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## Two's Company, Three's a Crowd: Part I



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### Two's Company, Three's a Crowd: Part I

Many of Elizabeth Regina's international affairs were intertwined with those of Philip II. Most students of history understand his connection as King of Spain and the adversary who lost The Spanish Armada. Many forget his role as ruler of the Netherlands and Elizabeth's opposition to his sovereignty there. Even more do not realize his role as her brother-in-law, Philip was married to Elizabeth's half-sister Mary for several years. What was the basis of their relationship? Did Elizabeth feel any allegiance to Philip for the contribution he made to her relationship with her sister and her position at Court? How did this association influence both countries' foreign policies? These questions and several others will be addressed in a series of blogs entitled "Two's Company,

## **Philip II**

Who was Philip II of Spain? Born 21 May 1527, his parents were Charles I of Spain (Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor) and Isabella of Portugal. Given a classical education, he was also given practical instruction. Philip spent much time as interim ruler of Spain while his father traveling through his domains and much of Philip's time was spent in the 17 Provinces of the Spanish Netherlands (territories of modern day Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxemburg) where he became nominal ruler from 1549.

Married four times, he was created King of Naples upon his marriage to his second wife, Mary I of England, in order to share equal rank as a ruling sovereign with his new bride. Philip arrived in Winchester on July 19, 1554, where he met with Mary for the first time prior to their marriage held in the cathedral on 25 July 1554.



**Philip II**

As King of Naples and England, Philip's main concern at all times was for Hapsburg interests. Leaving England for Flanders in late August of 1555, he attempted to impose the will of the Holy Roman Empire in central Europe. He returned to his wife 18 March 1557 to request her support in the war against

France. He left again four months later never to return. Mary did embroil England in a war with France on behalf of his interests and lost Calais January 7, 1558.

Philip's royal rank was secured when his father abdicated in 1556 and he became ruler in the Spanish Netherlands, Burgundy and Spain. Besides titles in many European territories that had once been part of the Holy Roman Empire, Philip became King of Portugal in 1580 through his mother's claims.

Referred to accurately as the "secretary-king" or the "king of paper", Philip ruled "through the written word rather than through personal contact and debate." As a young king he was a "shy, passive, sedentary man" resolving perfectly to rule his "far-flung dominions with pen and ink alone" (Boyden 66). Words to describe Philip would be pious, frugal in dress and at table, hard-working, and conscientious. This blogger believes his dominate trait was loyalty—to the Hapsburg interests. Politically, this trait overshadowed his religious scruples; religiously, this trait overshadowed his politics. Regardless, from the time of his father's abdication until his own death at the age of 71 in 1598, Philip ruled absolutely. On one occasion, he wrote "I don't know if [people] think I'm made of iron or stone. The truth is, they need to see that I am mortal, like everyone else" — but he seldom had qualms about exercising his absolute power (Parker). Surprisingly, the cautious almost hesitant Philip of his early reign morphed into a more reckless, imprudent ruler in his later years as he struggled with his country's relations with the Low Countries and England.



**Mary I**

England's military and financial assistance to the Dutch rebels, the seizure of Spanish bullion ships and lack of cooperation with Spain—as perceived by Philip—led to deteriorating relations between the two countries. Whereas Elizabeth ruled in a time of change, ironically in the face of her motto *Semper eadem*, he was seen to hold to tradition. While she did try to keep things familiar, he had to innovate in response to the needs of his vast empire and the shifting international scene.

Despite four marriages and the births of many children, Philip constantly contended with inadequate heirs who were sickly or mentally unstable. He exclaimed once in frustration, “God, who has given me so many Kingdoms to govern, has not given me a son fit to govern them” (Philip II of Spain).

## Mary I

Upon the death of Edward VI and the proclamation of Jane Grey as Queen, there was confusion and anger from the London masses. Many landowners favored the ‘old religion’ and thus supported Mary when she came to call on the magnates to rally troops for her cause. She stunned the foreign ambassadors (most likely thinking she couldn’t succeed without foreign troops and intervention) with a following of thousands at Framlingham in Suffolk.

The rationale included in Jane’s proclamation was set to instill fear in the country. It was a warning that if Mary were to take over the throne and eventually marry “any stranger born out of this realm...to have the laws and customs of his ... country ...practiced and put in use within this realm, rather than the laws, statues, and customs here... of long time used, ...to the peril of conscience and the utter subversion of the common weal of this realm” (Castor 409).



