The ruins of the city of Machu Picchu are situated on a plateau at an altitude of 2,000 feet. We discovered it by following some Peruvian Indians up a narrow goat path. . . . I believe that we were the first white men to gaze on the city of Machu Picchu since Pizarro went there 400 years ago. The white granite stones used in the foundation of the temple measured 8 by 12 feet, and were well chiseled and beautifully joined without mortar in Egyptian style. — Hiram Bingham, interviewed by the New York Times, 11 December 1911 (emphasis added)

In 1913 National Geographic Magazine trumpeted the news of the “discovery” of Machu Picchu in 1911 by professor Hiram Bingham of Yale University. Newspapers large and small across the United States spread the story. Due to the sagacity of the Incas, Machu Picchu had remained hidden from white view for almost four centuries. Hence, the headline adopted by Bingham and the newsmen: “The Lost City of the Incas.” Editors and columnists framed the event as part of the imperializing impetus they attributed to scientific endeavors overseas. Quite often, the word discovery appeared near the word conquest. Implicit in the reports of the discovery of Machu Picchu was the understanding that a U.S. American, a man of science, a professor at Yale University, had begun a second conquest of South America. Made possible by the association between
business and science, the discovery promised to reveal the secrets of an ancient Peruvian civilization, misunderstood by prior white conquerors.

Newspapers reported Bingham’s achievement in terms of race, gender, and nationalism. Bingham was the first white man to have seen the marvelous granite walls of the “lost city” since the times of Francisco Pizarro, his mere gaze transforming the event into a “scientific discovery.” The fact that “natives” knew about the existence of such ruins carried little significance. Also important was the fact that when Bingham had climbed Mount Coropuna, the “second highest mountain of South America,” he got there before the female mountaineer Anny Peck from Harvard (Hiram Bingham 1912a). And by planting the Yale flag on Mount Coropuna, Yale University symbolically took possession of a new field of study—the Southern Peruvian Andes—from European men of science.

The story and the images of Machu Picchu fired up the U.S. imagination. The story seemed to reopen the old question of the Spanish conquest from a completely different perspective. Here was an ancient American civilization that had resisted Spanish colonialism until the end, maintaining a whole city hidden from the gaze of the colonizer. Projected into the landscape of mass-consumer capitalism, the second conquest of Peru attracted a wide variety of interests. News companies wanted to send reporters to Peru. Book publishers wanted to include pictures of Machu Picchu in geography textbooks. Hunting clubs and naturalists suddenly developed an interest in collecting mammals in South America. Shipping companies started to plan for an increase in the number of travelers to Peru. Mining companies tried to decipher the riddle of “Inca metallurgy.” Surgeons began to inquire about Inca cranial trephinations. And the U.S. Department of Agriculture developed an interest in Inca roads and terrace farming.

In Peru the reception of the Yale Peruvian Expedition (YPE) proved problematic. A group of local amateur historians and archaeologists managed to disturb and slow the advance of this project of knowledge, questioning the legitimacy of Yale University’s presence in the Urubamba Valley. Between 1912 and 1916 cuzqueñistas and indigenistas waged a battle for the control and ownership of cultural assets. Peruvian antiquity, they claimed, belonged to Peru and should be under the strict supervision of the Peruvian state. With the support of the press and a wink from the central government, the local intelligentsia created an unfriendly environment for the Yale group, which translated into delays, red tape, and lack of cooperation.

In this chapter I examine Bingham’s subsequent YPE—a vast enterprise focused on the Southern Peruvian Andes—as a way to understand the cultural apparatus of informal empire. Like the U.S. newspapers, Peruvian media rumors framed the expedition as an imperial intrusion, associating Bingham’s
scientific endeavors not with triumph but with colonial pillage and mining imperialism. The rumors disrupted the initial cooperation between the Yale scientists and the cuzqueño intelligenists—a small number of amateur archaeologists, university students and professors in Cuzco—and young indigenistas. (Indigenismo was a politicocultural movement that attempted to improve the condition of contemporary indigenous peoples while claiming pre-Columbian civilizations as part of the nation’s heritage). In spite of the impressive armature supporting the expedition, Bingham was ultimately unable to counter local opposition.

The Armature of Scientific Conquest

The YPE was an impressive scientific endeavor, unprecedented in its scope and ambitions. Other scientists had been part of the enterprise of knowledge in South America. There was William C. Farabee, an ethnologist from Harvard, collecting materials for the Philadelphia Museum in the Peruvian Amazon. Adolphe Bandelier, the famous Harvard ethnographer, had previously worked in Lake Titicaca, Bolivia. In 1906–1909 Max Uhle had collected artifacts for the museums of Berkeley and Berlin. But the YPE set out to map all the archaeological sites in the Urubamba Valley, comprehensively survey the geology and topography of the Southern Peruvian Andes, photograph and measure “natives,” study local botany and zoology, and set up meteorological stations. As Bingham explained to the Yale president Arthur Twining Hadley in 1914, “It is not only archeology, but also work on topography, geology, meteorology, biology, anthropology.” The YPE shared with U.S. expansionism an insatiable desire for knowledge.

Indeed, both the newsmen and the Peruvian opposition were right: YPE was an enterprise of conquest, a moment when business and scholarship united in the construction of the U.S. informal empire. First, the project incorporated Peru and the Andean region into the U.S. sphere of scientific observation. At one point, for example, Bingham entertained the idea of establishing an “International School of American Archeology” at Cuzco. U.S. archaeology, already contending for primacy in Greece, Rome, Jerusalem, New Mexico, and Central America, could now conquer a new frontier: Andean South America. Like the international schools of Athens and Rome, Bingham thought, Cuzco would attract the attention of intellectuals from around the world. This would be a golden opportunity for Yale University to establish a branch in the Andes, with the financial support of U.S. business. As Yale would not support this idea, Bingham tried to sell it to the Archaeological Institute of America,
a Washington-based institution that shared Bingham’s view about the need for U.S. archaeological expansionism abroad.

Second, the ype acted as a multinational corporation with regard to its object of study. U.S. scientists saw the Peruvian Andes as simply a reservoir of knowledge, a treasury of facts, they might profitably exploit. In the same way that promoters of Pan-Americanism or U.S. mining companies talked about the natural resources of South America, the members of the expedition referred to Peru as “their” field of study. Reading to what Aleš Hrdlička (a member of the ype) had to say about Peru, one wonders about the separation between the rhetoric of business and knowledge.

The country is a vast store-house of facts as well as specimens, and I should like to see at least some of our institutions engaged there. . . . Should you ever decide to go back and send some archaeologists, I should be glad to give exact information regarding a number of localities easily accessible where good collections could be made at moderate expense.\(^5\)

Good collections at low cost of extraction, vast deposits to be exploited, an opportunity for U.S. presence: if we were to substitute minerals or natural resources for “facts and specimens,” we would get the same discourse that John Barrett had been promoting since the early 1900s and that U.S. business interests shared. South America was a good “field of opportunity” for business and science alike to conquer.

Third, this scientific mission shows the interconnection between business and knowledge in the age of informal empire. The ype was facilitated by the prior penetration of U.S. capital in the region (in transportation, petroleum, rubber, mining, etc.), while new technologies (especially photography) enhanced the observation and surveying capacity of U.S. explorers. But the collaboration between scientific discovery and business enterprise went well beyond that. The ype was a scientific venture supported by the business community. Though the principal funds came from the National Geographic Society, corporate interests contributed equipment, know-how, and publicity. Kodak Company supplied the expedition with photographic cameras, film, and development equipment. Waltham Watch Company provided chronometers and astronomical watches. Winchester Repeating Arms Company supplied small weapons. Once on Peruvian soil, the expedition received intelligence, manpower, and social connections from W. R. Grace and Company, the largest U.S. trading firm in South America. Rubber prospectors contributed information about the Southern Peruvian jungle, while U.S. “railroad men” were essential in negotiations with the Peruvian government.
Moreover, the infrastructure of foreign capital paved the road to Cuzco. The members of the expedition traveled in United Fruit steamships, at subsidized cost. Personnel from W. R. Grace & Company transported equipment, clearing it through customs, and took care of monetary arrangements in Lima. The Peruvian Corporation provided scientists with free train tickets from Arequipa to Cuzco and later contributed an agricultural expert to collect plants. The Inca Mining Company, which had helped to establish the Harvard Observatory in Arequipa, provided the team with valuable meteorological information. The managers of W. R. Grace and of Cerro de Pasco Mining supplied intelligence about political conditions in Lima.

