

An English Traveller in the Province of Huelva:
William George Clark's Ecological Perception of Doñana Park in
Gazpacho or Summer Months in Spain (1850)

Un viajero inglés en la provincia de Huelva:
La percepción ecológica del Parque de Doñana de William George Clark en
Gazpacho or Summer Months in Spain (1850)



TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO

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Abstract

William George Clark was a British writer who followed the tradition of his contemporary fellow traveller in the second half of the nineteenth century. He was fascinated by what was different about Spain. Andalucía, mainly because of its oriental attraction, had been traditionally evoked in many travel books as a picturesque land around Europe. Travellers played a significant role as cultural mediators through different genres (novels, drama, travel-accounts, philosophical accounts tracts) providing new images from different angles about the Spanish population and its landscape, constructing personal and interesting views.

Clark found his own paradise in Doñana and offered a naturalistic version of the traditional romantic ideal, replacing the attraction for the exotic for the respect of wildlife. The park was an extremely difficult place to get to, hidden in the immensity of a flat landscape, and he wanted to manifest the vital importance of its natural environment. His version of Doñana represents nowadays an early and original defense of ecological values.

Key Words: William George Clark, Travel Literature, Andalucía, Doñana.

Resumen

William George Clark fue un escritor británico siguiendo la tradición de su compañero viajero contemporáneo en la segunda mitad del siglo diecinueve. Andalucía, principalmente a causa de su atracción oriental, había sido evocada en muchos libros de viajes como una tierra pintoresca alrededor de Europa. Los viajeros representaban un papel significativo como mediadores culturales a través de diferentes géneros (novelas, tragedia, informes de viajes, trayectorias filosóficas) proveyendo nuevas imágenes desde ángulos diferentes sobre la población española y su paisaje, construyendo perspectivas personales e interesantes.

Clark encontró su propio paraíso en Doñana y ofreció una versión naturalista del tradicional ideal romántico, reemplazando la atracción por lo exótico por el respeto de la vida salvaje. El parque era un lugar de acceso extremadamente difícil, escondido en la inmensidad de un paisaje llano y él quiso manifestar la importancia vital de su entorno natural. Su versión de Doñana representa en la actualidad una pronta y original defensa de valores ecológicos.

Palabras Clave: William George Clark, Literatura de Viajes, Andalucía, Doñana.

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1. INTRODUCTION, STATE OF THE QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY

This paper seeks to explore the ecological value of a peculiar work by the British traveller, William George Clark in 1850: *Gazpacho or Summer Months in Spain*, where he acts as a cultural mediator, examining, among other aspects, the landscape of Doñana Natural Park. His very interesting contribution deals with a close description and defense of nature, where the marshes acquire great symbolic power as a paradise of enormous value, with a magic atmosphere that rises from a mixture of greenery and water.

During the nineteenth century the landscape of the Pyrenees and Sierra Nevada were described with emotion and passion by English travellers. Realistic accounts added detailed information about geography and vegetation, but the most usual writings were literary comments related to nature, the solitude in the mountains and desert beaches. Articles and descriptions of Doñana usually started with the tales of the travellers that visited the area out of some sort of scientific interest and who spread the word about its wildlife, presenting it as an out of the way spot full of surprises. This district was seen as an area for livestock, fishing and forestry, hunting grounds situated in a region open to world trade.

Several authors approached this area with care and with serious aims to protect nature, among others: Antonio Machado (1815-1896), Walter J. Buck (1843-1917), Abel Chapman (1851-1829), or G. Mountfort (1873-1942). They were precursors in the preservation of green spaces and provided a respectful cult of nature. Naturalists demonstrated the importance of the Coto of Doñana in the twentieth century as a causeway for birds migrating from Western Europe to Africa. Focusing in some aspects of Clark's *Gazpacho* and within the theoretical framework opened by James Buzard's *The Beaten Track* (1993) which studied the development of tourism and its contribution in the area of travel literature, this work analyses Clark's experience as a literary traveller, fascinated for the wilderness of Andalucia and defender of Doñana's ecological value.

