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RECASTING A NATION: THE REBURIAL OF AGUSTÍN DE ITURBIDE

by

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

Agustín de Iturbide's countrymen proclaimed him the "Hero of Iguala" for securing Mexico's independence in 1821. By 1824, he lay in a humble tomb, executed as a traitor. In October 1838, the government consummated the re-acceptance of Iturbide into the pantheon of heroes with an elaborate public reburial in the National Cathedral of Mexico City.

Iturbide's reburial was less about forgiving past indiscretions than about bringing legitimacy to the current political party in power. In the mid-1830s, conservative forces regained control of the government from liberals led by Valentín Gómez Farías. Conservatives faced internal political and financial chaos, and the external threat of war in 1838. Through the ceremony, secular, ecclesiastic and military conservatives strengthened their political power and legitimacy, while reaffirming conservative national values and traditional social hierarchy. By incorporating religious and socio-political aspects, ceremony organizers hoped to bring order and stability to Mexico once again.
I. INTRODUCTION

"Who is the happiest man you have ever seen?"
"An Athenian," he said," called Tellus."
"...he had a glorious death. In battle...he fought for his countrymen, routed the enemy, and died like a brave man; and the Athenians paid him the high honour of a public funeral on the spot where he fell."
--Herodotus

Mexicans! ...I die for having come to assist you, and I die happy because I die among you. I die with honor, not as a traitor.
--Agustín de Iturbide, facing a Mexican firing squad

Don Agustín de Iturbide's countrymen proclaimed him the "Hero of Iguala" for routing the Spaniards and securing Mexico's independence in 1821. Just three years later, their liberator lay dead in Padilla—shot to death—executed as a traitor by these same countrymen. Fourteen years passed before those who had had a role in his demise honored with a public funeral the man who bravely faced the firing squad and died 'happy' for his country. In October, 1838 Iturbide officially became a Mexican

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2Lucas Alamán. Historia de México Desde los primeros movimientos que prepararon su independencia en el año de 1808 hasta la época presente, vol. 5 (Mexico: Editorial Jus, 1942), 736.
worthy of respect again. The government consummated the re-acceptance of Iturbide into the pantheon of heroes with a month of provincial celebration and three days of elaborate public ceremonies in the nation's capital.

Iturbide's rapid rise to heroism began when he betrayed the royalist cause against insurgents such as Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos and Vicente Guerrero, and proclaimed his Plan of Iguala for the independence of Mexico in 1820. The plan united diverse elements, and within seven months Iturbide led his triumphant Army of the Three Guarantees into Mexico City amid much fanfare. With popular support, especially from the military, Iturbide found himself quickly propelled from victorious general, to president of the regency, to Emperor in a matter of seven months. The heights attained by Iturbide in such a short time are amazing. His rapid downfall seems all the more spectacular in comparison. Official sentiments turned against him by the end of August 1822--only one month after his coronation--when Iturbide arrested a number of congressmen on conspiracy charges. In October, he dissolved the congress altogether citing inefficiency. By February 1823, the 'Hero of Iguala'-turn-popularly-elected-Emperor abdicated his throne and was escorted out of the country. The most vocal of those he left behind wasted no time in expressing their negative opinions and warned him not to come back.

With the exception of more recent scholars such as William Spence Robertson, Michael Costeloe and Timothy Anna, Iturbide's era has been long overlooked by most scholars of Mexican history. Historians often quickly dismiss Iturbide as an usurper, before moving on to a discussion of the formation of the republic. Much of what has been written, even today, draws upon early histories written by men who had been

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3 For an anonymous nineteenth century formal portrait of Iturbide as general, see Portrait of General Iturbide in Rafael Heliodoro Valle. "Iturbide Varón de Díos," Artes de México, 18. no. 146 (1971), 28.
Iturbide's personal acquaintances—and frequently, his political enemies. Prolific historians, pamphleteers and republicans such as Carlos María de Bustamante and Fray Servando Teresa de Mier were among the congressmen arrested by Iturbide in August 1822. Not surprisingly, they labeled Mexico's first emperor a self-serving tyrant. Mier, an avowed republican, opposed a monarchy from the start regardless of who might lead it. Even contemporary foreigners like American Joel Poinsett described Iturbide's rule as "arbitrary" and "tyrannical." Poinsett took an active role in supporting Mexico's republicans, despite his position as a foreign diplomat. As a result he had no positive remarks for the emperor, and even implied that Iturbide was shifty-eyed. The opposition of Iturbide by others developed as they further cultivated their own political convictions after Iturbide's enthronement. Although never a strong supporter of Iturbide, Bustamante's criticism of Iturbide grew stronger as his republicanism developed. Often overlooked in the historiography is that even men such as Valentín Gómez Farías and Vicente Guerrero, who later became staunch liberal republicans, initially supported the election of Iturbide to the throne. In fact, congressional deputy Gómez Farías presented to congress the motion, signed by forty-six others, to consider Iturbide as a candidate for the throne as a reward for his role in independence. Republican aspirations, and perhaps personal grudges, led to attempts to discredit the former Emperor and the system he represented through pamphlets, articles and books—the primary forum for political debate at the time. It is these works which have formed the basis of Mexican historiography. As later historians built uncritically upon this body of work, Iturbide became, in the words of modern historian Timothy Anna, "the most significant nonperson of Mexican history."

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1 Joel Roberts Poinsett, *The Present Political State of Mexico* (Salisbury, NC: Documentary Publications, 1976), 68.
2 Timothy E. Anna, *The Mexican Empire of Iturbide* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 1990) x, 14-17, 68.
Despite criticisms heaped upon his imperial excesses, nearly all leaders in early independent Mexico recognized Iturbide as the true father of Mexican independence. This assumption reveals their class bias as *hombres de bien*. Self-defined, this group of upper-class Creoles formed the core of Mexican leadership in the years following independence. Despite the development of factional differences, all *hombres de bien* sought order and social stability. Although today Miguel Hidalgo is honored for the instigation of independence, the lower classes comprised the majority of his movement. Like Iturbide, most *hombres de bien* supported the royalist cause against these early insurgents. It was not until Iturbide's Plan of Iguala assured protection of their propertied interests that many *hombres de bien* opted for independence. In the anti-*iturbidista* sentiment following Iturbide's abdication, however, there was a push among those who had supported the original Hidalgo movement to honor the early insurgent leaders. They officially changed the date of independence from September 27, the date of Iturbide's triumphal entry, to September 16, the date of Hidalgo's *Grito de Dolores*.

Later presidents sought to remedy the poor consideration of the man whom all agreed was the true father of Mexican independence. Despite slander spread about the former emperor while in exile, Antonio López de Santa Anna pledged on November 3, 1833 to honor Iturbide by moving his mortal remains to the National Cathedral in Mexico City to join the final resting places of the nation's already recognized heroes of Independence. These included insurgents Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos—men against whom Iturbide fought in his early years as a royalist officer. However, as

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Lucas Alamán recorded, "his remains lay forgotten in the humble grave in which the body was deposited, until the month of August 1838." In this month President Anastasio Bustamante renewed the commitment to honor his fallen compatriot.

Ironically, Iturbide criticized the first congress for worrying about honoring fallen soldiers of the war for independence given the critical state of the fledging nation. The economy was in dire straits, an independent constitution remained unwritten, and Iturbide worried about the safety of the weak nation against the potential threat of an invading foreign army. In 1838, the government of President Anastasio Bustamante faced many of these same concerns. A new constitution changing the basic form of government had been instituted only two years previously. An empty treasury meant that most public officials had received little or no pay for months. With the French fleet off of the coast of Veracruz, foreign invasion seemed imminent. Despite the unlikely timing, Bustamante as both President of the Republic and president of the voluntary *junta patriótica* charged with the annual organization and funding of commemorative events, authorized the *junta* to commence with plans for an elaborate, and certainly expensive, public reburial for Agustín de Iturbide.

As the *junta patriótica* planned the events of Iturbide's heroic reburial in 1838, they built upon previous ritual. Ceremony and ritual hold an important place in any society. Rituals unite communities by portraying a common, accepted interpretation of values and history. Rituals draw upon tradition, creating a sense of legitimacy. Mexico in 1821 was newly freed from Spanish political dominance, but not free from its cultural heritage. The first leaders faced the task of creating a unique national identity.

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7 Alamán, 741.
separate from its colonial past. While building upon Spanish cultural rituals long associated with legitimate authority, Mexican leaders could look to the war for independence and the heroes that emerged from it as a first point of departure in the creation of a unique identity. With this in mind, a group of prominent citizens formed the first voluntary junta patriótica in 1825 to organize an annual celebration of Independence.9

The choice of heroes reflects the values of a nation's leaders and can serve both as a source of popular inspiration and as a means to legitimate authority. Despite the alleged political impartiality of the junta patriótica, public events designed to honor heroes have political underpinnings designed to shape public beliefs, teaching the populace what it means to be part of that nation (or religion) and expressing nationalism. But the nationalism expressed in such ceremonies is one carefully constructed to reflect the goals of the nation's leaders. The purposeful re-internment of heroes reflects a political need for the values they have come to represent. Traits and glories once associated with a fallen hero become reflected upon current leaders, legitimizing their authority. The spectacle itself serves an important role as a medium available to literate and illiterate alike, offering a means of visually installing these heroes into the collective memory of the general public and inspiring a sense of common history and nationalism. The placement of the event within an established ceremonial format, such as provided by Roman Catholicism, added a sense of continuity which further garnered legitimacy. The religious format also added solemnity and importance of those being honored, while at the same time renewing the power and authority of the Church.

The careful orchestration of public events for political effect is nothing new. Large public spectacles are a powerful tool with which to chisel upon the collective memory. More powerful than a document seen and understood only by a few literate politicians, public spectacles held within a common public space speak to literate and illiterate alike, of every social class.

Within his lifetime, Iturbide rose to supreme hero, and fell to condemned traitor. Chroniclers of the era alternatively lauded or cursed him. The remains of the former 'Hero of Iguala' lay forgotten for nine years before Santa Anna first suggested renewing Iturbide's official recognition as Liberator. Yet another five years elapsed before that recognition was carried out. Clearly, the actions of the dead man had not changed in the years since his execution. What had changed, rather, was the situation in Mexico and the goals of its leaders. President Anastasio Bustamante instigated the ornate, and costly, reburial ceremonies of Iturbide at a particularly stressful moment in Mexican history when logic would dictate the allocation of scant national financial resources to more pressing concerns. To understand how a man executed as a traitor could be restored to heroic stature, and why it should have occurred when it did, requires an examination of how contemporaries regarded Iturbide, their motives, and the historic situation surrounding the decision to honor him.

