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This book examines the relationship between the indigenous peoples of northern Ecuador and disease, especially those infections introduced by Europeans during the sixteenth century. It addresses an important and often overlooked element in the history of Amerindian populations: their biological adaptability and resilience. But it is more than a history of disease incidents, medical responses, and population trends. The history of the biological adaptation it recounts also reveals much about a people's social and political experience under colonial rule. It differs from other studies in the field by its emphasis on the relationship between biological and social responses.

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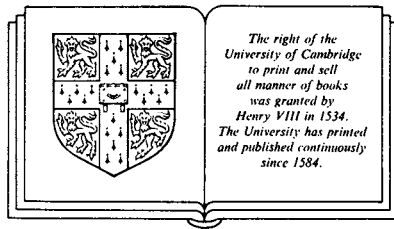
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SUZANNE AUSTIN ALCHON
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Acknowledgments

The origins of this book are in a doctoral dissertation completed in 1984. During the past six years, I have had occasion to return to archives in Ecuador and Spain and, as a consequence, I have altered significantly many of the ideas contained in the dissertation. The intervening years have also given me the opportunity to read further and to think more about the nature of disease and its effects on the native peoples of colonial Ecuador. Thus, time and additional research have led me to change both structure and content, and I believe that the ideas embodied in the book are clearer and richer as a result.

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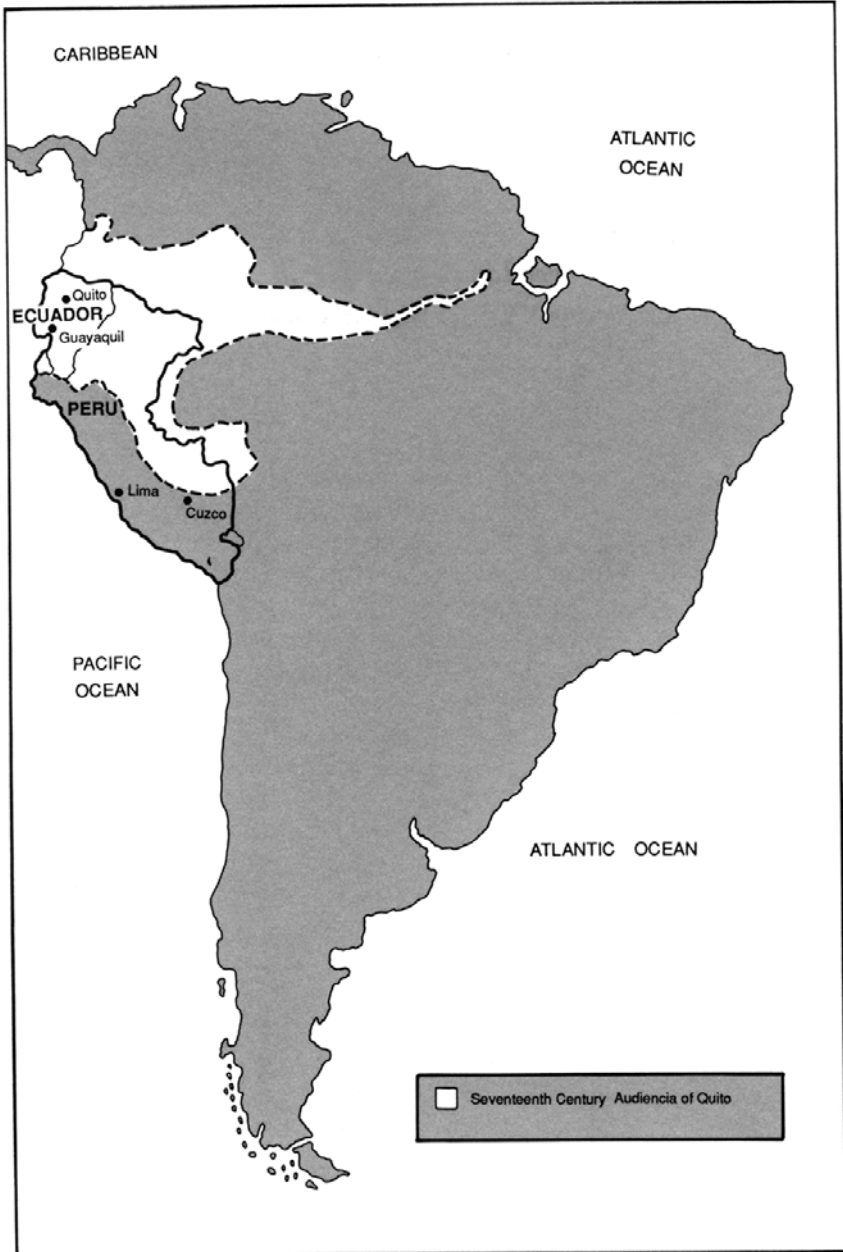
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*For Lilla Brown Coombs
and William Waldorf Coombs*

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Map 1. The Audiencia of Quito in the seventeenth century.