

## EXPLORING PERMANENT VALUES: CANTO CIV

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Canto CIV is a complex poem that touches upon many of the concerns of *Thrones*. Pound's technique in this canto is to set up a running tension between creative, life-giving impulses, which lead to virtuous government, and destructive states of mind, which produce bad government. Pound goes back and forth in his exploration of this tension as though to test the strength of each side. We find the themes of betrayal (of individuals and of nations) and exile; centralized control by cabal vs. constitutional or representative government; invocation of the spirits and harmony with nature; strong leaders and virtuous individuals; the destruction of culture and governments by monopolists and usurers; and cultural transmission (Confucius from East to West; cadences from Greek to Latin and English). Canto CIV ends on a positive note of enlightenment in religious ceremony and ritual.

Pound opens the canto with an evocation of a Na-khi forest scene, derived from Joseph F. Rock's writings:

Na Khi talk made out of wind noise,  
And North Khi, not to be heard amid sounds of the forest  
but to fit in with them unperceived by the game,  
(CIV/758)<sup>1</sup>

This reverie, in which the wind is personified as a kind of deity, seems to be a basis for Pound's paradisaical vision in "Notes for CXVII et seq.":

Do not move  
Let the wind speak

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<sup>1</sup> References are to *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York, New Directions, 1996).

that is paradise.

(CXVII//802)

Meditation or contemplation suddenly gives way to boisterousness as the scene shifts to a wartime conference. We are placed in the middle of the action, where a young English official—the proverbial fly on the wall—overhears two of his country’s leaders, intent on winning the war with the help of the country’s allies, plot to betray one of those allies:

But when the young lout was selling the old lout  
the idea of betraying Mihailovitch  
The air of the room became heavy so that young S.  
Resigned from the F. O. and ‘went into the City’---  
(CIV//758)

Pound does not give us names, apart from that of the soon-to-be-betrayed ally, though it is clear that he knows who they are. Nor does he tell us when or where the plotting unfolds, if he knew. Fortunately, there are enough clues in this passage and in Pound’s correspondence to identify precisely who the participants are and where and when the event takes place. As an historical event, it refers to the “sale” of the idea of betrayal on the evening of January 24, 1943, in Marrakesh, Morocco. After the Casablanca Conference, Winston Churchill (“the old lout”) and Franklin D. Roosevelt set out on an overnight excursion to Marrakesh, where they spent January 24-25, 1943. Accompanying them on the trip was Churchill’s son Randolph (“the young lout”).<sup>2</sup> Captain Robin Sanderson (Grenadier Guards Company, Guards’ Battalion, IRTD [Infantry Recruit Training Depot], CMF [Central Mediterranean Force]) (“young S.”) was in charge of Churchill’s villa at Marrakesh.<sup>3</sup> By 1946 Robin F. Sanderson was a stockbroker with the firm of Rowe Reeve & Co.,

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Collins Dunn, “Franklin and Winston’s Excellent Road Trip: Churchill and FDR Overnight in Marrakesh,” MEI Editor’s Blog, January 25, 2013, <http://mideasti.blogspot.com/2013/01/franklin-and-winstons-excellent-road.html>. For Randolph Churchill’s public views on Mihailovich, see Randolph Churchill, “General Mihailovich’s record as a war leader,” *The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* (London), 9 April 1946.

<sup>3</sup> The Churchill Papers: A catalogue, <http://www-archives.chu.cam.ac.uk/perl/node?a=a;reference=CHAR%2020%2F229A-C>.

located at 20 Copthall Ave, City of London (“the City”).<sup>4</sup> It is still not known from whom Pound got the anecdote, which he had heard by 7 Aug. 1953. In a letter of that date, Pound asked his correspondent Olivia Rossetti Agresti if she knew “Robin Saunderson.”<sup>5</sup> He returned to the subject in a letter of 5 Nov. 1953: “Colin {or Robin} something or other was present when the lousy Randolph C/ was selling the idea of betraying Mihaelovitch.”<sup>6</sup> Pound gave as his source of information “the lady to whom Saunderson related it.” This anecdote, of course, does not appear in any of the official histories; it is “secret history.”

Even before Pound heard this anecdote (or had it related to him in a letter, whichever the case may be), the idea of the betrayal of Mihailovitch would have resonated with Pound as right-wing, anti-Communist rhetoric. In 1946, the *New York Journal-American*, an anti-Communist Hearst newspaper, published an editorial excoriating the shameful betrayal by the United States of Gen. Mihailovich:

If the United States Government does less than its utmost to prevent the planned murder of General Drazha Mihailovich by Tito’s Communists, it will have committed an act of betrayal that the American people will have to remember with shame forever. . . . General Mihailovich was our friend and Ally. . . . But when Soviet Russia set about infiltrating and undermining Yugoslavia, the United States Government withdrew its support from Mihailovich and gave it to the Communist puppet Tito. . . . Mihailovich’s only offence is that he resisted Communist Russia in defence of his own country’s freedom. In abandoning him to support the despoilers of

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<sup>4</sup> Don Campbell, “Let’s Take Stock: Security Broker Finds Investments in Art,” *Arizona Republic*, Phoenix, Arizona, December 17, 1966; *The Stock Exchange Official Year-book* (1965)

<sup>5</sup> EP to ORA, 7 Aug. 1953, “*I Cease Not to Yowl*”: *Ezra Pound’s Letters to Olivia Rossetti Agresti*, edited by Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos and Leon Surette (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press [1998]), p. 120. Hereinafter “*I Cease Not to Yowl*.”

<sup>6</sup> EP to ORA, 5 Nov. 1953, “*I Cease Not to Yowl*,” p. 132.

his country's freedom, the American Government committed a sufficiently shameful act of betrayal.<sup>7</sup>

In 1951, Pound's disciple Eustace Mullins wrote disparagingly of "Ellery C. Huntington, Chief of the Military Mission to Yugoslavia which betrayed Mihailovitch to the Communist Tito."<sup>8</sup> Along the same lines, in his famous "Twenty Years of Treason" address, delivered on March 19, 1954, at a dinner of Young Republicans in Milwaukee, Senator Joseph McCarthy attacked "The deliberate betrayal [by the Democrats, *i.e.*, Roosevelt] of our fighting ally, the militantly anti Communist Mihailovitch in Yugoslavia in favor of Communist Tito. The result: a Communist Yugoslavia."<sup>9</sup> Mihailovich was to Pound another anti-Communist hero (like himself) who was betrayed by political enemies, arrested and charged with treason, and put on trial, with devastating political consequences for the victimizing country. For Pound, however, the anecdote takes on a significance that goes beyond mere Churchill- and Roosevelt-bashing and anti-Communist rhetoric. In the four lines of this passage, Pound shows us the unraveling of the British Empire. It is a betrayal of the same kind that Pound saw at the Yalta conference. Pound wrote Agresti that after a reading of the *Yalta Papers* (released in March 1955), Judas Iscariot would seem like a

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<sup>7</sup> "A Shameful Betrayal" [editorial], *New York Journal-American* (Mar. 30, 1946), p. 2, reprinted in *General Mihailovich: The World's Verdict. A Selection of Articles on the First Resistance Leader in Europe Published in the World Press* (Gloucester, John Bellows Limited, 1947), p. 31, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/42695316/General-Mihailovich-The-World-s-Verdict-A-Selection-of-Articles-on-the-First-Resistance-Leader-in-Europe-Published-in-the-World-Press-1947>.

