

Foreword

Having brought to completion the publishing programme that marked the four years leading up to the Winter Olympic Games held here in Turin in 2006, the Archivio Storico of the City has now chosen to dedicate its efforts to the anniversary celebrating the three hundred years of the siege and liberation of Turin. The importance of these events suffices to justify devoting a volume in this series to them. With the approach of the celebrations commemorating the 150 years of Italian Unity it would appear even more necessary to reflect on this historic moment which, considered by some interpreters as the true harbinger of the Risorgimento, in any case constituted an objective premise for Turin and the Savoy dynasty to start looking at Italy in a completely new light.

Quite new too are the efforts of the curators and authors in that they have avoided anecdotal chronicling in a search for multiple levels of interpretation for reading these themes. The city and the events of 1706 have been studied both on a local scale with the tools of social history, the institutions and religious spheres, and on a European scale, through political-diplomatic, economic, artistic and cultural history. Research on historiography and on the often conscious construction of a shared memory of such events cementing a real or presumed 'Turin-ness' has not been neglected either.

Finally, the appearance of the publication itself is new: after more than twenty years following in the steps of the prestigious model proposed by Luigi Firpo, the need for a line that was freer and more modern was felt, capable of exalting and expressing in the best possible ways the richness of the iconographic heritage belonging to the Archivio Storico and to the other institutions with similar collections in the city. We believe that our readers will fully appreciate the enormous effort made to combine renewal and tradition.

This volume also marks the final project of the Scientific Committee which has contributed to the publishing and exhibiting initiatives of the Archivio Storico with enormous skill and passion for half a decade. Vera Comoli was a member of this committee, and we would like to remember her here with affection and gratitude. Gratitude which must also go to all the personnel of the Archivio and to the various collaborators who have made this publication possible with their customary enthusiasm and professional competence.

Turin, December 2006

Sergio Chiamparino,
mayor of Turin

Fiorenzo Alfieri,
councillor for Culture and for the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy