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*Caupolicán*: Shaping the Image of National Identity  
in Chilean Public Art

A Thesis Presented

by

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Abstract of the Thesis

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*Caupolicán*, the statue created in the nineteenth century by the Chilean sculptor Nicanor Plaza, is considered one of the most popular works of Chilean public statuary. However, the historical trajectory of the statue reveals that the statue was not originally conceived of as a public monument, nor was it even originally intended to represent the historical Native American figure of *Caupolicán*, for whom it was named. Instead, its first identity appears to have been the last of the Mohicans, a character taken from James Fenimore Cooper's novel of the same name. This study explores the circumstances in which the statue became known by these two different identifications and the way in which the statue known as *Caupolicán* became known as one of the most emblematic images of Chilean national identity.

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## INTRODUCTION

In September 1910, Santiago became the main stage for the celebration of Chile's Centennial. The festive atmosphere of the commemoration of the birth of Chile as an independent nation affected not only the civic spirit, but also the development of the arts in the city, as demonstrated, for example, by the opening of the new building for the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.<sup>1</sup> Even so, the museum was not the only domicile for the arts in the city. The festivities surrounding the Centennial also made the urban space of the city itself a suitable context for the installation of new public monuments. Paralleling the nineteenth century Parisian phenomenon of "statuemanía," late nineteenth century public monuments in Santiago populated every major site in the city.<sup>2</sup>

*Caupolicán*, one of the most outstanding works by the Chilean sculptor Nicanor Plaza (1844-1918), was among the most popular public statues erected at this time. It depicted Caupolicán, the Araucanian chief of the Mapuche people, who played a prominent role in the struggle of the Mapuche people against the Spaniard conquerors in the sixteenth century. Significantly, neither its current identification, nor its final public location corresponds to Plaza's original conception of the piece.

Considering that 2010 was Chile's Bicentennial year, and taking into account the fact that there is a lack of formal studies on this work and that information about it is disparate, investigating it further at this time is a pertinent yet challenging undertaking.

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<sup>1</sup> From 1886 the Museum had been installed in the Edificio del Congreso (Congress Building) and later in the Partenón until 1910 when moved to its definite building. Beatriz González Stephan y Jens Andermann (eds.), *Galerías del progreso. Museos, exposiciones y cultura visual en América Latina*, (Argentina: Beatriz Viterbo Editora, 2006), 275.

<sup>2</sup> Pablo Berríos et Al., *Del taller a las aulas. La institución moderna del arte en Chile (1797-1910)*, (Santiago: Estudios de Arte, 2009), 345.

This study is based on a review of primary and secondary sources, including catalogs, newspaper, magazines, images and bibliographies. It analyzes these sources through the lens of the then-current cultural and historical context. Through an examination of the statue's iconography, its reproduction and circulation, and its public legitimization, this study aims to establish *Caupolicán*'s significance within the frame of the discourse on the issues around Chilean national identity.

To tackle these matters, this text is structured into three chapters. Chapter One reconstructs the lost history of the statue through a chronological examination of the period between 1868, the date of its alleged creation in Paris, to 1872, the date of its first public display in Chile at the *Exposición Nacional de Artes e Industria*. In particular, this section investigates the controversy surrounding its misleading iconography, which emerged from the fact that the statue was known by two different identities in two different contexts: in the United States the statue was known as *The Last of the Mohicans*, while in Chile it was recognized as *Caupolicán*.<sup>3</sup> A close analysis of its reproduction and the role of the art market are also considered in order to determine how the former identity was legitimized in the United States.

This section also considers historical primary source texts, which while often containing misleading information, nonetheless delineate how the statue came to be known as *Caupolicán* in the South American context. Because the controversy around this work's identity seems to have originated from the very moment of its conception, it is important to establish how its identity was split and under what circumstances it became an iconic figure in Chilean public art.

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that for the purpose of this study, the statue will be referred to as *Caupolicán* for the reason that it was under this designation that the statue's identity was recognized in the public realm.



Chapter Two discusses *Caupolicán*'s 1910 entry into the Chilean public sphere and its inclusion into modern aesthetic discourse. Although the image was widely known within the context of museums and expositions, it was not until 1910 that it was installed outdoors. In fact, it was at this time that the statue and its iconography consolidated its significant meaning in the discourse around national identity. Hence, this chapter examines the relationship between the statue's iconography and conceptions of national identity of the era, as well as the relationship between its public representation and the actual social situation of the Mapuche people at the time.

Chapter Three examines the impact of the statue on Chilean visual culture and its relationship to existing Chilean and Native American iconography. It includes a general analysis of Araucanian iconography in Chilean statuary in order to determine whether Plaza's statue was the first one to take up this subject matter, and consequently, how influential it was for later Chilean sculptors. Likewise, this section explores the extent to which the image appeared in both local Chilean visual culture, as well as that of the larger Latin American region, through its reproduction in other mediums such as photography, illustrations, and postage stamps.

To summarize my approach then, this study examines the statue of *Caupolicán* in three different stages. The first investigates the main aspects of the historical trajectory of the piece and the existence of two identities for the same statue. The second analyzes its role in the public sphere in the context of the Centennial and accordingly, regarding the discourse of national identity. The third determines the significance of the piece in the context of Chilean sculpture and Latin American public statuary.

Ultimately, this study proposes a revised understanding of the statue of Caupolicán, situating it within two different frameworks. On one hand, this thesis discusses the statue within the United States context and analyzes it through its serial reproduction and commercialization, which resulted in the consolidation of its identity as *The Last of the Mohicans*. On the other hand, this paper examines it within the realm of Chilean public art, pinpointing the relevance of the specific social, political and cultural dynamics — including the influence of the Chilean elite, mass media, and art institutions — at play in the public’s recognition of the sculpture as *Caupolicán* and its subsequent legitimization as a national icon.

## I. CAUPOLICÁN AND THE ORIGINS OF ITS SPLIT IDENTITY

Since its creation in the nineteenth century, *Caupolicán* (Fig. 1) has been considered one of the most important works in the history of Chilean sculpture. Its importance relates not only to its local meaning, but also to its physical location in the heart of one of the most significant landmarks of Santiago.

The celebrated Native American leader Caupolicán gained his place in Chilean history for his role as the valiant leader of the Mapuche people who fought against the Spanish conquistadors during the Arauco War (1550-1656). When the Spanish arrived the Mapuche people —indigenous people of Chile and Argentina— inhabited the Southern Central region of Chile, where they remained during the colonial period. Because the region, located between Bío-Bío and Toltén Rivers, was known as Araucanía the Spanish also called its inhabitants “Araucanians.” It was during the Arauco War that the Spanish poet Alonso de Ercilla immortalized the figure of Caupolicán in his epic poem, *La Araucana* (1569-1589), in which he described the Araucanian leader as a brave and courageous representative of the heroic values of the Mapuche people.

Even so, determining the origins the statue of *Caupolicán* requires a deeper look. The original bronze monument was created in Paris by the Chilean sculptor Nicanor Plaza presumably between 1863 and 1868. In 1863 Plaza obtained a grant to study in Paris, the first of its kind awarded by the Chilean state to a sculptor. Grants such as this one demonstrated the state’s endorsement of European academic training to its artists. This fact is further evidenced by the 1849 hiring of the Italian painter Alejandro Cicarelli (1808-1879) as first director of the *Academia de Pintura* and the 1854 hiring of the

French sculptor Auguste François (1800-1876) as the first director of the *Escuela de Escultura*, where Plaza had studied before leaving the country.<sup>4</sup>

During his stay in Paris, Plaza studied for three years at *l'École Impériale des Beaux-arts*, and specifically with the sculptor François Jouffroy (1806-1882), who was also a professor at the *École* at that time.<sup>5</sup> Some sources contend that while he studied with Jouffroy, Plaza participated in a competition organized by the United States government to immortalize “the memory of ‘the Last of the Mohicans,’”<sup>6</sup> the subject popularized by James Fenimore Cooper’s 1826 novel.<sup>7</sup>

Although no primary source documentation regarding this alleged competition has ever been found, some aspects of what seems to be the first cast of the statue seem revealing. The statue that presumably Plaza crafted for the competition bore three distinctive characteristics: it was a small bronze cast whose dimensions varied from 32 to 34 inches in height, it bore the artist’s signature, and it displayed an inscription on its

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<sup>4</sup> Enrique Melcherts, *Seis Retratos* (Valparaíso: Ediciones Temporal, 1956), np.

<sup>5</sup> *Anales de la Universidad de Chile, 1866*. Tomo XXVIII (Santiago: Imprenta Nacional, 1866), 255-56. Accessed December 12, 2010.  
[http://books.google.com/books?id=MuyrqpJmruIC&pg=PA183&lpg=PA183&dq=1%27Ecole+imp%C3%A9riale+des+beaux-arts+paris&source=bl&ots=DLnFmjMErM&sig=Lh-N95\\_YKiLFeellYec1-PqFXzI&hl=en&ei=p1sFTev4HcH48AbrwKnnAg&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CEIQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=1%27Ecole%20imp%C3%A9riale%20des%20beaux-arts%20paris&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=MuyrqpJmruIC&pg=PA183&lpg=PA183&dq=1%27Ecole+imp%C3%A9riale+des+beaux-arts+paris&source=bl&ots=DLnFmjMErM&sig=Lh-N95_YKiLFeellYec1-PqFXzI&hl=en&ei=p1sFTev4HcH48AbrwKnnAg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CEIQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=1%27Ecole%20imp%C3%A9riale%20des%20beaux-arts%20paris&f=false)

<sup>6</sup> Víctor Carvacho, *Historia de la Escultura en Chile* (Santiago: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1983), 191.

<sup>7</sup> Cooper’s historical novel is framed within the context of the eighteenth century dispute between the British and French armies over the North American colonies. In the story, however, Cooper seems to have confused Mohegans and Mohicans when he named one of the story’s heroes with a *Mohegan* sachem’s (chief’s) name, “Uncas”. Whereas Mohicans inhabited New York State, the Mohegans settled in Connecticut. David R. Starbuck, *Massacre at Fort William Henry*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2002) 93. Accessed May 2, 2011.  
[http://books.google.com/books?id=4voeuWmbd5MC&pg=PA93&dq=james+fenimore+cooper+last+of+the+mohicans+confused+mohegan&hl=en&ei=rK-8Tb7dBiL30gH6tvG4BQ&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CFgQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=james%20fenimore%20cooper%20last%20of%20the%20mohicans%20confused%20mohegan&f=true](http://books.google.com/books?id=4voeuWmbd5MC&pg=PA93&dq=james+fenimore+cooper+last+of+the+mohicans+confused+mohegan&hl=en&ei=rK-8Tb7dBiL30gH6tvG4BQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=7&ved=0CFgQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=james%20fenimore%20cooper%20last%20of%20the%20mohicans%20confused%20mohegan&f=true)

base in Gothic type with the name of the statue: “The Last of the Mohicans” (Fig. 2). The statue depicts a Native person in an alert pose, as evidenced in the forward tilt of his torso, the leftward tip of his head, and the frown on his face that indicates that he has already spotted his enemies (Fig. 3). This tense position reinforces his courageous character and his warrior’s heroic attitude. Indeed, he seems prepared for an imminent military confrontation as demonstrated in the bow he holds, ready for the battle. Arrows and a thick wooden stick, both of which are intended to serve weapons, appear on the rocky ground, arranged as if they could be used at any moment. Moreover, the polished surface of the figure highlights the figure’s defined musculature and epitomizes the academic style in which the character is rendered. Nonetheless, his facial features do still maintain a certain resemblance to indigenous peoples, a fact that demonstrates Plaza’s intention to endow the figure with the likeness of a Native American.

Although the existence of a competition has never been confirmed, the fact that *The Last of the Mohicans* might be considered the original subject of the statue could be assumed precisely by its characteristics, that is, its size and the presence of a title. As the art historian Jacques De Caso points out, the original “was the first to bear the name or title of the sculpture.”<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the size suggests the provisional character of the piece, which probably would take its final dimensions when the artist obtained the commission. These characteristics indicate that the subject of Plaza’s statue originally conceived by the artist was intended as *The Last of The Mohicans* and that possibly the 32-inches bronze was the maquette for a larger work.

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<sup>8</sup> Jacques De Caso, “Serial Sculpture in Nineteenth-Century France” in Jean Wasserman, ed. *Metamorphoses in Nineteenth-Century Sculpture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 3.

## From *The last of the Mohicans* to *Caupolicán*

If we accept the previous account, then we can regard the larger-than-life-size bronze statue of the same figure —devoid of any inscription except Plaza’s signature and the name of the foundry where it was cast— as the *second* statue Plaza crafted of the figure. This second statue was publicly displayed for the first time, in plaster, in the 1868 Salon of Paris in which Plaza presented it as *Caupolicán*. Indeed, that year’s Salon catalog provides the statue’s earliest reference, although there is no indication of its size.<sup>9</sup> As was usual in the nineteenth century, Plaza presented a plaster version of the statue anticipating a commission, which would then make it possible to execute it in bronze or another material. This event in fact happened a year later.<sup>10</sup>

Hence, two separate moments of creation can be identified in Plaza’s work. *The Last of the Mohicans* embodied the artist’s first idea for the statue, functioning as what can be considered the “first original” chronologically and iconographically. However, after the alleged competition, it appears as if the statue’s initial identity as “the Last of the Mohicans” was publicly erased at the moment Plaza assigned it the new identity of *Caupolicán* for its appearance in the catalog of the 1868 Salon. Furthermore, the sculptor himself apparently never again presented the statue as *The Last of the Mohicans*. Thus, it is not only the elimination of the label, the change of scale, and the new cast that produces what we can consider the “new original”, but also the intentionality of the artist

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<sup>9</sup> In the catalog, the statue is identified as Number 3802, and described as: “Caupolican, chef Araucanien qui repousse les Espagnols en plusieurs rencontres (1550-1570); statue, *plâtre*.” *Salon de 1868* (Paris: Charles de Mourgues Frères, Successeurs de Vincnon, Imprimeurs des Musées Impériaux, 1868), 491. Accessed December 14, 2010. <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb399593695/date1868>.

<sup>10</sup> De Caso, 3.

in creating a new subject, for a new audience, with a new meaning, and for a new cultural context. Most importantly, Plaza apparently did not seek to give two simultaneous identities to the statue.