While traditionally the planned events of the juntas patrióticas were funded through private donations, in times of economic hardship donations became scarce. Beginning in the 1830s, the junta sometimes requested, and received, a grant from the national government. In 1838, Bustamante had asked Congress to again allocate funds to the junta as it had done the previous year. Costeloe, "The Juntas Patrióticas." 35-36.
The Rise and Fall of Agustín de Iturbide

Agustín de Iturbide began his career as a royalist soldier and quickly advanced through the officer ranks. He gained notoriety fighting insurgents under the command of leaders such as Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos. Belying his own bias, United States diplomat Joel Poinsett described him as a "blood-thirsty persecutor of the Patriots."¹ Iturbide commanded troops who defeated Morelos' army at Puruarán in 1814.² Six years later, Viceroy Juan Ruiz de Apodaca sent Iturbide and his troops against the forces of insurgent Vicente Guerrero. Iturbide switched allegiance, and with Guerrero declared his Plan of Iguala. The plan praised Spain but argued that the time had come for Mexico to strike out on its own. "Three guarantees" formed the basis of the plan. The first guarantee established that the new nation should become a constitutional monarchy. A provisional junta would offer the crown to King Ferdinand VII, or another suitable European prince. The second guarantee promised Roman Catholicism as the only official religion. The third guarantee vowed that Spaniards

²Timothy E. Anna, The Mexican Empire of Iturbide (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 2.
would be protected under a law granting all citizens equal rights. This third law served to win over Creoles and Peninsulares to the independence movement. The Plan of Iguala succeeded because it united diverse independence movements into one. Liberal and conservative elites supported the plan as it addressed issues important to their common social class. The new Army of the Three Guarantees grew quickly and after a nearly bloodless revolution, Viceroy Juan de O'Donojú and Iturbide signed the Treaty of Córdoba formally recognizing Mexican independence.

Iturbide entered Mexico City at the head of his triumphant army on September 27, 1821, his thirty-eighth birthday. Public celebrations, brochures and paintings lauded the 'Hero of Iguala,' the 'Consumator of Mexican Independence,' and the great 'Liberator.' Members of the victorious general's own staff carefully orchestrated the expression and format of the celebrations, based on colonial models of the entrance of vice-roys. Melchor Álvarez, head of the army's general staff, and Ramón Gutiérrez del Mazo, intendant of civil rule, informed soldiers and civilians of their proper role in the festivities. They published their decree on September 25 to give residents time to prepare. The three-day celebration emphasized the power and discipline of the victorious army. Iturbide's top military staff, including future president Anastasio Bustamante, accompanied the general at the head of the parade as it traveled a traditional ceremonial route through the principal streets surrounding the National Cathedral and central plaza. These included Calle de Plateros and Calle de San Francisco. Private citizens decorated their homes along the route, as instructed. After a brief pause for speeches at a specially-erected triumphal arch, the procession made its way to the National Cathedral where the archbishop attributed independence to an

^3For illustrations of nineteenth century paintings of the entrance of Iturbide's triumphal Army of the Three Guarantees into Mexico City, see Rafael Heliodoro Valle, "Iturbide Varón de Dios," Artes de Mexico, 18, no. 146 (1971), 56-57; Antonio García Cubas, El libro de mis recuerdos (Mexico: Imprenta de Arturo García Cubas, Hermanos Sucesores, 1904), 397.
act of God, carried out through His servant Agustín de Iturbide. A Te Deum played while Iturbide gave his thanks to God. As an instrument of the Divine, Iturbide became something more than a mere mortal—he became a potential saintly object of veneration.

The next day, Iturbide fashioned a five member provisional junta to create a ruling regency to implement the Plan of Iguala, in particular to secure a monarch. Among the five, was Iturbide's close friend Anastasio Bustamante. The junta elected Iturbide as its head, and he later was elected to head the regency as well. Later historians would point to this as self-promotion at work.

The ruling junta soon decreed that all citizens should proclaim an oath of loyalty to the new empire on October 27, based on the jura del rey, an oath of allegiance to the king, of the colonial era. As before, the carefully ceremonies abounded with tradition and symbolism. Citizens decorated their homes and public buildings in preparation for the afternoon's parades which wound through streets near the Plaza Mayor en route to the National Palace. There, after the reading of the Act of Independence, the Plan of Iguala, and the Treaty of Córdoba, a crowd of over 70,000 shouted their loyalty to the Empire—as yet without a monarch—while bells rang and artillery sounded. A mass the following morning, and a bullfight that afternoon, concluded the ceremony.

New national symbols debuted that day. The red, white and green banner of the Army of the Three Guarantees formed the backdrop for the new national eagle—perched on a nopal cactus. The eagle and cactus motif, appropriated from the Aztec Empire, suggested an inherent legitimacy of rule in the New World. An imperial

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6Robertson, 137, 140; Baker Tuller, 22-25.
crown perched on the eagle's head, recalled European authority. The colors of red, white and green each represented one of the three guarantees of Iguala: red for union; white for religion; and green for independence. By visually tying together the nation's indigenous and European roots on the backdrop of the tricolor banner of the Army of the Three Guarantees, the Mexican flag stressed unity, sovereignty, religion, and Iturbide's victorious army. After the proclamation, regents received gold and silver commemorative coins struck with the national eagle and the date of the ceremony. By imbuing existing colonial traditions with new symbols of an independent sovereign state, leaders appropriated to themselves the power and legitimacy vested in traditional public ceremonies.

When Ferdinand VII declined the throne and an acceptable European prince could not be found, Mexico became free, by the terms outlined in the Treaty of Córdoba, to select its own monarch. How Iturbide came to be elected Emperor of Mexico remains a cloudy issue. As Iturbide contended, he had strong popular support from the masses and the military. He did not, however, have the support of all congressmen, whom he referred to in his memoirs as his "sworn enemies." A few modern historians, including Timothy Anna, conclude that the demonstration was a result of military support for Iturbide who earlier that day had threatened to resign as head of the regency over the issue of expanding the military. Rather than expand the military, the congress which sought to curb Iturbide's power, decreed that the number of military should be slashed. Nevertheless, many contemporary historians, including Carlos María de Bustamante, argued that Iturbide's own ego and greed played the

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7 Anna, The Mexican Empire of Iturbide, 10.
8 For an illustration of this coin and a physical description, see Benjamin Betts, Mexican Imperial Coinage, (Privately Printed, 1899). 6. Plate I. illustration 2.
10 Anna, The Mexican Empire of Iturbide, 62-64.
largest role as he abused his power and popularity as head of the junta and as the 'Hero of Iguala' to have his loyal officers incite a lower class demonstration in front of his palace on May 18, 1822.\textsuperscript{11} Iturbide initially turned down the mob led by Sergeant Pío Marcha of his own Regiment of Calaya, which demanded his enthronement, purportedly shouting "¡Viva Agustín I, Emperor of Mexico!"\textsuperscript{12} Not surprisingly, current historians, relying on accounts such as that by Bustamante, frequently come to similar conclusions.

The following morning, Valentín Gómez Farías presented to Congress a motion, signed by forty-six others, to consider raising Iturbide to the throne. By the end of the rowdy session, filled with Iturbide supporters, his enthronement was decided although even eyewitnesses differed on the number of deputies present. Sixty-seven voted for enthronement and fifteen voted to delay the decision to give representatives from the provinces times to discuss the proposal. None, however, voted against the proposition. In the following days, the date of the coronation was set for August 1822. After Iturbide's abdication, contemporary historians argued that the session lacked sufficient deputies for quorum, thus rendering Iturbide's enthronement technically illegal.\textsuperscript{13}

For his coronation, Iturbide borrowed directly from the French model of Napoleon I. Iturbide felt the best way to keep order was to continue the trappings of authority already in place and honored by the people. Part of the ceremonies included the naming of inductees into the newly created military Order of Guadalupe.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{11}Carlos María de Bustamante. \textit{Continuación del cuadro histórico: Historia del emperador Agustín de Iturbide y establecimiento de la república popular federal}, vol. 6 (Mexico: Instituto Cultural Helénico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985), 131-133.
\textsuperscript{13}Anna, \textit{The Mexican Empire of Iturbide}, 69-71.
\textsuperscript{14}For illustrations regarding Iturbide's coronation, please refer to Rafael Heliodoro Valle, "Iturbide Varón de Dios." \textit{Artes de Mexico}, 18, no. 146 (1971). color plates. These illustrations include a
Anastasio Bustamante and Vicente Guerrero were among those inducted as first class members. Iturbide inducted Antonio López de Santa Anna as a member of the second class. As with the oath-taking ceremony of October 27, 1821, a coin was struck to commemorate this occasion as well. Contemporaries and later historians have often dismissed the practical value of Iturbide's continuation of ritual as personal greed and self-glorification. While the point of Iturbide's motives is debatable, the practical impact of the ritual remains valid. By focusing on ritual, Iturbide demonstrated the legitimacy of the new government based on pre-existing models and created a national image to replace a colonial one. Congressmen appreciated pageantry as an accepted and integral part of a monarchy. Their criticism stemmed, rather, from the fact that they did not all agree on a monarchy.

The ten years of the independence movement, which could rightly be considered two separate class movements, and the general lack of political experience among the nation's new leaders left the political and economic leadership of the country in disarray. After the Treaty of Córdoba caused the flight of many colonial Spanish aristocrats, the Creole elite dominated the political stage of independent Mexico. Comprised of military officers, clergy, businessmen and professionals, this elite group identified themselves as *hombres de bien*. Despite division into political factions, the ideological consistency of this small, predominately Creole, upper class lay in class goals (and persons involved). *Hombres de bien* viewed political parties and allegiances

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16For an illustration of this coin and a physical description, see Benjamin Betts, *Mexican Imperial Coinage*, (Privately Printed, 1899), 6-7, Plate I, illustration 4.
primarily as a means to a specific end: the maintenance of order and stability.\textsuperscript{17} Prevailing thoughts about who should make critical national decisions limited government participation to educated men of ample financial means and a certain level of social refinement. More than simple self-promotion, they saw their educated leadership as essential for the well-being of the nation, given the low levels of education (and allegedly, morals) of the general population. \textit{Hombres de bien} encouraged advances in education, culture and science as a means to promote stability, growth and cultural identity. Liberals may have sought secular schools while conservatives preferred parroquial, but both groups agreed on the importance of education for Mexico's progress and stability. They reasoned that education would prevent the masses from being easily swayed by charismatic leaders, and help prevent violence. That this goal cut across factional lines is evident in the selection of administrators for the \textit{Instituto de Ciencias, Literatura y Artes} established by José María Torne1 in 1825. Conservative Lucas Alamán served as the school's president; federalist Andrés Quintana Roo as its vice-president; and Tomel's brother-in-law, \textit{santanista} Manuel Diéz Bonilla, served as its secretary. In addition to education, \textit{hombres de bien} of all political persuasions supported the promotion of Mexico's cultural heritage. This included the writing of national history by men such as Alamán, José María Bocanegra, and José María Luis Mora. It was within this social class that a sense of nationalism and loyalty to the nation developed most quickly.\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{18}Will Fowler. "Dreams of Stability." 296-297.
With independence, *hombres de bien* saw a glistening opportunity to create a new, perfect nation without fear of policy change based on events in Europe. Also with the decree of equality in the Plan of Iguala, Creoles now had the opportunity to fulfill their previously frustrated political ambitions. Unfortunately, ideas of perfection varied, as did the depth of understanding in how to implement them. In the first months after independence, the majority of people and generals-turned-politicians preferred to establish a monarchy. It was a system with which all were well acquainted: a tradition extending thousands of years into the past. The idea of a republic was still young and considered seriously only by elite intellectuals, such as Fray Servando Teresa de Mier. Even Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who would later denounce Iturbide as a tyrant and fight for the republican cause, admitted in his autobiography that having grown up under a monarchy he did not support republicanism. He wrote, "...my friends tried to coax me into joining with them, but having been reared under a monarchy, I could not favor such an extreme change and listened to their words with disapproval."19

Even those congressmen who championed the cause of republicanism clashed over the choice of a federal or centralized republic. They united only in their dislike of Iturbide, whose popularity and Empire impeded realization of their goal. For their alleged conspiracy against the monarchy, Iturbide arrested and imprisoned fifteen congressmen, among others, on August 26, 1822. These included Bustamante, José Fagoaga, José Joaquín de Herrera, José del Valle, Anastasio Zerecera, and Mier, whom Iturbide accused of leading the plot.20 On October 31, 1822, Iturbide dissolved Congress altogether, replacing it with a smaller, more efficient junta. Iturbide reasoned that Congress was too large, too ineffectual and in nine months, had not begun its

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assigned task—the creation of a unique constitution for Mexico. Nevertheless, even Iturbide's supporters criticized his dissolution of Congress and the imprisonment of the congressmen. This action provided Iturbide's republican enemies the brief anti-\textit{Iturbidista} sentiment they needed to begin to implement their own designs. Despite the arrests, the several ensuing uprisings against Iturbide called only for the release of the congressmen, not for the end of the monarchy.

