trans atlantic cultures
Cultural Histories of the Atlantic World 18th–21st Centuries

ISSN 2739-6614
transatlantic-cultures.org



La Cripta de los Héroes: Public Monuments and Hidden Agendas during Peru's Aristocratic Republic

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La Cripta de los Héroes in Lima commemorates Peru's disastrous conflict with Chile during the War of the Pacific (1879-1884). The monument's origins reveal the interplay of nationalist aspirations and neocolonial dependencies, ultimately intertwining Peru's nation-building endeavors during the with French imperial ambitions.

PUBLISHED	June 19, 2025
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE	English
TOPICS	Memory
SPACES AND PLACES	Europe · South America
PERIODS	The Steam Atlantic
KEYWORDS	france, memory, sculpture, architecture, imperialism
PERMANENT LINK	https://transatlantic-cultures.org/en/records/la-cripta-de-los-heroes-public-monuments-and-hidden-agendas-during-peru-s-aristocratic-republic/

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Introduction

Within Lima's Cementerio Presbítero Matiás Maestro, la Cripta de los Héroes houses the bones of over two hundred combatants who died during Peru's unsuccessful war against Chile, the War of the Pacific (1879–1883). The war had been fought over control of the Atacama Desert, where Peruvian, Chilean, and Bolivian businesses were engaged in the lucrative business of extracting nitrate-rich mineral deposits used in the production of fertilizers and explosives. Chile won the war, annexing Peru's valuable territories of Tacna, Arica, and Tarapacá, and leaving both Peru and Bolivia in decades of economic turmoil. The inauguration ceremony for la Cripta de los Héroes occurred on September 8^th^, 1908 and attracted an estimated 50,000 persons to the cemetery. [1] Local and foreign dignitaries were present at the ceremony, including president José Pardo, representatives from the Peruvian army and the navy, composer José María Valle Riestra, the French diplomatic mission to Peru, as well as Chile's Minister Plenipotentiary to Peru, José Miguel Echeñique. [2] Both the ceremony and the monument would have been unimaginable in the immediate postwar years, when Peru's intelligentsia had treated the War of the Pacific as a source of shame and contempt towards the Peruvian state. As part of a broader project to create greater social cohesion during the Aristocratic Republic (1895–1919) [3], however, the ruling Civilista Party attempted to reinterpret Peru's defeat into a patriotic act of collective sacrifice which is most clearly expressed in the architecture of la Cripta de los Héroes. The building, which was designed by French architect Émile Robert, prominently features a text on the front of the crypt reads "La Nación a sus defensores en la Guerra de 1879" (The Nation to its defenders in the War of 1879), underneath which stands a marble sculpture titled *Gloria Victis*. The sculptural group represents a dead soldier holding a broken saber lifted in the arms of a winged female Glory, the soldier's heroic nudity underlining his achievement of immortality through his act of martyrdom for the nation.



Emile Robert (architect), *La Cripta de los Héroes*, inaugurated 1908, Cementerio Presbítero Matías Maestro, Lima, Peru

