

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Photographic Encounters: Martín Chambi, Indigeneity and Chile–Peru Relations in the Early Twentieth Century

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Abstract

In 1936, the indigenous Peruvian photographer Martín Chambi travelled to and exhibited his work in Chile. Using a transnational framework of historical analysis, this article explores the multiple meanings of his visit. In particular it underscores the involvement of the Chilean and Peruvian governments in this cultural encounter, and highlights some of the commonalities and connections, as well as differences, between the discourses of race that were circulating in Chile and Peru at the time. This is important because it undermines the dominant historical narratives, which have tended to present Chile as a country that – in contrast to Peru – failed to engage in discussions about the so-called ‘indigenous question’, and which have interpreted relations between Chile and Peru almost exclusively as antagonistic and hostile.

Keywords: Chambi; Chile; Peru; indigenous; transnational; encounter

The picturesque image of ‘La llama y el llamero’ (‘The Llama and the Llama-Driver’, [Figure 1](#)) counts among the most lauded works of the Peruvian photographer Martín Jerónimo Chambi Jiménez (1891–1973).¹ It was one of the photographs that Chambi took with him to Chile in 1936. This educated, urban-based, Quechua and Spanish speaker, from a rural peasant family in Puno – hailed by Cuzco newspaper *Excelsior* as the ‘great Andean artist’ – visited the country for three months (February–May) and exhibited his work in Santiago, Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, Temuco, Osorno, Valdivia and Puerto Montt.² My article investigates what happened to and through his photographs when they journeyed across the Chilean–Peruvian frontier, and thereby seeks to fill a gap in the burgeoning

¹Silvia Spitta, ‘Monumentally Indian: The Photography of Edward Curtis and the Cuzco School of Photography’, *Comparative American Studies*, 11: 2 (2013), p. 180.

²*Excelsior* (Cuzco), 4 Dec. 1927. For a brief overview of Chambi’s life story see Roderic Camp, ‘Martín Chambi: Photographer of the Andes’, *Latin American Research Review*, 13: 2 (1978), p. 224.



Figure 1. Martín Chambi, 'La llama y el llamero' (1930) (Courtesy of Teo Allain Chambi, Archivo Fotográfico Martín Chambi)

scholarship on Chambi, which makes reference to the fact that he went to Chile, but does not explore the repercussions of the trip in any depth.³ I investigate this one specific instance of the early transnational reception of Chambi's photography, in order to better understand both the significance of his photography – especially in relation to the visual politics of race – and the multidimensional nature of Chile–Peru relations during the first half of the twentieth century.

Academic scholarship and the popular press have tended to present the contemporary and historical relationship between Chile and Peru as one of hostile antagonism. This is not surprising, given the two major wars fought between these countries (and Bolivia) in the nineteenth century, and the long-term repercussions of those wars, particularly the War of the Pacific (1879–83).⁴ Only in recent years have scholars begun to excavate the equally long history of Chilean–Peruvian interactions and collaborations. The work of Carmen McEvoy and Ana María Stuen represents an important step in this direction for the nineteenth

³For example, Andrés Garay Albújar, *Martín Chambi, por sí mismo* (Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 2010), pp. 152–4; Michele Penhall, 'The Invention and Reinvention of Martin Chambi', *History of Photography*, 24: 2 (2000), p. 107; Edward Ranney, 'The Legacy of Martin Chambi', in *Martin Chambi: Photographs, 1920–1950* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), p. 11; Herman Schwarz, 'Martín Chambi: Corresponsal gráfico, 1918–1929', in Andrés Garay Albújar (ed.), *Martín Chambi* (Madrid: Fundación Telefónica, 2007), p. 31. These authors mention Chambi's trip to Chile, but the focus of their analysis lies elsewhere.

⁴One major repercussion was the festering maritime border dispute, arbitrated by the International Court of Justice in 2013.

century.⁵ Eduardo Cavieres and Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada take us into the early 1900s,⁶ and the collection of essays edited by Sergio González and Daniel Parodi points to a number of interesting cultural and intellectual developments that occurred over the course of the twentieth century.⁷ Particularly welcome additions to the new literature are those of Paulo Drinot and Stefanie Gänger.⁸ The former's discussion of contemporary representations of the War of the Pacific indicates some of the longstanding overlaps between Chilean and Peruvian discussions about race, not least the notion that 'indigeneity [is] commensurable with backwardness',⁹ and Gänger's study of antiquity-collecting in Chile and Peru reveals 'the interconnectedness and similarities between scholarly and political ideas in the two nation-states' from 1837 through to 1911. 'The identification with a pre-Columbian ancestor through the discourse of archaeology in both Chile and Peru', she argues, demonstrates 'shared concerns about race, nationality, and territoriality, as well as about authenticity and sovereignty, about civilisation and progress'.¹⁰

My study of Chambi's trip to Chile digs down into the detail of some of these shared concerns at one particular moment in time: 1936. It thinks outside the confines of the nation-state which, as Jo Guldi and David Armitage remark, 'has been the default container of historical study since the nineteenth century',¹¹ but does not reject the nation-state as a valuable unit of historical analysis. Indeed, this specific example of cross-border dialogue partially reinforces the significance of national boundaries, by exposing the complex relationship between intellectuals and their respective states, and the role of cultural exchange in the shifting diplomatic and political relationship between Chile and Peru.

The Chilean Minister of Foreign Affairs (1927–9), Conrado Ríos Gallardo, once described 'the Arica-Tacna question between Chile and Peru' as the gravest of 'all the international American problems'.¹² Chambi's visit to Chile, which took place seven years after the signing of the Tacna and Arica Treaty, constituted an important transnational bridge-building exercise. The Santiago-based magazine *Hoy*

⁵Carmen McEvoy and Ana María Stiven, *La república peregrina: Hombres de letras y armas en América del Sur, 1800–1884* (Lima: IEP, 2007).

⁶Eduardo Cavieres and Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada (eds.), *Chile–Perú, Perú–Chile: 1820–1920: Desarrollos políticos, económicos y culturales* (Valparaíso: Ediciones Universitarias de Valparaíso, 2005).

⁷Sergio González and Daniel Parodi (eds.), *Las historias que nos unen: Episodios positivos en las relaciones peruano-chilenas, siglos XIX y XX* (Santiago: RIL Editores – Universidad Arturo Prat, 2013).

⁸Paulo Drinot, 'Website of Memory: The War of the Pacific in the Global Age of YouTube', *Memory Studies*, 44: 4 (2011), pp. 370–5; and Stefanie Gänger, *Relics of the Past: The Collecting and Study of Pre-Columbian Antiquities in Peru and Chile, 1837–1911* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁹Drinot, 'Website of Memory', p. 378.

¹⁰Gänger, *Relics of the Past*, pp. 206–7.

¹¹Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 15.

¹²The 1883 Treaty of Ancón stipulated that Chile was to maintain control of the provinces of Arica and Tacna for the next ten years. At the end of this period, the local population was supposed to decide whether to be Chilean or Peruvian by plebiscite. For a variety of reasons, however, the plebiscite never took place. In 1929, a final settlement, the Tacna and Arica Treaty, allowed Tacna to be reincorporated into Peruvian territory, whilst Arica remained Chilean. See William Skuban, *Lines in the Sand: Nationalism and Identity on the Chilean–Peruvian Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), which opens with the words of Ríos Gallardo.

hoped that his ‘travels around Chile [would] serve as an aesthetic bond’ encouraging ‘friendship between the two countries’.¹³ And when the Peruvian press discussed the trip, both at the time and retrospectively, Chile was presented as a ‘neighbour’ worthy of admiration and emulation because of its economic accomplishments.¹⁴

In an interview with *Hoy* shortly after his arrival in Santiago, Chambi recounted: ‘I have read that in Chile people believe Indians have no culture, that they are barbaric, that they are intellectually and artistically inferior when compared to whites and Europeans.’¹⁵ Initially, the photographer’s words seem to corroborate the dominant scholarly narrative about Chile which persists until today: that is, of a country which ‘ignores its [own] Indian heritage’ and is highly racist in its attitude towards ‘more Indian’ countries such as Bolivia and Peru.¹⁶ As a result, it has largely been excluded from scholarship on *indigenismo* – a ‘reformist movement’ led by non-Indians seeking to defend a ‘marginalised Indian population and vindicate its cultural past or potential future’¹⁷ – which reached its peak in Latin America between the 1920s and 1940s.¹⁸ In contrast, we are continually told that *indigenismo* ‘enjoyed special esteem’ in Peru.¹⁹ As narrated by historian Jorge Basadre, ‘the growing awareness among writers, academics and politicians of the Indian’s existence’ constituted the ‘most important phenomenon in Peruvian culture in the twentieth century’.²⁰

Undoubtedly, there were major differences between Chile and Peru at the time of Chambi’s visit. In Peru, indigenous people constituted the majority; in Chile they did not, partly because the state had physically eliminated many Mapuche people in the ‘pacification’ campaigns of the late nineteenth century. In Peru, where there was no full-scale military effort of this kind, people could not have denied the existence of indigenous people even if they had wanted to. Furthermore, Chile had no equivalent of Cuzco or Machu Picchu; it had no comparable historic monuments to honour the ‘great civilisations’ of the pre-Columbian era. It had no Luis Valcárcel (1891–1987) or José Carlos Mariátegui (1894–1930), intellectuals who were famed

¹³*Hoy* (Santiago), No. 223, 25 Feb. 1936.

¹⁴*El Pueblo* (Arequipa), 19 April 1947.

¹⁵Interview with Martín Chambi, ‘El alma quechua alienta en los cuadros de un artista vernáculo’, *Hoy*, No. 224, 4 March 1936, p. 1.

¹⁶Miguel Centeno, *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), p. 109; Erika Beckman, ‘The Creolization of Imperial Reason: Chilean State Racism in the War of the Pacific’, *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 18: 1 (2009), pp. 73–90.

