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Henry Kamen

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Philip of Spain Henry Kamen
Philip II of Spain, ruler of the most extensive empire the world had ever known, has been viewed in a harsh and negative light since his death in 1598. Identified with repression, bigotry and fanaticism by his enemies, he has been judged more by the political events of his reign than by his person. This book is published 400 years after Philip's death. Placing him within that social, cultural, religious and regional context of his times, it presents a picture of his character and reign. Drawing on Philip's unpublished correspondence and on many other archival sources, Henry Kamen reveals much about Philip the youth, the man, the husband, the father, the frequently troubled Christian and the king. Kamen finds that Philip was a cosmopolitan prince whose extensive experience of northern Europe broadened his cultural imagination and tastes, whose staunchly conservatives ideas were far from being illiberal and fanatical, whose religious attitudes led him to accept a practical coexistence with protestants and jews, and whose support for Las Casas and other defenders of the Indians in America helped determine government policy.

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