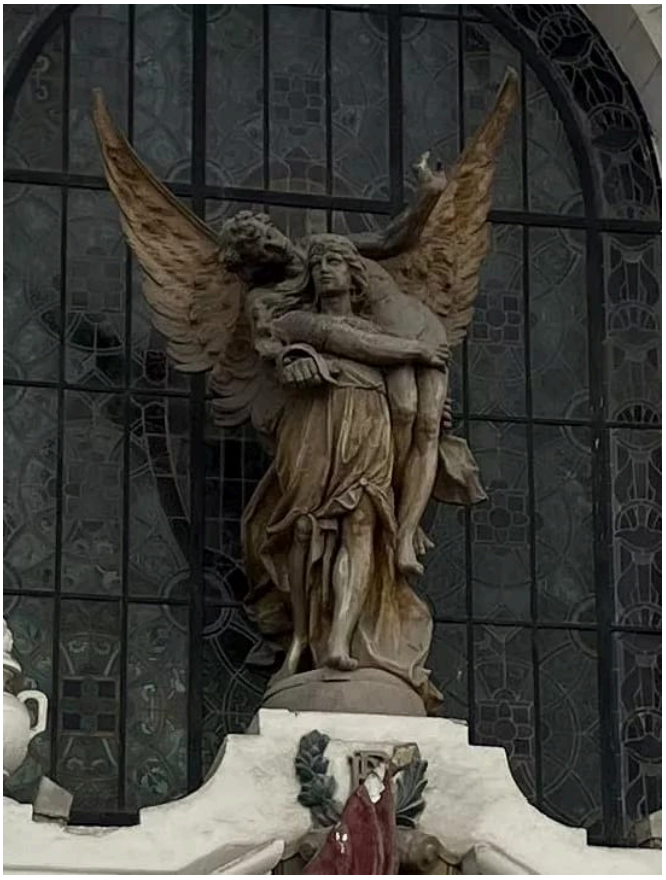
Source: Author's photograph

The sculpture's title, *Gloria Victis*, which means "glory to the vanquished" in Latin, and an inversion of the famed quote attributed to the Gallic chieftain Brennus, *vae victis*, or "woe to the vanquished", was a fitting allegory for a society undergoing major reconstruction efforts in the wake of a devastating military loss. *Gloria Victis*, however, was not originally created to commemorate the War of the Pacific. Rather, the sculpture had been created more than three decades earlier by French artist Antonin Mercié to commemorate his own nation's defeat during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). During the early decades of the Third Republic, *Gloria Victis* became one of France's most popular symbols for commemorating the Franco-Prussian War, with bronze copies erected in cities including Paris, Bordeaux, Cholet, Châlons-en-Champagne, and Niort. This recycling of this war monument for its use in the heroic mythologizing of la Cripta de los Héroes, like the recycling of the previously inhumated remains of Peruvian soldiers that were transferred to the crypt, I argue, illustrates the broader nation-building agenda of the Civilista Party during the era of the Aristocratic Republic (1895–1919), which sought to reshape the country in the image of the French Third Republic and build stronger relationships with the French government. The Peruvian government's increased reliance on France, however, simultaneously entangled Peru in France's imperialist political agenda, which threatened to undermine the country's nation-building efforts.

With the exception of Alcides Daniel Sánchez de la Cruz's 2017 analysis of La Cripta de los Héroes for el Museo Cementerio Presbítero Maestro, the origins of the crypt have received little scholarly analysis, and many details surrounding its creation remain uncertain. [4] The key event that contextualizes la Cripta de los Héroes, particularly with regard to its appropriation of French commemorative symbols, I argue, is the

simultaneously occurring French Military Mission to Peru. In 1895, Peruvian President Nicolás de Piérola (1895–1899) had formally invited French officers to help redesign the country's military according to their own national model. Although France had previously led a military mission to Guatemala (1886–1891), many larger Latin American countries including Chile had sought aid from the German Empire – Europe's leading military power following the allied German defeat of France in 1871 – to modernize their armed forces. The Peruvian government's decision to seek guidance from a fellow loser in recent armed conflict, France, was curious. Nonetheless, the French Military Mission to Peru, which lasted from 1896 to 1939, helped bring substantial reforms that included the construction of new military schools, the implementation of a new system of civilian conscription that required all Peruvian citizens, regardless of race, to participate in the defense of the nation. French aid, however, was a double-edged sword. In the decades following their country's own defeat in 1871, the leaders of the French Third Republic engaged in a systematic effort to increase French influence abroad through not only violent territorial expansion, as seen in North Africa and Southeast Asia, but also educational and cultural missions.

The present analysis is a case study of the surprising ways in which the experience of defeat influenced international relationships at the turn of the century, including through the exchange of cultural symbols like the *Gloria Victis* monument. Following Lucie Bullick's argument that the French Military Mission to Peru should be read in the context of French colonial philosophy of the *mission civilisatrice*, la Cripta de los Héroes' French-inspired design, along with its reliance on European materials and labor, can be interpreted as the an example of French imperial ambitions in Latin America, and yet, simultaneously, an expression of the Civilista Party's patriarchal vision of republican rule. [5] This overlap of imperial expansion and nation-building within la Cripta de los Héroes therefore places the monument as both an example of international cooperation as well as a struggle for power between two governments wrestling to overturn their countries' mutual legacies of defeat.



Antonin Mercié, *Gloria Victis*, (1872; inaugurated 1908). Marble. Detail from the facade of la Cripta de los Héroes, Cementerio Presbítero Matías Maestro, Lima, Peru. The monogram R.P., or "la Republica del Perú," is visible immediately below the sculpture

Source: Author's photograph



Postcard of the *Gloria Victis*, Antonin Mercié, (1872; inaugurated in 1902). Bronze, Cholet, France

Source: Archives municipales de Cholet

White Marble, Brown Skin: la Cripta de los Héroes as an Expression of European Ideals