2. FOREIGN PERCEPTIONS: SPAIN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Spain had been perceived in the eighteenth century as a nation in decline. The image of Spain most commonly transmitted by French philosophes like Voltaire and Montesquie emphasized topics such as political despotism and religious obscurantism embodied by the Inquisition. According to Jesusa Vega, Spain was perceived as a decadent, isolated country:

Por lo tanto es fácil comprender que España estuviera fuera del “grand tour”, pero esta misma circunstancia llevó a un desconocimiento europeo casi total y que a la imagen que se tenía del país se quedara anquilosada, fosilizada, la de un país pobre y en continua decadencia. Esa imagen se había construido a través de la historia política y la progresiva pérdida de esplendor de la dinastía de los Habsburgo. (2004, 98)

Nevertheless, the journeys undertaken by foreigners increased from 1760 onwards. Those travellers were merchants, diplomats, clergymen or officers, travelling on duty but also for pleasure. During the second half of the nineteenth century two important books on geography were published with the representation of the Spanish territory describing a technical progress in cartography: *Atlas de España y sus posesiones de ultramar* (1847) by Francisco Coello Portugal and *Diccionario geográfico-estadístico-histórico de España y sus posesiones de ultramar* (1846) by Pascual Madoz. They both proved the technical progress in cartography at that time and the scientific development in the description of natural landscapes.

Spain was a difficult country regarding its accessibility, mainly because of its mountains and its difficult communication routes. *Le voyage pittoresque et historique de l'Espagne* (1812) by Alexandre Laborde (1771-1842) had a great influence in the cultural stereotypes of the European romantic travellers visiting Spain as it provided an exhaustive description of all the Spanish regions. Richard Ford's *A Handbook for Travellers in Spain and Readers at Home*, published in 1845, was also quite famous as a direct account of Andalusia as the author, who had lived there with his family from 1830 to 1833. This manual, known as “the red book” due to the colour of its covers, became an emblematic guide for British travellers. Clark felt the need to mention Richard Ford in the

first pages of his book to justify his daring attempt, as he follows Ford's example:

When one takes as a companion an author so racy and vigorous, one cannot but appropriate and 'assimilate' his thoughts, and afterwards, unconsciously, reproduce some of them as original. Once for all, I beg his pardon for any unwitting plagiarisms. I shall be more than content if he relishes the metaphorical Gazpacho half as much as he is said to relish the reality. (2006, vi)

Clark played with the meaning of the proper name Ford, as 'ford' is a river:

I was fain to refresh myself by dipping into 'Ford', who, unlike his namesakes in Spain, is never dry. 'Sir', once said a table-d'hôte acquaintance - 'Sir, he is the traveller's vadium mecum'. The pun was unintentional, for the speaker was a Scotch gentleman in the muslim trade.(2006, 17)

Clark also met Mateo Ximenez, a 35-years old guide whose experience inspired Washington Irving in his elaboration of *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832), a book based on history and legend to introduce those sites of Granada to the American readers with a romantic touch. Clark recalls Ximenez saying:

(...) my guide, meanwhile, keeping up a running commentary of the very smallest talk, recklessly confounding dates and facts, nations and personages; and for any special absurdity, audaciously appealing to the authority of 'Vasindon Eerveen'. What a lucky moment it was when the twaddling old fool first met the illustrious man whose name and meaning he constantly perverts. The glowing fancy of Washington Irving has blazoned 'honest Mateo' to the English half of the world as a little hero of romance, handing him down to posterity, besides enabling him to make a pretty penny out of his contemporaries. (2006, 112)

Clark also mentions George Borrow, an English author who wrote novels based on his experiences around Spain. He evokes Borrow's comparison, describing Gibraltar rock as a British lion when he reached Algeciras:

I find that the resemblance occurred to Mr. Borrow in the same place; but he supposes it to be menacing Spain, while to me the head appeared to be turned decidedly the other way. I suppose, if the French had it, their fancy would carve it into the outline of an eagle. (2006, 190)

Clark was very interested in a detailed and realistic landscape evoking images of a remote wilderness as a nature lover. Scientists and geographers had proved their interest in natural history in Spain. For example, the Irish William Bowles stayed in Spain and produced *Introduction to Natural History and Description of Spain* in 1789. Later, Pierre Edmond Boisser, a Swiss prominent botanist, had written *Botanic Travel to the South of Spain* in 1837. Naturalists were attracted to the great diversity of flora and fauna and found the possibility of obtaining specimens for their scientific collections. Doñana was featured in photography books on wild life and caught the interest of Spanish ornithologists including Francisco Bernis (1916-2003), who produced *Migración en aves* in 1966 and Antonio Valverde (1926-2003) who wrote *Memorias de un biólogo heterodoxo* published in 2003.