Indeed, the interpenetration of business and science was remarkable. In the preliminary stages of the expedition, the geographer Isaiah Bowman suggested installing a line of meteorological stations in the Peruvian Cordillera to map the region’s temperature, barometric pressure, winds, and rainfall. U.S. and British mining companies shared his interest in this data and persuaded the Harvard College Observatory to send meteorological equipment to Peru. The equipment went to the “Inca Mining Co.” and the “Inca Rubber Co.,” two firms that helped to set up the equipment and later took responsibility for the measurements. The observatory at Arequipa would centralize this information and distribute it among the users. U.S. and British capitalists, Yale and Harvard, all cooperated to create a thorough meteorological knowledge of southern Peru.

The question of “Inca metallurgy” is another instance of business-knowledge cooperation. In 1914 Bingham tried to disprove the preconception that Inca bronzes were “accidental.” He needed to show that copper and tin were rarely found together in a natural state and that, consequently, the bronzes must be the product of Inca metallurgy. To prove his point, Bingham drew on the expertise of U.S. and English mining engineers. Edmond Guggenheim wired Bingham’s question to his company’s experts. Representatives of the Braden Company in Chile got interested, initiating an inquiry among the region’s foreign engineers and mineralogists. So did Cerro de Pasco Mining. In response, Bingham received letters dated in mining towns of Bolivia (Corocoro), Southern Peru (Chuco), and northern Chile.

The information sent by the Braden Company expert in Chile, the engineer Alfredo Sundt, helped Bingham to solve the enigma. Copper-tin amalgamation was common to Bolivia, he said: first indigenous peoples and then the Spaniards had used it to make everything from church bells to cooking utensils. But it was not natural. Nobody had ever found minerals in which copper was allied with tin. Therefore, Inca bronzes were “artificial” amalgamations.
More than that, said the engineer Tarnawiecki, from Cerro de Pasco Mining at Chuco, after analyzing the samples: Inca bronzes were a metallurgical miracle. Working with minerals containing tin in a concentration of 5 to 1, the Incas were able to get a bronze with only 6 percent of tin. Inca command of metallurgical techniques was admirable.

Cooperation was essential to this enterprise of knowledge. At the request of Bingham, U.S. business firms mobilized their personnel to solve the problem of Inca bronzes, a technical puzzle about Peruvian antiquity. A Yale mission helped Harvard to establish a chain of meteorological stations that, in turn, provided accurate information to road builders, mining companies, and rubber tappers. Bowman’s morphological and geological survey of the 73rd meridian contributed an inventory of natural resources in the central Andes. Two additional instances of cooperation proved crucial to the ype: Kodak provided the expedition with key technologies for recording ancient Peru, while the National Geographic Society helped the expedition disseminate its results among the U.S. reading public.

**Photography, Ruins, and Advertising**

Kodak had pioneered the use of advertising to create markets. Its success in the marketplace owed much to its campaigns persuading the U.S. public that photography was a “pleasurable and necessary component of modern life” (West 2000, 19–35). The primary message of Kodak advertisements was that everybody could use a Kodak camera to capture almost all aspects of quotidian life. Advertising modernity as an attainable, democratic good had made Kodak the leading firm in the trade. Advertisements portraying explorers, however, were not common before the ype.

Kodak supported Bingham’s exploration for reasons related to product development and marketing. Executives took the ype as an opportunity to experiment with new cameras and film-developing methods in the adverse conditions of “the tropics.” They wanted to know how their newest equipment performed in damp, tropical valleys or at high altitudes. In three expeditions to Peru (1911, 1912, and 1914–1915), Bingham tried successively the A3 and the A3 Special, the Panorama, and the Cirkut cameras. Members of the expedition tested also the Kodak “tank developer” to develop film on the spot, and quite naturally, they used only Kodak paper for their prints. Results were adequate but not remarkable.

Images of U.S. explorers carrying Kodak cameras into their “fields” could also be used for advertising purposes. If consumers could see that Kodak
cameras functioned well in inaccessible regions of the world (such as the North Pole, in the Amazon jungle, or in the Peruvian highlands), much value could be added to these products. And Bingham himself took care to disseminate his archaeological and historical finding using photographs, giving Kodak a reputation as a firm supporting U.S. scientific exploration. In an article in Harper's Weekly (1912), Bingham mentioned that he had used a 3A camera at an altitude of 21,000 feet. A subsequent article in National Geographic (1913) contained 200 photos, “all taken with the Kodak,” and was a publicity hit. That issue of the magazine, entirely devoted to Machu Picchu, sold at least 126,000 copies. Because of this success, Kodak included the Peruvian panoramas in its own promotional campaigns. In July 1914 the company added these pictures to its “touring exhibition” across the United States. Later, in 1915, the company contributed these photographs to the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco, a quite popular event. The advertising returns were certainly greater than those garnered from product experimentation.

The supply of cameras, film, and development equipment reduced the cost of production of images for the expedition. Photographs were an important objective. It was expected that pictures circulated later among other research centers could help to decipher the mystery of Peruvian antiquity. According to a catalog published in 1915, more than 12,000 photographs were taken during the three Yale expeditions. Of those, 3,000 were of ruins, 4,000 dealt with the physical or geographical features of the region, 1,000 depicted Indian types, and 1,000 portrayed customs and social life (Hiram Bingham 1915). Without exaggeration, the Yale became a machine producing mass images of Peru. Back in the United States, these images would have multiple uses. They helped the public visualize Peru and its ruins; large photographs would be exhibited in the National Geographic Museum, in the Hispanic Society of America, and in the Pan-American Exhibition. Bingham himself used Peruvian photographs to illustrate his classes at Yale and his lectures to numerous scientific societies in the Northeast. Other members of the expedition used these photographs to illustrate articles about Andean geography, archaeology, ancient medicine, animal and plant life, and geology.

**Dissemination: The National Geographic Society**

The National Geographic Society (NGS) was the most important financial sponsor of the Yale. Its publications provided ample publicity to the discoveries of the expedition, elevating Bingham to the status of popular hero. Because of its role as mediator between science and the U.S. people, the society was a

Yale at Machu Picchu
central component of the armature of scientific conquest. National Geographic Magazine, with its plainly narrated articles and colorful pictures, presented the discovery of Machu Picchu and the work of the YPE as an extension of the desires of U.S. Americans.

The objectives of the NGS in supporting the expeditions were clearly stated in the contract signed with Yale University in May 1912. In exchange for financially supporting the expedition, the NGS acquired the “exclusive rights in the first popular story of the Expedition.” When the NGS and Yale University signed a second contract, in 1914, the same clause applied. Against its financial contributions, the NGS would receive “a popular article of 6,000 to 7,000 words, written by the Director of the Expedition, describing in a popular form the results of the expedition.”

The repetition of the word popular underscored the importance of translating the results of scientific exploration into the language of the people.

A “popular story,” that was all the NGS wanted. Not just any story—a story with pictures about early man in South America. Visualization was central to the aims of the NGS. The U.S. informal empire was not only a social formation dominated by “print–photo capitalism,” it was also a democratic sort of empire, in which people needed to connect visually with the lands recently “rediscovered.”

The legibility and translation of its new informal hinterland was done in the name of the “American public.” Gilbert Grosvenor, director of the NGS, contributed to the overall design of the YPE. It was Grosvenor who persuaded Bingham that “ruins, lost cities, and bones”—rather than geological surveys and geographical descriptions—were what the public wanted.

The discovery of Machu Picchu had touched a chord in U.S. sensibility and created a venue to exploit. The U.S. people, according to Grosvenor, were interested in ancient humanity in South America.

What we particularly want is “meat,” facts and information rather than personal movements of various members of the party—as much information as you can give on these ancient peoples and of the new cities which you have discovered. I don’t care particularly for a detailed account of mapping, etc., but want everything that is of human interest. Be sure and tell us as much as possible of Machu Picchu and your surmises as to the manners, life and civilization of the ancient people who built this remarkable city.

Grosvenor talked of South America as “the New World,” in the same way colonizing Europeans had spoken of the Americas four centuries before. Now it was the turn of modern America to discover its southern neighbors. The modern United States was a mass society demanding information. Readers wanted...
to know about ancient peoples, their temples and cities; they were in search of their own antiquity. The United States deserved to have within its orbit of influence its own Rome or Athens.

