


Dossier

Heroísmo profesional: La construcción de un panteón de héroes en Panamá (1903-1931)

Heroísmo profesional: La construcción de un panteón de héroes en Panamá (1903-1931)

Rolando de La Guardia Wald
University of Panama, Panamá
r.wald@alumni.ucl.ac.uk

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1614-4351>

Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos
vol. 47 1-54 2021

Universidad de Costa Rica
Costa Rica

Recepción: 21 Agosto 2021
Aprobación: 24 Noviembre 2021

Abstract: This article focuses on how Panamanian intellectuals and politicians searched into colonial and nineteenth century regional history for elements that could help them construct narratives, produce a new historiography, and create symbols that differentiated Panama from Colombia. This served to justify the separation of 1903, through the writing of a new national history. In addition, this article focuses on the creation of a pantheon of national heroes. The article argues that the celebration of the deeds and lives of the men chosen to enter such a pantheon of heroes intended to promote civic nationalism. Hence, most of the men chosen were civilians, not military men, who, allegedly, used their professional skills to bring progress to the nation in a peaceful manner.

Keywords: Panama, historiography, heroism, national identity, nation.

Resumen: Este artículo hace hincapié en cómo los intelectuales y políticos panameños utilizaron la historia local de la era colonial y del siglo XIX para encontrar elementos que pudieran ayudarles a construir narrativas, producir una nueva historiografía y crear símbolos que diferenciaron a Panamá de Colombia. Esto sirvió para justificar la independencia de la República de Panamá en 1903, a través de la escritura de una nueva historia nacional. El artículo arguye que la celebración de los hechos y vidas de los hombres escogidos para entrar en el panteón de héroes apuntaba a promover un nacionalismo cívico. Por ello, la mayoría de los elegidos fueron civiles, no militares, quienes, supuestamente, usaron sus habilidades profesionales para traer progreso a la nación de una manera pacífica. En resumen, el artículo establece que la historiografía creada en Panamá para presentar dicha nación moderna y civilizada resultó en la formación de un panteón de “héroes profesionales”.

Palabras clave: Panamá, historiografía, heroísmo, identidad nacional, nación.

Introduction

In 1902, Eusebio A. Morales published an article with the title of “The Political and Economic Situation in Colombia”. Essentially, the text presented to an English-speaking public a criticism of the way the Colombian government had managed finances and public policy, and how that particularly affected Panama during *La Regeneración*. His discourse projected a rejection of war and mistrust of military leaders:

The writer of these lines is not in favour of the war, because he had [before], as he has now, the full persuasion that [such a] extreme resource solves no problem among our people, but rather renders more complex the problems which already exist, while giving rise to others [that come] from the quality of the men who present themselves as saviours or as valiant fighters (Morales, 1902, p. 354).¹

Morales’s argument suggests that men who took control of the government by means of violence become corrupted by power and incapable of solving any problems. More relevantly, the fragment also implies that Morales claimed that there were other kinds of people better qualified to rectify what he considered a deplorable political and economic situation in Colombia than those self-proclaimed “saviours” and “valiant fighters”. It is important to observe that Morales not only criticised the lack of ability of victors of wars to govern, but also expressed discomfort with the constant appearance of new saviours and fighters in the political arena. Despite the temporariness of the fame of these ephemeral national or regional heroes, Morales’s words denote preoccupation with the permanent moral effects of creating role-models in the image of men who obtained power and fame through the use of force. He was not alone in his concerns about presumptuous military heroism; many other early twentieth-century Panamanian nation-builders worried about the message that the celebration of soldiers could transmit to the population.

After 1903, Panamanian political and intellectual elites wrote extensively about the consolidation of peace in the Isthmus. The narratives of the time give the impression of being attempts to forget the violent past and eliminate the celebration of nineteenth century “saviours” and “valiant fighters” from nationalist stories. This especially applies to those martyrs and warriors who did not fit into the heroic model of the intellectual and political elites, who produced official national symbols that exhorted forgetting the violent past. For instance, the Panamanian anthem recites:

It is necessary to cover with a veil,

The calvary and the cross of the past,

Warrior cries ended,

Only fraternal love reigns... (De la Ossa and Santos, 1904).

Besides “forgetting” the military past and wars, Panamanian intellectuals invested most of their energy in inventing a national history filled with the biographies and images of civilian heroes, whose lives narrated a story of struggle for independence (patriotism and nationalism) and respect for the law, social order and peace. When writing Panama’s national history, Panamanian intellectuals composed narratives of “professional heroism”.

Isthmian professional heroes were individuals who used their skills to defend the interests of Panama in a peaceful manner, and, thereby, became models of what was being created as the desirable national character. As Panamanian national history, generally, presented Isthmians as victims of another power (Spain, Colombia, and the United States), those professionals who struggled to liberate and defend the interests of the Panamanian nation against such impositions from stronger nations became the first members of the national pantheon of heroes. Although many professional groups played a part in the defence of national interests, in general, the role of the pacifist and perseverant leader who dealt with foreign powers fell upon the head of Panamanian diplomats. At the beginning of the twentieth century, most Panamanian diplomats had other professions, such as educators, artists, journalists, lawyers, businessmen, professional politicians, and physicians.

State of the Art, Concepts and Theories

In debating the role of war and heroism in the creation of identities, Miguel Ángel Centeno’s *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America* (2002) was useful in the development of the concept of professional heroism and understanding the challenges to and contradictions in the nation-building processes such as the creation of a pantheon of national heroes. Centeno might be considered controversial because of his argument that the Latin American states and their militaries have not been as oppressive as claimed by many other analysts (2002, p. 2). More importantly for the argument here, however, Centeno suggests that the limits of international and internal war made it impossible for Latin American states to construct a consensual national imagery based on glories and misfortunes of war (2002, pp. 198-199).

By borrowing his argument regarding the ephemerality of military heroes in countries with populations divided by partisanship, regionalism, social class or race (Centeno, 2002, p. 210) and applying it to civilian heroes, Centeno’s book served to develop this articles’ argument about the forgetting of Panama’s the military past, the

remembrance of suffering from war and the re-definition of Panamanian as being a peaceful nation in the twentieth century. In addition, Blood and Debt made visible the challenges that the “blue-print” from other Latin American countries’ nationalism and their forms of celebrating heroes, especially soldiers, posed to the celebration of Panamanian professional heroes. This is especially important in a place in constant turmoil and civil war like Panama and Colombia, especially if this was provoked by partisanships. In this sense, the ephemerality of narratives of one character’s heroism does not imply the ephemerality of the values the hero represented.

Following this idea, the considerable expenses to promote certain professional heroes in Panama do not imply the weakening of the fascination for military heroes, because ephemeral heroism might remain immemorial in the formation of partisan identity. Whether in power or not, political parties in places suffering from uninterrupted civil war were able to constantly create new heroes. Their partisans might even forget the name of those heroes, but not of the values behind their heroism. In disagreement with Centeno, war stories have a great potential to captivate romantic audiences. So, counterintuitively, his work helped contemplate the complex task that Panamanian nation-builders had into erasing the appeal of romantic war stories. Instead, they transformed these war stories to narratives of professional heroism, which aimed at instilling aspirations of having a peaceful country.

My analysis of heroism also draws upon the articles by Rebecca Earle on the creation of national heroes, which helped in understanding how the theories of Anderson and Hobsbawm could be applied to the case of nation-building in Latin America. Earle’s analysis shows that Latin American nation-builders tried to make the population of their countries acquainted with national history by constantly exposing them to the images and names of heroes or events. Accordingly, the repeated civic festivals, use of coins, bank notes, and stamps or the constant passing by plazas and streets are more efficient in “their potential to reach large audiences” (Earle, 2005, p. 377). The reason for this is that stamps and currency were very effective in the formation of the imagined communities of Latin America, because the post and money are used daily by all social sectors in the whole territory of a state. However, it is important also to remember that “few stop to study a statue or monument” (Earle, 2005, p. 375). This article will analyse the impact of civic festivals, the erection of statues and the various forms of material culture to explain how they projected certain values related to the political and intellectual elites’ notion of civic nationalism in late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth century Panama.

In respect to particular exemplary men, John Lynch’s *Simón Bolívar. A Life* (2007) makes possible to see how different movements and politicians through time depicted Bolívar’s with

different characteristics that represented their values. In other words, this study how the cult of Bolívar and the interpretations of his legacy have evolved in many Latin American countries depending on the ideological inclination of the State, political movement, social group or individual that analyses the Libertador's life. He concludes that sometimes he appears in historiography and other works either as a communist, a populist or a liberal, a conservative, or any other political tendency that a government profess (pp. 280-304).

Similarly, in her work *The Myth of José Martí. Conflicting Nationalisms in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba* (2005), Lillian Guerra shows that the appropriation of the image of a hero depends in two factors: the diverse kinds of nationalisms and the related visions of the nation, and on the hero's consciousness and self-perception of his or her own role within a movement and how this informs his or her public discourses and performances. According to Guerra, the latter allowed Martí to develop a sort of conciliating discourse of "social unity" that appealed those who followed different forms of clashing nationalisms. She divides these visions of the nation-state in three: "pro-imperialist nationalism" (2005, p. 15), "revolutionary nationalism" (pp. 16-17), and "popular nationalism" (pp. 17-18).

The first group of nationalists was formed, mainly, by expatriates living in the United States, many of whom had acquired US citizenship. They were professionals, educated members of the classical elites and the high-middle classes, who emigrated due to their participation on Cuba's previous independence wars (1868-1878) and (1879-1880) or because they had been economically damaged by them. Their view of the Cuban nation was that exporting plans of modernization from Europe or the United States to their island: the development of mass agricultural production and industry, the attraction of foreign investment, and the importation of science and technology. In their plans, they envisioned the need for acculturation. However, according to Guerra, they did not want annexation to the United States; they had confidence in American "benevolence" and conceived the possibility of cooperation to mutually benefit (2005, p. 16). The second group was made of veteran officers of previous wars, "both white and of color" Their revolutionary view of the nation, says Guerra, was informed by the aims of the previous war and the break with colonial rule. They sought for an equal society, but with a top-down approach based on models of rural Cuba or a patron-client system. In a few words, there would be access to equality, as long as those in the lower social tiers accepted the authority of the revolutionary leaders (2005, p. 17). Finally, the popular nationalists viewed of the Cuban nation-state as a conception of horizontal democracy informed by relation to their personal and collective "experiences of marginalization". This group included workers who emigrated to New York, soldiers and officers of lower ranks who

fought in the War of 1895, “Black civil rights and labor activist”, and women from the middle and low social classes. The envisioned a state in which the needs of those who had suffered because of colonial rule and the wars came first (Guerra, 2005, pp. 17-18).

In sum, allegiance to these distinct and conflicting nationalisms depended on social class, relations with the United States, race and ethnicity (and, therefore, experiences and memories of slavery), work or employment, gender, and previous experience in Cuba’s failed wars of independence. By 1890s, Martí, however, was able to negotiate with all the groups and transcend the social and racial past. He did so by uniting the groups under the Partido Revolucionario de Cuba (PRC) in New York in 1891; or founding, La Liga, a school founded by Martí (Guerra, 2005, p. 38) and a cigarmaker (p. 28) in 1899. There he taught together with Black and Mulatto intellectuals and activists (p. 34). He even persuaded leaders of opposing nationalisms to moderate the words in speeches to prevent rejection from other groups (Guerra, 2005, pp. 38-39).

Guerra claims that Martí managed to keep separate his public and internal discourses (2005, p. 39). Therefore, despite of his possible preference and proximity to the pro-imperialist nationalists (p. 27) and of having some skepticism about the equality between races (p. 39) and that there is not mention of the concepts of “racial equality” and “social equality” in his private and public writings and speeches (p. 28), Guerra states that he “relied in a multilayered discourse of identity that resonated with the conflicting, emerging nationalisms of Cubans” (p. 29).

Nevertheless, Guerra recognises that different groups of nationalists appropriated the image of Martí and created different myths about him according to their own expectations and interpretation. This happened especially after his death in battle in 1895. Then, Cuban nationalists generated “multiple memories of Martí [that] originated in the multiple visions of nation that Martí legitimated and the multiple images of himself as a leader and representative of those visions that he created” (2005, p. 41).²

There are several important conclusions that can be extracted from Guerra’s work: first, as in the case of Bolívar, the Myth of José Martí demonstrates how different nationalists and ideologues can generate and regenerate distinct narratives, stories, and images to fabricate their own myth of a hero (or villain if it is case). This has happened in Panama many times with many personages through Isthmian history. Second, the relevance of Guerra’s work also lies on the historical context: both Cuba and Panama were geographically small countries whose independences had the common denominator of intervention from the United States. Both independences occurred within a period of 5 years (1898 and 1903) and, since then, Panama and Cuba were constantly and directly affected by U.S. colonialism and

impositions (until the Cuban Revolution success in 1959). Third, and probably of more importance, José Martí as well as his Cuban peers, and Panamanian politician and intellectuals lived in a common transnational intellectual and political environment.

As most of them were formally educated and belonged to similar social groups, they shared a common language, had similar preoccupations, and discussed the same issues even if it was to disagree. It is likely that they read each other, especially taking into account that Martí visited Panama in 1893 and that some of his Cuban revolutionary collaborators, such as Dr. Manuel Corrales, lived in the Isthmus and welcomed other supporters of Martí (Ojito, 2017). Hence, it would not be surprising that leading Isthmians, as Martí, learn to rely in a multilayered discourse and imagery that amalgamated different forms of nationalism, both through the creation of cults to national heroes or by incarnating themselves liberation and heroism. For living Panamanian próceres, perhaps, the difference was that they did not die in a heroic fashion.

