



EXHIBITION
"THE LIFE OF CERVANTES" - "LA VIDA DE CERVANTES"
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Traveling Graphic Biography Exhibit at Wake County Libraries.

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CERVANTES

PANEL 1

THE FAMILY

Ladies and gentlemen, please pay close attention, because I, Gaspar Téllez, author and director of a company that has successfully represented, and without an offering of cucumbers or anything thrown, through the corrals of half of Spain, I am going to tell you the life by Don Miguel de Cervantes, Prince of Wit and teacher of the Spanish Language.

It is a great honor for me to introduce you to the life of such a distinguished character who, although he did not grow as he would have liked in the world of comedy, reached the Olympus of glory in Spanish literature.

But a man's life does not begin with his birth; his roots sink further back in time. This is not the place to relate a genealogy that, because unknown, would necessarily have to be fabled.

Grandpa Juan

We can go back without falling into narrative fiction to the years of Cervantes' grandfather. He was a nobleman, with a degree in law and a somewhat licentious life. He responded to the name Juan de Cervantes and was a lawyer, businessman and crown official, becoming a lieutenant of the magistrate.

Adulterous husband who abandoned his wife, Leonor de Torreblanca, for her maid and who found her dead in prison in Valladolid accused of pimping his own daughter. The lawyer was acquitted, but it is worth stopping at this episode because it marked a kind of fatal fate that was repeated among the women of the Cervantes family. María, daughter of Don Juan, was in an affair with a member of the house of the Dukes of Infantado. Castilian law establishes, for the protection of innocent maidens, that every man who has enjoyed feminine favors by promise of marriage must compensate the unwary woman if the profiteer breaks said promise. Those of the Infantado did not want to pay the abandoned and pregnant María and the rightly enraged father denounced them. It is a bad business to seek protection from justice for the misdeeds of the nobles, but it seems that Grandfather Juan was a determined man and, despite being forced to spend the night in the Valladolid cells, he got away with it. Those of Infantado paid but they did not forget.

IMAGES

Gaspar Téllez and the comedy corral.

Photo caption Portrait Juan de Cervantes: Grandfather Juan de Cervantes.

Photo Caption Vallisoletana Prison: It seems that the Cervantes lineage took a liking to the Vallisoletana Chancery prison. Grandfather Juan, her son and her grandson were her guests at different times.

PANEL 2

THE FIRST STEPS

Several children were born to Mr. Don Juan and his wife, Mrs. Leonor. Apart from the scorned and compensated María, the one we care about is Rodrigo, father of our hero.

Rodrigo, the surgeon

Rodrigo de Cervantes was a needy gentleman who, due to his lack of business acumen, earned his income by working as a bloodletting surgeon, if not as a beard shaver. He married Leonor de Cortinas, daughter of a wealthy peasant family from Arganda.

Leonor and Rodrigo begat a large offspring and, to maintain it, they began an itinerant life that took them through Madrid, Valladolid, Córdoba and Seville, always in search of a fortune that never wanted to smile at them.

Miguel de Cervantes was born around the year 1547 in the very noble and University City of Alcalá de Henares.

When he was four years old, his family was living in Valladolid. It was there, where Cervantes' father fell into the hands of a usurer and ended up in prison, the same one that Grandfather Juan visited, for non-payment of debts. There are those who suggest that the dark and vengeful influence of those of the Infantado was behind this and many other calamities that befell poor Rodrigo.

It was necessary to return to the roads in search of other cities friendlier to the Cervantes.

The formation

Miguel learned to read and write at a young age, and soon became fascinated by the artificial brilliance of show business. In Seville, he was a neighbor of Lope de Rueda, actor and playwright, whom some consider the creator of Spanish theater.

In 1566 the Cervantes family was back in Madrid.

Miguel continued his studies in the classrooms of the López de Hoyos school, writer, humanist and professor at the Estudio de la Villa de Madrid.

The generous teacher, sensing the talent of his young pupil, allowed her to introduce some poems in the elegy composed for the death of Queen Isabel de Valois, wife of Philip II. The verses were liked and the young poet's pen was requested to compose new relations.

