

already been subpoenaed to testify before a grand jury. And the as-yet-unleaked reams of Bronx wiretap have fueled endless speculation about what Giuliani may have said. “You’ve got to believe he’s on those wiretaps,” speculates Doug Muzzio, a professor of public affairs at the City University of New York. “This is not good for business, and it’s not good for his presidential race.”

People around Giuliani say they don’t know what the damage will be. “It depends on what’s on those tapes,” says one former aide. Giuliani’s spokeswoman, Sunny Mindel, declined to comment on whether Giuliani called Kerik in 2005, when prosecutors were reportedly listening in.

But, despite the fact that Kerik may drag Giuliani’s name into the seamy world of illegal wiretaps and mafia-linked contractors, it’s still unlikely Giuliani will cast him out. Giuliani’s attachment to his former driver reveals what has always been a defining quality about the likely presidential contender: Giuliani expects deep loyalty, and returns it to his aides and their families with little attention to their qualifications. Despite Kerik’s symbolic expulsion from Giuliani Partners after the DHS fiasco, Giuliani has never repudiated his former bodyguard. That’s not how things work within his tight, intensely loyal inner circle.

On September 11, Giuliani hosts an annual dinner, a blend of reunion and memorial for his City Hall circle. This year it was at Frank’s, a steakhouse in the meatpacking district, and two people who were there were mildly surprised to see the hulking shoulders and trademark mustache. Kerik, who had pled guilty to misdemeanor charges for accepting the free renovations two months earlier, wasn’t doing much talking. He was “on an island amid a sea of people,” said one guest. But he was there. When I expressed surprise to Giuliani insiders that the tarnished Kerik had been invited to that September 11 dinner, they just shrugged. Kerik, one said, is “part of the family.” ■

Did Yale plunder Peru? Bonesmen

BY CHRISTOPHER HEANEY

ON JULY 24, 1911, a 35-year-old Yale lecturer named Hiram Bingham followed an eight-year-old boy into the Peruvian jungle. As director of the Yale Peruvian expedition of 1911, Bingham was looking for Vitcos, one of the last Incan capitals sacked by the Spanish in 1572; the boy, whose family lived and planted crops among Incan ruins, was his guide. Bingham—six-foot-four, handsome, and dressed in a hunting jacket and crumpled gray fedora—followed the child over cascading terraces and into a

cave framed by sacred steps and a sinuous hourglass of cut stone. Above, a beautiful curving tower scraped the overcast sky. Beyond it was a clearing bound on two sides by temples, on the third by a view of a snow-capped peak, and on the fourth by the ridge that lent these ruins its name: Machu Picchu. The grandest of the temples had three walls of beautiful, cyclopean white granite and sat at an angle to an unfinished temple with three perfect trapezoidal windows.

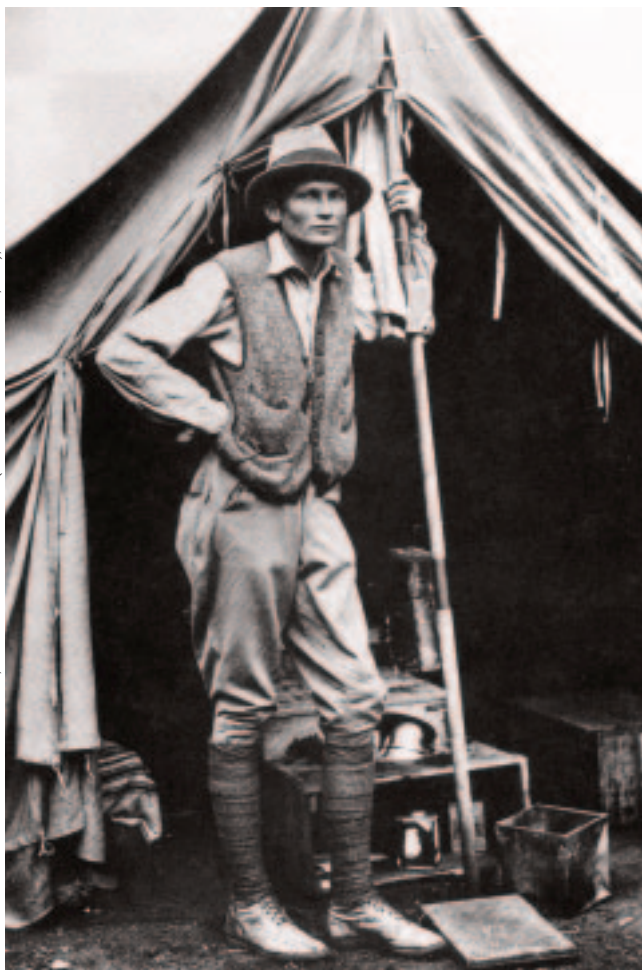
Bingham knew that Machu Picchu was too close to Cuzco, the center of the Incan empire, and thus was not Vitcos. The romance of the ruins, however, struck him to the core. He spent five hours excitedly taking pictures of the Incas’ ceremonial baths and vine-draped royal residences, of their spectacular mountain views, and of the boy next to a carved stone column—or *Intihuatana*—that had once been the Incas’ hitching post for the sun, their god. He noted in his journal that a Peruvian had “discovered” the ruins in 1902, but Bingham was determined to return. “Would anyone believe what I had found?” he recalls himself musing, almost 40 years later, in his classic account of the expedition, *The Lost City of the Incas*.

