Santa Anna, the Mason
Casey D. Stanislaw, Lee Lockwood Scottish Rite Library and Museum

In the collective imagination of Texans, the dark visage of General Antonio López de Santa Anna looms large as a villain, a rogue, a manipulator, a womanizer, and a ruthless tyrant. Ironically, a masonic legend has persisted for many years that Santa Anna’s life was spared from the wrath of a vengeful Texans at Battle of San Jacinto and the months afterward due to his masonic membership, a proposition put forth by William Denslow in 1957 in his book, 10,000 Famous Freemasons, a claim which can be regarded as largely speculative and without supporting evidence. Although suggestions as to his membership-by-association have been noted by many historians and biographers, Santa Anna’s masonry was not definitively confirmed until 2008, when his 1825 Scottish Rite patent was discovered in a closet in the Chancellor Livingston Masonic Library and Museum in New York City. To date, a detailed treatment of the patent and Santa Anna’s masonic history has not been published in English.

As an introduction to this topic, a review will be given of historical research done before 2008 concerning Santa Anna’s masonic membership. The details of the patent and a translation will then be presented, along with considerations as to the regularity of the masonic body which issued it. Secondly, a review of Santa Anna’s history and the status of masonry in Mexico during the time period will be discussed, and suggestions will be made as to how Santa Anna came to be made a mason in 1825. Thirdly, data will be presented concerning the patent’s authenticity, and two discrepancies in the patent will be noted which suggest that Santa Anna was a mason for political purposes and in name only, and that he utilized his masonic membership only to further his career. In conclusion, the patent’s historical impact will be considered, along with suggestions for further study.

As an introduction to the study of this unique primary source document is worthwhile to review the statements of historians prior to this time, who wrote without the conclusive information contained in the patent. These historians can be roughly divided into two groups, those writing before 1990, and modern scholars writing after 1990 to present. In the first group we find the previously mentioned Denslow, who notes that Santa Anna gave the Masonic sign of distress at San Jacinto to several soldiers, including Sam Houston, and that he owed his life during captivity to the masons assigned to guard him, and later, as a sign of appreciation, presented a masonic apron to John Stiles, one of his guards. Denslow notes that he was an escocés, or Scottish Rite mason, who later became a yorkino, or York Rite Mason. Charles Stuart is another oft-cited writer, who reported in his book Masonic Soldiers of Fortune (1928) that Santa Anna was a “renegade mason” due to his reconciliation with the clergy and the abolishment of the York Rite College in Oaxaca in 1833 (ref). Dr. James Carter, in his seminal work Masonry in Texas (1958), quotes a first-hand account stating that Santa Anna “filled the air” with masonic signs after his capture. Carter also recognizes Santa Anna’s masonic membership through a reference to a classic work written in Mexico in 1884, Historia de la Masonería en México desde 1806 hasta 1884 by José María Mateos, who states flatly, “Santa Anna era masón escocés” (“Santa Anna was a
Scottish Rite mason.”) (Mateos 62). Besides that of Mateos, two other volumes written in Spanish serve as obligatory starting points for any Mexican masonic research projects: *Una contribución a la historia masónica de México* (1899) by Richard Chism; and the two-volume set, *Apuntes para la historia de la masonería en México* (1950) by Luis J. Zalce y Rodríguez (Reyes Heredia 63), both of whom affirm Santa Anna’s masonic membership. (Chism 36, Zalce ?). In addition to these masonic historians, others have also made passing references to Santa Anna’s escocés membership, including Lucás Alamán in *Historia de México, Vol V* (1885); and Wilfred Henry Callcott, in *Santa Anna: The Story of an Enigma that one was Mexico* (1936). (For a complete dealing see Várgas Márquez, 49-57).

What has been generally lacking from these earlier historians is a more detailed treatment of Santa Anna’s masonic activity, the particulars of which are beginning to come to light through the work of the second group, a new generation of twenty-first century researchers, who have begun sketching the activity of masons in Mexico during the time period through the research of newspapers, fliers, letters, and previously unavailable archives. Historian Will Fowler, in his 2007 biography, *Santa Anna of Mexico*, portrays an up-and-coming Santa Anna identified politically as a yorkino at the beginning of his political career, despite being enmeshed in political maneuverings between centralists and federalists in the mid-1820s and having close allies in the Veracruz region who were escoceses. Mexican researcher María Vázquez Semadeni also affirms Santa Anna’s masonic associations through (give details).

With this background, let us now turn to the newly discovered Scottish Rite patent, presently housed at the Livingston Masonic Library and Museum in New York City, under the care of curator Catherine Walter. The artifact, dated December 12, 1825, was discovered in 2008 by Walter as she was going through a box of items donated in 1960 by the Master of Americus Lodge #535, then located in Whitestone (Queens), New York. In the time period, a patent of this type would have been carried with the bearer folded in a leather pouch and presented to verify his Scottish Rite membership, certified by his ne varietur (signature) in the left margin. The patent was found folded, and although damaged and missing the portion where Santa Anna’s ne varietur would have been, the patent clearly states that Antonio López de Santa Anna was certified and recognized as a 32nd degree Master of the Royal Secret (See Appendix 1). The certificate itself is paper, attached to a vellum backing, with handwritten text in Spanish and Latin, two woven ribbons, two stamped seals and a red wax seal. In the upper left corner appears the iconic double-headed eagle, with the Latin phrase “Universi terrarium Orbis.” In the upper center an angel flies upward with the words “Evolat Ad Immortalitatem”. On the right side of the document are images which reference Scottish Rite degrees, the Ladder of Kadosh, and a representation of a Knight Templar, which is meant to be Jaques de Molay. Above the knight and next to the ladder is an urn with a sword through it, on top of a three-headed serpent with crowns on each of the heads. The serpent is a unique feature of the patent and will be discussed below.