<sup>8</sup> Eustace Mullins, "Black Paper on Korea," *The Social Crediter*, Dec. 22, 1951, reprinted in *Women's Voice*, Chicago, X.5 (Dec. 27, 1951), pp. 8-10 (p. 9), [https://archive.org/download/foia\\_Womens\\_Voice-Lyrl\\_C.\\_Van\\_Hyning-Chicago-2/Womens\\_Voice-Lyrl\\_C.\\_Van\\_Hyning-Chicago-2.pdf](https://archive.org/download/foia_Womens_Voice-Lyrl_C._Van_Hyning-Chicago-2/Womens_Voice-Lyrl_C._Van_Hyning-Chicago-2.pdf); *The New Times*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Melbourne, Friday, Jan. 25, 1952, pp. 1, 4, 7 (p. 4), <http://alor.org/New%20Times/pdf/NT1802.pdf>; and *Women's Voice* (Dec. 25, 1952), pp. 13-15 (p. 14), [https://archive.org/download/foia\\_Mullins\\_Eustace\\_C.-NYC-1/Mullins\\_Eustace\\_C.-NYC-1.pdf](https://archive.org/download/foia_Mullins_Eustace_C.-NYC-1/Mullins_Eustace_C.-NYC-1.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Joseph R. McCarthy, "Partial Text Of Address Given By McCarthy." *The Sun*, Baltimore, Md., Mar. 20, 1954, p. 9; McCarthy, "Twenty Years of Treason," *The New Times*, Melbourne, Vol. 20, No. 12, July 2, 1954, pp. 1, 2, 5, 7 (p. 2), <http://alor.org/New%20Times/pdf/NT2012.pdf>.

virgin compared to Churchill.<sup>10</sup> This betrayal represents not just the dying throes of the British Empire, but the decline of responsible government in general. In 1956, Pound wrote, “When a nation has conquered by its own strength, it is not hysterical and terrified of its defeated enemy. Nothing provokes to sadism like fear. Sane diplomacy having defeated another nation looks to the honest elements in its late opponent. It does not try to build an alliance on those members of the lately opposed forces who have been its accomplices and with whom gentlemen’s agreements can be such in name only. The betrayal of Mihailovitch has not paid off to British benefit.”<sup>11</sup>

The “louts”—the Churchills and their ilk—are part of government by “cadocracy,” to use J.F.C. Fuller’s term, as opposed to “sane diplomacy.” Pound wrote that “One of England’s leading military authorities, if not THE authority, General Fuller, uses the term ‘Cadocracy’ to describe his country’s hopeless ruling class. ‘This ‘Cadocracy,’ having offered no resistance to the blackout of history (ref. Christopher Hollis, ‘The Two Nations’ for acceleration of the blackout), having lost the model of sane diplomacy, is now simply content to wallow in whatever ‘comes along.’”<sup>12</sup> The “blackout of history” stands for the Jews, who are the instrument of the blackout, and the members of the “cadocracy” are their pawns. Of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—the source of the blackout idea<sup>13</sup>—Pound said in 1943: “What is interesting, perhaps most, to the historian is their definite campaign against history altogether, their declared intention to blot out the classics, to blot out the record, and to dazzle men with talk of tomorrow.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> EP to ORA, 18 Mar. 1955, “*I Cease Not to Yowl*,” p. 183.

<sup>11</sup> Pound, “London,” *New Times*, XXII.11 (1 June 1956), p. 6, <http://alor.org/New%20Times/pdf/NT2211.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Pound, “London,” *New Times*, XXII.11 (1 June 1956), p. 6, <http://alor.org/New%20Times/pdf/NT2211.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> *Protocols* 16.4: “Classicism as also any form of study of ancient history, in which there are more bad than good examples, we shall replace with the study of the program of the future. We shall erase from the memory of men all facts of previous centuries which are undesirable to us, and leave only those which depict all the errors of the government of the GOYIM.”

<sup>14</sup> “Zion” (radio broadcast of April 20, 1943), “*Ezra Pound Speaking*”—*Radio Speeches of World War II*, edited by Leonard Doob (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), p. [283]. Hereinafter “*Ezra Pound Speaking*.”

Pound shifts from Jewish control of politics to Jewish control of culture:

Banners they took after Lepanto  
but now obtain “control of the outlets”  
to keep down printed quality  
(CIV/758)

This passage seems to celebrate a victory over Jewish usury, especially as practiced in Venice. After the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, in which the Venetians and Spaniards conquered the Turks in the contest for the island of Cyprus, Venetians brought out the captured Turkish banners for some of their public celebrations.<sup>15</sup> Goethe saw the Venetian banners still on view at St. Justine’s church in Venice in 1786.<sup>16</sup> Room II of the Armoury of the Palazzo Ducale (Doge’s Palace) currently features the triangular standard taken at the famous naval battle.<sup>17</sup> Venetian Jews were blamed for the war and were threatened with expulsion.<sup>18</sup> The German and Italian Jews survived the war by making financial concessions. They decreased their interest rate to five percent per annum, the price they had to pay for stable residence in the ghetto.<sup>19</sup> By the time of Pound’s writing, the usurers were back in control; “control of the outlets” means a usurious monopoly on the distribution of books or periodicals. Pound complained to Agresti about “[t]he same congenital idiocy of the goy/ letting the jew book [trade] monopolize the occident.”<sup>20</sup> Among those of whom Pound complained was one Ravenna, a book stall owner in the Piazza San Marco Venezia.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Julie Amacher, “New Classical Tracks - 1612 or 1812?” Classical MPR, July 17, 2012, <http://www.classicalmpr.org/story/2012/07/18/new-classical-tracks--1612-or-1812>.

<sup>16</sup> Notes by Hugh Keyte on Lepanto, the Rosary feast, and Gabrieli’s Magnificat and *In Ecclesiis*, <http://www.ifagiolini.com/1612/historical-notes/>.

<sup>17</sup> “Armoury-Palazzo Ducale,” <http://palazzoducale.visitmuve.it/en/the-museum/layout-and-collections/armoury/>.

<sup>18</sup> Gotthard Deutsch and Eude Lolli, “Venice,” *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1906), <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14667-venice>.

<sup>19</sup> Virtual Jewish World: Venice, Italy, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Venice.html>.

<sup>20</sup> EP to ORA, [3 Sept. 1954], “*I Cease Not to Yowl*,” p. 170.

<sup>21</sup> EP to ORA, [3 Sept. 1954], “*I Cease Not to Yowl*,” p. 170.

After giving an example of bad government in the form of a decayed British Empire, Pound introduces two Chinese characters to offer an antidote: ling and wu. Thomas Grieve defines ling and wu as follows:

(ling<sup>2</sup> 4071) The spirit of a being, which acts upon others. Spirit; spiritual; divine. Supernatural. Efficacious.

(wu<sup>1,2</sup>. 7164) A wizard or witch; a medium. Magical arts. Dancing and posturing in order to induce the descent of the spirits.<sup>22</sup>

Grieve explains ling<sup>2</sup>:

Thus ling<sup>2</sup>, the character which opens *Section: Rock-Drill* and recurs like a pulse-beat through Canto 85 and Canto 86, is an image of the process of virtuous government, and as such is focal to the political concerns of this first Canto. The character also gives image to the attitude of a man responsive and in supplication to the descent of natural and divine beneficence, an image that will reverberate through the later Cantos of this section. One simply must know the root components to enter into Pound's definition -- "sensibility" -- and to participate in the full projective range of this character in informing the totality of *Section: Rock-Drill*: Rain falling on the open mouths of figures dancing in order to induce the descent of the spirits. The ideogram is no longer an underlining; it is performance.<sup>23</sup>

For Hugh Kenner, "Ling<sup>2</sup> with its dancers below, its rain falling above, its ritual engaging by harmony cosmic process, the 'great sensibility' by which dynasties are generated, may serve as emblem for the poet's role, making the dance, questing for the right and

