Metaphrastic materiality : the typographic archive of Ezra Pound and Susan Howe

Steven Paschall

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METAPHRASTIC MATERIALITY

THE TYPOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE OF EZRA POUND AND SUSAN HOWE

STEVEN D. PASCHALL

Thèse en vue de l'obtention du grade de docteur en littérature américaine

Sous la direction de John S. Bak — Soutenue le 29 juin 2018

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments iii
List of Illustrations iv
List of Abbreviations viii
Notes on the Text ix

INTRODUCTION

TRACES: TYPOGRAPHIC TRADITIONS 1
Verses to Versus 10
Image to Object 20
Field to Edge 27
Projection to Suspension 37
Malatesta to Melville 42

PART ONE: EZRA POUND'S MALATESTA CANTOS

1 PASSAGES: INTERTEXTUAL MATRIX 58
Opening Elsewhere 59
Telescoping Epics 68
Framing Translations 73
Shadowing Revision 84

2 STRUCTURES: RESCRIPTED ANALECTA 94
Receiving Fragments 95
Obscuring Genres 105
Synthesizing Space 113
Inscribing Conflict 118

3 DRAFTS: CANTOS IN CONCRETE 134
The TEMPIO in CANTOS VIII and IX
Building Foundations 135
Reconstructing Traditions 147
Layering Histories 159
Compounding Transitions 172
The TEMPIO in the POST-BAG LETTERS
Transcribing Forms 183
Drafting Materials 192
Corresponding Figures 204
Collating Blueprints 216
The TEMPIO in CANTOS X and XI
Controverting Lines 226
Recollecting Sites 232
Restoring Displacements 242
Mapping Remnants 249

4 PROOFS: EPISODES IN INK 257
Binding Languages 259
Indexing Quotations 273

Weighing Words 279
Revolving Records 289

PART TWO: SUSAN HOWE'S "MELVILLE'S MARGINALIA"

5 MEDIUM: FORM AND FORMULATION 296
Transposed Substrates 297
Alternative Articulation 305
Parenthetical Areas 315
Parallel Marks 322

6 DESIGN: ABSTRACTION AND STRATA 335
Evolving Archive 337
Echoic Overtype 345
Incited Variance 353
Composite Alterity 368

7 TRANSFER: CONCEPTION AND PERCEPTION 380
Open Absence 385
Original Errancy 395
Cryptic Manuscripts 405
Transcribed Elusion 420

8 FRAMEWORK: ERRATA AND ERASURE 430
Cross Logics 436
Editorial Hinge 442
Shapeshifting Type 452
Altered Continuity 467

CONCLUSION

9 PLUME: THE MAGPIE AND THE CORMORANT 478

END MATTER

APPENDICES
Appendix A: Ezra Pound's First Typescript Draft of the Initial Malatesta Canto 492
Appendix B: Structure and Page Layout of "Melville's Marginalia" in Three Editions 497
Appendix C: Textual Sources for Poems in Part One of "Melville's Marginalia" 498
Appendix D: Summary in French 506

BIBLIOGRAPHY 520
INDEX 544

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ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

0.1	Ezra Pound, "Canto LIII" (53: 265.1-17)	4
0.2	Ezra Pound, "The Return," *Ripostes* (53)	17
0.3	Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro." Draft in a letter sent to Harriet Monroe, and as published in *Poetry* 2.1 (12)	22
0.4	Diagram of "In a Station of the Metro"	24
0.5	Ezra Pound, "Canto LXXXV" (85: 563-564)	30
0.6	William Carlos Williams, *Paterson*, Book 3, Section III (137-39)	32
0.7	Charles Olson, *The Maximus Poems* (93, 226)	36
0.8	Susan Howe, "Scattering As Behavior Toward Risk," *Singularities* (69)	39
0.9	Susan Howe, "Secret History of the Dividing Line," *Frame Structures* (94, 113)	40

CHAPTER 1

1.1	Ezra Pound, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (27)	60
1.2	Early draft of Canto VIII, EPP Box 70 f. 3149	62
1.3	Early draft of Canto VIII, EPP Box 71 f. 3153	65
1.4	Diagram of the openings and closings to the four Malatesta Cantos	72
1.5	Ezra Pound, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (28)	75
1.6	Excerpts from two drafts of Canto VIII, EPP Box 70 f. 3150 and f. 3152	77
1.7	Pope Pius II, "Contra Sigismundum Malatestam," *Epistolae* (n.p.)	83
1.8	Excerpt from Ezra Pound's reading notes, EPP Box 70 f. 3141	87

CHAPTER 2

2.1	Four excerpts from Ezra Pound's reading notes, EPP Box 70 f. 3140 and f. 3141	96
2.2	Three revisions to Canto VIII, EPP Box 71 f. 3156, f. 3162, and f. 3165	98
2.3	Ezra Pound, handwritten draft of "Papyrus," EPP Box 111 f. 4688, and the poem as published in *Lustra* (49).	100
2.4	Detail of Canto VIII from proof sheets of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, EPP Box 7 f. 60 (Oversize Box 241).	103
2.5	Diagram of the Medici letter in Canto VIII, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (28)	112
2.6	Illustration by Henry Strater for Canto X, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (38)	122
2.7	Excerpt from a draft of Canto X, EPP Box 71 f. 3155	124
2.8	Sketch of the Tempio Malatestiano, and a passage from Canto X in Ezra Pound's reading notes, EPP Box 70 f. 3141	129

CHAPTER 3

3.1	Diagram of passages from Cantos VIII and IX (8: 32.16 and 9: 35.19-20)	149
3.2	Sketch of the ox carts in Canto IX, EPP Box 70 f. 3152	163
3.3	Excerpt of Henry Strater's headpiece for Cant IX, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (31)	163
3.4	Handwritten note for a passage from Canto IX, EPP Box 70 f. 3142	171
3.5	Revised draft of a passage from Canto IX, EPP Box 71 f. 3165	171
3.6	Inscriptions for the tomb of Isotta degli Atti, EPP Box 70 f. 3138	181
3.7	Ezra Pound's translation of a letter from Pietro di Genari and Matteo da Pasti to Sigismondo Malatesta, EPP Box 70 f. 3146	200
3.8	Ezra Pound, fifth post-bag letter, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (34)	205
3.9	Ezra Pound, detail from the seventh post-bag letter, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (35)	213
3.10	Draft outline for the post-bag letters, EPP Box 70 f. 3140	218
3.11	Ezra Pound, two-page spread from *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (34-35)	222
3.12	Henry Strater's headpiece for Canto XI, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (42)	235
3.13	Photograph of the l'Aula del Nuti reading room in the Biblioteca Malatesiana di Cesena	244
3.14	Photograph of the entrance to the Biblioteca Malatesiana di Cesena	245
3.15	Typescript draft of Canto XI, EPP Box 71 f. 3165	246

CHAPTER 4

4.1	Intralinear diagram of a passage from Canto VIII (28.2-3)	264
4.2	Interlinear diagram of a passage from Canto VIII (28.2-3)	265
4.3	Table of the variations in the visual presentation of appropriated text in the Malatesta Cantos	275
4.4	Francesco Gaetano Battaglini, "Della vita e de' fatti di Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta," *Basini Parmensis poetae opera praestantiora* (669) and Ezra Pound, Canto XI (51.10-13)	286
4.5	Diagram of two passages from Canto XI (51.10-13 and 52.1-9)	288
4.6	Excerpts from Carlo Grigioni, "Un Capriccio di Sigismondo Malatesta," *Arte e Storia* (40-41)	291
4.7	Diagram of the framework in the Malatesta Cantos	293

CHAPTER 5

5.1	Susan Howe, "long away lightly," SHP Box 15 f. 1, and "Photographs of walls and works ... 69-71," SHP Box 15 f. 5	300
5.2	Susan Howe, *That This* (64)	304
5.3	Susan Howe, *Tom Tit Tot* (n.p.)	304
5.4	Susan Howe, "Hinge Picture," *Frame Structures* (46) and *The Western Borders* (n.p.)	305
5.5	Susan Howe, "Secret History of the Dividing Line," *Frame Structures* (89)	311

5.6	Wilson Walker Cowen, *Melville's Marginalia* (xiv), and Susan Howe, *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (113).	313
5.7	Diagram of the spatial arrangement in *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (156-57)	317
5.8	Susan Howe, *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (125), and a draft of the French translation of the same poem, SHP Box 50 f. 2	324
5.9	Three early drafts of page 127 of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, SHP Box 47 f. 4	326
5.10	Six early drafts of page 127 of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, SHP Box 47 f. 4 and Box 48 f. 7	328

CHAPTER 6

6.1	Susan Howe, *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (118)	341
6.2	Diagram of the typography in page 108 of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*	347
6.3	Wilson Walker Cowen, *Melville's Marginalia* (164), and a page from Susan Howe's photocopied version of Cowen's work, SHP Box 49 f. 6	351
6.4	Susan Howe, *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (101)	355
6.5	Susan Howe, two poems from *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (103-04)	356
6.6	Susan Howe, lower poem on page 104 of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*	360
6.7	Diagram of excerpts from Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism* (67-71)	362
6.8	Susan Howe, *Marginalia de Melville*, trans. Bénédicte Vilgrain et al. (26-27)	366
6.9	Typescript draft of page 106 of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, SHP Box 46 f. 4	369
6.10	Susan Howe, *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (110)	376
6.11	Unpublished poem for "Melville's Marginalia," SHP Box 46 f. 4	377

CHAPTER 7

7.1	Susan Howe, *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (119)	386
7.2	Diagram of parallels in two lines from page 119 of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*	390
7.3	Table of thematic interpretations based on figure 8.2	390
7.4	Handwritten notes to the galley proof for page 119 of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, SHP Box 48 f. 10	392
7.5	Unpublished poem for "Melville's Marginalia," SHP Box 46 f. 4, and its revised publication in *Marginalia de Melville* (21)	410
7.6	Elizabeth Berney bookplate (1003), William Augustus Brewer Bookplate Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Delaware	412
7.7	Susan Howe, "Scattering As Behavior Toward Risk, *Singularities* (63)	421
7.8	Two typescript drafts of page 132 of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, SHP Box 48 f. 9	423
7.9	Susan Howe, *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (131)	426
7.10	Percy Bysshe Shelley, transcription of an early draft of "A Defence of Poetry," *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts*, Vol. VII, ed. Donald H. Reiman (169)	426

CHAPTER 8

8.1	Susan Howe, *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (102)	437
8.2	Unpublished poem for "Melville's Marginalia," SHP Box 48 f. 7	439
8.3	A handwritten correction by Herman Melville to the table of contents in his copy of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, Vol. 2, from Harvard's Houghton Library	450
8.4	James Clarence Mangan, "Fragment of an Unfinished Autobiography," *The Poets and Poetry of Munster* (xxxviii)	454
8.5	Diagram of the textual sources for page 134 of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*	460
8.6	Diagram of James Clarence Mangan, "Literæ Orientales," *Dublin University Magazine* 10 (282), footnote to "Eighteen Hundred Fifty," *Dublin University Magazine* 25 (106), and Susan Howe, *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (143).	468

ABBREVIATIONS

WORKS BY EZRA POUND

ABC	*ABC of Reading* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934)
GB	*Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: John Lane, 1916)
GK	*Guide to Kulchur* (London: Faber and Faber, 1938)
L	*The Letters of Ezra Pound*, ed. D.D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951)
VA	*Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts*, ed. Harriet Zinnes (New York: New Directions, 1980)

WORKS BY SUSAN HOWE

BM	*The Birth-mark: Unsettling the Wilderness of American Literary History* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1993)
ET	*The Europe of Trusts* (New York: New Directions, 1990)
FS	*Frame Structures: Early Poems 1974-1979* (New York: New Directions, 1996)
MM	*Marginalia de Melville*, trans. Bénédicte Vilgrain, Bernard Rival, Dominique Fourcade, Richard Sieburth, and Susan Howe (Courbevoie: Théâtre Typographique, 1997)
MM	*The Midnight* (New York: New Directions, 2003)
NCM	*The Nonconformist's Memorial* (New York: New Directions, 1993)

ARCHIVES

EPP	Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University
SHP	Susan Howe Papers, UCSD MSS 201, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California San Diego

NOTES

Unless otherwise noted, references to Ezra Pound's *The Cantos* are to the current edition (New York: New Directions, 1993). Citations give the canto number [colon] the page number [point] and the line numbers on that particular page (e.g. 8: 30.11-15). When the citation spans multiple pages, the page and line number of each is separated by a hyphen (e.g. 9: 37.27-38.6). A gap between cited lines is indicated by a slash (e.g. 9: 35.7-9/18-20; or, across multiple pages: 10: 44.19-24/45.12-14).

The archival manuscripts/typescripts from the Ezra Pound Papers are transcribed as is, following the lineation and spacing as closely as possible, and including all misspellings and errata. Due to the number of the latter, the use of [*sic*] has been foregone. Furthermore, it should be noted that in the drafts and the published poems, Pound's preference was for the Latinized spelling "Sigism*u*ndo," as opposed to the actual Italian Sigism*o*ndo. All ellipses used, including the exact number of periods, are Pound's. The transcriptions of Pound's typescript drafts and notes indicate handwritten additions and/or revisions by enclosing them in angled brackets: ⟨ ⟩. All edited aspects imported are noted by square brackets: [ ].

For the sake of sharper typography, all images of poems from "Melville's Marginalia" are taken from the first edition published by New Directions, and not the later reprints, which have darkened and muddied the type. For ease of reference, however, the parenthetically cited page numbers given are those of the edition currently available, which differ from the first publication by eight pages (see Appendix B). In conjunction with New Directions's version, frequent reference is made to the French translation published by Théâtre Typographique, due to the latter's inclusion of several unpublished poems, and its restoration of Susan Howe's intended page layout, as per her manuscript drafts.

Susan Howe's archival typescript drafts, and all handwritten notes, are transcribed so as to reproduce as closely as possible all spatial and orthographic particularities. Unless otherwise noted, all errata are found in the original documents.

Herman Melville's books, housed in the Houghton Library at Harvard University, are frequently cited. In such instances, following the standard citation, the reference number of the volume's location is given (e.g. Houghton Library, *AC85.M4977.Zz865a).

The issues of *The Paris Review*, from which interviews conducted with Ezra Pound and Susan Howe are cited, have been digitized and made available online. The page numbers for these sources are therefore not provided. Citations from *The New Oxford American Dictionary* are also from the digital version.

All translations are those of the author unless otherwise noted.

"Direi, quasi, ch'ogni scrittore deve cominciare in tipografia..."

— Ezra Pound

"Because the gaps and silences are where you find yourself."

— Susan Howe

TRACES: TYPOGRAPHIC TRADITIONS

> "The poets made all the words, and therefore language is the archives of history, and, if we must say it, a sort of tomb of the muses. [...] The etymologist finds the deadest word to have been once a brilliant picture. Language is fossil poetry."
>
> — Ralph Waldo Emerson[1]

The figurative mountain of modernist literary works formed during roughly the first half of the 20th century has in many ways grown out of the idea contained in three, monosyllabic words: "make it new." The relative banality of the phrase has undergone a remarkable degree of scrutiny and criticism, and, in recent decades, even the field of modernist studies itself has had its own experience of renewal. Both in the wake and the midst of the major socio-cultural shifts of any such period, what precisely does it mean *to make*? What is *it* that is being made? And how might one truly define, or recognize, the *new*? The ubiquity of Ezra Pound's modernist slogan in English perhaps owes its resilience, in part, to its being at once deceptively simple, and curiously complex. "Make it new" has been cited abundantly in service of a multitude of critical commentaries on the poetry and prose of a time period with no shortage of radical artistic innovations. Pound's injunction, possibly due to a lingering interpretation common amongst literary critics in the late 1950s and early 1960s, is often assumed as concisely embodying a modernist aesthetic of novelty.[2] What may be at first read as simple suggestion becomes dictum, and dictum later becomes a kind

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[1] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet," *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* Vol. 3, *Essays Second Series* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904) 21-22.

[2] Although an attempt to itemize the profusion of references to the phrase would be neither practical, nor especially profitable, a few examples suffice to demonstrate the point. In *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Pericles Lewis), a section entitled "Making it new" begins by stating "The poet Ezra Pound expressed the aspirations of modernism in the slogan 'Make it New.' He wanted his poetry to show new sides of reality to people who had become accustomed to seeing only one side" (26). In *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry* (Alex Davis), one reads "If the thrust of Poundian modernism was to 'Make it New,' then the impetus of Yeats's equally innovatory vision was to recover the old and the immemorial" (131). *The Modernist Novel: A Critical Introduction*, Stephen Kern states "By his famous exhortation to 'make it new' Ezra Pound implied that it did not matter what *it* was as long as it was new [...]" (5). *Modernism, Volume 1* (Astradur Eysteinsson), a part of a series entitled *Comparative history of literatures in European languages*, includes this passage: "[...] the will to 'make it new,' in fact, sums up a newly conceived epistemology and, therefore, a new world vision that new narrative and new artistic forms embed" (435). See also the five literary critics quoted between 1956 and 1966 in Michael North's *Novelty: A History of the New* (170).

of monumental written law retroactively applied to all modernist literature. More often than not it seems that "make it new" is quoted without a serious consideration of the phrase's background. Oddly enough, it did not make its way into the scope of Pound's work until much later than one might expect from a principle considered as a fundamental impetus. Its first published appearance in Pound's work occurred in April 1928 in a chapbook publication of *Ta Hio: The Great Learning, Newly Rendered into the American Language*, his translation of the *Da Xue*, by the University of Washington Book Store.[3] Shortly thereafter, seemingly gaining in significance for Pound, it was used as the title to his 1934 collection of essays. Nonetheless, as mentioned in Michael North's critical account of the concept of novelty, when the poet submitted this collection of essays, even T.S. Eliot and Faber found the phrase and, in Eliot's words, its "subtle literary allusion," obscure.[4] Furthermore, concerning Pound's poetic output, the three-word declaration was only first used in *The Cantos* in Canto LIII (53: 265.1-3). As part of the Chinese Dynastic Cantos (LII-LXI), composed between November 1937 and March 1939, the poem was first published, along with the John Adams Cantos (LXII-LXXI), in 1940. Whatever date is taken as the expression's pivotal point of entry into Pound's work, it is clear that the lateness of its arrival would belie its apparent status as the foundational precept of modernist literature. Far from a trivial historical development, in conjunction with the common, erroneous association of the phrase with the importance of novelty, such a status reveals certain misconceptions regarding modernist literature and the concept of the "new," which only relatively recently have begun to be dismantled.

The formulation has its source in an historical anecdote relating to the founder and first king of the Shang dynasty (1766-1753 B.C.), Ch'eng T'ang (Tching Tang).[5] This is alluded to in the passage in Canto LIII, which also includes the original Chinese characters (see figure 0.1). The phrase's origins, then, are via translation, inevitably complicating both the understanding of "new," and the connotations of the phrase as a whole. There were, furthermore, several stages of translation. At the time Pound began preparing his own version of the *Da Xue,* he was working with

[3] Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound and 'Globe' Magazine: The Complete Correspondance*, eds. Michael Thomas Davis and Cameron McWhirter (London: Bloomsbury, 2016) 53. The work was later reprinted in May 1936 by Kynoch Press.

[4] Michael North, *Novelty: A History of the New* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013) 169. Eliot's phrase is from a letter dated 18 June 1934.

[5] Carroll F. Terrell, *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 205.

translations by M.G. Pauthier and James Legge, in French and English, respectively. Pauthier's translation of the passage in question reads, "Renouvelle-toi complètement chaque jour; fais-le de nouveau, encore de nouveau, et toujours de nouveau"; in English Legge proposes, "If you can one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day. Yea, let there be daily renovation."[6] Working primarily from Pauthier's French, Pound formulated one condensed translation with his characteristic use of slang in the main text, "Renovate, dod gast you, renovate!," and a second, more literal rendering in a footnote, "'Renew thyself daily, utterly, make it new, and again new, make it new.'"[7] In the end, the brevity of the first was maintained in reducing the second to the three, now famous words, whose peculiarity as a translation, as North correctly points out, lies in its elimination of the self-renovation contained in the original, and additionally in Pound's choice not to translate "fais-le de nouveau" as simply "do it again." At the time of Pound's writing, the latter translation would most likely have been a less palatable maxim among the avant-garde, lacking the kind of cultural currency of the word *new*. A closer examination of the phrasing Pound offered, however, reveals it to be not the impetus for artistic creation but rather a succinct, and slightly ironic, commentary on what poets and artists had already undertaken.

If taken in the context of Canto LIII, the "it" of "make it new" may be seen as referring to the effective governing of the State with which the canto is concerned. Pound's inclusion of the phrase in the 1935 text *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*—where it appears as "make it new, make it new as the young grass shoot"—would support this association of the phrase with Pound's view on ideal forms of government. Just prior to the quotation, Pound, citing Confucian doctrine writes, "That you can bring about better world government by amelioration of the *internal* government of your nation."[8] In this particular case, the Confucianism takes on overtones of Fascism: the two Chinese ideograms, *hsin* ("new," "renovate") and *jih* ("sun," "day"), which when read together describe, in Carroll Terrell's words, "the regenerative and ethical metamorphoses,"[9] signify for Pound, respectively, "the fascist axe for the clearing

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[6] M.G. Pauthier, *Confucius et Mencius: Les quatres livres de philosophie morale et politique de la Chine* (Paris: Charpentier, Libraire-Editeur, 1858) 44. James Legge, *The Life and Teachings of Confucius* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1867) 268.

[7] Ezra Pound, *Ta Hio: The Great Learning, Newly Rendered in the American Language* (Seattle: University of Washington Chapbooks, 1928) 12.

[8] Ezra Pound, *Jefferson and/or Mussolini: L'Idea Statale Fascism as I Have Seen It* (London: Stanley Nott, 1935) 112.

[9] Terrell, 205.

away of rubbish" and "'renovate, day by day renew.'"[10] This context would, then, suggest the phrase be interpreted as "make *the State* new."

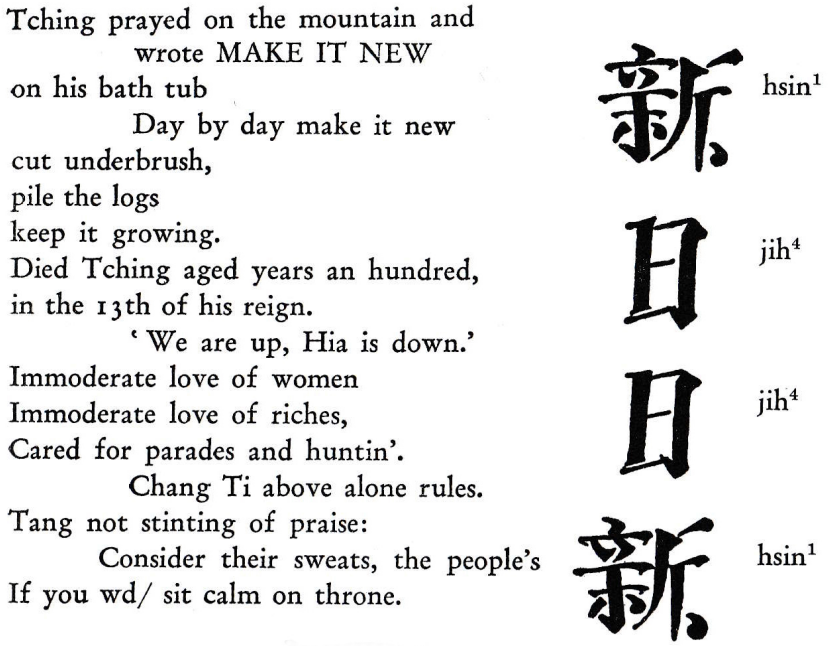

Figure 0.1: Excerpt from Ezra Pound's Canto LIII (53: 265.1-17), wherein is the first inclusion of the phrase "Make it new" in *The Cantos*.

Nevertheless, if the entire history of the phrase is taken into account—Chinese, French, English, Confucianism, Fascism, modernism, philology, anthropology, literature, poetry, and essay—it represents a unique constellation of knowledge and interests, forming a fragment of Pound's personal socio-cultural and artistic network. This may be what led Hugh Kenner to connect the phrase with "Pound's translating activities" and "the sense of historical recurrence that informs the *Cantos*: not a bulldozed 'All this has happened before,' but a lively sense of forms asserting their immortality in successive *material* opportunities."[11] Peter Nicholls further develops Kenner's interpretation, writing that the statement "points not simply to an idea of cultural renovation but to a far more complex process whereby two different times are grafted together, each somehow 'supplementing' the other. [...] one

[10] Pound, *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*, 113.
[11] Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985) 234, emphasis added.

text [overlaying] another without effacing it."[12] From these statements it is seen that the historical recurrence and the grafting together found in *The Cantos* are achieved through Pound's handling of language and text, which would include translation, with regard to their materiality in a palimpsestic structure. In other words, they are accomplished through the creative, or regenerative, act of poetic composition via linguistic materials.

A more comprehensive understanding of the *it* in "make it new" thus returns one to the question of language and poetry. From this vantage point, Pound's liberal choice of the verb "to make" in his translation acts as a reminder of the etymological roots of *poetry* and *poem*. Both words trace back through Old French and Latin to Greek: *poesis*, literally "a making, a fabrication," and *poema*, literally "a thing made or created," both deriving from the verb *poiein*, "to make or compose."[13] Such roots impart to the poetic composition a notion of materiality—the poem as an object constructed of material language. In Pound's translation of the Chinese characters alongside the 19th-century French, what is renewed is not the self, as in the original axiom ("renouvelle-*toi*," or renew *yourself*), but the language that carries ideas through history. Applied to poetics, "make it new" may be reformulated as "make *the language* new." Pound's fellow Imagist poet and close friend H.D. articulates this in summarizing a contemporary review of the poetics in *The Cantos*: "The *Chronicle* spoke of Ezra collecting, appropriating, stealing lines and phrases from Greek, Latin, mediaeval and oriental poets, and building a nest like a magpie. It asserted, however, that the effect was astonishing and 'make it new' had vitalized a host of lesser satellites."[14] As part of Pound's "magpie" technique, what is deemed to be still of value in past cultures and history is restored, and woven into the on-going palimpsest of contemporary experience.

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[12] Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*, 2nd ed. (Hampshire, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 175.

[13] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Third Edition, eds. Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[14] H.D., *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound*, eds. Norman Holmes Pearson and Michael King (New York: New Directions, 1979) 46. The reviewer's image of the magpie is one that Pound himself used during the composition of the Malatesta Cantos. Two lines from an unused passage in an early draft read, "The magpie, cut like a shield, black/white / before the even-cut box hedge." Running up the bottom right margin alongside this passage, Pound's handwritten note shows him grappling with the fragmentary, documentary technique: "give up the attempt at shelving? or later." EPP Box 70 f. 3147.

This concept is not without significance for that modernist tradition to which Pound belongs, for—in addition to containing the fundamental interest in language, and language as material—it also conveys a sense of modernist poetry's understanding of, and relationship to, the past. Pound's maxim is, after all, a translation of a past translation of a much older text. This fact would seem terribly ironic, if not contradictory, if "make it new" is misinterpreted as advocating for a break with history, as opposed to a vision of poetic composition as renovation or restoration—both words containing a notion of *return*—through its embrace of a process of recycling. With respect to the poetic process (*poiein*), to recycle—in other words, to convert into reusable material— reemphasizes the view of language as one such pre-existing material, the manipulation of which serves as the poem's basis as a constructed object (*poema*). On closer inspection of the phrase's historical origins, Pound's injunction is not the call for radical departure that it is so frequently assumed to be, but, on the contrary, advocates for an active engagement with the palimpsestic languages and documents of the past, along with the traditions they embody.

This notion of a network of relations is echoed in T.S. Eliot's writings stemming from his studies of F.H. Bradley and Henri Bergson: "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciations is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists." And again, Eliot writes, "[Tradition] involves, in the first place, the historical sense, [which] involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence."[15] Pound's exhortation does indeed suppose a certain presence of the past, for nothing can be made new if its existence is not first acknowledged. A tension between the historical and the contemporary is evident, and the work resides in the attempt to bring the two into focused relation through a unifying composition. In this sense "make it new" looks as much to the future as it does to the past, thus further expanding the network of relations. The new composition will in turn be appropriated and renovated by subsequent generations.[16] Implicit in Pound's injunction, then, is a consciousness of

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[15] T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," *The Sacred Wood* (London: Methuen and Co., 1920) 44.

[16] Three, very direct and explicit, experimental appropriations of Pound's poetry that may be cited here are the constraint-based works of John Cage's "Writing through the Cantos," *X: Writings '79-'82* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983), Jackson Mac Low's *Words nd Ends from Ez* (Bolinas, CA: Avenue B, 1989)—both based on *The Cantos*—and Steve McCaffery's collaged re-

genealogy. The fault in designating the phrase as the summation of modernist literary practice par excellence lies not solely in the designation per se, but also in misinterpreting its implied reach as unidirectional, when in fact its sense of descent and development of tradition and innovation extends as much backward as forward.

The interpretation and use of "make it new" in the latter half of the 20th century as *innovate* in place of *renovate*, therefore, would appear to reveal less about the literary practices of Ezra Pound and his contemporaries than it does about the current, or more recent, critical environment. One may see in the corruption of the maxim a tendency to privilege, or perhaps romanticize, the avant-garde over the traditional, and a revolution over a restoration. The same may be said for the term *modernism* itself, so deeply embedded in culture and criticism as referring to an ill-defined artistic style and movement taking place at approximately the beginning of the 20th century, that it is scarcely possible to avoid using the term. *Modernism*, however, was not a term that the writers most often associated with it employed with regard to their work. Not until Laura Riding Jackson and Robert Graves's *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, published in 1927, did the word begin to find its way into regular usage.

Ironically, today the affinity for the word is perhaps matched only by the increasing skepticism surrounding its definition, which has led to a growing body of critical work attempting to splinter the concept. In light of these works, two brief remarks may be made. First, the dominant trend is to deny and fracture the notion of a monolithic modernism. To be sure, in such cases it is neither a question of establishing a hierarchy of modernism*s*, nor of drawing permanent, static lines of historical causation.[17] Second, that the works demonstrate a recognition of the

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visualization "Four Versions of 'In a Station of the Metro'" from *Modern Reading*, and included in *Seven Pages Missing Volume One: Selected Texts 1969-1999* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2000).

[17] The dates bracketing modernism, and its different phases, are a matter of continued debate, with all of the following works providing further study of the various forms of modernism. According to Jean-Michel Rabaté, there are "three phases of modernism upon which critics tend to agree: they divide half a century into 'early modernism,' ranging from 1900 to 1916, 'high modernism,' from 1917 to 1929, and 'late modernism,' from 1930 to 1945." *1913: The Cradle of Modernism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007) 3. Within this entire period, Rabaté had previously delineated the activity in London between 1914 and 1922 as the culmination of the movement. *La Pénultième est morte. Spectrographies de la modernité* (Seyssel: Editions Champ Vallon, 1993) 194-95. Michael Levenson also situates the modernist movement primarily in London, dividing the period between 1908 and 1922 into two parts split by World War I. *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). For her part, Marjorie Perloff more or less echoes Rabaté and Levenson, setting modernism between roughly 1900 and 1930, and, in a separate work, pinpointing the formal experiments of the international avant-garde between 1910 and 1917.

continued influence on contemporary practices, both critical and poetic, of the resultant modernisms. The latter notion is exemplified by Marjorie Perloff's work *21st-Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics*, in which she posits a continuity between some of the fundamental theories of the avant-garde in the early 20th century, in the works of figures such as T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, and Marcel Duchamp, and specific contemporary poetic practices, in which she finds those concepts finally realized. Regarding the former, the studies diverge based on a variety of criteria that may include geographic locations, specific times frames, one or more of the early 20th-century *-isms*—Symbolism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Cubism, Futurism, etc.—groups of authors in correspondence and/or collaboration, gender, race, or ethnicity. Furthermore, with regard to the important interaction of the historical and the contemporary, the differentiation may also be entirely conceptual. In his study *Les Métamorphoses du modernisme*, for example, Clément Oudart distinguishes "two distinct visions, two different points of view, of the avant-garde, modernism, the canon, history and poetry. One is founded on rupture, the other on relation."[18] It would seem, then, that what ultimately ties all the various types of modernisms together is simply a certain multifarious nature.

By way of example, Peter Nicholls's study entitled, in fact, *Modernisms* does well to demonstrate the point. In the preface to the second edition, Nicholls takes this diversity into account, stating that the work only intends "to provide a conceptual map of the different modernist tendencies," and acknowledges the emergence of terms such as "geomodernisms" and "alternative modernities," which extend beyond the predominate Eurocentric framework.[19] A more thorough illustration of this

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Respectively, "Epilogue: Modernism Now," *A Companion to Modern Literature and Culture*, eds. David Bradshaw and Kevin J. H. Dettmar (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006) 572, and *21st-Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002). Stephen Fredman—concentrating on a line of uniquely American modernism stemming from Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman—extends "the period that we designate as modernism" by a decade on each side: "roughly, from 1890 to 1940." *The Grounding of American Poetry: Charles Olson and the Emersonian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 21.

[18] Clément Oudart, *Les Métamorphoses du modernisme. De H.D. à Robert Duncan: vers une poétique de la relation* (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2010) 57.

[19] Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide 2nd Ed.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) viii. As a work of reference, Nicholls cites *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity*, eds. Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2005). For himself, Nicholls's examines differing types of modernisms arising out of different groups of authors in various locations, but originating primarily out of a pre-history in 19th-century French literature that the work maps out. In particular, the work posits a mixture of the late-Symbolist and Decadent aesthetics, eventually

multidirectional area of study is found in Nicholls's chapter aptly titled "At a Tangent: Other Modernisms," with discussions on writers like H.D. and Gertrude Stein, and in yet another focusing specifically on African-American modernism and the Harlem Renaissance.

On a general level, and with regard to the aforementioned distinction made by Oudart, the genealogy that the present study takes as its point of departure initially approaches modernism with respect to it being principally informed by, and informing, a network of relations—thereby suggesting a sense of evolutionary continuity—rather than by rejection and dissociation. However, considering the plethora of intersections and overlaps in the increasingly complex palimpsest of modernisms, it seems more accurate—indeed, even inevitable—to speak of the differing combinations of relation *and* rupture as part of any genealogical line. The two terms need not be understood as mutually exclusive, for as each successive author and/or work embraces and counters certain poetic concepts from the past, even the break implied by the latter demonstrates a form of relation through familiarity, or proximity, much like the "separate" sides of the same coin.

More specifically, and taking into account the implications of Pound's modernist maxim discussed above, the type of modernism this study is based upon is one for which the inclusion of the poet's engagement with the materiality of language and text is fundamental to the compositional process. Materiality is primarily used here in the sense of visio-spatial typography, but is also used in reference to the physical characteristics of a document or book. As such, the Objectivist tradition in 20th-century poetry is the central thread in the historical lineage relevant to this critical work, beginning with Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams—from so-called high modernism (circa 1917-1929) and extending through late modernism (circa 1930-1945)—and continuing onward to Charles Olson. Substantial critical work has been done on the modern epics each of these three poets wrote, and the shared lineage is well documented. However, in order to specifically address the concept of visual materiality as a genealogical thread, it is helpful to examine its origins in the poetry of Pound and Williams prior to their long poems. Furthermore, as George Bornstein writes, "All modernist poetry is a palimpsest, an ongoing record

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giving way to a "social Symbolism" that is less oriented towards the self, as planting the seeds of 20th-century modernist literature.

of processes [...]. It is we who must copy—or better yet, construct—the next stage of that palimpsest."[20] An additional layer to the palimpsest of this tradition is Susan Howe, whose association to Pound's compositional practices has been occasionally mentioned, but whose poetics has not been the subject of in-depth criticism with respect to what precisely characterizes such a connection. Combining these two aspects is the basis for the genealogical line centered on typographic materiality to follow, whereby the 20th century is roughly bookended between Pound's early work in *The Cantos* and Howe's poetry in the last decades of the period.

VERSES TO VERSUS

In the first decades of the 20th century, either further developing or reacting against a number of 19th-century literary theories and practices, authors and poets exhibited a dramatic increase in the focus on, and investigation of, formal aspects of their medium. In *The Visible Word* Johanna Drucker concisely identifies several key features of the period as follows:

> [...] The artistic work and the critical writing [...] participated in an investigation of the terms of signification, of assumptions about the nature of presence and absence, of image and word, *imago* and *logos*, as different orders of symbolic activity. The materiality of presence associated with visual form [...] was considerably modified within the early twentieth century [...]. On further examination it becomes evident that formal investigation of signification within early twentieth century art frequently focused upon an inquiry into the effect of the material properties of the signifier in its relation to the signified. Most specifically, this signals a shift of emphasis from the plane of reference [...] to the plane of discourse. This new emphasis allowed, encouraged, and depended upon a focus on materiality [...].[21]

Developments of poetic practices, furthermore, embody changes in certain social practices: "changes in the techniques for the reproduction of texts, that is changes in technological processes [...], changes in the form of the book itself and the visual appearance of the printed page [...], that is changes in the object, and changes in

[20] George Bornstein, *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 45.

[21] Johanna Drucker, *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909-1923* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994) 60.

reading and writing practices, that is changes in the subject."[22] Individual practices among those poets associated with such innovations—which, amongst the anglophone group, includes Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams—varied in how the relations between materiality and representation were interpreted, but stood together in conceiving of the nature and operation of signification as a matter of process, as opposed to product. It is a continuing negotiation of those relations that is explored and enacted within the given form. The formal investigation, furthermore, stems from the doubt and distrust—or, at the very least, the challenging—of those modes of representation espoused by previous generations and literary movements. This is not to suggest, as mentioned earlier, that early 20th century practices demonstrated a rupture with those of the 19th century. On the contrary, in leading to a renegotiation of language and representation, as well as a shift in attention towards the specificities of the material medium, such questioning maps relational paths between differing traditions.

Free verse is one such tradition, and distinguishing some key features of its development during the modernist period by Pound and Williams further clarifies the visio-spatial materiality of the Objectivist genealogy. The debate concerning free verse in the early 20th century—its definition and how it is to be understood, its functioning and the form it ought to take—is a complex and often convoluted one. Indeed, Ezra Pound complicates the appellation "*free* verse" by discussing its rigors in his collection of essays "A Retrospect," and both T.S. Eliot and William Carlos Williams explicitly denied its existence: "*Vers libre* does not exist. [...] And as the so-called *vers libre* which is good is anything but 'free,' it can better be defended under some other label" (Eliot); "I do not believe in *vers libre*, this contradiction in terms. [...] *Vers libre* is prose" (Williams).[23] All three poets, however, were practitioners of, for lack of a better term, free verse. In one respect, what makes attempting to draw distinctions between free verse traditions particularly difficult is the manner in which primarily aural poetries overlap with primarily visual poetries. Hélène Aji offers the following gloss on Pound and free verse: "[...] rhythm is either artificial, in the case of

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[22] Rosemary Huisman, *The Written Poem: Semiotic Conventions from Old to Modern English* (London: Cassell, 1998) 149.

[23] T.S. Eliot, "Reflections on *Vers Libre*" (1917), *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot,* ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975) 31-32. William Carlos Williams, "Speech Rhythm," unpublished essay from 1913, quoted in Mike Weaver, *William Carlos Williams, The American Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) 82-83.

the iambic form or even of its experimentations within foreign forms, or it stems from a structuring at once visual and acoustic. Pound, then, implicitly calls free verse into question [...]."[24] In an unpublished manuscript from the Williams archive in SUNY-Buffalo, the poet touches on the issue, writing the following:

> There are various forms of poetry
> and one of them is the lovely sound
> of words tuned skillfully to please
> the ear as another, requiring less
> tuneful handling, gives itself to
> holding before the eye a well imagined
> image. Neither is complete without
> the other, it may be said, in a full
> work. But the two are the principal
> forms to be borne well in mind in
> all major compositions. When the eye
> can no longer delineate or bear the
> brunt of the thought and the intelligence
> goes off into regions where sight
> cannot follow the ear begins its reign.[25]

Responding to this text, Henry Sayre remarks that the fact of Williams's differentiating the visual from the aural is an indication of the development of "a poetic structure that differs fundamentally from traditional structures dependent on meter or rhyme, structures where the ear has always dominated the eye."[26]

In American poetry, this shift away from the metrical structures is rooted in Walt Whitman; however, his free verse line is also one that privileges the rhythms and stresses of everyday *speech* patterns. While rejecting the metrical and stanzaic regularity of traditional oral-based forms, Whitman maintains the voice as the dominant structural agent, and thus the ear over the eye. The visual nature of the printed poem, however, is not entirely neglected in Whitman's free verse. Both Rosemary Huisman and Jerome McGann point out the poet's background as a printer, and their comments illustrate that, despite Whitman's primary concern for how the poem would be voiced, the spatiality of a text was also of particular interest:

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[24] Hélène Aji, *Ezra Pound et William Carlos Williams : pour une poétique américaine* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001) 94.

[25] William Carlos Williams, Poetry Collection, The Lockwood Memorial Library, State University of New York at Buffalo. Quoted in Henry M. Sayre, *The Visual Text of William Carlos Williams* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983) 80.

[26] Sayre, *The Visual Text*, 81.

> It is not irrelevant that Whitman was a printer. He designed and printed his collection, *Leaves of Grass*, in 1855. Unlike Wordsworth, who was disinclined even to write down his own poems, Whitman concerned himself intimately with the printed text. For Wordsworth, the printed text was, apparently, a record of his spoken poem, already complete in its aural patterning; for Whitman, the printed text was a vocal score, like a musical score, to direct any future performance of his work, though in a much more limited fashion than the extraordinary detail of Mallarmé's *Coup de Dés*.
>
> ---
>
> With the exception of Whitman [...] American writers (and printers) did not attempt practical explorations of language's bibliographic resources for serious writing until the 1890s.[27]

The arrangement of lines—the graphic display of the text—acts, in this case, as a representation of language that is spoken. This interaction between the visual/spatial and the oral/temporal in the construction of a poem is found in a letter Pound wrote to Hubert Creekmore in February 1939: "All typographical disposition, placing of words *on* the page, is intended to facilitate the reader's intonation, whether he be reading silently to self or aloud to friends. Given time and technique I might even put down the musical notation of passages of 'breaks into song.'"[28] In the various accents and slangs found in Pound's poetics, and in Williams's search for the uniquely American idiom, a link to the Whitmanic tradition is undoubtedly present. However, their early poetry is also sharply contrasted to Whitman's free verse for the way in which language is arranged on the page, even as they effectively advance the visual and spatial aspects of composition initiated by Whitman's attention to printing: Williams writes in his essay "Against the Weather: A Study of the Artist," "[Whitman] broke through the deadness of copied forms [...]."[29] In his poem "A Pact," Pound, too—even while expressing his general distaste for Whitman—nonetheless acknowledges, "It was you that broke the new wood."[30] Analysis of several exemplary poems from early in Pound and Williams' careers serves to illustrate their distinction from Whitman, as well as demonstrate the importance of space and the page in the development of materiality as a fundamental aspect of their poetics.

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[27] Respectively: Huisman, *The Written Poem*, 60. Jerome McGann, *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993) 26.

[28] Pound, *L,* 418.

[29] William Carlos Williams, *Selected Essays*, (New York: New Directions, 1954) 218. See also Williams's essay from 1917 entitled "America, Whitman, and the Art of Poetry."

[30] Ezra Pound, *Lustra* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1916) 17.

In her article "The Free Verse Spectrum," Eleanor Berry addresses the issue of meaningfully distinguishing and discussing free verse practices, which are all too often aggregated under the same catch-all term. Among other approaches to free verse distinctions surveyed, Berry discusses the various techniques expounded in Donald Wesling's book-length study *The Scissors of Meter: Grammetrics and Reading* (1996). The first of these she cites as "Whitmanic, referring to Whitman's adaptation of 'the biblical verset and syntax' in 'end-stopped lines ... with boundaries so often equivalent to those of larger units of grammar,' which Wesling sees as 'constitut[ing] the precomposition or matrix of free verse in English.'"[31] The following stanza from a poem in *Leaves of Grass* provides a clear example of the poet's technique of free verse that fits the description above:

> A noiseless, patient spider,
> I mark'd, where, on a little promontory, it stood, isolated;
> Mark'd how, to explore the vacant, vast surrounding,
> It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself;
> Ever unreeling them— ever tirelessly speeding them.[32]

In order to more accurately map and distinguish free verse practices, Berry proposes five axes:

> (1) line length, including extent of variability in length; (2) line-integrity, as determined by intralinear features as well as line-divisions; (3) line-grouping, whether stichic (ungrouped), in verse paragraphs, in stanzas, or dispersed on the page; (4) sensory basis of the verse form, whether aural, visual, or both; and (5) semantic function, that is, the relation of the verse form to the semantic aspect of the text, characterized in such terms as organic, iconic, and abstract.[33]

According to these criteria, Whitman's poetry would be characterized as long-line, end-stopped, stanzaic, aural (in that hearing the poem read aloud and reading the poem on the page convey the same sense of structure), and organic (in that the semantic aspect of the poem correlates to the verse form). In addition to privileging the aural over the visual as a means of formal structuring, Berry concludes,

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[31] Eleanor Berry, "The Free Verse Spectrum," *College English* 59.8 (December 1997) 880. Such a distinction, Berry also notes, is echoed by Enikö Bóllobás, who identifies a "prosody based on grammar, with a tendency to coincidence of line and sentence, as developed by Whitman" (881).

[32] Walt Whitman, "A Noiseless Patient Spider," *Leaves of Grass* (Philadelphia, PA: David McKay, c.1900) 208.

[33] Berry, 882.

"Whitman's is a prosody of transparency, directing the mind's eye of the reader beyond the page [...]."[34] This stands in stark contrast to Pound and Williams, whose poetics are classified separately by Berry and Wesling, as well as in Bóllobás's *Tradition and Innovation in American Free Verse*.

The distinction is evident in the following poem by Williams, written in 1916. The disassembled phrases describing the visual details draw as much attention to the words themselves, as they do to the external image beyond the page; at the same time, the thin column of text draws the surrounding blank space of that page closer to the forefront:

Metric Figure

Veils of clarity
have succeeded
veils of color
that wove
as the sea
sliding above
submerged whiteness.

Veils of clarity
reveal sand
glistening —
falling away
to an edge —
sliding
beneath the advancing ripples.[35]

The short, enjambed lines, far from adhering to syntax for lineation, fracture it into a visually structured text on the opposite end of the free-verse spectrum. If the poem were grammatically normalized and collapsed according to syntax, it would be situated much closer to Whitman:

> Veils of clarity have succeeded veils of color
> that wove as the sea, sliding above, submerged whiteness.
>
> Veils of clarity reveal sand glistening —
> falling away to an edge —
> sliding beneath the advancing ripples.

[34] Berry, 884.

[35] William Carlos Williams, *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams: Volume I, 1909-1939*, ed. Christopher MacGowan (New York: New Directions, 1988) 51-52. Another poem entitled "Metric Figure" is included in the later collection *Al Que Quiere!* (1917).

As arranged and printed, however, the spatial effects of the poem slows the reader's gaze, bringing each pair or trio of words into greater focus. The spatial arrangement results in the textual accretion of each detail of the image, presented on its own in a sequence of isolated, yet connected, perceptions. In the first stanza, the language is broken down into layers, ending with the "*submerged* whiteness," and the stacked fragments of the second stanza also conclude "*beneath* the advancing ripples," whose forward motion is given the visual analog of the only irregularly long line.

With respect to Pound, the free verse poem "The Return," from the 1912 collection *Ripostes*, demonstrates his use of the material page for visual effect (see figure 0.2). Pound's formal experimentation is immediately noticeable, and the varied metrics particular to each line exemplify the poem's unique prosody. According to Hugh Kenner, the free rhythms are displayed and announced in the poem's opening "explicit statement that the gods, returning now, do so in unstable meters."[36] For his part, E.E. Cummings's statement on the poem underscores the importance of its spatial construction: "'the inaudible poem—the visual poem, the poem for not ears but eye.'"[37] The silence that Cummings suggests is due, in part, to considering the apparent blank spaces of the page as poetically significant, rather than mere by-products of composition. Nevertheless, space and sound are best understood in this poem as functioning together, as the critic Peter Simonsen's comments elucidate: "Pound's repetition of 'see' three times in the opening five lines underscores his visual prosodic agenda (the alliteration of the s-sound in 'see' and 'slow' and the repetition of 'ee' in 'see' and 'feet' foreground Pound's desire to make us see as much as hear the poetic feet)."[38]

While Pound does indeed draw the reader's attention to the poem's visio-spatial aspect through such linguistic devices, the same is also achieved by means of his striking use of precise indentations and line breaks to alter the justified, left-hand margin of the conventional poem. The spacing also introduces syntactic complexity: "the / uncertain / Wavering" can be read with "uncertain" modifying the "wavering," or with "wavering" modifying "the uncertain." Furthermore, the arrangement as a

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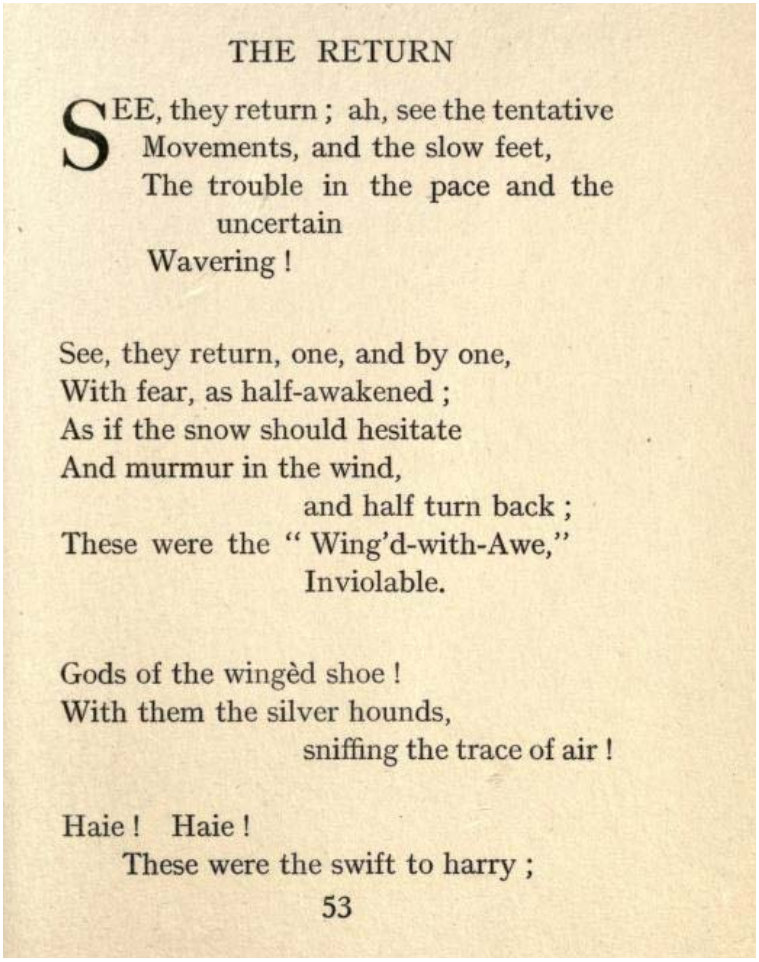
[36] Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California, 1971) 190.

[37] Richard S. Kennedy, *Dreams in the Mirror: A Biography of E.E. Cummings* (New York: Liveright, 1980) 106.

[38] Peter Simonsen, "Typewriter Poetry Makes Nothing Happen," *Aktuel Forskning* (2010) 7.

whole encourages a reading trajectory that is as accelerated vertically—with the eye jumping more quickly downward in lines ten to twelve, for example—as it is disrupted horizontally by semi-colons and blank space within or across lines.



THE RETURN

SEE, they return ; ah, see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the
uncertain
Wavering !

See, they return, one, and by one,
With fear, as half-awakened ;
As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind,
and half turn back ;
These were the " Wing'd-with-Awe,"
Inviolable.

Gods of the wingèd shoe !
With them the silver hounds,
sniffing the trace of air !

Haie ! Haie !
These were the swift to harry ;

53

Figure 0.2: Ezra Pound, *Ripostes* (London: Stephen Swift and Co., 1912) 53.

"The Return" makes use of empty space to speak of what is lost to language, in visually re-presenting the absence that silence "pronounces." The title itself, in fact, helps to reinforce the relation between absence and presence: each both precedes and follows the other in a forward-and-backward motion reproduced in the reader's gaze, which is pushed and pulled across the page through Pound's variable metrics, line breaks, and enjambments. Lines eight to ten include three fragmenting actions: to "hesitate" (a break of time), to "murmur" (a break of silence), and to "half turn back" (a break of forward momentum). All three actions are communicated in the negative space of the page's intervention within these lines. It fragments the temporal component of the traditional, left-to-right and top-to-bottom reading, provides a

spatial equivalent of untranslatable sound, and returns the reader's eye to the empty space that is mirrored before the gesture is literally spelled out. The visual layout presents several possible interpretations: the murmur was uttered and then carried away by the wind, never again to be heard; the murmur was uttered, but, because of the wind, never heard; or the murmur, uttered into the wind, was heard as incomprehensible, and therefore represented by an absence of semantic content. A similar idea is again found in the third occurrence of the same indentation, when "the silver hounds" attempt to detect "the trace of air" in the blank space around them (l. 14-15). In each instance, Pound's use of the page's visual field adds layers of typographic meaning to the text of the poem.

Pound and Williams' experiments with free verse constitute a visual construction resulting from "composition by field" (in Olson's words), where the space of the material page signifies in conjunction with the language. The poetics of these two modernists appears, in this sense, to be entirely separate from that of Whitman. This distinction is expressed in Pound's famous essay from 1913, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," when he writes, "Don't make each line stop dead at the end, and then begin every next line with a heave. [...] Naturally, your rhythmic structure should not destroy the shape of your words."[39] In "Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry" (1917), T.S. Eliot went so far as to remark, "Whitman is certainly not an influence; there is not a trace of him anywhere; Whitman and Mr. Pound are antipodean to each other."[40] With specific regard to the use of short lines, Williams made a similar distinction discussing Olson's *The Maximus Poems*, though the statement applies equally to his own work: "And how he wrote the poem down on the page was very interesting to me. And the shorter lines. Anti-Whitman. It's a good example of what has happened to Whitman."[41] However, despite these comments, on the matter of genealogy and tradition, labeling the poetics of Pound and Williams as

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[39] Ezra Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* 1.6 (March 1913) 204.

[40] T.S. Eliot, "Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry," *To Criticize the Critic, and Other Writings* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1965) 177. The same hardline, anti-Whitman sentiment was repeated a decade later by Eliot in his introduction to a volume of Pound's selected poems: "I am [...] certain—it is indeed obvious—that Pound owes nothing to Whitman." *Ezra Pound: Selected Poems*, ed. T.S. Eliot (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928) ix. For a study linking Whitman to Eliot, see James E. Miller "Personal Mood Transmuted into Epic: T.S. Eliot's 'Waste Land,'" *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations:* The Waste Land*, Updated Edition*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 2007).

[41] Walter Sutton, "A Visit with William Carlos Williams," *The Minnesota Review* 1.3 (April 1961) 311-12.

"anti-Whitman," or "antipodean" to their American free verse predecessor, is certainly inaccurate. While the differences are evident, one finds an equal degree of relation and rupture between the three poets. In one respect, Whitman's commitment to spoken language is a continual reference in the works of the two modernist poets; in another, Pound and Williams' typographic and spatial distancing from Whitman may, in fact, be seen as an advancement of his initial attention to the form of the printed poem, as mentioned earlier. In the interview quoted above, Williams goes on to state, "Olson's line is very much more in the American idiom. A shorter division of the lines, not the tendency of Ginsberg. He went back."[42] The implication is that, although qualified as the opposite of Whitman's technique, the short lines found in the work of Olson, and Williams before him, evolved out of Whitman as a development of the American idiom. Ginsberg retraced the line, while Olson continued it.

The critic Jerome McGann has argued for an alternative tradition of free verse stemming from Whitman's contemporary Emily Dickinson. According to his study of her uniquely visual manuscripts, in which he finds instances of Pound's ideas of phanopoeia and logopoeia,

> [...] this other tradition, where "Writing as Composition" connects to the visual imagination of the painter, the graphic artist, and the typographer [...] should be connected to the textual innovations of Emily Dickinson. To see her verse as a kind of graffiti seems to me useful. Pound's typographical experiments, glanced at by Zukofsky, have come to epitomize this other tradition for English readers.[43]

It is problematic to argue Dickinson's poetics as an actual influence on Pound and Williams based on the study of her manuscripts, as they were not published until R.W. Franklin's edition of *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson* in 1981. In the early decades of the 20th century, the only available publication was Thomas Higginson and Mabel Loomis Todd's grammatically and formally regularized edition, published in 1890. However, from a contemporary vantage point, the association is constructive, and particularly relevant to the present study, in light of Dickinson's inestimable role in shaping Susan Howe's poetry. Considering Pound's call, in the essay cited earlier, for concision and density, the effective use of enjambment, and an understanding of rhythm as visual shape, Dickinson's manuscript poems may be seen

[42] Sutton, 312.
[43] Jerome McGann, *Black Riders*, 84.

as a form of Imagism itself. Howe, amongst many others, contends that Dickinson was "clearly among the most innovative precursors of modernist poetry and prose," and even as early as 1930 Amy Lowell wrote, "And with the name of Emily Dickinson, a history of American verse may well begin, for she, a belated daughter of the Transcendentalists, was also the great precursor of the Imagists."[44] Thus, as a continuation of the Objectivist tradition of modernist materiality, viewing Howe's work as a contemporary evolution of the visual poetics of both Dickinson and Pound, as part of the same line, is a useful perspective.

IMAGE TO OBJECT

As Imagism proper was just beginning, the role of materiality and visual composition by field continued the push toward the kind of typographic precision found in Dickinson's poems.[45] Central interests for the direct treatment of the thing, sparse accuracy, and exact language, prompted greater attentiveness to the syntactic structures and spatial arrangements of a work's form. Several events, overlapping or in relatively quick succession, contributed to this development of the visually constructed text. The International Exhibition of Modern Art in New York—commonly referred to as the Armory Show—took place in 1913, and featured primarily European artists working in a variety of avant-gardes. In particular, the works of Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia had a strong impact on Williams. The materiality of Cubism's collage technique of juxtaposing fragments influenced the poetic methods that Williams, and Pound (living in London at the time), transposed from the visual arts. In the same year, Pound acquired a group of manuscripts written by the American historian Ernest Fenollosa on Chinese and Japanese art, poetry, and language. Among them was the essay "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry," which Pound edited and finally succeeded in getting published in *The*

[44] Susan Howe, *My Emily Dickinson*, 1985 (New York: New Directions, 2007) 11. Amy Lowell, "Emily Dickinson," *Poetry and Poets: Essays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930) 175.

[45] The Imagist poetic movement can perhaps first be marked with the 1912 publication of Pound's collection *Ripostes*, the appendix of which introduced a series of poems by T.E. Hulme with the word *Imagiste*. In the fall of 1912, in the British Museum Tea Room, H.D. presented a group of poems to Pound, who found them to exemplify the Imagist principles for poetry that both poets, along with Richard Aldington, later agreed upon. Those poems were subsequently edited and signed "H.D. Imagiste" by Pound, and published in the January 1913 issue of *Poetry* magazine. Two months later, in the same magazine, Pound published the essay "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste." In 1914 the first Imagist anthology, edited by Pound, was published under the title *Des Imagistes*.

Little Review in late 1919, and again in his collection of criticism *Instigations* (1920). Understanding the Chinese character as "a picture of a thing"—as opposed to "a picture of a sound"—the method of juxtaposing particulars was especially important to Pound.[46] Its influence is evident in many of the poems published in the collection *Lustra* (1916), and even several decades later, Pound still maintained, "For Ars Poetica, gorrdamit, get my last edtn of Fenollosa's" essay.[47] Finally, the same journal, *The Little Review*, dedicated their spring-summer issue of 1922 to Francis Picabia, which included a large number of his machine paintings (inspired by his visit to America). Williams later wrote that the issue was "a distinct success: it gives me the sense of being arrived," and went on to state, "I speak of the *Little Review*, you see, as if it were an object, as if it were a piece of sculpture."[48]

This small selection of important events during the period was significant for the role it had in the accumulated effect on Pound and Williams of reinforcing the visual materiality of a poetic technique incorporating the fragmentation, collage, and spatial manipulation of Cubism and sculpture. Richard Aldington wrote of Imagism's "hardness, as of cut stone," likened to "nicely carved marble."[49] As in these art forms, the language and substrate of the page are progressively viewed as materials to be manipulated into a poem that is itself a constructed object. In Pound's work, this approach is seen almost immediately. He submitted his now legendary poem "In a Station of the Metro" for publication in *Poetry* magazine in 1913. Having drastically revised the poem over the course of a year and a half from the original thirty lines, to half that length, then to the final two lines, Pound's process parallels that of visual collage—in fragmenting and rearranging the textual materiality of his initial draft—and modernist sculpture—in cutting down the large block of language into the very minimal fourteen words. Furthermore, while the ternary spacing was later regularized for inclusion in *Lustra* (1916)—and maintained as such in the *Collected Poems of Ezra Pound* (1926)—for the poem's first publication Pound explicitly

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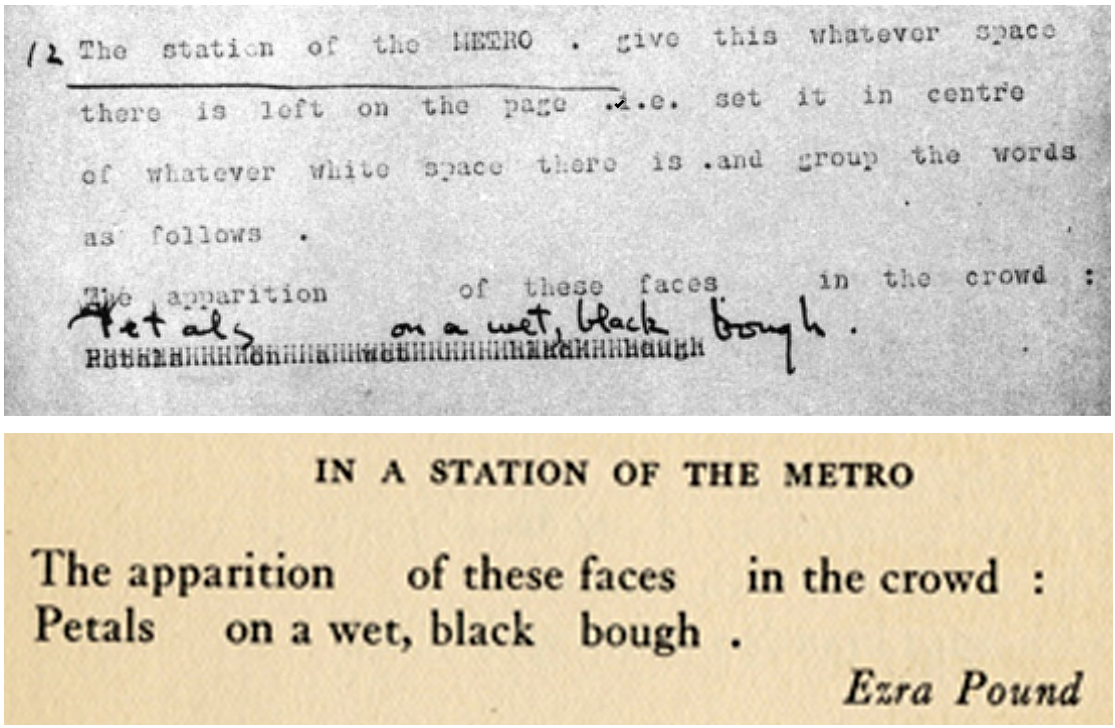
[46] Pound, *ABC,* 21. Much has been written about the ways in which Pound's conception of the Chinese language was, in fact, mistaken; see, for example, Haun Saussy's "Fenollosa Compounded: A Discrimination," *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry: A Critical Edition*, eds. Haun Saussy et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

[47] Pound, *L*, 417. The letter was written to Hubert Creekmore in February 1939.

[48] William Carlos Williams, "The Reader Critic," *The Little Review* 9.1 (Autumn 1922) 59-60.

[49] Richard Aldington, "Modern Poetry and the Imagists," *The Egoist* 2.1 (June 1914) 201-03.

specified his desire for the typographic layout to be respected. Its first appearance in print, as seen below, retained Pound's instructions for spacing.



/2 The station of the METRO . give this whatever space there is left on the page .i.e. set it in centre of whatever white space there is .and group the words as follows .

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :
Petals on a wet, black bough .

IN A STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :
Petals on a wet, black bough .

Ezra Pound

Figure 0.3: [Above] A typescript/manuscript draft of "In a Station of the Metro" in an undated letter from Pound to Harriet Monroe. *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* Records, Series 1, Box 38 f.29, Special Collections Research Center, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago. [Below] The first publication of "In a Station of the Metro" in *Poetry* 2.1 (April 1913) 12.

Responding not only to the traditional thematic elements of *hokku* (or *haiku*), but also to its formal aspects, Pound's modernist haiku experiments with space in order to gesture toward the original form, as well as reinforce the poem's fragmentary imagery.[50] The Japanese characters of a *hokku* are written in a single, unbroken vertical line, often containing, between two of the metrical units, a mid-verse *kireji*—a "cutting word," somewhat equivalent to a caesura. The three parts of that verse are typically represented in English as three separate lines; Pound, however, while transposing the language onto the horizontal axis of English, also approximates the single-line form, using intralinear space to convey its constituent parts. The line break functions as the *kireji*, and the sense of verticality is suggested by the parallel tripartite structure.

[50] For further study see Yoshinobu Hakutani, *Haiku and Modernist Poetics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Fragmenting the lines invites the reader to make the imaginative leaps that follow the experience of visual perception leading from the faces to the crowd, to the petals, and finally to the bough. In the process, that perception moves from the external to the internal, or from the image to the imagined. In his essay "Vorticism" (1914), with regard to "In a Station of the Metro," Pounds writes, "In a poem of this sort one is trying to record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective."[51] A similar comment emphasizing simultaneity was made a year earlier, when Pound defined an image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time."[52] By layering one image on top of the other, and freezing the fragments into a snapshot of sorts, the poem imparts the static moment of that dynamic leap inward, confusing the temporal by a blurring of spatial distinction. This also occurs on a linguistic level, as the three lines—including the title—are densely interwoven with syntactic, acoustic, and visual threads:

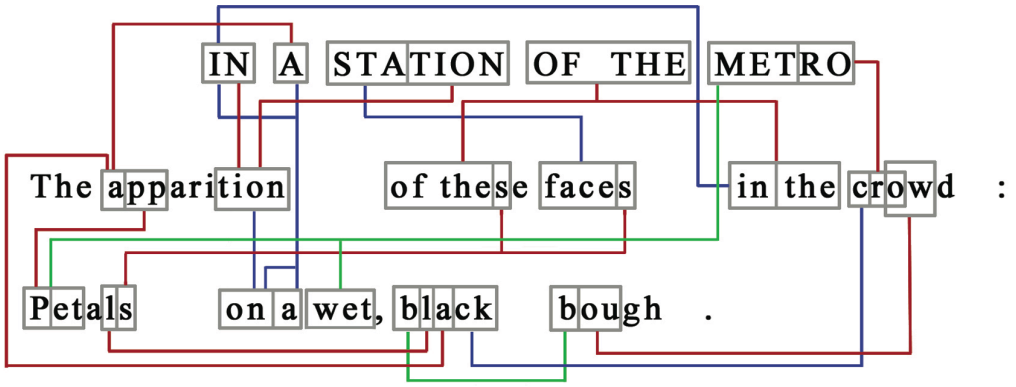


Figure 0.4: Diagram of the system of acoustic and/or visual connections within the text of "In a Station of the Metro." While the interlinear spacing has been expanded, the intralinear layout corresponds to the poem's first publication (see figure 0.3 above).

The materiality of the language, and the page, combine the juxtaposed fragments into a form of palimpsest, perceived as a visual whole. This type of *object*ive materiality is suggested in Pound's brief remarks about the poem, stating, "The 'one-image poem' is a form of super-position, that is to say, it is one idea set on top of another."[53] The collaged elements are interdependent within the field of the page. The spaces Pound leaves on the material surface are those areas where the palimpsestic fragments would

[51] Pound, *GB*, 103.
[52] Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," 200.
[53] Pound, *GB*, 103.

conceptually overlap, as language and image write over themselves in the reading process.

The Imagist movement, however, was short-lived for Pound and Williams alike. Vorticism was developed out of it by the former, and "from 1915 on," as Hélène Aji notes, the latter "distanced himself more and more from the imagist model: the image progressively became the purpose of the poem and not the representation of something else. It ceased to be the catalyst of the poem, to instead become the object."[54] As a part of this shift, Williams begins constructing his poems so as to highlight an interaction of discrete visual perceptions that unfold in the process of seeing, much as the arrangement of different planes in a modernist painting or sculpture. For the critic Henry Sayre, these poems are a form of "objective reportage," where the constituent parts are juxtaposed within the perceptual space of the field of the page.[55] In addition to the different role of the image itself, Williams's progression after Imagism also included a sharper focus on the role of the material page as part of a poem's spatial composition. Providing the definition for Objectivism in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*—in which he notes its development out of Imagism—he states, "[it] recognizes the poem, apart from its meaning, to be an object to be dealt with as such. O[bjectivism] looks at the poem with a special eye to its structural aspect, how it has been constructed."[56] This has echoes of Pound's statement in *The Egoist* that "[The Vorticist] *depends*—depends for his artistic effect, upon the arrangement of space and line, on the primary media of his art."[57] For the poet, this would mean the manipulation of language in the textual space of the page.

The refiguring of the poetic page in Williams's poetry is well illustrated in his collection *Spring and All*, published in 1923. Its pages juxtapose blocks of prose to the tightly structured short lines of poems, with roughly the first half of the book divided into chapter titles and roman numerals placed out of order. The construction of the writing also demonstrates Williams's view of the poem as a material object. On the topic of the Objectivist theory, he writes the following in his autobiography:

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[54] Aji, *Pound et Williams*, 134.
[55] Sayre, *The Visual Text*, 71.
[56] Alex Preminger, Frank J. Warnke, and O.B. Hardinson Jr., eds., *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965) 582.
[57] Ezra Pound, " Edward Wordsworth, Vorticist" *The Egoist* 1.16 (15 August 1914) 307.

> But, we argued, the poem, like every other form of art, is an object, an object that in itself formally presents its case and its meaning by the very form it assumes. [...] The poem being an object (like a symphony or a cubist painting) it must be the purpose of the poet to make of his words a new form: to invent, that is, an object consonant with his day. This was what we wished to imply by Objectivism, an antidote, in a sense, to the bare image haphazardly presented in loose verse.[58]

In the following extract from *Spring and All*, Williams breaks down the poetic *material* of language, in a manner that makes the poem fold in on itself, as it comments on its own formulation of meaning:[59]

No that is not it
nothing that I have done
nothing
I have done

is made up of
nothing
and the dipthong

ae

together with
the first person
singular
indicative

of the auxilliary
verb
to have

everything
I have done
is the same

The typographic layout emphasizes the interdependency of the individual lines, while the poem's self-reflexivity invites the reader to view it as an object on the page, just as the poet does. As the composition attempts to explain the language that structures it, the double negatives and various repetitions lead Williams to declare that everything

[58] William Carlos Williams, *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams* (New York: New Directions, 1967) 264-65.

[59] William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All* (New York: New Directions, 2011) 25-26. Reprint of the original 1923 edition. The misspellings of "diphthong" and "auxiliary" are errata noted on page 95.

done "is the same," and later, "for everything / and nothing / are synonymous." The final lines of the poem, "which only to / have done nothing / can make / perfect," merely point the reader back to the start of the text, to again follow the arrangement's hesitations. Thus, the poem is repeatedly subject to its own objectification, continually calling attention to its status as material on the page.

Regarding Pound and Williams's view of the poem as a material object, a further parallel development exists between the two poets, with respect to their interest in the mechanical and its relation to modernity.[60] The hard, sculptural quality in Pound's notion of the "welding of word and thing," and both he and Williams's concern for how the juxtaposition, or parataxis, of their collaged poetic material would function as a whole, later found expression in the idea of the poem-as-machine. In a letter sent from Rapallo in 1925, Pound discusses machinery, writing, "It's the mobile parts, and the parts REQUIRED to keep 'em in their orbits or loci that I am interested in."[61] An essay entitled "Machine Art," written shortly thereafter, repeats this particular interest in machines, stating that their beauty resides primarily in the various components where there is a concentration of energy.[62] Commenting on the quotation above, Hugh Kenner notes that, as it relates to writing poetry, the required parts include "the placing of the words on the printed page."[63] As seen in the poems examined earlier, a key aim of such typographic placement is ensuring the different textual pieces are not only mutually informing, but also interdependent. In the introduction to his collection *The Wedge* (1944), Williams addresses this relation of the poem to the machine explicitly: "To make two bald statements: There's nothing sentimental about a machine, and: A poem is a small (or large) machine made of words. When I say there's nothing sentimental about a poem I mean that there can be no part, as in any other machine, that is redundant."[64] The collage technique of this

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[60] Williams's interest can be linked, notably, to the works of artists like Francis Picabia, Charles Sheeler, Charles Demeuth, and Alfred Stieglitz. For a detailed study of Williams relation to modernity, kinetics, industry, and machines, see the chapter entitled "Machine Made of Words," in Cecelia Tichi's *Shifting Gears: Technology, Literature, Culture in Modernist America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 1987). Pound's fascination with mechanics, notably the coin press and the typewriter, is addressed in Hugh Kenner's chapter "Pound Typing," in *The Mechanic Muse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[61] Pound, letter to Homer L. Pound, 23 October 1925, *VA*, 301.

[62] Ezra Pound, "Machine Art," *Machine Art and Other Writings, The Lost Thought of the Italian Years*, ed. Maria Luisa Ardizzone (Durham, NC: Duke University Press) 57.

[63] Kenner, *The Mechanic Muse*, 47.

[64] William Carlos Williams, *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams: Volume II, 1939-1962*, ed. Christopher MacGowan (New York: New Directions, 1988) 54.

type of Objectivist poem assembles the materials in such a way as to render the final composition irreducible:

> The conception of the poem as machine [...] allows Williams to set down the poem as a whole, the parts of which cannot be separated without damaging the functioning of the ensemble. Just as a painting cannot be conceived in pieces, but must be perceived in its totality, and in the simultaneity of all of its details, the poem must be evaluated as a unity of meaning.[65]

Totality and simultaneity require seeing the page as a poetic unit. The space of the material substrate, therefore, is "read" alongside the typography of the words. All of the physical details of the received poem are to be taken into account, where each acts as one part of a visual whole—a palimpsest, the fragmentary layers of which cannot be separated from each other. It is toward this form of compositional process that the objectivist tradition advances through Pound and Williams, as the materiality of text and document came to occupy a central place in their poetics. After Pound and Williams, poets in the same genealogical line continued on the basis of, and in response to, the trajectory of their precursors' increasingly visual model, and increasingly documentary method.

FIELD TO EDGE

Their influence is evident in the objectivist issue of *Poetry* magazine, published in 1931. In the text "Program: 'Objectivists,'" the poet Louis Zukofsky—who also acted as editor of the issue—names both Pound's *A Draft of XXX Cantos* and Williams's *Spring and All* as essential reading in accordance with objectivist principles. Elsewhere in the issue he even claims, "In contemporary writing, the poems of Ezra Pound alone possess objectification to a most constant degree."[66] Zukofsky's articles written for the issue emphasize two important aspects of the objectivist modernist tradition. The first is the uniquely visual nature of this poetics, which, stemming from the development of Imagism's techniques in Pound and Williams's work of the 1920s, concentrates on visual precision leading to

[65] Aji, *Pound et Williams*, 150.

[66] Louis Zukofsky, "Program: 'Objectivists,'" and "Sincerity and Objectification: With Special Reference to the Work of Charles Reznikoff," *Poetry* 37.5 (February 1931) 268 and 276, respectively.

linguistic precision. "Program: 'Objectivists'" begins with a definition that reads as follows: "An objective; (Optics)—The lens bringing the rays from an object to a focus [...]. (Use extended to poetry)—Desire for what is objectively perfect, inextricably the direction of historic and contemporary particulars."[67] The passage alludes to Pound's combination and activation of the past and present in the process of poetic composition in *The Cantos*, while also relating the minutely focused imagery of Williams's poems. Zukofsky reiterates this in "Sincerity and Objectification": "Writing occurs which is the detail, not mirage, of seeing, of thinking with the things as they exist [...]."[68] The latter portion of this statement would later be reformulated by Williams (and become a poetic maxim) in the opening poem to the first book (1946) of *Paterson*: "—Say it, no ideas but in things—" which he rephrases later in the poem as "No ideas but / in the facts."[69]

A second major characteristic of objectivist poetics, according to Zukofsky, is mentioned as he continues in the same article: "[...] each word in itself is an arrangement, it may be said that each word possesses objectification to a powerful degree [...]."[70] The materiality of language provides the objectivist poet with a set of structural objects that are included within the larger spatiality of the page. Charles Altieri links Zukofsky's relation of object and optics with these poets' "aim to 'compose' a distinct perceptual field," and "seek an artifact presenting the modality of things seen or felt as immediate structure of relations [...]."[71] As the poem is yet another object amongst objects, it too is a type of *artifact*: "something made" (Latin, *factum*), "by or using art" (Latin, *arte*).[72] The inclusion of the material fact of poetic composition into the writing itself, demonstrated in the work of Pound and Williams, foregrounds the spatial construction of the text.

> Objectivism, then, is not merely attention to objects: it entails the construction of aesthetic objects. [...] As George Oppen put it, objectivist poets "attempt to construct meaning, to construct a method of thought from the imagist technique of poetry—from the imagist intensity of vision." Construction, not description, would be the basic

[67] Zukofsky, "Program: 'Objectivists,'" 268.
[68] Zukofsky, "Sincerity and Objectification," 273.
[69] William Carlos Williams, *Paterson*, ed. Christopher MacGowan (New York: New Directions, 1992) 6, 27.
[70] Zukofsky, "Sincerity and Objectification," 274.
[71] Charles Altieri, "The Objectivist Tradition," *Chicago Review* 30.3 (Winter 1979) 6.
[72] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*. This etymology is also related to the Greek roots: *poesis*, "a making, a fabrication," and *poema*, "a thing made or created."

> source of models of relatedness, and these would find their roots in the collagist techniques.[73]

The resultant meaning is a product of the interdependency of the collaged particulars, which the poet has selected and arranged with an awareness of the materiality that underpins their textual structures. However, Oppen's words imply that the objectivists were centrally concerned with the material *process* of construct*ing* a poem, or series of poems, into a coherent whole. On the basis of Pound and Williams's "intensity of vision," the later generations focused on the method of poetic revision the two poets implemented with respect to the materials they gathered.

