ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The nucleus of this work began as a doctoral dissertation for which I was awarded a Ph.D. by Calcutta University in 1989. It is a pleasure now to acknowledge the intellectual and material assistance without which I could not have completed the dissertation or undertaken its transformation into a book.

I owe a very special debt of gratitude to my dissertation adviser Rajat Ray and to Gautam Bhadra for their intellectual guidance and support. I would also like to recall the help and encouragement I received from the late Dr. Indrani Ray, particularly the faith that she reposed in an incipient thesis. A research fellowship for four years from the University Grants Commission of India provided financial support for dissertation research. My thanks to the Department of History, Calcutta University, for awarding me this fellowship.

In Patna, Professors S. H. Askari and Qeyamuddin Ahmad generously shared their great knowledge of local history with me. I would specially like to thank Dr. A. R. Bedar for his invaluable assistance and cooperation that made my work at the Khudabaksh Library possible. The kindness and hospitality that I have received from Anjali Sircar (mashima) and Dipankar Sircar have sustained my several trips to Patna.

My research at the Oriental and India Office Records in London in 1992 and 1993 was supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by grants from the Pennsylvania State University, specifically the Kent Forster award from the Department of History, a research grant from the Institute of Arts and Humanistic Studies and the Dorothy W. Gilpatrick fellowship. The Gilpatrick fellowship also provided a semester of much-needed time to work on the manuscript during the fall of 1993.

I owe many thanks to Chris Bayly for taking time off from his own pressing engagements to provide detailed comments on an earlier version of the manuscript. Many friends, colleagues and mentors have contributed to this work through their comments, interest and suggestions. In particular I would like to mention Rich Barnett, Arun Dasgupta, Barun De, Mike Fisher, David Ludden, Bharati Ray, Sudipta Sen, and Anand Yang.

I appreciate the help I have received from the staff of the libraries and archives where I have worked, the Bihar State Archives, the National Library, Calcutta, the West Bengal State Archives, the National Archives of India and the Oriental and India Office Records. Special thanks are due to Dr. Shayesta Khan and to the staff of the Khudabaksh Library for their help.
with the translation of some Persian and Urdu sources I have used in this book. Thanks are also due to Jeri Fisher, the Deasy Geographics Laboratory of the Pennsylvania State University, to Richard Garner (for rescuing me from computer-related crises), and to Therese Boyd and Tom Minsker for their editorial and technical work in getting the manuscript ready for publication. I am indebted to Ishita Ghosh and Peggy Smith for preparing the index.

Parts of chapters 2 and 5 originally appeared as an article entitled “Grain Traders and the East India Company: Patna and its Hinterland in the Late 18th Century and Early 19th Century”, in the Indian Economic and Social History Review, Vol. 23, No. 4 (1986). A revised version of my article entitled “Conflict and Collaboration: Bankers and Colonial Rule in India, 1757-1820” which was published in the Indian Economic and Social History Review, Vol. 30, No. 3 (1993) appears here as chapter 7. For both these articles copyright is held by the Indian Economic and Social History Association for 1986 and 1993 respectively. All rights reserved. They are reproduced here with the permission of the copyright holders and publishers, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi. An earlier version of chapter 3 had appeared as an article entitled “Trade and Darbar Politics in 18th Century Bengal Subah” in Modern Asian Studies, Vol. 26, No. 2 (1992), © 1992, Cambridge University Press. It has been reprinted here with permission of the Cambridge University Press.

This work would not have been possible without the support of my family. I value Kalyan’s understanding and quiet encouragement of my scholarly endeavours. My parents, as in all other things, have been an unfailing source of love and emotional support. This book is dedicated to them.