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Hiram Bingham's Expeditions and the Peruvian Response:

A Connecticut *Yanqui* in the Land of the Incas

On June 15, 1915, the renowned Yale historian-turned-explorer Hiram Bingham III returned from a three-week trek along the Salcantay trail to find his Ollantaytambo headquarters occupied by four hostile young Peruvian men. In the name of the Instituto Histórico del Cuzco, they accused him of violating the prefect's decree prohibiting the excavation of Inca sites in the vicinity. Their suspicions were not unwarranted. Lining the walls of the office were large wooden cases, full of archaeological specimens. They demanded to investigate the contents of the boxes, charging that Bingham was smuggling gold and treasures out of Peru by way of Bolivia. Perturbed, Bingham obliged, and the Peruvians found their accusations to be without basis. Yet tensions would not subside easily. This moment marked the culmination of increasingly antagonistic relations between the Yale explorers and their Peruvian hosts, and no amount of investigation could bridge the deep divide of distrust that had formed over the past four years.

To this day, the conflict continues to rage. The confrontation in Ollantaytambo was but a microcosm of the rift that now spans nearly a century. Yale remains in possession of thousands of artifacts from Machu Picchu and the surrounding area, and Peru still accuses Yale of stealing a part of its national heritage. In September 2007, after years of quarrels, threats, and near-lawsuits, the university and representatives of the Peruvian government finally reached an agreement to send the relics home, after 91 years in Yale's Peabody Museum. Yet the 60-day deadline to sign the accord came and went,

and the artifacts continue to sit in Peabody storage. The most vocal opposition to the recent agreement comes from the wife of former president Alejandro Toledo, Eliane Karp-Toledo, who wrote a guest column in *The New York Times* on February 23, 2008, arguing that “Yale continues to deny Peru the right to its cultural patrimony.” The agreement, which allows Yale to keep a portion of the artifacts for as long as 99 years, represents “a colonial way of thinking.”¹ Negotiations have been reopened, but there is little optimism the dispute will be resolved in the near future.

The origins of the controversy can be traced back to Bingham’s expeditions to Peru between 1911 and 1915, and to the initial Peruvian response to these projects. The historical context that thrust Bingham and the delegates of the Instituto Histórico into confrontation sheds light on the nature of this response. The 1910s were a time of great change in Peru, and particularly in the Cuzco highland region that is home to the ancient sites under consideration. A new generation of intellectual and political leaders in Cuzco, eager to shift the center of national power and political discourse from *mestizo*-dominated Lima, celebrated Peru’s indigenous majority and Inca heritage through a movement that became known as *indigenismo*. The response to Bingham’s expeditions and exportation of artifacts, then, can best be explained by *cuzqueño* intellectuals’ struggle to establish their philosophy of *indigenismo* in the face of perceived imperialism from the North American explorers.²

On July 24, 1911, Hiram Bingham and his small team of adventurers pushed through a thicket of trees and bamboo and found themselves face to face with the

¹ Eliane Karp-Toledo, “The Lost Treasure of Machu Picchu,” *New York Times*, February 23, 2008.

² The terms *cuzqueño* and *limeño* are used frequently throughout this essay. *Cuzqueño* is an adjective referring to the city of Cuzco, while *limeño* is its Lima counterpart.

impeccable Inca masonry of Machu Picchu.³ Bingham pulled out his notebook and scribbled, “Fine Ruins—much better than Choq[uequirau]. Houses, streets, stairs. Finely cut stone.”⁴ He snapped a few photos and admired the impressive architectural remains. After several hours, he was convinced that he had seen all there was to see. He left the site to pursue what he considered a more important undertaking: his search for Vitcos, the last Inca capital.⁵ He would not return for another year.⁶

Bingham’s gross underestimation of the significance of the ruins at Machu Picchu was a result of the haphazard origins of the expedition. As a lecturer in South American history at Yale, he had little knowledge of archaeology, geology, botany, anthropology, agriculture, or mountaineering, the fields into which he hoped to gain insight by means of his adventures in Peru. His desire to become an explorer stemmed from his restlessness as a teacher and his slow recovery from an appendectomy, which removed him from the classroom for a year.⁷ After a rather aimless trip through much of South America in 1906-1907, he soon set out to explore once again. His plan was to uncover Maya ruins in Mexico, but he was forced to resort to his backup option of Peru when he failed to attract funding for his Mexican ambitions.⁸ His interest in Peru was also spurred by misogynistic envy: a woman named Annie S. Peck had recently climbed Mount Huascarán in the Peruvian *sierra*, and he was uncomfortable with the idea that a woman

³ Alfred Bingham, *Portrait of An Explorer: Hiram Bingham, Discoverer of Machu Picchu* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989), 9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

might achieve greater fame as an explorer than he.⁹ Bingham managed to win Yale's financial backing, and on _____, the Yale Peruvian Expedition set sail for South America.

Like the expedition itself, the discovery of Machu Picchu was something of a chance event, if indeed the term "discovery" can be used at all. Bingham was led to the ruins by a local farmer named Melchor Arteaga, who took him across rickety bridges, rocky cliffs, and viper-filled grasses for the price of one *sol*, equivalent to about fifty cents.¹⁰ Several Indian peasant families were already living in the ancient huts of Machu Picchu when he arrived. Bingham was also surprised to find the words "Lizarraga 1902" scribbled in charcoal on one of the walls, and he wrote in his journal, "Agustin Lizarraga is discoverer of Machu Picchu."¹¹ In fact, Bingham could not even take credit for finding Arteaga. Albert Giesecke, the U.S.-born rector of the National University of San Antonio Abad in Cuzco, had met Arteaga in early 1911 and taken him up on his offer to explore Machu Picchu when the dry season arrived.¹² Giesecke generously passed this

⁹ Ibid., 108. Hiram Bingham's preoccupation with Annie Peck is evident in his frequent mentions of her, and his desire to discount or surpass her accomplishments, in letters to friends and colleagues.

¹⁰ Hiram Bingham recalled in *Inca Land*: "The morning of July 24th dawned in a cold drizzle. Arteaga shivered and seemed inclined to stay in his hut. I offered to pay him well if he would show me the ruins. He demurred and said it was too hard a climb for such a wet day. When he found that we were willing to pay him a *sol*, three or four times the ordinary daily wage in this vicinity, he finally agreed to guide us to the ruins." Hiram Bingham, *Inca Land* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1922), 315. Curiously, the cost of this transaction differs in nearly every account. In the April 1913 *National Geographic* piece "In the Wonderland of Peru," he states that he paid Arteaga 50 *centavos*, "two and a half times his usual daily salary." Quoted in Mariana Mould de Pease, *Perú: Viajeros de ayer, Turistas de hoy* (Lima: Salgado Editores, 1997), 36. And Alfred Bingham sets the price at a silver dollar. Alfred Bingham, 6.

¹¹ Alfred Bingham, 19. Lizarraga was a local farmer of mixed Spanish-Indian descent. Interestingly, in later years, Bingham retracted his crediting of the discovery to Lizarraga. In his final account of the expedition in his 1948 book *Lost City of the Incas*, he writes matter-of-factly, "After I found it..." with no mention of Lizarraga. Hiram Bingham, *Lost City of the Incas* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948), viii. And in a 1922 letter, he explains: "I suppose that in the same sense of the word as it is used in the expression 'Columbus discovered America' it is fair to say that I discovered Machu Picchu. The Norsemen and the French fishermen undoubtedly visited North America long before Columbus crossed the Atlantic. On the other hand it was Columbus who made America known to the civilized world. In the same sense of the word I 'discovered' Machu Picchu—in that before my visit and report on it it was not known to the geographical and historical societies in Peru, nor to the Peruvian government." Alfred Bingham, 25-26.

¹² Ibid., 5.

opportunity on to Bingham, who proved himself the beneficiary of extraordinarily good timing.

