# Introduction

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Although the Duchy of Savoy had claimed royal status since 1632,[1] it was only in 1713, elevated by the Treaties of Utrecht, that Victor Amadeus II, Duke of Savoy (1666–1732), was crowned King of Sicily (Fig. 0.1).[2] This signalled the moment that the Savoy, projecting their dominion over the Mediterranean, rightfully entered into play on the European strategic chessboard that, in the following century, would lead to the unification of the entire Italian Peninsula under their rule. The momentous events of 1713 sanctioned a decades-long project that the Duchy had pursued with cunning and perseverance through the convoluted maze of political relationships between foreign powers. Of these, the British Kingdom was one of their most persistent advocates, because of complementary dynastic, political and commercial interests.[3] The Savoy–British relationship would intensify over the course of the eighteenth century, against the background of the pressing threat of the neighbouring Kingdom of France and the Holy Roman Empire: a threat that ultimately led to the Napoleonic Wars, which fundamentally changed the landscape of Europe and altered the nature of this relationship. In the two centuries leading up to this point, however, a notable stream of British diplomats and visitors to the Savoy capital engaged in an extraordinary and reciprocal exchange with the Turinese. This flow of travellers, a number of whom were British emissaries and envoys posted to the Savoy court, coincided only in part with the itineraries of the international Grand Tour that transformed the Savoy capital into a gateway to Italy along the land routes to and from France.

A desire to explore this fertile period of cultural exchange in the long relationship between Turin and Britain led to the 2013 conference *Torino*

[1] See: Oresko 1999; Osborne 2002; Bianchi and Gentile 2006; Barberis 2007; Bellabarba and Merlotti 2014.

[2] On the Treaties of Utrecht, see, in the first instance: Kamen 2001. On the role of the Savoyard State, see: Symcox 1983a; Symcox 1983b; Storrs 1999; Bély 2013. On Savoyard representatives in Utrecht, see Bianchi, with additional bibliography, in Crespo Solana and Schmidt-Voges (in press).

[3] For British political and diplomatic relations with Turin before and after 1713, see in particular Parts I–III of this volume. See also: Bianchi and Merlotti (2017).

**Figure 0.1** Francesco Cichè, *Allegory of the Coronation of Duke Victor Amadeus II crowned King of Sicily*, in D. Pietro Vitale, *La felicità in trono…* Palermo, Regia stamperia, 1714, Private collection.

*Britannica: Political and Cultural Crossroads in the Age of the Grand Tour*, from which this book originates.[4] The premise of the conference was to recover the less celebrated and previously underappreciated pathways along which intellectual and artistic trends were spread across Europe in the early modern period, including those relating to politics, diplomacy, society, education, religion, literature, music, architecture and the arts. More than this, however, the aim was to draw attention to the unique aspects of this connection, understudied in comparison to more established historiographic models of British relations with celebrated capitals of the grand tour, such as Rome and Venice. These aspects included the 'modernity' of the culture and of the city-state of Turin. In addition, the conference addressed a previously overlooked, and yet critical feature of the international movement of the grand tour – the grand tour 'all'inverso' – or, the reverse phenomenon

[4] *Torino Britannica: Political and Cultural Crossroads in the Age of the Grand Tour*, a conference co-organized by the British School at Rome and the Centro Studi della Reggia di Venaria, Turin, was held on 19–22 June 2013, with two days (19–20 June) at the British School at Rome and two days (21–22 June) at the Reggia di Venaria, Turin.

represented by the Turinese protagonists who travelled to Britain, including Anglophile poets and playwrights such as Giuseppe Baretti and Vittorio Alfieri; architects such as Filippo Juvarra (Sicilian by birth, but court architect to the Savoy) and Giovanni Battista Borra; sculptors, including three generations of the Plura family; and musicians such as Gaetano Pugnani and Felice Giardini.[5]

The resulting publication, *Turin and the British in the Age of the Grand Tour*, considers Turin as not only the capital of an ancient and enduring state, but as a border territory, intimately tied to the rest of Europe by a complex network of relationships, typified by the way in which British historiography translates the phrase 'Stati sabaudi' interchangeably, and not unambiguously, to signify, on the one hand, the geographical region 'Savoy Piedmont', and on the other, the political expression of 'the Savoyard State'. The city of Turin is the hinge of these two meanings of the term. Indeed, it is difficult to separate the history of the city from the events of the state, just as it is impossible to discuss the urban history of Turin without considering the role of the capital as the seat of a court and a government.

