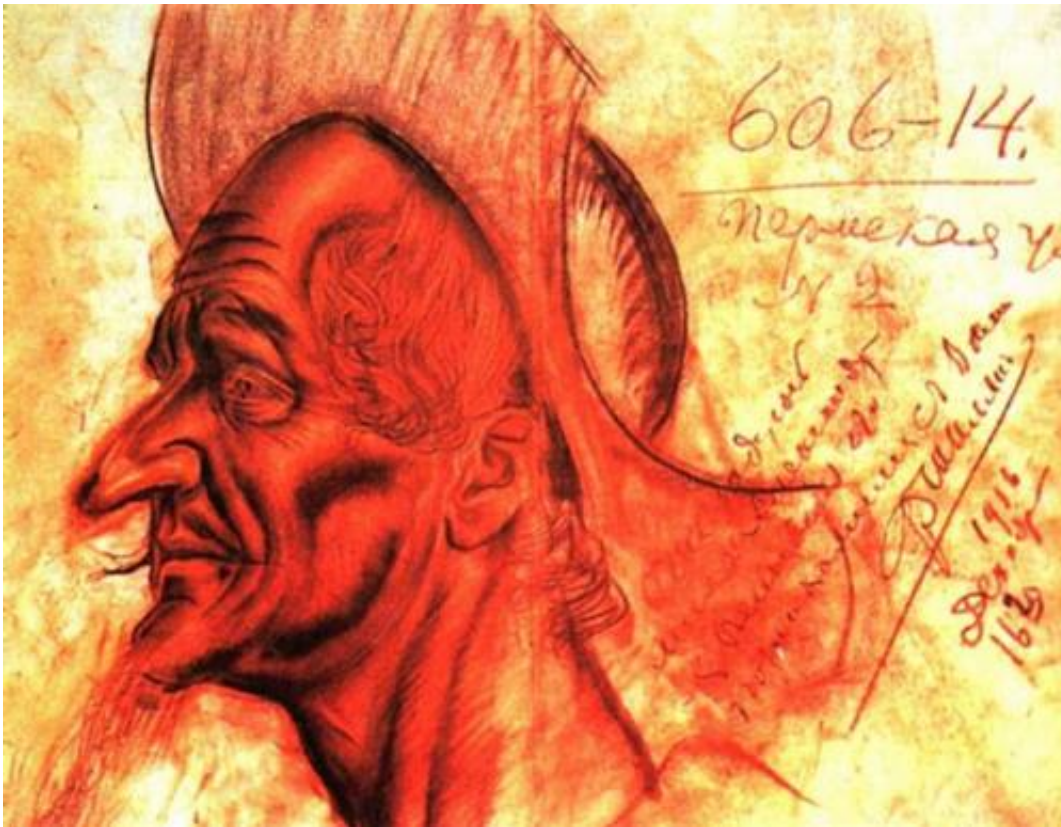


# Cervantes DNA confirmation unlikely, KU expert says

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Anthropologists are seeking to identify whether 400-year-old remains discovered this week are those of Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes, who wrote "The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha."

Patricia W. Manning, a University of Kansas associate professor of Spanish and Portuguese, researches early modern Spanish literature and addresses the significance of the search and attempt to identify Cervantes' remains.

## **Q: What is the significance of searching for and verifying these are Cervantes' remains?**

Manning: This year, 2015, is the 400th anniversary of the publication of the second part of Miguel de Cervantes' novel "El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha (The Ingenious Gentleman of La Mancha)", most commonly known in English as "Don Quixote". Next year, 2016, will be the 400th anniversary of the author's death, so these two anniversaries created interest in searching for the author's remains, with the goal of creating some type of monument to the author at his burial site.

The "Ruta del Quijote" ("Route of the Quijote"), which identifies the route that Don Quixote and Sancho travel in the novel, has become a popular tourist attraction, so I expect that this convent will become a point of greater interest to tourists as the site of Cervantes' interment.

## **Q: How has this story been viewed in Spain?**

Manning: The Spanish press has been following the search in some detail, from the results of ground penetrating radar that indicated several burial sites in the crypts underneath the Convento de las Trinitarias in Madrid to the news that the remains belonging to Cervantes, his wife and a number of other people have been discovered.

At the same time, there has been some criticism of relatively high levels of governmental spending on cultural projects at a time when so many people are still suffering as a result of Spain's economic downturn. As

the Wall Street Journal article points out, the headline in El Mundo, a Madrid newspaper, about the discovery pokes fun at the fact that it is rather unlikely that Cervantes' remains can be definitively identified. Since the location of the grave of Cervantes' sister also is unknown, even if DNA can be recovered from the Madrid remains, it is unlikely that a DNA comparison can be made to definitively identify the author.

**Q: Can you describe his legacy to literature in a nutshell? Whether these turn out to be his remains or not, would it change anything about his legacy as it now stands?**

Manning: Miguel de Cervantes published the two parts of "Don Quixote" in 1605 and 1615. Many scholars consider this book to be the first modern novel. So, Cervantes had a significant impact on the creation of literary form that is significant to us. Moreover, the novel's protagonists, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, have become the prototype for the unlikely pairings of opposites that are so common in television and film, such as "buddy movies." The discovery of the author's [remains](#) will not alter this legacy, but it will more definitively associate this convent with Cervantes.

Provided by University of Kansas

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