### **The “Streatham” portrait believed to be Lady Jane Grey**

Mary’s sex and the traditional role of wife were against her but the people knew her to be the rightful heir. When she was set to marry Philip of Spain and the people expressed their concern, she gave a rousing speech to ease their fears. Mary proclaimed, “I am already married to the Common Weal and the faithful members of the same; the spousal ring whereof I have on my finger: which never hitherto was, nor hereafter shall be, left off. Protesting unto you nothing to be more acceptable to my heart, nor more answerable to my will, than your advancement in wealth and welfare, with the furtherance of God’s glory” (*Loades Chronicle of Tudor Queens* 36). This assertion that she was married to her kingdom was a smart political move.

Many people in the country could not fathom that as a woman she did not need a husband to carry out “the offices which do not properly belong to woman’s estate” (Castor 428). Linked to this was the belief that Mary would not hand over the power of England to her husband. The marriage treaty solved this fear. Philip would have little to do with the running of the country. He could assist and that was about it. Mary would do all in her power to appear to include him yet there was no doubt that she, who had been trained as a sovereign Princess of Wales, would be ruler of England. In the Council Register two days after their marriage it was noted that “At Winchester, 27<sup>th</sup> July, This daye it was ordered by the boarde that a note of all such matteres of state as should passe from hence should be pute into Latten and Spanyche from henceforth. It was also ordered that all matteres of estate passynge in the kinge and quenes names should be signed with both their handes” (*Nichols Chronicle of Queen Jane* 135). So he

could read documents in Spanish, he could sign them, but he would be greatly restricted in his formal influence.



### **Mary and Philip**

Did Mary need a husband to help rule England. No. She needed one for an heir though. She had misread her people. They opposed the foreign match with Philip. Yes, he was Catholic, the choice of the advisor she so admired (Charles V), and he was from her mother's homeland. These emotional elements were also supported by the more practical and political merits of his being a good choice from a limited selection. It is well-known that Mary fell head-over-heels in love with Philip. With a restricted formal influence, his informal influence was close to boundless. Giovanni Michiel, Ambassador to England for Venice reported to the Doge and the Venetian Senate that Queen Mary's representative, Francesco Piamontese, was sent in June 1556 to Brussels because "it being credible that nothing is done, nor does anything take place, without having the King's opinion about it, and hearing his will" (Brown *VI June 1-15 505*).



## Charles V

Simon Renard, Ambassador to Spain in England was instructed to feel Mary out about the union. Charles also inquired about his son's view. Dutifully, he responded "I very well see the advantages that might accrue from the successful conclusion of this affair." Philip assured his father, "If you wish to arrange the match for me, you know that I am so obedient a son that I have no will other than yours" (Patterson 42-43). Mary, showing as much filial loyalty as Philip assured Renard that she wanted to please Charles "in the same way she would wish to please her father" (Patterson 43). The marriage was inevitable despite Mary's need to have the Privy Council's approval. Charles V was aware of this and worked hard behind the scenes to get members on his side. The importance of this marriage, uniting England and Hapsburg territories, was discussed in many contemporary writings; all agree that the purpose was for "temporal and spiritual peace and unity among Europeans" (Hunt 152). Quite a mission.



**Simon Renard, Spanish Ambassador to England**

John Elder shared many details about the ceremonies which marked the marriage between Mary and Philip in the summer of 1554. Philip had “landed at Southampton in Hamshire, within ten mile of the cite of Winchester, on Friday the xx day of July at iii of the clocke at afternone” and was met by “the lords of the counsel and diverse other noble men” (Nichols *The Chronicle of Queen Jane* 137-138). Philip rode through Winchester “on a faire white horse, in a riche coate embroidered with gold, his doublet, hosen, and hat suite-like” (Nichols *The Chronicle of Queen Jane* 139).

Mary stayed at Wolvesey Palace (the Old Bishop’s Palace) and Philip was housed in the Dean’s house. They met on July 23<sup>rd</sup> for the first time at Wolvesey Palace and while some reports say Mary spoke French, most sources agree they conversed “in the Spanishe tongue” (Nichols *Chronicle of Queen Jane* 140).

