

The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of Tobias Smollett

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In 1971 will occur the bicentennial anniversary of the death of Tobias George Smollett, one of the major English novelists of the eighteenth century. In commemoration of this anniversary The University of Iowa Center for Textual Studies is editing *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of Tobias Smollett* to be published by The University of Iowa. This is not the complete works. None of Smollett's translations, compilations, historical works, poems, or plays will be included. This will be a seven-volume edition of his five novels, his travels, and his prose satire, *The History and Adventures of an Atom*. It is by virtue of these works, particularly his best novels, that Smollett is still read and enjoyed.

There has never been a correct edition of Smollett's major works. In addition to the changes made by the author, many errors, major and minor, have crept into the text through printers' errors or faulty editorial procedures. Most of the changes have gone unnoticed. Smollett's first novel, *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, for example, was revised several times by the author, and his second novel, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* had, in addition to smaller revisions, seventy pages deleted between the first edition and the second edition. There have been no subsequent editions which reflect these revisions and, until recently, it has been very difficult to find a copy of *Peregrine Pickle* with the seventy pages, as no later editions of the novel used the first edition as copy-text. Clearly a text which carries Smollett's authority, insofar as this can be determined, is needed.

Multiple copies of all editions which might have been revised by Smollett are currently being collated under the direction of the author, who is General Editor and Textual Editor for the edition. In addition to providing a section of textual notes in which the editor gives the principles governing his choice of copy-text and lists the variants he has discovered and rejected from the copy-text, he will prepare an

introduction dealing with the composition, publication and early reception of the work as well as explanatory notes that will identify obscure persons, places and objects, and the various literary, social and political allusions. The following scholars are supplying introductions and explanatory notes for the edition: Robert Scholes, The University of Iowa, *The Adventures of Roderick Random*; William Hagestad, St. Louis University, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*; Carl Klaus, The University of Iowa, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*; James J. Hill, Jr., St. Louis University *The Adventures of Launcelot Greaves*; Robert Kelley, The University of Iowa, *Travels through France and Italy*; Barry Slepian, University of Pennsylvania, *The History and Adventures of an Atom*; and Thomas Preston, Loyola University of the South, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*.

Although The University of Iowa Library is fortunate in having first editions of all these works, the Library needs the other editions which appeared during the eighteenth century. Often later editions of a work are valuable for the textual editor because they represent a later revision of the text. Although these editions are seldom expensive, they may be difficult to find simply because they have never been collected. It has been thought for years, for example, that no copy of the fourth edition of *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1755) existed, although the printing ledgers of William Strahan indicate that it was printed in an edition of 1000 copies. Fortunately one copy has been located and has been made available to the editor through the courtesy of its owner, Mr. John Emerson of Lowestoft, Suffolk. This is an important edition because it contains variants not present in the other editions and it contains the first printing of Smollett's *Apologue*, in which he replies to those readers who persisted in believing the novel was autobiographical and particularly to those who believed themselves to be represented in the novel:

. . . I beseech thee . . . while thou art employed in the perusal of the following sheets; . . . seek not to appropriate to thyself that which equally belongs to five hundred different people. If thou should'st meet with a character that reflects thee in some ungracious particular, keep thy own counsel; consider that one feature makes not a face, and that tho' thou art, perhaps, distinguished by a bottle nose, twenty of thy neighbors may be in the same predicament.

Hopefully all editions and issues necessary for the completion of the edition will be located shortly and become available in the Library in the form of books or microfilms. The target date for the completion of the edition is the fall of 1971, at which time all of the major works of one of the greatest English novelists will be available in accurate and readable texts for the first time.