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A Princess with ambition and political insight

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Margaret of Austria. A Princess with ambition and political insight

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Début de l'article

The most important phases in the life of Margaret of Austria were the result of decisions made by others : by her father Maximilian I (1459-1519) and her nephew Charles V (1500-1558), both of whom acted in the overall interest of the Habsburg dynasty. As the case of Margaret of York has shown, it was a fate no different from that of other noble women, yet despite traditional expectations that viewed the female sex in terms of obedient daughters, loyal wives and responsible mothers, women of that period often enjoyed a surprising degree of liberty, which each could exercise according to individual inclination and personality. This is particularly true of Margaret of Austria who spent the second half of her life (1507-1530) in the Burgundian Netherlands and through her achievements attained considerable renown throughout Europe. Her influence on the politics of the territories she administered was considerable and she actively sought to extend her personal authority. That today we are able to form such a clear picture of Margaret is due to her amazing energy and willpower. Her fascinating personality is still to be felt in Mechelen, the city she made her residence, and in Brou close to Bourg-en-Bresse, where her body is buried. Through her love of music, art and poetry, she transformed her palace, the so-called *Hof van Savoyen*, into a centre of courtly culture, with a reputation that extended far beyond the boundaries of Mechelen.

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