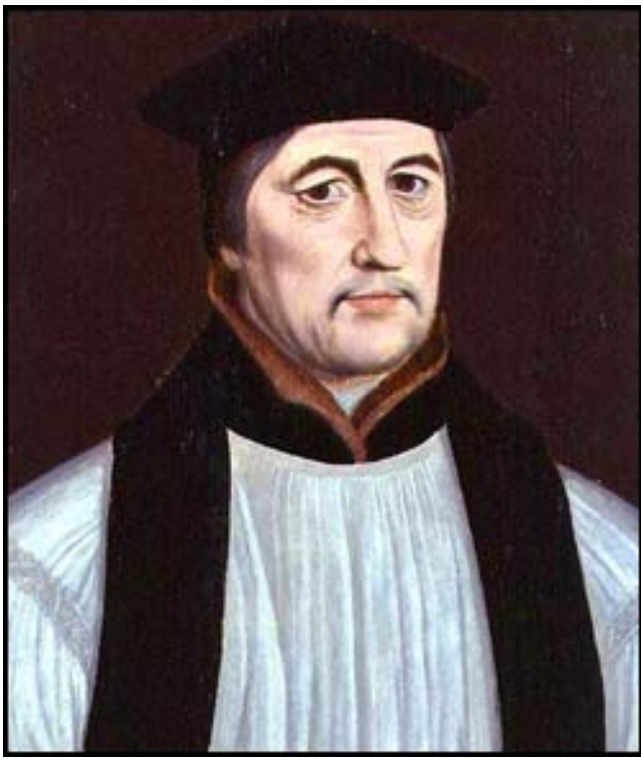




### **Ruins of Wolvesey Palace, where Mary and Philip met for the first time**

The wedding, held on 25 July 1554 the feast day of St. James, patron saint of Spain, was very sumptuous with many sources describing decorations of the churches and palaces and the splendor of the clothes and jewelry of the participants. We know Philip was attired “in brocade, covered with white velvet, rich in gold and pearls, with a very rich brocade collar, a ruby robe, richly decorated with gold and pearls and diamond buttons” (Hunt 148). Mary was dressed “in silver cloth with a cloak ...a very rich collar and hair decoration...a belt in the richest gold, with jewellery on the breast with a diamond in the center” (Hunt 148).

At the Cathedral Philip was met by the Bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner Lord Chancellor and five other bishops all “mitred, coped, and staved” where he knelt, kissed the crucifix, prayed and then entered “upon a skafholde which was made for the solomnizacion of his marriage” (Nichols *The Chronicle of Queen Jane* 139). Remarkably, throughout the ceremony Mary was placed on the right and Philip on the left, the opposite of the conventional set-up. Perhaps to placate her English subjects or her own feelings of triumph, Mary showed herself as the ruling sovereign with Philip as consort.



### **Stephen Gardiner, Lord Chancellor and Bishop of Winchester**

Regardless of who was seen as sovereign and consort, the royal titles are impressive. John Elder, with relish, gives the list in the “stile in Latin” and the “stile in Englishe” which will be recreated below:

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"Philip and Marie, by the grace of God king and quene of  
Fraunce, Naples, Hierusalem, and Irelande, defenders of t  
princes of Spain and Secy, archdukes of Austria, dukes of  
Burgundy, and Brabant, counties of Haspurge, Flaunders, a  
(Nichols Chronicle of Queen Jane 142).
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After the ceremony Philip “addressed the Spanish lords who were about him, and told them they must at once forget all the customs of Spain, and live in all respects after the English fashion” (Nichols *The Chronicle of Queen Jane* 139). Post wedding celebrations were then held at Wolvesey Palace where there was much “triumphing, bankating, singing, masking, and daunsing, as was never seen in Englande heretofore” (Nichols *Chronicle of Queen Jane* 136).



## Winchester Cathedral

Two days later, in the Council Register it was noted that “At Winchester, 27<sup>th</sup> July, This daye it was ordered by the boarde that a note of all such matteres of state as should passe from hence should be pute into Latten and Spanyche from henceforth, and the same to be delyvered to such as it should please the kinges highnes to appointe to recave it. It was also ordered that all matteres of estate passynge in the kinge and quenes names should be signed with both their handes” (Nichols *Chronicle of Queen Jane* 135).

Elder was beside himself exclaiming the joy after “this moste noble mariage” of seeing dual sovereignty with “the kinges magestie and the queen sitting under the cloth of estate” (Nichols *Chronicle of Queen Jane* 143). We know this did not come to pass without problems. In January of 1554, after hearing the rumors of a possible match between Mary and Philip, a group of gentlemen organized an uprising known as the Wyatt Rebellion. This will be further discussed in the blog entry, “Two’s Company, Three’s a Crowd: Part II.”

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