The principal text of the document is written abbreviated script, and some of the text is unreadable or missing. A substantial portion of it remains, however, and a complete
transcription is provided in Appendix 2, along with an English translation. A summary of the text follows:

- Issued by the Grand Territorial Consistory of Yucatán (Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry), established to the Orient of the Paraclete, which is properly and legitimately constituted in the Sovereign Grand Consistory of the 32nd Degree,

- Confirms that “we have duly examined our Illustrious Brother António López de Santa Anna, born in Jalapa, State of Veracruz, of 29 years of age… various degrees that he has legitimately received, and to his special petition.”

- Certifies, recognizes and proclaims Santa Anna to be “very expert”, a Past Master of Symbolic Lodges, and lists his Scottish Rite degrees, beginning with “Secret Master” and ending with “Sublime and Illustrious Prince of the Royal Secret,” and member of the Sovereign Grand Territorial Consistory of Yucatán.

- Authorizes Santa Anna to inspect all Chapter College Lodges of the Royal and Military order, according to the grand constitution and the regulations of the Consistory.

- Orders all Knight Prince Brothers and Sublime Masons to admit and receive him as a 32nd degree mason.

- Signed and sealed, given in the Consistorial Chamber near the Orient of Arcadia, “under the celestial vault, 12 December, 1825

What is definitively known is that the certificate was issued to Antonio López de Santa Anna on December 12, 1825, and clearly recognizes him as having received the degrees entitling him to represent himself as a 32nd Degree Master of the Royal Secret of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

In his thesis, Martinez Moreno provides detailed data on the regularity of Mexican lodges and establishes that masonry first became established on the coast through Spanish military lodges, later becoming annexed by the Grand Lodge of Louisiana under the York Rite. On July 12, 1817, Reunión de la Virtud No. 9 in Campeche was annexed, followed by Aurera de **** No. 18 in Yucatán, Cuba (Mérida) on July 12, 1820. As will be discussed below, the Yucatán, and especially Mérida, maintained a strong Spanish sentiment after independence due to their close relationship with Cuba. In 1821 the Gran Oriente Territorial Español-Americano (Spanish-American Grand Territorial Orient) was organized under the Scottish Rite in Cuba, followed by the Consistory of the Sublime Princes of the Royal Secret 32° in Veracruz, the latter of which reclaimed their authority over the symbolic degrees, and over the lodge Arquitectura Moral in Mexico City. A document dated 1823 suggests that the Grand Consistory of the Yucatán separated itself from Havana and united with the Grand Consistory of Veracruz, which would have still had jurisdiction over it in 1825 at the time of the issue of the Santa Anna’s patent. This Scottish Rite Consistory most likely corresponded with Aurera (Aurora) No. 18 in Mérida.
In 1825 a faction of escoceses in Mexico City, through U.S. Plenipotentiary Joel Poinsett, received charters for York Rite lodges from the Grand Lodge of New York, and formed the La Gran Logia Nacional Mexicana del Rito York (National Mexican Grand Lodge of the York Rite), with Vicente Guerrero, José María Alpuche Infante, and Lorenzo de Zavala among its first grand officers. In the following years many Scottish Rite lodges would convert to become York Rite lodges, and these two groups would come to define political parties and shape the debate in the coming years, with the yorkino faction representing a more inclusive and progressive group with strong federalist tendencies and an anti-Spanish agenda; and the escoceses maintaining a more aristocratic group, in favor of more gradual reform and sustaining loyalties to aristocrats and politicians of Spanish heritage who remained in Mexico after independence. As we shall see, in 1825 Santa Anna would have been caught in the middle of the escocés/yorkino debate.

Compelling evidence suggests that Santa Anna’s Scottish Rite patent is authentic and not a forgery, but before considering these points it is worthwhile to place the artifact within its proper context by reviewing Mexican history during the early 1820s, and situating Santa Anna within this milieu. After the overthrow of Emperor Augustín I in 1823, Santa Anna was appointed military commander of far-away Yucatán (which at that time included with it the present-day states of Campeche and Quintana Roo), a remote province that had independence tendencies of its own. His first assignment was to mediate a dispute between the region’s two largest cities, Mérida, the capital on the north shore and heavily dependent on maritime trade with Spanish Cuba, and the centralist-leaning Campeche, located a little further south and closer to Mexico City. The region was on the verge of civil war, and in February of 1824 the political class in Campeche sent 2000 troops to Mérida to force the state legislature to obey the mandate from the central government to cut off all trade with the Spanish. Santa Anna arrived, portraying himself to the yucatecos as “the friend of Liberty,” expounding upon the virtues of a political system that was federal, republican and liberal; and urging them to settle their differences peacefully. Civil war was averted, but Yucatán still remained divided, as Campeche was commercially dependent on Mexico and trade with Veracruz and New Orleans, while Mérida remained economically loyal to Spanish Havana. Santa Anna drafted a resolution to Congress recommending that the implementation of the Spanish trade ban be postponed for Mérida, an action which won him local political clout but did not solve the problem. Always the soldier, he came up with a solution that could please both the federal government and those of the people of Yucatán: liberate Cuba from the Spanish. In the summer and fall of 1824 he prepared troops for the expedition and urged Congress for its adoption, which was backed by President Guadalupe Victoria but in the end was rejected. (Fowler 79-85)

