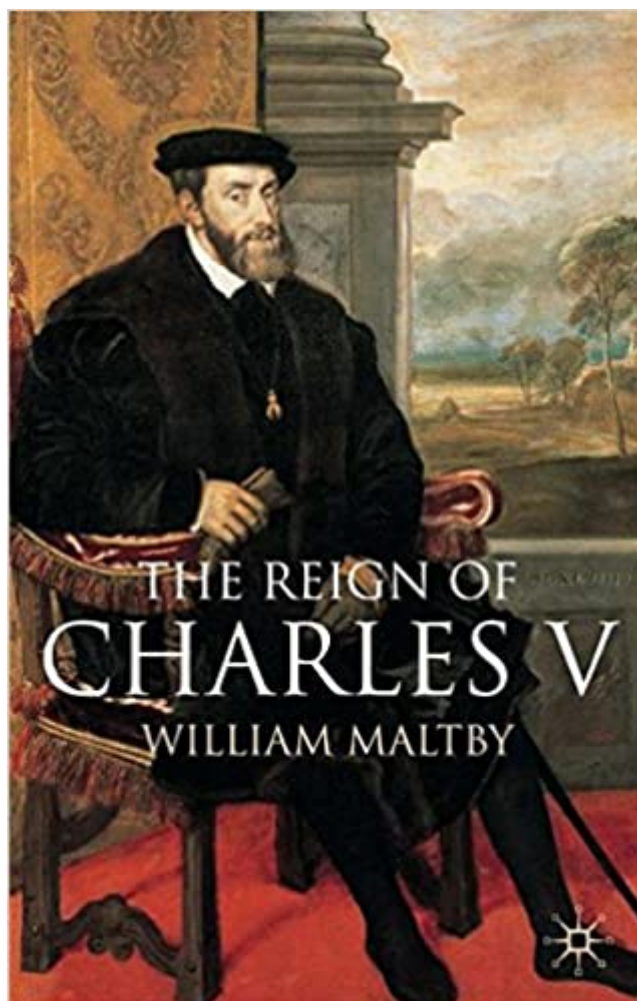


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# The Reign Of Charles V (European History In Perspective)



## Synopsis

Why should we remember the reign of Charles V? What happened in those years that altered the course of history and helped to shape the world we live in today? Few ages have been more important to the history of Europe and America than the reign of Charles V. Charles ruled the first truly global empire, his sovereignty extending beyond Spain to the Netherlands, much of Italy, the Americas, and the Holy Roman Empire. His life saw the waning of the Renaissance, the religious transformation of Europe by the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, and the emergence of Spain as a leading international power. At the same time, the conquests of Mexico and Peru, the establishment of a Habsburg empire in eastern Europe, and a series of wars with France, the Ottoman Empire and the German Protestants transformed European politics and the global economy. William Maltby's engaging new study not only looks at Charles V as a person, but also examines important critical issues: the emperor's policies and their consequences; the institutional, economic and intellectual development of his various realms; and his military and diplomatic struggles. Concise and readable, it provides students and the general reader with an indispensable introduction to a reign that defies historical comparison, and an era that changed the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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Sandra Cavallo, Royal Holloway, University of London

'The text is broader than existing ones and does not only approach the subject from the viewpoint of political history - there is considerable attention to the overseas dimension of the Empire.' - Dr Sandra Cavallo, Royal Holloway, University of London

This was a readable and highly enjoyable (albeit brief) examination of the rule and legacy of Charles V, whose life had enormous impact on the development of the 16th-century world. There seems to be a dearth of full-length biographies on Charles V in English (please correct me if I've missed an existing book--I'd be very interested to read it!), making Mr. Maltby's contribution to this crucial leader of the Holy Roman Empire all the more important. I was particularly interested in Charles' actions on the international front, and in this arena Mr. Maltby does not disappoint. He takes care to inform the reader in some detail of Charles' interests in Spain, France, Italy, the Low Countries, Mediterranean, and the New World throughout the rule of his expansive empire. The book's analysis of Charles' abdication is also a highlight of this well-researched work. I finished this book even more interested in the history of the period and in this fascinating ruler. Mr. Maltby's work is certainly worth your time if you have an interest in Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, or just general European history. Highly recommended.

Concise, well written, yet too short of a book to get complete details. This is a wonderful book to get the broad picture of Charles V. More questions are raised which means further research.