Iturbide bowed to the pressure and reinstated the original Congress, which worked quickly to limit the power of the monarch. With sentiment growing against him, Iturbide voluntarily abdicated the throne on March 20, 1823. While he had managed to unite diverse elements towards the goal of independence, once that goal was achieved, partisan politics resurfaced and threatened to tear apart the fragile union. Through his secretary, Iturbide explained in a letter to the head of Congress that he abdicated to prevent becoming a "pretext for civil war."

During the self-imposed exile which followed, disgruntled congressmen falsely maligned Iturbide and the form of government he represented in order to gain favor for their new alternative, republicanism. In his 1823 memoirs written while in exile, Iturbide refuted many congressional allegations including that he engineered his own election to the throne. He argued that contemporary historians largely fabricated his self-serving image for their own advantage. Coincidentally, among these historians were congressmen briefly imprisoned by Iturbide in 1823—including Mier and Bustamante. Considering political aspirations and personal grudges, the potential for

\begin{itemize}
  \item Iturbide, 35-36.
  \item Agustín de Iturbide, "Appendix XII," in \textit{A Statement of Some of the Principal Events in the Public Life of Agustín de Iturbide, Written by Himself}, 150.
  \item Iturbide, 45-53.
\end{itemize}
bias in the writings of these authors is obvious. Likewise, United States diplomat Joel Poinsett, candid in his support of the republican cause, had little to say in favor of Iturbide.\textsuperscript{25} Modern historian Timothy Anna makes arguments mirroring and further supporting Iturbide's own self-defense.\textsuperscript{26}

A rising spirit of republicanism lured influential congressmen. Hoping to lead the nation to a republican form of government, they feared a recreation of a monarchy. When rumors began to circulate of Iturbide's return, republicans declared Iturbide a traitor to prevent him from returning to Mexico where they knew he and the monarchical system still had strong popular support. Many of the congressmen had been close friends of the former emperor and his proscription was a political move, rather than true animosity towards Iturbide as an individual.

Certainly news of the proscription decree of April 28 had not reached England when Iturbide left London for Mexico on May 4, 1824. Contemporaries and current historians alike contest the true reasons Iturbide returned. Conspiracy theorists, Bustamante for example, argued that Iturbide planned to re-establish the monarchy, or even to regain Mexico for Ferdinand VII. Reacting to these rumors, Iturbide affirmed that he came as a soldier and a Mexican, not as an emperor. "to contribute with my words and sword to the maintenance of Mexican liberty and independence," should Ferdinand send the rumored force to retake Mexico. Congress made no effort to notify the former emperor of its decision branding him a traitor and sentencing him to immediate execution should he ever return. Bustamante later defended the congress, arguing that as Iturbide sent an acquaintance ashore in Soto de la Marina, Tamaulipas

\textsuperscript{25}Poinsett. 52. 68-69. \\
\textsuperscript{26}Anna, "The Rule of Agustín de Iturbide: A Reappraisal."
to first assess the situation, he should have been well aware of his proscription before he disembarked from the Spring. 27

Quickly apprehending Iturbide on July 17, Felipe de la Garza referred the execution order to the council of Tamaulipas. After deliberations, they voted to uphold the proscription decree. De la Garza executed Iturbide on July 19, 1824 by order of the council and buried his body without pomp in the parish cemetery of Padilla. 28 Meanwhile his peers and executioners set down the "facts" in their oft-quoted histories. De la Garza was censured on July 28 for his failure to immediately put to death the traitor as proscribed. 29

**Major Actors of the Republican Period**

The post-independence, and post-Empire, era is noted for its numerous political upheavals. The usually bloodless revolts generally involved same cast of characters, whether on stage or waiting in the wings for a new opportunity at power. Frequent shifts in political affiliations by leaders added to the seeming chaos of the era. Even devoted liberals and staunch conservatives changed political alliances at some time during their careers. 30 Historians frequently have divided the period into a battle between liberal and conservative parties. However, some historians such as Timothy Anna and Will Fowler, have called this an oversimplification that has resulted from the uncritical dependence on works that form the basis of Mexican historiography, including works by Mora and Alamán, despite the inherent personal bias of these authors. In reality, a multitude of political factions existed. The most prevalent

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27Bustamante, vol. 6, 259-261.
28For an illustration of the execution, please refer to Rafael Heliodoro Valle, "Iturbide Varón de Dios," *Artes de Mexico*, 18, no. 146 (1971), 95.
30Fowler, "Dreams of Stability," 300, 302.
included radical liberals, moderate liberals, conservatives, and santanistas. For secrecy, these groups retreated into Masonic lodges: the York Rite for the liberals, and the Scottish Rite for the conservatives.

Many factions were in fact variations of others. The liberals, for example, divided into radical and moderate segments. Radicals sought to create a truly representative republican society. To do so, they fought the entrenched privileges of the Church and military. The liberal newspaper, El Fénix de la Libertad, decreed 1833 a successful year as surviving colonial institutions and privileges had faced nearly continuous setbacks. Consisting primarily of intellectuals, journalists, lawyers and small businessmen, they sought the supremacy of the states as demonstrated by the federal example of their northern neighbor and the Spanish Constitution of 1812. They sought a separation of Church and State, religious toleration, and an end of Church and military privileges. They viewed the unquestioning devotion of the masses to the clergy as an obstacle to the rational society they strove to create, and the power of the Church as threatening to state sovereignty. The sale of Church assets to fund the faltering national economy figured as part of the laissez-faire principles which governed their national economic plans. Radicals also supported a direct tax on income. They discouraged a national army in lieu of strong local civic militias commanded by state governors to guarantee states’ autonomy. The most radical of liberals, such as Valentín Goméz Farías, wished to grant suffrage to a greater portion of the populace in order to create a true representative democracy. Other radicals, moderates and all conservatives, on the other hand, sought to limit voting rights to the propertied classes.

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Famous radicals included Goméz Farías, Vicente Guerrero, Lorenzo de Zavala, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada and José María Luis Mora.

Moderate liberals fell between radicals and conservatives. Most moderate liberals supported the constitutional monarchy until the fall of Iturbide’s Empire when they reluctantly supported a republic. They were less adamant than radicals and less hurried to curb the power of the Church. They felt the Church still played an important role in State. Moderates recognized the drain on the national economy caused by a large national army, but were weary of local militias, whom they felt tended to be comprised of unsavory and untrustworthy characters.\(^{33}\)

Conservatives, consisting primarily of the clergy, the army and large landowners, sought to establish a strong central government led by a civic bureaucracy, a national military and a strong Catholic Church. Their platform stressed religion, morals, family values and private property. They emphasized the maintenance of established social divisions, fearing that radical change would lead to disastrous social disorder as exemplified by the French Revolution. Conservatives limited voting privileges to the propertied classes. Opposite of the radical liberals, they sought to establish a strong national army and do away with local civic militias in order to centralize power. A government-controlled economy would include the possibility of monopolies as had existed under the colonial system. The Church would supervise birth, death, and marriage rituals and control education to ensure the obedience and morality of the populace. Conservatives saw the Church as a necessary instrument to ensure a just, moral society and to promote stability.\(^{34}\)

Often overlooked, perhaps the largest of all factions consisted of santanistas, the followers of Santa Anna. As leaders experimented with political theories and

\(^{33}\)Stevens. 30-32.

\(^{34}\)Stevens. 29-33; Costeloe. The Central Republic in Mexico. 12.
experienced what worked and what did not, political affiliations easily changed throughout individuals' political careers. Santanismo sought to establish a strong government to maintain stability and order by whatever means necessary. As the level of stability and order fluctuated, so too did the adherents to this faction. In desperate times, their numbers swelled, as politicians gave up factional quibbles in lieu of saving the union. In appealing to the common class goals of the hombres de bien, santanismo provided an acceptable compromise between the liberal and conservative that all could live with in desperate times. The movement which began as an ideological faction later developed into a party of its own complete with manifesto. That the party had wide, though fluctuating, support is attested by Santa Anna's eleven stints in power.

The politics of the era involved more than just political factions. The power and wealth of the Church and the power of the military made them important political actors. From colonial times through Independence, the Church and clergy played a role larger than seeing to the religious needs of their flocks. The Spanish Crown had recognized the importance of religious orders and clergy in keeping order in New Spain by maintaining the obedience of the native population. In the colonial northern frontier, Jesuit missions played a fundamental role in the subjugation and settling of the native population, and development of a mission economy, which hitherto had made European colonization of the area impossible. Even after independence, considering the misery in which much of Mexico City's citizens lived, their faith and obedience to the clergy helped to suppress potentially explosive situations.

Both liberal and conservative politicians were aware of the socio-political power of the Catholic Church in Mexico. While the former worked to dismantle it, the latter worked to harness it for their own advantage. Liberals under Gómez Farías forbade

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priests to preach on any topic other than that concerning religion in the interest of a separation of Church and State.³⁶ As evidenced by clerical revolutionary leaders, sermons served as an important motivational tool to inspire the faithful. Given the preponderance of clerics within the intelligentsia and government, and their influence in society, the potential for spreading political ideas from the pulpit was considerable.³⁷ Later, conservatives took advantage of the political role of the Church to emphasize respect for authority, property and the maintenance of the established social order. Higher clergy tended to support conservative political goals. They recognized that the maintenance of the Church's position of power and influence was linked to both political goals and popular sentiments. Political leaders, and *hombres de bien* in particular, were acutely aware of the possibility of a priest-led rebellion of the lower classes, as occurred under Hidalgo in 1810. While the Church as an institution was the wealthiest corporation in Mexico, its wealth was not evenly distributed. Lower clergy, especially rural clergy, earned less than higher clergy. They tended to be more liberal and have greater sympathies for their congregations, with whom they worked closely. This was especially true after the wars of independence weakened the hierarchical structure within the Church itself, as well as its political and economic position in society. As was his right under the *Patronato Real*, the Spanish king refused to appoint new bishops to replace those who had died or fled Mexico. By 1829, Mexico had no bishops at all. The loss of the Church's higher echelons, meant less supervision of lower clergy--leading to increasing class divisions among the clergy. The Church had hoped that Independence would bring more independence from civic authorities than it had experienced under colonialism. In addition, like the rest of Mexico, the Church

³⁶Samponaro. 97-98.
faced increasing economic problems in the first decades after independence. The generally poor state of the economy lessened the value of Church real estate, and radical reforms such as the abolition of the tithe further hurt Church income.38

Powerful and plentiful after the wars for independence, military officers played an important role in the post-independence governments as well. Many had supported Iturbide's Plan of Iguala and comprised a major component of the emperor's support. Historian Timothy Anna contends that this support went both ways.39 Military men held important political positions for most of the next 125 years.40 Not a military dictatorship, the prevalence of military officers within the government can be attributed in part to the prevalence in government of the social class from which they came. As in Europe, the upper-classes saw the officer corps of the military as a worthy professional career for men of their social standing. The recent war provided a plethora of officers ready to lead. In the post-Independence governments, military leaders often spent more time in congress than on the battlefield. During his reign, Iturbide granted numerous military promotions—to the extent that in Mexico City there existed less than two enlisted men for each officer.41 Later critics would complain that the disproportionally high ratio of officers to enlisted men in the military, and their consummate compensation, was an undue strain on the national Treasury.