Yet Bingham did not immediately appreciate just how fortunate he was. Initially underwhelmed by Machu Picchu, he only began to sing the site's praises when it attracted considerable attention from the press and his colleagues. What was once a striking but insignificant old city became, in his multiple subsequent retellings, a refuge from enemies, the birthplace of the first Inca, the burial grounds of Inca Pachacuti VI, the capital of the Inca Empire for centuries, the long-lost city of Tampu-tocco, and, finally, a safe haven from European invaders.¹³ As the myths surrounding Machu Picchu expanded, so did its fame, and Bingham found his name splashed across front-page headlines for years to come.

Building on the unexpected success of his mission, Bingham immediately began planning another expedition to Peru upon his return home. This time backed by the National Geographic Society, "The Peruvian Expedition of 1912 under the auspices of Yale University and the National Geographic Society" set forth to continue the exploration of Peru's ancient ruins and unique topography.¹⁴ It was during this journey that the controversy over Bingham's motives and methods began to take form in Peru.

¹³ Hiram Bingham, *Inca Land*, 330-39. These theories have since been discredited as groundless. Historians and archaeologists continue to dispute the function of the citadel. In *Machu Picchu*, Richard Burger and Lucy Salazar argue that it served as a royal estate, where the Inca and his court spent the winter months to escape from the cold of Cuzco's higher altitude. Richard Burger and Lucy Salazar, *Machu Picchu: Unveiling the Mystery of the Incas* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 26-27. John H. Rowe contends in "Machupijchu a la luz de los documentos del siglo XVI" that it may have been built by the emperor Pachakuti or his lineage to commemorate Inca military victories in the area, while Johan Reinhard's *Machu Picchu: The Sacred Center* links the city to mountain worship. Cited in Maria Rostworowski and Craig Morris, "Inka Power and Its Social Foundations," in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), vol. 3, part 1, 853. While no consensus has been reached, it appears clear that most or all of Bingham's claims were unfounded.

¹⁴ Yale President Arthur Twining Hadley allowed Bingham to leave Yale mid-semester, arguing that he would be more valuable to the university in Lima than in New Haven. Alfred Bingham, 277.

The Yale Peruvian Expedition had set the conflict in motion the year before by evading the Peruvian government's 1893 decree prohibiting archaeological excavation without a permit.¹⁵ There followed a stricter decree in August 1911, which forbade the exportation of excavated materials, excepting duplicates, even when a permit had been issued.¹⁶ These restrictions did not play a large role in 1911, when Bingham took only “glacial bones”—ancient fossilized human and animal remains—out of the country.¹⁷ But in 1912, Bingham hoped to undertake much more excavation, with the goal of bringing his findings back to the Peabody Museum. For this reason, he sought to obtain a concession from the Peruvian government that would grant him broad excavation rights.

Bingham approached President William Howard Taft in February 1912 and urged him to ask the Peruvians for such a concession. He apparently met with success. A short time later, President Augusto Leguía submitted legislation for a ten-year exclusive concession to the Peruvian parliament, which would have prevented any other institutions from performing excavations in the region.¹⁸ Thinking the matter settled, Bingham set out to work on his project, only to be called back to Lima. The political situation had soured. Leguía, an important ally for Bingham, was nearing the end of his presidential term, and the country was in turmoil over the issue of succession.¹⁹ The parliament in

¹⁵ A. Bingham, 278.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 279.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Editorial: “The Yale Scientific Expedition,” *West Coast Leader*, October 10, 1912, Yale Peruvian Expedition papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT (hereafter cited as YPE), Box 35, Folder 52. All cited newspaper articles from the YPE papers are clippings in one of Hiram Bingham's two relevant scrapbooks. One scrapbook, contained in Box 35, Folder 52, contains clippings up through 1913, while the other, contained in Box 35, Folder 53, contains clippings from 1914 and later.

¹⁹ A. Bingham, 284. Leguía had grown quite unpopular in some circles. In a letter to his wife on September 15, 1911, Hiram Bingham described a student riot in Lima against Leguía's crackdown on free speech. Himself something of an authoritarian, Bingham wrote, “The government is much more active in suppressing manifestations than when I was here before [in 1908]. Most of the boarders seemed to think the government was going too far. They do not realize how essential it is to put down all revolutionary beginnings.” A. Bingham, 231. Part of his support for Leguía stemmed from his reliance on the president as a loyal backer, who instructed all the local authorities to cooperate with Bingham and provided him with

Lima would not be addressing the matter of the concession in the near future, and its support was becoming unlikely as a growing number of young intellectuals vociferously opposed the agreement.

When Bingham finally arrived in Lima, a new president, Guillermo Billinghurst, had taken the reins of government. Unlike Leguía, who had been sympathetic to U.S. interests, Billinghurst was widely regarded as opposed to United States influence in Latin America. Leguía himself wrote in 1914, “Billinghurst is a known anti-American. The celebrated politics and agreements with the United States have been discarded and violated by him.”²⁰ Billinghurst curtly informed Bingham that a concession would be a “disgrace” for Peru.²¹ On October 15, with the concession formally rejected, the Peruvian parliament granted Bingham limited permission to finish the excavations he had already begun:

military escorts and assistance. So close was their relationship that Leguía later sent his son to Connecticut to study under Bingham’s mentorship at Hamden Hall (**check this**). The younger Leguía then matriculated at Yale. (**confirm this**)

²⁰ “Declaraciones de Don Augusto B. Leguía,” *El Comercio* (Cuzco), March 9, 1914. All translations from Spanish-language and German-language sources are mine. All articles from *El Comercio* and *El Sol* that do not list the YPE papers as the source came to me in digital format from Willie Hiatt. See bibliographical essay for more information.

²¹ *Ibid.* After the unpopular Leguía left office, Billinghurst was hailed by many as the savior of Peru. Songs celebrating his glory were published in *El Cancionero de Lima* (The Lima Songbook). Examples include “The New President,” which begins:

As soon as you take control
Of the government of Peru
We will be happy
We will enjoy good health
And we will have food to eat

There will no longer be calamity
Nor denouncements of informers
Nor torture or imprisonment
Or abuse of power...

Another piece is a polka, which concludes:

You, Guillermo, gave us salvation,
You told us the victory is ours
The nation will suffer no more torments.

(cancionero 3-7) **DELETE????????**

A duty to international etiquette and deference to the cited institutions leads the Government to accede, just this once, to that which is solicited by the petitioners with the aim of completing scientific studies of positive utility for the history of Peru; -IT IS RESOLVED:-to authorize Dr. Hiram Bingham, representing Yale University and the National Geographic Society of the United States of America, to continue the explorations and excavations that he has initiated . . . , provided that the monuments and constructions from the Inca and colonial eras do not suffer destruction or mutilation as a result of the excavations. . . . This concession expires on December 1; and after this date, all exploration and excavation are prohibited.²²

Consequently, on the first of December, Bingham began his return voyage to the United States, accompanied by a hundred cases of bones and pottery shards that would become the source of major controversy over the next century.

Initially discouraged by the frustrating conclusion to the 1912 expedition, Bingham quickly regained interest in the project and soon began planning his next trip to Peru. At the same time, he published his Machu Picchu stories and photographs in an issue of the *National Geographic Magazine* that was devoted entirely to his work. With his newfound fame, he succeeded in raising a substantially larger budget for the “Peruvian Expedition of 1914-15 under the auspices of the National Geographic Society and Yale University” than he had managed for his earlier voyages.²³ In his planning, he assumed that he would face no opposition from the government to his excavations around Machu Picchu.²⁴ He miscalculated. On May 25, 1915, the prefect of Cuzco ordered the immediate cessation of all excavation.²⁵ Furthermore, when Bingham returned from a trek to the Vitcos area on June 15, he was confronted by four men in his Ollantaytambo

²² Mariana Mould de Pease, “Apuntes interculturales para la historia inmediata de machupicchu: Las funciones de Hiram Bingham y Albert A. Giesecke,” in *Revista del Archivo Regional del Cusco*, no. 15 (Cusco: Archivo Regional del Cusco, 2000), 141. This passage reproduces a government resolution of October 31, 1912.