This is particularly the case for Charles Olson, who, as an important influence on Susan Howe, is the Objectivist poet most relevant to this study. By 1950, the year that Olson published his well-known essay on a new form of poetics, "Projective Verse," Ezra Pound had recently published *The Pisan Cantos* (1948) and was working on the later sections of his epic at St. Elizabeth's Hospital,[74] and William Carlos Williams had thus far published three books of his own epic *Paterson* (1946, 1948, 1949). It was in relation to these two major works that Olson situated himself as a continuation of the objectivist, poet-historian.

The space of the page in *The Pisan Cantos* was opened further than in previous sections, with Pound including more Chinese characters within, and alongside, the English text, and arranged in ways that demanded a more spatially attuned reading. In a then-unpublished piece written in 1950, Williams, in fact, remarked on "the excellence of the fabric, the language of woof and warp [...] and the strength of the *material*" of these cantos.[75] The subsequent sections—*Rock-Drill* (1955) and *Thrones* (1959)—were works of reconfigured citations from primarily a single source, and were more visually and spatially radical than anything prior in Pound's epic (see figure 0.5). On the relation between the poet, the source materials of these poems, and the position of the reader, David Ten Eyck writes the following:

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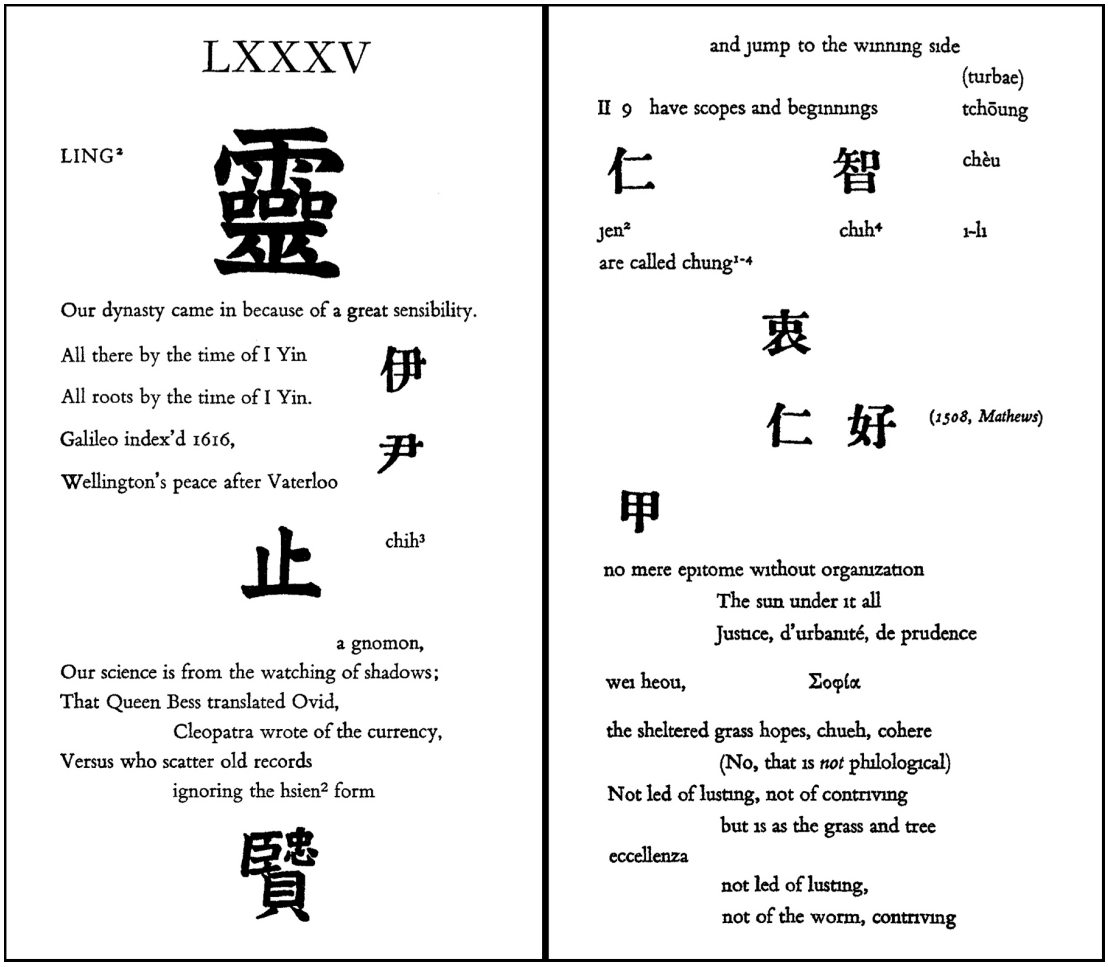
[73] Altieri, "The Objectivist Tradition," 12-13.

[74] The cantos of *Rock-Drill* and *Thrones* were written across forty-seven spiral-ring notebooks, dated from 1946 to March 1958, held at Yale's Beinecke Library.

[75] William Carlos Williams, "The Later Pound," *The Massachusetts Review* 14.1 (Winter 1973) 124. Much earlier Williams had made a similar statement regarding *A Draft of XXX Cantos*: "It is that the material is so molded that it is changed in *kind* from other statement. [...] That is the way Pound's verse impresses me and why he can include pieces of prose and have them still part of a *poem*." *Selected Essays*, 108.

> The succession of swift juxtapositions generated by this mode of writing imparts energy to the poetry and encourages the reader to assume an active role, making connections between the fragments of the source text from which the poem is composed and arriving at an understanding of the basic subject of the source material in the process.[76]



LXXXV

LING[2] 靈

Our dynasty came in because of a great sensibility.
All there by the time of I Yin 伊
All roots by the time of I Yin.
Galileo index'd 1616,
Wellington's peace after Vaterloo 尹

chih[3] 止

a gnomon,
Our science is from the watching of shadows;
That Queen Bess translated Ovid,
Cleopatra wrote of the currency,
Versus who scatter old records
ignoring the hsien[2] form

賢

and jump to the winning side
(turbae)
II 9 have scopes and beginnings tchōung
仁 智 chèu
jen[2] chih[4] i-li
are called chung[1-4]

衷

仁 好 (*1508, Mathews*)

甲

no mere epitome without organization
The sun under it all
Justice, d'urbanité, de prudence
wei heou, Σοφία
the sheltered grass hopes, chueh, cohere
(No, that is *not* philological)
Not led of lusting, not of contriving
but is as the grass and tree
eccellenza
not led of lusting,
not of the worm, contriving

Figure 0.5: The opening two pages to *Section Rock-Drill De Los Cantares LXXXV-XCV* (563-64).

The paratactic structures of these compositions heighten the visual nature of the material fragments that Pound reforms in the field of the page. H.D.'s comments, for example, demonstrate the kind of visual reading that leaps from quotation to quotation implied by Ten Eyck's remark: "I read the *Cantos* or read at them or in them," and, developing this statement later, "My eye, following too rapidly the uneven lines of the difficult pages, was yet part of my intellectual equipment."[77] As H.D. suggests, when

[76] David Ten Eyck, *Ezra Pound's Adams Cantos* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014) 7.
[77] H.D., *End to Torment,* 5, 30.

reading Pound's work, one looks *at* the page, and enters *in* the architecture of the material as a means of contemplating the text. Pound, therefore, mediates the experience of the document(s) by way of the page's visual field.

For his part, Williams turned to Paterson, New Jersey for his American epic, to which he made a series of trips to gather material concerning the city's present, as well as read through the historical records and newspapers to do the same for its past. In addition to poetry and prose, he included lists of figures, statistics, materials, epistolary documents, and advertisements. The result was a fusion of materials, and materialities, wherein the pages of poetry are consistently interrupted by heterogeneous fragments. As part of a "GENERAL NOTE" for *Paterson*, Williams writes the following:

> There are to be completely worked up parts in *each* section—as completely formal as possible: in each part well displayed.
>
> BUT—juxtaposed to them are unfinished pieces—put in without fuss—for their very immediacy of expression—as they have been written under stress, under LACK of a satisfactory form
>
> —or for their need to be just there, the information.[78]

This structural technique was intended to create for the reader a more direct experience of reality, with Williams playing the roles of poet, historian, and reporter. Indeed, Eric Mottram writes, "In the true explicit sense [...] *Paterson* is news, a living newspaper with a newspaper's curiously brilliant unity in disparity."[79] In *Spring and All*, Williams had declared the "cleavage" between poetry and prose complete, at the same time that he juxtaposed what is often very dense, poetic language printed in the format of prose, to quite simple, "prosaic" language in highly structured poems. *Paterson* blurs the distinction between genres to a much greater degree, due to the diversity of materials Williams includes, and the fragmentary construction of his documentary poetics.

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[78] Unpublished material from William Carlos Williams's papers at Yale University. Quoted in Margaret Lloyd Bollard, "The 'Newspaper Landscape' of Williams' *Paterson*," *Contemporary Literature* 16.3 (Summer 1975) 325.

[79] Eric Mottram, "The Making of *Paterson*," *Stand* 7.3 (1965) 28.

Hi, open up a dozen, make
it two dozen! Easy girl!
You wanna blow a fuse?

All manner of particularizations
to stay the pocky moon :
January sunshine .

19^{49}

Wednesday, 11
(10,000,000 times plus April)

—a red-butted reversible minute-glass
loaded with
salt-like white crystals
flowing
for timing eggs

Salut à Antonin Artaud pour les
lignes, très pures :

"et d'évocations plas-
tiques d'éléments de"

and

"Funeral *designs*"
(a beautiful, optimistic
word . .) and
"Plants" (it should be explained that
in this case "plants" does NOT refer to interment.)
"Wedding bouquets"
—the association
is indefensible.

S. Liz 13 Oct

(re. C.O.E. Panda Panda)

Fer got sake don't so exaggerate
I never told you to *read* it.
let erlone REread it. I didn't
say it *wuz ! ! henjoyable* readin.
I sd the guy had done some honest
work devilupping his theatre technique

That don't necess/y mean making
reading matter @ all.
Enny how there must be
one hundred books (*not*
that one) that you *need* to
read fer yr/ mind's sake.

---

re read *all* the Gk tragedies in
Loeb. — plus Frobenius, plus Gesell.
plus Brooks Adams
ef you ain't read him all. —
Then Golding's Ovid is in
Everyman's lib.

& nif you want a readin
list ask papa—but don't
go rushin to *read* a book
just cause it is mentioned
eng passang—is fraugs.

SUBSTRATUM

ARTESIAN WELL AT THE PASSAIC ROLLING MILL, PATERSON.

The following is the tabular account of the specimens found in this well, with the depths at which they were taken, in feet. The boring began in September, 1879, and was continued until November, 1880.

DEPTH	DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS
65 feet. . .	Red sandstone, fine
110 feet. . .	Red sandstone, coarse
182 feet. . .	Red sandstone, and a little shale
400 feet. . .	Red sandstone, shaly
404 feet. . .	Shale
430 feet. . .	Red sandstone, fine grained
540 feet. . .	Sandy shale, soft
565 feet. . .	Soft shale
585 feet. . .	Soft shale
600 feet. . .	Hard sandstone
605 feet. . .	Soft shale
609 feet. . .	Soft shale
1,170 feet. . .	Selenite, 2 x 1 x 1/16 in.
1,180 feet. . .	Fine quicksand, reddish
1,180 feet. . .	Pyrites
1,370 feet. . .	Sandy rock, under quicksand
1,400 feet. . .	Dark red sandstone
1,400 feet. . .	Light red sandstone
1,415 feet. . .	Dark red sandstone
1,415 feet. . .	Light red sandstone
1,415 feet. . .	Fragments of red sandstone
1,540 feet. . .	Red sandstone, and a pebble of kaolin
1,700 feet. . .	Light red sandstone
1,830 feet. . .	Light red sandstone
1,830 feet. . .	Light red sandstone
1,830 feet. . .	Light red stone
2,000 feet. . .	Red shale
2,020 feet. . .	Light red sandstone
2,050 feet. . .	
2,100 feet. . .	Shaly sandstone

At this depth the attempt to bore through the red sandstone was abandoned, the water being altogether unfit for ordinary use. . . . The fact that the rock salt of England, and of some of the other salt mines of Europe, is found in rocks of the same age as this, raises the question whether it may not also be found here.

Figure 0.6: The text from three consecutive pages from Book 3, Section III of *Paterson* (137-39). The middle page, apart from the first line, is composed of the "first two-thirds of a letter sent to WCW by Ezra Pound, October 13 [1948], from St. Elizabeth's hospital" (285 n.138). Williams's typescript approximates the spacing of the original, but does not maintain all of Pound's idiosyncratic spellings.

Reviewing the work in 1953, the poet Randall Jarrell writes, "[...] the beauty, delicacy, and intelligence of the best parts depend so much on the organization in the whole [...]."[80] The "things" in which the poet takes his ideas are the facts of tangible texts, displayed as material objects. As the multiple voices from the history of one American city, they are re-contextualized and made new to form a document representing the nation. Invented or selected (and occasionally revised) by the poet, it is through his technique of structuring those texts on the page that Williams transforms them. The objectification of the poem in *Spring and All* is expanded in *Paterson* so as to encompass textual objects of all sorts into the epic.

Charles Olson's indebtedness to Pound and Williams is well documented by the poet himself, and critics have studied the ways in which Olson's modern epic *The Maximus Poems* builds on, and breaks away from, *The Cantos* and *Paterson*, with respect to conceptions of history, temporality, and subjective/objective poetic methodology (amongst others).[81] Attempting to correct what he saw as Pound's problematic handling of historical materials, and Williams's misconception of an American city's historical temporality, *The Maximus Poems* is Olson's synthesis of the compositional methods of the two older poets' projects. *The Cantos* and *Paterson*, according to Olson, "are HALVES." He goes on to explain this position, stating, "I take it (1) that the EGO AS BEAK is bent and busted but (2) whatever it is that we can call its replacement (Bill very much a little of it) HAS, SO FAR, not been able to bring any time so abreast of us that we are in this present air, going straight out, of ourselves, into it."[82] The first portion of this comment is in reference to Pound, whose view of history was too idiosyncratic, too quintessentially "Ezra Pound," for Olson, while the latter part stems from his view of Williams's history via Paterson as shortsighted or obsolete.[83]

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[80] Randall Jarrell, *Poetry and the Age* (New York: Vintage Books, 1953) 205.

[81] See Michael André Bernstein's monograph *The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound and the Modern Verse Epic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980) for a detailed study of *The Cantos*, *Paterson*, and *The Maximus Poems*. In addition to those texts cited below, see also Charles Doria, "Pound, Olson, and the Classical Tradition," *boundary 2* 2.1-2 (Autumn 1973-Winter 1974), Michael Davidson, "Archeologist of Morning: Charles Olson, Edward Dorn and Historical Method," *ELH* 47.1 (Spring 1980), and Alan Golding, "From Pound to Olson: The Avant-Garde Poet as Pedagogue," *Journal of Modern Literature* 34.1 (Fall 2010).

[82] Charles Olson, *Selected Writings of Charles Olson*, ed. Robert Creeley (New York: New Directions, 1966) 83.

[83] On Williams, Olson writes, "I'm only trying to say how far bill WCW missed by not going behind Sam one Houston!" *A Bibliography on America for Ed Dorn* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1964) 14. He also claims, "Bill, with all respect, don't know fr nothing abt what a city *is*,"

Yet despite these objections, Pound and Williams did provide Olson with fundamental aspects of the poetics he sought; namely, a documentary process grounded in particulars, and a spatial reconfiguration of historical time. The conclusions Pound draws are a matter of contention for Olson, but as "one of the real forerunners, the documentarians," Olson writes, the elder poet's "process is the thing to protect."[84] In doing so, however, he narrowed the focus of Pound's vision by means of Williams's methodology: "That is, if I think EP gave any of us the methodological clue: the RAG-BAG; bill gave us the lead on the LOCAL. Or put it that pat: EP the verb, BILL the NOUN problem."[85] Thus, Olson's modern epic adopts Pound's process of including a wide range of historical and generic materials into the poem, but follows Williams in anchoring those documents to the city of Gloucester in northeastern Massachusetts. In *Maximus Poems IV, V, VI* Olson's reach stretches much further back in history than the predominately 18th and 19th-century focus of *Paterson*, yet maintains that the proper handling of the structure provided by the singular story of one city in New England could produce the knowledge of history and tradition necessary for altering the present. As critic George Butterick writes, Olson focuses "on a single locality that serves as a microcosm by which to measure the present and the nation and which grows to encompass earth, heaven, and hell."[86] The scope of *The Maximus Poems* adopts the localization of *Paterson*, but expands it to a Poundian extent to include national and international cultural history.

Olson also notes that the methodology of *The Cantos* "destroys historical time [...] viz. a space-field."[87] This non-linear representation of time present in Pound's work allows the poet to access the materials for his poem with a kind of historical simultaneity, whereby the past and present are fused on the page. The parallel to this approach is that of rematerializing the gathered documents within the spatial field of the page in a manner free from predetermined formal arrangements. In "Projective

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and, concerning Pound, that after 1917 "the materials of history which he has found are not at all of use." *Selected Writings*, 84.

[84] From two unpublished essays entitled "The Mystery" and "Canto V," respectively, in the Charles Olson Archives at the University of Connecticut. Quoted in Robert von Hallberg, "Olson's Relation to Pound and Williams," *Contemporary Literature* 15.1 (Winter 1974) 20, 23.

[85] Charles Olson, *Letters of Origin*, ed. Albert Glover (New York: Cape Goliard, 1970) 129.

[86] George F. Butterick, *The* Maximus Poems *of Charles Olson*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) xix. Michael Bernstein also echoes this view and links it to the end of *The Cantos* and Book Five of *Paterson*: "Thus, rather than Gloucester's history and the destiny of its modern inhabitants, in *Maximus IV, V, VI* it is the poetic imagination itself, in its interaction with the landscape *of the entire earth*, that becomes the real 'hero' of the poem." *The Tale of the Tribe*, 267.

[87] Olson, *Selected Writings*, 81-82.

Verse" the author writes, "First some simplicities that a man learns, if he works in OPEN, or what can also be called COMPOSITION BY FIELD, as opposed to inherited line, stanza, over-all form, what is the 'old' base of the non-projective."[88] Marjorie Perloff's examination of this famous essay illustrates its indebtedness to Pound and Williams by laying it side-by-side with quotations from (amongst others) Williams's "Introduction to *The Wedge*" (1944) and "The Poem as a Field of Action" (1948), and Pound's *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (1916) and *Guide to Kulchur* (1938). She argues that Olson's writing "is essentially a scissors-and-paste job, a clever but confused collage made up of bits and pieces of Pound, Fenollosa, Gaudier-Brzeska, Williams, and Creeley."[89] Nevertheless, with regard to visio-spatial materiality, Olson's realization of the essay's ideas—wherever their precise origin lies—in *The Maximus Poems* is certainly different from either Pound or Williams. His imitation or theft, one might conclude, is entirely his own. Olson's nonlinear, achronological history is expressed in the materiality of his poetry in a much more spatially experimental way than found in *The Cantos* or *Paterson* (see figure 0.7). There is a more extreme variance of line-length, the short poems are positioned at a variety of different locations on the page, and in the later sections there is frequently an indeterminate quality to the reading process, due to the verticality and horizontality of juxtaposed words or blocks of text.

In Williams's autobiography, by way of preface to Olson's essay he writes, "An advance of estimable proportion is made by looking at the poem as a field rather than an assembly of more or less ankylosed lines."[90] Although his own poetry had accomplished a great deal to that end, Williams's comment appears to acknowledge a further "loosening" of lines on the pages of Olson's work. The innovation of this "open" form also speaks to how the poet controls the construction and transmission of meaning to the reader. Robert von Hallberg remarks that the disruption of conventional syntax in Olson's prosody, even down to the unit of the syllable, is a means by which "a poet can reacquaint his readers through concrete images with the objective reality." This fracturing of syntactic structures is tied to the prior techniques of Pound and Williams:

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[88] Olson, *Selected Writings*, 16.

[89] Marjorie Perloff, "Charles Olson and the 'Inferior Predecessors': 'Projective Verse' Revisited," *ELH* 40.2 (Summer 1973) 295-96.

[90] Williams, *Autobiography*, 329.

> Both Pound and Williams set precedents for disrupting conventional units of meaning. Williams, most characteristically, stretches syntactic units across the space between lines or suspends their completion way beyond conventional expectations: large units of meaning accrue only after tested patience has sharpened attention and disrupted conventional expectations. Pound made it part of his program to substitute his own theories of the ideogram for the principles of conventional prose syntax, but his intent was nonetheless to construct larger units of meaning.[91]

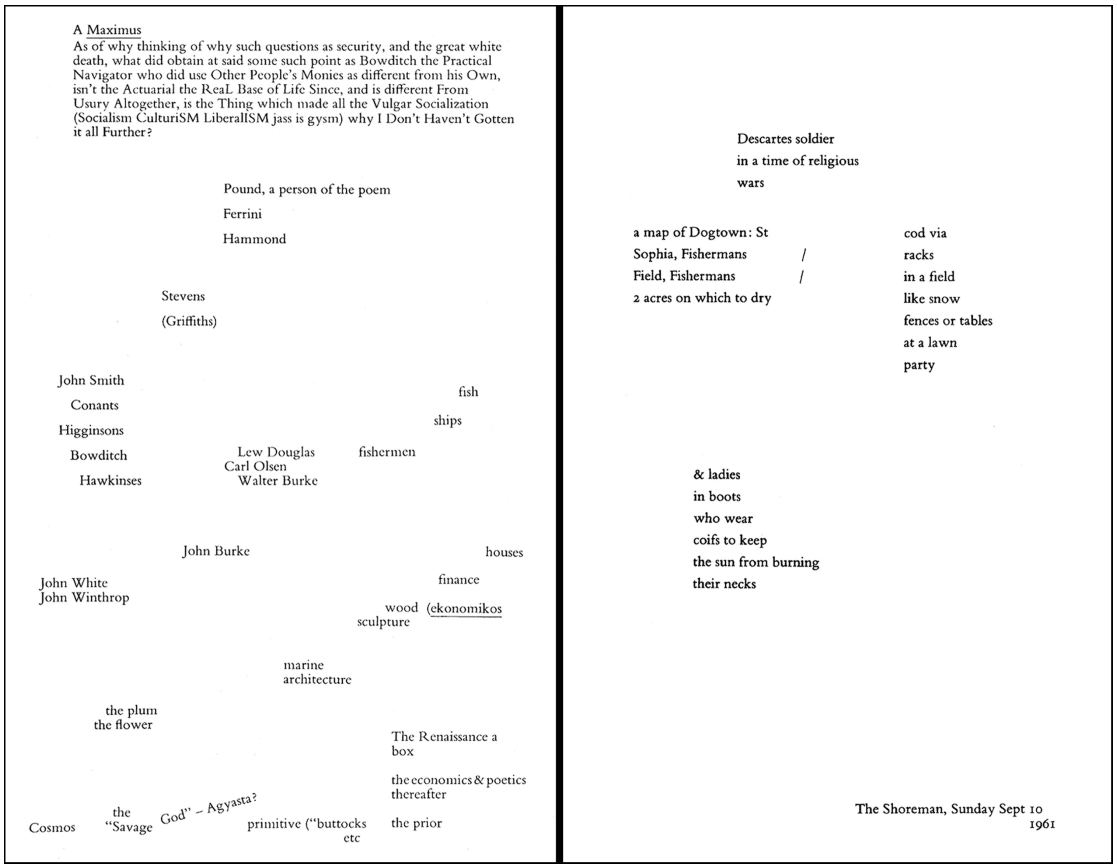

Figure 0.7: Two examples of typographic experimentation in *Maximus IV, V, VI*, pages 193 (left) and 226 (right) in *The Maximus Poems*. On the earlier page, Pound is mentioned by name as "a person of the poem," in the first line after the block of prose.

Despite these distinctions, in the case of all three poets, skewing language's conventional structures depends on the typographic manipulation of the language as concrete material. The disruption, stretching, deferral, and accretion Hallberg mentions are alterations to the visual construction of the words, and/or letters, as they appear on the page. Olson's use of text to further fragment the spatial field does more

[91] Hallberg, "Olson's Relation to Pound and Williams," 41.

than sharpen the images he includes. It also destabilizes the materiality of the documents he incorporates into his long poem, at the same time that it works to heighten the reader's awareness and experience of that materiality. As a result, the language of those documents becomes more "concrete," thereby narrowing the gap between the reality of the textual object and the reader's experience of it.

PROJECTION TO SUSPENSION

The third and final volume to *The Maximus Poems* was published in 1975, seven years after the second volume, and five after Olson's death. Only a year before, Susan Howe had published her first collection of poems, entitled *Hinge Picture*, with Telephone Books. She later recalled the influence in the early seventies of Olson's epic on her writing: "Discovering Charles Olson's *Maximus Poems IV, V, VI* was crucial for the direction my work was taking at the time. He mapped the places I was familiar with—Gloucester, Boston Harbor. Olson showed me what I already knew by instinct, through being half-Irish—that spirit traces in local landscapes resound in particular words on paper."[92] This statement touches on several connections Howe's poetry has to her predecessors, with respect to the continued evolution of the compositional techniques of the documentary poet-historian.

Similar to the manner Olson absorbed and developed Williams's geographic localization, Howe's ongoing poetic project is particularly invested in the area of New England, and specifically the 19th-century history thereof. From Buffalo to Boston and Cambridge, Lake George in New York to Connecticut, her poetry is nearly always grounded in the history of an identified locale. In his autobiography, Williams includes a quotation from John Dewey, which states, "The local is the only universal, upon that all art builds."[93] Howe responds to this aspect of *Paterson* in parallel fashion to Olson by constructing a network of relations that, though anchored in the local, extends the figurative boundaries of the region or city. The preceding statement from Howe hints at this as well, in the mention of her Irish ancestry, which comes from her mother Mary Manning. Consequently, for as much as her work gravitates to northeastern America, it also bridges the Atlantic Ocean's separation of that part of

[92] Susan Howe, "Susan Howe, The Art of Poetry No. 97," interview by Maureen N. McLane, *The Paris Review* 203 (Winter 2012).
[93] Williams, *Autobiography*, 391.

America from Europe. In the collection of her early poems, *Frame Structures,* the opening page of the preface reprints an engraving from 1912 entitled "The Second Oldest View of Buffalo," followed by a discussion of the multiple nationalities coalesced in the city's history, as it relates to that of her family. Moreover, the first sequence of poems, *Hinge Picture*, begins with an epigraph from Marcel Duchamp's *Green Box*, and takes Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* as its principle source.[94] This transatlantic trend continues with sequences stemming from New England—such as *Articulation of Sound Forms in Time* (1987) and "Thorow" (1990)—balanced by others drawing heavily from her Irish roots—like "The Liberties" (1980) and *The Midnight* (2003). In her extension of Williams's project, then, Howe's body of work has a commonality with Ezra Pound's, in manifesting a socio-cultural identity equally informed by America and Europe. The development of this aspect of her poetics, as suggested above, parallels Olson's historical spiraling out from a specific locale in New England.

However, this genealogical line stretching across the twentieth century has perhaps more to do with a poetics of material space, than with geographic particulars or a cross-cultural mapping of place. Howe's mention of "particular words on paper" in relation to *The Maximus Poems* is made more specific in a similar comment from a separate interview: "I would open [*Maximus IV, V, VI*] up, and what he was doing with the space of the page and with history would set me off."[95] At the time of this volume's publication in 1968, Howe was still working as a visual artist, and after her subsequent shift to poetry her early sequences often recall the typographic space of Olson's project. Howe recognized the continuity from *The Cantos* and *Paterson* to *The Maximus Poems*, but also saw how Olson had pushed the materiality of the page, in conjunction with that of the language, further into the visual realm:

> Acute visual sensitivity separates *The Maximus Poems* from *The Cantos* and *Paterson*. [...] *Maximus* is for viewing. [...] At his best, Olson lets words and groups of words, even letter arrangements and spelling accidentals shoot suggestions at each other, as if each page were a canvas and the motion of words—reality across surface. Optical effects, seemingly chance encounters of letters, are a BRIDGE.[96]

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[94] Howe, *FS*, 1, 31. The poet's sources are given on the copyright page of the book.
[95] Susan Howe, Interview with Lynn Keller, *Contemporary Literature* 36.1 (Spring, 1995) 20.
[96] Susan Howe, "Where Should the Commander Be?" *Writing* 19 (1987) 5-6.

Squarely within the mode of composition by field, Howe's poetics follows the trajectory and momentum of Olson's innovation in this respect by further disrupting conventional syntax and reading practices through experimental typography. Where Pound and Williams reconfigured the space of the page by moving away from fixed forms and dissolving the boundaries between textual genres, Howe advances Olson's break from traditional linearity by reconfiguring the invisible grid of the typewriter's pages (see figure 0.8). In *The Cantos*, for example, multiple textual fragments inhabit the same space of the page through juxtaposition or parataxis, constructing a poetic language out of the echoes and resonances of Pound's arrangement of voices along vertical and horizontal axes. Howe, on the other hand, deconstructs language into a scattering of materials that "speak" to each other in an overlapping crowd of textual objects. The resultant visual dissonance is countered by the significant amount of "silent" white space that accompanies such poems, and which the reader is invited to literally *see* as the medium of communication.

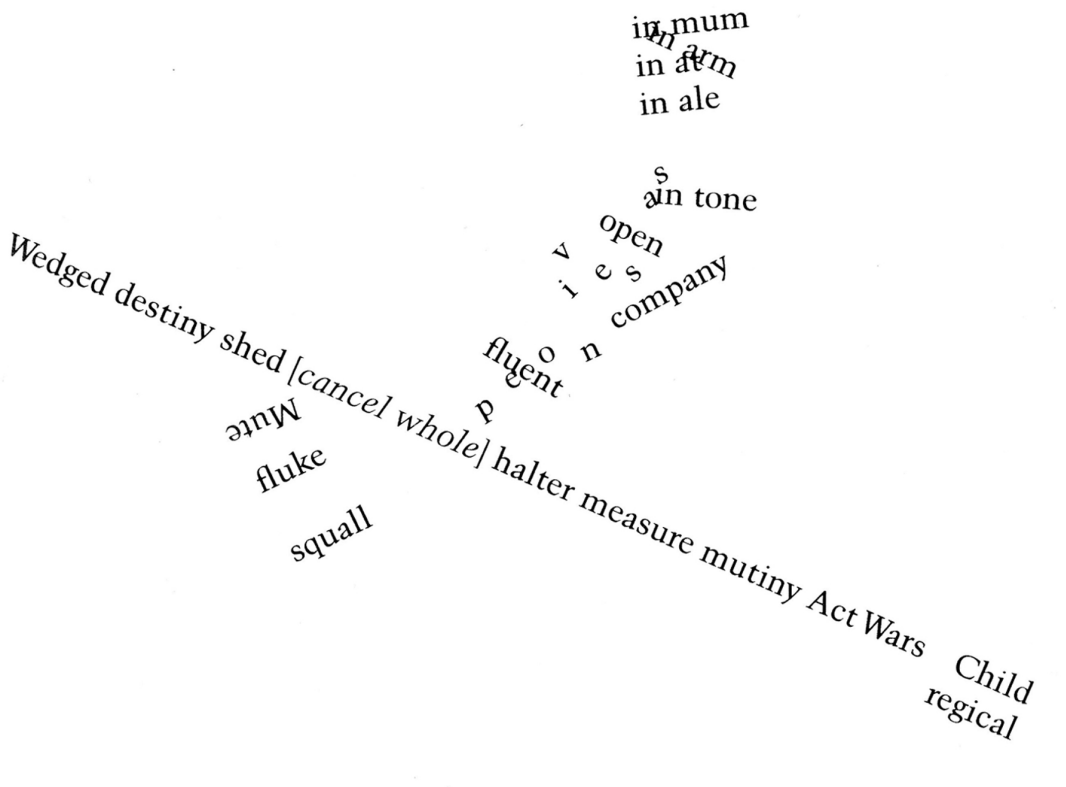
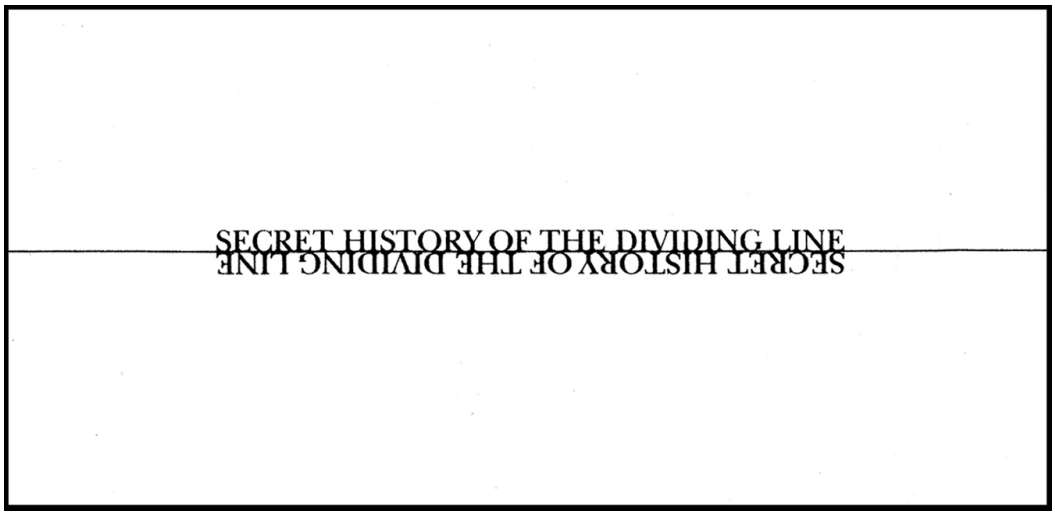


Figure 0.8: A page from "Scattering As Behavior Toward Risk" (*Singularities*, 69). The entire poem is centered vertically and horizontally.

If the unintelligible is rendered intelligible through syntax, Howe's materiality frequently reverses the process toward inarticulation. However, deconstructive though

her compositional process may be on the level of syntactic logic, she also maintains a clear sense of a material construction that creates a "whole" textual space. "Pound famously distinguished between two kinds of poets. The first displays a struggle with materials; Williams is his example [...]. The second kind of poet eliminates evidence of struggle in order to present a finished lyric."[97] Howe aligns with Williams in the former category, arranging her poems so as to display the linguistic fractures and the textual seams of material fragmentation. Nevertheless, these characteristics of her poems also visually point to the architecture of her intervention—the poem is built out of the gathered pieces of text with an artist's eye to how they are perceived in space. "[V]orticism," Pound stated in 1960, "was a renewal of the sense of construction. [...] an attempt to revive the sense of form—the form you had in Piero della Francesca's *De Prospectiva pingendi*, his treatise on the proportions and composition."[98] Francesca's work concerns the creation of spatial depth to the flat surface of the page—the three-dimensional perspective of sculpture, for example, in a two-dimensional medium. Howe's spatial approach to composition often results in a similar transformation of the page by using the typography of printed text to produce a visual "reality across surface" with "optical effects" analogous to those she saw in *The Maximus Poems*.



[97] Robert von Hallberg, "Susan Howe, Poet in the Academic Zone," *Lana Turner: A Journal of Poetry and Opinion* 4 < http://www.lanaturnerjournal.com/archives/howehallbergzone >.

[98] Ezra Pound, "Ezra Pound, The Art of Poetry No. 5," interview by Donald Hall, *The Paris Review* 28 (Summer-Fall 1962).

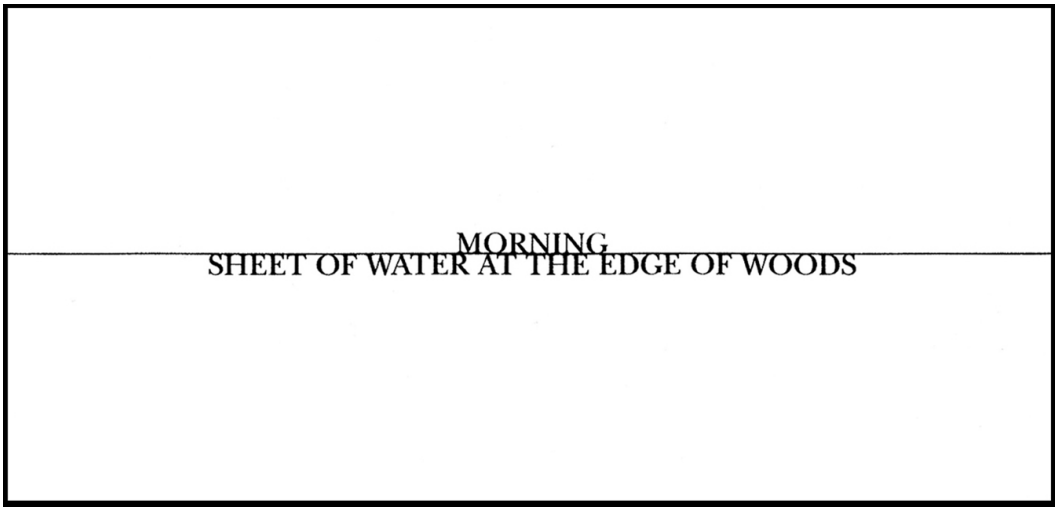


Figure 0.9: Two non-consecutive pages from "Secret History of the Dividing Line" (*FS*, 94, 113).

"It is this 'cutting and pasting' (and erasing) process," Howe remarks, that brings me to the subject in the end."[99] The subject matter, then, is borne out of the formal manipulations of the source text(s). Presented with the final visual construction, the reader is led to work the process in reverse, from the subject back through the poet's materials, which—like Pound, Williams, and Olson—are often tagged with bibliographic references or lexical inserts. As a result, the reception of the text is accompanied by an historical process that follows in the footprints of the author's compositional method. Olson's transcription and use of *'istorin* is relevant to this construction and deconstruction of material sources:

> Obviously the word 'history' is a word—unless you take it to root—which doesn't have any use at all. And the root is the original first use of it, in the first chapter if not the first paragraph of Herodotus, in which he says 'I'm using this as a verb *'istorin*, which means *to find out for yourself…*' After all, Herodotus goes around and finds out everything he can find out, and then he tells a story.[100]

With respect to writing poems "containing history," for this Objectivist line of poets, telling the story involves structuring the materiality of the documents gathered, and the text selected from them. As William Carlos Williams writes, "When a man makes a poem, makes it, mind you, he takes words as he finds them interrelated about him

[99] Susan Howe, "Susan Howe: An Interview by Amy Wray," *The Notre Dame Review* 5 (Winter 1998) 83.

[100] Charles Olson, "On History," *Muthologos: Lectures and Interviews*, ed. Ralph Maud (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2010) 46. Originally given at a conference in Vancouver, 29 July 1963.

and composes them."[101] Consequently, these types of poems attest to being as much original objects as fields of documentary remnants. Attending to their materiality, the reader also finds out for him/herself by tracing the historical and literary methodology back through the *made* thing. By pushing the documentary poetics of her predecessors further into the domain of visual materiality, Howe's work foregrounds the complex of interrelated words and material texts that underpins the Objectivist compositional process of cutting, pasting, and erasing.

Will Montgomery writes that among the set of recurring thematic and formal characteristics in Howe's work, "The relationship between poetic language and the past is at the heart of her various assertions," and that poetry for Howe is "a way of recovering some of the experience that history's 'winners' might have effaced."[102] This investment in poetry as a means for linking the past to the present—whether to establish or restore continuity, refashion the contemporary moment, or transition to a future one—is one that Howe shares with Pound, Williams, and Olson. However, the latter part of Montgomery's statement touches on the notion that Howe's poetics also challenges history's channels of transmission, and questions the way one receives and indexes the information such channels provide. The alternative forms of communication her work demonstrates, turn to a typographic representation of historiography's clash with inarticulation. In so doing, the blanks, erasures, gaps, and lacunae that an archival poet confronts are recognized as new types of historical information and knowledge. The materiality of the printed page itself—in addition to the text—has its own message. As one critic writes, in response to Ezra Pound's call to "make it new" at the start of the 20th century, "Susan Howe does not so much map new terrain for poetry, as render that terrain newly configured."[103] This, of course, is in keeping with the aforementioned implications of Pound's phrase. The words and documents that she discovers—or recovers—in the archives of history undergo a metaphrastic process of poetic composition, which draws on Objectivist traditions of materiality, as much as unsettles their textual ground. "When you're writing well," Howe says, "you're taking dictation, and you don't know where the dictation is

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[101] Williams, "Introduction to *The Wedge*," *Collected Poems, Vol. 2*, 54.

[102] Will Montgomery, *The Poetry of Susan Howe: History, Theology, Authority* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) xii.

[103] Kim Robinson, "Woman's Borderline Figure: Representation and Woman's Voice in the Poetry of Lorna Goodison, Medbh McGuckian and Susan Howe," (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2000) 250.

coming from, which raises questions about originality and copies." She then goes on to state, "I'm a lost Modernist."[104]

MALATESTA TO MELVILLE

Mapping the changing poetic responses to the material production of text through these authors serves the purpose of linking the two poetic sequences that form the focus of this study: Ezra Pound's Malatesta Cantos (VIII-XI), and Susan Howe's "Melville's Marginalia." The objective of analyzing these two texts is to examine and consider the functioning of the materiality, and materialization, of language and text within the processes of poetic composition and signification. In doing so, a number of poetic techniques are given specific attention: a movement toward the page as the poetic unit of composition; the visio-spatial arrangement of textual fragments, most often through juxtaposition or parataxis; and the appropriation and manipulation of source texts. The latter technique is of particular importance, in that it further refines the sense of materiality at the core of the critical approach as being of a uniquely archival nature. The Malatesta Cantos and "Melville's Marginalia"—both, to cite another of Pound's famous quotations, "poem[s] including history"—are each heavily grounded in textual research, the wide reach of which constellates a variety of sources. As a result, the documentary poetics that underpins their structural composition is one that incorporates the archival materiality of both manuscripts and printed texts as a key component shaping the treatment, and reception, of the sequences' principal themes. However, the method of inclusion is not a matter of simply copying or transcribing archival texts—although such processes certainly have their place in the works—but is metaphrastic in its alteration of one textual form to another. The term "metaphrast" is one found in *The Maximus Poems*, taken from *Webster's Fifth Collegiate Dictionary*, which is used by Olson as "a reflection on the poet's own attempt to render historical materials into poetry."[105] Metaphrastic

[104] Susan Howe, "Detective Work," interview conducted by Catherine Halley, *Poetry Foundation* (14 January 2015) < http://www.poetryfoundation.org/article/249896 >. In a discussion with Robert Creeley, Howe states, "I do feel my models would be people like Pound or Eliot. A modernist list of models." "Four Part Harmony: Robert Creeley and Susan Howe Talk it Out," *Village Voice* (12 April 1994) 22.

[105] Michael Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material Word* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997) 112.

materiality, then, is an application of Pound's maxim to "make it new" on a documentary level, which, for the aforementioned sequences, is anchored in each poet's engagement with the archive. This criterion alone does in no way definitively set either sequence apart from others in the œuvre of either poet. But while other poems or collections from Pound and Howe may also lend themselves to a study of this type of materiality, the aforementioned sequences are important markers in the evolution of both poets' compositional practices.

The Malatesta Cantos are widely considered to represent a fundamental turning point in the poetics of Pound's epic work *The Cantos*, due to the poet's shift to a documentary mode. Myles Slatin's article tracing the history of the first sixteen of Pound's cantos notes that the period "stretching from the spring of 1922 to the early part of 1925, was the climactic period of the poem's composition, for during it the poem—or at least the first part of it—took what is now its final shape."[106] In one of the most extensive studies of the sequence in question, Lawrence Rainey narrows Slatin's comment further, stating that "at least one point has gradually attracted a substantial consensus: the decisive event in the formation of *The Cantos* occurred when Pound composed the Malatesta Cantos in 1922 and 1923." He goes on to write, "For Pound, it is clear, the issues he had encountered in the dramatic moments of 1922-23 became a reference point for all his subsequent thinking about civilization and cultural politics."[107] The composition and publication of these poems are situated only slightly after the landmark works of two of Pound's contemporaries and friends: James Joyce's *Ulysses*, first appearing in print in February of 1922, and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, published in October of that same year. One is perhaps tempted to attribute the "catalytic moment," as Rainey refers to it, of Pound's development of the poetic techniques in the Malatesta Cantos to these groundbreaking works. Marjorie Perloff, speculating on precisely this question of causation, mentions both works as the most popular candidates, but concludes that "nothing could be less like Joyce's [...] novel," and that Eliot's intricate structure of recurrent symbols is "quite unlike the documentary, presentational mode of the Malatesta Cantos."[108]

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[106] Myles Slatin, "A History of Pound's Cantos I-XVI, 1915-1925, *American Literature* 35.2 (May 1963) 189.

[107] Lawrence Rainey, *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 4.

[108] Marjorie Perloff, "Pound and Rimbaud: The Retreat from Symbolism," *The Iowa Review* 6.1 (Winter 1975) 105.

Howe's case is slightly different, as "Melville's Marginalia" does not mark the introduction of a documentary poetics, which is present in collections from the very beginning of her poetic career. It remains, nonetheless, a pivotal work for both the themes and process of its composition. Apart from being the lengthiest sequence Howe had written at the time of its publication, it also stands apart for the poet's approach to archival materiality and its eventual appropriation. In exploring the central figure of Herman Melville, Howe does so not through his own writings, or even those written about him, as in her previous work, but rather by the indirect means of the books he owned, and her connection of him to the Irish poet James Clarence Mangan. Regarding this method, Howe's earlier interest in the concept of marginality is here explored through its actual materialized form as part of the page's spatial field. Accordingly, the poems are constructed from a more numerous and wide-reaching groups of texts, which mirror the diverse corpus out of which Pound composed the Malatesta Cantos. Furthermore, the archival materiality of manuscripts in particular, is given a much more fundamental place within the thematic and compositional structure, constituting a sustained analysis of the visual and spatial characteristics of documents outside of the printed text alone. This increased attention is also extended to archival research itself, with the entire sequence triggered by, and anchored to, Wilson Walker Cowen's bibliographic work for his PhD dissertation. From the publication of "Melville's Marginalia" onward, Howe's interest and incorporation of manuscripts has only grown deeper and more complex. Joining this key work to the poet's subsequent collection *Pierce-Arrow*, Will Montgomery's comments illustrate the unique archival materiality forged in the earlier set of poems, as well as their impact on Howe's later work:

> "Melville's Marginalia" is centrally concerned with both the relation between authors and books as objects. [...] The space of the page is treated in such a way that the page frequently assumes the force of a visual artwork. Much of *Pierce-Arrow* concerns the invidious status of manuscripts and the abilities of these artifacts to convey by visual means dimensions of writerly activity that are lost to the printed page.[109]

[109] Montgomery, 117.

The more radically visual sequences composed after *The Nonconformist's Memorial*—which actually include manuscripts and drawings in facsimile, as well as textual collages of bibliographic fragments that deconstruct all manner of alphabetic letter and poetic line—in many respects originate from the archival materiality in "Melville's Marginalia," which initiates a movement from the specifically typographic to the graphic. Thus, like the Malatesta Cantos for Pound, this sequence proved to be a crucial stage in the development of Howe's own form of documentary poetics.

Among literature giving specific attention to the Malatesta Cantos, the aspect of their singularity has been approached with differing critical objectives, which may be divided, on the broadest level, into two categories: those primarily concerned with history and/or the development of culture, and those focused on the poems' impact and enduring importance for the project of *The Cantos*, as well as for Pound himself. Each scholar (in either category) engages with the documentary element of the sequence, and, at varying lengths and to varying depths, analyzes its specificities. Nevertheless, the materiality of Pound's poetics often remains an auxiliary concern, addressed in service of arguments with foci directed at topics other than typography itself, or the functioning of the visual poetics.

Although forming only a portion of the aforementioned article, Perloff's discussion of the Malatesta Cantos does concentrate almost exclusively on Pound's use of documents, but only as an example in order to demonstrate that Pound does not "recreate history," but "decompose[s] and fragment[s] historical time so as to create a new landscape without depth [...]."[110] This, in turn, serves her central argument for an historical connection to the French Symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud, in positing his "particular brand of Imagism" as a model for Pound's work.[111] This type of manipulation of history has proven a point of contention for critics whose work addresses the poet's relation in the sequence, not to poetic history, but to history at large. In engaging those who previously criticized Pound's (re)presentation of history, Michael Harper analyzes a number of the same textual moments as Perloff, with regard to the issues of poetry's relation to a factual past, and how that history is read and written. He discusses the archival documents included in the sequence according to how Pound's use of them clashes with that of professional historians, yielding a text

[110] Perloff, "Pound and Rimbaud," 111.
[111] Perloff, "Pound and Rimbaud," 93.

that, while perhaps not absolutely "true," is valuable for its "denial of the conventional separation between 'poetry' and 'history.'"[112] Consequently, the details of the historical context surrounding those documents—not their materiality itself—is given precedence in Harper's arguments.

Though drawing quite distinct conclusions, both Thomas Jackson and Robert McNamara have taken up similar interests concerning representations of history via the figure of Sigismondo Malatesta. In examining Pound's Malatesta in conjunction with his concern for *order* as much as *action*, the manipulated depiction of the central figure, Jackson argues, results in an ambivalent presentation that makes the man so significant to Pound and *The Cantos* appear more paradoxical than heroic. Therefore, the historical importance the poet later gives to Malatesta through associations with Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Chinese emperors, is, in Jackson's view, "unqualified" and "will not do."[113] McNamara, on the other hand, contends Malatesta did, in fact, exemplify the qualities of a Poundian hero, the actions of whom, as recounted in the cantos, offer an alternative order.

> Choosing Malatesta as his hero for his monumental history, Pound radically reappropriates the past, revises it, reconstructs it, tearing down what Burckhardt has regarded as the "verdict of history" on Sigismundo and replacing it with a new order, one that manifests in Sigismundo's actions the impulse to create a better form of life.[114]

McNamara's move from Sigismondo as creative/constructive hero to that figure's inclusion in Pound's "monumental history" links it to Lawrence Rainey's extensive study on the Malatesta Cantos as a "monument of culture." His work examines the poems in parallel to the historical details surrounding the events included therein, in addition to the scholarly and ideological traditions that have played a role in determining the structure of Pound's literary complex. The material practice of writing, therefore, is but one component of Rainey's primary concern for the issue of transmission, which, as "the sum of processes and forces that issue in the sociomaterial instance of every work," both precedes the production and reception of

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[112] Michael Harper, "Truth and Calliope: Ezra Pound's Malatesta," *PMLA* 96.1 (January 1981) 100.
[113] Thomas H. Jackson, "The Adventures of Messire Wrong-Head, *ELH* 32.2 (June 1965) 240.
[114] Robert McNamara, "Pound's Malatesta: An Alternative to the Martial Ideal," *Pacific Coast Philology* 20.1/2 (November 1985) 64.

literary works, as well as mediates the two.[115] Similar to the critics mentioned above, Rainey engages the problematic nature of fact within the cultural monuments and heritage, constructed and reconstructed in a chain of shifting intellectual and social practices. As a result, and in a reversal of Perloff's position, he argues that the four cantos suggest "a space where fiction will be repeatedly transformed into fact." This leads him to conclude, "Historical criticism, we begin to perceive, is understood wrongly as the mere recovery of a context that has existed in the past; its most important contexts are those that exist only in the future."[116]

Michael North's article entitled "Architecture of Memory" bridges the gap between the first and second lines of criticism. Similar to Rainey, he is concerned with monuments and "their stability over time, their role in tradition, and the aid they offer to personal memory [...]." However, these themes are set more specifically in the context of poetic models for *The Cantos*, and how Pound's project would continue to use other cultural buildings—Malatesta's Tempio being the prime example—to address the questions of poetry's "relationship to a public, to tradition, and to memory [...]."[117] The impact on the fundamental concepts and practices of subsequent cantos is developed at greater length in Peter D'Epiro's monograph on the sequence, published in the same year. The book is divided into essentially equal halves, with the first being devoted to a close-examination of the compositional evolution of the Malatesta Cantos from first draft to publication. The astute exploration of the available archival documents serves to provide the reader with a chronological development of Pound's writing, and thus allowing one to track the thematic and poetic characteristics that accompanied the poet's various choices identified by D'Epiro. In the second half of the book, this earlier study is then connected to the rest of *The Cantos* on the basis of the Malatesta Cantos representing the epic style that would inform the entirety of the project's development. The critic argues for Pound's adoption at this stage of his poetic career of "the technique of ironic presentation: he assembled all the materials necessary for an epic, heroic treatment of Sigismondo, but he deflated the potential windiness of such an undertaking by the use of irony, humor, and bathos, thereby

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[115] Rainey, *Monument*, 7.
[116] Rainey, *Monument*, 72.
[117] North, "Architecture of Memory: Pound and the Tempio," *American Literature* 55.3 (October 1983) 386-87.

creating the sense of a controlled confusion [...]."[118] According to the study, it was not only Pound's newfound "deflated epic style" that influenced his work, but also the representative figure of Sigismondo Malatesta himself. A progression is set forth whereby, in the 1930s, Pound's initial "interest in the solitary outsider," in the vein of Sigismondo, "was displaced onto another kind of 'solitary' figure—not the man alone on the *outside*, but the man alone at the *top*—and thus the so-called 'middle Cantos' (31-71) concern themselves with figures like Jefferson, John Adams, Mussolini, and the Chinese emperors [...]." As the progression continues, D'Epiro proposes that the shift in *The Pisan Cantos* marks a "return of all the major outsiders of Pound's earlier work," of which Sigismondo was of the most prominent.[119]

Much more recently, David Ten Eyck has responded to both North and D'Epiro by focusing more restrictively on the poetic influence of the Malatesta sequence, exploring them as a precursor to his main subject of the composition of the Adams Cantos (LXII-LXXI), and the importance of the "Adams *Paideuma*" therein to Pound's later sequences, such as *Rock-Drill* and *Thrones.* Regarding the Malatesta Cantos, Ten Eyck argues that the historical texts are used "to augment material that is presented in other poetic modes," setting the documentary poetics as one element of a much larger artistic project concerned with natural process, terminological definition, and social government. In particular, three distinct poetic modes are identified in the Malatesta Cantos, the combination of which plays a significant role in conditioning the understanding of history: the lyrical ("which functions outside history"), the narrative ("which is tied to the chronological march of historical events"), and the documentary ("which functions within the space delineated by a written text").[120] Here, as in all of the aforementioned studies, constructive discussions of materiality occupy an important place in service of the scholar's individual aims within the field of modernist poetics and history, while remaining, nonetheless, a secondary interest.

The substantial body of critical work on Susan Howe's writing bears a great deal of resemblance to that on Pound's, in examining particular aspects of her poetic techniques as they relate to an understanding of how history is formed and represented, as well as received and retransmitted. More precisely, much of the extant

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[118] Peter D'Epiro, *A Touch of Rhetoric: Ezra Pound's Malatesta Cantos* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983) 63,

[119] D'Epiro, 100, 107.

[120] Ten Eyck, *Ezra Pound's Adams Cantos*, 42-44.

studies concentrate on how the poet's own scholarly research engages with the power structures and exercise of authority within the domain of historiography, thus raising fundamental questions on the evolution of literary history and canon formation.[121] One recurrent theme found in the aims of addressing these central topics is an analytical demonstration of Howe's express attempts to draw out of the historical record a disregarded, or otherwise silenced, alterity consisting of feminine and/or "antinomian" voices found throughout her work.[122] In so doing, individual scholars have tended to privilege one or more facet of the poet's role within this project, which Hélène Aji has concisely pared down to "Susan Howe the revisi<ion>er, Susan Howe the <historio>grapher, Susan Howe the lib<e>r<ta>rian."[123]

"Melville's Marginalia" has been given relatively less critical attention than have Howe's other long poems and collections, though several scholars have provided important analyses of the sequence's representation of socio-historical authority through the lens of processes of marginalization. In her monograph dedicated to an overview of Howe's work, Elisabeth Joyce devotes a chapter to "Melville's Marginalia" in which she argues that understanding margins—both socio-cultural and material—as combining an array of activities related to creative writing, reveals the poems to be uniquely invested in the concept of historical and authorial influence. "This is a poem on influence, but on an influence that is not separate from the writer or from the product that the writer creates; this is an influence that reflects immersion with the precursors so that the resulting product is practically a co-creation of the writer's with the precursors."[124] By shifting the convergences of this marginal space on the outskirts of society into the foreground of her work, Joyce concludes that

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[121] See, for example, the following articles: Hélène Aji, "'I [will not] Gather the Limbs of Osiris': Susan Howe's Transcendent History," *Jacket 2* (2010), Peter Nicholls, "Unsettling the Wilderness: Susan Howe and American History," *Contemporary Literature* 37.4 (Winter 1996), Marjorie Perloff, "'Collision or Collusion with History': The Narrative Lyric of Susan Howe, *Contemporary Literature* 30.4 (Winter 1989), and Ming-Qian Ma, "Poetry as History Revised: Susan Howe's 'Scattering as Behavior toward Risk,'" *American Literary History* 6.4 (Winter 1994).

[122] It should be noted that Howe's frequent use of "antinomian" typically refers to a broader sense of anti-authoritarianism, and only in a few rare cases adheres to the term's strictly religious definition. In her essay "These Flames and Generosities of the Heart," she defines it as follows: "A conflict of authority. A contradiction between conclusions that seem equally logical reasonable correct sealed natural necessary" (*BM*, 141). This much more connotative than denotative use perhaps stems from the non-specific etymology of the Greek: *anti* ("against") and *nomos* ("law"). *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.

[123] Aji, "'I [will not] Gather the Limbs of Osiris,'" n.p.

[124] Elisabeth Joyce, *"The Small Space of a Pause": Susan Howe's Poetry and the Spaces Between* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2010) 204.

Howe "makes the work of the margins visible," and so collapses "the division between inner and outer worlds" that would otherwise dismiss certain historical processes as inconsequential to later interpretations of a literary work.[125]

The turn to the future with which Joyce ends her chapter is the principal concern of Megan Williams article on the notion of posterity in "Melville's Marginalia." She asserts that the act of recovery as part of Howe's poetics ultimately aims to revise history with the purpose of carving out a space for the poet's voice within an historical lineage. Through Melville, Howe is able to find "a frame that will testify to an author's ability to elude historical erasure," and thereby ensure her place within a continuing literary past.[126] The formal aspects of the poems are touched upon for the way in which they demonstrate how the sequence's primary concerns, according to Williams, involve issues outside of poetic composition itself: "Howe's work attempts to revitalize poetry in America by suggesting that poetry has the ability to remake culture, history, and literary criticism."[127] This conclusion is followed by the suggestion that the reader, in fact, becomes an integral part in Howe's place in posterity by continuing the poet's work of recovering erasures. This selfsame notion of the work's trajectory carried forward by a reader's active engagement in seeking new paths into and out of history's other voices is echoed in Jessica Wilkinson's analysis. However, even as all three critics mentioned thus far address how "Melville's Marginalia" pulls readers through its narrative fragments while also directing them beyond its pages, Wilkinson goes further by developing the idea of "'new literary histories'" as an actual transformative act realized in Howe's "gestures towards a new kind of literary-historical methodology that is capable of encompassing the marginal voice."[128] The implication of this methodology, it follows, is not simply an alternative narrativizing or constructing, but rather a confounding of those very processes, leaving historical maps and literary frameworks "equivocal, multiple, variable."[129]

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[125] Joyce, 208, 211.

[126] Megan Williams, "Howe Not to Erase(Her): A Poetics of Posterity in Susan Howe's 'Melville's Marginalia,'" *Contemporary Literature* 38.1 (Spring 1997) 114.

[127] Williams, 127.

[128] Wilkinson, "Out of Bounds of the Bound Margin: Susan Howe Meets Mangan in 'Melville's Marginalia,'" *Criticism* 53.2 (Spring 2011) 270. This is in response, Wilkinson states, to a comment she agrees with in Stephen Greenblatt's article "Racial Memory and Literary History."

[129] Wilkinson, 287.

In one of the other book-length studies on Howe's poetry, the previously mentioned work of Will Montgomery devotes a chapter to a close examination of "Melville's Marginalia" tied to the collection *Pierce-Arrow*. Although his over-arching themes of history, theology, and authority (as per the title) situate his criticism rather firmly amongst those scholars discussed above, Montgomery's analysis of "Melville's Marginalia" is distinct for its sharper focus on the creative process of writing poetry itself. Astute observations on the spatiality of Howe's poetics, and useful close-readings of her technique of textual collage are included as part of what the critic sees as the centrality of the sequence's conjunction of the mediation of language and the immediacy of enthusiasm. "Citation summons a force of externality that, paradoxically, reinforces the poem's qualities of immediacy, sending it down obscure, collage-driven pathways that abstract the poem from the speaking subject and place it at the center of a humming network of decontextualized meanings."[130] Telepathic connections between Irish and American literature, and the intertwining of past and present in the Freudian concept of *Nachträglichkeit* are, according to Montgomery, both key aspects of how "Melville's Marginalia" incorporates a kind of suspended textuality. He argues that "[Howe's] work *is* a reorganization of material," and yet this "foreign material is never fully assimilated."[131]

Such conclusions, and the critical development that precedes them, have much in common with the scholarship of Craig Dworkin and Michael Davidson. Both of these critics have explored "Melville's Marginalia" with an explicit regard for materiality, albeit pursuing different lines of criticism. Dworkin's approach is markedly more interdisciplinary, referencing avant-garde writing, visual art, and music. Beginning with a connection to Guillaume Apollinaire's calligrammatic poem "Il pleut," he states, "[...] the *line*, that is, forms Howe's basic unit of both prosodic and spatial composition, and deviations from the conventional horizontal axis in her texts arise primarily from the manipulation of lines rather than of individual words or letters." However, later arguing that Howe's poetry should, in fact, be ultimately differentiated from concrete poetry on the basis of the relationship between text and image, Dworkin proposes the novel *Clarissa Harlowe* (1747) as a precedent for the visual pages of Howe's sequence. By way of John Cage's conception of silence and

[130] Montgomery, 114-15.
[131] Montgomery, 123-24.

noise, he then concludes his chapter by linking excerpts from "Melville's Marginalia" to Russian futurism: "When Howe makes manifest the 'visible surface of Discourse' by explicitly linking the *faktura*, or materiality, of her texts with their medial noise, she highlights what the Russian futurists called *zvukopsis*, the 'noise emitted by the surface of the work of art."[132]

Dworkin, therefore, approaches materiality in Howe's work in a much broader sense, with the aim of moving from an initial typographic reading to one that reaches outside of a strictly textual, and aesthetic, domain. This progression resonates with the prior scholarship on "Melville's Marginalia" presented in Davidson's book *Ghostlier Demarcations*. At the outset of his chapter, he makes clear one of his main objectives as the examination of how poetry's textual materiality "interact[s] with the materiality of social forms beyond the archive." Authorial influence and interchange, and the marginalization of voices of what has been labeled "minor literature," figure significantly into Davidson's analysis of a "palimtextual" poem as "reveal[ing] cultural hierarchies" and "forces of stabilization in the culture at large."[133] The nuanced insights into the material text of Howe's work offered by Dworkin and Davidson are distinct, in one sense, from the other literature on "Melville's Marginalia," in that their analyses maintain a focus on materiality itself; nevertheless, remaining within those critical bounds is achieved by an expansion of them, so as to include ideological materialities of society at large.

The critical attention for both the Malatesta Cantos and "Melville's Marginalia" thus mirror each other with regard to, first, a general consensus for the importance of each sequence within the respective poetic œuvres, and second, to the frequency of analytical reflections on the shared themes of alternative representations of history and the influence of different socio-cultural factors on historiography. While studies of both sequences have also consistently noted, and examined to varying extents, the innovation and unconventionality of the documentary poetics at work, critics have been inclined to give precedence to the intersections of each poems' thematic developments. The complexity of those themes have continued to offer divergent paths in scholarship concerning each poet's interpretative approach, but the visio-spatial materiality of the works' archival strategies, and its role in how Pound

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[132] Craig Dworkin, *Reading the Illegible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003) 33-34, 45.

[133] Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations*, 64, 92.

and Howe's documentary poetics shape their subject matter, has yet to receive a sustained, in-depth consideration. Understanding the insights into typography's operations of signification, and the use of the material page, as they relate to a source-based strategy of writing, is crucial to the evolution of the concept of "a poem including history." The analysis tracking the compositional method of each sequence in this study is heavily anchored in the archival materials and historical documents—either gathered in the collected papers of each poet, or which formed a part of their own research for the sequence—with the aim of providing a sharper appreciation for the visual framework of archival materiality that informs the evolution of the documentary poetics both within Pound and Howe's individual poetic projects, as well as between them.

The following criticism, consequently, is divided into two major parts, each moving through the sequence under study along two lines, though occasionally straying from any strict boundaries that either may imply: (1) the compositional process from textual sources and reading notes, through subsequent drafts, and finally to the published edition, or later editions when necessary; (2) the sequential progression of the poems as presented in the codex format of those publications. An overall consideration of each sequence as a single, long poem is encouraged, despite the Malatesta Cantos being separated into four, explicitly titled poems (i.e. cantos 8-11), and "Melville's Marginalia" being constructed of roughly two equal halves, the subdivisions of which are detailed later in the study.

The opening chapter of this work focuses on the routes of intertextuality in the Malatesta Cantos that result from techniques of editorial appropriation. The opening to the sequence is given particular attention, followed by later textual instances whereby Pound establishes a network of materiality between documentary fragments and languages, reaching both outside of the four cantos, as well as across them. Chapter two engages with Pound's use of spatial fragmentation and paratactic structures, exploring approaches to the visual and material qualities of the page as a means of multiplying significations and expanding, or effacing, generic boundaries for the poet-historian. The next chapter is divided into three sections examining the role of the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini within the compositional process of the sequence. The first aims to develop and clarify the structural metaphor of the temple

as an artistic parallel to the materiality of the cantos, dealing specifically with the typographic innovation of Pound's documentary poetics in Cantos VIII and IX. Section two is an extended critical look at the post-bag section that comprises the middle of Canto IX, placing its series of documents in their archival context, in order to analyze the metaphrastic process by which Pound reconstructed them within the history of his poem. The final portion focuses on the last two cantos of the sequence, and the continued symbolic importance of the Tempio as it is represented through the remnants of architectural history that form Sigismondo's map of cultural materiality. Chapter four, the last on the Malatesta Cantos, engages the thematic element of the written word and material page, and their function in the palimpsestic construction of histories. All of the aforementioned chapters draw extensively on Pound's archival material as a means of breaking open the poet's compositional method, and tracking the stages and specificities of the cantos' typographic complexity.

The second half of the study turns to Susan Howe's long poem "Melville's Marginalia," beginning with a chapter that places the work in the context of Howe's visual poetics from the outset of her career in writing. The analysis establishes the poet's conception of marginalia, and concentrates in particular on the use of the blank space of the page, which, in conjunction with Howe's visually composed verse, is a key component of the sequence's structural genesis. Chapter six explores the concepts of quotation, palimpsest, and polyphony in the abstract typographic arrangements of the sequence's first poems. The close readings of these poems are framed within Howe's engagement and representation of the archive, and her unique methods of research concerning the books of Herman Melville's library, and Wilson Walker Cowen's work on their marginalia. The analysis of the subsequent chapter moves forward to the second half of "Melville's Marginalia." It begins by seeking to clarify Howe's view of books and documents as textual embodiments of their authors, followed by a critical look at erasure and absence in the poet's compositional process. The chapter then turns to Howe's poetic handling of the idiosyncratic materiality of manuscripts—namely, those of Percy Bysshe Shelley—and the difficulties inherent in the transcription of them. Chapter eight deals first with the counter methods of the poet and the historian as conceived by Howe, followed by an examination of the role of editors and editorial practices in the material structuring of textual history and biography, through the lens of the Irish poet James Clarence Mangan. The chapter concludes with close readings of several key passages and poems that close the

sequence, focusing on editorial and historical alteration as it relates to the materiality of literary production. As with the study of the Malatesta Cantos, these chapters on Susan Howe follow a similar methodological approach, grounded in the archival manuscripts and typescript drafts for "Melville's Marginalia," by which the development of Howe's documentary poetics is examined across the unfolding of the composition.

The conclusion to the study revisits several of the key argumentative themes in the preceding chapters from a broader vantage point, setting the typography and metaphrastic materiality of Ezra Pound and Susan Howe's archival-based poetics in closer proximity, in an effort to draw a sharper genealogical line between the two.

PART ONE

EZRA POUND'S "MALATESTA CANTOS"

PASSAGES: INTERTEXTUAL MATRIX

> "The blank page is not blank. Words are always secondhand [...]. No text has one single author. Whether we are conscious of it or not, we always write on top of a palimpsest."
>
> — Rosmarie Waldrop[1]

Composed between late March 1922 and April 1923, Ezra Pound's Malatesta Cantos (8-11) mark a crucial turning point regarding compositional technique and style in Pound's epic poem. Even two years later in early 1925, when William Bird's Three Mountains Press in Paris published the first installment of *The Cantos*, Pound seems to have considered the Malatesta sequence the central, defining cantos in the book. Referring to the prospective *A Draft of XVI. Cantos for the Beginning of a Poem of some Length*, Pound writes, "S'Oiseau is preparing de looks edtn. of *Malatesta* at 25 dollars a shot; with still more valued edtn. at 50 bones. Strater at work on special capitals."[2] When the book was released—a publication Pound qualified as "placuit occulis," a phrase included in the Malatesta Cantos in reference to Sigismondo's mistress and later third wife Isotta degli Atti—Pound made a special request to Bird for a copy of a page from Canto IX, and a year later was searching for a historical character on par with the now exemplary Sigismondo for a new series of cantos.

Pound's comment that the "de looks edtn." of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* was "pleasing to the eye" is a fitting one, not only because of Henry Strater's striking illuminated letters that open each poem, but also because of the Malatesta Cantos themselves, whose unique visual qualities set these four cantos apart from the others. Indeed, the centrality of the sequence and their importance in shaping subsequent

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[1] Rosmarie Waldrop, "Thinking of Follows," *Dissonance (if you are interested*), (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005) 204.

[2] Pound, *Ezra Pound to His Parents*, eds. Mary de Rachewiltz et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 511, emphasis added. Similar comments were made to Kate Buss in a letter dated 12 May 1923: "The Three Mts. is following this prose series by a dee looks edtn. of my Cantos (about 16 of 'em I think) of UNRIVALLED magnificence. Price 25 dollars per copy, and 50 and 100 bones for Vellum and illuminateds It is to be one of the real bits of printing; modern book to be jacked up to somewhere near level of mediaeval mss." *L*, 256.

cantos is due in part to the visual materiality they embody. This innovation in Pound's compositional technique was a significant departure from the previous cantos, and would continue to develop and evolve through the last completed installments of Pound's long poem—*Section: Rock-Drill de los Cantares* (85-95) and *Thrones* (96-109). Pound's extensive research in numerous Italian archives from Rome to Milan yielded over 700 pages of reading notes, bibliographic references, transcriptions, manuscripts, and typescripts, currently held in The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. The final result was four cantos of greater typographic complexity, expressing a particular interest in the issues of documentary materiality, regarding both the material nature of language and the tangible page itself. Examining these concepts through the sequence's intertextuality, this chapter addresses the different ways Pound's poetics draws a network of external works into the poem, as a means of foregrounding the material text produced in the physical act of writing. Analysis of Pound's careful alteration and repurposing of source texts, and insertion of notes pertaining to translation and archival research, will demonstrate how the poet extends the reading of the sequence to contain the textual materialities of history within those of its own pages.

OPENING ELSEWHERE

Arriving at the final version of the Malatesta Cantos involved, unsurprisingly, a great deal of revision on Pound's part, including the excision of lengthy passages, numerous rewrites of individual lines, and significant changes in order and arrangement. However, the opening lines to Canto VIII—one of the sequence's most stunning and frequently commented passages—provides the reader with an extremely concise and dense introduction to almost all of the compositional techniques and stylistic traits regarding materiality that unfold over the course of the four poems (see figure 1.1).

Although Strater's illuminated letters were not retained in subsequent printings of *The Cantos*, it is important nonetheless to acknowledge the immediate visual and textual nature of this feature of the initial publication, and the significance thereof,

which dominates the title pages of each poem.[3] The bold, red initials and medieval headpieces make clear that these poems are meant to be *seen*, and furthermore, to make the reader conscious of sight's role in the act of reading, and thus in the nature and operation of signifying practices. While Strater's illustrations are not reserved solely for the Malatesta Cantos—nor is such graphic design only employed for *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*—it is this sequence, occupying the central portion of the book, which first seems to commit to and carry out fully such a notion.

Figure 1.1: Excerpt from *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (Paris: Three Mountains Press, 1925) 27.

[3] The second volume of *The Cantos—A Draft of the Cantos 17-27*, published in 1928 in London by John Rodker and J. Curwen and Sons Ltd.—contained initials and illustrations designed by Gladys Hynes. Although more modern in subject matter and style, they were intended as a continuation of the previous volume's design, and readily resemble Stater's work. The third volume—*A Draft of XXX Cantos*, published by Nancy Cunard's Hours Press in Paris in 1930—contained initials designed by Ezra Pound's wife Dorothy in a "vorticist" style; however, with its absence of color printing and smaller format, this volume departed from the previous two. Beginning with Faber's 1933 printing of *Draft of XXX Cantos* onward, the illustrations and elaborate initials have been absent from editions of *The Cantos*. For an analysis and discussion of the significance and evolution of the bibliographic design and code of *The Cantos* see Jerome McGann, *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), and George Bornstein, "The Book as Artefact: Historicizing Ezra Pound's First Thirty Cantos" in *The Book as Artefact, Text, and Border*, ed. Anne Mette Hansen et al. (New York: Rodopi, 2005).

Jerome McGann offers the following gloss on the materiality of this first volume, in addition to the two subsequent ones that retained a similar design:

> The physical presentation of these three books thus constitutes a display of their meanings. [...] In doing this, the work equally declares its commitment to a fully materialized understanding of language. The *Cantos* summons up the power and authority of the most elementary forms of language, its systems of signifiers, and it apprehends these signifiers as historical artifacts. The graphic presentation of Pound's books is thus made an index of their aims. Through book design Pound makes an issue of language's physique, deliberateness, and historicality.[4]

Although book design itself is not the focus here, for the present purposes the relevance of McGann's statement lies in its emphasis on the precise visual construction for these poems as not merely decorative, but as significant in immediately setting forth a part of the poetics at work. With specific regard to the Malatesta Cantos, the comment is more relevant still, as it also underlines the notion of materialized textuality and historical intertextuality. The importance of these two connected concepts to the poetics of cantos 8-11 is apparent in Pound's choice to introduce them in the very first line of the sequence.

Pound begins the Malatesta Cantos by appropriating a line from the final section of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, a text edited by Pound only several months prior to the beginning of his preliminary work on Sigismondo, and thus certainly fresh in his mind.[5] The reference to the anterior, though contemporary, text cannot rightly be labeled either quotation or paraphrase: the former is inaccurate as Pound does not use Eliot's exact words, nor does he visually signal the line as such by enclosing it within quotation marks, and the latter is equally incorrect in that the few changed words in Pound's line hardly restate or clarify the meaning of the original. It is, then—respective to the aforementioned designations—rather an act of appropriation and manipulation, both being concepts of central importance to the Malatesta Cantos.

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[4] McGann, 80.

[5] "These fragments I have shored against my ruins." T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970) 69. Pound's edits to Eliot's work were done in January 1922, and Pound left for a vacation in Italy on 27 March of the same year. During this time Pound visited many locations that would figure into the Malatesta Cantos, and after his return to Paris in July he spent five months of focused research on Sigismondo.

The first alteration Pound makes to the line is to substitute the pronoun *you* for Eliot's *I*. Pound's pronoun is without any referent, and thus may refer as easily to any one, or all, of three figures:

1) T.S. Eliot, the author of the text alluded to. The first appearance of the line (in a slightly different form) in the archival papers for the Malatesta Cantos is in what is most likely the first completed draft of the single Malatesta canto Pound had at that stage planned to write, and the only draft that is explicitly dedicated to "T.S.E."[6]
2) Sigismondo Malatesta, the "factive personality"[7] at the center of cantos 8-11. In the first three lines of the draft dedicated to Eliot, the altered line from *The Waste Land* is immediately followed, in the same phrase, by mention of Sigismondo, to whom a second occurrence of the verb "shelved" is ascribed. The "fragments," therefore, are the architectural materials Malatesta had gathered.

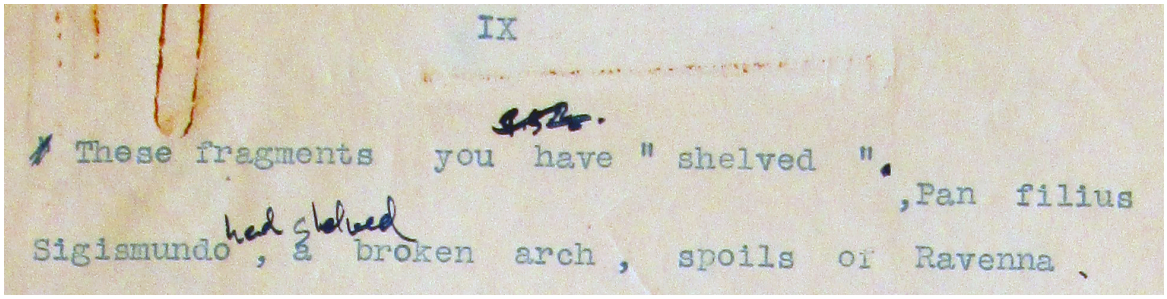


Figure 1.2: Excerpt from a typescript for an early draft of Canto IX (=VIII). EPP Box 70 f. 3149.

3) Ezra Pound himself, who as the author of the cantos has gathered, or shored, from a variety of archives and sources the numerous textual and bibliographic fragments, out of which the presentation of Malatesta and his deeds is fashioned throughout the four cantos. According to this interpretation—in the original, typed wording of the early lines reproduced above—the figure Sigismondo, the arch, and the "spoils of Ravenna" are all historical fragments collected in Pound's archival research.

[6] EPP Box 70 f. 3149.
[7] Pound, *GK*, 194.

The appropriated and emended line moves beyond a simple nod from one poet to another. By allowing all three figures to coexist through the single pronoun, Pound creates an intertextual network, for each figure may in fact be represented within that relationship by a corresponding text. For T.S. Eliot the text is, of course, *The Waste Land*—another long poem in multiple parts, whose own intertextual weave of historical, classical, and popular works spanning centuries and genres is one of its defining and most influential characteristics. It is certainly not by chance that Pound, as a major editor of that text, sets it in relation to his Malatesta Cantos, as they are also a work highly invested in the incorporation of history through the modernist aesthetic of quotation and appropriation. With regard to Sigismondo, while it becomes clear as Pound's work is read that his story is reconstructed using a number of primary and secondary sources, the first text from Malatesta is his letter to the Medici, which immediately followed the current opening line of Canto VIII in all of the later drafts prior to the publication of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, when three new lines were inserted.