2.a. Traveller's perceptions in *The Beaten Track; European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to Culture* by James Buzard

The best theoretical source to understand Clark's contribution is Buzard's study. The book is a study of European tourism during the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. It describes "exemplary cultural practice" (1993, 7), of travellers at that time, represented by what Buzard calls "the beaten track" by tourist. The critic shows how travel depends upon technology, the earliest travellers rode horses or mules and the invention of the wheel offered new modes of transportation. The interest in travel increased with the development of new roads.

Clark was one of the many English travellers who walked at times, rode, or went by train or on board of a steamer. Not knowing what was coming next, he was in contact with locals and visited places as part of his personal adventure. Describing his trip to Spain he stated:

In my visit I enjoyed no particular facilities, and I went with no definite purpose -such as circulating the Scriptures, or surveying for a railroad; consequently, I was exempt from the persecutions and obstructions which a person engaged in either would have to encounter. (2006, vi)

The railways built during the kingdom of Isabel II (1833-1868) made shorter the distances and thanks to the civil guard the security had increased too. The new urban development changed the aspect of many towns and some of them were much more commercial. As a result the conception of tourism changed, as the traveller enjoyed many activities, accommodations, services, shops, entertainment business while completing the trip.

One of the achievements of the book *The Beaten Track* by Buzard is to contrast the nature of the traveller versus that of the tourist. According to him, the traveller will try to immerse himself in the local culture rather than standing out, trying to explore the less travelled areas and locations. His goal would be to learn and experience new things instead of taking a break of everyday life. A traveller considers a trip a journey rather than a vacation and interacts with locals. Tourists visit major cities instead of venturing to smaller towns or off the beaten path and stay in areas where the amenities are similar to what they have at home. Obviously, Clark's approach was that of the traveller, not of the tourist, and he knew well the bibliography that had been written about Spain.

The apparition of John Murray's *Handbooks for Travellers* (travel guide books published in London beginning in 1836) and their following editions had a great importance in the development of the British tourism in Spain. All the information provided by Richard Ford's *Handbook* offered new possibilities to explore the country. Simultaneously, during the second half of the nineteenth century tourism increased due to financial interests and Spain became much more visited.

In this context, Clark also benefited from the knowledge of the locals. He mentioned that upon his arrival in Granada, there were three guides persuading him to take them as his personal guides: Mateo Ximénez, who had been described by Washington Irving in *Tales of the Alhambra*, Mateo Ximénez, who had been described by Washington Irving in *Tales of the Alhambra*, Mateo Ximénez junior (his son) and Bensaken, a Jewish man from Gibraltar. All in all, traditional traveller's accounts, tourist guides and local guides became then, Clark's best sources for his adventures.

2.b. Travellers in Andalucia

During the nineteenth century Spain was a very important focus of attraction for all the European adventurous spirits as they were delighted with the Spanish customs. Some of them as Teophile Gautier (*Voyage a Espagne* in 1843), Gustave Dore (*L'Espagne, Moeurs et Paysages* in 1872), Henry Swinburne (*Travels through Spain in the Years 1775 and 1776* in 1779), Joseph Townsend (*A Journey through Spain in the Years 1786 and 1787* in 1791), became partial judges, depending of what they experienced, heard and understood. Spain offered them a vast landscape, but the most of the times the Spain they were looking for was Andalucia.

Travellers were seeking romantic roots, Arabian style, culture, artworks and architecture, all this together acquired a predominant space in their stories, as they were fascinated by exoticism. Once they were back to their own countries, they were motivated to publish their travelling experiences with the aim to help future travellers with the inconveniences they had had and providing a better knowledge of the region and population. Travel accounts were the main vehicle to contemplate and describe far away cultures.

With romantic perception, the genre of travel acquired significance and new values. The romantic traveller was more interested in nature in the countries he visited. His attention was drawn to landscapes, indigenous archetypes and everything that could be deemed picturesque. Above all, the romantic landscape came to be the stage for historic evocation and also for adventures and fantasies of the artists. One of the features of the romantics was exoticism, meaning the interest in finding out about foreign countries, new landscapes, inhabitants and customs. Spain, therefore, became the favourite destination for many curious English travellers fascinated by its past as well as its geographical proximity. Regarding natural vegetation and crops they were interested in African species, prickly pears, pitas, rosebays, fig trees, cotton, cane sugar, cherimoya trees, sweet potato, orange and lemon trees, palm trees, olive trees.

