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Sintesis e indice de los mandamientos virreinales, 1548-1553, by
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specialists, including the mandated relocation (*congregación*) of indigenous peoples into more compact settlements, the formation of haciendas, the pressures that impelled colonial caciques to surrender the holdings of their communities, and the seventeenth-century *composiciones* that enabled the new owners to paper over any irregularities in their titles. Martínez argues that protective legislation did little to retard the process of land alienation in Tecamachalco and Quecholac. Spaniards enjoyed a 50-year free-for-all before any significant laws appeared, and they openly flouted the rules thereafter. Their methods ranged from the most blatant—outright violence, fraudulent manipulation of sales and rental agreements, theft of title documents, and the deliberate unleashing of livestock on lands they coveted—to somewhat more subtle maneuvers, including marriage to Indian women. Authorities declared “vacant” (*baldo*) lands that actually were not, and Franciscan friars energetically encouraged bequests to pious foundations and individuals. Meanwhile, indigenous nobles lost their workers as their erstwhile dependents (*terrazgueros*) departed to meet labor obligations imposed by the Spanish. Left thus “unoccupied,” the caciques’ lands became especially vulnerable to expropriation.

In all, the people of Tecamachalco and Quecholac lost more than 137,000 hectares between 1521 and 1644, an average of more than 1,100 hectares per year. What little agency they were able to muster—and Martínez does give several examples of lawsuits and other tactics—proved futile and even self-defeating. Some readers may conclude that Martínez credits the Spanish settlers with far more coordination and forethought than they actually possessed. Others might suggest that this region represents an extreme case and that elsewhere indigenous peoples were able to defend their lands more effectively. Nevertheless, this book deserves a careful reading, for it poses a sobering rejoinder not only to the generation of scholars who painted a kinder and gentler picture of Spanish colonialism in their efforts to refute the most strident claims of the Black Legend, but also to more recent students who have preferred to highlight the agency of indigenous peoples.

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Síntesis e índice de los mandamientos virreinales, 1548–1553. By PETER GERHARD. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1992. Maps. Bibliography. Index. 774 pp. Paper.

The mid-sixteenth century was a critical period in New Spain. In the 1540s, the indigenous peoples were subjected to a devastating epidemic that had immediate demographic, economic, political, and social repercussions throughout much of the colony. In this context, the crown in 1549 issued a new labor law that sought to re-fashion relations between the Spanish and the surviving Indian communities, leaving the challenge of its implementation to the local authorities. In addition, the discovery of rich silver deposits in the north promised greater opportunities for royal and

personal wealth and quickly prompted investment in infrastructure and technology. Peter Gerhard's excellent index facilitates access to government materials that will enable historians better to understand how these and other processes unfolded during the last years of the Mendoza viceregal administration and the first two years of Velasco's term.

Gerhard's annotated guide to viceregal decrees is based largely on materials in the Kraus Collection at the Library of Congress and the Ayer Collection at the Newberry Library, supplemented by smaller holdings in the Civil and Mercedes sections of the Mexican National Archives. Given the local nature of much of the data, Gerhard arranges the documents by the extant provinces of midcentury New Spain and introduces each section with a historical sketch and a map. Each document is summarized and, depending on the availability of published materials, enhanced with explanatory notes on the people, places, and events mentioned. When appropriate, annotations cross-reference documents, a very helpful feature in following particular issues and individuals. The guide also includes brief sections of document summaries and inventories pertaining to boundaries of bishoprics, sinecures, and viceregal permission to leave port, travel outside the colony, and, contrary to royal law, use *tamemes* (Nahuatl for porters). A bibliography and a splendid name and subject index complete the volume.

A perusal of the entries provides a glimpse into the issues that preoccupied colonial officials, European settlers, and indigenous peoples during the early life of New Spain. As might be expected, control of land, labor, and other resources tended to take a disproportionate share of the viceroys' attention. Many documents refer to land grants to Spanish settlers in areas ravaged by the epidemic, the resulting conflicts between Spanish ranchers and Indian farmers over boundaries and invasive livestock, and the types of work that Indians were required to perform for the crown, the church, and the settlers. A careful reading of the viceregal orders also offers a sense of demographic, economic, and settlement patterns at midcentury. It illustrates the impact of the epidemic on native communities throughout the colony, how many Spaniards either resided or had economic interests in the provinces, and, for certain areas, the rapid shift from Indian agriculture to ranching within several years of the end of the pestilence.

Particularly interesting is to view the role of the colonial state in the formative years of the colony, notably the relatively swift emergence of royal authority and concomitant limitation of municipal influence. The guide's geographical organization facilitates the exploration of these and other themes at the local or regional level.

This is a welcome and easy-to-use research aid that not only illustrates how the viceregal court operated on a daily basis during a period of great transition, but also offers a fascinating look into the myriad peoples and cultures that made up a nascent Mexico.

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