The NGS played a key role in the popularization of the expeditions and also contributed funds for the publication of the scientific papers that derived from it. Publication was the main business of the society. In fact, as accurately described by Grosvenor, the NGS was a busy printing factory of popular geographic knowledge: “Six big, and most modern presses working night and day, week in and week out, are not able to take care of the job.”

Popular demand for curiosities about faraway lands in visual form kept the machines of National Geographic Magazine running.

Skirmishes over Cultural Property

Between 1911 and 1915, the relationship between Hiram Bingham and the local Peruvian intelligentsia dramatically deteriorated. Early partners in the discovery of Peruvian antiquity soon turned into adversaries contending over the ownership of cultural assets. Though other factors prepared the terrain for the emergence of cultural nationalism—in Cuzco, at least, these included the reform of the university, the modernization of the city, and the crisis of the wool trade—it is clear that the YPE helped to congeal a regional and national opposition against U.S. scientific explorations. The strong reaction of the cuzqueño and Limeño intelligentsia against the “pretensions” of the Yale mission contributed to create a consciousness among Peruvian readers of the need to preserve “national antiquities.” In cooperation, local antiquarians and early indigenistas pressed the Peruvian state to assume a new role: that of broker between universalizing science and local-regional knowledge.

The partnership had begun auspiciously. In June 1911 El Comercio (Cuzco) gave Bingham and his group of researchers an unconditional welcome. The objectives of the expedition—performing topographical, astronomical, and archaeological observations—seemed transparent and innocuous to the nation. The members of the expedition—Bingham, Bowman, Kai Hendriksen, Harry Foote, and William Erving—were outstanding men of science, whose impeccable credentials left no doubts about their motivations. They were altruistic men who had come “to resolve enigmas of science.” More important, argued the paper, the work of the YPE would contribute to the “cause of progress,” integrating the local intelligentsia into its project.

The same reception awaited the group at Lima. When Bingham delivered a lecture before the Sociedad Geográfica (5 December 1911), “well-known
Peruvian professors, university students, and students of the Normal School for Men” gathered to welcome the Yankee discoverer. Bingham explained to this cultivated audience Yale University’s interest in Latin America, what he believed he had found in Machu Picchu, and the group’s future research plans. His lecture, assisted by lantern slides, presented the audience with a comprehensive project of knowledge. Bingham spoke of the need to study all aspects of the Urubamba Valley, from paleontology to geology, from hydrography to osteology. In particular, there were two things he wanted to know: how far the Incas had gotten in the mountainous region, and whether the Ucayali River was fully navigable. His objectives, however grandiose, seemed “scientific” and nonintrusive. At the end of the talk, as it had happened in Cuzco, Limeño intellectuals felt they had been invited to participate in this project of knowledge. The gestures were clear. Bingham praised Machu Picchu as the “proof of the greatness of the Ancient Peruvian civilization” while Bowman credited two local scholars for their mapwork.

At the beginning, the Yale group also enjoyed the support of the Peruvian government (under Augusto B. Leguía) and the patronage of “good society.” Bingham brought with him letters of recommendation to important notables in Cuzco and Lima (judges, physicians, clerics, military), preannounced the arrival of the expedition through local newspapers, and hired an influential lawyer (Cesar Lomellini, a counsel for the Peruvian Corporation and a cousin of President Leguía) to obtain the permit for the excavations. At Lima, the NGS was so enthusiastic about the project of the YPE that they provided Bingham with a complete set of maps drawn from the Raimondi’s Atlas. Meanwhile, at Cuzco, Albert Giesecke, the U.S. American rector of the university, assisted Bingham in drafting a map of the Cuzco Valley and interested his students in visiting the ruins of Machu Picchu. And the local intelligentsia gave Bingham a big welcome. The University of Cuzco asked him to deliver a lecture about Machu Picchu and the YPE. At a ceremony with all the signs of an international-relations event, Bingham delivered a speech, praising the progress of Cuzco and presenting his “discovery” as an advancement of science and humanity. After this, the local university granted him the honorary degree of Doctor in Letters. Bingham reciprocated, extending to Giesecke, now the president of the university, the Yale bronze shield.

In the background of these public ceremonies, there was a growing discomfort about the presence of U.S. American scientists. The second expedition (June–December 1912) involved a greater degree of excavation work and, consequently, was more likely to attract public scrutiny. Increased notoriety also surrounded the concession that the Leguía government had granted to Yale
University, permitting excavation.\textsuperscript{30} As the Peruvian congress and the new president failed to approve this concession, the work of the YPE proceeded in an environment laden with suspicion and debate. Soon, a disrespectful comment, attributed to Bingham and exaggerated by the local press, started to erode the initial enthusiasm.

In May 1912 El Comercio (Lima) reported that Bingham had warned foreigners about Cuzco’s bad smell. El Sol (Cuzco) immediately published derogatory remarks it attributed to Bingham: “To walk along the streets of Cuzco, [the traveler] needs to make efforts to keep the balance and has to either carry various perfumes or close his nose with his fingers” [Para andar por las calles de Cuzco hay que hacer equilibrios y taparse las narices e ir pertrechado de pomos de esencias].\textsuperscript{31} Apparently, the source of such information was Bingham’s recently published book Across South America (1911), in which the author had portrayed Cuzco as “one of the dirtiest cities in America” (262). The alleged remarks produced great indignation among the Cuzco and Lima elites.\textsuperscript{32} With a bit of irony, El Sol demanded that the municipal government make a greater effort to clean the city; otherwise, “neat North-American tourists” would start canceling their travel plans. While sharing Bingham’s views that indigenous peoples were not up to U.S. American standards of cleanliness, the newspaper presented Cuzco as the Rome of South America. It was a city already installed in the imagination of the modern scientific traveler: a city holding treasures of ancient civilizations.

Between July and October 1912, the political situation turned around. Guillermo Billinghurst, a populist politician who seemed ready to confront the oligarchy, was elected president, raising the hopes of workers and indigenous peoples and signaling problems ahead for the YPE. The new president thought it a “disgrace” that Peruvians were unable to investigate “their own” ruins.\textsuperscript{33} During Billinghurst’s short period in office, some indigenistas and cuzqueñistas rose to prominent government positions in areas of culture and education. (Cuzqueñistas were intellectuals and publicists who asserted the importance of Cuzco in the history and politics of Peru, in part by valorizing local music, dance, theater, and literature.) This created a hostile environment for the Yankee explorers. So Bingham’s petition for permission to excavate went down the bureaucratic ladder: from the congress to the Ministry of Education and then to the Instituto Histórico de Cuzco. Here, the YPE encountered its first clear opposition. The members of the institute wanted to supervise the activities of the YPE.\textsuperscript{34}

To no avail Bingham tried to use the former president Leguía and the minister of justice as leverage. But his old allies were now suspected of corruption,
and this placed Bingham in a difficult situation. Though the scandals of the former Leguía administration were chiefly financial, the question of cultural patrimony was also in the public eye. It was rumored that Max Uhle, a German archaeologist, the last director of the Museo Histórico at Lima, had “smuggled out of the country nine tenths of his discoveries.” Hence, the members of the ype came under suspicion of wrongdoing. (Bingham wrote, “All foreign archaeologists are in bad odor and we are probably no exception.”)\(^{35}\)

To counter the public perception that government paid no attention to the protection of “Peruvian antiquities,” the new president appointed agents in different departments to act as custodians of national cultural assets. In Cuzco the appointment went to the people of the Instituto Histórico. The indigenista journalist and writer José Gabriel Cosío supervised the activities of the Yale mission and found no wrongdoing.\(^{36}\) But he insisted that the ype was working without the corresponding government permit, as established by the 1911 decree. For Bingham this meant only additional government red tape. From July to October 1912, Bingham spent more time than he expected in Lima, lobbying government.\(^{37}\) Local bureaucrats, not accustomed to direct talk, were difficult to deal with. “This is a queer place, honeycombed with subterfuge and suspicion,” he wrote to President Hadley of Yale.\(^{38}\)

What at first sight appeared to be indifference or inexplicable delays turned soon into outright opposition. Only after much insistence, the new minister of justice told Bingham that he was opposed to the exportation of archaeological finds. He considered these artifacts “part of the riches of Peru” that should remain within the country. In October 1912, after months of unproductive lobbying, Bingham came to realize the obvious: there was actual hostility against the United States among the new leadership.\(^{39}\)