Andalucia became also interpreted with a romantic touch. The entry into Andalucia through Despeñaperros and its Arabic historicism implied the interpretation of the Andalucian's landscape searching its Muslism splendour.

Travellers insisted in the suffocating hot weather and the extreme light, as they were not used to the climatic conditions and Andalucia was next to the African continent. So

in their narratives many readers identified Andalusia as a symbol of Spain, although each one of them took a different angle to analyse it. French travellers as Laborde, Gautier, and Latour systematically contemplated religious issues in their narratives. English travellers as Richard Ford, Borrow, Jacob and Hare highlighted Arabian splendour. German scientist's accounts provided in their accounts a wide knowledge in art and nature. Americans like Washington Irving and Slidell Mackenzie wrote about the metropolis (London) and the feeling of Independence. They also focused on artistic monuments (Alhambra, mezquita and Giralda) as central topics.

2.c. The itinerary routes

The inclination of travelling to Spain started in 1808, the date of the French invasion, as the Napoleonic troops traced the main routes to access in the country. According to Antonio Garnica (2004), many travellers wanted to discover the Spanish geography fascinated by its richness, economical benefits, and interesting life style. Travellers started visiting the main cities two usual itineraries leaving from England: one by land, coming from Irun, and the other through the sea reaching Gibraltar. During the second part of the nineteenth century the access through Cataluña was the usual way generally. The itinerary through Pais Vasco was the most natural way to arrive to Madrid, passing Burgos and near Avila, Segovia and the Escorial. From Madrid the route to the south was crossing Toledo and finishing in Andalusia, where Cordoba and Granada were parts of their journey, sometimes extending the trip to the north of Africa. From Andalusia the traveller could go back to Madrid through Extremadura or La Mancha. Once they were in Madrid they could be back to the border, near Pais Vasco or going around Valladolid and Leon. The sea route to Gibraltar was similar to the one to Madrid without reaching the north. The access to Cataluña included the visit to Barcelona, Valencia and Zaragoza and also offered a better knowledge of the oriental Andalusia including Malaga, Granada, Seville, Cordoba and finally Madrid. The Andalusian region was always visited as an obligatory stop.

William George Clark: *Gazpacho, or Summer Months in Spain* (1850) accounts for the author's travel to Spain in 1849 by stagecoach and riding a horse or mules. W.G. Clark travelled around Spain from Bayona to Burgos, continuing his way to Madrid,

Segovia, El Escorial, Toledo, Aranjuez, Bailen, Granada, Ugijar, Guadix, Alhama, Velez, Malaga, Torremolinos, Marbella, Algeciras, Ronda, Utrera, Sevilla, Cadiz, Jerez and back to Cadiz he took a steamship to return to England. This was the tour he performed on the fifteenth of June in 1849. Clark got to Doñana approaching Sanlucar de Barrameda on board of a steamer.

3. WILLIAM GEORGE CLARK AND HIS VISION ABOUT ANDALUCIA

William George Clark came to Spain attracted by the romantic ideas about this land and its legends written by well-known authors. The success of his book was registered in an interesting article published in *The Spectator* in 1850:

Although Spain is comparatively speaking new ground, from the difficulties and alleged dangers which attend travelling in the country, the book owes its interest as much as to the mind of the author as to the materials. “*Gazpacho*”, Mr. Clark tells us, ‘is a dish universal in and peculiar to Spain. It is a sort of cold soup, made of bread, pot herbs, oil and water. Its materials are easily come by, and its concoction requires no skill’. The title and its explanation, however, convey an erroneous idea of the work. If Mr. Clark’s materials were not gotten by means of riskful adventure or severe toil, they were only attainable by a trained observation. (1850, 448-449)

The term *Gazpacho* was used as a metaphor for his tour in Spain. The ingredients are described as the different regions he visited. He explained that the ingredients had been taken from the account by Ford, assimilating his thoughts but transforming his own way. Clark became a naturalistic, ecological version of former travel accounts.

