

Coronation of Emperor Charles V

In 1519, Charles of Habsburg, king of Spain, was crowned emperor at the age of nineteen. This occurred at a moment when Christendom felt a strong need for a single emperor under whose protection it would be able to defend itself against the dual threat of the Lutheran reformers and the Turkish advance from the east.

Inheriting the Austrian domains and the Low Countries from his father, and the throne of Spain with its American colonies, Sardinia, Sicily, and the kingdom of Naples from his mother, Charles V extended his authority as far as Central Europe, encircling France with his possessions. In this way, he inevitably created a situation of conflict between the two nations, and almost all of the battles were fought on Italian soil.