The second alteration is Eliot's verb "shored" replaced by Pound's "shelved," an edit that adds to the concept of the textual representation of the three figures present. Each is found within books to be shelved and un-shelved. The first line will certainly recall *The Waste Land* for readers familiar with that text, and Pound's handwritten addition of "had shelved" in the second line effectively repeats the implication of books, libraries, and archives. An examination of Pound's manuscript and typescript drafts suggests, however, that the function of this opening line in announcing the sequence's textual and intertextual basis was not entirely apparent from the outset. While that structural basis is present, however subtly, the line as written here is much more centered on establishing the fragmentary and disassembled state from which these cantos begin, as well as the act of reconstruction such a state requires. "Fragments" is echoed and re-emphasized in "broken," and together with the implied partiality of "spoils," draws the reader's focus to the necessity of a reorganization of the materials at hand. As written, the opening's primary function is to introduce Pound's project of reassembling the historical fragments of Malatesta's life by linking the architectural to the literary. The association is interdisciplinary, without necessarily being intertextual. The latter element, while still present, only subtly floats beneath the concept of an initial state of fragmentation that remains on the surface. This is also partially due to the absence in this draft of Sigismondo's letter to Giovanni de' Medici, which Pound would later add. Instead, Pound begins with a

cursory account of Sigismondo's genealogy from Mastin Vecchio forward. The absence of a concrete example of specifically *textual* fragmentation again re-centers the opening of this early draft on the nonlinear recounting of Sigismondo's story.

In the subsequent draft, Pound's revisions to the typescript reveal his uncertainty regarding the line adapted from Eliot's poem. His focus on using the line to announce the technique of compositional fragmentation, without the emphasis on that structure's intertextuality, is demonstrated in the much more paratactic organization in the opening lines of this draft, which jump between different historical episodes. Pound does include excerpts from the Medici letter—with a number of lines separating each fragment—though had not yet added the truncated, spatially fragmented lines found at the start of the final version of Canto VIII. While it seems, then, that Pound was moving towards a more textually focused beginning, he cancelled the opening line entirely—this draft reads, "~~These fragments you have shelved? / and Malatesta?~~"[8]—eliminating the dialogue between *The Waste Land* and *The Cantos*. At the bottom of the second page of the draft, Pound handwrote, "then fragments?" (referring to those that immediately followed the deleted first line). His concern at this stage was simply how to effectively rearrange the history of Sigismondo, whereas structural choices later would take into account the implications of textual juxtaposition as part of a documentary poetics.

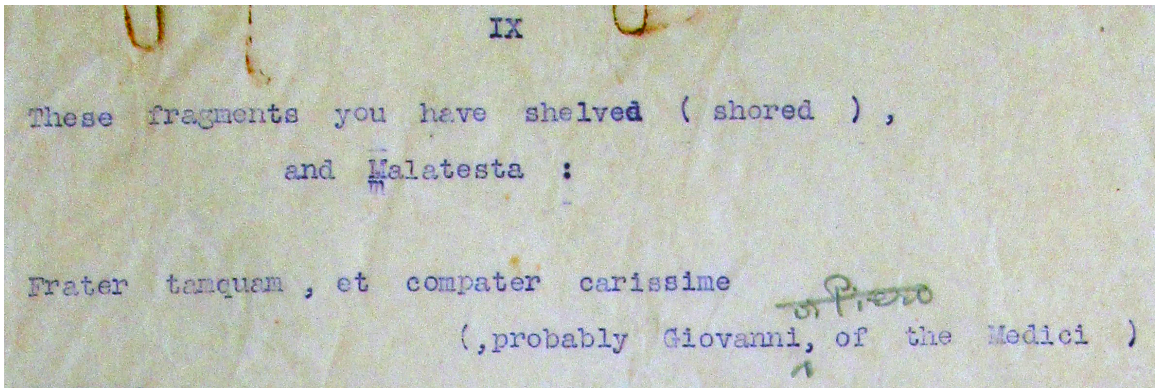
The same indecision carries over into the following draft, which begins with a much longer extract from the Medici letter. After these initial eleven lines, Pound, clearly unsure of where to place his adaptation of Eliot, writes "~~These~~ fragments?" The cancellation indicates that Pound, as in the previous draft, again decided, though with obvious hesitation, to abstain from foregrounding the textuality of the fragments via the reference to *The Waste Land*, and instead maintain only the actual passages themselves. Nonetheless, the insertion of the reference, however temporary, attests to Pound's attachment to its inclusion in the poem. Its importance to the sequence as a whole can be glimpsed in its continual resurfacing in these early drafts; an importance confirmed when Pound, having modified the phrase, eventually settled on its ultimate position as the first line in the Malatesta Cantos.

Pound's initial incorporation and reading of the sequence's opening line as predominately functioning to establish the context of fragmentation certainly does not

[8] EPP Box 70 f. 3150.

disappear in later drafts, nor is it necessarily subordinated to the announcement of the poem's inter/textual basis. Pound does, however, come to realize that the very technique of fragmentation in his compositional process is, in fact, specifically textual, and by the final version arrived at a very compact fusion of the two concepts. The fragments that Pound abstracted from history, in order to create a new work of art that would contain the developments of culture and civilization, are documentary—that is, written/printed material and factual record. The critic Richard Seiburth puts to readers of *The Cantos* the same question it seems Pound once asked himself: "For what, more often than not, are the 'facts' to which the *Cantos* refer but texts in their turn, what is the 'history' that the poem includes but a body of written traces?"[9]

This notion of written *traces* is found two drafts later in Ezra Pound's archival papers, in a typescript of the still single canto that more closely resembles what would later be the final version:


IX

These fragments you have shelved (shored) ,
and Malatesta :

Frater tanquam , et compater carissime
(,probably Giovanni, of the Medici)

Figure 1.3: Excerpt from a typescript of an early draft of Canto IX (=VIII). EPP Box 71 f. 3153.

Here, Pound's second alteration of Eliot's line—the substitution of "shelved"—is no longer contingent on the reader's memory of *The Waste Land*. Having appended Eliot's verb to the end of the line, Pound invites a consideration of the implications regarding the intentionality of editorial manipulation. Error and emendation are brought into dialogue, and the alteration raises the question of whose text—Eliot's or Pound's—is in fact being edited. Pound's revision also significantly shifts the weight of the line. Without "(shored)" the line is more or less evenly constructed, with the

[9] Richard Sieburth, "Dada Pound," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 83 (Winter 1984), 57.

heavy stress on "fragments" at the beginning being counter-balanced by that on "shelved" at the end. The addition, however, leaves the line heavily weighted at the end, an effect that is greatly aided by the double alliteration of /*sh*/ and the past participle suffix /*-ed*/. The focus, therefore, naturally shifts as well: the reader's attention is both acoustically and visually directed to the apposition of "shelved" and "shored."

That apposition has several functions regarding the poems inter/textual nature. First, it invites a direct comparison of the two verbs, and Pound's arrangement of the line imparts his intention that such a comparison not be overlooked. As mentioned earlier, "shelved" evokes an image of books and texts, libraries and archives. Eliot's verb conveys the notion of gathering, but in a more or less haphazard fashion, while Pound's, on the other hand, implies at the very least a sense of order, and at most a precise system of cataloguing and storing, as one would expect to find in an archive. To the poem's idea of textual representation, then, is added that of how such texts are to be structured in relation to one another. As a result, the alteration to Eliot's now un-shelved poem is framed in the context of one's engagement with a text—its reception, interpretation, and appropriation—in relation to others, as reader, author, editor, or textual scholar. The lines between these four roles are, in fact, presented as porous, blurred, or perhaps even nonexistent. Which role, or roles, Pound is understood to assume in this opening line defies any straightforward delineation. In the words of Peter D'Epiro, "The Malatesta Cantos begin with a feigned slip of the pen that purports to mimic a plausible slip of the tongue."[10]

But the deliberate mistake is more than Pound "indulg[ing] in a bit of gratuitous 'emendation,'" as D'Epiro goes on to state. For by including the parenthetical "correction," Pound introduces the voice of the faithful textual scholar (be it Pound himself, or fictional and external) intervening on behalf of the original source texts, whose remarks sporadically appear throughout the four cantos as if a form of inline footnotes. In fact, visually setting off these remarks from the surrounding text by placing them in parentheses brings them closer to the realm of footnotes, in the sense of providing an ancillary piece of information. The same technique appears several times in the lengthy extract from the Medici letter that follows in this draft. The insertion of "(probably Giovanni, of the Medici)" is a line

[10] Peter D'Epiro, *A Touch of Rhetoric* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983) 69.

resulting from Pound's archival research. Having viewed the original document, he corrects Charles Yriarte's presumption that the letter was sent to Lorenzo the Magnificent.[11] Further on "(bisogno dinari)" provides the original Italian for the colloquial translation of "he needs cash."[12]

Finally, the apposition of "shelved" and "shored" serves the more general purpose of communicating the foundation of this sequence of cantos on the consultation and analysis of pre-existing texts and documents.[13] The poems are constructed by piecing together the citations and textual fragments Pound gathered while researching the life of Sigismondo Malatesta. The page is the site where those fragments are arranged in relation to one another, and thus where the dialogue of Pound's documentary poetics is visualized. To be sure, there is plenty of original material composed by the poet himself in these cantos, but Pound's innovation lies principally in his manipulation and arrangement of those materials appropriated from other texts. The first line of the first canto in the series provides the reader with an extremely concise example of the type of material intertextuality that results from those poetic techniques Pound employs. Had Pound maintained Eliot's phrasing exactly, the line would be a standard quotation, the implications of which might go unnoticed. Had he not chosen to draw attention to his manipulation by including the parenthetical citation of the source, the dialogue between the two texts (or more than two considering the plethora of sources each draws upon), would no longer be visually present upon the material page. As it is written, however, Pound demonstrates that

> Quotation depends on a synecdochal and metonymic relation to authorship and authority. It is synecdochal, because one quoted line or even one quoted word can evoke an entire source text, *pars pro toto*.

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[11] Charles Yriarte, *Un Condottiere au XVe siècle: Rimini: Etudes sur les Lettres et les Arts à la cour des Malatesta* (Paris: Jules Rothschild, 1882) 380. In Pound's reading notes—taken prior to his research trip to the Italian archives—is a partial translation of the letter (from Yriarte's transcription) which begins "Lorenzo mio, et frater: send Pier Francesca [...]." EPP Box 70 f. 3140.

[12] EPP Box 71 f. 3153. The correct spelling, as in Yriarte's transcription, is "denari." Pound first misspelled it "danari" in his typescript of Yriarte, and a second time, though differently, in this draft. Pound later made revisions to both examples given here; the former is now Canto 8: 28.11-13; the latter was cut from the text, and replaced by an example of the same nature (8: 28.32).

[13] See Ben D. Kimpel and T.C. Duncan Eaves, "Pound's Research for the Malatesta Cantos," *Paideuma* 11.3 (Winter 1982), 406-19, and Daniel Bornstein, "The Poet as Historian: Researching the Malatesta Cantos," *Paideuma* 10.2 (Fall 1981), 283-91.

> And it is metonymic, because this synecdoche creates an associative relation between the quoted and quoting texts.[14]

It is the construction and arrangement of this *mis*quotation, in its final form, which anticipates the interweaving of texts and their materiality in the continuation of the opening, and in the series as a whole.

TELESCOPING VERSE

The second line of Canto VIII is a jolting shift from the first, linguistically, stylistically, and thematically. Truth and Calliope's quick exchange of insults confronts the reader with a supposed longstanding clash and incompatibility between history and epic poetry. Peter D'Epiro offers a concise summation of the conflict:

> [...] where there is epic in the conventional sense, there is no truth; where there is historical truth, epic sublimity is impossible. Truth thus accuses Epic of being the "Slut" of almost any legendary or historical character: all that is needed is a poet willing to distort, exaggerate, or embellish the facts. Calliope, on the other hand, considers History a "Bitch," for she exposes the vileness and sordidness that often lurk beneath the surface of "heroic deeds."[15]

The issue harks back to the Aristotelian distinction: the historian describes the already occurred, while the poet an imagined future.[16] However, Pound's own definition of an epic as "a poem including history"[17] blurs such a distinction, which may indeed be entirely lost in a textual realization. This has led the scholar George Dekker to describe the Malatesta Cantos as "a peculiar Poundian oleo which is not quite poetry and not quite history—but which pretends to be both."[18] Parsing Pound's text according to generic differentiation in order to determine the mutual influences between his poeticizing history and his historicizing poetry is a subject of considerable complexity, demanding its own dedicated examination. However, the

[14] Patrick Greaney, *Quotational Practices: Repeating the Future in Contemporary Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014) 2.

[15] D'Epiro, 69.

[16] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Ingram Bywater, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random, 1941) 1464. See Michael F. Harper, "Truth and Calliope: Ezra Pound's Malatesta," *PMLA* 96.1 (January 1981), 86-103, which begins with this distinction and Hayden White's statement that "the historian performs an essentially *poetic* act" (86).

[17] Pound, *ABC*, 46.

[18] George Dekker, *Sailing after Knowledge: The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (London: Routledge, 1963) 138.

simple acknowledgement of the problematic notion of reconciling history and poetry, or successfully assimilating one to the other, is significant in and of itself. Truth and Calliope may not be on the same page figuratively, but in the opening of Canto VIII they are, nonetheless, on the same page physically. Occupying the same parallelistic line—in an apposition similar to line one—they indicate to the reader that these cantos engage the compositional processes related to both history and poetry, and depict the tensions such a combinatory approach entails. Concretely, Pound's moving back and forth between the two is realized by means of the juxtaposition of historical and poetic documents and/or passages. The first pages of Canto VIII provide several examples:

1) Line one appropriates a fragment from a poetic text (i.e. *The Waste Land*), and only a few lines later (28.6-10) reproduces a fragment from an historical document (i.e. a letter from Sigismondo to Giovanni de' Medici).
2) After the Medici letter (28-9.6-24), a second historical document—a contract between Sigismondo and the Florentines (29-30.25-10)—is followed by a five-line poetic interlude, and an adapted excerpt from a love poem ostensibly written by Sigismondo to his mistress Isotta (30.16-22).
3) The love poem is itself "interrupted" and juxtaposed with another letter from Sigismondo (30.24-32), this time to Cosimo de' Medici, concerning Malatesta's finances and business as a condottiere.

Just as the two muses' invectives, set side by side on the same line, imply a back-and-forth exchange, so Pound oscillates between the historical and the poetic—the differentiation being intentionally frustrated—in placing one adjacent to the other on the same page. Whether in the realm of historiography or poetic composition, the roles/voices Pound assumes in the Malatesta Cantos—author, reader, scholar, historian, or archivist—all deal with textual artifacts. Pound's process of extraction and paratactic reconstruction that integrates those documents together into a new page hinges on a conception of them in their materiality. Their status as history or poetry may be abstract, but this fluidity of the degree to which these materials are considered fiction is grounded in the fact that they remain concretely *written* traces.

Additionally, the mention of Truth and Calliope inevitably recalls the Greek epics, which traditionally begin by invoking the muses. Peter D'Epiro interprets this

as an aspect of what he designates as Pound's "deflated epic style," a type of parody of the epic mode.[19] Analyzing the Malatesta Cantos in comparison to the tradition of epic poetry, D'Epiro observes that the "tetradic organization" of the four-canto structure of the sequence

> calls to mind the short epic (the epic 'deflated' in size), sometimes consisting of four books, as do the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, Milton's *Paradise Regained*, and, perhaps most appropriately, *The Dunciad*. At the opposite pole, that of the individual line of verse, we notice that Pound's lines are often lengthy and prosaic, suggesting a parodic relationship to the swelling hexameters of classical epic [...].[20]

The second line of Canto VIII evokes the epic tradition by mimicking the classical structure, inviting the entirety of the Malatesta sequence to be viewed side by side with the great epics that preceded it. Furthermore, the aspects of parallel, or parodied, structure that D'Epiro points out in this passage are of a specifically textual nature: the division of pages into separate books or cantos, and the visible length of lines as they are printed on the page. Similar to the way line one responded to *The Waste Land*, and thus set the Malatesta Cantos in relation to that text, line two does the same with regard to certain masterworks of epic poetry.

For readers of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, or of the first section in the current New Directions volume containing the entire project, this aspect of the line's intertextuality will also relate the sequence on Malatesta to the seven cantos that precede it. Indeed, the primary source for Canto I is a Latin version of Homer's *Odyssey* by the scholar Andreas Divus, and the poem also makes reference to the *Second Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, and to Dante's *Divina Commedia*. Canto II also refers to Homer and the story of Helen of Troy, in addition to the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Use of classical mythology continues in Cantos III-VII, wherein also figure the poetry of Sappho and the troubadours. By recalling the epic tradition, therefore, the intertextual dialogue in these two short lines of the Malatesta Cantos reaches from classical Greek texts to the modernist poetry of the 20th century. Pound immediately sends, or at least points, his readers from one text to another, and from one material document to the next. In setting the first eleven cantos

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[19] D'Epiro 66. This designation is defined as a "technique [that] treats of potentially epic actions in the low style" using "irony, humor, and bathos, thereby creating the sense of a controlled confusion out of which emerges the dauntless figure of Malatesta" (63).

[20] D'Epiro, 68.

in relation to one another through this backward glance, Pound includes in that group of documents his own ongoing poetic text.

This type of *intra*textuality becomes even more apparent in line four of Canto VIII: "*That* Alessandro was negroid." The phrase refers back to the last six lines of Canto VII:

> O Alessandro, chief and thrice warned, watcher,
> Eternal watcher of things,
> Of things, of men, of passions.
> Eyes floating in dry, dark air,
> E biondo, with glass-grey iris, with an even side-full of hair
> The stiff, still features.
>
> (7: 27.26-31)

The Alessandro in question is Alessandro de' Medici, and much like the corrective gesture of lines 11-13 in Canto VIII vis-à-vis Yriarte, line four purports to clarify a bit of historical ambiguity. Pound, in other words, is re-reading himself, and revising the history of his own work.

As this line is also one of those not found in Pound's manuscript or typescript drafts, its late addition to the poem for *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* demonstrates Pound's awareness of the materiality of his own soon-to-be-published codex, and his attention to how its intertextual structure would function as much internally, within that materiality, as externally, with its source texts. Furthermore, it may have been true that prior to the publication of the Malatesta Cantos in a volume that placed them at the structural center, Pound deemed it necessary to tie Canto VIII to Canto VII, much like Canto XII opens with a passage (originally a part of the Malatesta drafts) that looks back to Canto XI (50.21-2). Given the compositional influence of the Malatesta series on the techniques of later cantos, its structural influence on those written before them—for example, the former Canto VIII was slightly revised and shifted to the present Canto II—and the sequence's stylistic and tonal departure from the elegiac mode, it is understandable that Pound saw a need for a sense of continuity.

Similar intratextual moments are repeatedly found across all four of the Malatesta Cantos, and in particular, the start of each new poem refers the reader back to the end of the previous one (see figure 1.4). The result of this technique is the sequence's cyclical progress: the story of Sigismondo moves forward while the pages of the poems consistently provide the reader with textual cues sending him/her back within the text. Just as Pound appropriates and manipulates archival documents to

construct his poems, so also does he recycle the very poems themselves. His own lines of verse, drawn out of the research notes taken from his source texts, are fragmented, adapted, or copied and pasted in a new position. This type of textual recycling makes the cantos themselves a part of Pound's documentary poetics, and in so doing, Pound re-emphasizes the materiality of all text and language. The materiality of historical and/or archival documents—in light of the often novel or antiquated characteristics of the materials themselves—may, indeed, more readily lend themselves to appropriation than contemporary texts. However, by incorporating his own work into the collaged construction of the pages of the Malatesta Cantos, Pound reminds his readers that, as all historical texts were once contemporary, all contemporary texts are in a sense historical. Visually arranged on the surface of the same material page, texts of various types enter into a dialogue whereby temporal and generic distinctions are confused.

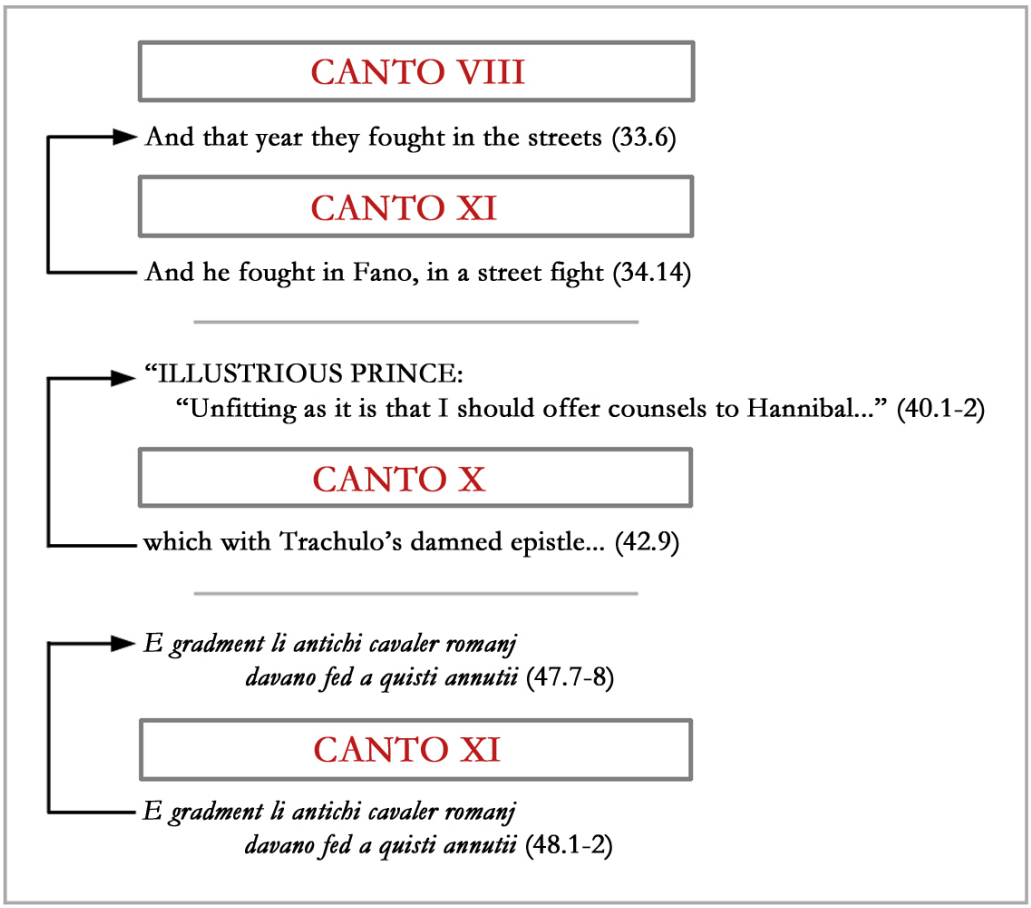

Figure 1.4: The retrospective structure between the beginnings and endings of the Malatesta Cantos.

Pound's frequent inclusion of the original language of the archival documents, primarily Italian and Latin, adjacent to the English translation is another aspect of the poet's compositional technique that repeatedly directs the reader to the textual origins of the series. These scholarly translator notes—often distinguished from the surrounding text by the use of parentheses and/or italics—invite the reader to participate, to a certain extent, in the same textual research that Pound himself conducted; in particular, the consultation of archival documents. As a result, the reader is continually reminded of the documentary process at the core of the sequence's creation, what that process entails (at least in part), and what are the dominant concerns according to Pound. There are, of course, many functions of these translator notes on the linguistic level, but the function germane to the current discussion regards the manner in which the notes bring into focus the materiality of the written word. While there exists a great number of notes of this kind throughout the four cantos, a small number of specific examples spanning the entire sequence suffice to demonstrate this particular compositional strategy, the variety of ways it is employed, as well as the consistency with which it is utilized.

The first of Sigismondo's letters, at the beginning of Canto VIII, provides two parenthetical notes with the original Italian of the Renaissance-era document. At both of these moments in the text, the act of translation—underscored by the original and target languages sharing the same page—refers the reader to the physical documents to which it applies. The first of these reads as follows:

> And it wd. be merely work chucked away
> *(buttato via*) (8: 28.31-32)

With a strict regard for translation alone, the appended Italian does serve the purpose, as Michael Harper claims, of allowing the reader to "see that Malatesta really did say something like 'chucked away.'"[21] Lawrence Rainey develops the idea further: "Here the evocation of a colloquial idiom serves to foreground the departure from philological decorum. Still, in itself the gesture is insufficient, liable to be dismissed as a matter of mere taste: therefore Pound explicitly cites the original Italian as his

[21] Harper, 93.

justification."[22] Apart from this function, however, the evolution of this line in Pound's reading notes, manuscripts, and drafts provides an insight into a fundamental purpose for the inclusion of the Italian phrase: a textual correction resulting from Pound's archival research. This citation of the original document effectively acts, in Rainey's words (quoting Pound), as "a sign that his quotation *is* based on 'direct study of the texts themselves' rather than 'upon commentaries.'"[23] The focus, again, is returned to the material documents themselves and the poem's inter/textual foundation.

Prior to Pound's departure from Paris to Rapallo on 27 March 1922 for the start of an extended trip throughout Italy, he had relied principally on Charles Yriarte's 1882 book *Un Condottiere au XVe siècle*. Yriarte offered a transcription of Sigismondo's letter to Giovanni de' Medici that constitutes the majority of the opening to Canto VIII. In Pound's papers concerning the Malatesta Cantos at the Beinecke library is a typescript of the letter in its entirety copied from Yriarte's book. Thus, both texts include the following phrase, which would become lines 27-32: "Del Maestro di pentore ; perche per ancora le Capelle sono piu fresche non saria da dipengerle per lo presente, *perche seria un opera gettata via* [...]."[24] It was not until Pound's research in the Archivio di stato di Firenze[25]—the repository for the public records and archives of the city of Florence—that, having consulted the original document, he would discover Yriarte's error in transcribing "gettata via" instead of "buttato via," the note for which is found in Pound's papers.[26]

Pound's find is also reflected in his drafts of the poem: in an early draft of Canto VIII, the line was first written "it wd be work thrown away," revised by hand and maintained in a subsequent typescript as "And it wd. be mere work thrown away."[27] The translator/researcher's note with the original Italian is absent in these drafts, and having sent the co-editor/publisher of *The Dial*, James Sibley Watson, the

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[22] Lawrence Rainey, *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 68-69.

[23] Rainey, *Monument*, 69. The quotations from Pound are from the "Praefatio Ad Lectorem Electum" in *The Spirit of Romance* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1910) viii.

[24] EPP Box 70 f. 3151. In Yriarte the passage is found on page 381, emphasis added.

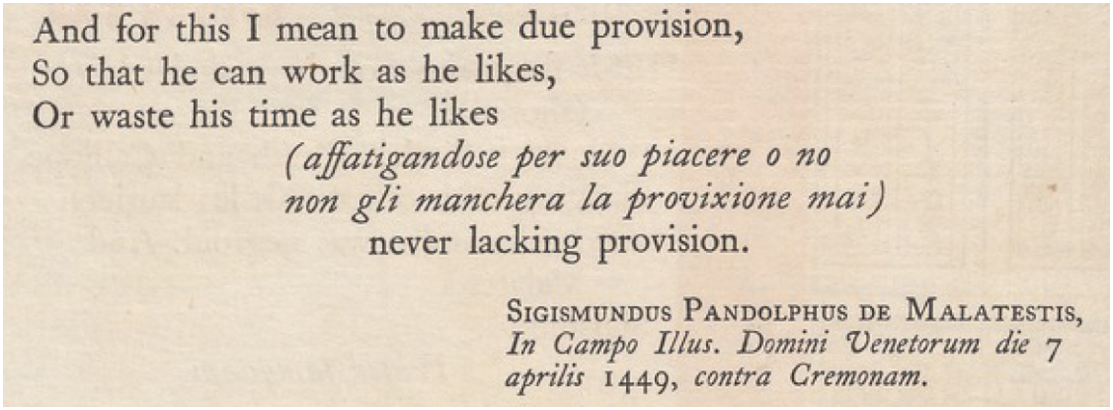
[25] D'Epiro cites a letter from Pound to his mother, dated 2 March 1923, informing her of his arrival in Florence and intention to conduct to research in the Florentine Archives (4). In *Monument of Culture* Rainey also states that Pound's registration at the archive on 2 March 1923 has been conserved. For details of Pound's travels in Italy see page 305 in D'Epiro, and pages 234-42 in Rainey.

[26] EPP Box 70 f. 3140.

[27] EPP Box 71 f. 3153 and f. 3155, respectively.

completed draft of the four Malatesta Cantos (i.e. the Watson typescript), it is clear that at this stage Pound was content with the line. However, that same day (5 January 1923) Pound returned to Rapallo and began a tour of a number of Italian libraries and archives, including the one in Florence. After this phase of research, the canto was revised, and the latest typescript includes the final version of the line; that is, with the English translation "chucked away" and the Italian "(buttato via)."[28] Before having seen the original document and thereby discovering Yriarte's error, Pound evidently did not see a need to include the original phrase. The later revision certainly has a great deal to do with the change to the English translation, but regarding the intertextuality of Pound's poetics, the addition of the Italian serves to document the textual origin of the phrase, and the fact of Pound's examination of it in Florence. In these two words enclosed in parentheses and inserted into the text, the poet/translator/researcher leaves an intertextual trace whereby the Malatesta Cantos lead to Charles Yriarte's 1882 book, and then further back to Sigismondo's original letter of 1449.

The second example from Canto VIII of this type of parenthetical translator's note comes at the end of the same letter:


And for this I mean to make due provision,
So that he can work as he likes,
Or waste his time as he likes
(affatigandose per suo piacere o no
non gli manchera la provixione mai)
never lacking provision.

SIGISMUNDUS PANDOLPHUS DE MALATESTIS,
In Campo Illus. Domini Venetorum die 7
aprilis 1449, *contra Cremonam.*

Figure 1.5: Excerpt from Canto VIII in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (28). In the New Directions edition this passage is printed with an alternate spatial arrangement (8: 29.16-24).

The lines in this example—with only minor changes in wording—first came into the poem at a fairly early stage, when Pound still only planned to write a single canto. The most significant difference in their first appearance is the inclusion of the archival

[28] EPP Box 71 f. 3165. The underlining was Pound's method for indicating the use of italics with his typewriter.

reference in place of the letter's closing (see figure 1.6, upper image). This more explicit indication of Pound's interest in the material traces of the poem was, nevertheless, deleted in the next draft where the textual/archival nature of the lines is instead conveyed by Pound's inclusion of the Italian as a *literal* footnote (see figure 1.6, lower image). While both of these choices certainly bring to the text a definite air of the academic and scientific, they also lend themselves to being perceived as strictly *para*textual. Such an impression stems largely from their spatial arrangement on the page. In the first draft, the archival reference is set far below the Italian phrase (and the letter altogether), surrounded by blank space at the bottom of the page. Based on such spacing it may have seemed to Pound a logical revision to simply opt for the format of a footnote. In the subsequent draft, the sense of the paratextual is even stronger as the Italian phrase is not only placed at the bottom of the page, but is also visually separated from the body of the text, in which it is replaced by the numerical referent, with a horizontal line.

Pound must have realized that though such a spatial arrangement conveys the notion of intertextuality, a more effective way of doing so would be to make the quotation *intra*textual. Thus, in Pound's next draft of the poem, immediately preceding the completed four-canto Watson typescript, he makes a handwritten revision indicating that the two lines of Italian—which he had typed after the entirety of the English translation, but preceding the letter's closing as it exists in the current version—are to be displaced between "or waste his time as he likes" and "never lacking provision." The revision is carried out in the Watson typescript and the placement was never again changed (see figure 1.5).

The phrase in its original language is, therefore, incorporated into Pound's translation, bringing the source document quite literally *into* the text. By fusing the two documents—Pound's poem and Sigismondo's letter—the poet eliminates any subordination of one to the other (as a footnote may suggest, despite the author's intentions). Furthermore, arranged as they are on the surface of the same page, Pound demonstrates that neither is more *artifactual* than the other; both the historical letter and the contemporary poem are to be experienced as visual, material text. The intention is further advanced by following Sigismondo's Italian phrase with a typographic reproduction of the closing of the letter. To quote a text in translation is one form of textual engagement, to provide the language of the original quotation is

another, and to typographically replicate the document from which it was quoted is yet another.

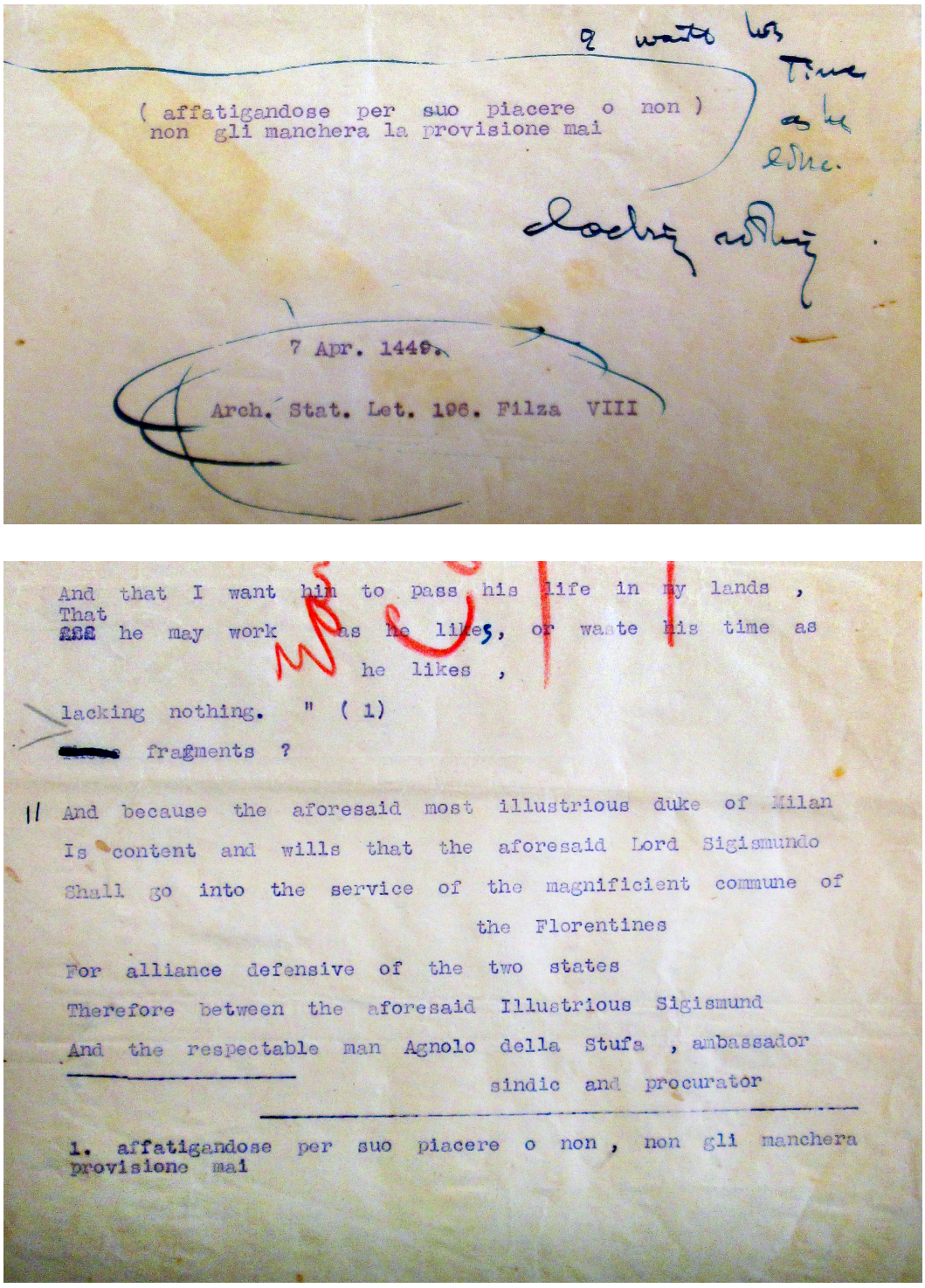


Figure 1.6: Two excerpts from two separate early drafts of Canto VIII. Upper image: EPP Box 70 f. 3150. Four pages later in the same folder Pound typed the full reference, in addition to several others, with an additional note: "FLORENCE / Carteggio Mediceo inanzi il Principato 'Archivo di Stato' / Florence. Lettre 196. Filza VIII / (Sig. to ?? Med. re P. Francesca ??) / date 7 April, 1449." Lower image: EPP Box 70 f. 3152.

Exchanging the document's archival reference with which he first began for a visually accurate printing of a part of that text provides a more immediate experience of the materiality of the original document. While the example of "*(buttato via)*" directed the reader to Malatesta's actual letter via Yriarte, here the reader is allowed to encounter the sound of its language and the look of those words on the page. Pound's attention to the typographic details of the pages of the Malatesta Cantos demonstrates the level of importance he placed on the visual intertextuality of the poems. The fragments of archival documents are neither mere ornament, nor simple gestures at authenticity, but the very materials that compose the work.

Canto IX continues the practice of incorporating fragments of Italian and/or Latin from the source texts as notes to the translation. Very often, though not always, these fragments are presented in the same form as those in Canto VIII (i.e. printed in italics and in parentheses). However, several examples from this canto function in a slightly different manner, placed adjacent to the English translation not as justification per se, but in concert with it in order to complete the meaning.

This type of co-authored meaning is demonstrated in the use of "*rem eorum saluavit*" (35.20), and later with the inclusion of "*(m'l'ha calata)*" (37.5). It may initially seem that providing the original language renders the English redundant, as if mere repetition; however, in both cases the two languages comment on, and clarify each other. The pronoun in the first example—"saved *their* cause"—refers to the Florentines. Pound initially placed the Latin after the English:

> and it "saved the Florentine state"
> (rem eorum saluavit)[29]

In this arrangement the subordinated Latin loses some of its significance and poetic weight in the passage, and in his first revision of these lines Pound marks the typescript with an arrow placing it immediately before the English translation (a change retained for the final version).[30] Consequently, the translation identifies the referent of the preceding pronoun, and turns the Florentines' "cause"—saved by Sigismondo—into a metonymy for the whole state of Florence. Pound's intention to emphasize the import and impact of Malatesta's actions—in contrast to Pius II's

[29] EPP Box 71 f. 3161.
[30] EPP Box 71 f. 3162.

reluctance—is thereby achieved. The complete meaning of the lines, arranged as such, is contingent on the relationship and dialogue between the combined languages.

The same is seen in the second example, where the Italian "m'l'ha calata"[31] explains the ambiguity of the line "This time Mister Feddy has done it" (9: 37.3). Pound's addition of the Italian is not, however, a mere afterthought, having realized the reader would not know what is actually referred to by "done it." The lines were initially written:

> And he said "This time Mister Feddy has done it."
> He said, Broglio, I'm the goat. This time Mister Feddy
> has dropped it, dropped right over me."[32]

Having provided a gloss of the first line, however unclear the verb may still be, there is no need to append Sigismondo's words in Italian to the line. In a later autograph draft, Pound follows "Mister Feddy has done it" with "got the drop. — m'l'ha calata," suggesting an intention to clarify the line, and in the final typescript he inserts the Italian within parentheses in the position where it is currently found.[33] In this example, as in the previous one, Pound's choice of translation alone makes a case for the inclusion of the phrase's original language. But doing so also draws into Pound's cantos external texts: Pius II's *Commentarii rerum memorabilium* and Broglio's *Cronaca universale*. This in turn complicates (1) how the lines function together within the passage by altering subordination and referentiality, (2) what they signify, by introducing layers of meaning from issues (such as translation and textuality) outside the immediate context, and (3) how the lines will be received and interpreted by undercutting the conventional linear reading, and pointing readers to external sources.

The first of these two examples is part of a longer passage in Canto IX, and is preceded by another of Pound's parenthetical, translation notes:

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[31] Literally, "he has dropped it on me"—hence Pound's initial translation in drafts of the poem (see the citation above)—and figuratively, "he has trumped/tricked me." After having been deceived by Federico d'Urbino regarding the recapture of Pesaro from Alessandro Sforza, Sigismondo said to Broglio, "Misser Federico me l'ha pur calata!" A full account of the event can be found in *Modernism: An Anthology*, ed. Lawrence Rainey (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005) 73.

[32] EPP Box 71 f. 3161. In Folder 3162, Pound's handwritten revisions add the missing quotation marks before *Broglio*, and cross out the third line, replacing it with "has done it."

[33] EPP Box 71 f. 3163 and f. 3165, respectively.

and this change-over (*hæc traditio*)
As old bladder said "*rem eorum saluavit*"
Saved the Florentine state; and that, maybe, was something.
(9: 35.19-21)

In *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound*, Carroll Terrell's note to the first line states that "haec traditio" is Medieval Latin for "this treachery" and adds (citing *New Approaches to Ezra Pound*, ed. Eva Hesse) "Pound eliminates the charge of treachery against Sigismundo by translating *traditio* as 'change-over,' as though the word were Latin rather than Medieval Latin."[34] However, John Hamilton and William Vasse, in *Annotated Index to The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, identify the phrase as Latin for "this tradition."[35] Taken together, these two annotations demonstrate the complexity embedded in the Latin phrase. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short's *A New Latin Dictionary* offers two definitions of *traditio*:

1. [literal] a giving up, delivering up, surrender

2. [figurative] A. a teaching, instruction
   B. a saying handed down from former times, a tradition.[36]

The matter is further complicated by the fact that the Latin is not a quotation, as it purports to be, but Pound's own adaptation of a phrase from Pius II's *Commentarii*, which reads "nec dubium quin ea Sigismundi *proditio* rem Florentinam salvaverit."[37] If this original phrase from Pius II is taken into consideration, Terrell's definition is the more accurate of the two, *proditio* being defined as "a discovery, betrayal, treason, treachery."[38] It is also surely more historically accurate: in 1447 Malatesta signed with King Alfonso, who paid him 25,000 ducats to march an army to Milan, only to betray Alfonso six months later and align himself with Florence. Malatesta, however, kept Alfonso's money.[39]

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[34] Carroll F. Terrell, *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 44.

[35] John Hamilton Edwards and William W. Vasse, *Annotated Index to The Cantos of Ezra Pound: Cantos I-LXXXIV* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957) 84.

[36] Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A New Latin Dictionary* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1891) 1883.

[37] Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *I Commentarii*, vol. 1, ed. Luigi Totaro (Milan: Adelphi, 1984) 368, emphasis added.

[38] Lewis and Short, 1455.

[39] The details of this story, along with a full account of Sigismondo's life, are found in D'Epiro, xiii-xxii. The subsequent note in Terrell's work also quotes Pius II's *Commentarii*: "There is no doubt that Sigismondo's treachery saved the Florentine cause."

Nevertheless, the word in the poem is not *proditio*, but *traditio*. In translating the latter term, the etymology of the English word *tradition* adds another layer of complexity: "from Latin *traditio(n-)*, from *tradere* 'deliver, betray,' from *trans-* 'across' + *dare* 'give.'"[40] Pound had first "composed" the Latin phrase in his early handwritten reading notes, where it is written as "(et hoc *traditione* / rem eorum saluavit)."[41] It seems improbable that Pound understood the Latin word to mean *tradition*, failing to realize its primary definition of *capitulation*, and, furthermore, he was likely attentive to its resemblance to the English word, if not entirely aware of the figurative sense of the Latin (given his background in philology). In any case, his choice to adapt the line was not due to an error of transcription, as the original wording of the statement is also found in Pound's reading notes, along with its bibliographic reference "Pio II p. 52."[42]

Therefore, while it may seem from Terrell's gloss of the line that Pound mistranslated *traditio* as "change-over," it is more plausible that his translation was an attempt to fuse the two definitions: a "change-over" as a giving up of, or break from, tradition; in other words, Sigismondo's rejection of the custom of fulfilling a signed contract. The inclusion of the Latin, in addition to reading it as a justification for the translation, simultaneously clarifies and complicates the English. Terrell is correct that Pound's choice of words conceals the dishonesty of Sigismondo's act, and had Pound not included the Latin his translation could justifiably be seen as a calculated "error." However, based on Pound's manuscript notes and typescript drafts, the intention for such manipulation or concealment is nowhere to be found. Despite noting the Latin phrase early on, no form of it appears in any drafts of the poem until a late stage of the composition. In a group of carbon copies with revisions to the Watson typescript, Pound first adds only "rem eorum saluavit," thus foregoing the translation issue of the other Latin phrase. When Pound does insert the English phrase "And the change-over," in the final set of revisions, it is also accompanied by the Latin "(hoc traditio)," allowing the reader to interpret his translation.[43] The presentation of these lines as quotation, not adaptation or paraphrase, visibly signals the source text, to which the reader is thereby directed. By including the (adapted)

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[40] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Third Edition, eds. Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[41] EPP Box 70 f. 3139, emphasis added.

[42] EPP Box 70 f. 3142.

[43] EPP Box 71 f. 3161 and f. 3165, respectively.

Latin, the two texts now forming the passage—Pound's canto and Pius II's *Commentarii*—work in combination to offer the more complete meaning Pound wishes to impart to his readers.

It is, furthermore, a meaning that moves beyond an explanation of the turn of events surrounding Malatesta, Alfonso, and the Florentines. Once the major developments of the incident and the nuances of the Latin are known, Pound's translation can be understood as casting a certain doubt upon Pius II. In Canto X, Pius II's Machiavellian words (as they are presented by Pound) concerning Sigismondo constitute a significant portion of the poem; but already here in Canto IX, when Pius II first explicitly enters the poem,[44] his ostensible choice of *traditio* is called into question by the apposition of Pound's "change-over." True, readers may, in fact, do the inverse and question the accuracy and implicit meaning of Pound's choice of words, especially upon discovering that Pound has falsified the record. The poem itself, though, effectively introduces "old bladder" (Pius II) as a dubious character who, nonetheless, plays a significant role in the Malatesta saga, and equally in the Malatesta Cantos by means of his historical text *Commentarii*.

This sense of doubt surrounding Pius II returns in Canto X, when Pound again combines two languages, setting the suspicious tone of the narrator's English phrasing next to the grandiloquent Latin:

> I mean after Pio had said, or at least Pio says that he
> Said that this elegant oratory "*Orationem*
> *Elegantissimam et ornatissimam*
> *Audivimus venerabilis in Xti fratres ac dilectissimi*
> *filii*... (stone in his bladder
> *testibus idoneis*) (10: 45.17-22)[45]

While in the aforementioned example Pound had purposely manipulated the passage from *Commentarii*, this quotation from Pius II's papal bull, *Discipula veritatis*, is framed in doubt and fabrication. Pound confers an air of authenticity on his own text by means of the citation, the veracity of whose source text he undercuts in the same moment. Pound thereby challenges his readers' assumptions concerning the role of archival, historical documentation in the acceptance and establishment of truth, and

[44] The presence of Pius II (Enea Silvio Piccolomini) is implied in Canto VIII: "With the church against him" (32.1), and "*templum aedificavit*" (32.16), which is taken from *Commentarii*.

[45] Terrell provides the following translation: "We have heard a most elegant and highly ornate speech of our reverend brother in Christ and most beloved son" and "with fit witnesses." (53).

invites them to consider (or reconsider) the thought processes that underlie the reception of a text, and influence the engagement with it. These lines are, in fact, quoting Pius's self-quotation: *Discipula veritatis* (1462) allegedly reproduces the author's own words spoken after Andrea del Benzi's oration in 1461:

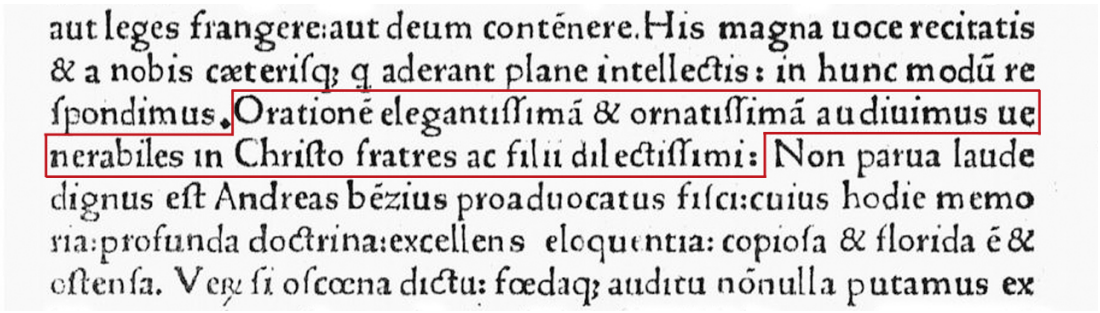
aut leges frangere:aut deum contẽnere.His magna uoce recitatis
& a nobis cæteriſq; q aderant plane intellectis: in hunc modũ re
ſpondimus.Orationẽ elegantiſſimã & ornatiſſimã audiuimus ue
nerabiles in Chriſto fratres ac filii dilectiſſimi: Non parua laude
dignus eſt Andreas bẽzius proaduocatus fiſci:cuius hodie memo
ria:profunda doctrina:excellens eloquentia: copioſa & florida ẽ &
oſtenſa. Verũ ſi oſcœna dictu: fœdaq; auditu nõnulla putamus ex

Figure 1.7: Excerpt from Pope Pius II's papal bull, *Discipula veritatis*, as part of the sixth epistola, "Contra Sigismundum Malatestam," with Pound's quotation encircled. *Epistolae* (Milan: Antonius Zarothus, 1487) n.p.

To which act of citation, and to which text, Pound asks, should the benefit of objectivity be given? In other words, if all texts were at some point contemporary, should not the same requirement for examination and substantiation, without a prior assumption of facticity, be applied to historical sources as much as they are to contemporary works?

In this example from the Malatesta Cantos, Pound's poem is intertextual not just for being in dialogue with another extant text, but also with the very concept of a written document. Here the framing of a citation acts as a form of commentary on the notion of documentary poetics. For, as Pound's lines implies, by the physical acts of writing and printing the record *can* be falsified, and text *can* be manipulated, allowing someone (like Pius II in the context of the poem) to "[say] that he / Said," even if in reality such an act may have never occurred. It is just such a moment in the Malatesta Cantos that illustrates, paradoxically, both Marjorie Perloff's claim that "fact [...] is repeatedly turned into fiction," and Lawrence Rainey's counter-argument that the sequence proposes "a space where fiction will be repeatedly transformed into fact."[46] Indeed, it is precisely the difficulty of determining which process is occurring when interpreting the intertextuality of quotation that the passage highlights. Pound again

[46] Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1983) 183. Rainey, *Monument*, 72.

indicates the poems' repeated gestures to the dynamics of the intertextual, and the emphasis they place on the material text, as—whatever the reader's initial interpretation of this passage—the only course of action in order to debunk the narrator's doubt, or validate the purported textual proof, is to consult the relevant original documents. Pound's quotation of an historical text in this excerpt from Canto X is, as Rainey later writes about discourse, "Janus-faced: it looks backwards and forwards, soliciting the past in order to imagine the future."[47] With regard to materiality, the signification of the passage is borne out of the intertextual relationship that looks back from Pound's canto to the fact of Pius II's printed works—that is, *Commentarii* and *Epistolae*—and the context surrounding their composition, and also forward from that canto to the fiction of an imagined future where textual reception will be re-read in light of such issues.

SHADOWING REVISION

Through Canto XI to the end of the sequence, Pound continues the technique of foregrounding the materiality of language via intertextuality, and, more specific to this discussion, the material text and the physical act of writing and/or printing. In one of the final passages of the sequence (11: 51.9-15), the poet again follows an English translation with a snatch of the Latin from the original text; but where this example differs from previous instances is the more overt emphasis that is placed on the material page. The importance of the language being written down *on paper* is evident from the first formulation of these lines in a draft of this canto in the later stages of composition:

> 64 lances in his company, and his pay 8000 a year,
> and and paper saying he was not to try to get any more
> men.
> And he had the gold rose one week, and a bum deal from
> Paulo (Formusus) the next week.[48]

In this initial version of the passage, the action of curtailing Sigismondo's annual payment and severely limiting the number of soldiers in his company is assigned to

[47] Rainey, *Monument*, 72.
[48] EPP Box 71 f. 3161.

the *paper*, and only indirectly to Pope Paul II (Paulo) once the reader—of his/her own accord—attributes his "bum deal" to the written agreement. Although the formulation of the first three lines was revised in the next draft to that found in the final version, the wording in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (and in the later New Directions edition) makes no mention of Paul II in the same block of text. However, the paper—though the action is no longer directly attributed to it (i.e. "paper *saying*")—remains a symbolic actor in the scenario:

> And he with his luck gone out of him
> 64 lances in his company, and his pay 8000 a year,
> 64 and no more, and he not to try get any more,
> and all of it down on paper, but leave to keep 'em
> in Rimini,
> I.e. to watch the Venetians[49]

The significance of the material page, the physical document whereby the agreement drawn up by Paul II is authorized and enacted, seems to have prompted Pound to "reproduce" a part of it by inserting some of the original Latin words immediately after the mention of marked paper in a subsequent draft: "*sexaginta quatuor nec tentatur habere plures*" (11: 51.13).[50] Pound is not content to merely refer to the materiality of the source text by calling the reader's attention to its inked pages, but instead offers the reader the possibility to *see* the language of it.

A more explicit example of this technique is found in both the closing lines to Canto X, and the opening lines to Canto XI. Awaiting a battle with the papal forces in 1461, Sigismondo prepares to address his troops:

> And they came at us with their ecclesiastical legates
> Until the eagle lit on his tent pole.
> And he said: The Romans would have called that an augury
> *E gradment li antichi cavaler romanj*
> *davano fed a quisti annutii*,
> All I want you to do is to follow the orders,
> They've got a bigger army,
> but there are more men in this camp. (10: 47.4-11)

The first two lines of Canto XI repeat the Italian phrase, which may be translated into English as "Greatly the ancient and valiant Romans placed great faith in these

[49] EPP Box 71 f. 3163.
[50] EPP Box 71 f. 3165.

annunciations."[51] Following Rainey's analysis of this passage, in addition to the use of the article *li* instead of the current *gli*, "five words out of eleven [are] written in a manner discrepant with practice both older and modern": *quisti* and *cavaler* (in place of the more common *questi* and *cavalieri*), and *grādment*, *fed*, and *annutii*. The source for the lines is the 15th-century manuscript *Cronaca universale* by Gaspare Broglio Tartaglia da Lavello. Neither published nor quoted in secondary sources in 1923, Pound could only have consulted the original text in Rimini.[52]

A complete transcription of the passage would read "Grandemente li antichi e valenti romani davano fed[e] a questi annuntii chiamati augurii."[53] According to Rainey, Pound's "lack of palaeographical training meant that he couldn't recognise a device called fusion, by which writers of the period would fuse or meld together the strokes of adjacent letters with commensurate shapes in order to save both space and time." Furthermore, the horizontal line above the /*a*/ in *grādment* signaled a contraction, in this case of the /*n*/.[54] The significance of Pound's transcription is not, therefore, in its paleographical accuracy, but rather in its documentary accuracy. What the reader encounters in these instances in the Malatesta Cantos is as direct an experience of examining the original document as possible, given the unavailability of facsimile. While it may appear that Pound unwittingly copied Broglio's words, overlooking the diacritical marks, a page from his reading notes demonstrates the care Pound took to reproduce the document as accurately as he could (see figure 1.8). Pound's willingness and determination to arrive at an exact material transcription of the document, despite the evident difficulties of the manuscript, is apparent, going so far as to include (in typescripts and in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*) the macron over the /*a*/.[55] The passage's final form—maintaining the contractions and elided letters—is less an experience of the original Renaissance language, as such written conventions would not be reproduced orally, than it is one of the visual materiality of the text itself.

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[51] Rainey, *Modernism*, 85.

[52] Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998) 121-22.

[53] Terrell, 55. The full quotation as it appears in Terrell's work also elides the final /*e*/ of *fede*, which Rainey identifies as a mistake in transcription (see note 51).

[54] Lawrence Rainey, "Pound or Eliot: whose era?" *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry*, eds. Alex Davis and Lee M. Jenkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 104.

[55] The relevant typescripts are found in EPP Box 71 f. 3164 and f. 3165.

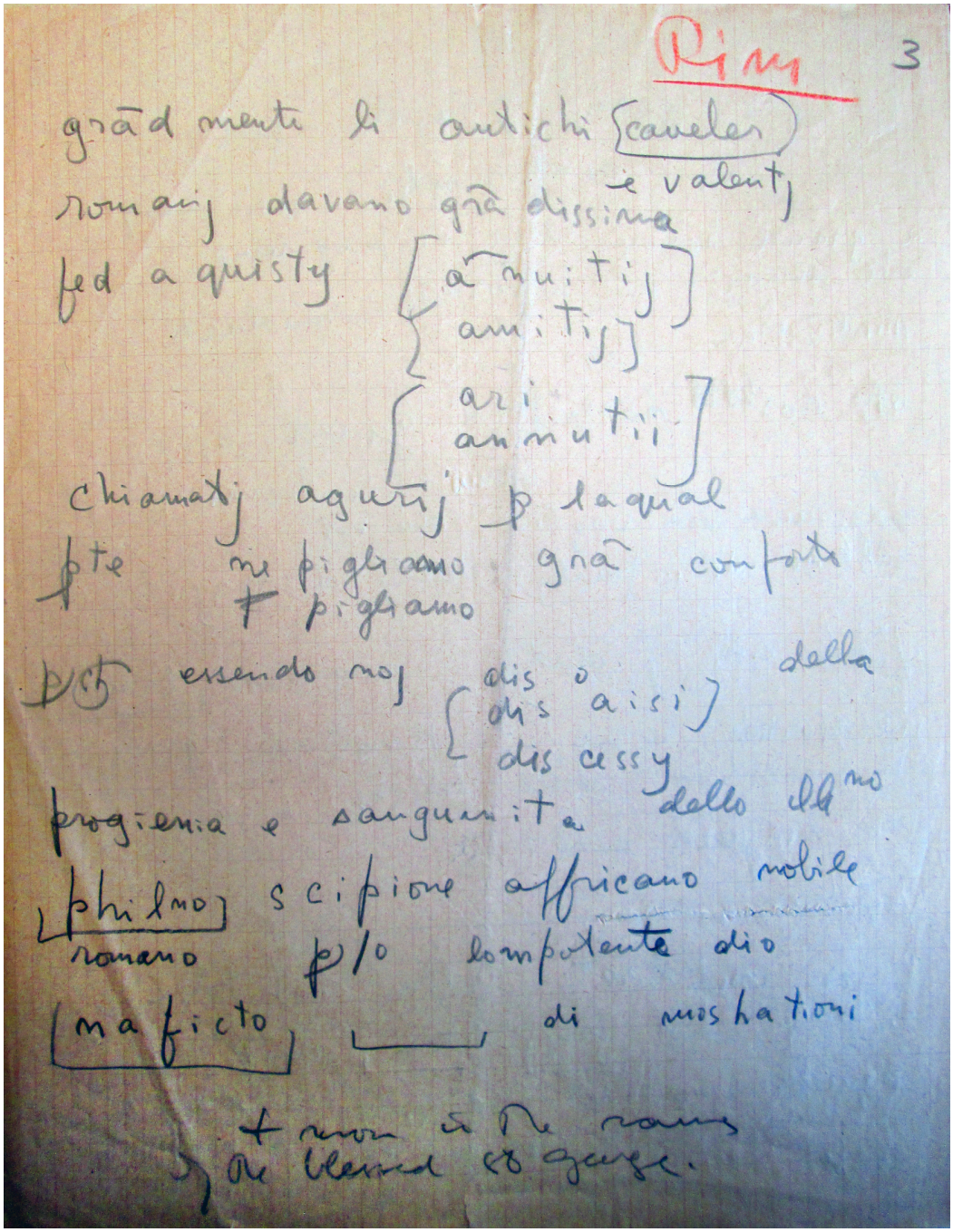

Figure 1.8: A page from Pound's reading notes for the Malatesta Cantos. EPP Box 70 f. 3141.

The thematic flashback that occurs by the repetition of these two lines to open Canto XI, also repeats the act of material reproduction. Coming in quick succession, the recopying of the copy imparts an even stronger sense of the materiality involved in such a technique. The passage is reprinted exactly, duplicated as any other manufactured item might be. But beyond this, the repetition also adds a step in the intertextual process being enacted, for the first two lines of Canto XI are more

immediately in dialogue with the closing to Canto X than to *Cronaca universale*. The material documentation the reader encounters thus sends him/her, first, backward in time within the text being read, and then further back outside *The Cantos* to Broglio's writing. By doing so, Pound momentarily holds the reader at a remove from the content of his text in order that its compositional elements and techniques may be highlighted and viewed in relation to those of other texts. As in other similar moments in the sequence, this repetition in Canto XI not only tightens the continuity with a preceding canto, but also comments on the documentary materiality of its construction.

Closely related to this intertextual element of materiality in the Malatesta Cantos are the archival and bibliographic references the poems contain. Canto X offers the reader two examples of how Pound uses these academic notes to underscore the intertextual processes at work in the poem. Both first appear mid-way through the composition of the sequence—one in the Watson typescript, and the other in the draft just prior to it—suggesting that while numerous (and consistent) bibliographic notes and references are present in Pound's reading notes from the beginning, their inclusion within the poems came only gradually as the work's inter/textual characteristics became increasingly significant, and more fully grasped by Pound himself. Moreover, like the scholarly interjections regarding translation and contextual information of sources seen regularly throughout all four cantos, these references are also printed in italics. Visually distinguishing them from the surrounding text as annotations, or nearly a kind of marginalia, these interjections act as a visual cue, reminding the reader that the original text—as a material document—is drawn into the poem.[56]

The example first encountered in the final version of the poem (10: 42.24-29), was initially arranged in a slightly different manner, functioning less effectively as a moment of intertextuality:

> Et
> "anno messo a saccho el signor Sigismundo"
> Archivo Storico, 4th
> series t. III.
> Florence

[56] The first publication of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* includes *literal* marginalia, which provide the full names of those referred to in the poem by pronouns and/or alterations of the proper nouns.

"La guerra dei senesi col
conte di Pittigliano

As Filipo Strozzi wrote to Zan. Lottieri, then in Naples
"31 Dec.
I think they'll let him through at Campiglia."[57]

Pound would later revise the passage, flipping the archival reference and the English translation of Strozzi's statement. As both quotations are taken from Strozzi's letter, displacing the reference to follow the two may seem a purely logical revision; however, by rearranging the lines, Pound interweaves the original Italian, his English gloss on the source, the quotation translated into English, and the archival reference. The reader, then, moves back and forth between the contents of the letter and supplementary information about the document, as well as between languages. Furthermore, as the English lines were composed/translated by Pound, the reader also shifts between his voice and that of the archival document. The revised arrangement of the passage, therefore, spatially imparts the interdependence of the constituent parts: first, the Italian (literally, "they've sacked Sigismondo") relates Malatesta's precarious situation that requires him to ask permission from Florence to pass through Campiglia, the answer to which is communicated in the English translation that follows; second, the mention of Strozzi's letter to Lottieri is given further precision through the bibliographic reference identifying the source text and its location.

In addition to directing the reader back to the source text of the passage, the archival information in the note also plays a thematic role. The mention of Luciano Banchi's text "The War of the Sienese Against the Count of Pitigliano" helps clarify—though hardly in a sufficiently explicit manner—that the pronoun in the Italian quotation from Strozzi's letter refers to Siena. After Sigismondo was forced to flee via Campiglia, his being *sacked* by the Sienese pertains to their having raided his abandoned headquarters at the siege of Sorano, whereby (in the immediate context of the poem) the letters in Canto IX were plundered from his mail *sack*. Though piecing together the details of the conflict between the two parties from Pound's poems themselves is nearly impossible, the archival reference, nevertheless, does serve a

[57] EPP Box 71 f. 3155. In this draft of the sequence, this passage occurs as the last lines of (at the time) "Canto XI," following the post-bag letters (the current ending to Canto IX), and an early version of the first 23 lines of Canto X. D'Epiro remarks that this passage comes through the intermediary of Yriarte's work (134 n.9).

purpose beyond the immediately apparent function of identifying the passage's textual origins. Consequently, the intertextual workings of the poem not only relate to its compositional techniques and strategies, but also its thematic development and historical treatment of Sigismondo.

Not much further into Canto X, the reader comes across another bibliographic reference of a different nature. After a thirteen-line passage in Latin quoted from Pius II's writings concerning the public burning in effigy of Sigismondo in Rome in the spring of 1462,[58] Pound includes the following note:

> *Com, Pio II, Liv. VII, p. 85.*
> *Yriarte, p. 288.* (10: 44.9-10)

Differing from the previous archival reference, which identified the source text, and stated where it may be consulted, these two lines instead trace the transmission of the passage from its origin to Canto X. It is telling that Pound chooses to cite both texts, for, despite relying a great deal on Yriarte's study, Pius II's *Commentarii* itself was also a principal source, and thus could have been cited on its own. Conversely, having copied and earmarked the passage for the cantos from Yriarte's transcription, Pound could have just as easily included only Yriarte in the embedded footnote. Instead of either option, Pound makes mention of both possible sources—a decision made from the first appearance of the quotation and reference note, and remaining unchanged in later drafts[59]—effectively identifying this section of the poem as a copy of a copy.

The reader's reception of the quoted passage is quickly complicated by being at once tied to the multiple sources of Pound, Pius II, and Yriarte. Which text, if any, is, or should be, considered reliable? Or, as this excerpt from Canto X seems to propose, is the only reliable aspect the dialogue and interaction that exists between the texts in question? In this instance, then, Pound conflates the idea of "a *poem* including history" with that of a work of historical criticism itself; if, in fact, they both reproduce the same citation from the same historical text, where does the boundary lie between the poetic and the prosaic, the literary and the un-literary? Pound blurs the

[58] Rainey states that a total of *three* effigies were burned in May 1462. *Modernism*, 81. D'Epiro does not provide an exact number, writing only that several effigies were burned "in a few different locations in Rome," but gives the date as 27 April 1462 (xx). Terrell provides only the year 1462, and states that only *two* effigies were burned (52). According to Pound, there was a "pair" of effigies (10: 45.30).

[59] EPP Box 71 f. 3153 contains the first draft where the passage appears; in the Watson typescript (Box 71 f. 3155) only specific changes to the lineation were made.

distinction by integrating both types in the construction of the same page. Occasionally, as in the two aforementioned examples, that page also includes the same critical apparatus as a work of historical scholarship. On the level of visual materiality, poetic and historical documents are confounded in the same physical space, where the reader moves from one to the other in seemingly the same moment. Here, the issue of intertextuality is approached from the vantage of how different types of text function, and function together, in addition to what documents and texts they reference and incorporate.

This kind of intertextual functioning relates to what Lawrence Rainey refers to as "[quotation's] historical transformations, its transmissional dynamics;" or in more general terms, "the routes of reference."[60] For the reader with only the Malatesta Cantos before him/her, there is no way of ultimately determining from which text (Pius II's or Yriarte's) Pound actually quoted the Latin passage. The lines to which the multi-bibliographic reference is attached read as follows:

> SCRIPTURAM
> MULTI LEGERUNT. DEINDE ASTANTE POPULO, IGNE IMMISSO,
> ET PYRA SIMULACRUM REPENTE FLAGRAVIT.
>
> (10: 44.6-8)

Florence A. Gragg offers the following translation: "This writing was read by many. Then, while the populace stood by, fire was applied to the pyre and the image, which at once blazed up."[61] In addition to recounting the details of Sigismondo's effigy being burned, the lines may also be read in light of Pound's choice of bibliographic reference and what it demonstrates. The entire quoted passage, recorded by Pius II, Yriarte, and Pound, has indeed been "read by many." Furthermore, the reader of the Malatesta Cantos is also now connected to what the quotation has transmitted, and may be him/herself a future route of reference. The inclusion in this group of many figures is due to "This *writing* [having been] *read*." With regard to the dynamics of historical transmission as part of those routes, the emphasis here is placed on textuality, and more specifically on the materiality of written documents, which involves the act of writing as well as the act of reading. In this excerpt the written

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[60] Rainey, *Monument*, 60.
[61] Terrell, 52.

documents in question are all three copies: the writing actually read by the populace in Rome in 1462 is reproduced in Pius II's *Commentarii* (1584), itself referenced and recopied in Yriarte's *Un Condottiere au XVe siècle* (1882), which is finally quoted in Pound's Malatesta Cantos (1923).

The latter portion of the Latin quotation reflects this notion of reproduction in that the effigy of Sigismondo is, in fact, a material representation: a *simulacrum*. Furthermore, as Pound indicates shortly thereafter, that simulacrum was itself *re*produced:

> So they burnt our brother in effigy
> A rare magnificent effigy costing 8 florins 48 bol
> (i.e. for the pair, as the first one wasn't a good enough likeness)
>
> (10: 45.28-30)

The original image (i.e. Sigismondo) is copied, and recopied, just as the text of the effigy's inscription is printed and reprinted. In both cases, the difficulty in distinguishing one from another is apparent. Regarding the effigy, the Latin passage states:

> [...] IMAGO SIGISMUNDI COLLOCATUR HOMINIS LINEAMENTA, ET VESTIMENTI MODUM ADEO PROPRIE REDDENS, UT VERA MAGIS PERSONA, QUAM IMAGO VIDERETUR; [...]
>
> ---
>
> [...] an effigy of Sigismundo imitating the [wicked and accursed] man's features and dressed so exactly that *it seemed a real person rather than an image*.[62]

Together these passages detail the effort made to produce as accurate a copy as possible, a reproduction that would bear an uncanny resemblance to the original. However ironic it may be, Pound matches Pius II's endeavors for visual verisimilitude with regard to the text, the Latin of which he typographically renders to imitate the visual style of inscription. He thereby provides the reader with a seemingly accurate,

[62] *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, 38. The New Directions printing does not conserve Pound's specifically defined lineation for these lines (10: 43.31-34). The translation is also Gragg's (Terrell, 52), emphasis added. The definition of *imago* reads, "an imitation, copy (of a thing), an image, likeness [...] a representation." Lewis and Short, 888.

material representation.[63] The dual-bibliographic reference makes of that imitation a single, palimpsestic image. In relation to the text it refers to, the bibliographic note includes the reader in the multiple routes by which the text is materially copied and historically transmitted, at the same time that it generates a degree of inconclusiveness with respect to the functions of those textual copies, and the stability of the boundaries that exist between them.

The intertextuality of the Malatesta Cantos is anchored in textual processes of this sort. Subsumed under the work of the poet-historian, the multiple roles that Pound assumes in composing the cantos are each, in their own manner, invested in the materiality underpinning the often meandering evolution of documents, as they are collected, transformed, and/or restored throughout the development of history. Through a process of editorial appropriation, Pound establishes a dialogue between fragments and languages, which are gathered in such a way as to conflate the contemporaneity of his text with the historicity of its framework. This intertextual network functions, in part, by approximating the experience of the original source texts, or by shifting the reader's focus to the linguistic techniques and scholarly methodologies that mediate such experience. Aiming to achieve an approximation or shift of this kind, Pound's compositional process combines the aforementioned textual particulars with an attention to the spatiality of material documents, which the chapter below addresses. As briefly mentioned with regard to several of the examples discussed above, Pound's use of typographic arrangement plays a significant role in shaping the poem's thematic concerns with language's materiality. The critical reading of Pound's fragmentation of text within the field of the page that follows, examines how spatial arrangement develops the concept of the palimpsest in the Malatesta Cantos.

[63] It may also be noted that Pound's typographic efforts, like the expensive effigies, was coupled with a significant financial investment, the result of which was William Bird's "de looks" edition for Three Mountains Press.

STRUCTURES: RESCRIPTED ANALECTA

"Apparently legible at a glance, [space] is in fact composed of overlaid fragments of language."

— John Frow[1]

Remaining strictly within the Malatesta Cantos themselves, Pound's use of fragments, as mentioned earlier, creates an *intra*textual dynamic throughout the four-poem sequence. In addition to foregrounding the "poem including history" as one constructed of collected fragments, the opening to Canto VIII announces and demonstrates Pound's method of fragmentation. The organization of the textual fragments gathered into the work—being shelved and un-shelved—is not at all the haphazard *shoring* that Pound replaces and relegates to a parenthetical insert in the opening line. This chapter focuses on how the diverse textual interactions within the Malatesta Cantos are, in fact, achieved in large part due to the specific structural techniques organizing those fragments. Just as Pound pays particular attention to the signifying potential of the material nature of his source texts, so too does he use the visual elements of the cantos' pages to construct, reinforce, or reflect the poem's thematic concerns.

The succession of Pound's revisions and displacements of the adapted line from *The Waste Land*, discussed in the previous chapter, conveys the gradual emergence of the line's focus on textuality, and Pound's questioning the effectiveness of its position (if included at all) with regard to the actual fragments that would share the page. In its final form, and as the opening line, the phrase announces the textual and historical fragmentation that will form the basis of the sequence, along with the manipulation and corrective gestures that form a part of the technique. However, Pound obviously struggled with how to best introduce and demonstrate these issues. In his early draft notes, Pound at one point even handwrote vertically alongside a lengthy passage "Give up the attempt at shelving? Or later?"[2] Revised several times,

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[1] John Frow, "Michel de Certeau and the Practice of Representation," *Cultural Studies* 5.1 (1991) 56.

[2] EPP Box 70 f. 3147.

juxtaposed to several different formulations focusing on various aspects of Sigismondo, and shifted from the first line to as far as the sixth page in one draft, the opening line was clearly an essential component to communicating the poetics of the sequence. In particular, as Pound's comment reveals, the organization and structural aspects of the documentary method expressed in the line are crucial to the process of fragmentation.

The snippets of quotations, translations, transcriptions, and historical chronicles are brought together upon the page, where they are positioned so as to serve several functions: first, the visual layout—including, but not limited to, indentation, justification, line breaks, and blank lines—aids in signaling the passages as incorporated fragments; second, the typographic characteristics further punctuate Pound's spatial arrangement of the source texts, and, more importantly, visually represent their materiality. Working in conjunction, both of these qualities facilitate the relations between the individual fragments to be established by the reader's engagement with the text. As a result, the specific historical angles Pound adopts, and aims to impart, find a unique channel of visio-spatial communication.

RECEIVING FRAGMENTS

The difficulty of the "shelving" technique involved not only the general order in which the fragments would be juxtaposed, but also how they would be typographically situated on each page. Perhaps the most striking example of this kind of spatial fragmentation, and the first in the Malatesta Cantos, is the truncated opening to Sigismondo's letter to Giovanni de' Medici. Although the arrangement of these lines—8-12 in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* lines, and 6-10 in the current New Directions publication—was not decided upon until the very last typescript draft, the idea was present very early on. Though in reference to different letters than that from 1449 chosen by Pound for the beginning of Canto VIII, there are four instances in his reading notes where Pound copied down the addressee of the documents (see figure 2.1). All four maintain the fragmented words, which Pound attempted to complete himself, and in two of the four Pound is careful to include the scholarly Latin term "tergo," indicating the physical location of the words on the reverse side.

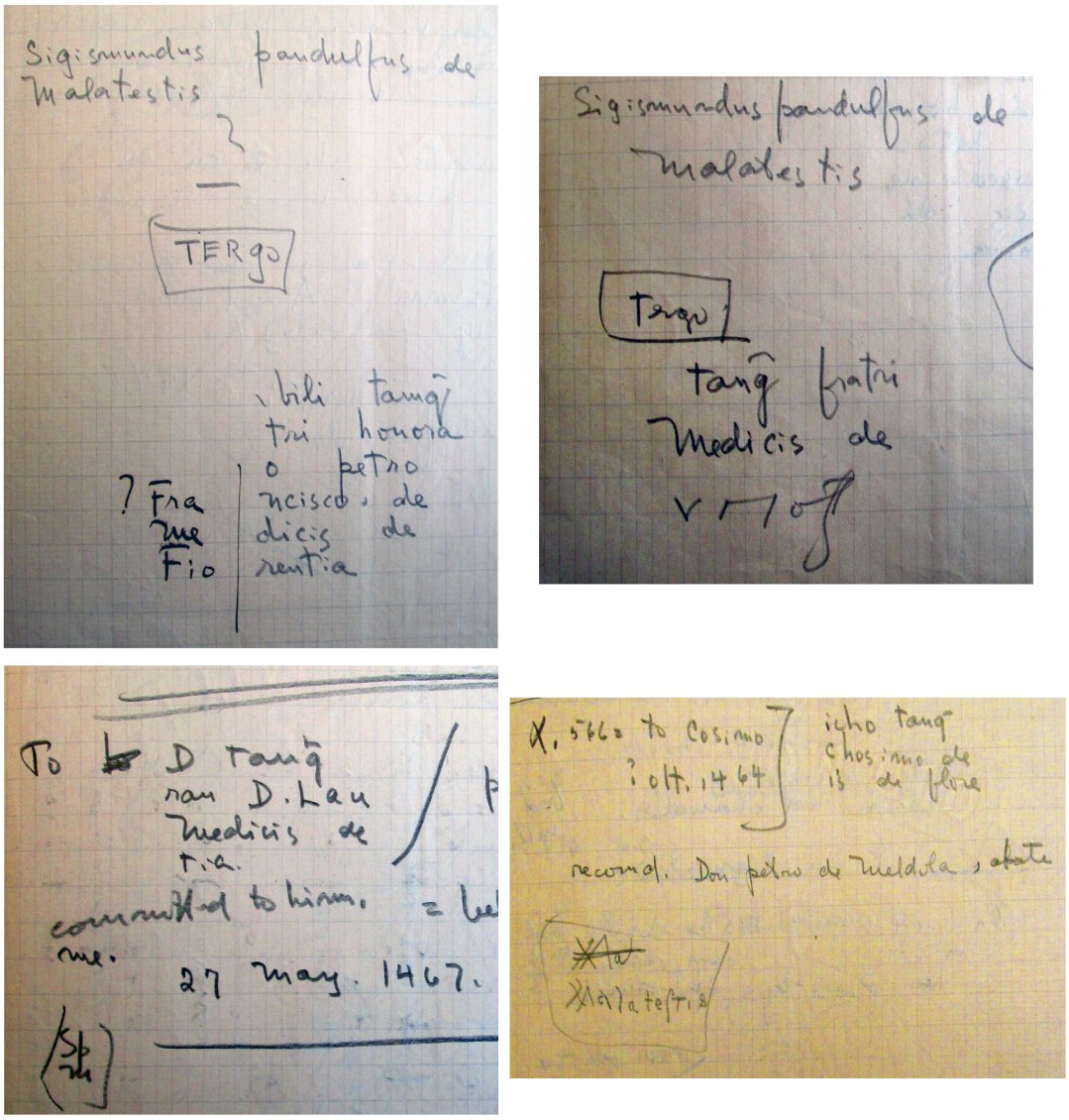

Figure 2.1: Four excerpts from Pound's reading notes for the Malatesta Cantos. EPP Box 70 f. 3140 [upper two images] and f. 3141 [lower two images].