The question was a masterful literary concoction. As Bingham well knew, everyone would believe his story. Bingham and his Yale expedition had come to Peru in the waning light of a golden age of American exploration, and, perhaps just as importantly, in the dawn of America’s imperial century, when the country’s soldiers, diplomats, businessmen, and scientists spilled into Latin America. What Bingham did next, on a subsequent expedition to Machu Picchu, was emblematic of that age: He unearthed thousands of artifacts—ranging from necklaces and bracelets to broken and delicate terra-cotta instruments and human remains—and shipped them back to the United States, to the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University. Today, these artifacts make up the only intact collection from an Incan royal estate that escaped the torches of Spanish conquest.

But the descendants of the Americas’ largest pre-Columbian empire now want those artifacts back. A year ago, the government of Peru announced that it was prepared to sue Yale in court for the return of the “lost treasure” of Machu Picchu. Yale refused to return the collection, claiming it rightfully belonged to the university, although it did offer the compromise of returning some artifacts and funding a museum for their display. Peru rejected the offer and has yet to follow through with its threatened lawsuit, but, if it does, it will be in sensational company. This year, several countries have charged world-famous Western museums with illegitimately possessing native artifacts. In February, Italy successfully forced the Metropolitan Museum of Art to acknowledge that the Euphronios Krater was looted, and it prosecuted a former J. Paul Getty Museum director for accepting smuggled artifacts. That same month, Egypt’s antiquities chief threatened the St. Louis Art Museum with legal action if it did not

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FROM "PORTRAIT OF AN EXPLORER, HIRAM BINGHAM, DISCOVERER OF MACHU PICCHU" (OWA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1989); PHOTO PROPERTY OF YALE UNIVERSITY



Hiram Bingham III near Machu Picchu, 1912.

return a purportedly stolen 3,200-year-old mummy mask. In July, Greece also won the return of artifacts from the Getty, and, in September, a German university took the unprecedented step of returning a small piece of a Parthenon frieze. (The British Museum continues to stonewall Greek attempts to retrieve the larger Elgin marbles.)

Although modern laws distinguish between artifacts collected 150 years ago and those pulled from the soil last week, these challenges correspond with a twenty-first-century surge of nationalism and anti-globalization sentiment. Smaller countries, once pawns in the imperial games of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are aggressively reasserting their rights to their own heritage and culture, as embodied by these artifacts. This burst of cultural protectionism has forced premier museums of the world, seemingly apolitical institutions, to defend the acquisition of some of their finest antiquities. This political subtext is particularly keen in Peru, where the national pride in—and anger over Yale’s possession of—the treasures of Machu Picchu accompanies a larger anti-American leftist sentiment.