¹⁷Seemin Qayum, ‘Indian Ruins, National Origins: Tiwanaku and *Indigenismo* in La Paz, 1897–1933’, in Laura Gotkowitz (ed.), *Histories of Race and Racism: The Andes and Mesoamerica from Colonial Times to the Present* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 160.

¹⁸According to cultural historian Jorge Larraín, Chile never really developed an *indigenista* movement, at least not in the early twentieth century. He acknowledges that several prominent Chilean intellectuals wrote about the ‘indigenous question’ but claims such writings were limited to anthropology scholarship and had limited impact. It was not until the 1980s, Larraín says, that a significant number of authors began to show an interest in the subject. See his *Identidad chilena* (Santiago: Ediciones LOM, 2001), pp. 232–3.

¹⁹Angel Rama, trans. by David Frye, *Writing across Culture: Narrative Transculturation in Latin America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), p. 95.

²⁰Cited in Priscilla Archibald, *Imagining Modernity in the Andes* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2011), p. 25.

for their writings on the 'Indian problem' and their belief in the future return of the Indian.

Yet, one of the key points that I have made in previous works is that intellectuals and politicians *were* talking about 'the indigenous question' in early-twentieth-century Chile.²¹ It was not as prominent as in Peru, but it was an important topic of discussion nonetheless. Specialists were investigating the Mapuche (and other indigenous) languages.²² Soon-to-be Nobel laureates were writing about the suffering of the Mapuche people.²³ Mapuche leaders had long been demanding better access to education, and an education that was more suited to their needs, and government authorities occasionally responded to these demands.²⁴ Mapuche organisations debated the land problem at local congresses attended by Chilean journalists and senators.²⁵ President Arturo Alessandri, in power when Chambi visited Chile, had travelled to Araucanía during his election campaign, and pledged that he would work 'heart to heart' with the 'most potent race of South America', a race 'that had enabled the triumphal successes of the Chilean people', and regional newspapers celebrated such encounters.²⁶ As usual, official promises failed to live up to much, but Alessandri's government did endorse some important initiatives such the creation of an Indigenous Credit Scheme in 1936.

Set against this backdrop, it is not surprising that – as reported by *El Pueblo* of Arequipa in 1947 – Chilean artists and journalists were bowled over by Chambi, refusing to 'leave him alone [even] for a second'.²⁷ Following his previously cited declaration about Chilean notions of indigenous inferiority, Chambi told readers of *Hoy*: 'I have never believed this [...] More eloquent than my opinion, however, are visual testimonies, and it is for this reason that I have come here.'²⁸ Retrospective accounts suggest he was pleased he did: speaking to *El Pueblo* in June 1958, he said 'I am tremendously proud that people abroad have paid tribute to me as an Indian and a Peruvian.'²⁹ According to this Peruvian periodical, one of the most significant accolades bestowed upon Chambi was that 'printed on the

²¹Joanna Crow, *The Mapuche in Modern Chile: A Cultural History* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2013), especially chapters 2 and 3.

²²Tomás Guevara, Rodolfo Lenz and José Felix de Augusta were of a slightly earlier period, writing their best-known works on Mapudungun between 1890 and 1910, but these were republished in new editions long after their deaths.

²³For example, Gabriela Mistral, 'Música araucana', *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), 17 April 1932, p. 82. Pablo Neruda also took an interest in the Mapuche, and was reprimanded by Chilean state authorities when, as Consul in Mexico City in 1940, he published a magazine called *Araucanía*, with a Mapuche woman on the front cover.

²⁴Andrés Donoso Romo, *Educación y nación al sur de la frontera: Organizaciones mapuches en el umbral de nuestra contemporaneidad, 1880–1930* (Santiago: Pehuén, 2008).

²⁵On the annual Araucanian Congresses organised by Manuel Aburto Panguilef, see André Menard and Jorge Pavez, 'El Congreso Araucano: Ley, raza y escritura en la política mapuche', *Política*, 44 (2005), pp. 211–32.

²⁶Participación del Comité Indígena antenoche en la recepción del candidato señor Alessandri', *El Diario Austral* (Temuco), 28 Sept. 1931.

²⁷Martín Chambi, el genial artista de la luz', *El Pueblo* (Arequipa), 19 April 1947.

²⁸*Hoy*, 4 March 1936.

²⁹Martín Chambi, reliquia del Arte Fotográfico del Cuzco. El artista del paisaje cumple Bodas de Oro', *El Pueblo* (Arequipa), 24 June 1958, p. 13.

front cover of the Chilean newspaper *La Nación* – the announcement ‘in bold letters of the success of his exhibition in Santiago’.³⁰ Interviewed by *El Sol* of Cuzco earlier that same month, Chambi was keen to call attention not only to *what* was said in the Chilean press, but also *how much* press coverage he received: ‘*El Mercurio, La Nación, El Diario Ilustrado* and other eminent newspapers from Santiago de Chile publish my photographs. *Hoy, Zig-Zag, and Revista Ercilla* also show them. In this way, I made sure and am still making sure that the entire civilised world finds out about Cuzco.’³¹ In short, Chile was not as ‘anti-indigenous’ as he had thought before going, or he felt that by exhibiting his photography there he had helped to undermine such racism.

Chambi sought to debunk racial stereotypes but often ended up reinforcing them. In exploring how he did this, we become aware of the prevalence in *both* countries of images of the ‘authentic’ Indian, the historic Indian, and the ‘sad Indian’. Crucially, we also sense that Chileans and Peruvians were speaking *with* (not just similarly *to*) each other. This is important because it opens up a window onto the processes by which ideas travel. After a brief description of the world in which Chambi lived, and of the logistics of his trip to Chile, this article offers an in-depth reading of the ways in which his photographs were received and re-transmitted by the Chilean press. In total, it analyses a dozen articles that appeared in ten different Chilean newspapers and *revistas* or magazines (mainly, but not exclusively, from the capital city), and compares this coverage to Chambi’s reception in the Peruvian press. In doing so, it takes up Deborah Poole’s recommendation that we ‘ask not what specific images *mean* but, rather, how images accrue value’.³²

This investigation frames its comparison of Chilean and Peruvian discourses of race and indigeneity as one of *extent*, rather than arguing that Chile articulated one vision (or did not talk about race) and Peru another (or always talked about race). Early-twentieth-century Chile did not have a Valcárcel or Mariátegui but it did have Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda and Alejandro Lipschutz. It had no Cuzco or Machu Picchu but it was home to a scholarly community that was interested in (collecting, preserving, and exhibiting) artefacts pertaining to Chile’s pre-Columbian cultures. There were some denials, but many people acknowledged the existence of indigenous peoples, even if they lamented it, or relegated it to the southern provinces, just as in Peru the ‘indigenous question’ was consigned to the Andean highlands. Chile did not have as prominent an *indigenista* movement as Peru but the full name of the Araucanian Corporation, set up by Venancio Coñuepán and other Mapuche political leaders in 1938, was the Corporación Araucana, Movimiento Indigenista de Chile (Araucanian Corporation, Indigenista Movement of Chile), and Coñuepán went to the First Inter-American Indigenista Congress, held in Mexico, in 1940, as official representative of the Chilean government.

It was this *indigenista* Chile that Chambi visited. An analysis of the Chilean reception of Chambi’s photography that draws out comparisons with Peruvian responses to his work during the same period allows us to tease out some of the

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*El Sol* (Cuzco), 15 June 1958.

³²Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 10.

different layers and nuances of debates about race in the two countries. Chambi did not create a debate about race in Chile but he entered into it and got people talking across national boundaries.

The Social and Political Landscape of Chambi's World

At the time of his trip to Chile, Chambi was living and working in Cuzco, a city located high in the Andes and several days' journey from Lima. It was much smaller than Lima, with a total population of approximately 35,000–40,000.³³ It was nonetheless 'a very active intellectual centre'.³⁴ It had its own School of Painting, dating back to the colonial period, and a well-established School of Photography.³⁵ It was also home to the San Antonio Abad University, which had led the way in Peru's university reform movement. Such cultural hubs (and many others) brought together intellectuals from across the Americas and Europe, as well as from different parts of Peru.³⁶

As Marisol de la Cadena and others have shown, the city was also a hot-bed of political activism.³⁷ The 1920s had witnessed a significant increase in rural unionisation, and local indigenous leaders progressively 'adopted class vocabulary and activities in their political work'.³⁸ A number of peasant rebellions had taken place towards the end of the decade, and the newly named Communist Party actively competed with the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance, APRA) for the support of organised labour in the region, despite being persecuted by the military government of Óscar Benavides.³⁹ What is more, as the heartland of the ancient Inca empire and thus a centre for what Robert Levine describes as 'pro-Indianist sentiment',⁴⁰ the city

³³Lima was home to approximately 500,000 people by this time.

³⁴Camp, 'Martín Chambi', p. 224.

³⁵Tom Cummins, 'A Tale of Two Cities: Cuzco, Lima and the Construction of Colonial Representation', in Diana Fane (ed.), *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America* (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1996), pp. 157–71; Edward Ranney, 'New Light on the Cusco School: Juan Manuel Figueroa Aznar and Martín Chambi', *History of Photography*, 24: 2 (2000), p. 113.

³⁶As noted by Spitta, the city had a faster connection to Buenos Aires than did Lima at the time ('Monumentally Indian', pp. 173–4).

³⁷See Marisol de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru, 1919–1991* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 137.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 129.

³⁹The Socialist Party was renamed the Communist Party in 1930. Robert J. Alexander notes the historic strength of Communism in Cuzco, and claims this dated from the early 1930s, when Eudosis Rabines – Secretary General of the Partido Comunista Peruano (Peruvian Communist Party, PCP) – 'had considerable success proselytising among the Indians there'. See *A History of Organised Labor in Peru and Ecuador* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), p. 72. The hostile political climate of the second half of the 1930s limited the capacity of both the PCP and APRA to influence the labour movement (many leaders were jailed or sent into exile), but recruitment efforts continued nonetheless. See Paulo Drinot, 'Creole Anti-Communism: Labor, the Peruvian Communist Party and APRA, 1930–1934', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 92: 4 (2012), pp. 703–36. For more focused works on Communism in Cuzco, see José Luis Renique, *Sueños de la sierra: Cusco en el siglo XX* (Lima: Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales, 1991) and Julio Gutiérrez, *Así nació la cruz roja: Contribución a su historia política, 1924–1934* (Cuzco: J. G. Gutiérrez, 1986).