It is in this scenario that Santa Anna is first associated with masons and masonic organizations. Back in his hometown of Xalapa, in Veracruz province, a secret masonic society known as the Gran Legión del Águila Negra (Grand Legion of the Black Eagle) had been established with the express purpose of promoting and bringing about Cuban independence. Given that Guadalupe Victoria was the founder and varón fuerte (“strong male”) of the organization, and that Victoria had backed Santa Anna’s plan despite strong opposition from the capital, Santa Anna’s ties with Guadalupe and the Veracruz region suggests that there may have also been some masonic association. The Gran Legión, though it remained an independent organization and a
clandestine masonic lodge, bore similarities with the York Rite in its practices and rituals (VS 101-105, Fowler 84, VS article 153 and passim). Considering our knowledge of Santa Anna, it would appear that his philosophy matched well with the stance of the Gran Legión del Águila Negra, an organization with the specific purpose of combating the Spanish and not embroiled in the finger-pointing between yorkinos and escoceses. (VS article 153).

Frustrated and unable to complete his mission in the Yucatán, Santa Anna wrote four lengthy letters requesting permission to leave between July 1824 and February 1825. He was recalled in April of 1825 and appointed director of engineers in the capital, a post he declined. He returned home to the economically strategic region of Veracruz, which served as the port of call for commerce going to and from Mexico City, where he declared that he was retiring from politics, got married, and bought his country estate of Manga de Clavo. From 1825 to 1827 he channeled his energy into looking after his young wife, running his hacienda, purchasing and acquiring most of the land between Xalapa and Veracruz, and solidifying his power as the local caudillo from his strategically placed hacienda on the road to Mexico City. (Fowler 86-90) Santa Anna was a social animal who very much enjoyed the cockfight, so it is natural to believe that during this leisurely time period that he might have become associated with a group of masons, but unlike many of his compatriots, his name is not found in the leadership or on the roles of any masonic group, nor have any historians strongly linked him to any group by association, neither yorkino, escocés, nor novenario, another quasi-masonic political group formed in 1827. By all indications, Santa Anna was a mason of convenience and for political purposes only.

Although removed from the volatile Yucatán Santa Anna found himself divided between his nationalistic loyalties in Mexico City and his economic interests in Veracruz. After the ratification of the new constitution in 1824 and the formal establishment of the York Rite in 1825, political loyalties in Mexico would divide along escocés / yorkino lines, which put Santa Anna in the middle between his yorkino allies in the capital, and his escocés associates and family in Veracruz. Santa Anna’s legal representative in Mexico City, Jose María Tornel y Mendívil, President Guadalupe Victoria, and veracruzano minister of finance José Ignacio Esteva all became yorkinos, along with Vicente Guerrero. The region of Veracruz maintained a strong escocés base, and Santa Anna’s brother, Manuel López de Santa Anna, was one of the editors of the escocés newspaper El Veracruzano Libre (“The Free Veracruzan”). Fowler, writing without the benefit of the recently discovered Scottish Rite patent, makes a strong case for Santa Anna being a yorkino. In 1825 he bought the Veracruzan yorkino newspaper El Mercurio, and identified strongly with the federalist yorkino associates in the capital. Fowler states:

The unsubstantiated accusation that Santa Anna was an escocés in 1827 is consequently difficult to believe. At a national level, he was a yorkino both in ideological terms and in terms of his personal allegiances. It was at a regional level that the profession of his political faith became difficult to express. (Fowler 98)

[Need to examine Martinez Moreno’s 2009 REHMLAC article]
In 1825 many escoceses were converting to become yorkinos, so why did Santa Anna become an escocés in December of 1825? Santa Anna’s strong alliances with Guadalupe Victoria are well-known, as well as his desire to lead an expedition to Cuba. His close proximity to the meetings of the Legión del Águila Negra in Xalapa also suggests a desire to participate in that group, and, as it was a quasi-masonic organization, his “ticket” to gain admission would have been provided by a Scottish Rite patent. Martínez Moreno supports this theory by noting that this was common among escoceses of the era:

[E]l documento … es consistente con la tesis que sostengo sobre las diferentes posturas políticas que asumieron los escoceses en la primera mitad del siglo XIX, que no se derivan necesariamente de la filiación al rito masónico, sino de las redes de intereses, la coyuntura y el cálculo político. (228)

The document is consistent with the thesis that I maintain over the different political postures that the escoceses assumed in the first half of the nineteenth century, which were not necessarily derived from affiliation to the masonic rite, but to the networks of interest, the situation, and political calculation.

