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Candace Mary Beutell Gardner  
*Wayne State University*

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**The Reception of *Don Quixote* in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Germany and  
Friedrich J. Bertuch's Pioneering Translation (1775-77) of It**

Endeavoring to translate artful writing, particularly an indispensable work like *Don Quixote*, grows out of infinite optimism as the translator, perhaps quixotically, attempts to enter the mind of the first writer through the gateway of the text. It is a daunting and inspiring enterprise. (Grossman, "Translating" 1)

In 1605, when Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616) published the first part of his innovative novel *Don Quixote*, he never could have anticipated the reception it would receive, both at home and abroad. The fact that this ground-breaking work was reissued five times in Spain in its first year alone is evidence of the resounding success his novel enjoyed in his native country (Melz 301). Today, four hundred years later, *Don Quixote* continues to be the second most read book after the Bible (Esterbrook); and in 2002, it was voted "the best work of fiction in the world" by "one hundred major writers from fifty-four countries" (Grossman, *Don Quixote* 3). Considered the first modern novel, *Don Quixote's* popularity is due, in large part, to the fact that it offers something for everybody. Like *Alice in Wonderland* and *Gulliver's Travels*, it can be read at different levels, enjoyed as a humorous tale, a biting satire, or a work of great literary depth.

In this paper on Friedrich Bertuch's translation, I will first discuss the reception of the *Quixote* in the two centuries after its publication, in order to provide the reader with sufficient background information to make the transition from the early seventeenth-century original to the late eighteenth-century edition of the German translation discussed. I then delve into Bertuch's

pioneering translation, giving illustrations of how he bridged the distinctively different Spanish and German cultures. For example, I discuss how he handled foods, money, measurements, religion, adages, etc. Since many of the passages I quote in this work are in German and Spanish and unfamiliarity with these languages might hinder a reader's understanding of my findings, I provide translations from Edith Grossman's work (Spanish) and my own translations (German), placed in brackets, immediately after each quotation. Thus, in a small way, I learned to appreciate even more Bertuch's efforts. It is a true, and humbling, challenge to attempt to render an author's words into another language accurately and not have the resulting passages sound awkward or forced.

### **The Reception of *Don Quixote* in Germany in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

For its first 150 years, people simply enjoyed reading about the comical, farcical adventures entered into by the Knight of the Sad Countenance and his trusting and faithful squire Sancho Panza. Seen as a whimsical tale, who could not find it funny when the hero mistook windmills for giants, a barber's basin for a revered helmet, or a coarse and illiterate farm girl for the fair and graceful damsel Dulcinea de Toboso? It took seven years before non-Spanish-speaking Europeans could enjoy the work in their own languages. The very first translation of the novel was done by England's Thomas Shelton, who published his Part I in 1612 and Part II in 1620. Renditions in other languages soon followed: César Oudin's translation of Part I appeared in France in 1614, and his fellow countryman François de Rosset's translation of Part II was published in 1618. In addition to these English and French editions, Lorenzo Franciosini's Italian version appeared four years later, in 1622, and Lambert van den Bos's translation was published in the Netherlands in 1657.

Germans were equally as enthusiastic as their fellow Europeans about the humorous novel and its madcap heroes. The first evidence of familiarity with the novel's characters, and also proof that the novel was perceived as a humorous work, occurred in 1613 when figures representing Don Quixote and Sancho Panza appeared at a masquerade celebrating the marriage of Friedrich V of the Palatinate and Elizabeth Stuart of England (Fischer 331). "As part of the entertainment, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, in archaic German, challenge the assembled guests to admit that Dulcinea is the most beautiful woman in the world; the audience must have been sufficiently familiar with the story to appreciate the dramatization of this episode" (Bergel 307). This shows that Germans were well aware of the comical aspects of the novel and thus were able to use them for their entertainment.

Four years later, in 1617, Germans had their first opportunity to read a portion of Cervantes's work in their native tongue with the publication of a translation of "El Curioso Impertinente" ["The Man Who Was Recklessly Curious" or "The Impertinent Snoop"], one of the many novellas Cervantes included in his novel. As would be the case for all but two translations, one by Pahsch Bastel von der Sohle in the mid-seventeenth century, the other by Friedrich Justin Bertuch in the late eighteenth century, the anonymous translator based his work on a French rendition. However, this work is not a faithful translation of Cervantes's story since certain conversations are abridged and Tansillo's poetry is completely omitted (Berger 9-10).

In 1648, Bastel von der Sohle, whose true identity is still unknown, published a longer translation, one covering the novel's first 22½ chapters, because he "considered it a highly entertaining story which should be available to a wider public" (Melz 308). The translator was obviously familiar with both Shelton's and Oudin's works since he mentions them both in the

book's preface (10-11). However, it is not believed that he used either as the basis of his rendition, which is entitled *Juncker Harnisch aus Fleckenland* [*Sir Armor from the Land of Spots*] – the author's literal translation into German of the Spanish title. Instead, it is obvious that Bastel von der Sohle worked directly from the original Spanish, since in his preface he also explains the difficulties he encountered in translating Spanish words (*agaçan*, *cavallerizo*, *Quixote*) and proverbs (14-15). The translating mistakes he does make – using *Base* [cousin] for *sobrina* [niece], *Ohmb* [uncle] for *primo* [male cousin], and rendering *maligno* [scoundrel] with the proper noun *Maglimo* – would seem to give further proof that he did not use another language's translation in his effort but instead relied on his knowledge of Spanish. The translator also demonstrates his familiarity with the customs and people of Spain when he correctly translates *Potro de Cordova* as *Diebsbrunnenplatz zu Corduba* [Thieves' Well Square] “because he knows of the ill-famed quarter of Córdoba” (Melz 313).