La Cripta de los Héroes originated under the first presidency of Civilista Party member José Pardo y Barreda (1904–1908). Congress approved the construction of the crypt on December 3^rd^, 1906, ordering the creation of "a funeral chapel where the remains of the defenders of the Nation who succumbed in the last foreign war will be deposited." [6] The task of designing the monument was given to French architect Émile (or Emilio) Robert. Although little remembered today, Robert had received moderate success in France and abroad. Robert moved to Peru in approximately 1905, when he joined la Sociedad de Ingenieros del Perú (the Society of Peruvian Engineers), whose records list him as State Architect. [7] Robert's first major project in Peru was to design el Palacio Legislativo in Lima, the contract for which he had recently won through a competition in 1906. Like much of the architecture constructed under the Aristocratic Republic, Robert's subsequent project, la Cripta de los Héroes, was inspired by European rather than local influences. [8] Even though the nation-building agenda of the Aristocratic Republic included increased interest in the history of the Incas and other Andean civilizations, highlighted above all by Pardo's inauguration of el Museo de Historia Nacional in 1906, the architectural style chosen by the government to represent Peru's postwar rebirth was both modern and French. The domed mausoleum, whose entrance mimics a Roman portico, mirrors the design and function of the Panthéon of Paris, which had only recently, under the Third Republic, been officially designated as a mausoleum with the inhumation of Victor Hugo in 1885, replacing its former status as the église Sainte-Geneviève. The text

on the front of la Cripta de los Héroes, “La Nación a sus defensores en la Guerra de 1879” (The Nation to its defenders in the War of 1879), further echoes the Panthéon’s inscription “Aux grands hommes la patrie reconnaissante” (To the great men, the grateful fatherland). Below the inscription is a monogram R.P., or “la Republica del Perú,” modeled after the monogram R.F., or “République Française”, which decorated numerous French municipal buildings. In between the inscription and the monogram stands *Gloria Victis*. Fabricated by industrial Italian carvers from Carrara, it is the only known copy of the sculpture made of marble. [9] Like the R.F. monogram, *Gloria Victis* was a common visual symbol in Third Republican France. The original bronze, then located at the Hôtel de Ville of Paris, had been recast four times to be used as a war monument in Niort, Bordeaux, Châlons-en-Champagne, and Cholet. Thanks to its mass commercial reproduction in the form of bronze reductions by the Barbedienne company beginning in 1879, smaller versions of the sculpture could also be found in civic buildings, local clubs, world’s fairs, and public celebrations. *Gloria Victis* had such a profound impact on French society that as Michael Dorsch has demonstrated, the sculpture became “an undisputed part of the shared cultural language of the French people.” [10] The symbol spoke to not only the memory of France’s past defeat, but just as much to contemporary Third Republican civic society, including most notably universal military service, as well as popular conceptions of nationalism which sought to trace the French nation back to Gaul prior to Roman conquest, thereby demonstrating the unconquerable spirit of the French people. [11] Transported to Peru to decorate the façade of la Cripta de los Héroes and commemorate the War of the Pacific, *Gloria Victis* was recycled as a symbol sublimating and celebrating the memory of defeat. Just as importantly, the monument also reflected the political agenda of the ruling Civilista Party to turn the Republic of Peru and its institutions into a modern nation – ideals which the Civilistas sought to produce by mimicking Europe, much like the copy of *Gloria Victis* on la Cripta de los Héroes.



A bronze reduction of Antonin Mercié's *Gloria Victis* on display (center right) surrounded by other patriotic symbols including the monogram R.F., or République Française, (center left) at the French Pavillion of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois, USA, to celebrate the French National Holiday

Source: *Scientific American Supplement* XXXVI:925 (September 23, 1893): 14775

The Civilista Party rose to power in 1895 through an alliance with Piérola's Democratic Party, who overthrew General Andrés Avelino Cáceres and the militarist Constitutional Party that had ruled the country since the end of the War of the Pacific. Dominated by Peru's bourgeois elite families including the Barredas, who had gained their fortune from the guano industry, the Civilista Party promoted values including *civilismo*, or civil rule, along with liberal economics. In essence, the Civilistas were an oligarchy of liberal-conservatives who promoted social reform, but through a paternalistic, hierarchical, and authoritarian system of rule. [12] Read from the Civilista Party's political platform, *Gloria Victis* illustrates what Natalia Majluf has called "the process of elite 'whitening'" of Peruvian society during the nineteenth century. [13]

To be clear, I am not arguing that the choice of white marble constitutes an act of white supremacy. Rather, it is the material histories that underlie and surround the monument's construction, including the importation of Italian marble from Carrara and the employment of French artists and architects, which illustrate a broader tendency in Peru's Republican history to not only perpetuate, but transform and expand colonialist racial hierarchies. Since the rapid urban development of Lima during the mid-century guano boom, almost every public sculpture erected in Lima was created by a European artist or architect and rendered in European style. The governing elite's preference for European labor and discrimination against locals was so great that the country's engineers published a complaint in the newspaper *El Comercio* in the late 1860s concerning their inability to secure government contracts. [14]

The Peruvian government's preference for European art and artists was symptomatic of a much deeper problem of foreign dependency. The country had been in debt to European banks since independence, having taken out loans from London in 1822 and 1824, which the early Peruvian governments had been unable to pay back, and which continued to accrue crippling amounts of interest. The guano boom beginning in the 1840s appeared to be Peru's ticket out of debt, but the industry only led the country into further financial crisis, in part due to French businessman Auguste Dreyfus' monopoly over the country's exportation of guano, and Dreyfus' financial backer, the French bank la Société Générale. [15] After the descent of the guano industry in the 1870s and Peru's subsequent war with Chile at the decade's end, Peru emerged in the 1880s with soaring debt and a minuscule annual budget.

