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David Sven Reher

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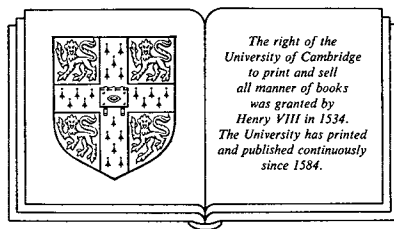
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Town and country in pre-industrial Spain

Cuenca, 1550–1870

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*This book is dedicated to
my parents Anne and Sven
and to my boys
Antonio and Guillermo*

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Preface

Research for this book began many years ago during the Fall of 1975. Over the years many of the original postulates underlying the project have changed. At first I was very influenced by the French “Annales” school of historiography, but as the project progressed the work of British and American currents of historical demography and social history became increasingly important to me. Both of these sources of inspiration can be seen in this book. My original ties to the town of Cuenca were purely circumstantial, and were based on its accessibility to Madrid and the existence of adequate archival sources. Now my attitude to the town is anything but indifferent. This book is written in homage to a beautiful, often forgotten and little understood town which centuries ago became trapped in the backwaters of Castilian history and was never again able to free itself.

This project would never have been possible without the help of many people. Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, the premier historian of early modern Spain, guided my steps from the very beginning. Had he not graciously accepted me as a doctoral student in 1974, the present book might never have been finished. People and institutions in Cuenca and in Madrid also gave me much needed support. Dimas Pérez Ramírez, archivist of the Diocesan Archive of Cuenca, and Elena Lázaro Corral and, later, Miguel Jiménez Monteserin, archivists of the Municipal Archive facilitated my work in every possible way. Felipe Ruiz Martín, Jordi Nadal, Vicente Pérez Moreda, Juan Sanz Sampelayo and Julio Molina generously allowed me to use some unpublished results of their own research. Carlos Sanz Blanco, Pedro Luis Iriso and Javier Gavilán shared their technical expertise with me; Manuel Pinedo, Francisco Blanco, Beatriz Nogueras, Carlos Muñoz, Nieves Pombo and Margarita Delgado helped in different aspects of archival research, and Guillermo and Antonio Reher drew up many of

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Preface

the figures and maps in the text. I owe them all a very real debt of thanks.

In the course of this project I have also received considerable institutional support. Two grants greatly facilitated my work. IBM Spain gave on-going funding for the computing aspects of the project, and its employees José Luis Ruiz and Jesús Sánchez Lladó willingly and patiently answered my queries and solved most of the computing problems related to the project. The actual writing of this book was greatly facilitated by a grant received from the Tinker Foundation of New York during the 1987–1988 academic year. During that period, the Universidad Complutense de Madrid gave me academic leave which proved essential for the completion of the project. I have also benefited from prolonged stays with the Cambridge Group for the History of Population in Cambridge, England (during the Summers of 1986 and 1988) and with the Graduate Group in Demography at the University of California at Berkeley (during the 1987–1988 academic year).

Massimo Livi Bacci, Peter Laslett, Dudley Baines, Patrick Galloway, David Ringrose, Vincente Pérez Moreda, Richard Wall, and Robert Lee have read different parts of the manuscript. Their incisive and often pointed critical comments have enabled me to correct many of the weak points of my text. They are responsible for much of what is good in this book. Any mistakes or weaknesses are entirely mine.