The year 1868 can be established, therefore, not only as the first time that the statue was recognized as an image of the famous Araucanian chief, but also as the initial moment it became linked to Chilean history and particularly to a South American Indigenous figure. It can also be identified as the time when a new original subject – *Caupolicán*— was created.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1869 Salon, the statue was exhibited again. This time the catalog indicated that Luis Cousiño, one of the wealthiest Chilean businessmen of the time, owned the bronze statue.<sup>12</sup> Cousiño's father, Matías, was known for his prominent role in the coal-mining industry during the nineteenth century. When he passed away, Luis was in charge of the family's business. He was also a philanthropist, with particular interest in art, as was demonstrated by his acquisition of the largest private collection of sculptures and other pieces at that time in Chile.<sup>13</sup> The Cousiño family's interest in Plaza's work had started before the artist left Chile. In fact, Matías Cousiño, who died in 1863, had partially funded Plaza's residency in France.<sup>14</sup> This fact reveals how early support and

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<sup>11</sup> Berríos, 222.

<sup>12</sup> The statue was identified by the Number 3642 in the catalog, and described as “Caupolican, guerrier araucanien; statue, bronze (Appartient à M. Cousino)” and Plaza is identified as “élève de l'École des Beaux-Arts de Santiago et de M. Jouffroy.” *Salon de 1869, Explication des ouvrages de peinture et dessins, sculpture, architecture et gravure des artistes vivants* (Paris: Charles de Mourgues Frères, Successeurs de Vincnon, Imprimeurs des Musées Impériaux, 1869), 512. Accessed April 2, 2010, <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb399593695/date1869>.

<sup>13</sup> Ilustre Municipalidad de Santiago, *Arte de Fundición Francesa en Chile*, (Santiago: Andros Productora Gráfica Ltda., 2005), 102.

<sup>14</sup> Arturo Blanco, “Biografía del escultor don Nicanor Plaza”, *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía*, tomo 69, Num. 71, Santiago Oct-Dic. 1930, 259.

patronage of artists by the elite started in Chile. The statue was later installed in Parque Isidora Cousiño in Chile, also known as Parque Lota in (Fig. 4), which belonged to Cousiño. The statue was presumably installed there after being displayed in the 1969 Salon.<sup>15</sup>

Most interesting about Cousiño's support is the fact that he did not seem to consider the lack of accuracy in the figure's features to be problematic. Indeed, the new statue did not appear to represent a South American Araucanian, but rather a North American Native American. Whether it was conceived of as an actual Mohican or just as a conventionalized representation of one is still debatable.

In any case, Plaza's intentions do not seem to have been to depict an Araucanian. For instance, following from his training and the prevailing tastes of the time, he rendered the figure's musculature in more of an academic fashion than according to the actual characteristics of an Araucanian person. Moreover, some of the sculpted details, such as the feathered headdress, the earrings, the necklace, the bow, and the arrows were not part of traditional Araucanian attributes and attire (Fig. 5). This discrepancy is visible in a mid-nineteenth century illustration included in the *Atlas de la Historia Física y Política de Chile* by the French naturalist Claudio Gay (Fig. 6). Nonetheless, it was not until the 1940s that Araucanian communities lodged complaints about this issue. After the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the foundation of Santiago in 1941 Mapuche critics of the statue raised questions about the figure's attire. As Carlos Haiquiñir, President of the Araucanian Society, asserted in 1942, "that statue of Caupolicán, it is not

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<sup>15</sup> Vicente Grez, *Les Beaux-Arts au Chili, Exposition Universelle de Paris, 1889, Section Chilienne* (Paris: Roger et F. Chernoviz), 74.



Caupolicán.”<sup>16</sup> He explained that the figure’s costume was not appropriate for an Araucanian, and would be more suitable for people who lived warmer climates. Also feathered headdresses were never worn by the Araucanians.

Even so, it is important to remember that representational inaccuracy was common in nineteenth-century Latin American statuary, as reflected in the use of stereotyped figures of indigenous peoples in public monuments. This is particularly true of allegorical representations. Take, for instance, the *Equestrian Statue of Pedro I* by Louis Rochet, erected in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1862.<sup>17</sup> Following the example of European allegorical sculpture, Rochet featured Indians at the monument’s base, symbolizing South American rivers. According to the art historian Rodrigo Gutiérrez, the fact that the natives used to symbolize the Amazon River resembled North American “redskins” rather than Amazonian tribes was a hotly debated issue at the time.<sup>18</sup>

A similar situation arose around a statue of the Inca leader, Atahualpa, part of a larger fountain sculpture located in the Plaza de Armas in Cuzco, Peru. As Rodrigo Gutiérrez points out, while representational inaccuracies of Latin American figures by European sculptors were disparaged in many Latin American countries, local artists nonetheless continued to produce works with similar inaccuracies —possibly following

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<sup>16</sup> All translations mine. “Los araucanos piden que desaparezcan las plumas de la cabeza de Caupolicán”, *Las Últimas Noticias*, Lunes 9 de marzo de 1942, 9. Liisa Flora Voionmaa Tanner, *Escultura Pública*, Vol. 2 (Santiago: Ocho Libros 2004), 40.

<sup>17</sup> Leonardo Ladeira, “Monumento a D. Pedro I”. *Rio&Cultura*, May 6, 2010. Accessed March 7, 2010. [http://www.rioecultura.com.br/coluna\\_patrimonio/coluna\\_patrimonio.asp?patrim\\_cod=19](http://www.rioecultura.com.br/coluna_patrimonio/coluna_patrimonio.asp?patrim_cod=19).

<sup>18</sup> Rodrigo Gutiérrez Viñuales, *Monumento Conmemorativo y Espacio Público en Iberoamérica* (Madrid: Ed. Cátedra, 2004), 124. See also Jorge Coli, *Idealização do índio moldou a cultura nacional*. Accessed December 5, 2010. <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fol/brasil500/imagens5.htm>.

European artists' example— demonstrating how common a practice this was for public statuary during the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

In the case of Plaza's work, it is unlikely that its representational inaccuracy responded to its allegorical character. Rather, it is more likely that Plaza never actually intended to represent an Araucanian to begin with. Nevertheless, given the frequent use of stereotyped representations of Native Americans for allegorical purposes in South America, one can assume that nineteenth-century Chilean audiences would have tolerated the statue's representational inaccuracies, and permitted the statue to be identified as an Araucanian, despite the fact that its features were not actually related to those of the real Caupolicán. Ultimately, it is most likely that the reason the statue, which was originally intended by the sculptor to represent a North American Mohican, came to be known as Caupolicán is because of the widespread acceptance of figural inaccuracies.

Although having two different identifications for the same statue might seem unconventional, the truth is that having two different names for the same sculpture was not uncommon during the nineteenth century.

Rodin's *The Defense* (also known as *The Call to Arms*) can serve as an example. It was created for a competition organized by the Departmental Council of the Seine to commemorate the courage of Parisians during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. However, when it lost the competition, the financially strapped Rodin presented it instead for an international competition organized by the Chilean government for the creation of a monument commemorating the War of the Pacific, specifically the Naval Battle of

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<sup>19</sup> Gutiérrez Viñuales, *Monumento Conmemorativo*, 120-24.

Iquique of 1879.<sup>20</sup> Ultimately, Rodin lost this competition as well, and the *Monumento a los Héroes de Iquique*<sup>21</sup> was eventually commissioned from another French sculptor named Denys Puech, and installed in Valparaíso.<sup>22</sup>

Considering the aforementioned examples, two questions arise regarding Plaza's work: Which of the two versions of Plaza's statue is the original? and, Is it possible to have two originals? Indeed, in Rodin's example, the use of the same work for more than one purpose did not seem particularly controversial. In the case of Plaza's statue, however, the dual identities proved to be problematic, as both the piece and its two identifications quickly became popular abroad. As a result of its virtually immediate circulation, the two identities traveled from Paris to two destinations: The United States and Chile.

### **The *Last of the Mohicans* in the United States**

Plaza's work can be framed within the trope of nineteenth century European artistic practices, in which the use of prototypes was common because of the popularization of mechanical reproduction. This fact is evident in the increasing number of serially-produced bronze statues in France at the time. Because of this type of production, models could be reproduced in larger or smaller versions and in different

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<sup>20</sup> A reproduction of *The Defense* is currently located in the city of Viña del Mar, Chile. Liisa Flora Voionamaa Tanner, *Escultura Pública*, Vol. I, (Santiago: Ocho Libros 2004), 136-8.

<sup>21</sup> "Monumento a los héroes de Iquique." Accessed March 7, 2010.  
[http://www.esacademic.com/pictures/eswiki/72/Heroes\\_of\\_Iquique\\_Valparaiso.jpg](http://www.esacademic.com/pictures/eswiki/72/Heroes_of_Iquique_Valparaiso.jpg).

<sup>22</sup> For Rodin, as for many other European sculptors, Latin American public statuary commissions offered a new market and an opportunity to expand their work and possibly generate increased financial profits. Voionamaa Tanner, Vol. 1, 138. Gutiérrez Viñuales, *Monumento Conmemorativo*, 17.

materials. Serial production had an effect not only on the art market —by increasing the public’s access to works of art— but it also compromised the role of the artist in the process of production, handing artistic agency over to industrial producers.<sup>23</sup>

If we assume that *The Last of the Mohicans* was dismissed as a possible commission, we could conjecture that the statue may have seemed suitable for entering into the serialized bronze market. Indeed, the statue’s characteristics coincided with the formal qualities of other serially produced models. Its material, size, and portability appeared appropriate for reproducibility and for the indoor display of a private consumer. Even so, whether it was Plaza’s decision to put up the sculpture into mass reproduction is dubious.

Nineteenth-century technical innovations were a crucial factor in the circulation and legitimization of the identity of *The Last of the Mohicans* in the United States. Its identity as “the last of the Mohicans” did not gain currency in the United States because of the artist’s original intention. Rather, it seems to have been determined by the entities that marketed reproductions of the work for American audiences.

Indeed, during the nineteenth century the art market experienced extraordinary developments, seen, for example, in the increasing commercialization and traffic of works of art from France to the United States. At the time, the most prestigious foundries were in France. Serial bronze sculptures production at these foundries made possible a broader range of affordable works. French serial sculptures were often marketed in stores

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Kashey and Martin Reymert, *Western European Bronzes of the Nineteenth Century. A Survey* (New York: Shephers Gallery, 1973), n/p.

and auction houses in the United States as early as mid-nineteenth century, at the same moment when American audiences were beginning to shape their artistic taste.<sup>24</sup>

The development of transportation and communications allowed the popularization of sculpture, as well as the technical innovations of printing facilitated the dissemination of images of works of art published in illustrated magazines and journals.<sup>25</sup> The favorable attitude toward art and particularly toward sculpture by 1850 related in part to consumers' interest in raising their social status through the consumption of imported works of art.<sup>26</sup> In fact, Americans more often preferred French sculptures than American ones. Most of these works were purchased for ornamental purposes rather than for an aesthetic appreciation of their artistic quality.<sup>27</sup>

The increasing interest in art consumption and the commercialization of art works in both France and the United States may explain the arrival from France of reproductions of the prototype of Plaza's initial project, *The Last of the Mohicans*. The first destination of the statue appears to have been New York, where it seems to have been popular in the American market. Indeed, it appears that it was the production and commercialization of seemingly numerous reproductions of the statue that contributed to the consolidation of its last of the Mohicans identity. This fact also reveals the problems around copyright related to bronze reproduction at that time. Apparently it was not

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<sup>24</sup> Michele Bogart, "The Development of a Popular Market for Sculpture in America, 1850-1880," *Journal of American Culture* (Spring, 1981), 7.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 7.

uncommon that some artists lacked control over multiple copies of their own work.<sup>28</sup> These circumstances had notable consequences. Indeed, Plaza seems to have lost control of the Last of the Mohicans identity of the statue.

### **The reproduction of the *Last of the Mohicans* in the United States**

One of the first times that unauthorized reproduction and commercialization of the smaller version of the statue in Europe and the United States is mentioned comes from the illustrious Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, who had been in Chile since 1886. In the second edition of his most important and well-known work, *Azul* (1888), Darío claimed:

The European industry took advantage of Plaza's creation -without asking him at all, of course, and without paying him- and multiplied it in bronze and terracotta. *Caupolicán* by Plaza is sold in bric-a-brac stores of Europe and America, under the name of *The Last of the Mohicans*! An engraving of it was published in *Ilustración Española y Americana*. He has had glory, but no fortune.<sup>29</sup>

Darío's assertion reveals not only the fact that the statue was reproduced several times first in Europe and later in the United States, but also that the artist did not profit from its reproduction. Most importantly, it sheds light on how the artist lost direct control over the initial identity of the piece. Even so, as was usual for pieces produced in France, the existence of multiple, seemingly unauthorized reproductions of the work did not mean

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<sup>28</sup> De Caso, 11.

<sup>29</sup> “La industria europea se aprovechó de esta creación de Plaza sin consultar con él para nada, por supuesto, y sin darle un centavo y la multiplicó en el bronce y en la terracotta. ¡El Caupolicán de Plaza se vende en los almacenes de *bric-à-brac* de Europa y América, con el nombre de *The Last of the Mohicans*! Un grabado que representa esta obra maestra de Plaza fue publicado en *Ilustración Española y Americana*. La Gloria no ha sido esquiva con el amigo Plaza; pero no así la fortuna...” Rubén Darío, *Azul*, quoted in Raúl Silva Castro, *Rubén Darío a los veinte años* (Santiago: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1966), 86-7.

that Plaza's artistic authorship was not recognized. On the contrary, the versions found in New York and a reproduction in France all carry the sculptor's signature.<sup>30</sup>

Both the statue's smaller size and the presence of a signature help explain why the statue was easy to reproduce serially. Because the original model was signed, it is possible that the artist may have intended to have the work serially reproduced at some point in the future.<sup>31</sup> However, there is no documentation that confirms that this was definitely the artist's intention.

The engraving mentioned by Darío (Fig. 7) does not correspond to the smaller version of the statue, but rather to the larger-than-life-size one. The fact that the image corresponds to the larger version is evidenced by the statue's base, which does not display the same title inscription as the smaller version —*The Last of the Mohicans* written in gothic letters. Instead, it bears a strong resemblance to the larger statue titled *Caupolicán*, which was later installed in Cerro Santa Lucía.<sup>32</sup>

In 1888, the Austrian explorer Charles Wiener, also mentioned the statue, writing:

The statue bought in a New York shop carries the inscription: “the last of the Mohicans.” It seems that this “last of the Mohicans” had great success in the United States, as it was reproduced in more copies than anywhere else. This is very profitable for a few unscrupulous dealers, while the author of this outstanding work of art doesn't have much to live on.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> In Chile, during 1880s some reproductions with the types of *Last of the Mohicans* characteristics found in the American auction houses arrived in Chile. One of them was purchased by president José Manuel Balmaceda in 1886 to be placed in the La Moneda Presidential Palace. Blanco, 259.