Here young Miguel could have begun his career in the world of letters, but we are not owners of our destiny and only God can know what is hidden in the mists of the future.

IMAGES

Photo caption: University of Alcalá de Henares. Founded by Cardinal Cisneros in the year 1499.

Photo caption: View of Madrid.- The Villa of Madrid became the permanent residence of the Court in 1561 by decision of Philip II.

Caption: Comedians acting. - Puppeteers and street comedians awakened a love for theater in the boy Miguel.

PANEL 3

IN SEARCH OF GLORY

Leaving Madrid

Miguel was gradually opening a niche for himself in the exclusive environment of literary gatherings and academies, which used to meet under the protection of cultivated nobles. His teacher López de Hoyos called him "beloved disciple" and his pen was already scribbling on the paper verses that were not badly received.

So... why did Miguel leave the town of Madrid and his family with it? There are many conjectures of his biographers. Among them, the following one seems true and possible to me. They say that the fiery and youthful Miguel crossed swords with a certain Antonio de Sigura and since duels are prohibited in the Court, he was denounced. He was disgraced by the penalty of ten years of exile and the loss of his right hand. Excessive punishments were applied to those who collided with Toledo in the Royal Alcázar grounds. Something that is possible in this case, since Miguel was always looking for the company of the nobility.

If things turned out like this, he had to leave the Court hastily, and since he was leaving, what better destination than the search for his fortune?

In Italy

Through contacts from his father, or through knowledge of palace academies, he went to Italy to enter the service of Monsignor Aquaviva.

However, his youthful fervor found no peace in the corridors of the palaces, nor among the trivial papers of his master's secretariat.

Soaked in the news of victory that praised the exploits of the Spanish Tercios, he decided to follow the career of arms.

He would not find his fortune, since it is already known that soldiery is a school where the stingy becomes frank, and the frank becomes prodigal. The soldier's purse is fuller of desires than money.

When Miguel's brother, named Rodrigo, learned of his decision, he followed his brave example and also enlisted.

Lepanto

The ancient war between Islam and Christianity wrote another page with the resounding victory of Lepanto. The galleys commanded by Juan de Austria defeated the ships of the Grand Turk. Cervantes lost the use of his left hand fighting in that bloody naval battle. But the wounds that come from war give you honor rather than taking it away from you and Miguel showed off his weakness with the pride of a hero.

IMAGES

Caption. Monsignor's office. Cervantes lasted less than a year as a pen-sucker.

The soldier. Spanish harquebusier.

The battle of Lepanto. Christian victory in which Cervantes participated and of which he always felt proud.

PANEL 4

THE SOLDIER

The Spanish thirds

They are the armed arm of our Spanish monarchy outside the peninsula. Initiated by the Great Captain, Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, they acquired their definitive formation in 1534 and have reigned on European battlefields for almost two centuries.

The third must be made up of three thousand men divided into ten companies, of which two are of harquebusiers or musketeers and the other eight of pikemen.

At the head of each company is a captain who appoints the second lieutenant (in charge of carrying the flag), the sergeant and the corporal.

The applicants must “settle their position” by signing a contract by which the captain undertakes to pay them a fee from the Royal Treasury. Although weapons and clothing are provided to them, they are deducted from their pay.

In addition to the pike and harquebus musket, they must carry a sword and dagger.

They say that only two things force a man to leave his country to be a soldier: one, the inclination for weapons and to gain honor in the exercise of them and, the second, because he is poor. We can think that both circumstances were present in our protagonist.

After Lepanto

When Miguel fought in Lepanto he was a new soldier. From there he emerged decorated with two shots to the chest and a damaged left hand and arm. Let us not think that he ended his military career, quite the contrary he had only just begun.

After Lepanto, and for several years, he served in Manuel Ponce de León's company, within Lope de Figueroa's third and was on campaign in Tunisia and Italy. Always in the galleys, as an embarked soldier. As a marine, Miguel fought on many fronts and rose from a mere private to the position of second lieutenant.

Student of life

Miguel de Cervantes did not have a formal academic training, but he was endowed with an inexhaustible curiosity that led him to read everything that fell into his hands. His alert intelligence helped him train himself with the resources within his reach.

