

José Manuel Lucía Megías. *Leer el Quijote en imágenes. Hacia una teoría de los modelos iconográficos*. Madrid: Calambur, 2006. ISBN 84-96049-99-X

As he himself notes, José Manuel Lucía Megías brings to the vast field of Cervantine iconography the conceptual tools and practices of the philologist. The sheer number of illustrated editions of *Don Quixote* from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries poses a daunting task for the researcher interested in tracing and examining the Cervantine images according to the patterns of philological textual criticism. Whereas preparing a stemmata of a text for which there might be 5 or 6 versions is manageable, sifting through the literally thousands of book illustrations and other visual images related to Cervantes' masterpiece involves a methodological challenge of another degree. In general, the results of his research are both highly informative and illuminating. In theoretical terms, the most innovative feature of his thought is the notion of the iconographic program (*programa* or *jerarquía iconográfica*), according to which certain episodes of the novel are depicted in similar manners across various editions and by various artists. He rightly proposes this concept as a way to categorize and analyze the strikingly similar cast of depicted episodes across editions. Moreover, he also rightly states that these programs were often the choice of the publisher rather than the artist. In short, the model of the iconographic program allows for the analysis of coexisting approaches to the illustration of *Don Quixote*. It is a useful tool for capturing both the similarities and the contrasts between different general interpretive stances toward the novel.

Lucía Megías associates these different iconographic programs with specific national traditions: the French, the Dutch, the English, and the Spanish. Whereas it is helpful to contextualize the first and/or the most dominant representatives of each program in their sociopolitical context (take, for example, Coypel as representative of the French and Vanderbank as representative of the English), it is also the case that visual images in general, and prints in particular, circulated much more freely across national and linguistic boundaries than would a text. Subsequently, Lucía Megías himself expands the notion of the Dutch iconographic program, for example, to include the illustrations of Spanish artists such as Diego de Obregón and José de Camarón. Given the general validity of the categories he has identified in their capacity to characterize specific iconographies, perhaps it would be more useful to label them according to their interpretive stance toward *Don Quixote* rather than their origins in a given nation.

Considerable advances in our knowledge of the material in question have occurred in the last decade. Drawings, prints, and other previously unknown archival material have surfaced in a variety of archives. Lucía Megías brings us up

to date on much of this new information within the text itself. Nonetheless, given the acceleration of research in the field of Cervantine iconography, the presentation of a complete bibliography would have been most useful. References to other studies in the text and its footnotes are often incomplete, and at times even allusive. Although the author avoids direct refutation or argumentation with other scholars in the field, I, for one, would have preferred that he directly address issues on which we disagree. As the field of Cervantine iconography matures, it becomes ever more incumbent on all of us that issues of controversy (such as the carnivalesque elements of certain images or lack thereof) be openly and honestly debated. Although reference to the Calvinistic beliefs of 17th-century Dutch printers is helpful contextual material, it still does not explain nor does it obviate the representation of bawdy corporeal humor in the most graphic of terms.

If there is a limitation to this study (in addition to its lack of bibliographical citation of other scholars), it is the tendency to view the illustrations in relation to each other rather than in relation to the editions in which they appeared. That is to say, by tracing iconographic programs that transcend the edition, the author bypasses the messy but interesting question as to how the illustrations contributed to the reader's experience and interpretation of the text. It also sidesteps the issue of how the visual iconography contributed to the historical reception of the novel and its eventual (and I still maintain surprising) canonization. By the same token, the strength of this study is its capacity to arrange and order the overwhelming mass of visual material produced in relation to and with Cervantes' text. José Manuel Lucía Megías has provided an invaluable tool for classifying and studying the development of 17th- and 18th-century Cervantine iconography through his innovative notion of iconographic programs. There is no doubt that it will be much easier for the next generation of scholars to wade into this compelling and fascinating wave of visual imagery.

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