<sup>31</sup> De Caso, 4.

<sup>32</sup> *Caupolicán* by Antonio Camacho, *Almanaque de la Ilustración de Madrid* (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1877), 22. Accessed March 26, 2010. <http://www.mimolibros.com/ficha.php?referencia=23015>.

<sup>33</sup> “La statue achetée dans un magasin de New York porte comme légende ‘le dernier des Mohicans.’ Il paraît que ce dernier des Mohicans ayant eu un grand succès aux États-Unis, on a dû le reproduire à plus d'exemplaires qu'il n'a existé de Mohicans de par le monde. Cela rapporte beaucoup à de peu scrupuleux négociants, pendant que l'auteur de cette oeuvre puissante n'a pas de quoi vivre”. Charles Wiener, *Chili & Chiliens* (Paris: Librairie Léopold Cerf, Onzième Édition, 1888), 138. Accessed February 6, 2010.

Wiener's comment not only reveals that numerous copies of the statue were available for sale in New York at that time, but also confirms the broader popularity of the subject. In addition to the extended practice of serial production in the United States, a cultural component also seems to have contributed to the attractiveness of the subject in the American art market. The seemingly unauthorized reproduction and commercialization of the smaller version of the statue can also be explained by the popularity of James Fenimore Cooper's novel in America at the time. Indeed, *Last of the Mohicans* merchandise in general was very popular in America in the nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> Because *Indian Warriors* was already a popular subject at the time, the association of Plaza's statue with the literary character of the *Last of the Mohicans* could have made it very appealing to American audiences.<sup>35</sup>

Wiener also reinforces the suggestion that reproductions of the statue in the United States were unauthorized by the artist. As the passage suggests, art dealers, not the artist, profited most from sales of reproductions of the work. However, it is important to consider the fact that this account was the result of Wiener's trip to Chile. Therefore, it is possible that his version does not reflect his own direct observations, but rather comments he overheard during his stay there; or it is possible that he became acquainted with and repeated Darío's version of the story.

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<http://books.google.com/books?id=t4IaAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA137&dq=nicanor+plaza+%2B+caupolicán&lr=&cd=6#v=onepage&q=caupolican&f=false>.

<sup>34</sup> Douglas Kendall, *A statue with a split personality*, June 10, 2010. Accessed August 7, 2010. <http://fenimoreartmuseum.blogspot.com/2010/06/statue-with-split-personality.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Bogart, 8.



Another commentary that confirms the awareness in Chile that the piece was being commercialized in the United States is that of the Chilean critic Vicente Grez. On the occasion of the 1889 Universal Exposition of Paris, Grez mentioned that *Caupolicán*—the title by which the piece was known in Chile— had been popularized in Europe and the United States by European foundries.<sup>36</sup> Grez remark confirms that it was common knowledge in Chile that different versions and reproductions of the statue were being circulated abroad. Even so, Grez did not mention that the piece was sold as *The Last of the Mohicans* instead of *Caupolicán* in the United States. Yet in France, the piece was known by both names: the large version displayed in the Salon of 1868 was titled *Caupolicán* while the smaller version sold in Europe and America, was still titled *The Last of the Mohicans*.

Significantly there is no evidence that copyright of the statue was ever transferred to any person or institution in Chile or France, as was the case for Rodin, who left the works he possessed and the rights to their reproduction to the French government after he passed away.<sup>37</sup> There is also no evidence that Plaza ever complained about the reproduction of the work after finding out that the statue was being marketed in the United States, a fact of which he was presumably aware.

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<sup>36</sup> “Les oeuvres les plus remarquables de Plaza sont toutes de sa jeunesse: cependant, nous mettons en première ligne la statue du héros araucanien Caupolican, popularisée par les fondeurs européens qui l’ont fait circuler sur les marches artistiques de l’Europe et de l’Amérique.” Grez, 73.

<sup>37</sup> De Caso, 7.

## *The Last of the Mohicans in the twentieth century*

Notably, commercialization of the statuette was not limited to the nineteenth century. To this day, American auction houses sell nineteenth-century reproductions of the piece. While some casts of the model sold in the United States were made in France, others seem to have been produced in New York. At least ten statues, two of which bore inscriptions, have been put up for sale between 1991 and 2011. One inscription confirmed the fact that some of the reproductions were cast in France,<sup>38</sup> whereas others displayed the mark of a New York foundry, as is mentioned in auction houses websites, although they do not identify it. This fact confirms that reproductions were not only imported from France, but also produced in the United States. According to the information provided by auction houses, all the casts of the statue include the inscription “The Last of the Mohicans” as well as an inscription with Plaza’s name; yet none of the works seems to be dated. While in France, the statue has also been sold in at least one antiquities store that marketed it with a label that reads: *le dernier des Mohicans*. The existence of a French language label reveals the clear difference between the reproductions intended for the French market and those bearing an English titled, which were produced to be sold in the United States.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Live Auctioneers, Lot # 166. Accessed March 16, 2010.

<http://content.liveauctioneers.com/item/2018669>.

Eldred’s also offered a reproduction (Lot # 937) signed by Plaza and identified as “French, 19th Century, probably late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.” Eldred’s. Accessed April 3, 2010.

<http://www.eldreds.com/sales/gallery.php?sale=251&method=department&q=8&start=0&increment=100>.

Cowan’s also sold a reproduction with a Parisian foundry mark. Cowan’s. Accessed April 3, 2010.

[http://www.cowanauctions.com/past\\_sales\\_view\\_item.asp?ItemId=38651](http://www.cowanauctions.com/past_sales_view_item.asp?ItemId=38651).

<sup>39</sup>Antiquites en France Accessed December 9, 2010. <http://www.antiquites-en-france.com/item/17166/statue-en-regul-signee-plaza>.

An interesting example of the reproductions that arrived in New York is a cast with golden-brown patina that belongs to the Fenimore Art Museum's collection in Cooperstown NY (Fig. 2), the only one held by a museum in the United States. It was donated to the museum in 1943 by Harry St. Clair Zogbaum, the architect that modified the original house that today houses the museum.<sup>40</sup> The piece could not have found a better home. The museum, boasts a strong collection of American Indian art, folk art, and other fine art, and is currently located on what was once the site of James Fenimore Cooper's farmhouse in the early nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup> In 2010 in fact, Douglas Kendall, Curator of Collections of the New York State Historical Association, first revealed Caupolicán as an alternate identity for the statue.<sup>42</sup>

A mark at the base of the museum's statue is of particular interest. Its inscription reads: "Fabrication Française/Paris/Made in France." The inclusion of the English translation reveals the maker's knowledge of a market for the statue outside France, suggesting the existence of an established relationship between French producers, merchants, and American private collectors.

### ***The Last of the Mohicans in Central Park***

The commercial success of Plaza's statue in the United States was certainly known in Chile. Indeed, the presence and popularity of the statue in the United States

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<sup>40</sup> Douglas Kendall, *A statue*.

<sup>41</sup> Kate Betz, *From House to Home for Great Art*, March 17, 2009. Accessed December 9, 2010. <http://fenimoreartmuseum.blogspot.com/2009/03/from-house-to-home-for-great-art.html>.

<sup>42</sup> Douglas Kendall, *A statue*.

was magnified first by Chilean authors, and later by both American and European writers. These authors, not affiliated with the art market, asserted that a larger-than-life-size copy of the statue — identified as *The Last of the Mohicans* — had been installed in New York's Central Park. American and European writers blindly accepted this assertion even though there is no evidence whatsoever supporting this claim.

In 1904, the American historian Marie Robinson Wright's comment that a reproduction of *Caupolicán* stood in Central Park as *The Last of the Mohicans* is the first such assertion. She wrote:

The sculpture [*Caupolicán*] was the work of Don Nicanor Plaza, who had just returned from Paris after having won fame among the critics of the salon by the exhibition there of his statues of *Susana*, *Jugador de Chueca*, and *Caupolicán*. The last named has made the great sculptor celebrated all over the world; and in Central Park, New York, there is a replica of this splendid statue, conspicuously located, and bearing the title of *The Last of The Mohicans*. The original was purchased by Don Luis Cousiño and placed in the Park of Lota. A copy, life size, adorns the park of Don Rafael Correa Echaurren. *Caupolicán* is a noble interpretation of the historical character that has been presented to us in the pages of *Ercilla* as the invincible hero of the Araucanian Wars.<sup>43</sup>

Later, in 1914, the Englishman Francis J. G. Maitland published his account of his travels to Chile, where he seemed surprised by the story:

How many Americans are aware that the strikingly dramatic bronze statue of an Indian warrior in the Central Park, New York, entitled 'The last of the Mohicans,' is the work of the great Chilean sculptor, Don Nicanor Plaza. This statue, of which New York is so proud, is the replica of a statue of the great Araucanian chief and warrior, 'Caupolicán' which stands in Lota Park, within sight of busy coal fields and smelting works, a reminder of the distant days when savagery ruled supreme, in South of Chile.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Marie Robinson Wright, *The republic of Chile: the growth, resources, and industrial conditions of a great nation* (Philadelphia: G. Barrie & Sons, 1904), 182.

<sup>44</sup> Francis J. G. Maitland, *Chile: its land and people; the history, natural features, development and industrial resources of a great South American Republic* (London: Francis Griffiths, 1914), 275. Accessed March 21, 2010. <http://www.archive.org/stream/chileitslandpeop00maitrich#page/274/mode/2up/search/caupolican>.

This passage seems to refer almost unequivocally to the only statue in Central Park that had this kind of iconography: *Indian Hunter* by John Quincy Adams Ward (1860), which was erected in the park in 1869.<sup>45</sup> *Indian Hunter* and *The last of the Mohicans* are different in terms of attitude and attire, but it appears that the general commentary on “an Indian” in Central Park was confused and later conflated with the *Caupolicán* statue.

Similarly, in 1916 the American Reverend John Augustine Zahm, who undertook several scientific explorations of South America, wrote in a footnote: “It may surprise most people of New York to learn that the much-admired bronze statue of *The Last of the Mohicans* in Central Park is but a replica of the one of the Cerrito Santa Lucia.”<sup>46</sup>

In the same vein, four years later in 1920, Frederick Augustus Sherwood referred to the sculpture in the following terms:

Speaking of Chilean art, it is not, perhaps, generally known that the well-known statue in Central Park, called the ‘Last of the Mohicans,’ is by a Chilean sculptor, Nicanor Plaza. At least, the statue in New York is a cast of one in Lota, Chile. The original is supposed to portray an Auricanian [sic] Indian, one of the aborigines of Chile. In the circumstances, the cry of nature-faking is in order, but few of us recognize the difference between a Mohican and an Auricanian [sic], anyway.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The Committee of the “Indian hunter Fund” presented the statue to Andrew H. Green, Controller of Central Park in 1868, was praised as one of “heroic size” and “truly American in subject.” *Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park for the year ending December 31, 1868* (New York: Evening Post Steam Presses, 1869), 101-2. Accessed March 19, 2010.  
[http://books.google.com/books?id=nqwWAAAAYAAJ&pg=RA1-PA3&lpg=RA1-PA3&dq=annual+report+of+the+board+central+park+1868&source=bl&ots=Fahqj5LsFo&sig=8BdD5mt\\_KQ3EGZVna7cPLRAAf10&hl=en&ei=S6\\_6TL\\_zGY70swPXk4z3DQ&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=4&sqi=2&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=indian%20hunter&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=nqwWAAAAYAAJ&pg=RA1-PA3&lpg=RA1-PA3&dq=annual+report+of+the+board+central+park+1868&source=bl&ots=Fahqj5LsFo&sig=8BdD5mt_KQ3EGZVna7cPLRAAf10&hl=en&ei=S6_6TL_zGY70swPXk4z3DQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&sqi=2&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=indian%20hunter&f=false)

<sup>46</sup> John Augustine Zahm, *Through South America's Southland* (New York: D. Appleton and Company Publishers, 1916), 284. Accessed March 23, 2010.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=L0BIAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA284&dq=mohican+bronze+statue&cd=5#v=onepage&q=caupolic%C3%A1n&f=false>

<sup>47</sup> F.A. Sherwood, *Glimpses of South America* (New York: The Century Co., 1920), 209. Accessed March 23, 2010.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=F2FDAAAIAAJ&pg=PA209&dq=mohican+bronze+statue+central+park&lr=&cd=5#v=onepage&q=central%20park&f=false>

In this passage, the author not only asserts the existence of Plaza's statue in Central Park, but also the idea that the original *Caupolicán* remained in Chile and that a "copy" of it called *The Last of The Mohicans* had been placed in Central Park. Thus, the chronology of the statues' creation dates is reversed by Sherwood so that it appears as if *Caupolicán* were created first and followed by *The Last of the Mohicans*. Moreover, Sherwood assumed that the statue could represent any Native American person, demonstrating that the representational accuracy of the figure's features played a secondary role for American audiences.

Finally, in 1922, professor Jacob Warshaw pointed out that "the splendid statue of The Last of the Mohicans in Central Park, New York, is a replica of the bronze statue of the Araucanian chief, *Caupolicán*, by the Chilean sculptor Nicanor Plaza."<sup>48</sup> Warshaw's book included a "brief bibliography of recent books on Latin America" in which Reverend Zahm's 1916 work appears. It seems likely that Warshaw merely adopted Zahm's account of the story.

Despite the similarities among these versions, one of which was published in Philadelphia and three in New York, it is important to point out that all of them were written as part of personal travel accounts to South America and Chile. None of these accounts specifically pertained to the statue or Central Park, nor did the authors identify the sources of their assertions. Thus, although these versions of the statue's whereabouts and origins are dubious, they exemplify how widespread the idea that *Caupolicán* was

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<sup>48</sup> Jacob Warshaw, *The New Latin America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company Publishers, 1922), 255. Accessed March 16, 2010. [http://books.google.com/books?id=AnFnAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA255&lpg=RA1-PA255&dq=sculpture+contest+last+of+the+mohicans+++central+park&source=bl&ots=00VBZiETGY&sig=biRWAcZpuGS-  
ui8j076rDSfpAd0&hl=en&ei=ONmfS\\_gBh9YzpPjE2Qw&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=9&ved=0CB4Q6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=mohicans&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=AnFnAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA255&lpg=RA1-PA255&dq=sculpture+contest+last+of+the+mohicans+++central+park&source=bl&ots=00VBZiETGY&sig=biRWAcZpuGS-<br/>ui8j076rDSfpAd0&hl=en&ei=ONmfS_gBh9YzpPjE2Qw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=9&ved=0CB4Q6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=mohicans&f=false).

actually in a public place in New York City must have been in Chile at the time. This fact is significant insofar as most of these assertions were made after *Caupolicán* was already installed in Cerro Santa Lucía. For this reason, Central Park, one of the most significant landmarks in New York, could have been considered a natural destination for *The Last of the Mohicans* statue, and therefore would have never been questioned or verified by those who supported that version of the story. Moreover, the statue's presumed popularity in the United States might have contributed to Plaza's prestige in Chile.