The pitfalls of foreign dependency were nonetheless repeated by the Aristocratic Republic's leaders who sought to reform, but ultimately perpetuated the highly stratified nature of the Spanish Casta system, which included *criollos* (South American-born Whites), *mestizos* (people of mixed European and indigenous descent), *negros* (people of African descent), *indios* (Quechua, Aymara, other indigenous people), and other classifications. The Aristocratic Republic adopted a racialized interpretation of liberal republicanism not unlike that which was used to justify France's so-called civilizing missions overseas. The Aristocratic Republic's vision of criollo paternalism deeply influenced their social policies, including how they presented the history of the War of the Pacific to the Peruvian public. At the start of the twentieth century, the government had ordered presses to print nationalist literature to glorify and justify the war, including through books like *Nuestros Héroes: Episodes Nacionales de la Guerra del Pacífico* (Our Heroes: National Episodes from the War of the Pacific). *Nuestros Héroes* consistently represents indigenous Peruvians according to the common trope of the noble savage: as ignorant but obedient, as able to spend days without any sustenance other than coca leaves, and as pure of heart, yet merciless when exacting revenge on his enemy. Unlike past literature, however, the author of the book admits that indigenous Peruvians had been unfairly deprived from a place in society throughout colonial and postcolonial rule. Through education and government guidance, the author predicts, these people will play a useful role in the "progress of the nation." [16] The Aristocratic Republic promised to include indigenous people in their social reforms, but the role that they played was predetermined to be one of servitude to the criollo and mestizo bourgeoisie.

La Cripta de los Héroes therefore follows the pattern of "elite whitening" not only in how it was created and how it commemorates, but whom it commemorates as well. The majority of Peru's soldiers during the War of the Pacific came from its Quechua-speaking indigenous communities, yet one rarely sees their image reflected in official commemoration. When the crypt was inaugurated in 1908, the ceremony revolved around the transfer of the remains of colonel Francisco Bolognesi and admiral Miguel Grau, both of whom had died in combat during the War of the Pacific, from their prior burial locations in the same cemetery to the new crypt. While the remains of other soldiers lay below ground, the sarcophagi of Grau and Bolognesi reside on the mausoleum's main floor, immediately visible to all those who enter. There, their sarcophagi are presented in the manner of saintly relics, flanking either side of a Christian altar. In line with their paternalistic vision of republican rule, the Civilistas promoted Grau and Bolognesi as the exemplary models of civic heroes. Sánchez de la Cruz argues that one of the principal goals of the inauguration ceremony was to recast Grau and Bolognesi as Founding Fathers, linking their deaths to the rebirth of a civilian-led government and republican ideals under the Civilista Party. [17] La Cripta de los Héroes' veneration of two white Peruvian commanders is therefore illustrative of the Civilista Party's philosophy of fostering a sense of patriotic duty across Peru's wider public through the idealized image of European society and civilization.

The internment of remains in la Cripta de los Héroes was not for funerary purposes, but rather for the development of a civil religion for which Peruvian citizens would be willing to sacrifice their own lives in the event of another war. Martyrdom was the common theme throughout the inauguration ceremony. When the coffins of Bolognesi and Grau arrived, carried by students of the army and naval academies, they were placed at the front steps of the mausoleum, where they were blessed by the archbishop of Lima, who gave a speech according to the theme, "Religion has its martyrs, the Nation also has its own.\" [18] The image of the Bolognesi's and Grau's remains carried by the youngest generation of Peru's soldiers reinforced the message that Bolognesi's and Grau's deaths should be seen as examples of patriotic sacrifice to be emulated by future generations. Before the remains of Bolognesi and Grau were placed in their sarcophagi, President Pardo gave a speech, where he emphasized the role of la Cripta de los Héroes in reminding Peruvians of their patriotic duty to die for the country:

> *"Future generations of Peru will come to this temple of patriotism to pay the homage of their admiration to the heroes, with the same patriotic intensity with which the current generation has fulfilled the duty of gratitude, gathering in a decent burial place the venerating remains of their unforgettable defenders. Time will pass; but under this dome, patriotism will always vibrate with the same emotion, as long as there is territory and national honor to defend. May the glorious example of the martyrs remind Peruvians at all times of their duties and thus the generous sacrifice of their selfless children will be more and more fruitful for the country!"* [39]