There is not much written about the contexts, methods and philosophical models that shaped the ways in which Panamanian nation-builders constructed their pantheon of heroes. Most books about Panamanian personages are, precisely, biographies exalting them. Only a few books and articles that pay some attention to the characteristics of Panamanian perceptions of heroism and hero-making in Panama.

Peter Szok's *La Última Gaviota. Liberalism and Nostalgia in Early Twentieth-Century Panama* (2001) indicates that there was an intention to promote Liberalism in Panama by enhancing the appreciation of many local heroes, such as Tomás Herrera and Justo Arosemena. Regarding Justo Arosemena, Szok mentions two major works: Octavio Méndez Pereira's *Justo Arosemena*, and José Dolores Moscote's and Arce's *La Vida Ejemplar de Justo Arosemena*, both of which were presented to a contest sponsored by the National Assembly to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Arosemena's birthday. According to Szok, these biographies present [Justo] Arosemena as an "expert legislator" and a "moral politician" whose actions and progressive agenda constitute the "exemplary life". Arosemena became another symbol of Panama's Liberal identity, which continued to grow in spite of the post-independence crisis (Szok, 2001, p. 83). Similarly, Szok mentions the books that celebrated Tomás Herrera. He focuses on *Vida del General Tomás Herrera* by Ricardo J. Alfaro (1882-1971), published in 1908, "one of his numerous contributions to [Liberal] historiography".

Szok's analysis of Alfaro's book indicates that, although celebrated as a "valiant warrior" in Ayauchó and Junín, Tomás Herrera is mainly exalted for his "sense of legality, the orderliness of his government [in 1840-1841], and his selfless concern for the nation". Alfaro, supposedly, suppressed "despots and social malcontents who are

portrayed as... dangerous for civil disorder and peace". For this reason, Szok argues that Alfaro emphasised that Herrera's "mentality was more that of a civilian as he opposed the colonial traditions of centralism and authoritarian rule and who worked consistently to defend modern, democratic regimes". La Última Gaviota, finally, adds that in that biography, Herrera's heroism was partly based on the image that 'he was a progressive thinking man who fraternized more easily among youthful "philosophers, poets and writers" than among the less enlightened members of the Colombian military' (pp. 80-81). Finally, Szok comments that

this martyr of the nineteenth-century [Panamanian] republicanism became an icon of virtue whose image was cast in bronze... in the capital square renamed after the general. Today the precursor sits dignified on his charger in Plaza Herrera, affirming that Panama is still Liberal. The isthmus remained Liberal even as modernization resulted in disillusion and created social turmoil threatening the middle and upper classes (2001, pp. 82-83).

After talking about the elite's disappointment with the social effects of the Panama Canal construction, Szok claims that there was a switch among the Panamanian elites from enthusiasm with "Hamletism" to a nostalgia for the past. This "second Panamanian identity" (2001, p. 39) principally consisted of the celebration of segregating Hispanoamericanismo, the colonial past or the national authenticity of the Interior (pp. 95-110). Szok claims that the escapist attitude of the elites was revealed in the raising of statues and coinage that represented the colonial past, chiefly, showing the image of Vasco Núñez de Balboa (pp. 98-99). Moreover, he observes more expressions of this supposed desertion from reality in the construction of buildings that linked the Panamanian nation with European greatness, which, for him, will be the case of the "Greek-like building" that hosted the Instituto Nacional, the National Archives, the Palacio de las Garzas (The Presidential Palace), or the National Theatre (Szok, 2001, pp. 86-88). Finally, he encounters many poems which regretted what had happened after the construction of the waterway through the Isthmus, as would be the examples of the most celebrated Panamanian poet "Patria" by Ricardo Miro, "Al Cerro Ancón" by Amelia Denis de Icaza, and "Panamá La Vieja" by Roberto Lewis (1874-1949) (Szok, 2001, pp. 89-90, 103).

More importantly, Szok's analysis is the repetition of the idea that only Liberals gave form to Panamanian identity. He deduces that values such as pacifism, civil order, education and modernisation were only promoted by Liberals. His book, although remembering some of the aspects of La Regeneración, fails to recognise that before the Independence of 1903, it was mainly conservatised-Liberals and Conservatives who supposedly advocated for Paz Científica. Since Conservative leadership was still present in Panama after the separation from Colombia, it is impossible to say that Conservatism

was not involved in the formation of Panamanian identity. In his examination of heroism in Panama, Szok does not notice that many Conservative leaders, like General José de Fábrega (1774-1841) and Manuel Amador Guerrero, were also celebrated for their patriotism and civic nationalism. Actually, many contemporary Liberals wrote praises to their Conservative peers, as seen in writings about Nicolás Victoria Jaén (1862-1946) and Santiago de La Guardia Jr. (1858-1925). In this context, Szok remains in the mainstream that describes Panamanian nation-building as essentially a Liberal project.

For Szok, the manner in which Liberal intellectuals and politicians imagined the nation did not seem to establish a link between national symbols and heroes and popular identity. In a few words, Balboa, Herrera, Justo Arosemena, the “Hanseatic ideal” or European architecture were not representative of the masses idiosyncrasy. He writes that Panamanian leaders:

Attempted to create a more restricted identity that excluded new groups and defended their status... began to emphasize their Spanish American heritage to counter domestic turbulence and their image of a U.S. colony... The same leaders expressed intolerance toward the West Indians and other newcomers who... now dominated the urban areas. The Panamanian middle and upper classes attempted to expel the masses from history (Szok, 2001, p. 119).

Although this affirmation might be valid in an ethno-cultural sense, especially for the case of immigrants from the West Indies, Europe, China and the U.S., these images might have appealed to Panamanians who had heard of some of these heroes since the nineteenth century (Balboa, Herrera or José de Fábrega). Szok’s argument also overlooks events from the past: first, Catholicism and Spanish language were already fomented in Panama when it was part of Colombia; second, Panama had already become diverse in the nineteenth century during the construction of the Panama Railroad and the French attempt to build a canal. Also, the language of civic nationalism might have appealed because social order, peace and progress could be seen as Universalist values.

A. E. Porras’ *La Cultura de la Interoceanidad: narrativas de la identidad nacional de Panamá* (1990-2002) (2005) uses some of the same theories to explain the development of different identities in Panama. She attempts to demonstrate that, due to a close social and historical relation with trans-isthmian transit, a “Culture of Interoceanity” was developed in Panama. She indicates that this culture values “cosmopolitanism, a globalised services economy, international politics, the transitist function of Panama, peaceful and diplomatic negotiation, racial and cultural diversity, modernizing cultural change, syncretism, and mestizaje” (Porras, 2005, p. 39).

The book by Ana Elena Porras is useful for this dissertation it offers an analysis of narratives about historic heroes and villains.

According to A.E. Porras, depending on their content, the narratives strengthen or challenge the “Culture of Interoceanity” (2005, pp. 24-25). In this line of thought, *La Cultura de la Interoceanidad* analyses legends that refer to the Panama nation’s colonial origin, such as the story of Vasco Núñez de Balboa (Porras, 2005, pp. 74-82), Anayansi (pp. 70-73)³ or Urracá⁴ (pp. 60-69). The book also investigates the narratives about the Independence of 1903, including those that celebrate the próceres’ heroism, and those that criticise them as traitors who sold the country to the United States (Porras, 2005, pp. 99-149). Finally, the book intends to interpret metaphors that represent the Panamanian nation as internationalist such as “Pro Mundi Beneficio” (pp. 234-238), “Bridge of the World” (pp. 239-245) or “Heart of the Universe” (pp. 246-251) and contrasts them with slogans like “Panamá Soberana” (pp. 261-265) or “Panamá 2000” (pp. 266-274).

A.E. Porras’ main claim is that those narratives that transmit the idea that the Separation of 1903 was heroic have the same imbedded message as the internationalist slogans or the legend of Vasco Núñez de Balboa or Anayansi. For A. E. Porras, they intend to instil the appreciation for “cosmopolitanism, the internationalization of political relations, service economy, the transitist function of Panama, peaceful and diplomatic negotiation, racial and cultural diversity, and cultural change towards modernisation, commerce, syncretism, and mestizaje [racial and ethnic mixing]” (2005, p. 39). This last part seems to connect the “culture of inter-oceanity” with Liberalism and the so-called “Hanseatic ideal” of the nation.

In *La Cultura de la Interoceanidad*, A. E. Porras, however, perpetuates generalisations that describe the Interior as a region with Conservative and xenophobic identity, always in opposition the tolerant Liberalism of Panama City. This occludes the many key factors: first, many of the narratives that promoted “interoceanity” were produced by Conservatives and/or intellectuals from the countryside. Second, Liberalism and Conservatism were not enclosed and isolated in specific areas of Panama. Moreover, she discards the work of historians by simply describing it as “highly interpretative” (Porras, 2005, p. 143). As a result, *La Cultura de la Interoceanidad* overlooks the historical context in which many of the narratives of national identity emerged. In doing so, the work forgets the importance of influences of Conservatism, Progressivism, Positivism and Hispanoamericanismo in the formation of Panamanian national identity.

The preservation of the bi-dimensional dichotomy between Conservatives and Liberals and the neglect of historical contexts leads A. E. Porras not only to connect the “Culture of Interoceanity” with Liberalism and the concept of “Hanseatic ideal”, but also to overstate their importance in the formation of Panamanian identity.

This over-emphasis can be seen in the argument Panamanians appear as having an “interocenic” personality or ideosyncrasy. She claims that “in situation of extreme political tension, [the culture of interoceanity] expresses its preference for survival, negotiation, tolerance and commerce over confrontation, honour, pride or heroic [actions] and, many times, at the cost of undesirable subordination” (Porras, 2005, pp. 39-40). It appears as if “the culture of interoceanity” have an almost deterministic conditioning of Panamanian behaviour, which makes them open to seek protectionism, to be collaborative with stronger others, or to accept subordination. The connotations are negative, even when cosmopolitanism (internationalism) or informal forms of negotiation, pacifism or neutrality could be techniques of resistance.

Félix Chirú has published several articles on the topic of heroism and commemorations in Panama:⁵ Possibly, the most related to this piece is the article “Liturgia al héroe nacional: el monumento a Vasco Núñez de Balboa en Panamá” (2012) [The Liturgy to the National Hero: the Monument to Vasco Núñez de Balboa in Panama], which explores the details of the erection and unveiling of a statue dedicated to Vasco Núñez de Balboa, the Spanish conquistador that discovered the Pacific Ocean to Europeans. There, Chirú presents similar arguments to those of Ana Elena Porras and Szok. Following Erich Hobsbawm’s “Inventing Traditions” and Anthony Smith work on nationalism, he identifies the celebration of Balboa as a ritual that links a character of the past with the nation’s present and future (Chirú, 2012, p. 73). For him, the bodily image of Balboa and the narratives that exalted his deeds created an incarnation of a past glory that has predetermined Panama’s manifested destiny: to become an interoceanic route for the transit of goods and people (Chirú, 2012, p. 75).

Chirú reminds the readers of the cult to Balboa officially conveyed on other forms: the name of the national currency, an avenue, a port and surrounding neighbourhood (in the Canal Zone), and a beer (2012, p. 94). He also highlights the representation of Balboa in painting and literature (pp. 76-77). Nevertheless, his article focuses on the effort of building the monument to Balboa, because, for Chirú, it was an attempt of “civic pedagogics” that aimed at advancing a project that inculcated a mindframe in the population that asserted the perennality of Panama’s “interoceanity” (2012, p. 90) and hispanidad (pp. 72, 88, 94) and connected them to liberalism (p. 86). This also sought for making other Spanish American countries and Spain remember that Panama was hispanic too and, as such, it deserved their recognition as a sister nation (Chirú, 2012, pp. 82, 88). Chirú adds that it was also a demonstration of resistance to political and cultural influence from the United States (p. 72).

Chirú makes an excellent work in delving deeply into the history of the negotiations and endeavors of Panamanian leaders to realize the confection and erection of the statue. He uses official correspondence to illustrate the intention of making both the monument and the event of the inauguration a great moment for Hispanic countries and for “la raza latina” (Chirú, 2012, p. 88), a clear example of hispanoamericanismo. He even proves that other Spanish American countries and especially Spain supported the plan with rhetoric and financial support (p. 84). His argument regarding the importance of cultural diplomacy and the promotion of, what I call, an “ethnic internationalism” to attain the acceptance and recognition of Panama’s sovereignty by other Hispanic nations is solid.

However, there are five visible weaknesses and voids: the overemphasis on the input of liberalism in the symbolism of Balboa’s monument as well as in organization of other commemorative events; the unstudied intentions and thoughts of the artists that made the statue; the naming of the event as a “liturgy” without contemplating the full scope of Hobsbawm’s theory and its potential gaps; the unconvincing overstatement that part of the intrinsic message of the celebration of Balboa was to present the Panamanian nation as “white” while ignoring blacks and indigenous people (Chirú, 2012, p. 91); and, more importantly, the little attention paid to a much more important need to inculcate civic nationalism and internationalism.