His stay in Italy fueled his genius, both through mere life experience and through reading the great Italian masters and contemplating the inspiring works of the Renaissance and Roman antiquity.

IMAGES

Image of Gaspar Téllez speaking.

Soldier reading in some Roman ruins. Miguel did not miss the opportunity to enlighten himself, whenever the situation allowed it.

Horseback officer and soldier. The Spanish regiments marked the rebirth of the predominance of infantry on the battlefields.

PANEL 5

CAPTIVE IN ALGIERS

The return

After several years of service in the regiments, the Cervantes brothers decided to leave Italy and return to their homeland. At the beginning of September 1575 they embarked on the galley the Sol, in the port of Naples bound for Spain.

It has been said that Miguel was tired of the hectic life of the soldier but it is not true. It is true that the Cervantes embarked armed with brand new letters of recommendation, signed by Juan de Austria himself. But among that documentation, Miguel carried a captain's license that would have allowed him to recruit a company on the peninsula to continue fighting in Italy. Miguel considered himself a man of sufficient merit and service to be able to command a company.

The capture

Despite the defeat of the Grand Turk's Navy in the Battle of Lepanto, the waters of the Mediterranean continued to be a shoal where the Barbary pirates cast their nets.

Based in Algiers, the corsair galleys successfully looted Christian ships, taking thousands captive.

Great was the bitterness and despair of Miguel and Rodrigo when, already smelling the longed-for effluvia of the Spanish coasts, their galley was boarded by privateers under the command of the renegade Albanian Arnaut Mamí.

When, chained and imprisoned, Miguel's eyes saw the houses of the port of Algiers appear on the maritime horizon, his poet's soul must have fainted and his eyes shed abundant tears.

The captive

Miguel de Cervantes spent five long years as a captive in the city of Algiers, first being the slave of a galley captain before becoming a member of the cruel Hassan Pasha, governor of Algiers by design of the Sublime Porte.

Throughout his captivity, four times, invoking God and fortune, Miguel organized escapes of captives that invariably ended with the capture of the fugitives.

A great mystery arises here. Why, if the escape attempt was punished with mutilation or hanging, did Miguel always emerge unscathed from his failures? A difficult answer left to the judgment of the wise and learned, the purgers of libraries and the creators of fabulous theses.

IMAGES

Captive in the galley. The galley in which Miguel and his brother were returning to Spain was boarded by Barbary corsairs.

View of Algiers. The port of Algiers was the base of the pirates who depended on Istanbul, the capital of the Turkish empire.

Hassan Pasha. The governor of Algiers, born a Christian, converted to Islam and rose socially thanks to his cruelty and lack of scruples. Page 49, penultimate vignette. Michael captive. There were four escapes that Miguel organized and surprisingly he was never punished for them. Page 59 of the comic

PANEL 6

THE RESCUE

Captivity

Not all captives received the same treatment in the Algerian city.

The majority were poor and, therefore, dedicated to menial jobs or to the rowing benches of the galleys. Wealthy captives were excused from physical labor and spent the day wandering around the city or locked in the baths.

Miguel, thanks to his letters of recommendation, was assimilated into the main people.

Thus he enjoyed sufficient freedom of movement to carry out escape plans or write poetic and devotional compositions to bring comfort to the souls of his companions. He even wrote a verse epistle for Mateo Vázquez, secretary of Philip II, in which he described the city of Algiers and the possibility of its conquest with a determined attack by the Spanish navy. He himself was committed to leading an uprising of captives at the time of the alleged attack.

The rescue business

No matter how mild the conditions of captivity were, everyone wanted to escape that sad condition. Some opted for conversion to Islam which instantly made them free citizens on equal terms with others.

The desired freedom was achieved by paying a ransom. The main people had their families negotiate directly with the captors, but for the ordinary people, there were other traffickers.

The orders of Mercy and Trinity were in charge of the merciful task of negotiating ransoms or redemptions.

Freedom

The Cervantes family did not abandon the two brothers. There were two means to raise the necessary funds, 300 escudos for Rodrigo and 500 for Miguel.

