57. BULLOCK, William, Jr. Catalogue of the Exhibition Called Modern Mexico; Containing a Panoramic View of the City, with Specimens of the Natural History of New Spain, and Models of the Vegetable Produce, Costume, &c. &c. Now Open for Public Inspection at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly. By W. Bullock, F.L.S. &c. &c. London: Printed for the Proprietor [title verso: J. Bullock Printer, Lombard Street, Fleet Street], 1824. [1-3] 4-28 pp., folded lithograph frontispiece (see below). 8vo (21 x 12.6 cm), modern grey boards, upper cover with paper label. Other than light foxing and offsetting to title, very good. Rare in commerce (in 1977 Swann sold the last copy to appear at auction). Laid in this copy is a different lithograph plate from another issue of the English edition of the pamphlet (see below).

Plates

[Lithograph in pamphlet] Exhibition of Modern Mexico at the Egyptian=Hall Piccadilly Drawn, & Printed by A. Aglio. 36 Newman St. Oxford St. Image: 16.6 x 28 cm; image and title: 17.5 x 28 cm; overall: 24 x 30 cm. Men, women, and children admire the exhibition, glass cases at left and right holding artifacts, in the background is the large panorama of Mexico City painted by Bullock’s son, William Bullock, Jr. The show featured “a live Mexican” (José Cayetano Ponce de Leon of Texcoco) who is shown at far right by a thatched hut conversing with a gentleman in top hat and tails. The quality of this lithograph is superior to the one laid in the pamphlet. Illustrated in Stephen Oettermann, The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium, New York: Zone Books, 1997, p. 212.

[Variant plate, laid in] View of the Exhibition of Ancient and Modern Mexico, [left below neat line] Drawn on Stone by I. Baker. [right below neat line] Printed by N. Chater & Co 33 Fleet St. Neat line to neat line: 16.5 x 28.1 cm; image, border, and title: 17.2 x 28.1 cm; overall sheet size: 20.5 x 30.5 cm. Creased where formerly folded, otherwise very fine. A small group of men, women, and children peruse the exhibition, which is a combination of background paintings and original objects, coconut and other trees. At left is a large stone sculpture. The show featured a diorama with a live Mexican, who is shown here in the center of the picture talking to one of the visitors. This version of the plate appeared in an undated London issue of the pamphlet with 32 pages. The Smithsonian attributes a date of 1824 to their copy of the pamphlet with this view. It is not so finely done as the one by Aglio.

First edition. Given the huge popularity of Bullock’s exhibition and the probability of multiple printings, we cannot speculate on the printing sequence, nor is it clear in the bibliographical sources. The title is found with publication dates of 1824 and 1825, and number of pages varies from 27 pages to 32 pages. Kress Library of Economic Literature 24362. Sabin 9136 (calling for 27 pp. and plate). The frontispiece is by Agostino Aglio (1777-1857) the same illustrator who created the images in Kingsborough’s monumental Antiquities of Mexico (see herein).

This pamphlet is one of a series of exhibit catalogues William Bullock (1773-1849) issued
to advertise his various Mexican exhibits, which were based on material he collected on his trip to Mexico (see herein). An inveterate collector, he acquired the basis for those exhibits by accumulating materials during an 1823 trip to Mexico (see herein), including three vitally important items of cultural patrimony that he eventually returned. The best examination of William Bullock’s life, writings, and exhibits is that of M.P. Costeloe, *William Bullock, Connoisseur and Virtuoso of the Egyptian Hall: Piccadilly to Mexico* (HiPALM monograph series, Bristol, 2008). Bullock is rated as London’s most successful showman in the second decade of the nineteenth century, but he was also a silversmith, jeweler, taxidermist, antiquarian, botanist, geologist, traveler, author, mine owner, collector of Mexican antiquities and art, and proprietor of the London Museum and other museums and exhibit halls. Preceding the present Mexican exhibit, Bullock was involved in exhibits on natural history, Australian aboriginal artifacts, and a wide range of other material, such as Napoleon’s battle carriage captured by the British and brought to London.

Bullock’s exhibit was held in London’s Piccadilly with its ostentatious Egyptian Hall, a fashionable, profitable venue that saw visitors ranging from the general population to Jane Austen to British and European royalty. The exhibit included remarkable Pre-Columbian treasures, a grand panorama of Mexico City, and even a Native American said to be the first Mexican Indian seen in Europe since the Spanish Conquest. Among the many items exhibited were saddlery and other horse equipage (including Cortes’ saddle), textiles, material culture, minerals, botany, and other natural history. The exhibit garnered great public interest in Mexico, and was a huge success. Bullock sanguinely projected Mexico as a fertile field for economic investment, which struck a chord with more than a few Brits. Even though Bullock’s financial plans did not materialize when he purchased a silver mine in Mexico (without heeding the ancient maxim *caveat emptor*), he certainly sparked interest in Mexico, investment in its resources and economy, and emigration to Mexico.


Mexico and his Mexico-related activities were the pinnacle of his career, and it was largely those which brought him international renown. Furthermore, it is little exaggeration to state that he was responsible on a broader scale for much of British interest and investment in Mexico in the 1820s. It was in the years following Mexican independence from Spanish rule in 1821 that thousands of British people chose (and they had a range of alternatives open to them) to invest their money in Mexican government stocks or in the shares of numerous British companies that were set up at that time to exploit Mexico’s natural resources. There are many reasons why they opted for Mexico, but among them, without doubt, was William Bullock.

Getty Institute, *Obsidian Mirror-Travels: Refracting Ancient Mexican Art and Archaeology*, November 2010-March 2011 (plate in our pamphlet illustrated):

Panoramas were perhaps the most dramatic form of public entertainment in Europe and the United States during the early nineteenth century, transporting viewers to places and events distant in time and space. Paintings of exotic
locales, highly detailed and rendered in accurate perspective, fed nineteenth-
century interests in travel and exploration. These empires of the imagination paralleled the very real empire-building taking place at that time. Not all panoramic views were made for public entertainment; panoramas of foreign
cities and archaeological sites were also commonly created for scientific and
documentary purposes and made in many artistic mediums, including etchings,
lithography, and, later, photography.

In 1823, William Bullock, proprietor of London’s Egyptian Hall, and his son,
William Jr., spent six months in Mexico collecting artifacts. They were among the
first Europeans to visit Mexico after it was opened to foreign travelers in 1821.
Upon returning, they organized the exhibitions *Modern Mexico* and *Ancient
Mexico*—the first of their kind. On display were antiquities, plants, animals,
minerals, handicrafts, and even a live Mexican Indian with his hut—all set against
a panoramic view of the Valley of Mexico painted by William Bullock Jr. The
exhibitions were visited by nearly fifty thousand people. Two years later, Robert
and John Burford turned Bullock’s original sketches into a large-scale circular
panorama of Mexico City that was shown in Europe and the United States.

($750-1,500)