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Fraser Grieve, "Annotations to the Chinese in *Section: Rock-Drill*" (M.A., Simon Fraser University, 1973), p. 31, <http://summit.sfu.ca/system/files/iritems1/2921/b10863011.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Grieve, p. 19.

absolute rhythm to mime with his blood and breath some greater process.”<sup>24</sup>

Ling<sup>2</sup>, then, is the reception of the divine. *Semina motuum*—shortened by Pound to “*semina*” in this passage—and “*phyllotaxis*” (CIV/763) are the working out of *ling* in individuals. Pound defines “*semina motuum*” as the spirit which animates the family and, in a Confucian sense, spreads outward to enlighten the government of the state: “One humane family can humanize a whole state; one courteous family can lift a whole state into courtesy; one grasping and perverse man can drive a nation to chaos. Such are the seeds of movement [*semina motuum*, the inner impulses of the tree]. That is what we mean by: one word will ruin the business, one man can bring the state to an orderly course.”<sup>25</sup> In Legge’s translation: “From the loving example of one family a whole State becomes loving, and from its courtesies the whole State becomes courteous, while, from the ambition and perverseness of the One man, the whole State may be led to rebellious disorder;— such is the nature of the influence. This verifies the saying, ‘Affairs may be ruined by a single sentence; a kingdom may be settled by its One man.’”<sup>26</sup> *Phyllotaxis*, in botany, is “The arrangement of leaves or other lateral members (e.g. the scales of a pine cone, the florets of a flower of the family *Asteraceae* (*Compositae*), etc.) on an axis or stem”<sup>27</sup>; by extension, it is the biological law which governs such an arrangement; it is part and parcel of “the force that makes the cherry stone become a cherry tree.”<sup>28</sup>

Ling, as both Grieve and Kenner mention, is also rain falling—rain being, figuratively, divine inspiration. That Pound was aware of this meaning is evidenced by his translation of Ode 50 (*Ting*) of *The Classic Anthology Defined by Confucius*, in which Pound translated *ling yü* as “timely rainfall”:

On timely rainfall in the starlit gloom,  
would call his groom to hitch

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<sup>24</sup> Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971), p. 544.

<sup>25</sup> Pound, *Great Learning*, IX.3.

<sup>26</sup> <http://wengu.tartarie.com/wg/wengu.php?l=Daxue&s=10>.

<sup>27</sup> *phyllotaxis*, n. *Oxford English Dictionary*, Third Edition, March 2006, <http://www.oed.com>.

<sup>28</sup> *A Companion to the Cantos*, II, 680.

ere day was come<sup>29</sup>

At this juncture, Pound holds off giving us examples of the “intelligence working in nature,” seen in figures of intelligence who run enlightened governments and create or transmit culture. Instead, Pound turns our attention to the beginning of the British cadocracy:

Disraeli, Wolff Henry (double ff)  
bitching England  
and by-passing Parliament  
(CIV/758-59)

These lines continue the theme of usury from the Lepanto passage. They make reference to the purchase by Disraeli, in 1875, of “Suez Canal shares” (CIV/762). “Wolff Henry (double ff)” was Sir Henry Drummond-Wolff (1830-1908), an English diplomat and Conservative Party politician. His father was a missionary who had been born Jewish. Both Disraeli and Drummond-Wolff were Conservative Party politicians, but there seems to be no evidence that Drummond-Wolff was involved in the Suez transaction. Pound, however, rather heavy-handedly sets up the anti-Semitic theme by singling out the “double ff.” Pound’s source was probably Count Egon Caesar Corti’s *The Reign of the House of Rothschild--1830-1871* (1928), which Pound did not read until 1950.<sup>30</sup> Corti tells the story as follows:

In the end the Egyptian state and the khedive got so heavily into debt that the ruler was compelled to proceed to sell the 177,602 shares in the Suez Canal which he held, to obtain money for his most pressing requirements. It was essential that the cash should be made immediately available, and the khedive had already got into touch with French financiers. Heinrich Oppenheim heard of the whole scheme which it was proposed to carry through; he

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<sup>29</sup> Pound, *Poems and Translations* (Library of America, 2003), p. 779. See David Hsin-Fu Wand, “Cathay Revisited: The Chinese Tradition in the Poetry of Ezra Pound and Gary Snyder” (Ph.D., University of Southern California, 1972), p. 69, online at <http://digitalibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll17/id/59488>.

<sup>30</sup> EP to ORA, [ans. 4 Apr. 1950], “*I Cease Not to Yowl*,” letter 26, p. 48.

was a banker who had often lent the khedive money, and he informed both the journalist Frederick Greenwood and Lionel of this excellent opportunity for the British government to secure its hold upon the maritime connections with India. Disraeli had for some time been thinking of securing a dominating influence in the canal by securing the 400,000 Suez Canal shares. But now it was essential to act quickly, for the khedive had already granted an option to French financiers, so that the British could not afford to delay with their offer. Parliament was not sitting, and could not be summoned quickly enough; and it was not such a simple matter to take £4,000,000 out of the treasury without parliamentary sanction. In view of the importance of the matter, Disraeli ignored all these difficulties. "We have scarcely time to breathe, we must carry the matter through," Disraeli wrote to his queen, and through his friend Lionel Rothschild, the £4,000,000 required for the purchase was raised without parliamentary sanction. By the afternoon of November 26, 1875, the purchase had been carried through. The Rothschilds had advanced the money at 3%, while Ismail [the Khedive Ismail Pasha] had undertaken to pay 5% per annum until the dividends on the shares should again become payable. Thus the British government carried through an important political and a magnificent business deal."<sup>31</sup>

This anecdote became a staple of Anglophone anti-Semitic literature after the English translation of Corti's book came out in 1928. Among the writers who repeated the story were William Joyce and Arnold Leese, with both of whom Pound corresponded.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Count Egon Caesar Corti, *The Reign of the House of Rothschild--1830-1871*. Translated from the German by Brian and Beatrix Lunn (New York, Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1928), pp. 415-416, online at [http://americandeception.com/index.php?action=downloadpdf&photo=PDFsml\\_AD/The\\_Reign\\_of\\_the\\_House\\_of\\_Rothchild-Count\\_Egon\\_Caesar\\_Corti-1830-1871-c1928-525pgs-SEC\\_SOC.sml.pdf&id=366](http://americandeception.com/index.php?action=downloadpdf&photo=PDFsml_AD/The_Reign_of_the_House_of_Rothchild-Count_Egon_Caesar_Corti-1830-1871-c1928-525pgs-SEC_SOC.sml.pdf&id=366).

<sup>32</sup> William Joyce, *Twilight Over England* (Berlin, 1940), <http://www.counter-currents.com/2012/03/economic-development/>; Arnold Leese, *Gentile Folly: The Rothschilds* (1940), [http://www.sunray22b.net/The\\_Rothschild\\_Leese.htm](http://www.sunray22b.net/The_Rothschild_Leese.htm).

What Pound objected to in the Suez transaction was, first of all, that it was an executive decision on the part of Disraeli without legislative approval by, or even consultation with, Parliament. As Pound would go on to explain in Canto CVIII, “Cap. VI bitched by Disraeli” (CVIII/786). “Cap VI” is the chapter of the Charter of Confirmation (1297) that forbids the use of public funds without express consent of Parliament.<sup>33</sup> “Cap VI” reads:

Moreover we have granted for us and our heirs, as well to archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, and other folk of holy Church, as also to earls, barons, and to all the community of the land, that for no business from henceforth will we take such manner of aids, mises, nor prises from our realm, but by the common assent of all the realm, and for the common profit thereof, saving the ancient aids and prises due and accustomed.<sup>34</sup>

Pound’s second objection to the transaction was that it was usurious. Rothschild, from whom Disraeli borrowed the purchase price for the shares, was paid a commission at the expense of the English public:

“His Highness the Khedive having proposed to sell his Shares in the Suez Canal Company to Her Majesty’s Government for 4,000,000 l., Her Majesty Government accepted the proposal, supposing that His Highness was still in possession of the full number (177,642), formerly belonging to him; but His Highness subsequently informed them that he had parted with some Shares, and that the number in his possession actually amounted to only 176,602, a reduction corresponding to the reduced number was accordingly made in the Purchase Money, which amounts to 3,976,582 l. 2 s. 6 d. Messrs. N. de Rothschild undertook to pay the above-mentioned sum to the Khedive in anticipation of the Vote of Parliament; and, in consideration of their trouble and Risk, it was

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<sup>33</sup> *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound*, II, 706.