The needy could go to the Crusade Council requesting money that was rarely granted due to the Crown's chronic shortage of gold. What they did give were business licenses to trade with Algiers. These licenses were only granted to the relatives of the captives and Leonor de Cortinas, mother of Miguel and Rodrigo, obtained one, but she lacked the capitalist partner necessary to invest in the business.

After many calamities, the mother and daughters collected the 300 escudos requested by Rodrigo who was first released, and some time later, Miguel's sisters, renouncing their dowries and falling into debt, managed to rescue him when he was about to embark for Istanbul in company of his master Hassan Pasha.

IMAGES

The captives of Doré.- The days are lazy and ominous for the captives.

Disembarkation in Denia.- Miguel's joy was great when he was reunited with his family after being released.

PANEL 7

RETURN TO COURT

In Denia

Miguel, freed from his bitter captivity, landed in Denia on October 27, 1580. There the joy in his heart was renewed and his spirit was excited with the greatest joy that can be had in this life: to arrive after a long captivity healthy and save the homeland.

Waiting in Corridors

Arriving in Madrid after twelve years of absence and reunited with his family, he began the process of seeking a subsidy or grant from the Council of Castile.

But in Imperial Spain it is a dishonor to work, and the corridors of the Court overflow with idle claimants for some pension or sinecure that, if it does not make them rich, at least allows them a good time. Miguel soon tired of joining such a deplorable line and set his sights on an old desire: he tried to make a living from his pen, a profession that, as we know, then and now, the most it reports are disappointments and a dark future.

He wants to be a comedy writer

Since King Philip installed the capital of his kingdom in Madrid, life in the small town became extremely agitated. Lovers of games and leisure, Madrid residents have found one of their greatest tastes and hobbies in the theater. In the two corrals of the capital, comedies are performed non-stop, interrupted only by royal mourning or by the intransigent morality of the uptight clerics.

Miguel entered the literary circles of the capital, returning to writing with renewed passion.

He composed several comedies, which ran his career without whistles, shouts or hubbub. He also composed his first novel, "La Galatea," which was printed in Alcalá de Henares during the summer of 1584.

His daughter Isabel

Miguel was already a poet. Unfortunately, this is not a title that brings benefits or honors. What's more, poets coexist in close promiscuity with comedians, musicians, rogues and hustlers of all kinds. In this atmosphere of relaxed and happy morals, which finds its best setting in the taverns, Miguel met Ana Franca, a tavernkeeper's wife, little or not at all afraid of adulterous incidents.

From loves that a clergyman would never have blessed, Miguel's bastard and only daughter, Isabel, was born, who as the years passed, and her mother died, she would go to live with her father.

IMAGES

Making hallway. The list of individuals who claimed some favor from the Crown was endless.

Street representation. Comedies were not only performed in the corrals. Traveling comedians took to the streets and squares for their performances.

Tavern scene. In Madrid, a brave city that, between ancient and modern, has three hundred taverns and a single bookstore.

PANEL 8

THE WEDDING

Trip to Esquivias

Thus, Miguel left for Esquivias, a Toledo town famous for its wines, to meet Juana Gaitán, widow of an old friend of his, to help her prepare the posthumous edition of a songbook composed by the dead man.

It is presumed that the said Juana served as matchmaker between the settled Miguel and the young Catalina de Salazar, whom the needy poet was twice in age.

The girlfriend

She was Catalina from a noble family from Esquivias with certain properties, orphaned by a father who was not very skilled in managing his estate. It is also presumed that the young woman from Esquivia was captivated by the man of the world, experienced and kind, who must have had little or no difficulty in seducing the girl.

Did Miguel intend to sink his teeth into the young woman's assets by marrying her in order to alleviate her chronic poverty? If so, he must have been disappointed after the wedding, since his wife's father only left debts when he died.

Did Miguel think that the time had come to rest for the love of the fire, for slow and quiet days in a peaceful town in La Mancha?

What we can take for granted is that our man was disenchanted with the profession of the pen. Only writers of comedies or poets could aspire to the difficult perk of being properly paid for their writings. But he did not achieve it despite the many comedies he composed.

And his novel *La Galatea*? Idle tongues say that it is the hand of a saint against insomnia.

