshoot the Istituto Bancario San Paolo, now the biggest bank in Turin, and one of the biggest in Italy.

6. *Political Conflict and Economic Crisis.*

Public festivities often have a way of bringing latent political conflicts to the surface. The feast-day of St John the Baptist, Turin's patron saint, was customarily celebrated with a great bonfire in the city's main piazza, ceremoniously lighted by the duke in the presence of the court, the high officials of state, the civic leadership, and a throng of citizens. Tradition dictated that the syndics, representing the city, would hand the duke the torch with which to light the bonfire, but at the celebration in 1618 a dispute erupted: the governor of the citadel attempted to grab the burning brand, the syndics resisted, and a scuffle ensued. The governor's gesture highlighted in a dramatic way the conflict that had been brewing since Emanuel Filibert's restoration, between the duke's men – courtiers and soldiers – and the civic elite. By trying to upstage the syndics the governor was attempting to assert the primacy that he and the duke's high officials claimed over the city council. His attempt failed: the syndics held onto the torch and duly handed it to the duke. But the incident highlighted the complex and contentious relationship that had developed between the dukes and the leaders of their capital city, and the challenge that the growth of the court and the ducal government posed to the civic elite.

This relationship however must not be construed as one of simple binary opposition, as the duke and his men vs. Turin's city council. manifold tensions existed, to be sure, especially over taxation. Charles Emanuel's court was expensive, and his ambitious foreign policy involved the state in a series of costly wars. Charles Emanuel demanded that the city pay extra taxes and advance large loans to him, despite the