<sup>34</sup> “Medieval Sourcebook: Confirmation of the Charters, 1297,” Internet History Sourcebooks Project, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/conf-charters.asp>.

agreed that Her Majesty's Government should pay to them a commission of 2 1/2 per cent. on the Purchase Money, or 99,414 l. 11 s. 1 d."<sup>35</sup>

Elsewhere, Pound wrote, "And Disraeli sold the brit fools down the river" (XCIX/619) and:

. . . England not yet sold for the Suez---  
 That would have been 20 years later,  
     or was it '74?  
 At any rate, sold down the river,  
     passed over Parliament,  
     "whatever else he believed in,  
 it was not representative government"  
     Nor visible responsibilities.

(LXXXVI/584)

Pound attributes a malevolence to Disraeli's action, seeing in it the first step that would lead to Churchill's betrayal of England some decades later. By 1956, at about the time he is writing Canto CIV, Pound has developed the notion of the Kahal System as having taken control of the British government at the highest levels. In a letter to Noel Stock, dated June 17, 1956, Pound describes "the kahal system of keeping a certain proportion of their subjects on the verge of hunger where they are ready to commit any crime for a sixpence."<sup>36</sup> Historically, the Kahal System, "as it used to be in the Russian ghetto, was introduced into England by Disraeli, when he bypassed the House of Commons to get Suez Canal shares. The same system was introduced into the United States by President Wilson, either from natural meanness or manipulated by Col. House, when he signed the Federal Reserve Banking Act. The Kahal System, as distinct from either British or American constitutional government, is rule by an irresponsible group of rich men, who keep a number of their fellows at or near starvation level, or in some way,

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<sup>35</sup> Great Britain. Parliament. 3d sess. House of Commons. *Sessional papers ... 8 Feb.-15 Aug. 1876* (London, 1876), v. 49. Accounts and papers, p. 649.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Ellen Cardona, "Pound's Anti-Semitism at St. Elizabeths: 1945-1958," *FlashPoint*, Web Issue 9 (Spring 2007), <http://www.flashpointmag.com/card.htm>.

as underdogs, so that they will do anything to earn a quick dollar, pound or ruble . . .”<sup>37</sup>

There was nothing particularly new in Pound’s theme of irresponsible government. By the time of the Rome Radio broadcasts, Pound had developed a concept of responsible versus irresponsible government. In “But How? Second Item” (1942), Pound contrasts “EVERY race in Europe that takes the responsibility for being a nation and administering openly, as a government in the eyes of the people” with “the crawling slime of a secret rule, a secret and IRRESPONSIBLE rule, that takes NO responsibility for the welfare of races, and nations, but eats like a cancer into the heart and soul of all nations. Even that where of its central staff is composed.”<sup>38</sup> In Canto 88, he writes:

Responsible, or irresponsible government?  
Minimum of land without surveillance.  
(LXXXVIII/600)

In 1956, Pound stressed the anti-Semitic undertones of the concept of responsible versus irresponsible government. The charge that the Kahal system keeps “a certain proportion of their subjects on the verge of hunger,” as Pound asserts in June 1956, appears to have as its immediate source Elizabeth Dilling, a virulently anti-Semitic writer whom Pound mentions in his correspondence with Agresti. Noel Stock, echoing Pound—as he often did at that time—wrote that the Kahal System “operated in Poland during World War Two, under German occupation. ‘The Revolt in the Bialystok Ghetto,’ written in Yiddish by Ber Mark and published by the Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw in 1950, tells, according to Elizabeth

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<sup>37</sup> A letter from “a correspondent in Europe” [*i.e.*, Pound], printed under the heading: “Further Notes on the Kahal System,” *New Times*, XXIII.3 (8 Feb. 1957), p. 5, <http://alor.org/New%20Times/pdf/NT2303.pdf>. This was based on a letter to Stock, dated November 17, 1956, in which Pound wrote, “The kahal system, as distinct from either British or American constitutional government, is the rule by an irresponsible group of rich men, who keep a number of their fellows at starvation level so that they will do anything for a quick buck or a quick ruble.” Quoted in Ellen Cardona, “World War II and Pound, 1940-1945: The Anti-Semite Revealed,” *FlashPoint*, Web Issue 11 (Winter 2008), <http://www.flashpointmag.com/card4.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> “But How? Second Item” (radio broadcast of March 23, 1942), “Ezra Pound Speaking,” p. 73.

Dilling, how the KAHAL bosses, while making money out of contracts with the Germans, kept poorer Jews at starvation level.”<sup>39</sup> The Dilling piece to which Stock refers might have been an article for *Common Sense* or *Women’s Voice*, two anti-Semitic magazines to which she contributed frequently in the 1950s. Dilling, in turn, seems to have borrowed the concept from Leslie Fry, another anti-Semitic writer, whose book *Waters Flowing Eastward* (1931), also full of references to the Kahal, was the basis of Pound’s Rome Radio broadcast “Big Jew” (June 1, 1943). Fry wrote that, during the First World War, “the men controlling the international financial system . . . secured the setting up of UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration] whose purpose is to restrict the distribution of food, and lead to famine in Europe. . . . Europe has now been brought to near-detonation point. Its peoples are being driven to desperation by gross food-shortage, and lack of recovery from the desolation of war.”<sup>40</sup> The idea of “keeping a certain proportion of their subjects on the verge of hunger” is ultimately derived from the *Protocols*: “Our power is in the chronic shortness of food and physical weakness of the worker because by all that this implies he is made the slave of our will, and he will not find in his own authorities either strength or energy to set against our will.”<sup>41</sup>

Pound passes immediately to a drug-smuggling operation:

In metal cylinders, swallowed by camels  
who are then killed after passing the frontier  
de l’audace, PANURGIA, & heroin.  
(CIV/759)

The operation takes place along the Egyptian border. This passage links to the Suez Canal passage not only because of the Egyptian connection, but also because of the Communist/Jewish central control exemplified in both passages. The use of camels as desert mules, as it were, was frequently in the news, where Pound could

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<sup>39</sup> Noel Stock, “The Jewish Kahal System and the World Situation,” *New Times*, XXIII.2 (25 Jan. 1957), pp. 5-9, <http://alor.org/New%20Times/pdf/NT2302.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> L. Fry, *Waters Flowing Eastward: The War Against the Kingship of Christ* (1931, 6th ed. rev. 1988), [https://ia800504.us.archive.org/9/items/WatersFlowingEastward\\_307/1-watersFlowingEastward.pdf](https://ia800504.us.archive.org/9/items/WatersFlowingEastward_307/1-watersFlowingEastward.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> *Protocols* 3.7.