⁴⁰Robert Levine, *Images of History: Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Latin American Photographs as Documents* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1989), p. 65.

became embroiled in an ‘intense nationalist debate’ between *indigenismo* and *hispanismo*.⁴¹

Chambi was a major player in the complex cultural and political heterogeneity that was 1930s Cuzco. On 16 August 1936, the regional paper *El Tiempo* proudly asserted that ‘almost all the globe-trotters who visit Cuzco end up in the house of Martín Chambi’. ‘Intellectuals, poets, journalists and others who have dedicated their lives to art’, it said, ‘have always descended on Chambi’s home’. Just the night before, 20 or more people had gathered there to say farewell to the Argentine writer Fausto Burgos.⁴² Robert Levine comments that many of Chambi’s friends ‘were probably members of the Communist Party’; he also claims the photographer associated with APRA.⁴³ We need to take care, though, not to pigeon-hole Chambi as a leftist, for, despite such (notably vague) assertions of party political affiliations and despite being born into a humble peasant family, he also moved relatively comfortably among Cuzqueño landowning elites, with much of his income coming from the portraits that they commissioned.

Chambi has often been linked to the *indigenista* movement that was prominent in Peru – and especially prominent in Cuzco – during the first half of the twentieth century. Indeed, for some scholars such as Jorge Coronado it is precisely in this context that it is most fruitful to analyse his photography.⁴⁴ Existing literature stresses that his relationship with *indigenismo* was an ambiguous one, in that he seemingly ascribed to, helped to shape and challenged it all at the same time. He collaborated on government-led tourist brochures which publicised Cuzco’s unique cultural heritage, but also recorded the poverty-stricken existence of the local indigenous population, and played around with dominant ideas about cultural and racial identity. New scholarship has also underscored the fact that *indigenismo* was ‘a diverse movement, ideologically and aesthetically’, which introduced multiple ‘often contradictory meanings, categories and analytical paradigms’ in order to try to grapple with the ‘Indian question’.⁴⁵ Chambi’s photographic oeuvre provides an illuminating lens through which to explore the complexities of *indigenismo*, for it likewise told many different and often-conflicting stories. Perhaps because of this very ‘elasticity’,⁴⁶ Chambi proved to be the ideal candidate for the role of Peruvian cultural emissary in Chile.

The Logistics of the Trip and the Exhibition(s)

Press reports at the time of Chambi’s visit to Chile suggest that it was facilitated and sponsored by the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁷ They also indicate that the Peruvian Ambassador in Chile, Pedro Yrigoyen, as well as other prominent

⁴¹De la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, p. 132.

⁴²Granadas de mano: En casa de Martín Chambi’, *El Tiempo* (Cuzco), 16 Aug. 1936.

⁴³Levine, *Images of History*, p. 65.

⁴⁴Jorge Coronado, *The Andes Imagined: Indigenismo, Society and Modernity* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).

⁴⁵Archibald, *Imagining Modernity*, pp. 25 and 50.

⁴⁶James Scorer, ‘Andean Self-Fashioning: Martín Chambi, Photography and the Ruins at Machu Picchu’, *History of Photography*, 38: 4 (2014), pp. 379–97.

⁴⁷For example, ‘El artista Martín Chambi viajará a Chile’, *Los Andes* (Cuzco), 23 Jan. 1936.

members of the Peruvian diplomatic corps, attended the inauguration of the most widely-reported of his exhibitions: that hosted by *La Nación* in Santiago (see Figure 2). Perhaps even more significantly, the then President of Chile, Arturo Alessandri, arranged for a private meeting with the Peruvian photographer whilst he was in the capital city,⁴⁸ and – once the exhibitions in Viña del Mar and Santiago were finished – agreed to fund Chambi's travels to the south of the country.⁴⁹ Right from the beginning, then, the Peruvian photographer's visit was supported by officialdom, and closely connected to the incipient tourism industry of both countries. For *Los Andes* of Cuzco, the main purpose of the trip was to 'encourage people to come and see our archaeological riches',⁵⁰ and the financial support provided by Alessandri's government came specifically from the Department of Tourism, on the basis that Chambi would exhibit the photographs that he took of southern Chile back in Peru (and in Argentina, according to one newspaper).⁵¹

At first glance, the governments of Chile and Peru in 1936 appear markedly different. Arturo Alessandri (1932–8) was a democratically elected civilian president who pledged to introduce important social reforms, whereas Peru's Óscar Benavides (1933–9) was a repressive military dictator.⁵² There were also, however, some important connections: these governments shared anxieties about the menace of anarchism and communism; they liaised with each other over labour legislation and public health policy;⁵³ and together led what could be described as the re-invention of corporatism in Latin America.⁵⁴ Furthermore, both Chile and Peru were keen to participate in new Pan-American cultural initiatives, such as the Inter-American Institute of Intellectual Cooperation. The official aim of Chile's National Committee of Intellectual Cooperation was to 'create spiritual bonds with foreign countries so as to publicise Chilean culture abroad and foreign cultures in Chile'.⁵⁵ Chambi's visit, which took place just a year after this committee started its work, fitted in perfectly with such a remit.

⁴⁸'Artista peruano fue recibido por el Sr. Alessandri' was the title of the article in *La Nación*, 5 May 1936.

⁴⁹*Zig-Zag*, of 8 May 1936, affirmed that Chilean state authorities had 'provided all that Chambi needs for his tour around the south'.

⁵⁰'El artista Martín Chambi'. Albert Giesecke, rector of San Antonio Abad University, was labouring tirelessly at this time to make 'the archaeological value of Cuzco and its environs known worldwide' (Spitta, 'Monumentally Indian', p. 180). The same year that Chambi visited Chile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs entrusted Giesecke with the promotion of Peru abroad.

⁵¹'Martín Chambi, artista de la fotografía, debe llegar hoy', *La Prensa* (Osorno), 6 April 1936.

⁵²After three years of de facto civil war under Luis Sánchez Cerro, many Peruvians hoped Benavides would succeed in restoring civil order. Initially, he declared amnesty for numerous political prisoners and set about instituting social reforms, but this brief political opening was over by the end of 1934. See Kathleen Weaver, *Peruvian Rebel: The World of Magda Portal* (Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), pp. 119–20.

⁵³As detailed by Drinot, Peruvian policy makers studied the Chilean Social Security Law of 1935–6, and Chileans followed closely certain elements of the Benavides government's statist social action programme, particularly its 'Restaurantes populares' initiative. See *The Allure of Labor: Workers, Race, and the Making of the Peruvian State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 180, 189–90 and 199–200.

⁵⁴Frederick Pike, *FDR's Good Neighbor Policy: Sixty Years of Generally Gentle Chaos* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995), p. 152.

⁵⁵Comisión Chilena de Cooperación Intelectual, *22 años de labor: 1930–1952* (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1953), p. 5.



Figure 2. Inauguration of Martín Chambi's Photographic Exhibition in Santiago, 1936 (Chambi's head is circled in both photographs.)

Source: *La Nación*, 22 March 1936.

Photographic exhibitions do not just happen by themselves. As noted above, both the Peruvian and Chilean governments were actively supportive of Chambi's trip. The director of *La Nación*, Arturo Meza Olva, who is pictured with Chambi in the newspaper's own report on the exhibition (top photograph in Figure 2), also needed to be on board – as did the owners or managers of the other exhibition sites, such as the Casino in Viña del Mar, the book shop

(Librería Universo) in Osorno, and the watch shop (Relojería Pérez) in Puerto Montt. Local artists and intellectuals were invited to attend the openings of the exhibitions, and journalists (and the periodicals that employed them) acted as vital publicists for these events. And, of course, Chambi himself had an important role to play: he decided on the content of the exhibitions, chose whom to ask to the inaugurations, and gave interviews with the press to communicate the significance of his work.⁵⁶

The exhibition in Santiago was entitled 'Motifs of Cuzco'. It comprised 70 photographs,⁵⁷ which can be broken down into five main categories: 24 images of people ('tipos') and their cultural practices, 22 images of the natural landscape, 20 of colonial buildings and streets, three of archaeological sites, and one of a religious festival.⁵⁸ More than a third of the photographs exhibited in Santiago had been part of an exhibition ('Andean Motifs') held at Lima's Hotel Bolívar in July 1927.⁵⁹ Audiences in both capital cities thus encountered a similar photographic oeuvre. It was also this 'version' of Chambi which went on display in the National Centre of Art History in La Paz in 1931,⁶⁰ was exhibited in the Alcedo Academy in Lima in 1935,⁶¹ and was brought to the attention of *National Geographic* readers in 1938:⁶² that is, not the commercial work that was run out of his studio in Cuzco (which constituted the vast majority of his prints and piqued the interest of foreign audiences in the late 1970s),⁶³ but instead the 'magnificent landscapes, fabulous ruins, and curious peoples and traditions' that, as Natalia Majluf makes clear, had long been the main interest of scholars and tourists visiting Peru.⁶⁴

The 70 photographs were put on view in the 'Sala de Exposiciones' on the third floor of the offices of *La Nación* newspaper on Agustinas Street in central Santiago. Press coverage of the official opening, which took place on 21 March 1936 (see Figure 2), shows that the photographs were displayed as relatively small, label-less prints, clustered together on the wall. The image of Chambi amidst scores of invitees present at the inauguration of his exhibition in Lima in 1935 (as reported by *La Crónica*, Figure 3) indicates that there was nothing particularly unique about this display format. In fact, the layout and setting of, and the social crowd that flocked to, the exhibition openings in Lima (1935) and Santiago (1936) were strikingly analogous, at least as represented by the national press in Peru and Chile.