But at the heart of Yale and Peru’s argument are the antiquities themselves and how they became the property of

Yale. Were they legally exported for their own protection, or were some smuggled out in a spirit of greed? And was Yale ever legally bound to return these lost treasures to Peru? An investigation into letters, journals, official papers—from Yale’s own Manuscripts & Archives Collection, the National Archives, and the National Geographic Society—and numerous government and private archives in Peru reveals that the answers lie in the actions of one man: Hiram Bingham, the romantic, ambitious, but flawed explorer who, in many ways, became a proxy for American imperialism itself.

IN 1912, National Geographic Society President Gilbert H. Grosvenor sent Bingham back to Machu Picchu with the hope that “you will be able to excavate and bring back a shiplot of antiquities for your museum at Yale.” But the explorer had a problem. During the excitement of the first Yale expedition, Peru’s intellectuals, including a passionate and nationalistic young Peruvian scholar named Luis E. Valcárcel, began to hound the government to protect the treasures of pre-Columbian ruins from foreign exportation. In 1911, just weeks after Bingham first arrived at Machu Picchu, a group named the Society to Protect Historical Monuments pushed the Peruvian president into decreeing that any artifacts found through scientific excavation belonged to the state, and, most importantly, that the exportation of antiquities, “whatever their class or condition,” was prohibited.

Bingham wrongly derided these protections as local jealousy and intellectual posturing. But his proprietary feeling toward the artifacts was also rooted in the American exceptionalism of Bingham’s time and personal history. Hiram Bingham III was born in Hawaii, in 1875, to a famous family of missionaries. He grew up in the shadow of his grandfather, the deceased Reverend Hiram Bingham I, who brought Protestant Christianity to the islands in the 1820s, leading to its later U.S. political and economic dominance. Bingham moved to the mainland for prep school and earned his B.A. from Yale in 1898, a month and a half after the United States declared war on Spain and intervened in Cuba’s fight for independence. According to a profile of Bingham from the 1920s, his uncle talked him out of joining Colonel Theodore Roosevelt’s voluntary cavalry of “Rough Riders.” Just as the September 11 attacks showed the necessity of Middle Eastern Studies in the twenty-first century, the Spanish-American War suggested the need for Latin Americanists in the early twentieth. By September 1901, when Roosevelt was sworn in as America’s new president, Bingham had married an heiress to the Tiffany jewelry fortune and was pursuing a Harvard Ph.D. in South American history.

In 1907, Yale President Arthur Hadley brought Bingham back to his alma mater as a lecturer. “It is the first opportunity, so far as I know, in any American University, implying the authority to teach the History and Geography of South America as a specialty,” Bingham wrote to his father. His appointment came in the shadow of Roosevelt’s Corollary

to the Monroe Doctrine, asserting the right of the United States to intervene in Latin America; Bingham's classes, which prepared students for careers in Latin American business and diplomacy, initially reflected this khaki-clad sentiment. One final exam asked students to rate South American countries from excellent to poor based on their "opportunities for (a) a Mining Engineer. (b) a Soldier of Fortune. (c) a Capitalist. (d) an average Yale graduate with good health and a capital of \$5,000."

But Bingham wasn't simply a Teddy Roosevelt-era nationalist. He was also a restless romantic who saw himself as following in the benevolent tradition of explorers and his missionary ancestors. Bingham studied South America with his feet: After earning his Ph.D., he struck out for Colombia to trace the march of the revolutionary Simón Bolívar into the swamps of Venezuela. By 1909, Bingham's conversations with South Americans had led him to rethink America's jingoist leanings, and, after a Pan-American Scientific Congress in Santiago, Chile, Bingham decided that the Roosevelt Corollary was not only an unnecessary blow to South American sovereignty but also to America's image and interests abroad.

This realization intensified Bingham's evolution from academic to explorer—to understand Latin America today, Bingham reasoned, the United States should understand the golden, and idealized, pre-Columbian civilizations of the past. After visiting Chile and tracing colonial trade routes through Bolivia—running into Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid's gang on the way—Bingham visited his first ruins, Choquequirau, or "cradle of gold." Although he doubted its popular identification as the Incas' last capital, the glimpse of undocumented Incan sites in the Andes was tantalizing and sparked one of the twentieth century's most breathtaking sprints of exploration. By 1911, Bingham had raised enough money to return to the Andes with his first Yale expedition, and, on July 24, with the help of Peru's president, business community, intellectuals, and landowners, he reached Machu Picchu. In the weeks following, he visited a number of other sites, including Vitcos, which he identified through a great white rock shrine nearby, the ghostly Yurak Rumi.