Andalucia region exerted a particular fascination for Clark. Seville, Cordoba and Granada were his main destinations because of their architecture and Arabian style. He travelled around Spain during three months and his main objective was to get more knowledge about Spanish nature, architecture and art. His interest in geographical features of landscape was also an original feature of his work.

3.a W. G. Clark adventurer and writer

William George Clark was born in England, Darlington (March 1821- 6 November 1878). He was a cultivated man, educated in Cambridge, where he was graduated in classics. He won a Browne medal at the university, a gold medal which since 1774 has been awarded for annual competitions in Latin and Greek poetry.

Clark took orders from 1830 to 1870 and also was Public Orator, he retired because of ill health. He donated money to his friend for the foundation of a lectureship in English Literature. As a literary writer and traveller he had always wanted to travel, so he used to spend his holidays travelling around Europe. Some of the countries he visited were Spain, Italy, Greece and Poland. Clark's best known work was the *Cambridge Shakespeare* (1863-6). He wrote *Gazpacho* (1850) as an account of his tour in Spain, *Peloponesus* (1858) as a contribution to the knowledge of Greece, *Vacation Tourist* (1863) described his stay in Italy and Poland.

Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro (1819-1885) was a classical scholar who considered Clark a very versatile man in *Journal of Philology* (1879).

According to José Alberich, *Del Támesis al Guadalquivir* (2000), Clark is very spontaneous and individual and explained the reasons of his thought:

Para mí, la marca distinta del buen escritor de viajes consiste en su receptividad para lo nuevo e inesperado, en su sensibilidad para lo que se sale del marco de su experiencia normal. (2000, 43)

3.b. *Gazpacho, or Summer Months in Spain: Perception of Andalucía*

Gazpacho, or Summer Months in Spain is written in form of diary, first person narrator. His book has at the beginning a preface followed by twenty-nine chapters and a final appendix, where a letter signed by G.H.A, Clark's friend, is included reinforcing the ecological value of Doñana as they shared common memories. Clark wanted to transmit new knowledge telling the real truth while travelling, giving an accurate information about the country he likes. He enjoyed the most in Granada and Doñana in Huelva. The book is very realistic and reveals his way to see Spain. He describes his feelings and beautifies his experiences with exact words, although recreating with

almost a lyrical tone. The book becomes an invitation to visit Spain as an extraordinary country where he found his own paradise in the wild nature¹.

M. Antonia López (2012) states that Clark enjoyed the landscape ranging from the high sierra to the border of the coast, a picturesque appearance. He felt captivated by the name of “Alpujarras” when he was in England, as can be seen in her account:

When I first unrolled the map of Spain at home, and projected my future tour, there was one portion of it which, above all, attracted my imagination – the district lying between the Sierra Nevada and the Mediterranean. It was plentiful seamed with those skeleton of sprats which are the geographical symbols for mountain ridges, the round dots which indicate towns were labelled with unheard – of names, and it was intersected by none of those double lines which betoken carriageable roads, and, by consequence, coaching-inns and a modicum of civilization. Finally, the title ‘Alpujarrez’, bestriding the whole tract in capital letters, had something oriental in the very sound, and, accordingly, one of my first cares after arriving at Granada (...) (2006, 139)

Sierra Nevada and Alpujarras had had a great interest by geologists and botanists, and the mountains were visited by a great number of naturalists due to increasing interest in Ethnobotany in 1845, as can be seen in Clark’s account:

Near the top of the peak nothing grows, except a kind of cushion-grass and the dwarf – manzanilla, which is much prized by the cullers of simples. The Sierra, however, is rich in botanical treasures. Two years ago, a German established himself in a cave on the mountain side, for the purpose of collecting plants. He had hired an attendant from Granada, but the man son ran away, thinking his master uncanny. Nevertheless, the indefatigable botanist lived on alone for some months in his cave, too bold to care for wolves, too poor to fear for robbers and too much of a philosopher to be scared at goblins. Several persons at Granada mentioned the fact, but no one could remember his name. Jose, my myth-

¹ Other exotic sites in Andalucía for later English travelers and expert engineers’ attraction was Riotinto in Huelva. See Losada , María et al. “Prejudiced Hispanophiles: Literary and Cultural Traces of the British Community in Huelva and its Province (19th and 20th centuries), 2014.

loving guide, assured me that Moorish doctors frequently came over from Africa to gather certain `med´cinable´herbs, found only here. (2006, 112)

Richard Ford had also offered a detailed description of his travel in La Alpujarra in July, 1833. The Lanjaron Spa had five springs of medicinal mineral waters enriched by the wide variety of rocks and minerals from the snows of Sierra Nevada. They were recommended for treatment of respiratory and muscular conditions. Ford had described Lanjaron as “a picturesque Swiss town whose fresh air, fruit, and mineral water attract summer visitors from the scorching coasts.” (1845, 397)².