has often been argued that a shared culture, or at least shared cultural references or practices, can help to foster peace and prevent war.<sup>45</sup> Common cultural practices include art, literature, and music.<sup>46</sup> Pound was a believer in this notion. His belief helps to make sense of his otherwise loopy-sounding proposal to trade Guam for sound films of Noh plays.<sup>47</sup> That peace between Japan and the United States could have been achieved through shared culture has been given support by at least one historian, who writes, “Though Japanese aggression in East Asia was the root cause of the Pacific War, the road to Pearl Harbor was built on American as well as Japanese miscalculations, most of them mired in mutual cultural ignorance and racial arrogance.”<sup>48</sup>

Pound then turns to the first two of his figures of intelligence anticipated since his introduction of *ling*<sup>2</sup> and *wu* earlier in the *canto*—Cyril Rocke and Albert Londres:

Old Rocke (with an -e terminal not the botanist) /  
learned Abyssinia  
[. . .]  
Londres’ books neglected,  
the French did not learn them.  
(CIV/759)

These sets of lines, separated by one additional line on Abyssinia<sup>49</sup>, should be discussed together. Both passages have to do with writers

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<sup>45</sup> Miguel Tamen, Michiko Urita, Michael N. Nagler, Gary Saul Morson, Oleg Kharkhordin, Lindsay Diggelmann, John Watkins, Jack Zipes, and James Trilling. “Introduction: Peace by Means of Culture,” *Common Knowledge* 22.2 (2016): 181-189 (abstract, <http://commonknowledge.dukejournals.org/content/22/2/181.abstract>).

<sup>46</sup> Tamen *et al.*, 181.

<sup>47</sup> “Ex-Idahoan Has Peace Plan,” *The Salt Lake Tribune*, Salt Lake City, Utah (April 4, 1941), p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Jeffrey Record, “Japan’s Decision for War in 1941: Some Enduring Lessons.” Carlisle, PA, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, February 2009, [www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2009/ssi\\_record.pdf](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2009/ssi_record.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> The line is “Sammy’s nevvly got the gold out of the palace bed-room.” Pound was aware of this story, dating from the time of Haile Selassie’s flight from Addis Ababa in May 1936, by the Second World War, when he wrote, “The British thieves have it seems taken most of the gold away from Egypt. Of course it was not their gold. The Egyptian Bank had wheedled some of

who point out what good governments need to do; for very different reasons, neither writer was listened to in his time, but the consequences of the failure to pay them heed were equally dire in each case. Cyril Edmund Alan Spencer Rocke (1876-1968), an English lieutenant-colonel, was a defender of Mussolini and a white supremacist. This is Rocke “with an -e terminal,” to distinguish him from the botanist with the homonymic last name who surfaces later in the canto. In the mid-1930s, Rocke, like his better-known compatriot J. F. C. Fuller<sup>50</sup>, visited Abyssinia to observe firsthand

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it out of Abyssinia LONG ago. But still the anglo jews have now moved it again.” (anonymous 1. Jan. [1942], YCAL MSS 43 Box 127 Folder 5265. (Thanks to Matthew Feldman for the transcription.) In conflating the story of Abyssinian gold with that of Greek gold during the war, Pound gives an anti-Semitic reading to both examples. According to some accounts, Greek gold was transported through Egypt to London in 1941: In February 1941 “the Greek authorities decided to transfer the Bank of Greece’s gold to Crete, to be deposited in the vaults of the Heraklion Agency. . . . In the following months, the German invasion and the capitulation of Greece in April 1941 provoked the departure of the King and of the government to Crete. . . . Soon became evident that the battle of Crete would be lost for the Greek and Allied forces, a new replacement was decided for both, gold and the government. The gold was to be transferred and deposited in South Africa, via Egypt where the Tsouderos government would be based. Once again gold moves, transported from Crete to Alexandria by British warships. The King, the Government and the Administration of the Bank of Greece left Crete for the Egyptian port of Alexandria on the 22 or 23 May and after a month a new replacement, this time to Cairo. In Cairo the final transportation of the gold to South Africa was prepared with the assistance of the British military authorities. . . . Finally, the gold went to Pretoria and was deposit[ed] in the vaults of the central South African Reserve Bank. In that period, the Greek government was based -for a short period- in Johannesburg. In September 1941 the King, the Government and the Bank of Greece Administration moved to London, where was also based the governments in exile of other European countries. According to other sources, gold also was transferred and stocked in London.” (Catherine Brégianni, “Stories and myths: Greek gold transfers during the World War II and beyond,” in G. Depeyrot (ed.) with the collaboration of C. Brégianni and M. Kovalchuk, *Three Conferences on International Monetary History*, Wetteren, Moneta, 2013, pp. 261-270 (pp. 265, 266), [https://www.academia.edu/3822033/Stories\\_and\\_myths\\_Greek\\_gold\\_transfers\\_during\\_the\\_World\\_War\\_II\\_and\\_beyond](https://www.academia.edu/3822033/Stories_and_myths_Greek_gold_transfers_during_the_World_War_II_and_beyond)).

<sup>50</sup> Major-Gen. J. F. C. Fuller, *The First of the League Wars: Its Lessons and Omens* (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1936).

and to report what the situation was like. He was particularly interested in the savagery of the Abyssinian people. Roche “learned Abyssinia” in the sense that he observed the barbaric customs of the Abyssinian. Pound wrote to Olivia Rossetti Agresti, “Some damWOP ought to do nice gentle li'l essay on abyssunian codes and customs/ where is old ROCKE? He knows. My set of photos probably liberated in the destruction of Rapallo.”<sup>51</sup> According to James J. Wilhelm, “[James] Laughlin says that Pound showed him photographs of innocent Italians and others who had supposedly been butchered by the barbaric natives. Pound had said, ‘Abyssinian habits are unprintable.’”<sup>52</sup> In 1935, after his visit to Abyssinia, Roche gained notoriety with an open letter (published as a 4-page propaganda leaflet) supporting Italy’s involvement in the Abyssinian war, *The Truth about Abyssinia by an Eye Witness. An Open Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Lords Cecil, Craigmyle and Snowden, The Rt Hon G. Barnes, Sir Norman Angell, etc., and the leader writers of The Times, Daily Telegraph, etc.* Dated from the Guards Club, 1 September 1935, Roche’s letter expressed his belief that Mussolini, in attacking the country, was doing God’s work and bringing civilization to the savages. Pound endorsed Roche’s view of the white man’s imperial burden, finding the invasion justified on the ground that, as in the former British Empire, what was exported to the occupied land was “good government or better government than the natives would have had without England.”<sup>53</sup> Roche wrote that “The horrible sufferings of every day life in large parts of Abyssinia are such as would make every sanctionist shudder with repulsion were these idealists to be brought face to face with them.” “Italy is not doing wrong [in invading Abyssinia], but right before God and man, if only you knew it. . . . Italy is doing now what Christendom should have done long ago.” “Those who belittle Mussolini’s nobility of purpose degrade themselves.” Roche concluded by thanking God “in as much as He has created a great and noble man like Mussolini, a man of white race who, without an atom of cruelty in his composition, believes in the destiny of the white races as a whole.” Pound had a

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<sup>51</sup> EP to ORA, 29 May 1954, “*I Cease Not to Yowl*,” p. 153.

<sup>52</sup> James J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound: The Tragic Years, 1925-1972* (Penn State Press, 1994), p. 109.

<sup>53</sup> “England” (radio broadcast of March 15, 1942), “*Ezra Pound Speaking*,” p. 59, quoted in Rajiv C. Krishnan, “Empire in *The Cantos* of Ezra Pound,” *CIEFL Bulletin*, 12.1-2 (ns) (Dec 2002): 99-115, [http://www.academia.edu/974103/Empire\\_in\\_Ezra\\_Pounds\\_Cantos](http://www.academia.edu/974103/Empire_in_Ezra_Pounds_Cantos).

copy of *The Truth about Abyssinia*, probably given to him by Roche when the latter visited Italy as a guest of the Italian Ministry of Propaganda late in 1935. Roche might have given the photographs of the butchered Italians to Pound. After June 10, 1940, when Italy declared war on Great Britain, Roche stayed on in Rome and began broadcasting in English on Rome Radio.<sup>54</sup> “Old Roche,” following Mussolini, “learned Abyssinia,” as opposed to the “sanctionists,” who by implication did not (and did not care to know). The sanctionists were, in Pound’s view, an international Jewish clique which devised the sanctions against Italy in order to provoke a European war.<sup>55</sup> As Pound saw it, had Roche been listened to, war might have been avoided.