It was Machu Picchu, however, that made him famous. Although archaeologists and historians have shown how Bingham's identification of the site as the cradle and grave of the Incas was a fanciful distortion of facts, its revelation in 1911 seemed a lightning bolt to Western attitudes about pre-European accomplishment. Bingham believed it paramount to bring the lost treasures to the United States—not only to burnish his reputation, but also, as he sincerely believed, for the protection of the artifacts and the monuments. It was no secret that the antiquity-rich South American nation had problems guarding its archaeological past. The Peruvians who brought him to Choquequirau, for example, searched for treasure with dynamite. Peru had passed laws and decrees protecting monuments and antiquities since Peruvian independence, but, for lack of resources, enforced them arbitrarily, if at all.

So, after learning of the Peruvian government's decree, Bingham met with American President (and fellow Yale) William H. Taft, who asked American consular officials to help negotiate a concession that would make Yale the only licensed archaeological excavator in Peru for a decade. That summer, Bingham and Yale excavators—now funded by the National Geographic Society—burned Machu Picchu to clear the vegetation, then mapped and excavated the white granite city. The work was well underway when Peru's parliament, intellectual community, and press caught wind of the deal and exploded with indignation. Yale's excavations halted to await a Peruvian monitor. A November 4, 1912, letter to a Cuzco newspaper captured the furor, declaring that anyone who wanted to study the riches of Peru ought to come to the country itself and leave their dollars there, for it would be the ultimate insult if Peruvians ever had to go to North America to study what used to be in Peru.

The concession was scrapped, but pressure from Peru's wealthiest British investor got Bingham a decree allowing, "as an exception and only this once," for the export of Machu Picchu's graceful ceramics, silver finery, and nearly 5,000 other artifacts, as well as human remains. It was a victory subject to Peru's goodwill, however. A clause in the agreement reserved Peru "the right to exact from the University . . . the return of the unique and duplicate objects it has extracted."

Back at home, the press and scientific community alike celebrated Bingham's successful delivery of the Machu Picchu artifacts to Yale. When *National Geographic* magazine devoted its entire April 1913 edition to Yale's 1912 return to Machu Picchu, *The New York Times* called it "the Greatest Archaeological Discovery of the Age." For his efforts, Bingham sat at National Geographic Society banquets between Robert Peary (who, with Matthew Henson, reached the North Pole in 1909) and the Norwegian Roald Amundsen, who reached the South Pole in December 1911, six months after Bingham reached Machu Picchu.

As Yale's celebrity explorer and the nation's foremost expert on Peru, Bingham took the opportunity to assault American interventionism in Latin America in *The Atlantic Monthly*. "THE MONROE DOCTRINE: AN OBSOLETE SHIBBOLETH" made him a household name to many who had yet to hear of Machu Picchu. Bingham's fame finally gave him a brush with the age's other spirit of exploration and expansion: Theodore Roosevelt. In 1913, while touring South America after his defeat in the 1912 presidential election, Roosevelt responded to Bingham's criticisms of his interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine by lecturing against "another type of well-meaning but singularly short-sighted American"—"often a man of learning, a college graduate, or even a college professor"—who "attacks the Monroe Doctrine . . . [as] an 'outworn policy.'"

Bingham was at the height of his fame and planning his third Yale expedition to Peru when, in April 1914, he sat down to write a letter to the director of Peru's National Library. In it, he claimed that he would send "separate pieces" from Machu Picchu back to Peru now that studies were

completed. But, despite his promise, Bingham never did. In the letter, he also chided the Peruvian government for interfering in his projects:

Confidence ought to be shown in [foreign] excavators until they show that they do not merit confidence, then they ought not to be allowed to operate. It is extremely unpleasant, and leads to many difficulties to have a government representative constantly on watch like a spy. . . . [A]rchaeologists ought to be men of honor like other people, and to a man of honor it is extremely painful to be spied upon. If he cannot be trusted, he ought not to be allowed to work in the country.