As we have seen, the split identity of Plaza's statue emerged from two very different trajectories. The identity of the statue as the last of the Mohicans was legitimized in the United States as a result of the serial reproduction of the piece, the art market, and the public taste for Indian-themed art at the time. The *Last of the Mohicans* was a suitable *objet d'art* for consumption by the emerging American art consumer who bought serial reproductions for their indoor ornamental qualities and their currency as a sign of social status. Ultimately, reproduction of the piece served not only as a vehicle of dissemination of the statue, but shaped its very identity.

Furthermore, the Salon of Paris operated as platform for the transformation of the identity of the original statue into something else. The statue changed both in format as well as in identity, as it was intended for a different cultural and artistic context. When *Caupolicán* arrived in Chile other factors contributed to the consolidation of Plaza statue popularity and its legitimization as a national icon. The larger-than-life-sized *Caupolicán* casts that arrived in Chile from France were intended for settings that were different from those of *The Last of the Mohicans* in the United States. Once in Chile, the larger versions

of the statue were not displayed in private indoor locations, but rather, were presented to broader audiences in the public sphere. Indeed, *Caupolicán*'s dimensions confirmed that it could not be placed in a domestic setting, as was *The Last of the Mohicans*. Indeed, in the case of the latter, the statue's owner was faced with an individual aesthetic experience, devoid of any institutional or spatial mediation, as was the case with the larger cast. In contrast, because of its dimensions, *Caupolicán* appeared more suitable for museums or public sites, where the aesthetic experience became a collective one.



## II. CAUPOLICÁN IN THE CHILEAN PUBLIC REALM

When *Caupolicán* was installed in one of the terraces of Cerro Santa Lucía (Santa Lucía Hill) in 1910, the Chilean public already knew it well. Forty years had passed since the statue's creation and its popularity had grown since its arrival in Chile in 1872. From then on, three elements contributed to the ease with which Chilean audiences became familiar with it: its display in exhibitions, the influence of the Chilean elite on the public opinion, and the role of visual media in disseminating its image to the public.

After nine years in Paris, Nicanor Plaza came back to Chile in 1872.<sup>49</sup> In that year the *Escuela de Escultura* had asked Plaza to take the place of his former sculpture professor, the Frenchman Auguste François, due mainly to François' health problems during his stay in Chile. Once Plaza re-settled in Santiago, his works became well known and his earlier connections with the local elite supported his career.<sup>50</sup>

The sculptor's return to his country coincided with Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna's induction as Intendent of Santiago (1872-1875). Plaza had known Vicuña Mackenna as early as 1858, when he recognized in a publication the sculptor's artistic potential before Plaza entered the *Escuela de Escultura*.<sup>51</sup> Hence, Plaza received extraordinary support from one of the most prominent and influential men of the political and intellectual elite of the time. Vicuña Mackenna was known not only as a prominent historian and politician, but also for his role as the driving force behind the urban modernization of

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<sup>49</sup> Plaza returned to Europe in 1888. He died in Italy in 1918. Melcherts, np.

<sup>50</sup> Berríos, 290.

<sup>51</sup> Blanco, 257.

Santiago, of which the transformation of the Cerro Santa Lucía became an emblematic project.<sup>52</sup>

As part of this attempt to modernize Santiago, Vicuña Mackenna also led the organization of the most important exhibitions of the 1870s. These exhibitions along with his other cultural initiatives, had a significant impact on Chilean cultural development at the time, and provided a useful contextual backdrop for reconsidering Plaza's works. For instance, the *Exposición del Mercado*, organized by Vicuña Mackenna, was instrumental in helping Plaza and *Caupolicán* attain public renown.

### ***Caupolicán at the Exposición del Mercado***

The first exhibition organized by the Intendent was the *Exposición Nacional de Artes e Industrias* in 1872, known also as the *Exposición del Mercado* because it served as the opening of the Mercado Central (Central Market). The exposition was inspired by similar nineteenth century expositions in Europe, such as London's great Exhibition of 1851, which functioned as state-funded showcases of modernization.<sup>53</sup>

It was at the *Exposición del Mercado* that the statue of *Caupolicán* — the version owned by Luis Cousiño that eventually ended up in Parque Lota — was displayed for the first time in Chile. One of the first favorable comments about it came from an essay

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<sup>52</sup> See Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, *Album del Santa Lucía*, (Santiago: Imprenta de la Librería del Mercurio, 1874). Accessed February 22, 2010.  
[http://www.memoriachilena.cl/temas/documento\\_detalle.asp?id=MC0006534](http://www.memoriachilena.cl/temas/documento_detalle.asp?id=MC0006534).

<sup>53</sup> Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, "El arte nacional i su estadística ante la exposición de 1884." *Revista de Artes y Letras*, Año 1, No 9 Tomo II, Santiago 15 de noviembre de 1884, 425. González Stephan and Andermann, 11-19. Accessed November 15, 2010.  
<http://www.memoriachilena.cl/archivos2/pdfs/MC0041374.pdf>.

included in the publication prepared for the exhibition, in which the “Araucanian” *Caupolicán* was described as “a truly admirable work.”<sup>54</sup> A second sculpture of an Araucanian subject titled *Jugador de Chueca* (Chueca Player) (Fig. 8), also by Plaza, was displayed at the same time, apparently the first time it was ever shown. If we assume that *Caupolicán* had been originally created as *The Last of the Mohicans*, we might consider *Jugador de Chueca* as the first sculpture originally conceived of by the artist as an Araucanian.

In *Jugador de Chueca*, Plaza depicts a young Araucanian man playing *chueca*, a traditional Araucanian game — a sort of Araucanian hockey — leaving the work devoid of the kind of heroism evident in *Caupolicán*. This time, the statue maintained the academic features of Plaza’s earlier figures. However, in contrast to *Caupolicán*’s facial features, which resemble a Native American, *Jugador de Chueca* is rendered in a more idealized fashion. Even so, the attire appears more appropriate for an Araucanian than was *Caupolicán*’s. The ribbon on the forehead looks much more accurate than *Caupolicán*’s feathers, as corroborated by the image that illustrates the *chueca* game in Claudio Gay’s *Atlas de la Historia Física y Política de Chile* (Fig. 9). Instead of the bow and the arrows, the wood stick and the balls are consistent with those used in the *chueca* game, and therefore, with Araucanian customs.<sup>55</sup>

Plaza consolidated his fame nationally when *Caupolicán* won the gold medal in the *Exposición del Mercado*. Although some members of the Chilean elite had

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<sup>54</sup> *Exposición Nacional de Artes e Industria de 1872* (Santiago: imprenta de la República de Jacinto Núñez, 1873), 122.

<sup>55</sup> In the Catalog of 1896, the *Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes* mentions that an original bronze statue identified by the number 76 had been bought by the *Comisión de Bellas Artes* for 1,500 pesos. *Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Santiago de Chile. Catálogo* (Santiago: Imprenta y Librería Ercilla, 1896), 14.

commissioned Plaza's works in Paris, the broader Chilean public was not familiar with his work until 1872. After all, Plaza had spent almost ten years in Paris.

The exhibition certainly reinforced the elite's favorable opinion of Plaza's work. In fact, from then on, the sculptor received an increasing number of private and public commissions in Chile. The close relationship between Plaza and his elite patrons continued, as is demonstrated by the fact that many of the works he realized during his residence there were commissioned from prominent individuals, including Luis Cousiño and Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna himself.

Indeed, Vicuña Mackenna's support continued to be important for many years. For instance in 1884, when recalling the 1872 Exhibition, he mentioned Plaza's *Caupolicán*, calling it a "magnificent and Herculean" masterpiece.<sup>56</sup> He also referred to the "graceful" *Jugador de Chueca*, identifying it as the second of Plaza's two "Araucanian studies."<sup>57</sup> These later comments not only demonstrate Vicuña Mackenna's recognition of the Araucanian identity of the two works, but also his favorable attitude toward the academic aesthetic standards embodied by each. Likewise, his remarks confirm the idea that the first statue was by then indisputably considered an authentic representation of Caupolicán.

The statue's display in the Exposition of 1872 is relevant for another reason. At that time, expositions served as showcases to local audiences, so that they could familiarize themselves with these works before they attained the status of a national monument. In Latin America, exhibiting statues indoors in large exhibitions such as this one were often a precursor to their installations as monuments in the public realm.

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<sup>56</sup> Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, "El arte nacional", 430-31.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 430.

Hence, the Exposition of 1872 can be understood as a platform for the presentation of Plaza's work. It can also be seen as the moment that the *Caupolicán* transitioned from the private to the public realm, from the temporary character of the exhibition artwork to the permanency of the monument.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, it was in 1872 that the statue attained cultural currency and became recognizable in Chile. Through the framework of the national exposition, *Caupolicán*'s identity was established in the Chilean context and the heroic qualities of the Araucanians were first introduced into the iconography of national statuary. In this way, *Caupolicán* represented the greatest example of a specific indigenous subject in the Chilean public imagination.

### **The Araucanians and the Chilean Identity**

After Chile's independence in 1810, Chile's cultural and political leaders searched for symbols that could help shape the national image. Given their place in history as defenders of Chilean independence against colonial domination, the Araucanian people were already considered an important symbol of the nation. However, frictions between the state and the Mapuche people had emerged during the second decade of the century.

Because of their investment in notions of "progress" and in consolidating the identity of the modern nation, the Chilean ruling class and the intellectual elite undertook

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<sup>58</sup> González Stephan and Andermann, 18.

the task of reshaping conceptualizations of the nation.<sup>59</sup> In this new context, the perceived racial difference between Chileans and Araucanians was crucial in redefining their role in the modern nation-state. In constructing a modern Chilean identity — ethnically and culturally — the Araucanians were treated as outsiders and therefore, marginalized. This fact had notable consequences for the representation and reception of Plaza's *Caupolicán*.

The state decided that the territory “beyond the Frontier” — the territory where the Araucanians lived — needed to be “civilized.” The political and social tensions resulting from this move reached a high point during the period known as the Pacification of Araucanía. This process, consisting of a set of government actions to occupy and expropriate the Araucanian territories, lasted from 1861 until the 1880s.<sup>60</sup>

As an ardent promoter of the progress and modernization, Vicuña Mackenna also expressed his support of the government military actions in the occupation of the Araucanía. As the historian Jorge Pinto points out, the Intendent stressed the “barbarian” qualities of the Mapuche people several times in his writings, especially in relation to the Pacification of Araucanía.<sup>61</sup>

Perhaps one of the most revealing statements made by Vicuña Mackenna toward Araucanians — and perhaps representative of the general sentiment of the elite towards indigenous groups at the time — was a comment he made in an 1866 conference in New York, six years before the *Exposición del Mercado*. In the statement he commended the

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<sup>59</sup> Jorge Pinto Rodríguez, *El Estado, la nación, y el pueblo mapuche. De la inclusión a la exclusión* (Santiago: Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos, Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana, 2003), 23.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 185-87.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 172.

courage of the Araucanians during the Spanish conquest, but nonetheless contended that as a result of the racial mixing during the colonial period, it was impossible to find an ethnically pure Araucanian person. In fact, Vicuña Mackenna considered this alleged “extinction” of Araucanian indigenous peoples as one of the country’s virtues.<sup>62</sup>

This statement reveals the lengths Vicuña Mackenna’s went to in representing a certain image of Chile abroad, one that stressed the absence of “barbarians” in the country and that implied the dominance of a European rather than a “colored” racial make-up of the population. Yet, at the same time, he upheld the rhetoric around the heroic nature of the Araucanian people in order to emphasize the independent and powerful origins of the country and its people. Ultimately, the construction of the history and identity of the Mapuche people was clearly fraught and complicated at the time due to the conflicting ideological needs of the developing society. Hence, it is easy to see why Araucanian subjects were not common in Chilean artistic imagery at the time.

By Vicuña Mackenna’s account contemporary Mapuche communities were barbarians, a worldview that reflects the predominant exclusion of the Araucanians from the liberal historic discourse of the nineteenth century. Similarly, intellectuals of the time such as Miguel Luis Amunátegui, Diego Barros Arana and Crescente Errázuriz, in the few instances in which they mentioned Araucanians, presented them as second-class citizens, or as members of an inferior race who posed a threat to the civilizing and modernizing principles espoused by Chile’s intellectual and political elite. According to

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<sup>62</sup> Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, *Diez meses de misión a los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica como agente confidencial de Chile*. Tomo 1, apéndice (Santiago: Imprenta de la Libertad, 1867), 15. Accessed December 23, 2010.

[http://books.google.com/books?id=aWgMAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA148&lpg=PA148&dq=sobre+la+condici%C3%B3n+presente+y+el+porvenir+de+Chile+vicu%C3%B1a+mackenna&source=bl&ots=7rSX7AWJyv&sig=cSf5qiTGgfDmQJXvuEge3S1JY4o&hl=en&ei=JWQTTd9sg\\_rwBoarpboM&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=1&sqi=2&ved=0CBoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=porvenir&f=true](http://books.google.com/books?id=aWgMAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA148&lpg=PA148&dq=sobre+la+condici%C3%B3n+presente+y+el+porvenir+de+Chile+vicu%C3%B1a+mackenna&source=bl&ots=7rSX7AWJyv&sig=cSf5qiTGgfDmQJXvuEge3S1JY4o&hl=en&ei=JWQTTd9sg_rwBoarpboM&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&sqi=2&ved=0CBoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=porvenir&f=true).

Pinto, by promoting the stereotype of the indigenous hero of the pre-Hispanic period, Vicuña Mackenna's suppressed and de-historicized the indigenous groups of his day.<sup>63</sup> Thus, he not only denied Mapuche presence in the Chilean historical discourse but also downplayed the threat posed by the current Chilean-Mapuche tensions.