Home to the Savoy court since 1563 (although already in the sixteenth century the principal administrative centre of the state),[6] by the end of the seventeenth century Turin proved a unique stopping-point for visitors in the larger Italian context of the grand tour. With its rational, orthogonal grid of streets deriving from the city's ancient Roman origins, Turin appeared 'modern' to travellers, as well as uniform and clean (Fig. 0.2).[7] Piazza San Carlo, with its regularly faced porticoes, was not only built in emulation of the great royal squares of Paris from which it was directly inspired, but was reminiscent generally of the grand urban spaces that characterized the capitals of Europe. The area around the Palazzo Reale (Fig. 0.3), where all the government buildings were located, functioned as a concentrated locus of political administration for the Savoy rulers, demonstrating their determination to wield power outwardly through urban organization as much as through a tightly controlled political apparatus. Successive Savoy rulers redeveloped existing buildings in this area, but also patronized large *ex novo* building projects, such as that undertaken for the realization of the

[5] For the theme of the Grand Tour 'all'inverso' see, in this volume, Parts IV–VI. See also, in particular, Marshall and Wolfe in Marshall *et al.* 2011: 3–6.

[6] Barbero 2002. On the various locations of the court in the Royal residences, see Merlotti in Piccoli and De Pieri 2012: 59–83.

[7] On urbanism and military fortifications in Turin, see: Pollak 1991; for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century urban studies, see: Griseri and Romano 1989; Cornaglia 2012a; Kieven and Ruggero 2014.

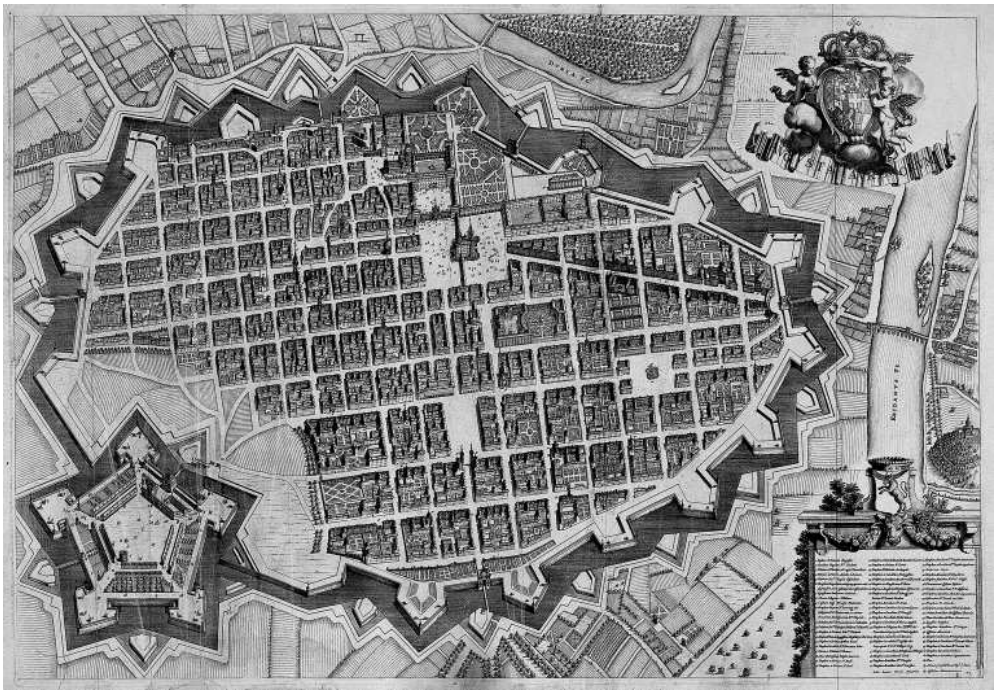

**Figure 0.2** Giovanni Tommaso Borgonio, *Topographic View of Turin*, in *Theatrum Statuum Regiae Celsitudinis Sabaudiae Ducis*, Amsterdam, Blaeu, 1682, vol. I, plate 8, Reggia di Venaria.

great diagonal axis of the Via Po that extends from Piazza Castello, across the Borgo Nuovo, to the Piazza d'Armi, known today as Piazza Vittorio Veneto (Fig. 0.4). In the face of the overriding image of orderliness that the city presented to visitors, individual buildings and *palazzi*, incorporated into the long, straight street facades, receded into the background. Royal residences were the exception to this: the royal palaces and administrative offices, and especially the magnificent royal suburban villas, arranged in a configuration resembling a crown around the city, were singled out for commentary, especially by British travellers (see below, Figs 6.3, 6.8–6.9).[8]

This same élite group of visitors also commented on the world of polite society in which the Savoy family, following strict protocol, dictated the rules of etiquette of the Turin court – as John Boyle, 5th Earl of Cork and 5th Earl of Orrery (1707–62), observed with much curiosity in 1754:

> No clock-work ever moved with greater exactness, than this court. Every minute fulfils its destiny, and turns round its own axis with the royal inhabitants of

[8] See Andrew Moore in this volume, Chapter 6. See also: Merlotti 2014.