On October 26, Bingham persuaded President Billinghurst to agree to an intermediate solution. In a new meeting with Billinghurst, Bingham and his ally W. L. Morkill, of the Peruvian Corporation, used heavy artillery. Morkill threatened the minister of justice with international discredit: “How unpleasant it would be for Peru to have us return to the States and say we have been robbed of half our collections on a technicality.”\(^{40}\) To compromise, Billinghurst promised a new decree that would grant permission for the ype to excavate for the rest of the year. But he did not immediately sign the decree. A campaign El Comercio launched against the Yale contract caused the new government to postpone the new resolution. The newspaper claimed that granting exclusivity to Yale University for twenty years would prevent other men of science from investigating Peruvian antiquity. By the end of the month, however, the decree was finally signed and went into effect.\(^{41}\) Bingham would now be able to export
the bones and artifacts collected, but under quite severe limitations. The decree prohibited any excavation work after 1 December 1912, placed all excavation under the supervision of José Gabriel Cosio, and stated that all materials sent to the United States had to be returned to Peru within eighteen months. What offended Bingham the most was the warning that the Yale “should not mutilate or destroy the architectural monuments of Perú,” which sounded like an official accusation that the Yale excavations had damaged the Inca ruins.42

By January 1913, Bingham and the rest of his team were back in the United States. A shipload with thirty-seven cases of osteological and archaeological materials was on its way to New York.43 The remaining boxes, detained by customs officers at Mollendo for no apparent reason, took longer to arrive.44 Measured against the favorable impact of the expedition in the U.S. media—National Geographic published the article about Machu Picchu with two hundred photographs to great acclaim—the opposition found in Lima and Cuzco seemed like a minor discomfort. In the United States, Bingham soon found himself transformed into a public figure. In a commemorative ceremony at the National Geographic in Washington in January 1913, he sat for a publicity photo with Robert Peary and Roald Amundsen, who, respectively, “discovered” the North Pole and the South Pole (Alfred M. Bingham 1989, 291). Bingham’s fame, enhanced by his lectures in scholarly societies and elite clubs and by press interviews and notes that presented him as the “second/scientific conqueror” of Peru, gave him a new platform from which to address issues of political interest, such as the current validity of the Monroe Doctrine.45

Emboldened, Bingham started to organize a more encompassing expedition to Peru for 1914 and 1915. For this third expedition, the budget, which was greater than those allotted for the preceding expeditions, allowed him to add to his team additional experts—two botanists, a zoologist, a second topographer, and a surgeon acting as a physical anthropologist—and to widen the scope of the research. While planning for the new expedition, Bingham thought his team could either bypass the Peruvian government’s prohibition on the exportation of Inca artifacts or, alternatively, examine the artifacts in the field. He imagined the new expedition as a convergent series of research efforts, including botanical and zoological collections and more ethnographic studies. None of this new work demanded government permission.

The third expedition (1914–1915) was a success in terms of discoveries: Bingham and his team located a dozen new ruins, discovered a fifty-mile Inca road, and found new glaciers.46 The excavations also yielded a great deal of evidence. Members of the expedition gathered “a few mummies, quite a number of skulls, and several boxes of sherds from various localities.”47 Trepanned
skulls, mummies in full burial clothing, and the “Inca trail” constituted the true treasure discovered by the expedition. In spite of their success in the field, however, the expedition was unable to counter bad publicity from the local intelligenstia. The YPE was encircled and trapped by rumors and could not deal with them. A small provincial institution, the Instituto Histórico de Cuzco, led by indigenistas, and the local newspaper *El Sol*, helmed by the prominent indigenista, historian, and anthropologist Luis E. Valcárcel, managed to discredit the Yale commission, presenting its members as pillagers of Peruvian ancient treasures.⁴⁸

Rumors circulated that the U.S. Americans were exporting national treasures, bypassing governmental controls. Disguised as men of science, the members of the YPE were engaged in a deplorable commerce of Peruvian antiquities. With the intimidating presence of gendarmes and for a few cents, they were purchasing objects of great value from local Indians. In Cuzco *El Sol* raised an alarm about the loss of “national treasures,” as did *El Comercio* in Lima.⁴⁹ One of these rumors stated that the expedition had brought a steam shovel from the Panama Canal in order to unearth Inca treasures more quickly. Popular gossip claimed that the Yankees had already accumulated five million soles in Inca gold and were shipping this treasure out of the country via Bolivia.⁵⁰ Another version had it that the Yale explorers had purchased a golden idol sixteen inches high for only thirty soles.⁵¹ The number of boxes smuggled out of the country, as well as the value of the “treasury,” varied according to the storyteller.⁵² To complicate matters, an unconfirmed report said that two images of Catholic saints, San Jerónimo and San Francisco, had disappeared from Cuzco churches.⁵³ And landowners charged that the excavations were luring away their workers.

At this point, the Instituto Histórico del Cuzco, led by prominent indigenistas such as Luis Valcárcel, the Cosio brothers, and Vega Enríquez, entered into the debate. The institute appointed a commission to investigate the allegations. This commission determined that, although there was no clear evidence that the YPE was exporting gold and silver objects through Bolivia, the foreign group was excavating without proper authorization and, in some cases, jeopardizing the security of ancient ruins. Bingham tried to convince the members of the Instituto Histórico that his excavations had not damaged Inca ruins, that they had not diverted labor from productive activities, and that the expedition had collected only scientific evidence.⁵⁴ But his arguments fell on deaf ears. His interlocutors—local cuzqueñistas and indigenistas gathered around the institute—took the occasion as a golden opportunity to promote cultural nationalism.
In fact, they converted their own supervising activities into rites of national affirmation. On 1 July 1915, members of the Instituto Histórico confiscated and inspected four boxes of materials at the YPE camp. As Prefect Costa Laurent read the government decree, the indigenistas opened and inspected the boxes, carefully annotating their contents. Bingham and his assistant William Hardy had to stand and watch as bits of pottery were unpacked and repacked, their tags getting mixed up in the process. The scene resembled a ritual restoration of sovereignty. Through the newly appointed *interventores*, it seemed, the Peruvian nation was reclaiming its precious cultural assets. Dedicated to their new mission, the indigenistas sent a delegation to La Paz to further inquire about the rumor that the YPE had already smuggled some of the “Inca treasure” out of the country.

Although the boxes were later returned to Bingham, local suspicion persisted. In July 1915 the government put the whole YPE deposit of archaeological remains at Ollantaytambo—which the locals now called Yanquihuasi—under surveillance. Later that year, the Instituto Histórico took more steps to stop the YPE activities, applying for a judicial injunction against the exportation of Inca artifacts. The members of the institute believed that the YPE had continued excavating, against the government’s order. This was an intolerable affront to Peruvian sovereignty. Luis Valcárcel, the director of the Instituto Histórico, took the opportunity to gain control of what he considered “national historical resources.” That year, he presented to congress a bill that would ensure national control of archaeological resources by prohibiting new excavations without government authorization, by putting all the activities of foreign scientists in Peru under the control of Peruvian experts, and by absolutely forbidding the export of artifacts from the Inca or pre-Inca period.

By November 1915, the tension between Bingham and the local intelligentsia (indigenistas and cuzqueñistas) had reached the breaking point. Facing increasing opposition from these cultural nationalists and unable to counter the press campaigns against him, Bingham decided to stop all further research in southern Peru. His refusal to continue the project reveals a sense of frustration and incomprehension. Although he tried to counter rumors with lectures and newspaper columns, Bingham could not defeat his “enemies.” After he left Peru, the local opposition managed to obstruct the exportation of the archaeological materials for another year, impounding the last harvest of the expedition (seventy-four boxes with Inca bones, pottery, and mummies). To reclaim the boxes and get them out of Peru, Bingham had to acknowledge in writing that all these materials were “Peruvian property” and had to be returned to Peru on request. Before the boxes were shipped, the director of the National Museum,
Gutiérrez de Quintanilla, examined them, noting the importance of the trepanned skulls as proof of the sophistication of Inca medicine. On 17 August 1916, all seventy-four boxes finally arrived in New Haven and were carefully stored in Yale's Osborn Hall. In spite of claims to the contrary in Bingham's *Lost City of the Incas* (1948), Yale University failed to return the bones until recently.