⁵⁶For this reason, Ranney claims that 'how Chambi saw himself as an artist is still best indicated by selected newspaper interviews and the titles and print lists of several exhibitions he presented' (and he explicitly includes Santiago here). See 'The Legacy of Martin Chambi', p. 10.

⁵⁷*Fotografías Artísticas de Martín Chambi J. Motivos de Cuzco* (Santiago: Imprenta Bureau Gráfico, 1936).

⁵⁸Garay Albújar, *Martín Chambi*, pp. 150–1.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰'La embajada cuzqueña', *El Diario* (La Paz), 29 Jan. 1931.

⁶¹'De arte: La exposición de Martín Chambi y Francisco Olazo', *La Crónica* (Lima), 26 March 1935.

⁶²Teo Allain Chambi, 'La herencia de un archivo', in Garay Albújar (ed.), *Martín Chambi*, p. 21.

⁶³Penhall, 'The Invention and Reinvention of Martin Chambi', pp. 106–12.

⁶⁴Natalia Majluf, 'Ce n'est pas le Pérou' or the Failure of Authenticity: Marginal Cosmopolitans at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855', *Critical Enquiry*, 23 (1997), pp. 868–93, here p. 873.



Figure 3. Inauguration of Martín Chambi's Photographic Exhibition in Lima, 1935
 Source: *La Crónica*, 11 March 1935.

Discourses of Authenticity

In line with the Peruvian press, and the scores of dedications that Chambi preserved in his personal notebooks,⁶⁵ most Chilean periodicals reporting on Chambi's visit in 1936 lauded the artistic quality of his photographic work.⁶⁶ Some picked up on specific aesthetic hallmarks of Chambi's repertoire, such as his creative use of light, but for the main part they prioritised content over form and technique. Of particular interest to Chilean journalists was this artist's representation(s) of Peru's indigenous culture and history: as outlined by the press, this was what people would learn about if they went to see Chambi's opus, and it was precisely because of his intimate insider perspective that exhibition-goers could be sure they were getting the 'real thing'. On the day of its opening, *La Nación* informed readers that Chambi's Santiago exhibition would be accompanied by 'a valuable collection of genuine Indigenous-style Peruvian weavings'. Apparently, Chambi had collected these weavings from remote Andean villages, where he spent long periods of time 'studying up-close the customs of the local inhabitants'.⁶⁷ In a slightly more direct manner, *Hoy* acclaimed the photographer as an indisputable 'specimen of Peruvian indigenous culture', because he had 'lived side by side with the men of his race',⁶⁸ and *Las Últimas Noticias* assured readers that Chambi's family was

⁶⁵In his notebooks, reproduced by Garay Albújar (*Martín Chambi*, pp. 281–308), Chambi collected 87 dedications from people who visited him in Cuzco, or whom he met whilst travelling. Of these, 31 described Chambi as an artist (often a 'great' or 'distinguished' artist, sometimes Peru's 'greatest artist') and his photography as an art form. Clearly, the relationship between photography and art was an issue of great debate in early-twentieth-century Peru. On Chambi's training as a photographer, see Adelma Benavente García, 'The Cusco School: Photography in Southern Peru, 1900–1930', *History of Photography*, 24: 2 (2000), pp. 101–5.

⁶⁶For example, *Hoy* of 4 March 1936, *Las Últimas Noticias* of 16 March 1936, *La Nación* of 21 March 1936, and *Zig-Zag* of 8 May 1936.

⁶⁷'*La Nación* inaugura esta tarde la exposición fotográfica del artista peruano Martín Chambi', *La Nación*, 21 March 1936, p. 1.

⁶⁸Interview with Chambi, 'El alma quechua', p. 1.

of 'legitimate Quechua stock'. As if to allay any doubt, it noted his 'brown skin, protruding cheek-bones, and distinctive eyes'.⁶⁹

Thus emerge two discourses of authenticity: one which focuses on culture (on Chambi's connections to and knowledge of the traditional customs of 'his race'), and another which prioritises phenotype as the ultimate proof of indigeneity (the idea that people could *see* Chambi's indigenous-ness written upon his face). For either reason or both, there was a sense – as Levine has remarked – that Chambi was 'able to go so much further than other photographers in penetrating the social realities of his day'.⁷⁰ Chambi helped to cultivate such thinking when he introduced himself to readers of *Hoy* as a 'representative of the [Indian] race', and proclaimed that this race spoke through his photographs. He consciously set himself up as an informed Indian ('I know the brothers of my race'), and appeared to use the term 'race' interchangeably with culture: 'I bring with me', he said, 'more than 200 photographs of various aspects of Quechua culture', and emphasised that he had travelled 'all over the Peruvian Andes' to take them.⁷¹

As with the celebration of Chambi's status as an artist, Chilean papers' emphasis on authenticity parallels the way he was talked about in the Peruvian press. In 1927, Lima's *Seminario Nacional* commended Chambi as 'a pure and genuine representative of the Quechua race',⁷² Lucas Guerra described him as 'a true American Indian' on the basis of 'his blood and his spirit' when he signed his notebook in 1932, and José Portugal, writing in 1934, praised his achievements as an 'artist of profound Indian sentiment'.⁷³ In the words of de la Cadena, from the early twentieth century, 'Peruvian intellectuals and politicians [...] juggled with an imprecise notion of race in which the "spirit" prevailed over (but did not cancel out) the physical aspects of race'.⁷⁴

That allusions to culture did not cancel out bodily attributes is aptly illustrated by a caricature that Chambi's friend and studio assistant Víctor Mendívil did of him in the 1930s (see [Figure 4](#)). It is also demonstrated in the praise that a Cuzqueño town councillor, Miguel Milla, heaped upon Chambi as a 'genuine Peruvian Indian' in the late 1940s; similarly to *Las Últimas Noticias* in Chile, Milla claimed that Chambi stood out for his 'protruding cheek-bones, condor-like eyes, and large mouth and lips'.⁷⁵ And it is further corroborated by the writings of key intellectual and political activist José Uriel García. In his prologue to the 1937 edition of his major treatise on *mestizaje*, *El Nuevo Indio*, Uriel García declared: 'Our era cannot be one of the resurgence of "races" [...] Instead I think we have reached the predominance of the "spirit" over "race" and over "blood"'.⁷⁶ As commented by Poole, Indian-ness, for Uriel García, was 'not so much a material fact which could be documented and photographed' – and here he explicitly diverged from

⁶⁹'Grandeza del Viejo Cuzco a través de la fotografía', *Las Últimas Noticias*, 16 March 1936.

⁷⁰Levine, *Images of History*, p. 67.

⁷¹*Hoy*, 4 March 1936.

⁷²*Seminario Nacional* (Lima), 18 Aug. 1927.

⁷³Of the 87 dedications included in Chambi's notebooks, 30 either alluded to or emphatically underscored his indigenous roots.

⁷⁴De la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, p. 8.

⁷⁵Quoted in Mauricio Verbal, 'Martín Chambi: Poeta de la luz', *La Voz de Cuzco*, 29 Jan. 1949.

⁷⁶In de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, p. 143.

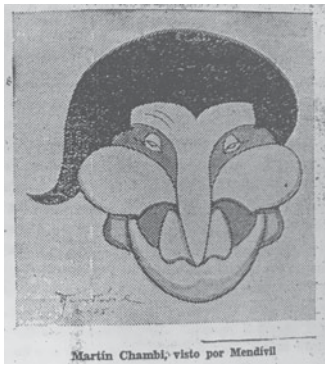


Figure 4. Caricature of Martín Chambi by Víctor Mendivil
 Source: *El Comercio* (Cuzco), 2 May 1935.

other prominent *indigenista* intellectuals, such as Luis Valcárcel – but rather ‘an attitude and pose’.⁷⁷ In an oft-cited article published in *Excelsior* just over ten years later, however, Uriel García spotlighted the physical features of Chambi: his ‘small stature, protruding cheekbones, strong chin, [and] thick, straight hair’. This – together with his ‘unassuming, polite, artistic temperament, the naturalness of the great Inca stones and the warmth of the sunny Andean pastures’ – is what made Chambi a perfect ‘native specimen’.⁷⁸ Again, then, we see cultural understandings of race articulated together with phenotypical ones. This was Chambi’s milieu and it partly explains his popularity in Chile.

As Uriel García’s reference to the ‘Andean pastures’ implies, Cuzqueño *indigenistas* of the 1930s and 1940s located the ‘soul’ that defined authentic Peruvians firmly within the Andean landscape. Not for nothing were 22 of the 70 images exhibited in Santiago in 1936 scenic views of this landscape. *El Mercurio* averred that Chambi’s aesthetic creativity derived from the land: he was, it said, ‘an artist who feels the [spiritual] power of his *tierra*’.⁷⁹ Chambi was aware of these discursive strategies and consciously positioned himself to take advantage of them.

Despite it not being ‘his’ *tierra*, Chambi made use of the 1936 trip to take photographs of Chile’s natural landscape (proclaimed as the root of national identity by writers such as Gabriela Mistral and Mariano Latorre). Possibly at the behest of Alessandri’s government, which financed his travels around the country, Chambi chose to prioritise the south of Chile.⁸⁰ One newspaper of Puerto Montt boasted that Chambi had come with the aim of capturing ‘the beautiful panoramic views of this region’,⁸¹ and afterwards *Zig-Zag* of Santiago triumphantly reported that he had ‘brought back many photographs of the Lakes Region that [...] provide him with plenty of material to put on an exhibition when he returns to Peru, an

⁷⁷Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity*, p. 190.

⁷⁸José Uriel García, ‘Martín Chambi, artista neoindígena’, *Revista Excelsior*, Aug. 1948, p. 17.

⁷⁹‘Las ruinas incaicas en una colección de fotos’, *El Mercurio*, 24 Feb. 1936.