Let us now consider the question of the patent’s authenticity. The first and most obvious question that must be answered is, how did it get to New York? Santa Anna had a very long career and was head of the Mexican state nine times, stepping down for the last time in June of 1855, at the age of 61. Vilified by his country, he went into exile with his family to Colombia, and later to St Thomas in the Caribbean, where in 1861 he would go on record supporting the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Mexico under Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian. In February 1864, hoping to play a part in the unfolding events which would place Maximilian on the throne of Mexico, he returned briefly to Veracruz, but before disembarking his transport ship in Veracruz harbor he was asked to sign a document in French in which he pledged his support for the French monarchy and promised “to abstain from all political demonstration and to do nothing, be it written or verbal, that would make my return to my country be other than a simple citizen.” (Fowler 324) The latter pledge earned him further banishment a few weeks later by the French authorities in power when he was accused of violating it (Fowler 324). He returned to St. Thomas, where he was paid a courtesy visit in January 1866 by US Secretary of State William Seward, after which he convinced himself that the U.S. was inviting him to intervene in overthrowing Maximilian’s reign and heroically return as the Restorer of the Republic. In May 1866, at age 72, persuaded by false documents and proposals from several con men, he invested most of his savings and property in the sale of war bonds (See Appendix 3) and relocated to Elizabethport, New Jersey, where he believed that US aid for his venture would be forthcoming. Back in Mexico, support for deposed president Benito Juárez was gaining momentum, and Juárez’ representatives in the US set about to discredit Santa Anna. News of Santa Anna’s presence in New York was not well-received by The Juarista Club in New York, who published a statement in May of 1866 declaring Santa Anna an “odious tyrant”, a traitor, and one who has always betrayed his country (326-7). It is not known whether the Juarista Club in New York City had any masonic affiliations, but regardless of Santa Anna’s connection with this club, it is surmised that during his stay in New Jersey, and later Staten Island, that Santa Anna proffered his Scottish Rite patent to bolster his credibility, perhaps to connect with masons there, and left it
in the care of a lodge. Notes from Catherine Walter at the Livingston Museum indicate that the
document was donated to the museum’s collection in the 1960 by Gustavo Ferrer, then
Worshipful Master of Americus Lodge No. 535 in Whitestone (Queens), New York. To date this
lodge’s records have not been examined to ascertain if Santa Anna had any association with this
lodge or its members.

The question also arises as to whether the document could have been forged in its time period.
Carlos Martínez Moreno points out a critical detail which supports the patent’s authenticity the
triple-headed serpent with royal hats on each head, one of which is a papal tiara.

Si se tratara de un documento falsificado es difícil comprender la razón por la que
no hay noticia de que haya sido difundido un documento masónico del año 1825
de Antonio López de Santa Anna …; porque, reitero, el diploma cuenta con una
imagen de una víbora tricéfala con una tiara papal en una de sus cabezas, y en el
contexto del imaginario de la época, habría sido un recurso político invaluable
para usarlo en su contra.

De haberse difundido en el siglo XIX mexicano, tan caracterizado por la
superstición y el fanatismo religioso, se habría acompañado de un escándalo y
habría dado elementos a los que calificaban a los grupos masónicos de satánicos.

…

Reitero que el símbolo de la víbora tricéfala con una tiara en una de sus testas,
como el del diploma de Santa Anna, habría tenido un impacto muy fuerte en el
imaginario de la época de haberse difundido para usarlo en su contra. (285-287)

The inclusion of this heretical detail in 1825 supports the claim that the document is genuine.

Despite being certain of the patent’s authenticity, two historical discrepancies are noted in the
patent. The first, pointed out by Martínez Moreno, is the age of Santa Anna, which is incorrectly
specified on the document, stating that he was 29 years old, when in fact he was 31 at the time.
This can be put down to clerical error, but another more circumstantial discrepancy arises
through a parallel study of Santa Anna’s biography, for which Fowler provides ample evidence:
Santa Anna did not live in the Yucatán at the time of the issuance of the certificate. Neither is
there biographical evidence to suggest that he traveled there during the time period, given his
strong propensity to come home only months earlier, and the trip between Veracruz and Mérida
necessitating travel by ship. He was also preoccupied with local responsibilities and the care of
his hacienda. Also noteworthy is that the patent states that it was awarded under a “special
petition” (“pedimiento especial”) and not in normal circumstances. It is therefore proposed that
Santa Anna received his Scottish Rite Masonic degrees en absentia. Since he was not present, it is
little wonder that his age was incorrectly recorded. As previously mentioned, Santa Anna may
have needed to provide proof of his Masonic membership in order to gain entry into the Gran
Legión del Águila Negra, and it is hypothesized that he called upon some old friends in Yucatán
to provide this evidence in the form of a Scottish Rite patent.
In conclusion, let us consider what has been learned and what questions merit further study. At the very least, we have learned that Santa Anna’s Scottish Rite patent is a unique surviving artifact from the era, and that the detail of the three-headed serpent has not been observed on any other similar patents. (Note: email conversation with Brent Morris.) It remains to be seen whether the investigations in masonic archives in Mexico will yield similar documents, but it at least confirms the regularity of a Scottish Rite lodge in Mérida in 1825.

From a Texan standpoint, it can now be definitely confirmed that the generals of both armies at the Battle of San Jacinto were masons; whether or not they recognized and received each other as such is a subject for another paper. This possibility actually begs a bigger question: given that there were masons on both sides in the Texas War for Independence, did they share masonic fellowship in the years leading up to 1836, during the empresario period in Texas? Many signs point to “yes,” but the looming figure of Santa Anna has clouded the investigation, as Mexican masons who were allies to the Texan cause tend to be dismissed along with Santa Anna. Now that we have a better picture of Santa Anna’s masonic legacy, the time is ripe for further investigation into this fertile field of history.