It was a strangely self-righteous note to be sounding a mere 24 hours after Bingham had done something that would surely have made his Peruvian hosts—had they known about it—realize he couldn't be trusted.

BINGHAM'S TEMPTATION CAME in the form of a letter from a Peruvian antiquarian and landowner named T.A. Alvistur, who offered to sell him his collection of 366 Incan antiquities for £2,200. The catch, however, was that, in order to get the artifacts on a U.S.-bound ship, Bingham would have to pay a "great sum to allow the collection to leave, for, as you know, the exportation of ancient objects is prohibited." Bingham did know, of course, but he also knew the value of Alvistur's collection from his 1912 visit to Cuzco. Although it lacked the breadth of the 5,000-piece trove that Bingham had brought back to Yale from Machu Picchu in 1912, it was far finer—handpicked by the collector in Cuzco from objects found by farmers in the nearby Inca valleys. If Alvistur bribed Peruvian customs, Yale could have a valuable, untraceable, and permanent collection. The day before he wrote his letter to the director of Peru's national library, Bingham made a counteroffer of £1,500 (about \$145,000 today): "I realize that the material is worth more than this, and I wish I could pay more," he apologized, "but this is as much as I can possibly offer you."

It was enough for Alvistur, who personally shepherded the collection's 366 pieces past customs and onto a ship bound for New York. While Bingham paid almost entirely out of his family's deep pockets, he intended the artifacts for Yale's Peabody Museum. When the deal was over, Bingham thanked the shipping agent for helping make "Yale an efficient place in which to learn about Peru ancient and modern."

Did Bingham believe he was heroically intervening to rescue Peruvian artifacts? Or was he, like some modern curators, prey to the competitive pressure to build a collection for the folks back home? Either way, from then on, Bingham grew disingenuous about his excavations in Peru. In mid-July 1914, while Bingham was still in New Haven de-emphasizing the archaeological nature of his team's work to the Peruvian government, the third Yale expedition made notable finds at a site known as Inca Churisca, or Frozen Inca. They included a bronze breast plate, broken

silver, bronze suns, and, apparently, the only gold ever found by the Yale expeditions: a small "circle, marked and pierced." The Inca Churisca materials are listed today in the Yale Peabody Museum's online catalogue of anthropological materials. But the director of Peru's National Museum never registered any gold, or anything from Inca Churisca, in his 1916 inventory of the expedition's collection. Already suspicious of Yale, he would have noted such unique items.

A clue to how the finds may have reached Yale, without the permission or knowledge of the Peruvian authorities, lies in expedition records: In September of 1914, two months after the incredible find, two of the expeditions' members returned to the United States and "sent 17 envelopes and packages to [Hiram Bingham] by Dr. Meserve."

But Bingham was playing a dangerous game under the increasingly watchful eyes of Peru's own scientific community. The explorer's Inspector Javert turned out to be Valcárcel, the young Peruvian scholar who had been among the intellectuals inspired to protect Incan ruins after Bingham's first expedition. The 24-year-old Valcárcel had since founded Cuzco's Historical Institute and was keeping a close eye on excavations in the area. In March 1915, Bingham arrived in Peru. His trip started promisingly enough. In April and May, he mapped the now-famous Inca Trail leading to Machu Picchu ("I . . . nearly wept to see how [the site] had gone back to jungle and brush," he wrote to his wife), then went to Vitcos—the Inca capital that he had found after Machu Picchu—and oversaw excavation of the site. Five days later, Bingham arrived in Ollantaytambo, where he was greeted by the young Dr. Valcárcel—birdlike and intense in his small round glasses—and three members of Cuzco's Historical Institute (one a rumored descendant of the Incas). They confronted Bingham with accusations collected from local *campesinos* and recorded by Valcárcel in indignant shorthand in his little yellow diary: that the Yale expedition had been illegally excavating and damaging ruins; that it had secretly found a tunic of gold in Machu Picchu and golden chalices, rings, and mummies filled with gold elsewhere; and that all had been hidden in boxes to be smuggled out through Bolivia.