Pound's attention to, and faithful notation of, the material details of the source documents is on clear display in these examples from a very early stage of composition, and it is not surprising that Pound progressively moved to the more spatially accurate arrangement found in the final draft revisions. In the first appearance of the lines, however, the poet was still developing and experimenting with the composition and arrangement of the passage. As a result, the form's expression of material fragmentation is less effective. This is due primarily to the absence of the fragments of Giovanni de' Medici's name. Pound opts instead to include only the greeting from the letter:

These fragments you have shelved (shored),
and Malatesta:

Frater tamquam, et compater carissime
(probably Giovanni, of the Medici)[3]

To be sure, fragmentation is still at work in the two lines. As is the case for the line from *The Waste Land*, Pound again only retains a fragment of the full phrase, which he again further manipulates, here by reversing the order of two words in the original quotation: "Magnifice vir *tanquam frater*, et compater carissime."[4] Additionally, the voice of the historian and researcher is inserted in parentheses, fragmenting the greeting from the letter itself, which follows the interjection. Therefore, in this draft the forms of the two opening couplets mirror one another: opposite to cutting off the end of Eliot's phrase ("against my ruin"), Pound cuts off the beginning of Sigismondo's greeting ("Magnifice vir"); the substitution of "shelved" displaces Eliot's "shored," restored via the scholarly parenthetical comment, and the flattery of Sigismondo's "tanquam frater" is inversed, subtly undermining its sincerity, and again followed by the voice of the scholar.

The association between fragmentation and textuality begins to manifest itself more clearly in the construction and arrangement of these lines, which are key to the opening of the poem. Pound evidently realized their significance and kept them unchanged for the Watson typescript, which he had considered worthy of publication, and eventually for the final version, though with the elimination of "probably," and the addition of three lines between the couplets (8: 28.1-2).

It remains true, nonetheless, that the letter's salutation—altered though it may be—still reads as complete, and short of possessing a detailed knowledge of the original document, the reader is all but sure to interpret (or assume) the line to be an accurate quotation. What is absent from these lines in the early drafts is the visibly perceptible spatial fragmentation, the form of which Pound would work out over a series of revisions to the Watson typescript. The addition of the surviving shreds of the letter's addressee came, of course, after Pound had examined them in Florence,

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[3] EPP Box 71 f. 3153.

[4] Charles Yriarte, *Un Condottiere au XVe siècle: Rimini: Etudes sur les Lettres et les Arts à la cour des Malatesta* (Paris: Jules Rothschild, 1882) 381, emphasis added. Pound's typescript transcription of the letter (via Yriarte) is found in EPP Box 70 f. 3151; later, in March 1923, Pound consulted the original document in the archives in Florence.

and at a stage in the composition when the relationship between fragmentation and materiality had also become more evident.

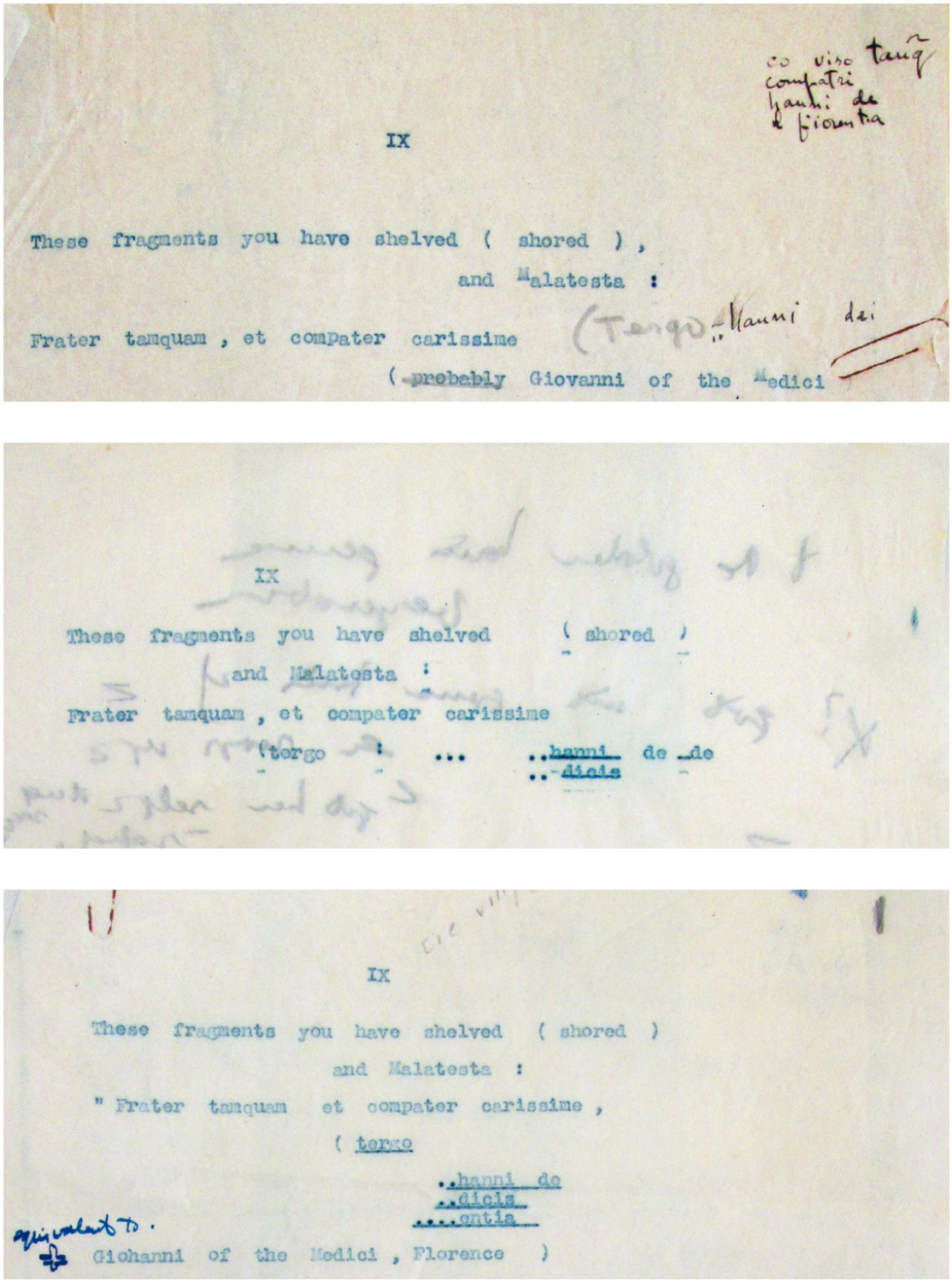
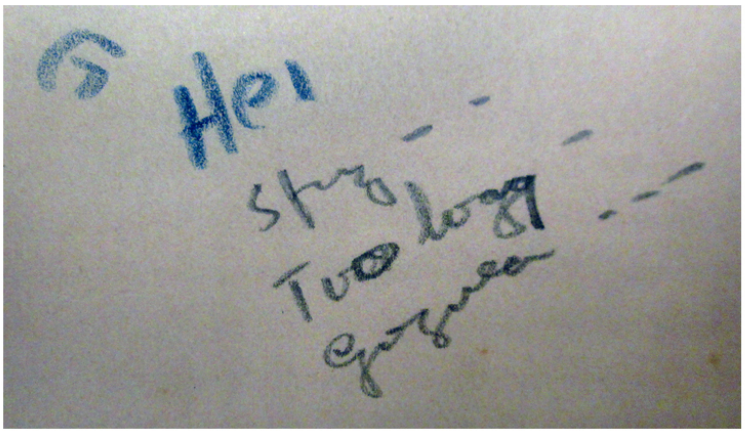


Figure 2.2: Three successive revisions to the opening of the (then) Canto IX, currently Canto VIII. Top to bottom: EPP Box 71 f. 3156, f. 3162, and f. 3165.

In the first handwritten revisions to the Watson typescript Pound, now sure of his estimation, cancels "probably," and decides to include "tergo" as he had previously done in his reading notes. From the notes copied in the top-right corner, it also appears that Pound considered fragmenting Sigismondo's greeting to Giovanni along with the addressee: "co viro tanq / compatri / hanni de / [?] fiorentia." The second typescript excerpt above was, as the rest of the sheet is blank, either simply a false start, or a deliberate attempt to work out the form of the truncated lines before retyping the sequence. In any case, the mention of Florentia is excluded, as it had been in the previous drafts, and spatially the arrangement is more linear, and thus further from that of the original document. Finally, in the last draft of the poem Pound's lineation visually reproduces the reverse side of the letter, including the detail of Florence, and the correction of Yriarte's mistake regarding the recipient is emphasized with the addition of "equivalent to."

Besides the addition of the lines about Truth and Calliope, and Alessandro, Pound made only a few changes to these opening lines for the publication of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, which while minor are not wholly insignificant. Whereas in the final typescript draft Pound had set everything from "tergo" to "Giohanni of the Medici, Florence" in parentheses, the punctuation is entirely absent from the published version. The voice of the scholar, therefore, is no longer visually signaled, as it is in the opening line, and as it is later in the poem. Instead, Pound chose a stronger visual distinction by having the fragments from the letter printed in italics, a choice he would repeat throughout the four cantos. It seems also that he considered the late substitution of "equivalent to"—followed by a colon and a line break that isolates it on the page—a sufficient enough indication of a shift in voice. Furthermore, despite several words being dropped down to the next line due to the tight space between Strater's decorative capital and the left margin, the three lines of the fragmented addressee remain unaltered. In the later publications of *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (with the Vorticist initials designed by Dorothy Shakespear Pound) and the New Directions edition (with only slightly enlarged capitals), the white space that surrounds the three lines on both the left and right is much more substantial. Indenting the lines, so as to juxtapose them with the absence of the blank page on both sides, gives an even more striking impression of material fragmentation—what was lost, and what remains on the page of the original document.

The spatial arrangement of this small set of lines closely resembles Pound's earlier poem "Papyrus" (1915) from his collection *Lustra* (1916). Also three lines, each incorporating and relying heavily on ellipses, "Papyrus" is similarly engaged with the materiality and fragmentation of textual artifacts:



Papyrus

Spring . . .
Too long . . .
Gongula . . .

Figure 2.3: Pound's handwritten draft for "Papyrus" (EPP Box 111 f. 4688), and the poem as it was first printed in *Lustra* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1916) 49.

"The poem itself may be technically considered as an attempted translation of three out of the sixteen extant lines of a seventh-century fragment of Sappho," whose 1909 publication in *The New Fragments of Alcaeus, Sappho and Corinna* in London, was most likely Pound's source.[5] In Sappho's poem, she yearns for her lover over the course of a too-lengthy spring, or does so in anticipation of a spring-like rebirth through their reunion. However, the title to Pound's rendering of the fragmented lyrics indicates that, more than separated lovers, he is addressing the fragility and decay of the written record. In reproducing the Sappho fragment in English and with the ellipses, yet with no indication that it is either a translation, a fragment, or was originally written by Sappho—an ambiguity that did not go unnoticed[6]—Pound retains the partiality of the original, damaged papyrus, while simultaneously recasting it as a whole. As a translation of the disjointed Greek, and a transformation of the fragmented manuscript into a printed text, the poem foregrounds the materiality of

[5] Achilles Fang, "A Note on Pound's 'Papyrus,'" *Modern Language Notes* 67.3 (March 1952) 189.

[6] In their joint 1927 work, Robert Graves and Laura Riding Jackson express their uncertainty: "And why 'Papyrus'? Is the poem a fragment from a real papyrus? Or an imaginary one? Or is it the poet's thoughts about either a real or imaginary fragment? Or about spring too long because of the gongula of the papyrus reeds?" *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1928) 218-19.

poetic artifact—Latin, *factum* "something made," plus the adjective *arte* "by or using art"[7]—as well as the material production (or reproduction) of text. In other words, the subject matter is materiality itself, which is presented here as temporary and vulnerable to change.

Nonetheless, those very characteristics, or their results, are signifying in and of themselves. As Hugh Witemeyer writes, "In theme and form, the poem enacts a drama of presence and absence. [...] By honing language's presence to an absolute minimum, the Imagist poem sharpens our intuition of its expressive gaps and omissions."[8] The missing words of the lyric complement the meaning of those remaining, but, on a more general level, are also expressive of how the material and typographic nature of writing and language operates in the processes of signification. Each line's ellipsis, and the blank space into which they trail off, figures into what Hugh Kenner calls Pound's "intent on a poiesis of loss," and "an aesthetic of glimpses."[9] The fragments in "Papyrus," however, are not solely concerned with loss. According to Kenner, part of the meaning of the poem is in its attempt to set the record straight, and present the reader with only the three original words of the Sapphic fragment that Professor J.M. Edmond did not himself complete in his translations.[10] Therefore, the poem is also a gesture of correction, or recovery, achieved by a return to the source text.

These same techniques and strategies are found in lines 8-10 of Canto VIII. The ellipses are now found at the beginning of each line, visually inviting the reader to move backward across the page, symbolically returning to the original document as Pound himself did. Moreover, as mentioned above, Pound intentionally leaves a significant amount of blank space to the left of the lines, whereby the reader is confronted with the page itself. As in "Papyrus," the poet aims to express the material fragmentation of text—be it historical or poetic, aligned with Truth or Calliope—by spatially reproducing the original, and thereby giving the reader the opportunity to participate in the process of typographic signification. Even without having read the

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[7] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Third Edition, eds. Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[8] Hugh Witemeyer, "Modernism and the Transatlantic Connection," *A Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry*, ed. Neil Roberts (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003) 11.

[9] Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) 56, 71.

[10] Kenner, *The Pound Era*, 54.

pieces of Medici's name, the visual layout alone allows the reader to connect the fragments back to the modified phrase from Eliot in line one.

Pound is, however, more explicit in expressing the notion of recovery in the beginning of the Malatesta Cantos. While Pound leaves the reader to interpret the fragments of "Papyrus" and fill in the blank space, in Canto VIII he immediately completes the name of the recipient of Sigismondo's letter. The fact is recovered, and the fragment completed. The first two words of the document (8: 28.14), in Pound's translation, may in fact be read in light of this process: the addressee having been restored—after prior fragmentation and error—the "Letter" is successfully "received."

Also pertinent to this discussion is Pound's use of punctuation in a visual manner to signify beyond conventional indications. In neither the autograph draft of "Papyrus," nor the handwritten or typed revisions to Canto VIII does Pound use the traditional three-point ellipsis (see figures 2.3 and 2.2, respectively). Regarding "Papyrus," though the 2-1-3 variation (whether intentional or done out of haste) was standardized for the initial publication in *Lustra*, when the poem was reprinted by Boni and Liveright (1926), and later by New Directions (1949) and Faber & Faber (1952), the ellipses were extended to 6 or 7 points.[11] The ellipses, now dragged out beyond their normal length, visually represent that what is absent or lost has been, as the poem says, missing for "Too long." A similar, but more precise, development is seen concerning Canto VIII. Pound made a deliberate choice to replace the missing letters from the recipient's name and location with points: GIOhanni de / MEdicis / FLORentia. The 2-2-4 variation found in the final typescript means that Pound either failed to notice that the first ellipsis was lacking one point if it is to correspond to the forename he provides three lines later, or alternatively, the incongruence may have resulted from a confusion of which spelling would ultimately be used: Giohanni (or Giovanni, as in an earlier set of revised carbons), or JOhanni, as is used later in the poem (8: 30.25). Regardless, as seen in figure 2.4, Pound's attention to typographic exactness in proofing these lines of the Malatesta Cantos for publication extends to these most inconspicuous of marks, and corrects the error.

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[11] See *Personae: The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952) 122, as well as *Personae: The Shorter Poems*, eds. Lea Baechler and A. Walton Litz (New York: New Directions, 1990) 115.

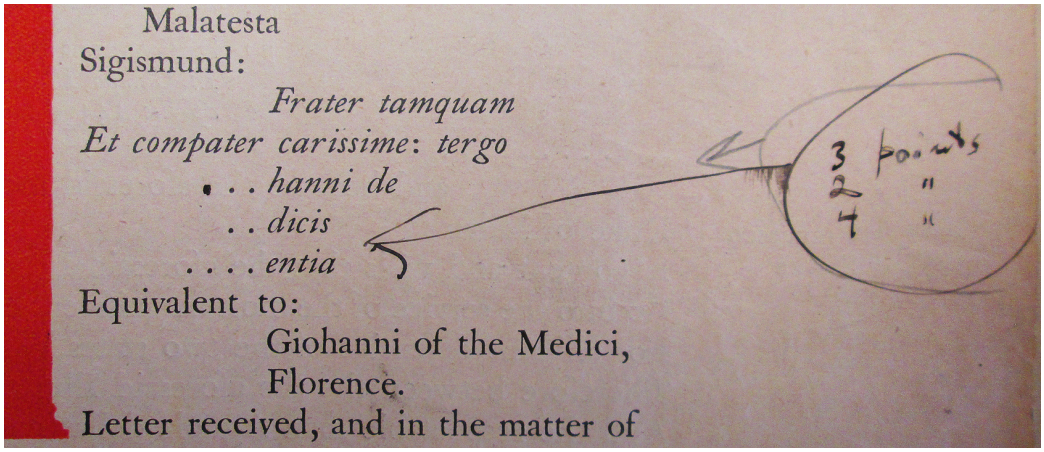

Figure 2.4: A detail of Canto VIII from the proof sheets for *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* with Pound's handwritten revisions. EPP Box 7 f. 60 (Oversize Box 241).

His note to the right also makes it clear that his, at times, unorthodox uses of typography are not extraneous details, but that each mark carries its own significance.[12] By altering the standard ellipsis in these lines, he again provides a precise visio-spatial arrangement that facilitates drawing connections between different passages and different voices in the poem. Through such connections the pages of the Malatesta Cantos may be seen not as a disarray of documentary, narrative, and lyrical fragments, but as the organized, interwoven assemblage Pound intended to create.

The Medici letter closes in much the same way that it opened, giving a full name (i.e. Sigismondo's), the location of said person, and the date of the letter. Echoing the addressee, the formal closing is also center-aligned on the page, and typographically distinguished from the surrounding text (see figure 1.5). Spatially and visually, then, the end of the letter recalls the beginning, and by sending the reader back to the previous page Pound draws the two sets of lines, and the two historical figures, into direct comparison.

The typography—both font and layout—with which Pound casts Giovanni and Sigismondo's names, in light of the symbolic weight that a name possesses, reveals a point of view that is upheld throughout the Malatesta Cantos. Giovanni de' Medici's name is fractured over two lines to the point of obscuring identity, and, its capitals

[12] Ironically, the marks proved too inconspicuous for William Bird and Three Mountains Press, and the revision never made it into print. More ironic still, in New Direction's current edition of *The Cantos* the missing point has been restored, but one from the third line has been erroneously omitted.

having been lost, only slanted lowercase letters remain. Conversely, Sigismondo's is set on a single, unbroken line without the slightest obfuscation, printed in all capital letters—a visual representation of "the factive personality, Sigismundo, an *entire* man," as Pound would later write in *Guide to Kulchur*.[13] The message seems apparent that while the fragile material of the Medici name has frayed and worn away, the Malatesta name remains rigidly upright, as if engraved in stone. Furthermore, while Giovanni stays comfortably in his city of Florence—"the Medici bank for itself" (8: 32.2)—Sigismondo is out in the field campaigning against Cremona. The contrast is not necessarily to criticize the work of a financier and banker, nor to exalt that of a condottiere, but simply to present Sigismondo as the man of *action*, both martially and artistically, as the text in body of the letter communicates.

Visually framing the entire letter on the double-page spread by reproducing the spatial and material qualities of the document, Pound assists the reader in linking and interpreting passages in conjunction with one another, which may have otherwise remained separate. Shortly after the closing to the Medici letter, and on the same page in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, the layout is repeated:

> As please the ten of the Baily,
> And to be himself there with them in the service of the commune
> With his horsemen and his footmen
> *(gente di cavallo e da pie),* etc.
> Aug. 5, 1452, *register of the Ten of the Baily*.[14]

The offset lines again act as a visual marker for the end of a block of text and/or a document; in this case, the contract regarding Sigismondo's condotta with the Florentines. The repetition of this spatial arrangement invites the reader to see the page, or two-page spread, as a whole. By drawing the reader's attention back to the material page as a unit, the poem implies that its fragments be *seen* in the same manner. The poetics in the Malatesta Cantos approaches the page with an understanding that its material and visual qualities may be used to increase the complexity of a poem's processes of signification, at the same time that they facilitate the access to, and reception of, those processes. The constituent parts of the poem are

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[13] Pound, *GK*, 194, emphasis added.

[14] Pound, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, 28. In New Directions's edition, "of the commune" is on a line of its own, and the indentation of the last two lines is half of the length (8: 30.5-10).

broken up, and then rearranged on the page, where, as a unified whole, the interrelations between them multiply.

OBSCURING GENRES

A strategy of spatial arrangement that calls for a view of the page in its entirety is not confined to the Medici letter's frame alone, but is found in the body of the text as well. Arranging the opening and closing of the letter, Pound attempts to visually reproduce the document; regarding the body of the letter, however, he does the opposite. Instead of maintaining a letter's standard prose format of lines written from the left to the right margins, and arranged in paragraphs, Pound prints the letter in a free-verse poetic form. Except for six, the thirty-five lines that comprise the contents of the letter are left justified, but the line lengths vary from two to fifteen words, resulting in a considerably jagged right edge.[15] Perceived as a whole, then, the page visually signals poetry, not prose. However, all of the presuppositions and expectations attached to a poetic tradition—in other words, the way in which such a text would be read—are quickly derailed as the language and content of the letter unfold. Pound's blurring of the distinction between prose and poetry relies on the spatial arrangement that results from breaking up the phrasing of the original document. Though the phrases read smoothly enough, the lines of prose have been, in fact, visually fragmented.

The final form of the body of the letter, like that of the opening, emerged over several drafts and numerous revisions. Examining the early forms and variations in Pound's treatment of the Medici letter reveals his intention to find an arrangement that effectively confounds the two genres through the relationship between fragmentation and spatiality. Initially Pound adopts a different strategy altogether, choosing to drastically fracture the content, and complement it by breaking apart the prose format of the source text. Consequently, the first draft of the poem that incorporates the Medici letter is much more disjunctive than the current Canto VIII, both visually and

[15] These numbers refer to *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, which contains a number of differences in lineation and spacing from the New Directions edition, largely due to page width and margins. The New Directions printing results in 40 lines total, 4 or which are not left justified, varying in length from 2 to 14 words.

thematically. After having cancelled the adapted line from Eliot in line one, the first page of the draft progresses in the following manner:[16]

1) A fragment from the Medici letter, in which Sigismondo requests the services of Piero della Francesca.
2) The captain of the watch at Ancona's response to Sigismondo (8: 31.33-34).
3) A quotation concerning Sigismondo's conflict with Federico da Montefeltro, first duke of Urbino.
4) A short interjection in reference to the Tempio Malatestiano.
5) A continuation of Sigismondo's request for a painter, taken from the Medici letter.
6) Sigismondo's anterior statement to the captain of the watch at Ancona (8: 31.30-32), followed by a repetition of the latter's reply.
7) A quick mention of Drusiana Sforza's marriage to Jacopo Piccinino (Count Giacomo), and Cosimo de' Medici's reaction (10: 43.18-21).
8) Two lines referring to Francesco Sforza and Bianca Visconti's visit to Rimini (8: 30.33-31.6).

Thus, only one portion from the Medici letter was used, and split up across three other events. Realizing the weaknesses in this organization, on page two of the draft, Pound restarts the poem, beginning with a lengthier, uninterrupted extract from the letter to Giovanni, after which he thought to include the other fragments from page one. The subject matter of the extract is continuous, and the lines themselves are much more fragmented spatially—only five of the fourteen lines are flush with the left-hand margin, and only two of the indented lines are aligned. In general, however, there is a much greater frequency of long, prose-length lines. Furthermore, as on page one, the lines are not blocked together, but recurrently separated by one or several blank lines. These typographic details are certainly due in part to immediate edits and revisions, as well as the mechanics of the typewriter Pound was using. However, comparing the layout of this early draft with the arrangements in subsequent drafts—realized in the same circumstances—one notices Pound's increasing consciousness of, and meticulous attention to, how the content of the Medici letter might best be presented visually.

[16] EPP Box 70 f. 3150.

In Pound's next draft, for example, the canto begins with an eleven-line extract from the letter, which is significantly more organized: a plainly established left-justified margin (seven lines of the group), six lines running all the way to the right-hand margin, and three of the four indented lines being essentially aligned.[17] These indented lines are also clearly the result of the end of the phrase spilling over onto the next line, as opposed to deliberately chosen line breaks, suggesting that the intended layout was a solid block of margin-to-margin text. The draft demonstrates Pound's gradual shift to a more coherent handling of Sigismondo's letter, and a tighter spatial arrangement. In the final version, the typographic strategy shifts to its near opposite: fragmenting the block of text by introducing line breaks, and therefore moving away from the prose format and towards a poetic one.

As the importance of the letter grew, in that it introduced Sigismondo to the reader in a favorable light, in accordance with Pound's own view, the material included in these early drafts increased. Thus, in the Watson typescript, which incorporated the draft immediately subsequent to the two discussed above, the *entirety* of the letter to Giovanni de' Medici is translated as the first two pages of the draft. As the letter is now complete, from beginning to end, the typographic layout consequently begins to take on the characteristics of fragmentation, which were previously expressed by jumbling the content. Twenty-five of the forty lines do not extend all the way to the right-hand margin, contrasted to twenty-six of thirty-five in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, and thirty-five of forty in the New Directions edition. Nonetheless, at this point Pound does still retain characteristics of the original document's prose format. Most significantly the Watson typescript bears a quasi-paragraphic spatial arrangement for this section of the poem. The subject matter of the letter is spaced apart as follows, with a blank line separating each passage:[18]

1) Introductory material: "Letter received [...] Adding thereto your wishes and memoranda." (8: 28.14-16).
2) Affairs concerning the King of Ragona: "As to arranging peace [...] As either adherent or participant." (8: 28.17-23)

[17] EPP Box 70 f. 3152.

[18] EPP Box 71 f. 3155. While the corresponding lines in the New Directions publication are indicated in parentheses, the wording and lineation of the passages referred to are different in the Watson typescript.

3) Payment from the Medici for services rendered: "Concerning the money [...] as quickly as possible." (8: 28.24-26)
4) Request for Piero della Francesca: "For the Maestro di pentore [...] never lacking provision." (8: 28.27-29.21).

From a visual standpoint the Watson typescript's arrangement in blocks of long lines more closely resembles prose than that chosen for the printed versions of the poem. Though Pound was surely aware that typesetting the poem for publication would mean certain changes in lineation, this draft nevertheless demonstrates his dual-intention for the spatial arrangement: to distance certain lines in this section from the short, compact lines of the lyric poem, while disrupting a strictly prosaic reading through the occasional line break and visual appearance of verse. The typographic technique regarding the source text is thus, in one sense, more uniform, as the opening, body, and closing all aim to reproduce—to varying degrees—the material document as is. Furthermore, the straightforward layout is consistent with the phrasing and diction of the passage (i.e. a prosaic, formal letter concerning matters of business). At the same time, where Pound breaks away from that form, he reminds the reader of *The Cantos* that he or she is, in fact, reading a work of poetry.

Despite this duality, and though the context of a *canto* undoubtedly clashes with the tone and texture of the letter's language, the intentional loss of distinction between prose and poetry is only vaguely represented visually at this stage. At the time *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* was printed—after the first publication of the Malatesta Cantos in the quarterly *The Criterion*,[19] for which T.S. Eliot was the editor at the time—the spacing that separated the various topics into irregular, paragraph-like blocks was eliminated. Given the variations in line length that already existed, the letter was thereby further distanced from the prose form of the source document. It remains true, nevertheless, that the Medici letter as presented in the Watson typescript is a significant development in Pound's engagement with the role of typography, and the page as a visual unit, as part of the poetics of materiality in the Malatesta Cantos. More intentionally than in the early drafts, the poet is seen working with the phrasing (in translation) of the source text within the space of the page, aware of how that

[19] "Cantos IX to XII of a long poem" appeared in July 1923 in the fourth issue of *The Criterion*, pages 363-84. This was an intermediate version of the sequence, as it lacked the first five lines of the current Canto VIII.

space may frame or collapse the language, and of the resultant effects upon the poem's reading.

Only a handful of modifications were made to these lines in later drafts. A number of the sets of shorter lines were revised and/or combined into one or two lines stretching from the left to the right of the page, and minor deletions or syntactic alterations were made. One of the more important changes regarding spatial fragmentation is Pound's continued rearrangement of the final lines of the letter. From early on, his intention to visually and spatially distinguish it in some manner is apparent. In the three drafts immediately prior to the Watson typescript, the two lines in Sigismondo's Italian—the final lines of the section at that stage—move from a tightly spaced, but spatially isolated couplet, to a footnote, and finally to two widely spaced lines (see figure 1.6 for images of two of these drafts). As previously mentioned, the lines in the third draft were revised by hand so as to maintain the spatial distinction of "never lacking provision." And while the order remained the same, Pound did modify the spacing and lineation of these lines in the last set of revisions to the Watson typescript: compare the arrangement in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (figure 1.5) and the following, from the Watson typescript:

> Unless you put him off it ⟨–⟩ and for this I mean to make
> Due provision, so that he can work as he likes, or
> Waste his time as he likes (affatigandose per suo
> Piacere o non, non gli manchera provisione mai)
>
> never lacking provision.[20]

By placing the quotation on separate, indented lines in the revised draft, Pound visually sets apart the Italian, further emphasized by the italics it is printed in, and draws attention to its insertion within the English translation. Moreover, Pound's further indentation of the last part of his translation continues to lead the reader's gaze across the page in a descending, step-like manner. Had Pound aligned these last three words with the rest of the translation above them, thus pulling the reader's gaze back to the left-hand margin, the original Italian would appear more as an interruption, perhaps even interpreted as an entirely superfluous one. Instead, with Pound's spatial arrangement of these lines on the page, one text/language progressively *steps* into

[20] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

another. In their current state as published by New Directions, this effect is lost, given that the two lines of Italian are left-justified on the page; however, the merit of this spacing lies in its suggestion of a more seamless fusion of the two texts/languages—both are, in fact, *aligned*.

As Pound worked through the drafts of what was at the time still Canto IX, the final lines of Malatesta's letter progressively drew away from the long line-lengths with which they began. In the first typescript draft to incorporate the entirety of the letter, all of the lines expressing Sigismondo's promise of provision for the master painter reach from the left to the right-hand margin (excluding one word typed on its own line due to lack of space on the previous one, and the two lines in Italian). To the Watson typescript, as seen above, Pound added line breaks to the four long lines, fragmenting them over six for publication. As a result, the lengthy lines of the prosaic language and phrasing in the letter continually, if irregularly, break down as the end of the document is reached, and finally detach from the left margin completely. On a visio-spatial level, the reader experiences the prose layout morph into a poetic one. The text thereby more effectively questions, if not erases, the boundaries between the two genres.

In the current New Directions edition, though bearing a longer series of thirteen short lines to close the letter, this visio-spatial effect is somewhat mitigated by the number of long lines split into two in the first half of the document. The juxtaposition and/or fusion of prose and poetry on the same material page is present nevertheless—as it also is in the anterior *A Draft of XXX Cantos*—as the linguistic characteristics of Sigismondo's letter signal the former, while the spatially fragmented layout of the text signals the latter.

It is also important to note that the shift to the more poetic form occurs when Malatesta's attention turns to the assurance of provision and freedom for the artist Piero della Francesca. Sigismondo's work as a patron of the arts was of the utmost importance to Pound. Peter D'Epiro provides a useful description of his engagement with the concept:

> Pound's emphasis on enlightened patronage antedates his interest in Malatesta by many years. In 1915, for example, Pound had written to John Quinn: "My whole drive is that if a patron buys from an artist who needs money (needs money to buy tools, time and food), the patron then makes himself equal to the artist: he is building art into the world; he creates." But by the time he started working on the Malatesta

> Cantos, Pound had actually attempted to put his ideas on patronage into practice. The result was "Bel Esprit"—a fund that would use the subsidies of individual guarantors to free the energies of certain pre-selected artists, enabling them to devote themselves to their craft on a full-time basis.[21]

According to Pound's idea, by providing Francesca a salary ["I want to arrange with him to give him so much [cash] per year" (8: 29.7)], specific opportunities for work ["I will arrange for him to paint something else" (8: 29.2)], and most importantly, the leisure necessary to artistic creation ["So that he can work as he likes" (8: 29.17)] Malatesta becomes an artist himself, building and creating. In a letter dated 31 March 1925 to Henry Allen Moe, on the subject of patronage and promoting certain artists for the Guggenheim Foundation's awards, Pound explains Sigismondo's letter to Giovanni de' Medici, then wrote the following:

> Ma[l]atesta got the goods. And he was enough of an artist himself to know that you can't always tell when an artist is loafing. Real work may be done on tennis court or in trolley car, and sham work at desk.[22]

Accordingly, it is at this moment in Pound's canto when Sigismondo's writing begins progressively breaking away from the prose form of the historical document and assuming the look of a more "artistic," poetic text.

Furthermore, Pound's line breaks and spatial arrangement visually emphasize the subject matter by highlighting and linking the key groups of words that Pound's translation of the passage has already stressed acoustically. The two diagrams in figure 2.5 illustrate, first, the tight aural structure, and second, how the spatial arrangement highlights the visual repetition of the principal words. The notion of creativity ("to make" and "can work") is connected to that of leisure ("as he likes" and "waste his time"), itself being connected to that of provision ("never lacking"); the thrice-repeated "provision" is in turn linked to the concept of freedom ("piacere": liking, will, choice). Moreover, in each case, the connections are both acoustic (alliteration and assonance) and visual (semi-aligned and/or stacked layout).

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[21] Peter D'Epiro, *A Touch of Rhetoric* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983) xix.

[22] An unpublished letter from the Ezra Pound Papers at the Beinecke. Immediately preceding these lines the letter quotes directly from the Medici letter (8: 29.17-19). Quoted in Lawrence Rainey, *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 70.

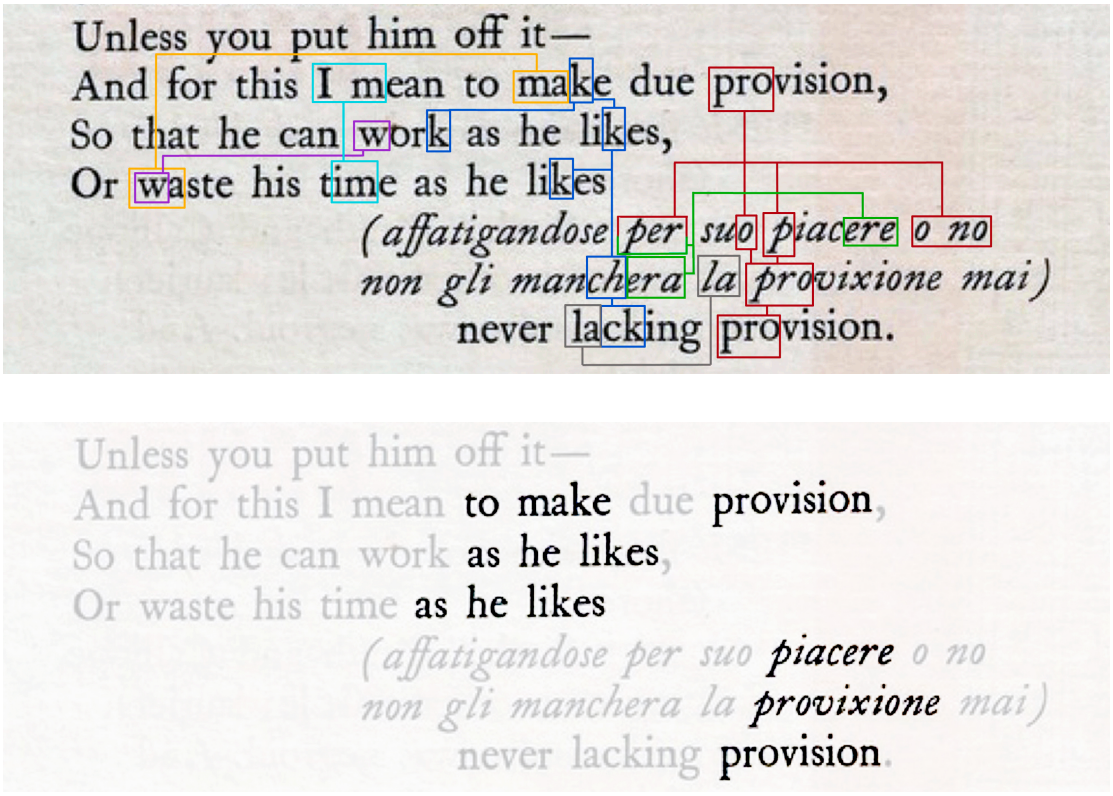

Figure 2.5: The network of acoustic connections (above) and visual construction (below) of the closing lines to the Medici letter at the start of Canto VIII, as published in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (28).

Excluding the last three, these shorter lines are flush against the left margin just as the longer ones that precede them. As the contrast between the line-lengths is due to the right margin, a particular focus on the ends of these last lines is already achieved. And it is precisely in those places where the key words repeated over the six lines are found. Thus, even from a visio-spatial standpoint alone, the passage's central tenet that continual provision allows for artistic freedom is communicated. Sigismondo's letter moves thematically from business and financial concerns to patronage, with Pound putting a particular emphasis on the latter, and thereby—according to the poet's own ideas on the subject—giving priority to Malatesta the artist over Malatesta the condottiere. Nevertheless, the two facets of Sigismondo's character are not separated, but presented in a *single* document, sharing the same page on which lines of prose and lines of poetry are also combined, and form a whole.

In the letter to Giovanni de' Medici, the fusion of the two, traditionally opposed, genres occurs internally within the body of the text itself, but the alternation between prose and poetry also forms a part of the overall structure of the poem's composition. In the first half of Canto VIII—lines 1-113 of the 176 in the New Directions version—Pound's poem repeatedly shifts back and forth between textual fragments that are paratactically arranged so as to challenge the reader's ability, or proclivity, to distinguish between the two genres.

The canto begins with four lines of poetry, in which the aforementioned conflict between Truth and Calliope may be interpreted as preparing the reader for the combination of historical *prose* and epic *poetry*, respectively. It then shifts to the Medici letter, the closing of which—being composed of lines that visually signal poetry—is bookended between the prosaic phrasing of the letter's beginning, and the translated excerpt from a contract between Sigismondo and the Florentines. The latter document returns to the official, business-like vocabulary and tone of the opening to the Medici letter. In other words, the reader again finds him/herself with fragmented lines of prose. Next, the poem abruptly shifts to five poetic lines describing Pennabilli—a small town in the Appenines, near to Rimini—from which the Malatesta family originated, followed by a six-line excerpt adapted from a longer lyric poem ostensibly written by Sigismondo to Isotta degli Atti.[23] The poetry ends just as abruptly as it began, and the canto again returns to Sigismondo's letters, this time one written to "Johanni di Cosimo" (i.e. Cosimo de' Medici) regarding military action and a contract with Venice. The next fifteen lines are an image-laden, poetic description of Francesco Sforza and his new wife Bianca's visit to Rimini. All in all, the reader moves from fragmentary poetry, to a letter, to a contract, to a lyric poem, to another business letter, and finally swings back to poetry again.

The repetition of sudden shifts from prose to poetry, often within the space of the same page, has the effect of melding the two distinct genres into a single concept.

[23] Charles Yriarte incorrectly identified the poem's author as Sigismondo Malatesta. In 1911 the scholar Aldo Francesco Massèra found the original poem to have been written by Simone Serdini. Most of the final two lines in Pound's excerpt (8: 30.22-23) originated from a poem by Carlo Valturi, who, like Serdini, worked at the court in Rimini. In any case, due to Pound's acceptance of Yriarte's conclusion, in Canto VIII the lyric is associated with Sigismondo and his mistress Isotta. For further discussion see Rainey: *Modernism*, 68, and *Monument*, 177-86.

As the rapid succession continues, the prose and poetry become more and more closely associated, and the conventional definitions that differentiate one from the other become less and less reliable. The technique is comparable to that of the thaumatrope: a device composed of two images (traditionally a lone bird and an empty cage) drawn on opposite sides of a card or disk, which when spun so as to alternate the pictures, results in the perception of only one image (i.e. a bird in a cage). The effect of the thaumatrope is, of course, an *optical* illusion, and similarly, Pound's use of space in arranging the fragments of prose and poetry impacts the reader's visual perception. Regarding the Malatesta Cantos, it is not that a fragment of prose becomes entirely indistinguishable from a fragment of poetry, but rather that by fluctuating between them in the same material space they are no longer seen separately. The reader is led to view not isolated sections of one or the other genre, but the page as a whole unit, where the junctures between blocks of text structure the space.

As mentioned above, the Medici letter is visually framed by the truncated words of the addressee and the typographically distinct closing with Sigismondo's name and location. The contract with the Florentines that follows the letter bears a similar presentation. It begins with a long series of points, acting simultaneously as a demarcation line, and a visual signal that the document begins in medias res. The reader is, therefore, aware of the transition to a new fragment of text, but the first three lines immediately subvert that notion:

> . . . . . .
> and because the aforesaid most illustrious
> Duke of Milan
> Is content and wills that the aforesaid Lord Sigismundo[24]

Having cut the first part of the document, the word "aforesaid"—the repetition of which is accented visually by Pound's choices of line breaks—can only send the reader back to the preceding Medici letter, as if the two were in fact one document. Moreover, the line breaks draw a visible parallel between "Lord Sigismundo" and the immediately foregoing superlative "most illustrious," echoing the positive presentation of Malatesta that concludes the antecedent document. The transition from

[24] Pound, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, 28. In the New Directions edition (8: 29.25-27) the wording of the lines is unchanged, but the line of points is reduced to six, and does not occupy its own line, but is set with the first line of text.

the contract to the five lines of poetry concerning the landscape around Pennabilli and Rimini works in much the same way:

> As please the ten of the Baily,
> And to be himself there with them in the service of the commune
> With his horesmen and his footmen
> *(gente di cavallo e da pie)*, etc.
> Aug. 5, 1452, *register of the Ten of the Baily*.
>
> From the forked rocks of Penna and Billi, on Carpegna
> with the road leading under the cliff,
> in the wind-shelter into Tuscany,
> And the north road, toward the Marecchia
> the mud-stretch full of cobbles. (8: 30.5-15)

The document ends like the Medici letter before it, with an official, "signed" and dated closing, which is again spatially and visually distinct through indentation and italics. A blank line is also left before the lines of Pound's poetry begin. However, the phrase "*Pen*na and *Billi*" sounds as an acoustic adaptation of "*Ten* of the *Baily,*" the echo reminding the reader, however briefly or subtly, of the previous line, and thus the previous textual fragment. At both the beginning and end of the excerpt from Sigismondo's contract, Pound visually communicates the transition from one block of text to another, but then effaces the boundary between the two by projecting the reading backward across it, as if no division actually existed.

For the two following blocks of text, Pound still signals the switch from one to another, but the changeover is much more explicit. While the Medici letter segued seamlessly from prose to poetry with no paragraphic/stanzaic divisions, and visio-spatial markers delineated the Florentine contract, Pound directly states the formal shift to lyric poetry, and its suspension, due to yet another document concerning matters of business and finances:

> Lyra:
> "Ye spirits who of olde were in this land
> Each under Love, and shaken,
> Go with your lutes, awaken
> The summer within her mind,
> Who hath not Helen for peer
> Yseut nor Batsabe."
> With the interruption:
> *Magnifico, compater et carissime*
> (Johanni di Cosimo)

Venice has taken me on again
At 7,000 a month, *fiorini di Camera*.
For 2,000 horse and four hundred footmen,
And it rains here by the gallon,
We have had to dig a new ditch.
In three or four days
I shall try to set up the bombards. (8: 30.16-32)

Prior to the final revisions to the Watson typescript, the two passages lacked any introductory indication (i.e. "Lyra" and "With the interruption") and were typed as if two homologous stanzas, with blank lines inserted before and after each. In the last set of corrected carbons, where one passage is adjacent to the next with no intervening space, Pound had added "Lyra" prior to the poem, and inserted "Against" before the letter. Though a handwritten correction changed the latter term to the current phrase, Pound's original preposition conveys his view of the two texts as both thematically opposed and spatially apposed: as per the multiple definitions of *against*, they are "in conceptual contrast," as well as "in *visual* contrast" and "in [...] *physical* contact."[25]

The two texts differ on nearly every level. The first is *to be sung* ("Lyra"), and therefore melodious, while the second is a discordant "interruption." Furthermore, being sung, the short poem is intended to be heard, and for the first time Pound encloses his translation of the source text in quotation marks, indicating as much a vocalized text as a cited one. Conversely, the Cosimo letter is a document specifically intended to be read, and Pound accordingly replaces the opening and closing quotation marks with italics script; that is, a style of *printing*. Several other shifts occur regarding the content of the two passages: the lyric poem's past "spirits [...] in this land" contrast to the letter's horses and soldiers in the field, the topic jumps from love to money, the climate from the summer's light to rain, the action from awaking to digging ditches, and instruments of music (lutes) are substituted by instrument of war (bombards).

On the basis of content, then, the two texts could hardly be more conflicting. But it is just such a contrast that Pound specifically aims to challenge through the spatial arrangement of both passages. Upon reading them, the diction of the second is noticeably more prosaic, while the metrics and sonority of the first make it readily identifiable as a text of verse:

---

[25] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, emphasis added.

/ / ^ / ^ / ^
Each under Love, and sh*aken*,
/ / ^ / ^ / ^
Go with your lutes, aw*aken*

However, given Pound's choice to syntactically break up the phrasing of the latter document, spatially the two texts are essentially indistinguishable: the majority of the line lengths are the same, and there are variations and indentations in both. The reader is explicitly informed of the division between the poetry and the prose documents, but such a distinction occurs only after having first seen the section as a single group (there are no blank lines), whose spatial arrangement communicates a similarity of genre. The two are perceived in conjunction, and simultaneously, as part of one visual field, and their eventual categorization paradoxically only further accentuates their material resemblance.

When the canto then returns to the poetic mode, recounting the showering colors and visual fanfare of Sforza and Bianca's arrival in Rimini, Pound moves quickly and seamlessly from short, enjambed lines—"The small white horses, the" (8: 31.5)—to lengthy, end-stopped lines—"Twelve girls riding in order, green satin in pannier'd habits;" (8: 31.6)—and by the end of the passage both typographic aspects of the two previous blocks of texts (i.e. quotation marks and italics) are interwoven into the same two lines:

> For two days' pleasure, mostly "*la pesca*," fishing,
> *Di cui* in the which he, Francesco, *godeva molto*. (8: 31.12-13)

The integration of prose and poetry having been thus fully realized and established typographically, the rest of Canto VIII dexterously mixes dry repetition with poetic anaphora, standard diction with slang, and an informative tone with figurative overtones.

This series of juxtapositions, from the Medici letter through the description of the Sforzas' visit to Rimini, functions as a commentary on the significance of a text's typographic materiality in determining how it is read, and therefore interpreted. In progressing towards a view of the material page as the poetic unit itself, Pound's technique of spatial fragmentation synthesizes opposing documents into one, while at the same time drawing the reader's attention to the very act of synthesis. Whether a visual distinction is blurred linguistically, as with the document ratifying the *condotta*

with Florence, or the linguistic styles are confounded visually, as with the lyric poem and Cosimo letter, the material manipulation of the text suggests that the physical space a text occupies—how it inhabits the page—will not only impact the operation of its meaning, but will itself be a meaning. Textual conventions and the nature of a document are put on display, and in order to subvert any preconceived definitions thereof, their material basis is drawn into a space where definitions break down, and fragments are shelved into a unifying organization. Pound's modernist poetics attempts, as he wrote in an early draft of the Malatesta Cantos, "to put things into some order / upon which the new learning."[26]

INSCRIBING CONFLICT

In the second half of Canto VIII, Pound moves through events and circumstances much more rapidly, often condensing them into a single line. The details provided are necessarily fragmentary, offering only a glimpse of the total situation or incident. The technique is to present many facets of the history being recounted, any of which alone would hardly be helpful, but as an ensemble create a picture of Sigismondo and his deeds. In this way it relates to Pound's discussion of the image and vorticism: "The image it not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, to call a vortex, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing." He goes on to equate poetry and sculpture, specifically with regard to the use of "'planes in relation'" and "the organization of forms."[27] When, in the Malatesta Cantos, Pound is not functioning in a strict documentary mode, the composition frequently consists of a series of *planes* supplying a view of the forms they define from various angles. In such moments, the text is constructed sculpturally, as if from material fragments organized on the surface of the page. Canto VIII ends with the following lines:

> And the wind is still for a little
> And the dusk rolled
> to one side a little
> And he was twelve at the time, Sigismundo,
> And no dues had been paid for three years,

[26] EPP Box 70 f. 3147.
[27] Pound *GB*, 107.

And his elder brother gone pious;
And that year they fought in the streets,
And that year he got out to Cesena
And brought back the levies,
And that year he crossed by night over Foglia, and...

(8: 32.33-33.9)

The lines begin with the slightly ominous calm in the weather—coming just after the passage concerning incest and murder in the Malatesta family history—and indeed, consistent struggle and strife is to ensue for Sigismondo as the sequence continues. Flashing back to the beginnings of Sigismondo's public life, it then references the unpaid papal census, and the start of his defense of his patrimony. There are no full stops, and very little punctuation overall, and the reader is further reminded of the constructed unit these fragments comprise by the string of repeated conjunctions that have the effect of linguistic accumulation.

The nearly solid column of /*And*/s running down the left-hand margin also have the visual effect of unifying the lines, while simultaneously demonstrating a compositional technique of structuring the materiality of language by "stacking" lines of text. The consistent repetition of certain words aligned one on top of the other creates a graphic pattern, thereby evoking the concrete quality of those words, which appear as so many material blocks. This sculptural aspect draws out the physical space of the page, which Pound effectively uses to amplify the poetics at work, in addition to the thematic development.

Canto VIII ends in as fragmentary a manner as it began, with a final conjunction and ellipsis breaking off into blank space, offering a reverse image of the Medici address's stacked fragments, where white space led into ellipses. As Peter D'Epiro observes, "The sweep of Canto 8 is from the exact midpoint of Sigismondo's career to the very beginning of it—or from *in medias res* to earliest flashback—and from the middle of words ('... *hanni de* ...') to the middle of a sentence [...]."[28] The "reflection" in these fragments, flashing back, is a visual representation of the canto's chronology. However, as much as it sends the reader backwards through the pages of history and the poem itself, it also carries him or her forward through Sigismondo's saga. From a visual and material perspective, the terminal conjunction connects the

[28] D'Epiro, 75.

last group of lines to the blank space that follows them. And just as the reader is presumably unaware of the conclusion to Sigismondo's crossing the Foglia River, being here situated at the beginning of Malatesta's career, the course it will take is equally *open-ended* and *unwritten*. There is certainly a sense of foreboding and inevitability in the final passages to the first poem in the sequence, and the remaining cantos do, indeed, trace Malatesta's conflicts, mishaps, and eventual defeat.

Nevertheless, the experience of Malatesta's fate via Pound's text is yet to unfold, and one is left to read the blank space of Canto VIII's final page on the hinge of what is presented as a decisive year. The final three clauses to Canto VIII all begin "And *that year*," marking a time of accelerating action in visual opposition to the "*three* years" of inaction (i.e. unpaid dues) at the end of the phrase two lines earlier. The same emphasis and layered structural arrangement opens Canto IX:

> One year floods rose,
> One year they fought in the snows,
> One year hail fell, breaking the trees and walls.
> Down here in the marsh they trapped him
> in one year,
> And he stood in the water up to his neck (9: 34.1-6)[29]

In addition to offering a visual parallel, Canto IX picks up the themes of the previous canto's conclusion: once crossing over a river of the Marche, Sigismondo is now standing in "water up to his neck;" after having "fought in the streets," he now has "fought in the snows;" and the once still wind and rolling dusk, have given way to a forceful hail storm. As the events of Sigismondo's life continue to build up, Pound constructs his text by telescoping time into the space of the page, stacking one incident upon another.

As another aspect of Pound's "deflated epic style," according to Peter D'Epiro, the poet's technique

> imitate[s] the most debased form of historical writing—the chronicle, "which enumerates events one after the other with frequent and somewhat abrupt shifts from one scene to another." Thus, in a passage of twenty-four lines soon after the opening of Canto 9 (9.34.6-29), we

[29] The indentation of the fifth line, from *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, does not exist in New Directions's publication.

> notice that eighteen of them begin with "and," while the subject at hand changes no fewer than eleven times.[30]

Such a list may appear to be an attempt towards comprehensiveness, fitting in as many events as possible in the smallest amount of space, but Pound's chronicle is deliberately fragmented. Christine Froula has written that in the Malatesta Cantos Pound renders the "incompleteness" of historical events as part of his aim to represent "historical 'process.'"[31] That incompleteness, or fragmentation, is further emphasized by Pound's anachronistic reconstruction of those events. As Froula's comment suggests, it is the accretion of fragmented events and details into a whole that a passage such as the one mentioned above demonstrates; moreover, the unique sense of a *composite* page is enhanced by the visual column of conjunctions stringing those fragments together. Defining the left-hand margin, the forty /*And*/s beginning lines in the first seventy-five of the poem—and, later, the twenty-two in the span of thirty-two lines (9: 36.27-37.26)—give these extended passages a quality analogous to a mathematic equation:

[event *a*]
+ [event *b*]
+ [event *c*]
+ [event *d*]
+ etc.

The spatial arrangement, whereby the material layering of events into a composite whole is rendered visually, facilitates the reading of historical process in conjunction with poetic composition that the Malatesta Cantos seek to represent.

Pound continues utilizing the technique of polysyndeton with varying concentration throughout the remaining cantos, imbuing the entire sequence with a visually concrete feature that is more or less continuously present. A far more remarkable example of the poem's concrete materiality, however, is found in Canto X, when Pound shifts his attention to the May 1462 burning of Sigismondo's effigy in Rome. Short of printing it on its own separate page, the extended quotation from Pius II's *Commentarii*, via Yriarte, is typographically distinguished from the adjacent text in almost every way:

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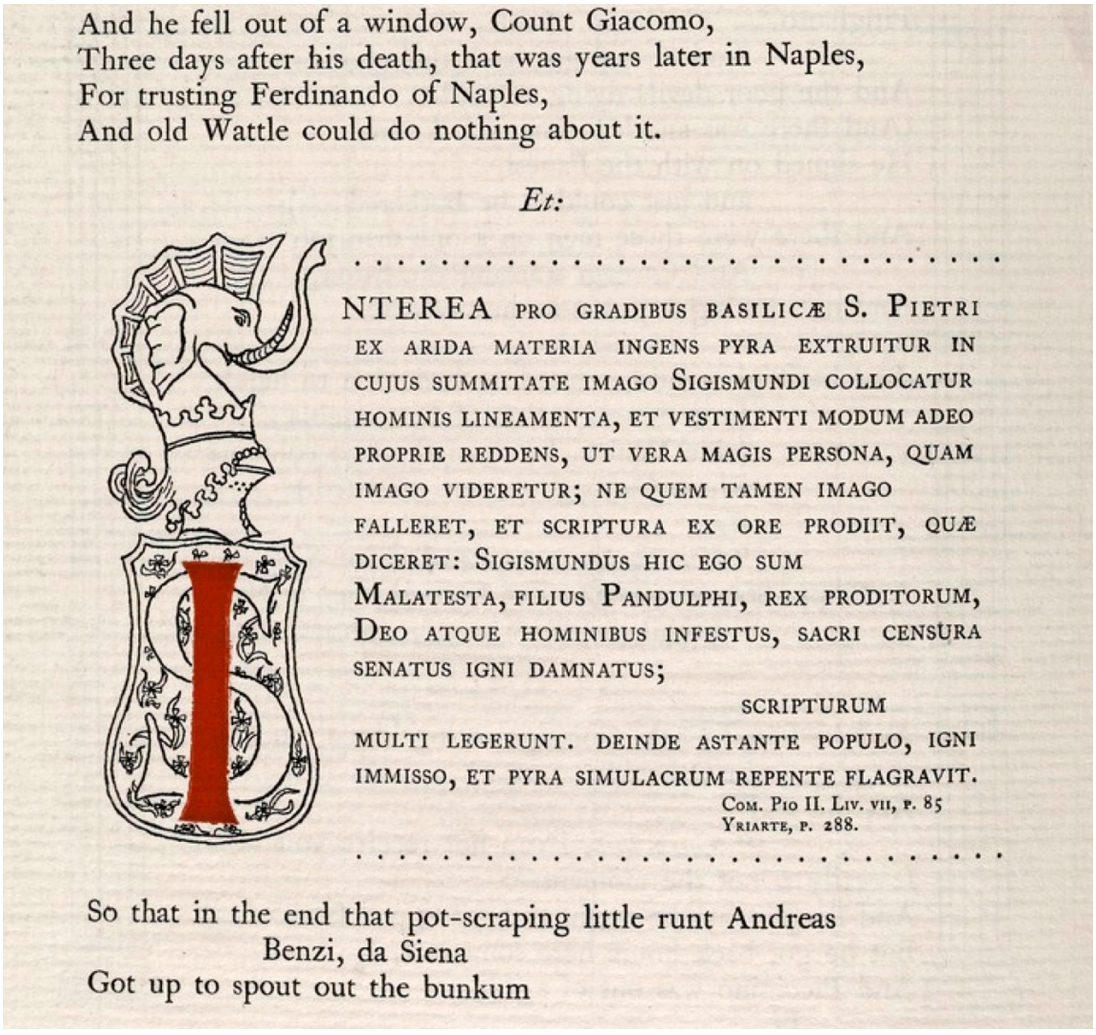
[30] D'Epiro, 75-76. The citation is from Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953) 243.

[31] Christine Froula, *To Write Paradise: Style and Error in Pound's* Cantos (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984) 158, 160.

1) A sizable, two-color illustration of the helmet and crest by Henry Strater accompanies the text (though it is only included in the publication of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* by Three Mountains Press).
2) A line of blank space precedes and follows the passage.
3) A textual frame is provided by the lone, italicized "Et:" and the concluding bibliographic reference, both of which are offset.
4) A visual demarcation in a margin-to-margin line of points comes before and after the text.
5) The Latin quotation is printed in a different font than the surrounding English.


And he fell out of a window, Count Giacomo,
Three days after his death, that was years later in Naples,
For trusting Ferdinando of Naples,
And old Wattle could do nothing about it.

Et:

. . . . . .

NTEREA PRO GRADIBUS BASILICÆ S. PIETRI EX ARIDA MATERIA INGENS PYRA EXTRUITUR IN CUJUS SUMMITATE IMAGO SIGISMUNDI COLLOCATUR HOMINIS LINEAMENTA, ET VESTIMENTI MODUM ADEO PROPRIE REDDENS, UT VERA MAGIS PERSONA, QUAM IMAGO VIDERETUR; NE QUEM TAMEN IMAGO FALLERET, ET SCRIPTURA EX ORE PRODIIT, QUÆ DICERET: SIGISMUNDUS HIC EGO SUM MALATESTA, FILIUS PANDULPHI, REX PRODITORUM, DEO ATQUE HOMINIBUS INFESTUS, SACRI CENSURA SENATUS IGNI DAMNATUS;

SCRIPTURUM MULTI LEGERUNT. DEINDE ASTANTE POPULO, IGNI IMMISSO, ET PYRA SIMULACRUM REPENTE FLAGRAVIT.

COM. PIO II. LIV. VII, P. 85
YRIARTE, P. 288.

. . . . . .

So that in the end that pot-scraping little runt Andreas
Benzi, da Siena
Got up to spout out the bunkum

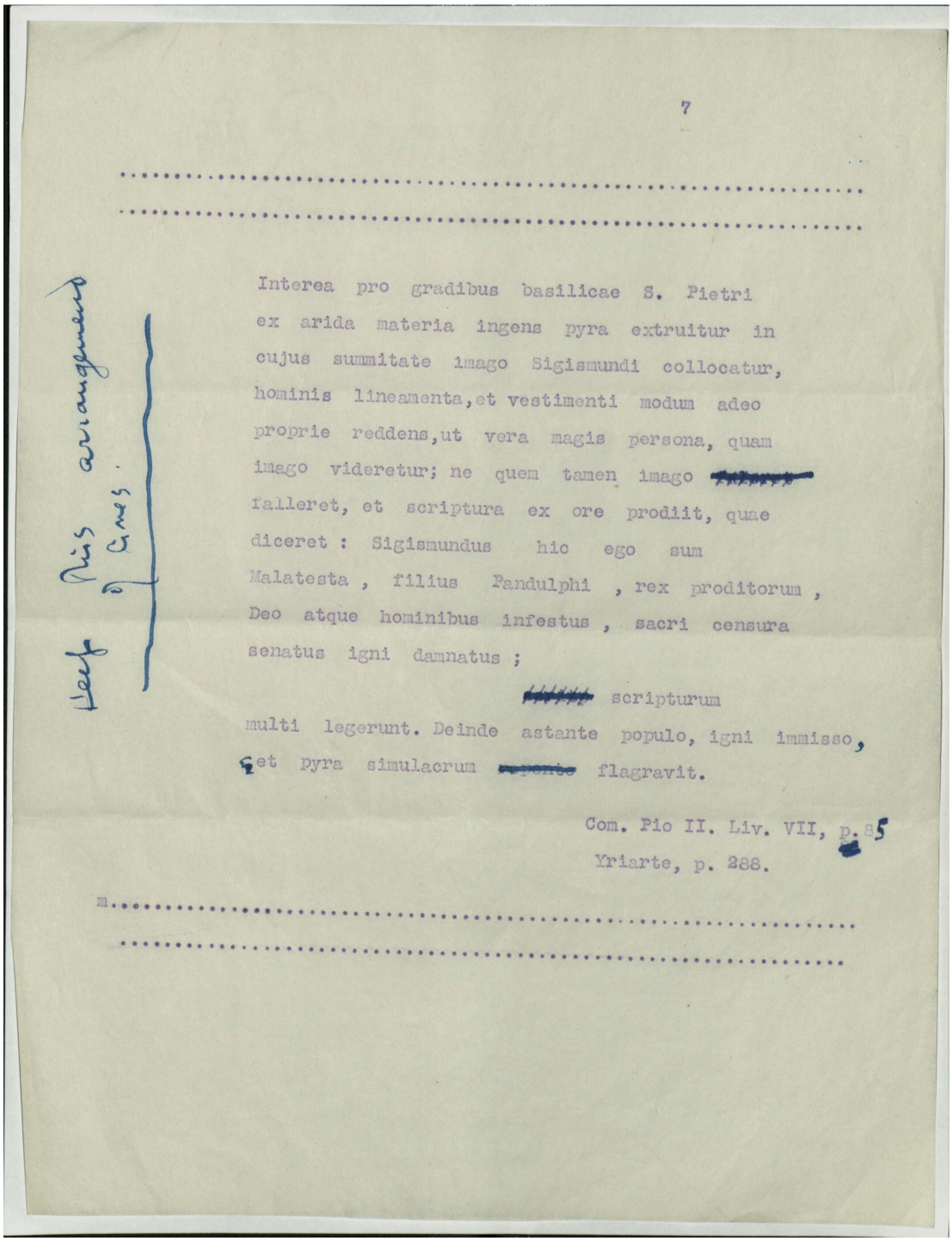
Figure 2.6: Excerpt from Canto X in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, with accompanying illustration by Henry Strater (38).

Pound's intention for visual distinction is evident from the passage's first inclusion in the drafts of the Malatesta Cantos—namely, the Watson typescript—where it was, in fact, given a page to itself (see figure 2.7). In the typescript, the perception of a visual frame is even stronger with *double* rows of points spanning the page above and below the text. As in the final version, these typographic borders visually signal the passage as a textual insertion; one can imagine the material document being cut along the dotted lines and pasted onto the new page. Furthermore, the draft attests to Pound's conscious attempt to reproduce, as nearly as possible, a solid block of left and right justified text, while still retaining an integrity of line breaks. The importance of such a layout is clearly expressed in Pound's underlined, handwritten note to the typesetter to "keep this arrangement of lines." The exclusion of Strater's illustration from the current New Directions edition, however, meant a significant change in spacing, and thus Pound's original arrangement for the first eleven lines is altered in order to maintain the block format.

The only exception is line 10: 44.2, where the first line of the inscription that accompanied the effigy, "SIGISMUNDUS HIC EGO SUM," is logically set on its own line. Doing so keeps the phrase intact, and allows the following line to remain as Pound had originally set it. Additionally, the spatial emphasis afforded by its separation and indentation—which also conserve the lateral position of the words' in the earlier arrangement/printing—give the declaration an air of defiance, as it breaks away and stands out. "Spoken" (*diceret*) by the effigy, and by extension Malatesta himself, such boldness is certainly ironic, in light of the context of Sigismondo's excommunication, total interdiction, and summons to be burned alive in Rome. However, this sense of resistance in absentia is significant to the recurrent rivalry between Malatesta and Pius II. In *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, this was further expressed by Strater's illustration, which "soars over the page like a defiant gesture," with the heraldic device's "letter *I* inked in flaming red."[32] The shield and crested military helmet do, indeed, appear to stand in threatening opposition to Pius's authoritative text. As the latter is read, the reader's gaze is repeatedly drawn back to crash against the looming illustration, whose size alone dominates the space of the page. Missing from the New Directions edition, Sigismondo's defiance is at least partially recovered

[32] Rainey, *Monument*, caption to Plate 8, and 208.

in the spatial distinction of line 44.2, though in a less effective, and undoubtedly less dramatic, manner.



7

Interea pro gradibus basilicae S. Pietri ex arida materia ingens pyra extruitur in cujus summitate imago Sigismundi collocatur, hominis lineamenta,et vestimenti modum adeo proprie reddens,ut vera magis persona, quam imago videretur; ne quem tamen imago [redacted] falleret, et scriptura ex ore prodiit, quae diceret : Sigismundus hic ego sum Malatesta , filius Pandulphi , rex proditorum , Deo atque hominibus infestus , sacri censura senatus igni damnatus ;

[redacted] scripturum multi legerunt. Deinde astante populo, igni immisso, et pyra simulacrum [redacted] flagravit.

Com. Pio II. Liv. VII, p. 85
Yriarte, p. 288.

Figure 2.7: Excerpt from Canto XI (present Canto X) of the Watson typescript. EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

The same attention to the role of space in determining how a line will function can be seen in the one deviation from the block format that Pound incorporated into

his first draft of the passage. The break serves to isolate the word *scripturum* (from the verb *scribo*: to scratch, engrave, "hence, to write, draw, or otherwise make lines, letters, figures, etc."), amended in later publications to *scripturam* (from *scriptura*: "a writing, written characters").[33] Specific attention is therefore drawn to the physicality of written characters as graphic marks, and to the relation between the physical act of writing (or printing) and that of engraving (or drawing). Taking these factors into consideration, Pound's lineation and font style are understood to represent the materiality of inscription in an actual concrete block. The lines appear as if etched into a stone monument, the evenness of the small capital letters adding to the uniformity of the square spatial arrangement.

The relation between the materiality of writing and that of engraving is again conveyed in the juxtaposition of the illustration. Strater's drawing itself appears as an engraving, and, in fact, was adapted from one reproduced in Charles Yriarte's *Un Condottiere au XVe siècle*. The basis for that engraving was a mid-15th-century medal created by Antonio di Puccio Pisano (a.k.a. Il Pisanello), which included—to the left of a fully armed Sigismondo—the traditional heraldic symbol of the Malatesta family.[34] Thus, a design stamped or scored in metal leads to a representative engraving, itself reproduced in the pages of Yriarte's text, from which Strater's illustration is adapted and finally printed in the pages of Pound's long "poem including history." Similarly, the text that Pound sets adjacent to the drawing is also traced back through Yriarte to its original source via the bibliographic reference. The material history of the text, then, runs parallel to the material history of the illustration, with the typography of the former resembling etched inscription so as to visually signal its equation to the latter.

As previously mentioned, the effigy of Sigismondo—the central subject of the Latin text—is a material "copy," just as Pius II's text was copied by Yriarte, and then Pound. Having established Strater's illustration to also be a copy of a copy, its own materiality is at an even greater proximity with that simulacrum of Sigismondo. The insignia composed of the letters /*S*/ and /*I*/—which are intertwined on the Pisanello medal and in the bas-reliefs of the Tempio Malatestiano—and the crested helmet are,

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[33] Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A New Latin Dictionary* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1891) 1647-48.

[34] For further details on the "Pisanello" medal, and later engraving thereof, see Rainey, *Monument*, 178 and 207-08.

like the effigy, *images* representing Malatesta.[35] But while one is burned into oblivion at Pius II's command, the other defies and resists such destruction. Carried down through nearly five hundred years of history, and ending up on the page of Canto X in Pound's work, the inclusion of the illustration is no mere fanciful decoration. The historical image becomes an image of history and civilization "*against* the current of power,"[36] and one that both amplifies and counters the historical text, which the poem's visio-spatial materiality suggests is itself yet another simulacrum.

Elaborate printing, such as exhibited in this passage, is, of course, not without historical precedents, and yet there remains a sense of the visually "rare [and] magnificent" (10: 45.29) in this page from the Malatesta Cantos. According to Borso d'Este's comment, paraphrased by Pound, which follows the description of the effigies, "the time was ill-suited / to *tanta novità*, such doings or innovations" (10: 45.31-32). However, having related the effigies to Pound's text, interpreting Borso's statement with regard to the latter initially yields quite the opposite conclusion. The innovations found in Pound's use of typography and the page, seem, in fact, perfectly suited to the early 20th century. From Stéphane Mallarmé's *Un Coup de Dés* to texts from the Italian and Russian Futurists, typographic experimentation in the early 1920s was very much in accord with the developing interests in materiality's role in poetry. Nevertheless, Pound's text-as-monumental-inscription, and the inclusion of Strater's heraldic illustration, gives the page a visually anachronistic quality—it appears more antique than contemporary. As Pound himself commented, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* was a "modern book jacked up to somewhere near level of *mediaeval mss*."[37] Thus, while in tune with the interests in typography found in certain forms of early modernism, Pound's historical, "manuscript" page stands in stark contrast to the avant-garde practices during the two preceding decades (embodied, for example, in a

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[35] The signification of the "S.I." insignia has been the question of great debate. On one side are those arguing for the romantic interpretation of ***S****igismundus* ***I****sotta*. This group includes works by Giuseppe Malatesta Garuffi, Gianmaria Mazzuchelli, Francesco Gaetano Battaglini, John Addington Symonds, Charles Yriarte, and Antonio Beltramelli et al. On the other side are those who affirm a strictly historical interpretation, according to the mid-quattrocento custom of rulers' names being abbreviated to the first two letters (i.e. ***SI****gismondo).* Notably, this group includes Malatesta's contemporary Gaspare Broglio, and the historical work of Giovanni Soranzo. For his part, the art historian Corrado Ricci argues the sign intentionally had an official, public meaning of *Sigismondo*, and a private one of *Sigismondo + Isotta*. Pound, although aware of the evidence for the opposite view, favored the romantic one nonetheless. For further details see Rainey, *Monument*, 186-98.

[36] Pound, *GK*, 159. Earlier in the same paragraph Pound states, "You get civilization in the [wax] seals," in particular that of Sallustio Malatesta (son of Sigismondo), which are "level with the [Pisanello] Medallions" of Isotta and Sigismondo.

[37] Pound, *L*, 256.

text like Filippo Marinetti's *Zang tumb tuuum*).[38] Considering solely the *look* of the page, then, Borso's comment that the effigies of Malatesta in 1462 were visually novel and odd applies equally to Canto X's extended Latin passage in 1925. It may further be stated that the typographic innovation of the passage parallels Sigismondo himself, who, in defying Rome and the papacy, also departed from contemporary practices.

The conflict between Malatesta and Pius II continues as Canto X moves forward, and Pound, likewise, maintains a use of typography to visually distinguish particular passages in order to reflect their aberration from the norm. Only nine lines after the effigy passage, Pound again offers the reader the language of Pius II (via Andrea del Benzi) regarding Sigisimondo:

> *Stupro, cæde, adulter,*
> *homocidia, parricidia ac periurus,*
> *presbitericidia, audax, libidinosus,*
> wives, jew-girls, nuns, necrophiliast, *fornicarium ac sicarium,*
> *proditor, raptor, incestuosus, incendiarius, ac*
> *concubinarius* (10: 44.20-25)

The italics of the list of charges against Malatesta differentiates the purported actions from the surrounding text, visually conveying their deviation from Catholic law, as well as the anomalous, or deviant, nature therein.[39] More importantly, however, the italics draw attention to the distinction of the language itself. As opposed to the uniform, rectangular capital letters and squared lines of the effigy passage, here Pius II's "best bear's-greased latinity" (10: 44.19) is printed in askew, lower-case italics over six uneven lines. The enumerated crimes attempt to expose Sigismondo as

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[38] Jerome McGann connects *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* to "medieval calligraphy or decorative printing," and to the ornamental features of Pre-Raphaelitism and the late-19th century Renaissance of Printing. *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993) 79. Olga Nikolova, in repsonse to McGann's claims, states, "In reality [Pound's] models were Renaissance books. [...] If Pound's book refers to [William] Morris, it is via Renaissance manuscripts and not the other way round." Furthermore, she also notes that William Bird's "press was quite old and the 'looks' was quite old too. If the machine came from more than a century ago, Pound was excited about a 'mss' feel of the edition." "Ezra Pound's Cantos de Luxe Preamble," *Modernism/Modernity* 15.1 (January 2008) 164, 159, respectively.

[39] Pound's choice of the English words in the fourth line of the set (not in italics) may have been done in order to facilitate a connection with "neither christian, jew, gentile" (10: 44.29) and the reference to Epicurus in the following line ("nor any sect pagan, *nisi forsitan epicureæ*"), thereby further emphasizing Pius II's apparent opinion that Sigismondo's sexual hedonism was devoid of limits of any kind, in particular religious.

unforgivably immoral and inhuman, and yet the stylistic and syntactic vulgarity of the language stands out as aberrant in its own right:

> The "bear's-greased" Latin is a jumble that manifests a lack of discrimination, the absence of an ordering moral intelligence and sensibility. These are general charges, heaped together by someone who does not trouble to distinguish truth from falsehood, the likely from the unlikely, but who simply gathers up whatever stones are at hand and hurls them haphazardly at the enemy. [40]

The pope intends to reveal Sigismondo to be a monster, but through the experience of the rhythmically aggressive, maladroitly organized language of Pius II, the reader is meant to understand something of the true character of the accuser, whom Pound describes five lines earlier as "that monstrous swollen, swelling s.o.b." That nature is reflected visually on the page through the slick italics and erratic line lengths of the list of crimes.

Pound's choice to distinguish the passage again highlights the conflict between Malatesta and Pius II, both of whose "true natures" are called into question. The two are juxtaposed figuratively, just as the effigy passage and the illustration of Sigismondo's insignia had previously done literally. Indications of such an opposition are found in Pound's early reading notes for the Malatesta Cantos. Box 70, folder 3141 of the Ezra Pound Papers at the Beinecke, contains two handwritten pages sketching lines that would eventually become parts of Canto X (44.12-45.22), and consisting mostly of lists of the Latin charges against Sigismondo. On the subsequent page, Pound wrote a condensed version of that list, much closer to the lines found in the final version, directly opposite an isometric drawing of the Church of San Francesco, or Tempio Malatestiano, over which Pound has written "Position of / Quadratura / = / impact of the gods" (see figure 2.8). Though this page of Pound's notes does not indicate an early intention to actually include such a drawing in the published version of the poem, it does suggest that he saw Pius II's overwrought and intentionally destructive language as diametrically opposed to the measured construction of Sigismondo's creative ambitions, embodied in the Tempio. While the Roman Catholic Pope is concerning himself with (primarily carnal) sins and terrestrial

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[40] Michael Harper, "Truth and Calliope: Ezra Pound's Malatesta," *PMLA*, 96.1 (January 1981) 96. Peter D'Epiro's comment is also useful: "[...] a string of syntactically free-floating epithets suggesting the ravings of an obsessed personality and demonstrating the true nature of the man with the elegant name of Aeneas Silvius" (79).

justice, Pound's sketch implies Malatesta's interest is in the "impact of the [pagan] gods."

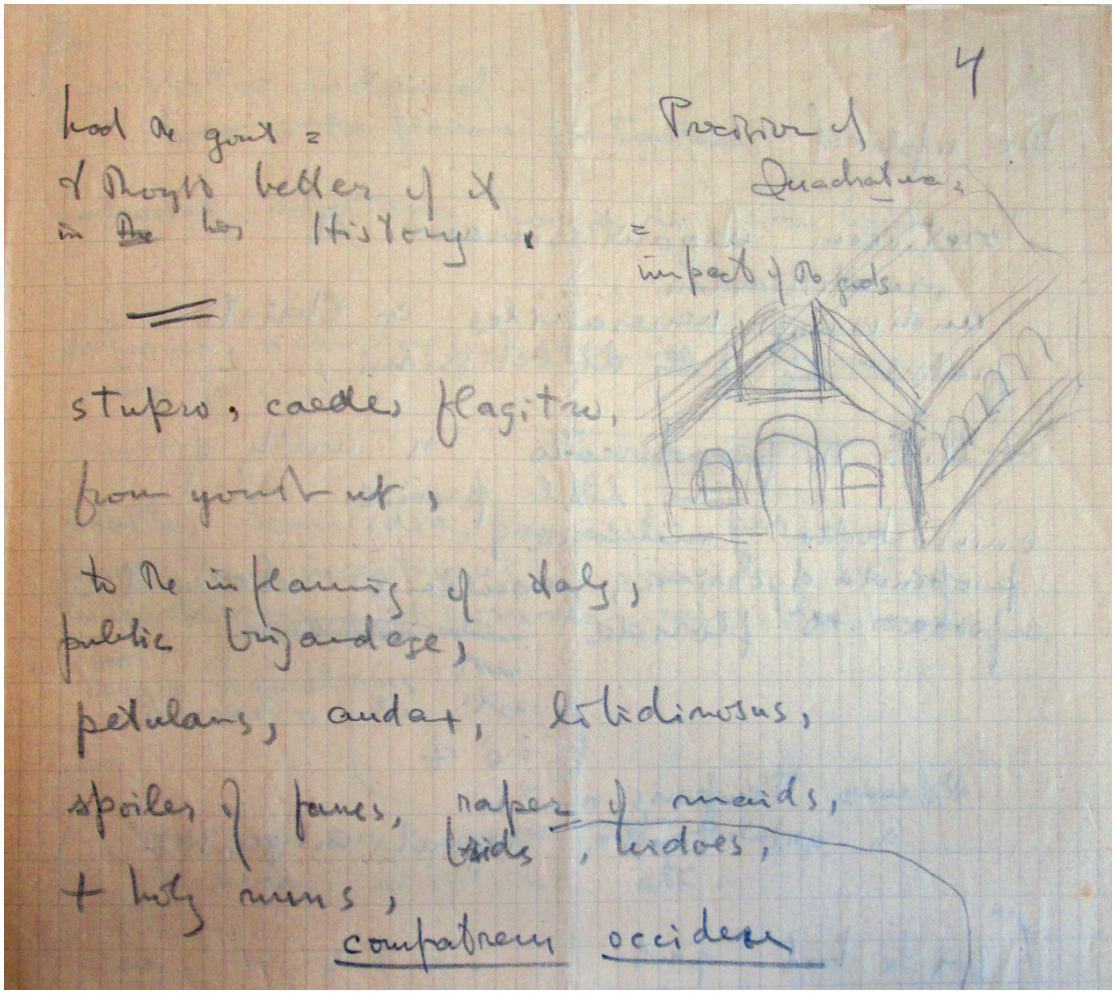

Figure 2.8: An early form of a passage in Canto X (44.20-25) next to a sketch of the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini, from Pound's reading notes. EPP Box 70 f. 3141.