Thus, Clark gathered previous opinions and accounts of nature and provided his own, specific choice in his focus of Doñana Park.

4. CLARK IN THE PROVINCE OF HUELVA: THE GREATNESS OF DOÑANA

William George Clark sailed on board of a little steamer approaching Sanlúcar de Barrameda where the banks of the river were fringed with pine trees. At that time the steamer “Real Fernando” or also called “El Betis” used to cover the line between Seville and Sanlúcar de Barrameda for fluvial trajectories. This steamer was built in Triana for the Real Company of the Guadalquivir in the summer of 1871 Seville – Sanlúcar – Cadiz. However the name of the steamer in which Clark sailed was not mentioned.

As we approached San Lucar³, the banks are fringed with pines, which on that day, by a species of mirage, seemed as if they grew in mid-air. Passing the bar, we emerged from calm to trouble. (2006, 251)

Clark did not visit the town of Huelva, instead he was in the surrounding area of Doñana and he proved with his old schoolfellow’s letter the location of the place:

You remember, as you glided down the Guadalquivir from Seville to Cadiz, when near San Lucar, that the opposite banks of the river, thought no lofty, where so thickly wooded with pines and other low trees, that

² For other references of La Alpujarra in English travelling accounts see López-Burgos del Barrio’s “La Alpujarra en la literatura de viajes: Gerald Brenan y otros precursores” (2012).

³ The present name of the village, “Sanlúcar de Barrameda”, appear in Clark’s document as “San Lucar de Barrameda”

they formed a barrier inscrutable by the eye. (...) A wilderness, chiefly of Sandy soil, sometimes undulating covered with the pines. (2006, 263)

According to Francisco García García's *La historia de Doñana y sus duques explotadores y conservadores del coto* (2014), the most important activity at Clark's time was hunting. The reserve was protected by the Duke and Duchess of Medina Sidonia who used to rent and sell some zones to hunt and also they could grant licenses to important people as clergymen or governors, so the environment of Doñana was represented as an appropriate place for leisure. Clark was obviously aware of its privileged position:

You will sympathise with me when I add, as the chief attraction of this wild region, that it is the primest sporting-ground in all Europe. Countless herds of the red deer scour across its wastes. (2006, 264)

The duke got plenty of benefits renting the land to farmers, hunters, cattle-raisers and some more workers to collect nuts, honey and asparagus. Dynasties of families like Toro or Spinar were the gamekeepers of the coto, they lived there and could have some crops and horses to survive. Clark evokes the experience:

(...) imagine us starting off on that bright, fresh morning, under the guidance of the sage huntsman and guardian of the 'coto', Manuel de Toro, and penetrating into the depths of the wilderness, caring little for all other possessions in the world save our trusty weapons, and the extra horse, laden with provisions, which accompanied us. (2006, 265)

Fishing was another of the labours practiced in Doñana, there were two types: the one practiced in the mouth of the river Guadalquivir and the other near a tunny fishery where it was placed Carbonero Tower. Just at the right of the river there were eleven salt mines to salt the tunas. The river in Sanlúcar de Barrameda had at one side the National Park and at the other the marshes, pine trees, salt mines, estuaries and paths showing the richness of the vegetation and fauna.

4.a. Clark, precursor in the defence of the landscape

Clark was a pioneer as defender of the landscape in the natural reserve of Doñana. He followed his own path regarding to its ecological value. Generally, travellers had not been much interested in the plains. Doñana was unknown and Richard Ford was much more interested in the artistic value of architecture and paintings. Ford somehow dismissed the marshes, the natural environment of Doñana, as he represented them as a marginal land. His account of Huelva had not been very positive:

This is called the Marisma or marsh district, and also the Condado, or county of Niebla: formerly it was a pretty Moorish kingdom and with most of this district passed into the great Guzman family. Let none go there except driven by dire necessity, or on a sporting excursion. Spanish mis-government and neglect have here done their worst. (1845, 162)

Ford had just admitted the importance of the Marismillas as “an excellent reserve” (1845, 165). He fixed the itinerary Palacio de Doñana – Rocio – Almonte – Niebla – Bollullos – Aznalcaza - Villa Manrique - El Coto. His touristic text is very informative but pragmatic, with an encyclopedic style.

