

Joyce's German Vocabulary

Ian MacArthur

Joyce's ability as a linguist is well known, but this was not solely due to talent, as notes in MS Cornell 37-244-274: *JJA* 3:074-104 show. These consist of nearly 1200 German words and phrases copied neatly, many taken from a book by Emil Otto,¹ one of the three authors who gave their names to the "Method Gaspey-Otto-Sauer" (*FW* 485.03) for learning and teaching of German. The notebook entries show that when these were recorded, during the Trieste period, Joyce had a basic knowledge and was *expanding* his vocabulary. The notebook, kept by Stanislaus, was not available to Joyce during the later years and so any usage of the words must have been of those committed to memory. Many ended up in *Finnegans Wake*. The list below represents a small subset of the total German in that work, as there are numerous common words which Joyce had obviously already learned and more which he would have encountered at a later stage. Nor can we be sure that all these words *were* used. I signal doubts of a few with a question mark.

There is reason to think that the Cornell material represents a fair copy of what were probably loose sheets of notes, made from Otto and other sources, since the blocks of consecutive units from the numbered lessons in the former are out of order. The first page of Joyce's notes start midway through the 50th lesson in Otto and is wholly taken from there. The second page begins at the end of the 48th lesson and ends at the end of the 49th. The third starts midway through the 48th lesson and ends near the end. This pattern continues with more and more units not apparently found in Otto interspersing blocks from that source. It is also possible that material was lost.

In the appendix below, my notes are enclosed in square brackets. I give Joyce's holograph versions unedited except I have substituted a colon for Joyce's = sign. A number contain compound versions or words used in phrases. Those looking for new revelations will be

disappointed as practically everything here has already been glossed, first by Helmut Bonheim², who adopted a ‘scattergun’ approach, listing every possible German word and phoneme regardless of the context, and later by Roland McHugh³, who fortunately adopted a more selective approach.

I have only located two words occurring in *Ulysses* (both in *Proteus*) but I have made no great search. Cornell 37-262/263, *JJA* 3:092/093 ‘*Frauenzimmer* = woman’ / ‘*schleppen* = to drag’. Of course, these may well have come from other sources.

As a small consolation for the lack of new glosses, I offer one little gem among some mathematical terms, which I think has so far passed unnoticed.

MS 47478-60 *JJA* 53:138. (Part of a long holographic addition in the margin of a proof of *Tales Told*.)

Quarrellary. The logos of somewome to that base anything, when most characteristically mantissa minus, comes to nullum in the endth: orso, here is nowet badder than the sin of Aha with his cosin Lil [...] *FW* 298.18

Note: Cornell 37-273 *JJA* 3:103 Base = female cousin

References:

1) Otto, Emil. *German conversation-grammar; a new and practical method of learning the German language*. (1890). – There were many editions of this book. I have used the one below but it is not clear which Joyce used.

Online at: <https://archive.org/details/germanconversat01ottogoog/page/n352/mode/2up>

2) Bonheim, Helmut. *A Lexicon of the German in Finnegans Wake*. (California 1967)

3) McHugh, Roland. *Annotations to Finnegans Wake*. Fourth Edition. (Baltimore 2016)

Appendix: Words noted by Joyce (MS Cornell 37-244-274: *JJA* 3:074-104) which may be found in *Finnegans Wake*.

<i>FW</i>		<i>MS</i>
3.10	taufen: baptize	88
3.14	ringsum: around	101
4.08	toll: mad	100
7.06	taub gegen alle Bitten: deaf to all prayers	75
9.26	brummen: growl	83
13.23	vier Glieder: 4 deep	83
14.07	locken: to entice [lockt: inflection of locken]	103
15.05	Gang: passage	92
17.23	Die Liebe zum Ruhm: love of glory	75
17.23	rühmen (sich): boast of	75
19.30	Ahnen: ancestors	103
22.02	ringen: wrestle	88
24.12	Junger: disciple	84
28.30	flattern: to flutter	96
32.29	auf immer: for ever	75
41.20	oberflächlich: superficial	79
44.19	brummen: growl	83
50.19	Trost: consolation	89
51.15	Enkel: grandson	104
52.25	toll: mad	100
53.35	die Hitze: the heat	95
56.36	sollte es regnen ... : should it rain ...	87
58.12	fluchen: to curse	103
58.17	Seufzen: a sigh	96
64.19	wischen: to wipe	96

