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0521299292 - Early Latin America: A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil

James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz

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A HISTORY OF COLONIAL
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A HISTORY OF COLONIAL SPANISH
AMERICA AND BRAZIL

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Preface

Plans for this book go back to the time some years ago when, participating in a conference session on comparisons between Spanish America and Brazil in the early period, we discovered that the two of us had written nearly the same paper. Rather than comparing Spanish and Portuguese America as two separate entities, we had each treated the whole of Ibero-America as one entity, finding that the parts of Brazil tended to fall together typologically and in other ways with certain parts of Spanish America in contrast to other Spanish American areas, especially Peru and Mexico. We decided that there ought to be at least one work in English which treats within a single framework the entire area occupied by Iberians during what is usually called the colonial period.

In the years since our first commitment to the project, an additional motivation for it has grown ever more important in our minds. The spate of significant scholarly production in the field after World War II, in the period of about 1950–65, has been followed by an even more varied and voluminous outpouring. Under these conditions, frequent updating of syntheses is called for. Here, as in the matter of the two imperial zones, our aim is a unified view. Sub-fields have grown up – not an entirely new phenomenon in Latin American history – which hardly seem to recognize each other's existence, much less speak each other's language. In trying to combine the results of the subdisciplines, we also try to achieve a common vocabulary. Although we are not incognizant of the contribution of anthropology, sociology, linguistics, and other neighboring disciplines, and although we have developed some new terminology of our own in this book, we attempt to stay inside the boundaries of the readily intelligible across disciplines and specialties.

Intending the volume as both synthesis and introduction, we have forgone footnotes, which here tend to be irrelevant for the neophyte or general reader and unnecessary for the professional, who will quickly recognize many of the works on which we draw and the extent to which we follow or comment upon them. We do, however, provide a relatively ample selected bibliography to satisfy partially

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the need for a guide to further reading and to acknowledge some of our debts. Those debts go far beyond the items of the bibliography, and we wish to thank the countless individuals who have contributed through their writings to the understanding of early Latin America. Our special thanks go to William Taylor for a thoughtful reading of the manuscript.

J. L.

S. B. S.