Albert Londres (1884-1932) was a French investigative journalist whose books described the horrors of such places as penal colonies, military prisons using forced labor, and lunatic asylums.<sup>56</sup> Pound seems to have been especially interested in Londres’s writings about bureaucratic ineptitude in the administration of the African colonies. In 1935, Pound wrote, “I think it was Albert Londres who remarked on the drivelling mania of the ghouls who govern French Africa.”<sup>57</sup> In one of his wartime radio broadcasts, Pound said, “Albert Londres had a hunch that the French ought to try it [eugenics] on blacks in their Africa. He hated to see the Africans going rotten, covered with scabs in French colonies.” In the same broadcast, he said that “Seems fairly clear that you fix a breed

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<sup>54</sup> Archie Henderson, “I Cease Not to Yowl” *Reannotated: New Notes on the Pound/Agresti Correspondence* (Houston, Texas, 2012), p. 570.

<sup>55</sup> David I. Kertzer, *The Pope and Mussolini: The Secret History of Pius XI and the Rise of Fascism in Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 460 n.14.

<sup>56</sup> In writing about Jewish pimps in Buenos Aires in his book *Le Chemin de Buenos Aires* (1927) (*The Road to Buenos Aires*), Londres has been accused of anti-Semitism. (Donna Guy, “Argentina: Jewish White Slavery,” *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/argentina-jewish-white-slavery>). However, in his book *Le Juif errant est arrivé* (1930) (“The Wandering Jew Has Arrived”), Londres supported the creation of a Jewish state. (Benjamin Ivry, “The Wandering Jew Has Arrived”: French Journalist Albert Londres Visits Tel Aviv,” *Forward*, May 10, 2010, <http://forward.com/the-assimilator/127898/the-wandering-jew-has-arrived-french-journalist-a/>).

<sup>57</sup> Pound, (“In the Wounds (Memoriam A.R. Orage),” *Criterion* (April 1935) (Gallup C1176), in *Selected Prose 1909-1965*, p. 445.



is not performed we will not attain perfection like others.”<sup>61</sup> The ceremony incorporates references to elements of the Na-khi landscape. “Wind over snow-slope” may be Pound’s poetical version of Rock’s description of the high winter gales that bend trees on wind-exposed cliffs.<sup>62</sup> As Pound continues, the Na-khi ceremony blends with a Roman invocation of the gods or spirits:

. . .        agitante  
               nos otros  
                      calescimus  
    (CIV/759)<sup>63</sup>

This is a fractured Latin and Spanish composite of lines from Ovid: “Est deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo, | Impetus hic sacrae semina mentis habet” (Ovid, *Fasti* VI, 5-6), meaning “When he [the god in us] stirs we are set on fire.”<sup>64</sup> Their being on fire in the Roman ceremony echoes the “pine-needles burning” of the Na-khi ceremony.

Pound then moves to two more figures of intelligence:

Murare, tradurre:

Pope Nicolo had those two passions.  
 Gained for the latin tongue  
 (Valla)  
                      latinitas  
    (CIV/759)

Pope Nicholas V (1397-1455) reinforced Rome’s fortifications; simultaneously, under the Pope’s commission, Lorenzo Valla translated Greek histories, pagan as well as Christian, into Latin. Like Malatesta and Mussolini, Pope Nicholas V was therefore for Pound both a builder of cities and an artifex. For Pound, the rinascimento began when Valla wrote in the preface to his *Elegantiae Linguae Latinae* (1444), “Ibi namque Romanum imperium est, ubicunque Romana lingua dominatur”—in Pound’s translation,

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<sup>61</sup> Rock, p. 41, quoted in P. Th. M. G. Liebrechts, *Ezra Pound and Neoplatonism* (Madison, Teaneck, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004), p. 362.

<sup>62</sup> Rock, p. 26 n.44.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Canto XCIII/628: “agitante calescemus . . .”

<sup>64</sup> *A Companion to the Cantos*, II, 565.





By re-introducing the anecdote of the “Suez Canal shares” (CIV/762), Pound invokes the themes of usury and the blackout of history, leading into his fulmination on the Whig theory of history:

Said Hollis (Christopher)  
 Regius ... (deleted) Professorships  
 for falsification  
 and Coke disappeared from curricula.  
 (CIV/762)

During the Second World War, Pound wrote that “Regius Professorships were founded to falsify history and teach Whiggery.”<sup>71</sup> This notion comes from Christopher Hollis’s book *The Two Nations*: “Now what was the [Whig] history which these endowed teachers taught? It was the progressive theory of history – a theory hitherto unknown, a theory soon, as a result of their activities, accepted uncritically, a theory created in the first place quite cynically and clear-headedly in order to cover up the traces of truth. . . . So by the end of the eighteenth century the progressive theory of history had received general acceptance among those who claimed for themselves the prestige of educated people. It was, therefore, not necessary specifically to teach it any more. So long as there was no great risk of their believing inconvenient history, it was much safer for the governing class not to learn any history at all.”<sup>72</sup> “Coke disappeared from curricula” because history in general disappeared from the curricula. More specifically, Coke, like “Blackstone does not harmonise with the planned falsification and blackout of history, forwarded by the Regius Professorships, in a mild way, and since then with increasing virulence. Blackstone does not accord with the total divorce of law from principles of equity and justice.”<sup>73</sup> Again, there is an echo of *The Protocols*, to whose malevolent influence may perhaps be ascribed the “increasing

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<sup>71</sup> Pound, *L’America, Roosevelt e le cause della guerra presente* (Venezia, Casa editrice delle edizioni popolari, 1944) (Gallup A51a), translated into English by John Drummond as *America, Roosevelt and the causes of the present war* (London, Peter Russell, 1951).

<sup>72</sup> Christopher Hollis, *The Two Nations: A Financial Study of English History* (London, G. Routledge and Sons, 1935), chapter 4, pp. 39-40, [http://www.yamaguchy.com/library/hollis/two\\_index.html](http://www.yamaguchy.com/library/hollis/two_index.html).

<sup>73</sup> John Vignon [*i.e.*, Ezra Pound], “Our Common Heritage,” *New Times* (11 Feb. 1956), p. 6.

virulence” over time of the “blackout of history,” leading to the weakness of England’s contemporary ruling class. The positioning of the “Suez Canal shares” passage as a lead-in to the Regius Professorships passage suggests that, for Pound, both are steps on the way to Churchill’s final act of betrayal.

Pound returns to the theme of monopoly, first broached in the passage on “control of the outlets” earlier in the canto:

‘No sooner in Goa /  
than they started uprooting spice trees  
(CIV/762)

“They” refers to the Portuguese: “the Portagoose uprooted spice trees,” as he wrote to Agresti in 1950.<sup>74</sup> It was, however, not the Portuguese, but the Dutch who uprooted the trees, and it was not in Goa, which remained under Portuguese control, but in the territories or islands under Dutch control which had spice trees. The Portuguese ruled Goa, the smallest state in present-day India, from 1510 to 1961. According to Alexander del Mar, Pound’s source, “For two hundred years the Dutch enriched themselves by the sale of cloves and nutmegs. To secure themselves the exclusive trade in these articles they destroyed and enslaved the nations who were in possession of these spices; and lest the price of them should fall, even in their own hands, they rooted up most of the trees and have frequently burnt the fruit of those they possessed.’ (Raynal, 11,415.)”<sup>75</sup> Pound’s confusion probably arose from the fact del Mar writes that the Dutch and Portuguese had just concluded a peace, but a Dutch general kept the news from the Portuguese whom he was still fighting for a prized possession. After he had taken the possession from the Portuguese, a frigate from Goa brought news of the peace, but by then it was too late.