The expedition *had* failed to apply for an excavation permit from Peru's Educational Ministry, but the other accusations were sensationally incorrect—Yale had not excavated at Machu Picchu since 1912, it had not found anything so spectacular anywhere else, and nothing was sent out through Bolivia—and, for that reason, impossible to prove. Nevertheless, Valcárcel and the Historical Institute published their accusations in local and national newspapers, and the Peruvian government stepped in with an investigation. Valcárcel's Historical Institute brought formal charges against the expedition in Peru's court, Bingham wrote. Two months later, he fled the country.

But he was not through yet. While waiting in Lima in August for his steamer to Panama—and, from there, to New York—Bingham paid for another "interesting lot of Peruvian antiquities . . . provided the owner would ship them out

of the country.” The owner had them consigned to a fictitious character, one “J.P. Simmons, New York.”

All told, Bingham spent \$25,000 of his own resources (at least \$480,000 today) on items for Yale. But the artifacts did not relieve Bingham’s wounded pride. By the time that the final shipment reached New Haven in 1916, he had quit exploration entirely and was abandoning his conviction that Peru and South America deserved respect and understanding. As he wrote in 1916 to a friend who helped the legal exportation of the 1914–1915 artifacts: “I cannot help wishing (as I presume you do) that we had never attempted to bring this stuff out. . . . I hope I may never have to go back to Peru.”

Fueled by anger, in May 1916, Bingham took the train out to Oyster Bay, New York, rode up to the house of his former adversary, Theodore Roosevelt, and pushed through a crowd of Republicans. “Colonel Roosevelt, I want to tell you how frankly I stand,” said Bingham. “When I was in Peru, as a representative of the National Geographic Society, I found much that didn’t please me. I found that the claim to American citizenship won no respect. We were often accused of stealing gold there, and our statement that we were members of the National Geographic Society was no claim to consideration. They did not have a very high opinion of Americans there. So I decided that there were pleasanter occupations for an American citizen than exploring in Peru, and I came home.”

“The other delegates cheered this frank utterance,” *The New York Times* reported, “and the Colonel clapped his hands vigorously. ‘Good for you!’ he said. ‘I can’t tell you how much it pleases me to hear you talk like that.’” Bingham was too old for war, but, with Roosevelt’s encouragement, he organized a battalion of Yale students raring to intervene in the Mexican Revolution. By 1920, Bingham had publicly reevaluated his criticism of the Monroe Doctrine and believed that the United States did need an intervening hand in the region after all.

By 1924, Bingham’s ambition, charisma, and willingness to toe the Republican line won him a seat in the U.S. senate. His flair undiminished at age 50, he became America’s “Flying Senator” when he landed a zeppelin on the steps of the Capitol. But he also courted controversy—supporting U.S. intervention in Nicaragua—and was censured for putting a lobbyist on Senate payrolls. He died in 1956, but not before serving as a Communist-hunting head of the Loyalty Review Board during the Red Scare.

A HALF-CENTURY AFTER Bingham’s death, on May 9, 2006, over 1,200 residents of Machu Picchu Pueblo left the shadow of the famous ruins and rode the train to Cuzco. In what may have been history’s first public protest over a collection of antiquities, the tourism-dependent residents marched with signs and banners to the city’s main plaza, calling for the return of Machu Picchu artifacts that Bingham had brought to Yale. “We feel that our roots are in these archaeological remains,” says Machu Picchu Mayor Oscar Valencia Auca,

who claims that marches in Lima and the United States are being planned. “The world should admire these pieces in their home.”

Over the years, the government of Peru tried to repatriate the Incan antiquities. Although the officially collected and legally exported artifacts and bones from the 1914–1915 expedition belonged, through an agreement, not to Yale but to the Peruvian government, when Peru first asked for their return in 1918 Bingham was directing the Allies’ largest air training base in France, and Yale won an extension. In 1920, Peru’s consul in the United States asked again, this time citing the clause in the 1912 agreement that guaranteed the return of the Machu Picchu artifacts. Bingham ignored the reference, and, instead, in 1921, the Peabody Museum sent back “forty seven cases of human skeletal remains from the Highlands of Peru.”

