RARE PEDRO URDIMALAS ALMANAC HUMOROUSLY MOCKING SANTA-ANNA

MINIATURE LITHOGRAPHS OF SCENES IN THE DICTATOR’S LIFE, INCLUDING GOLIAD & THE TREATY OF VELASCO

225. [LÓPEZ DE SANTA-ANNA, ANTONIO]. Segundo calendario de Pedro Urdimalas para el año de 1857, con un opusculo titulado: Santa-Anna a la faz de sus compatriotas. Adornado de una estampa con veinte cuadros. Mexico: Imprenta á cargo de Leandro J. Valdes, Calle de Chiquis núm. 6, [p. 64: Editor responsible—Mariano Trujillo], [1856]. [1-27] 28-64 pp., 1 folded lithograph plate: Cuadro histórico del General Santa Anna. 2ª. parte. [below neat line] Lito. de Iriarte y Cd. calle de Sta Clara nº. 25 (neat line to neat line: 19.5 x 28.7 cm; overall sheet size: 22.5 x 30 cm; twenty vignettes, each 5 x 5.7 cm). 12mo (14.3 x 9.2 cm), original printed wrappers, title within architectural border, stitched. Wrappers lightly stained and creased, lower wrapper with minor tears in lower blank margin (not affecting text); interior and plate fine. A rare survival.

First edition. Not in standard sources. Only one copy of this edition on OCLC, which lists a few scattered copies for other years; no copies at auction in the past thirty-five years. Apparently published for the first time for the year 1856 and for the last time for 1860. The Bulletin of the New York Public Library (1909), “List of Books in the New York Public Library Relating to Mexico,” p. 625 lists 4 issues, Nos. 2-5, from 1856-1859. The first twenty-seven pages are a standard almanac, listing feast days, etc. Pages 28-54 comprise “El General Santa-Anna a la faz de sus compatriotas.” Pages 55-64 are “Refutacion de Francisco de P. Orta” which seeks to prove that Santa-Anna lost his leg at Veracruz “en un acto de cobardia” rather than in an heroic manner.

The biography of Santa-Anna states in the first paragraph that the text seeks to document the life of “este hombre funesto” and goes downhill from there, incessantly attacking the dictator and his methods so that the citizenry “no sean engañados de nuevo por él ni por sus paniaguados, que son los únicos que desean su gobierno....” The article is particularly critical of his roles in the loss of Texas and the country’s defeat in the Mexican-American War. His behavior at the Alamo merely demonstrated that Santa-Anna “jamás ha economizado la sangre de los mejicanos, aunque sea solo por satisfacer una pueril vanidad,” with the result that the loss of Mexican troops was “espantosa” (p. 37). The author even more bitterly denounces the Fannin massacre, saying that Santa-Anna “cometio uno de aquellos hechos atroces infames y crueles que ni aun entre los mismos salvajes, faltos de toda civilizacion, se cometen; uno de aquellas hechos atroces que cubren de inmundicia á quien lo comete” (p. 37). At the Battle of San Jacinto, the author notes that Santa-Anna was asleep at the start and had not even bothered to post pickets. His actions in the Mexican-American War are depicted as one blunder and deceit after another. At the Battle of Chapultepec, for example, Santa-Anna caused the defeat there by promising General Bravo reinforcements that were never sent.
The exquisite plate, composed of twenty detailed, finely executed vignettes, shows various important scenes from Santa-Anna’s career. Among the subjects shown are the Goliad Massacre wherein he is placed at the scene, although he was not actually present; signing the Treaty of Velasco, which is described as “vergonzoso”; his leg wound at Veracruz; the burial of his leg (see herein); the 1844 insurrection against him, showing the mob attack on his leg’s catafalque; fleeing at the siege of Puebla; his defeat at the Battle of Cerro del Peregrino in 1854; lightning striking his carriage; fleeing Mexico in 1855; and at home at Turbaco.

The compiler chose to entertain his readers through the ancient character Pedro Urdimales—the rogue, rascal, or trickster. The earliest extant documentation of the legendary folklore of Pedro Urdimalas is from a late twelfth-century Spanish manuscript. Cervantes wrote a full-length comedy in verse based on the character. The present send-up of Santa-Anna evokes Lord Byron’s words: “And if I laugh at any mortal thing, ‘Tis that I may not weep.”

($500-1,000)