

city council to her will. It was left to her son, Victor Amadeus II, to crush the council's resistance, terminating a conflict that had gone on intermittently since the Savoyard restoration. As soon as the young duke came to power in 1684 he set out to modernize the institutions of the state and its capital city. In his dealings with Turin, Victor Amadeus cleverly outmaneuvered the city council by turning its strategy of appealing to ancient privilege against it. In December 1687 he informed the councilors that their membership had fallen to about two-thirds the number required by the statutes of 1360 and 1433, and that he himself would fill the vacancies. Most of the candidates he proposed were his own men: courtiers or state functionaries. The councilors protested furiously, but they could not argue with the law, and in March 1688 they had to vote in the duke's appointees. Victor Amadeus had executed a minor *coup d'état*. In 1708 he ordered another reshuffle of the council's membership, and when places fell vacant in subsequent years he ordered the council to vote in his own candidates. The result was a radical transformation in its composition. Before 1688 it had recruited its members from Turin's old civic nobility, leading merchants and professional men; after 1688 they were offset by a growing lobby of the duke's men. This change mirrored the transformation that had taken place in Turin's social structure since it became the seat of the court and the government, as a new elite of nobles and officials appeared, parallel to Turin's old civic elite. In a sense, therefore, Victor Amadeus's remodeling of the city council simply reflected this diversification, by merging representatives of the new state-centered elite with the old urban oligarchy.

8. *The French Wars and the Siege of Turin.*

Whatever plans Victor Amadeus might have had for other civic reforms, they were overtaken by the outbreak of war with France in 1690. From the start of Marie Jeanne-Baptiste's regency Louis XIV had treated the Savoyard state as a satellite, imposing a military alliance on the regent, and arranging for Victor Amadeus to marry a French princess, Anne of Orleans. Victor Amadeus was eager to escape from this tutelage, and the outbreak of war between France and a coalition of European powers led by William III of England in 1689 provided him with the chance to break free. In 1690 he joined this alliance, provoking immediate retaliation. A French army overran Savoy, penetrated into Piedmont, and headed for Turin. Frantic preparations were made to with-