

Richard Ford's *Gatherings from Spain* and Joyce: A Possible Source for Some Spanish Words in *Ulysses*

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Abstract

Joyce included several Spanish words in *Ulysses*, although his sources for this lexis are still unknown. Richard Ford's *Gatherings from Spain* includes words in Spanish that are not very common in Spain, and some of them appear in *Ulysses*. This overlap indicates that Ford's book might be one of the thus far unidentified sources for *Ulysses*.

Joyce's *Ulysses* includes several Spanish references and words, although they are admittedly rather few if we compare their number to the greater amount of other foreign references.

This scarcity is not at all surprising, if one bears in mind the little contact that Joyce had with both Spanish people and culture. As a result, his knowledge of the Spanish language was minimal, even though Ellmann asserts that he took some Spanish lessons (*JIII* 607). The biographies of Joyce bear witness to this lack, as does Joyce's library that has been preserved in the SUNY Buffalo collection, as García Tortosa points out.¹

However, so as to create a veritable Molly Bloom, Joyce felt forced to include some Spanish words, and thus most of the Spanish references that are found in *Ulysses* are connected to Bloom's wife. Aware of both his own ignorance and his desire to portray reality, Joyce made Bloom think "[f]orgotten little Spanish she knew" (*U* 4.60-61), since he expected that attentive readers would figure out that someone who had spent her childhood and adolescence in the British colony at the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula would know the Spanish language. Nevertheless, this was one of the flaws that make his female character unreal, although Molly boasts that she would be able to teach Spanish to

Stephen (*U* 18.1476), since a person who had had Spanish nurses such as Mrs. Rubio would have remembered many Spanish words.²

Some of the Spanish terms in *Ulysses* are typical, common expressions that may be found in any textbook for learners of Spanish, as has been demonstrated for *Finnegans Wake*.³ Thus, terms like “*palabras*” (words) (*U* 9.577), “*señorita*” (young lady) (*U* 13.1282, 15.1057, 18.1405), “*Bueñas noches, señorita Blanca. Que calle es esta?*” (it should read *buenas* instead of *bueñas*) (Good evening, Miss Blanca. Which street is this?) (*U* 15.216), or “the *criada*” (female servant) (*U* 18.1482-83), do not necessarily indicate Joyce’s reading of any specific work. Since Joyce lived in such cosmopolitan cities as Trieste, Rome or Paris, and since he was fond of drinking in bars and cafés, it is not unlikely that he met some Spanish visitor or sailor who may have taught him such words.

In contrast, other Spanish words that are not so common are also found within the pages of *Ulysses*, and thus written sources have to be uncovered to explain these words’ appearance. The matter is complicated by the fact that the books Joyce used to obtain information about Gibraltar do not include many Spanish words. As a consequence, he had to turn to other sources to learn the Spanish words that he included in his most famous novel. Taking this into account, the purpose of this paper is to try to discover what his sources for those terms were.

While most of the Spanish words that appear in the *Wake* have been shown to be taken from the Berlitz School’s *Libro Español*,⁴ there are other words included in *Ulysses* and that cannot be found in that source. Among the books reported to have been used by Joyce to learn about Spain, Richard Ford’s *A Handbook for Travellers in Spain* has been named a couple of times, though discussion has been in broad terms and no attention has been paid to the Spanish language that Ford’s works include.⁵

Although we agree with these findings in admitting that Joyce probably knew Ford’s *Handbook*, we feel inclined to think that he used the same writer’s *Gatherings from Spain* to borrow some Spanish expressions, as we seek to prove below.

Our basic argument rests on the fact that, although some words in the *Handbook* are written in Spanish and there is also a section in it holding some Spanish lexis,⁶ none of the terms included appears in *Ulysses*. In contrast, *Ulysses* does include some Spanish words that may have been taken from *Gatherings from Spain*.

Having lived and traveled throughout Spain for several years, Ford, commissioned by the Geographical Society, published his *Handbook*, and the book on Spain became quite successful.⁷ As a consequence, the *Handbook* became the most reliable book about Spain written in the English language in the 19th century, together with George Borrow's *The Bible in Spain*.

As the reading public expected a second edition but had complained about the first's complexity and small type, Ford decided to publish the *Handbook* again but in a new format, with rather fewer pages, omitting many learned references, and addressing his new book to women, in terms that nowadays would surely have banned the book from publication, since it is clearly sexist:

Many ladies, some of whom even contemplate a visit to Spain, having condescended to signify to the public their regrets, that the *Handbook* was printed in a form, which rendered its perusal irksome, and also to express a wish that the type had been larger, the Author, to whom these distinguished compliments were communicated, has hastened to submit to their indulgence a few extracts and selections.⁸

Ford also included some new material in *Gatherings from Spain* and so devotes two chapters to the art of bullfighting, basically the same essay that he had written as an article that had been published in 1838 by the *Quarterly Review*.⁹

This is the main reason that we have to favor Joyce's use of this latter book. There are indeed some references to bullfighting in *Ulysses*, and since Ford's *Handbook* does not offer much information on bullfighting, we think that Joyce took some Spanish words on the topic from *Gatherings from Spain*, especially taking into account that the books on Gibraltar simply name the bullring at the nearby town of La Línea.¹⁰