As happened with the translation of “El curioso impertinente,” however, this first German translation, although thoroughly enjoyable, is not a faithful one. Besides covering only 1/7 of the work's 126 chapters, the book does not contain the novel's dedication or any of its introductory poems, it numbers chapters slightly differently, and even eliminates some. In addition to renumbering chapters and omitting some shorter passages, the translator excludes longer parts of the novel that, in his opinion, do not belong since they do not further the story. The translator explains the reasons for doing so in his preface, stating that they kept the reader from the main work and did not bring any special delight to the story (18). Bastel von der Sohle adds one final, and revealing, reason to his explanation of his editorial efforts, writing that one has to bring this foolish work to an end at some point (18). It is obvious from this last statement that for him

Cervantes was only an amusing jokester (Berger 11). It would be another one hundred years before this attitude changed.

In 1683, fourteen years after the 1669 reissue of Bastel von der Sohle's work, another translation appeared in Germany. Entitled *Don Qvixote Von Mancha abentheurliche Geschichte* [*Don Quixote of la Mancha's Adventurous Story*], it was based not on the Spanish original but on the 1677-78 French translation by François Filleau de St. Martin. In his preface the translator, noted simply as J. R. B., who did not have a favorable opinion of *Juncker Harnisch*, scorns von der Sohle's work as an incomplete and mutilated version.

It would be several years before anyone again took on the challenge of translating *Don Quixote*. In 1734, not one but two German translations were published in Leipzig. One work was translated by an anonymous author, the other by a Sekretär Wolf, sometimes identified as Georg Christian Wolf. The anonymous work, printed by Caspar Fritsch, a well-known Leipzig publisher, is entitled *Des berühmten Ritters, Don Quixote von Mancha, Lustige und sinnreiche Geschichte* [*The Amusing and Useful Story of the Famous Knight, Don Quixote of la Mancha*]. In the preface its author informs readers that the translation is based on a French version. Relatively successful, this edition would be reissued in 1753, and a revised edition appeared in Leipzig in 1767.

Sekretär Wolf's rendition, similar to J. R. B.'s 1683 version, is also based on Filleau de St. Martin's translation. Published in a work entitled *Angenehmes Passe-Tems durch welches zwey Freund einander mit nützlichen und lustigen Discursen vergnügen* [*Pleasant Pastime by Which Two Friends Amuse Each Other with Useful and Amusing Discourses*], this abridged version of Don Quixote's adventures is related in a conversation between two men, Heraldo and

Fernando (Berger 23-24; Schwering 502). In the preface to this work, its editor explains that he is offering readers a new translation because copies of the popular 1683 rendition are no longer available (Fassmann 3).

The reception of these two translations in Germany shows a curious and significant bifurcation. Both editions appear to have been more successful with less-schooled German readers than with those who were educated. The latter, disdainful of what they considered to be unsophisticated translations, preferred to read the work in French, a language with which they were quite familiar (Berger 25). They had many options since French translations of Cervantes's novel appeared in 1677-79, 1693-98 and 1713-22. These discerning readers also had access to Alain René Le Sage's 1704 rendition of Avellaneda's apocryphal *Don Quixote II*, which would be reprinted in 1716 and again in 1741. Thus, "Es ist leicht ersichtlich, dass durch diesen französischen Import die Kenntnis des Don Quixote ausserordentlich gefördert war" ["It is quite apparent that this French import contributed greatly to knowledge of *Don Quixote*"] (Berger 24-25).

Note that all of these translations emphasized the novel's humor. Even 150 years after its first publication, "... *Don Quixote* is mainly a book of entertainment and amusement..." (Bergel 308). However, despite the success of these earlier renditions, an authentic Spanish to German translation was needed because of the low quality of earlier works and the novel's growing popularity (Berger 25). Bertuch's work, then, is quite significant, if for no other reason, because it was the first relatively complete Spanish-to-German translation of *Don Quixote I and II*.

### **Bertuch's Translation**

Bertuch's translation is also important because it reflects another interpretation of *Don Quixote*, one that emerged in the mid-eighteenth century when German literary critics began to formulate a new opinion of this seminal work. In their view, Cervantes's novel was much less a comical tale than it was a biting satire in which the author exposed the very real social problems of his day, problems to which the eighteenth-century reader could also relate. Indeed, "Practically every aspect and phase of German life between 1750 and 1800 ... is directly or indirectly related to *Don Quixote*" (Bergel 309). For it was not only during Cervantes's lifetime that such social problems occurred; in Germany, too, people were incarcerated without just cause; there was literary censorship; kings, princes and dukes ruled at their whim; religious intolerance was strong; strife continually threatened peace; and wealth bought privileges (Rose 145-156, 162-163). Consequently, although it had always been popular because of its humor, *Don Quixote* now gained additional readers who saw reflections of their own concerns in the work. Like the novel's hero, they too realized that there were "agravios que ... deshacer, tuertos que enderezar, sinrazones que emendar y abusos que mejorar y deudas que satisfacer" ["evils to undo, wrongs to right, injustices to correct, abuses to ameliorate, and offenses to rectify"] (I, 2). Thus, despite the book's foreign names, customs and cities, German readers could relate to the novel's satire that reflected its underlying or "intellectual" realism (Baker 5).

