

## The New Christians of Spanish Naples 1528-1671: A Fragile Elite (Early Modern History: Society and Culture)

Peter A. Mazur

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Despite its reputation as the breeding ground of religious warfare and intolerance, the Mediterranean in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries nevertheless contained space for religious coexistence and even collaboration. The story of the conversos of Naples, a teeming commercial and military center under the control of Spain, shows how an enterprising and well-organized minority could accumulate wealth and influence, even obtaining aristocratic titles and key political roles, through an improbable alliance with the very men who were responsible for enforcing the city's Catholic identity and the imperial mission of the Spanish monarchy: the city's viceroys. Despite numerous attacks on their position, not least from the Inquisition, the conversos of Naples achieved a level of prestige and stability in this city that calls into question stereotypes about the nature of Spanish imperialism and the obstacles that the converso minority presented to it.



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