Appendix 1

Item C45-102, 1825 Scottish Rite Certificate of Antonio López de Santa Anna
Appendix 2

Transcription and Translation of the 1825 Santa Anna Patent

Transcription of the Santa Anna Patent, with line numbers. Sources:

- Primary source information from notes compiled by Catherine Walter, Curator of Chancellor Robert Livingston Masonic Library and Museum, New York, New York.
- Supplementary information by Carlos Martínez Moreno, Master’s Thesis, 2011.
- English translation by Casey D. Stanislaw.

Notation:

- [Square brackets] denote an abbreviation in the document which has been expanded. For example: “Cab : “ = “Cab[alleros].
1. Universi terrarum Orbis Evolat ad Immortalitatem Architectoris Gloria ab Ingentis

2. Lux ex tenebris


5. … tados <…> de todos gg[rados] antiguos y modernos sobre <los> dos Emisferios. A todos los q[u]e las presentes vieren.

6. <S>A L U D ESTABILIDAD PODER


9. <….> diferentes gr[ado]s que legítimamente ha recibido, y a su pedimento especial


14. <…> Heredon, Gr[an] Pontif[ice], M[aestro] ad vitam, Patriarca Noachicta o C<a>b[allero] Prusiano, Principe del Libano, Gefe del Tabern[áculo], Cab[allero] de la


19. y a los Reglamentos partic[ular]es de este Consist[orio]


21. a n[ues]tro Yl[ustre] H[ermano] Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna en sus diferen<tes> cola es <...>es lita <...> <g>[rado] 32 de la Mas[onería], de tratarlo y favorecerlo en todos sus em-

22. peños, prometiendo tener la <...>a e. . . . . rio. . con los que se <...> enten con <ti>culos tan autenticos como este.


26. (Firmes ilegibles)
English Translation

Line 1: To the whole world Flying to immortality All Glory to the Architect

Line 2: Light from Darkness

Line 3: Grand Territorial Consistory of the Yucatán (Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry), established to the Orient of the Paraclete.

Line 4: To the Sovereign and Valiant Princes of the Royal Secret, Knights of Kadosh, Illustrious Princes and Grand Ineffable Knights, Sublime and Perfect

Line 5: (Accepted) … of all ancient and modern degrees over two Hemispheres. To all who are present may see:

Line 6: HEALTH – STABILITY – POWER

Line 7-8: … The below signed Illustrious Sovereign and Valliant Princes properly and legitimately constituted in the Sovereign Grand Consistory of the 32nd Degree, that we have duly examined our Illustrious Brother António López de Santa Anna, born in Jalapa, State of Veracruz, of 29 years of age.

Line 9: … various degrees that he has legitimately received, and to his special petition

Line 10-12: We certify, recognize and proclaim our Illustrious Brother López de Santa Anna Antonio an Extreme Expert and Past Master of symbolic Lodges, Secret Master, Perfect Master, Intimate Secretary, Provost and Judge, Intendant of Buildings, Elected Master, of the 15, Sovereign Knight Elected, Grand Master Architect, Royal Arch, Grand Elected Perfect and Sublime Mason.

Line 13: We certify furthermore, that he is Knight of the East, or of the Sword, Pontiff of Jerusalem, Knight of the East and West, Knight of the Eagle, and Sovereign Prince of Rose Cross, <…>

Line 14-16: <…> Heredom, Grand Pontificate, Master ad vitam (for life), Noachite Patriarch or Prussian Knight, Prince of Libanus, Chief of the Tabernacle, Knight of the Bronze Serpent, Prince of Mercy Grand Commander of the Temple, Grand Scot (Scottish Knight) of St. Andrews Sovereign Knight or Accepted Prince, Knight of Kadosh Brother of the Black and White Eagle, Sovereign Grand Inquisitor, Knight Commander and Sublime and Illustrious Prince of the Royal Secret, member of the Sovereign Grand Territorial Consistory of the Yucatan.

Line 17-19: We authorize and give power to our said Brother Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana (sic.) to inspect all of the Chapter (Capitular?) College Lodges of the Royal and Military order of ancient and modern Freemasonry over the Hemispheres conforming to our grand Constitution and to the particular regulations of this Consistory.
Consequently it is ordered to all and each one of the Knight Prince Brothers and Sublime Masons to admit and recognize our Brother Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna in his various (??) 32\textsuperscript{nd} degree of Masonry, to treat and favor him in all of his efforts, promising to have … been .. with those that (have been invested) with such authentic titles such as this.

With which … we have signed below Sovereign <…> of the Sovereign Grand Consistory of the 32\textsuperscript{nd} Degree, first on this Continent,

Having made for the … the Grand Seal … to our ne varietur (signature) Given in our Consistorial Chamber near the Orient of Arcadia (?), under the celestial vault, 12 December, 1825.

(Signatures illegible.)
Appendix 3.