²³ A. Bingham, 296.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 305.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

office, known as Yanquihuasi, pseudo-Quechua for “Yankee house.” The leader of the delegation was Luis Valcárcel, the editor of *El Sol* and president of the Instituto Histórico del Cuzco (Cuzco Historical Institute).²⁶ Valcárcel and his colleagues accused Bingham of violating the prefect’s order and, to his surprise, of smuggling gold out of Peru by way of Bolivia. Facing possible imprisonment or other punishment for crimes he had not committed, Bingham managed to persuade his accusers of his innocence in the matter of gold smuggling and return to the United States in the fall of 1915.²⁷ Seventy-four boxes of excavated materials followed him six months later.²⁸

Theories on why Bingham faced such resistance to the concession and to his expeditions in general are manifold. A portion, albeit a small one, of the opposition to the concession stemmed from a usual suspect: Yale’s arch-rival Harvard University. Harvard administrators protested vehemently when they learned of the likelihood of an exclusive concession to Yale, which would bar Harvard from any exploration in the Cuzco region. The coverage of Bingham’s expedition by the Boston press reflects Harvard’s frustration. A December 1912 article in the *Boston Post* reported that the concession “will cause a serious breach in the relations of the two colleges.” The piece continued, “Harvard has long been conceded the leadership in archeology. But in recent years Yale has been exerting every resource to pull down the Cambridge college’s lead.”²⁹ Harvard administrators complained of the concession to American and Peruvian authorities. In response, the State Department instructed U.S. diplomats in Lima to ensure that the

²⁶ “Notas del día: La Comisión de Yale,” *El Sol*, June 2, 1915.

²⁷ *Riese* 21

²⁸ A. Bingham, 310.

²⁹ “Harvard Angry at Yale Scheme,” *Boston Post*, December 18, 1912, Yale Peruvian Expedition papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT (hereafter cited as YPE), Box 35, Folder 52. All cited newspaper articles from the YPE papers are clippings in one of Hiram Bingham’s two relevant scrapbooks. One scrapbook, contained in Box 35, Folder 52, contains clippings up through 1913, while the other, contained in Box 35, Folder 53, contains clippings from 1914 and later.

academic and scientific interests of other universities not be hindered.³⁰ Thus Bingham found himself thwarted not only by internal opposition in Peru, but also by his former home and now competitor, Harvard.

In his essay “Local versus Imperial Knowledge,” the Argentinean historian Ricardo D. Salvatore posits another theory. He suggests that *cuzqueño* researchers and academics, confronted by a well-funded team of North American explorers, experienced a kind of inferiority complex. The academic institutions of Cuzco, he argues, lacked the resources to fund such fields as archaeology and anthropology. They “withdrew into a defensive position” and tried to block the Yale expedition’s efforts “with a series of possession rituals, with bureaucratic red tape, and with defamation campaigns in the press.”³¹ While there is validity to the argument that the small group of *cuzqueño* intellectuals struggled to contend with a team backed by Yale and the Leguía government, such a theory is incomplete and inadequate, as it fails to account for the important social changes occurring in the Cuzco region during Bingham’s stay.

The confrontation between the Instituto Histórico and Bingham represents a convergence of several currents in the sociopolitical environment of Peru at the time. The country had undergone major shifts in the past few decades, from coups to wars to the rise and fall of the volatile guano economy. The most radical change in the 1910s, however, was taking place in the *sierra*, the Peruvian highlands, primarily in the Department of Cuzco. The city of Cuzco had been the capital of the Inca Empire, and it served as the most important administrative and cultural center in Peru until Lima became the colonial capital. With the destruction and subordination of the indigenous

³⁰ Ibid., 284-86.

³¹ Ricardo D. Salvatore, “Local versus Imperial Knowledge: Reflections on Hiram Bingham and the Yale Peruvian Expedition,” *Nepantla: Views from the South* 4, no. 1 (2003): 75-76.

population over the centuries came a period of struggle and marginalization for the city of Cuzco and the *sierra* as a whole.

The issue of race played a major role in this phenomenon. The social elites of countries throughout Latin America had been embracing a concept known as *mestizaje*, which took many forms, but always referred to the general promotion of racial mixing for the betterment of the population.³² In Mexico and Central America, the currents of *mestizaje* ran strong and served to counter the notion that dark-skinned peoples were eternally subordinate to their Hispanic neighbors.³³ In Colombia and Brazil, among other nations, *mestizaje* was employed in a eugenic process of whitening, through the absorption of the native populations into the white mainstream by interbreeding, coupled with European immigration.³⁴ In the Andes, however, *mestizaje* never made great inroads, and it did not receive state endorsement until the mid-twentieth century, if at all.³⁵ There did exist a Peruvian strain of *mestizaje*, but it generally stressed the importance of cultural factors such as education, rather than biological solutions of miscegenation, in lifting the Indians out of their “miserable” condition.³⁶ The idea was that the Inca race, once great and noble, had degenerated into a savage state after centuries of subordination (and, according to some, alcohol abuse). The aim of *mestizaje*,

³² Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt, eds., *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), xi. The term *mestizaje* is derived from *mestizo*, which has a diverse range of applications but generally refers to a person of mixed white and Indian racial makeup.

³³ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁴ Brooke Larson, “Andean Highland Peasants and Nation Making,” in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), vol. 3, part 2, 582. Sociological consideration of racial mixing were not new to the Spanish upon their arrival in the New World; they had confronted these issues through their interactions with Moors, Sephardim, and African slaves in Spain. Stuart B. Schwartz and Frank Salomon, “South American Indigenous Societies (Colonial Era),” in *Ibid.*, 444. And the goal of whitening populations was not unique to Latin America; under Theodore Roosevelt, the United States encouraged immigration from Europe but tried to limit the arrival of Africans and Asians. Macpherson and Roseblatt, xi.

³⁵ Macpherson and Roseblatt, 32.

³⁶ Marisol de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, 5-6. To many Peruvians, education signified the attainment of culture, thus separating

therefore, was to assimilate the indigenous population into the social ranks of *mestizos* and thereby save the Indians from their suffering. Education had the power to “culture” the *indigenas* and thus separate them from the “uncultured” masses.³⁷ The politician and literary critic Manuel Gonzáles Prada, a proponent of *mestizaje*, explained, “Whenever the Indian receives instruction in schools or becomes educated simply through contact with civilized individuals, he acquires the same moral and cultural level as the descendants of Spaniards.”³⁸ Similarly, Javier Prado, the rector of the University of San Marcos in Lima, proclaimed in 1909, “Thanks to education man can today transform the physical milieu and even the race. It is his most glorious triumph.”³⁹

While Peruvian *mestizaje* had its supporters, it did not enjoy the wide appeal of its counterparts throughout much of Latin America. Instead, Peruvian intellectual and political elites, including defenders of the indigenous population, tended to emphasize a dichotomy between the Spanish-descended inhabitants of the coastal region and the Indians who dominated the highlands. To some elites, this distinction took the form of discrimination against the supposedly uncivilized *indigenas*, whom they viewed as hopelessly savage and thus deserving of exploitation.⁴⁰ To the growing group of intellectuals who sympathized with the Indians, however, it manifested itself in a philosophy that sought to prevent the contamination of pure, noble, Inca blood, and the accompanying culture.⁴¹ This line of thinking effected a powerful intellectual movement known as *indigenismo*.

³⁷ Parker, *The Idea of the Middle Class*, 27

³⁸ Indig Mest 17.