Military officers may have been well-organized and prestigious, but the lower ranks often lacked equipment, proper training and housing. The lower ranks were often forcibly recruited, including the rounding up of "vagrants." Desertion was common, with deserters often becoming highway bandits. Official numbers for the size of the

38Stevens, 32-33.
40Costeloe, The Central Republic in Mexico, 5.
41Wilfrid Hardy Callcott, Santa Anna, The Story of an Enigma who Once was Mexico (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), 35.
military are often unreliable, due to inflation of numbers by the officers to justify increasing military expenditure. With few funds available from the national Treasury, the lower ranks often were not paid for months. They therefore tended to follow whichever general could promise them victory and riches.\(^\text{42}\)

Initially, the military had no set political agenda, but sought whichever faction seemed to offer them a bigger role in the new nation. The army was often aligned with the conservatives who wished to create a strong national army. Conservatives promised to maintain military fueros, while the radicals sought to eliminate privileges and dismantle the national army.

*Challenges Facing Mexico*

Politicians of all affiliations faced many challenges after Independence. The Mexican union itself was tenuous with the fall of the colonial constructs that had held together the diverse regions of New Spain. Leaders since Iturbide recognized the fragility of the new nation used to three hundred years of strong, central colonial government. Locally powerful military leaders or families ruled provinces, regardless of what form of government existed in the capital.\(^\text{43}\) Fearing that regions having little in common with each other might try to form their own nations, leaders worked hard to promote a sense of national unity, as illustrated by the symbolism of Iturbide's triumphal entry and oath-taking ceremony.

Meanwhile, external threats persisted throughout this period. A real threat of reconquest by Spain remained until the death of King Ferdinand VII of Spain in 1833. He had vowed never to relinquish the colony of New Spain and openly planned its

\(^{42}\)Costeloe, *The Central Republic in Mexico*, 7.

With this aim, in 1829 he sent a force to Mexico via Havana, Cuba. Although Mexicans defeated the Spanish force in Tampico under the leadership of Santa Anna, Spain was not the only concern. United States interests in the weak, young nation grew throughout the next decade. Especially after the disastrous war over Texas, Mexicans viewed the U.S. as a constant threat. General Manuel Mier y Terán, a presidential candidate with great interest and affinity for Texas, lamented the political disunity among leaders in the capital. He predicted distractions in Mexico City would cause the loss of Texas. In poor health and in despair, the general committed suicide in 1831 in Padilla, Tamaulipas on the very spot where De la Garza executed Iturbide. His body was interred in the same humble tomb as Iturbide.

Fear of reconquest served as a pretext to keep a large standing army. Military leaders recognized the need to emphasize their own importance to maintain power and privilege and often found opportunities to celebrate military victories and heroes with public holidays and celebrations. Santa Anna proved to particularly adept at promoting the importance of the military and his own military leadership in particular.

Third, without Crown-controlled monopolies the economy faltered from the start. The flight of the wealthy Peninsulares, the decision to honor colonial debt and the wars for independence aggravated the situation. Various coups, counter-coups and the cost of the large standing army took a toll on both the economy and foreign relations. With little money in the treasury to pay soldiers, many leaders resorted to forced loans and appropriated goods. French citizens' complaints to their government regarding forcibly appropriated goods eventually led to the French government sending a fleet to

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44 Costeloe, *The Central Republic in Mexico*, 5.
45 Morton, 178. That Terán's death was self-inflicted was almost universally accepted at the time. Only General Vicente Filisola and Carlos María de Bustamante contested the conclusion. Bustamante argued that a brave man such as Terán would not suffer such an ignoble end. Both men indirectly implicated Santa Anna for Terán's death: Costeloe, "Santa Anna and the Gómez Farías Administration." 20.
Veracruz in March 1838 to demand reimbursement for its citizens. Financial and political chaos meant officials took no action. The state of the economy had reached the point that government officials received pay in virtually worthless promissory notes or not at all. Officials struggled to keep soldiers paid to ensure their loyalty. Having blockaded the port of Veracruz for over seven months, the French declared war and fired upon the fort of San Juan de Ulúa in Veracruz just one month after the glorious reburial ceremonies of Iturbide.

Finally, personal power struggles within the young government diverted much time and energy from more fundamental issues. Politicians feared not only outside threats to their power, like France and the United States, but also charismatic leaders within their own circles who might gain personal power through popularity with the easily-swayed masses. To many hombres de bien, Iturbide had proven himself one such internal threat. Given the struggle for power among Creoles at the top, it is no wonder that many discredited the legitimacy of the mob which proclaimed Iturbide emperor on May 18, 1822. An ambitious man with real popularity among the masses indeed was dangerous to individual designs on power. With this in mind, many feared the possible autocratic ambitions of Santa Anna. Nevertheless, given that he usually retired to his estate after a successful coup, leaving the actual governing to others, factions saw benefit in an alliance of convenience when they felt an opposing faction in power became too extreme.48

The Reforms of the Radical Liberals and the Conservative Backlash

Factional power struggles set the stage for the decision to honor Iturbide. While Lucas Alamán suggested that Santa Anna in 1833 felt it was time to honor and show

47Costelo, *The Central Republic in Mexico*, x.
gratitude to the hero who had achieved independence with "prudence and valor." A more conspicuous answer lies in an examination of the political landscape of the time.\textsuperscript{49}

In the ten years after Iturbide's execution, federalists and centralists clashed over the form of the new nation. In 1824 a new constitution established the federal Republic of Mexico. Congress elected Guadalupe Victoria as Mexico's first president with Nicolás Bravo as his vice-president. Yet four years later, vice-president Bravo staged (unsuccessfully) the first of many military coups. Liberals turned the 1828 elections into an armed struggle as Santa Anna led their successful revolt to institute Vicente Guerrero as the next president, with Anastasio Bustamante as his vice-president. As Guerrero refused to give up the extraordinary powers granted him by Congress during the Spanish invasion of Tampico, Vice-president Bustamante followed Bravo's precedent and led a successful revolt in the name of the constitution and assumed the presidency himself in 1830. In 1832, Santa Anna overthrew Anastasio Bustamante. New elections were held, and on April 1, 1833 the state legislatures legally elected Santa Anna president for the first of many times.\textsuperscript{50}

Despite his election, Santa Anna "retired" to his Veracruz estate on his inauguration day, leaving the country in the hands of his vice-president Valentín Gómez Farías. A radical liberal, Gómez Farías immediately enacted sweeping reforms, especially against the Church. Radical liberals sought to abolish property and income requirements for suffrage in order to create a democratic representative government. They denounced the persistence of colonial era privileges among the military and clergy. Military \textit{fueros} were abolished, and the size of the military reduced. They

\textsuperscript{49} Lucas Alamán. \textit{Historia de México Desde los primeros movimientos que prepararon su independencia en el año de 1808 hasta la época presente}, vol. 5 (Mexico: Editorial Jus, 1942), 741.

secularized the Church-based education system, and abolished tithes. Radicals warned clergy to preach only on matters of religion, and avoid politics. The Mexican government, rather than the Pope, took charge of clerical appointments in Mexico, claiming to have inherited the right from Spain. To implement these plans, the Gómez Farías administration began a systematic purge of political enemies through the ley de caso, replacing them with officials of their own political persuasion. Replaced officials included opposing military officials such as Anastasio Bustamante who was exiled for six years. Many were stripped of rank or exiled. Fearing the strength of the national military, liberals set up their own civil militias to protect themselves in the event of a coup. In addition, civic militias led by state governors furthered the cause of state autonomy while a national army may have threatened it.

The reforms of the radical liberals quickly alienated moderate liberal and conservative hombres de bien, and especially, the Church and the military, causing a fundamental power struggle. Radical reforms attempted to directly limit the power and privilege of these powerful vested interests. Additionally, conservatives argued attacks against the Church and the parochial education system would lead to the moral decline of society. Further, allowing the uneducated masses a voice in government could only be detrimental, perhaps leading to a class war as demonstrated by Hidalgo's independence movement, the French Revolution or the rioting during the Revolt of Acordada. The direct income tax on men and businesses instituted by the radicals severely affected the wealthy hombres de bien and the Church. Hombres de bien found the direct taxes particularly harsh and unfair in comparison to previous indirect taxation plans. Conservative forces appealed to Santa Anna to save the country from certain instability and ruin. The radical liberal government quickly fell upon Santa

Anna's return to the capital on April 24, 1834. Gómez Farías left for exile in Spring 1834.

The conservative backlash began immediately as anti-liberal propaganda demonized liberals and attacked Gómez Farías. Editors of El Mosquito Mexicano described him as "the scourge sent from heaven against the Mexican republic." Just as political aspirations determined Iturbide's malignment and proscription, attacks on Gómez Farías intended to discredit his radical political policies. Despite these public attacks, personal relations among members of conflicting political parties were not always so harsh. While in exile, Gómez Farías received material aid from his political enemies. Devout conservative Carlos María de Bustamante wrote Gómez Farías to say that he wished their friendship could be maintained despite their differences in their political opinions. Meanwhile, conservative newspapers blamed radical policies for all the ills facing Mexico. On April 29, 1834 Santa Anna publicly refused to sanction any of the radical liberals' reforms, then systematically began to dismantle them. Santa Anna dealt with remaining liberals in congress by dissolving the congress altogether based on several public pronunciamientos—widely considered staged—against the liberal government. Santa Anna restored military officers stripped of rank and conservative politicians deprived of posts, and reinstated property and income.

53 Costeloe, "Santa Anna and the Gómez Farías Administration," 36.
54 Costeloe, The Central Republic in Mexico, 28, 39.
55 Olivera and Créte, 10.
requirements for voting. In 1836, voting requirements were made more stringent, in effect eliminating sixty per cent of previously eligible voters. Religious fueros were restored. The conservative congress repealed laws which negatively impacted men of wealth and property, such as themselves, and began to consolidate class power once again. In 1836, conservatives (with much opposition from Santa Anna, who many feared had autocratic ambitions) designed a new centralist constitution in 1836 to replace the federal constitution of 1824. This conservative constitution greatly centralized power and changed the basic form of government from a federation to a central republic. Meanwhile, Texans declared independence and Santa Anna ran to the north to defeat the rebels. Despite the victory at the Alamo, Texans soundly defeated Mexican forces. Santa Anna recognized the independence of Texas in exchange for his freedom, and returned to Mexico in disgrace.