Detailed Images of Angel
Appendix 4

Detail of Knight of Kadosh
Appendix 5

Detail of Urn, Ladder of Kadosh, and Three-Headed Serpent

Appendix 6

Magnified Detail of Section Containing Biographical Information
Bibliography

Primary Source Document


Secondary Sources


Notes

Before continuing let us first review the makeup of masonry in Mexico during the time period. Scottish Rite masonry comes first, with York Rite to follow. Use Fowler quote. See 2009 REHMLAC article by Martinez Moreno

Returning to 1825, we find a much younger Santa Anna aspiring for power and walking the fence between his *yorkino* contacts in the capital and the local Veracruzan *escoceses*. Whether born out of political necessity or desire for greater personal affiliation, Santa Anna obtained his Scottish Rite degrees from the Grand Consistory of Yucatán on December 12, 1825, even though he is at the time residing in the state of Veracruz. Further analysis of the patent by Mexican scholar Carlos Martínez Moreno supports the theory that the move was purely political:

[E]l documento … es consistente con la tesis que sostengo sobre las diferentes posturas políticas que asumieron los escoceses en la primera mitad del siglo XIX, que no se derivan necesariamente de la filiación al rito masónico, sino de las redes de intereses, la coyuntura y el cálculo político.

El contenido del documento es consistente también con lo que ya he dejado dicho acerca de la acusación de Chavero contra el escocés Francisco Ibar, miembro de la logia Arquitectura Moral y también Sublime Príncipe del Real Secreto grado 32° y miembro del Consistorio Territorial Yucateco en el año de 1826, y con la afirmación de Mier, respecto de que los escoceses les ayudaron a derrocar a Iturbide. (MM 288)

[The document is consistent with the thesis that I maintain over the different political postures that the *escoceses* assumed in the first half of the nineteenth century, which were not necessarily derived from affiliation to a masonic rite, but to the networks of interest, the situation, and political calculations.]
The content of the document is consistent also with that which I have already stated over the accusation of Chavero against the escocés Francisco Ibar, member of the lodge Arquitectura Moral and also Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret 32º, and member of the Territorial Consistory of the Yucatán in 1826, and with the affirmation of Mier, with respect to the fact that the escoceses helped to overthrow Iturbide.]

Two historical discrepancies are noted in the patent. The first, pointed out by Martínez Moreno, is the age of Santa Anna, which is incorrectly stated on the document, stating that he was 30 years old, when in fact he was only 29 at the time. This can be put down to clerical error, but another more circumstantial discrepancy arises through a parallel study of Santa Anna’s biography, for which Fowler provides ample evidence: Santa Anna did not live in the Yucatán at the time of the issuance of the certificate, nor is there biographical evidence to suggest that he traveled there during the time period, given his strong propensity to come home only months earlier, the trip necessitating travel by ship, and being as he was preoccupied with local responsibilities. Also noteworthy is that the patent states that it was awarded under a “special petition” (“pidimiento especial”) and not in normal circumstances. It is therefore proposed that Santa Anna received his Scottish Rite masonic degrees en absentia. Since he was not present, it is little wonder that his age was incorrectly recorded.

Part of the verification of the certificate was done by Mexican scholar Carlos Martínez Moreno, in his Master’s Thesis for the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in 2011, in which he states:

Cada vez que encontré menciones parecidas, puesto que mi propósito ha sido el histórico, me pregunté por qué no las describieron en lugar de diarias por sabidas, mofarse o ufanas de que las conocían.

También pude advertir que las descripciones rituales no siempre eran iguales, por lo que supuse que pudieron haber sido parte de diferentes tradiciones, así que decidí considerar su análisis con la idea de poder averiguar con qué tipo de masonería se vinculaban, con la intención de delinear hasta dónde podría saber en qué tipo de tradición masónica se iniciaron los masones de la Nueva España y de México desde finales del siglo XVIII y hasta finales del siglo XIX.

Para lograr tal propósito, me di cuenta que las descripciones rituales sólo podría ser consideradas como datos con sentido si consideraba el constructo contrafáctico que les subyacía a partir de sus propias fuentes, y que el punto de partida no sería otro que la consideración de las diferentes formas de masonería que debió haber en la época, de acuerdo con lo estipulado en sus propios manuales, rituales, liturgias y monitores. (49)
From this statement we ascertain that Martínez Moreno’s purpose is to establish the masonic regularity of the lodges in his investigation, and to dispel some of the mystery associated with order from the standpoint of researches who are not masons. His work is of interest to our thesis, as it seeks to link the regularity of the lodge which issues Santa Anna’s certificate and verify that he was indeed part not only of an organization, but of a regular lodge which practiced regular ritual.

The veracity of the document:

Supóngase, sin conceder, que sí es falsificado el documento. La intencionalidad de quien lo hubiera falsificado habría sido no sólo vincular a Santa Anna con la masonería sino con el Rito Escocés Antiguo y Aceptado, sólo unos meses después de haber sido constituida la Gran Logia Nacional Mexicana del Rito York con Vicente Guerrero, Alpuche, Zavala – acerca de los últimos nombrados Alamán decía que habían sido escoceses -- ; y de que el presidente de la República Guadalupe Victoria hubiera constituido la sociedad paramasónica del Águila Negra, con la pretensión de liberar a Cuba, acto de liberación para el que, según Carlos María de Bustamante, Victoria había pensado enviar una expedición que condujese precisamente Santa Anna para sublevar la isla, por solicitud del betlemita cubano Fray Simón Chávez. (283)

Las fuentes primarias documentales permiten evidenciar que difícilmente puto haber sido falsificado el documento en su época, porque las pruebas permiten asegurar que casi nada era conocido ni de los tratamientos, tecnicismos léxicos, ni de la estructura interna del Rito Escocés Antiguo y Aceptado en México, ni de sus contenidos rituales simbólicos en la primera mitad del siglo XIX, y no digamos por los grupos antimasónicos, sino por los miembros del Rito York, que abiertamente pugnaban políticamente contra los escoceses.

