

PROJECT OF A CRITICAL
COLLECTION OF
VICEREGAL REPORTS

by

Lewis Hanke

A. IMPORTANCE OF THE VICEREGAL REPORTS

Spain established in America one of the most extensive empires the World has ever seen, and developed a remarkable bureaucratic structure to govern it. The key official was the Viceroy, the personal representative of the King in the two great viceroalties organized in Mexico and Peru shortly after they were conquered in the early years of the sixteenth century.

Each Viceroy was supposed to draw up a formal report on his administration as a record of important events and as a guide for his successor. Not all Viceroys complied with this royal order but the many reports, sometimes extensive, which were written constitute official documentary sources of prime value to anthropologists, economists, geographers, historians, political scientists, and indeed to everyone concerned with the history of the Spanish Empire in America or colonial administration in general. Only a small number of these reports have been published, sometimes in restricted editions or without adequate editorial apparatus. No other European power of the time appears to have required such reports, so that this corpus of material represents a unique and valuable historical source.

The "Residencia" material described below complements the "Relation", for it gives the view of those royal officials who served as judges of the viceroy's rule after he had left office. While the viceroy projected his own image in his *Relación*, the reports of the residencia judges reflected the criticisms and shortcomings of each viceroy as they appeared to his subjects in America.

This project is limited to the 16th and 17th centuries (the Hapsburg era) because the viceregal reports for this period are less well known than those of the 18th century which are, moreover, so bulky and detailed that the project would be too large if they were included too.

When completed, the project will provide a substantial amount of source material for the study of colonial Spanish America and will

also constitute a basic guide to the research materials on each viceroy's rule.

B. WHAT THE PROJECT INCLUDES

The following material, all in Spanish, will be included on each viceroy, so far as possible:

1. **Biographical Sketch:** Brief statement of about 100-200 words.
2. **The relación:** The text of each viceroy's report will be based upon the best manuscript or manuscripts available. For those periods when no viceroy was in power, an appropriate report or general letter by the interim governing power, the Audiencia, will be included whenever possible.
3. **Residencia Material:** The *Dictamen* of the fiscal (royal officer), and the *Sentencia*. The fiscal summarized the charges made against each viceroy during the "Residencia", a judicial enquiry carried on at the end of each viceroy's rule to determine whether he should be punished for any misdeeds while in office. The "Residencia" proceedings were often very detailed with much evidence given pro and con by witnesses. The "Dictamen" by the fiscal was intended to summarize the more important evidence, and the "sentencia" showed what punishment, if any, was to be given to the viceroy after the Council of the Indies reviewed the evidence. Taken together the "Relación", the viceroy's account of his own rule, and the "Residencia" provided valuable complementary and sometimes contrasting opinions on Spanish viceregal administration in America.
4. **Bibliography:** An annotated list of important articles, books, and unpublished doctoral dissertations, as well as an organized list of documents previously printed, relating to each viceroy.
5. **A Statement on Manuscript Sources:** It is hoped to prepare a succinct description (not a detailed catalog) of the manuscript material in the Archivo General de Indias in Sevilla and in other Spanish repositories on each viceroy. It is also planned that there will be supplementary statements on material in Peru, in Mexico, and in other places such as Berkeley, Buenos Aires, London, Paris, and Washington, D. C.
6. **Index:** A person and subject index will be in each volume, as well as consolidated index in the last volume. Thus it will be possible

- to study any particular aspect of viceregal administration on a comparative basis, chronologically and by area.
7. Illustrations: If adequate reproductions can be arranged, there will be a picture of each viceroy, plus perhaps other contemporary prints of Mexico City and of Lima.
 8. Publication: José Porrúa Venero of Madrid has agreed to publish the six to eight volumes involved, in a documentary series directed by the American historian, Dr. Ernest J. Burrus, S. J.

C. HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

I have been at work on this project intermittently over a period of some ten years, but have never devoted much time to it on a steady basis because of my teaching commitments and other research interests (see Vita, and list of my publications). Modest grants from the University of Texas and the University of California, Irvine, have enabled me to collect microfilm copies of many of the relaciones. The University of Massachusetts is supporting the project during the academic year (1969-70) by providing two part-time research assistants (graduate students who will thereby be getting useful experience in research), an office in Herter Hall for the project, an electric typewriter, files, etc. The University of Massachusetts administration, in correspondence concerning my appointment to the History faculty, has indicated its expectation of providing additional assistance in about the same way over the next two or three years. The estimate of ten percent of my time during the academic year (see the Budget) is a conservative figure.

D. PLAN OF WORK

The grant now being requested would make possible the achievement of the key operation of the project—the completion of the preparation of all the texts of the relaciones and the residencia material, and the research work in Spanish archives during the summer of 1970 and 1971 relating to the editorial apparatus.

The year immediately following (September 1, 1971 - September 1, 1972) would be devoted to the final work on the editorial apparatus, with the expectation that all the material would be ready for the press on January 1, 1973. The following year or eighteen months would be spent on reading proof and preparing the index, so that the volumes should begin to appear in 1975.