On November 3, 1833, Santa Anna had decreed Iturbide to be one of the founding fathers of Mexico. Lucas Alamán suggested that by 1833 enough time had passed to forget Iturbide's transgressions as emperor. While true in a sense, historian Shannon Baker Tuller suggested that Santa Anna made the decree in order to gauge current sentiments regarding a monarchy. Strong rumors circulated at this time regarding Santa Anna's autocratic intentions. An in-depth study of Santa Anna's motivations for this decree is beyond the current scope of this thesis. Its importance lies in its role as one of the first official positive recognition of Iturbide since his execution, and as the decree that Anastasio Bustamante would build from in 1838. Congressmen voted to move his ashes to an urn in Mexico City, to join the final resting

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56 Costeloe. The Central Republic in Mexico. 36-37.
57 Stevens, 36.
58 Olivera and Créte, 10. 12.
place of the other recognized heroes of Independence, including Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos. Political turmoil in the capital prevented any action on the proposition. Aside from this unfulfilled decree, it was not until this conservative backlash in the mid-1830s that Iturbide received his first official recognition since his execution. On May 6, 1835, the conservative government lead by General Don Miguel Barragán, officially forgave all political offenses committed since 1821. This included the supposed treachery for which Congress proscribed and executed Iturbide. That month, Congress voted to inscribe Iturbide's name upon the wall of the congressional hall. Congress also voted to allow the return of Iturbide's widow and children to Mexico, and reinstated the payment of the former emperor's pension which had been denied them by a congressional decree of March 15, 1824.

During the years 1835 to 1837 the financial crisis worsened despite the best efforts of the conservatives. By end of 1836, it seemed clear that the conservative experiment with centralism had failed to improve the national situation just as miserably as the radicals' experiment with federalism. The economic situation, and the failure of both the liberal and conservative plans created an atmosphere of general instability. By 1837, numerous liberal (pro-federalist) revolts had broken out, especially in the Northern provinces.

Perhaps because of his good record in economic improvements, or because of his ambiguous political affiliation, in 1838, Anastasio Bustamante was recalled from exile to be elected the next president. Frequently described as an indecisive leader, historian Michael Costeloe suggests his election was based on the positive economic gains he had achieved during his earlier presidency as well as being viewed as pro-

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60 Costeloe, *The Central Republic in Mexico*, 63.
61 Robertson, 293, 304.
clerical.\textsuperscript{62} In 1837, Congress elected as president the previously overthrown Anastasio Bustamante, and repudiated the Texans' independence.

The situation at the time of Iturbide's reburial is well summarized in the description sent by U.S. consul William D. Jones to U.S. Secretary of State John Forsyth on October 30, 1838.

\begin{quote}
The Country really is in a deplorable situation, the standard of civil rebellion raised against the Government in every quarter of the Republic, a powerful exterior enemy at the very threshold of the Country, an empty treasury, a divided Ministry, and naught but discontent prevailing amongst every class of citizens, an insufficient (sic) army composed of new recruits taken from the prisons or dragged from their occupations and forced into service for which they have little disposition. Miserably officered and poorly paid, these are the men who are to stand against the well disciplined troops of the French invading army - the result cannot be doubted.\textsuperscript{63}
\end{quote}

There could not have been a better time to infuse some heroic nationalism into the tattered nation. The extravagant reburial of the hero who freed Mexico from Spain might rally Mexicans to unite once again under the ideals of freedom and liberty. More pressing, however, was the need to legitimate the failing government and inspire the disheartened congressmen, many of whom no longer bothered to show up for congressional sessions.\textsuperscript{64}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{costeloecentralrepublicinmexico} Costeloe, \textit{The Central Republic in Mexico}, 116.
\bibitem{jonesletter} William D. Jones, Letter to United States Secretary of State John Forsyth, 30 October 1838.
\bibitem{costeloecentralrepublicinmexicost} Costeloe, \textit{The Central Republic in Mexico}, 92.
\end{thebibliography}
III. THE REBURIAL

In the small cemetery of the Church of Padilla, entering it by the plaza, find, to the left, a marked gravestone in front of the door of said church. Digging it up, you will then find a tin-lined coffin, that contains the remains of General Terán; underneath these, in the center, are the remains of Sr. Iturbide.¹

Following treasure-map-like instructions, on the morning of August 22, 1838 a large party including such notables as the governor of the department of Tamaulipas, the priest of Güemes, the commander of the forces of Yucatán, as well as numerous on-lookers, wound its way through the sleepy town of Padilla, Tamaulipas with the object of digging up the fragmentary remains of the 'Hero of Iguala.' Minister of the Interior, José Joaquín Pesado sent the party to enact the first step of compliance with the congressional decree of August 6, 1838. This two-article decree, mirroring that which Santa Anna proclaimed in November 1833, authorized the transfer of the

remains of Agustín de Iturbide to the capital on September 27 to coincide with the anniversary of his triumphal entrance in 1821, and their interment in the National Cathedral, a "place destined for heroes."²

The Exhumation and Translation

That morning in Padilla, Governor of Tamaulipas Don José Antonio Quintero carefully counted, identified and recorded the 136 artifacts respectfully removed from the tomb. Of the one hundred thirty-four bone fragments, he identified six as pieces of cranium, one as a vertebrae, two as femurs, and the remaining one hundred twenty-five as various other bones. He also listed one suspender buckle, and one piece of embroidered cloth. These remains were placed in a wooden urn lined with gold-fringed black velvet and taken into the church of Padilla. There inhabitants of Padilla paid respect to the remains of Iturbide with decrees of appreciation. After singing a solemn response over the urn, officials passed it to the lodgings of Governor Quintero. A contingent of soldiers from Yucatán, commanded by Lieutenant D. Pedro Arcadio Cantón, ensured its safekeeping. Cantón kept possession of the urn's key until he safely passed it into the custody of Francisco Molina, the government official sent to accompany the urn on the next leg of its journey towards Mexico City. The day following the exhumation, officials arranged the remains for transport in a litter pulled by a mule dressed in the black trappings of mourning.³

Iturbide's heroic relics spent the next month traveling from town to town amid great fanfare and reverence en route to the nation's capital. Güemes, Ciudad Victoria, Soledad, San Luis Potosí, San Francisco, Querétaro, San Juan del Río, Tula and Guadalupe were among the stopping points during the five week journey to Mexico.

²Luis Manuel de Herrera, vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies, cited in Pacheco, 61.
³Pacheco, 62-64.
City. On a strict schedule to arrive in the capital by September 21, the procession could not detour its established route to visit additional towns requesting the opportunity to honor the remains. Neglected townspeople instead often met the procession en route. Emphasizing public appreciation for Iturbide, José Ramón Pacheco reported that humble peasants with little else to offer might volunteer a horse, mule or even themselves to help convey the relics on part of their journey. At each location, people requested that the urn be opened so that they could see for themselves the actual bones of their liberator.5

Throughout the country, organizational juntas patrióticas created ceremonial programs for their communities. Local governors, military leaders and ecclesiastic authorities consulted with one another to establish days of official mourning in honor of the 'Hero of Iguala,' as well as appropriate decoration and commemoration activities. These usually mirrored plans in the capital, although on a lesser scale.6

As the relics' procession neared its destination, ecclesiastic and secular authorities from Mexico City met the entourage in Guadalupe outside of Mexico City to conduct the relics into the capital. These included the prefect of Mexico City, the mayor of the plaza Lucas Condelle, his ayudantes, Lieutenant Colonel José María Barrera and Captain J. María Lebrija. Agustín Burguichani, the surgeon of the army, also accompanied the remains. His role was to verify publicly the authenticity of the bones for Mexico City officials and citizens. After appropriate honors in the church at Guadalupe, officials transferred the relics to an open landau draped in mourning and pulled by four black horses equipped in funeral trappings. Joining the procession as

4Carlos María de Bustamante. Continuación del cuadro histórico" El gabinete mexicano durante el segundo perido de Bustamante hasta la entrega del mando a Santa Anna, vol. 7-I, (Mexico: Instituto Cultural Helénico, Fondo de Cultura Económica. 1985), 84-87; Pacheco. 67.
5Pacheco. 66.
6For details of celebration plans in San Luis Potosí, see Carlos María de Bustamante, vol. 7-I, 84-87; For plans in Ciudad Victoria, see Pacheco. 64-65.
well were eight presidential aides and the lancers of the cavalry regiment of Iguala. Upon recognition of this regiment with its famous name, none would mistake the procession for any other than that of Agustín de Iturbide, 'Hero of Iguala.'

As had so often plagued large-scale public events of this nature, officials could not maintain the perfect order of the solemn procession. Eager to be in front, hundreds of men on horseback raced in all directions, at all speeds, and over all obstacles to reach the head of the procession as it traveled from Guadalupe into the capital. Additional people joined the parade along the route, disrupting the careful order constructed by the planning committee, despite the significant military presence. Two thousand troops with weapons held respectfully *á la fúneral*, lined the route in a double row from the watchtower of Peralvillo to the final destination of the procession, the Church of San Francisco.

Regardless of the disorder of the participants, decorative preparations had proceeded as planned. As requested in the published plan of the *junta patriótica*, homes of all classes of citizens as well as the trees along the procession route, had been decorated in appropriate funeral splendor to honor the liberator.

Canons placed in the plazula of Santa Anita first announced the arrival of the remains at doors of the city. These shots were quickly answered by canons placed in other plazas, and by pealing bells in the city's churches. Night had begun to fall as the procession arrived at the illuminated Church of San Francisco at 5:20 on the evening of September 25, 1838. Three cannon shots from Peralvillo followed by the ringing of church bells, beginning with those of the National Cathedral, notified the populace that the remains had entered the Church of San Francisco. There, after the

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7Pacheco, 67-68, 73.
8Bustamante, vol. 7-I, 88
9Pacheco, 69.
10Pacheco, 69.
appropriate mass and funeral orations. they remained on display until the major
ceremony began a month later.\textsuperscript{11} The one month laying in state allowed the reburial to
occur on the symbolically important October 27, the date of the official consecration of
Mexican independence. In addition, it ensured officials sufficient time to prepare the
necessary grandeur.\textsuperscript{12}

With approval from President Bustamante, the\textit{junta patriótica} charged with
creating a detailed program for the Mexico City ceremony published its description in
\textit{El Cosmopolita} on October 24, 1838. Divided into fifteen articles, the description
covered all aspects of the reburial ceremony, from the public viewing of the remains to
the composition and path of the procession to the appropriate symbolic clothing to be
worn by various military ranks and government officials.

\textit{The Reburial}

The greatest part of the ceremonies began on October 24, 1838. Iturbide's
remains were open to public viewing from October 24 through October 26, in the
convent of the Church of San Francisco. To prevent overcrowding and public disorder,
organizers arranged the flow of traffic through the church. People entered the church
through the main door and exited from a side door. Decorators draped the back of the
church from vault to floor in black. Tricolor banners hung from four columns
supporting the dome to a canopy suspended above the memorial. The crest of the
Army of the Three Guarantees adorned the top of the suspended canopy. Above the
urn, the national eagle supervised. The memorial itself stood thirty feet tall.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{footnotes}
\item B\textsuperscript{11}ustamante, vol. 7-1, 87-88.
\item P\textsuperscript{12}acheco, 73.
\item P\textsuperscript{13}acheco, 55-98. For an illustration of this memorial, please refer to Pacheco, 75.
\end{footnotes}
Details of a smaller scale were not overlooked. Organizers took special care to arrange Iturbide's mortal remains. The longer bones of the Liberator, such as the femurs, arm bones and the collarbones were organized into a square. These formed the basis of a pyramid completed by smaller bones such as fingers and vertebrae. Although the inventory made in Padilla listed six fragments of cranium, due to a "lack of vigilance," significantly fewer actually arrived to Mexico City. Pieces disappeared, presumably kept as relics. With missing portions recreated from wax, a black velvet cushion held the remnants of the skull atop the pyramid of bones. A crystal and gilded bronze urn held this mortal sculpture. The upper portion of the pyramid included material possessions of the former emperor, such as the uniform he wore while a general in the army, his flag, staff, hat and sword. No artifacts recalled his days as Mexico's first emperor, however. On the front of that body was written only "Iturbide." At each of the four corners of the base of the main memorial were columns fifteen feet tall, draped with black velvet cloth with gold fringe. Atop each were solid silver incense burners. An honor guard of two grenadiers and two presidential aides kept watch with scabbarded swords in hand as a sign of deep mourning. Requiems in Iturbide's honor were sung continuously in the church's side altars during his laying-in-state.