In the final version of the poem, however, Sigismondo's pagan temple, as it so frequently does throughout the sequence, remains in the background. Pound does, though, address the religious conflict between the two men in this section of the sequence:

> and that he rejected the whole symbol of the apostles,
> and that he said the monks ought not to own property
> and that he disbelieved in the temporal power,
> neither christian, jew, gentile (10: 44.26-29)

The opposition, not by means of the temple, is instead represented through the visual accentuation of italics, a choice made not merely because it is Latin and not English,

but in order that the reader's attention be focused on contrasting the two men through the marked language, spoken by one in order to describe the other. That contrast is greatly aided by Pound's placement of the Latin passage, coming as it does so quickly after the Latin text regarding the effigy burning. In both cases, Pius II and Sigismondo are pitted against each other, and both texts are visually and spatially distinguished. Despite these similarities, the contrast in typography and the drastic linguistic shift—from long, formal phrasing to a succession of individual epithets—are more immediately apparent. Therefore, the reader is much more likely, at least initially, to compare and contrast Pius II's Latin lines in Roman capitals to his Latin words in lower-case italics, drawing conclusions in the process. Though the subject matter in both passages is, in fact, Sigismondo, Pound's use of typography effectively brings Pius II to the forefront.

In earlier drafts of the poem, Pound had adopted a different arrangement. The list of charges in the "Pre-Italy" drafts—in which the effigy passage is absent—begins with one line in Italian, followed by six in English, with only "ac heresia" in Latin. The effigy passage is included in the Watson typescript, but Pius II's list of charges arrives three full pages later, and is entirely in Italian except for the last four words "and guilty of heresia."[41] It is only in later revisions that Pound repositions the effigy passage and replaces the Italian with Latin, thereby more effectively linking the two proximate texts from Pius II. The two conflicting sides of Pius II can, therefore, be clearly seen on the page, and they are sides that result from a critical reading of linguistic and typographic styles.

As Pound worked towards the final form of this section in Canto X, the strategy of setting typographically differentiated passages in spatial proximity to one another developed further. Thus, he does not discard the list of charges in Italian that was switched out for Latin, but instead displaces it to the end of Pius II/Benzi's tirade against Sigismondo (10: 45.12-14). As a result, the nineteen-line section in English is visually bookended by two distinguished sets of lines, neither of which are in English, but both of which are printed in italics. The Italian and Latin obviously overlap in listing Malatesta's alleged crimes and sins—in both cases a clear emphasis is put on those of a sexual nature. However, in addition to being visually linked, they also have similar acoustic effects. The average reader, regardless of his or her level of Latin

[41] EPP Box 70 f. 3145 and Box 71 f. 3155, respectively.

and/or Italian, will certainly be able to deduce the English equivalent of a handful of words (e.g. *adulter, incestuosus, assassino, infidele, sodomitico,* etc.). Reading this block of text, he or she is likely to experience it in a uniquely material manner; namely, as an acoustic bombardment of repeated vowels. This is especially the case as concerns the Italian portion:

> *"LussuriOSO, incestuOSO, perfidE, sozzurE ac crapulonE,*
> *assassiNO, ingorDO, avaRO, superBO, infidelE*
> *fattorE di monetE falsE, sodomitiCO, uxoriciDO"*
>
> (10: 45.12-14, capitals added)

Both aurally and visually, the language seems repetitive to the point of excess. The materiality of the language itself contributes to the bombastic absurdity of Pius II's charges that Pound aims to communicate, later expressed more directly when "the lump lot" is entrusted to a "kid-slapping fanatic," "calling rumour" in order to convict Sigismondo (10: 45.23-27), whom Pound then compares to the crucified Christ (10: 46.2). In the notes and drafts of the Malatesta Cantos, Pound went through a number of variations of these lines, as well as those in Latin, before deciding on the desired combination of words. One page of notes contains eight handwritten lines listing twenty-two crimes, six of which Pound underlined or marked in red pencil, and of which a total of ten are present in the published version. In the Watson typescript, Pound composed six lines in Italian, later edited down to three.[42] Revisions such as these demonstrate Pound's interest in language *as language*; beyond the signification of the words read in combination, the poet is concerned with how they will be seen and heard.

Only two lines after the Italian, Canto X returns to the words of Pius II, again printed in italics, which comment on the preceding language:

> I mean after Pio had said, or at least Pio says that he
> Said that this was elegant oratory "*Orationem*
> *Elegantissimam et ornatissimam*
> *Audivimus venerabilis in Xti fratres ac dilectissimi*
> *filii*... (stone in his bladder
> *testibus idoneis*) (10: 45.17-22)

[42] EPP Box 70 f. 3142 and Box 71 f. 3155, respectively. Manuscript or typescript pages containing other variations and drafts of the relevant passages can be found in Box 70 f. 3141 and the "Pre-Italy" drafts in Box 70 f. 3145, as well as in Box 71 f. 3164.

Typographically these lines are linked to the prior lists of crimes, visually bringing the three groups into juxtaposition. The mechanical repetition found in the catalog of charges against Sigismondo is praised with a series of grandiloquent superlatives, and the juxtaposition serves to emphasize the irony of Pius II claiming the overblown series of aberrant, or abhorrent, actions to be "elegant oratory." The quotation bears a similar acoustic structure to that of the Latin and Italian groups—namely, heavily assonant and alliterative word-endings—and this stylistic resemblance is foregrounded through typographic correspondence. Within Canto X these three fragments are thereby made to form a kind of whole, providing a more complete view (on the basis of Pound's personal reading) of one of Sigismondo's primary enemies through language alone. The entirety of Pius/Benzi's tirade against Malatesta is framed on one side by the charges in Latin, and on the other by those in Italian. That framework, and its contents, is then visually tied to the commentary and critique of it, which happens to come from Pius himself. Pound uses the materiality of the page to display the closed circuit of the papacy's language and actions, consequently implying that the suspicion he advocates for should be applied to any reading of them.

Characteristic of the program of fragmentation in the Malatesta Cantos is Pound's utilization of typography in order that the individual excerpts, quotations, and passages construct not only the view of Sigismondo that Pound aimed to convey, but also impart an understanding of the textuality of historical documentation as a materially complex signifier. From the use of font style on the level of the individual word and letter, to spatial arrangement on the level of the composed set of lines, the sequence's focus on materiality is realized on the scale of the page's visual field. It is precisely the concrete unit of the page—whose structure joins one fragment to another—that incorporates localized instances of materiality into a more expansive one, which both exploits and subverts the spatiotemporal restrictions of the conventional, linear reading. The poem's articulation of ideas both historical and contemporaneous, and the subsequent interpretations of them, is dependent upon a simultaneous view of the page as a whole, whereby one is drawn forward and pulled back by their unique typographic features so as to progressively blur the sense of the temporal within the experience of the spatial.

Part of the poet's inspiration for such structural innovations was the design and construction of the Tempio Malatestiano. As briefly mentioned above, this important building stands as a backdrop for the cantos' portrayal of Sigismondo, and the events of his life, and the focus of the subsequent chapter turns to an analysis of its poetic function throughout the composition of the sequence. In an analogous fashion to how the poem's typographic qualities often serve to clarify the historical subject matter, the Tempio serves as an artistic model that plays a central role in defining the metaphrastic materiality of Pound's approach to visual textuality. An object of great admiration for the poet, the symbolic significance he attached to its singular history and aesthetic informed the poetics he developed in attempting to archive the temple's architectural language.

DRAFTS: CANTOS IN CONCRETE

"We intuit the author from the architecture, from the traces he has left."

— Ben Lerner[1]

THE TEMPIO MALATESTIANO IN CANTOS VIII AND IX

Ezra Pound's fascination with Sigismondo was due in no small part to the "renaissance" quality Pound saw embodied and realized by Malatesta. With a skillful artistic eye and a mind for military strategy, the man seemed a complex of contradictions, whose ability to "make it new" Pound admired. A condottiere with the sensibility of the poet, in unending throes of political calamity and personal passions, Sigismondo was the kind of amalgamation of history and culture that Pound's modern epic sought to include as a representative figure. In Pound's mind, he came to exemplify the definition of the German ethnologist Leo Frobenius's concept of *paideuma*, which Pound had reformulated from "the spiritual essence of a culture," to "the tangle or complex of the inrooted ideas of any period."[2] At the same time, the Tempio Malatestiano—the present-day cathedral of Rimini—became the material expression par excellence of "the gristly roots of ideas that are in action" during the Quattrocento.[3] Considered innovative or overly esoteric, honorable or controversial, the temple was, nevertheless, undoubtedly an architectural triumph, and for Pound, a high-water mark of artistry and civilization. In composing the Malatesta Cantos, Pound worked progressively towards a view of the Tempio as both the visible

[1] Ben Lerner, Afterword to *Selected Poems*, by Keith Waldrop (Oakland, CA: Omnidawn, 2016) 306.

[2] Leo Frobenius, *Leo Frobenius on African History, Art, and Culture: An Anthology*, ed. Eike Haberland (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2014) 21. The concept was first published in a work entitled *Paideuma: Umrisse einer Kultur- und Seelenlehre* (Munich: Oskar Beck, 1921). Pound's definition is found in *Guide to Kulchur*, 57.

[3] Pound, *GK*, 58. The quotation is a second wording Pound offers as a definition of *paideuma*. Elsewhere the phrase is modified to read, "a concept implying a tangle of ideas, mental habits, predispositions which make the mind of an era." *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose: Contributions to Periodicals*, Vol. 7, eds. Lea Baechler, A. Walton Litz, and James Logenbach (New York: Garland, 1991) 77.

documentation of Sigismondo's larger-than-life character and ambitions, and a model for the cantos' poetics.

The analysis to follow first focuses on how Pound introduces the Tempio into his sequence, and, through its presentation in Canto VIII, establishes a parallel between the temple's architectural aesthetic and Pound's documentary method. Tracking the compositional development of passages referring to the building through Pound's notes and drafts, the role of the Tempio as a structural metaphor for the poems' materiality is examined, with specific attention paid to the poet's use of typography to extend the temple's significance to larger thematic concerns. Being built into the visual construction of the cantos, the architecture's combinatory approach to seemingly disparate artistic styles and historical threads is then developed in several key passages in Canto IX, followed by an in-depth study of the post-bag section of this poem. Pound's archival methodology of layering the languages and texts of the past and present according to a visio-spatial logic is argued as analogous to the repurposing of found materials in the Tempio's architectural palimpsest. The critical discussion of the temple's presence as a material "text" in the background of the Malatesta Cantos is continued through the final two poems, completing the sequence's network of references, through which Pound conveys the fragmentary history's paradoxical contemporaneity.

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS

The spatial arrangement of fragments as part of Pound's documentary method lends a unique visual quality to the structural devices of the Malatesta Cantos. Over the course of the four poems, and throughout the compositional development found in the numerous drafts, Pound is seen to be gradually assembling the materials out of which his epic is constructed. In one such draft, the materiality of these fragments as composed blocks of texts, to be organized and reorganized into a meaningful synthesis, is apparent when Pound ends it by simply indicating the central characters of them, and how they are to be juxtaposed:

////
Sforza and Venice.
///
Tempio.
and Alfonso.

⟨gisors⟩
But got up the building.
The week before Siena.

the tempio ...
⟨Calixt⟩
. . . . . .

/// ⟨Louis IX⟩
Sforza
Pio ... Cosimo
Borso
//// Sono venuto a mal passo
Morea
Stick of the rocket. Paul II
Mort.
Isotta. blue robe brushing the grass.

Verona.
⟨] Novello
] Nov.
Urbino
] mail bag] Valerio
] Nov. ⟩[4]

The skeletal structure of this draft displays Pound's compositional approach to constructing the pages of the Malatesta Cantos with a specific regard for how a series of history's episodic materials will be rearranged. Pound brackets the space for previously composed blocks of text, arranging them by stacking and apposing the pertinent figures from the Italian Renaissance, occasionally demarcated by Pound's often used series of slashes. From the first draft to the revisions of the Watson typescript, the poet continually shifted the events of Sigismondo's life, bypassing chronology, by restructuring the textual fragments of each page, as well as the order of the pages themselves. Through such rearrangements the figure of Sigismondo, the axis of the sequence, emerges alongside his foremost achievement in the four cantos: the construction of the Tempio Malatestiano.

In the passage quoted above, the temple is mentioned three times, suggesting, thematically, Sigismondo's tenacity in the face of adversity, and, compositionally, the recurring centrality of the building's symbolic significance. While Pound's single Malatesta canto gradually expanded into four over the course of his continued

[4] EPP Box 70 f. 3152.

research on Sigismondo, the temple became representative of his own poetics, in addition to his literary and cultural ambitions. Thus, in the pages grouped and labeled "Drafts pre-Ital"—which, closer to a set of typed notes, precede the first formal drafts of the Malatesta Cantos—this partially cancelled passage is found:

> ~~Chien de metier,~~
> ~~hopelessness of writing an epic,~~
> chien de metier,
> ~~hopelessness of building~~ a temple,
> in Romagna [...].[5]

Just as the Malatesta Cantos would occupy a central position in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, and would be of the utmost importance to the design of *The Cantos* as a whole, so would the Tempio Malatestiano for the sequence itself. Pound's early research, particularly Charles Yriarte's work and Antonio Beltramelli's *Un tempio d'amore*, led him to adopt a view of the refurbished Church of San Francesco in Rimini as inspired by a love poem allegedly written by Sigismondo to Isotta degli Atti, and indeed, as itself a sort of architectural poem.[6]

With regard to materiality, the developing theme of the Tempio in the Malatesta Cantos correlates to, and conveys, the textual construction of the pages. In Pound's early drafts, the architectural and sculptural parallel between the cantos and the temple is more explicit than in the later drafts and, eventually, the published versions. An example is found in the following lines from the Pre-Italy drafts, which form a part of a lengthier ekphrastic passage on the Tempio:

> For at a given moment the dumb stone took shape,
> and of dead slabs, live figures rose,
> treading the dolphins, lyra aegyptiorum,
> lygdiorum cithera. scraping the viel strings,
> thumpihng on tympana.[7]

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[5] EPP Box 70 f. 3145.

[6] Beltramelli's work (1912) posits that the temple was built in honor of Sigismondo's mistress (and later third wife) Isotta, due in part to the interpretation of interior and exterior decorations and sculptures. In Yriarte's work, the love poem is argued to be the key to such iconography. Following Yriarte, Pasquale Villari later wrote in an 1886 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* that the decorations originated in the same poem, a claim repeated in the 1908 edition of the Baedeker travel guide to central Italy, which Pound used when first visiting the building in May 1922. For further details on Pound's historical conception of the Tempio see Lawrence Rainey, "Ezra Pound in the Temple of History," in *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[7] EPP Box 70 f. 3145.

The once mute stones of the temple are linked to melody (*lyra*, *cithera*, and *viel strings*) and rhythm (*tympana*), and the structure is then figuratively made to sing, as if a lyric poem. In short, the material is shaped to speak. Pound returns to the same equation in a subsequent draft, where the temple is linked not only to music (here Provençal song) but also to *voice* in general:

> Charlemagne, Poictiers, bringing his
> jongleurs, and viel players out of Spain
> but here Rimini, the voice, the stone,
> e gai saber,
> behind it all, the urge to refound the world.[8]

These lines more clearly demonstrate the materiality of the motif by setting the acoustic material of song immediately adjacent to the visual material of the temple, an apposition that connects both to the geographic space of Rimini. Spatial dimensions are thus given to "the voice" as it is embodied in concrete form; or, as Pound would state in a more explicit line from a later typescript draft, there is "a song caught in the stone."[9]

Although music and poetry are often discussed together—particularly in the case of the lyric—the move from *song* to the more general *voice* is a significant one, as the latter term applies equally to a wider range of texts. For the Malatesta Cantos, that range includes lyric poetry, historical works, legal documents, and letters; in other words, the voice as it is represented in various genres on the visual page. Given the textual basis of the sequence's poetics, Pound's further step from *voice* to *word*, a page later in the same draft, seems only logical:

> Neptunes seat, Apollinaire, rained from the sea
> washed marbles, but here ⟨ (⟩Rimini, ⟨) ⟩ ~~and~~ the graces,
> and the genius loci,
> Fragments against his ruin,
> Sigismundo's -- ~~il ll some to the point in a moment~~
>
> ~~The urge~~, life in a setting, and the word made stone.
> Against his ruin and the house's ruin ~~fifty years~~ later
> . . . . . .
> Fragments against his ruin,

[8] EPP Box 70 f. 3149.

[9] EPP Box 70 f. 3152. Several pages later, though Pound cancelled the line by hand, the draft revisits the motif: "For the stones' sake or the song's sake, follow him."

~~at 51~~, his head in Isotta's lap.
〈 [sono venuto
a mal passo. 〉[10]

This progression from *music* to *voice* to the concretized *word*, conveys an increasing attention to the visual materiality of the sequence, and further emphasizes the parallel between the material construction of the Tempio and that of Pound's text.

In reference to a church from the Italian Renaissance, the phrase "word made stone" carries with it a Biblical connotation, recalling Moses and the Ten Commandments.[11] Taken in conjunction with the temple's Neoplatonic and Pythagorean characteristics, and with Pound's quotation in Canto IX that the temple was "so full of pagan works" (9: 41.10), the irony of this veiled allusion imparts Pound's view of the Tempio as "a jumble and junk shop."[12] As much as the temple is a monument to "clean and beneficent Christianity," so is it to pagan mythology, and (following Pound's view) as much as it was built in honor of Isotta, so was it in honor of Sigismondo himself.[13] The construction of the building is fundamentally fragmented, combining multiple religions, histories, time periods, and materials. As a transformation of the Church of San Francesco, the construction of the Tempio Malatestiano was itself a palimpsest—Leon Battista Alberti's architectural shell was built around the existing façade, resulting in the partial visibility of the earlier Gothic windows through the Roman arches. Furthermore, the architectural transformation was only half-completed, as Sigismondo eventually lacked the financial means to see the project through. In its remaining, abandoned state, the temple, therefore, is a material representation of a fragmented vision. Visitors to the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini see only a part of the original, unrealized whole.

The significance of the Tempio's fragmentation to Pound's presentation of Malatesta is particularly evident in the passage cited immediately above. In no other draft does Pound insist as heavily on the relationship between the fragmented temple and the fragmentation of Sigismondo's life. Over a passage of fourteen lines, or less if

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[10] EPP Box 70 f. 3149.

[11] "When [the Lord] had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God." (Exodus 31:18). "Now the Lord said to Moses, 'Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered'" (Exodus 34:1). *New American Standard Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[12] Pound, *GK*, frontispiece.

[13] Pound, *GK*, 301.

edited for cancellations and handwriting, the line taken from Eliot is mentioned three times. Though only a single occurrence would be retained in the final version of the sequence, it is clear that Pound viewed the building of a temple out of material fragments from multiple traditions as the documentation of Sigismondo's ambitions, despite his downfall. Its partial construction runs parallel to Malatesta's partial destruction at the hands of his enemies. The passage above ends with Sigismondo's death, but in the final version, Pound opted for an ending that portrays Sigismondo as defeated, but—in a humorous mood—far from broken. Erasure is incomplete, and, like the Tempio, a notion of the historical is read through the contemporary.

Sigismondo's ambitious creativity in attempting, with Alberti's expertise, to refurbish and renew the Church of San Francesco in Rimini while still preserving a sense of the structure's tradition—to "make it new," in other words—certainly resonated with Pound, who saw in the Tempio's seamless blending of histories and styles a parallel to his own artistic project of *The Cantos*. The following passage from one of Pound's early manuscript drafts demonstrates his interest in the Tempio's embodiment of the kind of documentary poetics that Pound would adopt as the foundation for the construction of his Malatesta Cantos.

> The grained stones, the fragments of Greek inscription.
> the putti, and the wreathes, insignia of Ixotta,
> Stone roses and heavy wreaths,
> the portal, like the arch of Augustus,
> Roma in petto,
> octavo for the folio,
> but willed, to the end, willed, that the temple be there,
> testavit, rents out of Rhodes
> the faint fragments of fortune,
> that Alberti's dome shd. rise[14]

In his description, Pound attempts to convey at least some of the span and variety of styles present in the temple's decor: Greek, Roman, and the Renaissance.[15] The multiple traditions and histories are folded into one another, forming a single "text," as suggested by the line at the center of the passage "octavo for the folio," or a book

[14] EPP Box 71 f. 3154.

[15] The interior of the temple included Agostino di Duccio's bas-reliefs depicting Neoplatonic and Pythagorean allusions, classical deities, the zodiac, and mythological and allegorical figures of the liberal arts. Photographs can be found in Hugh Kenner's *The Pound Era*. For a full-length study, see *Il tempio malatestiano* (Rome: Bestetti & Tumminelli, 1924) by Corrado Ricci, with whom Pound conversed.

resulting from folding the printed sheets into eight leaves (equal to sixteen pages). The passage's heavy focus on the visual is evident, as the poet's eye jumps from one decorative design to the next, but in the second half, the symbolic significance of the temple emerges, and what is seen in the decor is Sigismondo's ambition and will. Thus "the fragments of Greek inscription" become "the faint fragments of fortune," and, indeed, the temple is viewed as a sort of will and testament (*testavit*) to Malatesta's life. Pound's own documentary text in the Malatesta Cantos achieves, at least partly, that same purpose. Jumping from one moment, fragment, or style to the next, according to its own modernist architecture, the text attempts to reconstruct the many facets of Sigismondo.

As far as the compositional development of the four cantos is concerned, two important aspects may be gleaned from the early drafts, from which the above passages were quoted. The first is that Pound's view and treatment of the Tempio progressively assumed a more precisely visual nature. The lines on Guillaume Poictiers and Provençal song remain in the final version of Canto VIII (32.22-25), but no longer make any direct reference to the temple. The building is present in the subtlest of ways in the mention of the setting by the Marecchia River, where Rimini is situated, and from which the temple is less than a kilometer away. As a result, the temple is shifted from the foreground to the background. This move relates to the second aspect, namely, the much greater frequency of explicit reference to the Tempio in the early drafts, as well as devoting longer passages to its description and/or symbolic importance. In any case, for the final version of the Malatesta Cantos many of those lines were cancelled, leaving for the most part only brief, relatively dispersed, direct allusions to the temple. Not including the post-bag letters in Canto IX—a section whose relationship with the Tempio is examined later—there remains one in Canto VIII (32.16), four in Canto IX (35.24, 36.5, 36.16-19, 41.10-16), zero in Canto X, and one in Canto XI (49.30-33). Consequently, while the temple and its construction are certainly brought to the forefront in the post-bag section, in general, Sigismondo's grand project lingers quietly beneath the surface of the sequence.

It should not, however, be assumed that as the work on the Malatesta Cantos continued past the early drafts, the Church of San Francesco in Rimini gradually lost its significance for Pound. In the early stages of the compositional process, Pound inserted frequent, direct allusions to the Tempio, using them as landmarks to punctuate the reading of Sigismondo's story. In later stages, though, he opts for a

different technique, whereby the Tempio would serve as a structural metaphor for the series as a whole—a template of sorts. At any given moment, then, while the temple may not be explicitly voiced, its aesthetic is still seen in the visio-material poetics of Pound's sequence. The construction of the Tempio Malatestiano, it may be said, is *built into* the text.

The very first mention of the temple comes in Sigismondo's letter to Giovanni de' Medici at the beginning of Canto VIII (28.27-29.2). The subject matter of the passage is, nevertheless, the "Maestro di pentore"—commonly thought to be Piero della Francesca—and the synecdochic references to the temple in "the walls" and "the chapels" are simply in service of the focus on Malatesta's patronage. The first true appearance of the Tempio arrives near the end of the canto. "Appearance" is a fitting term, as the line is visually distinct from the lines before and after it, standing out among them as the temple itself surely did amidst the other surrounding structures:

> Commanded the Milanese in the spring,
> the Venetians at midsummer,
> The Milanese in the autumn,
> And was Naples' ally in October,
> He, Sigismundo, *templum ædificavit*
> In Romagna, teeming with cattle thieves,
> with the game lost in mid-channel,
> And never quite lost till' 50,
> and never quite lost till the end, in Romagna
> So that Galeaz sold Pèsaro "to get pay for his cattle."
>
> (8: 32.12-21)[16]

Pound inserts the line within a list of Sigismondo's affairs as lord of Rimini, and as condottiere: shifting alliances, political plays, victory, defeat, and three separate references to theft. The context in which the reader first encounters the temple is significant, for amongst all of Malatesta's occupations, roles, and achievements, that of the builder of the temple was one of the most (if not the most) important to Pound. As he would later write in *Guide to Kulchur*, regarding the Tempio Malatestiano, "There is no other single man's effort equally registered," and "It is perhaps the apex of what one man has embodied in the last 1000 years of the Occident. A cultural 'high'

[16] The Latin translates to "built a temple." However, Lewis and Short's first two definitions for *templum* are "a space marked out," and "an open, clear, broad space." *A New Latin Dictionary* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1891) 1850. Thus, with regard to typography and visual materiality in the Malatesta Cantos' structural relation to the Tempio, it is useful to consider a more literal translation, such as "[He] built an open, marked *space*," in conjunction with the standard one.

is marked."[17] The temple is therefore a prominent achievement not only in Malatesta's life, but also in Renaissance Italy, and in occidental history.

Consequently, as this first line announces, the temple is frequently set apart visually from the other text within the Malatesta Cantos. The indentation of the line does help to separate it from the politically oriented lines, but, as others are also indented, the effect is minimal. The most distinguishing features of the line are certainly the italics, and Pound's choice of Latin to introduce the Tempio into the sequence. The typographic distinction alone would not make the line entirely unique within this section of the poem, for nine lines earlier italics are also found: "Who [Francesco Sforza] stole Pèsaro in October (as Broglio says '*bestialemente*')." From an historical point of view, linking these lines is not without its significance: in the context of savage thievery, Sigismondo erected his cultural monument—an artistic achievement "managed *against* the current of power," and, one might add, in opposition to the socio-cultural norms.[18]

However, printing the line in italics *and* in Latin does effectively set the words apart from the lines immediately preceding it—the nearest italicized Latin is found sixty lines prior—and all of the subsequent lines in Canto VIII. The irony of referencing a temple that was, in the words of Pius II (quoted later in Canto IX, 41.10), "so full of pagan works," in the liturgical language of the Roman Catholic Church was surely not lost on Pound. Pius II was, after all, one of Sigismondo's primary enemies. In another sense, the choice of Latin is perfectly suited to the Tempio, whose inclusion of representations of mythological deities links it to the ancient Roman Empire and its Latin literature. Furthermore, it is from this classical language that Romance languages, notably Italian, are derived; therefore, just as the Tempio unifies historical artistic traditions, "He, Sigismundo, *templum ædificavit*" suggests a linguistic tradition and continuity. The classical Latin—a so-called "dead" language in the 20th century—is written into the contemporary by virtue of poetic material.

More than conventional script, the italics emphasize this written aspect, if not by its closer resemblance to handwriting, then by the fact that it visually draws the reader's attention to the materiality of the written/printed word. The effect of seeing

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[17] Pound, *GK*, frontispiece, 159.
[18] Pound, *GK*, 159.

the text of "templum ædificavit" *as* text, in combination with the vision of the Tempio as "the word made stone," underlines the connection Pound forms between his Malatesta Cantos and Sigismondo's building. At this point in Canto VIII, the reader has already been confronted with a similar experience of the materiality of the written word in the address to the Medici letter that opens the sequence. In fact, the combination of the Latin language with the italics script more immediately recalls line 30.24—"*Magnifico, compater et carissime*"—which itself is an echo of the opening to the Medici letter that precedes it. The typographic and linguistic connection between the first statement of Sigismondo's construction of the temple and the half-erased address of the letter—the first words from Sigismondo the reader encounters—is not coincidental. Analogous to the envelope's addressee, the Tempio also bears the aesthetic of fragmentation in several senses.

First, regarding the interior, the building's design seeks to cohere a series of diverse elements gathered from different sources. As stated above, the constituent tesserae are wide-ranging and varied, making of the temple, in Pound's words, "a jumble and junk shop." But the resultant mosaic "nevertheless registers a concept."[19] For Pound at least, the historical, religious, and philosophical fragments of the six principal chapels formed a meaningful whole. Second, regarding the exterior, under obligation to conserve the standing construction, Leon Battista Alberti's design involved building over and around the existing church. Gothic fragments of the former structure became congruous elements in the new Renaissance design, much like the excerpts of archival documents are integrated into Pound's cantos. Third, neither Alberti's architectural design for the exterior, nor Matteo de' Pasti's for the interior, were ever fully realized. Like the address of the Medici letter, the Tempio Malatestiano is only partially presented, a fragment awaiting completion.

Therefore, in more than one way, the building is an architectural palimpsest. "The filigree [is] hiding the gothic," as Pound states in Canto IX (41.13), but it does not hide it completely. The design for the Tempio involved layering the present over the past, and consequently juxtaposing differing artistic "languages," a compositional strategy that Pound would undertake in the Malatesta Cantos. A palimpsest also invites a consideration of material conservation and preservation. This notion also

[19] Pound, *GK*, frontispiece. In a passage from an early manuscript draft, Pound refers to the "mosaic walls" of the temple. EPP Box 70 f. 3149.

surfaces when viewing Pound's first line on the building of the temple in relation to the Medici letter's opening. The inclusion and "reproduction" of the truncated Medici address is an act of preserving, in a sense, the materiality of the text. A parallel is found in Sigismondo's attempt to "preserve" the remains of important humanists and philosophers, Isotta, and Sigismondo himself, in the temple's sarcophagi; however, this project, too, is fragmented in that only seven of the fourteen sarcophagi were filled.[20] Canto IX closes with the lines, "And the old sarcophagi, / such as lie, smothered in grass, by San Vitale" (41.15-16). Texts are lost, erased, or simply decay, and, as Pound wrote in a discarded passage from the Watson typescript, "empires slide to nothing here in the marsh-drift."[21] Pound's text attempts to dig in the archives and unearth such fragmented histories. Setting the line "He, Sigismundo, *templum ædificavit*" in typographic relation to the Medici letter—which he, Sigismondo, wrote—brings the nature of the parallel between text and temple into focus. In their fragmented states, both objects are visually and materially meaningful. There is documented history and culture in the partially erased and the half-built. Pound's project for the Malatesta Cantos embodies this parallel throughout: the sequence is as much a visual *construction* as the Tempio is a material *text*. They are both intended to be seen, as well as read—the architecture of the pages complemented by the narrative of the walls, built with "a touch of rhetoric in the whole" (9: 41.14).

An examination of the variants of this first line addressing the temple-text parallel, and of what formerly held its place as the first reference to the Tempio, in the early manuscript notes and drafts, and the later revisions, reveals two recurring foci: the action of physically constructing the temple, and the textual significance of its holistic approach to fragmentation. In the folder of Pre-Italy drafts—which include notes (both typed and handwritten), numerous cancellations, false starts, restarts, and variant wordings of a single line—there are three occurrences of the phrase, each in a slightly different form:

Diva Isotta, erected a temple (p. 8)

---

yet " raised a temple, in Ariminum,
~~raised up a temple to Gemisthus's gods~~ (p. 12)

---

[20] Terrell, 41.
[21] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

But arose : templum magnificum. He built a splendid
church, so full of images (p. 20)[22]

In each of these iterations, it is the fact that the temple was actually *built* that is foregrounded. As Pound writes elsewhere in the Pre-Italy drafts, despite all of the political, legal, and financial problems, "the point is the man built his temple." Furthermore, as exemplified in his focus on Sigismondo's dedicated patronage in the opening Medici letter, the relevant passages in Canto IX (notably in the post-bag letters), and the germane comments in *Guide to Kulchur*, part of Pound's fascination with the temple was the *process* by which Sigismondo amassed the necessary materials and got "the best there in Rimini" to make use of them.[23] Accordingly, what the Malatesta Cantos communicate with respect to the themes, and to poetics in general, stems as much from their compositional process—*how* they were built—as from the building materials themselves.

A major component of that constructional process, as discussed earlier, is the program of fragmentation. Mirroring the temple, signification is rooted in the combination of the pieces on the surface of the page, in order to "[register] a concept." One way Pound conveys this reflection is by associating the sequence to the temple through the line in which the building first appears. Had either of the first two quotations above been retained, the link of the Tempio's structure to the poem's construction would be weakened, as, lacking the typographic distinction of the italics[24] and the linguistic differentiation of the Latin, any connection to the opening Medici letter would be lost. Only the third quotation, which hints at the eventual wording Pound would settle on, resembles the current form of the line. However, not content to rely solely on that line's subtle linguistic connections, initially—and up until the last revisions to the sequence—Pound expressed the notion of the temple as a fragmentary palimpsest in a much more explicit fashion. The line from the Pre-Italy typescripts mentioned above is rephrased by Pound three lines later as "the point is: /

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[22] EPP Box 70 f. 3145.
[23] Pound, *GK*, 159.
[24] While the italics script is not possible on a typewriter, Pound frequently typed a joined series of dashes to underline the words he intended to be printed in italics. As can be seen above, no such underlining is present in the quoted lines from the Pre-Italy drafts.

the wall and the broken arch."[25] As Pound began composing the first drafts, the latter phrase was first modified, and then attached to the altered line from *The Waste Land* (as seen previously). Subsequently, the temple's incomplete state is again rewritten and displaced, becoming the first explicit mention of the Tempio in the Watson typescript:

> Say that Poictiers had it all in his saddlebags
> And the next notch here,
> The broken, unfinished temple, set by the
> sea's edge ...[26]

These lines were later discarded for the final draft, making "templum ædificavit" the earliest direct reference to the temple. This revision coincides with Pound's first typed version of the five-line, fragmented address for Giovanni de' Medici, which would remain unchanged for publication. What these series of changes illustrate is Pound's gradual move away from a straightforward announcement of the temple-text parallel, and the role of fragmented construction therein, to a reliance on typography and materiality to establish such a connection. As a result, the reader first encounters the Tempio Malatestiano not as part of the "façade" of the cantos' architecture—it is Sigismondo himself who appears front and center—but within the structure itself. As part of the inner-workings of the poems, the parallel invites the reader to see the page as constructed of material fragments whose interconnections visually direct the reading both vertically over the pages, and horizontally across the four cantos.

RECONSTRUCTING TRADITIONS

In light of this correlation between the Tempio and the poems, a reinterpretation of the last ten lines of Canto VIII adds to its complexity. In the prior discussion, Pound's use of polysyndeton was seen through the lens of sculpture and vorticist planes, offering a composite view of Sigismondo and his deeds. The piece-by-piece layering of condensed events may now also be seen as architectural. If the Tempio Malatestiano stands as the lasting testament to Sigismondo's life, and to the personality of the man himself, then the events of that life may be interpreted as the

[25] EPP Box 70 f. 3145.
[26] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

materials with which it is constructed. Pound's stacking, then, of event upon event—and from a more strictly visual perspective, of the nine anaphoric conjunctions—is the process of assembling an architectural text. "The word made stone" is expanded to the *text* made *edifice*. Once having stated that Sigismondo built a temple (*templum ædificavit*), Pound concludes Canto VIII with a moderately rapid-fire ending, building up to a decisive year in Malatesta's life. Simultaneously, Pound offers the reader a visual experience of his text being constructed, layer after layer, and stone upon stone. Thus reinterpreted, the passage demonstrates that the temple-text relation is not solely an abstract one, and the "concrete" structural metaphor of the Tempio that the Malatesta Cantos embody is here seen more plainly. The material space of the page is utilized in order to accentuate the accumulation of fragments into a unified whole. The right-hand column of /*And*/s is, so to speak, a glimpse of the mortar cementing the lines together. Just as the escalation in the last lines of Canto VIII carries over into Canto IX, this compositional technique is also continued and amplified in the next canto's opening section, to then later be reformulated in the post-bag letters.

However, the reader comes across several lines and passages that are crucial to establishing Pound's vision of the temple before reaching the post-bag section, where it receives the most extended development in the Malatesta Cantos. The first of these is in a small group of lines, part of which has been discussed previously, though not in relation to the temple:

> And Valturio said "as well for a sheep as a lamb"
> and this change-over (*hæc traditio*)
> As old bladder said "*rem eorum saluavit*"
> Saved the Florentine state; and that, maybe, was something.
> And "Florence our natural ally" as they said in the meeting
> for whatever that was worth afterward.
> And he began building the TEMPIO,
> and Polixena, his second wife, died. (9: 35.18-25)

The two short phrases in Latin make no reference to the temple, yet, having examined the line "He, Sigismundo, *templum ædificavit*" (8: 32.16) with regard to the visual materiality of the language, they may be seen to contain a subtle connection to the church. The italics alone provide a typographic link between the lines, but additionally, these two lines are encountered in a very similar context. Only thirteen

lines earlier, Pound refers for the second time to Broglio's qualification of Urbino and Sforza's dishonesty vis-à-vis the possession of Pesaro:

> And this he did *bestialemente;* that is Sforza did *bestialemente*
> as he had promised him, Sigismundo, *per capitoli*
> to see that he, Malatesta, should have Pèsaro" (9: 35.7-9)

In the previous canto, the comment was given nine lines before mentioning the temple. As a result, the reader experiences a moment of déjà vu: the visually accentuated "*hæc traditio* [...] *rem eorum saluavit*" read shortly after the typographically identical "*bestialemente*," exactly as "*templum ædificavit*" had been.

Furthermore, the resultant comparison between the lines reveals more tightly woven linguistic ties due to the Latin language. Given that the three phrases are not in immediate proximity on the same page, they cannot be said to rhyme in a strict sense; however, as intimated above, the reader does find a *visual* rhyme in the words:

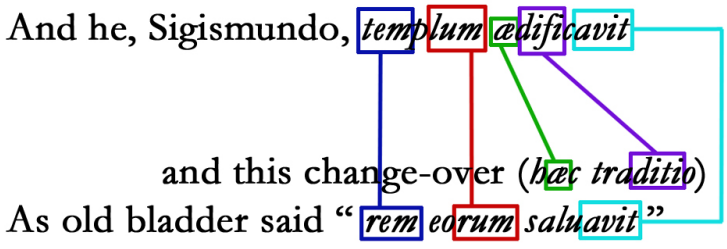

Figure 3.1: Diagram of the shared alliterative/assonant features between lines 8: 32.16 and 9: 35.19-20.

The homologous, visio-acoustic structure of these lines might justifiably be deemed negligible as mere cosmetic coincidence, if it was not for the more substantial significance concerning the representation of the Tempio that stems from reading the lines in parallel with one another. Both passages concern a particular action taken by Sigismondo: the verb *ædifico* (to build) in the first, and the verb *salvo* (to save) in the second. Considering the two together, as per the linguistic links illustrated above, the notions of salvation and restoration are consequently associated with the temple.[27] In

[27] In Canto CIII, Pound links the temple to restoration (or, "making it new") explicitly through a modified reappearance of the phrase: "nec Templum ædificavit / nec restituit rem / but not his fault by a damn sight" (103: 756.17-19); "he neither built a/the temple / nor restored anything." Terrell suggests the passage refers to U.S. President Buchanan, "a dedicated man filled with good intentions whose

other words, the event (*rem*) that saved/restored (*saluavit)* was the building of the temple (*templum ædificavit*). This is, of course, not to suggest that the temple's construction "saved the Florentine state;" it is the line from Canto IX which modifies the understanding of that from Canto VIII, and not the inverse. The Tempio Malatestiano, through Alberti's architectural ingenuity under Sigismondo's patronage, *saved* the 13th-century Church of San Francesco. Furthermore, Alberti, de' Pasti, and Agostino di Duccio's work *restored* certain stylistic features that pre-dated the original church; in particular, the Roman triumphal arches, and the Neoplatonic and mythological interior decorations. This interpretation is reinforced by "hæc traditio," whose ambiguity between "treachery" and "tradition" also applies to the construction of the Tempio: *treachery* (in the eyes of Pius II) for being "so full of pagan works it seemed less a temple for Christians than one for devil-worshipping heathens,"[28] and *tradition* for its incorporation of neo-paganism under Gemisthus Plethon's influence. The Tempio is, in fact, a philosophical and material "change-over." Pound's estimation of its restorative significance can hardly be overestimated—at one point in his reading notes for the Malatesta Cantos, he writes:

> & the world began again
> last October —
> & the Tempio – in October[29]

The relevance of this view of the temple to the cantos themselves is in the notion of a renewal of traditions through their integration into others. The Malatesta Cantos are not consistently operating in the documentary mode, but it is precisely its combination with the lyric and narrative modes that constitutes part of the uniqueness of Pound's poetics. The archival documents that Pound incorporates into the poems are "made new" in that they are figuratively, and perhaps literally, dusted off in order to shape their poetic potential. Moreover, the inclusion of such conventionally un-

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work came to naught" (673). The third line recalls the counter example of Sigismondo, whose remodel of the temple, as per Pound's comment in *Guide to Kulchur*, successfully overcame "the current of power" (159).

[28] "Aedificavit tamen nobile templum Arimini in honorem divi Fancisci ; verum ita gentilibus operibus implevit ut non tam Christia- norum quam Infidelium daemones adorantium templum esse videretur. Atque in eo concubinae suae tumulum erexit et artificio et lapide pulcherrimum adiecto titulo gentili more in hunc modum: Divae Isottae sacrum." Enea Silvio Piccolomini, *I Commentarii*, vol. 1, ed. Luigi Totaro (Milan: Adelphi, 1984) 366.

[29] EPP Box 70 f. 3139.

poetic texts—similar to Sigismondo's inclusion of "un-Christian" works in the Tempio—is a principal factor in what makes Pound's sequence innovative.

The very notion of a "poetic text" is, therefore, brought into question. Individual passages and sections of the Malatesta Cantos may be parsed and qualified as belonging to one genre or another easily enough, just as the tradition of a particular bas-relief in the Tempio may be readily and comfortably identified. However, it is in the combinatory structure of those constituent fragments where the conventional definitions of such qualifications breakdown. Lyricism and legalese, for example, arrange the space of the same page, mutually casting a shadow with its own particular tint. Like "the filigree hiding the gothic" (9: 41.13) in the temple, one style or genre is, in essence, layered over the other in a palimpsestic structure. The result of combining the two traditions is a new, third one—the poetry of the Tempio is not in the Roman or the Gothic alone, but in seeing one through the other. In a similar manner, Pound restores and renews the languages of Latin and 15th-century Italy through the utilization of archival documents from various textual genres. As seen in the lines quoted above, this allows the multidirectional interaction across pages between such languages to function as the means of the poems' processes of signification.

At the time of the publication of the Malatesta Cantos, "hæc traditio" may, in fact, have been the kind of terminology readers would be inclined to associate with the genre-blurring techniques and strategies of Pound's work—a kind of poetic "treachery." Shortly after Pound had sent James Sibley Watson of the *Dial* the final version of the sequence in May 1923, the co-editor Scofield Thayer expressed his view of the poems as "unbelievable rot."[30] However, from a contemporary vantage point—prior to which the techniques of Pound's modernist materiality have been repeatedly adopted, modified, and recast—what may have once been considered treacherous is now considered tradition.

If the reader happens to pass over the Latin in the passage from Canto IX without tying it back to the temple in the previous canto, Pound quickly provides a reminder with particular emphasis four lines later: "And he began building the

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[30] Nicholas Joost, *Scofield Thayer and "The Dial,"* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964) 173. Not long before, in October 1922, Thayer had made a more sweeping comment, stating, "I feel forced to refrain in the future from publishing such matter as the silly cantos of Ezra Pound [...]" (111).

TEMPIO" (9: 35.24). The line is a near paraphrase of that in Canto VIII, but chronologically precedes it by focusing on the importance of the beginning of construction. For a temple that was never ultimately finished, and therefore was always suspended in a state of being only just begun, the significance Pound placed on that initial moment is understandable.[31] This is seen in his handwritten reading notes, where set off at the top of one page he notes the specific date:

last day of October, 1447
=
Tempio begun
[32]

The emphasis of the heavily double-underlined words (in slightly larger handwriting), Pound later translated typographically to the prominence of the capital letters for "Tempio" in a revision to the Watson typescript.[33]

The choice of typography for the single word imparts a bold sense of permanence to the temple. On the page, the word appears fixed and immovable. Much like the Latin effigy passage in Canto X, here as well there is an impression of the word having been engraved in stone. While there is a sense of the etched-in-concrete, given the line's mention of the action verb *to build [up]*, one is more inclined to view

[31] These two lines are collated in a later occurence in *The Cantos*: "Templum aedificans, not yet marble, / 'Amphion!'" (90: 625.9-10). Here, "*building* a/the temple" points to its ongoing construction, and the incompletion is underscored by the mention of the absent marble. The connection of the Tempio to writing cantos is echoed in the second line: Amphion—a son of Zeus, and king of Thebes—"fortified the city with a *wall* magically conjured up by his *music*: at the sound of the *lyre* the *stones* moved into place by themselves" (Terrell, 541, emphasis added). Furthermore, three lines earlier in the poem, Pound mentions Castalia, which Terrell notes is "a fountain dedicated to Apollo on Mount Parnassus at Delphi" that is "known as the fount of poetic inspiration."

After Canto VIII, the five reappearances of the Latin phrase (altered or otherwise) all occur in the late cantos, suggesting the continuing symbolic importance of the forever incomplete Tempio: two in *Rock-Drill* (the quotation above, and 89: 616.26), and three in *Thrones* (103: 756.17—see footnote 27 in this chapter—106: 775.16, and 107: 778.4). Relating to this suspension, one may also consider the entire project of *The Cantos* itself, which Pound never officially, or satisfactorily, completed. The final section of the latest edition of *The Cantos*, entitled "Drafts & Fragments," contains, of note, the following lines: "my errors and wrecks lie about me [...] I cannot make it cohere (116: 816.1-3); "The dreams clash / and are shattered – / and that I tried to make a paradiso / terrestre. // I have tried to write Paradise" (Notes for CXVII et seq.: 822.6-10); "These lines are for the / ultimate CANTO // whatever I may write / in the interim" (Fragment (1966): 824.7-10).

[32] EPP Box 70 f. 3140. In the previous folder, among Pound's handwritten drafts of various passages, is found a precursor to this note: "And the world began again last October – / and the Tempio – in October."

[33] EPP Box 71 f. 3165. The line in this set of carbons is slightly different than the published version: "And he was building the TEMPIO." The subsequent change, whereby the *beginning* of the temple's construction became the principal verb, is further evidence of Pound's intention to highlight said moment.

the capital letters as a representation of the Tempio standing *out*, rather than carved *in*. The word *concrete*, then, is interpreted as both noun and adjective, and accordingly, the individual letters take the place of the building material ("the word made stone"), and the shape of the church itself. From the perspective of concrete poetry, a reader may see the lines and angles of the principal façade recalled in the /*T*/ and /*I*/, the layers of the cornice, imposts, and base course echoed in the /*E*/, the successive columns along the church's sides depicted in the /*M*/, and the curvature of the recurrent arches traced in the /*P*/ and /*O*/.

Such a reading of Pound's typographic choice for the line was certainly not lost on the poet himself. Evidence of his consciousness of the visual materiality that typed script afforded him is found throughout his letters, which Pound almost always composed on the typewriter. In one letter to William Carlos Williams, Pound types the word "flower" as "flowYer," adding the capital /*Y*/, in full bloom as it were, as a kind of typographic illustration.[34] Another letter written to E.E. Cummings—a poet particularly adept at using the typewriter for visual effect—is full of such material manipulation:

> You might send the poEms via me/ as I
> shd/ like in nanny case to see 'em.
>
> Seems to me the PyRAMid Press in Paris
> might do the poEMS unXpurg'd.
>
> I will havva try, when I get the lot. IF that
> meats wiff yr/Kumradly pleasure a nap-
> proval.
>
> Mrs A/R/O also expresses pleasure thet
> you shd/ be in th pyper.
> wot I mean IZ thet the mill/ieu
> iz favourabl.[35]

Commenting on Pound's "material and visual discourse," and the letter's use of "ideogrammic word-pictures," George Reynolds provides a concise analysis worth quoting at length:

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[34] Hugh Witemeyer ed., *Pound/Williams: Selected Letters of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams* (New York: New Directions, 1996) 314.

[35] Barry Ahearn ed., *Pound/Cummings: The Correspondence of Ezra Pound and E.E. Cummings* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996) 52.

> In this open linguistic field [...] the capitalisation of "A" and "M" creates a series of small visible 'pyramids' in the middle of their signifier; the capital "X" in the middle of "unXpurg'd" suggests a literal cross-ing out, as well as occupying the space that the initial letter "e" would occupy in a less self-expurging word. "Milieu" is broken down etymologically in an almost Joycean fashion: a line placed through its middle explores its original meaning in French ("middle") and its possible etymological composition from a word for "middle" (the OED suggests Latin, *medius*) and the French for "place" (*lieu*). [...] Pound's emphatic typography and abbreviation draws our attention to "m" sounds that proliferate throughout; how the "Pyramind Press of Paris" never existed and that Pound chose to rename the Obelisk Press so as to obtain the added rhythmic emphasis for alliteration.[36]

Beyond merely emphasizing the word *Tempio* on the page, its capitalization is a textual depiction of the structure itself. This second explicit mention of the temple is, like the first in Canto VIII, visually unique amongst the surrounding text. The line from Canto IX may, in fact, be interpreted as a concretization of the earlier "*templum ædificavit*."

As posited above, the typography used for the temple in Canto VIII connected it to prior instances of italics; in a similar manner, the capital letters in Canto IX invite a correlation with previous uses. The same typography is used in two separate moments in the opening canto. The first is Sigismondo's full name given after the letter to Giovanni de' Medici: "SIGISMUNDUS PANDOLPHUS DE MALATESTIS" (8: 29.22). Printed in this fashion, Sigismondo's name, as discussed earlier, is set in stark contrast to the fragmented remains of Giovanni de' Medici's name in the letter's address. Considering it in relation to the Tempio in line 35.24 of the following canto, the name takes on the same concrete permanence of the building adorned with his insignia ($) and emblems (the elephant and the rose). The suggestion is that both the temple and the Malatesta name—in other words, Sigismondo's achievements—will last beyond his eventual demise and passing. Pound returns to this sentiment in Canto XI, toward the end of the entire sequence, where, with the same typographic distinction, it is twice addressed more directly:

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[36] George Reynolds, "Pound's Letters: Towards a Poetics Including the EZpistolary," *Cambridge Literary Review* 1/2 (Lent 2010), 217-18.

And the writs run in Fano,
For the long room over the arches
Sub annulo piscatoris, palatium seu curiam OLIM *de Malatestis*.

(11: 50:10-12)

"When he got here from Sparta, the people
"Lit fires, and turned out yelling: 'PANDOLPHO'!"

(11: 51.28-29)[37]

Though not found on the Tempio itself, the Latin inscription in the first set of lines evokes a sense of the former glory of Malatesta, of which Pound considered the Tempio the epitome. While the intention of the inscription is to remind viewers/readers of Sigismondo's downfall, Pound's decision to print *olim* (i.e. formerly) in capital letters ironically undercuts the meaning of the word. In light of the previous examples of this typography, it appears to signify the enduring presence of Sigismondo, rather than his disappearance. The capital letters boldly declare amongst the italics that the "former" Malatesta—like the Tempio he had built—stood against "the times," being in defiance of the Catholic Church. The latter example above, the penultimate passage in the sequence, reinforces the lasting impact and popularity of Sigismondo, despite his final defeat. As the reader first encountered the name in Canto VIII, here again *Pandolpho* is capitalized, not having lost any of its typographic grandeur and gravitas. Like the unfinished Tempio, though undone by Church authorities under popes Pius II and Paul II, Malatesta remains a "monumental" figure.

The second use of this typography prior to the mention of the Tempio in Canto IX, is found in lines 31.16-20 in Canto VIII:

And the Greek emperor was in Florence
(Ferrara having the pest)
And with him Gemisthus Plethon
Talking of the war about the temple at Delphos,
And of POSEIDON, *concret Allgemeine*

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[37] In the first quotation, the Latin reads: "Under the seal of the pope, the palace or court formerly of the Malatestas." The relevant portion of the line itself ("Olim de Malatestis") "survives" in *The Cantos*, resurfacing in Canto 83 (549.19).

The passage immediately evokes a relationship between Greece and Italy, which at first situational, becomes focused on the Tempio through several successive connections. The first of these is the Byzantine philosopher Georgios Gemistos Plethon, whose Neoplatonism was a principal influence on Sigismondo's temple; as one critic writes, the building was "an illustration of the artistic use of Neoplatonic concepts, of beliefs going into action."[38] Moreover, Plethon's remains were later exhumed by Malatesta and interred in a tomb located in Rimini. Malatesta's detour in Greece in order to retrieve the bones attests to his devotion, as does the following inscription he had made for the tomb:

> Sigismondo Pandolpho Malatesta, during the Peloponnesian War against the Turks, on account of his immense love of learned men, caused to be brought and placed herein the remains of Gemistos of Byzantium, *in his time the Prince of Philosophers*. 1465.[39]

The next line in the passage from Canto VIII references one of ancient Greece's most important religious sanctuaries, and Pound's use of the word *temple* in this line effectively sets Delphi side by side with the Tempio Malatestiano. The latter's interior prominently represented Olympian deities, and therefore carries forward the Greek tradition in its own architecture. As Pound later wrote, one of Plethon's "distinct aims [was the] regeneration of greek [*sic*] people."[40]

The final line of the quotation above contains the capitalized "POSEIDON," and thus the typographic link to the Tempio. In *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound alludes to Fritz Schultze's work *Georgios Gemistos Plethon un seine reformatorischen Bestrebungen*, wherein Schultze explains Plethon's consideration of Poseidon as "the all-encompassing genre of ideas, all ideas in their unity." It is from this work that Pound takes the term *concret Allgemeine*: "This universal is not an abstract universal [...] but the *concrete universal* which contains all particulars in itself [...] the complete embodiment of all particulars."[41] The correlation of the Tempio with Poseidon is

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[38] Peter Liebregt, *Ezra Pound and Neoplatonism* (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004) 159

[39] Joscelyn Godwin, *The Pagan Dream of the Renaissance* (York Beach, ME: Weiser Books, 2005) 58, emphasis added.

[40] Pound, *GK*, 224. In an early draft, Pound also wrote, "The mediaeval error is lifted, / Battista Alberti, and di Duccio / turning to pagan gods." EPP Box 70 f. 3149.

[41] Fritz Schultze, *Georgios Gemistos Plethon* (Jena: Maukes Verlag, 1874). "Poseidon [...] ist eine Idee, nicht aber nur diese oder jene Idee, sondern die die sämmtlichen Ideen in der Einheit umfassende Gattung der Ideen" (155). "Dies Allgemeine ist aber nicht ein abstract Allgemeines [...] sondern das

based on the idea of a composition of particulars, through which universals are known, what Aristotle referred to as *universalia in re*, a concept Plethon endorsed.[42] Matteo de' Pasti and Agostino di Duccio's bas-reliefs in the Tempio—depicting everything from the goddess Diana, to a crab representing the zodiacal sign for Cancer, to the prophets Isaiah and Micah next to Greek sibyls, to "fat-rumped putti sprout[ing] from the balustrades"[43] and angels with flowing robes—are, through this lens, a "universe" of particulars drawn from distinct traditions rendered in concrete and marble.[44]

Through the visual link to Poseidon, in the context of Gemistos Plethon's Neoplatonism, the conception of the Tempio evolves from "the jumble and junk shop" to something more akin to Pound's definition of the "VORTEX" as "a radiant node or cluster [...] from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing."[45] Such a definition is strikingly similar to Schultze's gloss on Plethon's Poseidon quoted above. Pound provides his own gloss in Canto LXXXIII, which also contains an explicit connection to the Tempio: "Gemisto stemmed all from Neptune / hence the Rimini bas reliefs" (83: 548.3-4). The church is thus perceived as the center of a network of interrelated images, traditions, and figurative "texts."

With regard to Pound's poetic work, this type of aggregation is much like *The Cantos'* constellation of "Luminous Details," which yield the "intelligence of a period."[46] The importance of Pound's typographic connection of the Tempio and Poseidon lies in its relation to the compositional strategy for the structure of the Malatesta Cantos. The method of shelving fragments therein, is, to borrow a phrase from Hugh Kenner, a "self-interfering patterned integrity." Kenner writes "Luminous Details, then, are 'patterned integrities' which transferred out of their context of origin retain their power to enlighten us. [...] The universe 'is the aggregate of non-

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concret Allgemeine, welches alle Besondern in sich enthält [...] der volle Inbegriff aller Besondern" (159, emphasis added).

[42] Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos and Stephen J. Adams, eds., *The Ezra Pound Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005) 221.

[43] EPP Box 70 f. 3149.

[44] Regarding this idea, Peter Liebregt states that Pound considered the Tempio as an "actualization of Ideas in concrete forms" (159). See also Peter Makin, who writes that the section of the Malatesta Cantos "shows a sea of the particular." *Pound's Cantos* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985) 143.

[45] Pound *GB*, 106.

[46] Ezra Pound, *Selected Prose, 1909-1965*, ed. William Cookson (New York: New Directions, 1973) 22.

simultaneous, only partially overlapping, transformational events."[47] The documentary aspect of Pound's poetics in the Malatesta Cantos is one in which the selected details are structured into a new materiality that attempts, like the Tempio, to "[register] a concept" of history and culture, and offer readers the "intelligence of [the] period" that was the Quattrocento.

An essential feature of this structure's pattern is a certain disregard for straightforward temporality, and a privileging of spatiality. If the Tempio's design and decor appeared anachronistic, such a quality is also present in the Malatesta Cantos within the achronological progression of those "non-simultaneous," palimpsestic events. On this subject Rebecca Beasley writes that the representation of history in Pound's work (as well as in that of T.S. Eliot and T.E. Hulme) is non-linear:

> Eliot's "simultaneous order" and Pound's "method of Luminous Details" represent history as *arranged in space*, rather than developing through time.
>
> "We do NOT know the past in chronological sequence," wrote Pound in 1938. "It may be convenient to lay it out anesthetized on the table with dates pasted on here and there, but what we know we know by ripples and spirals eddying out from us and from our time."[48]

The pages in the Malatesta Cantos and the walls in the Tempio Malatestiano are constructed not according to a temporal logic, but a visio-spatial logic, whereby texts and/or images share the same space in order to highlight the very presence and nature of that space. The spatial construct of Pound's ideogram—which involves the structural arrangement of graphic signs on the page, whose constituent images then form a unified and singular concept—applies equally to this sequence of poems, and to Sigismondo's Tempio. As an ideogram, the layered spatialization of the latter finds its equivalent in Pound's work through the use of paratactic construction to suggest an architectural/textual palimpsest where the temporal is broken down and rerouted.

In the same chapter from *The Pound Era* quoted above, Kenner provides two metaphors for this type of poetic composition: "The knot is a *patterned integrity*. The rope renders it visible"; and later, "the vortex is not the water but a patterned energy

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[47] Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) 148, 153. The quote within the latter citation is taken from Buckminster Fuller.

[48] Rebecca Beasley, *Theorists of Modernist Poetry: T.S Eliot, T.E Hulme and Ezra Pound* (London: Routledge, 2007) 68, emphasis added. The quote from Pound is taken from *Guide to Kulchur*, 60.

made visible by the water."[49] To restate the central idea in different terms, it is the material in its spatial arrangement that allows the structure to be seen. The Poundian page in the Malatesta Cantos bypasses the conventional linear sequence, opting instead for an architecture whose visual materiality—as demonstrated in the poems' initial allusions to the temple, and the resultant correlations—looks equally forward and backward through time and text. As the reader moves within Pound's constructed text in this fashion, an increased sensibility to the parallel between the Tempio and the material page, and its role in the poems' operations of meaning, progressively emerges.

LAYERING HISTORIES

The visibility of the material to which Kenner refers is central to the first extended passage on the Tempio in the four-canto sequence. Over the course of twenty-two lines the reader is given an initial view of the temple, which is both material and fragmented. At this stage, only a few arches have been constructed, and the future temple is but a mass of marble fragments being carted away to Rimini. Pound, then, chose to first place the reader not before the erected "templum magnificum,"[50] but in the midst of Sigismondo gathering the materials necessary for its construction. In short, the process supersedes the finished product. This decision is significant for the temple-text parallel in its introduction of the concept of *found* material, and the historical palimpsest that results from the poet/artist's manipulation and re-arrangement of it:

> And Sigismundo got up a few arches,
> And stole that marble in Classe, "stole" that is,
> *Casus est talis:*
> . . . . . .
> Filippo, commendatary of the abbazia
> Of Sant Apollinaire, Classe, Cardinal of Bologna
> That he did one night (*quadam nocte*) sell to the
> Illmo D^{o}, D^{o} Sigismund Malatesta
> Lord of Arimininum, marble, porphyry, serpentine,
> Whose men, Sigismundo's, came with more than an hundred
> two wheeled ox carts and deported, for the beautifying

[49] Kenner, *The Pound Era*, 145-46.
[50] EPP Box 70 f. 3145.

of the *tempio* where was Santa Maria in Trivio
Where the same are now on the walls. [...] (9: 36.5-19)

Though Pound's reading notes include brief mentions of this episode, the set of lines does not appear in a form resembling the final version until the late revisions of the Watson typescript, when Pound had a full comprehension of the strategy and purposes of the sequence's use of fragmented materiality.[51] Accordingly, just as the Malatesta Cantos themselves begin, Pound plunges the reader *in medias res* regarding the temple. Whether by scraps of a half-lost address, excerpts from contracts or conversations, or the salvaged building materials from a 6th-century basilica, the reader is witness to the pieces being gathered—shored, then shelved—and structured together.

Moreover, significant portions of the Malatesta Cantos are composed of pre-existing, found texts just as the marble for the temple was "stolen" with the goal of repurposing said material. "Ravenna's marble stolen, *but carved*," Pound writes in an early manuscript draft.[52] This type of material appropriation and manipulation recalls T.S. Eliot's famous statement in his 1920 essay from *The Sacred Wood*:

> Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn; the bad poet throws it into something which has no cohesion.[53]

From Pound's aforementioned comments on the Tempio, he clearly saw cohesion in its assemblage of images and traditions, as he also did in his Malatesta Cantos: "It seems to read easily. That's something"; and later in 1938, "No one has claimed that the Malatesta Cantos are obscure."[54] The Tempio does not *quote* (or imitate) the basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, but like Pound's cantos, reshapes the thieved material into something "utterly different":

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[51] See the notes in EPP Box 70. f. 3140, and the revised carbons in EPP Box 71 f. 3162.

[52] EPP Box 70 f. 3149, emphasis added.

[53] T.S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen & Co., 1920) 114.

[54] Letter from Pound to James Sibley Watson, 5 January 1923, *Pound, Thayer, Watson, & The Dial*, ed. Walter Sutton (Gainesville: University Press of Florida) 256, and Pound, *GK*, 194.

> And the beautiful putti, and the carved stones in the chiesa
> And the marble stolen in Classe,
> And remade into images[55]

The material reshaping of the once "flat marble slabs"[56] in the hands of the artists Sigismondo hired, parallels Pound's own linguistic, typographic re-contextualization of the archival documents and historical events his poetics "welds [...] into a whole of feeling." The significance of such documents depends on their position within, and relation to, the conception of materiality—based on the monument of the temple—that Pound's poetics concretize on the page. As David Ten Eyck writes, what Pound provides in the Malatesta Cantos is

> a framework within which [the historical documents] can be assigned a definite, rather than a relative value. [...] The document, in other words, is useful only to the extent that it gives a material form to a concept. In the same way, the documents thrust before the reader of the Malatesta Cantos are only useful insofar as they have significance in relation to the monument at the centre of the sequence.[57]

Pound draws the reader into the process of the Tempio's construction just as he also documents his own process of archival research by means of parenthetical interjections, and embedded footnotes and bibliographic references. Indeed, the temple is as much a representation of the archive as is Pound's text, which makes a point of identifying the constituent materials as specifically *found* and *collected*. Once gathered, they are subsequently organized and repurposed within the framework of a new modernist poetics.

In their fragmentary state, those materials further parallel the "stolen" marble from Classe, which was carted off to Rimini in pieces. As previously addressed, early in the compositional process Pound had immediately drawn a direct comparison between textual fragments and architectural materials, the latter being collected, figuratively or literally, by Sigismondo for the purposes of the Tempio:[58]

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[55] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.
[56] EPP Box 70 f. 3149.
[57] David Ten Eyck, *Ezra Pound's Adams Cantos* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014) 51.
[58] Lawrence Rainey contends that the "broken arch" refers to the Arch of Augustus in Rimini, situated at the crossroads of the ancient streets of Aemilia and Flaminia. At the time that Pound saw it, in 1922 (prior to its restoration in 1937), the gate was surrounded by other buildings, and had become a mere structural support. The commemorative gate, constructed in 27 B.C., is the assumed model for the triumphal arch in the principal façade of the Tempio. *Monument*, 220-21.

These fragments you have "shelved."
,Pan filius
Sigismundo ⟨had shelved⟩, a broken arch, spoils of Ravenna.[59]

In their position as the opening lines of the draft, no context or specifics concerning the items are yet known, apart from their being broken and having been plundered. Though these lines were later cancelled, the episode in Ravenna and its implications for the Malatesta Cantos was undoubtedly important to Pound; when it resurfaces in later drafts, it is significantly expanded to include details about the context and process. That the latter was of particular significance is evident in the majority of the lines' focus on the necessary labor; for example, lines 36.22-23: "grnnh! rrnnh! pthg. / wheels, plaustra, oxen under night-shield." In addition to having noted this aspect of the story early on in his research, a graphic representation of it is also found in his research materials (figure 3.2). Although this drawing is not found in the published versions of the Malatesta Cantos after Strater's rendition of it in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (see figure 3.3), through the corresponding passage's repeated imagery of the ox carts, and the onomatopoeic rendering of the laboring oxen, the reader is meant to *see* the uncut, individual pieces of the future walls and columns of the Tempio.

Having cancelled the initial lines presenting the temple's relation to the text in a fairly straightforward manner, the Tempio does recede somewhat into the background. However, it is precisely in the later drafts when Pound's treatment of the temple shifts, allowing it to function primarily, though not solely, as a structural metaphor. In this sense, it is always present just below the surface of the page. When addressed directly, as in the passage on the theft of the marble, Pound repeatedly returns to a concentration on the material and structural aspects of the temple. The reader is therefore invited to consider such passages with respect to the poetic material at hand (i.e. the text as a whole). The element of fragmentation is meant to be interpreted with equal regard to Pound's approach to, and manipulation of, not only the historical documents and events themselves, but also their construction. The juxtapositions within that construction include flash-forwards and flashbacks,

[59] EPP Box 70 f. 3149. In a letter from January 1925 to William Bird, Pound mentions that it was "the ole archivista in Ravenna who made me the sketch of the oxcarts," which were used to transport "the spoils." *L*, 267.

narrative intrusions, and documentary tessellation. The result of these techniques is a text whose unconventional seams are made visible.

Figure 3.2: Sketch of the ox carts from Canto IX (36.5-26). The verso reads "100 Two wheeled / ox carts / quadam nocte" (36.13/16-17). This roughly 10x6 cm. card is included with one of Pound's early drafts for the Malatesta Cantos. EPP Box 70 f. 3152.

Figure 3.3: Part of Henry Strater's headpiece for Canto IX, depicting the oxen hauling the marble acquired in Classe back to Rimini. *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, 31.

If in the Malatesta Cantos Pound's work is read as an attempt to rectify the historical record he considered falsified by the authorities of the time, and/or the historians after them, such a methodological nonlinearity is precisely one of the sequence's features which most accurately represents the reception of history. According to this method, events are privileged or relegated, begun and broken off. "Real knowledge goes into natural man in tidbits. A scrap here, a scrap there [...]," Pound writes. Through the snippets of language and hyper-condensed events from the

Quattrocento—presented within a temporally fractured spatial arrangement—Pound aimed to establish "an underlying purpose or current [...] beneath a series of facts."[60] Any act of inclusion, however, casts a shadow of exclusion; consequently, the illegible or blank areas of the scraps' resultant palimpsest are of equal importance. The poet's positive view of such gaps is found in a passage from Canto XIII:

> And even I can remember
> A day when the historians left blanks in their writings,
> I mean for things they didn't know,
> But that time seems to be passing (13: 60.3-6)

Pound's awareness of this quality is also demonstrated in the numerous allusions throughout the Malatesta drafts, and the published versions alike, to what is "missing" from the palimpsestic Tempio, whose "holes" have become a part of its structural history.[61] Though due primarily to Sigismondo having been unable to complete the construction, at three separate moments in the Watson typescript Pound briefly describes other reasons for the temple's "partial" existence. The first of these is destruction and/or neglect at the hands of those either unappreciative or ignorant of the Tempio's artistic value, or simply unwilling to maintain it:

> And Borgia all over the country: wait, wait a little.
> The crowd breaking the elephants, and tearing down
> the cut bronze.

and five pages later:

> So that he had his run, on the whole
> and got up the buildings,
> . . . . . .
> He left provision, you know, ⟨testamentum,⟩
> ⟨"⟩ Lien on my goods in Ragusa, and my heirs
> To continue the tempio ... ⟨"⟩
> ~~which they didn't.~~[62]

[60] Pound, *GK*, 99.

[61] In 1938 Pound stated plainly that the Tempio is "in verbal sense a monumental failure" (*GK*, 159). Nonetheless, he considered the building's supposed shortcomings an important part of its artistic appeal. In a review he wrote, Pound contrasted the temple to the "successful" monument exemplified by the Palladio: "The Tempio in Rimini would have been a far less daring synthesis had all its details been fully digested and reduced to a unity of style, à la Palladio." Review of Adrian Stokes's *Stones of Rimini*, *Criterion* 13 (April 1934), 495-97.

[62] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

Despite being abandoned in a broken state, the temple remains a *testament*—the Latin word echoing the earlier *templum*—to Sigismondo's ambitious creativity. The cancellation of the final lines also suggests that Pound wished to portray the importance of the unfinished Tempio as unending. The building is, after all, "a human record" and "a record of courage."[63] *The Cantos* are, in many ways, a certain form of the historical record as well. They are not a comprehensive record, by any means, but one that nonetheless attempts to salvage the truths simultaneously revealed and concealed in historical documents, however fragmented. Like that of the Tempio Malatestiano, an experience of the Malatesta Cantos involves the process of reading and restructuring the fragments and blanks of an architectural, archival palimpsest. It involves continuing the work of construction and creation.

The building faced further destruction at the hands of men when it was severely damaged, and on the verge of collapse, due to Allied bombings in December 1943, and during the first months of 1944. At the time that Pound began writing the Italian Cantos (LXXII and LXXIII), partly in reaction to the significant damage to the Tempio Malatestiano, the structure was indeed in ruins:

> Rimini burned and Forlì destroyed.
> Who will see Gemisto's sepulchre
> The arches down and the walls
> of the "divine Ixotta's" resting place
> and its symbolic designs burnt out. (72: 435.2-6)[64]

The reference to the collapsed arches recalls Pound's association early in the composition of the Malatesta Cantos of the "broken arch" and the "spoils of Ravenna" to the "shored fragments" from Eliot's *The Waste Land*. These fragments are of symbolic significance, for the shattered remains of the original design form a new whole, which works against ruin. In them is found an impression of the past state(s), and of what has since become of them, both with a ghostly expression of the memory of what no longer remains.

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[63] Pound, Review of *Stones of Rimini*, 496.

[64] Pound's English translation was first included in the New Directions edition in 1996. The original Italian reads: "Rimini arsa e Forlì distrutta, / Chi vedrà più il sepolcro di Gemisto / Che tanto savio fu, se pur fu greco? / Giù son gli archi e combusti i muri / Del letto arcano della divina Ixotta . . ." (72: 428.14-18). Pound's translation omits the third line ("Who was so wise, even if he was Greek?") and rewrites the last two ("Wrecked are the arches, and burnt the walls / Of the arcane bed of the divine Ixotta"). Photographs of the damaged church after the bombings, in addition to further details of the events, can be found on pages 209-13 of Rainey's study.

The second detrimental force to the temple that Pound conveys in the Watson typescript is simply that of natural decay. In context, this is partly related to the aforementioned lack of attention and care given after Sigismondo's passing, but Pound also imparts a sense of inevitability to civilizations' decline:

> Byzance gone,
> the empire?
> The empires slide to nothing here in the marsh-drift,
> there in the marsh-drift, gone
> Caesarea, between the town and Classe, gone,
> roof-deep in the marsh.
>
> Behind the great phalloi of the temple ....
> . . . . . .
> An emerald lizard
> peers through the border grass.
> Fatal August.[65]

The disintegration due to the elements eventually leaves all empires and monuments in ruins. Even memory itself suffers the ravages of time. Viewed as a representation of the experience and memory (or monument) of the Quattrocento's *civilization*—in the Poundian sense of creative force and active construction—the already fragmented Tempio is further splintered by the partial erasures that inevitably come with the passing of time.

In such erasures one is allowed to "see" the historical. It is, so to speak, in the *salvaging* of testaments, and in symbols *sliding* into the marsh-drift—in the means, not the ends—that a continuing significance beyond the historical moment may be deciphered. Eventually, however, the empires and monuments of old "slide to *nothing*," and disappear. Interpreting this passage in conjunction with the visio-material poetics of the Malatesta sequence, in addition to the realization and reflective lamentation of gradual, if natural, decline, here again may be seen a subtle advocacy for conservation and restoration. Before the elements of "fatal August" encroach on the structure, and the marsh soon swallows the art, before the palimpsest becomes tabula rasa, the civilization and tradition therein ought to be saved. The creative act of poetry thus takes on a documentary, and restorative, dimension, embodied in the Malatesta Cantos' spatial layering of historical and archival events and texts.

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[65] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

The central example of this type of structural layering is the Tempio itself, and the text on the acquisition of the marble exhibits the integration of cultural-historical layers. Sigismondo's mid-16th-century temple is, in fact, the 12th-century Church of San Francesco in Rimini housed within Alberti's architectural design. The Italian Renaissance is, therefore, physically layered over the Gothic. However, in this passage Pound traces the lineage of the temple back even further. Indeed, the Church of San Francesco replaced the 9th-century church honoring the Madonna dell'Acqua, Santa Maria in Trivio at Rimini, that once stood where the Tempio is now, and which Pound mentions in line 36.18.[66] There is yet another structural layer reaching several centuries further into the past. Pound twice indicates that the acquired "marble, porphyry, [and] serpentine," which is the focus of the section, is originally from the Basilica di Sant'Apollinare in Classe, erected at the beginning of the 6th century in Ravenna. In the course of twenty-two lines, Pound has drawn the 20th-century reader back through thirteen centuries, all of which are present in the walls of the Tempio: the Renaissance shell, incorporating Byzantium materials, was wrapped around the Gothic church, itself situated on the site of the Benedictine church constructed three centuries prior.

This first extended passage on the temple is thus characterized by a reverse temporality—it is a form of historiography that, rather than contemporizing the past as in previous moments in the sequence, leads the reader *back* into it. The same structure of "regressive progression" is seen in the lines directly referencing the temple discussed thus far. In Canto VIII, Pound introduces the Tempio to the reader as already built: "*templum ædificavit*."[67] He then flashes back in the first reference in Canto IX to the initiation of the building's construction: "And he began building the TEMPIO." This line is followed by an even more remote passage recounting the

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[66] Although it is not included in Pound's poem, Philip Furia writes that prior to both the Church of San Francesco and that of Santa Maria in Trivio at Rimini, a temple dedicated to Aphrodite had been built on the same site. *Pound's Cantos Declassified* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1984) 23.

[67] Although the Tempio Malatestiano was never completed, the Latin *tempus perfectum* conjugation, signifying a completed action in the past, is here employed. For an incomplete action in the past, the *tempus imperfectum* would be used (i.e. ædificabat). This is not to suggest that a grammatical error was made—the phrase is, in fact, taken from Pius II's *Commentarii*: "Ædificavit tamen nobile templum Arimini in honorem divi Francisci [...]" (366). Furthermore, the construction was indefinitely (and by Sigismondo's death in 1468, ultimately) halted in 1460. However, in *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound writes, "The Tempio was stopped by a fluke? or Sigismundo had the flair to stop it?" (159). In conjunction with this statement, the verb tense may be seen as another example of Pound's view of the temple as a kind of fragmentary whole.

procurement of materials that predated the construction: "And stole that marble in Classe [...] for the beautifying / of the *tempio*." In the latest of the three passages, the historic layers lying beneath the surface of the Tempio are revealed; accordingly, in the Malatesta Cantos the overlapping of histories and cultures is found both within passages, and between passages. In building up the structure of his text, Pound repeatedly foregrounds its origins and materials.

Those materials include the non-neutral substrate that is the material page, and language itself. At the same time the passage from Canto IX traces the temple's genealogy back to Rimini in the 9th century, it also visually sends the reader backward through the text. For the third consecutive time, Pound typographically distinguishes the word used for the temple, though each occurrence possesses its own individual features. The first was in Latin and printed in italicized lower-case letters, and the second in Italian and in all capital letters. Here, the third occurrence is a synthesis of the two preceding it, combining the lower-case italics of the first with the Italian of the second. Therefore, the appearance of "*tempio*" in line 9: 36.18 is an instance of textual layering, which, as a parallel to the Santa Maria in Trivio ⇒ San Francesco ⇒ Tempio Malatestiano development, visually embodies the two antecedent strata. Ironically, in prompting a return to the previous canto (i.e. to the text's past), the line simultaneously projects the reader into the temple's future, and thereby acts as an indication of the temple's enduring uniqueness: from the plan for the "beautifying of the *tempio*" (9: 36.17-18) to the beginning of its construction (9: 35.24), and finally to its (partial) realization (8 32.16).[68] Through all of these stages the Tempio remains materially and textually singular in the cantos. Visually, as Pound wrote of the actual building, "nothing can touch it."[69]

Internally, Pound's use of italics in the passage also relates the contemporary integration of the historical. Two lines after the italicization of "tempio," the script is used for another type of building:

> [...] for the beautifying
> of the *tempio* where was Santa Maria in Trivio

[68] It is true that Sigismondo began remodeling one chapel of the church in 1447, two years before the incident with the marble in Classe. However, the overhaul of the building did not begin until 1450 when Alberti was commissioned for a complete redesign. Finally, as previously mentioned, construction was halted in 1460. In any case, Pound's poem does not provide the reader with such dates.

[69] Pound, Review of *Stones of Rimini*, 496.

Where the same are now on the walls. Four hundred
ducats to be paid back to the *abbazia* by the said swindling
Cardinal or his heirs.