The departure

What were the reasons why, after less than three years of married life, Miguel left Esquivias? Surely he would not adapt to the life of the lazy and idle gentleman, who lives a good life at the expense of his wife's estate.

From the pen, I never tire of repeating it, rather than living, he died of hunger and need.

Why did he leave, leaving behind his wife and the poet's muses? It is well said that the heart has reasons that reason does not understand, and perhaps we would be presumptuous if we wanted to get right with the motives that push a man to do what he does.

One way or another, Miguel sought his fortune in other ways.

IMAGES

- 1.- View of the town. - Church of the Toledo town of Esquivias.
- 2.- Gaspar Téllez with Catalina and Miguel. - we put text in the speech bubble
- 3.- Miguel saying goodbye to his wife Catalina.
- 4.- Esquivian noblemen chatting in one of his wineries. Page 73 of the comic

PANEL 9

THE COMMISSIONER OF SUPPLY

Seville

Firstly, Cervantes requested a vacant position in the administration of the Hispanic Monarchy in the Indies and the official response was: "Look around here for a favor."

And Miguel looked to Seville, the largest, most fascinating and bustling city in all of Spain, enriched by the monopoly of the Indies trade.

Those were the years of "The Invincible Armada" that our King Philip, the second, chartered to try to subdue the English heretics.

To properly arm and supply such an immense fleet required the collaboration of many efforts and wills.

Along the Andalusian roads

After much presenting and begging, the disenchanted poet took the position of Commissar of Supplies of the King's Galleys.

As commissioner, he spent years in Andalusia supervising the entire process of requisitioning wheat and oil for storage and processing.

Miguel found himself a trafficker between the Crown, the councils, the peasants and the church. For fulfilling his obligation, mediating between all of them, he managed to receive insults, slander and harm, topped off with the cherry on top of the excommunication that some uncomfortable prelate threw at him for having to take wheat out of his granaries to supply the Navy that was fighting for the catholic faith.

In 1594, Philip II, alarmed and angry at the continuous irregularities and corruption in the requisition of wheat and oil, decided to dismiss those in charge of the Commissariat, including Cervantes.

The tax collector

Miguel asked for mercy again and he got it. He was appointed tax collector. But if the commissioner's adventure was unhappy, the treasury employee's adventure was dramatic. Miguel left some money collected, and therefore from the Royal Treasury, plus some of his own funds, at the house of the businessman Simón Freire of Seville and went to Madrid.

Freire disappeared with the capital and Miguel had to answer for the escape by becoming a prisoner. He spent seven long months in the Sevillian dungeons but finally his fortunes straightened out and he knew freedom, perhaps due to lack of evidence since, as far as is known, there was no trial.

Miguel had to make money acting as a public official, but his poor management, or his almost certain penchant for playing cards, returned him to the ranks of the needy.

IMAGES

Seville.- It was the only port authorized for trade with the Indies, which made it incredibly prosperous.

Confiscating the peasants. -The Crown paid poorly and there were many occasions in which Miguel went to confiscate wheat from a farmer who had not been paid for the confiscated wheat the previous year.

VALLADOLID

Return home

It is not a fabrication to suppose that Don Quixote came into the world in a cell, since Miguel himself wrote to us that his novel "was generated in a prison, where every discomfort has its seat, and where every sad noise makes its room."

He had regained his freedom, but the years were already weighing him down and his spirit, once lively and restless, showed the traces of misfortune.

Tired of toiling in collecting money for such an ungrateful master, he abandoned the Andalusian roads and, looking for some solace and peace, returned to his family and his wife, Catalina.

Not finding a better occupation, he decided, for our fortune, or better yet, for all of humanity, to take up the pen again.

The Cervantas

Oh, friends! It is not idle to repeat, as a warning to naive youth, that he who wants to adequately support and raise his family must flee as from the most malignant plague of the writer's profession.

To exemplify and illustrate this advice, suffice it to say that, while he wrote Don Quixote, Miguel survived thanks to the meager property of his wife and the work of his sisters; Well, the Cervantes' new family home was made up of Miguel himself, his daughter Isabel, his sisters Magdalena and Andrea, her daughter, named Constanza, his wife Catalina, and a maid named María de Ceballos, six women and one man, so it is not surprising that that home was called, more appropriately, the Cervantas house.