During the morning of October 26, organizers prepared for that afternoon's procession. Streets along the procession route were swept and sprinkled. Troops formed a barricade along the route and people arrived early to get a good view for the eleven o'clock procession. Invitations sent to foreign dignitaries advised them to

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14Pacheco, 74, 78. Scholarly debate ensued during the preparation period over the actual size of Iturbide's skull. Scientific notions of the time argued a correlation between the size of a man's intellect and the size of his cranium. Some argued that such a great man as Iturbide must have had a skull larger than typically presented in existing portraits.

15For an illustration of the funeral monument built within the National Cathedral, see Pacheco, 85.

16Pacheco, 78-79.

17Pacheco, 80; Bustamante, vol. 7-1, 89.
arrive that morning at ten o’clock for services at the Church of San Francisco, and to assemble again at four o’clock that afternoon at the National Palace. They were invited to attend the Latin mass held in the Cathedral once the procession had arrived. In addition, they were invited to attend funeral honors in Spanish to be held the following morning at eight o’clock. That afternoon, the carefully organized, candle-lit procession carried the urn from the Church of San Francisco to the National Cathedral. In a funeral carriage completely covered in black cloth and pulled by six black horses decorated in black velvet with gold fringe and black plumes, the procession carried Iturbide’s remains along San Francisco Street, turning at the Portal de Mercaderes, passing the Portal de Diputación, the Portal de las Flores and the Palace, then finally crossing the central plaza diagonally to enter the main door of the National Cathedral. The notoriously ill-kept cobble-stone pavement was repaired specifically for this event: laborers worked throughout the previous night to finish in time.

A cavalry squadron complete with canons, artillery, and four horses dressed in mourning trappings led the procession. Next marched the sergeant major of the plaza and his ayudante, including two colonels and two lieutenants all on horseback with swords in hand. A group of grenadiers followed, who were in turned followed by fifty poor—wards of the state—in new clothes for the event, carrying burning torches and led by their director and chaplain. (It had become the custom of the junta patriótica to perform acts of charity at national celebrations. This at times included the distribution of new garments to selected poor citizens.) Representatives of the religious schools, confraternities, Third orders, religious communities, clergy, parish crosses and the

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18José Joaquín Pesado, Invitation from Minister of the Interior Pesado to United States Consul W.D. Jones, October 1838.
19Pacheco. 79-81.
cabildo followed. Students of the military college guarded the urn, surrounded by two rows of infantry. In the center of these, presidential aides marched carrying the symbolic tassels of the two division generals, the Director of Public Debt, a minister of the general treasury, a member of the city council and an official from the University. Funeral trappings of the mules in front of the funeral car carried the noble crest of the Iturbide family embroidered in silver and gold. Following the funeral carriage, the general comandante and his estado mayor marched, accompanied by a company of armed soldiers with rolled flags and arms carried respectfully á la funerala. Next came other representatives from the University, the town council and persons of distinction, including civilian and military chiefs, governors and authorities from all of the nation's departments. Government advisors, invited members of the Supreme Court, congressmen and President Anastasio Bustamante followed. The President of the Chamber of Deputies held the position of "main mourner," representing the entire nation. Behind the procession marched the remainder of the capital's troops, appropriately dressed, and with arms á la funerala.

Once the procession arrived at the Cathedral that evening, priests celebrated mass in Latin, accompanied by a chorus of over one hundred and fifty people. Carlos María de Bustamante noted that "many heard [the mass], and few understood it." As the average lay-person could not understand the traditional Latin mass, the visual and symbolic aspect of ritual garnered greater importance. At eight o'clock on

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21Bustamante, vol. 7-I, 90.
22Santa Anna previously had organized states into military departments.
23Manuel Barrera, et. al. "Orden de la funcion funebre en la traslacion de las cenizas del heroe de Iguala, el dia 26 del presente," El Cosmopolita, 24 October 1838.: Bustamante, vol. 7-I, 89-90; Pacheco. 80-83; For an illustration of the funeral procession, please refer to Pacheco, 98.
24Pacheco, 89.
25Bustamante, vol. 7-I, 91.
the following morning, October 27, 1838, those involved in the procession gathered once again at the Cathedral to participate in another funeral oration, this time celebrated in Spanish by Dr. Don José María Castañeda. Afterwards, officials placed the crystal and bronze urn inside another made of fine wood. This was then placed on the stone pedestal of the chapel of San Felipe de Jesús where a permanent marble mausoleum was later built to house the remains.\(^27\) The Minister of the Interior kept the key to the urn in his secret archive.\(^28\) Carlos María de Bustamante described the pyre as similar to those used for burials of Spanish kings.\(^29\) At this point in the ceremony, the members of the commission returned to the National Palace to give condolences to the President, thus marking the end of the ceremony. Like the churches and balconies along the route, organizers decorated the foyer and balconies of the National Palace in black for mourning.\(^30\)

Despite the throngs of spectators and noise of frequent artillery salvos, ringing church bells, and clapping hooves, José Ramón Pacheco described the procession as being dreadfully silent.\(^31\) Nevertheless, the three days of ceremonies heard ample devotion to the firing of cannons, artillery salutes, the ringing of bells and singing. Each day at dawn cannons placed in the Plaza of San Lucas, the Ciudadela and in Chapultepec each fired five shots, followed by the ringing of bells one hundred times in all the churches of the city. On October 26, batteries of soldiers fired canons every fifteen minutes from ten o'clock in the morning until dusk. Canon firing also marked the arrival of the funeral procession to each of several landmarks: first, upon leaving the Church of San Francisco, next at the arrival at the Portal de Mercaderes, and at the

\(^{27}\)Pacheco. 89-90.
\(^{28}\)Barrera, et. al.
\(^{29}\)Bustamante. vol. 7-I. 91.
\(^{30}\)Pacheco. 90-91; Bustamante, vol. 7-I. 90.
\(^{31}\)Pacheco. 82.
National Cathedral. Canons also played a role in the mass celebrated on October 27. Canon shots announced the start of mass, the acceptance of the holy host, and along with a gun salute, the end of mass as well. Various groups sang their praises at the main altar of the Church of San Francisco: the first day, religious groups; the second day, the parish; and the third day, the cabildo.

The organization committee encouraged all inhabitants of Mexico to decorate their homes with white curtains and black sashes in recognition of Iturbide's funeral honors. Doña Nicolasa, sister of Iturbide, had the entire façade of her house covered with a black curtain. At the Palace, balcony windows remained closed.

Governmental decree required civil and judicial authorities to dress in mourning for a full month beginning October 24. Officials asked heads of households within the city also to dress appropriately as personal circumstances, and sentiments, permitted. The commissioners clearly outlined the guidelines for appropriate military apparel, including wearing black sashes on parts of the uniform, varying with rank.

*Symbolism of the Ceremonies*

Symbolism clearly dominated most elements of the three-day ceremony. Black banners symbolizing mourning were interspersed with tricolor banners representing the Army of the Three Guarantees and Iturbide's patriotism. In the Church of San Francisco, the crest of the Army of the Three Guarantees topped the suspended canopy, and Iturbide's military uniform and sword reminded the mourner not of Emperor Agustín I, but of General Agustín de Iturbide, leader of the triumphant army. The choice of location and date of the ceremonies emphasized Iturbide's role as grand patriot and liberator. The arrival of Iturbide in death intentionally coincided with his

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32Pacheco. 80.
most triumphal arrival in life—at the head of the Army of Three Guarantees on September 27, 1821. Ceremony organizers publicly displayed Iturbide's remains in the Church of San Francisco, the same church where on October 27, 1821, Iturbide had held the ceremony officially consecrating the achievement of Mexican independence. The transfer of his remains to the National Cathedral on the same date seventeen years later further emphasized his role as independence hero over that of Emperor. Even the epitaph inscribed upon his tomb, written by Don José María Torrel, within the National Cathedral makes no mention of him as emperor.

Agustín de Iturbide
Author of Mexican Independence
Compatriot, mourn him
Traveler, admire him
This monument guards the ashes of a hero
His soul rests in the bosom of God

Conservative, and long-time opponent of Iturbide, Carlos María de Bustamante complained that this epitaph was incomplete. He recommended the following inscription that included mention of Iturbide's rise to the throne (with implied use of force), his abdication, and his unfortunate, perhaps even disgraceful, death.

Traveler:
Here lie the venerated remains
of Agustín de Iturbide y Aramburu
who with heroic valor
and dauntless courage
untied without breaking the bonds of this America
with its mother country:
He consummated the work of Mexican Independence.
Changing in seven months the political face
of two worlds.
He gave secure guarantees to his fatherland
to consolidate the union of the parties
that destroyed it.

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34 Pacheco, 93.
Proclaimed emperor by the garrison of Mexico.
He abdicated this high dignity; and traveled to Europe,
from whence he returned and died disgracefully
in the town of Padilla
on June 19, 1824.
To God his soul for eternity
the happiness he procured for his fellow citizens of the time.\textsuperscript{35}

While the emphasis was placed on Iturbide as hero of independence, it is worth
noting that his ashes remained separate from those of earlier heroes already honored by
the government, including Miguel Hidalgo. Bustamante and the \textit{iturbidistas}
recognized common interment would have been inappropriate, considering Iturbide's
role in routing those he considered "a lawless band who harassed the country."\textsuperscript{36} In
fact, Iturbide fought congressmen who wished to bestow belated funeral honors upon
these "heroes" from the independence movement of 1810. Conservatives tended to
concur with Iturbide in their opinions of the early independence movement.

Following tradition, the most honored position in a procession was closest to the
honoree, in this instance the relics of Agustín de Iturbide. Military cadets guarded the
urn, surrounded by infantry. Within their midst marched presidential aides with
symbols of division generals. To observers, the message would have been clear. By
allotting the military the most honored position, not only was Iturbide's role of victorious
general (rather than Emperor) enforced, but the authority and power of the military
itself was emphasized and legitimized. This should come as no surprise given that the
event was organized under the authority of President (and General) Anastasio
Bustamante, who had served as a senior staff member of Iturbide's Army of the Three
Guarantees.

\textsuperscript{35}Carlos María de Bustamante. \textit{Continuación del Cuadro Histórico Historia del emperador Agustín
de Iturbide y establecimiento de la república popular federal}, vol. 6 (Mexico: Instituto Cultural
Helénico Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985), 265.
\textsuperscript{36}Agustín de Iturbide. \textit{A Statement of Some of the Principal Events in the Public Life of Agustín de
Group positioning, decorations and the dates chosen for the honorary reburial speak to political and military aspects of the ceremony, but the format of the ceremonies reflected a religious aspect carefully considered by the government's ceremonial organizers. The path and composition of the procession, the use of artillery salutes, tolling bells, lighted candles and so on, were all based on earlier colonial models, such as *Corpus Cristi*. A standard ceremonial format guaranteed importance and solemnity, especially among the predominately Catholic populace, accustomed to a more ritualistic expression of faith. Foreigners Fanny Calderón de la Barca and Joel Poinsett each commented upon the instantaneous silence and respect given to the passing Host.37 One had even commented that the priests commanded more obedience from the masses than could the strongest dictator.