The ideas and actions expressed at the inauguration ceremony echo similar examples of the secularization of memory, including the commemoration of war, in the service of nationalism. Pardo's words echo those of U.S. President Abraham Lincoln during his Gettysburg Address at the inauguration of a national cemetery in 1863. Like Pardo, Lincoln likened the soldiers' deaths to an act of consecration which bound all citizens to a sacred oath not only to remember their sacrifices, but to willingly follow in their footsteps to preserve the nation. The proliferation of monuments across the postwar U.S. and the thematic shift in commemoration towards martyrdom, as Thomas J. Brown has argued, coincided with the government's increased efforts at militarization up until the First World War. [19] Likewise, in France, the transformation of commemorating dead soldiers from a funerary rite to a patriotic ritual, as evidenced by the proliferation of *Gloria Victis* monuments, was one aspect of the promotion of civil religion by the Third Republic governments, which also included the replacement of religious instruction with civicinstruction and the promotion of military values in French public schools. [20]

The praise of martyrdom seen in the rhetoric surrounding the inauguration of la Cripta de los Héroes was thus not merely patriotic hyperbole. The inauguration of la Cripta de los Héroes came at a moment when the Peruvian military was undergoing major reforms thanks to the French Military Mission. Along with the modernization of military education, equipment, and infrastructure, one of the greatest tasks that the French military advisors undertook was to establish a system of national mobilization – a system which was equally becoming normalized during this period in both France and the United States. To convince Peruvian citizens to willingly fight and die for their country, however, the manner in which the military operated had to be reformed.



The archbishop of Lima blessing the caskets of Colonel Francisco Bolognesi and Admiral Miguel Grau at the foot of la Cripta de los Héroes.

Source: *Variedades* (11 de septiembre de 1908): XV.

"The Egalitarian Tax of Blood": Creating Civic Consciousness through Military Reform

In the postwar years, public faith in the Peruvian military was poor. The reason for this was not only because of its recent defeat against Chile, but because of its longstanding history of corruption. According to Peruvian politician Carlos Ferero, writing for *El Tiempo*, under the military rule or caudillismo that followed the War of the Pacific, Peruvian soldiers frequently acted with impunity, and their abuse of power caused further discord within the country. [21] Under the country's longer history of caudillo rule, the military had largely relied on a system of forced conscription which almost exclusively preyed upon rural Black and indigenous communities. The country's criollo elite, by contrast, were seldom expected to serve. Between in 1898 and 1905, Peru passed a series of laws which attempted to implement a system of conscription which was lottery-based and therefore, in theory, egalitarian. Nonetheless, the military's longstanding reputation for abuse meant that few persons would show up when a call to service was issued, out of either fear or entitlement. [22] In 1908, Pierre Merlou, French Minister in Peru wrote to Stephen Pichon, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, to describe the great difficulty of creating a unified military corps given Peru's deep racial and class divides, frequently pointing his finger at the country's aristocratic elite. Merlou made no effort to hide his disdain for the urban criollos called to service, whom he described as lazy, incapable of work, and carrying themselves with an air of arrogance which they mistook for refinement. Merlou openly wondered whether these young aristocrats, habituated to their entitlements, would be willing to submit to the rule of law and march side by side with the Black and indigenous recruits for whom they openly expressed disdain. The results were positive, albeit not perfect.

Merlou stated in his report that a newly fostered sense of national pride under the Peruvian government had coerced these young men to push their longstanding prejudices aside to serve when the head of the Military Mission. Preferential treatment according to race appears to have continued as a de facto practice. Merlou states in the same report that the French military leaders lured Lima's criollos into recruitment by giving them the option of joining a special battalion through which they could obtain a non-commissioned officer's certificate. Nonetheless, when Captain Paul Clément ordered a test mobilization in Lima, the number of civilians who reported in was greater than anticipated. Although race continued to be a determining factor in how Peru operated, for the leaders of the Military Mission, the common duty of all citizens to lay down their lives for the nation was the foundation for building a functional republic. "The obligation of military service, which was dormant in the law, will no longer be an empty word," Merlou declared. "The example given by the sons of families and university students, who perhaps saw in their eagerness around the conscription tables only a display of elegant snobbery, has opened a breach in the citadel of privileges that nothing can fill: no one can henceforth escape the egalitarian tax of blood." [23]

