



The Men of Cajamarca: A Social and Biographical Study of the First Conquerors of Peru (Lilas Latin American Monograph)

James Lockhart

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In November 1532, a group of 168 Spaniards seized the Inca emperor Atahualpa in the town of Cajamarca, in the northern Peruvian highlands. Their act, quickly taken as a symbol of the conquest of a vast empire, brought them unprecedented rewards in gold and silver; it made them celebrities, gave them first choice of positions of honor and power in the new Peru of the Spaniards, and opened up the possibility of a splendid life at home in Spain, if they so desired. Thus they became men of consequence, at the epicenter of a swift and irrevocable transformation of the Andean region. Yet before that memorable day in Cajamarca they had been quite unexceptional, a reasonable sampling of Spaniards on expeditions all over the Indies at the time of the great conquests.

The Men of Cajamarca is perhaps the fullest treatment yet published of any group of early Spaniards in America. Part I examines general types, characteristics, and processes visible in the group as representative Spanish immigrants, central to the establishment of a Spanish presence in the New World's richest land. The intention is to contribute to a changing image of the Spanish conqueror, a man motivated more by pragmatic self-interest than by any love of adventure, capable and versatile as often as illiterate and rough. Aiming at permanence more than new landfalls, these men created the governmental units and settlement distribution of much of Spanish America and set lasting patterns for a new society.

Part II contains the men's individual biographies, ranging from a few lines for the most obscure to many pages of analysis for the best-documented figures. The author traces the lives of the men to their beginnings in Spain and follows their careers after the episode in Cajamarca.

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