It’s only recently, however, as Peru seeks its national identity in the pre-Spanish past, and the United States loses Latin American favor, that the lost treasures of Machu Picchu have become a popular political issue. Peru’s current claim against Yale began after Alejandro Toledo’s election as president in 2001. Hailed as the first indigenous president in Peruvian history, Toledo held a second, symbolic inauguration at Machu Picchu. His wife, an anthropologist, helped spearhead the claim against Yale. The Yale–Machu Picchu story also factored into recent presidential elections. On June 4, Alan Garcia, a center-left former president, beat Ollanta Humala, a strident populist à la Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez, with about 55 percent of the vote. Beforehand, says Mayor Valencia Auca, the town contacted the candidates for their commitment to fight for Machu Picchu’s artifacts. In letters read in Cuzco a few days before the election, both candidates pledged to retrieve patrimony abroad.

But there’s a very good chance that Yale can’t legally be forced to return the Machu Picchu artifacts. The reason is a loophole of sorts: As explained by Yale’s lawyer in Peru, Enrique Ghersi, neither the 1911 decree that prohibited the exportation of antiquities nor the 1912 decree that provided for the future return of the Machu Picchu artifacts has legal weight. The basis of the decrees, Ghersi argues, was an 1893 decree that had been quietly voided in 1903. Therefore, the artifacts excavated in 1912 by the Yale Peruvian Expeditions belonged to Yale under a still extant 1852 civil code. As for the allegations of Bingham’s smuggling, Yale Public Affairs officer Helaine Klasky rejected the correspondence between Bingham and the collectors as evidence of wrongdoing. But if, as Yale contends, the 1911 prohibition on exportation was legally baseless, then the collections that Bingham paid to be exported weren’t “smuggled” anyway.

Recent international law between the United States and Peru also supports Yale’s claim. As Dr. Richard Burger, the Peabody’s curator of anthropology and co-curator of Yale’s Machu Picchu exhibition, explained by e-mail, Peru’s bilateral agreement with the United States on antiquities “recognizes the impossibility of disentangling these historical cases

and only applies to antiquities that entered the [United States] after 1981.” He also noted, “Private collections were widely bought, sold, and exported early in the twentieth century, and museums in Europe and the USA are full of them.”

There is some small hope, however, for Peru. Before being approached for this article, Yale claimed that the artifacts Bingham excavated in 1914–1915 had been returned, as agreed upon with Peru. When presented with the information that the one recorded repatriation to date consisted solely of skeletal remains, however—and that the Yale Peabody Online Catalogue lists at least a thousand artifacts that only could have been excavated in 1914–1915—Klasky said, “We believe that Bingham intended to return all the materials he committed to return,” a sharp contrast to assertions that all antiquities from 1914–1915 had been returned. Klasky also says that the current inventory of the Peruvian expeditions’ artifacts “has many problems and is currently under review.”

Although Yale is optimistic that the new Peruvian government will continue discussions rather than take the matter to court, the previous administration’s claims have already won the support of the National Geographic Society. After a review of the Society’s documentation, says Terry Garcia, National Geographic vice president for mission programs, he had “no question” that the artifacts from Machu Picchu belonged to Peru. “[The Peruvians are] not

saying that Yale did a bad job in preserving and conserving these things,” continues Garcia. “But they are saying, ‘Look, you agreed that you were going to return these. It’s time.’”

Bingham’s story is as complex as the legacy of imperialism it represents. Like many Americans abroad, Bingham legitimately started out with the belief that he was doing something good, that he was helping a culture that could not help itself. But, in the end, he sabotaged the very history and self-determination he wished to restore and, in the process, tarnished his own (and Yale’s) reputation. Today’s cynicism toward Bingham and Yale—like much current Latin American suspicion today of U.S. intentions—was best captured by one Argentinean. “Here’s the tragedy,” wrote 23-year-old Ernesto Guevara in 1953, a few years shy of becoming “Che,” “All of the ruins were cleaned of vegetation, perfectly studied and described and . . . totally robbed of every object that fell in the hands of the investigators, who triumphantly carried to their country more than two hundred boxes containing invaluable archaeological treasures. . . . Bingham is not the culprit, objectively speaking, nor are the North Americans, in general, guilty, nor is a government economically prevented from making an expedition like that of the discoverer of Machu-Picchu guilty. There is no one then? We accept this, but where can we admire or study the treasures of this indigenous city? The answer is obvious: in the museums of North America.” ■

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