It was just this interpretation that inspired Bertuch to publish the first volumes of his new translation in 1775. He was determined that his fellow countrymen enjoy the fantastic adventures of his beloved hero as Cervantes, in his opinion, really intended and not as the farcical character seen in earlier renditions. In 1774, he expresses this intention in a letter to a friend: "Ich habe es geschworen, schon vor 5 Jahren geschworen ... dem liebenswürdigen Thor, Don Quixote, den Bettler Mantel abzunehmen, in welchem er seit länger als 26 Jahre schon in

Teutschland herumzieht” [“Five years ago I swore to ... remove from the charming fool, Don Quixote, the beggar’s cloak which he has been wearing for more than twenty-six years as he wanders around Germany”] (qtd in Pröhle lxxvi). Bertuch’s six-volume work, entitled *Leben und Thaten des weisen Junkers Don Quixote von Mancha* [*The Life and Exploits of the Wise Nobleman Don Quixote of la Mancha*], appeared over the course of three years, 1775-77; it was so popular that unauthorized versions started appearing in 1776.

Bertuch’s path to this translation started in 1769, when he left the university while only part-way through his studies. Through mutual friends, he met Baron Ludwig Heinrich Bachoff von Echt who hired the impoverished intellectual to live in his home as the tutor for his children. The baron, a former diplomat posted to the royal court in Madrid, had a wonderful library with many Portuguese and Spanish works, among them *Don Quixote*. In the space of six short weeks, von Echt, who was temporarily confined to bed with gout, met daily with Bertuch to teach him Spanish, using Cervantes’s masterpiece as their textbook. Captivated with this new language and its literature, the young man spent long hours each night in a poorly lit room, drinking copious amounts of coffee as he poured over his texts.

In order to fill his countrymen’s desire for Spanish literature in German translation, mentioned by certain of the baron’s visitors, Bertuch decided shortly thereafter to take on the challenge of translating the *Quixote* into German from the original Spanish. Familiar with earlier translations, Bertuch felt correctly that they did not accurately capture Cervantes’s intent and that he could not only do a more faithful translation, but a complete one from the original Spanish. Learning of his plans, Bachoff von Echt wrote Bertuch, giving him his full support.

Bertuch planned to translate not only all of Cervantes’s work, traditionally referred to as *Don*

*Quixote* I and II, but also the apocryphal sequel written by Avellaneda. Although Avellaneda's work would later grow out of favor, when it first appeared it was well-received by an international reading public eager for more of the knight errant's fantastic adventures. Fortunately for his many readers, its success forced Cervantes, who was angry about the spurious sequel, to publish his own long-promised and long-anticipated but also long-delayed Part II in 1615. Bertuch, in the preface to his work, notes that had Avellaneda not published his sequel, Cervantes's Part II might never have been written, since the latter passed away in 1616 (xii). Of the numerous German editions of *Don Quixote* that have appeared over the centuries, Bertuch's is the only one that contains Avellaneda's work.

Although Bertuch's work would be one more in the string of translations and reworkings of the text that had appeared in Germany in the mid-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "keine davon kam auch nur entfernt dem Originale nahe" ["none of them was remotely close to the original"] (Bohadti 19). Bertuch believed these other translations and reworkings of his text incorrectly emphasized the comical aspects of the story rather than the satire that Cervantes truly intended. Thus, confident of his abilities and his knowledge of Spanish, he was determined to rectify the situation. At the same time, in addition to capturing the deeper significance of the text, he also was determined to translate faithfully the Spaniard's words themselves. For example, in order to capture the jargon and expressions of the common folk accurately, Bertuch paid special attention to the conversations of the merchants and customers who gathered daily beneath the windows of his first home, an apartment over shops at the Jakobstor in Weimar. He learned a great deal by listening to them and used this knowledge to render the novel's many aphorisms and exclamations into German. In addition the author also incorporated into his translation the many useful expressions that he learned from one of the retainers at Romschütz who had served

the baron in Spain and was therefore quite familiar with the ordinary speech of the Spanish working class and its customs. Besides replicating the familiar expressions of the common folk, Bertuch also took great care to capture the somewhat stilted, formal, old-fashioned language of knights errant in the romances so popular in the sixteenth century. He expresses this goal in his prologue, saying that he has tried his best to incorporate them into his translation (x).