More specifically, like Peter Szok, the work of Félix Chirú follows the classical historiography produced in Panama and the United States that contends that Panama was a bastion of liberalism, so he associates the explicit and implicit values presented in the monument to liberal ideals. Nevertheless, ethnic nationalism does not belong to a particular political group, especially when it comes the notion that a group of people has common cultural background. Indeed, Panamanian nation-builders assumed or at least hoped that all the population shared a Hispanic history and culture, which was tangible in the actions of Balboa, the use of the same spoken language and a practiced religion. Nevertheless, this vision of the country was not exclusive of liberals. Many studies have demonstrated that, since the Nineteenth Century, cared much for the proper learning of Spanish language and the practice of Catholicism. Furthermore, Panamanian conservatives would also search for international recognition from, at least, their peers elsewhere. In fact, Panama’s governments from 1903 to at least 1912⁶ were mainly directed by conservatives who sought international recognition for their new nation-state too.

In connection to this, Chirú’s analysis leaves aside the role of the Spanish artists who made the statue and the pedestal of the monument, Mariano Benlliure and Manuel Blay. Chirú studies what some liberal leaders like President Belisario Porras wanted to display and the meanings he wanted to transmit. Nevertheless, this does not

mean that the artists complied with these wishes. In order to understand the true meaning of each symbolism in the monument, it is mandatory to study the thought behind the motifs of those who conceived the piece of art. More research needs to be done about these authors' thoughts on Balboa to decipher the meaning of the symbols adorning the statue.

Moreover, Chirú does not take into account a key factor from Hobsbawm's argument on how traditions are invented: repetition (Hobsbawm, 2012, pp. 2, 4). This idea renders a potentially paradoxical notion. Although the constant exposure to the icons of Balboa, represented in material culture or public spaces might fabricate a constant remembrance, routine could lead to indifference. That is, the establishment of an invented tradition requires, a constant ritual with, as Anthony Smith (points out, enough emotional potency to remember the audience of the importance of their past and connect it to their present and future expectations (Smith, 2008, p. 8). Yet, a ritual such as an annual "Balboa Day" or a "Pacific Ocean Day" was never implemented. The unveiling of Balboa alone hardly stands for a "liturgy". This lack of consistency led the myth of Balboa to dissipate. His image is known, but the metaphoric message escapes the interest of most citizens. After all, contrary to Bolívar or Martí, the story of this conquistador does not have enough appeal and inclusiveness to incentivize different groups to appropriate his image as a symbol of their ideals.

As mentioned, Chirú observations on both the attempt to use ethnicity as an instrument to enhance national and international recognition of the Panamanian nation-state and how this same instrument excluded a considerable number of the Isthmus' inhabitants (English-speaking and French-speaking West Indians, Asians, East Indians, among others) are convincing. Nevertheless, the fact that the narratives and images of Balboa depicted this explorer and conqueror born in Extremadura in 1475 as a white European does not necessarily mean that Isthmian liberals or the elites wanted to produce a "white" nation or exhibit Panama's "whiteness" to the Hispanic world. This might be an overstatement. Although it is customary to claim that members of the elites were "white". Yet, this is a problematic terminology for Panama, for it might lead to the notion that these elites were genetically "white". There is enough evidence that demonstrate that this is not precise. Panamanian nation-builders, who belonged to the social, economic, political, cultural and intellectual elites, were not a monolithic and monochromatic group.

As Lillian Guerra explained for Cuba, there was a centuries process of "whitening" in the island. However, its most important aspect was the adoption of European behavior, which was perceived as civilized (2005, p. 34). Social acceptance, of course, depended on the color of the skin and European ascendancy, but the practice of European

customs and etiquette, the owning or acquisition of European tastes, formal or professional education, a respectable employment, and/or financial resources (inherited or attained) could mitigate discrimination and derive in social mobility. As a result, people of African and Indigenous descent could become members of the social elite and leaders of political movements and parties.

The process of cultural “whitening” certainly happened in Panama since at least the Eighteenth Century and early-Nineteenth Century as indicated by Figueroa Navarro (1978, p. 90) and Silvia Espelt-Bombín (2014, pp. 37-69). As will be seen, there is enough evidence to demonstrate that by the end of the Nineteenth Century a double process of “whitening” and “empowerment” of mulattoes and mestizos as well as other mixed population was consolidated. The point here is not to neglect colonialism, imperialism, racial discrimination, the rise of Darwinian views of the qualities of different human races, or the (mis)understanding of Spencer’s social Darwinism (Navari, 2000, p. 4) in Latin America, but to acknowledge the existing and emerging transversal alliances and social links as well as the complexities of ethnic-racial mixing (*mestizaje*) to adequately see the social dynamics of race and ethnicity in Latin America. By doing so, it is possible to understand the adoption of acculturation or “whitening” allowed small group of individuals from social lower tiers within the colonial and Nineteenth Century social pyramid found ways to move upwards to the satisfaction or despise of others.

Hence, this acculturation and embracing of Spanish culture resulted in that, by the end of the Nineteenth Century, there were writers of mixed ascendancy that became notorious hispanophiles. For instance, liberal writers such as Aizpuru Aizpuru and Soto published a newspaper called *Don Quijote* (Aizpuru Aizpuru and Soto, 1899). The heading of the newspaper had a drawing of an enormous medieval knight, wearing full-armour and riding a spirited steed, while chasing out little suspicious characters that were hiding among the letters of “Don Quijote”. This included an Afro-West Indian (1899, p. 1). It is possible to say that Hispanismo was widely accepted among Panamanians of African descent, who had mobilized politically, socially, and financially since colonial times.

Moreover, it would be simplistic to deem the Panamanian political elite as witless and unaware of the co-dependency between members of the political and commercial elite and the rest of the population to achieve a governability. This is specially the case of a new nation-state, in which the consolidation of governmental authority and the promotion of nation-building projected depended on the expansion of the state’s institutions to distant areas, where the majority of the population was not “white”. Social mobility of mulattoes and mestizos was both partially accepted and necessary.

The discourse elaborated around the image of Balboa was not put upon the idea that he was hero of the “white race”. As Chirú contradictorily indicates, the message was placed upon the exaltation of the “raza latina” or “raza hispana”. This concept was used in Latin America, including Panama, through the Nineteenth Century. An example is Justo Arosemena’s article *La Cuestión Americana*, in which he compared the “raza anglosajona” (“Anglosaxon race”) and the “raza latina” (“Latin race”). There “raza latina” does not refer to the genetics of people of Latin background, but to the cultural background coming from Spain. an inheritance that had a two-folded effect on Latin Americans. On one side, there were positive elements such as spiritual, heroic, and chivalrous; on the other, it was described degraded and “tire fights and the [constant] political and religious instability” (Arosemena, 2018, p. 24).

Similar to Martí, savvy men like Belisario Porras, who had study, worked, campaigned and even fought alongside many members of poor mixed majorities and mulatto intellectuals, knew how to address his audience. This was most probably the case of other Isthmian thinkers and politicians. They were conscious that their message of ethnic nationalism was attractive to a broad group of people who had Panamanian citizenship or aspired to it, as well as other persons with nationality of other Spanish American countries. The raise of the monument to Balboa was a mean to exalt and vindicate the “raza latina”. There is not enough reason, then, to argue the event and its message only represented the will and prejudices of the “white” elite. As shown, there were hispanophiles among the “non-white” population, so the Hispanic focus given to monument to Balboa most likely appealed to them.

Nevertheless, I contend, contrary to Chirú and Szok, that that the cult to Balboa was the most important and clear message of the cult to Balboa, displayed in the monument, public spaces, and material culture, was not a simple indication that Panama is a Hispanic nation. After all, the effectiveness of the discourses and practices to generate social unity through solely “civic nationalism” or “ethnic nationalism” in multicultural societies are limited (Smith, 2008, pp. 39-42). Instead, this time in agreement with Chirú, that for 400 years, Isthmians were part and had served the “civilized” world (2012, p. 94). In this sense, “whitening” implied to behave according to European standards and having this behavior meant to be “civilized” and, therefore, a person with proper civic values.

The discourse and image around Balboa had two juxtaposed goals: the promotion of civic nationalism and civic internationalism. Both the local and foreign listeners and viewers, whether living in Panama or not, will perceive Panama as a nation formed by citizens who respected national and international laws; preserved order and peace; sought for international cooperation; and aimed at progress in science, technology, and the arts and letters for the sake of humanity.

From my viewpoint, this discourse of civism was more relevant for Panamanian nation-builders than attracting the support of other Hispanic nations through representations of common ethnicity. After all, the most important requirement to attain international recognition, and open the door to practice any kind of diplomacy, sign any sort of treaty, form alliances, and enter international organizations was to prove that a new nation-state understood and abided to the rules and “civism” of the Western international community. In spite of the beginning and end of the Great War (1914-1918), the practice of a progressive internationalism focused on cooperation and respect for international law was especially important in the early Twentieth Century to claim that a country was part of the concert of nations (Sluga, 2013, pp. 11-12; Navari, 2000, pp. 4, 8). For this reason, the confection of a constellation of professional heroes became crucial for the first generation of Panamanian nation-builders: these “professionals”, among which they counted themselves, represented role models for future law-abiding and civic-conscious citizens who could contribute to the perfecting of “civilization” in the world.

Based upon these ideas and to challenge and contribute to the historiographical debate, and to break from the mainstream celebratory historiography, this article will argue that the study of Panamanian national iconography and heroism allows us to see more clearly how Panamanian nation-builders attempted to build a nation founded on other principles besides those of Liberalism. At least, the images transmitted some of the premises of discourses of Positivism and Conservatism and Progressivism, which influenced La Regeneración and Paz Científica or internationalism, diplomacy and neutrality/pacifism. This Article is divided into four parts.

The first part will illustrate the way military heroes were exalted in the nineteenth century. This will help to establish a contrast between the forms in which Panamanians commemorated local heroes for their military abilities and the posterior fashion of exalting professionals. The second part will present evidence of the transition, in the 1890s, from a conventional romanticising of the military hero to the attribution to a military man of civilian values. The third part will show the different ways Panamanian leaders celebrated professional heroes by appropriating internationally known heroes such as Bolívar, Cervantes and Columbus, searching in the past for Panamanian professional heroes and the celebrations of their peers as heroes of the separation of 1903. The fourth part will analyse the process of decline of the image of the professional hero. It will explore the reasons why professional heroism decays and how it slowly becomes replaced by more conventional forms of heroism, such as the celebration of warriors and charismatic personalities. At the end, it is a story of civic nationalism versus ethnic nationalism.

Panamanian heroism before 1903: celebration of military heroes

In the nineteenth century, Panamanian and Colombian Liberal and Conservative politicians tended to articulate war as a necessary and justifiable measure to establish or re-establish their conceptions of proper governance. Therefore, they constantly led troops into battle against the national government or local governments of the states or departments of Colombia. War drove many Colombians to join, at least temporarily, the ranks of the political parties and to follow the news about the course of events. In other words, civil war established a paradox: it produced fragmented political identities and a divided nationalist sentiment, but also contributed to the creation of a more generalised national awareness. Since the different political factions intended to build the Colombian nation in distinct forms, many representations of the nation appeared and disappeared, especially after successful coups against the central state. However, political parties, even when out of power, used the press to inculcate their ideals. War played an important role in the establishment of party cohesion, as it provided material to celebrate their victories and their miseries. Liberals and Conservatives used stories of war to commemorate glorious moments and their particular heroes and martyrs.

Within this context, Conservatives and Liberals in Panama produced partisan narratives and images celebrating “saviours” and “valiant fighters” to construct a party identity and obtain the support of the population. They did this when they announced and sponsored the candidacy of a brave captain or granted military titles to civil leaders who organised military campaigns or when newspapers and poems celebrated “martyrs” and “victors”.

In order to determine who was a military rather than a professional hero, it is important to observe the emphasis that biographers give to the hero’s military deeds, and how much attention the narratives pay to the intellectual and civic deeds of the character in question. Besides the balance between military and professional heroism, other important factors like social class and access to political power and to the media determined if a character was celebrated or forgotten in the early twentieth century. There are several examples of these ephemeral heroes: Pedro Prestán (1852-1885), Victoriano Lorenzo (1867-1903), Carlos Albán (1844-1902), and Buenaventura Correoso (1831-1911).

The biography of Buenaventura Correoso by educator J. M. Lleras, *Rasgos Biográficos del General del Estado Soberano de Panamá, en los Estados Unidos de Colombia, señor Buenaventura Correoso* (1876), is an example of how Panamanians celebrated heroism in the

nineteenth century. Lleras began commenting on the hero's professional studies at the Escuela Normal. Afterwards, he described Correoso's political career, relating how Correoso obtained his first political position when he was elected for a charge in the municipality of Panama in 1852. Later, due to his contact with Liberal leaders such as Tomás Herrera, Correoso became Judge of the parish of Panama and Secretary of the Court of Crime of the District of Panama, and then a Chief Judge of the latter institution in 1855.

Afterwards, the Asociación amigos del Orden (Association of friends of order) invited Correoso to work on the editorial section of the newspaper *El Pueblo*. This presented Correoso with the opportunity of having "new challenges and some glories" (Lleras, 1876, p. 4). Lleras claimed that Correoso played a crucial role as a journalist in favour of José de Obaldía. This helped Correoso to obtain more important official positions such as Deputy of the Department of Panama and Magistrate of the Supreme Court of Panama between 1858 and 1859 (Lleras, 1876, p. 4). Correoso's swift political rise was not only due to his popularity among the inhabitants of the Arrabal, but because of his links with powerful politicians. These men promoted him to key political charges, which, supposedly, gave Correoso the chance of intervening in favour of the masses.