From Madrid to Valladolid

Due to circumstances that concern an indolent king and a greedy private person, but which are not relevant here, the Royal Court moved from Madrid to Valladolid. Behind her were all the puppies that fed on the royal udder and all those who wanted to.

As it could not be otherwise, the Cervantas and Miguel looked for a new accommodation in the city of Pisuerga. They found it next to the Rastro de los Carneros, a neighborhood of dubious fame, in a two-story building, in the lower part of which there was a tavern.

A feminine and bustling home, with entrances and exits, giving rise to insidiousness and rumors.

Here, too, Miguel was inclined by that fateful star that insisted on crashing his unhappy life.

IMAGES

Valladolid.-Castilian city of great tradition and tradition, it had hundreds of imposing palaces and a multitude of churches.

Las Cervantas.- Miguel lived in Valladolid with his daughter Isabel, his niece Constanza, his wife Catalina and his two sisters Magdalena and Andrea.

Gaspar Téllez??

THE EZPELETA CASE

Poet by profession

While Miguel lived in Valladolid, he may have written the exemplary novel: "The Colloquium of the Dogs", since the brilliant conversation between the dogs Berganza and Cipión takes place in the Hospital de la Resurrección, near the Cervantes home.

In that home, Miguel received a postage-paid letter that contained an infamous sonnet full of insults towards him. Cervantes reprimanded his niece for having paid to send such a repulsive letter, but we can assume that it was his pride, more than his purse, that was hurt, since our writer decided to immortalize the incident in one of the unparalleled prologues.

Catalina, his wife, was absent from Valladolid when the unpleasant event occurred that made Miguel and his sisters visit the Valladolid prison, which had already housed, years ago, his father and his grandfather.

Turk's heads

While the Cervantas and her man were at home, they heard cries for help coming from the street. When they went down to find out what was happening, they saw a man bleeding to death in the doorway.

He was a certain Gaspar de Ezpeleta, a Navarrese gentleman who, leaving his wife and daughter in Pamplona, led a happy life in Valladolid, publicly engaging in adulterous affairs with Inés Hernández, the wife of a royal notary named Melchor Galván.

Upon seeing Ezpeleta's condition, they took him to his house and there he received the extreme unction.

As soon as word spread, Mayor Villarroel showed up with two brackets and with the intention of obscuring the event to divert all suspicion from his friend, the cuckold notary, Galván, and from his wife's penny.

The dubious reputation of the neighborhood and the Cervantas, added to the circumstance that the dead man was in his house, came to the fore of Mayor Villarroel. While the cuckolded murderer enjoyed the pleasures of his house, Miguel, his sisters and most of the building's tenants were taken to prison.

Fortunately, they were not there for more than a day and a half because the statements of Ezpeleta's innkeeper cleared them of all suspicion.

The uproar and hubbub that Villarroel caused served to make the royal notary's name appear in the gossip mills, but not in the courts.

The name of the Cervantas did not shine for its neatness and this event increased the murmurings against them by idle tongues.

IMAGES

El Rastro de los Carneros.- Home of the Cervantes in the Rastro de los Carneros, in front of the slaughterhouse and behind the Resurrection hospital.

Cervantes writing page 144. Failed in his attempts to live as an employee of the Crown, Miguel once again tried to support himself as a writer.

THE QUIJOTE

They are not clean wheat

You will remember, your graces, that, at the beginning of this narrative, I spoke to you about Aunt María, sister of Rodrigo, father of Cervantes. This good woman resolved her life thanks to the compensation she obtained from her boyfriend, with whom she lived in public cohabitation, for breaking the promise of marriage. Well, it turns out that two of Miguel's sisters and his own daughter resorted at some point in their lives to such an unusual method to gather wealth, with greater or lesser success. Although her conduct was supported by Castilian law, she was not so supported by prevailing morality.

Fame

Cervantes completed Don Quixote at the beginning of 1604 and gave it to the Madrid bookseller Francisco de Robles who, like so many businessmen, was also in Valladolid, so it was in this city that he requested the printing privilege.