Once completed, his work was enthusiastically received by the numerous German readers who were either truly interested in Spanish literature or simply enjoyed the whimsical adventures of the hapless knight. It was precisely at this time, the apogee of translations' popularity in Germany, that Bertuch published his *Don Quixote*, employing a translation theory called "Nachdichten" ["paraphrasing"]. Popular in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, this method gave a translator great leeway in his writing; he "was at liberty to alter the tone, style, diction or form of a work, even to delete certain passages or add new ones of his own if he thought it would improve the final product" (Bernofsky, *Foreign Words* 1). (Interestingly, this method obviously contradicts Bertuch's stated intention of faithfully translating Cervantes's work.)

One can understand, therefore, why Bertuch, following this theory, shortened or omitted various passages when translating *Don Quixote*. In the preface to his translation, Bertuch advises his readers of and his reasons for the alterations he chose to make, explaining that he eliminated those elements not immediately connected to the action of the novel, elements that, while popular in 17<sup>th</sup> century Spanish literature, were no longer fashionable (xv-xvi). Bertuch's decision to make abridgments to his translation, in order to modernize the work and thus make it more appealing to the German readers of his time, was not the only one he had to make. Indeed,

there were many other possible changes that the author had to take into consideration when translating this novel, or any work. Breitingger, Bertuch's contemporary, succinctly summarizes the challenges that confront every translator: "... es [kommt] einem Uebersetzer oft sauer [an], die Gedancken seines Originals ohne Verminderung des Nachdruckes und der Schönheit ... auszudrücken, welche in seiner Sprache nicht fremd klingen, und dem Character derselben nicht Gewalt anthun" ["... it is often difficult for a translator to express the thoughts of the original without a lessening of its emphasis and beauty, not have it sound strange in his own language, and not violate the character of the same"] (143).

This statement is especially true when the original piece is in a language whose culture is substantially different from the target language, for the translator needs to consider many other factors in addition to word order and vocabulary. For example, should a translator retain the characters' names in the original language — doing so would "foreignize" the text — or would it be better to render those names in the target language, and thus "domesticate" the text (Venuti 13; Borges 36)? The translator must also apply this same rationale to other cultural differences, i.e., measurements, money, food, etc. If the author makes no changes and retains these cultural differences, he risks losing his intended audience, since a text's having too many foreign words could possibly dissuade readers from finishing the work. If, however, by translating these items into his target language he bridges the cultural gap too much, he also risks losing the foreign flavor, creativity, and identity of the original work. Besides these important considerations, Bertuch faced another challenge when he took on the task of translating Cervantes's novel. Since no good Spanish-German dictionaries were available, he had to rely on the Spanish he had learned from Bachoff von Echt, the idioms and proverbs taught him by the baron's valet who had

served with the diplomat in Spain, and the everyday expressions and speech patterns of the tradesmen who frequented the shop below his first apartment in Weimar.

How, then, does Bertuch's seminal work render Spanish names, measurements, foods, aphorisms, exclamations, profanities and other cultural differences? Where does the author stick to solid, word-for-word renditions or, conversely, have recourse to looser translations; and what are his occasional translation errors? As his translated text clearly indicates, Bertuch decided to take a middle-of-the-road approach as far as either foreignizing or domesticating the German version is concerned. In contrast to Bastel von der Sohle, who translates many of the characters' names, including Don Quixote's, Bertuch retains the majority of them in their original form. The only exception he makes is to Germanize a few first names. Thus, *Juan* becomes *Hans* or *Johann*, *Guillermo* becomes *Wilhelm*, *Pedro* becomes *Peter* and *Luis* becomes *Ludwig*. He also translates all honorifics except "Don," changing *señor* to *Herr*, *emperador* to *Kaiser* [emperor], *preste* to *Priester* [priest], *caballero* to *Ritter* [knight], *Molinera* to *Müllerin* [miller's wife], *San* to *Sanct* [saint], *reina* to *Königin* [queen], *alcaide* to *Burgvogt* [burgrave], etc. And instead of retaining the Spanish versions of Latin and Greek names, Bertuch employs the standard German forms: *Zoilus*, *Xenophon*, *Cato*, *Plutarch*, *Homer*, etc. If a character's name is one invented by Cervantes to incorporate a play on words, Bertuch retains Cervantes's creative version. For example, he kept *Laurcalco* [Laurelfacsimile], *Miulina* [Mewlina], *Malindrania* [wicked], *Alifanfarón* [Alibombast], *Micocolemo* [Monkeywedge], *Brandabarbarán de Boliche* [Brandabarian of Ninepins], *Alfeñiquén del Algarbe* [Mollycoddle of Babble], and *Timonel de/von Carajona* [Helmsman of Guffawjona]. Unfortunately, perhaps because Bertuch himself did not catch the play on words, he rarely footnotes these names so that the reader might better understand the humor they contain.