³⁹ Indig Mest 16

⁴⁰ Tamayo Herrera 164-5. José Tamayo Herrera, a well-known Peruvian historian, was the son of Francisco Tamayo Pacheco, a childhood friend of Luis Valcárcel. The Tamayo and Valcárcel families moved from Moquegua to Cuzco around the same time. Valcárcel, *Memórias*, 113.

⁴¹ Race and Nation 7.

The transformation of intellectual thought that led to *indigenismo* began in the early years of the twentieth century as *cuzqueñismo*, a challenge to the conventional notion that Cuzco was politically, culturally, and racially subordinate to Lima.⁴² Residents of Cuzco began to voice pride in their city and region as a potential equal to the more Europeanized coast. This movement slowly merged with the increasing academic focus on the issues facing the indigenous population of Peru, and the result was an ideology known as *indigenismo*. The renowned Peruvian historian Jorge Basadre defines *indigenismo* broadly in his comprehensive *Historia de la república del Perú* as “interest and sympathy toward Indians, toward the cultures of the pre-Inca epoch, and toward the Inca Empire and its surviving cultural, social, and economic legacy.”⁴³

The roots of *indigenismo* can be seen as early as 1903, when Angel Vega Enríquez, the editor of the new Cuzco daily *El Sol*, wrote a series of editorials depicting Indians’ unconscionable treatment at the hands of the Hispanicized elites. These articles, which expressed the indignation of the *cuzqueño* intelligentsia with regard to the so-called “Indian question” for the first time, received widespread attention in Cuzco and to a lesser extent throughout Peru.⁴⁴ While Vega Enríquez and his contemporaries raised some awareness of indigenous concerns, the birth of *cuzqueño indigenismo* is almost invariably dated to 1909. In May of that year, a group of students at the University of San Antonio Abad in Cuzco formed the Asociación Universitaria and led a campus-wide strike, demanding the removal of the university rector as well as several organizational reforms.⁴⁵ The success of the strike led to the installment of Albert Giesecke as the new

⁴² Indig Mest 22

⁴³ Basadre, *Historia de la república*, vol xvi, p. 27

⁴⁴ Tamayo Herrera 166

⁴⁵ Krüggeler 169. In his memoirs, Luis E. Valcárcel writes, “The university in Cuzco was still a colonial institution, with dull and incompetent professors, and governed by a small group of people who executed their office by impeding access to new ideas.” (Valcárcel, *Memorias*, 136)

rector and the rise to prominence of the young rebels, who became known as the Generation of 1909, and of their leader, the eighteen-year-old Luis E. Valcárcel.

With Giesecke's support, the students began to take up the Indian question. Giesecke, who was only twenty-six when he was named rector, inspired his students by leading class trips to Inca sites in the area and raising awareness of indigenous issues.⁴⁶ His students gushed about his fresh approach to academia. "His political economy classes are not limited to pontifications about the great philosophic theories," wrote the undergraduate Valcárcel. "[Instead] he uses knowledge to our benefit, and applies all his doctrine to the study of Cuzco."⁴⁷ His students responded by producing a slew of academic essays on topics relating to the past and present situation of indigenous peoples in Peru over the next few years that permanently altered the intellectual discourse of the region.⁴⁸ Their impact on the university was enormous: while theses on indigenous issues were rare in the early 1900s, by the 1910s the Indian question had become the predominant topic of study at San Antonio Abad.⁴⁹

Issues of *indigenismo* began to appear regularly in the discourse of the *cuzqueño* press, as intellectuals lamented the plight of the Indian and the failure of the government to respond properly. An October 1910 front-page article by Frederico Larrañaga in the

⁴⁶ Comercio, July 23, 1910, "Universidad," p. 3

⁴⁷ quoted in de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, 62

⁴⁸ Exploring an essentially new field, eager students of indigenous culture tackled all aspects of the topic, often with little background knowledge. In his 1913 thesis for a bachelor's degree at the Universidad Menor del Cuzco, Timoteo Flores Ayala conducted a "Psychological Study of the Indigenous Sentiment." His analysis went, "I should begin with the following affirmation: that the Indian is an essentially sad, melancholy, sullen being.... The cause of his chronic sadness is hereditary. ... A people that lived happily under the patriarchal government of the Incas, without misery or pain, leading a tranquil existence at the time of the fall to the claws of the ignorant conquistador, ... fell into the blackest prostration, full of deception and suffering, and above all unjust servitude and enslavement." (9) His thesis also employs a strange sort of quasi-scientific method to assess the differences between the Indian and white races: "I have proven that an Indian takes eight to ten seconds between stimulation and perception, while a civilized white person takes two or three seconds." (8)

⁴⁹ Tamayo Herrera 181

Cuzco daily newspaper *El Comercio* declared that the Indian race was “enslaved, no longer by the Iberian conquistadors, but by our very selves, descendants and tyrants. . . . We have been fratricidal; yes, fratricidal against their souls, their spirits, and their traditions.”⁵⁰ A May 1911 piece in *El Comercio* stated that “the misery of the Indian race is quite extensive and intense, much more so than in the poorest parts of Europe or Asia.”⁵¹ That article proposed education of the indigenous population as the “absolutely necessary” solution, while an editorial in *El Comercio* encouraged Peruvians, particularly those in the military, to learn the Quechua language, spoken by the Indians inhabiting the *sierra*.⁵²

Indigenismo was transformed from the passion of a few students and intellectuals to the fixation of an entire region by a singular event in 1911: Hiram Bingham’s discovery of Machu Picchu.⁵³ Word of the discovery graced the front-page headlines of newspapers across Peru, the United States, and the world. (Throw in a couple headlines and proclamations about how it’s the greatest discovery of the age, etc.) Interest in the history of the Incas surged, and several organizations formed to study the region’s past. In September 1913, the Asociación Pro-Indígena presented a manifesto to the Peruvian Senate, demanding greater attention to Indian issues.⁵⁴ Around the same time, Valcárcel founded the important and controversial Instituto Histórico del Cuzco.⁵⁵ “The principal objective of the Instituto was to motivate historical, archaeological, and folkloric

⁵⁰ *El Comercio*, p. 1, Oct 26, 1910, “Crónica de un salvaje,” by Frederico Larrañaga

⁵¹ *El Comercio*, May 27, 1911, p. 2, “Redención Indiana,” Pío Benjamín Díaz

⁵² *El Comercio*, Jan 28, 1911, p. 2, “El Kechua y su importancia”. Quechua speakers, in fact, comprised four-fifths of the total Peruvian population.

⁵³ Krüggeler 169

⁵⁴ *El Sol*, Sept 17, 1913, “La causa pro-indígena,” p. 2

⁵⁵ Sources differ on the exact date of the founding of the Instituto Histórico. José Tamayo Herrera dates the founding to October 1913 (Tamayo Herrera 179), while *El Comercio* states that the institute was founded in June 1913 and officially recognized by the government in August 1913 (*El Comercio*, Aug 28, 1915, p.2, “Nuestras reliquias históricas”)

studies,” writes Valcárcel in his memoirs, “and to propose to the government the most effective ways to conserve the remains of our ancient civilizations and denounce their deterioration.”⁵⁶

Indigenistas differed somewhat in their approach to the Indian question, but they generally rejected the ideal of *mestizaje* as a *limeño* perversion and embraced the unadulterated indigenous culture.⁵⁷ They agreed with proponents of *mestizaje* about the importance of lifting Indians from their struggles, the result of centuries of oppression, but they argued that it would happen not by means of forced assimilation but through a renewed zeal for their culture, passed down from the Incas. In his prologue to Valcárcel’s 1922 book *Tempestad en los Andes*, the *indigenista* José Mariátegui, who would become Peru’s leading socialist, argued: “What distinguishes the ‘new Indian’ is not education but spirit. . . . The ‘new Indian’ aspires. He has a goal. That is his secret and his force.”⁵⁸ Later in the same book, Valcárcel asserts the necessity for Indians to stand up for themselves and their culture. Elaborating on his rallying cry, “Peru is Indian!”, he explains, “Two-thirds of the population is Indian and continues to speak vernacular languages. To these four million Peruvians, the White Man continues to be a usurper, an oppressor.”⁵⁹ He argues, therefore, that assimilation is neither feasible nor desirable: “Every personality, every group *is born* within a culture *and can only live within it*.”⁶⁰

Paradoxically, the main players in the *indigenista* movement in Cuzco all came from urban middle-class white and *mestizo* families.⁶¹ Valcárcel, who was in fact born

⁵⁶ Valcárcel, *Memorias*, 184

⁵⁷ *Indigenista* is both an adjective referring to *indigenismo* and a noun referring to a proponent of the movement.

