Figure 12.1), a wonder of architecture, art, and irrigation. Portugal and Granada were relatively homogeneous with predominantly Christian and Muslim populations, respectively; Castile and Aragon accommodated within their borders Jews and Muslims as well as Christians.

Like England and France, the three Christian kingdoms were plagued by wars—both internal civil conflicts and conflicts among one another—during the Later Middle Ages. King Dinis I of Portugal (r. 1279–1325) brought prosperity, security, and a navy to his realm, but his successes were undercut by later succession crises and wars with Castile. For its part, Castile was constantly torn by aristocratic uprisings, disputed royal successions, and border conflicts with Aragon and Portugal. And the Aragonese monarchy strove with only limited success to placate its nobility and merchants by granting significant concessions to regional representative assemblies, or cortes. A prolonged civil war in mid-fifteenth-century Catalonia—in which, as we saw in the last chapter, peasants allied with their king against aristocrats and merchants—was put down only with the greatest difficulty.

In 1469, a single marriage began to change at least some of these problems (see Timeline 13.3). In that year, Isabella of Castile (r. 1474–1504) married Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469, their combined resources made them unquestioned masters of the peninsula.