For instance, the biography mentions that, when occupying the position of Chief of the Court of Crime of the District, Correoso declared the "expiration" of a trial against the Goitía (also spelled as Goytía) family for attempting to revolt in Los Santos. This gave him the opportunity to favour future political allies such as Pedro Goytía, one of the most influential Liberals in the region of Azuero and who became president of the State of Panama in 1863. It is probable that his posture also helped residents of the Arrabal, affecting the interests of real estate owners in Panama City (Muñoz Pinzón, 2004, pp. 176-192).

Nonetheless, a clearer turning point in Correoso's political life was the publication in the last edition of *El Pueblo* of an article with the title "No más sufrir" [No more suffering]. Correoso, as a representative of the Liberal Party, opposed the revolution of 1859, led by the President of the Confederación Granadina, Mariano Ospina, because it went against Liberal federalists, causing the "unhinging of the federal order" (Lleras, 1876, p. 4). As Liberals from the rest of Colombia approached victory, said the biographer, they understood the participation of Panama as crucial for the success of their federalist cause. Therefore, they could not permit the Isthmus to remain neutral as proposed in the Convenio de Colón⁷ and decided to contact Liberals in the Isthmus. Correoso, as a person with strong influence among "the people", was one of the leaders who Liberals approached and urged to join the war. Accordingly, since the

federalist cause had already cost him many “sacrifices”, he opted to join the rebels.

It is possible to say that it is at this moment that Correoso’s military career began. It is also the point at which the narration begins to celebrate Correoso’s military heroism. Nonetheless, the story reminds the readers that, after all, Buenaventura Correoso was a man of Liberal and patriotic principles. Before engaging in battle with the Governor of Panama, Santiago de La Guardia, Correoso supposedly tried to convince him to embrace the federalist cause to ensure that “the Panamanian star came to occupy its rightful place in the radiant constellation that ornaments the triumphant flag of the... United States of Colombia” (Lleras, 1876, p. 7).

According to Lleras, De La Guardia rejected several offers for a peaceful settlement. The author speculated that the reason for De La Guardia’s stubborn posture was a possible lack of trust in Correoso, De La Guardia’s faithfulness to the Convenio de Colón or even a possible attachment to the ideal of Isthmian independence (Lleras, 1876, p. 7). The text continued describing several deeds of the Arrabalero leader, including his rise to the presidency of the State of Panama and his successful campaign to suppress a coup, and his opposition to another Arrabalero, Gabriel Neira and his “corrupt” government (p. 22).

As a hero, Correoso appears as leader who decided to take political and military action against “oppressive” governments. For this reason, Correoso, said the biography, was about “the public figure who, after General [Tomás] Herrera, has achieved, in recent times, the greatest sympathy among the popular masses of the Isthmus” (Lleras, 1876, p. 4). This comparison is very important, because the way Lleras presented Correoso as almost equal to a Liberal and military man of great symbolic relevance as General Tomás Herrera, more than anything, highlighted the image of Correoso as a military hero rather than as a professional.

However, certain parts of Lleras’s biography of Correoso adopted some apologetic tones. The text tried to excuse Correoso from the death of Santiago de La Guardia. While excusing Correoso, he committed many factual errors. For example, De La Guardia was a Conservative, but Lleras described him as a “resolute Liberal” (1876, p. 6). The fact that Lleras deemed it of great importance to indicate that Correoso appreciated De La Guardia (p. 10), suggests not only that Correoso had critics with enough influence to demand an apology.

It is possible to infer that there were some Panamanians who opposed both the Arrabal and the Liberal Party, indicating that the authority and influence of Arrabalero leaders in Panamanian politics and society was constantly challenged. Evidence of this is that in 1868 and in 1871 two revolts occurred in Chiriquí. The leaders of the first rebellion were two Conservatives: Manuel Amador Guerrero, who

would become the first president of Panama, and Aristides de Obaldía, a relative of José de Obaldía. The second rebellion was organised in Dolega (Chiriquí), where Correoso had his “worst enemies” (Lleras, 1876, p. 19). Although Lleras celebrated Correoso’s victories, these gained him enemies like Amador Guerrero or Santiago de La Guardia Jr. This situation could partly explain why his deeds were forgotten in the early twentieth century.

The importance of military heroism in nineteenth-century Panama and Colombia is reflected in writings dedicated to the events of the War of the Thousand Days, such as the poem by Rodolfo Caicedo, “La Batalla de Panamá”, which celebrated the victory of the Conservative troops over the Liberal army in the Conservative victory at Battle of the Bridge of Calidonia in Panama City. The stanzas described war scenes and, more importantly, commemorated the leadership and heroism of the Conservative commander, Carlos Albán. As mentioned, in 1900, several Liberal leaders, including the Panamanian Belisario Porras, arrived in the Isthmus took control of the countryside and advanced towards Panama City. General Albán defended the Capital and defeated the Liberal troops. Caicedo’s poem reads:

They are not men...
...those brave men... imitate
The titans when throwing rocks
To the Gods of the Olympus.
...look there, in the trenches,
Wielding his sword...
[It]is Albán...
in his chest there is rejection
...of disorder...
...his spirit...
Aggrandises him in bloody dramas...
...Albán!... Your breath
Was the salvation of the Isthmus...
[It] revived the heroism ...
Thus... triumphed...

The holy Idea that invokes progress

Under the patronage of Christian faith (1946a [1901], pp. 16-18).

The poet not only celebrated the heroism of Albán in the battlefield by describing him “wielding his sword” near the “trenches”, but also by portraying him as a charismatic leader, who was able to “revive” the “heroism” of his soldiers. More importantly, though, Caicedo attributed to Albán the status of hero, as the poems described representative of the ideals of La Regeneración. In the first stanza, the poet is probably making a reference to the Olimpo Radical [Radical Olympus], which was the name given to the government of the Colombian Radicales under the Constitution of Rio Negro (1863).

If so, Albán appears as a “titan” who fights against the Radicales. More evidently, the poet wrote that Albán rejected “disorder” and endowed the hero with a strong Catholic aura. Albán appears as a military hero who defended social order and Catholicism, which, according to the principles of La Regeneración, were essential for the progress of Colombia. By linking Albán’s actions to the ideas of La Regeneración, Caicedo reinforced the link of the hero with Conservatism. As in the case of Correoso’s biography, this demonstrates the partisanship aspects of the narrative of Albán.

Transition in Panamanian hero-making: successes and failures in transforming military heroes into civilian heroes

The fact that nineteenth-century hero-making produced fragmentation among Panamanians compelled early twentieth-century nation-builders to eliminate the militarist narratives of their national history, as a way to promote the values postulated by Rafael Núñez in “Paz Científica”. This transition is visible in the two works of journalist and historian Rodolfo Aguilera (1858-1916): *Istmeños Ilustres de la Emancipación* [Illustrious Isthmians of our Emancipation] (1887) and *Galería de Hombres Públicos del Istmo* [Gallery of Public men of the Isthmus] (1906).

The former book comprises 78 short biographies of persons who somehow participated in the independence of Panama from Spain in 1821. In *Istmeños Ilustres de la Emancipación* (1887), Aguilera wrote about 46 civilians and 32 military officers of different ranks. In *Galería de Hombres Públicos del Istmo*, Aguilera commented on the life of 36 civilians and 11 military officers. A particular and important aspect that distinguishes one book from the other, though, is that the former briefly mentions upon the career of its selected personages, while the latter clearly indicates their profession. In addition, the

Galería includes photos or drawings of some of them and highlighted the qualities and achievements of members of the elites regardless of their skin colour or ascendancy. In this sense, at least 8 of the characters were not “white”. These illustrations suggest that the Panamanian elite was not as monochromatic and ethnically and racially impermeable as other authors have asserted.

The fact that Aguilera still included men with military careers in his list of influential Panamanians is an indicator that the construction of a pantheon of professional heroes in the Isthmus was not sudden. This process implied a transition that began in the late 1880s and continued until early twentieth century. The sources suggest that the selection of who would belong to the national pantheon of heroes depended on the way the personage was remembered. In this sense, it was more complicated to erase the military past of well-known men like Buenaventura Correoso or Tomás Herrera, whose careers and heroism had been constructed around their military actions. It was even more difficult to re-invent them as persons who fought for the sake of civic values. For instance, after being arrested due to his participation in the war of 1885 (Aparicio, 2004b, p. 243).

Correoso attempted to present himself, in 1888, as an individual who respected civil order in his writing *Sucesos de Panamá* [The events of Panama] (Correoso, 1946). In that text, Correoso manifested admiration for Santiago de La Guardia and his plan of transforming the Isthmus into a neutral territory. He lamented making the mistake of taking arms against De La Guardia and impeding the attainment of a period of peace for the Isthmus (Correoso, 1946, p. 7). Nonetheless, even after his retirement from politics, *El Duende*, a Liberal newspaper, published an article in honour of Correoso in 1895. The publication contained the following illustration (Figure 1).



Figure 1

Homage of El Duende to General Buenaventura Correoso
Aizpuru Aizpuru (1898).

The image shows the two aspects of Correoso's heroism. He is shown as a professional by his clothes and the pen below his chest, but also as a military hero since he was granted the title of General and the presence of a sword. The picture was followed by an article that

describes the deeds of Correoso, listing his posts in the government and his journalistic career. It celebrated his article “No más sufrir” and his defence of Liberal ideas with his “penmanship”. Furthermore, it commented that Correoso prevented a confrontation between troops from Cauca and the Liberals of Panama City in 1895. Even though the article paid attention to Correoso’s qualities as a journalist and civilian, it placed more importance on his military achievements. It praised his victory over the government in 1862, after overcoming all kinds of adversities. More clearly, the text expressed admiration for Correoso’s military life by pointing out that since 1862, Correoso,

whether fighting with his pen or with his sword, always in favour of the sacred cause of humanity, has achieved great triumphs and endured major setbacks... the latter include every kind of sufferings... which served him to acquire the highest position in the military career that our institutions... [used to] award to loyal and brave soldiers... in times when the promotions were given for... merits (Aizpuru Aizpuru, 1898, pp. 1-2).

However, in the twentieth century, his historical relevance faded away. Unlike Prestán, Correoso was still alive in 1903, but, even though he expressed pro-independence ideas a few months before the separation (Correoso, 1903, p. 13). it does not seem that he participated directly in the events of the 3 November 1903. In 1906, Aguilera’s list of prominent men of the Isthmus, again, recalled the readers of Correoso’s military rank. The book focused on the battles and military career of General Correoso, but not so much on his studies or professional achievements.

Besides this, it is important to remember that Correoso fought in the battlefield against Manuel Amador Guerrero (Lleras, 1876, pp. 15-16; Aparicio, 2004a, p. 228) and that some people blamed him for the death of Santiago de La Guardia (Lleras, 1876, p. 11). Considering that the former became the first President of Panama and the son of the latter, Santiago de La Guardia Jr., had the position of Secretary of Government, it is possible to infer that making Correoso a hero was a difficult task. All these factors might explain why his image was forgotten and why, even though a law was issued to order to erect a statue in his honour, this work was never done (Castillero Reyes, 1974, p. 49).

A similar case was that of General Tomás Herrera whose actions have been deemed as great examples of patriotism. It is important to mention that the image of Herrera was already commemorated in the nineteenth century. An example of this is that the province of Herrera, in the peninsula of Azuero, was created and named after him in 1855. That is, there were some governmental commemorations of Herrera as a regional hero since the mid nineteenth century, especially on the part of Panamanian Liberals. Furthermore, other events compelled early twentieth-century Panamanian nation-

builders to commemorate Herrera in spite of his military career: first, in 1831, he defeated a Venezuelan “despot”, General Eligio Alzuru (1791-1831), who had overthrown the leader of the secession of 1830, José Domingo Espinar (1791-1865) and declared the independence of Panama (Arce and Sosa, 1911, pp. 216-217; Araúz and Pizzurno, 1993, p. 83).⁸

More significant was the fact that, in 1840, Herrera decided to declare the independence of the Isthmus as a measure to prevent Panamanians from engaging in Colombian civil war known as the War of the Supremes. The period of independence lasted thirteen months, and, for many it meant the creation of the first Panamanian Republic: *El Estado Libre del Istmo* [The Free State of the Isthmus] (Arosemena, 2003, p. 32). It is probably for these reasons that Herrera became the first official Panamanian hero, as the Panamanian government decreed his commemoration through Law 7 of the 17 March 1904, which described Herrera as a “relentless champion of the law”, in defence of which he “gloriously surrendered his life” in Bogotá on 4 December 1854 (*República de Panamá, Poder Legislativo*, 1904, 13 April, p. 1).

This vision of Herrera might be the explanation of why other intellectuals of the early twentieth century described him as a Panamanian “martyr” (Alfaro, 2003, pp. 324-328), even though, ironically, he died while participating in civil war in defending the interests of the Liberal Party in Colombia. Furthermore, the law “honour[ed] the memory of Tomás Herrera and [celebrated] his centenary” and proposed to fund the carving of an equestrian statue of this hero. However, it seems that the commemoration of Herrera faded away, until 1928, when, finally, his statue was erected in the Plaza de Herrera (Square of Herrera) (Castillero Reyes, 1973, pp. 45-49).

It is possible to infer that, in early-twentieth-century Panama, the heroism of military men faded away, because it was too complicated to create narratives that reconciled their military history with the values of supposed political tolerance. The representation of individuals who were better known as being military heroes that respected the rule of civil law was not sufficient to present them as models of the values that early twentieth-century nation-builders wanted to transmit. Moreover, the fact that Herrera and Correoso were well-remembered for their military deeds and posts hindered their inclusion in the Panamanian pantheon of heroes.