In addition to these changes, like Bastel von der Sohle, Bertuch slightly alters a name's orthography, choosing to give it a more phonetic spelling in order to accommodate either German pronunciation or orthographic rules. Therefore, he changes: *Zancas* to *Sancas*, *Panza* to *Pansa*, *Rocinante* to *Rozinante*, *Recio* to *Rezio*, *Placerdemivida* to *Plazerdemivida*, *Henares* to *Enares*, *Mallorca* to *Majorka*, *Hircania* to *Hirkanien*, *don Quirieleisón* to *Don Kyrie-Eleison*, *Palomeque* to *Palomeke*, *Jarifa* to *Xarifa*, *Jerez* to *Xerez*, *Jaramilla* to *Xaramilla*, *Trujillo* to *Truxillo*, *Jáurigui* to *Xaurigui*, *Montemayor* to *Montemajor*, and *Candaya* to *Candaja*. The author also frequently replaces with a *v* those names containing a *b* – these two letters represent the same phoneme in Spanish –, e.g., *Cristóbal* becomes *Christoval*, *Córdoba* becomes *Cordova*, *Alcobendas* becomes *Alcovendas*, *Alcarbe* becomes *Alcarve*, *Torralba* becomes *Torralva*, and *Bamba* becomes *Vamba*. However, he does make a few exceptions to this alternation, e.g., *Almodovar*, *Villalpando*, *Zocodover* and *Viso*; and in one instance, he changes the Spanish *v* to a *b*. Thus, *Vizcayo* becomes *Biscayo*.

Here are some additional changes Bertuch makes:

**Measurements:** He domesticates most units of measurement that have no German equivalent, substituting instead an approximation for the Spanish amounts.

Cervantes	Bertuch
dedo [finger] vara [yardstick] celemín [4.6 dry liters] legua [league] seiscientos [600] media docena [½ dozen]	Zoll [inch] Steinwurf [stone's throw] Scheffelsack [bushel] Meile [mile] zehn Schock [1=60] ein halb Mandel [7½]

**Money:** When dealing with money, Bertuch at times chooses to domesticate the text by replacing some Spanish monetary units with terms more familiar to Germans, but then he foreignizes his work by retaining others, in order to keep the Spanish flavor of the novel.

<b>Cervantes</b>	<b>Bertuch</b>
dos ardites [coin of little value] real [coin] un cornado [smallest coin possible]	keinen Pfifferling [not worth a bean] Thaler Heller [penny]
<b>But:</b> doblonos cuartos zoltanís maravedís pesos	Dublonen Cuartos Sultanen Maravedis Pesos

**Food:** As far as food is concerned, the author again varies his tactics. He either uses the Spanish term, e.g., (*olla podrida* [meat and vegetable stew], and *salpicón* [chopped meat with onion, tomato and peppers]), or he replaces the word with something more Germanic:

<b>Cervantes</b>	<b>Bertuch</b>
una hogaza [loaf of bread]  alfení [sugar candy] badeos [watermelons] tortas y pan pintado [pies and iced cake]	ein Stück Pumpernickel [a piece of pumpernickel] Pfefferkuchen [gingerbread] Butterbirnen [pears] Zuckerbrod und Marzipan [sweet bread and marzipan]
cosas de masa [rounds of dough]	Pfannkuchen [pancakes]
<b>But:</b> <i>truchuela, olla podrida, salpicón</i> explained in	

detailed footnotes.	
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Whenever he does retain a Spanish word referring to measurements, money or food, Bertuch usually includes an informative footnote that gives the reader a very good explanation of the concept. These detailed footnotes, much favored by *Aufklärer* or followers of the Enlightenment, also demonstrate the depth of his knowledge of Spain's cuisine and culture. For example, in I, 2 he explains that *truchuela* "heißt gewöhnlicherweise in Spanien eine kleine Forelle, und als Stockfisch, wie es hier der Wirth braucht, ist es Provinzial Wort" ["usually refers to a small trout in Spain and the word 'stockfish,' as the innkeeper uses it here, is a provincial word"].

When introducing the naïve Sancho, Cervantes makes it quite clear in that he is not a scholar but a farmer "without much in the way of brains" (I, 7). The author then sets about capturing Sancho's rustic, uneducated persona by attributing to him, among other things, a lack of familiarity with scholarly vocabulary. In general, Bertuch is able to retain the comical effect evoked by Sancho's inability to pronounce more erudite terms. For example, when Cervantes has Sancho distort the word *ceremonias* [ceremonies] – he pronounces it *cirimonias* – Bertuch has Sancho mispronounce the equivalent *Zeremonie* as *Sarmunie* (II, 32). In another example, Sancho's tongue trips on both *teología* or *Theologie* [theology] and *teólogo* or *Theologe* [theologian], producing *tologías* or *Tologie* (II, 19) and *tólogo* or *Tologe* (II, 27).

Many times, however, the humorous passages involving Sancho Panza contain plays on Spanish words. Due to basic vocabulary and cultural differences between the two languages, only on rare occasions is Bertuch able to maintain a pun with the same word. For instance, when,

in Cervantes's text, Sancho confuses the lady's name *Fili* with *hilo* [thread], Bertuch has him turn it into *Filtze* [filly] (I, 22). In most other cases, though, this was not possible. Therefore, Bertuch maintains Cervantes's comical effect by continuing to have Sancho utter nonsensical words:

<b>Cervantes</b>	<b>Bertuch</b>
Fierabras	Frobias
Baccalaureus	Barklars
Calculo Ptolomäi	Bulculo Bartelmäi
Mambrino	Malandrin
Madasima	Magimasa
Universidad Salamanca	Umverstät Salmanka

**Adages, Proverbs and Sancho-isms:** Another means by which Bertuch frequently domesticates the text is the way he renders the novel's numerous adages, especially those uttered by Sancho Panza. Although in some instances there are direct correlations between the languages, for the most part the two cultures express the same idea in very different, and very colorful, ways. Thus, by using common German adages, his readers could easily relate to Don Quixote's faithful squire.

