

INTRODUCTION TO LA TAUROMAQUIA

OF GOYA'S FOUR major print series, only two were issued publicly in the artist's lifetime: the *Caprichos* (Caprices) and the *Tauromaquia* (Bullfights). The exact publication dates of both are known, thanks to a newspaper called the *Diario de Madrid*. It was February 6, 1799 for the first named series, and October 28, 1816 for this later one. However it is unlikely that many copies were issued then in view of the recent end of the Spanish War of Liberation—although not because the plates were politically controversial as the *Caprichos* had been. Miss Eleanor Sayre of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, thinks that most of the so-called first edition was not even printed until Javier Goya, the artist's only son, obtained possession of the copper plates and ordered a considerable supply of impressions made after Goya died in 1828.

If the greatest of the early Goya collectors, Valentín Carderera, is correct, the artist began his plates during the very first years of the nineteenth century, even though the only date to be found on any of the prints is 1815. Enrique Lafuente Ferrari, an excellent Spanish scholar, has demonstrated that it was at first Goya's intention to illustrate a much enlarged edition of a rather unpretentious little book on bullfighting by Nicolás Fernández de Moratín, father of Goya's close personal friend, the playwright Leandro de Moratín. This small octavo had been published at Madrid without illustrations in 1777. And since Goya, by his own say so, had always been deeply interested in bullfighting (one must recall he even signed himself occasionally "Francisco de los Toros"), what could be more natural than that by 1801, when any more active rôle than observation was barred by his increasing and serious deafness, as well as by his age (fifty-five), he should seek an excuse to picture the subject? The prints on bullfighting current in Madrid at that time were poor, and the sport had become increasingly popular.

This writer does not think it has ever been noticed that by 1804, at least, Goya could have had a visual prototype before him with the very title of *Tauromaquia*, a book written by the famous bullfighter José Delgado, popularly called "Pepe Illo." Like Moratín's booklet, the first edition of this work, published at Cadiz in 1796, is not illustrated. But perhaps the second edition of 1801 was, and another edition of 1804 certainly is, for the writer possesses a copy of

it. Here there are thirty simple, small (3 x 5-inch) engraved scenes from bullfights, oblong in form, with a number of compositional resemblances so close to Goya's thirty-three vastly improved and enlarged (9½ x 13½-inch) oblong plates that there almost surely was a connection. It was Goya's habit to seek inspiration from other prints; this was discovered by Miss Sayre in the case of the *Caprichos*, and is evident from the fact that Goya actually copied Velázquez. But after that first group of large engravings after Velázquez (made in 1778), Goya always elaborated on as well as outdid his visual sources. And he never succeeded better than in the case of his own *Tauromaquia*, which notably honors the small book's author "Pepe Illo," whom Goya personally knew, in the subjects and the actual printed titles of Plates 29 and 33. The latter is Goya's last subject in the first edition of 1816—"The unlucky death of Pepe Illo in the ring at Madrid"—a fitting and dramatic conclusion to his series.

On the 2nd of May, 1808, soon after Napoleon installed his brother Joseph Bonaparte on the Spanish throne with the aid of French troops, civil war broke out in Spain. Almost at once all peaceful projects were driven out of Goya's mind. His eighty prints of the *Desastres de la Guerra* (Disasters of War) must have been begun soon after this time. It is not supposed that he again took up the *Tauromaquia* theme, so suddenly interrupted, until the Peninsular War was ended by Wellington's victories of 1814. Certainly his Plates 19, 29 and 31 carry "1815" as well as the artist's name, and the French critic Paul Lefort says that trial proofs of no. 28 do also. Therefore, we guess that the last fourteen plates—nearly half the series—may be post-Peninsular War productions.

Goya also executed a number of bullfight paintings at different times throughout his artistic career, and the four (or five?) great lithographs popularly called *The Bulls of Bordeaux* (drawn in 1825 at that city during Goya's self-imposed exile from Spain; see page 77). At some point, probably early on, Goya made seven more bullfight aquatints of the same dimensions as the thirty-three in the 1816 edition; these were not published until 1876. They had been noticed etched on the backs of the *Tauromaquia* plates 1, 2, 6, 7, 11, 17 and 22, according to Tomás Harris, and may therefore be considered what the French call "planches refusées" (discarded subjects). These seven

aquatints, generally known as numbers A through G, or 34A through 40G, of the *Tauromaquia*, are reproduced here from a set of the 1876 publication.