Panamanian Heroism after 1903: forgetting the military past, international heroes, and professionals

After independence, Isthmian politicians and intellectuals seldom tried to rescue or to vindicate the few military events in their

country's history in order to create a glorious military past. Instead they tried systematically to “forget” military events and the military character of some national heroes. Hence, the question about Panama is not about how most of twentieth-century nation-builders were able to celebrate national military history in a country with a limited number of international wars, nor how they dealt with the dilemma of which heroes to commemorate after internal conflicts. The main question about Panama is how and why these nation-builders did not attempt to create a mythical military history, and instead identified heroes whose actions represented both the recognition of Panama's geographical importance and a preference for pacifist action over armed conflict.

Panamanian writers turned first to the colonial past for heroes that symbolised the nation. Within this context, many authors have pointed out the importance early-twentieth-century Panamanians attributed to Vasco Núñez de Balboa (1475-1519) for finding the path to the “Southern Sea” in 1513, which was evoked as an historical and geographical testimony of Panama's destiny. In addition, many writers claim that Balboa was considered to be a reflection of diplomatic ability, amicability with the Natives, and a shared history with Spain (Szok, 2001, p. 99).⁹



Figure 2

Coins of Panama

Courtesy. Colección de Vicente Alberto Pascual Landa (2003, p. 149).

For this reason, many poems and chronicles were published to remember and honour the Spaniard during the early twentieth

century. Moreover, the post-independence Panamanian public sphere was also populated with images of this hero as the new Panamanian coinage was named after him (Figure 2), as well as a main avenue that travels along the Pacific coast in Panama City. Also, a statue of the conqueror looking at the Pacific Ocean was erected in 1924. That day, the Panamanian president, Belisario Porras spoke, thus:

Here lies, at last, the hero; his body has sunken in the dust, but his name has been gigantic. His fame will shine like a great light crossing the skies. Greatness resides in him... He was what constitutes a leader of peoples who has confidence in himself, who dominates the environment, not by violence, but with the magnetism of his personality and for a quality that is not understandable or explicable for other human beings (Porras, 1945, p. 9).

Despite the fact that some personages of Panama's colonial past were elevated to the National pantheon, this is mostly populated by another kind of hero. The reason for this is that the constructors of national identity in Panama opted to search in the past for men who had had professional careers and respected civil order. Thus, the supposed ideology and lifestyle of prominent men of the nineteenth century had to be representative images of the values that twentieth-century Panamanian nation-builders' discourse aimed at promoting, regardless of their political affiliation.

Heroism was assigned to those members of the elites who, in the particular case of the Isthmus were perceived as persons who had not used force but, rather, their intellectual and professional skills to develop the nation. In Panama, thus, the most elevated positions of the national pantheon of heroes were not occupied by successful leaders and martyrs of wars, but, instead, by a constellation of professional heroes. The manner in which Panamanian leaders wanted heroism to be understood by the rest of the population was described in the first official textbook for civic education published in 1914:

Heroism is a glorious act by which life is voluntarily exposed or given for the sake of the Fatherland. But heroism is not only a special and exclusive virtue of patriotism, but rather the exaltation of any virtue taken to the point of sublimation. Hence, there is patriotic heroism, heroism of justice, heroism of science, heroism of charity (Martínez and Méndez Pereira, 1914, pp. 65-66).

Therefore, Isthmian nation-builders highlighted the lives of intellectuals, engineers, medical doctors, statesmen, artists, and, more importantly, conciliators and educators, who had served Panama. These heroes were praised because, in the minds of the nation builders, their deeds were representative of civic nationalism. The narratives of these heroes talked about men who worked in favour of the exploitation of the geographical position of Panama, a preference for diplomatic action as a cathartic method to liberate the nation

from suffering and oppression from significant others. For Panamanian nation builders, patriotism meant to

aggrandise [the Fatherland] at peace and defend it at war. At peace, by means of just and wise laws, and all making an effort so that science, art, industry and commerce can flourish in the country and spread outwards with honour and advantageously; we must defend it at war by putting our life and fortune at the service of those in charge of repelling attacks or invasions. War is an atrocious calamity, but it must be preferred to peace without liberty and justice (Martínez and Méndez Pereira, 1914, p. 65).

In conclusion, since the commemoration of military heroism was not a real possibility for Panamanians, the professional hero became indispensable because Isthmians needed educated men capable of liberating the nation peacefully from the subjugation imposed by more powerful countries and of leading the way towards modernity.

Panama's rituals to commemorate its heroes were not so different from those of other Latin American countries. Probably, Panamanian leaders had observed what other states in the continent had done to inculcate devotion to their exemplary men. Within this context, the role of education was fundamental, because the forms of commemoration were instilled in schools. An example of this is again *Elementos de Instrucción Cívica* [Elements of Civic Instruction], which, according to the authors, was inspired from the books of other Latin American writers. This book claimed that

one of the most elevated and fecund forms of love for the Fatherland is the study and divulgation of the most glorious deeds done by its sons, whether as heroes, as wise men, as artists, as educators, or as persons of high and exemplary virtues. We must know and remember with fondness the history of illustrious men, imitate their example as much as we can and publicly honour their memory' (Martínez and Méndez Pereira, 1914, p. 66).

It is not surprising, then, that the different governments of the early twentieth century produced stamps and postcards with the faces of the heroes, ordered the sculpting of statues, and named streets, schools or parks in honour of the selected national heroes.

The postcard presented below shows the national Coat of Arms and Flag accompanied by stamps of the busts of Panamanian national heroes. Some of them are colonial heroes such as Balboa and Fernández de Córdoba, the founder of the New Panama City in 1673, after Old Panama was destroyed during an attack directed by the pirate Henry Morgan. However, most of the heroes represented in the stamps are intellectuals, politicians of the nineteenth century such as José de Obaldía, a Panamanian lawyer who became President of Nueva Granada between 1854 and 1855, a presidential period in which he approved the creation of *Estado Federal de Panamá* (1855); Manuel José Hurtado (1821-1887), an engineer considered to be the "Father of Panamanian Public Instruction"; José de Fábrega, colonel

of the last Spanish troops posted in Panama and the most crucial leader of the independence of 1821; Tomás Herrera; and Justo Arosemena (Figure 3).



Figure 3

Stamps of Panama

Courtesy. Colección Vicente Alberto Pascual Landa (2003, p. 148).

However, not all the narratives about professional heroes were constructed in the same manner. It is possible to identify three different ways of categorising the accounts of Panamanian heroes: 1) searching the Panamanian past; 2) appropriation of internationally known exemplary men such as Simón Bolívar, Miguel de Cervantes, and Christopher Columbus (see Arosemena, 1916, pp. 437-445; Geenzier, 1916, pp. 463-465);¹⁰ and 3) commemoration of contemporaries. Three case studies will be analysed to explain the processes used to construct heroism in Panama.

Searching the Panamanian Past: Justo Arosemena

One way of creating heroes was to search in the past for leaders who supposedly defended the interests of Panama, and, then, to place them on an imaginary pedestal in the pantheon of national heroes. Initially, the formation of the nation was linked to men who had opposed Spanish or Colombian rule through legal procedures or diplomacy. Arguably, early-twentieth-century Panamanian nation-

builders deemed Justo Arosemena to be the most important Panamanian of the nineteenth century. This was because of the autonomist ideas expressed in his writing *El Estado Federal de Panamá*, published in 1855, and because of his efforts to attain from the Colombian government the establishment of an autonomous state in the Isthmus.

The book presents an historical argument to promote the idea that Panama's destiny and progress were linked to the Isthmus' geographical position, an argument that was fundamental for the formation of the Panamanian nation. Furthermore, it is possible that the celebration of civilian heroes might also have originated from Justo Arosemena himself. In his major work, he narrates that Panamanian independence leaders managed to separate the Isthmus from Spanish colonial rule in 1821 due to their

diplomacy and mercantile spirit [which] were to us as useful to us as spears and fusils were to our colonial brothers. Intrigues and gold were our weapons; with them we defeated the Spaniard, and the defeat which effects were as positive as those of cannons had the invaluable advantage of being bloodless (Arosemena, 1998, p. 24).

That is, Panamanian nation-builders appear to have found in his book precedents of exaltation of the Isthmians' supposed tendencies to act peacefully and diplomatically. Because of this, Justo Arosemena and his writings were presented as the true reflection of the ideals of early-twentieth-century Panamanian leaders. His rhetoric showed and promoted intellectual patriotism, statesmanship, ability for negotiation, rejection of violence, and professionalism. Thus, after 1903, he became the most celebrated Isthmian of the nineteenth century.

After the Independence of 1903, though, there was a subtle change in the discourse about the life of Justo Arosemena. As local history became national history, then, the hero's image began to represent the most significant characteristics of Panamanian national identity. Therefore, in the narrative about him, he appears to be against the political status quo in Colombia (even when the fact that he lived under and worked for Colombian governments is not neglected), and elements like the appreciation of peace, firm democratic ideals and professionalism became a more celebrated aspect of his personality. Some examples of this can be found in *Pensamientos que exaltan la personalidad de Don Justo Arosemena* [Ideas that exalt the personality of Don Justo Arosemena] (1933), a compilation of thoughts expressed about him, through the early twentieth century, by some of the most influential Panamanian politicians and intellectuals. For instance, Ricardo J. Alfaro, said:

In politics it is necessary to attain the approval of the people of a particular administrative policy... In the career of laws, which is [a form of] priesthood, the labour of a jurist is not to twist laws in favour of one or other litigant. A lawyer must have the courage of telling his clients when they are not right. That is the way [Justo] Arosemena understood politics, diplomacy and jurisprudence: like a serious and sincere gentleman (1933a, p. 11).

Thus, some of the main qualities attributed to Arosemena are related to his professionalism: the phrase concentrates on presenting Arosemena as a good lawyer. Furthermore, the creation of a cult of Arosemena was also directed to include a representation of a true democrat. This can be noticed in a speech called “Justo Arosemena. Patriota Inmaculado” [Justo Arosemena. Immaculate patriot], in which intellectual and educator Guillermo Andreve claimed that

[Arosemena loved] peace, [and] always was opposed in Colombia to political conflicts... settled by the use of arms... As a true republican, he believed in the necessity of the alternation of power between political parties... as a true democrat, his democracy did not consist in mixing with persons of dubious behaviour... [instead he did not] disdain the friendship of humble but honest men, and recognised merit wherever it was, without social distinctions. As a citizen he was austere, as a man faithful to his party, as a magistrate he was upright, as legislator he was fair (Andreve, 1917, p. 157).

For this reason several post-independence official programmes were designed to celebrate Justo Arosemena. In 1906, the Panamanian government issued a law to honour the memory of the “illustrious statesman”, and recommended the imitation of his “civic virtues”.

Furthermore, in a curious way of remembering the legacy of national heroes, Law 41 of 1906, indicated that: “The nation must perpetuate the merits of its illustrious sons in their descendents who for their intelligence and virtues are worthy of such distinction”, and approved the granting of a scholarship to Demetrio Fábrega Arosemena, “legitimate grandson” of the hero. This suggests that Panamanian statesmen and intellectuals deemed that values proper to Panamanian exemplary men were either inherited or transmitted within a family for generations.

Ten years later, Law 34 of 1916 was created to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Justo Arosemena's birth, decreeing the organisation of a contest to choose the best work on the hero's biography. Also, this law committed the State to raise a fund to commission a statue in his memory.¹¹ Finally, in 1933, Arosemena's body was retrieved from his grave to provide him with a tomb “worthy of an illustrious and modest patrician” (Inhumanación de los Restos, 1933, p. 47). The description of the event relates that the President of the Republic, Harmodio Arias, retrieved the remains of Justo Arosemena after the Republican Band had performed the National Anthem in front of an

audience made up of the "most notable people" in the intellectual, political and social spheres. Afterwards, Octavio Méndez Pereira (winner of the competition of biographies), the hero's great grandson, and the President gave commemorative speeches about Arosemena.

Ultimately, it can be said that Justo Arosemena became the model for future professional heroes. This is not only because of how his life was narrated in a manner that showed how nation builders and leaders saw themselves reflected in the past, but also because some of his ideas could be useful to defend the existence of an Isthmian nation, its interests, and its identity.

Appropriation of internationally exemplary men: Simón Bolívar

It is difficult to say when and how some Panamanians became supporters or admirers of Bolívar, especially because most historiography seems contradictory. Many writings, in an attempt to justify the right of Panama to secede from Colombia, argue that Panama joined the latter voluntarily and, therefore, has always been autonomous, but at the same time, these sources sustain the idea that Panama is a Bolivarian nation. The topic becomes more confusing when some authors claim that, in 1826, Panamanian Liberals organised a "Hanseatic" movement, or, in other words, a weak and ambiguous proposal of autonomy in reaction to Bolívar's Constitution of 1826 (Szok, 2001, p. 64; Figueroa Navarro, 1978, p. 244).

However, it is probable that, in spite of the fact that Bolívar never visited the Isthmus, many Panamanian leaders were familiar with Bolívar's writings and declarations, especially those regarding his plans for Panama. There are examples of a text written before Panama declared its independence from Spain in 1821, which mentioned the importance of Panama's geographic position in Bolívar's project. One case is the "Jamaica Letter", a document quoted constantly by Panamanian authors.