Similarly, while Crescente Errázuriz emphasized the brave image of the Araucanian evoked by Alonso Ercilla's epic poem, *La Araucana*, he nonetheless believed it to be merely a popular fantasy.<sup>64</sup> Ultimately, the exclusion of Araucanians in the popular conceptualization of the nation was problematic, not only in political terms, but also in terms of historical discourse, as they were marginalized in both realms.

### ***Caupolicán* as an image of Chilean identity**

The fraught relationship between Araucanians and the nation, and the problems around using their image to represent national identity were also visible in the artistic realm. Although the pre-Hispanic past had been considered an integral part of Chilean national history in the early nineteenth century, the mid-nineteenth-century tensions between Araucanians and the state resulted in the destabilization of the Araucanians historical and political position. While pre-Hispanic heroes remained important romantic symbols of national pride, there was little discourse around the problematic nature of their actual historic and contemporary relationship with the state. Even among those who praised the statue of *Caupolicán* as a heroic representation of the Araucanian race, none dared to establish any connection between the past and the present.

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<sup>63</sup> Pinto, 172.

<sup>64</sup> Crescente Errázuriz, *Historia de Chile sin gobernador*, 420-421, cited in Pinto, 176.



Somehow, the temporal distance between the romanticized Caupolicán of a far away time and the “pacified” Araucanians of the present moment allowed the former to be considered worthy of being a symbol of national identity.

Times of war often cause people to identify the elements that unify them and to create a collective sense of belonging to the nation. During these periods, heroic figures are utilized to represent the national spirit and patriotism. In Chile, this kind of situation emerged in 1879 with the Pacific War (1879-1884), in which Chile fought against Peru and Bolivia. The war strengthened the Chilean national spirit, a fact that is reflected, for instance, in the increasing numbers of artistic commissions of commemorative monuments installed in Santiago, which became the primary sculptural format used of the 1870s and 1880s in the public realm.<sup>65</sup>

Interest in the national was seen in relation to contemporary history rather than through past history. Nonetheless, the widespread interest in national subjects did not appeal to many artists, as evidenced by Vicuña Mackenna’s complaints in 1884 that artists were not interested in representing episodes of the Pacific War for the 1884 Exposition.<sup>66</sup>

The search for national icons at this time had a favorable effect on the popularity of Plaza’s statue. The general positive attitude towards the 1872 display of *Caupolicán* in Chile results from two elements: its academic style and its heroic character.

When Chile participated in the 1889 Universal Exposition of Paris, the statue received renewed commentary abroad. Alluding to Araucanian heroism, the Chilean critic Vicente Grez wrote: “The Caupolicán is the personification of a race that Spain,

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<sup>65</sup> Berríos, 345.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 344.

after its conquest of America could not subdue despite a three-century long struggle.”<sup>67</sup> Here, Grez stresses both Caupolicán’s braveness and his race as a distinctive aspect. Although he does not mention the Araucanian as a Chilean hero, he is nonetheless meant to represent Chilean identity to a foreign audience. This suggests that, though it is not explicitly pointed out, Caupolicán’s image was considered part of the national historic and artistic imagery.

Exhibitions were not the only stage in which the statue was exhibited to the public. In fact, magazines operated as an effective vehicle to disseminate *Caupolicán*’s image beyond the boundaries of the museum and national exhibitions, exposing it to wide-ranging audiences. This exposure partially explains why *Caupolicán* was so well known before it had been placed at Cerro Santa Lucía.<sup>68</sup> In fact, between 1872 and 1910 the impact of *Caupolicán* increased, in part because it was mentioned many times in different contexts, and in part because its image was spread through emerging illustrated magazines.

An interesting case is the first issue of *Chile Ilustrado*, published in 1902, in which the illustration of the statue appears not in the context of an exhibition, but instead as part of an image representing the idea of the national. Along with two other issues published in 1902 and 1903 (Figs. 10, 11, and 12), an illustration of the statue by Alejandro Fauré appeared as part of a larger image, on the first page of each issue along

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<sup>67</sup> “Le Caupolican est la personnification d’une race que l’Espagne, après sa conquête de l’Amérique, ne put soumettre malgré une lutte de trois siècles. L’original de cette belle statue fut acheté à Paris par M. Louis Cousiño, et s’élève aujourd’hui dans une des avenues du magnifique parc de Lota. Un autre amateur enthousiaste, M. Rafael Correa Echaurren, en possède une reproduction de grandeur naturelle, dans son parc de los Perales.” Grez, 74.

<sup>68</sup> Berríos, 346-47.

with the magazine's title. The very title of the magazine, the contents of which were mainly national literature and art, indicated its particular focus on national topics.

Indeed, the illustration —which demonstrates the influence of Art Nouveau that was predominant in Fauré's works<sup>69</sup> — shows at least three elements that can be considered national icons. In the first place, the illustration includes a Chilean landscape depicting the Andes in the background and the image of Cerro Santa Lucía. Landscapes were commonly represented in nineteenth-century painting as one of the most meaningful subjects of Chilean national identity. Secondly, on the left-hand side, the image includes a circular figure with the characteristics of the national emblem, the white star of the Chilean flag inscribed within a circle with a blue upper half and a red bottom half. Thirdly, on the right-hand side, the illustration shows an image of Plaza's statue. This reveals not only that the image of the statue continued being published after its first public display in the 1872 *Exposición del Mercado*, but also confirms that for some, the statue was as representative of Chilean national identity as the landscape and the national emblem.

In the third issue of *Chile Ilustrado* of 1903, the illustration was included in the same format as the previous one, as well as a photograph of the statue —part of a review of the works displayed that year at the Salón Nacional (Fig. 15). In the three issues, the image of *Caupolicán* was placed on the top of the page above a photograph depicting prominent women of Chilean society, such as María Errázuriz Echaurren, the President's

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<sup>69</sup> See Mariana Muñoz and Fernanda Villalobos, *Alejandro Fauré. Obra gráfica* (Santiago: Ocho Libros, 2009).

wife. Hence, these illustrations served not only to disseminate the image but also to establish its significance as a national icon.<sup>70</sup>

During the time of Chile's Centennial, comments about the statue continued in the same vein as those of the past. *Caupolicán* was considered one of the most important heroic figures of Chile's historical past. However, his image remained detached from any connection with contemporary issues regarding the fraught situation of Araucanians in Chilean society. Although at the moment of the Centennial the tensions seemed to have decreased, the place of the Mapuche people in the construction of the nation did not yet appear clearly defined. The clearest example of this was the commentary of French critic and artist Richard Richon-Brunet, who in his 1910 article "El Arte en Chile" stressed the statue's academic style as well as its local and heroic qualities:

This Indian is not just any figure, nor a simple pretext for making a work with the intention to attract attention; it has greatness and nobility, it is an epic figure that outstandingly embodies a race that well and exactly expresses the idea Ercilla gave us of these Homeric heroes of the first Araucanian wars.<sup>71</sup>

This passage reveals the extent to which Richon-Brunet valued not just the statue's aesthetic qualities, but moreover the powerful character of the Araucanian's image. Moreover, like previous commentators, he relates its significance to its literary source, *La Araucana*, rather than to the actual historical figure of Caupolicán. Hence, it is clear that

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<sup>70</sup> Revista *Chile Ilustrado*, Revista Mensual, Año 1, No 1 (Santiago: Imprenta Barcelona, Mayo 1902), np. Revista *Chile Ilustrado*, Revista Mensual, Año 1, No 2 (Santiago: Imprenta Barcelona, Junio 1902), np. Revista *Chile Ilustrado*, Revista Mensual, Año 2, No 16 (Santiago: Imprenta Barcelona, Noviembre 1903) np. Accessed December 14, 2010. [http://books.google.com/books?id=92UoAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=revista+chile+ilustrado&source=bl&ots=kYbxFyfaK4&sig=KxNC4e6Y260jID3cZj8Prlw0yD0&hl=en&ei=0B8ITbznDifCsAPamfyfDg&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=5&sqi=2&ved=0CDQQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=Caupolic%C3%A1n&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=92UoAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=revista+chile+ilustrado&source=bl&ots=kYbxFyfaK4&sig=KxNC4e6Y260jID3cZj8Prlw0yD0&hl=en&ei=0B8ITbznDifCsAPamfyfDg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&sqi=2&ved=0CDQQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=Caupolic%C3%A1n&f=false).

<sup>71</sup> "Este indio no es una figura cualquiera, ni un simple pretexto para hacer una obra con la intención de llamar la atención; tiene grandeza y nobleza, es una figura de epopeya que sintetiza bien una raza y traduce muy exactamente la idea que de estos heroes homericos de las primeras guerras de la Araucanía nos ha dado Ercilla." Ricardo Richon-Brunet, "Conversando sobre Arte". *Revista Selecta*, Año II, No 1 (Santiago, Abril 1910), 8.

aesthetic comments about *Caupolicán* remained distinct from the political and social sphere, at least regarding the contemporary situation of the Araucanians, whose incorporation into Chilean society was still unclear.

Notably, later in the article Richon-Brunet did recognize the connection between the statue and James Fenimore Cooper's novel, and hence the existence of a parallel iconographic discourse. Even so, instead of engaging in a debate about its identity, he reversed its meaning, turning a local iconographic reference into a broader Pan American discourse. He wrote:

In this way, Caupolicán by Mr. Plaza, appearing shortly after Fenimore Cooper's novels, came to symbolize, not only the Araucanian epic in a corner of South America, but in all the indigenous races of the whole American continent. It is known that in several places and parks in the United States, this statue has been popularized with the name of Cooper's hero, the Last of the Mohicans...<sup>72</sup>

This passage does not discuss the origin of the work as *The last of the Mohicans*, but rather the significance of its iconography as an exemplar of "Indian-ness." In addition, it confirms that the version of a reproduction existing in New York still existed. However, Richon-Brunet did not seem to be particularly concerned about the duality of the image, nor to think it might jeopardize its significance in the Chilean context.<sup>73</sup> In fact, Richon-

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<sup>72</sup> "Y así como el Caupolicán del señor Plaza, apareciendo poco después de la plena boga de las novelas de Fenimore Cooper, llegó a simbolizar, no solamente la epopeya araucana de un rincón de la América del Sur, sino toda la raza indígena del continente Americano entero. Se sabe que en varios sitios y parques de los Estados Unidos, esta estatua se ha popularizado con el nombre del héroe de Cooper, el Último de los Mohicanos..." Ricardo Richon-Brunet, "Conversando sobre Arte", 8.

<sup>73</sup> The more recent testimony of the significance of Caupolicán as national icon was that mentioned in 1993 by Jaime Soto Aliaga, member of the Chilean Philatelic Society. He described the presence of a bronze nineteenth century cast in the Infantry Regiment No. 1 "Buin" in Santiago with the inscription: "The Last of the Mohicans." Aliaga expressed first disappointment when realized it bore the inscription, but then he instead identified the statue as *Caupolicán*. As he pointed out, the association of the image of Caupolicán and the statue was so strong at that time that the first image most Chileans had in mind when they thought of the Araucanian chief, was Nicanor Plaza's statue. Jaime Soto Aliaga, *El Arte de los Sellos Postales en Chile* (Santiago: 1993), 57.

Brunet himself suggests in the same article that the statue should be placed in the public realm.

Liisa Flora Voionmaa explains that in his critiques on the statue, Richon-Brunet referred to *Caupolicán* not only as symbol of the nation's land, but also as a symbol of its virtues. Although he did not specify what virtues he is referring to, the remark confirms Richon-Brunet's opinion of Plaza statue as a national icon.<sup>74</sup> This is possibly the point at which the heroic became nationalized, and the connection between the figure and the local were related to ideas around the Chilean nation.

Ultimately, it appears that instead of questioning the original identity of the statue, critics such as Richon-Brunet and intellectuals such as Vicuña Mackenna legitimized the statue's identity as Caupolicán, and promoted its entry and acceptance in the public realm, acts which supported its eventual emergence as a national icon. Thus, by 1910, the year of the celebration of Chile's Centennial, the statue had been exhibited more than once, its image had been published several times, and its identity as Caupolicán had never been questioned. On the contrary, it seemed to be considered as a representative image of the Mapuche people and displayed along with images of actual Araucanians as demonstrated in a special 1910 issue of *Zig Zag*, one of the most popular miscellaneous magazines at the time (Fig. 13). The statue, which is identified in the magazine as Plaza's work, appears first on the left hand side of the page, followed by representative images of the Araucanian community: Araucanian women, houses and a cemetery. The fact that the statue appeared in a section about the region where Araucanians lived, demonstrates that in Chile the statue was assumed to truly represent an Araucanians.

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<sup>74</sup> Voionmaa Tanner, Vol I, 137.

Even so, the statue's appearance departed notably from the images of the indigenous people arranged along with it in the magazines' page.

### **Caupolicán in Cerro Santa Lucía**

In September 1910, different activities were organized to commemorate the Centennial, many of which were related to the arts. The most notable was the inauguration of the new building of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes where the 1910 International Exposition of Art was to be held. Within the context of such a festive period, the installation of *Caupolicán* at Cerro Santa Lucía was a meaningful occasion.

During this period the most influential sources promoting *Caupolicán*'s reception in the public realm were art critics and social elites. One influential art critic, for instance, was the same Richard Richon-Brunet, who served as the General Secretary of the 1910 International Exposition. In an article published three times that year, he suggested that Plaza's *Caupolicán* should be placed in a public site. The article was first published in *Revista Selecta*, later in *Diario El Mercurio*, and finally in the exposition's catalog.<sup>75</sup> Although Richon-Brunet was not specific in the article about which version of the statue he was referring to, the evidence demonstrates that it was the larger-than-life cast owned at that time by the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. According to diplomatic records, a cast of the statue was sent to Chile in 1893. That is presumably the larger-than-life-size bronze cast with green patina signed and dated in 1869 in Paris (from the

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<sup>75</sup> Ricardo Richon-Brunet, "Conversando sobre Arte", 8. Ricardo Richon-Brunet "El arte en Chile", en *Revista Selecta*, Año II, No 6 (Santiago: Septiembre 1910), 231. Ricardo Richon-Brunet, *Exposición Internacional de Bellas Artes. Santiago de Chile. Catálogo Oficial ilustrado* (Santiago: Imp. Barcelona, 1910), 33-34. See also Carvacho, 193.

Molz foundry), and later installed in Cerro Santa Lucía in 1910.<sup>76</sup> As stated in the museum's catalog of 1896, the statue was bought by the Chilean government for the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.<sup>77</sup> Occupying one of the main halls in the museum, *Caupolicán* had been displayed several times, as is evidenced in documentary photographs of the statue in both the 1899 and 1903 Chilean Salons (Figs. 14 and 15).