65.31	taufen: baptize	88
67.10	heiter: merry	103
69.32	betreffend: respective	97
78.07	zu jener Zeit: at that time	75
80.07	taufen: baptize	88
80.18	übergeben: to vomit [lit. translation of 'Give over']	98
94.17	verfaulter Obst: rotten fruit	99
94.18	fromme: pious	99
98.32	auf immer: for ever	75
99.08	Standbild: statue	88
99.16	drohen: to threaten	93
99.16	locken: to entice [lockt: inflection of locken]	103
101.09	vermittelst der Einflusses meine Onkels: through my uncle's influence	89
102.19	Barmherzigkeit: charity	86
105.09	taub gegen alle Bitten: deaf to all prayers	75
105.14	Ahnen: ancestors	103
105.21	? Bücklinge: redherrings	83
128.26	Ahnen: ancestors	103
134.07	vier Glieder: 4 deep	83
136.31	Königreich: kingdom	88
136.32	Stein der Weisen: philosopher's stone	89
137.07	Henne: hen	86
138.33	das alter: old age	89
141.14	geputzt: spruce [clean]	79
143.22	? Hengst: stallion	100
145.07	taufen: baptize	88
148.26	meine Wissens: to my knowledge	88
150.09	Übel: illness [Ague line 08]	75
151.12	eitel: vain	77
151.33	Brille: spectacles	76
153.26	Unfall: accident	101

153.31	? Vetter: male cousin	103
157.12	zweifelhaft: dubious [Zweifel: doubt]	87
157.28	der Buchstabe tötet, der Geist belebt: the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life	102
167.19	Sauerstoff: oxygen	95
180.08	? Zum Glück: luckily	75
187.03	Stimmung: mood	90
194.31	Brieftasche: pocketbook [Tasche: pocket]	86
211.17	Stein der Weisen: philosopher's stone	89
214.12	Hengst: stallion	100
221.20	? beobachten: to observe	95
221.29	toll: mad	100
221.34	Grabmal: tomb	92
222.18	neidisch: envious [Neid: envy]	82
223.12	stolpern: to stumble	98
224.02	bestimmt: reserved : decided : distinguished [atvoiced (lit. bestimmt)]	101
235.05	färben: to dye	79
240.24	taufen: baptize	88
241.08	von geringem Wert: of little value [Wert: worth]	88
243.06	? feige: cowardly	93
243.11	Die Liebe zum Ruhm: love of glory	75
246.15	? Wonne: delight	91
247.07	Tugend: virtue	85
249.20	Zug: feature	102
249.22	Saum: seam ['edge' or 'margin' is a better translation of 249.22]	83
250.14	Jetzt sind wir einig: Now we agree	95
252.16	? Gemeinde: community	82
261.06	Siegelbewahrer: Keeper of the Seals	93
262.28	sich drängen: throng	75
263.20	das alter: old age	89
265.07	reizend: charming	80
265.16	Wonne: delight	91

266.13	? stürzen: to rush	99
266.30	aufziehen: to bring up [ondrawer (lit.)]	95
268.F.3	? Junger: disciple	84
268.F.6	frech: insolent	93
268.F.6	frech: saucy	90
268.F.6	locken: to entice	103
272.01	fromme: pious	99
272.01	Glauben schenken: to give credit [glauben: believe]	89
272.17	Hengst: stallion	100
279.F.22	reizend: charming	80
284.10	gleichen: resemble ['gleich' is 'correct' version - see JJDA]	86
291.22	umarmen: embrace	84
300.15	fressen: to eat	104
302.22	? Dolch: dagger	90
305.29	Stein der Weisen: philosopher's stone [Note: G.Sl. Stein. Phallus.]	89
309.04	Stamm: trunk	89
310.19	? Bücklinge: redherrings	83
310.24	auf immer: for ever [immer: always]	75
312.01	stolpern: to stumble	98
314.18	ich könnte nicht umhin zu lachen: I couldn't help laughing	87
318.35	Unwillen: illwill	84
320.09	toll: mad	100
320.14	? Gitter: fence	79
321.28	Drohung: threaten [threat]	93
334.07	toll: mad	100
335.26	Untertan: subject	83
336.13	? frönen: indulge	77
338.03	Ehrenbezeugungen: honours	81
338.35	? heiter: merry [weitoheito probably Japanese not German]	103
339.35	er geht den Vater nach: he takes after his father	99
340.35	? Dass gab mir einen Riss: it was a blow to me	97