**Figure 0.3** Giovanni Tommaso Borgonio, *View of the Piazza of Palazzo Reale*, engraved by Romyn de Hooge, in *Theatrum Statuum Regiae Celsitudinis Sabaudiae Ducis*, Amsterdam, Blaeu, 1682, vol. I, plate 11, Reggia di Veneria.

Turin. Already we have beheld over and over again, the same royal scenes; the same princes, and the same princesses in the same coaches, taking the air, at the same hour, to the same place. They seem all married to time, and I presume that it is a kind of adultery to vary half a dozen minutes from the sun.[9]

Part I of the volume, dedicated to *Britain in Turin: Politics and Culture at the Savoy Court*, examines the dynastic relationships between the Savoy Duchy and the Stuarts from the beginning of the modern period, the backdrop against which a dense web of associations with British visitors and British politics is set. Toby Osborne's paper (Chapter 1) reveals what he has described as the nature of the 'special relationship' that arose from 'a virtuous circle of travel and diplomacy, due to shared political interests and dynastic ties'. He charts Stuart relations with the Savoy court, originally through

[9] His *Letters from Italy* (1754–5) were published posthumously, 'printed for B. White' in 1773: 52–3.

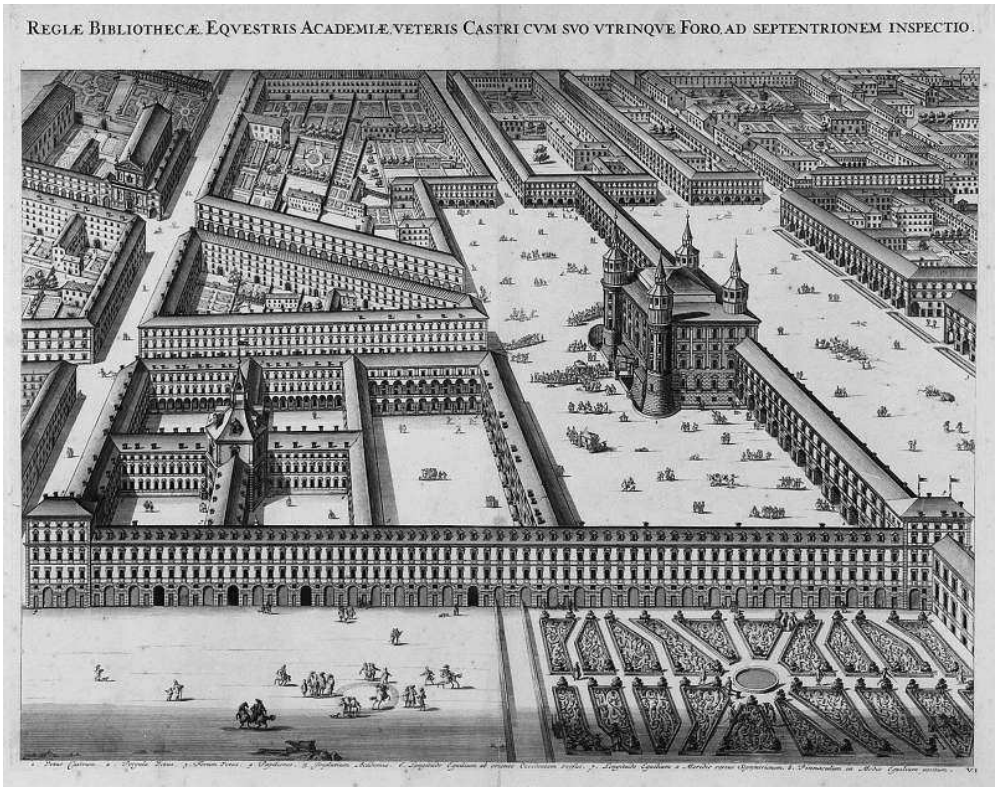


**Figure 0.4** Giovanni Tommaso Borgonio, *View of the Piazza of the Palazzo Reale, showing the Quadrant of the Turin Royal Academy in the lower left-hand foreground*, in *Theatrum Statuum Regiae Celsitudinis Sabaudiae Ducis*, Amsterdam, Blaeu, 1682, vol. I, plate 13, Reggia di Veneria.

the Stuarts' ambassadorial representatives, important cultural agents and mediators, travellers as much as diplomats, posted continuously to Turin from 1612 to 1640. But Osborne also discusses the wider implications of travel between Britain and Catholic Europe during this period, including the ongoing complications related to Protestantism (and the related British search for a historical legitimacy for Anglicanism), which were highlighted in the Savoy region, by the presence of the Waldensian population sited in the Alpine valleys, 'one of Europe's most unstable confessional frontlines'.