We now shall proceed to list these and other words, both in Spanish and in English, from *Gatherings* that appear in *Ulysses*. After, we will identify those that do not seem to have been taken from anywhere else. We make reference to page numbers in a modern edition of Ford's *Gatherings* and follow the words' order of occurrence in this book:

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| <i>Gatherings from Spain</i> | <i>Ulysses</i> |
| "fine words, <i>palabras</i> " 3 | "In words of words for words, <i>palabras</i> " (<i>U</i> 9.577) |

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| “ <i>posada</i> ” 54; “The genuine Spanish town inn is called the <i>posada</i> ” 161 | “ <i>posadas</i> ” (U 18.1595) |
| “and the Spaniards mounted unrepining cuckolds, <i>los cornudos pacientes</i> , on asses.” 70 | “ <i>coronado</i> ” (U 18.1394) |
| “by a practical <i>torero</i> ” 282 | “ <i>nude torero</i> ” (U 17.1810-13) |
| “ <i>Plaza de Toros</i> ” 282 | “the Plaza de Toros at La Linea, Spain (where O’Hara of the Camerons had slain the bull)” (U 17.1986-87) |
| “What <i>Manolas</i> , What reds and yellows” 283 | “singing the Manola” (U 18.441” |
| “the distinguished ladies wear on these occasions white lace mantillas” 283 | “the women were as bad in their nice white mantillas” (U 18.632-33) |
| “The <i>matadores</i> or killers, come behind them [the <i>chulos</i>].” 286 <i>matador</i> (293) | “ <i>matador Gomez</i> ” (U 18.629) |
| “If the animal be baffled . . . the fierce lord of the arena is encouraged with roars of compliments, <i>Bravo, toro. Viva toro. Well done, bull!</i> ” 288 | “the brutes of men shouting <i>bravo toro</i> ” (U 18. 631-32) |
| “It is in truth a piteous sight to see the poor mangled horses treading out their entrails, and yet gallantly carrying off their riders unhurt. But as in the pagan sacrifices, the quiverous intestines, trembling with life, formed the most propitious omens” 289 | “ripping all the whole insides out of those poor horses” (U 18.633) |
| “The <i>banderilleros</i> go right up to him, holding the arrows at the shaft, and pointing the barbs at the bull” 293 | “the <i>banderilleros</i> with the sashes” (U 18. 630-31) |

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| <p>“Poached eggs are at all events within the grasp of the meanest culinary capacity. They are called <i>Huevos estrellados</i>, starred eggs.” 125</p> | <p>“dos huevos estrellados” (<i>U</i> 18.1486-87)</p> |
| <p>“the author, who as every true Spanish Hidalgo very probably concludes on similar, and in every occasion, ‘kisses their feet.’” 325</p> | <p>“I kiss the feet of your señorita” (<i>U</i> 18.1405)</p> |

We have not included in the table above geographical names, such as Tarifa, Ronda or Algeciras, since they were easily found in Gilbard’s *Gibraltar Guidebook* or on any available map of the Peninsula.

After having listed the terms that appear in both works, we feel forced to discard some words that Joyce surely learnt from a different source. This is the case of “*manola*,” which refers to a type of carriage in *Gatherings* and to a song in *Ulysses*, respectively. The word “*coronado*” is rather spurious, since apart from having different spellings in both works, we cannot know if it is Joyce’s misspelling or an intentional mistake assigned to Molly. In the same way, “*posadas*” may have been seen in another source, as Ford does not relate it to Ronda.

On the contrary, the “*huevos estrellados*” seem to be a direct borrowing. Ford does not state from which region they are a typical dish, and Joyce clearly ignores—as he does in the case of “*pisto madrilenó*” (i.e. from Madrid) (*U* 18.720)—that such a dish is not named that way in the south of Spain. Similarly, the kissing of the feet, a literal translation of a polite Spanish expression, seems to have been read in *Gatherings*.

But as we pointed out above, the references to bullfighting make Ford’s influence clearer, although we must express some reservations in this regard. The words “*plaza de toros*,” referring to the one in La Línea specifically, may have been written on a postcard, as we have explained in a previous article.¹¹ The words “*torero*” or “*matador*” can easily have been heard or read, as they are quite common bullfighting terms, and most foreign travelers refer to them. In fact, George Borrow, a friend of Richard Ford’s, had written some years before: “‘Not know me!’ replied the being. ‘I am Sevilla, the torero. I know you well; you are the friend of Baltasarito, the national, who is a friend of mine, and a very good subject.’”¹²

Nevertheless, the noun “*banderillero*” is more specific, and Joyce must have seen this word printed. The scene of the bull attacking a horse

surprised many foreign authors and must have been borrowed from a written source. Besides, women wearing "white mantillas" were usual in posters, but Joyce had to have read the name in a book, since it was not printed on the posters.