**Indigenistas and Cuzqueñistas**

What was the nature of the opposition the YPE encountered? The activities of the YPE seemed to threaten two key actors in the regional scene: the local intelligentsia and the landowners. University students and amateur collectors became, after Bingham's “discovery,” zealous competitors in the enterprise of knowledge. Already in 1911–1912 Giesecke’s students were invading the Yale camp, trying to participate in the experience of discovery. They considered the Urubamba Valley their own field of study. The local subprefect visited Machu Picchu and hurried to print a report before the results of the YPE reached the press. (In 1915, a group of cuzqueños claimed for themselves the discovery of the Huayna Kenti ruins, unaware that Bingham had claimed the same discovery in 1911.) Local landowners, hacendados and gamonales, complained to the prefects that Bingham was taking away “their peons.” The higher salaries paid by the YPE were threatening to local employers: the expedition offered $1 a day, while hacendados offered 40 cents a day. More important, the expedition paid wages in cash, while local landowners paid wages in kind. It is also clear that hacendados did not approve of the YPE giving free medical attention to Indian peasants. This eroded their prestige as patrons and showed indigenous peasants a side of modernity that local landowners were not ready to embrace. To the gamonales, Yankee visitors seemed a more immediate menace, for they raised wages, defied traditional social hierarchies, and engaged peasants in the search for Inca artifacts.

Bingham did not talk of indigenistas or of cultural nationalists. He simply referred to them as “anti-foreign elements” and as “our enemies.” To him, opposition to the YPE came from an amorphous group made up of antiforeigners, students and professors at Cuzco University, and political opponents of the Leguía government. Bingham's simplified view of the opposition made him unable to read through the maze of Peruvian politics. In fact, he never questioned why the students of his friend and supporter Giesecke had turned, all of a sudden, into rabid cultural nationalists. Bingham blamed his “bad luck”—the sudden change in government—for the obstacles facing the expedition. But more was at stake than a political turnaround.
Among those who opposed the YPE, we can distinguish two groups: the “antiquarians” and the “early indigenistas.” In different ways both groups defended a cultural-nationalist position against foreign scientists and museum collectors. The director of the National Museum, Gutiérrez de Quintanilla, an antiquarian, demanded that the state take a stronger position to preserve “national treasures,” and the cuzqueño indigenistas wanted to prevent the YPE from exporting Inca artifacts. Early indigenistas were directly involved in controlling the activities of Bingham and his U.S. American colleagues. In 1912 Gabriel Cosio was the commissioner appointed by the government to inspect the Yale group and its collecting methods. In August 1915 two leading indigenistas—Valcárcel, then the director of the Instituto Histórico, and Angel Vega Enríquez, the president of the Centro de Arte e Historia de Cuzco—traveled to Bolivia to assess the validity of rumors that Bingham was smuggling Inca artifacts through this country. Their denunciations filtered into the newspapers in Cuzco, Lima, and La Paz, generating intense debate about the ownership—Peruvian or international—of cultural assets.

Early indigenistas criticized their government, foreign scientists, and dealers in antiquities. They accused the government of failing to protect the country’s cultural assets. They denounced foreigners for clearing out Peruvian archaeological sites. And they blamed native informants and merchants for facilitating the work of foreign scientists, by selling them valuable collections of Incaica. In this campaign of national affirmation, the press again acted as a powerful ally. The local newspapers 

El Sol (radical, sensationalist) and El Comercio (liberal, moderate) provided indigenistas and antiquarians with a platform for their denunciations.

The day after the indigenistas first visited the Yale camp at Ollantaytambo, El Sol published a shocking news story: “The Criminal Excavation of Machu Picchu: The Members of the Yale Commission Take Away Our Treasures” (Alfred M. Bingham 1989, 307). Bingham and his group were treated as criminals. They had defied the restraining order of the subprefect and were robbing the Peruvian people of their past (“Quitarle al Cuzco sus tesoros que testimonian su grandioso pasado es labor criminal y el pueblo mismo no lo debe tolerar”).64 In Lima El Comercio condemned the extraction and exportation of “Peruvian antiques” as an offense against the fatherland. While supporting the strong position taken by the Instituto Histórico de Cuzco in defense of Peruvian national culture, the article blamed the continued exportation of valuable Inca treasures on huaqueros. (Based on the word huacos, which means delicate ceramic pieces often found in ancient burial sites or near temples indicating association with indigenous religious or ritual practices, huaqueros refers
to those who excavate, extract, and hence, pillage ancient burial grounds.) A group of “unscrupulous persons” who practiced an “inadmissible commerce” for the benefit of foreign museums were damaging “Peru’s scientific interests.” The Yale affair was only the latest example of a long history of illegal appropriation of national cultural treasures.

By 1916, cultural nationalism was rampant. In January La Prensa published an article denouncing the exportation of archaeological artifacts. The article supported the position of Gutiérrez Quintanilla against granting an exportation permit to the ype. The columnist used strong language: the ype had come with the object of “extracting huacos, mummies, cloth, weapons, utensils, and other archaeological curiosities belonging to the ancient dwellers of the Tawantinsuyo empire.” The foreigners were taking artifacts that belonged by right to the Incas. And, since Inca heritage was protected by the Peruvian state, Bingham and his group were stealing “national property.” The article presented state patronage of national culture as a mark of modernity. The columnist associated the possibility of writing a national history with the possession of a given cultural patrimony. The message was clear: Peruvians should have priority in the study of their own antiquity.

For the cuzqueño indigenistas the defense of national culture meant nothing less than an Inca renaissance. In August 1916, in an “interview” published by El Sol, Valcárcel presented the Instituto Histórico as the vehicle for the affirmation of Peruvian cultural sovereignty. The institute, he said, was committed to the revival of “Inca patriotism.” It had recently celebrated the third centenary of Inca Garcilaso’s Comentarios Reales de los Incas (1609), a critical rendition of the Spanish conquest and colonization of Peru and a defense of Inca civilization and government; a year earlier the city and the institute had observed the centenary of the Cuzco Rebellion of 1814, a key moment in which indigenous peoples participated in the independence struggle. Valcárcel insisted that “Bingham y compañía” had extracted gold and silver objects and smuggled them out of the country, and he credited the institute’s commission with forcing the Yale archaeologists to abandon all excavations and with preventing them from exporting Inca remains. The institute, Valcárcel affirmed, was engaged in a comprehensive study of the Inca past and present: a project involving language, history, theater, and anthropology. Valcárcel himself said he was studying ayllus (Indian communes united by family ties) and the religiosity of the Incas, as well as preparing a guide to colonial Cuzco. It was only natural that the members of the institute promoted a law declaring all Inca ruins “national property.”

Limeño antiquarians, cuzqueño indigenistas, and local government had cooperated to stop (momentarily) a foreign project of knowledge. To pull this
off, they had used a powerful weapon: rumors circulated through local periodicals. Newspapers disseminated and provided expert credibility to popular rumors about the activities of the Yale group. The campaign for the preservation of Inca artifacts on Peruvian soil touched a chord in popular sensibility; Peruvians were soon denouncing the wrongdoings of the Yankee explorers as if it were their patriotic duty. The press served also as a platform for the launching of alternative historical and archaeological projects. Antiquarians and indigenistas used the Bingham incident to articulate the need for a different type of knowledge. One of the groups insisted that the key was the study of the Inca past in the present (an archaeology of the present). The other group simply defended the position that Peruvians needed to control their cultural assets in order to write their own national history.

If in 1912 cuzqueñistas had been united in the enterprise of “progress,” by 1915 antiquarians and indigenistas were deeply committed to the enterprise of cultural nationalism. Implicit in the local contestation was a new critique of Yankee imperialism. Opposition to the YPE was ultimately based on cultural arguments. This new kind of regional nationalism foresaw and reacted against a future of total cultural deprivation. If Peruvians allowed their best archaeological ruins to leave the country now, in the future Peruvians would have to travel to New Haven or Berlin to study their own prehistory. At a time in which the indigenistas had not yet developed a full-blown critique of gamonalismo (the despotism of hacienda overseers, usually mestizo) or constructed the basis of the utopía andina (the utopia of a regenerated Indian culture and government), the defense of Inca huacos, mummies, skulls, and pottery was their only effective critique.