Likewise, the description of this space by Theophile Gautier, French landscape writer and painter, was not evocative in his treatment of the plains, described with a list of images encompassing land, sky, vegetation and ocean, but with no interest about their natural or ecological value:

Las orillas del Guadalquivir no tienen ese aspecto encantador que les dan las descripciones de los poetas y de los viajeros (...) En realidad sólo se ven ribazos no muy elevados, arenosos de color ocre, aguas amarillentas y revueltas, cuyo tono terroso no puede atribuirse a las lluvias, tan raras en aquél país. (1985, 303)

Other authors made no reference of Doñana as its geographical position would not give an easy access. The ones who knew the area did not praise this impressive natural environment. Charles Davillier, French writer and art collector, his news about

Andalucía were very basic. Sanlúcar and the beach were an emblematic place for several reasons like health, sport practice and to socialize:

Sanlúcar está situada en la orilla izquierda del Guadalquivir, a poca distancia de su desembocadura que se ensancha mucho antes de verterse en el océano. Construida sobre una playa, casi a flor de agua, no ofrece la ciudad nada de notable. (...) La costa de Andalucía, al norte de la desembocadura del Guadalquivir, es casi siempre arenosa; con mucha frecuencia los pinos achaparrados y algunas plantas aromáticas constituyen la única vegetación que se alza sobre la orilla casi desierta. (1991, 372)

Clark remarked that the wonders of Doñana Park were a charming scenery that went beyond sensations. He claimed its plain morphology as a pleasurable and idyllic landscape while Ford disdained the marshes as a concept of what for Clark was sublime:

In this riverside track, called La Marisma, swamps, ague, and fever are perpetual. In these plains, favourable to animal and vegetable life, fatal to man, like those on the Pontine marshes, (...). (1845, 155)

Clark's approach wanted to highlight the conservation of its flora and fauna, proving that some species were endangered because they were not numerous and abundant or their extinction would occur prematurely. What he saw in his time, was later evaluated and praised: Doñana became a Biosphere Reserve in 1986 and was declared National park in 1989. It was also nominated Special Zone for Birds in 2002.

4.b. Flora and fauna

Clark reinforced the beauty of Doñana, the great biodiversity hosted in this place made this a strategic site for conservation in an international context. The area was divided into humid and dry zones. The humid Doñana consisted of flat salt marshes and lagoons which were dry in summer. Clark recalls the transition of seasons:

Fancy, now, the gleesomeness of heart with which I found myself, one bright morning early in February, ferried across the turbid river, and deposited in this double-barrelled paradise, when all the traces of winter

had vanished, and the heat had not yet called forth the swarming mosquitoes, or boiled up the malaria from the reeking swamps, (...) (2006, 265)

Clark observed cork trees in summer, as much as the interesting feature of the movement of the dunes around pine trees.

Here, you will allow, is variety enough for the picturesque, and - if you will permit it, in the absence of towering hills and living waters – even, for the beautiful; nature in all her first spring redundancy, starting for amid the ruins of previous years – for all is untouched by the hand of man – and assuming all the quaint shapes and graceful combinations, which are vainly sought for in the midst of cultivation. (2006, 263)

The images of Doñana highlighted its natural qualities provoking feelings and inspiration for future naturalists. Nature was an admirable entertainment that fulfilled Clark's soul, described in a very poetic way. It meant for him freedom and a spiritual adventure. Clark was the precursor as defender of the area to protect these pure elements in its wild state as a natural paradise recreating the ecological value of these ecosystems. The scientific interest in Doñana started later with the publication of *Catálogo de las aves observadas en algunas provincias andaluzas* (1854) by Antonio Machado y Núñez. The German zoologist Alfred Edmund Brehm influenced A. Chapman and W.J. Buck with his work *Brehm's Life of Animals* published in 1895, authors of *The Wild Spain* (1893) and *Unexplored Spain* (1910). Chapman discovered Europe's major breeding ground of flamingos and helped to save the Spanish Ibex, a wild goat from extinction. They were fascinated with the wildlife and were managers of the coast at Doñana, near the river Guadalquivir in 1882, which they ran as a nature reserve.