Since the earliest days of the colonial era, governing elites recognized ceremonies as a superb means of encouraging acculturation and the obedience of the diverse population. The celebration of *Corpus Cristi* in colonial New Spain was the largest annual celebration, overshadowed only by the occasional entrance of a vice-roy or a *jura del rey*. The format of the *Corpus Cristi*, based on European models, was adapted in New Spain to include the participation of native people. Once adapted, the basic format remained virtually unchanged for three hundred years. *Corpus Cristi* solemnly celebrated the establishment of holy communion, or Eucharist. The ceremony was defined by its procession. The procession left from a side door of the National Cathedral itself, looped around nearby streets and returned through the front door of the Cathedral. From the early colonial period, a standard ceremonial format guaranteed importance and solemnity, especially among the predominately Catholic populace, accustomed to a more ritualistic expression of faith. Foreigners Fanny Calderón de la Barca and Joel Poinsett each commented upon the instantaneous silence and respect given to the passing Host. One had even commented that the priests commanded more obedience from the masses than could the strongest dictator.

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procession route developed through the streets surrounding the National Cathedral and central plaza.

In some aspect, all of the populace participated in the ceremony. Residents along the procession route decorated their balconies with curtains and flowers. Indians swept streets, built a thatch canopy over the route and danced. Confraternities proudly displayed their patron saint and ceremonial tunics and banners. Students and civil authorities also had a role in the procession. Each group had a specific location within the procession: the closer to the holy host, the more honored the position. Participation within a group developed group pride, and often engendered personal prestige. For example, confraternities tended to be closed congregations of wealthy upper-class men. Belonging to such an organization increased their personal prestige in society by proving their financial position and demonstrating themselves to be dutiful Catholics.\(^{38}\)

Recognition of a group's role within the larger scope of society helped foster civic pride. At the same time, however, the compartmentalization of each group and its carefully considered location within the procession emphasized the maintenance of the established social hierarchy. That the ceremony had important civic functions is evidenced not only by the substantial amount of money spent in its preparation, but also by the fact that civil authorities took control from ecclesiastic officials of the funding and organization of the ceremony by the end of the sixteenth century.\(^{39}\)

An established format reminded the faithful of the power of the Church. Given the disorder within the Church caused during the wars for independence when the king

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refused to appoint new bishops, higher clergy recognized the need to reinforce the strict hierarchy, obedience, and unity within the Church to keep strong their collective power. The ceremonies aided in this goal, but more importantly, it projected these same goals—hierarchy, unity and obedience—outside the Church to the populace attending the ceremonies. By controlling popular devotion, the Church as an institution could justify and maintain its powerful position in society in the face of political enemies.

Roman Catholicism was perhaps one of the most pervasive forces in the life of the average citizen of Mexico City in the early 1800s. Ecclesiastic authorities who helped to plan the ceremony were well-versed in the medieval traditions of the Catholic Church, including the translation and reinterment of remains of saints and heroes. The collection and veneration of the remains of honored dead has existed from earliest times and among many cultures. In Spain, as elsewhere in Europe, the veneration of saints became an important aspect of popular Catholicism. Many believed in the miraculous power of saintly relics, sometimes embarking on far pilgrimages to see a relic firsthand. In addition, by the fourth century, people frequently sought burial close to the final resting place of a saint, or saintly relic. It widely was believed that when God resurrected a saint, those buried near him would join the saint in his journey to Heaven, and by virtue of their saintly traveling companion, would be more readily accepted into Heaven. The Council of Trent determined that saints' bodies were instruments of the Divine and officially sanctioned the veneration of relics. The tradition of venerating the mortal remains of saints, pieces thereof, or objects sanctified through contact, flourished during the Middle Ages in Europe. Larger cities gained prestige by acquiring the relics once stored in less magnificent sanctuaries. By the fourth century, solemn ceremonies accompanied the translation of saintly relics including all-night vigils, lights, incense and carrying the remains on elaborate and
opulent biers. In the era before the Holy See commanded ultimate authority on the
naming of saints, the recognition according in this type of ceremony was equivalent to
canonization. Canonization ceremonies could occur many years after the saint’s death,
although typically, ceremonies were held on the anniversary of a saint’s martyrdom.
By the sixth century, a *Te Deum* hymn, used for Sunday Matin masses and solemn
occasions, also was used in the canonization of saints.\(^4\)

The movement of relics assumed trade-like proportions during the Middle Ages,
and with it the threat of fraudulent relics. To combat fraud, the Council of Lyons in
1272 required authentication of all new relics. By the late Medieval period,
authenticated relics were placed on display as close as possible to the main altar within
a Church.

During Iturbide’s lifetime, the archbishop proclaimed him as an instrument of
the Divine for his role in securing independence. A number of elements of the
translation and reinterment of Iturbide’s remains imply that he was popularly viewed,
and officially presented, as saint-like.

The term translation in the Catholic lexicon refers primarily to the movement of
holy relics. José Ramón Pacheco’s description of Iturbide’s reburial (“Traslación a
México de las cenizas del Libertador: Descripción de la solemnidad funebre con que
se honraron las cenizas del Heroe de Iguala en Octubre de 1838”) follows the classic
style of the "translation narrative." These narratives include the search for the relic, its
discovery and authentication, problems involved in moving it, and the celebration the

\(^4\) *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 12 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911), 735-738; *New
*Catholic Encyclopedia for School and Home*, vol 10 (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company,
1965), 562.
relic receives at its final destination. Pacheco’s account, written by order of the government and published under President José Joaquín Herrera in 1849, fulfilled Article 15 of the reburial plan published October 12, 1838 in El Cosmopolita, which ordered the creation of a detailed description of all that occurred during the reburial festivities.

As planned and preserved by the government, Iturbide's reburial followed the traditional format for the canonization of a saint. Pacheco's account covered all important aspects of the "translation narrative." The process began with the search for Iturbide's remains in Padilla with the aid of a 'treasure map.' While in Padilla, the Governor Quintero of Tamaulipas authenticated and recorded the relics. Sr. Burguchi. surgeon of the army, again authenticated them in Mexico City. A month-long ceremonial procession traveled from town to town en route to Mexico City. Festivities at stopovers included vigils, candles, decorative biers and a reliquary so the faithful might see for themselves the bones of the venerated hero. The arrival of Iturbide's relics coincided with the anniversary of his triumphal entry in 1821, and his interment in the National Cathedral with the official consecration of Independence and day of national oath-taking. These events represented that which made him saintly—the Liberation of Mexico.

Further, the loss of bone fragments during the translation, presumably taken as relics, suggests public veneration. Upon arrival in the metropolis of the capital, officials celebrated, then intered Iturbide’s remains in the most honorable location in the Cathedral. The Chapel of San Felipe in the National Cathedral, located in the first side chapel to the left of the main altar, was dedicated in 1636 to San Felipe, the first martyred Mexican saint. Also sharing this chapel is Santa Rosa de Lima, Patron saint

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of Spanish America and Protector of the City of Mexico. To the right of this chapel is the Altar de pardoín, where at one time, those condemned by the Inquisition made amends with the Church before their execution.

Out of respect or faith, people did wish to be buried with Iturbide. General Mier y Terán was entombed with Iturbide in 1831 in Padilla; Anastasio Bustamante requested that his heart be interred with Iturbide in Cathedral upon his death, which was done in 1853.42

Clearly Iturbide appealed to public sympathies and perhaps even inspired religious devotion as a man led by the hand of God to achieve Mexican independence. The reburial ceremonies emphasized thorough symbols and eulogies his role of liberator over that of Emperor. Like Corpus Cristi, the reburial borrowed a religious format laden with civic implications. The many religious and symbolic elements did not result from coincidence, but rather were quite deliberately chosen by ceremony organizers. With the elements of the ceremony in mind, a review of the political events surrounding Iturbide's death and his reburial clearly reveal political motives for this elaborate heroic reburial. Despite the respect displayed for Iturbide's achievement of Independence, his deliberate reburial in 1838 speaks most strongly to the political situation of Mexico in the late 1830s and the goals of its leaders.

42Pacheco. 91.
IV. CONCLUSION

A man executed as a traitor might initially seem an unlikely candidate for a heroic reburial. Yet Iturbide's treason and execution primarily resulted from the political climate of the early 1820s and the republican aspirations of a number of congressmen. Contemporary sources confirm the regret with which Tamaulipas' councilmen chose to enforce Iturbide's sentence. José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, the governor charged with upholding the execution order of the national congress, sent a letter on June 20, 1824 to the congress explaining his reluctance but emphasizing obedience to national orders. Buried without pomp in the town of Padilla, Iturbide's remains lay untouched for fourteen years while republicans fought among themselves to find a formula that would keep Mexico stable.

In a strictly practical sense, Iturbide's death lessened the threat of the re-establishment of a monarchy. Meanwhile, continuing political and economic instability increased the possibility of foreign invasion. Spain attempted to retake its lost colony in 1829; rebellious American colonists in Texas in 1836 defeated Santa Anna; in 1838

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France declared war on Mexico with its fleet already waiting off the coast of Veracruz. Mexico's sovereignty could not be taken for granted. The nation's problems directly affected national leaders. As wealthy men, they suffered the effects of new direct tax laws—a desperate attempt to bring money into the treasury. As public employees, they received infrequent paychecks from the perpetually empty national treasury. In apathy or despair by the late 1830s, many congressmen stopped attending congressional sessions. Given the myriad of problems, there existed a need to re-establish the goals and values of the nation, to regain the respect and obedience of the population, and to send a warning to foreign powers. A major public spectacle could address these objectives. The government chose to honor a man who could be remembered as the liberator of the Fatherland: a man who had defeated a foreign power in the past, and who had gained independence for Mexico.

The choice of Iturbide as the subject of the ceremony reveals political goals. By 1838, the political climate had changed to the point where Iturbide no longer threatened republican goals, but rather reflected the socio-political values of the party currently in power. His proscription and execution reflected a temporary political necessity, but did not lessen the esteem with which most of his colleagues held for him for his role in attaining Independence. As evidenced by the liberals' *ley del caso* which expelled fifty-one leading political figures, including Anastasio Bustamante, for a period of six years, proscription decrees were designed principally to keep political adversaries out of the way while the opposition enacted new policies.

While men of all political persuasions appreciated Iturbide as Liberator, by the late 1830s, he developed a special significance to conservatives. Iturbide, as honoree, fit the conservative criteria of the current government. He represented conservative values such as religion, property and maintenance of the established social order. By
decreed the Plan of Iguala and achieving Independence, Iturbide protected Mexico from liberal reforms destined for New Spain under the new Spanish Constitution of 1812. These would have threatened the power of the Church and the landed aristocracy. He also protected wealthy Mexicans from the destructive social disorder of Hidalgo's lower-class movement. Thus to the men of property and wealth who primarily became the leaders of independent Mexico, Iturbide was the greatest hero. Furthermore, if one believes Iturbide's own explanations for his return to Mexico, he died for his country, proving valor, loyalty and personal sacrifice for the good of the nation.