Perhaps the clearest borrowing, as it is a very strange term, is the expression "*Bravo toro.*" A "*toro bravo*" is the name of the animal species and, although Spanish allows an adjective to precede the noun in noun phrases, it is an expression that a Spanish speaker would never use. As a consequence, it is a foreign phrase, English in this case, alluding to the audience's cheering of the bull in the fight, something a Spaniard would hardly do. "*Bravo*" here is not an adjective, but an interjection of Italian origin. The expression has been used in English publications several times, and Ford may have seen this expression and other bullfighting terms in another British traveler to Spain, Joseph Townsend, rector of Pewsey, Wilts, and late of Clare-Hall, Cambridge. Townsend, after visiting Madrid, used some Spanish words about the topic in his *A Journey Through Spain in the Years 1786 and 1787*. As regards the present study, we notice "*banderilleros,*" "*matador,*" and "*bravo toro,*"¹³ and Townsend also describes the "*mantillas*".¹⁴ Probably due to the success that Ford's book attained, the term occurred some years later in other English publications, as in Matilda Betham Edwards' *Through Spain to the Sahara*,¹⁵ or in Oscar Wilde's "The Birthday of the Infanta".¹⁶

As a matter of fact, there is not much to add about Ford's possible influence on Joyce's *Ulysses*. Honestly speaking, the biographies, the letters and the author's libraries cannot offer us any data regarding the actual reading of Ford's *Gatherings from Spain* by James Joyce. Therefore, this paper is only a conjecture, but the "*huevos estrellados,*" the "kissing of the feet," and the remarks on bullfighting must have been read in a book different from those used for the Gibraltar information, apart from Joyce's having glimpsed some pictures of a bullfight. Furthermore, there were not so many books about Spain in a language that Joyce could read at the time, and Ford's book may have been easily found in some library or bookshop.

In conclusion, we have been unable to trace the real origins of Joyce's entire Spanish vocabulary in *Ulysses*. One cannot forget, for instance, that he used several editions of Gilbard's *Gibraltar Guidebook* without paying attention to the year in which they had been published, and similarly Joyce might have taken only one or two of the claimed borrowings from Ford identified here. Otherwise, if he did not read or

browse *Gatherings from Spain*, which source(s) did Joyce use for the Spanish words in *Ulysses*?

Notes

¹ F. García Tortosa, "Tracing the Origins of Spanish in Joyce: A Sourcebook for the Spanish Vocabulary in *Buffalo Notebook VI.B.23*," *Papers on Joyce* 7-8 (2001-2002) 5-15.

² Joyce had learnt about Gibraltar from books, and those books failed to offer a true social vision of the life at the Rock, as Herring (507) and Quick show (223). See Phillip F Herring, "Toward an Historical Molly Bloom," *English Literary History* 45.3 (1978) 501-21 and Jonathan Quick, "Molly Bloom's Mother," *English Literary History* 57.1 (1990) 223-240

³ See García Tortosa, "Tracing the Origins."

⁴ García Tortosa 11-14.

⁵ P. Herring simply wrote that it is "a book that Joyce seems to have read" (502). On his part, Quick assumes that "it was another of Joyce's sources" (223). García Tortosa claims that Joyce may have read there that any person born in Gibraltar could have chosen to be Spanish, as Ford's *Handbook* indicates (7).

⁶ Richard Ford, *A Handbook for Travellers in Spain* (1845), xlvii-l.

⁷ To learn about the origins of Ford's *Handbook*, see W. E. Gilbert, "Richard Ford and His 'Hand-book For Travellers in Spain,'" *The Geographical Journal* 106.3-4 (1945) 144-51.

⁸ Richard Ford, *Gatherings from Spain*, 1846, ed. by Ian Robertson, London: Pallas Athene, 2000. "Preface", np.

⁹ Richard Ford, "Spanish bull-feasts and bull-fights," *Quarterly Review* 62 (1838) 385-424.

¹⁰ Ford was determined to keep some information exclusive in the new book: "The passages here reprinted will be omitted in the forthcoming new editions of the Handbook" (Preface n.p.).

¹¹ See Rafael I. García-León and Francisco Javier Quintana-Álvarez, "Bullfighting in *Ulysses*," *Papers on Joyce* 7-8 (2001-2002) 55-66.

¹² However, he prefers the translated English noun: "He is, however, at present confined to his bed, for he is very dissipated and fond of the company of bull-fighters and people still worse" (Chapter 13). *The Bible in Spain*. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/415>> 26 January 2006. Ford does not share his pejorative view of bullfighters, considering them as heroes.

¹³ Joseph Townsend, *A Journey Through Spain in the Years 1786 and 1787*, 2nd ed. (London, 1792) vol. I, 342-52.

¹⁴ Townsend, vol. II, 142-43.

¹⁵ We take this information from María Antonia López de Burgos, "'El primero de la tarde.' Tres viajeras inglesas del siglo XIX en los toros," *Fiestas de*

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toros y sociedad, eds. Antonio García-Baquero González & Pedro Romero de Solís (Sevilla: Fundación de Estudios Taurinos, 2003) 627-36, here 630. Ms. Edwards acknowledges having read Ford's work on bullfighting (629).

¹⁶ Oscar Wilde, "The Birthday of the Infanta," <<http://www.bibliomania.com/0/5/57/300>> 26 January 2006.