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PREFACE

This book is intended to make certain aspects of the colonial history of Spanish America more accessible at university level; some of these aspects are new; others have already been studied, but all of them, I must confess, have a particular appeal to me. An attempt has been made, on the basis of research carried out so far and with specific reference to its findings, to present a picture of some of the more important topics of that history, the understanding of which I consider to be indispensable to a full knowledge of that period. No attempt has been made, however, to cover the entire field, because, obviously, certain topics lie outside the range of my capabilities or interests. The better general histories that have appeared in the last few decades contain chapters devoted to specific topics, some of which are omitted from this study; this study, on the other hand, contains considerations of other topics not previously discussed. Rather than write a general history or summary of the period, I have preferred to concentrate my attention on certain problems or series of problems which throw light on the course of history as a whole, and on which I believe that I can make original observations, based on my own previous research, or express reflections and opinions suggested by the researches of others. This book, therefore, occupies an intermediate place between the general history and the monograph, although it occasionally takes on the characteristics of both types of study. The studies are interpretative, in the sense that they represent an attempt not only to provide information but also to demonstrate the historical trends and tendencies underlying the events, institutions and ideas described, in the hope of achieving a fuller understanding of those trends. The treatment of specific topics within each chapter has been arranged with this end in view.

In accordance with the character of the book, notes have been dispensed with almost entirely, except for a small number which are to be found at the end of the book; most of the references have simply been incorporated into the text. In the Bibliography, an attempt has been made to include all the books and articles which I have found to be of value in writing the present work until *ca.* 1970/72. This list does not include the printed sources –

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chronicles, letters, legal compilations, doctrinal texts, accounts of travellers and so on – which comprise the basic and best-known documentary sources. These have been omitted, both to save space and also because such sources are easy to find through references in the secondary works quoted in this study.

I must express my thanks to Dr Richard M. Morse of Yale University, who first suggested that I should write such a book; to Malcolm Deas of the Centre of Latin American Studies of the University of Oxford, for his friendly advice and assistance; and, as always, to my wife, for her unfailing help in the task of revising the text.

M.G.

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GLOSSARY

Adalid. Military leader, commander of a *cabalgada* or warrior-band.

Adelantado. In the Indies, title of the actual or future discoverer and conqueror of a particular territory.

Ají. Chili pepper (*Capsicum longum*).

Alcabala. Sales tax, levied on all commodities except foodstuffs.

Alcalde mayor. In the Antilles and Central America, the judge, appointed by the Crown, of a Spanish city or an Indian *pueblo*. He exercised both executive and judicial functions.

Alcaldes ordinarios. The head elected magistrates of the City Council.

Alcaldes provinciales de la Santa Hermandad. Officials responsible for the apprehension and prosecution of criminals within the jurisdictional area around a city.

Alférez mayor. Honorary municipal official, who carried the Royal Standard in religious processions and military parades. His office was the *Alferazgo mayor*.

Algara. Cavalry foray into enemy territory, with the object of capturing booty.

Alguaciles. Subordinate judicial officials, constables. However, the *Alguacil Mayor de Corte*, the *Alguacil Mayor de Audiencia* and the *Alguacil Mayor de Cabildo* were officials of high prestige. The office was the *Alguacilazgo*.

Almojarifazgo. Customs duty.

Audiencia. The supreme judicial and administrative authority in each territory.

Ayuntamiento. Municipal corporation. The term is virtually synonymous with *Cabildo* (*q.v.*).

Baquiano. Experienced guide, scout.

Benemérito de Indias. Direct descendant of the conquistadors and earliest settlers.

Cabalgada. See *Algara*.

Cabildo (secular). City Council; municipal corporation of a Spanish city or an Indian *pueblo*.

Cabildo eclesiástico. Cathedral chapter.

Caja Real. Royal Treasury.

Caja de comunidad. Community chest, into which were paid the revenues of an Indian *pueblo*.

Camote. Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*).

Capitulaciones. Agreements signed between the Crown and a discoverer or future conquistador, stipulating the conditions of the proposed undertaking and the profits due to the various participants.

Cédula, Real Cédula. Royal decree, of a general or specific nature.

Censos. A mortgage contract, frequently perpetual and frequently with the church.

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[More information](#)*Glossary**Chácaras*. Suburban smallholdings.*Compañía*. Community formed by a conquest band.*Comunidades*. In the Indies in the sixteenth century, the word was used in the sense of insurrections headed by municipal corporations (by analogy with the revolt of the *Comuneros* in Castile in 1520). It was still used in this sense in Paraguay in 1725–35 and in Socorro (New Granada) in 1781.*Concertaje*. The *mita* (*q.v.*) in the rural areas of New Granada and Quito, which gave rise to a class of Indians (*indios conciertos*) established on the Spanish-owned *haciendas*.*Contadores*. Comptrollers, auditors.*Corregidores*. Chief judicial and administrative officials of a Spanish city or Indian *pueblo*, appointed by the Crown or its local representative.*Costa y minción, a su*. At his own expense and risk.*Cuatequil*. Aztec system of forced labour, the forerunner of *repartimiento* (*q.v.*).*Dehesa*. Communal grazing lands around Spanish cities.*Doctrinero*. Parish priest of an Indian community.*Ejido*. Communal grazing land for domestic animals, belonging to a Spanish city or Indian *pueblo*.*Encomienda*. In the Indies, the grant of the personal service or tribute of a group of Indians to a Spaniard (the *encomendero*).*Entretencimiento*. Pension, annuity.*Escribano*. Notary.*Estancia*. Land granted for cattle-raising.*Fieles ejecutores*. Municipal inspectors of weights and measures.*Fiscal*. Judicial official of the *Audiencia*, attorney, public prosecutor; in Indian *pueblos*, a native catechist and churchwarden, working under the supervision of the parish priest.*Gañán*. Free rural journeyman-labourer.*Hacienda Real*. Royal Exchequer.*Hidalgo, hidalguía*. Gentleman (by birth or designation); the quality of one so described.*Ingenio*. Sugar-mill.*Letrado*. Lawyer, jurist.*Macehuales*. (Mexico) ordinary Indians, subject to tribute.*Mandón*. Native acting as foreman or overseer of a group of Indians.*Mercedes*. Grants (of *encomiendas*, lands, mines, etc.).*Mita*. In South America (originally only in Peru), a group of natives assigned to forced labour on a shift basis in the Spanish-owned mines, farms, textile workshops and building projects.*Mitayo*. Native assigned to the *mita* (*q.v.*).*Moradores*. Inhabitants of a city, other than the *vecinos* (*q.v.*).*Naborias*. Household Indians, of a quasi-servile status.*Obraje*. Textile workshop.*Oficiales reales*. The Treasurer, the Comptroller, the Factor and (occasionally) the *Veedor* (*q.v.*) of each *Caja Real* (*q.v.*).

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