Indeed, Richon-Brunet's idea that *Caupolicán* could be installed in a public place, coincided with the Comisión de Bellas Artes decision a month later to move the statue from the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes to Cerro Santa Lucía. Created in 1887, this commission — which since its beginnings included artists that had attained successful careers in Europe — was organized to promote national artistic production through state funding. It was also in charge of annual exhibitions and salons.<sup>78</sup> By May 1910 the commission concluded that the statue would be placed on the main landmark of the city, the Cerro Santa Lucía, in order to embellish it with an image “of the most characteristic hero of the Araucanian race, Caupolicán.”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> As stated in a note signed by Augusto Matte on March 29, 1893 from Paris, the dispatch of the statue, requested by the Minister of Public Instruction, was notified to the State Treasurer of Valparaíso in an official letter numbered 1208 on March 17, 1893. Augusto Matte, *Nota Diplomática 29 de Marzo de 1893*. Archivo Nacional, Ministerio de Educación, vol. 874.

<sup>77</sup> The catalog states that the Chilean government bought an “original” for 2,000 pesos. *Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Santiago de Chile. Catálogo* (Santiago: Imprenta y Librería Ercilla, 1896), 22. Accessed November 28, 2010. [http://www.memoriachilena.cl/temas/documento\\_detalle.asp?id=MC0036528](http://www.memoriachilena.cl/temas/documento_detalle.asp?id=MC0036528).

<sup>78</sup> González Stephan and Andermann, 274. Berríos, 387.

<sup>79</sup> It is also mentioned in the minutes that the Commission intended to ask permission to the government to transfer the statue to the Administration of the City of Santiago, then belonging to the National Museum of Fine Arts. *Acta de la Comisión de Bellas Artes*, 10 de mayo, 1910, 115. Centro de Documentación de la Biblioteca del Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Chile. The minutes of June 23, 1910 gave instructions that the statue should be handed over to Santiago's Municipality to be placed in Cerro Santa Lucía. *Acta de la Comisión de Bellas Artes*, 23 de junio, 1910



As the minutes reveal, the commission did not intend to place Plaza's statue only at the site. Another statue was intended to stand nearby: Caupolicán's wife, *Fresia*, sculpted by Lucas Tapia. However, for an unknown reason, *Fresia* was never installed.

*Caupolicán*'s installation in Cerro Santa Lucía was not motivated by an explicit intention to use the Araucanians to represent Chilean identity. However, its placement there suggests that Caupolicán was nonetheless considered a symbol of national identity. Certainly the decision could also be related to Plaza's fame and the popularity and familiarity of the statue. Indeed, art critics had already legitimized Caupolicán as a Chilean figure. Even so, both Richon-Brunet's article and the Fine Arts Commission's minutes characterize Araucanians as a different race from the Chileans, a fact that reveals uncertainty surrounding Chilean national identity at the time.

By September 1910 the statue was already installed in Cerro Santa Lucía, as documented in a page included also in *Zig Zag* (Fig. 16), although the photograph reveals that the statue was not installed in its current place, that is, upon a rock located on one of the terraces of the cerro (Figs. 17 and 18). Thus, in the public space, the statue finally became a monument, an image that officially commemorated the heroic image of the Araucanian people. From that point on it was meant to represent both historic memory and national identity.

Since Araucanians were almost exclusively associated with their heroic character and were forever framed within the pre-Hispanic times, *Caupolicán* eventually acquired a particular significance. In the second half of the nineteenth century, conceptions of "the national" were linked to historical patriotic scenes and heroic deeds, avoiding recent episodes of indigenous struggles. In this context, relying upon the figure of Caupolicán

became the only way to incorporate an Araucanian subject into the public realm without dealing directly with the problematic contemporary situation surrounding indigenous groups.<sup>80</sup> Thus, Caupolicán represented an exceptional case; his statue's placement in the public realm can be explained precisely because it did not pose a threat to the particular historical narrative established by the intellectual elite.

### **The sculptural program of the Cerro Santa Lucía**

After Vicuña Mackenna had traveled to Paris and had personally witnessed Baron Haussmann's Second Empire transformation of that city he was inspired to modernize Santiago into "the Paris of America" and conceived of a transformation project for the Cerro Santa Lucía (1872-1874).<sup>81</sup> This was an aspiration shared by many other Latin American city leaders who sought to emulate the kind of progress exhibited by the European cultural capital. They believed that such modernization programs could help peripheral nations achieve the same status as European cities.<sup>82</sup>

Cerro Santa Lucía (Fig. 19), known as Huelén before the arrival of the Spanish, was a significant place in Santiago. In fact, it was the location of Spanish conquistador Pedro de Valdivia's foundation of the city in 1541. Hence, the hill's transformation project came to represent a synthesis between past and present, history and modernization. Indeed, it reflected efforts to redefine the hybrid nature of the nation, resulting from the colonization process, and to reevaluate the dominance of European

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<sup>80</sup> González Stephan and Andermann, 278.

<sup>81</sup> Voionmaa Tanner, Vol. I, 106-09.

<sup>82</sup> González Stephan and Andermann, 15.

over local cultures. During this period, all the former Latin American colonies were forced to redefine themselves in order to create cohesive nation-states that were capable of dealing with their dual identities.<sup>83</sup> A part of this process was reestablishing ties to traditional culture and history.

Conceived of for recreation, the hill's transformation included a sculptural program with ornamental and commemorative elements.<sup>84</sup> Most of the statues for the hill were commissioned from Val d'Osne, a well-known French foundry that produced numerous sculptures for European and Latin American cities. The Intendent Vicuña Mackenna utilized Cerro Santa Lucía as a site to involve Chile in Western cultural and artistic trends, not only through the hill's new design, but also through its sculptural program. The original project included a group of statues of eleven South American capitals, of which only two, Caracas and Buenos Aires — both commissioned from the French sculptor Mathurin Moreau — were eventually installed due to the elevated costs of the entire group.<sup>85</sup> In addition, other sculptures of classic subjects were also situated there: Neptune, Diana, Polimnia, Ceres and Minerva as well as a copy of Cupid by Bouchardon.

Commissioning public statuary from European artists was a common practice at the time. Indeed the statue commissions for Santa Lucía were purchased from a French foundry because there were few Chilean sculptors available to produce such work. Furthermore, since the designers of the hill's program sought to emulate a Parisian model, the French foundries held more prestige than local sculptors. It was not until later

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<sup>83</sup> Jorge Larraín, *Identidad chilena* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2001), 85-6.

<sup>84</sup> Voionmaa Tanner, Vol. I, 119. See also Vicuña Mackenna, *Album del Santa Lucía*.

<sup>85</sup> Ilustre Municipalidad de Santiago, 63.

that sculptures by Chilean artists were installed in public sites. In fact, the first Chilean artist to have his works installed in Santiago was José Miguel Blanco in 1877.<sup>86</sup> Blanco had been the second sculptor sent to Paris after Nicanor Plaza.

For these reasons, *Caupolicán*'s installation on Cerro Santa Lucía was unique because it was the only public statue created by a Chilean sculptor and the only one celebrating an indigenous subject. In fact, in some ways, *Caupolicán*'s presence could be considered a challenge to the predominant European style and content of the original project. Despite its academic style, the figure of *Caupolicán* added a local reference to the Santa Lucía. In the end, *Caupolicán* seemed to contribute to the visual construction of a hybrid, and therefore more authentically national discourse, which incorporated both European and Chilean iconographies. It is also distinguished from the other sculptures placed in Santa Lucía, because it is the only statue whose subject is taken from national history instead of allegories and mythology.

Indeed, Plaza's work represented a local image, for which the public realm was a relevant space of recognition and validation. However, the statue's public installation hardly indicated a true reflection of contemporary reality. In fact, the statue attained a great deal of renown that it still carries to this day. The statue's representation of a heroic interpretation of the "national" enabled it to be employed as a vernacular image of national identity. However, the image it put forth was one tied to a version of history that did not have any correlation with contemporary reality. Indeed, to some extent, it created a fictive discourse that was only supported by remote historical references. Ultimately, the public realm was not only a forum for the display of contemporary artistic trends, but also a stage for the construction of an image of the modern nation.

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<sup>86</sup> Voionmaa Tanner, Vol. I, 122.

Significantly, Chile is not the only Latin American country in which there was a gap between what the nation actually was and how the authorities presented it. Other Latin American countries experienced similar inconsistencies especially in relation to pre-Hispanic history and contemporary Native Latin American realities.<sup>87</sup> In a very effective way, the figure of Caupolicán provided the Chilean people with a vernacular hero, while at the same it also represented the first time that the image of an Araucanian was exhibited in the Chilean public realm. Indeed, presenting an Araucanian subject in the public realm was not only a novelty for public art, but also for Chilean sculpture more broadly. It does not just represent the public recognition of an indigenous subject as a national reference, but also it demonstrates the acceptance the hybrid nature of Chilean identity.

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<sup>87</sup> González Stephan and Andermann, 28.

### III. CAUPOLICÁN AND INDIGENOUS ICONOGRAPHY

*Caupolicán* occupied an important place not only in the Chilean public realm but also in the broader context of Chilean art and visual culture. The significance of the statue as a symbol of national identity was demonstrated in other media besides just painting and sculpture.

The bronze statue of *Caupolicán* was not the first representation of the Araucanian chief, but its material characteristics allowed it to achieve greater popularity than other mediums. In fact, *Caupolicán* was first represented in painting. Indeed, indigenous subjects — *Caupolicán* in particular — appeared in painting before sculpture. This was due in part to the higher costs involved in sculptural practice.

The earliest examples of such subjects in nineteenth-century painting are found in works by the French painter Raymond Monvoisin, who created two pieces depicting the Araucanian chief: *La Captura de Caupolicán* (1854) (Fig. 20) and *Caupolicán prisionero de los españoles* (1859), both painted while he was in France.<sup>88</sup> Whereas Plaza's statue stressed *Caupolicán*'s role as warrior, Monviosan's *La Captura de Caupolicán* represented the Araucanian in a different fashion. In contrast with Plaza's work, the romantic painter depicts a scene in which *Caupolicán*, has been taken prisoner by the Spaniards, before being executed. Following Alonso de Ercilla's poem, *La Araucana*, the painting represents the moment in which *Caupolicán*'s wife, *Fresia*, repudiates him

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<sup>88</sup> Juan Manuel Martínez, *La Pintura como Memoria Histórica. Obras de la Colección del Museo Histórico Nacional*, (Santiago: Museo Histórico Nacional, 2009), 47. See Gutiérrez Viñuales, 470.

for being captured by the enemy. According to Ercilla, Fresia threw to the ground her little son, claiming that she did not want an infamous father's son.<sup>89</sup>

At the time, the painting's circulation was restricted, remaining in the domestic realm. From the moment it was created, *La Captura de Caupolicán* belonged to a private collection until the 1970s, when it became state property. For this reason, it was never displayed in an exhibition and was not exposed to a larger audience, as was Plaza's statue.<sup>90</sup> For this reason, Plaza's works seemed to attain wider visibility and enjoy more popularity than any other pictorial representation of the Araucanian chief.

In the sculptural field, *Caupolicán* not only represents a new kind of subject, but also it demonstrates a new way of representing indigenous people. The first one to do so was the monument dedicated to *La Libertad Americana*<sup>91</sup> created in 1829, and installed in Santiago's Plaza de Armas in 1836 to commemorate the figure of Simón Bolívar. Like other nineteenth-century monuments, it represented an allegory in which an unknown Native American symbolized the image of the American continent. The statue, executed in Genoa by Francesco Orsolino, depicted a woman symbolizing liberty breaking the chains of a female Native American, whose stereotyped costume included feathers. This fact suggests that the European artist conceived this work within the European iconographic tradition of using allegories to represent the continents.

This practice had been used widely from the sixteenth century onwards, and became well known through cartographic images, engravings, and paintings.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Martínez, 47.

<sup>90</sup> The painting belongs to the Collection of the Museo Histórico Nacional, Chile.

<sup>91</sup> Accessed March 10, 2011. <http://www.plazadearmas.es.tl/Un-poco-de-historia.htm>.

<sup>92</sup> Voionmaa Tanner, Vol. I, 84-5.

Allegories of the four continents appeared as early as the late sixteenth century, after the discovery of America. One of the first representations of the allegories was by Abraham Ortelius in the title page of *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*<sup>93</sup> (1570), in which elements such as the bow, arrows and feathered headdresses already appeared.<sup>94</sup>

Considering these precedents, it is unlikely that Francesco Orsolino attempted to create a specific native person, but a rather symbolic one.<sup>95</sup> The monument also included other specific historic scenes of Chilean battles at the base<sup>96</sup> and a native figure allegorically representing the Maipo River, as well as four crocodiles, employed in many other European representations of the American continent to emphasize its exotic qualities.

Keeping Orsolino's work in mind, Plaza's *Caupolicán* introduces a noticeable innovation, the specific and individualized representation of a native person. For the first time in Chilean public art, the image of the Native American departs noticeably from an allegorical representation to one that represents an historical individual, an actual indigenous person identified by name and race.

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<sup>93</sup> Accessed March 10, 2011.

[http://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/25063/Title\\_Page\\_Theatrum\\_Orbis\\_Terrarum\\_MDXCVIII/Ortelius.html](http://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/25063/Title_Page_Theatrum_Orbis_Terrarum_MDXCVIII/Ortelius.html). See also Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia or Moral Emblems* (London: Benj. Motte, 1709), 53. Accessed March 20, 2011. <http://emblem.libraries.psu.edu/Ripa/Images/ripa053b.htm>.

<sup>94</sup> As Walter Mignolo points out, representations showing naked or semi-naked people were as common in depictions of the Americas as in those of Africa, and therefore, there was a noticeable difference in comparison to those images representing Europe and Asia, in which figures were always clothed. This pattern of representation confirms the notion that Africa and America were perceived as less developed, inhabited by wild and primitive people. Walter Mignolo, "Putting the Americas on the map: cartography and the colonization of space". In Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 274.

<sup>95</sup> Honour, Hugh, *The New Golden Land. European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), 85.

<sup>96</sup> Voionmaa Tanner, Vol. I, 84.



