

most important sieges and, above all, the strategy of his most brilliant campaigns – among which that of 1706 – are studied. In this way, the multiple facets of his military career are brought to light, ranging between the extreme poles of war, from physical participation to combat (Eugenio was wounded three times) up to the strategic and economic preparation of whole campaigns, having a vast European and Mediterranean significance.

Finances and the War

Enrico Stumpo

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century the Dukes of Savoy only made limited recourse to the national debt. Even during the many wars they were engaged in, they preferred to resort to direct taxation on landed property and to taxing the most important consumer goods: salt, grain, flour and wine. To cover their military expenditure they adopted early on a system perfected later by countries such as Sweden and Prussia: financial contributions from the various European powers with which, from one time to the next, they were allied.

During the War of the Spanish Succession, Vittorio Amedeo II in fact obtained 43,276.939 lire in financial help from England and Holland, equal to 49.3 per cent of his military expenses. This policy was continued in the following period too: in the first half of the eighteenth century, the Savoyards obtained about 81 million Piedmontese lire, overall, from their various allies.

During the War of the Spanish Succession, Vittorio Amedeo II also made use of the resources of the cities of Turin and Cuneo, launching various issues of state securities guaranteed by the revenues of the two cities. So Turin, the capital of the duchy, made large contributions by loaning several million lire through the Monte di San Giovanni Battista, which were underwritten by numerous members of the aristocracy and upper middle classes. In exchange for the sums invested, these persons obtained annual interest of 4 or 5 per cent, paid on the revenues of the city, which, despite the war, continued to be plentiful.

Governing the Besieged City

Donatella Balani

Turin was besieged by the Franco-Spanish army for almost four months, between 13 May and 7 September 1706. Threatened since the previous summer, the city had had time to prepare a high-level defensive system and to organise an efficient system of services for the civil population that had remained outside the walls. The municipal government worked intensely, well documented by the frequency of the convocations of councils and congregations and by the number of issues discussed and decreed: it was above all engaged on ensuring that Turin's more than forty thousand citizens had sufficient provisions and the indispensable goods for daily activities, as well as those necessary for repairing damaged fortifications and buildings. The city government made a lot of acquisitions, stocked large quantities of non-perishable foodstuffs and kept commercial channels with the outside open for as long as possible. It also took care to rationalise consumption and to combat abuses. It was especially attentive to the weaker segments of the population, controlling the price of bread and providing food to the poorest assisted by the hospices and charity associations. It also endeavoured to ensure acceptable hygiene conditions and guarantee order in the city.

During the siege, cooperation between the ducal government and the city administration proved to be fundamental, as both put aside past differences to work together in harmony. As had previously occurred in the past, the municipality found itself playing the role of financial mediator between the citizens and the duke, overwhelmed by the expenses for the defence of the capital and for the war. On several occasions the municipal council decreed the issue and sale of securities guaranteed by the municipal heritage and the crown prop-