⁵⁸ *Tempestad* 3

⁵⁹ *Tempestad* 111-12

⁶⁰ quoted in *Indig mest* 23. E

⁶¹ *Cambridge*, 3, 2, 766

not in Cuzco but in the southern mountain city of Moquegua, could trace his illustrious lineage back to the sixteenth-century Spanish captain Diego de Vizcarra.⁶² *Indigenismo* was not so much a populist force as an intellectual one, and its sights were set at least as much on battling Lima for political and cultural clout as on raising the status of the Indians themselves. Valcárcel summed up the issues at stake in the *indigenistas'* challenge to Lima:

Cuzco represents the millenary maternal cultural heritage that the Incas bequeathed to us. Lima is the yearning for adaptation to European culture. And this is because Cuzco already existed when the Conqueror arrived, and Lima was created by him *ex nihilo*. There is nothing strange in Lima's being foreign-inclined, Hispanophile, imitator of exoticisms, Europeanized, and Cuzco being vernacular, nationalistic, and pure, portraying the hoary pride of legitimate American aristocratic ancestry.⁶³

In labeling the indigenous *sierra* as the true Peru and Lima as an imperialist extension of Europe and North America, the *indigenistas* staked their claim to political authority in the country. *Limeños*, for their part, dismissed the growing grassroots movement. Although there was a contemporary *indigenista* movement in Lima, beginning when Pedro Zulen, Dora Mayer, and others formed the Pro-Indigenous Association in 1909, its impact was minimal compared with its Cuzco counterpart, and interest in the movement waned. In the 1921 National Parliament, the Pro-Indigenous Association's successor, the Comité Pro-Derecho Indígena Tahuantinsuyu, was attacked as "an assembly of illiterates who aim to divide Peru by race."⁶⁴ It was not until well into the *oncenio*, Leguía's dictatorial second term as president from 1919-1930, that *limeño indigenismo* began to play a significant role in national politics.

⁶² Valcárcel, *Memorias*, 111.

⁶³ quoted in *Indig mest* 20

⁶⁴ Cambridge 3, 2, 778

This conflict between Cuzco and Lima factored into the controversy over Bingham's excavations. Many *cuzqueño indigenistas* saw the Yale expeditions as a kind of Lima-United States imperialist plot. They resented the fact that Leguía and his government in Lima gave a group of foreigners permission to invade the native soils of Cuzco and loot the antiquities of their indigenous ancestors.⁶⁵ For this reason, *cuzqueños* were constantly suspicious that Bingham, with Lima's backing, was smuggling gold and other treasures out of the country. These suspicions were not without credibility, since tomb looting and gold smuggling had been rampant in South America for quite some time. Bingham expressed his frustration at the mistrust with which he was always met in Peru: "The thirst for treasure even today is so great as to cause otherwise sane and intelligent people to accuse the scientific investigator of criminal excavations and of nefarious transactions in gold and silver objects."⁶⁶ The *Yale Daily News* of October 12, 1915 concurred, albeit in more derogatory terms, saying of the Instituto Histórico del Cuzco:

The fact that Professor Bingham has been spending £10,000 a year purely in scientific research work, a portion of which money he personally contributed, is utterly beyond their comprehension. They firmly believe that Mr. Bingham has "struck it rich" and has been shipping plate and "pieces of eight" out of the country in ships freighted down like the golden galleons of Spain. . . . The authorities at Cuzco have succeeded handsomely in placing themselves on the same intellectual plane as the "witch doctors" and "medicine men" of the Congo, warning their people against the "white man's magic."⁶⁷

This racist charge, equating *cuzqueños* with other so-called savage groups in Africa, exemplifies the lack of depth with which Bingham and the North American press often assessed the words and actions of the Peruvian public. The true cause of *cuzqueño*

⁶⁵ Salvatore 70

⁶⁶ Yale Peruvian Expedition Papers, Box 28, folder 18, manuscript p3

⁶⁷ YDN 10/12/15 (quoting WCL?).

suspicion of Bingham's motives, far from stemming from a fear of the "white man's magic," is rooted deeply in the past relations between the United States and Peru. Since the Monroe Doctrine of the early nineteenth century, the United States had asserted its right to intervene in Latin America in the case of a threat from a foreign power. The Roosevelt Corollary to this doctrine in a sense widened the United States' sway over its neighbor to the south, asserting the right to police Latin American countries when they were unable to take care of themselves, uncivilized as they allegedly were.⁶⁸ Within a six-year period around the turn of the century, the United States took control of Hawaii, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Panama.⁶⁹ The strategy began to change, however, as presidents turned their focus to South America. While annexation had been the primary goal of Manifest Destiny throughout the nineteenth century, the racist ideology that pervaded the top level of American politics precluded the country from incorporating the lands to the south, replete with dark-skinned populations.⁷⁰ For this reason, economic hegemony became the objective, as articulated by William Howard Taft's "Dollar Diplomacy" that reigned when Bingham happened upon Machu Picchu.⁷¹

Before Bingham's 1911 expedition, Peruvians were already critical of the perceived U.S. imperialism. "It is necessary that we convince ourselves in South America, and above all in Peru, that it is not sufficient to be a Yankee citizen," declared an October 1910 editorial in *El Comercio*. "If the men of North America have their pride, we have ours."⁷² Several months later, a piece under the headline "Yankee Imperialism"

⁶⁸ LaFeber 248

⁶⁹ LaFeber 249

⁷⁰ Smith, *Talons of the Eagle*, 27

⁷¹ LaFeber 258

⁷² *El Comercio* Oct 18, 1910, p. 1, "Los records de Chávez"

was nearly apocalyptic in its assessment of the threat posed by the United States in the context of the construction of the Panama Canal:

This Yankee imperialism, with its violating force, advances through South and Central America, sounding the clarion of conquest that proclaims the submission, abuse, and devastation of territories where the sun of free peoples once shone majestically. ... The English and the North Americans want to enslave the conquerable world, above all to gain a vast market for their products. ... The honorable Monroe Doctrine, which proclaimed *America for the Americans*, has been transformed into another doctrine that espouses *America for the Yankees*.⁷³

It is worth noting that Bingham himself was strongly opposed to the Monroe Doctrine and the imperialist philosophy it represented. Bingham believed that the doctrine was long obsolete, and that in the twentieth century, “the emphasis should be on collective action” rather than policing and intervention.⁷⁴ He published a piece called *The Monroe Doctrine: An Obsolete Shibboleth*, first as an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* and then as a full book with Yale University Press in 1913. Still, at least to Peruvian observers, Bingham’s voyages and excavations represented an extension of the Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt’s Corollary. An American self-proclaimed explorer could not arrive in Peru and start digging at potentially treasure-filled sites without arousing suspicion of imperialism.