Otro aspecto a considerar. Si el documento se hubiera falsificado en la época, sería obvio pensar que se habría falseado para usarlo y para difundirlo, si no qué caso tendría haberlo hecho.

Si se tratara de un documento falsificado es difícil comprender la razón por la que no hay noticia de que haya sido difundido un documento masónico del año 1825 de Antonio López de Santa Anna, varias veces presidente de la República y autoproclamado alteza serenísima muchos años después; porque, reitero, el diploma cuenta con una imagen de una víbora tricéfala con una tiara papal en una de sus cabezas, y en el contexto del imaginario de la época, habría sido un recurso político invaluable para usarlo en su contra.

De haberse difundido en el siglo XIX mexicano, tan caracterizado por la superstición y el fanatismo religioso, se habría acompañado de un escándalo y...
In 1824 Santa Anna was assigned the governorship of Yucatán by Congress, and he arrived there in late May. One of his early tasks was to mediate the conflict between the regions two cities, Campeche and Mérida, The political class in Campeche were insisting that the state government in Mérida comply with the national edit to cut off all trade with Spanish-dominated Cuba, but the political and commercial class in Mérida were unwilling to comply.

Between July 1824 and February 1825 he wrote four lengthy letters requesting permission to leave. He was finally recalled in April 1825 and appointed director of engineers in the capital, a post he declined. Afterwards he returned home to Veracruz in April of 1825, where he chose to give politics a rest and channel his energies into running his hacienda and looking after his young wife. (Fowler 77-86)

The patent is dated Dec 1825,

Although the discovery of the patent conclusively confirms SAs masonic membership, it is important to note that many historians and biographers had concluded that he was a mason long before this. Lucas Alamán, writing in 1986, for example, claims that SA became an escocés while in the Yucatan, while others claimed his membership in the escoceses as early as 1822. What is known is that his political dealings he was caught between the two. In 1825, after returning from the Yucatan, Santa Anna bought his hacienda at Manga de Clavo, near his home town of Xalapa, where he subsequently retired, but this did not mean that he retired from politics. His allies in the capital, such as Tornel, had all converted to the York Rite, while his collaborators in Veracruz were all escoceses. In 1825 Santa Anna bought a yorkino newspaper, El mercurio, which paralleled Tornel's activities in the capital and provoked resentment among the Spanish and escocés population of Veracruz, among those his brother, Manuel López de Santa Anna, who was one of the editors of the escocés newspaper El Veracruzano. Manuel would later be linked to an escocés conspiracy in 1827-28 to bring down President Victoria, but Santa Anna would maintain his federalist stance, demonstrated through his alliances in the capital. (elaborate) Biographer Will Fowler, writing in 2006 without the benefit of the recently-discovered Scottish Rite patent, notes, “The unsubstantiated accusation that Santa Anna was an escocés in 1827 is consequently difficult to believe. At a national level, he was a yorkino both in ideological terms and in terms of his personal allegiances. It was at a regional level that the profession of his political faiths became difficult to express.” (Fowler 98)

By 1827 Santa Anna had become disdainful of all masonic lodges and was neither yorkino nor escocés by then, hating all of the divisive factions and sects. Masonic historian Mateos notes that by his ascent to the presidency in 1834, he had turned from his federalist philosophies to a centralist one.
El enemigo más conspicuo del progreso durante los años de 1830 a 1845, fue el notorio Santa Anna, que se proclamaba masón del Rito Escocés, aunque en realidad no fue más que ‘un escocés’ del partido político de aquel nombre, que desde muchos años había sido nada más que una facción clerical. (Vargas Márquez, 49)

[The most conspicuous enemy of progress during the years from 1830 to 1845 was the notorious Santa Anna, who proclaimed himself to be a mason of the Scottish Rite, although in reality was no more than an “escocés” of the political party of the same name, that for many years had been nothing more than a political faction.]

There is no reason to believe that Santa Anna’s masonic membership was more than political. While there is yet to be any record discovered of him actually attending a lodge, this is not conclusive, since many documents from the period have been lost. Unlike his compatriots, he was never recorded as having served as an officer of a lodge or a grand lodge, and it is doubtful that he was even present at the awarding of his own degrees. Fowler documents his activity during the time period of late 1825 and 1826, when he dedicated his time and energies to running his hacienda and business activities in the Veracruz region. Although he ventured outside of Manga de Clavo on occasion, it was more likely to participate in cockfighting and gambling than to attend a masonic meeting.

Santa Anna’s patent clearly records a date of <<DEC XX, 1825>>, and by all examinations the document appears to be authentic. Santa Anna, however, had received permission to be relieved of his duties in the Yucatán in April.