In the first days of January 1605, Robles was able to put the book on sale in his bookstores in Valladolid and Madrid.

The success of Don Quixote was overwhelming. The figure of the lean and whimsical knight, accompanied by his plump squire, won the favor of the Spanish and European public with a speed that seemed more like the result of necromancy than the common news story.

The wishes expressed by Cervantes in his prologue, that by reading that story “the melancholic person will be moved to laughter, the smiling person will increase it, the simple person will not be angry, the discreet person will admire the invention, the serious person will not despise it, nor the prudent stop praising her”, were fulfilled point by point.

However, another wish, no less imperative because it was not expressed, did not come true: Don Quixote's fame was not equal to the benefit it brought to Miguel, because, although it alleviated his misery, it could not get him out of poverty, much less make him accommodated.

The Court leaves

It was necessary to abandon Valladolid, because the Court returned to Madrid, following the interested whims of the Duke of Lerma, the king's valet. But also, the damaged reputation of the Cervantes became a favorite target of gossipy and idle malignancy. As Miguel's name became known as that of the author of the novel that delighted everyone, the envious murmurings increased. It was advisable to have a change of scenery.

IMAGES

Image of three women page 145. Miguel lived all the last years of his life surrounded by the women of his family.

Don Quixote and Sancho. Also on page 169, on foot.

Francisco de Robles. (vignette page 182) He was the editor of Don Quixote

Image of the sale: Traveling through 16th century Castile was a real adventure. The roads were bad and the sales were scarce and dirty.

PANEL 13

POET BY RIGHT

The neighborhood of letters

The Cervantas and their man returned to Madrid and settled in the heart of the comedy universe, near the corrals and right next to the representatives' place, where everyone linked to theater and literature met.

Miguel already had a name; he was known and, therefore, the object of that very Spanish envy that rots our souls, overshadowing our natural generosity.

Lope de Vega

They say in the gossip mill that Lope de Vega always wanted to be a novelist, but he triumphed with comedy, and that Cervantes, longing for recognition as a poet of the stage, achieved glory with the novel. It was said that one could expect a lot from Miguel's prose, but nothing from verse.

Both giants had their ups and downs and lavished insults or praise on each other depending on whether the wind of jealousy or admiration blew.

Miguel was older, 15 years older than Lope, and considered himself a better writer than him. And indeed he was, as a great connoisseur of human nature and as a composer of exciting situations. But Lope found the popular taste and knew how to maintain it with fresh and delicious comedies. His fame became immense, everyone: nobles, priests or commoners, sought to treat Lope.

Did Miguel feel envy, of the success of his competitor? Such overwhelming success, that it prevented other authors from raising their heads in the world of comedy?

Who can know? Miguel was haughty and proud but he also knew how to be cloyingly flattering in the dedications of his works to noble figures. This was a common custom at the time, on the other hand.

Other works

Although no one asked for his comedies, he did not renounce his theatrical whims and, since he could not perform in the fiefdom of his competitor, he gave his "Eight Comedies and Eight Entremeses" to the printer. never represented."

He also published "The Exemplary Novels" which were enormously successful and after Don Quixote it is our author's most read book.

His verse work "Voyage of Parnassus" is a long poem that, mainly, is nothing more than a compendium of praise and praise for his fellow poets, full of flattery and adjectives. The result is a heavy and cumbersome book, difficult to finish. You already know what is said about Cervantes' verse.

IMAGES

Puerta del Sol is one of the most lively squares in Madrid.

Cervantes and Lope. Lope said: "There is no poet as bad as Cervantes nor so foolish that he praises Don Quixote."

Miguel writing (page 126) Make his hair white. Cervantes wrote most of his work in the last ten years of his life.

THE SECOND PART

A difficult relationship

Cervantes' family life did not spare him troubles and in his old age he had to deal with the indomitable character of his daughter Isabel, with whom he did not have an easy relationship.

Following the example of her aunts, she fell in love with a rich lover who supported her while their daughter lived. To save appearances and safeguard the honor of his daughter, the troubled Cervantes, he arranged a marriage for Isabel to a third party. An interesting marriage that nevertheless lasted twenty years, but that did not sweeten the relationship between Isabel and her father.