The Bingham affair preceded the Indian rebellions (in Ayacucho, 1922–1923) by at least seven years. In the background of Bingham’s correspondence and memoirs, signs of discomfort were already evident: Indian laborers who abandoned the camp without reason, peasants who refused to sell mules to the expedition, mestizo guides who kept Indian laborers away from the Yale camp, and commoners who denounced the wrongdoings of Yankee explorers to the press. Perhaps an underground understanding of the Yale mission nurtured the skirmishes over cultural property. Perhaps indigenous and mestizo peasants and laborers cooperated in the construction of a critique of Yankee imperialism that predated not only the rebellions of 1922–1923 but the mid- to late 1920s formulations of the indigenista intellectuals José Carlos Mariátegui, Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, and Luis Valcárcel. Popular rumors equated scientific exploration with imperialistic expansionism. Connecting the YPE with the Panama Canal, the rumors warned of the power of the new empire, a
mechanical-scientific power able to move mountains to open a water pass connecting the two oceans. Associating the expedition with treasure hunters, the rumors pointed to the reenactment of the colonial conquest. The scientists were like the old conquerors, blinded by the greed for gold. But modern conquistadors were more powerful: they had machines capable of tearing down “at one fell swoop” the buildings of past civilizations. The fear of destruction associated with the YPI excavations was not a mere invention of Bingham’s detractors. It was implicit in Bingham’s own explanations about his “discovery.” The best tombs—those that had not been tampered with by grave-diggers—were to be found underneath the great religious temples. Excavations therefore seemed to threaten the stability of Inca buildings. In this context, the notion that a bulldozer from the Panama Canal might level Machu Picchu to reveal the “Inca treasure” was not so far-fetched.

The rumors also revealed hidden connections between foreign business enterprises and scientific knowledge. Rumors intentionally confused the activities of the YPI with those of a mining company. Quite efficiently, great machines of the North were taking wealth from Peruvian soil and leaving the earth in ruins. Embedded in these rumors was a criticism of foreign enterprise’s mode of operation (railroad builders, oil prospectors, and mining companies), as well as a critique of government. The permissiveness of the Peruvian government, or the corruption of government officials, enabled foreign technology to appropriate Peruvian nature.

The stories of “boxes of gold” smuggled through Bolivia made wealth and knowledge equivalent: “treasures” desired by foreign agents. Boxes with bones and pottery were transformed into boxes of gold, because both were equally valuable to the imperialist other. Bingham himself referred to his collection of “trephined skulls” as a sort of unique treasure for science. For the first time, scientists were finding evidence of sophisticated surgical procedures performed by ancient Americans. This evidence was pure gold. And if the boxes were taken out of the country, it was only thanks to the cooperation of corrupt government officials. In this regard, the rumors were not in error: the YPI managed to smuggle an important number of boxes with all sorts of treasures (books, bones, pottery, and a few “bronzes”).

The conflict between Bingham and the local intelligentsia was not about the exportation of bones and broken pottery. It was about the ownership and control of cultural property. Cuzqueñistas and indigenistas pushed the Peruvian state to take responsibility for the preservation of “national” monuments of past civilizations. At stake was the control of the “evidence” necessary for the writing of Peruvian prehistory. The public debate about whether the govern-
ment should grant exclusive rights of exploration to Yale University or give permission for the exportation of Inca remains hinged on this issue. In the debate, sympathizers with and opponents of the U.S. explorers alike brought up the issue of the widespread commerce in “antiquities.” While Bingham and his allies (including the local doctor, Cesar Lomellini) tried to separate their “scientific” activities from the commerce in antiquities, his opponents suggested that the members of the YPE were actually part of this commerce. Foreign and national merchants, motivated only by profit, were exporting to European and U.S. museums important pieces of Peru’s rich colonial and precolonial past. If the loss of Inca and colonial artifacts to foreign museums was already a long-standing practice, the possibility that Peru would become a nation without a past was near.

*Huaqueros and the Commerce in Antiquities*

The third side of the story comes from subjects unwilling to take a position in the public debate: the “huaqueros” and the merchants of antiquities. Though without a public voice, these actors greatly influenced the cultural policies of the Peruvian state and mediated the relationship between the local intelligentsia and foreign explorers. Silently, they eroded the very cultural capital that was the basis of the dispute between foreign and local knowledge-producers. By unearthing and circulating ancient artifacts, they created anxieties about the exhaustion of the ancient Peruvian past. These anxieties were a powerful force in the forging of cultural nationalism. On the other hand, these merchants acted as facilitators. They contributed to the formation of antiquarian elite culture and assisted foreign explorers to acquire and export precious artifacts. Their services provided state museums with “antiquities” which could serve as the basis for educational, historical, and ethnographic projects.

During the years 1912–1915, the increasing fame of Bingham and the YPE attracted the attention of dealers and seekers of huacas. On several occasions, Bingham’s quest for the origins of the Incas was sidetracked by exchanges with seekers and merchants of Incaica. Traces of embarrassing transactions crop up, here and there, among the papers of the YPE. From Lima and from small towns (Pisco, Guadalupe, Cerro de Pasco), collectors and merchants wrote Bingham tempting him with good deals in “antiquities.” They offered him huacos, books, gold and silver jewelry, paintings depicting pre-Columbian events and ancient rituals, expertise on detecting fake Incaica, and directions to great ruins. Apparently, the “treasures” Bingham was looking for had already been collected and were available at a price.
Bingham, like other archaeologists, was ambivalent about these deals. On the one hand, he needed the assistance of these native informants to locate Inca ruins. The purchase of collections was not to be discarded as an option at a time in which the Peruvian state was imposing restrictions on new excavations. On the other hand, grave-diggers badly damaged archaeological sites; by taking all the valuable pottery and jewelry, they stripped the remains of connection to locality, family, and place in the social hierarchy. Once treasure hunters had done their job, all the archaeologist could find were scattered bones and broken pottery. For this reason, Bingham had to be selective about these offers, accepting some, rejecting others.

The unearthing of Indian tombs was an old practice, which increased in the post-independence period. The French explorer Count of Sartigés reported in 1834 that grave-diggers always accompanied archaeological expeditions in the expectation of finding the treasures of older civilizations. Treasure hunters were the most immediate competitors of the archaeologist: if they reached a burial site first, they would irreparably damage it. Bingham was quite aware of this competition. During the 1912 expedition, he and George F. Eaton, curator of osteology at Yale’s Peabody Museum, had found skeletons in a cave near San Sebastián already tampered with by “treasure hunters.” These “competitors” took Bingham as a potential customer. In September 1912 Bingham received a letter from the huaquero Belisario Rosas. In this letter (dated in Cerro de Pasco), Rosas offered information for locating ruins that were much older than those of the Incas. As a local expert (as well as a gold miner and photographer), he had a secret to sell: a place where two pre-Inca peoples, the Huancas and the Yungas, had purportedly fought a great battle, a place hidden from science. Furthermore, he was ready to inform Bingham about the business of fake Incaica being produced at workshops in Piura and Lima. With knowledge of how to detect fake artifacts, Bingham would be able to cleanse U.S. museums of fraudulent pieces.

Rosas was poor—he had no money to travel to meet Bingham—but he possessed valuable secrets. His knowledge came from his experience as a gold miner (previously a gold seeker, then a mine worker with an amateur interest in “Indian antiquities”). He was a prospector of huacos who had acquired special skills in identifying pre-Inca artifacts. His knowledge was essential to science. Without it, museums ran the risk of being stocked with fake artifacts, and foreign scientists were at risk of spending much of their precious time excavating in the wrong location. Yet for some reason, Bingham rejected Rosas’s offer. Perhaps he was not ready to study the Yungas and Huancas, peoples whose “history” did not relate directly to the question of Hispanic colonialism.
But the possibility of an exchange between the huaquero and the foreign explorer was there, and this possibility is quite revealing of the vortex of interests mobilized by the cultural-economic apparatus of informal empire.

We know that Bingham purchased some collections of Incaica, but cannot find details of these transactions. To protect his reputation as a scientist and to avoid further conflict with Peruvian cultural nationalists, Bingham left few paper traces of these operations. The purchase of books and manuscripts, on the other hand, was completely legal. During the second expedition, Bingham purchased a valuable book collection from F. Pérez de Velazco, a Lima book trader and insurance agent. For two rooms full of books, Bingham paid 2,500 Peruvian pounds. The collection was simply unique. It contained original royal cédulas, the Listas de Toros, viceregal bandos, and a good selection of rare books and pamphlets, many dating to the seventeenth century. Bingham referred to this as a “magnificent” collection. Personnel of W. R. Grace & Company arranged for the shipping of the collection, which arrived safely to New Haven in January 1913. Perhaps one of the most valuable “treasures” resulting from the expedition, the book collection arrived much earlier than the boxes with bones, and without so much publicity. This collection would form the basis of Yale Library’s South American Collection, now hosted at Mudd Library.

