

# Medicine, History and Art (2)

## Joanna the Mad and Philip the Handsome (ca 1505), Flanders

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**J**oanna was born a pretty and gifted child. She excelled in languages, law and classical literature and was skilled in musical instruments and horse riding. As the third child of Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, she was not groomed to become a monarch. At the age of seventeen she was married to Philip the Handsome, Archduke of the House of Habsburg, and went to live with him in Flanders (Northern Belgium).

In 1504, Isabel died and the throne of Castile was inherited by Joanna, then aged 24, since her elder brother and sister had passed away prematurely. Meanwhile her Father Ferdinand was the Governor and Administrator.

Joanna and Philip returned to Castile two years later to assume the throne as Queen and King. However, Philip died a few months later. Joanna herself was incapable of running the country, which was devastated by plague and famine. A year later, Ferdinand returned from Aragon and seized power, proclaiming himself as King of Castile, and Joanna was demoted to nominal co-monarch. In 1509, at the age of 29, Joanna was confined by her Father, on account of her madness, to the Royal Palace at Tordesillas, Castile.



Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium



On the death of Ferdinand, Joanna, now aged 36, also inherited the throne of Aragon, and her son, Charles, now aged 17, was co-monarch. To ensure his domination, Charles chose to continue Joanna's imprisonment until her death at the age of 75. She was entombed at the Royal Chapel in Granada, together with Isabel, Ferdinand and Philip.

Joanna started to develop symptoms of mood instability after her marriage. She had bouts of extreme agitation, and at times would not eat or sleep. At the death of Philip, she fell into a deep melancholy, and mourned for many years. She kept the coffin of Philip nearby, and took the coffin with her when she travelled.