How beautiful it would be if the Isthmus of Panama could be for us [Spanish Americans as a whole] what Corinth was for the Greeks! I hope that someday we will have the good fortune to install there an august congress of the representatives of these republics, kingdoms, and empires for the purpose of considering and discussing the important issues of war and peace with the nations of the rest of the world (Bolívar, 2003, p. 28).

Most historiography states that Isthmian leaders were federalists, but the constant citation of phrases like this suggests that it is probable that Bolívar's plans for Panama appealed to some Isthmian leaders, even when he had indicated in the Address of Angostura of 1819 that he did not believe that the former Spanish colonies were ready for a full federal system of government (Bolívar, 2003, p. 36). In

other words, the fact that Panamanians still decided to join Gran Colombia in 1821 suggests that there were, indeed, influential supporters of Bolívar in the Isthmus, who, at least, were willing to tolerate his centralist visions in the hope that Panama could benefit from the privileged position that Bolívar attributed to it. The movement of 1826, then, does not seem ambiguous in the light that Panamanians were not asking more than what Bolívar had previously proposed, and, indeed, continued promoting when he organised the Congress of Panama of 1826.

Bolívar's discourse was compatible with that of twentieth-century Panamanian nation-builders. This is probably why many Panamanians made him a hero of their own, in spite of the possibility that many nineteenth-century leaders might not have been fond of the Libertador's policies or might have been disillusioned after the failure of Gran Colombia (Earle, 2005, p. 396). This indicates that the foundations for the construction of a cult of Bolívar were found in events of the nineteenth century, as twentieth-century Isthmian intellectuals and politicians attributed their nineteenth-century predecessors with the vision of a province which could become the capital of world diplomacy and commerce. Furthermore, they construed some phrases as the basis for a differentiated cult that was not based on the Venezuelan's military victories, but on Bolívar's appreciation of the commercial and strategic potential of the Isthmus.

Isthmians in the twentieth century, as Rebecca Earle has argued for many other Latin American countries in the same period, "began to nationalize the heroes of independence [especially Bolívar], whose achievements might be admired by the entire world but who belonged to the individual countries that claimed them as their own" (Earle, 2005, p. 396). In addition, given the lack of their own internationally renowned heroes, Panamanian nation-builders chose Bolívar because of his international prestige, which emphasised the internationalist feature of the Panamanian nation. In other words, Bolívar is perceived as a hero by both Panamanians and Colombians, but the contents of the narratives produced to construct his heroism in early-twentieth-century Panama, although similar in their "underlying topics" (independence) and "fundamental motives" (nation-building), were new as a result of the differentiated elements of the emerging Panamanian national identity.

Panama's peculiar cult of Bolívar as a national hero was developed in relation to the particular elements of Panamanian nationalism, so early-twentieth-century Panamanian nation-builders tried to link their narrative about Bolívar's writings to the internationalist and peaceful elements of Panamanian nationalism. For instance, concerning peacefulness, in "Elogio de Simón Bolívar", a speech given in the Instituto Nacional, an intellectual and educator, José Dolores Moscote, said:

My eulogy of Bolívar will leave aside the famous, legendary and triumphant general of countless battles... That general died... The Man-Hero, the hero of faith and will, the hero of political thought, the symbolic hero, the hero, at last, whose best prize is to be the hero of America and that lives among us in every instant, is the only one that attracts me (Moscote, 1916, pp. 299-300).

In the same speech, Moscote, a Colombian who had resided in Panama for several decades, rescued Bolívar's internationalist image by quoting one of his visions of the Isthmus, a rhetorical resource that served to aggrandize the importance of Panama as a Spanish American nation (1916, p. 305).

The image of Bolívar as a statesman and an internationalist was also represented in poetry. For example, an award winning poem, "Himno a Bolívar" [Hymn to Bolívar], by Aizpuru Aizpuru, a well-known Panamanian writer, taught students the following verses:

Tune a hymn to Bolívar
the Spanish American nations;
like a sacred symbol of the Union;
And following his noble advice,
And extinguishing the torch of hate,
So that, with Equity and Justice, the ideas
Enlightened them
Bolívar was a heroic warrior;
he was an [inspired] apostle too...,
whose wise doctrine has achieved
as much as the actions of his sword (Aizpuru Aizpuru, 1925, p. 1).

In Panama, many intellectuals also granted professional characteristics to the Libertador. Another educator, Octavio Méndez Pereira claimed that "Bolívar would never be eclipsed by it because he knew how to place the majestic verb over the sorrow of defeat, over the drunkenness of triumphs, over the cannon's roar and the thunder of the liberating battles" (Méndez Pereira, 1917a, p. 1). For this author Bolívar was a man who preferred the use of words over the use of force. Again, Bolívar was presented as an individual who preferred peacefulness rather than war. Later Octavio Méndez Pereira adds,

For Bolívar the Letters were not an end, but a means. If he chose the most natural procedure, and perhaps the most effective for expressing his ideas – letters and oratory– it was because the [struggle for] Independence could not

disregard the powerful instruments that are books and journalism (1917a, p. 3).

This section of Méndez Pereira's writing depicts Bolívar as a man who could have been a professional writer or a journalist, if the circumstances of war had not impeded him. Furthermore, this Panamanian intellectual grants Bolívar the qualification of a social scientist. "There is no political problem or sociology of governance and diplomacy, which had not been treated by his genial penmanship with doctrinal clarity and amazing profoundness of discernment" (Méndez Pereira, 1917a, p. 6).

The message presented at the Congress of Angostura together with its constitutional project was "marvellous because of its sober style and for the superb flight of thoughts, which anticipated the most complex problems of legislation, politics and ethnology, and found for them the most adequate solutions" (Méndez Pereira, 1917a, p. 12). Finally, although acknowledging that the Liberator did not have a formal academic education (p. 13), he describes Bolívar as an educator, because he "proclaimed that popular education was the firmest base for democracy" (p. 12).

However, probably the most colourful manifestation of Panamanian Bolivarianism was the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Congress of Panama. Thus, in 1926, the Panamanian Government inaugurated a monument dedicated to Bolívar to commemorate the centenary of the Libertador's call for the Congreso de Panamá (Figure 4) a convention to which all the nations of Latin America and observers from the U.S. and United Kingdom were invited, in order to establish a forum for discussing regional and international matters regarding peace, war and commerce (Bolívar, 2003, pp. 159-161, 169-170).



Figure 4

Unveiling of the statue of Bolívar in Panama City in 1926

La Prensa. Inauguración del Monumento a Bolívar, Plaza de Bolívar, DVD Raíces de mi Panamá, s. p. La Prensa, S. A.

In the renamed Plaza Bolívar, previously Plaza de San Francisco, the monument to Bolívar exhibits one of the few statues in the world of the Libertador dressed as a civilian, displaying to the audience the distinctive manner in which Panamanians imagined Bolívar as a hero.

Celebration of Contemporaries: the Próceres de la Patria

Panamanian nation builders did not only find their heroes in the past. In their present, many of them were deemed to be Próceres de la Patria for they had been either directly involved in the independence of 1903 or had supported the movement and participated in the consolidation of the Panamanian state. In other words, Panamanian nation-builders were compelled to create narratives that presented themselves and their peers as exemplary patriots. In this context, it is possible to observe a process of creation of professional contemporary heroes.

In the early twentieth century, there were several methods used by Panamanian nation-builders to construct the heroism of their peers. One method was the publication of biographies about living important men. For example, in 1906, a collection of small biographies of notable Panamanians was published because “the Isthmian people has given [the world] many notable men who had

obtained fame deservedly and whose names have gone beyond the limits of the Fatherland. Letting them fall into oblivion would be to fall into criminal indifference” (Aguilera, 1906, p. 1). Most of the men celebrated in the text were still alive at that time.¹²

Living heroes were also commemorated in speeches, books, essays, and poems, in which their professional abilities, intellect and personality were exalted. A good example of this is Rodolfo Caicedo’s “Paz y Progreso”, a poem written as early as 1904, which celebrates the transition to peace, and links General Estaban Huertas, who assisted the process of independence by arresting the Generals of Colombian army government sent to Panama to investigate the situation in November 1903, and the members of the Junta Provisional de Gobierno to the arrival of peace and the beginning of progress in the Isthmus:

When thinking... of your heroism...

But I do not want in peaceful hours

To remember your feats as a warrior...

I want to remember that by your arm,

AMADOR...

Thrust the blow upon the iron lance

...and also placed in History

the names of BOYD, ARANGO...

Victory without tears...

...our soil is sheltered

By... the white flag

How beautiful is Peace! ...

Progress will come under its protection... (Caicedo, 1946b, pp. 16-17).

Caicedo’s nineteenth-century poems celebrated the military victories of Bolívar and General Carlos Albán. However, the title of this poem links the celebration of the próceres with “peace and progress”, a motto of Positivism and La Regeneración. This poem suggests a change of attitude in the mind of Panamanian nationalist writers, as can be noticed in other poems such as “Himno Nacional” by V. A. de Icaza (1904, 10 February, p. 15) and “Himno Istmeño” (the first version of the current national anthem) by Jerónimo de la Ossa (1904, 3 January, p. 9). Moreover, the fact that Caicedo was a Conservative, and that he exalted the deeds of

Conservative politicians implies that the discourse of peacefulness and progress was not only produced by Liberals. These granted the leaders of independence the most pristine qualities of the Panamanian nationalism: preference for peacefulness and a positive predisposition to embark on a quest to achieve progress.

Another method was the reciprocal dedication of writings or public speeches to each other, even when belonging to rival political parties.¹³ Also, it was very common to celebrate the heroism of their contemporary peers posthumously and immediately after death. Examples of this were obituaries or speeches pronounced at the tomb of prominent personages. Some evidence are the publications in newspapers after the deaths of President José Domingo de Obaldía and Carlos A. Mendoza. José Domingo de Obaldía was the son of José de Obaldía, who occupied high offices during the Colombian period, including the Presidency of Colombia. Like his father, José Domingo de Obaldía was very active in Colombian politics, and became Governor of the Department of Panama until the moment of Independence in 1903. Regarding this, in order to illustrate José Domingo de Obaldía's patriotism, *La Estrella de Panamá* published, the day after his death, an article saying

José Domingo de Obaldía had always favoured the idea of...autonomy of the Isthmus, [but,] as an agent of the Central Government, his duty was to oppose any attempt to dismember the Colombian territory... [L]ike any man... who loves his place of birth... he let the events pass, without taking direct part in them... but ready to assume... with his... compatriots... the... necessary sacrifices to secure the redemption of the Isthmus (1910, p. 11).

This article not only portrays José Domingo de Obaldía as a patriot, but also absolves him from any criticism that could arise from his passivity during the incidents of November 1903. Moreover, the description suggests that this primary prócer preferred peaceful action to violence. In addition to this, the newspaper indicates that José Domingo de Obaldía was a successful administrator. The article reminds the reader of the prócer's services to the nation: Ambassador to Washington and President of Panama. *La Estrella de Panamá* concludes that "he was not only First Magistrate of the Executive Power, but, due to this immense love for the land that saw him born, deserves the title of Father of the Panamanian People" (1910, p. 11). At the end, the text copies a Governmental decree that "recommended" Panamanians to be grateful, and that ordered them to raise the National Flag at half-mast in all public offices for a month, the National Police to mourn for three months and the Republican Band to play mournful songs for a week in different squares of the city (*La Estrella de Panamá*, 1910, p. 11).

Likewise, after the death of former President Carlos A. Mendoza on 13 February 1916, the newspaper *La Prensa* published, for several days, news honouring his memory. Among these, there was a small

obituary written by Ramón Valdés (1867-1918)¹⁴ and a Governmental decree promulgated by President Belisario Porras.¹⁵ The content of the article was not dissimilar from the one quoted above regarding José Domingo de Obaldía. However, just a day before Mendoza died, the same newspaper published an editorial note criticising him for accusing President Belisario Porras's government of using coercive measures against the followers of Rodolfo Chiari (1869-1937), a candidate with whom Mendoza sympathised.¹⁶ The fact that there was a change of tone when writing about Mendoza demonstrates that the death of an exemplary man could serve as a purgative event, which permitted the hero to be glorified posthumously.

The decline of the Professional Hero

The sponsoring of ethnic and cultural nationalism was also relevant for the decline of the idealisation of the Panamanian professional hero, because it endorsed the celebration of national folklore, national language, national dress, national music, and national currency.¹⁷ They went back into history to rescue heroes who represented the poor masses, such as Urracá. It shows the interest in creating a hero for whom Panama's rural population could develop affinity, as a part of a strategy to strengthen national cohesion (Earle, 2007, pp. 22, 184-212).

Probably, one of the earliest sources that celebrates this Panamanian cacique is *Compendio de Historia de Panamá*, a book officially approved for teaching history in Panamanian schools in 1911, which describes a Native-Panamanian leader, from the Province of Veraguas in the Interior [countryside], who resisted Spanish conquest for 9 years until his death (Arce and Sosa, 1911, p. 78). Nonetheless, the production of narratives about Urracá seems to decline. The next publication found about the heroism of Urracá is a short monograph, *Urracá, semblanza de este héroe nacional*; the text expanded on the same history, and portrayed Urracá as a valiant and intelligent warrior who defeated renowned conquerors like Francisco Pizarro (conqueror of Perú), Hernando de Soto (Governor of Cuba, conqueror of Florida and explorer of the South East of the United States), Gaspar de Espinosa (conqueror of Panama and Nicaragua), and Pedro Arias de Ávila (conqueror and Governor of Panama and Nicaragua), among others (Alba Carranza, 1928a, pp. 10-13).