⁸⁰There are newspaper reports from Osorno and Puerto Montt confirming that he visited. I have not yet found any press coverage from Temuco or Valdivia, but the reports from Osorno and Puerto Montt make reference to these cities, saying that either he has come from, or is on his way to them.

⁸¹‘Artista peruano en fotografía nos visita’, *El Llanquihue*, 5 April 1936.

exhibition publicising the immense beauty of southern Chile'.⁸² This was the most 'authentic' (and notably indigenous) Chile, just as the Andean highlands constituted the most authentic (or 'profound' and indigenous) Peru.

Writing on Peru and how it was imaged at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855, Majluf argues that a discourse of authenticity 'demands that the artist express a collectivity and not himself'.⁸³ The Chilean press always named Chambi and most sources included a photograph of him, but ultimately he stood for (Andean, Quechua) indigeneity. Very little was said about Chambi's origins, his childhood, or his training and career as a professional photographer. No need was felt to narrate his individual life story.

Contested Ownership of a Glorious Inca Past

Cuzqueño *indigenistas* like Valcárcel sought to recover an authentic indigenous identity based on the glorification of the Inca legacy. Chambi's photographs of Machu Picchu, Sacsayhuaman, Pisac, Quenco and Tambomachay did not constitute a major part of his exhibitions in Chile, but those that he did include were reproduced and feted in most of the local newspapers. As noted by Michele Penhall, a number of these photographs of archaeological sites were self-portraits,⁸⁴ suggesting that Chambi wanted to publicly affirm his close identification with a pre-Columbian heritage. With this we return to Chambi's role as representative of his 'race': according to *Las Últimas Noticias* of Santiago, he was uniquely placed to get at the 'lost corners' and 'unknown angles' of these sites.⁸⁵

Focusing on the image of the monumental ruins of Sacsayhuaman, *El Mercurio* praised Chambi's ability to capture the rich cultural heritage of Cuzco and the surrounding region, which was the 'cradle of a whole civilization'.⁸⁶ In Chambi's own words, quoted in *Las Últimas Noticias*, the ruins affirmed the 'architectonic importance of Inca civilisation'; they encapsulated the remnants of a 'brilliant architecture' and a 'great people'.⁸⁷ In *Revista Ercilla*, Juan Fernández homed in on recent excavations in Pisac, and drew attention – citing the works of Spanish colonial chronicler Cieza de León – to what the uncovered stones could reveal about the legendary Inca empire, not least how 'developed' (in terms of knowledge of symmetry) and 'happy' (in the original Spanish, 'sumamente alegre') it was.⁸⁸ Intriguingly, this article was republished in a Cuzco newspaper a couple of months after Chambi's return from Chile, an indication that Chilean appreciation of the 'millenary soul' of the Inca stones helped to endorse and propagate regionalist *indigenista* discourse within Peru.⁸⁹

Reflecting retrospectively on the significance of his international exhibitions, Chambi once stated: 'Ever since I began to take photography seriously, I had one

⁸²Martín Chambi, artista peruano', *Zig-Zag*, 8 May 1936, pp. 16–17.

⁸³Majluf, 'Ce n'est pas le Pérou', p. 892.

⁸⁴Penhall, 'The Invention and Reinvention of Martín Chambi', p. 107.

⁸⁵'Grandeza del Viejo Cuzco'.

⁸⁶'Las ruinas incaicas'.

⁸⁷'Grandeza del Viejo Cuzco'.

⁸⁸Juan Fernández, 'El alma milenaria de las piedras alienta desde el fondo de Cuzco', *Revista Ercilla*, 28 Feb. 1936.

⁸⁹*El Sol*, 26 July 1936.

main dream: to show the world the natural beauty of my homeland [“patria” in the original] and the striking image of the ruins which speak to our historic past, in order to promote [...] tourism in Peru.⁹⁰ In Chambi’s own words, the Inca ruins came under Peruvian ownership, or – depending on the intended meaning of ‘homeland’ and ‘our’ – a more local (indigenous, Cuzqueño) ownership that then defaulted to the nation-state.⁹¹ As noted above, Cuzco’s tourist industry was just beginning in the 1930s, and this coincided with the flourishing of a professional, state-sponsored national archaeology in Peru. The latter helps us to understand the continuing disputes that were taking place between Cuzqueño *indigenistas* and North American archaeologist Hiram Bingham, who presented himself as the ‘discoverer’ of Machu Picchu and had, in the 1910s, shipped hundreds of artefacts from the site back to his home institution, Yale University.⁹² Possibly, Chilean audiences recognised in Chambi’s work the motifs from Bingham’s ‘intensive marketing’ of the Inca citadel.⁹³ Bingham’s campaign, however, had mainly been aimed at US readers, and it is notable that newspapers in Chile dedicated more space to Chambi’s photographs of the Inca ruins at Pisac and Sacsayhuaman than to those of Machu Picchu. This may seem at odds with the state’s efforts to package and commodify Machu Picchu as *the* insignia of a ‘magical, mystical’ Peru, but it makes sense if read in the context of Peruvian archaeologists’ endeavours to make known (and claim for themselves) other less frequently visited Andean sites.⁹⁴

In the 1930s, proclamations of Peruvian national ownership of Inca ruins were surely directed against US imperialism (the archaeological excavations of academics such as Bingham coincided with the massive penetration of US capital into Latin America and multiple instances of US military intervention), but they supplemented rather than contradicted the ‘American-ness’ (i.e. Spanish or Latin American-ness) of the great pre-Columbian past monumentalised in these ruins. One of Chambi’s friends, for example, acclaimed the ‘millenarian Metropolis’ (of Cuzco), publicised by his photographs, as the ‘pride not just of Peru but of all [Latin] America’.⁹⁵ This ‘pan-Latin American nationalism’⁹⁶ would, in theory, allow Chileans too to lay claim to the glorious Inca legacy.

Such assertions of shared possession long predated the twentieth century and Latin American efforts to counter discourses of US hemispheric imperialism. In her excellent study of antiquity collecting in nineteenth-Chile and Peru, Stefanie Gänger shows how, from the early 1800s, ‘in the eyes of many in Chile’s scientific

⁹⁰Martín Chambi, *reliquia del Arte Fotográfico del Cuzco*, p. 13.

⁹¹The term ‘patria’ has multiple meanings. Here it is not necessarily the Peruvian nation. It could be Chambi’s place of origin or the place he feels at home; it could be Cuzco or the broader Andean region. Indeed, Cuzqueños often saw their region as very much opposed to the Peru of Lima and the coast. Chambi seems at least to connect his ‘patria’ and his ‘historic past’ to Peru, though, or to see it as part of Peru, in that he publicly speaks of its natural beauty as a way of bringing foreign tourists to Peru.

⁹²Geoffrey Schullenberger, ‘That Obscure Object of Desire: Machu Picchu as Myth and Commodity’, *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 17: 3 (2008), p. 321.

⁹³*Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵This is the 51st entry in his personal notebooks (Garay Albújar, *Martín Chambi*, p. 295).

⁹⁶Schullenberger, ‘That Obscure Object of Desire’, p. 317.

community the Inca were also the antiquity of Americans'.⁹⁷ This changed, Gänger argues, with the War of the Pacific. From 1879, Inca heritage ceased to be inclusive and increasingly embodied the Peruvian nation alone. Indeed, it became the 'core of Peruvian nationalistic propaganda' against the Chilean enemy,⁹⁸ who was condemned as a destructive, murderous invading force that – as well as usurping Peruvian lands – stole thousands of pre-conquest relics from Peruvian museums. Concurrently, in Chilean nationalist discourse, the Inca were thrown off their pedestal, and transformed into a tyrannical society, a decadent and degraded people that had failed to stand up to a handful of Spanish conquistadores. As such they stood in marked contrast to Chile's Araucanians, whose epic military feats against the Spanish had been an inspiration to independence heroes across the continent.⁹⁹

With Chambi's visit to Chile, and local audiences' admiration of his photographs, we see this politicisation of the indigenous past shift somewhat. It was not so much that the Chilean (or Peruvian) press tried to reconvert Inca civilisation into a universal treasure, for the archaeological sites imaged in his photographs remained, for the most part, distinctively Peruvian. This rich ethnic heritage was what set Peru, especially Andean Peru, apart and what was supposed to convert the region into a major tourist destination. It was, rather, that Inca civilisation was no longer set in opposition against Chile. Chileans too could celebrate it, as part of their neighbour's history; they could appreciate it from a distance through Chambi's photographs and, if wealthy enough, they could travel to Peru to experience it close-up. Inca Peru was 'other' in that it was exotic, but it was not antagonistic.

Transnational access to Peru's indigenous past went beyond the remit of tourism. Chileans' celebration of Inca Peru during Chambi's visit could be interpreted as the beginnings of what would culminate in renowned literary works such as Pablo Neruda's *Canto general* (1950), and its renovation of the pre-Columbian indigenous past as a shared site for a wider political consciousness and identity. Neruda visited Machu Picchu in 1943 (at the invitation of Uriel García) and wrote his iconic poem 'The Heights of Macchu [*sic*] Picchu' two years later, at the same time as he became a card-carrying member of the Chilean Communist Party. Reflecting on his encounter with this archaeological landmark, Neruda later wrote: 'I felt intimately small [...] [in that] deserted world, proud, towering high, to which I somehow belonged.'¹⁰⁰ For Neruda and many other Latin Americans, including the Argentine revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, Machu Picchu was much more than a stop-off for tourists. Identifying with those who had toiled in its construction, rather than with the Inca leadership, Neruda said it was as if 'my own hands had laboured there at some remote point in time', and perhaps more poignantly, 'I felt Chilean, Peruvian, American.'¹⁰¹ In 'The Heights of Macchu Picchu', Neruda allocated himself the role of spokesperson for

⁹⁷Gänger, *Relics of the Past*, p. 201.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁹⁹Joanna Crow, 'From Araucanian Warriors to Mapuche Terrorists: Contesting Discourses of Gender, Race and Nation in Modern Chile (1810–2010)', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 20 (2014), p. 80.