The statue also presents another peculiarity in the Chilean context. It is the first of its kind with these characteristics, that is, an individualized indigenous person, created by a Chilean sculptor. Considering the fact that the majority of the nineteenth-century public statuary had been commissioned from European artists, Plaza's statue established a new path for Chilean sculptors. It represented a starting point for the development of Chilean statuary of Araucanian iconography as part of an historic narrative. The only example of an earlier sculpture depicting a heroic Araucanian was *Tucapel*, a Mapuche leader also mentioned in *La Araucana*, which was created in 1862 by the Spanish sculptor Ricardo Bellver. This work, however, was only displayed in Spain.<sup>97</sup>

The Chilean sculptor Virginio Arias (1855-1941), who had studied at the *Escuela de Escultura* in Chile, and later in Paris, also explored Araucanian iconography. However, instead of depicting recognizable historic figures, Arias focused on specific Araucanian female types, as visible in his 1889 *Madre Araucana* (Figs. 21 and 22). In contrast to Plaza's *Caupolicán*, Arias' depiction of the Mapuche woman is consistent with the actual appearance of an Araucanian woman, including her attire, and her features. As evidenced through details such as the earrings, belt, necklace, and dress, the artist sought to represent an accurate image of an Araucanian woman. Suggesting a domestic scene, the woman carries her baby on her back while she holds a jug in the right hand (Fig. 18), revealing Arias' interest in depicting also Araucanian customs. Although this representation appears to be much closer to an actual Chilean indigenous person than *Caupolicán*, *Madre Araucana* did not receive the same attention or attain the same

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<sup>97</sup> Gutiérrez Viñuales, *Monumento Conmemorativo*, 470.

popularity as the former, nor was it installed in the public realm. Plaza's *Caupolicán* continued to remain unrivaled in Chilean popular culture.<sup>98</sup>

A possible explanation for *Madre Araucana*'s lesser popularity is the fact that in the nineteenth century, images of historical male heroes were more appreciated than those depicting customs. Moreover, because of the Pacific War in the late 1870s and early 1880s, the representation of such heroes appeared instrumental for encouraging the national spirit. The preference for male heroic figures may also explain the decreased interest in female figures representing domestic activities.

### ***Caupolicán* beyond Chile's boundaries**

The circulation of the image of Plaza's statue did not cease after its installation in Cerro Santa Lucía. On the contrary, photographs and other graphic representations of it continued to be published during the twentieth century. This fact confirms its significance as an iconic figure both in Chile and abroad, where it was assumed that *Caupolicán* was *the* authentic image of an Araucanian.

One example is reproduction of the image of the statue on Chilean postage stamps. Between 1934 and 1956, stamps depicting an image of *Caupolicán* in Cerro Santa Lucía were produced for international airmail. Executed through montage, the image appears along with other images such as a Pegasus and an airplane (Figs. 23 and

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<sup>98</sup> In the Salón Nacional de Bellas Artes two works related to Araucanian iconography were mentioned that were displayed in honor of Virginio Arias, *Fuente Araucana* (No 202) and *Araucana* (No 203). *Salón Nacional de Bellas Artes 1942* (Santiago: Sociedad Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1942), 44-5. Presumably, the statue could be the same one that was mentioned in the catalog of the *Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes* in 1896 identified as *Costumbre Ararucana* by the number 66, a bronze statue purchased by the Comisión de Bellas Artes for 800 pesos. *Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de Santiago de Chile. Catálogo* (Santiago: Imprenta y Librería Ercilla, 1896), 12.

24).<sup>99</sup> They were likely inspired by a view from Cerro Santa Lucía (Fig. 25). Since these postage stamps were used specifically for international service, this image circulated exclusively abroad, exposing the image to a wide-ranging audience beyond Chile’s borders.<sup>100</sup>

The image of *Caupolicán* also attained international circulation through the stamps of other Latin American countries. For instance, in 1948, a group of Argentine stamps used the image of the Araucanian chief (with some variations) to celebrate the Day of the Native American. Likewise, in a series of Ecuadorian stamps from 1981, a bust of the image was included in what seems to be a series of images of Latin American Indian chiefs. The Ecuadorian stamp bore an inscription that read: “Caupolicán de Chile. Caciques Indoamericanos,” reinforcing the idea that the image had already been legitimized in the regional context and had been accepted as an authentic image of a Native Latin American. All these cases confirm that in Latin America the image of the Araucanian was unmistakably associated in most people’s minds with the iconography of the statue.<sup>101</sup>

The image of the statue that spread internationally presented Caupolicán as a popular historical character and the statue as its authentic representation. Its role in the Chilean collective historic memory is also evidenced in a 1921 article published in Spain by Dionisio Pérez in which a photograph identified as the statue of *Caupolicán*, — “placed in Parque Lota” — was included as an illustration for Alonso de Ercilla’s poem,

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<sup>99</sup> Sociedad Filatélica de Chile Accessed March 10, 2011.  
[http://www.sociedadfilatelica.cl/webemisiones\\_1900\\_1949/emision1934\\_55.html](http://www.sociedadfilatelica.cl/webemisiones_1900_1949/emision1934_55.html).

<sup>100</sup> Soto Aliaga, 56.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 326.

*La Araucana*. In the article, Pérez contended that Caupolicán was better known in Chile than Ercilla was in Spain, demonstrating the weakness of Spanish patriotism as much as the short memory of the Spanish people. Whereas Chile perpetuated its own historic memory through the famous statue, Ercilla seemed almost completely forgotten, he explained. Thus, for Pérez, the image of the statue not only emphasized the importance of the Araucanian chief as a hero of the Arauco War, but also the importance of the statue as an instrument for maintaining national historic memory.<sup>102</sup>

Another example of the relevance of the statue image in the international scope is its use for documentary purposes. A 1955 American publication entitled *The Araucanians*, about the history and customs of the Mapuche people, provides yet another example of the extent to which the statue was known abroad outside from the artistic context. Notably, the image of Plaza's statue is the publication's first image. The text, which explains the story of the Araucanians, stresses their strong sense of independence. It shows an image of the statue in a section that explains the military confrontation between the Spanish and the Araucanians. Here, the image is used to illustrate Caupolicán's role in the conflict and therefore, serves to emphasize the courageous

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<sup>102</sup> "Chile ha perpetuado en una estatua a Caupolicán. Entre jardines en el parque de Lota, se muestra en Santiago alzando el leño enorme que inmortalizara nuestro poeta. El escultor Nicolás [sic] Plaza ha dado forma material a los versos de Ercilla, que se leen en muchas escuelas que repiten los niños y los jóvenes. Todos saben quién era, cómo era Caupolicán: ...de cuerpo grande y elevado pecho, hábil, diestro, tísicoimo y ligero, sabio, astuto, sagaz, determinado... Los niños chilenos saben quién era Caupolicán, y los niños de Madrid no saben quién era y cómo era D. Alonso de Ercilla... terminó mi amigo, y yo no pude encontrar palabras con que disculpar esta flaqueza incurable de nuestro patriotismo: la falta de memoria." Nonetheless, here the author confuses both statues the one in Cerro Santa Lucía and the one in Lota by mentioning that the statue is in parque Lota, in Santiago. Moreover, an iconographic inaccuracy is visible in the description. Pérez points out that Caupolicán is holding a log aloft and upon his shoulder, which was known by Ercilla's poem ("This brave Caupolicán, who holds the log light as a feather or a wisp of fog"). But clearly not depicted that way in the statue, which reveals that he did not even view the picture in the article, which does not show any log. Dionisio Pérez, *Diario ABC*, 06/10/1921. Accessed March 26, 2011. <http://hemeroteca.abc.es/nav/Navigate.exe/hemeroteca/madrid/abc/1921/06/19/013.html>. Excerpt of *La Araucana* by Alonso de Ercilla in *The Araucanians* (Washington D.C.: Pan American Union, 1955), 15. Accessed August 7, 2010. <http://www.archive.org/details/TheAraucanians>.

character of the indigenous leaders.<sup>103</sup> Interestingly, the photograph of the statue is not a photograph of the large-scale statue in Parque Lota, nor the statue in Cerro Santa Lucía. Instead, the photograph depicts the smaller version known in the United States as *The Last of the Mohicans*. Even so, the caption still reads: “Caupolicán.”

However, *Caupolicán* was not the only statue included in the book. Plaza’s *Jugador de Chueca* also appears in this publication as an illustration of the *chueca* game. It is interesting to consider that the images of these particular statues were used to explain the Araucanians and their history. Thus, they acquired not only an illustrative role, but more over a documentary one, reinforcing the assumption that the statues were appropriate representations of the Mapuche people.<sup>104</sup> Ultimately, it seems as if the image of Plaza’s statue was apparently the only known sculpture of Caupolicán both in Chile and abroad; the work essentially became the canonical image of the Araucanians. Considering the public relevance Caupolicán achieved as a representation of an indigenous subject, the analysis of the statue and its significance in the larger context of Latin American public statuary seems pertinent.

### **Representations of Indigenous People in Latin American Imagery**

The emergence of an indigenous subject in the Chilean public realm was not an isolated phenomenon in the Latin American context. Indeed, other capitals also installed monuments of indigenous subjects in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. In order to understand how other Latin American nations treated indigenous subjects in their

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 10.

visual culture, it is necessary to examine representations of indigenous people and Caupolicán in particular within a broader context of Latin American sculpture.

In the nineteenth-century Latin American cultural activities and tastes were defined by the upper classes. This seemed to be a rather generalized phenomenon that defined the character of the relationship between artists, commissions and the production of public statuary. During this period, pre-Hispanic imagery took hold of the collective imagination and Latin American indigenous heroes were represented most frequently, particularly in Mexico and Peru. Heroic representations of specific indigenous individuals however, were not as popular in some South American countries, with smaller indigenous population, where such figures were usually depicted allegorically.<sup>105</sup> Even so, earlier examples were found in the eighteenth century in Europe, such as those of the Aztec ruler Moctezuma and the Inca leader Atahualpa, both of which were part of a large sculpture program for the Palacio Real de Madrid in Spain. These statues seem to be the first ones to represent identifiable Native Latin American individuals, rather than stereotyped depictions. However, they were still portrayed conventionally and unrealistically. Instead of accurately representing their true characteristics and attire, European artists rendered them in an academic fashion that included ornamental vegetation not related to the tropical species usually associated to the Americas.<sup>106</sup>

This suggests that American Indigenous subjects were part of the European academy's repertory of mid-nineteenth century stock images, as seen in *Moctezuma II* (1850), *Tlahuicole* (1851), and *La Malinche* (1852) by the Spanish sculptor Manuel

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<sup>105</sup> Rodrigo Gutiérrez Viñuales, "Construyendo las identidades nacionales. Próceres e imaginario histórico en Sudamérica (siglo XIX)." In Manuel Chust, Víctor Mínguez (eds.), *La construcción del héroe en España y México (1789-1847)* (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València 2003), 299.

<sup>106</sup> Gutiérrez Viñuales, *Monumento Conmemorativo*, 467.

Vilar. In fact, it was Vilar who introduced these subjects in the Academia de San Carlos in Mexico. One of the most emblematic public statues in the Americas was the *Monument to Cuauhtémoc* of 1887, also located in Mexico, where the indigenous figures were especially significant, because of its large indigenous population.<sup>107</sup> Hence, it could be argued that Mexico was the first Latin American nation in which both the individualized image of the native person, and his heroic historical character were presented in the public realm, whereas other representations in that country still followed the allegorical pattern. However, Plaza's representation of Caupolicán, identified as such as early as 1869, was nonetheless one of the earlier statues of an indigenous subject in South America.

### **The construction of the indigenous hero in Latin American imagery**

In nineteenth-century Latin America, the search for national identity, and specifically, national heroes, explains in part the public interest in pre-Hispanic referents in artistic imagery. However, the popularity of such figures was unsurpassed in comparison with other heroes, whose portraits proliferated immediately after the battles of independence, and stylistically followed the example of representations of kings and other colonial authorities.<sup>108</sup>

As Rodrigo Gutiérrez explains, the belated interest, during the nineteenth century, in the representation of indigenous subjects as historical characters is visible in both painting and sculpture. An example of Chilean subjects is *La Caupolicán Prisionero de*

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 469.

<sup>108</sup> Gutiérrez Viñuales, "Construyendo las identidades nacionales," 281.

*los españoles* (1859) by the French painter Raymond Monvoisin. Although Gutiérrez does not mention it, *La Captura de Caupolicán* (1854) by Monvoisan is also a pertinent example, as is the Peruvian indigenous subject in *Los funerales de Atahualpa* by the Peruvian painter Luis Montero, successfully displayed in Buenos Aires in 1867.<sup>109</sup> In sculpture, Gutiérrez points to the 1869 *Caupolicán* and the indigenous chiefs *Abayubá* and *Zapicán* by the Uruguayan artist Nicanor Blanes, as evidence of the late incorporation of indigenous subjects as historical characters.

Even so, the heroic character of representations of Latin American Indians can be mostly explained by their literary sources, or rather by “literary inventions” rather than by their historical references. In fact, in some cases, indigenous characters represented in art did not even actually exist historically, a fact which demonstrates the crucial role epic literature played in providing subjects for artistic creation. Indeed, Caupolicán himself became widely known in Chile as a result of the epic description of him by Alonso de Ercilla. Nonetheless, it is important to stress that Caupolicán was indeed a real historic figure.

Conversely, other characters such as Tabaré, created by Juan Zorrilla de San Martín in Uruguay and also based on an epic poem, was not a real person. Instead, he embodied the idea of the Uruguayan nation. In this case, cultural and political leaders of the time attempted to restore a sense of national identity by creating an image for an almost wiped out people, as much as to conceal the fact that in Uruguay, the indigenous groups did not have a place in the construction of the nation. Authorities often condoned monuments such as these in order to avoid further conflicts with Native American communities, as was the case, for instance, with the *Monument to Cuauhtémoc* in Mexico

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 300.



(1887).<sup>110</sup> Yet, the appropriation of the pre-Hispanic past into a new national program did not necessarily imply the inclusion of indigenous population as citizens.<sup>111</sup>

In cases such as these, references to the “heroic Indian” related to figures of the pre-Hispanic past rather than to contemporary individuals, a fact that created a gap between an idealized past and a socially and politically complex present that was barely expressed in the public realm. Moreover, in Mexico, as in other Latin American countries, cultural policies privileged Europeanized cultural models so that they would be seen on the international stage as a “first world” society. Even so, Latin American countries also acknowledged the necessity — both authentic and strategic — of recognizing the indigenous local cultures of their nations.

Thus, cultural and artistic policies oscillated, with a varying range of emphasis in different countries, from European and overtly modern aesthetics practiced by mostly European and European-trained Latin American artists, to local references with a more nationalist tone, as in the case of Mexico and Peru.<sup>112</sup> In the case of Chile, *Caupolicán* synthesizes both the European aesthetic, visible in its academic appearance, and the nationalist tone of the subject. This phenomenon demonstrates the government’s difficulties in adhering to a European cultural pattern, in circumstances when there was also a large local culture to contend with.