Fostering a sense of sacred duty towards the nation amongst all citizens, rather than towards one's race, family, or *patrón*, was therefore a crucial aspect of the mission to reform the Peruvian military. While Merlou conceded that the largely successful efforts to assemble a conscripted army did not amount to a social revolution, it was in the very least "the germ of civic solidarity, the revelation of national consciousness; it is the dawn of a new era which will guarantee internal peace and border security." [24] Insofar as the goal of the French Military Mission was to develop "national consciousness" and "civic consciousness" amongst Peruvian citizens, military reform had much wider implications for Peruvian society. To ask all citizens to participate in military conscription and potentially die for the country not only assumed an equality of individuals, but also that they have basic educational competencies, such as reading and writing, to order to participate. [25] In this context, military reform was one of several projects to increase social unity undertaken by the Civilista government at the turn of the twentieth century through education and rights. These reforms included the development of a centralized public schooling system in 1905 which specifically targeted those who had little access to education before, above all rural Indigenous communities. [26]

The broader social aims of military reform during the Aristocratic Republic helps further explain Peru's interest in France for aid with military reform. Many South and Central American countries had similarly looked to Europe for military instruction at the end of the nineteenth century. Germany, which had demonstrated itself as having Europe's most powerful military during the Franco-Prussian War, was one of the most popular choices, providing aid to countries including Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina at the start of the twentieth century. [27] While the reason that Peru looked to France, the loser of the Franco-Prussian War, has been an issue of debate, given the Civilista Party's broader agenda of nation-building, France was arguably a better foreign model for fostering civil education. France was a republic while Germany was a country of landed aristocrats. For the Civilista Party, who hoped to reshape Peru into a modern liberal state, France, which many viewed as the birthplace of modern republican ideals, was clearly a more attractive international partner. Likewise, the Peruvian government saw a relationship with France as a potential counterweight to the United States' growing influence in Latin America. Writing to Pichon in the wake of the 1908 elections in Peru, Merlou reported on President Augusto Leguía's weariness of "Yankee" interference, stating that the new president preferred cooperation with the "Latin races", including France. [28]

Peru's intelligentsia frequently looked to France as a model for solving domestic issues, such as for example the integration of Peru's indigenous populations, who had been largely excluded from society throughout much of Peru's postcolonial history. According to Manuel González Prada, a one-time Civilista turned anarchist, one of the reasons for Peru's defeat pointed to by postwar writers was a lack of national unity amongst Peru's diverse populations. Prada argued that Peru's antiquated and inegalitarian social system equaled an inability to unify against the foreign Chilean invaders during the War of the Pacific:

> *"With the free but undisciplined crowds of the Revolution, France marched to victory; With Indian armies disciplined and without freedom, Peru will always go to defeat. If we made a servant of the Indian, what country will he defend? Like the serf of the Middle Ages, he will only fight for the feudal lord."* [40]

Like other Peruvian thinkers of the late nineteenth century, Prada looked to France as the model for creating a genuine republic. The key to creating a free and prosperous Peruvian people, including amongst the elite mestizo class, to which Prada belonged, was to liberate the rural indigenous population, who constituted the heart of the nation, similar to the French Third Estate.

The Civilista Party's goal of fostering a new civic consciousness, however, did not always lead to greater equality amongst Peru's citizens. In practice, the progressivism of the Aristocratic Republic in its inclusion of Indigenous persons was another form of colonial subjugation. As Jorge Alberto Ccahuana Córdova has demonstrated in his study of the Aristocratic Republic's educational reforms of 1905, indigenous Peruvians were systematically given fewer years and less elevated forms of education based on a racialized presumption of their inferior intellectual aptitude to Europeans. This manner of paternalistic progressivism is typical of Aristocratic Republic, where a handful of criollo elites fashioned themselves as the protectors of Peru's underserved classes, yet giving little credence to their voice as they attempted to remold them according to their Eurocentric ideals of civilization. The Civilista Party's own idealization of French culture, and above all their reliance on French labor for the reform of their military and for the construction of monuments, created a system of neocolonial dependency which threatened the core of the nation-building project they were undertaking.

Opening the Doors to Imperialism: France and the Pitfalls of Dependency

While the exact motivation behind the Peruvian government's decision to invite in a French Military Mission to Peru continues to be a source of conjecture, French political interests in supplying Peru with military training are clear. From the first mention of the request to send French officers to Peru, the French Ministry of War expressed its desires to use the opportunity to assert French influence in Latin America. While the French military's desire to counter Germany's growing influence in the region, alongside that of the United States and Japan, is expressed throughout the correspondence of offices including the Ministry of War and the French Consulate in Lima, the desire to politically and economically subordinate Peru played a part in French foreign policy as well. This latter goal is clearly expressed in the military reports given by Félix d'André, captain of the infantry for the French Military Mission in Peru from 1900 to 1911. Consistently described by his superiors as a model officer of exceptional intelligence and indefatigable work ethic, d'André was highly praised by both the French and Peruvian governments for his accomplishments during the mission, which included not only organizing and leading riflery

