

The History and Adventures of the Renowned Don Quixote

Translated from the Spanish of
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ILLUSTRATIONS

For the first edition of Smollett's *Don Quixote* (1755), printed in two quarto volumes on royal paper, the distinguished artist Francis Hayman (1708–76) designed a frontispiece and twenty-seven further illustrations, for which he was paid the generous sum of five guineas per drawing.¹ Hayman's professional association with Smollett had begun with the second edition of *Roderick Random* (1748), to which he contributed frontispieces for both volumes; it would end with his illustrations for the quarto and octavo editions of Smollett's *Complete History of England* (1757–58, 1758–60). By 1748, when he contracted with the booksellers John Osborn and Andrew Millar to illustrate the translation of *Don Quixote*, Hayman was recognized as the preeminent English artist in this medium: he had already illustrated such works as Richardson's *Pamela* (1742), Sir Thomas Hanmer's edition of Shakespeare (1743–44), Edward Moore's *Fables for the Female Sex* (1744), a new edition of *The Spectator* (1747), and the Reverend Thomas Newton's edition of *Paradise Lost*, for which the designs were completed several years before publication in 1749. Hayman's designs for Smollett's *Don Quixote* rank among his finest achievements in book illustration—a medium, as Brian Allen remarks, that Hayman, together with his friend Gravelot, “elevated . . . from its crude beginnings in the early years of the century to a significant art-form.”²

Hayman's original drawings for *Don Quixote* passed from Andrew Millar, the publisher, to Millar's widow, Jane, later Lady Grant; they were acquired by the British Museum in 1859 (Prints and Drawings: 201.b.4).³ Five of these drawings, selected to illustrate the differences between Hayman's designs and the engraved prints, are reproduced in the appendix to the present volume. (One notable difference common to all the prints, with a single exception [appendix, plate 2], is that they are mirror images of the originals.) So well were these illustrations received that by the late 1760s Hayman returned to the subject in a grander medium, doing a set of six oil paintings of scenes from *Don Quixote*, several of them based on his designs for Smollett's translation.⁴

The success of the illustrations was also owing to the skills of the four artists employed to do the engraving—at a fee, again generous, of ten guineas a plate. Chief among these were Hayman's principal collaborators during the period, Charles Grignon (1716–1810) and Simon François Ravenet (1706–74), who cut twelve and eight of the plates, respectively. The German-born artist Johann Sebastian Müller (1715–after 1785), who had previously done work for Hayman, was responsible for only two of the plates, but the freedom he allowed himself in rendering one of the designs is remarkable (see appendix, plate 1). The remaining six plates were executed by Louis Gérard Scotin the younger (1690–after 1755), for whom this appears to represent his only collaboration with Hayman. It is, however, in the quarto edition of 1755 alone that readers of Smollett's *Don Quixote* would enjoy the work of these four artists; for the second and subsequent editions, in four volumes duodecimo, Hayman's designs were reengraved and reduced by G. V. Neist for the smaller format.

PREFACE

If books, as is sometimes said, have lives of their own, the life of Smollett's *Don Quixote* has until recently followed the classic curve of tragedy: the fall from fame to utter ignominy. From its first appearance in 1755—in a pair of splendid quarto volumes handsomely illustrated by Francis Hayman—Smollett's spirited translation remained for many years the most popular version of Cervantes' masterpiece in English. Soon after the turn of the nineteenth century, however, its reputation began to suffer from the charge that it was little more than a paraphrase of Charles Jarvis's literal translation (1742); by the 1860s it was, as a commodity in the trade, decidedly moribund. For nearly 130 years no publisher risked reprinting it. Latterly, forged letters were adduced to "prove" that Smollett never wrote it, while the author of an academic monograph denounced it as a "hoax."

The redemption of Smollett's translation from this ill-deserved neglect and disdain began in 1986, when, in his foreword to a new edition of the work, the distinguished Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes declared it to be what it surely is: "the authentic vernacular version" of *Don Quixote* in English—"not necessarily the most lexicographically accurate, but . . . the one where the feeling and the tone both come through."

Tobias Smollett's translation of Miguel de Cervantes [Fuentes concluded] is the homage of a novelist to a novelist. It is a novelist's translation. Its immediacy and force, its playfulness and its freshness, will show the modern English language reader why *Don Quixote* is the first modern novel, perhaps the most eternal novel ever written, and certainly the fountainhead of European and American (Anglo and Latin) fiction: here we have Gogol and Dostoevsky, Dickens and Nabokov, Borges and Bellow, Sterne and Diderot in their genetic nakedness.¹

While English readers are indebted to Fuentes for thus declaring the true worth of Smollett's *Don Quixote*, the form in which the translation appears in the edition he introduced is seriously flawed, not only by the editorial decision to disregard Smollett's revisions and to omit more than two thirds of Hayman's illustrations, but by numerous printers' errors (in following the first edition, for example, the compositors repeatedly mistook the long *s* for an *f*).

In contrast, the present edition is the first to offer the translation in a form that represents Smollett's own intentions as faithfully as possible, including all twenty-eight of Hayman's illustrations as engraved for the original edition. Also included of course are Smollett's explanatory notes and his prefatory "Life of Cervantes." The latter, though heavily indebted to Ozell's translation of Gregorio's pioneering Spanish biography, is animated throughout by Smollett's style and personality, a quality especially notable in those passages where one finds him identifying sympathetically with Cervantes' character and circumstances; it is also the first biography of Cervantes in any language to make use of the colorful account of his captivity in Algiers found in Joseph Morgan's history of that region.

The introduction is chiefly historical in nature, relating the circumstances of the

work's composition, publication, and reception. It also considers the vexed question of Smollett's originality and the extent of his dependence on previous translations and on other sources for his commentary on the text. The judgment that the translation, far from being the "hoax" of a plagiarist, is very much Smollett's own performance is based on evidence set forth in greater detail in my article, "The Authorship of Smollett's *Don Quixote*," *Studies in Bibliography* 50 (1997):295-321. The notes make no attempt to gloss Cervantes' novel or his allusions. They are meant instead to identify Smollett's sources in the "Life" and in his commentary, to provide cross-references to his other works, and to illustrate his originality or his dependence on previous translations. Since quotations from the Spanish preserve the forms found in the original seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources Smollett consulted, orthography and accenting will not always conform to modern expectations. A separate glossary defines unusual or obsolete locutions.

Note

1. Smollett, *Don Quixote*, introduction by Carlos Fuentes (London: Deutsch; and New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1986), xiii.