

his reign, Turin, which previously had almost no such public displays, could claim more monuments than virtually any other Italian city. Likewise, to raise his capital's profile as an artistic center of European importance, Charles Albert founded the Royal Gallery of Paintings, which put on public display his family's collection of art works. Admission to the museum was free on certain days of the week to encourage popular attendance. Similar objectives led the throne to promote a host of other cultural institutions in the capital city in the 1830s and '40s, including the Royal Subalpine Delegation for the History of the Fatherland, the Council for Antiquities and Fine Arts, and the Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts. The same years saw the expansion of the Library of the Royal Palace, the construction of a new seat for the Academy of Fine Arts, and royal financing of works by leading Piedmontese scientists and scholars like Giovanni Plana, Amedeo Peyron, and Amedeo Avogadro. Finally, to promote his policies of dynastic grandeur and consensus, Charles Albert introduced new public festivals or resuscitated older ones that celebrated royal weddings, military victories and other glorious moments in the history of the House of Savoy with parades, fireworks, sports competitions, and masked balls.

3. *Turin in the Age of Charles Albert.*

This imposing array of royal initiatives had a decided impact on the capital city and the king's more affluent subjects. Economic and administrative reforms, in particular, brought about a slow but perceptible change in the city's relations with the rest of Piedmont. The shift to a freer trade policy and the ensuing expansion of commercial activity, for instance, accentuated Turin's role as a great emporium for the surrounding territories and a key link in the movement of goods and services from elsewhere in Europe. State investment in new public works projects further encouraged these tendencies by introducing improvements in transportation and communications that increasingly opened the city up to the more advanced economies of Europe. At the same time, Charles Albert's more efficient and interventionist royal administration magnified the importance of his capital city as the place where the crucial economic, political, and cultural decisions were made that affected the entire Kingdom of Sardinia. Finally, Turin was also emerging by the late 1840s not only as a center of state action, but also as a city where new activities, enterprises, technologies, and the institutions needed to support them were being developed and promoted.