Not surprisingly, Peruvian distrust of the Yale expeditions led Bingham’s hosts to speculate on his motives, and rumors and specious charges began to fly. By far the most pervasive rumor was the claim that he was smuggling large amounts of gold home to the United States by way of Bolivia, so as to evade customs officials. Some *cuzqueños* charged that the Peruvian Expedition had brought cranes from Panama to take apart the

⁷³ El Comercio March 18, 1911, p. 1, “Imperialismo yankee,” by Pío Benjamín Díaz

⁷⁴ ABing 292

ruins and loot the treasure. *El Sol*, which Valcárcel now edited, ran a piece on June 2, 1915 that summarized the accusations:

We must address the grave rumors that are circulating about the handling of the scientific expedition conducted by Yale University. ... People speak of large-scale excavations in an extensive zone stretching from Ollantaytambo to Machu Picchu. Of the discovery of a great treasure. Of its exportation by means of a pack of eighty mules via Caycay-Sicuani. Of the mockery that is made of our customs as more than five hundred boxes of objects are sent to the United States via Guaqui, La Paz, and Arica [two Bolivian cities and a Chilean city, respectively]. Of the “Yankee zone” comprising the radius of the excavations, which no one outside of the commission is allowed to enter. If all of these charges are true, the situation could not be more serious.⁷⁵

Bingham was able to dismiss most of these allegations, until Valcárcel and three other angry young *indigenistas* (Angel Vega Enríquez, Mariano Gibaja, and Ernesto Saldivar) confronted him in his Ollantaytambo office on June 15.⁷⁶ When Bingham allowed his boxes of excavated materials to be inspected by Peruvian officials, he finally laid their fears to rest. The inspectors created a detailed catalog of all the excavated objects, consisting mostly of human bones and potsherds.⁷⁷ Even after compiling an inventory of the objects, Valcárcel published a piece in *El Sol* that accused Bingham of smuggling gold and other treasures out of the country. “It appears that the majority of the accusations in *El Sol* [on June 2] have been confirmed,” stated an editorial on June 18.⁷⁸ The other *cuzqueño* daily, *El Comercio*, lacked concrete evidence regarding the charges but emphatically supported Valcárcel. In an August 1915 editorial, the paper described the Instituto Histórico as “a society full of vigor, comprising the most distinguished historians of that center of American prehistory [Cuzco].” The article went on to declare

⁷⁵ *El Sol*, June 2, 1915, p. 1, “Notas del día: La comisión de Yale”

⁷⁶ Valcárcel, *Memorias*, 186

⁷⁷ citation

⁷⁸ *El Sol*, June 18, 1915, p. 2, “La comisión investigadora a Muchupiccho.”

that the Instituto's intervention in Bingham's excavations "merits the deepest elegies from the Peruvian press."⁷⁹

Bingham was forced to defend himself, and he did so in a letter to *El Comercio* on June 19, 1915:

To carry out these excavations I did not believe it necessary to receive special authorization from the government, because it is a process that is inherently a part of archaeological studies. . . . The studies being performed by this Commission are of substantial interest because they are revealing a region that is little-known but very important. . . . I should declare that I have never been nor ever will be able to commit acts that go against the law and sentiment of Peru.⁸⁰

Bingham also had a defender in the *indigenista* José Gabriel Cosío, who had accompanied him on part of his 1912 expedition as a government observer.⁸¹ "The transportation of the objects to the United States was authorized by the Ministry," Cosío wrote in *El Sol* in response to charges that Bingham was secretly smuggling treasures out of the country. "There was no reason, then, to *hide* the shipment when permission had been granted to the explorers, whose labor has been invaluable to the study of Peruvian prehistory."⁸²

When Bingham was effectively exonerated, Valcárcel was compelled to retract his charge. His lapse in judgment may be attributed to his youth—despite his many accomplishments, he was only twenty-four at the time—but the underlying motives for the accusation undoubtedly lay in his frustration with the situation at hand. He had spent years studying the history of the Incas and expounding his view that Peru was an Indian nation, and that any association with foreign-inclined Lima was tantamount to usurpation. Now, he was confronted with a North American adventurer who knew comparatively

⁷⁹ *El Comercio*, August 28, 1915, p. 2, "Nuestras reliquias históricas"

⁸⁰ *El Comercio*, June 19, 1915, p. 2, "Comunicación al Instituto Histórico del Cuzco," by Hiram Bingham

⁸¹ José Gabriel Cosío, *Expedición científica*, 7

⁸² *El Sol*, July 6, 1915, p.2, "Sobre las excavaciones en Machupicchu," by José Gabriel Cosío

little about the Incas but who was on the verge of removing seventy-four large boxes of ancient artifacts from the country. He staked his opposition to the exportation of the relics on the widespread rumor that Bingham was smuggling gold—a rumor, no doubt, that resulted to some extent from the Peruvian lack of familiarity with well-funded scientific expeditions. When this rumor proved false, Valcárcel was forced to admit that the boxes contained “nothing of value, nor archaeological remains of any importance.”⁸³

The value of the exported objects continues to be a source of dispute in the current controversy between Yale and Peru. One thing that seems certain is that no gold or precious metals were excavated. Historians have concluded that when the Incas abandoned Machu Picchu in the sixteenth century, they took all the valuable objects, including jewelry and gold plates and cups, with them to Cuzco, thus precluding Bingham or anyone else from finding such treasures while excavating the site.⁸⁴ *The New York Times* confirms this assessment, writing of the artifacts now stored at Yale, “If you have visited Machu Picchu, you will probably find Bingham’s excavated artifacts at the Yale Peabody Museum to be a bit of a letdown. ... Everyone agrees that the Machu Picchu artifacts are modest in appearance.”⁸⁵ There is a consensus, then, that the excavated objects, mostly pottery shards and bones, are not “treasures” in the conventional sense. But the value that has been attached to them over the past few decades far exceeds that of most gold and silver items.

At the time of the exportation, the debate over the importance of the artifacts themselves was relatively subdued but nonetheless significant. The English-language Peruvian paper the *West Coast Leader*, writing to an audience of expatriates from the

⁸³ YPE Papers, 35-53, scrapbook, el comercio 7/3/15.

⁸⁴ Burger and Salazar 125

⁸⁵ *The New York Times* magazine ran a cover feature on the Yale-Peru conflict in its June 24, 2007 issue. (NYT mag 44)

English-speaking world and always quick to defend Bingham, affirmed that “there was no treasure or valuable object of any sort” and derided the Peruvian opposition to the exportation of the artifacts.⁸⁶ In fact, few Peruvian papers spoke out against Bingham’s plans after Valcárcel’s accusations were discredited. The Lima daily *La Prensa* was one of the few papers that did, arguing, “Everyone must see that apart from the intrinsic value these treasures may have, they have another, far more inestimable historic and artistic value, and they belong to the state by proper and inalienable right.” Giving them up, it continued, would be “a passive suicide.”⁸⁷ However, due to the press’s prior fixation on the alleged smuggling of treasures, criticism of Bingham subsided for the most part when the rumors died down. The patriotic and scientific value of the Inca artifacts, now at the center of the decades-old dispute between Yale and Peru, was largely overlooked.

For all of the miscalculation on the Peruvian side, Bingham was no model diplomat or scientist in his approach to the expeditions. On top of his many hasty and unfounded theories regarding the function of Machu Picchu, he dated the ruins at various points between 100 BCE and 800 CE. (In reality, they are believed to have been constructed in the 15th century CE.) He also claimed to have found the earliest human remains known to mankind, from 8,000 to 20,000 years ago, another unsubstantiated assertion made without proper examination.⁸⁸ These exaggerations were likely the result of a combination of uninformed deduction and an attempt to garner greater attention from the U.S. public. Additionally, Bingham persisted in comparing the Inca achievements to those of Old World civilizations.⁸⁹ The comparisons of Machu Picchu to ancient Greece

⁸⁶ YPE papers, 35-53, scrapbook, Christian science mon 9/2/15, quoting wcl

⁸⁷ YPE 35-53, la prensa 1/8/16

⁸⁸ cite me

⁸⁹ Speaking of the Incas in his manuscript for Inca Land (?), he wrote: “In the simplicity, sincerity and symmetry of their pottery they produced examples surpassed only by the Greeks. ... It is indeed remarkable that a people who succeeded in equalling [sic] the ancient Egyptians in architecture, engineering, pottery

and Egypt were generally favorable, with the exception of the topic of writing, which the Incas never developed. However, the condescension implicit in drawing parallels between an American civilization from five hundred years earlier and European and Egyptian ones from three to four thousand years prior placed the indigenous Peruvians in the persistent category of “primitive” peoples.