Andrea Pennini (Chapter 2) continues the theme of Stuart–Savoy relations, focusing on the several matrimonial negotiations to join the Stuarts and Savoys during the first decade of the seventeenth century, particularly the crucial question for the Savoy of marriage prospects with King James's heir, Prince Henry Frederick Stuart (1594–1612). While the repeated

attempts by the Savoy court through the strenuous efforts of their ambassadors abroad to secure alliances with the Stuarts were not realized for many years, this study reveals the intensity of the political and diplomatic relations between the two, and especially the determination of the Duchy of Savoy to enter into dynastic ties with Britain above all other countries, an argument supported by extensive new archival documentation and correspondence.

Edward Corp (Chapter 3) takes up this narrative at the point of its successful conclusion for the Savoy in the later seventeenth century with the 1684 marriage of Duke Victor Amadeus to James II's niece, his sister's daughter, Anne-Marie de Bourbon Orléans (1669–1728) (Fig. 0.5; Fig. 3.2). As a result of this union, the Jacobite claim to the British thrones, following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, could have devolved upon the death of Queen Anne to the Duchess of Savoy and her two sons, Prince Victor Amadeus of Savoy (1699–1715) and Prince Charles Emmanuel III (1701–73), a situation keenly followed on the European political stage (see Fig. 3.1, for the Jacobite succession in 1712). Corp analyses the wide-ranging ramifications of this political possibility, and the diplomatic bargaining power that it provided for a period to the Savoy dynasty. A passage from a letter written from Turin in March 1709 by Lord Charles Somerset (1689–1710) to his aunt, Lady Anne Somerset, Countess of Coventry (1673–1763), reveals that both sides were acutely aware of this situation. He recounts:

> I went to wait upon the present Duchess, who is not one of the most beautiful but I believe indeed one of the best Women in the World. She was extremely affable to me and told me what particular Esteem she had for the English Nation, being her self, as she expressed it, the better half an English Woman, for as your Ladyship knows, she is the next heir to the Crown of England if the Roman Catholicks were not debarred from succeeding.[10]

The increase in British diplomats and travellers to Turin over the ensuing century, from 1688 until the catastrophic involvement of the State of Savoy in the French revolutionary wars, is charted by Christopher Storrs (Chapter 4). Alongside the evolving protocol of British diplomacy at the Savoy court and the impact of British residents in Turin, Storrs notes a marked Anglophilia taking hold after the successive wars with France: 'another respect in which Turin was British in the eighteenth century'. Storrs has also compiled a

[10] See Lord Charles Somerset's diary of 1709, photographic reproduction of Badminton MSS, FMR 3/1 and 2, and FMT/B1/2/14 in RBF/9/34, State Foreign Papers, Archive, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. Somerset died unmarried in Rome in 1710. For the life of Anne-Marie de Bourbon Orléans, later Duchess of Savoy, then Queen of Sicily and Queen of Sardinia, see: Nobili Vitelleschi 1905; Reineri 2006.


**Figure 0.5** Unknown artist, *Anne Marie d'Orléans, Duchesse de Savoye, with the Town of Turin and the Castle of Rivoli*, engraved by François Jollian, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

highly useful appendix of the diplomats and visitors to Turin during the eighteenth century, an important contribution to a more integrated research approach to British foreign policy in Piedmont (Appendix I).

The second part of the volume, Part II, *Turin: Gateway to Grand Tour Society*, foregrounds the most important draw for British visitors, the Turin Royal Academy (Accademia Reale).[11] Opened in 1678, the Academy offered up-to-date and prestigious instruction in military and diplomatic culture to a wide range of young Europeans who frequented this élite institution over the course of a period of months or even years, nurturing a cosmopolitan exchange between future statesmen, diplomats and military officers. Far from a simple *Ritterakademie*, it was a fulcrum between the court and the various secretaries of state (the Academy was housed in an extension of

[11] See Paola Bianchi in this volume, Chapter 5 and Appendix III.