¹⁰⁰Pablo Neruda, *Confieso que he vivido* [1974] (Madrid: Plaza & Janés, 1998), p. 220.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*

the entire continent in its struggle for social justice – ‘Rise up to be born with me’, he calls out to the labourers in the last line – and when a special signed edition of the poem was printed by the Chilean publishing house Editorial Nascimento in 1954, its 12 ‘cantos’ were accompanied by Chambi’s photographs.¹⁰²

Chilean (and Peruvian) journalists in the mid-1930s mainly spoke of the *historical*, as opposed to contemporary, indigenous world embodied in Chambi’s photographs. The glorious Inca empire was interpreted as part of an irretrievable past, a society that had long ago ended. *Las Últimas Noticias*, for instance, spoke of ‘ruins that are irremediably collapsing’.¹⁰³ Yet there was something else going on in Chambi’s photographs too, and some Chilean newspapers picked up on it; that is, his efforts to draw the past into the present, and connect the two. ‘In each photograph’, *La Nación* commented, ‘the soul of the place or person comes alive’; Chambi’s lens, it said, ‘reached beyond the destroyed stones’.¹⁰⁴

For Valcárcel, who was involved in several publications which reproduced Chambi’s photographs,¹⁰⁵ the Indian’s potentiality ‘as creator’ lay hidden within these stones. They had been excavated by others, but publicised to the world by Chambi, and were ready to be reclaimed by the present-day Indian if only he would take ownership of the history (of enduring greatness) behind them.¹⁰⁶ As commented by James Scorer, Chambi recognised ‘the temporal mutability’ of the ruins – his photographs made visible the growth of plants and flowers in, around and over the intricate Inca stonework.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, in contrast to foreign explorers such as Bingham, Chambi celebrated the human presence at these ruins; he ‘highlighted the manner in which archaeologists, tourists and photographers were interacting with the material past’.¹⁰⁸ He photographed people picnicking, acting out plays, dancing and drinking amongst the ruins, and thereby transformed Machu Picchu from a ghostly scenario into a ‘living’ site of playfulness and fun. These more subversive images were not put on display in Chile, but the narrative of an enduring past that survived into the present, and that could be mobilised for the future, was communicated by a number of local press reviews.

Connecting the Past and the Present

According to Poole, Chambi – influenced by early-twentieth-century French anthropology – ‘conceived photography as a medium through which to record what he saw to be a rapidly disappearing historical or “authentic” Andean Indian’.¹⁰⁹ The peaceful, traditional, vanishing Indian is perhaps best epitomised

¹⁰²Pablo Neruda, *Alturas de Macchu Picchu* (Santiago: Nascimento, 1954).

¹⁰³‘Grandeza del Viejo Cuzco’.

¹⁰⁴‘*La Nación* inaugura esta tarde’.

¹⁰⁵For example, Valcárcel wrote the accompanying text for *Cusco histórico: Homenaje a la ciudad de todos los tiempos en la cuarta centuria de su fundación española* (Lima: La Crónica y Variedades, 1934).

¹⁰⁶Valcárcel, *Tempestad en los Andes* (Place: Publisher, 1927), cited in Alexandra Arellano, ‘The Inca Heritage Revival: Indigenismo in Cuzco, 1905–1945’, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 6: 1 (2008), p. 44.

¹⁰⁷Scorer, ‘Andean Self-Fashioning’, p. 388.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity*, p. 191.

by 'La llama y el llamero' (Figure 1, with which this article opened) and 'La tristeza andina' ('Andean Sadness', Figure 5). As recounted by *La Nación*, these two images were among the favourites of visitors to the photographer's exhibition in Santiago.¹¹⁰ *Hoy* drew its readers' attention to the 'heraldic llama' depicted in 'La llama y el llamero': a 'majestic, graceful, resilient animal' accompanied by 'his herder [...] the solitary, melancholic and wistful inhabitant of the desolate Peruvian highlands'. The herder and the flute player are somehow depicted simultaneously as historical ('very far from anything visibly modern', according to Coronado)¹¹¹ and outside history (abstracted, emptied of context). The 'sad Indian' trope – which dates back to the colonial period¹¹² – was taken up by Eduardo Lira Espejo. Writing for *Arquitectura*, this Chilean cultural critic imagined listening to 'the sombre, painful melody of the [Indian's] flute' and lamented the many 'saddened men, women and children' that we find in Chambi's photographs, suffering silently 'the pompous ceremonies of the church and its priests, the disdain of their masters, [and] exploitation by landowners'.¹¹³

These images of a long-suffering, stoic people likely proved popular among Chilean (and Peruvian) exhibition goers because they were not threatening. They were not the unionised, rebellious, land-seizing peasants that featured in Andean newspapers during the early 1920s.¹¹⁴ They were not the dynamic, vocal activists that sought to defend Mapuche lands in Araucanía by working together with organisations such as the Federación Obrera de Chile (Federation of Chilean Workers, FOCH) and the International Red Cross.¹¹⁵ Chambi's 'melancholic and taciturn Indian', in the words of *La Prensa* of Lima, was a 'sedated race' marked by a 'centuries-old lethargy'.¹¹⁶ This was very similar to the Indian that populated the speeches and writings of APRA leader, Victor Raúl Haya de la Torre: 'Those that have seen our Indian solitudes', he said in one essay of the mid-1920s, 'will have seen the great masses of sad, ragged and melancholy *campesinos* who carry the burden of four hundred years of slavery on their shoulders'.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰See also 'Lo que los ojos no ven', *El Diario Ilustrado*, 19 Feb. 1936.

¹¹¹Coronado, *The Andes Imagined*, p. 138.

¹¹²'El indio' became synonymous, across the Americas, with sadness and sorrow, due to the misfortunes that his 'race' had suffered since the conquest. And yet Majluf rightly points out the contrast between representations of the defeated Peruvian Indian as passive (politically neutralised) and the narratives of bellicose resistance associated with the Indians of southern Chile and northern Mexico. See Natalia Majluf, 'The Creation of the Image of the Indian: The Paintings of Francisco Laso (1823–1869)' (PhD Diss., University of Texas, 1994).

¹¹³Eduardo Lira Espejo, 'Martín Chambi transparente en sus fotografías el espíritu cuzqueño', *Arquitectura* (Santiago), No. 6, April 1936, p. 1.

¹¹⁴Arellano, 'The Inca Heritage Revival', p. 46.

¹¹⁵This is what delegates at the Araucanian Congress of 1936 agreed to do. Its organiser and chair, Manuel Aburto Panguilef, was deemed a Communist troublemaker for such actions and sent into internal exile on the island of Chiloé.

¹¹⁶*La Prensa* (Lima), 24 March 1935.

¹¹⁷Cited in Thomas M. Davies Jnr, 'The Indigenismo of the Peruvian Aprista Party: A Reinterpretation', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 51: 4 (1971), p. 628. Following José Carlos Mariátegui, Haya envisaged Peru's 'Indian problem' as a fundamentally social, economic and political problem. Unlike Mariátegui, who argued that this problem would be resolved only through a Socialist revolution, Haya pushed – especially in the 1930s, by which time he had softened his protest rhetoric – for a moderate reform programme, including the conservation of the 'comunidad', revised work contracts between Indians and landowners,



Figure 5. Martín Chambi, 'La tristeza andina' (1933) (Courtesy of Teo Allain Chambi, Archivo Fotográfico Martín Chambi)

For Spanish photography curator Alejandro Castellote, Chambi avoided 'the scenes that would have publicised the tremendous precariousness of his race and the violent injustices suffered at the hands of the oligarchy'.¹¹⁸ Prefiguring this recent criticism, Chambi's friend and critic, José Uriel García, contrasted him to 'the great Mexican painter' David Alfaro Siqueiros, whose artistic production functioned as an 'expression of social conscience'; according to Uriel García, writing in 1948, Chambi lacked a 'clear doctrinal and political vision'. He 'needs to dig down further into the complexities of the life of the people', Uriel García wrote, 'not just to discover them but also to denounce them'.¹¹⁹

Despite the visibility of Mapuche political activism, early-twentieth-century Chilean intellectuals often wrote of a degraded, vanquished race; long gone were the heroic titans whom Alonso de Ercilla eulogised in his epic poem *La Araucana*.¹²⁰ As in Peru, scholars – especially archaeologists and anthropologists working in museums – felt the need to salvage all that remained of indigenous

and the promotion of Indian small industries and crafts. Like many in Peru at the time, he claimed it was necessary to rescue the Indian from his state of ignorance, and that this was to be done through an education in trade and technical skills (*ibid.*). On Mariátegui's views on the 'Indian problem', see Marc Becker, 'Mariátegui, the Comintern and the Indian Question in Latin America', *Science and Society*, 74: 4 (2006), pp. 450–79.

¹¹⁸Castellote, 'Martín Chambi', in Garay Albújar (ed.), *Martín Chambi*, p. 74.

¹¹⁹Uriel García, 'Martín Chambi, artista neoindígena', p. 17.

¹²⁰See, for example, Mistral's aforementioned essay 'Música araucana'.

culture before it disappeared forever.¹²¹ But this was not exclusively the case. Some journalists, such as Juan Fernández, used the occasion of Chambi's visit to write in more optimistic terms about the future of the Indian. Shortly before the opening of the exhibition in Viña del Mar, Fernández told readers of *Revista Ercilla* – which was in the process of recruiting an increasing number of exiled Peruvian Apristas (members of APRA) fleeing persecution by Benavides' government to its editorial team¹²² – that Chambi was going to show them 'a Peru that we do not know and a race of which we are unaware'. 'The notion of the downcast, defeated and exhausted Indian', he continued, 'falls to pieces when we are confronted by the magnificent effort of an Indian of today and the Indians of the past who built the Inca empire'.¹²³ The stereotypical image of the downtrodden Indian is undermined by a narrative of praiseworthy indigenous endeavour: on the one hand, that of the ancient Inca empire, which is not surprising; on the other, a contemporary indigenous man, Chambi himself. He is the 'Indian of today' of whom, purportedly, Chileans had been unaware. One of the points I am making in this article is that Chileans *did* know of his existence.

