

# **Princes, Popes and Pirates**

Sandra Toro

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Princes, Popes and Pirates is an epic novel about the life of Joseph Nasi, the Duke of Naxos and an important leader in the world of Sephardic Jewry in the late sixteenth century. This is a sequel to Toro's By Fire Possessed: Doña Gracia Nasi, about the life of the most important Jewish woman leader of that era. Joseph Nasi is the historical fi gure on which The Jew of Malta by Christopher Marlowe was based, later reinterpreted by Shakespeare in The Merchant of Venice. Joseph Nasi was the most powerful Jew of his day, and his opposition to Spain, the Inquisition, the Church and the Holy Roman Emperor made him a persona non grata in the power circles of Europe. As heir to the commercial empire left by Doña Gracia, his aunt, he controlled one of the largest fortunes of his day. He was a close confidant to the Ottoman Sultan Selim, and he had a major role in the development of the Ottoman navy, which was so powerful that it controlled much of the Mediterranean. He was an important figure in the Battle of Lepanto.



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