Through ceremonies, governments and leaders appropriate to themselves the celebrated traits of a revered hero. Given the domestic and foreign problems facing Mexico in the late 1830s, it is no wonder that Bustamante wished to appropriate and recreate the unifying spirit inspired by the Plan of Iguala and its famous author. Organizers of the reburial ceremonies emphasized Iturbide's role as "Liberator," while conveniently ignoring parts of his life which had come to be accepted as "tyrannical." By 1833, time had eased the memory of Iturbide's misdoings, at least as ambitious congressmen had presented them in the early 1820s. In 1838, Iturbide's symbolic public funeral sought to exalt him as the undeniable hero of independence, with little mention of his reign.

In addition, conservatives used the ceremonies to slight the liberals. When conservatives regained control of the government with the help of Santa Anna in 1835, they quickly began to dismantle what they considered the disastrous reforms enacted by radicals that threatened the traditional order of society. Under Santa Anna, conservatives re-instated property requirements for voting—ensuring that only the wealthy and educated could vote, thus limiting suffrage to their own social class. They
granted a general amnesty to any persons convicted of political crimes since 1821. While this served to erase the bogus political convictions enacted by the liberals under the *ley de caso*, it also freed Iturbide posthumously from his treason and allowed the return of his widow and children to Mexico. Conservatives rejected the secularization of the education system, arguing it would lead to a loss of respect for religion and authority, causing disobedience and lower morals. Conservatives bemoaned the loss of traditional values. With nostalgia, conservatives looked to the by-gone era when the army was disciplined, children respected their elders, elders respected social divisions, and everyone respected the Church. In their minds, a wise man led Mexico, pledging three guarantees: a centralized form of government, the protection of property and wealth, and the supremacy of the Catholic Church. All these things embodied conservative goals. Regardless of the actual cause of Mexico’s woes or Iturbide’s previously smeared reputation, to conservatives Iturbide now represented all of the traditional values lost during the previous decade.

A look at liberal plans before their fall from power reinforces the political nature of the selection of Iturbide as honoree. Had the radical liberals the opportunity to enact their own reburial celebration, the honoree would have reflected their values. In fact, the radical liberal government of Gómez Farías had planned a similar memorial to another hero of Independence—Vicente Guerrero. Like Iturbide, Guerrero was accepted as a hero of Independence. In fact, it was with him that Iturbide had proclaimed the *Plan of Iguala*. Unlike Iturbide however, Guerrero was a radical liberal who had been on the insurgent side of the war for Independence all along. He represented the values espoused by leaders such as Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos—men feared by many *hombres de bien* (and all conservatives) as instigators of lower class riot with little respect for private property. In addition, despite his military
achievements. Guerrero's mixed heritage was disconcerting for most of the race and class conscious 
*hombres de bien*. As with other liberal reforms, conservatives quickly countermanded the liberals' memorial plans. More unacceptable still to conservatives was that should Guerrero be honored, many would recall that none other than conservative Anastasio Bustamante had ordered his execution. Thus while promoting their own values, the liberal-planned memorial intentionally cast conservatives in a bad light.

Despite the evidence indicating that the reburial fulfilled specific conservative political goals, the personal loyalty of Anastasio Bustamante to Iturbide cannot be overlooked as a motivating factor. Unlike most men of the era who changed political affiliations, Bustamante remained a life-long *iturbidista*. Bustamante, like many of his peers, supported Iturbide’s *Plan of Iguala*. During the war for independence, Iturbide promoted Lieutenant Bustamante to Field Commander of an entire division. Bustamante was among the officers of Iturbide's victorious Army of the Three Guarantees. He rode with Iturbide and other members of the senior staff at the head of the triumphal procession as it entered Mexico City on September 27, 1821. When the movement for the enthronement of Iturbide culminated in the mob demonstration of May 18, Bustamante’s was among the forty-six signatures presented by Gómez Farías to the congress calling for the discussion of Iturbide's enthronement. Iturbide rewarded this loyalty when, as Emperor, he inducted Bustamante into the newly created, prestigious, Order of Guadalupe, as a first class member. Soon after the Emperor's abdication, Nicolás Bravo accused Bustamante of plotting to restore Iturbide to the throne. Around this time also, congressmen changed the date of Independence to reflect Hidalgo's *Grito*, rather than Iturbide's triumphal entry. In 1837, as President,

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2Similarly, further investigation into the Masonic ties of Anastasio Bustamante and Agustín de Iturbide may help to shed light upon additional motivations for the extravagant reburial.
Bustamante reinstated September 27 as an official holiday. Until 1855, independence day was officially observed on both September 16 and September 27. In 1838, Bustamante renewed Santa Anna's 1833 decree to honor the Liberator. However, Bustamante's most striking display of the respect and loyalty he felt for Iturbide is evident in his final wishes. As he requested, Bustamante's heart was interred with the remains of Iturbide in the National Cathedral upon his death in 1853.\(^3\)

Public funeral eulogies hide within them a hidden political agenda. They are inherently political as the words chosen to honor the dead shape the meaning of their lives for the living. Pacheco's glowing and flowery account written by government order is a continuation of the political purpose behind the reburial. As the ceremony itself served the political purpose of emphasizing specific conservative values, it was important that the eulogies convey these values and a sense of overwhelming public support as they constructed the collective memory of Iturbide. Eulogies present lessons to the living on national values and history.\(^4\) Pacheco reported that an occasional "¡Viva Agustín de Iturbide!" or similar supportive outburst escaped from the throng of spectators. Pacheco wrote

...as if they felt the emptiness that Iturbide left among the Mexicans, and yearn today more than ever that those remains could revive to restore that heroic valor, that cordial union and enthusiasm, that public spirit, that abnegation of 1821; they shouted ¡Viva! as if each one


wanted to transmit their own life to those inanimate remains. (How many passed before to see the remains, and didn't direct inside their chests, "Raise, O Father of Independence, and come defend your own work; she is in danger; here we find everything; we lack no more than you. Here is your sword; but, who would dare to raise a hand to profane it?"

Produced by government order and prone to flowery eloquence, Pacheco's description of the reburial expresses the conservative purpose of the ceremony: to regain the unity and popular support the government enjoyed in 1821 to combat the disunity and apathy prevailing in 1838; and to defend Mexican independence in the face of an invading French army, and menacing northern neighbor. That Iturbide is presented as nearly saintly is stressed in the mention of how the touch of any other hand would profane his sword.

Government-controlled newspaper reports portrayed the ceremonies in a way to best achieve their political purpose. Not all reports were affected by governmental bias. Although a conservative, Carlos María de Bustamante was never a supporter of Iturbide. He countered that the reports of the government's Diario oficial, saying that the crowd was not as numerous as reported, nor moved to tears. Rather he described the crowd as full of thieving léparos—pickpockets on par with the "gypsies of Andalucia."6

Nevertheless, the heroic stature of Iturbide presented for public consumption is evident in the style and format of his belated funeral honors. The ubiquity of the Catholic Church in all aspects of Mexican life guaranteed that any ceremony, religious or civic, would have a religious format. By following a prescribed symbolic format, public spectacles such as Iturbide's reburial helped to create a sense of authority and

5Pacheco, 70.
6Carlos María de Bustamante. Continuación del cuadro histórico". El gabinete mexicano durante el segundo perido de Bustamante hasta la entrega del mando a Santa Anna, vol. 7-I (Mexico: Instituto Cultural Helénico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1985), 88.
tradition that people understood easily. Iturbide's reburial services, from the translation of his remains from Padilla to their internment in the National Cathedral, had all the pomp and honors that traditional Catholicism only accorded to the greatest heroes, saints and the Holy Sacrament.

For the Church, the reburial was not simply a matter of providing ceremonial conventions. The Church was inextricably tied to the state, as well as a fundamental aspect of Mexico's culture and daily life. The Church and its higher clergy played a major role in the politics of the era. Numerous clergy, including ordained priests and bishops, held government positions at all levels. Even José Antonio Gutiérrez de Lara, president of the Council of Tamaulipas which voted to enforce the order of execution against Iturbide, was an ordained priest. (Although he was able to withhold his vote on account of his vocation.) Through ceremonies, the Church could control and direct popular religious devotion. Especially after the radical reforms enacted under Gómez Farías, the Church was eager to emphasize its socio-political importance and maintain its social, political and economic power. Especially considering Iturbide's pro-clerical stance, the reburial ceremonies allowed the Church to stress its high profile in popular society, reaffirming the importance of tradition, and itself as keeper of that tradition. In return, Church leaders expected the populace to remain obedient and resist any future secular attacks against the Church or the established social order.

The ceremonies also reinforced the authority of the military. The positioning of military cadets and infantry, as well as Bustamante's aides with banners of the division generals in the most honored location of the procession, clearly demonstrated to spectators the importance and authority of the military, as well as furthering

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Bustamante's personal legitimacy. The 1838 reburial of Iturbide with its emphasis on his role as military hero deliberately emphasized into the public mind the importance of the military heroes of Independence of which most of the government still comprised. This strengthened both the current military and the government's official claim to power by reminding the nation of their role in gaining Mexico's freedom from Spain. By honoring a hero of Independence, they in essence honored themselves and brought legitimacy to their power, necessary due to the sorry state of the union. It also served as a means to inspire disheartened congressmen. To keep power the military needed to emphasize their importance to the nation. The presence of the military and the symbolic references to the Army of the Three Guarantees such as the tricolor banners strengthened, through patriotism, the position of the military.

The ceremonies emphasized Mexican nationalism, albeit a nationalism carefully constructed on the conservative values of its organizers. Through the ceremony, the Church, the military caste, and conservative hombres de bien emphasized respect for religious and military authority, as well as the maintenance of the established social order and unity through the valor of personal sacrifice for the nation. The organizers may have hoped that by stirring up public sympathies and emphasizing Iturbide's personal sacrifice to the good of the nation and his sense of duty to the Catholic Church that the populace might be more receptive to higher taxes and military conscription in the face of the invading French fleet in the port of Veracruz and Mexico's growing economic woes.

In addition to stressing legitimacy and unity at home, the ceremonies also sent a message to would-be foreign invaders, reiterating to the world Mexico's position as a legitimate, independent nation. The ceremony reminded foreigners of the success of
Mexicans in defending their national interests against those who would challenge them.

In the case of the reburial, it is known for certain that foreign dignitaries not only attended, but that the Minister of the Interior formally invited them. The United States Consul in Mexico City, William D. Jones, sent a copy of his invitation to U.S. Secretary of State John Forsyth, along with the notation, "I attended the said funeral honors in compliance with the above invitation." 8

Ironically, Iturbide in his memoirs described with disgust the ineffectual actions of the new congress in the chaos following independence. Rather than dealing with grave issues such as national finances or rising crime, Iturbide insisted of the congress, "The speeches which were pronounced turned on matters of the most trifling description!" These included the question of "What honours should be paid to the chiefs of the insurrection, who had fallen?" 9

More than simply honoring a departed hero, or trying to absolve themselves of guilt for his execution, the conservative forces controlling the government organized the reburial of Agustín de Iturbide because in 1838 it was politically expedient to do so. Despite the dismal financial situation or the French fleet in Veracruz, through the ceremony, secular, ecclesiastic and military conservatives strengthened their position of political power and reaffirmed conservative national values and traditional social hierarchy. By incorporating religious and socio-political aspects, ceremony organizers hoped to bring order and internal stability to Mexico once again. Perhaps Iturbide, even in death, could unite diverse elements and liberate Mexico from instability and the threat of foreign domination.

8William D. Jones, Letter to United States Secretary of State John Forsyth, 30 October 1838.
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