Pound next recalls a portrait of Prospero Intorcetta that he had seen during a visit to Sicily:

Intorcetta’s portrait is still there in Sicily  
with an unreadable text on his fan

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<sup>74</sup> EP to ORA, [early 1950], *“I Cease Not to Yowl,”* p. 41.

<sup>75</sup> Alexander del Mar, *A History of the Precious Metals from the Earliest Times to the Present* (New York, Cambridge Encyclopedia Company, second ed., 1902), p. 329.

Hence Webster, Voltaire and Leibnitz  
(CIV/762-3)

The link with the spice monopoly passage which immediately precedes these lines may be the connection with Goa. Prospero Intorcetta (1626-1696) was a Jesuit missionary who was active in China and a translator of Confucius. *Sinarum Scientia Politico-Moralis*, Intorcetta's Latin translation of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, first printed in Canton and Goa in 1667 and 1669, was reprinted in Europe in the volume *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive Scientia Sinensis latine exposita studio et opera Prosperi Intorcetta, Christiani Herdrich, Francisci Rougemont, Philippi Couplet, Patrum Societatis Jesu* (Paris, 1687). A portrait of Intorcetta, made in 1671, is currently housed in the gallery of the Biblioteca Comunale di Palermo. A copy made by Luigi Pizzullo in 1885 is in the Palazzo Comunale di Piazza Armerina, also in Sicily, where Intorcetta was born.<sup>76</sup> Pound's memory must be of one of these portraits. It is "an unreadable text" because the characters painted on the fan look like Chinese but are not.<sup>77</sup> Besides the humor of it, Pound's point in mentioning this fact may be that Intorcetta's Latin translation erased the linguistic barrier that the fan symbolized and opened Confucian ideas to Western culture. The "hence" is the line of transmission that Pound frequently likes to point out<sup>78</sup>: in this case, Intorcetta translated Confucius, and Voltaire and Leibnitz read the translation and spread the ideas to the West. Pound may have run across the names of Voltaire and Leibnitz in H. G. Creel, *Confucius, the Man and the Myth* (New York, The John Day Co., 1949), a book of which he seems to have been aware in the year of its publication. Pound made the connection between Intorcetta, Voltaire, and Leibnitz as early as September 1953.<sup>79</sup> Playwright John Webster was added to the list when William French found a passage in a Webster play suggesting that he had read (anachronistically, however) Intorcetta's translation

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<sup>76</sup> "Prospero Intorcetta," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Prospero\\_Intorcetta.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Prospero_Intorcetta.jpg).

<sup>77</sup> Thanks to Hua Wang for "reading" the unreadable text for me.

<sup>78</sup> Compare: In 1953, Pound wrote to Achilles Fang, "there is a str[aight] tradition. Kung, Mencius, Dante, Agassiz" (Pound, letter to Achilles Fang, Feb. 1953, in *Ezra Pound's Chinese Friends: Stories in Letters*, edited and annotated by Zhaoming Qian ([Oxford, New York] Oxford University Press [2008]), p. 129).

<sup>79</sup> EP to ORA, 8 Sept. 1953, "I Cease Not to Yowl," p. 125.

of Confucius.<sup>80</sup> Pound thought—erroneously—that Webster also read the Intorcetta translation, but Webster’s dates were too early; he died long before the translation was published. This line of transmission for Confucius is not unlike that for Greek, which passed through Pope Nicholas V, Valla, Bassinio, and Swinburne; and for Latin, which passed through Valla and then Intorcetta.

As a contrast to Venetian usury cited earlier in the canto, Pound writes of the wise use of Venetian gold:

But in Venice more affirmations  
of individual men  
From Selvo to Franchetti, than any elsewhere.  
(CIV/763)

Selvo is Domenico Selvo, the 31st Doge of Venice (1071-1084), the “doge, / that first mosaic’d San Marco” (XXVI/142). Franchetti is Baron Giorgio Franchetti (1865-1922), the last private owner of the Ca’ d’Oro, an ornate Venetian palace with an important art collection.<sup>81</sup> In the case of San Marco, the gold mosaic served the church; in the case of the Ca’ d’Oro (“House of Gold”), the gold decorations served art.<sup>82</sup>

Pound returns once more to the theme of monopoly, moving backwards in history to find his next example:

a common custom in business  
(CIV/763)

“Control of the outlets” is a contemporary example of monopoly; “they started uprooting spice trees,” Pound’s second example, dates from about four centuries ago; “a common custom in business” dates from the time of Aristotle and before. Pound ties monopoly to usury. As he explains, “The usual frauds of book-keeping, monopoly, etc., have been known since the beginning of history, and it is precisely for this reason that the usurers are opposed to classical studies. Aristotle, in his *POLITICS* 1.4/5, relates how Thales, wishing to

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<sup>80</sup> EP to ORA, 1 Dec. 1953, “*I Cease Not to Yowl*,” p. 135.

<sup>81</sup> Margaret Plant, *Venice: Fragile City, 1797-1997* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 291.

<sup>82</sup> Robert Casillo, “The Meaning of Venetian History in Ruskin and Pound,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 55.3 (Spring 1986), pp. 235-260 (pp. 239, 249).

show that a philosopher could easily ‘make money’ if he had nothing better to do, foreseeing a bumper crop of olives, hired by paying a small deposit, all the olive presses on the islands of Miletus and Chios. When the abundant harvest arrived, everybody went to see Thales. Aristotle remarks that this is a common business practice. . . . The manipulation of silver follows simple lines. It all fits perfectly into what Aristotle calls the ‘common practice of commerce’. (Politics 1.4/5 Thales).<sup>83</sup> This example also touches on the blackout of history in the usurers’s opposition to classical studies. Transmission of Greek and Latin serves for Pound as a counterflow to the workings of the blackout in history.

Pound points to a tool for price stabilization, and therefore a tool against usury, which he found in Alexander del Mar:

Del Mar cites 12 cases of tickets /  
as from Iron in Spartan coinage”  
(CIV/764)

Del Mar wrote that “The monopoly of the mines of copper, gold and silver, by the sovereign-pontiff of Peru . . . almost amounts to a conclusive proof that coins of these metals had been tried in Peru and abandoned as an impracticable measure of value. Precisely the same thing had happened in ancient times in India, in the Greek states of Sparta, Byzantium, Clazomenae, etc., in Carthage and even in Rome. All these states had tried gold or silver and sometimes both of these metals for coins and had eventually given them up and resorted to numerary moneys as a refuge from fluctuating prices and unstable social conditions.”<sup>84</sup> “[M]ost of the Greek States at one time or another resorted to a numerary currency in the place of coins. Among these were Sparta, Athens, Ionia, and Byzantium. . . . The introduction of substitutes for metallic money in certain countries,

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<sup>83</sup> Pound, *An Introduction to the Economic Nature of the United States; Impact*, pp. 22, 35; *Selected Prose 1909-1965*, p. 172). Cf. “and for notes on monopoly / Thales” (LXXVII/488); “‘Common practice!’ sd/Ari re business” (LXXXVII/590); “gold-bugs against ANY order, / Seeking the common (as Ari says) / practice / for squeeze” (LXXXVII/592); “Or monopoly, Thales, common practice, but dirty” (LXXXVIII/600); “‘a common’ / sez Ari ‘custom in trade’” (XCII/642).