<b>Cervantes</b>	<b>Bertuch</b>
¡esas burlas a un cuñado! [try those tricks on your brother-in-law]	den Sattel legt auf ein ander Pferd [put that saddle on another horse]
y no miel sobre hojuelas [not honey on hotcakes]	immer aus dem Regen in die Dachtraufe [always out of the rain and into the downspouts]
Cuando a Roma fueres, haz como vieres [When you're in Rome, do as you see]	Wenn man unter Wolfen ist, so muß man mit ihnen heulen [When you're among

<p>no ande buscando tres pies al gato [don't go looking for a 3-legged cat]</p>	<p>wolves, you have to howl with them]</p>
<p>de mis viñas vengo, no sé nada [I tend to my vines; it's their business, not mine]</p>	<p>bekümmert Euch nicht um ungelegte Eyer [don't worry about unlaied eggs]</p> <p>ich stecke meine Nase nicht in anderer Leute Broduck [I don't stick my nose into other people's breadbags]</p>
<p>de noche todos los gatos son pardos [at night all cats are gray]</p>	<p>in der Nacht sind alle Kühe schwarz [at night all cows are black]</p>

**Alliterative / Rhyming Elements Added:** Scholars are not sure why Bertuch chose to include as many alliterative and rhyming elements in his translation as he did. Perhaps, being a good Protestant, he was influenced by Martin Luther who incorporated such alliterative and/or rhyming phrases, which were part of everyday German, into his works, thus giving them an official stamp of approval. Perhaps Bertuch was influenced by Bastel von der Sohle who also employed numerous such expressions. And maybe the few rhyming pairs that do appear in Cervantes's text caught his eye, e.g., *desechado y desdeñado* [scorned and disdained] (I, 26). It is much more likely, however, that he was imitating the use of alliterative expressions found in devotional literature and calendars that could be found in virtually every household in Germany (Wilpert 319) and which had therefore made their way into everyday conversation. Whatever the reason, Bertuch's translation abounds with them. Thus, we see:

<p>Rhat und Tat [moral and practical support] Lug und Trug [lies and deception] frisch und feucht [fresh and damp] Gestalten, Gespenster und Geister [figures, ghosts and spirits]</p>	<p>Hülle und Fülle [in abundance] Sack und Pack [bag and bundle] schlammig und schlüpfrig [muddy and slippery] verfluchter Flegel und Freßwanst [you damned lout and pot-belly]</p>
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**Religion:** If Bertuch includes so many alliterative and rhyming elements due to Luther's influence, perhaps this next point is another reflection of his strong religious beliefs. Throughout the translation, Bertuch freely adds numerous phrases that refer to God or Christianity, or he rewords Cervantes's expressions in order to incorporate a religious sentiment. However, once again, these additions could be due to the ubiquitous calendars and popular devotional literature.

**Religious expressions added:**

<b>Cervantes</b>	<b>Bertuch</b>
en menos de un abrir y cerrar de ojos [in the wink of an eye]	ehe man noch ein Vaterunser betet [before you can say another <i>Our Father</i> ]
en todo el orbe [in all the world]	unter Gottes Sonne [under God's sun]
no sé [I don't know]	weiß der liebe Gott [the good Lord knows]

**Catholic vs. Lutheran:** When Cervantes's lines refer to the terminology, traditions or prayers of the Catholic Church, Bertuch sometimes retains them, sometimes omits them, and other times rephrases them to make them more Lutheran. For example, in I, 17 and 22 and in II, 41/9 the author retains the names of prayers addressed to the Virgin Mary, i.e., the Hail Mary and Salve, that other Protestant authors tend to replace with *Vater Unser* [Our Father] (Melz 340). In II, 26 Bertuch, like other Lutheran translators, also replaces the Creed with *Vater Unser* – although he does retain the name of this prayer in other parts of his work. Therefore, the Spanish phrase *en menos de dos credos* [in less time than it takes to say two Creeds] becomes *in*

*weniger als zwey Vaterunser* [in less time than it takes to say two Our Fathers] (II, 26). Here are other examples of his rewording in order to avoid certain Catholic phrases:

<b>Cervantes</b>	<b>Bertuch</b>
el cura y el sacristán [the priest and the sacristan] los dos católicos amantes [the two Catholic lovers] el tal vicario tomó la confesión a la señora [the same vicar heard the lady's Confession]	Herr Magister und der Schulmeister [the Master's degree holder and the teacher] den beiden christlichen Liebchen [the two Christian lovers] der Capellan sah dasVersprechen [... heard the lady's promise]

In I, 40/12 Bertuch completely omits the following passage that refers to the un-Lutheran practice of praying to the Virgin Mary: *y que tuviese cuidado de encomendarnos a Lela Marién con todas aquellas oraciones que la cautiva le había enseñado* [and that she should be sure to commend all of us to Lela Marién [[the Virgin Mary]] with the prayers the slave woman had taught her]. Instead, he writes: *und daß ihr Rath so gut sey, als hätte ihr ihn Lela Marien gegeben* [and that her advice was as good as if the Virgin Mary had given it to her]. In contrast to these omissions or alterations, in I, 5 and I, 18 Bertuch adds the following phrase, one that refers to a Catholic practice, to Cervantes's text: *und kreuzigte und segnete sich* [and crossed and blessed himself]. And in II, 55/23 he replaces Cervantes's reference to hell [*infierno*] with *Fegfeuer* [purgatory], a most decidedly un-Lutheran concept.