Such factors explain why Centennial celebrations were favorable moments for the creation of commemorative monuments depicting Native American figures. In addition

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<sup>110</sup> Gutiérrez Viñuales, *Monumento Conmemorativo*, 472-73.

<sup>111</sup> González Stephan y Andermann, 20.

<sup>112</sup> Schávelzon, D. (comp.), *La polémica del arte nacional en México* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988), 139, cited in Gutiérrez Viñuales, *Monumento Conmemorativo*, 475.

to *Caupolicán*, other such monuments followed, including *Manco Capac* (1926) in Peru, by David Lozano and the Caciques *Abayubá* and *Zapicán* (1930) in Montevideo, Uruguay, by Juan Luis and Nicanor Blanes. Likewise in Argentina, Luis Perloti executed a commemorative monument titled *Los Andes*, representing three Argentine Indian peoples; one of them was Araucanian, although he reverted to an allegorical rather than an individualized representational style.<sup>113</sup>

*Indigenismo*, the twentieth century pan-American movements for greater social and political rights for indigenous peoples, developed in different Latin American countries at different paces. While it acquired a rather defined form in Mexico and particularly in Mexican Muralism, in other countries, *indigenismo* led to more sporadic forms of artistic production. Indeed, the existence of Native American iconography in countries such as Chile did not necessarily imply a formal discourse by artists on *indigenismo*. On the contrary, the scarce number of statues produced in Chile, particularly those in the public realm, was not the result of indigenist claims, but rather the result of their desire to depict a concrete, yet idealized image of “Chilean-ness.”

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<sup>113</sup> Gutiérrez Viñuales, *Monumento Conmemorativo*, 470-71.

## CONCLUSION

In order to understand how *Caupolicán* operates within cultural, social and historical frameworks, this study explores its two different identities and examines aspects of it beyond its merely formal qualities. Particularly relevant to this discussion are its serial reproduction and its subsequent circulation. Indeed, we can understand the original identification of the statue as *The Last of the Mohicans* as directly correlated to the statue's serial reproduction, which legitimized its identity in the American art market.

In the Chilean context, an analysis of *Caupolicán* as public statuary sheds light on different and equally significant elements that contributed to the legitimization of the second identity of the statue. Here, serial reproduction and the art market were not as significant as in the case of *The Last of the Mohicans*. Instead, it was the Chilean elite, which had a notable influence on the statue's popularization and its subsequent entry to the public realm. Furthermore, the visibility of the statue, enabled through emerging exhibition circuits and visual media, served as a showcase for the statue and its image, which was reproduced through photographs and illustrations. Indeed, they operated as vehicles for disseminating and popularizing *Caupolicán* long before its presentation in the public realm.

In addition to the elements that contributed to the circulation of the statue's image to wide-ranging audiences, Plaza's work can also be framed within another context, that of the emergent construction of Chilean national identity in the nineteenth century. Once in Chile, *Caupolicán* occupied the place of the indigenous hero in the collective Chilean imagination. Plaza did not just provide a character, but rather a national icon through his

creation of an identifiable historic figure in which Chilean audiences recognized a representative of the Araucanian race, a reference to a local culture and history.

The inclusion of this statue in the public realm reveals nonetheless, a complex relationship between the Chilean state and Araucanian population in Chile, one which was initiated long before the statue was installed in Cerro Santa Lucía. The fact that the statue was installed in the public realm demonstrated a less conflicted pre-Hispanic history that erased contemporary political tensions. Moreover, the entrance of Araucanian subjects in the public realm as late as 1910 reveals that an inclusive public image of national identity had been not yet been completely defined and was still in the process of being shaped.

The general acceptance of *Caupolicán* as a national icon confirmed a public need for a recognizable symbol of Chilean national identity. By 1902, *Caupolicán*'s image had been incorporated into Chilean visual culture and had been accepted as a symbol of the national that crossed both national borders and artistic boundaries beyond just sculpture. Moreover, the statue's image was not only used as a graphic representation of a national icon, but also for documentary purposes in several significant publications. The inclusion of the statue's image in such publications appears significant insofar as it reveals the assumption that the image depicted an authentic Araucanian.

Finally, it is important to remember that within the larger Latin American context, *Caupolicán* was not an isolated case in national identity imagery formation. Many countries faced difficulties in defining an image of national identity that would adequately account for both the local and the European. In this way, the public sphere operated as a suitable site for making visible the complex hybrid nature of Latin

American national identities. On one hand, public statuary representing indigenous leaders demonstrated the inability of authorities to deal with contemporary conflicts with indigenous populations. On the other hand, it revealed the difficulties of eliminating all references to the local during a period when European models dominated in the Latin American modernizing process.

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**FIGURES**



Fig. 1: Nicanor Plaza, *Caupolicán*, 1869, Bronze. Cerro Santa Lucía, Santiago, Chile.  
Photography: Personal archive.



Fig. 2: Nicanor Plaza, *The Last of the Mohicans*, Zinc/Bronze. Fenimore Art Museum. Cooperstown, New York. Photography by Richard Walker.



Fig. 3: Nicanor Plaza, detail *The Last of the Mohicans*, Zinc/Bronze. Fenimore Art Museum. Cooperstown, New York. Photography by Richard Walker.



Fig. 4: Nicanor Plaza, *Caupolicán*, 1869, Parque Lota, Lota, Chile.  
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Fig. 5: Nicanor Plaza, detail *Caupolicán*, 1869. Cerro Santa Lucía, Santiago, Chile.  
Photography: Personal archive.



Fig. 6: *Araucanos*

Claudio Gay, *Atlas de la Historia Física y Política de Chile*, Tomo I, Imprenta de E. Thunot y Ca., Paris 1854. Biblioteca Nacional de Chile.

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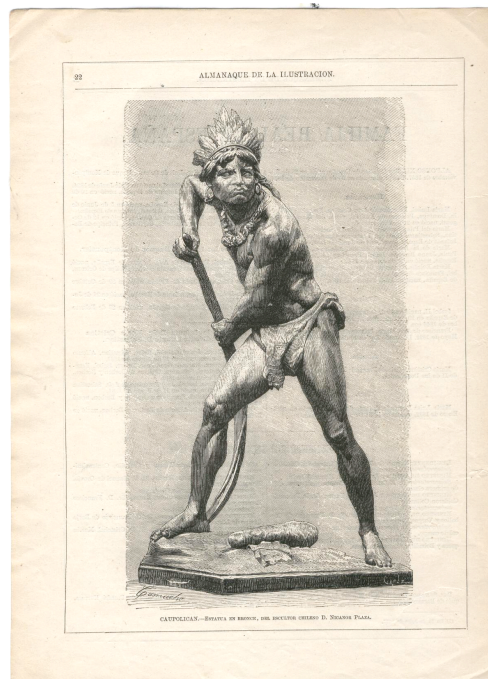


Fig. 7: Antonio Camacho, *Caupolicán*, 1877

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Fig. 8. Nicanor Plaza, *Jugador de Chueca*, Ca. 1872  
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Fig. 9: *Juego de Chueca*

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Fig. 10: Illustration from *Chile Ilustrado*, Revista Mensual, Año 1, No 1, Santiago: Imprenta Barcelona, Mayo 1902, np.  
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Fig. 11: Illustration from *Chile Ilustrado*, Revista Mensual, Año 1, No 2, Santiago: Imprenta Barcelona, Junio 1902, np.  
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Fig. 12: Illustration from *Chile Ilustrado*, Revista Mensual, Año 2, No 16, Santiago: Imprenta Barcelona, Noviembre 1903, np.  
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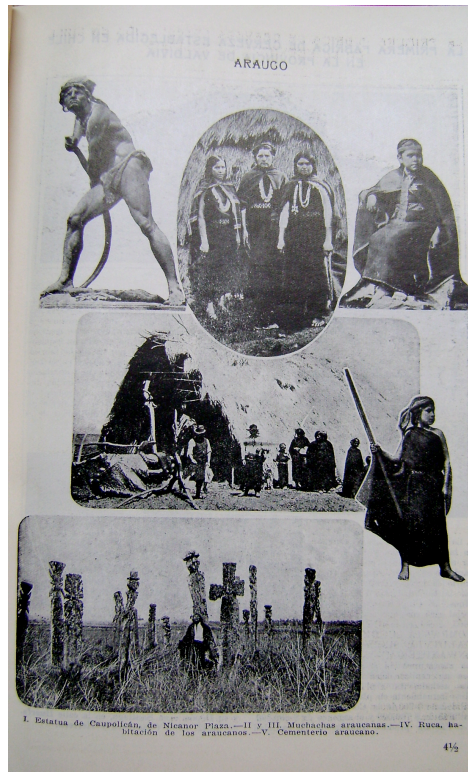


Fig. 13: *Arauco*  
*Zig Zag*, Sept. 1910, np. Biblioteca Museo Histórico Nacional, Santiago, Chile.



Fig. 14: Salón Nacional de 1899. Photo from *Instantáneas de Luz y Sombra*, Santiago 11 de Noviembre de 1900, Núm. 34, 6. Biblioteca Nacional de Chile.  
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VENERABLE DEL SALÓN

Fig. 15: Salón Nacional de 1903. Photo from *Chile Ilustrado*, Revista Mensual, Año 2, No 16, (Santiago: Imprenta Barcelona, Noviembre 1903) np.

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Fig. 16: *Monumentos de Santiago*  
*Zig Zag*, Sept. 1910, np. Biblioteca Museo Histórico Nacional, Chile.



Fig. 17: Nicanor Plaza, *Caupolicán*, 1869, Bronze. Cerro Santa Lucía, Santiago, Chile.  
Photography: Personal archive.



Fig. 18: Nicanor Plaza, *Caupolicán*, 1869, Bronze. Cerro Santa Lucía, Santiago, Chile.  
Photography: Personal archive.

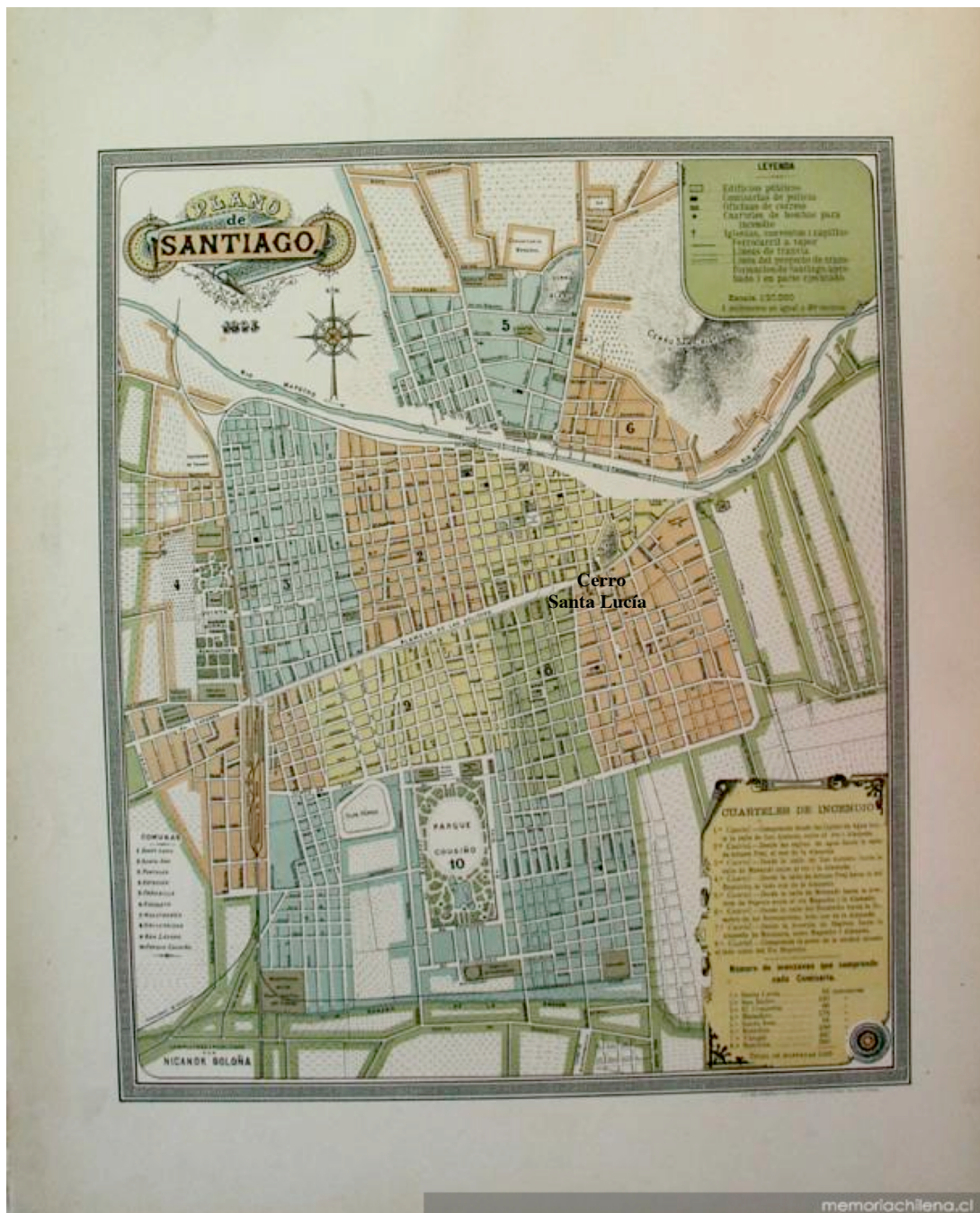


Fig. 19: Map of Santiago, 1895.

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Fig. 20: Raymond Monvoisin, *La Captura de Caupolicán por los Españoles*, 1854.  
Oil on canvas.  
Museo Histórico Nacional, Chile.



Fig. 21: Virginio Arias, *Madre Araucana*.  
Bronze, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes,  
Santiago, Chile.



Fig. 22: Virginio Arias, *Madre Araucana*.  
Bronze, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes,  
Santiago, Chile



Fig. 23:  
Airmail stamp 80 cents. Chile 1936.



Fig. 24:  
Airmail stamp 20 cents. Chile 1936.

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Caupolicán y vista desde el Cerro Santa Lucía.

*Curfhey y Jojré*

Fig. 25: *Caupolicán* y vista desde el Cerro Santa Lucía, 1941.  
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