(9: 36.17-21)

As indicated in lines 36.11-12, the abbey in question is that of the partially denuded Sant'Apollinare in Classe. In the aftermath of Luigi dal Pozzo's sale of the materials to Sigismondo, the abbot was required to give the money received (400 ducats) to the abbey, and Malatesta to pay 200 ducats for damages.[70] In its incorporation of those materials, part of the temple's visual distinction is due to the abbey's antecedent construction. A part of the materiality of the historic basilica was absorbed into that of Sigismondo's monument. The typographic link between *tempio* and *abbazia* conveys this idea, in that Pound's previous use of the latter term in line 36.11 is printed in the standard form. It is only upon the abbey's materials being "made new" by Sigismondo (via his architect and sculptors)—that is, upon their "beautifying of the *tempio*"—that the abbey assumes the typographic distinction of the temple in the poem. Pound's text does not merely remind the reader of the pertinent layers of history, but also demonstrates their integration into contemporary aesthetics. Zooming out to a view of the sequence as a whole, the "stolen" (or appropriated) materials in the four cantos are similarly assumed into a new structure, which likewise documents their sources and visually refashions them at once.

After describing Sigismondo's acquisition of the marble in May 1449, and the agreed upon reparations, Pound makes brief mention of an incident in June of the next year before assigning two Greek designations to Malatesta:

And there was the row about that German-Burgundian female
And it was his messianic year, Poliorcetes,
but he was being a bit too POLUMETIS
And the Venetians wouldn't give him six months vacation.

(9: 36.27-30)

It is the second of the two, printed in all capital letters, that is of particular interest here, as it is shares the same typographic differentiation encountered three times prior. In the immediate context of the four lines, Pound's description of Sigismondo as "many-minded" (*Polumetis*), as Homer had once said of Odysseus, relates precisely to

[70] "On the 13th of August: Aloysius Purtheo, / The next abbot, to Sigismundo, receipt for 200 ducats / Corn-salve for the damage done in that scurry" (9: 36.24-26). The document the passage cites is a quittance dated 13 August 1450 transcribed in Mittarelli's work.

Malatesta's divided attentions amongst the various affairs of the moment: as condottiere currently under contract with Venice, his plan to besiege Pesaro; rumors of having assaulted and killed the German woman; the continued construction of the Tempio; and, of course, other personal concerns, such as his ongoing relationship with Isotta. Like Odysseus, Sigismondo was "versatile" and "resourceful" in dealing with such a diverse plurality of matters (though not always ultimately successful); however, the emphasis given to the two Greek words, set one on top of the other, draws the focus toward two particular projects.[71]

The first is Sigismondo's military exploits as a "taker of cities" (*Poliorcetes*),[72] and the second—as per the preceding passage on the events in Classe, and the visual connection to "TEMPIO" in line 35.24—is the plans for the Church of San Francesco in Rimini. Recalling the reader's first view of him in the Medici letter that opens Canto VIII, Pound again shows Malatesta juggling business (as condottiere) and art (as patron). Furthermore, as seen earlier, Pound's choice of capitalization stretches the typographic link back to the start of the sequence:

1) "but he was being a bit too POLUMETIS" (9: 36.29) ⇒
2) "And he began building the TEMPIO" (9: 35.24) ⇒
3) "And of POSEIDON, *concret Allgemeine* (8: 31.20) ⇒
4) "SIGISMUNDUS PANDOLPHUS DE MALATESTIS" (8: 29.22)

Plethon's Poseidon "[comprised] all ideas in their unity," which, through the visual connection, finds an echo in the multiple projects carried out by "Sigismundo, an *entire* man," whose entire name is uniformly printed at the beginning of the series.[73]

More important, however, is the Tempio itself, which may indeed be considered "many-minded" due to its fusion of Christianity, Neoplatonism, the

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[71] In a note regarding this passage, D'Epiro indicates that one of the meanings of *metis* is "a project," and concludes "that Pound wished to shade the meaning [of *Polumetis*] to something like 'with his mind on many different things'" (138 n.19).

[72] One of Pisanello's medals commemorating Sigismondo includes the inscription "Poliorcetes et semper Invictus" (Greek/Latin: "Taker of cities and always victorious"). Terrell, 46.

[73] Pound, *GK*, 194, emphasis added. Earlier in *Guide to Kulchur* Pound comments on the Odyssean designation, tying in the Greek gods, and the notion of intellectual completeness: "The things that the *polumetis* knew were the things a man then *needed* for living. The bow, the strong stroke in swimming, the how-to-provide *and* the high hat, the carriage of the man who knew how to rule, who had been everywhere, Weltmensch, with 'ruling caste' stamped all over him, so that a red, cracked skin and towseled [*sic*] hair as he came out of the underbrush left him 'never at loss.' He might as well have met Nausikaa in gibus and opera cloak. And as Zeus said: 'A chap with a mind like THAT! the fellow is one of us. One of US." I hope that elsewhere I have underscored and driven in the Greek honour of human intelligence 'Who even dead yet hath his mind entire'" (146).

zodiac, hermeticism, and Pythagorean references (not to mention the multiple architectural styles). In the absence of the typographic repetition, the reader would likely still understand Sigismondo's attentions as divided primarily between his temple and his military ambitions, given the foregoing lines on the composition of the former, and the direct mention of the latter in the subsequent line. However, in such a case, it is doubtful that the reader's conception of the temple itself would be developed in the aforementioned manner. From his reading notes, it appears that Pound initially considered using the original Greek for only the second of the two titles:

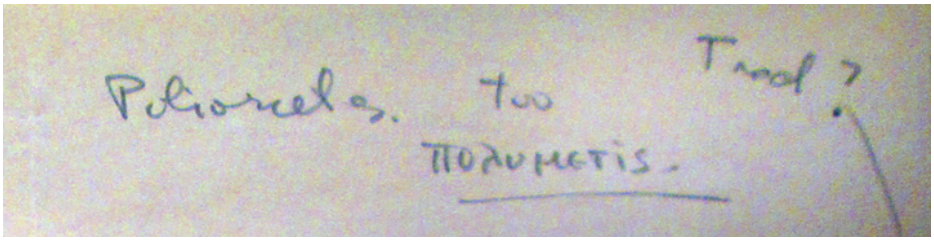

Figure 3.4: A handwritten note for what would become lines 9: 36.28-29. EPP Box 70 f. 3142.

Nevertheless, by the time the lines are included in a revised draft of the poem, the word is typed in all capitals instead. The typographic distinction is therefore maintained, but the word is also brought into relation with other moments in the sequence. Additionally, a phrase that would ultimately precede the episode involving Sant'Apollinare in Classe was positioned as the first in this group of lines:

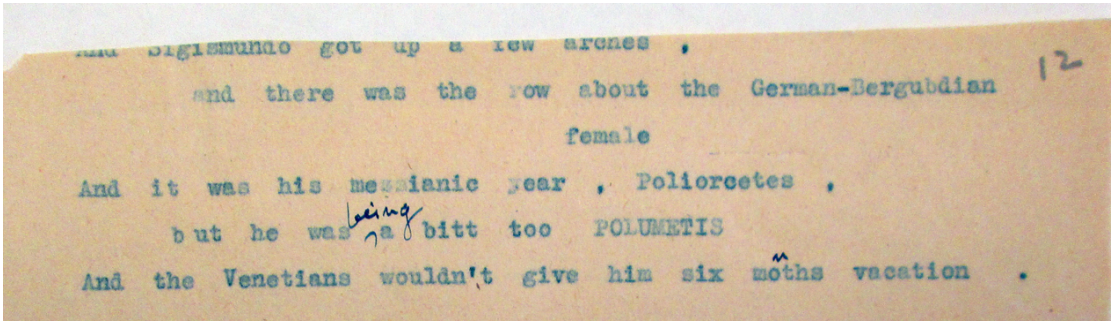

Figure 3.5: Revised draft of Canto 9: 36.27-30. The first line of this excerpt from a late typescript, "And Sigismundo got up a few arches," was later moved to its current position as line 36.5. EPP Box 71 f. 3165.

As a result, Malatesta as creative patron/artist of the temple is directly juxtaposed to Malatesta the condottiere. The later displacement of the line does not demonstrate an

abandonment of the idea such juxtaposition expresses, but Pound's shift in compositional strategy. Having changed significantly from the early drafts, at this later stage of composition the role of the Tempio in the sequence, and the manner in which it was to be presented, had been solidified. Rather than plainly stated, the singularity of its materiality—and how it reflected Sigismondo's character—were to be reflected in the visual poetics at work across the four cantos. It is, in fact, through the poet's use of typography in these passages in Canto IX that the reader is able to associate the Tempio with the kind of cultural and architectural polyphony that Pound returns to more directly in the poem's closing.

COMPOUNDING TRANSITIONS

It is in this final section, halfway through the four-canto sequence, that Pound evokes the temple in seven elegiac lines of remarkable stillness, which offer the most forthright view of the structure:

> "and built a temple so full of pagan works"
> i.e. Sigismund
> and in the style "Past ruin'd Latium"
> The filigree hiding the gothic
> with a touch of rhetoric in the whole
> And the old sarcophagi,
> such as lie, smothered in grass, by San Vitale.
>
> (9: 41.10-16)

Nowhere else in the Malatesta Cantos does Pound approach ekphrasis concerning the temple to such an extent. Yet the lines remain far from the straightforward description that Pound had attempted early in the compositional process (see the previous quotations from EPP Box 70 f. 3145). Instead, while still providing a glimpse of some of the temple's features, Pound clarifies several aspects of its significance on a cultural-historical level, and specifically with regard to his own text.

The original passage from Pius II's *Commentarii*, from which Pound's first line here is taken, has already been cited, but it is important to note that Pound's adapted translation of it was included in the earliest drafts. While Pius II's misgivings and disapproval is apparent in his writing, Pound's appropriation and manipulation of it were for quite a different purpose. Originally comprising thirteen lines, which cover

the entirety of the passage from *Commentarii*,[74] Pound's initial draft was finally condensed to a single line. Pound eliminated the most negative portion of Pius II's comment, as well as that referring to Isotta degli Atti's relationship to the temple. What is retained is only that which conveys what Pound saw as the Tempio's expression of neo-paganism. The importance of the idea is reflected in his alteration of the original text: Pius II's "gentilibus" (gentile) is replaced with "pagan." Pound's original thirteen-line translation was apparently influenced by Antonio Beltramelli's work *Un tempio d'amore* (1912), where Pius II's "et artificio et lapide pulcherrimum, adiecto titulo *gentili* more in hunc modum" was translated into Italian as "un sepolcro magnifico con l'iscrizione *pagana*." The result was Pound's English line: "a magnificent pagan / sepulchre and inscription."[75] Though the line itself was not included in the final version of the passage, the adjective *pagan* tellingly survived. Pound's later qualification of the Tempio's Christianity as "clean and beneficent" in *Guide to Kulchur*, stemmed precisely from the neo-pagan spirit he considered a crucial element in its design.

In addition to the religious and philosophical layering, the Tempio's fusion of multiple stylistic traditions was central to Pound's cantos, which formally redefine the page through multi-textual construction. In this example, Pound's English is a translation of a fusion of Pius II's Latin and Betramelli's Italian. The second quotation in the passage is equally significant for its historical layering resulting from Pound's linguistic manipulation. Walter Savage Landor's line "Past ruin'd Ilion Helen lives," from an untitled poem,[76] is altered so as to bring the reader from the ancient city of Troy (archaic Greek name *Ilion*, later Latinized as the Roman city of *Ilium*) to central western Italy (Latium), where Rome was founded, and finally to the Tempio in Rimini. The new style of Renaissance architecture, then, is indeed a rebirth and renewal of the past—in particular, the former paganism alluded to in the previous lines—which is carried into the future. It is a history that survives the inexorable decay that comes with the passage of time, but one that survives "past [the] ruin'd" by

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[74] The passage reads: "and in the language of Pius / built a church / noble but impious / with so many gentile / works that it seemed / no temple of Christians / but of infidels, adorers of demons, / and therein raised to his concubine / a magnificent ~~pap~~ pagan / sepulchre and inscription, / To the goddess Isotta., / sacro, / alla Diva Isotta." EPP Box 70 f. 3139.

[75] Regarding this passage, the transition from *Commentarii* to *Un tempio d'amore* to *The Cantos* is addressed in greater detail in Rainey, *Monument*, 30-32.

[76] For the poem in its entirety, see Pound, *ABC*, 184.

means of artistic creativity (such as the Tempio, or the Malatesta Cantos) in which it is preserved. Fragments *against* ruin, as Pound had emphasized in early drafts. The recognition of fragmentation and eventual de-composition is embodied in the word itself: the elision of the /*e*/ provides a purely visual representation (as the pronunciation of the word remains unchanged) of the partially "ruin'd."

These notions of history, decline, and renewal are continued in the last two lines of Canto IX. From Latium and Rimini, the reader is led to the 6th-century Byzantine church of San Vitale in Ravenna. Recalling the previously mentioned Sant'Apollinare, Pound again suggests Sigismondo's incorporation of historical traditions into contemporaneity, as the Roman sarcophagi near San Vitale were the inspiration for those of the Tempio. The reader is left before a kind of mirror image, with two 6th-century Byzantine churches in Ravenna that each bear witness to the passage of time. That image, however, is necessarily distorted, as the basilica in Classe has been stripped, and nature is "smothering" the tombs of San Vitale. From dust to dust, the image seems to express. Construction leads to dissolution, and dissolution to reconstruction. "The struggle to re-edify," Michael Alexander writes, "to make it new, is seen, as in many humanist poems of the Renaissance, to be endless."[77]

All of these traditions and styles are, of course, again renewed by Pound himself in the Malatesta Cantos, and the textual parallel in these final lines is deftly handled. In Pound's *détournement* of Pius II's comment, the classical and medieval themes in the Tempio's *neo*-paganism are reflected textually in the tracing of Latin to English (through Italian) in Pound's palimpsestic phrasing. As discussed above, a similar process of appropriation occurs in the manipulated quotation from Landor. But beyond the geographic genealogy, the line also contains a textual lineage: Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid* (Troy) to Landor's poem (Ilion) to Pound's *The Cantos* (Latium).[78] In the following two lines, the Renaissance “filigree” and “a touch

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[77] Michael Alexander, *The Poetic Achievement of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) 154. Alexander's choice of "edify" is particularly pertinent to the current discussion: "from Latin *aedificare* "build," from *aedis* "dwelling" + *facere* "make" (compare with *edifice*). The word originally meant 'construct a building' [...]."*The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Third Edition, eds. Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[78] Additionally, upon realizing the reference to Helen that Pound omits from his modified quotation of Landor, one is reminded of the lyric poem in Canto VIII (30.17-22), which draws comparisons between Helen, Iseult, Bathsheba, and Isotta degli Atti, who is the subject of the six lines that precede this passage in Canto IX. Therefore, the lineage of the phrase is telescoped, ending within its own text.

of *rhetoric*" transform the Gothic style of the Church of San Francesco. The style is thus combinatory, and throughout the inclusion of undisguised prose with lyrical and elegiac poetry in Pound's text, "a touch of rhetoric" is certainly present. The conglomeration of styles in both temple and text—that is, of fragments from various sources—are tied together, Pound intimates here, by the compositional techniques in the artistic *language* of each. What is holding up the structure is the "*word* made stone."

In the earlier version of these lines found in the Watson typescript, Pound's intention for the textual parallel to remain visible just behind his description of the Tempio was more apparent:

> The filagree hiding the gothic, thanks to Alberti,
> And a touch of rhetoric in the whole.
> Augustus' arch as the "unit"
> And the old sarc⟨o⟩phagi
> Lined up, (with new-cut inscriptions,)
> such as lie smothered in grass by San Vitale.[79]

These lines evoke both the structural unit for composition, in the arch, and the physical act of writing, in the sarcophagi's new inscriptions. The Augustan arch, it should be noted, was the model for the Tempio's principal façade, and the "broken arch" that Pound associated to the "shelved" fragments in earlier drafts. In light of the history and textuality at the center of this association, the fragments point to the archival documents and historical texts used in Pound's process of selective appropriation. The poet works toward the material unit of the page itself, in the space of which the fragments are arranged in lines, just as the "new-cut inscriptions" for the tombs are carved into the space of the "lined-up" stones. Like the historical documents, the stone intended to conserve the remains of humanists and philosophers is not itself ultimately spared the ruin over time. Malatesta's project, then, takes on an archival component in its attempt at conservation against time. The intelligence and culture—the "civilization"—that Pound read in the Tempio mirrors that which he found shelved in the libraries: "*de litteris et de armis, praestantibusque ingeniis*, / Both of ancient times and our own; books, arms, / And men of unusual genius" (11: 51.4-6).

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[79] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

Far more evident in the passage is the consistent focus on visual aspects of the temple. The montage of images jumps from the "pagan works" in the church's interior to the filigree of the exterior, then to the Gothic windows partially visible through the rhythmic arches of the surrounding shell, and finally to the sarcophagi. Contrary to previous allusions to the temple, its visual uniqueness is described in ekphrasis rather than typographically. In the closing to Canto IX, the latter technique is reserved for the immediately preceding lines:

> *"et amava perdutamente Ixotta degli Atti"*
> *e "ne fu degna"*
> *"constans in proposito*
> *"Placuit oculis principis*
> *"pulchra aspectu"*
> *"populo grata (Italiaeque decus)* (9: 41:4-9)

As in previously discussed examples, the italics are again used to distinguish the text, and indeed, the lines foreground Isotta's individuality: she was "loved desperately" (*amava perdutamente*) by Sigismondo, and "beloved by the people" (*populo grata*). Furthermore, her unique beauty is given particular attention: she was "pleasing to the eyes of the prince [Sigismondo]" (*placuit oculis principis*), and "beautiful to behold" (*pulchra aspectu*). The shift to the Tempio is abrupt, and though visually signaled by a return to normal script, the break is attenuated by a subtle use of typography as transition. Spatially, Pound leaves no gap between the two groups of lines, nor does he suggest a division by indenting the first line in the latter group. Secondly, that same line—"'and built a temple so full of pagan works'"—is set in quotation marks. The punctuation follows that of the six antecedent lines, whereas in the following six it is used only once, and *internally*. Therefore, typographically the line belongs equally with the first set on Isotta (i.e. arranged in the same stanza, and continuing the string of left-aligned quotation marks) and with the second set on the temple (i.e. standard script in place of italics). The result is an association of Isotta, and the qualifications thereof, with the Tempio and its own visual features. As per Pound's interpretive inclination, they are mutually clarifying elements in Sigismondo's history.

The connection is a significant one for the Malatesta Cantos, and Isotta's place in the Tempio (figuratively and literally) is certainly not negligible. However, despite Pound's apparent partiality for the interpretation of the temple as a monument to *Divae Isottae*—"a temple of love," according to Beltramelli's work—it is not

ultimately this interpretation that the actual poetics of the sequence incorporates.[80] In the early drafts of the Malatesta Cantos, before Pound had arrived at the Tempio's final role in the work, Isotta's centrality in the construction of the temple is repeatedly foregrounded. Thus, in the Pre-Italy drafts it is mentioned at two separate moments:

> and therein raised to his concubine
> a magnificent pagan sepulchre, and inscription
> Unto the Goddess Isotta,
> sacro
> alla Diva Isotta,
>
> a much respected, ⟨&⟩ longsuffering woman,
> with upper lip, a sense of humour, excellent glands
> lacking the hyperthyroid of her paramour (p. 9)
>
> ———————————
>
> [...] and raised their to his mistress
> a great tomb
> xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
> Unto Isotta's godhead. carved.
> Divae Isottae manes (p. 12)[81]

In two passages from subsequent drafts, yet still at an early stage of composition, this interpretation remains present:

> Diva Isottae,
> erected a temple
>
> ———————————
>
> Raised a temple, ~~unto the Diva~~ Isotta.
> ⟨"to the divine"⟩
> ~~recommencons~~.[82]

Upon later revisions, the focus on Isotta all but vanishes. In the final version of the Malatesta Cantos, she is first "present" in the lyric poem in Canto VIII,

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[80] On this "romantic interpretation" of the Tempio, Rainey writes, "the formation of this tradition required a massive transmission of numerous testimonies—a multiplicity of reproductions superimposed upon one another in a complex process that was discontinuous yet coherent. [...] There were mistakes, conflicts, discrepancies, intuitions, distortions, and struggles. [...] Pound's reception of this uneven and heterogeneous field is the event—composed of hundreds of particular engagements—that is registered in the massive documentation he accumulated in the course of his labors." *Monument*, 22.

[81] EPP Box 70 f. 3145.

[82] EPP Box 70 f. 3148 and f. 3152, respectively.

although her name is not actually mentioned; indeed, without any prior knowledge or annotations, no connection with Isotta would even be made.[83] Pound first mentions her directly, though essentially in passing, in the fourth letter of the post-bag section in Canto IX, where her name appears twice. Entirely absent from Canto X and Canto XI, the six lines in italics at the end of Canto IX is the only moment in the sequence where Isotta degli Atti is front and center, and "visibly" the focus of attention. However, even these lines were pared down from their original form. In his copy of Yriarte's work on Sigismondo, Pound marks a quotation Yriarte cited as originating in a 15th-century chronicle of Rimini: "Erat haec pulchra aspectu, plurimus dotibus locupletata, foemina belligera et fortis, et constans in proposito, grata populo et placita oculis principis."[84] From this Pound composed the following fragment:

Isotta

placita oculis pincipis
locupletata dotibus plurimus
foemina belligera populo grata
constans in proposito, belligera et fortis,
aspectu pulchra[85]

Two later typescript fragments include the mention of Isotta being "a trueth [*sic*] teller," having "ruled Rimini in [Sigismondo's] absence" and "kept out the intriguers," and being the "sister of Antonio, whose court yards was [*sic*] seleciato / paved."[86] In the passage's final form, nearly all of these non-physical attributes have been eliminated. As a result, Isotta's distinctly *visual* singularity is brought into focus, which Pound then reinforces typographically.

Such changes are significant for the manner in which they further the sense of inextricability between Isotta degli Atti and the Tempio Malatestiano. Similar to the effect of Pound's use of quotation marks, the hard juxtaposition of one to the other begins to overlap, as the physical descriptions of Isotta may be seen to equally apply

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[83] Given the poem's background and context, Isotta's name (also written *Ysotte* or *Ysotta*) may nevertheless be seen in Pound's alteration of Iseult/Isolde to *Yseut*. Again, however, this would require knowledge not provided by Pound himself in Canto VIII.

[84] "She was beautiful to behold, enriched with many gifts, a daring and strong woman, steadfast in purpose, beloved by the people, and pleasing to the eyes of the prince." Charles Yriarte, *Un Condottiere au XVe siècle: Rimini: Etudes sur les Lettres et les Arts à la cour des Malatesta* (Paris: Jules Rothschild, 1882) 155.

[85] EPP Box 70 f. 3140.

[86] EPP Box 70 f. 3146.

to the temple, whose visual features likewise figure prominently in this closing section. Pound indents the third line in italics, thereby spatially signifying a shift from the first half of the group to the second, and in fact, where the first three lines of the six in italics clearly regard Isotta alone, the next three simultaneously describe her and the temple. The latter, too, is "pleasing to the eyes of the prince," "beautiful to behold," and "beloved by the people."

The praise in italics culminates with the designation "*Italiaeque decus*," set off in parentheses. The words may be translated "the honor of Italy," but as Lawrence Rainey has pointed out, "in classical Latin *decus* covered a range of meanings: ornament, grace, embellishment, splendor, glory, honor, dignity."[87] Extracted as the words are from their original phrase and context, and placed immediately before a direct reference to the Tempio, in consideration of such variants, "Italiaeque decus" may just as well apply to the architecture. The "*ornament* of Italy" or "*embellishment* of Italy" are equally plausible interpretations, and ones which direct the reader more to the temple than Isotta. In fact, in Pound's latest draft, the two words remained on the same line as "populo grata," but were aligned flush against the right margin; spatially, they hung in the balance between the lines on Isotta and those on the temple. Nonetheless, given the innovative Tempio's landmark status in architectural history, even the less concrete "*honor*/*glory* of Italy" points as much forward to the built temple in the next line, as backward to "Ixotta degli Atti" five lines prior. Read in conjunction with the Tempio, the italics Pound chooses for this attribute (as well as the others) may, therefore, be seen as following suit with the typographic distinction given to the temple earlier in the Malatesta Cantos. In particular, "*Italiaeque decus*" recalls Canto VIII's "*templum ædificavit*," and indeed the phrase can be traced back to Sigismondo's artistic endeavors.

The words themselves are part of the legend on two bronze medals (1446), created by Matteo de' Pasti, with a portrait of Isotta degli Atti: "ISOTE . ARIMINENSI . FORMA . ET . VIRTUTE . ITALIE . DECORI."[88] One of the engravings included in Yriarte's work reproduces the phrase, as does a paragraph he wrote on the medals, in which he questionably ascribes one to Pisanello. Additionally, however, the full phrase comprised the original inscription for the tomb of Isotta in

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[87] Rainey, *Monument*, 160.
[88] "To Isotta of Rimini, for her virtue and beauty, the honor of Italy."

the Tempio. The inscription was discovered by Corrado Ricci, who authored a study entitled *Il tempio malatestiano* (1924), and provided Pound with a transcription of it (see figure 3.6). In both cases, it is through *material* language that Isotta's presence endures. "She kept her word," Pound handwrote underneath a later draft-fragment of the above passage.[89] Ultimately, however, words kept her. This is illustrated in the way she is embodied in Pound's cantos: the archival *manuscript* in the Vatican from which the lyric *poem* (attributed to Sigismondo) in Canto VIII was derived (via Yriarte), the historical *letter* in the post-bag section, and (later in Canto IX) the *inscription* on the medal and tomb. As the romantic interpretation of "the temple of love" progressively gave way to one in which it was an embodiment of civilization[90]—and thus taken as an artistic and structural model for the sequence—Isotta became significant to the poems only with respect to her relation to artistic production (e.g. poetry, sculpture, and architecture) and the materialization of visionary creativity. Isotta and the Tempio Malatestiano were both "placuit oculis," words Pound would later use to describe the visually "de looks" edition of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, in which the woman and the temple were as intertwined as the initials of the cipher ($) that adorned the building and the Pisanello medallions.[91]

Having examined the two parts of Canto IX's closing passage individually and in relation to one another, the lines should also be considered all together. Arranged as they are in one, thirteen-line stanza, the specific internal examples of the visio-textual transformation present in both Sigismondo's temple and Pound's text function together to offer a structural analogy that spans the whole. The text shifts from two lines in Italian, to four lines in Latin, then finishes with seven in English. In one draft fragment of these lines, Pound wrote, "Past ruined Latium *Latin lived*," and the

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[89] EPP Box 70 f. 3146.

[90] In *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound begins the chapter entitled "Examples of Civilization" with a discussion of the Tempio Malatestiano (159).

[91] In the letter, dated 25 January, to William Bird of Three Mountains Press, Pound writes: "Am *much* more pleased than I Xpected to be. And satisfied with Strater where I had before been worried abaht his effex. Engkore mes compleemengs. Also size of bok. is pleasant. Can be held on lap, not too heavy, and type read at that distance. A bhloody ghood job. After awl yr. night sweats. Placuit occulis." *L*, 267-68.

An engraving of the medal was published in Yriarte's work (80), on which Henry Strater based his illustration in Canto X of the Malatestan emblem underneath the /*S*/ and superimposed, red /*I*/. The aforementioned debate and confusion over the meaning of the initials does not ultimately preclude a reading of them in the Malatesta Cantos as **SI**gismondo, **S**igismondo & **I**sotta, or both simultaneously.

"De looks" is from a letter (11 May 1923) to Isabel Weston Pound, *Ezra Pound to His Parents*, eds. Mary de Rachewiltz et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 511. In a letter to Kate Buss (12 May 1923), Pound also refers to the Three Mountains edition as "dee looks." *L*, 255.

language is, indeed, "resurrected" in his text.[92] Therefore, as Isotta's beauty becomes the Tempio's, and as the Gothic becomes the Renaissance, language itself is also transformed.

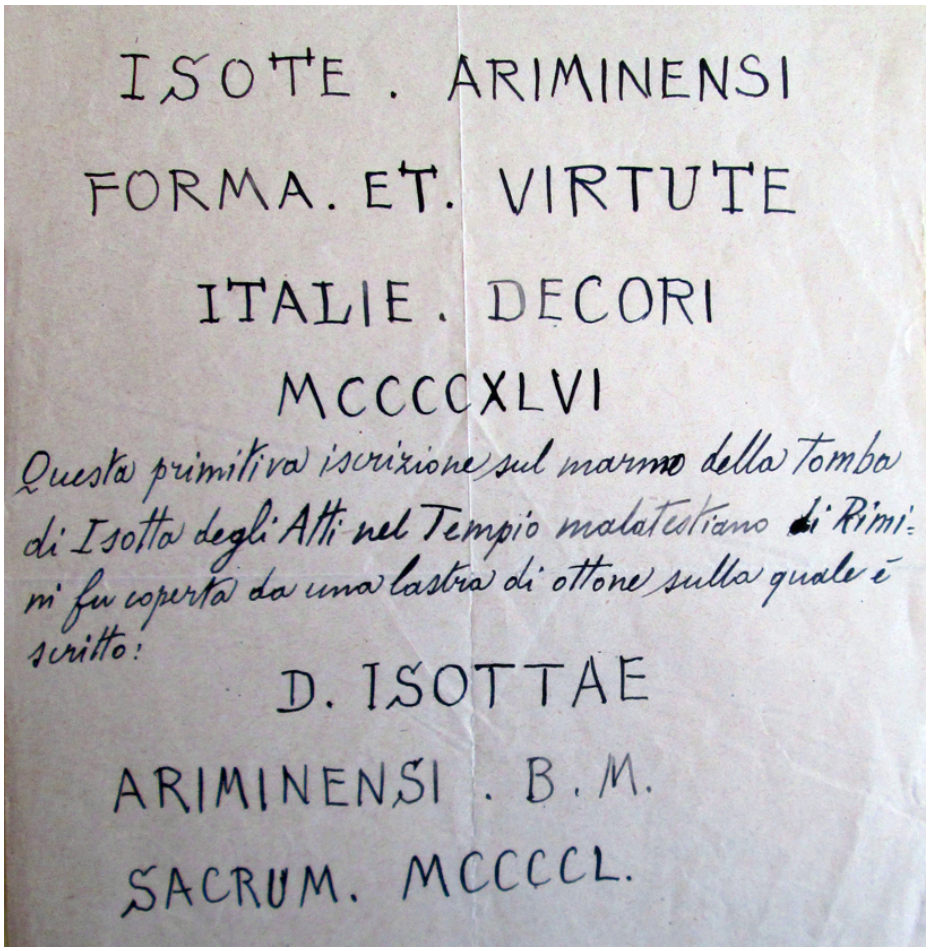

Figure 3.6: The original inscription (in capital letters in the upper half) and replacement inscription (the capitals in the bottom half) for Isotta degli Atti's tomb in the Tempio Malatestiano. As the Italian in between the two relates, the latter was engraved on a bronze plaque, and covered the former, which had been carved directly into the tomb's marble. The document, transcribed/written by Corrado Ricci, is found in Pound's materials for the Malatesta Cantos. EPP Box 70 f. 3138.

Furthermore, beginning with Sigismondo's love for Isotta, the passage ends with an image of the temple's sarcophagi, of which the elaborate tomb for Isotta, as demonstrated above, is alluded to through Pound's appropriation of a fragment of its inscription. The immaterial is concretized across the stanza, and although Sigismondo and Isotta's past is threatened by dissolution over time, the temple is seen as conserving it beyond such ruin. This stands in direct contrast to Polissena Sforza

[92] EPP Box 70 f. 3146, emphasis added.

earlier in the canto: "And he began building the TEMPIO, and Polixena, his second wife, died" (9: 35:24-25). Apart from her preceding Isotta as Sigismondo's wife, and dying, the poems offer nothing more on Polissena. However, the fact that Pound juxtaposes both wives to the temple conveys the notion that the historical preservation and transmission it embodies is a selective process—some figures and ideas are included, written in stone and "made new," while others are excluded and disappear. This aspect, as well, has a parallel in the fragmentary, appropriative techniques within the poetics of the Malatesta Cantos. Before Cantos X and XI trace Sigismondo's downfall, Pound leaves the reader at the end of Canto IX with a sense of the cyclical: after the climb comes the slide into ruin, and the natural burial underneath time. However, having developed the archival nature represented in both temple and epic in the first two cantos of the sequence, that sense of foreboding is countered with one of continuity via conservation. In perhaps the most significant stage in the development of the Tempio's textual materiality, the extended segment composed of the post-bag letters most strongly exemplifies the sense of an archive containing and conserving history.

Pound's introduction of the temple in the references and passages of the preceding analysis has a strong architectural focus, centered on the structure's visual design and the material elements thereof. This presentation frames the understanding of the building as the embodiment of a multiplicity of artistic and historical traditions that are unified according to a compositional aesthetic of fragmentation. Establishing this mode as a parallel to a documentary writing practice, Pound's use of typography to convey the Tempio as a network of interrelated images lays the foundation for his own poetics, which likewise appropriates, reorganizes, and repurposes. The further examination of the link Pound creates between the pages of the cantos and the concrete of the Riminese monument demonstrated that the textual layering "written" into the structural dimensions of the temple presents readers of the Malatesta Cantos with a process of visual engagement and spatial interaction. The nonlinearity of this kind of reading translates the palimpsestic experience of history and contemporaneity Pound saw in Sigismondo's Tempio. Concomitant with the poet's textual approach to the building is the integration of its architectural design as a structural metaphor for his poetry. Having offered a "view" of the temple's idiosyncratic history and

character, across the post-bag section—the subject of the continued analysis—Pound develops these initial concepts in a context much more grounded in the compositional techniques of a documentary poetic mode. The parallel between temple and text is put into practice through an archival lens directed at the materiality of the collected epistolary artifacts.

THE TEMPIO MALATESTIANO IN THE POST-BAG LETTERS

TRANSCRIBING FORMS

Just prior to the view of the partially constructed temple offered in the thirteen-line conclusion to Canto IX is the pivotal section wherein eight letters written to Sigismondo are reproduced. Constituting one of the most innovative and important techniques in the Malatesta Cantos—and, indeed, *The Cantos* as a whole—the post-bag section is also one of the sequence's most remarkable statements on materiality, the composition of the poetic page, and generic distinctions. It has already been seen that those distinctions were effectively blurred, when in Canto VIII Pound juxtaposes Malatesta's letters and contracts as condottiere with the lyric poetry written for his mistress Isotta degli Atti. As Michael Bernstein writes, Pound's text is constructed "without privileging either medium" and "open[s] for verse the capacity to include domains of experience long since considered alien territory."[93] At the time of writing, Pound was also mapping new poetic ground for his own work, and the stages of composition for each of the eight letters in the post-bag section that is tracked in the following pages, reveals a developing sense of interdependent materiality, and a spatial refiguring of textual history. The poet's synthesis of traditionally divergent territories of writing and experiences of history, as framed by the archive, occurs in tandem with a structural progression of the Tempio Malatestiano communicated through the textual re-composition of the letters' prose.

The moments when Pound appears to juggle different genres, such as that in Canto VIII, build up to the post-bag section when boundaries are not only blurred, but

[93] Michael André Bernstein, *The Tale of the Tribe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980) 40.

also erased. It may seem that Pound is, in fact, privileging "prose" in this section if the technique is considered, as Bernstein suggests, a mere *inclusion* of prose within verse, as opposed to a *fusion* of the two. However, as mentioned earlier, the prose is undisguised as such, and even highlighted through its spatial arrangement. In other words, Pound is intent on readers recognizing the letters as "alien territory." The fusion, then, stems not from disguising the prosaic as poetic, but rather from constructing pages that combine the mutual materiality of either type of document. The different writings that comprise a palimpsest may be distinguished from one another, but, as part of the same material, remain a *whole* nonetheless. They cannot be individually extracted from the page into which they are fully integrated without destroying it, analogous to the way that the components of an ideogram cannot be extracted without losing the combinatory signification.

Hugh Kenner writes that "there is no more dramatic moment in the *Cantos* than the one that affixes to the poem's page scraps of so-called prose that have been extracted and Englished, with neither meter nor ragged right margins, from the contents of Sigismundo Malatesta's post-bag."[94] Unpacking this concise statement, five key elements of this crucial section in the four cantos may be pinpointed. First, the letters Pound reproduces are "*so-called* prose": the reader is meant to identify them as prose at the same moment that he or she doubts the accuracy of that identification. If the term "prose" is indeed incongruous, one is perhaps equally inclined to refer to the letters as "so-called poetry." They may have no "ragged right margins," but at a time when the prose poem was already well known, such lineation hardly sufficed to discern one genre from the other. By fusing the two, and thus leaving the question of distinction open and unanswered, Pound foregrounds the materiality of the documents, as well as that of the text within which they are structured.

Second, Kenner implies precisely such a material status in referring to the quoted excerpts being "affixed" on the page. Pound's arrangement imparts a sense of bricolage, or collage, in three ways: *spatially*, through the insertion of one or two-line fragments between the offset formal greetings and closings of juxtaposed letters; *temporally*, through the anachronistic ordering; and *thematically*, through the variation of figures and subject matters. These pages in particular demonstrate Pound

[94] Hugh Kenner, "The Making of Modernist Canon," *Chicago Review* 43.2 (Spring 1984) 51.

manufacturing the pages of his cantos. An examination of the multiple definitions of *manufacture* in relation to the post-bag section elucidates some of the complexity of issues Pound's poetic technique involves. The 1848 edition of Noah Webster's *An American Dictionary of the English Language* offers the following:[95]

> **MANUFACTURE**
> [noun]
> 1. The operation of reducing materials of any kind into a form suitable for use.
> 2. Any thing made from raw materials by the hand, by machinery, or by art.
>
> [verb; transitive]
> 1. To make or fabricate from raw materials, by the hand, by art, or machinery, and work into forms convenient for use.
> 2. To work raw materials into suitable forms of use.
>
> [verb; intransitive]
> 1. To be occupied in manufactures

Moreover, it is useful to include those additions found in a contemporary dictionary:[96]

> [noun]
> 2. [a] the process of making wares by hand or by machinery [...].
> 3. the act or process of producing something.
>
> [verb]
> 2. [b] to produce according to an organized plan and with division of labor.
> 3. INVENT; FABRICATE.
> 4. To produce as if by manufacturing: CREATE.

Evident throughout the definitions of *manufacture* is the basis on working with materials. The curiosity of the term, when comparing and contrasting former conceptions with contemporary views, lies in its synthesis of the *manual* and the *mechanical*. The former word shares a root with *manufacture*, and, indeed, the etymology reveals the paradox in modern definitions (which often only specify the use of machinery):[97] from the Middle French *manufacture*, itself (via the Italian

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[95] Noah Webster and Chauncey Allen Goodrich, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1848) 621.

[96] Frederick C. Mish, ed. et al. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary: Eleventh Edition* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2004) 757.

[97] For example, the *The New Oxford American Dictionary*: "make (something) on a large scale using machinery." A later definition is given as "make or produce (something abstract) in a merely mechanical way."

manifattura) from the Medieval Latin *manufactura*, from which the phrase *manu factum* "made by hand"—*manu*, ablative of *manus* "hand" + *factum*, neuter past participle of *facere* "to make, construct, build, produce, compose."[98]

In the early 1920s, Pound was writing his Malatesta Cantos in what Walter Benjamin, a decade and a half later, would dub "the age of mechanical reproduction." Comments from Benjamin's essay, such as the following, resonant with the post-bag section in Canto IX:

> Around 1900 technical reproduction not only had reached a standard that permitted it to reproduce all known works of art, profoundly modifying their effect, but *it also had captured a place of its own among the artistic processes.* [...] First, technological reproduction is more independent of the original than is manual reproduction. [...] Second, technological reproduction can place the copy of the original in situations which the original itself cannot attain. Above all, *it enables the original to meet the recipient halfway* [...]. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the recipient in his or her own situation, *it actualizes that which is reproduced*.[99]

The letters that Pound arranges on the page, in as far as they may be considered material "scraps," appear as if manually constructed; in other words, cut out, arranged, and pasted together. Nevertheless, as demonstrated in previous analyses, the significance of the mechanical processes of typing and printing to the Malatesta Cantos—and especially *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*—is crucial. What meets the reader halfway, after all, are typed and printed versions of the original quattrocento documents in translation. The post-bag section, more than any other segment in the sequence, is simultaneously "made by hand" and "mechanically reproduced." The manufactured pages intentionally put on display the artistic process by which the materials are formed to reactivate the reproduced objects.

Third, by using the term "scraps" to describe the individual passages in the post-bag section, Kenner's statement conveys the fragmentation in Pound's construction of these pages. In one respect, the term again reflects the materiality of the archival documents from which the contents of this section are culled. Pound's

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[98] Compiled from the *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Lewis and Short's *A New Latin Dictionary*, and the *Online Etymology Dictionary* < http://www.etymonline.com >.

[99] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, eds. Michael W. Jennings et al., trans. Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2008) 21-22, emphasis added.

first contact with the documents was through Yriarte's book (obtained in August of 1922), which contained several facsimiles of letters written to Sigismondo, in addition to transcriptions and translations.[100] From the beginning then, Pound had at least a visual sense of the physical state of this batch of letters through their reproduction. Later, however, Pound visited the archive in Siena and examined the pages firsthand. Regarding Pound's treatment of the archival documents, the fragmentation is not as drastic as the reader finds at the opening of the sequence, but is, nonetheless, present throughout the post-bag section in other forms. At different moments Pound fractures continuous prose across several lines, omits lengthy portions of some letters, inserts snippets of text from separate portions of the same document, greatly reduces and/or abbreviates the formal salutations, and begins, or breaks off, quotations in the middle of sentences. These techniques are examined in greater detail below, but are listed here in order to illustrate the degree to which the strategy of fragmentation pervades the post-bag section.

The linguistic pieces are, of course, extracted from larger bodies of text. It remains true, however, that the post-bag section is as much composed of *whole* letters written to Sigismondo, as it is of brief, incomplete quotations. Nevertheless, the abrupt and consistent leaps between them only highlight the fact that the process of selection alone necessarily produces fragmentary results. As the reader's attention shifts back and forth between the letters' two predominate themes—the construction of the Tempio, and the domestic affairs of Malatesta's court—he/she becomes aware that even an entire letter, despite its completeness, does not provide the context necessary to fully appreciate it. A document in its entirety, just as much as a fragmented sentence quoted from another, is but a single piece of the puzzle. Pound's inclusion of certain details, and exclusion of others, does not allow a reader to reconstruct that puzzle from his text alone. A material retained or reproduced—be it a full text, or a quotation of only several words—does not transmit the entire context of the original, just as, inversely, it is placed, as Benjamin wrote, "in situations which the original itself cannot attain." In the post-bag section, these situations bring material

[100] Yriarte's work includes a facsimile of a letter from Isotta—partially translated by Pound in his early manuscript drafts, but not ultimately retained—and of one from Isotta's secretary—included in Canto IX (38.13-26)—both written to Sigismondo. *Un Condottiere au XVe siècle: Rimini: Etudes sur les Lettres et les Arts à la cour des Malatesta* (Paris: Jules Rothschild, 1882) 157-58.

textuality into focus through the image of the Tempio. It is, in fact, the structure of what has been selected—the extracted, then affixed scraps—that takes precedence.

A fourth element of fundamental importance is Pound's consideration and use of the visual field of the page as a determining factor in the processes of how the textual materials are perceived and signify. Kenner draws particular attention to this aspect by inserting the qualification that the extracts are without "ragged right margins." Typically, one expects to find such margins in a work of poetry, and in many ways that spatial arrangement was (and to some extent still is) a definitive marker of a poem. At the very least, such was the most immediate indication, as any text is *seen* before it is read. This type of identification was deliberately challenged in the 19th century, notably—though neither the only, nor the earliest example—by Baudelaire's seemingly oxymoronic "petits poëmes en prose." However, Pound's post-bag section bears neither label (i.e. prose or poem), and from a strictly visio-spatial point of view, differs primarily in (1) its combination of *multiple* texts of "so-called prose" on the same page, and (2) its occasional break from the format of prose paragraphs. While the justified margins of prose—left *and* right—certainly dominate the section, Pound does purposefully stray from that spatial arrangement. Thus, if these pages violate the spatial conventions of poetry, they do the same regarding those of prose. By adjoining the differing spatial arrangements of the two genres, Pound visually confounds the reader. Are the passages with lines of varying lengths poetry, or fractured prose? Conversely, are those printed with justified margins conventional prose, or prose poems? Ultimately, such questions, Pound's text suggests, cannot be definitively answered. All of Sigismondo's letters must, then, be read as both genres, or as neither, existing instead in a liminal space between the two. On a material level, that space is the page itself—the field in which the suspension of the compositional process between two forms is concretized. An acute awareness of the material page is one of Pound's major aims in this section, achieved in part by disrupting a reading process that would overlook it in favor of drawing conclusive, and exclusive, textual boundaries. This is not to suggest Pound is arguing that, in fact, no difference whatsoever exists between prose and poetry. Instead, Pound's documentary poetics demonstrates a broader conception of what constitutes poetic material, and sees the potential in constellating the variety of forms textuality takes to illustrate the importance of materiality as part of the process of signification.

That Pound intends to establish the import of the visual—in other words, that readers *see* the material text as such, *in* space and *on* the page—is further evident when considering that the documents, as Kenner writes, are without meter. To be fair, it is not the case that these texts are completely devoid of meter, lacking even the natural cadences of language. More accurately then, Kenner's phrase may be reformulated to state that the texts have no *regular* meter. It is telling that within the same clause he mentions the absence of a metrical pattern and the absence of uneven right margins, for had Pound (to quote his essay "A Retrospect") "shoveled in [the words] to fill a metric pattern or to complete the noise of a rhyme-sound," he would have been required to insert line breaks into the text.[101] This would have inevitably altered the spatial arrangement of the source documents. However, such is not the case in the post-bag section, and the prominent, justified right margin attests to the fact that here the line is *spatially* determined. Again, this does not preclude any and all sense of meter, but simply means that such temporal and acoustic devices do not act as the dominant structural principle. They are instead replaced by, on one level, the spatial features of the source documents themselves—for example, the format of the letters' closing remarks and "signature," and the paragraph breaks—and, on another level, the frame of the page on which those documents are reproduced.

In his 1917 essay "Reflections on *Vers Libre*," T.S. Eliot writes, "freedom is only true freedom when it appears against the background of an artificial limitation." By "limitation" Eliot was referring to "the ghost of some simple metre."[102] In this section of the Malatesta Cantos, the freedom quite literally *appears* against the visual *background* of the page. As a spatial limitation (i.e. with margins and physical edges), that page is both artificial—something "made or produced [...] typically as a copy"—and artifactual—a made object, "typically an item of cultural or historical interest." The two adjectives' shared etymological root is practically visible: Latin, *ars*, *art-* "art" + *facere* "make."[103] This aspect of the post-bag section, once again, returns the reader's attention to its structural features, and in particular the materiality of page and text alike.

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[101] Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968) 3.

[102] T.S. Eliot, *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings*, (New York: Farrar Straus, 1965) 187.

[103] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*. See the definitions and etymology of *manufacture* given earlier, which also has a root in the Latin verb *facere*.

The metrical issue in the post-bag letters leads to the fifth element in Kenner's description, for Pound's poetic decisions and strategies are also reflected in the documents having been "Englished." Pound certainly could have translated and arranged Sigismondo's letters into accentual English verse, much as he had previously done for his translation of "The Seafarer"; however, beyond simply eschewing this type of translation, many of the poet's linguistic choices redirect one's focus to the text's visual materiality. The reader who bypasses the visio-spatial features of the pages (and the individual passages they contain) to *delineate* them through metrical analysis will have his/her efforts quickly frustrated by Pound's idiosyncratic translations. The linguistic particularities dispersed throughout the one hundred and nine lines result in a certain metrical and acoustic indeterminacy.[104] How, for example, should one scan a misspelling like "opinium" (9: 38.1): as written, or as it ought to be written? Or again, how should the abbreviation "etc.", or a series of abbreviations such as "Y^{r} M^{gt} Ld^{shp}" (9: 40.12), be analyzed metrically?

Additionally, many of Pound's unconventional choices in translating the quattrocento letters must be *seen*, and would disappear entirely if only communicated orally. Included in this group are the aforementioned abbreviations, as well as those that follow Pound's own epistolary style, such as "wd." and "yr.". The letter written by Maestro Alvise's son is particularly illustrative:

> "Sence to-day I am recommanded that I have to tel you my
> "father's opinium that he has shode to Mr. Genare about the
> "valts of the cherch... etc ...
> "Giovane of Master alvise P.S. I think it advisabl that
> "I shud go to rome to talk to mister Albert so as I can no
> "what he thinks about it rite. (9: 37.35-38.5)

In this case Pound is reflecting the orthographical oddities of the original document, in part for the sake of conveying authenticity. Shortly thereafter however, in a different letter, Pound purposely introduces the misspelling "noboddy" into the

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[104] See *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage*, in which Marjorie Perloff discusses Pound's shift "from a Symbolist mode to the art of montage, of 'documentary' surface upon which dislocated fragments are juxtaposed" (157). Her chapter entitled "'No Edges, No Convexities': Ezra Pound and the Circle of Fragments," opens with Yeats's negative review of *The Cantos*, in which he complained of the fragmentary style: "[...] it is constantly interrupted, broken, twisted [...]" and left with "unbridged transitions, unexplained ejaculations [...]." *Oxford Book of Modern Verse 1892-1935*, ed. W.B. Yeats (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936) xxiv-xxvi. Pound's objection to these remarks is found in a letter written to Hubert Creekmore in 1939: "God damn Yeats' bloody paragraph. Done more to prevent people reading Cantos for what is *on the page* than any other smoke screen." *L*, 417.

translation, immediately followed by the erroneous homophone "hear" in place of "here" (9: 39.5).[105] In the context of Da Palla's complaint to Sigismondo that the stonemason Ranbutino has ignored his repeated requests, this "mistake" is not without its own punning implication. Such examples demonstrate how the multiple layers of signification depend on the materiality of the language at it exists *on the page*. The added emphasis these linguistic idiosyncrasies place on the visual component of the post-bag section makes it clear why Pound explicitly indicated to James Sibley Watson, "I DO want the mis-spellings in the documents, letters, etc. kept VERY carefully. Also the abbreviations. And where they are written on ^{an}other ^{line} the top line letters shd. be in smaller case."[106]

Kenner's choice of the term "Englished" implies a greater degree of alteration, as if to indicate that Pound's treatment of the post-bag letters is more akin to "re-imaginings" than straightforward translations. Many of Pound's choices—and even the choice to translate at all—are apparent, rather than obscured, manipulations. However, while the poet's interventions are often laid bare on the page, in Pound's hands this greater degree of linguistic manipulation is paradoxically done to impart the originality and authenticity of the source documents. Pound's strategy suggests that a translation which embodies the materiality of the source text—even at the risk of straying from the intended meaning—results in a more accurate experience of that text than would a traditional rendition. Had Pound followed conventional editorial practices and regularized his translations, the effect of the post-bag section would have been greatly impoverished. As they exist, however, Pound's "Englished" versions coincide with the dual position that the reader is given in this section: that of the Sienese reading through the contents of Malatesta's post-bag, with all of the idiosyncrasies, formatting, and variations the letters contain relatively intact, and that of Pound himself working with the language of those same documents as a researcher/translator/poet in the archives in Siena.

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[105] In the Watson typescript, Pound originally typed "nobody here," then cancelled the first word and typed "noboddy" above it (EPP Box 71 f. 3155). Subsequent revisions included the substitution of "hear" (EPP Box 71 f. 3165).

[106] Letter from Pound to James Sibley Watson, 4 January 1923. *Pound, Thayer, Watson, & The Dial*, ed. Walter Sutton (Gainesville: University Press of Florida) 256. Furthermore, handwritten up the left margin on the first page of the Watson typescript, Pound states, "note to printer. KEEP the abbreviations." EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

The introduction to the post-bag letters underwent a number of changes throughout the composition of the Malatesta Cantos as Pound's understanding of the section's role in the sequence developed. The early drafts and notes contain mentions of the context regarding Sigismondo and the Sienese—

Introd.]
[up to Siena 1454
letters. [Canto XI][107]

—or brief passages detailing the events leading up to Sigismondo fleeing his headquarters in Sorano, which would later become lines 37.16-26 in Canto IX. By the Watson typescript, however, Pound had placed the letters as the opening of what was then Canto XI (as indicated in the manuscript quoted above), while the context was found four pages prior, reduced to a single, vague line: "And there had been that affair near Siena."[108] For the final version the section was moved to the middle of the sequence, a structural position that, amongst other thematic benefits, underscores its centrality to the poetics at work in the Malatesta Cantos. Interestingly, the importance of the Tempio as a primary concern of Sigismondo was stated more directly in one of the earliest folders of archival material for the poems:

+ he raised the siege of Pimbino –
+ went on with the Tempio –
+ he signed on with Siena:
[Letters.][109]

Although the line was not ultimately kept, Pound did retain the idea it expresses of returning to the construction of the Tempio *in process*, as the post-bag section begins in the midst of carrying out Alberti's design for the temple. This type of shift in strategy from the explicit to the implicit is representative of Pound's progressive move away from the Tempio as a thematic subject of interest on the surface, towards the building as more a structural metaphor for the underlying compositional process.

[107] EPP Box 70 f. 3139.
[108] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.
[109] EPP Box 70 f. 3139.

As published the poem's plunge into and out of Sigismondo's letters is distinctly identified at the start and end of the section: "And this is what they found in the post-bag" (37.26), and "That's what they found in the post-bag" (41.1). Prior to this point no such clarification was given when archival documents were spliced into the poem. While Pound typographically signaled such documents as letters, he did not include any comment regarding their context or source. In addition to indicating the shift in the reader's position (i.e. to that of one of the Sienese), the lines also ensure the reader's awareness of the materiality—that is, flipping through *page* after *page* of personal letters—involved in that position.

What the section shares with those previous instances is the typographic distinction. The several lines that open the first letter, from the architect Matteo Nuti da Fano, are printed in italics as in Canto VIII. These lines establish the use of italics across the section as, most often, a visio-structural cue marking the shift to a new letter. Moreover, as with prior letters the italics are also intended to reproduce, or at least represent, some of the graphic qualities of the original documents. This intention is reinforced by the spatial arrangement on the page, which follows the indentation of the letter format. However, the lineation of the entire excerpt from Nuti's letter as printed in the New Directions edition differs slightly, but significantly, from that in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*:

A Draft of XVI. Cantos, Three Mountains Press (33-4)

Ex Arimino
die xx Decembris

" *Magnifice ac potens domine, mi singularissime*
" I advise yr. Lordship how I have been with master Alwidge who
" has shown me the design of the nave that goes in the middle of
" the church and the design for the roof and . . . "

The Cantos, New Directions (9: 37.27-32)

Ex Arimino die xxii Decembris
" *Magnifice ac potens domine, mi singularissime*
" I advise yr. Lordship how
" I have been with master Alwidge who
" has shown me the design of the nave that goes in the middle,
" of the church and the design for the roof and..."

Beginning with the publication of *A Draft of XXX Cantos* by The Hours Press in 1930, the original lineation of the Malatesta Cantos in Pound's typescripts, which were followed as closely as possible by Three Mountains Press, was altered. In many cases the modifications are due simply to restrictions imposed by the printing process; for example, Dorothy Shakespear's Vorticist capitals (which replaced those done by Henry Strater) for the Hours Press edition forced new line breaks for the first ten to fifteen lines of each poem. Nevertheless, many of the longer lines in the Malatesta Cantos were split over two lines without any constraints due to the margins of the page. While some are but minor changes, the impact of others, as in the passage above, should not be overlooked.

One first notices that while New Directions has corrected the date of the letter to the 22nd of December (an error previously reprinted in their own publication of *A Draft of XXX Cantos*), they have also reformatted these first two lines: they are set on the same line, the near right-justified alignment is replaced by a center alignment, and the font size is increased to that of the surrounding text. Though the indentation and italics still clearly distinguish the opening lines, Pound's approximation of the letter format is lost. By themselves, such changes are not likely to significantly alter the reading experience; however, in combination with those found in the subsequent lines, this first letter presents an interesting problem to the reader. In *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* all aspects of the spatial arrangement of this text—from the letterhead-style location and date, to the greeting, and lines extending from the left margin to the right—indicate an excerpt of prose. On the other hand, in New Directions's edition the lines in italics are not easily recognizable as following any particular textual format, and the four following lines—each of a different length, ranging from seven to fifteen syllables—would in all likelihood signal poetry before prose. This is especially the case given the poetic context in which these lines are read.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Pound includes fragments of Sigismondo's letters without any regular meter. With the "poetic" line breaks added to the text in later publications, the passage seems particularly inclined to frustrate the scansion of the very reading it visually invites:

/ – / – / – /
" I advise yr. Lordship how
/ – / – / – / – /
" I have been with master Alwidge who

– / – – – / – – / – / – – / –
" has shown me the design of the nave that goes in the middle,
– – / / – – / – – / /
" of the church and the design for the roof and..."

The first two lines coax the reader into a straightforward trochaic rhythm. Pound's subsequent lines, however, undercut the initial meter: after an additional stress is tacked on to the end of the second line, the third and fourth lines then depart from the trochaic rhythm completely. Neither of the first two lines are perfect examples of tetrameter or pentameter, respectively, and while one may see a semblance of anapestic meter in the final two lines, the variation is sufficient to deny the reader any satisfaction there. None of the lines are broken comfortably, or predictably, and the enjambments also serve as obstacles. The added comma at the end of the third line—disguising the strongest enjambment as an end-stopped line—is an instance where the intention of confusing any simple, conventional reading is particularly evident. Thus, even this altered lineation has its own advantages and disadvantages as far as expanding the notion of what a poem may include and/or look like on the page.

In either publication the spatial arrangement of this first letter plays an important role in determining how the documents in the post-bag section will be received and interpreted, for by it the reader is introduced to Pound's visual and structural design for these archival materials, given in the context of the Tempio's construction. This formal presentation works alongside the contents of the architect's letter about his exchange with the carpenter and foreman Luigi Alvise concerning "the *design* of the nave [...] and the *design* for the roof." Pound therefore logically begins this textual parallel of the temple with the blueprints of the building. The poet also somewhat anglicized the foreman's name from the letter's spelling of "Aluvigie"[110] to "Alwidge," linguistically making him a bridge between the Italian temple and the English poem. The mutual element of design in the two is that of appropriation and fragmentation. It seems, however, that initially Pound was more intent on illustrating the latter technique. His original excerpt from the letter was twice the length, with the second half jumping across three, successively smaller fragments quoted from the document, and ending with "etc." followed by the letter's closing. However, Pound's revisions in the next draft of the section cut out the entire second half, and truncate the

[110] Yriarte, 421. "Alvise" is given in the footnote to the name.

closing to "Vester fidellisimus servitor / Mateo da Fano."[111] In order to ensure that the focus on design remain clear, Pound seems to have taken his own advice to "use no superfluous word."[112] But the revisions also demonstrate a shift away from fragmentation; even the fractured closing was later excised. While the technique is seen in the broken lineation in publications after *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, what is more apparent is simply the appropriation of outside material. This, of course, relates to the design of the Tempio itself, for which Alberti—whose plans Nuti was called on to clarify after Alberti was recalled to Rome—incorporated the architectural monument of the Roman triumphal arch into his compositional adaptation of the existing ecclesiastical structure of the Church of San Francesco.

Cutting the excerpt where he did, Pound also significantly modified the transition to the second letter. Retaining, in some form, the closing to Nuti's letter would have resulted, at least initially, in a more disconnected reading that isolates the individual documents. Alternatively, by breaking the letter off mid-sentence, the paratactic shift is immediate, lacking any visual indication that from one line to the next a page has, in fact, been turned:

> " the church and the design for the roof and . . . "
>
> " JHesus,
> " *Magnifico exso.* Signor Mio
> " Sence today I am recommanded that I hav to tel you my father's
> " opinium that he has shode to Mr. Genare about the valts of the
> " cherche . . . etc. . . .
> " Giovane of Master alwise P.S. I think it advisabl that I shud go
> " to rome to talk to mister Albert so as I can no what he thinks
> " about it rite.
> " Sagramoro . . . "[113]

In the above layout, from *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, a line is skipped between the two letters, as per Pound's typescript. As is made clear in the rest of the section, a blank line is used indicate a jump to another document, but with this first instance such a practice has yet to be established, and a reader may very well see it as simply a jump between paragraphs within the same document, especially in light of the ellipsis that

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[111] EPP Box 71 f. 3154.

[112] Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," *Poetry*, 1.6 (March 1913) 201. A prime example of this principle is found in the poem "In a Station of the Metro," the composition of which is discussed earlier.

[113] Pound, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, 34. New Directions, 9: 37.32-38.6.

precedes it. That interpretation is all the more likely given that the start of the second letter is neither a date, nor the opening greeting (found in the following line) that one would expect for a new document. Instead, one finds the misspelled, detached word "JHesus" (the comma is not included in any of Pound's manuscripts or typescripts). This peculiarity was transcribed in Yriarte's work from the original letter written by Giovanni, son of Alvise. As are the others in the excerpt, the misspelling is attributed to the boy's errors in taking dictation: here, the result seems a combination of the pronunciations of the Italian *Gesù* and the Latin *Iesus*. Due to its inclusion, and given the situation, the word may have been inattentively exclaimed by "Master alwise," and duly noted by his overeager secretary. In the canto, though, it may have an additional function. Pound originally conceived of the post-bag section as putting the reader in the place of, or alongside, Sigismondo flipping through his letters, reading some and only scanning others. Accordingly, Pound added several interjections (all aligned right of center), being Malatesta's reactions to certain passages:

1) After Letter nº1 (a line above "'JHesus"): "ugh!"
2) In the middle of Letter nº2 (just before "Giovane of Master alwise"): "who the devil!"
3) Between the fragments from Letter nº3 and Letter nº1, when Pound returns to them later in the section (i.e. "[...] silver for the small medal..." and "*Magnifice ac potens*..."): "blast the silver."

Though these remarks were later cancelled—corresponding to the change in strategy whereby the reader witnesses the Sienese sift through the letters of the seized post-bag—Pound may have seen the ostensible interjection from Alvise as effectively bridging the gap between the two letters by doubling as one spoken by Sigismondo. As Philip Furia writes, "[...] Pound's arrangement makes it seem like it is Malatesta's exasperated outcry over the construction delay" of the Tempio.[114]

This interpretation seems less likely in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, where the word is typographically attached solely to the second letter, as opposed to floating between the two like the earlier exclamations Pound inserted. However, in subsequent printings of the poem, and as it currently exists, there is no gap between the documents. Therefore, considering the absence of the closing to Letter nº1, the word

[114] Philip Furia, *Pound's Cantos Declassified* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1984) 20.

may very well be seen as belonging either to the first document, or to the second. The ambiguity suggests a third option, where the word's liminality, in occupying the space that would otherwise separate the documents, makes it a visual connective between them. The transition from one text to the next is, consequently, all but seamless. This, in turn, leads to a reading that combines the appropriated materials rather than separates them. In addition to the left and right-justified lines being broken up, the first letter's segue is also unique to the post-bag section, for after this point the transitions are clearly indicated typographically with a dividing blank space, indentation, a change in font, or a combination thereof. The purpose of altering the spatio-structural arrangement in this way at the outset is to convey that the fragments of archival documents Pound has gathered for his poem, like those Sigismondo had for the Tempio, are not to be seen as much independently as they are interdependently; not as much (or not only) for what each contributes to Sigismondo's story, as for how each fits into the structural unit of the page, and pages of the Malatesta Cantos.

While this is exemplified in the first line of the second letter, the final line to that document expands the concept from a connective that bridges the space of a single line to one that spans almost an entire page. In the earliest drafts of the Alvise letter, Pound ended with a full quotation of the concluding statement to the original document's postscript: "Sagramoro has seen all the work and he wil rite [*sic*] to your Lordship."[115] Initially set as its own paragraph (following the layout of the original), then in a later draft as a continuation of the preceding sentence, in the Watson typescript the phrase was returned to its own line (though without indentation), but was drastically cut to "Sagramoro . . ." Thus, the post-bag's second letter ends as it begins, with only a single word. On the same page, twenty-one lines later, the reader finds an inversion of this line in what appears to be the completion of the phrase:

> " . . . *sagramoro* to put up the derricks. There is a supply of
> " beams at . . ."
>
> (9: 38.27-28)

Had Pound retained the whole phrase in the earlier document, the latter reference to Sagramoro would appear, like other names mentioned more than once, to be a simple

[115] EPP Box 70 f. 3146. Jacopo Sagramoro da Soncino was a counselor and secretary to Sigismondo.

repetition of one of Sigismondo's entourage. In other words, it would not appear as if reading the phrase was momentarily interrupted. This effect is communicated typographically by the ellipses on either side of the name, which more than an excision, signal a suspension. The temporality of reading is disrupted, as one would either jump backwards upon reaching line 38.27, or, having noticed the connection, skip forward over the intervening lines. The latter requires that the reader literally see the whole page, as a unit of text, and move freely within that space according to visual associations. A spatial reading of this nature is precisely the approach that the visual materiality of the post-bag section invites. By truncating the quotation and arranging it on its own line, flush against the left margin—instead of in the middle of the page in accordance with where the previous line ends—Pound creates a mirroring effect on the page: "Sagramoro . . ." ⇒ ". . . *sagramoro*." That "reflection," in turn, highlights how the pages of the post-bag section interweave archival fragments, for, as suggested above, the reader is given the impression that the end of the second letter has been displaced further down the page.

The initial phrase, however, is actually "completed" by a fragment taken from an entirely different document; lines 38.27-28 are, in fact, a part of the letter from Pietro di Genari and Matteo da Pasti, which constitutes the third letter in the post-bag section. Though the initial translation of it was quite extensive (see figure 3.7), and remained intact in the drafts prior to the Watson typescript, it was eventually reduced to three short fragments, which were inserted among the other documents in order to create effects such as that mentioned above. As Pound's original translation makes clear, due to the number of similarities in content, the first three letters from the post-bag are tightly woven together: various design elements of the Tempio (e.g. the vaults of the church, the nave, the chapels, the roofs), and the mention in each letter of the other workers involved in its construction (e.g. Alberti, Alvise, Genari, and Pasti). This third letter even refers directly to the fact that a letter from Alvise and his son is being written (a past event for the reader of the Malatesta Cantos). Accordingly, Pound groups the three letters together, and, going a step further, primarily through spatial arrangement fuses one to another. Having noticed that Sagramoro is spoken of at the end of the second and third letters, Pound does not just connect the two documents, or set them in relation, but actually integrates them into each other. It is as

if the shared word overlaps and compounds the two phrases as the Alvise letter is figuratively layered on that from Genari/Pasti.[116]

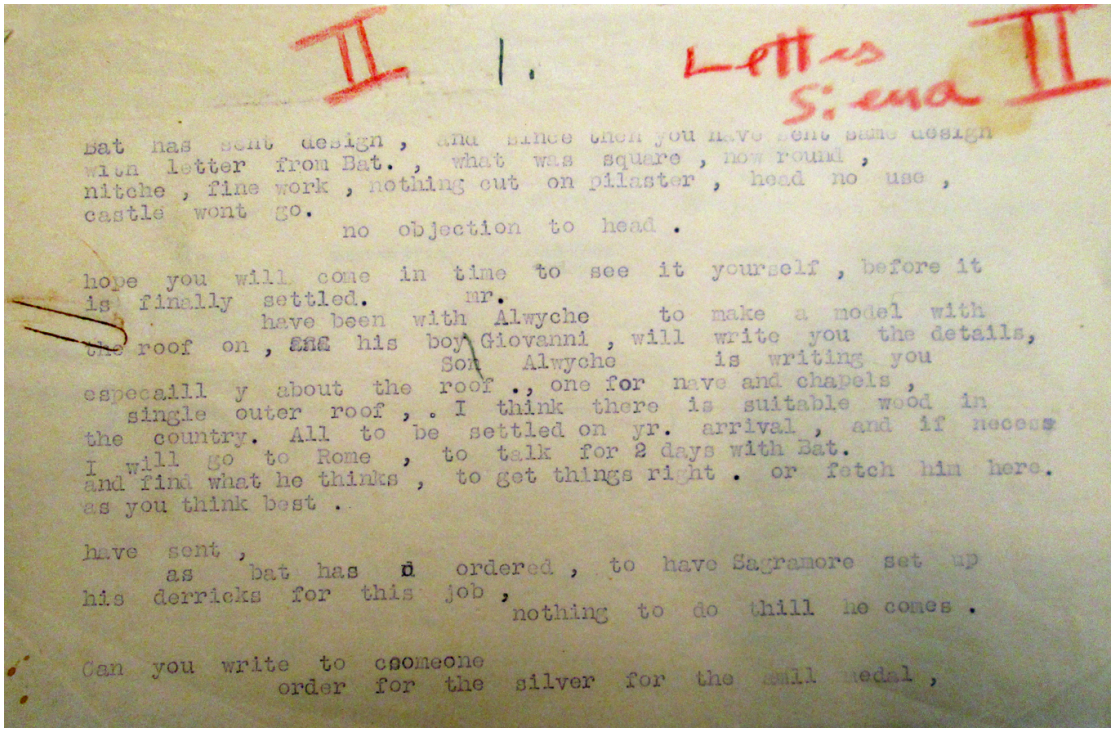

Figure 3.7: Pound's early translation of the third letter in the post-bag section (9: 38.7), written/sent by Pietro di Genari and Matteo da Pasti to Sigismondo. EPP Box 70 f. 3146.

It is nonetheless true that in the absence of any information outside of the text of Canto IX, the reader would be unaware that the supposed completion of the second letter's final phrase further down the page is, in fact, from a different text altogether. However, one also observes that in addition to collapsing the space between the first two letters, the later publications of the sequence also insert a blank line between the penultimate and ultimate lines of Alvise's letter. Where the one-word line "JHesus" is lodged between the first two letters, "Sagramoro . . ." floats between letters two and three. Seeing the secretary's name, and its separation—as if the greeting at the start of a letter—it might indeed be understood as a quotation from another document, and therefore counted as the third letter in the series. Its counterpart in lines 38.27-28 adds to the ambiguity typographically, due to the italics and lower-case /*s*/; both features

[116] The success of Pound's fusion of the two letters is evident in the confusion it has created: both John Steven Childs (in chapter four of *Modernist Form: Pound's Style in the Early Cantos*) and Philip Furia (in chapter two of *Pound's Cantos Declassified*), among others, incorrectly claim that lines 38.27-28 are part of the letter from Alvise's son.

visually connect ". . . *sagramoro*" to line 38.7 (Letter nº3), which shares the same typography: "'*Illustre signor mio*, Messire Battista . . .'" Consequently, one is led to read the line in conjunction with both the second and third documents. The end result of Pound's composition of these fragments is two separate archival documents becoming compounded within the palimpsestic structure of the page on which they are arranged, and of the text in which they are found.

The progression of establishing the gathered materials as a singular text continues in the next segment. Pound again fuses two documents into a single letter, yet this time provides no indication, however subtle, of having done so. The first line is a fragment from the opening to the previously mentioned letter from Genari and Pasti to Sigismondo, dated 17 December 1454. The following five lines are taken from a contract between representatives of Sigismondo—Antonio de' Pasti (brother of Matteo) and Francesco Marangoni—and the sculptor/stonecutter Antonio "lapicida" and Jacobi di Milano.[117] The contract, dated 5 June 1455, was for the acquisition of building materials to be used for the construction of the Tempio; Pound quotes four of the fourteen items listed:

> " *Illustre signor mio*, Messire Battista..."
>
> " First: Ten slabs best red, seven by 15, by one third,
> " Eight: ditto, good red, 15 by three by one,
> " Six of same, 15 by one by one.
> " Eight columns 15 by three by one third
> etc... with carriage, danars 151 (9: 38.7-12)

The layout of the passage certainly suggests a single source document, and Pound's revisions to his manuscript drafts indicate just such an intention.[118] The initial version of the Genari/Pasti letter, in figure 3.7, was first pared down to ninety words (roughly eight lines from margin to margin), the last two being Genari and Pasti's "signatures," under which are four consecutive slash marks indicating a shift to a new document. Moreover, on the pages of this typescript draft of the post-bag section, Pound identified each letter in blue ink in the right margin: "Nuti of Fano," "Boy," "Pasti,"

---

[117] See Yriarte, 418 and 398, respectively. Yriarte notes that the first document is part of the series *Lettere a personaggi diversi* in the archives in Siena for Malatesta, and that the original of the second is housed in the Biblioteca Civica Gambalunga in Rimini.

[118] As with the lines referring to Sagramoro, the two letters here have also often been mistakenly cited as one archival document; see, for example, Terrell (47) and Furia (25).

"Contract," "D. de M.," "Ixota," "Nurse," and "Son."[119] In the subsequent draft, Pound further revised the letter and included the complete closing: "Petro de Genari / Matthaeus de Pastis de Verona / adi 17 decembre 1454."[120] In the Watson typescript, however, the letter was radically cut from seventeen lines to only five words. The aforementioned closing being a part of the cancellation, the document as a consequence, is in no way signaled as separate from the juxtaposed list that follows.

The effect is again that of one text (the contract) layered over another (the letter), leaving fragments from each to be read together as a created, third text. After the Sagramoro lines drew the reader's attention away from a conventional, sequential reading, and towards the material page as a visual unit, this combination of documents ties that concept to the Tempio. While it is true for the entire sequence of poems, the post-bag section, in particular, illustrates a compositional process whereby the visio-spatial features of found, historical or archival texts are manipulated as poetic material into the manufactured pages of a new text. The structure, so to speak, is laid bare. Likewise, lines 38.8-12 are a dry, bald list presenting the raw materials of the Tempio. Pound first strips the original phrasing of all linguistic embellishment, leaving only the most essential words, pieced together with minimal use of prepositions and conjunctions. From the lengthy descriptive words in the original Italian (quoted below), Pound's four lines of strictly building materials are almost entirely composed of one-syllable words.

> *Primo*. Lastras rubias finas boni membri sine macula numero decem septem longitudinis et latitudinis quinque pedum et grossissiei unius tertii pedis lastras longitudinis sex pedum et duorum tertiorum latitudinis trium pedum et unius tertii et grossissiei unius tertii.
>
> *Item*. Octo lastras rubras bonas finas sine macula longitudinis quinque pedum latitudinis trium pedum et unius tertii grossissiei unius tertii pedis.
>
> *Item*. Sex petios lastrarum rubiarum bonarum ut supra, longitudinis quinque pedum latitudinis unius pedis et unius quarti grossissiei prædictæ. [...]
>
> *Item*. Octo coloncllas rubras longitudinis quinque pedum, grossissiei duorum tertiorum.[121]

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[119] Both the initial translation and the revised typescript of the letter, along with the others, are in the same folder at the Beinecke. EPP Box 70 f. 3146.

[120] EPP Box 70 f. 3154. The modified names and the "A.D." error are Pound's.

[121] Yriarte, 399.

Pound's English rendering heightens the sense of the process of construction by repetitiously linking the mostly monosyllabic words, which are themselves repetitive: "seven *by* 15, *by* one third [...] 15 *by* three *by* one [...] 15 *by* one *by* one." The lines are composed almost as mathematical equations, which, along with the density of numbers (nineteen of the thirty-six words), strengthens the impression of "addition;" the text building up, in other words. The spatial arrangement also contributes to this structural focus by stacking text upon text, as opposed to letting the lines run to the margin. As in the first post-bag letter, the passage's line breaks stray from the standard prose format of the archival documents. In stark contrast to the lines spanning the entire page immediately after it, these lines—as the language conveys—have been measured and cut. In parallel to the Tempio, the material "slabs" of text are then structured in layers and affixed to the page.

Juxtaposed as it is to the introductory phrase from Genari/Pasti's letter, the fragment from the contract acts as the body of their letter, the content of which is predominately concerned with plans for the temple: the designs for the façade, nave, and chapels, and the construction of a model with the roof included. Therefore, what was a discussion about *ideas* for the Tempio's construction is replaced by the *things* with which it will actually be built. The poem moves from material designs to materiality itself.

A further textual manipulation gesturing toward the visual aspects of the Tempio is Pound's use of Arabic numerals. Surrounded by numbers spelled out in English, each of the list's four lines contains the figure *15*. As the only one in the segment, the numerical symbol is in no way differentiated acoustically, but is a purely visual distinction. In the context of materiality, it serves to remind the reader that individual letters and words are as much graphic figures as are Arabic numerals (and even the Roman numerals that title each canto).[122] *Fifteen* and *15* are both homophonous, visual symbols. The comparison is particularly evident in the Watson typescript, and the handwritten corrections to it. For that draft, Pound revised the

[122] The same argument is present throughout *The Cantos*, and includes the Greek alphabet, hieroglyphics, and (most notably) Chinese characters. With regard to Pound's use of Roman numerals to designate his cantos, Jerome McGann (taking *A Draft of XXX Cantos* as an example) writes, "This small detail is a visual cue calling attention to the linguistic importance of the material form of every script. [...] Having been represented in print as 'XXX' and not 'thirty' (or even '30'), the work draws the reader's eye to the physique of the texts." *The Textual Condition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991) 136-37.

earlier version, where only the last line contained the numeral, so that, conversely, only in the third line is the number fifteen spelled out. The word, then, is fit between the numerals above and below it. As the composition progressed, however, that material context was set more and more in relation to the Tempio, and in the final drafts only the numeric symbol is used. Pound's choice to single out the number fifteen may be the Arabic numeral's resemblance to the initials /*S*/ and /*I*/, which carved together ($) adorn the temple in numerous places. In this passage of the post-bag section, the "initials" are repeatedly emblazoned amidst the materials of the text, as if a wall of the temple itself. The cipher is one of the visual characteristics of the Tempio that received the most attention from historians, due to the debate surrounding its signification: *SI*gismondo, or *S*igismondo and *I*sotta.[123] Seeing the digits as doubling for the letters, the numeral's inversion of the two would suggest a third interpretation as *IS*otta. Being reproduced a total of five times in the illustrations to *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, the sign was undoubtedly important to Pound, regardless of which is the correct interpretation.[124] Furthermore, over the four lines, the stone for the Tempio builds/adds up to a total sum of money (yet another material); visually the /*15*/s also appear to accumulate, yielding "danars *151*" in the last line. Symbolically, the final numeral seems to embody all possible interpretations of the temple's symbol: *IS*otta overlapped with *SI*gismondo, and/or *I*sotta–*S*igismondo–*I*sotta. In accordance with the romantic interpretation of the Tempio to which Pound adhered, the passage demonstrates that as the building is being constructed, so are the two lovers being progressively intertwined.