**Profanities and Vulgarities:** Vocabulary referring to excrement, bodily functions, and vulgarities like *puta* [whore], *bastardo* [bastard], and *hideputa* [son of a bitch] are retained. For extra flavor, perhaps because he was an unfulfilled author, he threw a few more in:

<b>Cervantes</b>	<b>Bertuch</b>
<p>miente [she is lying]</p> <p>ladrón [thief]</p> <p>las posas [my bottom]</p> <p>estas duennas [those duennas]</p> <p>pintor [painter]</p> <p>destraídas mozas [profligate wenches]</p>	<p>lügt sie ... wie eine Staupbesen-Hure [... like a battle-axe of a whore]</p> <p>Hurensohn [son of a bitch]</p> <p>den Arsch [my ass]</p> <p>die armen Huren [the poor whores]</p> <p>Saukerl [bastard]</p> <p>Metzen [whores, strumpets]</p>
<p><b>But:</b></p> <p>para ponerme la mano en la horcajadura [to put my hand in my crotch]</p> <p>A Sanchica tu hija fueron las aguas sin sentido de puro contento [Your daughter Sanchica wet herself without realizing it, she was so happy]</p>	<p><b>Rephrased in order to avoid an indelicate expression:</b></p> <p>daß ich immer die Hände in die Tasche stecken soll [... my hands in my pocket]</p> <p>Sanchica hat sich vor lauter Freuden gewälzt [Sanchica rolled around with joy]</p>
<p><b>But:</b></p> <p>aunque tú más me digas [no matter what you say]</p> <p>llorón [tearful]</p>	<p><b>Vulgarized Cervantes's phrase but then used asterixes to avoid writing an offensive word:</b></p> <p>du dich be***est [screw yourself, shit on yourself]</p> <p>Heul***sch [whining ass]</p>

**Translation Mistakes:** Considering the fact that he had no Spanish-German dictionary to help him in his efforts (something that he remedied when he published his own in 1790) and the short time he had to learn Spanish, Bertuch's work is remarkably free of translation mistakes. The ones that do appear are minor and do not really mislead the reader:

<b>Cervantes</b>	<b>Bertuch</b>
ahechar [to winnow]	fegen [to sweep]

después de mañana [the day after tomorrow] los caballos del Sol [the horses of the Sun] aquel delicado infante [that delicate child] que se ahogó en la Herradura [who drowned at La Herradura]	morgen [tomorrow] die Haare der Sonne [the hairs of the sun] diesen zarten Prinzen [that delicate prince] und sich im Schmiedeteiche ersäufte [who drowned in the smithy's pond]
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**Translation Coups:** In some places Bertuch achieves a word-for-word translation. And despite the frequent alterations he makes to Cervantes's text, there are also numerous instances where his translation is extremely close to the original, as seen in the following review – a review that, to the best of my knowledge, has not been previously mentioned in Bertuch scholarship – which appeared shortly after the publication of the first few volumes in the respected literary journal *Journal zur Kunstgeschichte und zur allgemeinen Litteratur* [*Journal of Art History and General Literature*]. The article, entitled “*Leben und Thaten des weisen Junkers Don Quixote von Mancha. Erster und zweyter Theil*” [*Life and Deeds of the Wise Nobleman Don Quixote of la Mancha. Parts I and II*] is not very flattering at first. In it, the anonymous author expresses his dissatisfaction with Bertuch's efforts, calling the translation “flüchtig” [“superficial”] (396). In the same sentence, he also compares Bertuch's effort to an “umgewandte Tapete” [“a tapestry seen from the back side”], perhaps paraphrasing Don Quixote when, in II, 62, he says: “... el traducir de una lengua en otra ... es como quien mira los tapices flamencos por el revés, que aunque se veen las figuras, son llenas de hilos que las escurecen y no se veen con la lisura y tez de la haz” [“... translating from one language to another ... is like looking at Flemish tapestries from the wrong side, for although the figures are visible, they are covered by threads that obscure them, and cannot be seen with the smoothness and color of the right side”]. However, the reviewer then admires Bertuch's ability to capture the humor of a particular scene faithfully:

Das achte Kapitel, des 2ten Theils, ... meines Bedünkens eines der launischsten im ganzen Buche, ist Herrn Bertuch sehr gut gerathen, und er hat das Drollichste des Spanischen so gut ausgedruckt, daß ich eben so herzlich bey dessen Durchlesung lachte, als ich allemal thun muß, wenn ich es in der Sprache des unglücklichen Cervantes lese.