There are further *Tauromaquia* aquatint subjects usually not included in this series, rare proofs (some unique) in the Vienna Albertina and the Madrid Biblioteca Nacional; three of these are reproduced in this volume. Closely related to the *Tauromaquia* is the lovely "Lluvia de toros" (Rain of bulls), which properly belongs to the series of *Disparates* (published first under the title of *Los Proverbios* in 1864). Finally, there are a few odd lithographs and etchings on bullfight subjects that were never part of any series of which we know.

The *Tauromaquia* proper, of thirty-three aquatint plates (reproduced here from a set of the 1816 first edition),* begins with thirteen subjects which relate to the history of the sport long before Goya's lifetime; the rest are roughly contemporary subjects and often, one guesses, were either seen by Goya himself or were intimately described to him. These last, of course, are the most convincing and exciting. Splendid as it is to see "El Cid Campeador" (the famous *eleventh-century* Spanish hero) spearing a bull from the shoulder through the ribs (Plate 11), one is disappointed to find him attired in a *sixteenth-century* costume! Nor does the horseman of Plate 10 look like any known portrait of the Emperor Charles V. Rather, one can see that he is a glorified amplification of the rider in Pepe Illo's little 1804 *Tauromaquia*, Plate 7 (see Figure 1).† The "Moors" in Plates 3 through 8 are all uncon-

vincing, but the landscape in Plate 2 wherein some "antiguos españoles" are hunting a bull on foot belongs to the finest, most luminous, scenes of this nature that Goya ever made.

Bound with complete sets of Goya's 1816 *Tauromaquia* series is a printed title page describing the subjects that Goya presumably thought he was illustrating. But, as has been seen, there were historical inaccuracies in these until Plate 14. Then the contemporary authentic scenes of Spain's national sport begin with a magnificent subject: a toreador who has just escaped the bull's charge by his quick footwork is watched by an impressionistically suggested audience in the grandstands that focuses one's attention on the two main protagonists.

The even greater agility of the bullfighter Juanito Apiñani is shown in Plate 20; he here performs a feat for which he was particularly noted. (Apiñani was active between 1750 and 1770, so the young Goya may easily have seen him in action.) Again Goya uses the audience in the background to direct attention to the perfectly timed vault. One more split second's reliance on the pole, and the torero would be brought down in the bull's path. This leap also demonstrates Goya's extraordinary eyesight in catching Apiñani's exact posture a good half-century before a fast-shuttered camera lens could prove that his vision was accurate.

Plate 21, "Death of the mayor of Torrejón," seems to this writer to be the finest single subject in the whole series, the climax of its dramatic confrontations. At the *corrida*, or bullfight, held on June 15, 1801 the fourth bull, from the famous herd of Palacios Rubios, broke through the barrier of the ring

*The engraved plate numbers have been omitted in this edition.

†It is also instructive to compare Plate 24 of Pepe Illo's little book (see Figure 2) with Goya's Plate 30 (the elements are reversed).



FIGURE 1

in Madrid and bolted up into the stands. The unfortunate mayor of Torrejón was in its path, and here, again, one finds an instantaneous record of what the artist must have seen with his own eyes. Goya's composition is unusually daring too. The right side of the scene is in pandemonium—the frenzied crowd contrasted with the momentarily static and triumphant bull. On the left, the stands are empty. Only the agonized face of one bullfighter peers over the heavy wooden fence dividing the ring from the grandstand, denying the apparent calm of the sunlit benches.

One could cite many other masterpieces in the published series, but it is harder to do this among the seven discarded subjects first published in 1876 at Paris, where Goya's copper plates had temporarily wandered before they were finally sold to the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid (1921). Yet plate 38—marked as (extra plate) E by its publisher, Loizelet—has a dramatic scene very little inferior to Plate 32 of the first series, and the forty-first plate (Albertina), which is extremely rare—and was never published—is little inferior to Plate 18, for which it must have been a trial design.

The unpublished aquatint that Goya's bibliographer Loys Delteil lists next (not reproduced here), together with Plate 31 of the regular series, served Goya much later as a model for the most famous lithograph of his last productive period. "The divided ring" of *The Bulls of Bordeaux* series reproduces the important elements from each of these aquatints to supply the major elements in the two halves of that large print. This was a habit of Goya throughout his life. He did not mind repeating his own favorite ideas, and even whole compositions, any more than he found it improper to borrow the ideas of other artists, and to improve upon them.

There is plenty of vitality and violence in the *Tauromaquia* aquatints, but they are the only wholly reportorial Goya print series. They contain no fantastic imagination, nor any political or anticlerical meaning that can be observed.

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FIGURE 2