Worse than Bingham’s archaeological assessments were his tactless relations with the local populace. In 1912, he declared publicly that Cuzco was the “dirtiest city in the world,” setting off a flurry of angry letters in newspapers across Peru.⁹⁰ He was forced to apologize, but he could not erase the local perception that he was a scientific imperialist, searching for treasure and fame and professing little interest in or understanding of the *cuzqueño* culture. His anthropological methodology, largely undocumented, also did little to ingratiate him with the city’s residents. According to Luther Nelson, his surgeon on the 1912 expedition:

In order to persuade the Indians in Cuzco to be measured, it was necessary for a soldier to go out on the streets to catch them and force them to come to the Hotel Central. Many of the Indians thought that they were being recruited for service in the army, and not a few shed tears at the thought. ... Thirty-eight measurements were taken of each subject.⁹¹

In total, the expedition measured 146 Indians in this manner, assessing their physical characteristics qualitatively and quantitatively. Remarkably, it appears that no newspapers in Peru or the United States reported on Bingham’s inhumane techniques, implying either that these experiments were carried out discreetly (although it is hard to imagine such a process being inconspicuous) or, more likely, that the mistreatment of average Indians on the streets of Cuzco was less important to the press and intelligentsia

and textiles, should have fallen so far behind them in the development of a written language.” (YPE 28-28, manuscript 23)

⁹⁰ *el sol* 5/7/12, YPE 35-52

⁹¹ H.B. Ferris, *The Indians of Cuzco and the Apurimac*, 61

than the abstract academic philosophy of the glorification of the Inca race. Additionally, the surprise that would ordinarily accompany revelations of such mistreatment was drastically reduced by the fact that similar techniques were frequently employed by Peruvians. In later decades, “Indigenous Women’s Beauty Contests” were held, in which strict entry requirements necessitated strip searches of the candidates by an all-male jury to ensure “morally pure” sexual attributes such as small breasts and sparse pubic hair.⁹² Bingham’s mistreatment of the local indigenous populace, then, came as no great shock to *cuzqueños*.

As uninformed and occasionally deplorable as Bingham’s approach to his studies might have been, the press coverage of the expedition in the United States displayed an astounding ignorance of Peruvian history and culture. First, there were frequent claims of cannibalism. On February 18, 1914, the *New York Press* ran a piece under the headline, “Explorers Killed and Eaten by Incas:”

Two exploring parties from this country to South America, which had not been heard from for two years—the Cromer and Seljan expeditions—were destroyed by cannibal tribes near the mysterious Inca city of Mashupicchu, high among the Andes mountains in Peru. . . . Captain J. Campbell Besley of the British army told a thrilling tale of how his small party of twelve men for three hours held off a band of cannibals who shot arrows dipped in poison, while the white men made a grave for the tangled mass of bones, all that remained of the two lost expeditions, and gave them a white man’s burial. . . . [Hiram Bingham] announced when told of the Besley statement that he had recently received information from the Peruvian Government which indicated that there is not the slightest doubt as to the authenticity of the discovery.⁹³

Caricatures such as this one, depicting the heroism of brave “white men” in the face of attacks from poison-arrow-wielding dark-skinned savages, widened the divide between

⁹² de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, 178. Similar pr

⁹³ YPE 35-53 NY Press 2/18/14

Bingham's party and his *cuzqueño* hosts and strengthened the local conviction that the imperialistic Yale explorers harbored little sympathy for the Peruvian people.

Several other newspapers printed articles making similarly outrageous claims, including the *Philadelphia Enquirer*, which concluded its piece entitled "Cannibalism in South America" with the unintentionally ironic line, "The whole incident goes to show how little is known of the whole Amazon basin."⁹⁴ The *San Francisco Chronicle* drew bizarre scientific conclusions in its June 24, 1913 piece "Important Discoveries Made in Peruvian Tombs," with the subtitle, "Were the People of Andes Uplands Connected With the Ancient Pharaohs [sic] of Egypt?—Mummies Found Would Indicate That This Is True." The article states that the statuettes and "hieroglyphics"⁹⁵ uncovered by Bingham and his crew bore a "striking resemblance to the early Coptic reliefs found at Knossus, in Egypt," thus proving that the ancient Egyptians descended from the ancient Peruvians. It goes on to assert that there was once a land bridge connecting South America and Africa—"the islands of Cuba, Porto Rico [sic], Madeira, Teneriffe and the Canary Islands are but the tops of a submerged mountain range—and that the fabled island of Atlantis also lay on this strip of land."⁹⁶ The American public thus received a dose of pure fantasy, while the U.S. press coverage completely ignored the growing *indigenista* movement in the *sierra* that informed the Peruvian response to Bingham's expedition.

Although *cuzqueños* bristled at the cavalier approach of the expeditions and the outrageous labels they received from the U.S. press, Bingham ultimately managed to persuade a substantial number of them that his work offered practical benefits for Cuzco and Peru. In a letter to *El Comercio* on November 4, 1912, Bingham insisted, "We are

⁹⁴ YPE 35-53 Phila Enqu 2/21/14

⁹⁵ This claim is highly dubious from the start, since the Incas lacked a writing system.

⁹⁶ YPE 35-53, New New Orleans 6/24/13 (from SF Chron)

guided solely by love and science, and the absolute desire to give Peru the fame it deserves, which will attract a large foreign contingent and many tourists and travelers who will want to admire the marvels of Inca and pre-Inca construction up close.”⁹⁷ Such arguments appear to have had a positive effect, or at least reinforced Peruvian notions of the potential good to come from Bingham’s expeditions. The same issue of *El Comercio* featured an editorial entitled “The Dog in the Manger,” which stated,

As we can see, Yale University acts in representation and for the benefit of Peru: it will, at its own expense, bring to life this unknown world, which has been deteriorating under the destructive action of the centuries. And it will not only excavate priceless objects, which are currently hidden away, but will classify them, order them, and make them useful to human knowledge, sharing with us, or rather giving us, the majority of what is discovered.⁹⁸

Peruvians thus saw economic and archaeological advantages to be derived from Bingham’s work.

Cuzqueños had an additional motive for their grudging support of Bingham’s projects, one that fits neatly into the paradigm of rising *indigenismo* and Cuzco-Lima power relations. The philosophy of *indigenismo* rested on the glory of the region’s Inca heritage, and Bingham helped uncover and market that glory. The *indigenistas* saw Bingham’s work as an opportunity to boost their cause through the free worldwide advertising provided by the Yale Peruvian Expedition. *Indigenismo* gained publicity and popularity as the international press heralded the ruins of Machu Picchu as one of the most spectacular sights in the world, rivaling or surpassing the pyramids at Giza and the Roman Coliseum. Tourism began to increase almost immediately, and the forgotten world of the Incas rose once more to prominence as other archaeologists rushed to excavate Inca sites. Reflecting on this phenomenon decades later, Valcárcel wrote:

⁹⁷ YPE 35-52, comercio 11/4/12

⁹⁸ YPE 35-52, comercio 11/4/12

During the period 1911-15, for the first time in Peru, a well-organized scientific expedition, ... directed by Professor Hiram Bingham, conducted a series of thorough investigations in the valley of the Urubamba River, and discovered places of great interest, such as Machu Picchu. This marked the beginning of large-scale archeological explorations, which have since been carried on in different parts of Peru.⁹⁹

In his memoirs, Valcárcel added, “The honor and solid prestige of the North American scientific mission was beyond doubt.”¹⁰⁰

When he left Peru, Bingham could not have envisioned such kind words. He was infuriated by the treatment he had received at the hands of the *cuzqueño indigenistas* and the *limeño* authorities. (*Throw in a quote or two from Bingham about his unfair treatment.*) The United States press widely published reports of the arbitrary opposition Bingham faced in Peru. On October 11, 1915, the *New Haven Register* ran a piece entitled “Prof. Bingham Had to Fight Weird Charges,” which states that Bingham and his colleagues were “compelled to abandon their archaeological researches because of absurd charges made by Dr. Valcarsel [sic].”¹⁰¹

Bingham departed in frustration in September 1915, determined never to return.¹⁰² When he did eventually go back to Peru, in 1948, he received a hero’s welcome. The Peruvian government invited him to dedicate the opening of the new road leading up to Machu Picchu from the nearby town of Aguas Calientes. The route was to be called the Hiram Bingham Highway. Evidently, much had changed since 1915. The cause of this radical shift in the Peruvian perspective lies in the evolution of U.S.-Peruvian relations and *indigenismo* over the three intervening decades.