[Mr. Bertuch did a very good job on the eighth chapter of the second part, in my opinion one of the most capricious in the whole book, and he captured the most comical aspect of the Spanish so well, that I laughed as heartily reading it as I always do when I read it in the language of the unfortunate Cervantes.] (398-99)

**Shows His Knowledge of Spanish Culture:** Throughout the translation Bertuch displays his solid understanding of Spain's culture by correctly translating place names usually missed by other translators and by including numerous, detailed footnotes to explain the historical significance of items. From these footnotes, it is obvious that Bertuch had a strong command not only of the Spanish language but also of its foods, customs, history and geography, and that he felt compelled to share this extensive knowledge with his readers so that they might more fully appreciate Cervantes's vocabulary, puns, and numerous literary and historical references.

**He Corrects Minor Mistakes Made by Cervantes:** In an attempt to be helpful to his beloved author and also in order not to mislead the novel's readers regarding certain details, Bertuch quietly corrects minor factual mistakes made by Cervantes; something he mentions he will do in his introduction. For example, in I, 7 Cervantes refers to Sancho Panza's wife as *Juana Gutiérrez*, yet only four lines later calls her *Mari Gutiérrez*. Bertuch, making no note of this variation, simply gives her the name *Marie* in both places. In another instance he corrects Cervantes's mix-up of Busiris (Egyptian king) and Osiris (Egyptian god), and in I, 25, he corrects Cervantes's confusion between Perseus and Theseus. When Bertuch finds it impossible to correct an oversight by Cervantes unobtrusively, he footnotes the discrepancy. For example, in

I, 20 Cervantes has the illiterate Sancho Panza refer to maxims by Cato the Censor. Bertuch translates the passage but notes this incongruity in a footnote:

Daß Sancho, der kurz zuvor nicht einmal lesen und schreiben kann, hier vom Römischen Cato, und dessen Sentenzen schwazt, ist freylich eine von den kleinen Autor-Sünden des guten Cervantes, ob denen ihn seine kritischen Höllenrichter mächtig hart angelassen haben.

[That Sancho, who just before cannot even read and write, discusses here the Roman Cato and his maxims is, of course, one of the good Cervantes's small auctorial transgressions because of which his critical, diabolical judges reproved him quite harshly.]

### **Conclusion**

So, after all of these comparisons, there are some conclusions we can make about Bertuch's efforts. The first one is that no, Bertuch did not offer his subscribers a word-for-word rendition of his beloved novel, although in his mind, I am sure he felt it was. Secondly, yes, the author subjectively abridged or eliminated novellas, poems, paragraphs and words, and added his own Germanic touches. Yet, despite these modifications, his work is an extremely lively and entertaining rendition. It is also a remarkable achievement simply because this dyed-in-the-wool man of the Enlightenment, an author in his own right, who had very decided opinions about how Cervantes's masterpiece should be constructed, was the first German ever to translate the work from the original Spanish. His lack of formal instruction in the Spanish language makes his feat even more noteworthy. And due to the immense popularity of this particular novel among Germans, his work was an assured success.

The influence Bertuch's translation had on his contemporaries and later authors, especially the Romantics, cannot be overstated. This seminal work opened the door to all future translations of *Don Quixote* published in Germany. In his article entitled "Spanien und die spanische Litteratur im Lichte der deutschen Kritik und Poesie" ["Spain and Spanish Literature

in Light of German Critique and Poetry”], Farinelli summarizes the incredible importance of Bertuch’s translation thusly:

Er drang in einen schönen Garten hinein, zählte die Blumen und achtete dagegen auf ihre Farben und auf ihren Duft nicht. Für einen unbarmherzigen Verstümmler nach Art des Florian müssen wir aber Bertuch nicht halten. Seine Übersetzung machte Epoche. Mit ihrer Hülfe konnte Cervantes Geist in alle Schichten des deutschen Volkes eindringen

[He entered a beautiful garden, counted the flowers but paid no attention to their colors or fragrance. However, we must not consider Bertuch a merciless mutilator in the style of Florian. His translation was epoch-making. With its help Cervantes’s spirit was able to penetrate all strata of German society. (321).

The first part of Farinelli’s comment notwithstanding, my opinion is that Bertuch’s translation was absolutely appropriate for his times and his readers. The 1775 publication, along with his magazine on Iberian literature and theater, helped satisfy his countrymen’s hunger for Spanish literature in German translation. Furthermore, his numerous, detailed footnotes conformed to the literary style of the Enlightenment. As this study reveals, although it was not a word-for-word rendition, his translation did indeed capture the colors, fragrance and the very essence of Cervantes’s work.

Thus, thanks to Bertuch’s work, which was greatly admired by adherents of the Enlightenment, Germans in general and followers of the new Classicism and later Romanticism would come to know the *Quixote*. Bertuch’s translation, although written with the mindset of an *Aufklärer*, was respected and appreciated by both Classicists and Romantics because of its lively style and pioneering importance. Therefore, it was through these numerous translations, the seed for which was sown by Friedrich Justin Bertuch, that Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra’s *Don Quixote* was disseminated among German-speaking peoples. For this reason, if for no other, Friedrich Justin Bertuch rightfully deserves his place in Germany’s stellar literary history.

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