

crown, but he had already discovered that Philip's Spanish training made him unacceptable to the German Electors. He had, therefore, used his powerful influence in Germany to secure the election of his brother Ferdinand as Emperor. He had, however, separated the duchy of Milan from the Empire to add it to Philip's already long list of possessions.

Philip II was sovereign of Spain with its American possessions, of the Burgundian inheritance (the Netherlands and Franche-Comte), of the Aragonese* inheritance in Italy (Naples and Sicily), and of the duchy of Milan.

The following table will explain how so vast an aggregation of states came by a series of ingenious political marriages to form a single empire:

Ferdinand=Isabella
of Aragon | of Castile
Joanna the Mad

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Maximilian=Mary, heiress
Emperor | of Burgundy
Philip the Handsome

Charles V
Spanish Hapsburgs

Ferdinand I
Austrian Hapsburgs

*Peter III of Aragon (1276-1285) had married the heiress of Naples and Sicily.

Philip's Dominating Position in Europe

His vast possessions and great resources made Philip easily the most powerful ruler of his day. Silver poured into his treasury from his American possessions; Spain, united in 1479 by the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile and the almost contemporaneous conquest of Granada, the last of the Moorish states, was passionately loyal to him even in the gloom of the closing years of the reign, and placed at his service her matchless infantry and unrivalled navy; the Netherlands, with its fine harbors and rich industrial centres, owned his sway; the possession of Milan, Naples and Sicily made him arbiter of the Italian peninsula; he was the logical leader of the Counter-Reformation, a movement then in full blast and threatening to overwhelm the struggling Protestant churches.

Philip succeeded to the greatest heritage that Christendom had ever seen, with universal domination apparently within easy reach: at his death he left his dominions distracted and ruined, his treasury empty, and his country's prestige shattered.

This stupendous collapse was due partly to Philip's character, partly to his methods, partly to his policy, but mainly to the folly of Charles V in leaving the Netherlands to his Spanish instead of his Austrian successor.

Character of Philip II

Philip was born in Spain, brought up in Spain, and after 1559 never again crossed the Spanish borders; he was a Spaniard through and through. His early education was neglected; he was

incapable of appreciating the beauties of either art or literature, and his native Spanish was the only tongue he spoke fluently. He had a distaste for all outdoor sports and exercises; and, though his reign was marked by incessant wars, he never saw service in the field. His lofty destiny had been instilled into him from his earliest years, and he grew up grave and self-possessed. The political instruction that he received from his father with his natural disposition led him profoundly to distrust his councillors and to make his own decision on every point that cropped up. He was firmly convinced that in all he did he was the agent or junior partner of God; to such a pass did long use of absolute power bring him. No blame could fall to him if things went wrong; it was God's interests not Philip's that suffered, for, according to his theory, Philip never consulted his own interests in anything that he did. As was becoming in a person who had something semi-divine about him, Philip cultivated a marvel-