<sup>84</sup> Alexander del Mar, *The History of Money in America, from the Earliest Times to the Establishment of the Constitution* (New York, The Cambridge Encyclopedia Co., 1899), p. 50.

and in certain periods of social progress, was quite as common in ancient times as it is to-day, and must have proved a strong inducement to other countries to interdict the use of gold and silver coins. Not only the Greek States, but also Carthage, Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern China, and Japan, and Rome itself—the latter during the whole period of the Commonwealth—established numerary currencies. Though employed by these countries for other reasons, their employment proved so beneficial, as it undoubtedly did for a time, in sustaining and steadying the accustomed level of prices, that this must have led to their adoption in other countries.”<sup>85</sup> Among the examples cited by del Mar in his *History of Money* are the following twelve: China (p. 41), India (p. 112), Japan (p. 138), Egypt (p. 150), Persia (pp. 152-53), Sparta (p. 163), Clazomenae (pp. 165-166), Byzantium (p. 166), Athens (p. 168), Syracuse (p. 169), Carthage (pp. 174-76), and Rome (p. 186).<sup>86</sup> This stabilizing effect recalls Pound’s interest in the stabilization of the price of bread: “In Venice the bread price was stable” (LXXXIX/622). Pound’s source was *Hitler’s Table Talk*, in which Hitler noted that “The example of the Hanse inspired all commercial and industrial activity of the Middle Ages. That’s how the price of bread could be kept the same for four hundred years, that of barley—and, consequently, that of beer—for more than five hundred years; and this in spite of all the changes of money.”<sup>87</sup> Hitler concluded, “The Venetian Republic affords an excellent example of how successful a State directed economy can be. For five hundred years the price of bread in Venice never varied, and it was left to the Jews with their predatory motto of Free Trade to wreck this stability.”<sup>88</sup> Similarly, Pound believed that instability or fluctuation of prices was due to usury. For Pound, the “usurocratic conspiracy” always employs “the same mechanism, [ . . . ] namely the creation of debts for the extortion of the interest, of monopolies so that they can keep all prices continually fluctuating, including the prices of the various monetary units, of the various

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<sup>85</sup> Alexander del Mar, *A History of the Precious Metals: From Earliest Times to the Present* (London, G. Bell and Sons, 1880), pp. 352-53.

<sup>86</sup> Alexander del Mar, *A History of Money in Ancient Countries from the Earliest Times to the Present* (London, G. Bell, 1885). Cf. “AT LEAST twelve epochal uses of token coin” (EP to ORA, 14 Feb. 1951, “*I Cease Not to Yowl*,” p. 58.

<sup>87</sup> “*I Cease Not to Yowl*,” p. 136.

<sup>88</sup> Hitler, *Hitler’s Table Talk 1941-1944: His Private Conversations*, translated by Norman Cameron and R.H. Stevens, Introduced and with a new Preface by H.R. Trevor-Roper (New York City, Enigma Books [2000]), p. 560.

national currencies.”<sup>89</sup> Del Mar’s “12 cases of tickets” illustrate one way to wage the war against usury. Price stabilization under numerary currencies serve as a counterweight to the fluctuations produced by monopoly.

Towards the end of the Canto, Pound adds two Chinese characters with their English transliterations:

pen yeh

(CIV/764)

The *Companion to the Cantos* explains that pen is “root” or “source,” and yeh is “teachings” or “instruction.”<sup>90</sup> Together, they mean “the source of divine wisdom.”<sup>91</sup> Canto XCIV prints the character for pen, followed by lines which anticipate one of the themes of *Thrones*:

That it is of thrones,

and above them: Justice

(XCIV/660)

These lines are explicated by *Paradiso* IX, 61-62, where Cunizza says: “Above are mirrors—you call them Thrones—by which the light of God as judge is reflected upon us.”<sup>92</sup> The “source of divine wisdom” recalls ling<sup>2</sup>—the animating spirit which descends to man in response to supplication of the divine—at the beginning of the canto. Both pen yeh and ling<sup>2</sup> are present in the last six lines of the canto, adapted from Couvreur’s double French and Latin translation of *Shujing* (The Book of Documents).<sup>93</sup> The translation itself carries forward the canto’s theme of Latin as a vehicle for cultural

<sup>89</sup> *L’America, Roosevelt e le cause della guerra presente* (Venezia, Casa editrice delle edizioni popolari, 1944), translated into English by John Drummond as *America, Roosevelt and the causes of the present war* (London, Peter Russell, 1951, p. 15).

<sup>90</sup> *A Companion to the Cantos*, II, 629.

<sup>91</sup> *A Companion to the Cantos*, II, 591.

<sup>92</sup> *A Companion to the Cantos*, II, 591.

<sup>93</sup> *Chou King: Texte chinois avec une double traduction en français et en latin. Des annotations et un vocabulaire par S. Couvreur S.J.* (Ho Kien Fou, Imprimerie de la mission catholique, 1897), <http://books.google.com/books?id=4P0sAAAAYAAJ>. Also at [http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/chine\\_ancienne/B\\_livres\\_canoniques/Grands\\_Kings/B\\_03\\_Chou\\_king/chou\\_king.pdf](http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/chine_ancienne/B_livres_canoniques/Grands_Kings/B_03_Chou_king/chou_king.pdf).

transmission. To emphasize this point, Pound quotes a phrase from the Latin translation: “curet cogitare perennia.”<sup>94</sup> Legge’s English translation of the section containing this phrase reads:

Examining into antiquity, (we find that) Gao-Yao said, ‘If (the sovereign) sincerely pursues the course of his virtue, the counsels (offered to him) will be intelligent, and the aids (of admonition that he receives) will be harmonious.’ Yu said, ‘Yes, but explain yourself.’ Gao-Yao said, ‘Oh! let him be careful about his personal cultivation, *with thoughts that are far-reaching*, and thus he will produce a generous kindness and nice observance of distinctions among the nine branches of his kindred. All the intelligent (also) will exert themselves in his service; and in this way from what is near he will reach to what is distant.’ Yu did homage to the excellent words, and said, ‘Yes.’<sup>95</sup>

The virtuous sovereign, like the other enlightened rulers already mentioned in the canto, will “spread order about him” (Canto XIII). He is the head of an enlightened government. He supplicates divine beneficence through ceremony and dance, in which even the animals participate – the deer dancing in the wood, recalling the image of the forest which opens the canto, and one final mention of the sacred dance, also involving animals. Pound writes, from (an adaptation or misspelling of) Couvreur, “foung houang li i.”<sup>96</sup> Legge translates the sentence from which this is taken as follows: “[Khwei said, ‘. . .] When the nine parts of the service, as arranged by the Ti, have all been performed, the male and female phoenix *come with their measured gambolings* (into the court).”<sup>97</sup> Pound leaves us with this image of sacred ritual and a glimpse of paradise.

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<sup>94</sup> *Chou King*, Part I, Chap. IV.1, p. 44.

<sup>95</sup> *The Sacred Books of China. The Texts of Confucianism*, translated by James Legge. Part I: The Shu King. The Religious Portions of the Shih King. The Hsiao King (Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1879), The Shu King, Part II, Book III.1, pp. 53-54, <https://ia600809.us.archive.org/32/items/1922707.0003.001.umich.edu/1922707.0003.001.umich.edu.pdf>. Italics added. Hereinafter *The Shu King*.

<sup>96</sup> *Chou King*, Part I, Chap. V.9, p. 58. See *A Companion to the Cantos*, II, 682.

<sup>97</sup> *The Shu King*, Part II, Book IV.2, p. 61. Italics added.

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