the Palazzo Reale), as well as a pivotal focus of activity among the nobles of Piedmont. Becoming an important rite of educational passage, the Academy taught not only martial arts and equitation, but also mathematics, geography, history and languages (Italian and French). In addition to these traditional subjects, it also taught social skills and gentlemanly virtues necessary for diplomacy and salon conversations, for the fashionable society of the continent: in short, it offered a modern education for gentlemen destined for public life. To gain a true sense of the Academy's European reputation, it is worth repeating the lengthy report compiled about the institution by the Anglo-Irish priest, John Chetwode Eustace (1762–1815):

> Its [Turin's] academy enjoyed a considerable degree of reputation, and was crowded with foreigners, attracted in part by the attention which the king condescended to show to the young members, and partly by the cheapness of masters, and by the facility of instruction in every branch and language. This academy was indeed a most useful establishment, and extremely well calculated to usher young men into the world in the most respectable manner, and to fashion them to courts and to public life. A year passed in it, with the least application, enabled them to prosecute their travels with advantage, not only by supplying them with the information necessary, but by procuring them such connections with the first families in all the great cities as might preclude the formalities of presentation, and admit them at once into the intimacy of Italian society. Without this confidential admission (which few travellers have enjoyed for many years past) the domestic intercourse of Italians, and consequently the character of the nation, which is never fully and undisguisedly unfolded unless in such intercourse, must continue a mystery. Now, the academy of *Turin*, where the young students were considered as part of the court, and admitted to all its balls and amusements, placed this advantage completely within their reach, and was in this respect, and indeed in most others, far superior to Geneva, where the British youth of rank were too often sent to learn French and scepticism.[12]

Paola Bianchi (Chapter 5) outlines the precise structure and educational aims of the various strata of the Academy, and explains its political relation to the Savoy court. In addition she explores the surprising religious 'promiscuity' of the Savoy polity, comprising Catholics, Protestants ('religionari') and Jews, and how this controversial religious heterogeneity, which brought the Savoyard State into conflict with the papacy, was also reflected in the student body of the Academy, which went so far as to cater for it. Bianchi also provides a separate appendix of British students who attended the Turin Royal Academy during the eighteenth century, an invaluable reference for scholars of Grand Tour studies, and British historiography (Appendix II).

[12] Eustace 1815: 370.

Andrew Moore (Chapter 6) follows the specific trail of one young British aristocrat at the Academy, Thomas Coke, later 1st Earl Leicester (1697–1759). Coke's period in Turin is contextualized in his lengthy Grand Tour, which lasted from 1712 to 1718, and which, as Moore demonstrates, provided the basis for the inspiration for Coke's building of Holkham Hall, 'giving rise to a new interpretation of British Classicism' and inspiring also his collecting of pictures and sculptures. Significantly, Coke's social contacts at the Academy and at the Savoy court, and his admiration for Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736), are brought to light, providing a personal case study of relations between Britain and Turin.

Alongside the importance of the Academy for exchanges with Britain, other contributors target the spaces of sociability shared by the various British presences in Turin in the eighteenth century, such as salons and masonic circles. Edoardo Piccoli (Chapter 7) follows the social forays of the British into the private salons of the Pallavicini, and their relations with the Protestants, the Torras, in a chapter dedicated to the residency and residential quarters of the British in Turin, mainly centred around the Protestant community in the area of San Federico. Andrea Merlotti (Chapter 8) continues the theme of the social interaction of the British at the court of the Princes of Savoy Carignano and the court of Anne-Marie d'Orléans, exploring the connection between the British in Turin and Freemasonry as a sphere of contact, especially that surrounding the Turin masonic lodge, 'Saint Jean de la Mysterieuse'. The chapters in Part II share a common dialogue, criss-crossing the intersections of international experience in the eighteenth-century Savoy capital. Moreover, British itineraries in Turin and in the Piedmont region are unravelled, thanks also to the painstaking research into housing and banking, undertaken by Piccoli and also discussed by James Rothwell (Chapter 10).

British travellers to Piedmont have, until now, only been sporadically investigated by scholars, among whom Jeremy Black must be singled out, for drawing attention to the exception represented by the Savoy court within the canons of a tour of Italy.[13] Anecdotes about Turin as a stopping-place for visitors are also recorded in a fundamental essay by Michael Wynne,[14] as well as in countless entries of the *Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers*

[13] 'British tourists in Italy were presented often to the Pope, the Kings of Naples and Sardinia, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Dukes of Parma and Modena and the Governor of Milan, but their courts did not dominate the pastimes of British tourists to the Peninsula, with the exception of the King of Sardinia's court at Turin'; see: Black 1999: 216. See also: Black 1984; 1989.

[14] Wynne 1995; 1996.