

sponsibility. To house the new departments of state, a long block of offices was built a few years later on the northern side of Piazza Castello, communicating directly with the palace – formerly ducal, now royal. The uniform façade of these offices still looks out onto Piazza Castello today. A special building was erected next to the offices, to house the state archives; it was probably the first purpose-built archive in Europe. Then in 1738 an opera-house was added to this complex of buildings, for the use of the court and the nobility. (It burned down in 1936 and was replaced by the modern structure that occupies the site today). In this way the area of the city close to the royal palace took on a distinctive character, becoming the domain of the court and the high officials of state, clearly differentiated architecturally and sociologically from the city's core.

During the French wars the University of Turin had ceased to function. As the wars drew to a close Victor Amadeus set about refounding it, as an institution geared to producing trained men who would enter the government, the professions, or the Church, and there render loyal, efficient service. To this end the king took over control of the university from the city council, transforming it into a royal institution, and moving it into a new building, close to the new government offices. In 1720 the new university opened its doors to students. It was staffed by professors in part recruited locally, in part brought in from outside, and was organized in three Colleges of Law, Medicine and Theology, with the addition of a College of Surgery in 1729. Certain aspects of its curriculum aroused alarm among traditionalists: the first professor of physics was dismissed for citing Galileo rather than Aristotle in his lectures. However science, and practical subjects like surveying, accounting and architecture, were central to the curriculum. It was also assigned the critical duty of directing the school system throughout Piedmont. Victor Amadeus II had taken the momentous step of creating what was perhaps the first secular school system in Catholic Europe, taking education away from the religious orders that had hitherto dominated it. The university became in effect the department of state in charge of education.

Conscious of the glory of his newly-won crown, Victor Amadeus set himself the task of enhancing the dignity and elegance of Turin's urban fabric. Here he was served by Filippo Juvarra, one of the great masters of the high baroque, who had learned his craft in Rome as both an architect and a stage-designer. His buildings have a distinctly theatrical quality, which perfectly matched his master's desire for striking monuments to adorn his capital and proclaim his greatness. Juvarra designed