Regional-ethnic history was also for sale. When the local historian Luis Ulloa found out of the purchase of the Velazco collection, he offered his own books and manuscripts for sale. A member of the Geographical Society of Lima, Ulloa had known Bingham, supported his research, and published some of his articles. As a representative of the Peruvian government in Spain, Ulloa had accumulated a mass of archival materials on colonial Peru. Back in Peru, he continued to build his library and archive, with the intention of writing a comprehensive history of South America. His involvement in politics led him finally to abandon this ambitious history project. So he decided to put his entire colonial collection up for sale, offering Yale University unique documents of the sixteenth century: probanzas (statements of evidence used in judicial settings) about Inca genealogy, legal conflicts over property between encomenderos (Spaniards entrusted with the usufruct of Indian labor), and materials from the Inquisition and the Franciscan missions to Lima. His “ethnologic collection” was, in fact, the basis of a new type of history, one that focused on Indian society and culture: an ethnic-regional history. In these documents, as Ulloa explained to his potential buyers, Indians themselves were telling the scribes that they all descended from Mama Oclo and Huaina Capac. The whole question of ayllus (Indian communities united by family ties), prop-
erty relations, and what would later be called mentalités (ideas and imaginaries shared by these communities) was accessible through these documents. Ulloa was selling Yale University not only colonial documents but also a local perspective on history. It is not clear that Yale was ready to pay his high prices or that Bingham was ready to understand the meaning of these sources. Bingham, the modern colonizer, had learned to read ancient Peru through the Spanish chroniclers and was more interested in topographical maps of southern Peru than in Indian genealogies or property disputes. Perhaps he was not prepared to venture into the field of ethnohistory. What is important about this small interaction is the possibility of the transfer, by a commercial transaction, of a whole perspective on history. The predicament of the amateur local historian—the impossibility of embracing a long project of history while trying to make a living—had much to do with this possibility.

During his stay in Peru, Bingham received various other business propositions from sellers who had a solid understanding of the U.S. American enterprise of knowledge. In July 1912 Bingham received a letter from Mariano Ferro, the alleged owner of the lands where Machu Picchu was located. In lieu of rent, Ferro proposed splitting fifty-fifty with the U.S. explorer the “hutilidades [sic]” or profits derived from the excavations. Perhaps heeding popular rumor, Ferro assumed that Bingham was searching for Inca treasures. Another interesting proposal Bingham received in 1915 came from the amateur collector Carlos Belli. Since the government had prohibited the exportation of huacos, Belli offered to sell Bingham a collection of oil paintings of Nazca huacos. This form of representation, Belli explained, was specially tailored for exhibitions in geographical societies and museums in the United States. If people wanted to know “the true history of the American Continent,” let them see paintings of it.

How many of these men did Bingham encounter in his travels across southern Peru? How many of his “discoveries” were actually purchases? The letters sent by huaqueros and antiquity dealers reveal a new dimension of the YPE. The expedition’s goal was to accumulate knowledge, ideally via exploration but also, as it turns out, via purchase. Perhaps the expedition was never able to clearly separate commercial transactions from scientific research and, in this way, provided ample ammunition to local critics. Rumors about Yankee professors purchasing and exporting “Peruvian treasures” thus contained more than a grain of truth, for the YPE carried back to New Haven invaluable treasures in books, artifacts, and bones, many of them acquired by purchase.
Conclusion

At this point, it is appropriate to remind the reader how the U.S. press framed the discovery of Machu Picchu. Headlines declared “Fifty Cents Finds Ancient Ruins,” “Bingham Pays Half Dollar to Find Treasure,” and so on. These headlines referred to the original transaction between Bingham and an Indian guide which led to the discovery of the “Lost City.” At the founding moment of the story of the lucky discovery was a transaction, in which local knowledge was purchased at a bargain price.

The actual appropriation by the foreign explorer of “Indian antiquities,” historical sources, and local perspectives is not really the point. What is important is that the deployment of the economic and cultural apparatus of informal empire created the possibility for these transactions. What was at stake was the very possibility of creating a local and national history and archaeology in the face of a transfer abroad of local sources, information, and perspectives. This was the main question raised by local indigenistas and cuzqueñistas. This problem does not reduce a bit the ingenuity and creativity of local subalterns to get on the train of the U.S. “enterprise of knowledge.”

What was the harvest of the YPE? At the end of 1915, the YPE had collected a vast amount of material: 12,000 photographs; between 90 and 100 cases containing bones, pottery, and mummies, as well as a few “bronzes”; two rooms filled with rare books; and several thousand plant specimens. In part, these materials would serve to fill the cabinets of natural history museums in the United States: the bones and pottery would go to the Peabody, the zoological and botanical collections to the Smithsonian, and some pieces to the American Museum of Natural History. There, resignified by scientists and museum personnel, they would become part of an “object-based epistemology” that supported and legitimized the narrative of progress (Conn 1998). Photographs would help disseminate the “discovery” of Machu Picchu and of Peruvian antiquity among the U.S. public. Kodak’s advertising “touring exhibits” and the pages of National Geographic carried with them the fiction that the emerging empire was discovering ancient Peruvian ruins for the sake of the “American people.”

To Bingham, however, the true harvest of the expeditions was an expansion of the frontiers of U.S. knowledge. This meant extending the gaze of the U.S. scientist to the Peruvian Andes, incorporating the region within the domain of “problems” to be solved by U.S. scientists. Bingham aimed at a comprehensive and ordered legibility of the southern Peruvian Andes. U.S. science needed to present Western civilization with an archaeological map of Peru, that is, to
order “early man in America” in sequential stages. Discovering the riddle of Machu Picchu was just one step in a more comprehensive plan of discovery and conquest. Bingham and the U.S. press viewed the “discovery” as a second and better (more enduring) conquest of South America. Like a religion, U.S. science was engaged in a quest for origins. In Bingham’s words, the YPE would “unravel the puzzle of the Ancient Civilization of South America” (Hiram Bingham 1914d, 677).

What sustained this quest was ultimately the U.S. reader; hence, the need to obtain masses of reproducible representations of Peruvian antiquity. In the end Bingham understood the wisdom of Grosvenor’s advice and directed the results of his expeditions to the U.S. people, the readers and spectators of South American antiquity. He was proud of having created “enthusiasm” among U.S. readers for the question of South American antiquity. Like the Spanish conquistadors, he felt that what really mattered was to bring news about the “marvels of the New World.” Numbers of readers and the enthusiasm of spectators—measures of the emerging consumer mass society—justified the investments of the YPE.

Relations among the YPE, Kodak, and the NGS illustrate the interconnectedness of business and knowledge in the age of the informal empire. This collaboration was necessary, not only because the nature of the enterprise of knowledge required the most modern technologies for the production and reproduction of images, but also because “print-photo capitalism” could produce value out of circulating Peruvian antiquity. The imperative of businessmen and knowledge seekers was to incorporate the region (Andean South America) under the orbit of U.S. knowledge and influence. Representation was crucial to this enterprise. Without photography, museum exhibits, articles in popular magazines, and lecturing circuits, the discovery of Machu Picchu would have been largely ignored.

How deep and far was this project of knowledge supposed to go? Before we place “reality” or the “Indian-social question” on the indigenista side and leave for U.S. science only the distant and comprehensive vision of archaeology and geography, we must read Bingham’s letters to Osgood Hardy, the ethnologist of the 1914 expedition. Bingham repeatedly insisted that Hardy should learn the language of indigenous peoples (Quechua), observe “native feasts,” and take notes on their agricultural methods and lifestyle. Hardy was “to learn folklore and local tradition,” even if this entailed hiring an Indian as a permanent servant. Bingham, the mountaineer-historian-archaeologist, had finally developed an interest in Indian South America. Language, traditions, manners, and customs were the “stuff” of the new science: anthropology. This
was the discipline that in the future would extract the final secrets from South America, those still hidden in the memory of indigenous peoples.