⁹⁹ Handbook v2, 177

¹⁰⁰ Valcárcel, *Memorias*, 187

¹⁰¹ NH Register 10/11/15

¹⁰² Find these quotes!

The Peruvian perception of the United States reached a nadir in the early 1930s, when the U.S.-friendly Leguía had been toppled and imperial-style relations had not yet ceased. An improvement came with Franklin D. Roosevelt's more peaceful "Good Neighbor" policy in 1933, a shift away from armed intervention and economic coercion. Valcárcel summarizes the course of events in his memoirs:

At the beginning of the 1930s, the image of the United States among Peruvian intellectuals was quite negative, as it was inextricably linked to interventionist politics. ... However, with the Roosevelt government, North American politics experienced a significant change. The United States established relations with the Soviet Union, and paternalist intervention, which until then had characterized its politics toward Latin America, was replaced by the so-called "good neighbor policy."¹⁰³

The start of World War II likewise drew the United States and Peru closer by strengthening commercial and political ties between the two nations. So great was Peru's desire to maintain strong relations with the U.S. that it deported nearly two thousand Japanese-Peruvians to the United States for internment.¹⁰⁴ Even some of the staunchest opponents of the U.S., such as Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, the founder of the leftist APRA party, became allies as they found themselves admiring U.S. wartime goals.¹⁰⁵

At the same time, *indigenismo* was undergoing major changes in Peru. During the *oncenio*, Leguía had been a supporter of indigenous rights and an ally to *cuzqueño indigenistas*.¹⁰⁶ However, many intellectuals in Cuzco grew increasingly opposed to Leguía's authoritarianism, despite his views on *indigenismo*. When a military coup removed him from power in 1930, many prominent Cuzco politicians left the city for Lima, where the new government appointed them to important posts. Valcárcel, for

¹⁰³ Valcárcel, *Memorias*, 332

¹⁰⁴ Clayton, *Peru and the United States*, 161

¹⁰⁵ Clayton, *Peru and the United States*, 159

¹⁰⁶ de la Cadena, *Indig Mest*, 86. In 1921, for example, he helped create a new constitution, which recognized and protected Indian communities.

example, became the director of the National Museum, and other members of the Generation of 1909 attained positions of similar prestige. New *cuzqueño* leaders, for the most part opposed to the form of liberal *indigenismo* that had dominated in the 1920s, stepped in to fill the vacuum.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, Peru witnessed a period of Spanish reaffirmation between 1931 and 1942, after the previous decade had seen an increased focus on the Indian.¹⁰⁸ The new *hispanismo*, led by the Lima aristocrat Víctor Andés Belaúnde, promoted a “whitened” *mestizo* identity for Peru.¹⁰⁹ Politics became increasingly partisan, and *cuzqueño indigenismo* essentially dropped out of the political debate, becoming obsolete in the face of new forms of *mestizaje*.¹¹⁰

As political *indigenismo* declined in importance and relations with the United States improved, some Peruvians actually looked to the U.S. as a model for handling the Indian question. In a 1947 interview, Valcárcel suggested, “We should learn from the United States, where ... they have for the last ten years put into effect a New Deal for the 400,000 natives that live there. In the United States, spiritual authority has been restored to the Indian.”¹¹¹ While just thirty years earlier, Peruvians had regarded the U.S. as a threat to the sovereignty of South American peoples and an enemy to the indigenous cause, they now hoped that they could emulate the North American example.

These factors, however, only provide a portion of the explanation for Bingham’s warm reception in 1948. The other side of the equation has to do with the legacy of Bingham’s work in Peru. Particularly once the *indigenista* debate and the Cuzco-Lima rivalry had subsided somewhat, the lasting impact of the Yale Peruvian Expedition was

¹⁰⁷ de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, 131-2.

¹⁰⁸ Basadre, *Historia*, 33

¹⁰⁹ de la Cadena, *Indig Mest*, 132

¹¹⁰ Tamayo Herrera, *Indig Cuz*, 255, 267

¹¹¹ de la Cadena, *Indig Mest* 166

one not of imperialism or disregard for sovereignty, but rather of increased awareness of indigenous history and culture, both internationally and within Peru. During the heated disputes of 1915, even *El Sol*, generally critical of Bingham, conceded this fact when it said of Bingham's commission, "their presence among us will induce many young students to take an interest in our glorious past."¹¹² Bingham's enthusiastic welcome to Peru in 1948 therefore demonstrates that the lasting impact of his expeditions on the historical memory of the *cuzqueños* was one of discovery that was ultimately valuable to the region and the country. *El Comercio*, the Cuzco newspaper that in 1912 had printed a nasty letter calling the government's compliance with Bingham "morally indecent,"¹¹³ ran a tribute to his accomplishments on September 4, 1948:

In 1915, a learned man from Yale University arrived, a man of science and with the baggage of necessary knowledge to give to the remains of Machu Picchu the recognition they deserved. ... This illustrious professor, who put love and respect, veneration and eager insistence into his work, was Dr. Hiram Bingham. He affirmed the grandeur of the historic citadel and revealed it to the world of science. ... Science has dubbed him, with reason, "the discoverer of Machu Picchu." ... Bingham is our old and dear friend.¹¹⁴

There is no shortage of irony in the fact that Bingham's expeditions, carried out at times with such little regard for the desires and realities of the local populace, represented the largest boon that *cuzqueño indigenismo* ever experienced. The Instituto Histórico del Cuzco was founded on the heels of Bingham's discovery of Machu Picchu, and likely would never have existed had it not been for Bingham's efforts. Yet the organization's primary target was Bingham himself, and no one was more perturbed by the perceived imperialism of the expedition than the Instituto's president, Luis Valcárcel. The June 1915 confrontation between Valcárcel and his fellow *indigenistas* on one side and

¹¹² *El Sol*, March 16, 1915, p. 2, "La Comisión de Yale"

¹¹³ YPE 35-52, comercio 11/412 (Buchhammer)

¹¹⁴ Mould de Pease, *Viajeros de Ayer*, 37-9

Bingham on the other contained all the paradoxical intricacies of the conflict-ridden interactions between the Yale explorer and his Peruvian hosts between 1911 and 1915. Now that the dispute over the Inca artifacts has been renewed, after ninety years of dormancy, *the ironies of Bingham and Valcárcel*, of *indigenismo* and imperialism, of past glories and present realities, have once again been brought to the fore.

Bring up once again Eliane Karp-Toledo as a representation/continuation of the irony of *indigenismo* (led by white elites, etc)?—like Valcárcel himself: not from Cuzco, not Indian, not poor, but makes himself champion of these people

Bib:

Heaney: admirable in its breadth, Burger's anger, lack of focus on Peruvian side (agrees with Salvatore to a large extent), the word "indigenismo" and its variants appear 3 times in whole essay