344.01	zum Glück: luckily	75
344.34	sich ärgern: be vexed [Arger: anger]	76
345.28	Trost: consolation	89
345.33	Vergeltet n. Böses mit Bösem: render not evil for evil	82
349.32	von oben: from upstairs [oben: above]	92
350.01	2 Katzen u[nd] 1 Maus [...] [no translation but obvious!]	91
352.25	besiegen: conquer	87
352.31	Gesellschaft leisten: to keep co[mpany] [Geselle: companion]	89
353.03	sauber: spruce [clean]	79
356.23	finden Notfall: in c. of need [notcase (lit.) Notfall / c. = case]	80
358.10	Glut: glow	103
360.10	zum Glück: luckily	75
364.27	schulden: to owe	87
368.20	allerdings: to be sure ; of course	89
368.32	? Stachel: sting [Annotations 'spike' is better]	89
371.18	bedauern: regret	81
376.14	vollenden: to complete [Annotations: vollends: entirely]	104
391.05	? zum Hohn: in scorn	78
414.36/415.26	zu jener Zeit: at that time	75
416.12	Gelegenheit: occasion	97
417.01-02	Grausen: horror	74
418.08	empfangen: receive	84
418.27	besiegen: conquer	87
427.18	bedauern: regret	81
427.23	toll: mad	100
438.19	der heilige Paulus: S. P. [Saint Paul]	89
443.14	Federbusch: plume [Feder: feather]	84
451.16	Schatzmeister: treasurer [Schatz: treasure]	88
454.03	Trost: consolation	89
457.28	flüstern: whisper	78
457.36-	Witwenstand: widowhood [Witwe: widow]	80

458.01		
465.07	? Der Weihe: the hawk	100
467.12	vermittelt der Einflusses meine Onkels: through my uncle's influence	89
468.08	taufen: baptize	88
474.03	Brieftasche: pocketbook	86
475.23	klettern: climb	78
476.13	Fallen stellen: set a trap	90
480.17	Enkel: grandson	104
483.28	fromme: pious	99
494.20	empfangen: receive	84
495.15	schleppen: to drag	93
499.07	Vergeltet n. Böses mit Bösem: render not evil for evil	82
499.07	Selbstmord begehen: commit suicide	91
510.24	Ehrenbezeugungen: honours [military salute - Ehren: honours]	81
	ich könnte nicht umhin zu lachen: I couldn't help laughing [lach/laugh	
511.13	FDV]	87
512.09	Glanz: splendour [FDV glanzfull]	93
513.08	Orkan: hurricane	99
525.24	frech: saucy	90
"	frech: insolent	93
529.24	Ziel: aim	78
"	Ziel: goal	87
529.34	Hengst: stallion	100
534.08	ernsthaft: serious	86
534.26	erleben: experience [Haben Sie so eines erlebt? - see Annotations]	86
535.09	zu Pferd: on horseback [Pferd: horse]	89
536.21	? sauber: spruce [Annotations: clean - said of wine]	79
537.10	Ehrenbezeugungen: honours [military salute - Ehren: honours]	81
538.10	von geringem Wert: of little value [Wert: worth]	88
538.12	Die Liebe zum Ruhm: love of glory	75
540.29	mindern: to diminish	93

542.01	reizend: charming	80
542.08	geputzt: spruce [clean]	79
546.04	Neckname: nickname	78
546.04	flüstern: whisper	78
546.29	taub gegen alle Bitten: deaf to all prayers	75
547.35	Dampfstrahl: a jet of steam	100
548.20	? Junger: disciple	84
549.01	Königreich: kingdom	88
551.01	elend: miserable	85
551.28	göttliche Ehre erweisen: pay divine honour	86
553.02	Tannenbaum: fir tree	96
560.34	zugeben: admit [togive (lit.)]	81
563.29	Barmherzigkeit: charity	86
564.22	Tannenbaum: fir tree	96
565.11	Beutel: purse	74
576.20	Ziel: goal	87
580.13	auf immer: for ever	75
581.32	das alter: old age	89
586.24	Gang: passage	92
586.28	Polizei diener: constable	74
587.01	vier Glieder: 4 deep	83
587.35	Weihnachtsbescherung: Xmas box	97
590.19	Jetzt sind wir einig: Now we agree	95
597.28-29	Wirbelwind: whirlwind	101
599.04	Pfade: path	101
600.26	auf immer: for ever	75
602.24	Schuld: debt [also Du. schuld: (i)debt (ii) guilt]	81
603.14	das alter: old age [alter: older]	89
603.24	Fusstritt: a kick [Fuss: foot]	99