According to the book, the Spaniards were only able to capture Urracá through deception, after they invited him to a false conference to negotiate peace. Nonetheless, the heroic image of the Panamanian cacique is further exalted when the author narrates that the day before the Spaniards sent their prisoner to Spain, he cut his ties with

his teeth and escaped to his own lands, where he continued the struggle against conquest (Alba Carranza, 1928a, p. 14).

Consistent with this narrative, when Urracá's statue was displayed in Santiago de Veraguas, one of the most famous Panamanian poetesses wrote "A Urracá".

Paladin of my race!...

You loved your mountains, your beaches and your jungles

Like sacred patrimony given to you by God

And when you saw them profaned by foreign hosts

Your enraged cacique's pride rose...

That... warrior who subdued the pride

Of the haughty sons of the Empire of the Sun

Fought, without success, to humble yours...

...when closing forever your luminous eyes...

Your lips cursed the hated foreigner... (De Obaldía, 1928, p. 15).

The fact that the poem was written by María Olimpia de Obaldía (1891-1985), who was born in the Interior and trained to be a teacher, suggests that it was addressed to a particular public: people from the countryside and students. The poem itself celebrates the valiant manner in which the cacique defended the beauty of the country's people, jungles and its beaches (a representation of the country's geographical position between two oceans) from mighty foreigners, who might well have been from Spain, Colombia, and, considering the historical moment in which the poem was written, the United States. Finally, besides the statue of the Panamanian cacique raised in Santiago, Urracá was also commemorated in symbolic representations and public spaces. Respective examples of this are: the bust of the 1 cent coins in which Urracá replaced Balboa; and the Parque Urracá (Park of Urracá) located on one side of the Balboa Avenue in Panama City. The commemoration of Urracá is, probably, connected to the appearance of an incipient indigenismo in Panama in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Another relevant example is that of Lorenzo. After 1903, the narratives of Lorenzo's suffering faded away but did not completely disappear from the press and books. There are sources showing that by the 1920s, the image of Lorenzo had already reappeared as heroic. For instance, there was a short article called "De una cuestión india" [Regarding an Indian question] published in 1927 in *Preludios*. This article is interesting because it is an example of

indigenismo. Briefly, it mentions that “[i]n 1898, the submission of the indians of Coclé was almost concluded”. The article pointed out not only the military conquest of the Spaniards by a “simple method of civilising: the sword”. The conquistadors not only “threatened their lives and the loss of their beliefs, but also added the replacement of their indian dialects with [Castilian language]” (Lombardo, 1927, p. 3). However, the author also highlighted the work of the clergy in the process of conquest through aculturation and submission. In this narrative, the priests were able to tell the indians that the gods to whom they offered gold and ornaments were the same and the only God of the Church, so the indians were convinced and passed to place these offerings before the “statues of Saints”. Lombardo criticised this because this indicated that “the superstition of the indians was fomented, stimulated and exploited without mercy. The systematic [process of] making them stupid was the only thing that would produce gold and slaves” (Lombardo, 1927, p. 4).

The article, then, cried “how much they have suffered and suffer still today, [because] the friar possesses the indian in the name of God; the policemen [possesses them] in the name of the authority of the Law” (Lombardo, 1927, p. 4). The author then denounced that their “women and daughters [are] violated, their haciendas [are] sacked, their lands [are] expropriated, [and they have to pay] diezmo... fines” (Lombardo, 1927, p. 4). However, the author explains that the fact they still had caciques would finally cause a conflict. Finally, he passes to exalt Victoriano Lorenzo, as if implying that he was one of those caciques.

Years before [1899], an Indian or cholito [a little cholo, generally, meaning a hispanised Indian] was born in the mountains of Penonomé. When he was very young, he committed a crime, enraged with his adversary’s body, he destroyed him. He was arrested, taken to Panama City and imprisoned in the dungeons of [the Plaza of] Chiriquí [in the Capital]. However, he had a good character, he was submissive and very intelligent. He wanted to be educated [and] learned to scribble his name and to repair some moth-eaten books (Lombardo, 1927, p. 4).

After his time in jail finished, he returned to his land. The author then asks “What did he meditate in prison? Had he measured the magnitude of civilising oppression?” and answers “[p]robably, because that man was Victoriano Lorenzo” (Lombardo, 1927, pp. 3-4).

This was the first part of a series of articles which could not be found during this research, but it sheds light on how in some schools the image of Lorenzo was changing in the late-1920s. The article still sounds condescending of Indians by expressing pity, portraying them as superstitious and stupid and barely capable of learning to scribble names. However, this pity and portrayal functioned as an instrument to differentiate Indians and their educated defenders from the Spaniards, the Church and the police. The writing is only the first

part of a longer article, but it suggests that Lorenzo would liberate the cholos from such an oppression (Lombardo, 1927, pp. 3-4). Here, it is important to remember that Lorenzo died when Panama was under Colombian rule.

This recalls “Racial Nations”, an article by Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt and *The Return of the Native. Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America, 1810-1930* (2007) by Rebecca Earle. “Racial Nations” makes a differentiation between two concepts: “race” and “racialization”. The first “mark[s] phenomena that were identified as such by contemporaries”; the second concept applies to “the processes of marking human differences according to hierarchical discourses grounded in colonial encounters and their national legacies” (Appelbaum, McPherson and Rosemblatt, 2003, p. 2). Their analysis focuses on the changes in the meaning of the concept “race” through time. This change involves much “racialization”.

The re-invented stories of Urracá and Lorenzo “racialized” their heroism. There is a difference between both stories, though. Urracá appears honourable, brave and smart. Indians were racialised as good warriors with a tendency to defend their sovereignty. In both, the story of Urracá by Manuel María Alba Carranza (1891-1978) and the poem of María Olimpia de Obaldía, when compared to the Spaniards, he is depicted as superior. María Olimpia de Obaldía identifies him as a hero of “her race”. It might not be too risky to infer that their racialisation of Urracá portrayed the Indian race and thus Panamanians as superior in comparison to the Spaniards.

On the other hand, Lombardo’s “De una cuestión india” racialised the cholo as inferior. For instance, Lorenzo was presented as someone “intelligent”, but, by presenting him as only able to learn how to scribble his name, it puts limits to such an intelligence. Nonetheless, Lombardo’s Indigenismo was condescending, but, at the same time, it blames the conquistadors and the Church for making the cholos stupid. Colonial and contemporary authorities are presented as abusive and morally inferior.

In her book, Earle studies how “Indian”, a category invented by Europeans, but conceptualised in different ways from colonial times to current days, was used in the period studied in this article. Earle focuses on the evolution of the concept “indian” and how it was or was not incorporated in elite discourses as an element of the nation. The most relevant part of her book for the sake of this article is her explanation of indigenismo. She claims that this movement

was characterised by a concern with the well-being of contemporary indigenous peoples, often expressed as a desire to elevate Indians from their lowly position so that they might enjoy the benefits available to other citizens... Where indigenismo was embraced by the state, official rhetoric was replete with references to the value and significance of the indigenous

population and affirmations of the nation's commitment to improving their lot (Earle, 2007, p. 185).

It does seem that Lombardo's racialisation of the cholos and of Lorenzo's suffering aimed at raising awareness about the condition of the indigenous people. The works of Alba Carranza, María Olimpia de Obaldía and Lombardo seem to have the intention of elevating the indigenous people and giving them an important role in national history. Indeed, the Imprenta Nacional published a linguistic study of the Cuna language. This was equivalent to a dictionary (Berenguera, 1934). This could be viewed as placing Spanish as equal to the indigenous language, because, as Anderson claims in *Imagined Communities*, "[b]ilingual dictionaries made visible an approaching egalitarianism among languages – whatever the political realities outside, within the covers of the [bilingual dictionary] the paired languages had a common status" (Anderson, 2006, p. 71).

Alba Carranza also wrote textbooks on geography and ethnology which were the first to comment on the different native groups of Panama (Alba Carranza, 1928b; Alba Carranza, 1929, pp. 58-59). Actually, in 1938, the Comarcas of San Blas and Barú were created and granted great autonomy to the Kuna and Guaymí indians who lived in those territories, respectively (República de Panamá. Asamblea Nacional de Panamá, 1938, p. 1). However, the Panamanian indigenismo of the 1920s and 1930s was incipient, even when the state temporarily embraced it. Even though the narratives of the heroism of the cholo and the indigenous have survived, other heroisms override them, while the social conditions still are precarious for most of them.

Finally, another transformation in the way of celebrating heroism was the exaltation and empowerment of the military. This coincided with the U.S.'s Good Neighbour policy, which implied the strengthening of national armed forces in Latin America. As a result, the Panamanian leaders of the 1930s began to provide the army with more political and coercive capacity (Percy, 1996, pp. 691-719), but also dressed it with a narrative of heroism. An example of this is the recognition given to the role of the troops stationed in Isthmian territory in November 1903. Many of those soldiers were Colombian not Panamanian, and they did not engage in any battle or perform any act of military heroism. However, in 1931, the Panamanian government created a fund for the "soldados de la independencia" [soldiers of independence] (República de Panamá. Poder Legislativo, 1931, 24620).

At the same time, some of the few essays that applauded the Panamanian military in wars and battles in the 1900s and 1920s were re-published. This is the case of Ricardo J. Alfaro's *Vida del General Tomás Herrera* (2003) and *Carabobo*, which was published in 1921 and re-published in 1933 (Alfaro, 1921; Alfaro, 1933b, pp. 25-45);

and Juan B. Sosa's "La Bandera de Panamá en la Batalla de Ayacucho", which was first edited in 1918 and re-published in 1933 (Sosa, 1918; Sosa, 1933, pp. 47-52).

The latter essay recounts the story of how a flag designed for the Isthmus after 1821 was taken to Ayacucho by a battalion of Isthmian recruits. The battalion was later disbanded and its members joined other troops. In spite of this, according to Sosa, at the end of the battle of Ayacucho, the flag of the Isthmian battalion was raised on a hill, indicating that they had defeated the last Spanish soldiers (Sosa, 1918; Sosa, 1933, pp. 47-52). Instead of commemorating men whose lives and deeds symbolised the use of professional skills to struggle peacefully in favour of the nation, the new narratives commemorated military actions.

Conclusion

The cases of Correoso and Albán illustrate the process of forgetting the Panamanian military past. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, "valiant fighters" and "saviours" were commemorated conventionally. That is, their sacrifice and bravery in armed conflict was romanticised. However, their images were only inspirational in sectorial terms. In other words, they were deemed as heroes only by followers of their political party. In many cases, this heroism did not go beyond local or regional boundaries. This means that the title of heroes did not necessarily produce any cohesion within a region and, even less, nationally, in particular in the case of personages whose actions were controversial, such as Buenaventura Correoso, who had many political rivals due to his participation in many revolts and wars.

Albán was not Panamanian and, more importantly, he had defeated many of the Liberal politicians who, after 1903, occupied important political positions in the government of the new nations and played a crucial role in the construction of the Panamanian state and in the process of nation-building. The incompatibility of values transmitted through the stories of these military heroes with the Positivist-Conservative discourse of the first generations of Panamanian nation-builders resulted in the fading away of their military heroism after Panama's independence in 1903.

The only military men to enter Panama's pantheon of heroes were those who participated directly in crucial moments of Panamanian national history: José de Fábrega and Tomás Herrera. The disappearance of military heroes reflects the search for a new order, which led Isthmian intellectuals and politicians to give historical preponderance to another kind of hero: their early and mid-nineteenth-century peers of the educated, social, economic, and political elite. In this sense, it can be said that, in the early twentieth century, Isthmian nation-builders intended to form a pantheon of

professional heroes whose images promoted a particular set of values. One of these was the promotion of professionalism, social order, and peacefulness.

Another purpose was to transmit a sense of nationalism and national identity linked to the idea that the destiny of the nation was to progress through the exploitation of its geographical position. Also, this creation of heroes produced a narrative of differentiation from Colombia and, later, from the United States. In order to do this, they searched in the past for men that either symbolised those values and who transmitted those principles by example while occupying a public office or in their daily life. They also appropriated and created original narratives of internationally prestigious heroes. Moreover, in contrast to most Latin American countries, they praised living próceres, who had achieved the separation from Colombia in 1903 or helped to consolidate the Panamanian state afterwards.

The creation of a pantheon of civilian heroes attempted to inculcate values like internationalism, and professionalism. In this sense, professionalism was presented as necessary for the progress of the nation, and, thus, it was expected that the population deemed becoming a professional as proper for those who wanted to be considered nationalists. Thus, the expansion of professionalism was perceived as a demonstration that Isthmian respected civic values and were willing to become modern. However, later, as the number of professionals increased, the image of professionals as heroes became less appreciated, because, as the demographic information shows, it became less of a rarity to obtain a degree and have a profession, while making the competition for high positions in government more intense.