Let us now contrast SA’s masonic activity with other Mexicans who had a positive impact on the territory of Texas during the time period. (Ramos Arizpe, de Zavala, Viezcas)

• Detail the certificate, discuss Martinez Moreno
• Discuss early SR lodges, activity noted by Fowler
• Recap politics, the Cortes de Cádiz, fall of Iturbide, establishment of 1824 constitution

Mateos

Se ha dicho que el general Santa Anna aspiraba al poder absoluto e esto lo hacía apoyado en el clero que por su constitución misma, sus principios y educación se halaba siempre en abierta y diametral oposición con los principios constitutivos y resultados sociales que se buscaban y procuran por el sistema representativo y educación. La riqueza del clero mexicano y su organización lo constitúan en un poder público, cabal, completo, distinto de la sociedad en que se hallaba implantando é independiente de ella por consecuencia forzosa. (61)
La milicia mexicana privilegiada por su misma organización y por los desórdenes originados de su indisciplina, que en ninguna suposición era dado al gobierno reprimir, es incombiable no solo con la libertad pública, sino con el órden social en cualquiera forma de gobierno; pero atacado por las ideas manifestadas contra los fueros, se puso, contando con el clero, de parte SA para destruir lo hecho y aún retrogradar más.

El poder absoluto era todo el anhelo del General SA y los hombres de los fueros, esa reacción civil, produjo el plan de Cuernavaca en 23 de Mayo de 1834 que se reducía a proclamar la religión, los fueros, y el Gen SA detestando las reformas e impiedad, la federación y a Farías, se prestó a todo. SA era masón escocés.

La reacción servil, el clero y la Milicia llamados auxiliares por los escoceses, se convirtieron en señores excluyendo a los que los habían llamado. Las cláusulas del contrato entre SA, el sacerdocio y la milicia, empezaron desde luego a ejecutarse: se declaró una persecución de tal naturaleza, que por ella muchos de los masones fueron reducidos a prisión, otros desterrados, y la mayor parte separados de los puestos públicos y empleos en que hacía muchos años servían; resultando de todo ello, como era natural y consiguiente, una paralización aunque no absoluta en los trabajos masónicos, y un desaliento que duró algún tiempo, y esto hizo que el Sup:. Gr:. Or:. En aquella época, no hubiera podido, como se tenía acordado, entrar en relaciones con los otros Orientes extranjeros.

(Goes on to relate how his mission was to destroy the federal system, abolish the civil militia, (62-63)
Presentation Summary

I. Intro: Who says? (Pre-certificate comments)
   a. SA was a SR Mason
      i. Denslow
      ii. Carter
      iii. Mateos
   b. SA identified himself as such at San Jacinto
   c. Fowler says he was a Yorkino

II. What does it say?
   a. Transcription and translation of the degrees
   b. Place, date, and regularity of the Consistory
   c. Illustrations and details
      i. Jaques de Molay
      ii. Urn with triple-headed serpent
      iii. “petición especial”

III. What is the context?
   a. Overview of Mexican history, 1812 – 1825
      i. Cortes de Cádiz
      ii. Iturbide and the Mexican Republic
      iii. Constitution of 1824
   b. Early Lodges in Mexico
      i. In 1810 in Mexico City, but first documented lodges are maritime, chartered by GL Louisiana
      ii. Gran Consistorio Español-Americano asserts control
   c. Santa Anna’s early military history, and the Yucatan (1824 - 25)
      i. Centralist vs. federalist battle lines
      ii. Cuba and the Spanish
   d. Santa Anna in Veracruz (1825 – 27)
      i. Political dealings: torn between yorkino and escocés
      ii. Probably was not present when his degrees were awarded
      iii.

IV. Is it a fake?
   a. Date and age discrepancies
   b. Why is it in New York?
   c. Martinez Moreno’s thoughts: papal tiara is controversial
   d.

V. Conclusion: So what?
   a. Santa Anna aside, it is a unique example from the time period
      i. Three-headed serpent unique
ii. Jaques de Molay

b. Emphasizes the need to bring in new and modern research.

c. There is a bigger story to be told: The Mexican/Texan Masonic Connection.

Lucas Alamán, Historia de Mexico, Desde los primeros movimientos que preparaon su Independencia en el año de 1808 hasta la época presente, México, 1942

p. 517, 525

MM 285-7
Si se tratara de un documento falsificado es difícil comprender la razón por la que no hay noticia de que haya sido difundido un documento masónico del año 1825 de Antonio López de Santa Anna, varias veces presidente de la República y autoproclamado alteza serenísima muchos años después; porque, reitero, el diploma cuenta con una imagen de una víbora tricéfala con una tiara papal en una de sus cabezas, y en el contexto del imaginario de la época, habría sido un recurso político invaluable para usarlo en su contra.

De haberse difundido en el siglo XIX mexicano, tan caracterizado por la superstición y el fanatismo religioso, se habría acompañado de un escándalo y habría dado elementos a los que calificaban a los grupos masónicos de satánicos.

Por ello es muy significativo que no nos haya llegado noticia de que quien lo poseyó lo hubiera difundido, parece entonces que fue reguardado en su memonto y no se hizo público, y es de presumirse que si alguien lo hubiera falsificado, no lo habría hecho para ocultarlo. ¿Será que el diploma es la “plancha” que yacía en la posesión del amigo de Alamán? ¿Por qué no se difundió?

…

Reitero que el símbolo de la víbora tricéfala con una tiara en una de sus testas, como el del diploma de Santa Anna, habría tenido un impacto muy fuerte en el imaginario de la época de haberse difundido para usarlo en su contra.