



UNITED STATES

1544-47 GREAT BRITAIN HENRY VIII GOLD SOVEREIGN S-2290 MS-60 NGC



Henry was the second son of Henry VII, first of the Tudor line, and Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV, first king of the short-lived line of York. When his elder brother, Arthur, died in 1502, Henry became the heir to the throne; of all the Tudor monarchs, he alone spent his childhood in calm expectation of the crown, which helped give an assurance of majesty and righteousness to his willful, ebullient character. He excelled in book learning as well as in the physical exercises of an aristocratic society, and, when in 1509 he ascended the throne, great things were expected of him. Six feet tall, powerfully built, and a tireless athlete, huntsman, and dancer, he promised England the joys of spring after the long winter of Henry VII's reign.

Henry and his ministers exploited the dislike inspired by his father's energetic pursuit of royal rights by sacrificing, without a thought, some of the unpopular institutions and some of the men that had served his predecessor. Yet the unpopular means for governing the realm soon reappeared because they were necessary. Soon after his accession, Henry married Catherine of Aragon, Arthur's widow, and the attendant lavish entertainments ate into the modest royal reserves.