Chambi made visible other 'Indians of today'. 'One theme of my photographs', he told *Las Últimas Noticias*, 'is the life of the contemporary indigenous worker, who maintains – almost intact – the cultural traditions of his ancestors'.¹²⁴ For him, there was no disjuncture between the past and the present; his was not a narrative of the past *versus* present, but the past *and* present as intimately interconnected. Crucially, the modern-day Indian here is a 'worker' – a possible rejoinder, on Chambi's part, to those who thought the Indian was racially incapable of work.¹²⁵ Lira Espejo applauded Chambi as someone who was loyal to his 'class' as well as his 'race'. Via Chambi, he denounced the exploitation and marginalisation of indigenous peoples. They had been forced into submission, but for Lira Espejo this submission 'contains within it a rebellion that has not yet managed to erupt'. As he saw it, there was 'something hidden' in the facial expressions captured in Chambi's photographs: 'an internal rage which pounds away in the chest and that at the slightest incitement [...] will explode'; to Lira Espejo's mind, that moment was not far off.¹²⁶ This would seem to echo the narrative (of the future return of a revitalised Indian) that Valcárcel promoted in *Tempestad en los Andes*.¹²⁷ It also echoes some of the dedications that Chambi collected in his notebooks: writing in 1931, Edmundo Delgado Vivanco celebrated the 'restlessness' ('una inquietud en marcha') and passionate defence of social justice that he detected in Chambi's photography. Not for everyone, then, was Chambi lacking in political vision. In 1930s Peru, the

¹²¹Two key figures who stood out in this regard were Ricardo Latcham and Aureliano Oyarzun.

¹²²Exiled Aprista leader Manuel Seoane was director of (as well as writer for) the magazine.

¹²³Fernández, 'El alma milenaria'.

¹²⁴'Grandeza del Viejo Cuzco'.

¹²⁵See Drinot, *The Allure of Labour* (especially pp. 40–3), on early-twentieth-century Peruvian debates as to how suitable the Indian was for industrial labour. One view was that industrial work – symbolic of 'civilisation' – could redeem and help to 'awaken' the Indian; others saw indigeneity and labour as incompatible. Chambi's photographs largely depicted Indians as agricultural (rather than urban) labourers, but still we could read this as an assertion of their capacity for work.

¹²⁶Lira Espejo, 'Martín Chambi', p. 1.

¹²⁷Valcárcel's classic *indigenista* text, published in Lima by Editorial Minerva in 1927.

'tendency was to use references to culture rather than class to naturalize social differences',¹²⁸ whereas in early-twentieth-century Chile, as told by most historians, class was a more significant social marker than culture or race.¹²⁹ Lira Espejo drew out the interconnections between class and race that he perceived in Chambi's oeuvre, as well as the continuing lack of integration that he detected in Peru, but he did not relate this directly to what was going on in Chile, despite the increasingly frequent expressions of solidarity between indigenous political activists and parties of the Left.¹³⁰ It seems Chambi was a sufficiently blank canvas for people to be able to inscribe him with – and take from him – whatever narrative (of the past or present) they wanted.

Mestizaje through Architecture

One of the photographs that Chambi exhibited in Santiago, and which piqued the interest of local newspapers, was of the bell tower of San Cristóbal church, with its panoramic view of Cuzco (see [Figure 6](#)). San Cristóbal is located in the neighbourhood of Qollqanpata Inca, Sacsayhuaman. This is about 400 metres away from Cuzco's main square, where we find (clearly visible in the photograph) the *Compañía de Jesús* church. To the left of this, in the distance, is the church of Santo Domingo (more difficult to make out in the photograph). San Cristóbal was built in the early years of conquest by the indigenous chief Cristóbal Paulla, to show his people's devotion to Christianity. Santo Domingo too was constructed during this period, on the site of the *Qorikancha*, the most sacred temple of the Inca; and the church of the *Compañía de Jesús* was built upon the palace of the Inca leader Wayna Qhapaq. For Chambi, such constructions epitomised the realities of 'colonial *mestizaje*'.¹³¹ To readers of *Las Últimas Noticias* he explained: 'We see how the Spanish built their homes on top of foundations and walls constructed by the Quechua.'¹³² There are two ways of interpreting this narrative of racial or cultural mixing: on the one hand, a European cityscape has been superimposed on and has erased indigenous architecture; on the other, the Inca city remains visible and defies assimilatory colonial endeavours. In the words of Tom Cummins, 'new structures replaced or were built on the foundations of old ones, but the physical (and, therefore, the historical) presence of the Inca could never be erased'.¹³³

In the 1920s, many of Cuzco's *indigenista* intellectuals, such as Valcárcel, repudiated *mestizaje* as 'inauthentic' and a process of loss (for indigenous cultures) but, as de la Cadena remarks, local discussions about race 'changed significantly in focus in the 1930s from the purist *indigenista* ideology to one that welcomed *mestizaje* as

¹²⁸De la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, p. 140.

¹²⁹For example, Patrick Barr Melej, *Reforming Chile: Cultural Politics, Nationalism, and the Rise of the Middle Class* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

¹³⁰On one particularly important (albeit disputed) event in this regard, see Florencia Mallon, 'Victims and Emblems: Images of the Ranquil Massacre in Chilean National Narratives, 1934–2004', *Labor: Studies in Working Class History of the Americas*, 8: 1 (2011), pp. 29–57.

¹³¹Interview with Chambi, 'El alma quechua', p. 1. The term '*mestizaje*' is used to refer to the process or discourse of cultural or racial (biological) mixing. In this case, the focus is on cultural mixing.

¹³²'Grandeza del Viejo Cuzco'.

¹³³Tom Cummins, 'A Tale of Two Cities', p. 158.



Figure 6. Martín Chambi, 'Campanario de San Cristóbal, Cuzco' (1931) (Courtesy of Teo Allain Chambi, Archivo Fotográfico Martín Chambi)

the project for national and regional identities'.¹³⁴ Cuzco mestizo identity, as articulated by figures such as Uriel García, was no longer set in opposition to indigeneity; instead this new discourse of nation-building embraced indigeneity and allowed it to thrive. It was, to borrow from Florencia Mallon, a 'resistant mestizaje', a 'liberating force that breaks open colonial and neo-colonial categories of ethnicity and race'.¹³⁵

¹³⁴De la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, p. 131.

¹³⁵Florencia Mallon, 'Constructing *Mestizaje* in Latin America: Authenticity, Marginality and Gender in the Claiming of Ethnic Identities', *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 2: 1 (1996), p. 171.

In her recent book on race in Chile, Patricia Richards comments that ‘notions of racial and cultural mixing have occasionally sprouted up over the course of Chilean history’, but argues overall that ‘Chile does not adhere to the [dominant] myth of *mestizaje*’.¹³⁶ Given its prominence in museum narratives, school texts, presidential speeches, the national anthem, art works and literature throughout the twentieth century, I would contend that *mestizaje* emerges as an official discourse of nation-building in Chile just as it does throughout most of the continent.¹³⁷ However, it seems clear that – in contrast to what de la Cadena says of 1930s Cuzco – it operates largely as ‘a discourse of social control’ and is ‘constructed implicitly against a peripheral [...] Indian “Other” who is often “disappeared” in the process’.¹³⁸ As in Lima, official discourses of *mestizaje* in Chile often glorified ‘the image of the pre-Columbian Indian while demeaning and dehumanizing contemporary indigenous people’.¹³⁹ In their version of ‘constructive miscegenation’, Gänger explains (noting the lasting influence of the racial nationalism propounded by Nicolás Palacios), ‘Chileans were a new, white race that had absorbed and assimilated the best of a bygone Indian people, the ancient Araucanians.’¹⁴⁰

Only one Chilean press article of 1936 referred directly to Chambi as representative of a mestizo Peru, but it was the most extensive and detailed piece and is therefore worthy of close analysis. The aforementioned Lira Espejo told readers of *Arquitectura* that Chambi’s photography excited him because ‘the Indian and mestizo are always present [...] the Indian and mestizo with their impenetrable [...] facial expressions, compact like the stones of their monumental constructions...’¹⁴¹ Lira Espejo drew heavily on Uriel García’s studies on colonial Cuzco, especially his assertions that the ‘aesthetic form imported from the metropolis predominated’ in the urban area, in contrast to the rural outskirts of the city, where Indian and peasant traditions remained visible.¹⁴² Whereas for Cummins *mestizaje* was lived as a contest between Inca and Spanish architecture *within* the city, *mestizaje* for Chambi’s contemporary Uriel García – as interpreted by Lira Espejo – was manifested in the struggle between urban Cuzco and its rural environs.

For Lira Espejo, that struggle was about both race and class: the art of urban Cuzco was ‘upper class’ (‘arte de señores’), while, in the small villages outside the city, one found the ‘rustic and vigorous’ ornamental art of the peasants, the ‘real art of the Indian and mestizo peoples’. As Lira Espejo saw it, the ‘affirmation of power’ by the (Spanish) upper classes was countered by the ‘vengeful irony’ of the indigenous and mestizo peasants. This represents one instance, then, of a ‘resistant’ or ‘liberating’ version of *mestizaje* circulating in Chile.¹⁴³ Critically, Lira Espejo’s article shows that Peruvian *indigenista* intellectuals such as Uriel

¹³⁶Richards, *Race and the Chilean Miracle: Neoliberalism, Democracy, and Indigenous Rights* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), p. 8.

¹³⁷Crow, *The Mapuche in Modern Chile*.

¹³⁸Mallon, ‘Constructing *Mestizaje* in Latin America’, pp. 171–2.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁴⁰Gänger, *Relics of the Past*, p. 236. Nicolás Palacios was a physician and writer, and author of *Raza chilena*, originally published in 1904.

