

HONORÉ DAUMIER

1808 Marseille - Valmondois 1879

Don Quichotte et Sancho Pansa

Charcoal, red chalk, and crayon conté on brownish paper. Executed in the 1860's.

Traces of a list of words and numbers in grey pencil.

With the fragment of a charcoal sketch of a standing figure (verso) [Fig. 1].

145/153 x 232 mm

PROVENANCE: Roger Marx (1859-1913), Paris – (Strolin) – Carl O. Schniewind, Chicago/New York – Anonymous sale: C. G. Boerner, *The C. O. Schniewind Collection, New York*, Leipzig 1933, no. 388. – Mr. and Mrs. Richard S. Davis, Wayzata (Minnesota) – Private collection, London

LITERATURE: *Catalogue de la Vente Roger-Marx*, Paris 1914, II, no. 118 – Erich Klossowski, *Honoré Daumier*, Munich 1908 (3rd ed. 1923) no. 46 B – Karl Eric Maison, *Honoré Daumier, Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings*, II, Oxford 1987, reprint San Francisco 1996, no. 434, p. 147, plate 147 – Johannes Hartau, *Don Quijote in der Kunst*, Berlin 1987, pl. 200 - Colta Ives, Margret Stuffmann, Martin Sonnabend, *Honoré Daumier Zeichnungen*, exhib. cat., Städtische Galerie im Städelschen Kunstinstitut, Graphische Sammlung, Frankfurt am Main 1992-3, p. 246, no. 125, ill.

Daumier created a significant number of drawings and paintings based on the novel *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha* which Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) published in two parts in 1605 and 1615. Along with the theatre and the legal profession, the absurd 'heroic deeds' of the self-appointed nobleman are therefore one of the significant themes in Daumier's *œuvre*. While a fascination with fictitious material may at first seem strange for an artist so firmly committed to Realism, the connecting link lies in the pleasure Daumier took in caricature, which can highlight certain aspects of human behaviour in a particularly telling way. It is all the more surprising that these works were little known during Daumier's lifetime and have only gradually been rediscovered since.

Cervantes's hero Don Quixote lives in the illusory world of the courtly romance. He embarks with the utmost bravado on a series of supposed adventures that generally end disastrously for him, exposing him to ridicule. He is accompanied on his sorties by his 'groom' Sancho Panza, a peasant who is his master's opposite in every respect. The dissimilarities between the two of them – the short, fat, down-to-earth peasant on the stocky donkey and his lean, lanky, day-dreaming master on his emaciated mare – must have stimulated Daumier's sense of comedy and caricature to an extreme. The tragicomic universal hero he found in the character of Don Quixote oscillates between reality and fantasy, incapable of distinguishing ideals from facts.

Daumier presented his first study based on an episode in Cervantes's novel at the Paris Salon in January 1851. It was titled *Don Quixote on the Way to Don Camacho's Wedding*.¹ In the twenty years that followed he repeatedly produced variations on the Don Quixote theme, representing Don Quixote

¹ Maison, op. cit., I-33, dated c.1850.

alone, together with Sancho Panza, riding out as knight errant and ‘groom’, in repose and in a wide range of episodes that often involve Don Quixote’s nag Rosinante. He frequently altered situations described in the novel to suit his own ideas or departed from the narrative.

Daumier depicted the subject – Sancho following Don Quixote on one of his sorties – in a number of paintings and drawings, although many of these show the two men side by side. Our drawing depicts a different situation: Don Quixote can be seen in the distance, his eye-catching silhouette outlined against the sky, while the bulky figure of his faithful companion Sancho occupies the foreground.

As Margret Stuffmann pointed out our drawing relates to a painting with a similar composition belonging to the Armand Hammer collection in Los Angeles [fig. 1]² and dated it to the 1860s³. Both works present a very similar portrayal of Don Quixote’s loyal companion Sancho, who can be seen far behind on his donkey, his head tilted forward, resigned to his fate.



Fig. 1: Don Quichotte et Sancho Pansa; verso

² Maison, op. cit., I-206. Oil on canvas, monogrammed lower left: *h. D.* 40,2 x 33,0 cm.

³ Margret Stuffmann et al. op. cit., p. 246.



Fig. 1: *Don Quichotte et Sancho Pansa*, oil on canvas, monogrammed lower left: h. D. 40,2 x 33,0 cm. Armand Hammer Collection, Los Angeles