instruction for the Peruvian army, but also engaging in civilian military instruction, personally leading a four-week test mobilisation of largely indigenous civilians in the central highlands of Junin in 1906, and helping establish over 150 shooting societies across Peru. [29] Learning from the recent example of Boer commandos during the South African War (1899–1903), d'André believed that independent guerilla combatants, armed with rifles and taking advantage of the country's mountainous landscape, would play a role in defending Peru in the event of war. [30] While bolstering Peru's defenses against military invasion, however, d'André was simultaneously preparing the country for other forms of domination. In his 1909 report summarizing the development of the French Military Mission to Peru, d'André states that the ultimate goal of the mission was to assert political and economic dominance over Peru while simultaneously hiding the mechanisms of control through the veil of cultural goodwill. In contrast to traditional colonial rule, his "new formula of outward expansion," as d'André remarks, made the goal of French expansion possible without the need of physically occupying land, while it furthermore had the benefit of hiding France's political agenda. [31] While other European countries would always be viewed by Latin American governments as self-interested foreign capitalists, "the Frenchman frequently appears (and his mere presence in an educational mission is striking proof of this) as the disinterested champion of the great cause of Latin Civilization." [32]

D'André's analysis is consistent with the Third Republic's colonial policy, and especially France's leading architect of empire, Marshal Louis Hubert Lyautey. [33] According to Bullick, many of the French officers who led the Military Mission to Peru had been directly influenced by Lyautey's school of thought. One of the most fundamental aspects of this philosophy was the non-martial aspect of military occupation, where officers primarily functioned as civic leaders and educators, focusing on winning over the indigenous population through promoting active collaboration, developing natural resources, and fulfilling their social needs. In other words, as d'André's comment suggests, without direct military intervention, the French Military Mission to Peru adhered to France's imperial philosophy, which prioritized social intervention.

Within the wider political aims of the French Military Mission to Peru in mind, la Cripta de los Héroes can be interpreted as playing a role not only in the Europeanizing efforts of the Civilista Party, but also France's systematic approach to using culture and education as a means of creating political influence over the long term. The Military Mission, according to d'André, was only the first step in asserting French influence in Peru. Soon, other education missions would follow, reshaping public institutions from agricultural schools to the postal system, in the image of France. French chemists, doctors, and architects already had a notable presence in Peru, whose expertise would ensure the dominance of French industry in Peru, all while maintaining the façade of disinterested cultural exchange. [34] While France's ruthless colonization of North Africa and Southeast Asia is well-known, one of the defining features of France's foreign political strategy at the turn of the century was the use of educational and cultural missions as a means of asserting – and masking – influence abroad. Alongside military missions, the propagation of French language schools abroad through the Alliance Française – originally called "l'Association nationale pour la propagation de la langue française dans les colonies et à l'étranger" – or the efforts of foreign ministers to spread French sculpture abroad by encouraging artists to participate in local monument competitions, all played a role in the building of informal empire under the Third Republic. One of the most famous examples of this was senator Édouard Laboulaye's role in bringing Frédéric Bartholdi's *Statue of Liberty* to the United States after the Franco-Prussian War – an act which Laboulaye hoped would not only remind the U.S. public of the role of France during the American revolution, but also uplift France's weakened postwar relevance for the U.S. [35] Likewise, in Peru, promoting involvement in the construction of la Cripta de los Héroes could not only promote the interest of French artists and engineers,

but also in the long run shape Peruvian national memory in a manner sympathetic to France. Merlou wrote to Stephen Pichon after the inauguration to exalt Robert's talent and the architect's powerful use of *Gloria Victis* to express the immortality of the fallen Peruvian heroes. [36]

Along with asserting military power in Latin America, creating a system of economic dependency was also one of the goals of the French Military Mission. However, hiding the mechanisms of control was important for the French system of imperialism to succeed. As illustrated by Peru's experience with the French bank la Société Générale, mentioned above, the country's leaders were intimately aware of the pitfalls of foreign economic predation. The French government was well aware of this history and therefore keen not to let greed hamper its growing influence in Peru. A small crisis within the French Military Mission occurred when the Peruvian government, having been unable to receive adequate loans from French banks for the purchasing of arms, instead went to the German banks, who supplied them with money to purchase German weapons. While the French Ministry of War considered the move adequate grounds for ending their training mission in Peru, the Ministry of Foreign affairs urged them not to break ties with Peru, reminding them that the goal of the Military Mission was not in fact military, but political. [37]

Stated otherwise, the Military Mission was not about exerting short-term hard power but establishing long-term soft power. Once Peru's infrastructure was succinctly shaped according to French ideals, d'André theorized, the state would become dependent on France. With Machiavellian clarity, d'André remarks that the young country's attempts to wrest itself from colonial power were futile, continuing:

> *"It is in vain that an indigenous nationalism, poorly conceived, will sometimes want to emancipate small nationalities from foreign tutelage. From the moment that the native is incapable by his own means of manufacturing the advanced tools he needs, in an era of rapid mechanical progress, he will be forced one day or another, whether he likes it or not, to declare himself once again the obligatory tributary of the large producing countries who will hasten to provide not only the weapon, the product of the workshop, but also the competent instructor and the means of using it. [41] "*

Not only would the French Military Mission to Peru lead to dependence on French arms, according to d'André, but in an era of increasingly rapid technological development, a reliance on French training as well. In the case of providing military hardware and training, as d'André notes, there was little risk of demand running out, since a country's national safety relies upon the maintenance of its military. Once a country monopolizes the means of producing a service which another country needs, a disparity of power will always exist between the two, with the producing country asserting its control over the consumer. Even d'André's personal efforts in advancing Peru's military readiness against foreign invasion played a small role in furthering French dominance. In a 1910 letter addressed to Pichon by Jean Guillemin, Plenipotentiary Minister of France in Peru, the minister praised d'André's work in organizing shooting societies across Peru, remarking with pride that the French flag could be seen "flying next to the national flag on the shooting ranges established everywhere, even in the most obscure and remote localities." [38]

It is a bitter irony that the same vision of natural hierarchy seen in the Aristocratic Republic's vision of criollo paternalism is mirrored in d'André's justification of French domination over smaller countries. The Civilista government sought to integrate indigenous Peruvians into society while determining their place as subservient to Whites. France sought to integrate developing nations such as Peru into the global

economy while also keeping them economically dependent on France. In both cases, those in power relied on military prestige and architectural beautification to further their mission, with both visions of domination converging in la Cripta de los Héroes.

The hypocrisy of a criollo elite, who had largely been spared from battle due to their wealth and family connections to Europe, mourning the memory of the largely working-class and indigenous fallen soldiers was evident to many in Peru's society. After the inauguration of la Cripta de los Héroes, *Fray K. Bezón*, a satirical publication promoting freethought that was consumed by Peru's literate and semi-literate criollos, published a cartoon accusing the Civilista rulers of using the event for self-serving purposes.



"Los Civilistas y los Héroes", Chambon

Source: *Fray K. Bezón* 10:85 (1908): 4

The top register depicts a scene from the War of the Pacific, with Peruvian troops charging directly into gunfire and explosions while the Civilistas retreat under the pretext of "retrieving water." The second scene depicts the inauguration of la Cripta in 1908, with the mausoleum and Gloria Victis clearly visible in the background, where the still-living Civilista veterans cry (their eyes *sacan agua* or "draw water") over the fallen comrades they had abandoned during the war. The cartoon is clearly meant to mock wartime president Mariano Ignacio Prado, who had fled the country during Chile's advance under the pretext of seeking aid from Europe, but the cartoon is equally a sweeping critique of the Civilista Party as a group. A poem printed in the same magazine issue titled "Los Civilistas" further cut through the Aristocratic Republic's lofty façade of culture, patriotism, and paternalistic guidance, rendering the government leaders instead as thieves, dandies, and cowards who hid from reality via their self-identification with European society:

> *"Having at the gates the invader and the battlefield you deserted by the hundreds or you marched on the road from France to England, carrying Peruvian gold in your plentiful coffers."* [42]

Conclusion

The entanglement of Civilista and Third Republican political agendas effectively came to an end after the First World War. Devastated by war, France saw its imperial influence in Peru wane while the Civilista Party dissolved in the aftermath of the 1919 Coup d'État by Augusto Leguía, who brought Peru closer to the rising imperial power of the United States. Nonetheless, la Cripta de los Héroes illustrates the important ways in which competing national agendas can be hidden through cultural projects. At the heart of my interpretation of la Cripta de los Héroes' origins is the French Military Mission to Peru. From the perspective of the ruling Civilista Party, military reform through the aide of the French envoy not only was a a means of strengthen the country's national defense, which had greatly diminished following defeat by Chile, but also played into the party's nation-building agenda to shape Peru in the image of a modern European republic. Similarly, from the perspective of Third Republican administration, the Military Mission was not simply about furthering the country's military presence in Latin America to combat rival powers, but played into the government's broader imperialist agenda of creating a dependency on French goods and labor through the benevolent guise of an educational mission. Both of these hidden agendas are brought to light in la Cripta de los Héroes, where the recycling of French symbols and the use of French labor reveal the intersection of nationalist and imperialist ambitions.

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NOTES

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2. Pierre Merlou, French Minister of Peru to Stephen Pichon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, September 15, 1908, 173. 190CPCOM, Correspondance politique et commerciale, Nouvelle série, Pérou, Volume 4, Politique Étrangère : Dossier général. Centre des Archives diplomatiques de La Courneuve, France.
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