References

- Aguilera, R. (1887). *Istmeños Ilustres de la Emancipación. Bosquejos biográficos*. Imprenta de Aquilino Aguirre.
- Aguilera, R. (1906). *Galería de Hombres Públicos del Istmo*. Tipografía Casís y Cía.
- Aizpuru Aizpuru, J. B. (1898, 16 July). Nuestros Hombres. Buenaventura Correoso. *El Duende. Semanario crítico de costumbres, inocentón y medio travieso*, 5(122), 1-2.
- Aizpuru Aizpuru, J. B. (1925). *Idealismos de verdad y de belleza*. Editorial La Moderna.
- Aizpuru Aizpuru, J. B. and Soto, L. A. (Eds.). (1899, 8 July). *Don Quijote. Semanario Joco-Serio*, 1(1), 1.
- Alba Carranza, M. M. (1928a). *Urracá, semblanza de este héroe nacional*. Imprenta Nacional.
- Alba Carranza, M. M. (1928b). *Etnología y población histórica de Panamá*. Imprenta Nacional.
- Alba Carranza, M. M. (1929). *Geografía descriptiva de la República de Panamá*. El Panamá América.
- Alfaro, R. J. (1921). *Carabobo: narración histórica*. Editorial La Moderna.
- Alfaro, R. J. (1933a). *Pensamientos que exaltan la personalidad de Don Justo Arosemena*. Tolentino Cantoral, comp., 11. Imprenta Nacional.
- Alfaro, R. J. (1933b, January). Carabobo: narración histórica. *Boletín de la Academia Panameña de la Historia*, 1(1), 25-45.
- Alfaro, R. J. (2003). *Vida del General Tomás Herrera*. Biblioteca de la Nacionalidad, Autoridad del Canal de Panamá.
- Andreve, G. (1917, August) Justo Arosemena. Conferencia dada en el Instituto Nacional el 9 de agosto de 1917, con motivo del centenario del nacimiento del doctor Justo Arosemena. *La Revista Nueva* 3(2), 156-160. Imprenta Nacional.
- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso.
- Aparicio, F. (2004a). Capítulo XII. Federalismo e inestabilidad. *Historia General de Panamá. El Siglo XIX*, 2(3), 217-235. Comité Nacional del Centenario.
- Aparicio, F. (2004b). Capítulo XIII. Represión y Explotación. *Historia General de Panamá. El Siglo XIX*, 2(3), 236-255. Comité Nacional del Centenario.

- Appelbaum, N. P., Macpherson, A. S., and Roseblatt, K. A. (2003). Introduction: Racial Nations. In *Race & Nation in Modern Latin America* (pp. 1-31). The University of North Carolina Press.
- Araúz, C. and Pizzurno, P. (1993). *El Panamá Colombiano*. Diario La Prensa-Primer Banco de Ahorros.
- Arce, E. J. and Sosa, J. B. (1911). *Compendiode Historia de Panamá*. Casa Editorial del Diario de Panamá.
- Arosemena, P. (1916, October). Alocución del doctor Pablo Arosemena. *La Revista Nueva*, 1(6), 437-445.
- Arosemena, J. (1998). *El Estado Federal de Panamá*. Ediciones Manfer, S. A.
- Arosemena, R. (2003). El Estado Independiente Panameño. In R. Arosemena Jaén et al., *Homenaje pro Panamae et mundi beneficio en los quinientos años de la Nación Panameña* (pp. 29-48). Imprenta Articsa.
- Arosemena, J. (2018). *La Cuestión Americana*. Obra Selecta de Justo Arosemena. Discursos, ensayos, estudios y testamento de Justo Arosemena. Editora Novo Art, S. A.
- Berenguera, J. (1934). *Rudimentos de gramática caribe-cuna*. Imprenta Nacional.
- Bolívar, S. (2003). *El Libertador. Writings of Simón Bolívar*. Oxford University Press.
- Caicedo, R. (1946a, April). La Batalla de Panamá. *Revista Lotería*, 59, 16-18.
- Caicedo, R. (1946b, May). Paz y Progreso. *Revista Lotería*, 60, 16-17.
- Castillero Reyes, E. J. (1973, December). Panamá y sus estatuas: las estatuas de la Ciudad de Panamá. *Revista Lotería*, 214, 45-49.
- Castillero Reyes, E. J. (1974, May). Las estatuas de Panamá. *Revista Lotería*, 219, 45-51.
- Centeno, M. A. (2002). *Blood and Debt. War and the Nation-State in Latin America*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Chirú, F. (2012). Liturgia al héroe nacional: el monumento a Vasco Núñez de Balboa en Panamá. *Cuadernos Inter.c.a.mbio*, 9(10), 71-99.
- Correoso, B. (1946, October). Sucesos de Panamá. *Revista Lotería*, 65.
- De la Ossa, J. and Santos J. (1904). Himno Nacional de Panamá. In *Símbolos de la Nación*. <https://www.mingob.gob.pa/simbolosdelanacion/himno-nacional/>
- De Obaldía, M. O. (1928, October). A Urracá. *Revista el Mundo*, 7, 15.
- Earle, R. (2005). Sobre Héroes y Tumbas: National Symbols in Nineteenth – Century Spanish America. *Hispanic American Review*, 85(3),

- 375-416. Duke University Press. http://read.dukeupress.edu/hahr/article-pdf/85/3/375/704322/hahr853_01_earle_indd.pdf
- Earle, R. (2007). *The Return of the Native. Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America, 1810-1930*. Duke University Press.
- Espelt-Bombín, S. (2014, July). Notaries of Color in Colonial Panama: Limpieza de Sangre, Legislation, and Imperial Practices in the Administration of the Spanish Empire. *The Americas*, 71(1), 37-69.
- Figueroa Navarro, A. (1978). *Dominio y Sociedad en el Panamá Colombiano (1821-1903)*. Impresora Panamá, S. A.
- Geenzier, E. (1916, October). Salmo de la Vida. *La Revista Nueva*, 1(6), 463-465.
- Guerra, L. (2005). *The Myth of José Martí. Conflicting Nationalisms in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. (2012). Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In E. Hobsbawm, and T. Ranger (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (pp. 1-14). Cambridge University Press.
- Inhumanación de los Restos. (1933). *Pensamientos que exaltan la personalidad de Don Justo Arosemena*. Tolentino Cantoral. Imprenta Nacional.
- La Estrella de Panamá. (1910, 2 March). *Duelo Nacional*, p. 11.
- Lleras, J. M. (1876). *Rasgos biográficos del General del Estado Soberano de Panamá, en los Estados Unidos de Colombia, señor Buenaventura Correoso*. Imprenta de J. M. Lleras.
- Lombardo, M. (1927, October). De una cuestión india. *Preludios*, 2(7-8).
- Lynch, J. (2007). *Simon Bolívar. A Life*. University of Yale Press.
- Martínez, C. J. and Méndez Pereira, O. (1914). *Elementos de Instrucción Cívica*. Tipografía Guardia Hnos.
- Méndez Pereira, O. (1917a, February). Dr. Pablo Arosemena. *La Revista Nueva*, 2(1), 91-120.
- Morales, E. A. (1902, September). The Political and Economic Situation of Colombia. *The North American Review*, 175, 550, 347-360. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25119300>
- Moscote, J. D. (1916, August). Elogio a Bolívar. *La Revista Nueva*, 4, 299-305.
- Muñoz Pinzón, A. (2004). Capítulo X. El Conflicto Azuereño de 1854. *Historia General de Panamá. El Siglo XIX*, 2(3), 176-192.
- Navari, C. (2000). *Internationalism and the State in the Twentieth Century*. Routledge.

- Ojito, E. (2017, 19 May). Coroalles, la mano derecha de José Martí en Panamá. *Escambray*. <http://www.escambray.cu/2017/manuel-coroalles-la-mano-derecha-de-jose-marti-en-panama/>
- Pearcy, T. L. (1996, November). Panama's Generation of '31: Patriots, Praetorians, and a Decade of Discord. *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 76(4). Duke University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2517949>
- Porras, A. E. (2005). *La Cultura de la Interoceanidad: narrativas de la identidad nacional de Panamá (1990-2002)*. Editorial Universitaria "Carlos Manuel Gasteasoro".
- Porras, B. (1945, September). Inauguración del Monumento a Vasco Núñez de Balboa. *Revista Lotería*, 52, 7-8.
- República de Panamá. Asamblea Nacional de Panamá. (1938, 23 September). Ley 2 del 16 de septiembre de 1938. *Gaceta Oficial*, año 35(7873).
- República de Panamá. Poder Legislativo. (1904, 13 April). Ley 7 del 17 de marzo de 1904. *Gaceta Oficial*. Segunda Época, .(12).
- República de Panamá. Poder Legislativo. (1931, 2 March). Ley 6 de 7 de febrero 1931. *Gaceta Oficial*, año 28(5944).
- Sluga, G. (2013). *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Smith, A. (2008). *Nationalism. Theory, Ideology, History*. Polity.
- Sosa, J. B. (1918, December). La Bandera del Istmo en la Batalla de Ayacucho. *La Revista Nueva*, 53(6), 901-904.
- Sosa, J. B. (1933, January). La Bandera del Istmo en la Batalla de Ayacucho. *Boletín de la Academia Panameña de la Historia*, 1(1), 47-52. Imprenta Nacional.
- Szok, P. (2001). *"La Última Gaviota". Liberalism and Nostalgia in Early Twentieth-Century Panama*. Greenwood Press.

Notes

- 1 The text in brackets was included by the article's author. This will be repeated through the rest of this text.
- 2 To learn about a similar case in Europe, read Lucy Riall's *Garibaldi. Invention of a Hero* (2007).
- 3 Anayansi was supposedly the native princess who married Vasco Núñez de Balboa. It is important to mention that there is a debate about her existence.
- 4 Urracá was a cacique, whose story tells that resisted the Spanish conquest for 9 years in the mountains of today's Province of Veraguas.

- 5 Other works by Félix Chirú are: “Panamá entre las independencias de 1821 y 1903. Una Aproximación a la conmemoración del I centenario de la República” (2011), and “Conmemoraciones patrióticas, imposiciones imperiales y resistencia social en Panamá 1903-1925” (2020).
- 6 It is worth mentioning that many of conservatives occupied key positions in the government and in cultural and social institutions (the Church, academies, clubs, schools, etc.) during liberal-controlled governments that rose to power after 1912.
- 7 A treaty signed in 1861, between the State of Panama and the then called Estados Unidos de Nueva Granada, which declared that Panama could become independent from Colombia if its interests were negatively affected, and that the Isthmus would be neutral in any future civil war in Colombia.
- 8 Some historians argue that Alzuru was supported by relevant members of the Panamanian “Urban Oligarchy” (Figuerola Navarro, 1978, pp. 145-147; Lasso, 2004, p. 71).
- 9 Other examples that celebrate Balboa: the anonymous “Inauguración de la estatua de Vasco Núñez de Balboa” (1924, p. 26); Sotomayor de Concha’s “Canto a Vasco Núñez de Balboa” (1924, p. 27).
- 10 In October 1916, the Panamanian government organised floral games to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the death of Miguel de Cervantes.
- 11 It is important to point out that Law 12 of 1918 restated what Law 34 of 1916 had ordered. The statue was finally inaugurated in 1951 in the University of Panama Campus (Castillero Reyes, 1973, p. 47).
- 12 A few personages commemorated in the book are: Manuel Amador Guerrero, José Agustín Arango, Pablo Arosemena, Jerónimo de la Ossa and José Domingo de Obaldía. Also, it is relevant to mention that many persons with military ranks were mentioned in the book, including Esteban Huertas.
- 13 For example the work of Jorge Guillermo Leguía “Vida de Don Pablo Arosemena. Cómo era Panamá durante la Infancia de Arosemena” (1928, September-October and November-December, pp. 419-424); and Octavio Méndez Pereira’s works “La Crítica y el Arte” (1916, pp. 431-436), “Dr. Pablo Arosemena” (1917a, pp. 91-120), and “Don Nicolás Victoria J.” (1917b, pp. 333-336).
- 14 Ramón Valdés. (14 de febrero de 1916). Hora Solemne. La Prensa, p. 1.
- 15 Gobierno Nacional. Decreto Número 36 de 1916 (del 13 de febrero). Honores Fúnebres. La Prensa, 14 de febrero de 1916.
- 16 “Nota Editorial”, La Prensa (12 de febrero de 1916), p. 1.
- 17 The discourse of “Acción Comunal” was representative of an “ethnic nationalism”, which was based upon its members’ understanding of Hispanoamericanismo. During their governments (1931 to 1941),

they sponsored the celebration of La Pollera, the “traditional” dress from the countryside; Virgin Mary; and they are also famous for coining the slogan “count [your money] in Balboas, and speak in Spanish”.

Información adicional

About the Author: **Rolando de La Guardia Wald**. Panamanian. He studied for my BA in History at the University of Notre Dame. Later, he got a MA in International Studies and a MPhil in Latin American History from the University of Barcelona. In 2008, he obtained a scholarship from the National Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Innovation of Panama (SENACYT) to acquire a PhD in History at University College London. In 2016-2017, he undertook postdoctoral research at the University of Oxford. Currently, he is Associate Professor at the Department of History of the University of Panama. He is coordinator of a MA in the History of Panama-US Relations, and the course author and coordination of the first ever PhD in History programme in Panama.



Disponible en:

<https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=15267833021>

Cómo citar el artículo

Número completo

Más información del artículo

Página de la revista en redalyc.org

Sistema de Información Científica Redalyc
Red de revistas científicas de Acceso Abierto diamante
Infraestructura abierta no comercial propiedad de la
academia

Rolando de La Guardia Wald

**Heroísmo profesional: La construcción de un panteón de
héroes en Panamá (1903-1931)**

**Heroísmo profesional: La construcción de un panteón de
héroes en Panamá (1903-1931)**

Anuario de Estudios Centroamericanos

vol. 47, 1-54, 2021

Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica

anuario.eca@ucr.ac.cr

ISSN: 0377-7316

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15517/aeca.v47i0.50635>



CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 LEGAL CODE

**Licencia Creative Commons Atribución-NoComercial-
SinDerivar 4.0 Internacional.**