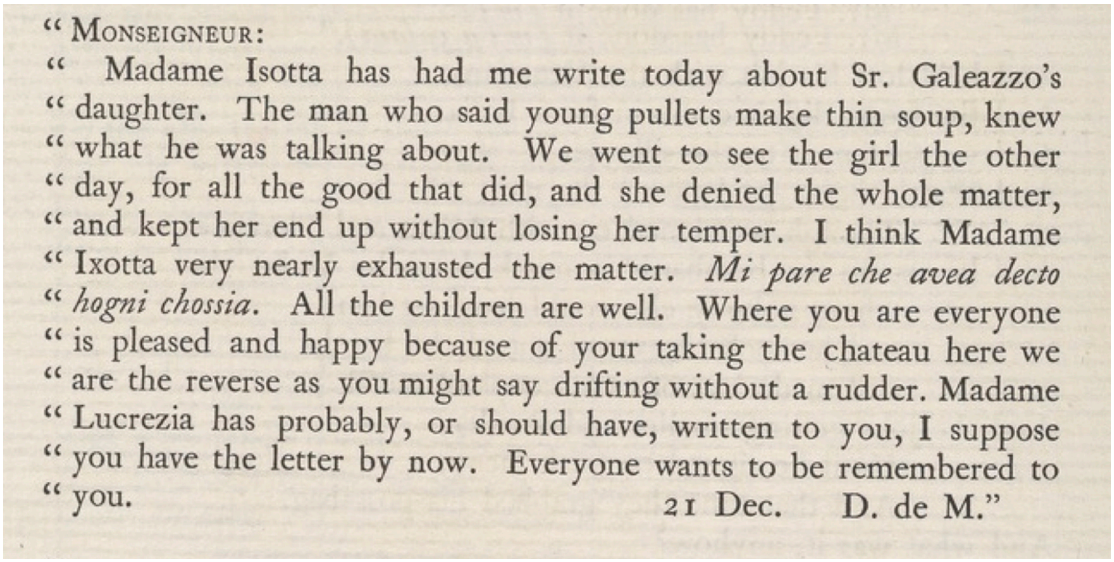
CORRESPONDING FIGURES

However subtly introduced in the third and fourth letters, the connection between Isotta and the Tempio segues into the fifth letter (see figure 3.8), which begins with the name of Sigismondo's mistress. In discussing Malatesta's affair with a young woman, the first half of the letter explicitly mentions Isotta twice. Curiously though, Pound varies the spelling of her name the second time, opting for the more

[123] See footnote 35 in chapter three of this study.

[124] The symbol occurs once in the headpiece to Canto VIII, twice in that of Canto X, and once in that of Canto XI. The fifth instance is on the second page of Canto X, opposite the effigy passage. Lawrence Rainey, for example, contends that "the sign becomes a key to Pound's entire argument in the Malatesta Cantos, and by extension throughout *The Cantos*." *Monument*, 208.

authentic "Ixotta."[125] Were the earlier instance spelled with an /*x*/, the visual link to the previous letter—and by extension to the temple's cipher—would be lost. But where the first occurrence ties the document to what precedes it, the second connects it forward to the end of Canto IX. The final lines to the poem, examined earlier, also contain the spelling *Ixotta* in direct juxtaposition to the Tempio. That passage begins with two lines in Italian and four in Latin, all printed in italics. Similarly, just below "Ixotta" in the post-bag letter Pound also inserts a line of italicized Italian: "*Me pare che avea decto hogni chossia*" (9: 38.20). The inclusion of the variant spellings, just as the numerals *15* and *151*, attests to an awareness of the historical debate concerning the intertwined initials ($). More importantly for the present discussion, it also attests to an attention to the visual significance of the archival record, and how such attention may be used for poetic effect. In this case, it reinforces a spatial structure whereby the interrelation of passages extends not only to adjacent lines, but also across a page, and even over several pages.



" MONSEIGNEUR:
" Madame Isotta has had me write today about Sr. Galeazzo's
" daughter. The man who said young pullets make thin soup, knew
" what he was talking about. We went to see the girl the other
" day, for all the good that did, and she denied the whole matter,
" and kept her end up without losing her temper. I think Madame
" Ixotta very nearly exhausted the matter. *Mi pare che avea decto*
" *hogni chossia*. All the children are well. Where you are everyone
" is pleased and happy because of your taking the chateau here we
" are the reverse as you might say drifting without a rudder. Madame
" Lucrezia has probably, or should have, written to you, I suppose
" you have the letter by now. Everyone wants to be remembered to
" you. 21 Dec. D. de M."

Figure 3.8: *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*: the fifth letter from the post-bag section in Canto IX (34). New Directions, 9: 38.13-26.

With respect to the letters seen thus far in the section, the most immediately striking aspect of this document, taken as a whole, is the fact that it is a *whole*

[125] The two drafts prior to the Watson typescript do not contain the variant spelling, "Isotta" is used both times. The change to "Ixotta" coincides with those made to the fourth letter regarding the Arabic numerals.

document. As the first entire letter included in the series, the solid block of text stands in sharp contrast to the fragments on either side of it. Though the letter from "D. of M." does not explicitly reference the temple, the structure of the building may be related, nonetheless, to that of the text. This results from its juxtaposition to textual fragments concerning the Tempio "under construction." Positioning the *whole* fifth letter—in which discussion of the still *fragmentary* temple is absent—between the materials of the unfinished building underscores the process of construction and composition. The reader's eye is drawn to notice that as the temple is in progress of completion, the texts directly referencing it have a corresponding partial form. Taking into consideration the building's architectural specificities reinforces the interpretation. Alberti's design preserved the existing structure of the Church of San Francesco by surrounding it with an outer shell. That design, however, was only half-completed; most notably, the principle façade was unfinished, and Alberti's dome for the Tempio was never constructed. Pound's personal experience of the temple was, therefore, of a complete building enveloped in a fragmented structure, forever suspended in a moment of construction. In addition to the interior—also never completed—the exterior revealed the structural framework of Alberti's design in certain areas, as well as that of the older church where it was not entirely covered. The post-bag section's textual representation of this particularity may be seen in Pound's choice to *surround* the complete fifth document with fragmentary quotations. This effect is primarily a visual one. Contrary to each of the four preceding letters, the fifth is printed with the opening salutation ("MONSEIGNEUR:") *and* closing date and signature ("21 Dec. D. of M.").[126] These visual cues accompany an unbroken paragraph of twelve lines (fourteen in the New Directions edition), all stretching from the left margin to the right. Pound worked progressively toward this textual form, beginning with a scattered initial draft—where he was clearly working out his translation—and later typing the letter as two paragraphs of roughly equal length. The split arrangement was maintained up until the final revisions to the Watson typescript. The final rearrangement into a solid block of text effectively gives it greater visual weight on the page, as well as a starker contrast to the fragmented details relating the progress of the Tempio's construction.

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[126] The complete closing to the letter, as transcribed by Yriarte, is "Data a di xxi de decembre / De la V.S. / serva d. de M." (397).

After the snippet from the Genari/Pasti letter, which offers a glimpse of that progress—the derricks have been set up, and a supply of beams has been located—Pound quickly returns to Sigismondo's domestic affairs with a second, complete document. As with the previous full letter, the greeting (also in all upper-case letters) and entire closing are included: "MAGNIFICENT LORD WITH DUE REVERENCE," and "your faithful / LUNARDA DA PALLA / 20 Dec. 1454" (9: 38.29/39.7-9). The document is also followed by two fragments conveying the ongoing work on the temple, adding to its thematic and spatial link to letter nº5. Palla's letter, in fact, reverses the subject matter of that previous document: it begins by picking up where "D. of M." left off, relaying information on Sigismondo's children (in this case, his son Sallustio), and then turns to a matter concerning Isotta. He requests that Sigismondo write to Giorgio di Ranbutino (Pound's "Georgio Rambottom") to have him "fix up that wall to the little garden that madame Isotta uses, for it is all flat on the ground now" (9: 39.1-2). Having already connected Isotta to the Tempio, the garden wall doubles for those of the temple: both are only partially constructed, and are therefore brought to Malatesta's attention. Even when dealing with domestic affairs, the archival documents in the post-bag section redirect the reader to structural aspects of the Tempio, and their parallel to material aspects of the poem.

Palla's letter ends with a reformulation of two short phrases from the fifth letter: "[...] for all the good that does as noboddy hear can do anything without you" [i.e. Sigismondo] (9: 39.4-6) restates the antecedent "[...] for all the good that did [...]" and "[...] here we are the reverse as you might say drifting without a rudder" [i.e. Sigismondo] (9: 38.17/22-23). This type of circular reading only further emphasizes the textual interdependency the post-bag section demands, which, seeing the page as a unitary field, freely leaps forward and backward through space according to an associative, nonlinear mode of experience.

By moving from this letter to fragments from those already encountered in the section, Pound aims to achieve a sense of simultaneity between Sigismondo's various affairs. The reader thus arrives in the middle of a sentence from the Genari/Pasti letter (nº3), but breaks off before the second sentence is finished to read a piece of the

greeting and four short words taken from the end of Nuti's letter (nº1). For these lines, Pound further fragmented his already choppy initial translations:[127]

> ~~Illustre signor mio~~ Messire Battista degli Alberti sends me a design for the façade and a ~~very beautiful (~~ captial ~~);~~ ~~since when S.V. (Yr. Ldshp) has sent the same design and a letter of Messire Battista's,~~ which Piero di Genari has shown me, and we have gone over it with all the maestri and engineers [...] ... can you write to have someone to give me the silver to cast the small medal... // Petro de Genari / Matthaeus de Pastis de Verona
>
> ⇒
>
> " ... gone over it with all the foremen and engineers. And
> " about the silver for the small medal..."
>
> (9: 39.10-11)
>
> ---
>
> Magnifce ac potens domine mi singularissime [...] And the said roof is fastened to the big walls which yr. Lordship ... ~~has~~ / the third reason is because the walls of the chapels ... [...] Matteo Nuti de Fano
>
> ⇒
>
> " *Magifice ac potens...*
> " because the walls of..." (9: 39.12-13)

The first fragment lacks any indication of its source; however, the reader is likely to assume that what was examined with the foremen and engineers was certain blueprints, or designs, for the temple. This would then point back to Nuti's letter (though it is not actually the source), wherein such designs are mentioned, and it is precisely a fragment from that very letter that is juxtaposed below. In fact, Canto IX quotes itself with the first line in the latter fragment. In addition to clarifying the documentary source, this act of internal quotation conveys the poem's self-reflexive archival nature. In piecing together a variety of historical documents into one new text, the poem sees itself as a part of the very textual history it relates.

On a thematic level, the reference to the walls (i.e. of the Tempio) will recall the more proximate "fix up that wall" from Palla's letter. Where the garden wall was explicitly stated to be in pieces—"all flat on the ground"—Pound offers a visual representation of the temple walls' deconstructed state by quoting a fragment divorced

[127] EPP Box 71 f. 3154, and Box 70 f. 3146, respectively.

of its beginning and ending; an incomplete sentence that cannot be completed at the present moment. One may, however, see the four words as pointing back to the very first letter of the entire sequence, in the opening to Canto VIII: "That there can be no question of / His painting the walls for the moment, / As the mortar is not yet dry" (8: 28.28-30). In other words, collating the two phrases, "because the walls of" the chapels are "not yet dry," progress is temporarily halted. Notwithstanding this intratextual completion, the phrase still speaks to the Tempio's unfinished and fragmentary state. In any case, the ellipses Pound uses, especially in the greeting, invite the reader to attempt to piece together the materials the poet provides. The aim is to redirect the reader's attention, as Hugh Kenner notes, to "not where the components came from but how they go together." Therefore, the reader is asked to "[see] a large number of factors distinctly and at the same time."[128] Stated differently, the ideogrammic method, as enacted in the post-bag section, depends on its highlighted understanding of the structure of interrelated textual materials. The consistently present ellipses in the post-bag section do not only indicate missing text, but a method of creating a unity through the parataxis of carefully selected materials within the space of the pages. "Those ellipses on the page," Kenner writes elsewhere, "were contrived."[129]

At this point, Pound again returns to Sigismondo's household with a letter from his and Isotta's son Sallustio. Of all the documents in the post-bag section this letter receives the most attention from the poet regarding its material details, presented as it is with the most thorough greeting and closing, each typographically distinct and formatted accordingly. The passage begins with four lines of Latin, providing the addressee and salutation:

> " *Malatesta de Malatestis ad Magnificum Dominum Patremque*
> " *suum*.
>
> " Ex^{so} D^{no} et D^{no} sin D^{no} Sigismundum Pandolphi Filium
> " Malatestis Capitan General
>
> (9: 39.14-17)

Though the first couplet is not found in Yriarte's transcription, he does include the latter couplet, which is identified as taken from the reverse side of the sheet (*a tergo*).

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[128] Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985) 14-15.
[129] Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*, 4.

The lines in italics, then, appear to be the inscription on the outside of the envelope; the reader, therefore, is given a much more complete material experience of Sigismondo's post-bag. The addressee on the verso of the letter bears several alterations. The first is the missing "meo," preceding "sin D^{no}" in the original. This seems to be an error Pound made in retyping his drafts, which was never corrected, as the word is included in all four of the drafts prior to the final typescript. According to Yriarte's transcription, the rest of the phrase reads: "Sigismundo Pandulfo de Malatestis Capit^{o} Generali."[130] Pound chooses to maintain the Latin for Malatesta's name, but follows it with the Italian apocopic form of "capitano." However, given that "Generali" is shortened as well, the line offers two possible readings: 1) the entire phrase is in Latin, with a truncated form of the last two words—Captian(eo) General(i), as per other letters which contain the same wording;[131] or 2) the last two words are in English with a misspelling of *captain*. Both readings seem to conflict with Pound's exactness and intentionality in reproducing the Latin, and yet the resultant ambiguity is significant insofar as it embodies the kind of divergent readings of the historical record that make an attention to the materiality of archival documents so critical. Pound has already been seen to correct Yriarte in the opening to Canto VIII, and such may very well be the case here. Nevertheless, these first lines of Sallustio's letter raise the issue of historiography, whose complexity is a central interest in the Malatesta Cantos. As Michael Harper writes,

> [Pound] is obsessed with the idea that history has everywhere been falsified by the ruling interests, and that the honest investigator must always *read between the lines*. [...] Only if one knows how to read, he believed, can one penetrate to the reality behind words; [...] only if one knows how to read can one determine *the true significance of a historical document*.[132]

What Pound offers here is not only an approximate experience of the material document, but also of the *process* of reading such materiality. Working towards the

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[130] Yriarte, 445.

[131] In Yriarte's work, the three letters immediately prior to Sallustio's—all from the court poet Trachulo, and of which an excerpt of one comprises the subsequent letter in the post-bag section—contain the words "Capitaneo Generali" in the addressee on the versos of the sheets (443-45). The letters are signed "Servulus [young servant] Trachalus."

[132] Harper, 87-88, emphasis added.

body of Sallustio's letter, it is as if one first opens the envelope and unfolds the paper, all the while examining the historical traces they bear.

Reading "Capitan General" as English with erratum also foreshadows the unconcealed language mistakes found in the young boy's text. These errors will undoubtedly recall those in the other post-bag letter written by a son, namely that of Luigi Alvise (letter nº2). But while that earlier letter contained predominately orthographic mistakes, the most blatant errors in Sallustio's text are syntactic. In both instances Pound appears to abide by Walter Benjamin's notion that "The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [*Intention*] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original."[133] The English of the seventh letter, however, more directly exemplifies Benjamin's argument for a literal translation:

> *A real translation is transparent*; it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully. This may be achieved, above all, by *a literal rendering of the syntax* which proves words rather than sentences to be the primary element of the translator.[134]

Reading Sallustio's letter, it is evident one is reading a transparent translation, a fact ensured by Pound's inclusion of the original Italian immediately before a glaring syntactic error and somewhat awkward diction:

> [...] and with [your letter] the bay pony (ronzino baiectino) *the which* you have sent me, *and which* appears in my eyes a fine caparison'd charger, *upon which* I intend to learn all there is to know about riding, in consideration of yr. paternal affection *for which* I thank your excellency thus briefly [...].
>
> (9: 39.20-25, emphasis added)

Pound's choices as a translator are made clearer upon examining the letter in its original Italian, with the language errors present therein:

> [...] inseme cum uno ronzino baiectino, *el quale* quella me manda, *et quale* ronzino a mi pare sia uno grosso et apreciato corsiero, sopra *il*

---

[133] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007) 76. The bracketed, italicized word is in the original.

[134] Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 79, emphasis added. See also D'Epiro, 67.

> *quale* penso de aitarme molto bene a cavalcare, considerato lo amore paterno : *del quale* summamente ne rengratio la V. Ex^{sa} S. [...][135]

"A literal rendering of the syntax" in the Italian allows the reader of the post-bag section to glimpse the *structure* of the language. By deviating from grammatically correct English, Pound's translation prompts a heightened attention to how language constructs and arranges words and phrases in relation to one another. Benjamin later relates that construction to fragmentation, and in so doing implies the inherent materiality:

> Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel.[136]

Pound's aberrations make visible the fragmentary nature of the languages in view, by exposing the "glue" that binds a text together.

Linguistic construction is, in turn, to be interpreted in the context of the Tempio, whose frame continues to be erected. The letter is most obviously connected thematically to Palla's letter (nº6), which also speaks of how Sallustio "is so much pleased with his pony" (9: 38.31). The ending of the boy's letter, though, is more closely related to that written by Isotta's secretary (nº5). His words "notifying you by the bearer of this [letter] that we are all in good health [...] with continued remembrance I remain" (9: 39.26-28) rephrase the secretary's "All the children are well. [...] I suppose you have the letter by now. Everyone wants to be remembered to you" (9: 38.20-26). All three of these documents are connected spatially on the page by the bits of text concerning the development of the Tempio; furthermore, just as the contents of the two prior letters are each in some way related to the temple, so is Sallustio's. Though the text makes no mention of building materials, the language itself may be seen as one such material. Its exposed structure makes it a textual parallel to the Tempio, and further establishes Pound's view of the latter as a "poem" to be read, and the sequence of cantos as a "building" whose space the reader inhabits

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[135] Yriarte, 445, emphasis added.
[136] Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 78.

and moves within. The open, nonlinear movement from letter nº7 to letters nº2, nº5, and nº6—in an order determined by the connections the individual reader makes—exemplifies the experience of material space, according to which the pages of the post-bag section are structured.

Finally, the letter from Sigismondo's son ends as it began, with a typographically complete closing. The five lines bear three different scripts, and in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, three different sizes:

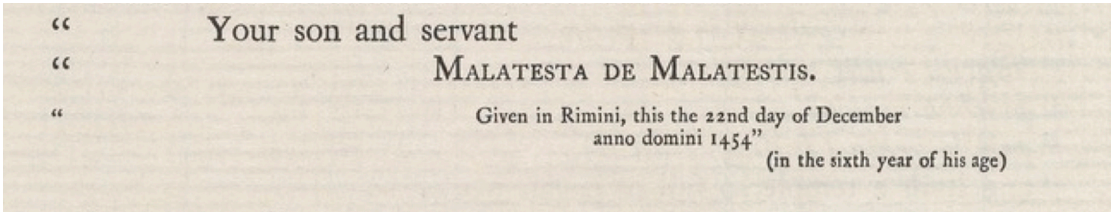

Figure 3.9: *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*: the closing to the seventh letter in the post-bag section of Canto IX (35). New Directions: 9: 39.29-33.

The document is thus situated geographically, chronologically, and contextually. For no other letter in the section does Pound do all three. The visual materiality of the archival document is thereby complete, and perhaps more than any other letter in the section, this text aims to put that physical page before the eyes of the reader, if not in his/her hands.

The opposite may be said of the eighth letter in the series, whose two-word greeting and single line of text constitute the shortest excerpt from any one document Pound uses here. Where the reader was given a complete view of Sallustio's letter, Pound offers only the briefest of glances at Trachulo's words to Sigismondo. Ironically, with regard to Malatesta's political rise and fall, the document is the most significant of the group, for the Sienese's suspicions of Sigismondo's betrayal would have been strengthened, if not confirmed, by Trachulo's suggestion that he turn on his employer. Pound's initial treatment of the document, however, took a completely different direction. His roughly twenty-line first draft begins with a false start, having seemingly chosen a different letter from Trachulo among the three that Yriarte includes in his book. That letter makes no mention of the Sienese affair, but instead, like previous letters, discusses the construction of the Tempio. Pound condenses a paragraph from Yriarte's transcription into a summary of several lines:

> Ill. princeps et excellens Domine mi *post recommendationem*. [...]
> Ho vista quella inventione de sfida che ha facta maestro Allevise, de la quale non scrivo ala V. S^{ola} perchè con penna non velo sapreria dare ad intendere. Ma conclusive a mi piace tanto che io ne so' matto. Et credo che se tutti li maestri del mondo se gli impontasseno, non la fariano più vaga et più forte et meglio apta a simil luogo.
>
> ⇒
>
> Illustrius Prince, and Excellent Lord in especial.
> Unfitting as it is that I should offer councils to Caesar
> The Temple increasing daily in magnificence
> as you will have seen from the design of the architect
> which we have seen here.[137]

It appears that Pound felt it unnecessary to include another mention of the Tempio's design and architect, and one that does not particularly develop what has already been stated in other letters, and thus shifted his attention to Sigismondo's business with Siena. The rest of the draft is comprised of phrases translated from a different letter from Trachulo (on the previous page in Yriarte's work). Yet, for the Watson typescript, all but the very first lines this draft would be cut, as Pound imagined Sigismondo bypassing the contents of the letter altogether. It thereby became "Trachulo's *unread* epistle," as it is referred to two pages later in that draft.[138]

In his revisions to the Watson typescript Pound abandoned his original strategy of the reader witnessing Sigismondo scan through his letters, to instead put the post-bag in the hands of the Sienese: "And that time they grabbed his post-bag" (9: 37.17). Consequently, in addition to eliminating Malatesta's occasional outbursts at reading the letters (as cited above), Pound also changes "unread epistle" to "damn'd epistle," in what would eventually be line nine of Canto X. Despite the shift, though, Pound did not add the "damning" portion of the letter's contents, which he had composed in the earlier draft, back into the next typescript:

> Unfitting as it is that I shd. offer councils to Caesar
> I wd. advise you do all things convenient to gain
> favour with the Sienese people,
> Though now you serve where it were fitting that you shd.

---

[137] Yriarte, 444-45 and EPP Box 70 f. 3147.

[138] EPP Box 70 f. 3155, emphasis added. The entire two-line passage reads, "Which with Trachulo's unread epistle / Somewhat aiding the latter suspicion..."

rule,
for if later they break into faction it wd. be but in
the order of things that the general
should take over the seignory.[139]

However, this passage is at least partially paraphrased as a supposed quotation from Aldobrandino Orsini, which immediately precedes the aforementioned line from Canto X: "but if you will hire yourself out to a / 'commune (Siena) which you ought rather to rule than / 'serve...'"[140] It therefore seems possible—though highly unlikely—that the reader might stitch together this turn of events.

For the post-bag section itself, though, the only letter that does not predominately discuss the two major topics of the Tempio and Malatesta's domestic affairs is cut short before any explicit mention of business or politics. The second line does, nevertheless, imply Sigismondo's profession as condottiere due to a small, but significant, revision to the draft quoted above. In preparation for the Watson typescript Pound retyped the post-bag letters and labeled them by hand from "A" to "G." In addition to being in a different order from that in the final version of the poem, the Trachulo letter is excluded from this set of pages. When it was restored to the series Pound had substituted "Hannibal" in the place of "Caesar," and inserted it before the last letter in the section. The reason for the change may have been a re-reading of Yriarte's transcription of the letter, in which Trachulo writes, "Et benchi io conosca che l'e sciochezza admonire Haniballe nel mestiero de l'arme."[141] Like Hannibal before him, Sigismondo—who claimed to be a descendent of the famous general—also became an enemy of Rome, as seen in Canto X.[142] The Carthaginian general, of course, is remembered primarily for having crossed the Alps with elephants. Malatesta would later choose the animal as his own emblem, which was

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[139] EPP Box 70 f. 3147.

[140] "Pound splices together two passages, and also adds material of his own, from an essay by Luicano Banchi, 'La Guerra de' Senesi col conte di Pitigliano' [...]. Pound converts Banchi's synopsis [of Orsini's letter] into a direct quotation and attaches it to the preceding genuine direct quotation [...]." Rainey, *Modernism*, 79.

[141] Yriarte, 444. Pound's translation of the phrase is on 40.2.

[142] Terrell, 48. Malatesta's conflict with Rome is also connected to Siena, as Pound indicates in Canto 10: 44.12-18, where both Andrea del Benzi and Pope Pius II are identified as "da Siena." The significance of the connection warranted Pound's explicit handwritten instruction in the Watson typescript to "Keep line arrangement!" (Box 71 f. 3155), referring to the intended layout that set both occurrences of the phrase on their own lines, the two being aligned against the right-hand margin. In both *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* and the current New Directions edition the visual effect is lost, as the alignment is foregone, and the first "da Siena" is tacked on after "Benzi" (44.13/18).

incorporated into the walls of the Tempio, and, by Pound, onto the pages of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* as part of several of Strater's illustrations.[143] Having revised the line, its placement within the post-bag section brings the association to light, as the subsequent letter twice mentions the temple's "aliofants." Trachulo's sycophantic tone also resonates with Sallustio's zealous praise of Sigismondo in the antecedent letter. As argued above, the materiality of the son's language is linked to the Tempio, and so, despite its brevity, the line from Trachulo does the same in its own manner.

Indirectly, then, what may appear to be an incomplete quotation that has been divorced from any context, is in fact anchored into the structure and concerns of the post-bag section as much as any other excerpt. One such concern is precisely how one may manipulate and arrange language in order to elicit a spatial reading of the page, whose textual materials are architecturally interdependent. Determining the typographic layout necessarily means addressing the question of form, and it is interesting to note that though Trachulo was himself a poet—who had also composed a canzone for Isotta degli Atti[144]—he is represented here not in a metered, lyric stanza, but in a single line of prose spanning the entire width of the page. The words of a poet, so to speak, are not found in the form of a poem, but in the epistolary language of an archival document.

COLLATING BLUEPRINTS

The post-bag section concludes with a lengthier letter from Malatesta's chancellor "Petrus Genariis" (a.k.a. Pietro di Genari). The document is unique in the series for being the only one dealing with the construction of the Tempio that is quoted in full. It is further distinguished from prior letters on the temple in the details it presents and the progress they relate. While Nuti, Alvise, and Pasti's letters focus almost entirely on the planning and design, Genari's final letter describes what aspects of the construction have actually been accomplished. Readers moving through the post-bag section encounter, through Pound's organization, an experiential parallel between the material documents and the Tempio by simultaneously witnessing those

[143] A photo of the "aliofants" in the Tempio Malatestiano is found in Kenner's *The Pound Era* (429) and in Rainey's *Monument of Culture* (15). In *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, the same image is found on page 31, as part of Strater's headpiece to Canto IX, and the elephant emblem is again present atop the armorial insignia in Canto X on page 38.

[144] Yriarte, 442.

documents being read by Sigismondo and later the Sienese, and witnessing the temple gradually being constructed. Furthermore, this parallel is set in relation to *The Cantos* itself, as one also shadows Pound examining the historical texts, and follows *The Cantos* being progressively put together.

In his reading notes prior to the first drafts of the section, Pound apparently had not originally conceived of such a parallel. On one page he lays out a plan for a chronological ordering of the letters (see figure 3.10), favoring a straightforward historical development, as opposed to the architectural one that would be adopted later on in the process. As noted at the top left, Pound was working with Yriarte's work; however, that book presents the letters in a different order altogether:

1) The unused letter from Isotta, 20 December 1454 (p. 395)
2) The letter from Isotta's secretary "D. of M." 21 December 1454 (p. 396-97)
3) The contract listing the building materials, 5 June 1455 (p. 398-99)
4) Genari's letter, 18 December 1454 (p. 406-07)
5) The unused letter from Alberti regarding the Tempio, 18 November (p. 416-17)
6) Genari/Pasti's letter , 17 December 1454 (p. 419-20)
7) Alvise's letter, written by his son, 21 December 1454 (p. 420-21)
8) Nuti's letter, 22 December 1454 (p. 421-22)
9) Trachulo's letter, 18 December 1454 (p. 444)
10) Sallustio's letter, 22 December 1454 (p. 445)
11) Palla's letter, 20 December 1454 (p. 446)

Therefore, in reordering the letters Pound initially attempted to reconstruct the *documentation* of the Tempio. One notices, nonetheless, an inconsistency, in that the letter from Genari precedes all the others, despite its date of 18 December 1454. When Pound began composing the first typescript, however, he had chosen to adopt a different structural principle: not the documentation, but the architecture itself. He remained uncertain as to where to position Genari's letter, seen clearly in the second set of typescripts for the section (ordered "A" to "G"), in which he placed Genari's letter *last* in the order, but marked in the top-right corner "or pre A." In other words, having abandoned the chronological order, the question then became whether to work backwards and *de*construct the temple, or forwards and build it from the page up. As the role of materiality, and the parallel between the walls of the Tempio and the pages of *The Cantos* became clearer, the latter was ultimately the strategy chosen.

Accordingly, that set of typescripts was rearranged, shifting the Genari/Pasti letter—which, connected with the contract, involves the materials needed for the design discussed in Nuti's letter (now first)—to number three in the series, and leaving the Genari letter as the final document.

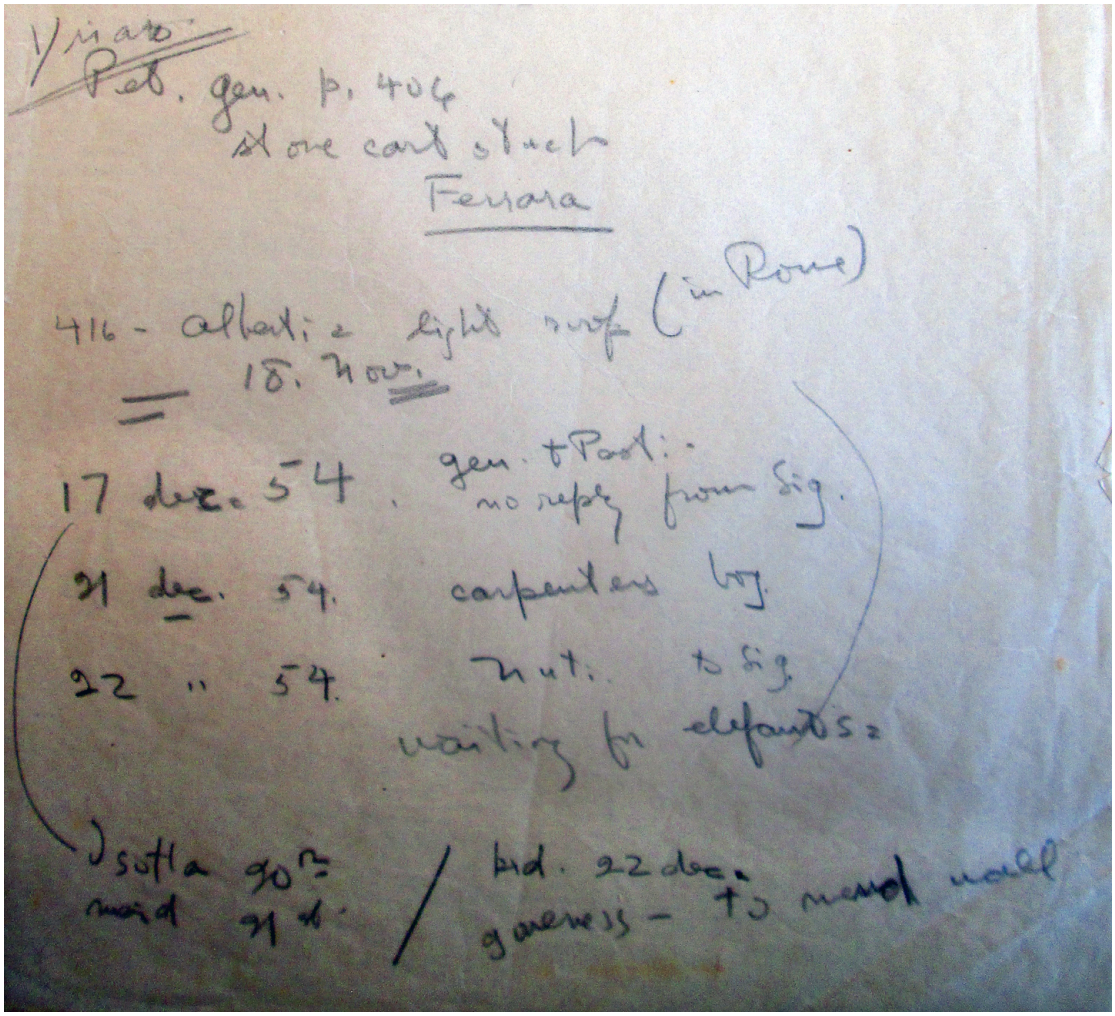

Figure 3.10: An early outline for the post-bag letters in chronological order. EPP Box 70 f. 3140.

The early outline also demonstrates Pound's focus on the details of the temple for the post-bag section, and only after the fact, adding the four letters regarding Sigismondo's household, of which that from Isotta was ultimately excluded. The eventual incorporation of these letters into the series would coincide with the simultaneous material development of the Tempio/Cantos as a structural and historical palimpsest. Layered in between textual fragments about the building's progress, the domestic letters are built into pages that belie their left-to-right, top-to-

bottom layout. As the reader traces the thematic reflections from quotation to quotation, across the page and across pages, the "overlapping" structure of documents emerges through the presentation of Sigismondo's lasting work being built with stone after stone, and stones upon stones.

Pound established the final order of the archival letters in the Watson typescript, which would remain internally unchanged, and with relatively few revisions to the text itself. Ultimately then, the post-bag section progresses from the planning and design for the Tempio, to the gathering of the materials for said design, and finally to the manipulation and utilization of those materials. Prior to this section, the temple is only mentioned in very brief or indirect ways: twice in Canto VIII—first in the allusions in the Medici letter, second in a single line—and twice again in Canto IX—again in a single line, followed by its mention in the Classe episode. From these flickers of the building's continual presence, the reader is led into it actually taking form as the Malatesta Cantos reach their midway point. At the end of the post-bag section Genari's letter synthesizes all of the previous elements of the temple's construction mentioned in the previous letters. The progression of the Tempio alone throughout the letters is as follows:

1) Nuti is given Alberti's design regarding the nave and roof of the church.
2) Alvise mentions the vaults of the church, and again refers to Alberti's design.
3) Genari/Pasti discuss Alberti's design, and Alvise's model for the roof (though this portion is excluded from Pound's poem).
4) The previous letter is merged with the contract for the marble destined for the Tempio's interior ornamentation (as Yriarte notes, still unfinished five years after the Tempio's inauguration in 1450).
5) An excerpt from Genari/Pasti's letter indicating that Sagramoro will put up the derricks (i.e. construction begins), and that some of the previously planned materials have been located.
6) Another excerpt from Genari/Pasti's letter states that construction is set to begin as the design has been reviewed with the foremen and engineers.
7) An excerpt from Nuti's letter, which implies that walls for the Tempio have in fact been constructed.

At this point, after the fragment from Trachulo's letter, the reader reaches Genari's letter recounting the *concrete* progress of the temple. Its first paragraph states that the Veronese marble has successfully arrived, recalling the contract for building materials and the fragment about the location of "a supply of beams" (38.27-28). The second paragraph details the acquisition and the finances involved, linking to the danars in the last line of the contract (38.12), as well as, in a certain sense, "And / about the silver" (39.10-11). The next paragraph mentions that the *already-cut* stone will soon be laid in the sacristy, and that a wall has been *finished*, to which the roof is to be added; the contract is thereby again recalled, and both excerpts from Nuti's letter—"the design for the roof" (37.32) and "because the walls of" (39.13)—resurface. The same is true of paragraph four, which speaks of the stone for the temple's interior, including the cornice to the columns and the elephant sculptures. The final three short paragraphs relay to Sigismondo work done or being done on a staircase, a paved court, some stone benches, the painting of the bull for the chapel, and a sarcophagus in the temple. The focus on material aspects is thus omnipresent in Genari's letter, as is the sense of the concrete realization of the Tempio's structure.

The form of that structure, furthermore, parallels the textuality of the post-bag section, as Genari's letter effectively melds the earlier fragments (as seen above) into a *whole* document. Therefore, as the reader is carried through the compositional process of the temple, he/she is simultaneously experiencing that of the cantos themselves: the previous archival materials are—as if the marble and stone of the Tempio—synthesized into a complete text. Nonetheless, one still notices that this concluding, full document ends the post-bag section on a note of only partial completion: the floor of the sacristy has not yet been laid (40.16-17), the roof remains to be set (40.18-19), the stone for the martyr chapel is only scheduled (40.20-21), the bull is not yet illuminated (40.28), the stone-cutters are waiting for spring to begin work (40.29-30), and "The tomb is all done except for the lid" (40.31). Pound, therefore, ends this highly documentary section with a *complete* letter expressing the structural combination of *fragments* into what remains a *partial* construction. However, such a state is intended to be understood—in conjunction with the present text—as a *whole*. The archive, like the Tempio, though never ultimately complete, successfully "registers a concept" nonetheless.

That the post-bag section is to be seen as a textual whole, despite its clearly fragmentary composition, is represented visually by the nearly unbroken chain of quotation marks running along the left margin. Like Pound's Poggio Bracciolini, the poet of the Malatesta Cantos—especially in the post-bag section—is "a rag-bag, a mass of sights and citations,"[145] and these cantos' appropriation of text as historical artifact is visually presented to the reader through Pound's strategies of quotation. But such a "rag-bag" must, in Pound's mind, be ordered: "Art simply *is* combining things into a whole."[146] Throughout the four cantos, Pound consistently shifts between paraphrase, signaled and un-signaled quotation, blending all three methods into the field of the material page. Interestingly, the post-bag section does not, in fact, require quotation marks to indicate its technique of appropriation; as previously mentioned, Pound explicitly states their *found* quality by prefacing the section with "And this is what they found in the post-bag." Furthermore, the typographic layout of the letters makes reasonably plain their inclusion as quotations. Part of the function of the thread of quotation marks, then, is on a purely visual level in the section, implying that the various documents form *one* extended quotation—a single text of a singular history.

This effect is more clearly seen in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, which includes fewer indentations of the quotation marks than the current New Directions edition (see figure 3.11). The repeated punctuation marks take on a graphic quality, forming a type of border that encloses the language and binds it together. At one point in his drafts, Pound expresses this symbolic singularity by following the post-bag section with the summarizing statement "*this* ideograph."[147] The Malatesta Cantos do not chronologically recreate history, but, as Marjorie Perloff writes, "draw the 'events' recorded *into* the world of text."[148] In doing so, Pound fuses them in the same space of the printed page. Perloff's statement may be expanded upon, in that the world of text is equally *drawn into* history, as that spatially combinatory process involves not only representing history as textual, but also textuality as historical.[149] Here, the epic as "a

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[145] Pound, *Pavannes and Divigations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1918) 30.

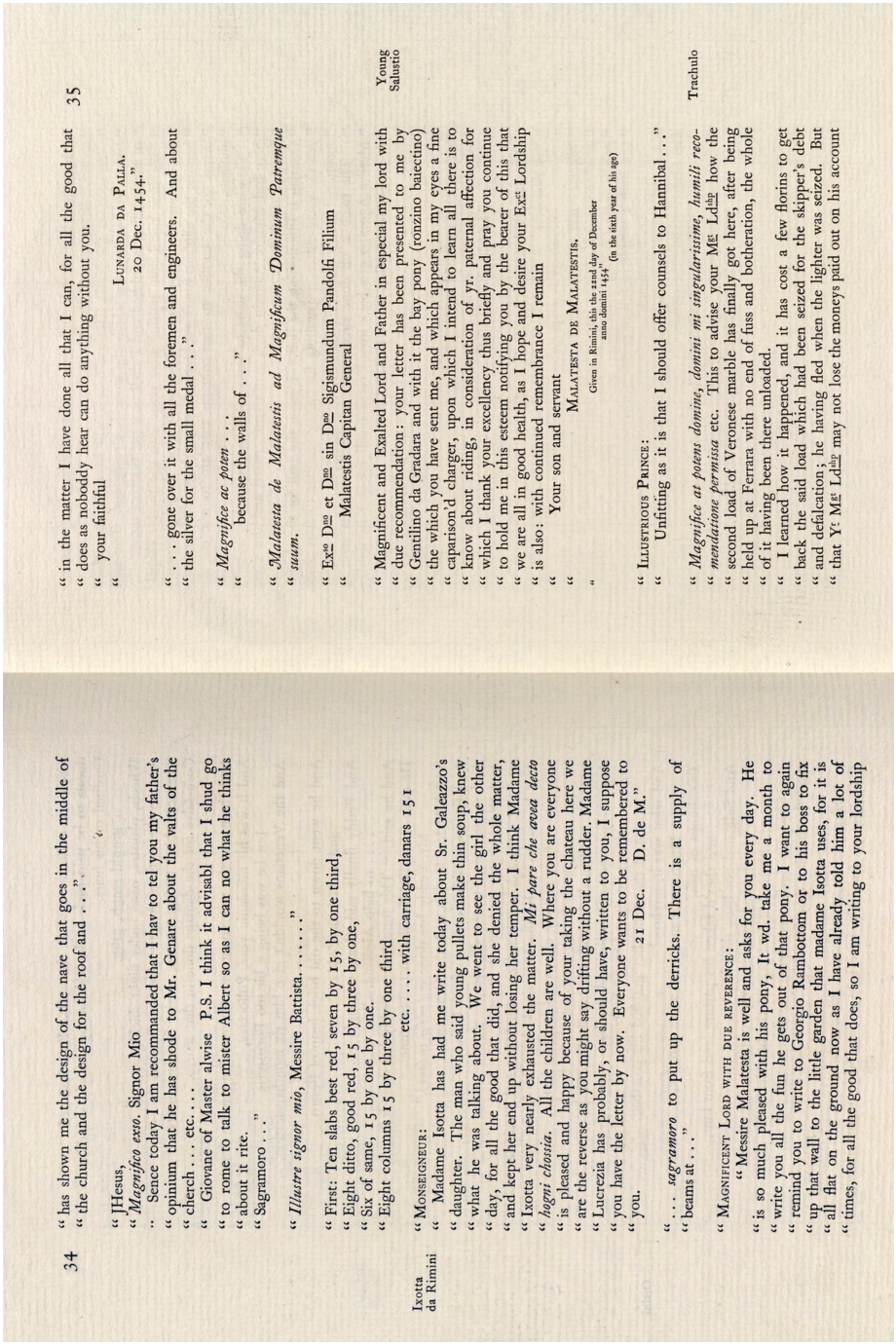
[146] Ezra Pound, "Rosing," *The New Age* (2 May 1918) 10. The piece is reprinted in *Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism*, ed. R. Murray Schafer (New York: New Directions, 1977) 97-100.

[147] EPP Box 71 f. 3158, emphasis added. An earlier handwritten page in f. 3154 records the line as "The ideograph."

[148] Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 187-88.

[149] Michael F. Harper expresses a similar idea, though in a more exclusive manner, in his article "Truth and Calliope: Pound's Malatesta": "Far from assimilating 'history' to 'poetry' Pound did exactly

poem including history" becomes one that first and foremost *contains* the material history of literary production.[150]



34 " has shown me the design of the nave that goes in the middle of
" the church and the design for the roof and . . ."

" JHesus,
" *Magnifico exso.* Signor Mio
" Sence today I am recommanded that I hav to tel you my father's
" opinium that he has shode to Mr. Genare about the valts of the
" cherch . . . etc. . . .
" Giovane of Master alwise P.S. I think it advisabl that I shud go
" to rome to talk to mister Albert so as I can no what he thinks
" about it rite.
" Sagramoro . . ."

" *Illustre signor mio*, Messire Battista. . . . . ."

" First: Ten slabs best red, seven by 15, by one third,
" Eight ditto, good red, 15 by three by one,
" Six of same, 15 by one by one.
" Eight columns 15 by three by one third
etc. . . . . with carriage, danars 151

Ixotta da Rimini
" MONSEIGNEUR:
" Madame Isotta has had me write today about Sr. Galeazzo's
" daughter. The man who said young pullets make thin soup, knew
" what he was talking about. We went to see the girl the other
" day, for all the good that did, and she denied the whole matter,
" and kept her end up without losing her temper. I think Madame
" Ixotta very nearly exhausted the matter. *Mi pare che avea decto*
" *hogni chossia.* All the children are well. Where you are everyone
" is pleased and happy because of your taking the chateau here we
" are the reverse as you might say drifting without a rudder. Madame
" Lucrezia has probably, or should have, written to you, I suppose
" you have the letter by now. Everyone wants to be remembered to
" you. 21 Dec. D. de M."

" . . . *sagramoro* to put up the derricks. There is a supply of
" beams at . . ."

" MAGNIFICENT LORD WITH DUE REVERENCE:
" Messire Malatesta is well and asks for you every day. He
" is so much pleased with his pony, It wd. take me a month to
" write you all the fun he gets out of that pony. I want to again
" remind you to write to Georgio Rambottom or to his boss to fix
" up that wall to the little garden that madame Isotta uses, for it is
" all flat on the ground now as I have already told him a lot of
" times, for all the good that does, so I am writing to your lordship

" in the matter I have done all that I can, for all the good that 35
" does as noboddy hear can do anything without you.
" your faithful
" LUNARDA DA PALLA.
20 Dec. 1454."

" . . . gone over it with all the foremen and engineers. And about
" the silver for the small medal . . ."

" *Magnifice ac poten* . . .
" because the walls of . . ."

" *Malatesta de Malatestis ad Magnificum Dominum Patremque*
" *suum.*

" Ex^to D^no et D^no sin D^no Sigismundum Pandolfi Filium
" Malatestis Capitan General

" Magnificent and Exalted Lord and Father in especial my lord with Young Salustio
" due recommendation: your letter has been presented to me by
" Gentilino da Gradara and with it the bay pony (ronzino baiectino)
" the which you have sent me, and which appears in my eyes a fine
" caparison'd charger, upon which I intend to learn all there is to
" know about riding, in consideration of yr. paternal affection for
" which I thank your excellency thus briefly and pray you continue
" to hold me in this esteem notifying you by the bearer of this that
" we are all in good health, as I hope and desire your Ex^ce Lordship
" is also: with continued remembrance I remain
" Your son and servant
" MALATESTA DE MALATESTIS.
" Given in Rimini, this the 22nd day of December anno domini 1454" (in the sixth year of his age)

" ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE:
" Unfitting as it is that I should offer counsels to Hannibal . . ."

" *Magnifice at potens domine, domini mi singularissime, humili reco-* Trachulo
" *mendatione permissa* etc. This to advise your M^gc Ld^ship how the
" second load of Veronese marble has finally got here, after being
" held up at Ferrara with no end of fuss and botheration, the whole
" of it having been there unloaded.
" I learned how it happened, and it has cost a few florins to get
" back the said load which had been seized for the skipper's debt
" and defalcation; he having fled when the lighter was seized. But
" that Y^r M^gc Ld^ship may not lose the moneys paid out on his account

Figure 3.11: Two-page spread from *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* showing the thread of quotation marks running nearly continuously down the left-hand margin, which graphically unite and contain the text.

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the opposite: insisting on language and therefore on writing as a means of knowing, he assimilated 'poetry' to 'history'" (87).

[150] In an interview conducted by Donald Hall, Pound does in fact define the epic as "a poem *containing* history." *The Paris Review* 28 (Summer-Fall 1962). This is used interchangeably with the prior, alternate wording of "a poem *including* history" (*ABC*, 46, and "Date Line," *Literary Essays*, 86).

All four cantos are constructed according to a method of quotation that first objectifies the language selected from an external context, to then incorporate and frame the material into the larger form of the text. In the post-bag section of Canto IX, where the technique is most fully displayed, the spatial configuration—"THERE ON THE PAGE"[151]—equates the materials of bricolage with the materials of textual construction. The poet here assumes an architectural role, "the foremen and engineers" (39.10) of which he makes mention. While the composition of the poem parallels that of the Tempio, it is true that the language of these cantos does not only figuratively represent Malatesta's temple, but, as material, is something to itself be represented. As Richard Sieburth writes, "quotation involves shifting the emphasis from language as a means of representation, to language as the very object of representation."[152] Pound's technique of citation presents language and text as material artifacts, labeling them as evidence. The combinatory effect of the continuous thread of quotation marks binds those pieces of evidence into a meaningful unit. Such a technique stems from the conception of the material page as a signifying unit in and of itself. The surface of the page is the site, and sight, where linguistic conventions, historical and textual events (citations), and fragmented images collide. Pound's use of parataxis as a strategy to reinforce materiality's role in multiplying and altering meaning depends, in part, on the graphic qualities of the printed page, in order to unify those significations into a constructed concept.

At the same time that the post-bag's final letter looks back to preceding documents, it also projects forward by linking Sigismondo's family to the Tempio through the joint notion of continuation. First, Genari's letter indirectly references the domestic affairs related in the post-bag section. The fifth paragraph mentions Isotta's brother, Antonio degli Atti, and work completed on the residences of Sigismondo's court. Consequently, it is connected to the nurse's letter (nº5) concerning, in part, Isotta's relationship with Malatesta, and Palla's letter (nº6), which requested work be done in Isotta's garden. Second, in the last paragraph Genari speaks of one of the temple's tombs and Agostino di Duccio, who sculpted many of the temple's bas-reliefs, as well as worked on the sarcophagus for Sigismondo's ancestors. Touching on the lasting legacy of Sigismondo, the subject of the Malatestan dynasty is equally

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[151] Pound, *ABC*, 102.

[152] Richard Sieburth, *Instigations: Ezra Pound and Remy de Gourmont* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978) 120.

concerned with preserving what was, and conserving what will continue to be. The legacy, of course, comprehends primarily his children and the monument of the Tempio, both of which inextricably unite the past and the present, and pass down culture and civilization to future generations.

Thus, Sigismondo's offspring are present in all three of the domestic letters, and in each are explicitly tied to the notion of lasting remembrance: Isotta's secretary states, "All the children are well" (38.20-21) and concludes with "Everyone wants to be remembered to you" (38.25-26); Palla relates that "Messire Malatesta [Sallustio] is well and asks for you [Sigismondo] every day" (38.30); and Sallustio, most tellingly, ends his letter by writing "with *continued* remembrance I *remain*" (39.28). The Tempio, moreover, was designed to house the remains of Sigismondo's ancestors as well as his progeny, thereby recording (or remembering) in stone a celebration of the Malatestan dynasty. One prominent feature of the temple is, in fact, Isotta's tomb, which bears the inscription "ISOTE ARIMINENSI FORMA ET VIRTUTE ITALIE DECORI M CCCC XLVI" carved in stone underneath a shield with the $ symbol. Although the tomb mentioned in the final paragraph of Genari's letter is not Isotta's, Pound suggests the connection by following it five lines later with an echo of that inscription: "*Ixotta degli Atti* [...] *Italiaeque decus*" (41.4-9). As it did in relation to Gemistos Plethon, for Pound the Tempio both literally and figuratively *embodied* Isotta.[153] By containing and representing history, it attempts to carry forward the palimpsestic present it continues to outlast.

That Pound associated such lines with the post-bag section—and thus with the structure of the Tempio—is seen in the early drafts of the letters. Pound had originally planned to include a letter from Isotta herself, addressing the regularization of her and Sigismondo's relationship. The first draft of this letter is followed by Pound's handwritten notes and additions, including the phrases that would ultimately constitute the first six italicized lines of Canto IX's thirteen-line conclusion. When Pound retypes his version of the document several pages later, those Latin lines are formatted as if the closing to the letter:[154]

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[153] For example, an early draft contains the line "Raised a temple, ~~unto the Diva~~ Isotta." The cancelled words are replaced underneath by the handwritten "to the divine." EPP Box 70 f. 3152.

[154] EPP Box 70 f. 3146.

⟨all the other children are well.⟩

Ixotta da Rimini

"Constans in proposito ,
Placuit oculis principis. "

Ariminesi forma ,
Italiaeque decus .

In relation to the temple, however, the phrases convey more a sense of a *completed* project being looked at and appreciated. The eventual shift of these lines to the position clearly after and outside the post-bag section suggests Pound's intention to maintain the development of the parallel between the letters and the interior structural *process* of the Tempio, as opposed to its exterior, aesthetic features. As a result, the reader moves in logical fashion from the progress and isolated accomplishments related in the post-bag's final letter to an impression of a completed whole: "'and *built* a temple so full of pagan works' / i.e. Sigismund" (41.10-11). It is telling that Pound follows the fragmentary compositional process presented in the post-bag section with a glimpse of a perceived whole (i.e. built and constructed) that endures the destructive forces of time—a legacy whose signifying weight lies in its very state of incompletion.

Any experience of history and time occurs *in medias res*, and the post-bag section begins and ends—as does each of the Malatesta Cantos—in the same manner. Through textuality, then, the reader is given a perception of the interior structure, and palimpsestic structuring, of such experience, which simultaneously sends one into the past and into the future. The abstract temporality of the palimpsest is reflected not only by Pound's nonconsecutive order, but also by the inclusion of original Italian and Latin phrases, and certain linguistic oddities of the documents. Like the Tempio itself—which blended Renaissance filigree with Gothic features, and Christianity with pagan works—the old and new are mixed into the same document and onto the same page. Some elements are lost or "illegible" (e.g. what Pound left out of his translations, or for which he provided no context), some show through the "overlaid" English text (e.g. the fragments of quattrocento language), and everything is read in

conjunction with everything else. Across space and across genres, together the materials form a single, constructed page.

The post-bag section does not merely intend to show Sigismondo as "a solicitous and devoted paterfamilias," nor "to illustrate the preoccupations of Sigismondo's mind," nor "to give another view of Malatesta's hectic many-mindedness."[155] All three are certainly accomplished throughout the letters, but such views rely too exclusively on the thematic and historical content of the documents, and fail to take into account *how* those contents are structured into one, unified text. In addition to further developing the Tempio's role in the sequence as a parallel to the poems' material and architectural foundation, on a broader scale it exemplifies a new kind of modernist, material poetics. The "poem including history" and "the tale of the tribe," it is suggested, must be more expansive, entailing a wider scope of poetic materials, linguistic styles, and typographic arrangements (e.g. historical prose documents, letters, lists, numbers and figures, the colloquial and the formal, etc.). The core of this central section to the Malatesta Cantos aims "to discover how history is structured by textuality."[156] Pound's appropriation and manipulation of the archive constructs the material language spatially, manufacturing it into a palimpsestic blueprint representing the historical page. The materiality of the poetry is metaphrastic, making new the documents therein. The citations offered to the reader throughout the section are collated as the vestiges of the physical site they textually restructure into a newly perceptible sight.

THE TEMPIO MALATESTIANO IN CANTOS X AND XI

CONTROVERTING LINES

Both in form and content the post-bag section, and Canto IX as a whole, present the Tempio Malatestiano in its incompletion, emphasizing process over product. As the reader progresses through Canto IX, a notion of the continuous accompanies the temple: Sigismondo "began build*ing*" (35.24), then proceeded with

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[155] Respectively: D'Epiro, 42, Terrell, 47, and Furia, 19.

[156] Richard Sieburth, "In Pound We Trust: The Economy of Poetry/The Poetry of Economics," *Critical Inquiry* 14.1 (Autumn 1987) 152.

his plans "for the beautify*ing*" (36.17-18) of it. Beginning in the midst of architectural plans, the post-bag letters conclude with the stonecutters "wait*ing* for spring" (40.29) and Genari promising he "*will* see that [Agostino] finishes [the tomb]" (40.32-33). The temple is "built" in the final lines of the poem, as mentioned above, and yet Pound combines the sense of accomplishment with one of ongoing change by means of the parallel to the antecedent San Vitale: in Rimini, as in Ravenna, the encroaching grass continues to grow. Thus, the open-ended impression in the post-bag letters is equally applicable to all of Canto IX, which begins with the passage of time—"One year [...] One year [...] One year [...]" (34.1-3)—and ends with a similar perception of time unabated.

In the second half of the sequence, the reach of this continuation is extensive, stretching over the decisive conflicts of Malatesta's life, and even projecting the reader across a larger historical arc. In the discussion to follow, Pound's portrayal of Sigismondo's enduring significance, predominately achieved through the temple, is first considered in the context of the aftermath to formal charges brought against Sigismondo, and to his excommunication and burning in effigy. The symbolic resistance of the Riminese monument is worked into the visual materiality of Canto X with the aim of conveying the historical and cultural impact that outlived Malatesta's demise. The analysis then follows a network of architectural remnants Pound constructs outward from the Tempio. From the events centered in Rome, the poem maps lines to Fano, Cesena, and finally, after a brief return to Rimini, to Ravenna. In so doing, Pound demands of the reader a participation in the poems' typographic and linguistic fabric, in order that the palimpsest of Sigismondo's fragmented architectural legacy be reconstructed and "reread."

This sense of temporal progression is carried over from the image of the Tempio in the closing to Canto IX, which is quickly contrasted with the apparent abeyance of construction in Canto X, where the temple is almost entirely absent from the poem, suspended, as it were, in the partially constructed state expressed in Canto IX. As the Malatesta Cantos continue the saga of Sigismondo, Pound shifts his attention to the escalating conflict with the papacy. Nonetheless, the continued presence of the temple is implied, however subtly, as Pound in many ways considered it a physical manifestation of Malatesta's defiance of the Roman Catholic Church and the dominant powers. For the poet, the building testified that Sigismondo, "outside the

then system, and pretty much against the power that was," had still managed to "cut his notch."[157] In the first two cantos of the sequence the building of the temple is mentioned in the midst of Sigismondo's political affairs, and in Canto IX it is directly juxtaposed to comments from Pius II. Drawing from this development, when the pope's words return as a central element to Canto X, they are similarly intended to be contrasted to the Tempio. Therefore, while Pius's comments build up over the course of the pages, that text collides with Malatesta's temple—a kind of text of its own—the building of which has seemingly been temporarily halted. The contrast is seen quite clearly in a draft prior to the Watson typescript, where one is spatially set against the other:

> Incestuoso, lussurioso ac
> crapulone, assassin, uxoricido, found here for fraud,
> lust, malice, perjured ~~and~~ tyrannical,
> and judged for violence, ~~and tyranny~~
> ac heresia
> ⟨() ~~dixit~~ sic ~~pontifex~~, /~~Aeneas~~ Piccolomini⟨)⟩
> ⟨wanting the land⟩
> Yet raised a temple in Ariminium, ⟨for his⟩
> Divae Ixottae manes ⟨nephews)⟩[158]

In accordance with the conclusion to Canto IX, here the temple is not *being* raised, but is *has been* raised. It stands as a fixed idea countering the precarious circumstances of Sigismondo's life.

Subsequent revisions yielded several major changes to this passage: first, the two lines concerning the temple were cut, and second, the charges from Pius II (in addition to interior modifications) were positioned much later in the sequence. However, for the publication of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, Pound had found another manner to represent the Tempio's subversive symbolism. Rather than reference the temple by means of an explicit statement, he does so through the symbol most closely associated to it: the intertwined /*S*/ and /*I*/. Thus, Strater's illustration of the superimposed initials are set flush against the passage describing Malatesta's burning in effigy (see figure 2.6). Certain aspects of this passage have already been examined, but with regard to its association to the temple, several interpretive features remain to be discussed.

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[157] Pound, *GK*, 159.
[158] EPP Box 70 f. 3152.

The clash with the dominant power as embodied by the illustration, and by extension the Tempio and Sigismondo himself, is expressed here in a number of ways. The top two components of the design—the elephant and the medieval helmet—face Pius's text head on, and echoing the shape of the elephant, the /*S*/ also appears to stand against the text. The elephant refers the reader back to the post-bag section, where General Hannibal (in Trachulo's letter) and the "aliofants" (in Genari's letter) introduced a militaristic element into the Tempio's construction. The bellicosity directed at Rome is heightened through the dressed elephant's trunk raised in resistance, and, of course, it sitting atop the two pieces of armor. Consequently, in this instance, the temple, which Pius did not consider a proper church, assumes the status of a stronghold. While one image (i.e. the effigy of Sigismondo) is destroyed by fire, as related by the text, the other (i.e. the Tempio) remains firmly standing, with each material element symbolic of Sigismondo soundly stacked onto another.

On the page, then, the Malatesta Cantos offer the reader an image *versus* a text; or, more specifically, versus a series of *verses*:

> **VERSE**
> - a group of lines that form a unit in a poem or song; a stanza
> - (archaic) a line of poetry
>
> From Latin *versus* "a turn of the plow, a furrow, a line of writing," from *vertere* "to turn;" reinforced in Middle English by Old French *vers*, from Latin *versus*.[159]

However, as much as the two are contextually and historically pitted against each other, they are visually combined on the page into a single unit. Interpreted in light of the Tempio, the image and the text do not only *turn toward* one another—through the orientation of the former, and the linear reading of the latter—but also turn *into* each other. Upon reading the passage, this is discerned in how the image (either entirely or partially) replaces the /*I*/ of "INTEREA." One must literally read the symbol with the text, and as graphics, the /*S*/ and /*I*/ on the shield are, of course, the same as any /*S*/ and /*I*/ found in Pius's words. Furthermore, that text is stylized in a manner that invites the reader to *see* it as much as one would the illustration. It is specifically given the look of an inscription in stone, which, next to the /*$*/ cipher that is actually

[159] *New American Oxford Dictionary*. The Latin *versus* is also defined as "toward" in the etymology for the word's use in English.

found carved into the temple's walls, reinforces the notion of the Tempio as *textual* architecture. Inversely, this page uniquely demonstrates the Malatesta Cantos as *architectural* text—"the word made stone," as Pound had written early in the compositional process.[160] To reiterate, the small capitals used to print Pius's words "in stone" recall the typography of line 35.24 in Canto IX: "And he began building the TEMPIO." Therefore, while in one respect the temple's symbol defies and resists the contents of the text (and vice versa), the text also mirrors the temple's materiality. The resultant effect is that Sigismondo's condemnation by Pius II appears *inscribed* in the walls of the Tempio itself, through which "[Malatesta] registered a state of mind, of sensibility, of all-roundedness and awareness," and, one might add, of counter-cultural defiance.[161]

In the published version by New Directions, this interaction between historical image and archival text is, unfortunately, greatly attenuated. In the absence of Strater's illustration, the effect falls entirely on the visual implications of the passage's typography, and the resultant irony of its contents' connection to the Tempio. The compositional technique maintained in the New Directions edition is nevertheless more complex than juxtaposing one set of lines to another (i.e. the charges against Sigismondo with a direct reference to the temple), as seen in the early draft quoted above. The opposition of the concept of the Tempio to the ruling powers is achieved in both, but the focus on visual materiality that remains in the final (and current) version effectively advances the parallel between temple and text developed in the post-bag letters. In so doing, while the Tempio is not explicitly present in the passage—through neither symbol nor word—its materiality remains in the background, being built into that of the poem, as the page typographically becomes a wall of stone.

The listing of Malatesta's crimes in Pius and Benzi's "best bear's-greased latinity" (l0: 44.19) arrives eight lines later in the canto. Not until the final revisions did Pound replace the Italian (currently 45.12-14) with the Latin. In the Watson typescript the charges are followed by a five-line description of the alleged prank involving the ink and the holy water of a church (44.31-45.6), after which the

[160] EPP Box 70 f. 3149.
[161] Pound, *GK*, 159.

impermanence of Sigismondo's sins and crimes—existing as they do here in Pius's quoted *words*—are contrasted with the enduring *images* of his Tempio:

> "O maladecta avaritia!" but that passes,
> And perfidy, a thing of the times, that passes;
> And the beautiful putti, and the carved stones in the chiesa
> And the marble stolen in Classe,
> And remade into images ... ⟨?⟩[162]

Therefore, the statement that Sigismondo "raised a temple in Ariminium" included in a prior draft is replaced by a more detailed passage in the Watson typescript. The artistry of "the beautiful putti" and images carved in marble in one *chiesa* are contrasted to the "inky faithful," stone fonts, and doors of an unidentified *chiexa* (10: 44.31-45.4).

This passage too, however, was later excised from the text, and the current lines 45.7-11 added in its place. It would seem, then, that any plan to juxtapose the construction of the temple with Malatesta's alleged crimes was abandoned. However, in the last draft of the Malatesta Cantos, along with the aforementioned switch between the Latin and the Italian, Pound makes an important addition. The charges of a predominately violent and sexual nature are followed by three lines describing Sigismondo's religious offenses, after which Pound makes a final addition of two handwritten lines: "neither christian, jew, gentile, / nor any sect pagan, *nisi forsitan epicuræ*."[163] The three preceding lines, and the subsequent line, all begin with "and that he," but the anaphora is curiously broken in the two added lines. The repetition, of course, makes it clear whom the lines are describing, yet the choice to exclude any explicit referent in the final two lines of the passage allows a direct association with the Tempio, given the similar description it receives in a passage from Pius II's *Commentarii*:

> Aedificavit tamen nobile templum Arimini in honorem divi Fancisci; verum ita gentilibus operibus implevit ut non tam Christianorum quam Infidelium daemones adorantium templum esse videretur.
>
> He built, however, a noble temple in Rimini in honor of Saint Francis; the truth is that he so filled it with pagan [or gentile] works that it

[162] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.
[163] EPP Box 71 f. 3165. Currently, these are the final two lines of 10: 44.26-30.

> seemed less a temple for Christians than for infidels worshipping demons.[164]

Pound's "neither christian, jew, gentile" seems to partially paraphrase this comment on the temple, and the first half of the following line ("nor any sect pagan") further echoes Pound's direct quotation of this passage at the end of Canto IX: "and built a temple so full of pagan works" (41.10). From the same work that Andrea del Benzi's oration is quoted in lines 10: 44.20-25, Pound cites the Latin that concludes the two lines: "unless perhaps that of the Epicureans," in translation.[165] At the time of the Renaissance, Epicurus's ethics and philosophy—like Sigismondo's—strongly conflicted with the Roman Catholic Church, and Pius II's statement "infidels worshipping demons" might certainly have been applied to the Epicurean sect as much as it was to the Tempio.

As a result of these connections, Pound's revisions to the turn in Canto X from the more violent crimes listed first, to specifically religious accusations—including the extended adaptation of Benzi's account of the ink and holy water incident—may be understood as a compositional strategy, whereby the Tempio's shadow is cast in the background of the events. Pound ultimately found a way to retain his initial idea of keeping the structure present throughout these passages, though without alluding to it directly, as he had done at several earlier stages of the composition. In this manner, the reader is not punctually reminded of the progress, or lack thereof, regarding the temple's construction, but is instead given a more continuous impression of its historical and cultural impact in the unfinished state it was in at the time.

RECOLLECTING SITES

In the last canto of the sequence, discussion of the Tempio is predominately linked to its fragmentary, unfinished state. Its construction continues, of course, but the details and allusions Pound includes center around the endlessness of the project. As he had written in the Pre-Italy drafts, there is a certain "hopelessness of building a temple," as there is "of writing an epic."[166] The embodiment of such endless difficulty

[164] Pope Pius II, *Commentarii*, 366.
[165] Giovanni Benedetto Mittarelli, *Bibliotheca codicum manuscriptorum Monasterii S. Michaelis Venetiarum prope Murianum* (Venice: ex typographia Fentiana, 1779), cols. 704-14.
[166] EPP Box 70 f. 3145.

is precisely part of the meaning Pound saw in the Tempio's incomplete structure: "and the point is: / the wall, and the broken arch."[167] What Sigismondo did successfully build is, in fact, significant in that it reveals the process of composition. The means by which it does so is the very structural fragmentation of its materials. Incomplete on their own, the materials of Malatesta's temple and Pound's epic are forever in the process of being completed by the viewer/reader. This aspect of the sequence is particularly evident in the Watson typescript, where Pound begins the unfinished fourth canto—Canto XIII in that draft—on a note of projection into the future:

> So that he had his run, on the whole
> and got up the buildings,
> From '30 to '47, to '5[?] to '56
> ~~And not really broken till Pio Secundo~~
> ~~put the lid on~~
> ~~"If they come they will come of themselves"~~
> He left provision, you know, ⟨testamentum,⟩
> ⟨"⟩ Lien on my goods in Ragusa, and my heirs
> To continue the tempio ... ⟨"⟩
> ~~which they didn't.~~[168]

The cancellations in this passage eliminate the sense of finality and failure, leaving only a sense of lasting accomplishment and legacy: buildings were erected, provision was ensured for his heirs, and a lien was drafted. Pound cuts the last line, thereby leaving the ellipsis to suggest the open-endedness of a work whose "completion" depends on the engagement of future viewers, or readers, with it.

In the dénouement of the Malatesta Cantos, it is to the temple in its "broken" state that Sigismondo returns, having himself been "broken" by Pius II, Urbino, and others. While the symbolism of the structure is not stated as explicitly as in the aforementioned passage from the Watson typescript, it is nonetheless conveyed by its *un*broken presence, which continues after Malatesta's defeat. That his downfall was more or less inevitable (but also that he would be outlasted by his work) is hinted at in the closing to Canto IX, where the grass-covered sarcophagi express the decline and

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[167] EPP Box 70 f. 3145.

[168] EPP Box 71 f. 3155. Pound writes to Watson (4 January 1923), "Use your judgment re the fragment of canto XIII. Print it if you think it helps to clarify the story." *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and* The Dial, ed. Walter Sutton (Gainseville: Univeristy Press of Florida, 1994) 256. It is unclear exactly which events Pound was referring to with the four years in line three; however, 1447 is the year construction of the Tempio Malatestiano began, and 1456 is the year Sigismondo married Isotta.

end of Sigismondo, who once "lived and ruled" (41.3), at the same time the stone itself remains.

The final paragraphs to Genari's letter also foreshadow some of the events recounted in Canto XI, which shifts from the recurrent presence of the project, design, and construction of the temple in the first two cantos, to its enduring fragmentation. Genari concludes by stating that the lid to the tomb is soon to be completed: in the cancelled lines quoted above, it was "Pio Secundo [who] / put the lid on," effectively sealing Sigismondo's fate. In the published version of the sequence's last canto, this sense of Malatesta's final exit can be found in Urbino's punning statement, "'*Par che è fuor di questo ... Sigis ... mundo*'" ["He seems lost to the (Sigis) world"] (11: 49.6), and again several lines later: "But dey got de mos' bloody rottenes' peace on us" (49.14). The latter refers to the terms dictated by Pius II, which stripped the Malatestan dynasty of significant lands (49.15-26). The "rottenes' peace" left not much more than the Tempio in Rimini in which Sigismondo might retire and "rest in peace."

It is precisely within the fragmentary temple that the reader next finds Malatesta, having returned to what remains of his exceptional, though thwarted, ambition:

> And one day he was sitting in the chiexa,
> On a bit of cornice, a bit of stone grooved for a cornice,
> Too narrow to fit his big beam,
> hunched up and noting what was done wrong,
> And an old woman came in and giggled to see him
> sitting there in the dark
>
> (11: 49.30-50.2)

As one of the final images of Sigismondo the reader is given, this picture of the man undone in the great temple he was not able to finish is of particular importance, and served as the center of Strater's headpiece for the canto (see figure 3.12). The somber Sigismondo in the passage contrasts to his "youthful levity" in the "chiexa" of the previous canto, where it was he "Making mock of the inky faithful" (10: 45.3), as opposed to being the subject of someone else's "giggling." The first two lines in the excerpt echo one of the final paragraphs to Genari's post-bag letter, in which he writes that "one can't get the measurements for the cornice to the columns that are to rest on the aliofants" (9: 40.23-24). The image is somewhat reversed, with Sigismondo resting on "a bit of stone grooved for a cornice" instead of the cornice (eventually)

resting on the sculpted, stone elephants. Here the measurement is incorrect, and metaphorically Pound implies that Sigismondo's ambitious project—as much against the powers in place as it was ahead of its time—was, in fact, beyond measure. In the end, the fragments he has "shored against ruin" must indeed be "shelved."

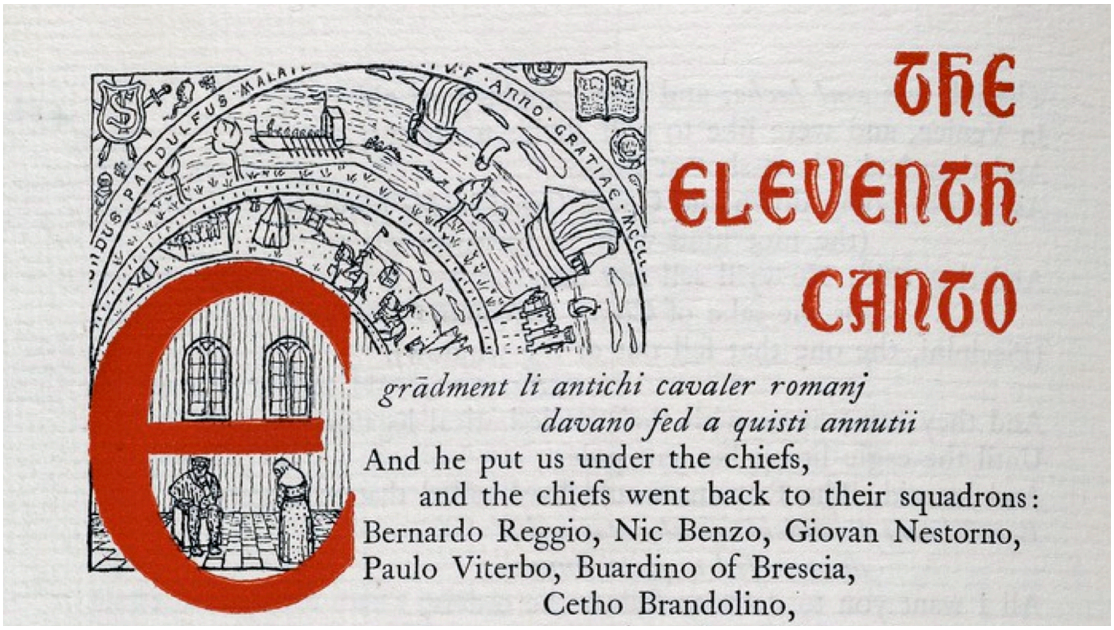

Figure 3.12: Henry Strater's illustration for the headpiece to Canto XI in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (42).

It is significant that the last image of the Tempio in the Malatesta Cantos consists of a fragment of its materiality ("a bit of stone"), whose form has been manipulated ("grooved") in order to be arranged within a larger pattern ("to fit his big beam"), yet remains incomplete ("too narrow") and separated.[169] The materials of Pound's text are likewise diverse and distinct, fractured and shaped, and it is tempting to retrospectively see the poet near the end of his career in this picture of Sigismondo. Indeed, in the first poem of *Drafts & Fragments of Cantos CX-CXVII*, Pound rephrases the opening line to Canto VIII: "From time's wreckage shored, / these fragments shored against ruin" (110: 801.5-6), and in the last completed poem he writes:

[169] In a handwritten draft just prior to the final typescript of the sequence, Pound had chosen a more explicit wording: "seated on an *unfinished* block." This version is also more materially specific, and Pound specifies several details regarding Sigismondo "noting the bad parts / of the sculptures." EPP Box 71. f. 3164.

a tangle of works unfinished.
. . . . . .
Tho' my errors and wrecks lie about me.
And I am not a demigod,
I cannot make it cohere. (116: 815.22-816.3)

The lines seems to mirror the description of Sigismondo among the unfinished fragments of material, "noting what was done wrong," contemplating the error in the stone that could not be set and held into place, and perhaps also wondering if he overstepped his bounds. Interestingly, Pound quickly follows his somewhat bleak recognition of failure with an affirmation of success on a certain level:

to "see again,"
the verb is "see," not "walk on"
i.e. it coheres all right
even if my notes do not cohere.

(116: 816.27-817.2)

The fragments, Pound suggests, may not at first appear as a unified whole, but with the right eyes, and upon closer examination, may ultimately connect. If this does in fact occur, it is because the reader actively fits together and unifies the materials structured onto the page (i.e. the "notes [that] do not cohere") on their own accord. In other words, just as the vision of the Tempio Malatestiano demands that the viewer "fill in the gaps" that Sigismondo was unable to complete, the signification of the cantos' material composition is conscience of, and requires the reader's participation in the act of reconstruction.

William Carlos Williams addressed this matter in his article on *A Draft of XXX Cantos* when he writes that "[Pound] is seeking to demonstrate the intelligence—as he believes a poet must—by laboring with the material as it exists in speech and history." Williams goes on to state that through such labor "Only superficially do the *Cantos* fuse the various temporal phases of the material Pound has chosen, into a synthesis. [...] It is not by any means a synthesis, but a shot through all material—a true and somewhat old-fashioned analysis of his world."[170] Williams's commentary is not to suggest that Pound's work does not constitute an objective unit or whole, but rather

[170] William Carlos Williams, "A Draft of XXX Cantos by Ezra Pound," *Modernism*: *An Anthology*, 551. The article was first published in April 1931 in *The Symposium* 2.2.

that his technique of rapid juxtaposition/parataxis of documents, languages, and histories (i.e. Williams's "*shot* through all material") unifies them *on the page*—or, "superficially"—as they are in their materiality. In positing that the resultant form of the poems is not a synthetic material but an analytic one, Williams seems to key in on the fact that often enough Pound's typographic arrangements visually distinguish his poetic material, allowing one to see the seams between the separate, constituent elements. The process is exposed, so to speak. At the same time, however, such a poetics is also uniquely aware of the inevitable synthesis that comes from printing those distinct parts on the same page, in that the reader is invited to see it as a material unit. As Pound writes later in Canto CXVI:

> And as to who will copy this palimpsest?
> al poco giorno
> ed al gran cerchio d'ombra
> But to affirm the gold thread in the pattern
> (116: 817.9-12)[171]

The fragments are not parsed out, but copied and reproduced as a whole. In tracing the form and design of a palimpsest, the reader is indeed brought full circle: led from the present into the past, through text into text, to eventually end at the beginning, where the materials from each—the origin and the outcome—are one. Be it intentional or otherwise, Williams expresses this unifying aspect of Pound's palimpsestic composition when he writes that "build[ing] new work, [Pound] postulates" is achieved "by poetry—that will strike *through words* whipping them into *a shape*—clarity and motion: analysis: be they what they may."[172]

A combinatory experience of the individual parts, on one hand, and on the other, of the material form and spatial arrangement that unites them, underlies the compositional process of the Malatesta Cantos. Two statements previously cited relate to this aspect of the poetics. First, Pound writing to his father from Rapallo in 1925 on the subject of machines: "It's the mobile parts, and the parts REQUIRED to keep them in their orbits or loci that I am interested in."[173] In terms of a material page of verse, the metaphor describes the spatial structuring of words into a functioning, visual

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[171] The Italian is a quotation from Dante Alighieri's "Sestina. Of the Lady Pietra degli Scrovigni," which Dante Gabriel Rossetti translates as "To the dim light and the large circle of shade." *The Early Italian Poets from Ciullo D'Alcamo to Dante Alighieri* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1861) 324.

[172] Williams, "A Draft of XXX Cantos by Ezra Pound," 551, emphasis added.

