



Charles V: The World Emperor

By Harald Kleinschmidt

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Charles V (1500-1558), King of Spain (1516-1556) and Holy Roman Emperor (1519-1556) is one of the most interesting and perplexing of the great European monarchs. The son of Philip the Handsome (son of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I) and Joanna the Mad (daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain), he became King of Spain at a time when the Valois and Habsburgs were involved in bitter disputes over northern European territories. When he was elected Holy Roman Emperor and united to the old Habsburg lands the empire of Spain, it seemed that the family might well be on the way to the universal monarchy. of Charles V it may truthfully be said that he ruled an empire on which the sun never set. he set out with high aims and ideals but found himself overwhelmed. The demands of ruling over the greatest number of territories ever accumulated by any European ruler and the seeming impossibility of achieving peace in Europe proved too great, and the disillusioned Emperor retired to the monastery of San Yuste, where legend has it his ghost continues to advise the Spanish monarchs. This book offers a chance to see Charles against the background of turmoil and unprecedented European expansion. It is an important study in ideas of kingship and dynasty, showing the last medieval emperor defending the ideals of Christian Christendom.

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