¹⁴¹Lira Espejo, ‘Martín Chambi’, p. 1.

¹⁴²Uriel García cited in *ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 2.

García were being read in 1930s Chile. Uriel García travelled to Chile (en route to Argentina) the same year as Chambi.¹⁴⁴ In 1939 a reception was held in Uriel García's honour in Lima, after he was elected as senator for Cuzco. Pablo Neruda, who was on his way back from France to Chile at the time, spoke at this ceremony, and his speech was published in the Chilean periodical *Qué Hubo* a few weeks later.¹⁴⁵ As noted above, it was Uriel García who invited Neruda to the heartland of the ancient Inca empire in 1943, and it was this trip that inspired the latter's famous poem 'The Heights of Macchu Picchu', which – in the 1954 edition published in Santiago – was illustrated by Chambi, who was a friend of Uriel García and worked with him on a book about Cuzco following the devastating earthquake of 1950.¹⁴⁶ Lira Espejo, Uriel García, Neruda and Chambi were thus all speaking to one another directly or indirectly.

The Santiago that Chambi encountered in 1936, however, was no Cuzco and there was no Machu Picchu nearby. Beyond the occasional monument celebrating the glorious military feats of the sixteenth-century Mapuche warriors, there was very little to discern of indigenous Chile in the architecture of its capital city. Perhaps it is to be expected, then, that there is no mention in the Chilean press of Chambi's touristic interest in Santiago. He seemed keen to leave the metropolitan region as soon as his exhibitions there were over, and for a specific reason: as quoted in *Las Últimas Noticias*, he planned 'to go to southern Chile to study the life of the Araucanians'.¹⁴⁷ Like many visiting scholars and tourists at the time, Chambi wanted to observe first-hand how Mapuche people lived. It is the classic exoticising 'gaze' at the 'other', even though the photographer is indigenous.¹⁴⁸

Zig-Zag magazine narrated this visit to the south as one of the highlights of Chambi's trip, and informed readers that 'he took fascinating pictures of the everyday lives of our aborigines' (as well as of the natural landscape) while he was there.¹⁴⁹ As mentioned earlier, the plan was then to exhibit these photographs back in Peru. The visual image of Chile that Chambi was going to disseminate abroad was not the 'modern' or 'progressive' nation of the capital city (although he did talk to the Peruvian press about how impressed he was by the country's economic progress), but rather the indigenous, rural south. The human protagonists that Peruvian audiences were going to encounter, through Chambi's photographs, were 'our aborigines'. Faced with this documentary record, government officials could not deny the existence of indigenous peoples in Chile. As depicted by *Zig-Zag*, they did not even attempt such a disowning; indeed, it was the government that sponsored Chambi's trip south. The choice of words suggests a colonial relationship ('our aborigines') but also intimates acceptance, within the 'lettered city' of Santiago, that Peruvians might come to think of Chile as an indigenous country.

¹⁴⁴Rodrigo Gutiérrez Viñuales, *Cuzco–Buenos Aires: Ruta de la intelectualidad americana, 1900–1950* (Lima: Universidad de San Martín de Porras, 2009), p. 194.

¹⁴⁵'Saludo a Uriel García', *Qué Hubo* (Santiago), 2 Jan. 1940.

¹⁴⁶*Cuzco: Capital arqueológico de Sudamérica* (Buenos Aires: La Pampa, 1951), with photographs by Chambi and prologue by Uriel García.

¹⁴⁷'Grandeza del Viejo Cuzco'.

¹⁴⁸'We are thus reminded of Poole's warning against understanding the gaze as a 'singular or one-sided instrument of domination and control' (*Vision, Race and Modernity*, p. 7).

¹⁴⁹'Martín Chambi, artista peruano'.

Concluding Comments

Chambi's was a camera for hire, as much by the Chilean government as the Peruvian government, although more research is required to ascertain whether he lived up to his promise to exhibit photographs of southern (indigenous) Chile back in Peru.¹⁵⁰ The promise itself, however, is significant. It speaks to the overlaps between Chilean and Peruvian discourses of race and indigeneity, in the context of both countries' efforts to promote international tourism. My analysis shows that while Chambi went to Chile with the aim of debunking racial stereotypes, he ended up reinforcing many of them. This was perhaps inevitable, given that the official purpose of his trip was to unveil a marketable Andean culture that wealthy Chileans would pay money to go and see. The limitations were not just applicable to his photographic exhibitions in Chile. Chambi presented a similarly marketable Andean culture for Peruvians. For inhabitants of Lima in particular, his photographs 'captured in print the strong and silent Indians, with all their distinctive characteristics; the most varied customs and traditions that were foreign to us'.¹⁵¹ As told by *La Tradición*, Chambi's Indians were just as 'other' to the elite of Lima as they were to the elite of Santiago.

This Peruvian photographer's exhibitions and his promotion of these exhibitions via press interviews fed into existing debates in Chile, and therefore help to illuminate the transnational dimensions of intellectual conversations about race in early-twentieth-century Latin America. I have drawn attention to several transnational (predominantly but not exclusively Chilean–Peruvian) cultural and political connections that emerge through and subsequent to Chambi's visit. Peruvian officialdom's appropriation of Chambi's photography as part of its campaign to publicise Cuzco's unique cultural heritage to the world can be read as a response to US archaeologist Hiram Bingham's self-ascribed role as marketer of Inca Peru. In Chile, Chambi's exhibitions were celebrated by a number of periodicals including the well-known *Revista Arcilla*, which had recruited several Peruvian writers, such as Manuel Seoane, to its editorial team. As an Aprista leader, living in exile in Santiago, Seoane openly opposed the government of Benavides. We thus see both official and non-official Peru associate with Chambi's photography, and incorporate him into their oft-opposing (national and continental) narratives. In his piece in *Arquitectura*, Chilean commentator Lira Espejo drew on the work of Cuzqueño educator, essayist and (leftist) politician Uriel García to interpret the stories being told in Chambi's photographs. Pablo Neruda also celebrated the importance of Uriel García's work, and might not have visited Machu Picchu – nor written his famous revolutionary poem about the site, which was later illustrated by Chambi – if Uriel García had not invited him there.

In the current context, when Chambi's iconic images circulate not just continentally but globally, Chilean–Peruvian cultural connections remain strong. In 1995, the

¹⁵⁰The fragmentary primary source material presented here proves only that Chambi took photographs of the southern region; I have yet to find any direct evidence that these were subsequently displayed in Peru. I plan to do more extensive research in Peruvian archives, particularly in Cuzco, and to combine this with research in Argentine and Bolivian archives, in order to expand my analysis of Chambi's transnational encounters.

¹⁵¹'Martín Chambi y sus obras de arte', *La Tradición* (Lima), 22 Aug. 1927.

Museum of Fine Arts in Santiago hosted a much-celebrated exhibition of this artist's work.¹⁵² In 2001, his grandson Teo Allain Chambi met Ilonka Csillag, Director of Chile's National Centre of Photographic Heritage, at a conference in Buenos Aires, and they agreed to work together on a project to recover, preserve and publicise Chambi's photographic archives.¹⁵³ In 2016, the Cultural Centre of Las Condes in Santiago, in collaboration with the Peruvian Embassy, put on an exhibition of 90 photographs by Chambi, and the same grandson was invited to give the inaugural talk.¹⁵⁴ Publicity surrounding the exhibitions of 1995 and 2016 – held in notably more prestigious venues than those of 1936 – demonstrates that this photographer remains something of an open page. As in the 1930s, diverse audiences can manipulate his work to suit their own political narratives about class and race. This malleability (which Chambi himself seemingly promoted during his lifetime) has allowed him to operate as an important cultural mediator, a constructive site of encounter both between and beyond national governments.

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Spanish abstract

En 1936, el fotógrafo peruano indígena Martín Chambi viajó y exhibió su trabajo en Chile. Utilizando un marco transnacional de análisis histórico, este artículo explora los múltiples significados de su visita. Se subraya particularmente el involucramiento de los gobiernos chileno y peruano en este encuentro cultural, y se identifican algunas de las cuestiones en común y conexiones, así como las diferencias, que existían entre los discursos de raza que estaban circulando en Chile y Perú en ese momento. Este hallazgo es importante porque debilita las narrativas históricas dominantes que han tendido a presentar a Chile como un país que – al contrario de Perú – fracasó en involucrarse en la discusión de la llamada 'cuestión indígena' y que han interpretado las relaciones entre Perú y Chile casi exclusivamente como antagonicas y hostiles.

Spanish keywords: Chambi; Chile; Perú; indígena; transnacional; encuentro

Portuguese abstract

Em 1936, Martín Chambi, um fotógrafo peruano indígena, visitou e exibiu seus trabalhos no Chile. Através do uso de uma abordagem transnacional de análise histórica, esse artigo explora os múltiplos significados de sua visita. Em particular, ressalta o envolvimento dos

¹⁵² *Martín Chambi en Chile, fotografías 1922–1944* (Santiago: Museo de Bellas Artes, 1995).

¹⁵³ Teo Allain Chambi, 'La herencia de un archivo', p. 28.

¹⁵⁴ Martín Chambi: La luz de la tierra', 6 April–4 June 2016: <https://antesantiago.wordpress.com/2016/06/02/martin-chambi-en-las-condes/>; last access 28 March 2018.

governos do Chile e do Peru nesse encontro cultural e destaca algumas das semelhanças e conexões, e também diferenças, entre os discursos de raça que circulavam no Chile e no Peru na época. Essa análise é importante porque enfraquece as narrativas históricas dominantes, que tendem a apresentar o Chile como um país que – ao contrário do Peru – tem falhado em envolver-se em discussões sobre a assim chamada ‘questão indígena’ e que também interpretam o relacionamento entre Chile e Peru quase que exclusivamente como antagonista e hostil.

Portuguese keywords: Chambi; Chile; Peru; indígena; transnacional; encontro

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