Clark gave also testimony of the big cat in Doñana, the lynx. This species was not very numerous and it was in danger of extinction. It appeared on the drier ground around the fringes:

The lynx flashes in his brightness across your path, that you are the more dangerous animal of the two. Wolves also are reported; and your guide sometimes points mysteriously to an unwanted impression in the sand and mutters 'lobo'. (2006, 264)

The lynx had been mentioned in Andalusia on a zoologic repertory of Doñana during the eighteenth century by the Duke of Medina Sidonia in 1774 in the book

Relación de los Árboles, Arbolitos, Animales y Pájaros, que hayan en el Real sitio del Lomo del Gullo, distante ocho leguas de la ciudad de Sevilla, jurisdicción de sus Reales Alcázares, were the lynx and the wolf were mentioned. The lynx was the most endangered predator in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they started to disappear in the Iberian Peninsula included Andalucía. The vital importance of the natural reserve were the marshes, birds, imperial eagle and lynx as they represented the richness in Doñana.


5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this paper has been an attempt to rescue the very interesting work of William George Clark, *Gazpacho or Summer Months in Spain* (1850). Clark followed the line of his contemporaries as a literary writer during the nineteenth century. His book was quite original in the genre of travel literature as it includes an attentive observation of the landscape of Doñana, its flora and fauna to defend its richness as a natural reserve. Analysing some of the sources used by Clark, and taking *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature and the Ways to Culture* as a theoretical framework, which explores the change of the concept in travel literature when tourism started to emerge, a new reasoning of Clark's text is provided. Clark was a cultivated man graduated in classics and also had taken orders but left the church. His ecological value as a pioneer for the conservation of nature has been proved in the research of some selected fragments, contrasting his views with those emblematic authors, such as Ford, and proving the good response of the book with its review in *The Spectator*.

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aventura lejos de la civilización. 2004, 98.



**An English Traveller in the Province of Huelva:
William George Clark's Ecological Perception of
Doñana Park
in Gazpacho or Summer Months in Spain (1850)**

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Convocatoria Septiembre 2016

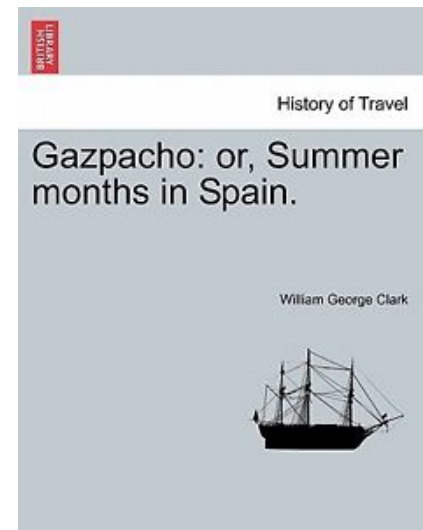
Grado en Estudios Ingleses

Universidad de Huelva

1. INTRODUCTION AND STATE OF THE QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY :



1. Clark's contribution to travel literature tradition: Ecological perception of Doñana
2. Theoretical framework: Travel Literature and James Buzard
3. Comparative approach and corpus analysis



2. FOREIGNER PERCEPTIONS: SPAIN IN THE 19TH CENTURY.

- Traveller's perceptions in *The Beaten Track*. (Aspects in James Buzard).
- Travellers in Andalucia. (Different nationalities, description of Andalucia as a different land and exoticism).
- The itinerary routes. (Main routes developed in Spain and the one taken by Clark).

3. WILLIAM GEORGE CLARK AND HIS VISION ABOUT ANDALUCIA.

- **Clark, adventurer and writer :**
Life, work and identity as a naturalist traveller
- ***Gazpacho, or Summer Months in Spain (1850):***
Structure of book, Reception

4. CLARK IN THE PROVINCE OF HUELVA: THE GREATNESS OF DOÑANA.

- Clark, precursor of the defense of the landscape . (Perception of the landscape, importance of a Biological Reserve as a paradise).
- Fauna and flora.




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6.CONCLUSIONS.

- Clark as a literary writer
- Sources analysed
- Conservation of nature



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**