The apocrypha

In the autumn of 1614, signed by the lawyer Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda and ordered to be printed in Tarragona by the bookseller Felipe Robert, a second volume of the adventures of the ingenious gentleman Don Quixote of la Mancha came out.

Nine years had passed since the publication of the first part and Cervantes was still reading chapter LIX of his Don Quixote when the apocrypha came out.

Even though Avellaneda, in a display of cynicism, filled the prologue of his book with insults against the true author, the old writer was not deterred. Fortunately for him and therefore for all of us, his beloved readers, Miguel accelerated the writing of his Don Quixote, concluding it in February 1615.

The real one

In October of that same year, the authentic Second Part was already on the streets and the Cervantes' economy improved somewhat. They were able to move from the old and gloomy house on Huertas Street to a newer one, with a ground floor, main floor and attic. This new home was on León Street, near the home of the one favored by the gods, Lope de Vega.

It is not necessary for me to say it, since your graces already know that the second part of the Adventures of the Ingenious Hidalgo and that of his Campechano Escudero, increased the success of the first and elevated Miguel to the Olympus of glory.

Alonso and Miguel

Cervantes breathed so much life into his fictional creatures that they seemed to embody, disputing the vital role of his creator. The fame of Don Quixote is so universal that there are those who can consider him real, while the name of Cervantes has gradually faded into the background, becoming a ghostly figure who seems to have existed only to give life to Quixote and Sancho.

IMAGES

Drawing of Isabel??, Gaspar Téllez??

Quixote and Sancho page. 169- Quixote and Sancho have become more real in the collective imagination than Cervantes himself. Bust of Cervantes page 153- We do not have an authentic image of Cervantes, the portraits that are preserved of him are imagined.

Cervantes Mayor page 158 - The publication of Avellaneda's Don Quixote served to spur Miguel and push him to finish his Second Part of Don Quixote.

THE FINAL DEVOTION

Last days

He was old and broken, but he wrote with the enthusiasm of a beginner, or perhaps he wanted to get out of his head all those paragraphs that were bustling to come out, before the reaper, who had already taken his sisters, took him too. He did not speak to her daughter, or perhaps she avoided him, trying not to let her father's bad fortune rub off on her. In his house, in Madrid's Barrio de las Letras, he lived with his wife Catalina and his niece Constanza.

The brother poets

There is an apparent paradox in the Spanish character. Along with the taste for laziness, fights, gambling and gold, a sincere and universal religious feeling seems to coexist. Cervantes did not escape this condition and in the company of other writers such as Lope and Quevedo, he entered the Brotherhood of Slaves of the Blessed Sacrament. Suspecting the last transit awakened the most ardent devotion in these older poets, who in their youth, almost without exception, had been scruples.

This commitment must not have seemed enough to Cervantes to relieve his soul from the weight of his sins and he wanted to follow the example of his wife and his two deceased sisters by professing in the secular Third Order of Saint Francis

Just as Lope de Vega's funeral was an event in the city attended by everyone, Miguel's funeral was much more modest. Shrouded according to the Rule of the Third Order with a Franciscan habit and his face uncovered, he was humbly buried in the Trinitarian convent of Madrid, close to his house. The Trinitarians had rescued him from Algiers and ended up paying for his funeral.

Last work

In the same way that brave knights who fell in combat are said to have died with their boots on, so Miguel also died, on April 23, 1616, with his pen in his hand, because although old, sick and broken, he had strength to finish a new book: "The Works of Persiles and Sigismunda", which was published posthumously.

Goodbye, humor; goodbye, wit; goodbye, merry friends; for I am dying and hope to see you soon, happy in the life to come!

This is how Miguel said goodbye to this world in the prologue of his Persiles and with him I say goodbye hoping to have been to the liking of your graces.

Stay with God!

IMAGES

Cervantes writing old. Despite his failing health, Miguel continued writing until the last day of his life. Cervantes in the street praying. Catholic devotion entered the Cervantes home, causing all its members to profess in the Third Order of Saint Francis before dying.

Gaspar Tellez