Fascinating emperor during extremely fascinating times. I enjoyed the book, yet was frustrated by how brief it was.

First off, this is not a biography of Charles V. It is as the title says and what Maltby says in his Introduction, it is a history of the reign of Charles V. This glances quite a bit on Charles V, so you do see quite a bit of his life. Even more so you see his realms and the wars and laws that were enacted. For the most part this is a short and succinct analysis of this important ruler's reign. It is a bit dry and sometimes reads more like a recital of facts, but it does move well from chapter to chapter. I would recommend this book only to someone who has read a biography or is familiar with Charles V and would like a more close analysis of his reign. 3.75 stars.

Fairly easy reading about a complex man and time. Necessary reading for those trying to

comprehend the contribution of the Hapsburg dynasty on modern Europe.

It is a good short reference book for those who are interested in the history of the House of Habsburg and its Spanish branch. Book provides ample bibliography for those who want to research subject in depth.

I enjoyed reading this biography of Charles V. His inheritance remains one of the most extraordinary events of human history. If we look at his relatives, we can see how each realm came into his possession: Maximilian --> Austria and the Holy Roman Empire Charles the Bold --> the Low Countries and the Free County Isabella --> Castille and New Spain Ferdinand --> Aragon, Sicily and Naples Unfortunately, because Charles had to fight so many enemies, including France, the Ottoman Empire, and the German Protestants, he was not able to capitalize on his situation. It is extraordinary to consider, however, the possibility for unity in Europe that existed during his reign.

The book is a historical presentation of the reign of Charles V and the implications in the development of world history.

I bought this book mostly on a whim a couple of years ago, and never really read it. Now I have. I admit that it's an excellent introduction to the reign of Habsburg Emperor Charles V. In fact, it manages to summarize most aspects of his life and times in language suitable for the general reader. To us northern Europeans, Charles V is mostly known as the bad guy sort-of-successfully challenged by Luther at the Diet of Worms (if we even remember his name). We usually don't think of him as the ruler of one of the largest empires in world history, spanning Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Mexico, Peru and (nominally) the Philippines. Charles fought never-ending wars against France, the Protestant princes of Germany, and the Muslim Ottomans. He helped to launch the Catholic Counter-Reformation. In many ways, he is one of the most important historical characters of our time, since he lived during the crucial transition between "the Middle Ages" and the "modern period". Yet, as a person, Charles remains strangely elusive, to a large extent because of conscious choice. His private letters almost never touch on personal matters, his public image was carefully grafted by royal propaganda, and he often acted in a seemingly low-key manner during negotiations with competing factions or powers. Thus, William Maltby's book says very little about Charles the man. Instead, the author deals with the emperor's wars, the imperial finances, the relations between emperor and pope, the system of government in

various parts of the empire, and the shifting interpretations of Charles' reign after his death. Some information contained in the book is almost chilling, as the revelation that Naples was an over-sized city ruled by Mafiosi and corrupt politicians already 500 years ago! Change seems overdue there, I think. It was also interesting to learn that France, a Catholic power, allied itself with the Ottoman Empire against Charles, even to the point of inviting the Ottoman fleet to French ports. Thankfully, the Ottomans weren't strong enough to take decisive advantage of the constant wars between the European powers. One issue not dealt with at any length is the cultural development during Charles' time. This is unfortunate, since the 16th century saw the rise of the Salamanca School in Spain, which combined support for the Catholic world order with abolitionism and a belief in "natural law". It also saw the rise of the Jesuits. A lengthier treatment of this would have been interesting and perhaps illuminating. In the end, Charles V's reign comes across as a "magnificent failure". He didn't stop the Protestant Reformation (but then, I have no problem with that detail), Spain was pretty much bankrupt when he abdicated, the attempts to smash the Ottoman-supported Barbary pirates failed spectacularly, and the attempts to suppress slavery and other abuses in the Americas were derailed by the conquistadors and their henchmen. Charles abdicated from all his royal positions in 1554-56 and retired to a Spanish monastery, where he died in 1558. The author believes the aged emperor was suffering from what we would today regard as a clinical depression. The most famous abdication took place in the Netherlands in 1555, when Charles was accompanied by a young William of Nassau, the future leader of the Dutch rebellion against Spain... The world, as they say, would never be the same again.

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