Bingham was unable to lead this vast project of knowledge to its conclusion: the complete mapping of Peru’s archaeological sites; the total topographical survey of the Southern Peruvian Andes; and the in-depth investigation of Peru’s indigenous groups. In particular, the riddle about Machu Picchu remained unsolved. The discontinuity of the surveys made it impossible for Bingham to validate his two most daring theses: that Machu Picchu was the “cradle” of Inca civilization and also its “last refuge.” In the cultural battles at Cuzco and Lima between the YPE and the local intelligentsia there was something close to a tie. In the United States, Bingham gained public acclaim as the discoverer of Machu Picchu, rapidly ascended the academic ladder, and soon became a recognizable name in the foreign-relations debate, a public man, and a successful politician. Yale University also profited from the YPE, accumulating materials about Peru in its natural history museum and its libraries. In fact, after the YPE, Yale became a recognizable site (like Berlin, Berkeley, and Harvard) in the field of Peruvian archaeology and South American history.

Indigenistas and antiquarians also made significant gains. Planting the notion in public opinion that foreign researchers were actually “treasure hunters,” they managed to stain the purity of foreign scientific explorations and, at the same time, to legitimize their own claims as custodians of Peru’s cultural property. For a moment at least, Ollantaytambo ceased to be a field open to international research. Clearly, cuzqueño institutions and research methods could not match the credentials of Euro-American science. As amateur collectors tinkering with “wild ideas” about the origins of pre-Columbian civilizations, they remained in a subaltern, marginal position, unable to finance large-scale excavations or wide-ranging topographical surveys. But they planted the seed of cultural nationalism and this proved instrumental for the control of key positions in Peruvian universities, museums, and historical institutes.

The YPE was able to ship its “boxes of bones” to New Haven, but the erosion of its credibility was so high that Bingham abandoned all interest in new Peruvian expeditions. In fact, according to his biographer, after 1916 Bingham returned only once to the area: in 1948, at the time of the inauguration of the Hiram Bingham Highway, in Cuzco (Alfred Bingham 1989, 178). Despite the popularity of the Peruvian articles, National Geographic also withdrew its support from the project. Back in the United States, Bingham continued to monitor the publication of popular and scientific articles about the expedition and, stimulated by friends and his publisher (Houghton Mifflin), he wrote a popular narrative of his expedition, Inca Land, published in 1922. But his
encounter with “fabricators of rumor” left deep imprints in his memory. Reconciliation came with time, when the breeze of the Good Neighbor Policy re-established the fiction of a continental friendship.

It is only fair to say that the same indigenistas who orchestrated the 1914–1916 press scandals came in the end to recognize the work of Bingham and the YPE. True, travel guides to Peruvian archaeological sites still put Bingham’s discovery within quotation marks, underscoring the fact that he publicized only ruins that indigenous Peruvians already knew well. And for years, indigenistas made a point of presenting Max Uhle as the “true father” of Peruvian archaeology, placing Europe at the center of Andean studies. But by the late 1930s and early 1940s, prominent indigenistas had made peace with Bingham and forgotten the First World War incident. In his memoirs, Valcárcel downplayed the incident, crediting Bingham for having stimulated an interest for Inca culture among his generation (Valcárcel 1981, 186–87). The fact that Valcárcel himself became a discoverer—conducting large excavations in Sacsaywaman in 1934–1938, making important finds in Pukara and Tambayeque, and even coming to be recognized in the United States—may very well explain this suspension of conflict in the official memory of indigenistas.91

The Bingham affair constituted a formative moment in the history of Peruvian indigenismo. The conflict gave indigenistas public notoriety as custodians of Peruvian antiquities. It provided a platform that legitimated their claims to leadership in the remaking of modern Peru. Who could own and use the remnants of the Inca past was a crucial question constitutive of their domain. Other questions—regarding gamonalismo, the social condition of the indio, and the possibility of an Inca renaissance—would come later. First, cultural nationalists had to establish Peruvian sovereignty over its own antiquity. Only the fear of national cultural deprivation—the anxiety of losing control over their own prehistory—worried indigenistas more than the condition of the Indian.

Bingham’s self-representation as a “conqueror” ready to commence the rediscovery of ancient Peru speaks of the imperial ambitions of U.S. science with regard to its novel object of study: Andean South America. He expected only admiration from the locals, the type of reception given by Federico Alfonso Pezet, the Peruvian representative to the 1915 International Congress of Americanists. Pezet recognized his country’s inferiority in science vis-à-vis the United States: In order to belong to the continental union imagined by the architects of Pan-Americanism, Peru has to welcome scientific missions from the North. The gesture of subalternity is clear: Peru would agree to be just a repository of ruins with the expectation that, in the future, foreign science would locate Peru among the privileged sites of world antiquity.
The local intelligentsia, of course, had a different position. Speaking in the name of national culture, they also sought to “elevate” Peruvian antiquity to the level of other famous archaeological sites. Amateur historians and archaeologists from Cuzco and Lima liked to imagine themselves as part of the international scientific enterprise of discovery. Exclusion and neglect from the U.S. scientists made them resentful. Their aspirations for social and economic progress seemed suddenly questioned by a representative of Yale University. In the hegemonic project of Pan-American science there was little room for local intellectuals. Cuzqueño and Limeño intellectuals found themselves serving as mere providers of information and antiquities to archaeological and historical projects that emanated from U.S. universities. It was precisely this refusal of recognition that prompted the local intelligentsia to formulate an alternative enterprise of knowledge.

Perhaps nationalism is always a “derivative discourse” and indigenous histories are always condemned to obscurity by the hegemony of Eurocentric history. But the local intelligentsia at Cuzco and Lima tried to present an alternative project of knowledge in archaeology and history. In the end perhaps, they failed. Overwhelmed by the center’s epistemological apparatus, local archaeology and history tended to replicate the theories and methods of U.S. and European scholars. But between 1912 and 1916, they managed to put in doubt the credibility of an emerging center of knowledge (Yale University) and created the basis for the cultivation of regional-ethnic history.

In the skirmishes over cultural property, none of the main contenders made explicit the connection between U.S. archaeological discoveries in Peru and the increasing penetration of U.S. capital in oil, mining, transportation, commerce, and banking. Much less did they unveil the increasing symbiosis between modern capitalism and the mechanics of representation. The antiforeign rhetoric of the cuzqueñistas and indigenistas had a limit: the separation of cultural and economic spheres. The defense of Peruvian national antiquities was not linked to a critique of U.S. enterprise. The local intelligentsia questioned the YPE’s exportation of bones and artifacts, but had nothing to say about the immense photographic collection that the expedition brought back to the United States. In the future, Bingham’s photographs, presenting living Indians in front of Inca ruins, would fixate Peru as a land of a glorious past and miserable present: as a land of contrasts incapable of achieving full modernity.

Only popular rumor—the anonymous voices that circulated the story that Bingham was collecting Inca gold with the most modern technology and smuggling it out of the country—alluded to the connection between foreign enterprise and scientific exploration. Only these stories seemed to uncover the
materialist and imperialist motivations of their explorations. Underlying the parade of knowledge deployed by the YPE was the same basic economic interest that motivated the prospecting work of mining and oil companies. Moreover, by assimilating the modern, scientific collection with the colonial persecution of “idolatry” and the pillage of huacos, rumors turned around the positive construction of the YPE as a scientific enterprise. Bingham seemed like Pizarro, in the sense that he reenacted the colonial project of cultural amnesia and pillage. At a time in which a new economic empire was forming in the Americas and a renewed Andean consciousness was beginning to surface in politics, this old denunciation acquired a poignant actuality.

The huaqueros and dealers in antiquities present us with yet another dimension of this story. Merchants in antiquities were morally condemned as treacherous agents, motivated by greed and money. In actuality, they provided a crucial intermediation in a business that grew alongside with the fantasies of National History and Informal Empire. Both projects of knowledge (the local and the global) necessitated their mediation. Much of the “discovery” of antiquity was based on the purchase of artifacts—simple commercial transactions. The huaqueros in turn were creators of value; they brought income to their communities and disseminated stories about the ancient indigenous past. Their stories magnified the myth of fabulous treasures absconded underneath Inca ruins. Moreover, they competed successfully with men of science in the “discoveries” and managed to supply fake antiquities to Euro-American museums and scientific cabinets. For doing this, they became the public enemy of cultural nationalists. Dealers in antiquities and huaqueros contributed to the vast transfer of “evidence” from Peru to European and U.S. museums and universities. Their function was to put the objects of dispute, Peruvian antiquities, into circulation as commodities. The huaqueros—subaltern seekers of Inca artifacts—knew the secrets of ancient Peru and were ready to sell them to the foreign men of science, for a price. But it was the responsibility of men of science and scientific institutions to fixate these elements of “evidence” into the bounded territoriality of nation, science, and modernity.