[173] Pound, *VA*, 301.

interdependency. Second, William Carlos Williams's statement that given an understanding of a poem as "a small (or large) machine made of words [...] there can be no part, as in any other machine, that is redundant."[174] This formal and structural conception of poetry informs the material poetics in the Malatesta Cantos, and Pound certainly understood the Tempio Malatestiano in the same fashion. Like the pages of Pound's text, Sigismondo's "junk shop" sets the gathered parts into a kind of vorticist shape and motion, wherein civilization is embodied, and no fragment is insignificant or haphazard. Thus, returning to the sight of Malatesta in Canto XI, sitting among the errors and incompletion of his "chiexa," one may very well hear Pound's question from *Drafts & Fragments* resonating in Sigismondo's mind and temple: "who will copy this palimpsest?"

As mentioned above, provision had been made in order that Malatesta's heirs would do just that, and continue the work of the Tempio. This, of course, never took place, and the temple remained a testament—all the more poignant for its fragmentary state—to the man's rise and fall. It seems the task of copying Sigismondo's palimpsest would not be taken up until centuries later with the works of historians and scholars like Charles Yriarte, Antonio Beltramelli, and Corrado Ricci. To that list of researchers and writers would be added Pound himself, whose documentary epic celebrates the successes of the Tempio at the same time that it records its failures. After the reader sees Sigismondo with the old woman in the church destined to be forever torn between "[verbal] apex" and "monumental failure,"[175] Canto XI never returns to the temple, nor mentions it again directly. There are, however, four remaining veiled references, all of which further underscore its fragmentary, palimpsestic structure.

The first of these follows immediately, shifting the reader's attention to yet another Malatestan building (this time in Fano) while the image of the Tempio in Rimini is still fresh in mind. Pound thereby juxtaposes the two structures, blending the materiality of each as the passages are read together. The intention is carried into the typography, which lifts the Latin inscription from the surrounding text, as done in similar lines from the previous cantos:

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[174] William Carlos Williams, *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams: Volume II, 1939-1962*, ed. Christopher MacGowan (New York: New Directions, 1991) 54.
[175] Pound, *GK*, 159.

And the writs run in Fano,
For the long room over the arches
Sub annulo piscatoris, palatiam seu curiam OLIM *Malatestis*.

(11: 50.10-12)

The Latin inscription over the *loggia del sansovino* of one of Malatesta's houses translates to "Under the piscatorial ring"—or the seal of the Pope, and by extension the Church—"the palace or court once of the Malatestas." Sigismondo's *palatiam* and *curiam* inevitably evokes, despite the indication of Fano, the Tempio, and also recalls those passages in the post-bag letters that spoke directly of various matters in his court. The connection was more clearly drawn in earlier drafts of the poem. The passage was slightly different in the Watson typescript, including an extra line, to which Pound made a handwritten extension in the right margin. While not finally retained, the architectural details in that addition demonstrate the poet's structural focus that parallels the Tempio:

sub annulo piscatoris
Palatiam seu Curiam, palace or curia, olim Malatestarum,
In Fano, fanum Fortunae. ⟨the carved door
posts of
Fano.
no more the
court yard +
the arches
+ the long room
over the portico.⟩[176]

It is also noteworthy that Pound provides the Latin "Fanum Fortunae," the name by which Fano was known to the Romans, and was given in reference to the city's temple dedicated to the goddess Fortuna: *tempio* della Fortun. Pound's inclusion of the name is partly for the sake of irony—considering the context of Sigismondo's loss of fortune and luck—but also further underscores the connection to Rimini's temple dedicated to the *divae Isotta*, as she is called in several of Pound's drafts.

Once linked to the Tempio, then, the italics in the published version relate the phrase to Canto IX, when Pound describes the marble taken from Classe

[176] EPP Box 71 f. 3156.

and deported, for the beautifying
of the *tempio* where was Santa Maria in Trivio
Where the same are now on the walls. (9: 36:17-19)

The connection is both fitting and ironic. The antecedent passage informs the reader of what *was* prior to the Tempio, just as the papal inscription declares what *formerly* belonged to the Malatestas. Moreover, Pound indicates that the very same marble is still "on the walls" in Rimini; likewise, in Fano, the arches of the long room still remain, despite no longer being in the possession of the Malatesta family. At the same time, the textual link is ironic, in that where the episode in Canto IX recounts an action taken to adorn to Sigismondo's holdings, the lines in Canto XI are a reversal, describing what in Sigismondo's eyes was certainly a defacement of his property. In both cases, however, Pound focuses the reader's attention on the visual materiality of the acts, and their significance within the larger historical scope.

Along the same typographic thread, the italics reach further back in the sequence to Canto VIII, when the architectural project of the temple is first announced as "*templum aedificavit*" (8: 32.16). The association again seems to emphasize the lasting efforts of Sigismondo, who built something that remains a testament to his creative ambition, while simultaneously diminishing those of the pope, who merely claimed someone else's work by having his signet and words engraved on the walls. Such a view is consistent with Pound's overall presentation in the Malatesta Cantos of the conflict between the two. The clash itself finds its own typographic connection, again via the italics, as the change in possession recalls the first of Pius II's words recorded in the sequence: "and this change-over (*hæc traditio*) / As old bladder said, "*rem eorum saluavit*" (9: 35.19-20). As before, the irony is thick. At this late point in the sequence, Sigismondo's actions have resulted not in the saving of a state (i.e. Florence) but in the loss of part of his own. Furthermore, just as Pius II clearly saw those actions as a form of "treachery," Sigismondo certainly saw the terms dictated by the Church—resulting in the loss of all territories except Rimini—in a similar manner.

The second typographic distinction in the phrase only adds to the textual layers, in particular regarding the aforementioned losses. Pound specifically singles out the word *olim* (once, formerly) by printing it in small capital letters. The emphasis

of the phrase, therefore, is visibly on the past, and yet the permanence of the word's materiality expresses its enduring presence.[177] Given that the phrase is an inscription dictated by the Catholic Church, Pound's typographic choice immediately reminds the reader of the passage describing the burning of Sigismondo's effigy, which was also printed in upper-case letters. That text contains the phrase "SCRIPTURAM / MULTI LEGERUNT" [this writing was read by many] (10: 44.6-7). This, in fact, seems the goal of the papal seal, and declaration of repossession, being inscribed over the arches in Fano, clearly visible to any visitor. Both the burning of the effigy and the inscription are intended as a public rejection and humiliation of Sigismondo; the text of the latter attested to his loss of holdings to the Church, that of the former to his loss of the Church itself via excommunication.

As previously discussed, the effigy passage stands in direct opposition to the symbolism of the Tempio, due in part to the script's appearance of being engraved in stone. With regard to "OLIM," the word was literally carved into a wall, thereby directing the reader to the sequence's central architectural work that is the temple. When the Tempio is first mentioned in Canto IX (35.24), the same typography is used, partly in order to visually represent the architectural features of the structure. Viewed in this typographic manner, the concrete letters of "OLIM" appear as the fragmented and jumbled remnants of "TEMPIO," while still communicating the same sense of material permanence. The temple, of course, remained in Sigismondo's possession, and therefore, in continuing to stand as his lasting legacy, contrasts to the *case Malatestiane* in Fano that are marked "ONCE of the Malatestas."[178]

Taken together, all of these typographic connections create a palimpsest of intratextual references. Approaching the end of the sequence, the reader is visually projected backwards through Malatesta's story, and Pound's text, with a particular focus on the simultaneity of the stages of the Tempio's construction and Sigismondo's conflict with Pius II and Rome. The concept of a palimpsest is appropriate in this context, for as the reader accumulates the textual layers, the resultant "image" provides a view of what once was (i.e. "olim") and what currently is, or has remained.

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[177] This idea is reflected in *The Cantos* as a whole, in which the phrase "olim de Malatestis" (or a translation of it) recurs several times: Canto 30 (149.2), Canto 76 (482.12-14), Canto 80 (521.8-9), and Canto 83 (549.19).

[178] In light of this notion of legacy, and given that the inscription in Fano involves the entire Malatestan family, one may also link the small capitals of *olim* to Sigismondo's son Sallustio's letter in Canto IX, which is "signed" with the same typography: "MALATESTA DE MALATESTIS" (9: 39.30).

The past is, in fact, embedded in the present in the same way the Latin writs are engraved in the room in Fano. A notion of progression and process—a development over time—is embodied in the palimpsest, which maps temporality as spatiality. To be sure, this effect requires the reader's engagement with the pages and materiality of the four cantos, which in this case means an initial willingness to abandon a strictly conventional, linear reading.

RESTORING DISPLACEMENTS

The necessity of the reader's active participation continues in the second veiled reference to the Tempio in the phrase immediately following the lines on Fano. Pound again quickly changes locations, taking the reader from Rimini to Fano to Cesena over a small number of lines. The rapidity of these shifts aids in unifying the architectural elements Pound references at each turn; namely, the cornice and beams in the Tempio, the arches in the *loggia del sansovino* in Fano, and finally the columns in Cesena.[179] The association and connection of these different material features impart a notion of construction, as if each is built as part of a single, larger design. The particularity of Pound's line concerning the third location lies in the linguistic focus he combines with the architectural subject matter:

> Gone, and Cesena, Zezena *d'''e b'''e colonne*. (11: 50.13)

Pound first reiterates the notion of loss and absence found in the previous line ("OLIM" ⇒ "Gone"), and then rewrites *Cesena* so as "to reproduce Sigismundo's Romagnole accent."[180] The same technique is applied to the latter half of the phrase: "de[ll]e be[ll]e colonne" [of the beautiful columns]. Thus, in both cases, the uniquely spoken dialect is materialized on the written page; that is, the spoken word's acoustic materiality becomes the visual materiality of the printed word. Given the architectural context, a parallel may be drawn between Pound's act of metaphrasis and that of the Tempio, which in many ways is the materialization of the character, interests, goals, beliefs, and lineage of Malatesta. As the critic Adrian Stokes writes, "Sigismondo's

[179] The geographic leaps continue after the reference to Cesena, though without the architectural component: Venice in line 50.14, Morea in line 50.15, and Sparta in line 50.18.
[180] Terrell, 56.

Tempio expresses Sigismondo. There he is, projected directly onto stone, not as a suggestion or a story, but as something immediate."[181]

Such a parallel invites a closer reading of Pound's elisions from a specifically visual point of view. One finds in the missing letters a visual representation of the terms "Gone," situated to their left, and "OLIM," situated just above them. As a result, the acoustic and the visual are even more tightly woven together, as Sigismondo neither speaks the /*l*/s in "delle belle," nor does he see the beautiful columns anymore. Furthermore, with regard to the architecture itself, the quotation marks appear as a series of partial columns. The fragmented /*l*/s again require the reader's participation in order to restore the letters, or, in a sense, "reconstruct" the columns. Taking the place of Sigismondo, he/she must imagine the lost beauty of the standing columns, just as the unfinished Tempio is only "completed" by a similar constructional engagement. For the reader, of course, this takes place through a textual representation. From this perspective, Pound once again ties documentary elements to architectural features.

That connection becomes clearer when considering the historical details of the reference. In his annotation to the line, Carroll Terrell states that the columns allude to the "Hospital of the Holy Cross."[182] It seems more likely, however, that they are in reference to the Biblioteca Malatestiana, founded in 1452 under Malatesta Novello (younger brother to Sigismondo), who is mentioned twenty lines prior in the same canto: "And when lame Novvy died, they even got Cesena" (11: 49.26). As the first civic library open to the public in Europe, it is certainly the most significant of Novello's building programs in Cesena. In addition to its architectural beauty, it is the array of important books Novello had gathered that are primarily responsible for its enduring fame[183] (see figure 3.13). The humanist library was dear to Pound, calling it

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[181] Adrian Stokes, *Stones of Rimini*, 1934 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002) 188.

[182] Terrell, 56. Terrell's source, though not cited in his annotation, is evidently Yriarte, from which he apparently translates "l'hôpital du Très-Saint Crucifix" (303); see Terrell, 93 n.5 on Novello. Yriarte quotes a passage from Braghi's *Memoriæ cesenati* praising the hospital's architecture: "[...] nosocomium, quod sanctissimi Crucifixi vulgo dicimus, vel Hospitale magnum, a fundamentis extruxit, magnificaque portica, et columnis marmoreis exornavit." Yriarte also includes an illustration of the arches along one side of "l'Hôpital du Crucifix, à Cesena" on page 307. Novello was responsible for the hospital's construction, but the Biblioteca Malatestiana remains the younger Malatesta's crowning accomplishment, as is clear even from Terrell's own annotations regarding Cesena and/or Novello elsewhere in his work.

[183] In *Pagan Virtue in a Christian World: Sigismondo Malatesta and the Italian Renaissance* (Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), Anthony F. D'Elia quotes "a near contemporary" of

"a unique monument to the culture of the best decades of the Renaissance."[184] He also gave a copy of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* to its director Manilo Torquato Dazzi in 1926, putting his poetry in the same building with the great codices of medieval culture, classical Latin and Greek (amongst many other languages and cultures) that Novello collected.[185]

Figure 3.13: An interior view illustrating the "belle colonne" of the Biblioteca Malatesiana di Cesena, seated in the reading room (l'Aula del Nuti) of the historical/antiquities section (sezione antica). Yriarte's work includes an illustration from a rear angle (306).[186]

In Canto LXXIV (466.5-8) Pound refers directly to the city's library and Torquato, and when Cesena's "beautiful columns" resurface in Canto CV (766.14-15), they are immediately preceded by a textual reference dating back to the Italian Renaissance; namely, the lack of a translation of Pietro Aretino's comedy *Il Marescalco* (1533). The specific textual and archival context in which Pound refers to

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Novello, Matteo Bosso: "'[Novello] called the most learned men to his court and had a magnificent wonderful library, rich in art and cultural works, in fact the best books to be found in Italy, in Cesena'" (65). Attesting to the building's architectural achievements, the Italian Renaissance historian Flavio Biondo wrote in *Italia illustrata* (1474) that Novello's library in Cesena was "digna di stare a paraggio con le migliori d'Italia" [worthy to remain amongst the best of Italy]. Yriarte, 306.

[184] Ezra Pound, "Possibilities of Civilization: What the Small Town Can Do," *Impact: Essays on Ignorance and the Decline of American Civilization* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1960) 79. This essay was first published in an issue of *The Delphine Quarterly* in July 1936.

[185] Pound wrote to R.P. Blackmur (30 November 1924): "There will be a public copy of the XVI in the Malatestiana at Cesena, if Dazzi consents to house it for me." *L*, 261.

[186] Massimiliano Calamelli, "Sala del Nuti," *Flickr*, 16 February 2013, CC BY-SA 2.0, < www.flickr.com/photos/mcalamelli/8482055228 > 15 March 2016.

Cesena's architecture—specifically, the Biblioteca Malatestiana—is particularly appropriate for the documentary poetics of the Malatesta Cantos. Through Canto XI's allusion to Novello's library in a passage concerning Sigismondo, Pound effectively sets it in juxtaposition to the Tempio Malatestiano. The chief architectural achievement of one Malatesta, then, mirrors that of the other, thereby aligning the temple with a library, and by extension, the books it contains (figure 3.14).[187] Reading the elided columns in Pound's typography with regard to the Tempio only further underscores the fragmentary state expressed in the canto's preceding passage.

Figure 3.14: The entrances to the Biblioteca Malatestiana di Cesena (left) and the Tempio Malatestiano di Rimini (right). The Malatestan elephants of the library's tympanum, and Novello's seal above it, recall those of the temple and Sigismondo. The Malatestan motto is inscribed over both elephants: "Elephas Indus Culices Non Timet" [the Indian elephant does not fear mosquitoes]. Yriarte includes illustrations of the doorway (304) and seal (305).[188]

[187] Coincidentally, construction of both the Tempio (i.e. the redesign of the church of San Francesco) and the Biblioteca began in 1447. Furthermore, the architect Matteo Nuti de' Fano—the author of the first post-bag letter—worked as an architect under Alberti on the former building, and designed/oversaw the construction of the latter.

[188] Sailko, "Biblioteca Malatestiana, Ingresso," *Wikipedia Commons*, 17 September 2013, CC BY-SA 3.0, < commons.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Biblioteca_malatestiana,_ingresso_01.jpg > 15 March 2016. Paperoastro, "Ingresso Tempio Malatestiano - Rimini," *Wikipedia Commons*, 7 September 2015, CC BY-SA 4.0, < commons.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ingresso_tempio_Malatestiano_-_Rimini.jpg > 15 March 2016.

By linking the archival and the architectural, Pound again makes his poetry as much a visio-spatial experience as it is a textual one. This is particularly evident in Pound's drafts of the passage, in which the poet goes through several variations of the elisions. The first is found in a manuscript draft written just before the final typescript of the Malatesta Cantos:

⟨Cesena, Zezena, [?]⟩
⟨Cesena de'e be'e colonne.⟩[189]

Here the visual effect is greatly reduced, as the single quotation mark in each word functions as a much more traditional elision (i.e. replacing one *or more* letters). When Pound typed the draft, however, he was evidently struck by the look of the typed words, and therefore continued to work through three different versions:

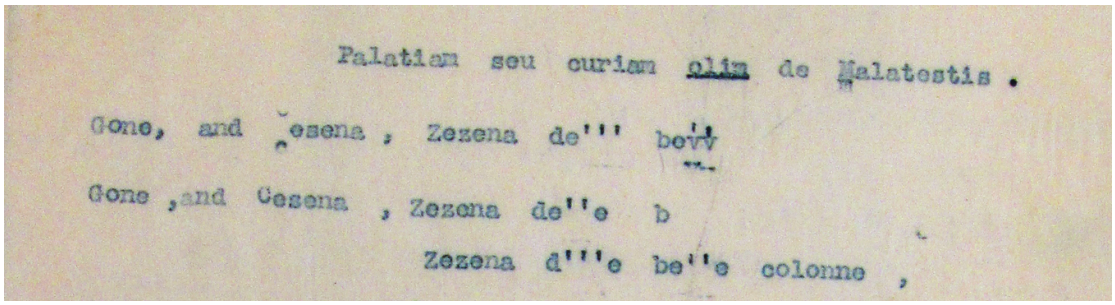

Figure 3.15: Excerpt from a typescript draft of Canto XI, with three variations of the Cesena passage (11: 50.13). EPP Box 71 f. 3165.

To be sure, he is simultaneously figuring out how to best communicate typographically the Romagnole accent; however, the variation between "delle" and "belle" in the third, apparently satisfactory, spelling would suggest that the visual aspect is of equal import. The two words would otherwise be typed with exactly the same phonetic spelling; the difference effectively draws the reader's attention to their visual materiality on the page.

Curiously, for *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, the variation was slightly altered (perhaps erroneously), resulting in "*d'''e b''e colonne*" (43). In the current New Directions edition, the dropped /*e*/ was corrected not by replacing it, but rather by adding a third quotation mark to signify its elision. The two words are therefore identical acoustically and visually; however, when Pound quotes himself in Canto CV

[189] EPP Box 71 f. 3164.

(766.15) the line is printed with yet another variation: "(Cesena, Zezena de be"e colonne)." There is, then, seemingly no definitive version of the line's unique typography, with neither the acoustic nor the visual being privileged over the other. The two are intertwined and inextricable, a notion Pound would express when commenting on a radio transmission he gave in July 1941: "Excellent delivery last night. Voice absolutely clear and every word 'visible' [...]."[190]

Shortly after the reader is given this image of Sigismondo's "voice," Pound offers another form of quotation from Malatesta, which bears several similarities to the line about Cesena. The first line of the passage states explicitly that the words were spoken—"And he said in his young youth" (50.26)—thereby implying they were pronounced with the accent reproduced earlier on the page. Additionally, as before, the passage immediately draws the reader's attention to a past state of affairs; in other words, "his young youth," like Cesena, is also "gone." Thematically this second quotation shifts from the architecture in Cesena to the attire of women in Rimini, yet the subject matters are linked in that the ornamentation in both passages is intended for, or results in, the beautifying of the city. Where the older, slightly nostalgic Sigismondo was seen/heard reminiscing about Cesena adorned with beautifully constructed columns, here the younger Sigismondo is seen/heard making decisions on behalf of "the city's glory" (50.29); namely, the 1436 decree by which the law in Rimini forbidding women to dress in an overly ornate fashion was repealed.

In fact, in Pound's Pre-Italy typescript drafts, the passage actually stood in place of the line on Cesena, following the Latin inscription in Fano:

> In Fano the writs run
> " sub annulo piscatoris "
> 1464
> Palatium seu curiam olim Malatestarum "
>
> in the place where he had said "
>
> " Anzi vogliamo

[190] Cited in Richard Sieburth, "The Sound of Pound: A Listener's Guide," *PennSound*, *University of Pennsylvania*, April 2007, < http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/text/Sieburth-Richard_Pound.html >. The same idea is found in Pound's *ABC of Reading*, when he comments on the poetry of W.S. Landor. After reprinting one of Landor's untitled poems – a line of which is quoted in Canto IX (41.12) – Pound writes, "the cantabile quality never wholly deserts the verses of his shorter poems, even when they are manifestly *inscribed*" (185).

che le donne vadano ornate a loro piacere
perche ridonda in splendore e belleza della città[191]

This early arrangement illustrates, first, the connection Pound intended to draw between the ornately dressed women—seen as part of the former "splendor and beauty" of the city's architectural landscape—and Sigismondo's former holdings (in particular, the buildings of those cities). Second, the juxtaposition also sets the pope's *written* decree in contrast to Malatesta's *spoken* one, suggesting in the process that the former outlasts the latter.

The revisions to the passage, however, dramatically altered the Italian quotation. Its position is shifted fifteen lines later in the poem—replaced, of course, by the line about Cesena—and it is almost entirely translated into English. Nevertheless, the aforementioned contrast is still somewhat present in the published version, as Sigismondo's pronouncement is printed only shortly after the papal inscription further down the page. Furthermore, in addition to the remaining thematic echoes in the connection discussed above, Pound reconstructed the lines in order that the Riminese women be typographically linked to Cesena's architecture in the substitutive line:

Gone, and Cesena, Zezena *d'''e b'''e colonne*,
. . . . . .
And he said in his young youth:
Vogliamo,
che le donne, we will that they, *le donne*, go ornate,
As be their pleasure, for the city's glory thereby. (11: 50.13-29)

The Italian of the un-translated phrase in the earlier draft would have made for a more evident visual rhyme, with "belleza della città" appearing as a restorative reflection of "*d*ell*e b*ell*e colonne*." However, the choice to translate the quotation results in a shared Anglo-Italian composition for both the earlier and later passage. Moreover, in blending the original Italian with his English, Pound again strategically uses typography to return the visual connection lost in translation. The poet does not simply italicize the fragments of the source language, as "Vogliamo" is printed in standard script. Consequently, the distinction of "*che le donne*," and the repeated "*le donne*," draws the reader's eye to connect these specific words with the italics above.

[191] EPP Box 70 f. 3145. The Italian reads: "Indeed, we rather desire / that the women go ornate as they please / that the city abound in splendor and beauty."

Doing so, one finds that "*che le donne*" is not only a perfect end-rhyme of "*colonne*," but also nearly matches it acoustically at the beginning and middle. At the same time, visually the two are strikingly similar, the later line coming across as an imperfect, or altered, replica. The emphasis via repetition of "*donne*" invites yet another visual link, as in one respect it appears to be the completion of the elided "*d'''e*." Sigismondo's phrase, in fact, intended to restore the beauty of the women throughout the city: *le donne belle della città*, in other words. Carrying the typographic association to its conclusion, then, yields the phantom appositional group *donne belle colonne*, where the center adjective modifies both of the rhyming nouns. The "missing" or "lost" columns in Cesena are thereby rediscovered. Through the materiality of the language—acoustic and visual—Pound fuses the people of the city with the architecture of the city: the restoration of the beauty of one (i.e. the Riminese women, or, *Rimini delle belle donne*) is equivalent to that of the other (i.e. the Cesenati columns, or, *Cesena delle belle colonne*).

MAPPING REMNANTS

The columns in Cesena, of course, where not in reality missing or destroyed, but taken from the Malatestan family's possession. However, as previously posited, they are in one sense intended to recall the incompletion of the Tempio. With the second quotation from Sigismondo, the city of Rimini as subject matter returns, and, via the aforementioned architectural association, the Tempio once again figures into the network of relations. As such, the restoration of architectural grandeur may be connected to the temple, which was left in a broken state just shortly before in Canto XI. But the reader is also led to the fragmentary temple by means of a different route. After Pound's typographic connections are made, the parallel between female beauty and architectural beauty modifies the reading of the rest of the quotation from the then nineteen-year-old Sigismondo. The geographic context of Rimini combined with the notion of female beauty recalls Isotta degli Atti, whose relationship to the Riminese and to beauty were extolled in the closing to Canto IX. In that passage, the lovely Isotta ("*placuit oculis*" and "*pulchra aspectu*") is also said to be popular with the people ("*populo grata*") and thus is referred to as the glory/splendor/beauty of Italy

("*Italiaeque decus,*" 41.7-9).[192] These attributes apply equally to the Tempio, described immediately after them, as per Pound's favoring the interpretation of Sigismondo's temple as a monument to his mistress Isotta. Returning to the lines in Canto XI, when Pound writes of the "glory" of the city of Rimini—literally, "splendor and beauty" in the original Italian—it may be understood to imply both the Tempio Malatestiano and Isotta degli Atti, the beautiful woman who ostensibly inspired it. That the ornamentation young Sigismondo desired for the women's attire was indeed "for the city's glory," may then be seen as fulfilled and translated much later in the Tempio's own ornamentation of "filigree hiding the gothic" and "rhetoric in the whole."

Nevertheless, the above-quoted passages from Canto IX and Canto XI are both written with a backward glance. The details of the temple in the earlier poem are seen as if from Pound's own 20th-century vantage point, and the later poem recounts a moment from the beginning of Sigismondo's career, roughly four years after he gained the lordship of Rimini. In short, at their core they give an impression of *former* glory. By recalling the image of the temple seen at the end of Canto IX, the veiled reference in Canto XI again ultimately leaves the reader with a picture of the building in a broken state at the hands of time. Examining the sequence's final manifestations of the temple, the circular structure of Pound's treatment of the building emerges.[193] Just as he began the Malatesta Cantos, it is the fragments that remain (to be shored and shelved) that he returns to in these last images of transient glory. The images themselves are unified by their mutual connection to the Tempio at the symbolic center of Pound's reflection on the ruins of past civilizations and the push-pull of necessary, yet futile, ambition.

This is best demonstrated in the Watson typescript, which closes with a passage of fifty-one lines (part of which was seen earlier) concerning Pound, T.S. Eliot, and Bride Scratton's meeting in Verona in 1922. Revisions to the poems saw the

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[192] Lewis and Short's *A New Latin Dictionary* also offers the following definitions: ornament, grace, embellishment, honor, and dignity (524). For his part, Carroll Terrell opts for the first, translating the phrase as "the *ornament* of Italy" (48), a choice which happens to resonate with the adjective "ornate" in the third line of the passage under discussion.

[193] Such a treatment coincides with Pound's own view of the Tempio: "I believe the construction to have a spherical basis—fortunately foiled in the effect, but there always as principle and as cause of a solidity, a satisfaction which no other base-form could have attained. Take a full set of photos of the Tempio and start counting the CIRCLES. Reverse, for a moment, Stokes' stone-blossom criterion or rather augment it by the idea of the flattened sphere." *VA*, 168.

cancellation of the passage, though Pound retained several individual lines or couplets, which were inserted at different locations in the Malatesta sequence, or elsewhere in *The Cantos*. In the conclusion to the passage Pound turns his attention more explicitly to the decline of civilizations:

> And she's buried in Ravenna,
> yellow, sun-yellow,
> lit by the alabaster panes,
> yellow, sun-yellow
> In the gloom, the gold,
> gathers the light against it.
> Byzance gone,
> the empire?
> The empires slide to nothing here in the marsh-drift,
> there in the marsh-drift, gone
> Caesarea, between the town and Classe, gone,
> roof-deep in the marsh.
>
> Behind the great phalloi of the temple ....
> winding path,
> Mosaic wall, and the souls,
> gonads in organdy
> Rose-flakes in arid darkness,
> the wing shows for a moment,
> and fades,
> An emerald lizzard
> peers through the border grass.
> Fatal August.[194]

Within the imagery of the passage, Pound associates the artistic beauty of Galla Placidia's mausoleum in Ravenna with that of the Tempio in Rimini. The descriptions of both locations are intentionally fragmentary, presenting the isolated architectural details as fading, but still present in their perceptible fragility. From the entire passage, only four lines made their way into the final draft of Canto XI (only two of which are in the excerpt quoted above): "And we sit here. I have sat here / For forty four thousand years" (11: 50.21-22) and "In the gloom, the gold gathers the light against it" (11: 51.30). As Peter D'Epiro remarks, the lines are "shorn of their original contexts, depersonalized" and the "*ex abrupto* voice, syntactically joined to what

[194] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

precedes and follows, but emanating from an eerie, surrealistic dimension of its own, provides the canto with a somber, sibylline resonance."[195]

In the final draft, the second of the two salvaged passages is preceded by two lines regarding Sigismondo's return from his failed campaign against the Ottomans in Morea between 1466-68:

> " When he got back here from Sparta, the people
> " Lit fires, and turned out yelling: 'PANDOLPHO'!"
>
> (11: 51.28-29)

Accordingly, both Kenner and D'Epiro read the de-contextualized "gloom" and "gold" in relation to these lines, and thus to Sigismondo: "He is the gold, their torches rhyme with the light."[196] However, while certainly correct, this only follows Pound's associative logic halfway. Together, the three lines juxtapose Malatesta's "triumph in defeat" in the eyes of the public, with the notion of preservation, or continued presence, represented by Galla Placidia's mausoleum in Ravenna. The sense of a sustained legacy after death is only heightened by the name "Pandolpho," which effectively applies to the entire Malatestan bloodline.[197] Additionally, as seen in the Watson typescript, Pound linked the mausoleum to the Tempio Malatestiano, as both, in spite of their transience, architecturally exemplified artistic grandeur and the promotion of culture and civilization through artistic action. In the long passage from that typescript, as Pound jumps from Ravenna to Byzance to Caesarea to Classe to Rimini, the locations become interchangeable, and conceptually unified. The architectural sites are all, as Pound wrote in an earlier draft of the passage, "sprouts in

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[195] D'Epiro, 48.

[196] Kenner, *The Pound Era*, 342.

[197] It is also worth noting that while Pound's choice to print the word in all capital letters is primarily to typographically represent the volume and enthusiasm of the crowd's shouts, it nonetheless ties the word visually to "OLIM" earlier in the canto, as well as to Canto IX's "TEMPIO" and "POLUMETIS," all of which have been previously discussed in more detail. As a result of such links, a textual and typographic "lineage" may be traced backwards through the sequence.

The passage and its typography may also be carried forward through *The Cantos* as a kind of future legacy of Malatesta. Canto LXXXIX contains the phrase, "he Andy Jackson / POPULUM AEDIFICAVIT / which might end this canto, and rhyme with Sigismundo" (89: 616.25-28). Jackson's *edification* of the *people* "rhymes" with Malatesta's popularity with the Riminese, and with the culture/civilization he brought to the city, symbolized in the *edifice* of the Tempio. Pound's line also implies the actual linguistic rhyme with "*templum* aedificavit" in Canto VIII (32.16). In Canto CVI is found another reflection of Malatesta by means of a temple built by Admiral Callicrates in honor of Egyptian Queen Selena Arsinoe (a.k.a. Arsinoe Aphrodite), written with the same language and typography: "At Zephyrium, July that was, Zephyrium / The high admiral built there; / Aedificavit / TO APHRODITE EUPLOIA" (106: 775.14-17). The content rhymes with Sigismondo's enduring testament to the "Divae" Isotta in the Tempio.

the loam," being woven together as they grow into a single, geographic fabric. On a more detailed level, Ravenna in particular, is blended into Rimini: the former's "sun-yellow" light, gathered "in the gloom" and "the gold," eventually becomes "the arid darkness" of the latter; or, as per a cancelled line from the same draft, both monuments are the "flame intermittent."[198]

This, of course, is not the first time in the Malatesta Cantos that Pound has associated monuments in Ravenna with the temple in Rimini. The last lines to Canto IX juxtaposed the Tempio's visual features with the sarcophagi of San Vitale in Ravenna; adding the third element of Galla Placidia's mausoleum in Ravenna is perfectly consistent. When the reader of *The Cantos* reaches this point in the sequence, the "gloom" and "gold" is first connected with Sigismondo (Pandolpho) Malatesta—pictured here in his decline—and then, via Ravenna, to the Tempio Malatestiano, whose unfinished, fragmented state foreshadows its own decline into brokenness. Indeed, what could symbolize Sigismondo's "triumph in defeat"—his ultimate failure to *build* an empire—better than the Tempio? As Pound's later writings on it would suggest, one major aspect of the building that intrigued and inspired him was precisely its incompleteness.[199]

This final below-the-surface reference to the Tempio is also consistent with those previously encountered in Canto XI. Once again Pound offers the reader a geographic displacement of the temple: first in Fano, second in Cesena, and now in Ravenna. The territories Sigismondo lost according to the papacy's terms are thereby regrouped through the Tempio's symbolic significance; it is, in other words, the locus attesting to what Malatesta achieved in his lifetime: "So that he had his run, on the whole / and got up the buildings."[200] Furthermore, unfinished as the temple was, this canto's association of it to Galla Placidia's mausoleum also carries with it the recurrent notion of architectural fragmentation. In *The Pound Era*, Hugh Kenner traces the connection, including the reference in Canto IX:

> [...] and ten minutes' walk away by San Vitale the sarcophagi in the long grass from which Sigismundo may have derived the row of tombs

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[198] EPP Box 70 f. 3149. The lines in this draft are composed as follows: "gonads in organdy, rose-flakes in the arid darkness, / a wing exists for a moment and goes out, / ~~flame intermittent,~~ / an emerald lizard peers through the border grass."

[199] As previously quoted, Pound described the Tempio as an "apex" and "monumental failure" in *Guide to Kulchur* (159), though this is not the only passage of his that expresses as much.

[200] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

> down the west side of the Tempio (in one of which lie the ashes of Gemisthus Plethon) line the path to the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, "the blue dome studded with stars [...].[201]

Pound's "gloom gather[ing] the light against it" provides an image of the mosaics on the vaults and cupola of the mausoleum. In the passage from the Watson typescript, after shifting to a description of the Tempio, the parallel is intimated in Pound's line on the "Mosaic wall." But even in the absence of such a line, the presence of the Placidia's "blue *dome*" gathering light is sufficient to evoke the suspended construction of the Tempio. One of the most prominent testaments to the temple's incompletion is, in fact, the absence of the magnificent dome that Alberti had designed: "The cupola would have rivaled Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, and the building was obviously meant to be an awe-inspiring monument."[202] Thus, when Pound refers to the gold-adorned cupola in Ravenna, its link to the Tempio is meant, in part, to highlight the fact that no such light is gathered in the latter. Sigismondo may bask in the glow of the people's torches, but the missing dome in Rimini reflects no light; it is, in reality, nothing but light—a vacant space, an unrealized ambition.

Consequently, it falls entirely upon the viewer of the Tempio to complete its structure by imagining the absent dome, and, in essence, replacing "the gloom" of its thwarted design with "the gold" of its intended glory. In more general terms, the participant must realize the significance of the blank space, and complete the fragment.

> but willed, to the end, willed, that the temple be there,
> testavit, rents out of Rhodes
> the faint fragments of fortune,
> that Alberti's dome shd. rise.[203]

In making such a demand on the viewer, the broken temple acts as a structural parallel to the poetics of the Malatesta Cantos, for the reader of Pound's work must likewise fill in the textual gaps throughout the poems.[204] In this particular instance, on the

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[201] Kenner, *The Pound Era*, 342.
[202] Rainey, *Monument*, 13.
[203] EPP Box 71 f. 3154.
[204] In light of the parallel of the Tempio to *The Cantos*, the absent dome may be interpreted as representative of the incompletion of both projects. Such was evidently the view of Charles Olson. As one of the principal inheritors of Pound's poetics, his epic *The Maximus Poems* carried on the aspiration of *The Cantos* to write/build a luminous city: "That is my dream," Olson writes, "of creating

simplest of levels, the reader is asked to imagine the scene of Sigismondo returning amidst the people's enthusiastic chants and the glow of their torches. Beyond that, however, this image blending celebration and frustration is to be connected to the symbolism of the Tempio by means of the reference (once recognized) to the mausoleum in Ravenna, and its earlier appearance in the sequence.

This link is, in turn, only fully understood when it is considered within the network of relations Pound has constructed throughout the canto: the loss of Fano, the missing, or absent, columns in Cesena, the former ornamentation of the city of Rimini, and now the "disembodied" dome of Galla Placidia's mausoleum. Each passage or line must be reconstructed locally, but is only finally completed by fitting it into the global structure of the individual canto, and then that of the entire sequence. At both levels, Pound redirects the reader to the Tempio, which, while not appearing to figure prominently in Canto XI, in fact provides the blueprint and scaffolding for the cantos' spatial accretion. It is, somewhat ironically, the structural gaps in Sigismondo's temple that act as the text's unifying agent. All of Malatesta's lines, so to speak, lead back to and meet in Rimini—the central "genius loci," as Pound wrote, where remain the "Fragments against [Sigismondo's] ruin."[205]

As the second half of the Malatesta Cantos trace Sigismondo's decline, the reader is drawn back again and again, however subtly or briefly, to the temple's partial construction with which the sequence's midpoint concluded. Reading these different events side by side, then, one sees that the temple's structure is a metaphorical embodiment of the "wrecks and errors" of Malatesta's political and professional career, as both are subject to the progressive damage that comes with time. That very same fate also applies to poems—and documents in general—in their materiality, which Pound had previously addressed in the fragments that comprise "Papyrus" (see figure 2.3). However, just as Pound demonstrated in that poem, it is precisely such inevitability of fragmentation that makes historical and textual conservation—and, if

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a city which shall shine as such. And this is only what I am, is the builder of that *dome*." *Reading at Berkeley* (San Francisco, CA: Coyote, 1966) 5, emphasis added.

The imagery also recalls Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous poem "Kubla Khan," the full title of which goes on to read, "or, A Vision in a Dream: A Fragment" (1816). In the text, Coleridge links poetic vision to the "stately pleasure-dome" (l. 2), and at the end of the poem writes, "That with music loud and long, / I would build that dome in air, / That sunny dome! [...]" (l. 45-47). *Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, Kubla Khan and Christabel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899) 35-37.

[205] EPP Box 70 f. 3149.

possible, reconstruction—a necessity. Thus, when the reader is returned, by way of Ravenna, to the fragmentary Tempio in Rimini at the end of Canto IX, and again at the end of Canto XI, it is with the dual view of the archivist that one reads the materiality of the structural aspects of both temple and text: what is absent and what is present, what was lost and what remains, what is forgotten and what is restored. Within the domain of textuality, this view of temporality through the lens of the materialization of written documents, and the resultant spatiality, is invested in the process of literary production as it pertains to the formation and alteration of historical narratives. An important theme of Pound's Malatesta Cantos, addressed in the following chapter, is the written word itself, and the crucial role it plays in determining historical development and the construction of the record thereof. If the history of the Tempio Malatestiano is appropriated by Pound as a kind of "textual event," he also incorporates materialized linguistic events into his epic with an understanding of them as historical "landmarks."

PROOFS: EPISODES IN INK

"space of time into paper"

— Susan Howe[1]

In his 1914 essay "Vorticism," Pound sets out to first explain Imagism and then demonstrate how its relations to painting and sculpture are included in his newly minted conception of poetry. As even the title suggests, Pound had already moved on from the former "department of poetry" which he had co-founded only two years earlier; and yet in doing so, the principles of Imagism had clearly not been abandoned. He writes, "There is another sort of poetry where painting or sculpture seems as if it were 'just coming over into speech,'" and in mentioning his well-known poem "The Return," and in tracing the origin and development of his much more well known Imagist poem "In a Station of the Metro," Pound focuses heavily on vision.[2] Quoting an unnamed "Russian correspondent" commenting on the former poem, Pound suggests that he did indeed "wish to give people new eyes." Regarding the latter, he relates the composition to a statement from American painter James McNeill Whistler—"'The picture is interesting [...] because it is an arrangement of colour'"—as well as to the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky—"[...] you can transpose his chapter on the language of form and colour and apply it to the writing of verse."[3] It is interesting to note that as Pound transitions into a discussion of Vorticist principles, his focus on the visual aspects of poetic composition shift from painting to primarily sculpture. In particular, he turns to the work of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and of Jacob Epstein, and to the formal concepts of "'planes in relation'" and "'the appreciation of masses in relation.'"[4]

Pound's interest for the visual materiality of language, and the relation of poetic composition to that of other art forms, is maintained throughout his

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[1] Susan Howe, *Souls of the Labadie Tract* (New York: New Directions, 2007) 120.

[2] Pound, *VA*, 200. The essay "Vorticism" was first published in *The Fortnightly Review* 96 (September 1914) 461-71.

[3] As Pound notes, Whistler's statement is quoted from *Gentle Art* (Pound, *VA*, 202), and that of Kandinsky from *Ueber das Geistige in der Kunst* (203).

[4] Pound, *GB*, 147. Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, "Vortex," *Blast* 1 (20 June 1914), 155. Gaudier-Brzeska's essay appeared before Pound's "Vorticism."

development across literary movements and schools. Twenty years later, in *ABC of Reading* (1934), he would again emphasize the visual nature of poetry: "You would think that anyone wanting to know about poetry would do one of two things or both. I.E., LOOK AT it or listen to it;" and on the following page, "In the case of poetry, there is, or seems to be, a good deal to be looked at."[5] Situated roughly halfway between these two publications are the Malatesta Cantos, at the core of which, as examined earlier, is the compositional and material parallel of the Tempio Malatestiano. The temple itself provided a great deal to "look at," and seeing that "the dumb stone took shape, / and of dead slabs, live figures rose, [...] scraping the viel strings / thumping on tympana," Pound also found much to "listen to" in those walls.[6] The innovative structure provided Pound with an architectural model whose sculptural qualities would allow him to further develop the concept of a poetic composition of planes (or masses) in relation through an exploration and investigation of the materiality of the written word.

At one point in his early drafts, Pound juxtaposes the construction of the Tempio with Sigismondo's determination to "write" his feats and defeats in the annals of history, making a physical mark on the Italian geography:

> Finish our chapter. First.
>
> Yet built the temple. laying the stones that year...
> Alberti guiding. And Gemisthus ...
> who had talked the gods, gone back to Morea,
> but the word burning and hot ...[7]

Pound's own structure, built of words, is likewise uniquely concerned with materialization; in this case, that of language onto the "concrete" page, which like the Tempio preserves and transmits culture and civilization. The material production of language in a range of different types of documents, and in transcribed speech, is encountered throughout the Malatesta Cantos, which consistently assert the primacy of the written word. Language, in fact, becomes an active figure or agent in the story of Sigismondo, and linguistic "events" are built into the historical structure as much as military, political, or domestic ones. Examining the compositional details of this

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[5] Pound, *ABC*, 30-31.
[6] EPP Box 70 f. 3145.
[7] EPP Box 70 f. 3152.

aspect of the sequence, the criticism to follow begins by addressing how the written production and material transmission of language is embedded into the poems' process of documenting the integration and synthesis of texts. It continues with an analysis of Pound's techniques of quotation and the implications thereof regarding the inclusion of history. Finally, a discussion contrasting the sequence's conception of the spoken word to documentation leads to a study of how the act of writing and visual materialization provides a framework to the four cantos.

BINDING LANGUAGES

As with other elements of the sequence, Pound's foregrounding of writing and of the written word as part of the poems' subject matter is established in the opening to Canto VIII. With regard to the production, or reproduction, of language's materiality, what is particularly evident in the first thirteen lines of the poem (in New Directions's current edition) is Pound's stylistic multiplicity. Though the emendation of Eliot's line from *The Waste Land* has already been examined, it is helpful to restate here that, first, the act of "shoring" fragments conveys a sense of elements from diverse sources and times, and/or of different constitution, being gathered and fused into a cohesive whole; and second, that the act of "shelving" implies that such elements are of a specifically textual nature. The reader is therefore set immediately in the context of heterogeneity and the written or printed word.

As he establishes the specific aspects of that context in these first lines—all of which are seen repeatedly throughout the four cantos—Pound draws attention to the act of reading, thereby also implying the prior act of writing. The sequence opens with Pound "reading" Eliot, and of the six words in the first line of Canto VIII, only two are, in fact, Pound's: "you" (replacing Eliot's "I") and "shelved." The latter alteration may appear as a "slip of the pen that purports to mimic a plausible slip of the tongue,"[8] yet it would be more accurate to state that the written "mistake" records not an error in speech, but one in reading. The shift of the pronoun also emphasizes the act of reading not only Eliot's text, but also Pound's. If the change were simply due to reported reading, the line would logically read, "These fragments *he* [Eliot] has

[8] Peter D'Epiro, *A Touch of Rhetoric: Ezra Pound's Malatesta Cantos* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983) 69.

shelved (shored)." The use of the second person pronoun, however, embodies the interaction between reader and text, and maintains the all-inclusive anonymity of that reader. Pound's "misreading" of Eliot provides several possible interpretations of the pronoun's referent, which, though previously discussed in relation to intertextuality, are re-examined here for how each leads back to written/printed language:

1) *You* is T.S. Eliot: Pound, then, is understood to have read the original text—in which the "I" refers to its author—and, in his own text, addresses Eliot directly.
2) *You* is Ezra Pound: in the act of reading the line from *The Waste Land*, Pound "voices" the word "I," and thus refers to himself; his own adapted line, then, is in reference to this prior reading. In other words, as the reader, he assumes the place of the writer. The same identification of the pronoun's referent may be reached when one considers the act of reading the line as printed in *The Cantos*: the reader voices the line back at its author, with the word "you" therefore in reference to Pound, who is, in fact, the one responsible for the fragments being "shelved."
3) *You* is the reader of *The Cantos*: rather than "delivering" the line, as in nº2, the reader is its recipient, with Pound's external text written directly to the reader.
4) *You* is Sigismondo: as is evident in Pound's drafts, this line was initially associated with the Tempio Malatestiano—both the diversity of elements Sigismondo was partly responsible for as patron, and the "fragments" of the remaining, unfinished temple. This interpretation would thus make the sequence's central figure, whose life and deeds are recounted, the *in absentia* reader who is reading Pound's text.[9]

Due to the ambiguity of the pronoun, this multiplicity of interpretations co-exists on the same plane; that is, the same material page. The pronoun itself allows for both a singular referent and a plurality of referents. What unites the different readings is that

[9] However, quoted documents aside, the four cantos consistently refer to Malatesta in the third person. An argument for this interpretation may nonetheless be made on the basis that, in shifting his narrative strategy from (predominately) Domenico Malatesta (a.k.a. Malatesta Novello, or in Pound's text "Novvy") to (predominately) one of Sigismondo's veteran soldiers, Pound failed to change all of the previously written (and retained) passages accordingly. One such instance is found in Canto IX (34.16): "And the Emperor came down and knighted us," where *us* refers to Sigismondo and Novello.

each is founded upon an engagement with written language and printed text, and the resultant relation between author, reader, and subject matter.

Such a multiplicity infuses the line with polyvocality: Eliot is "speaking" at the same time as Pound, and both simultaneously with the reader. Although Pound is certainly concerned with voice(s) in the Malatesta Cantos, this polyvocality is, more precisely, a concern with the *written* record of voice(s). This feature continues throughout the entire sequence, but the opening to Canto VIII is a particularly dense polyvocal passage wherein Pound demonstrates and establishes such a technique. The second line of the poem combines the voices of Truth and Calliope, whose exchanged invectives make the line a mock invocation of the muses. As History and Epic, respectively, Pound suggestion may be reframed in the present context as a conflict arising from opposing approaches to historiography. On one side, the traditional epic's narration of the acts and adventures of heroic figures may, in fact, present an inaccurate account due to the embellishment and exclusion of certain events or facts; on the other, the record may be accused of falsified construction, its putative objectivity being subject to interpretation and/or underlying ideology. If the Malatesta Cantos are indeed to be "a poem containing history" (i.e. an epic), they begin by asking how such history is to be written, and what history (or histories) will be included.

For Pound the critical examination of historical documents—a type of engagement with the written word—was central to successfully addressing those questions. Such an examination, as demonstrated in the remaining lines to Canto VIII's opening, involves not only the process of analytical reading, but also, at times, of detailed transcription. The poem's polyvocality thus continues, presenting the reader with three different voices across ten lines. The first is that of the soldier-narrator (28.4), who makes a point of declaring that Alessandro de' Medici was—as an illegitimate son of a Medici and a Moorish domestic—of *multiple* backgrounds.[10] The second is that of Pound via the modern historian and scholar (28.4-5), who,

[10] In her book on Alessandro, Catherine Fletcher addresses the doubt surrounding his parentage: "A few writer's of Alessandro's own time claimed his real father was Giulio de' Medici, Lorenzo's [de' Medici, Duke of Urbino] illegitimate cousin and the future Pope Clement VII. Others, more malicious, said that since his mother had slept with not only Lorenzo but Giulio and her own husband, a coachman, too, it was impossible to be certain. But most accepted him as Lorenzo's son. It was also widely agreed that Alessandro's mother was a servant or a slave in a Medici household [...]." *The Black Prince of Florence: The Spectacular Life and Treacherous World of Alessandro de' Medici* (London: Bodley Head, 2016) 16.

having examined the original letter written by "Malatesta / Sigismund" in the Florentine archives, notes the name of its author, and six lines later, having completed and translated the fragmented words he copied, clarifies the addressee of the letter in the same direct, telegraphic style:

> Equivalent to
>
> Giohanni of the Medici,
> Florence (8: 28.11-13)

The third voice comes just prior to these (28.6-10), and is that of Sigismondo himself, whose words are reprinted. In these lines, then, the reader is witness to Pound in the act of reading, transcribing, and translating, and simultaneously to Malatesta in the act of writing. The same is true of the following forty-three lines, which reproduce the letter in full, and include two parenthetical interjections on the part of the historian/scholar that are appended to lines of his English translation.

As plainly demonstrated in the opening lines and the Medici letter, Pound's technique of written polyvocality, combined with his documentary/archival process of including history into poetry, produces a multilingual work that seeks to integrate those languages into a single material record. "The sum of human wisdom," Pound writes, "is not contained in any one language, and no single language is CAPABLE of expressing all forms and degrees of human comprehension."[11] Additionally, the diversity of Pound's sources—from quattrocento manuscripts and publications, to 19th-century historians from England, Switzerland, and France, and up to early 20th-century publications[12]—adds a wide variety of linguistic registers to the multilingualism. Given these two features, the issue of translation is inevitably raised, and the idiosyncrasies of Pound's English versions are largely responsible for the multiple levels of diction one finds from beginning to end in the Malatesta Cantos. In materializing these languages onto the page, the poet combines the many *voices* into one palimpsestic, historical record, and epic. Pound's own voice, language, and style, is, in fact, one composed of many voices, languages, and styles. He is at once the documentarian and archivist, the poet and translator, the storyteller and the ghostwriter.

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[11] Pound, *ABC*, 34.

[12] See, in particular, Ben D. Kimpel and T.C. Duncan Eaves, "Pound's Research for the Malatesta Cantos," *Paideuma* 11 (1982), 406-19, in addition to D'Epiro and Rainey's works.

As other characteristics, this multiplicity in Pound's poetics is also illustrated across the very first lines of the sequence. Just below the ruminative, slightly melancholy first line, Pound juxtaposes two expletives with the names of two muses—in other words, the profane with the divine—and English argot with mellifluous French: "Slut! "Bitch!" Truth and Calliope / Slanging each other sous les lauriers" (8: 28.2-3). Peter D'Epiro provides a useful gloss on the passage, wherein he argues that Pound's style of "deflated epic" is "built into the linguistic component:"

> Calling to mind the antitheses featured in the "gonads in organdy" line, this verse epitomizes the *concordia discors* achieved in these cantos: the slangy English phrase joined to the "poetic" French one—a slangy English phrase, moreover, whose chief element is the word "slang" itself, and a poetic French phrase whose referent is the laurel tree, sacred to Apollo and all his tribe.[13]

Despite the stark contrasts of diction, the tight graphic-phonetic composition of each line overlays the different registers to form a new, combinatory materiality. In line two of Canto VIII, the interlocking structure reveals the links between each insult with its speaker (see figure 4.1). In the subsequent line, the connections reveal the centrally positioned word "other" to be the bridge between the English and the French, which mirror and echo from either side. Furthermore, viewing the two lines together, the material features of the language follow a nearly identical pattern from left to right (see figure 4.2). The linguistic and thematic antitheses within these lines are effectively synthesized on the printed page.

In line three it is also evident that, beyond the harmony and visual pattern, select words were chosen for their connotations, an example of Pound's concept of *logopoeia*.[14] In addition to the Greek context D'Epiro mentions in his commentary, on a linguistic level "les lauriers" evokes the noun *laureate*, which both French and English share, as well as the English verb *laurel*. Neither Truth nor Calliope is named

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[13] D'Epiro, 70. The line "gonads in organdy" is quoted from one of Pound's early drafts, found in EPP Box 70 f. 3149.

[14] In Pound's review of *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse* (1917), he defines *logopoeia* as "poetry that is akin to nothing but language, which is the dance of the intelligence among words and ideas and modification of ideas and characters." *The Little Review* (March 1918) 57. A clearer reformulation was later offered in Pound's essay "How to Read": "Logopoeia, 'the dance of the intellect among words,' that is to say, it employs words not only for their direct meaning, but it takes count in a special way of habits of usage, of the context we *expect* to find with the word, its usual concomitants, of its known acceptances, and of ironical play. *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968) 25.

the *winner* of this conflict, and certainly neither muse is *honored* by the insults; it is only the page of Pound's work and its materiality that is *adorned* by the language(s) used. The two definitions of *slang*, as noun and verb, are also significant with regard to the composition of the lines:

> [*noun*] a type of language that consists of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than writing, and are typically restricted to a particular context or group of people.
>
> [*verb*] attack (someone) using abusive language.[15]

The slang that Pound chooses is, of course, ironic, in that it would not readily be associated with the context of the muses within which it is encountered. More importantly, though, is the fact that Pound has *written* down—complete with quotation marks—the informal and abusive language that, in his imagination, was supposedly spoken. The stylistic multiplicity of these two lines is a clear demonstration of Pound's contention that "[the meaning of a word] comes up with roots, with associations, with how and where the word is familiarly used, or where it has been used brilliantly or memorably."[16]

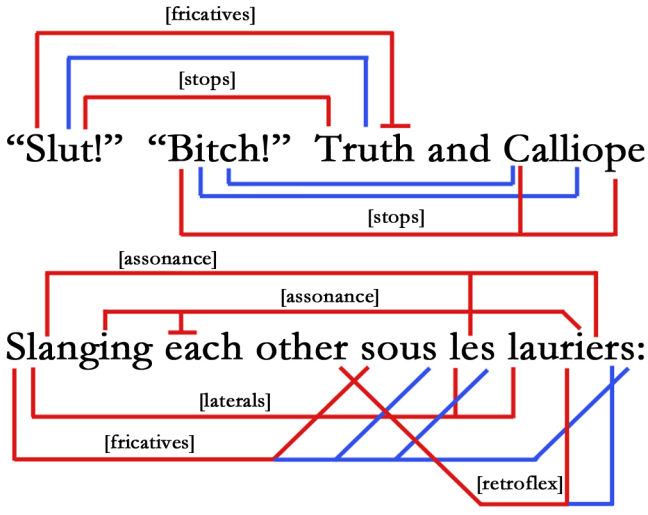

Figure 4.1: Diagram of the internal, visio-acoustic connections in lines 8:28.2-3. Red lines indicate acoustic links, while blue lines indicate those graphic repetitions that differ phonetically.[17]

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[15] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Third Edition, eds. Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[16] Pound, *ABC*, 36.

[17] With regard to the indications of assonance, specific terms for the types of vowels are not used due to the lack of perfect equivalence between the English and the French vowels. However, the

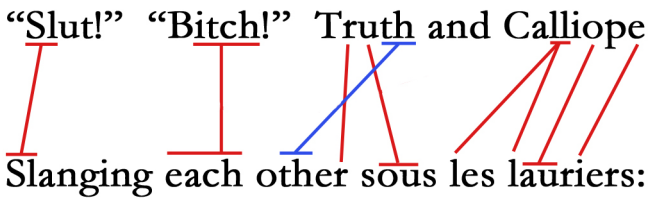

Figure 4.2: Diagram of the visio-acoustic connections across the same two lines.

Following these two lines, the poem again abruptly shifts in style. To English slang and poetic French are added two types of formal Latin: first, in the greeting "*Frater tamquam* / *Et compater carissime*" (28.6-7), the official and formulaic—a quality which Pound undercuts by inversing "tamquam" and "frater"[18]—and second, the scholarly, with the term *tergo* (28.7), which is italicized and inserted as if part of the transcription. In Italian, the Latin term—signifying "the back" or "the reverse side"—exists unchanged; therefore, placed after the opening Latin words of Sigismondo's letter, it acts as a bilingual transition to the three lines of fragmented Italian (28.8-10) that follow.[19] Being the addressee written on the letter's envelope, the fragments are paratextual, which relates to the style of the two short passages in English that bookend the Latin and Italian. In lines four and five, Sigismondo is introduced as the author of the ensuing letter in the form of an alphabetical index, replacing the standard comma between the last name and the first with a line break.[20]

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acoustic effect remains, notwithstanding the nuances of difference. It is also interesting to note that laterals and the retroflex (along with two semivowels) are sometimes grouped together as the *resonants*.

[18] In Pound's typescript of the entire letter, the greeting reads "Magnifice vir tanquam frater, et compater carissime." EPP Box 70 f. 3151. In addition to the inversion, the line in Canto VIII also diverges from Pound's typescript in using the alternate spelling "ta*m*quam." Either spelling is correct, and the two are essentially interchangeable; Lewis and Short's dictionary lists them together at the head of the entry for *tamquam*. However, "tamquam" more clearly represents the etymology of the word: *tam* ("in such a degree, as much, so, so much") + *quam* ("in what manner, to what degree, how greatly, how, how much"). The alternative "tanquam," on the other hand, better reflects the actual pronunciation of the word. *A New Latin Dictionary* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1891) 1835-39,1504.

Pound's typescript is copied from Yriarte's transcription (380-81); however, from the line's earliest inclusion in the poem (Box 71 f. 3153), prior to his research trip to the Italian archives, Pound chose the more philological of the two spellings, befitting the transcription's context of original sources.

[19] Given the context of palimpsest and erasure within which *tergo* is used in Canto VIII, it is interesting to note that the Latin word is also a conjugation (first person, singular, present indicative, active) of the verb *tergeo*, meaning "to rub off, to wipe off, wipe dry, wipe clean, cleanse" (Lewis and Short, 1858).

[20] This line break between "Malatesta" and "Sigismund" is present in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (Hours Press, 1930), and the current edition of *The Cantos*, despite the

On the other end are three more lines written in the same annotative style (28.11-13), commented on above. All things considered, in the course of the poem's first thirteen lines, Pound offers the reader four different languages and five different types of diction.[21]

Pound proceeds to print a reformatted English translation of Sigismondo's letter in full. It is in this document that the aforementioned role of translation in producing the multiple linguistic registers is first seen in the Malatesta Cantos. Additionally, the polyvocal aspect of the poem is continued, albeit infrequently, through the interventions of the historian/scholar regarding said translation, whereby the multilingual feature of the cantos is simultaneously maintained. Below is the first paragraph of Malatesta's letter in the original Italian (as copied by Pound), followed by a straightforward translation, and finally Pound's more liberal and stylistic rendering:

> Ho ricevuto vostra lettera et circha el facto de Messer Gianozzo nostro è stato a mi uno suo mandato et quale lo remandato in rietro spacciato in bohissima forma, et tanto più agionti li preghi et recordi vestri.
>
> ---
>
> I received your letter, and regarding our Sir Gianozzo, there was also one of his commissions to me, which was re-sent in excellent form, and, furthermore, with your added best wishes and remembrances.
>
> ---
>
> Letter received, and in the matter of our Messire Gianozio,
> One from him also, sent on in form and with all due dispatch,
> Having added your wishes and memoranda.[22]

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option/possibility in all three cases (given the remaining space of the page) to keep the two names on the same line.

[21] All of these are present in the rest of the sequence (though the French only returns once in Canto X (46.7). A sixth, onomatopoeic register, which is specifically animalistic, is also found in Canto IX. The acquisition of Pesaro by Alessandro Sforza, and of Fossombrone by Federico d'Urbino (34.29-35.9), is described by Pound (quoting Gaspare Broglio) as having been done "*bestialemente*." The twice-repeated qualification is reflected in Pound's vocabulary: "And old Sforza *bitched* us at Pesaro [...] through the *wangle* of the Illus. Sgr. Mr. Fedricho d'Orbino / Who worked the *wangle* with Galeaz / through the *wiggling* of Messer Francesco, / Who *waggled* it so that Galeaz should sell Pesaro." The earlier instance of Broglio's adverb, in Canto VIII, is also preceded by the same language: "With *wattle* Sforza against him / Sforza Francesco, *wattle-nose*" (32.3-4). Further on in Canto IX, entirely animalistic onomatopoeia is used in recounting Sigismondo's acquisition of the marble in Classe: "grnnh! rrnnh, pthg. / wheels, plaustra, oxen under night-shield" (36.22-23).

[22] EPP Box 70 f. 3151. Pound's typescript contains several errors in copying Yriarte's transcription: "rietro" should be "dietro," and "bohissima" should be "bonissima." Additionally, the quattrocento orthography and/or vocabulary frequently differ from modern Italian: circha/circa, facto/fatto (faccenda), remandato/rimandato, in dietro/indietro, bonissima/buonissima, agionti/aggiunti, li/gli, recordi/ricordi.

As Marjorie Perloff writes, Pound has taken "Sigismundo's perfectly straightforward" Italian and "turn[ed] it into business English [...] as if Rimini were dissolving into Wall Street."[23] Consequently, this letter to Sigismondo's "compater carissime" (most dear companion) begins with the terse "Letter received," and is followed by the professional jargon of "due dispatch" and "memoranda."

The businesslike diction turns more political and contractual in tone, over the next ten lines, as Malatesta addresses the arrangement of peace—"I shd. like to be party to it, as was promised me, / either as participant or adherent" (28.22-3)—and finances—"As for my service money, / Perhaps you and your father wd. draw it" (28.24-5). This register contrasts with the more fluid, colloquial style that emerges as Sigismondo shifts his attention from his affairs as condottiere to his creative and artistic endeavors. Pound's English translation, therefore, reflects Sigismondo's variety of interests through equally varied language. The written word embodies the "the factive personality."[24]

The shift is apparent in the first line of Malatesta's discussion of patronage by Pound's choice to leave "*Maestro di pentore*" in the original language, and to italicize it. As opposed to the somewhat stilted locutions prior, the reader glimpses the "natural" language of Malatesta. The familiar tone is most readily perceived in four instances in the remainder of the document (the Italian from Pound's original typescript of the letter is provided after the translation):[25]

Regarding Pound's translation, when these lines first appear in the poem (Box 71 f. 3153) Pound corrects by hand the spelling of the proper name to "Gianoz⟨z⟩o," which is retained in the Watson typescript. However, in the first revisions to the latter draft, at that point having visited the Italian archives, Pound crosses out the second /*z*/ and changes the spelling to "Gianozio." It may be that just as Yriarte had incorrectly identified the addressee of the letter as Lorenzo de' Medici (a.k.a. Lorenzo the Magnificent), he erroneously transcribed Gianozio's name.

There remains, nevertheless, some uncertainty regarding Gianozio. In their annotation, Edwards and Vasse identify Gianozio as *probably* being a chancellor to Sigismondo (78). Terrell's note contains the same doubt, but adds that Gianozio was "a dignitary (from Florence?) with whom Sigismondo was dealing" (37). Alternatively, D'Elia mentions the Florentine humanist Messer Giannozzo Manetti (1396-1459)—referred to by his first name in the biography of him by his contemporary Naldo Naldi—who, as ambassador to Florence, corresponded and met with Sigismondo on several occasions (120-21 and 137).

[23] Marjorie Perloff, "Pound and Rimbaud: The Retreat from Symbolism," *The Iowa Review* 6.1 (Winter 1975), 107-08.

[24] Pound *GK*, 194.

[25] EPP Box 70 f. 3151. "Danari" should read "denari," and Malatesta's "destolite" (as Yriarte notes) "distoliete."

1) "And it wd. be merely work chucked away" (28.31)—"perché seria un opera gettata via"
2) "And also because you write me that he needs cash" (29.6)—"et poi anche perché me scrivete gli bisogno danari"
3) "Unless you put him off it" (29.15)—"salvo se voi, compare, non lo destolite"
4) "So that he can works as he likes, / Or waste his time as he likes (29.17-18)—"affatigandose per suo piacere o no" (29.19-20)

With the exclusion of the third example, Pound's compositional technique regarding these colloquial or liberal translations was to append, via the voice of the historian/scholar, the relevant fragment of original Italian in parentheses. Over the course of the drafts, several revisions to these "translator notes" were made before arriving at the final version. As was discussed previously, Pound's translation of "gettata via" was initially based on Yriarte's erroneous transcription, and later corrected and annotated via the poet-translator's insertion of the original. The parenthetical Italian for Pound's slangy "cash" (bisogno denari), however, was cancelled in the same draft.[26] There were no modifications to Pound's more informal translation of "destolite" as "put him off it," as opposed to "dissuade him," nor to his expansion of "o no" to "Or waste his time as he likes."

Pound's translation of the Medici letter blends multiple linguistic registers, but in doing so also continues to overlap voices—Malatesta, Pound as poet-translator, and Pound as archival scholar—and integrate different languages. These instances of the poem's stylistic multiplicity emphasize, in particular, the process of translation: examination of the source text and language, transcription of the document, drafting a translation, revision of that draft, and annotation of the final version. Highlighting this process, in fact, draws attention to the more fundamental acts of reading and writing,

[26] The early draft in f. 3153 and the Watson typescript also include another parenthetical note that disappeared in the final typescript of the poem: "Wherever he likes (dove)," line 29.10 in the current edition of *The Cantos*. This example is not included in the above list, as the plain translation, contrary to the other examples, does not seem to warrant the inclusion of the Italian. Given the document's early mention of "arranging peace" (28.17), and Sigismondo's desire to "arrange" (29.2/7) for Piero della Francesca's financial and artistic comfort and enjoyment (i.e. a peaceful situation), Pound perhaps included "dove" as a visual homonym with the symbolic English word. Alternatively, Pound was also fond of the line "dove sta memora" ("where memory liveth," in Pound's translation) from Guido Cavalcanti's poem "Donna mi prega," which appears in Canto XXXVI (177.16), LXIII (353.13), and LXXVI (472.3/477.14). The Italian word in Canto VIII may have been a reference that later seemed all too subtle to be effective, hence its ultimate cancellation.

as each step, apart from the first, involves a combination of the two actions. Furthermore, an engagement with materiality is a part of both acts, and the reader of the Malatesta Cantos, in encountering the polyvocality that translation necessarily comprises, becomes uniquely aware of the material page that Pound wrote, and which he/she is reading. By incorporating the process of translation within the process of poetic composition, the page is experienced as a palimpsestic record, displaying the materialization, preservation, and transmission of language.

Pound's techniques of translation are developed further in the sequence, in particular with regard to how the multiple languages and voices are combined on the page in order to heighten the sense of the palimpsest's material layering. At one point in Canto VIII, Pound includes a passage of nineteen lines describing the newly wed Francesco Sforza and Bianca Visconti's visit to Rimini in 1442, and the pageantry of the reception. Though taken from Gaspare Broglio's work chronicling the life of Sigismondo, which Pound consulted at the Biblioteca Civica Gambalunga in Rimini, the passage is entirely in English but for one short, fragmented phrase in Italian, added from a second source. Tracing the forms of the phrase's inclusion in the poem from its initial use to its ultimate arrangement exemplifies the kind of interwoven language Pound intended for his text.

In the Beinecke's archive of Ezra Pound's papers, the Italian first appears in the reading notes that the poet had taken regarding the aforementioned event:

23. <u>May</u>.
pesca "di cui
godeva molto"[27]

The peculiarity of the note lies, first, in the fact that Pound did not follow it with a translation into English, as per his normal practice; even on this same manuscript page, other passages are accompanied by Pound's English. Secondly, the phrase is spatially arranged in three parts, in spite of ample space (before the vertical fold that divides the page in half) to continue the lines: *pesca*, the one word outside of the quotation marks; *di cui*, the first two words of the quotation; and *godeva molto*, on a separate line. To be sure, these are reading notes, not a draft of the poem; nevertheless, the tripartite arrangement of the Italian words prefigures the form Pound

[27] EPP Box 70 f. 3139.

would give them in the final version of Canto VIII, and perhaps attests to how he initially read the line.[28]

In the next folder, Pound's notes for the passage are more detailed, and as such he quotes a larger portion of Clementini's text:

=
various recreations
particularly "la pesca."
=
varie ricreazione] 2 days
e particolarmente |
della pesca. |
di cui godeva molto.][29]

Given the longer transcription and double-underline of "la pesca," this particular detail of the Sforza-Visconti visit evidently piqued Pound's interest. Demarcated by Pound's "connected equals sign"—characteristic of his autograph notes and drafts—this excerpt shows Pound attempting different compositional strategies for the line. His intention to include the phrase in the poem is also hinted at in his having translated several fragments of the original into English. Such a linguistic combination is precisely the form Pound was working towards, as the early typescript drafts of the canto demonstrate.

Exactly as in the note immediately above, the quotation appears unbroken and entirely in Italian on the first page of the "Drafts pre-Ital."[30] However, in the draft prior to the Watson typescript, Pound reverted to his very first reading note, only to then add the additional Italian by hand:

⟨to⟩ take ⟨two⟩ days for pleasure, ~~the~~ fishing boats drawn
⟨red-orange⟩
on the sand, ~~bright~~ sails in the creek's mouth,
"⟨di cui⟩ godeva molto," as they said of Frank Sforza,
⟨varie ricreazione e particolarmente della pesca.⟩[31]

[28] Pound's notes include his bibliographic source. The quote was taken from the section on Sigismondo Pandolfo in Cesare Clementini's *Raccolto istorico della fondazione di Rimino e dell' origine e vite de' Malatesti,* Vol. II (Rimini, 1617): "[...] e riposta si due giorni, con varie ricreazioni, e particolarmente della pesca, di cui godeva molto [...] (325).

[29] EPP Box 70 f. 3140.

[30] EPP Box 70 f. 3145.

[31] EPP Box 70 f. 3153.

In this draft, the combination of languages diverges from Pound's typical practice of providing an English translation before or after the quotation in the original language, as in the Medici letter, for example. Nonetheless, it is evident that his intention to include Clementini's Italian meant deciding how to satisfactorily fragment the quotation within the English.

Pound rearranged the Italian for the Watson typescript, editing it down to the fewest words possible in the manner of Basil Bunting's epigrammatic "Dichten = condensare," quoted in Pound's *ABC of Reading*:[32]

> but here for two days of pleasure, fishing boats
> Drawn on the sand, red-orange sails in the creek's mouth,
> "La pesca, di cui godeva molto," as they said of
> Frank Sforza.[33]

As a result of the revision, Pound fabricates a quotation, attributing it to the anonymous "they" as if having been spoken, as opposed to Clementini and so as something written. His poetic economy is carried to the level of the individual letter, fragmenting the original phrase even to the extent of fracturing a word: ~~con varie ricreazioni, e particolarmente del~~*la pesca, di cui godeva molto*. At this point Pound had settled on the exact wording he wished to include, but the arrangement in this draft detaches one language from the other, despite the two being part of the same sentence. As the last phrase in the Sforza-Visconti passage, spatially the Italian seems almost appended to the text, instead of integrated within it. Furthermore, the quotation marks immediately set the words apart—rather than *composed*, they are *cited*, drawn from an *external* source. In his revisions to the Watson typescript, Pound would emend the line in order to resolve both issues.

It is the position of the Italian phrase that is first modified in the initial corrections and alterations made to the draft. Pound encircled the entire quotation with the attribution tag, and drew an arrow to where he intended to move it. Along with several other changes, the typescript would then read: "~~but~~ ⟨and⟩ here for two days of pleasure, 'La pesca, di cui godeva molto,' as they said of Frank Sforza, ~~fishing~~

[32] The equation may be translated as "To write poetry is to condense;" or as Pound himself writes, the "idea of poetry as concentration." *ABC*, 36.
[33] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

boats drawn ⟨up⟩on the sand [...]."[34] Although the line is consequently more fully integrated into Pound's English, as a signaled, uninterrupted quotation its insertion does not convey a sense of written languages materially interwoven on the page. In the final typescript, however, Pound did not maintain the shift. Instead, he broke the quotation into two parts, thus alternating back and forth from English to Italian. The previously cancelled "fishing" is restored, not as an adjective, but as an intervening translation of "la pesca." Pound also discarded the attribution tag; however, based on his handwritten revisions, he apparently realized the ambiguity of the untagged quotation and added a short clause, which also translates some of the Italian:

> For two days' pleasure, mostly "la pesca," fishing,
> Di cui ⟨+ which he Francesco⟩ godeva molto.
> ⟨to the war southward⟩
> ⟨in which that time, he received an excellent hiding.⟩[35]

With the addition, Pound further fragmented the Italian by interrupting the quotation a second time. The latter portion of the line is also no longer signaled as a quotation at all. Consequently, even the quotation marks around "la pesca" seem not to indicate citation or speech, but that the "word or phrase is regarded as slang or jargon, or is being discussed rather than used within the sentence."[36] Moreover, Pound's choice to italicize the words, which he indicated on his typewriter by underlining them, draws further attention to their materialization as *script*. The visual distinction gives the impression of one text coalesced into the materiality of another. Indeed, as a result of this series of progressive changes from inserted quotation to interwoven verse, the passage appears as a bilingual palimpsest, where Clementini's Italian is overlaid with Pound's English. The lines, therefore, also seem to be in the very *process* of translation—the reader glimpses one language in the midst of becoming another.

By the final canto in the sequence the reader has, in theory, become accustomed to the poems' more or less constant fluctuation between English, Italian, and Latin, in Pound's attempt to progressively blend the languages. Accordingly, in Pound's chronicle of Sigismondo's defeat of the papal troops in July 1461 at the battle of Nidastore, the Homeric list of Malatesta's officers is followed by a series of Anglo-

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[34] EPP Box 71 f. 3156.
[35] EPP Box 71 f. 3165.
[36] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.

Italian numerical details. Pound first establishes a pattern of giving one figure in English then a second, or the same, in Italian. All of these numbers are written out except for a single Arabic numeral:

> And the papishes were three thousand on horses, dilly cavalli tre milia,
> And a thousand on foot,
> And the Lord Sigismundo had but mille tre cento cavalli
> And hardly 500 fanti (and one spingard)[37]

Pound's general practice throughout the Malatesta Cantos is to print words and phrases in Italian or Latin—proper nouns aside—in italics. In the above passage, the reader encounters one of the rare exceptions.[38] Visually, then, the lines make no distinction between the two languages. This is reinforced by Pound's choices in communicating the numbers. First, due to the order, the English translation "*three thousand* on horses" is itself re-translated back into (the original) Italian "cavalli *tre milia*." The next two lines mirror these figures, following the same linguistic pattern: "a *thousand* on foot," then "*mille tre cento* cavalli." However, in the last line, the Arabic numeral "*500* fanti" (infantrymen) is an anomaly in the pattern; given the alternation between the two languages, and being framed between the aforementioned Italian and the English "*one* spingard," there is no discernible manner of determining whether *500* is to be vocalized as "five hundred" or "cinquecento." The numeral thereby remains, in a certain sense, exclusively *written*—a grapheme that is equally the Italian and the English it unifies. The five-line passage implies that the linguistic multiplicity established at the start of the sequence has paradoxically become, by the last canto, a singularity on the page.

INDEXING QUOTATIONS

This type of progressive unification by means of the printed page is an aspect of the poem that stems from Pound's attention to the material production of language.

[37] Pound, *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, 42. The earlier publication is cited here due to the difference in lineation, whereby the spatial arrangement more clearly highlights the juxtaposition between the papal army and Sigismondo's. In the New Directions edition "dilly cavalli tre milia" is a line unto itself (11: 48.14).

[38] The first two are found in the Classe episode in Canto IX: "abbazia" (36.11) and "plaustra" (36.23). A third, also in Canto IX, is in the post-bag letter from Sallustio: "(ronzino baiectino)" (39.21). In Canto X, "chiexa" (44.31/45.2) is not italicized, nor the Latin "Sigismund Imperator, Rex Proditorum" (46.2). In Canto XI, "chiexa" is again in standard print (49.30), as is "Vogliamo" (50.27).

The Malatesta Cantos are consistently engaged with the process by which the diverse languages and "disembodied" voices of historical figures may be concretized and collaged. The sequence begins with Pound and Eliot *composing*, with Truth and Calliope *recorded*, with Sigismondo *quoted*, with the soldier-narrator *documenting*, and with the textual scholar *noting*. In aiming to allow history to "speak" and "speak back," the visio-spatial renderings of Pound's sources—in combination with his own original writing—constitute what Pound called "A speech more real than speech, with the bare nerve in it."[39] This line, from an early draft of the Malatesta Cantos, later made its way into an early draft of Canto XII, revised in a manner that makes its connection to the *material* structure of the Malatesta sequence all the more evident: "A speech more real than speech, / the form cut into the stone."[40] Of course, a great deal of the language in cantos VIII-XI is not *speech* per se, but is drawn from textual sources. Cutting the form of speech into that of stone, or *inscription*—literally, "to write *into,*" from its Latin roots—involves the realization of language through the materiality of the medium (in Pound's case, the page). As the critic Olga Nikolova writes, Pound's interest in *The Cantos* "with how to look at drawing/writing, that is, how to read [...] begins with an awareness of the process (intellectual, mechanical, and physical) of writing."[41] Therefore, crucial to a reading of the sequence is an understanding of how the act of quotation—that is to say, the selection and reproduction of language, with or without manipulation—which Pound's process of writing comprises, actually *looks* on the page.

Quotation as composition, in and of itself, is complex. But the issues that it raises regarding textuality and materiality are further complicated by the fact that Pound, although there are discernible tendencies, has no fixed, stable practice when it comes to signaling quotation. Considering the variability of his method, it would be more accurate to speak of *appropriated*, rather than *quoted*, source texts. The table in figure 4.3 shows four passages culled from different historical works, each presented visually in contrasting ways. The methodology of citation in the poems is a system

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[39] EPP Box 70 f. 3147.

[40] Quoted in Ronald Bush, "Excavating the Ideological Faultlines of Modernism: Editing Ezra Pound's *Cantos*," *Representing Modernist Texts: Editing as Interpretation*, ed. George Bornstein (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991) 69. About the line Bush argues, "The epigram formulates Pound's aspirations toward prelinguistic wholeness in the form of a medium in which words are at one with things [...]."

[41] Olga Nikolova, "Ezra Pound's Cantos De Luxe Preamble," *Modernism/modernity* 15.1 (January 2008) 172.

that consistently undercuts its own procedures, by which the signification of visual markers, and the reader's dependence on them, are challenged.

Figure 4.3: Variations in the Visual Presentation of Appropriated Text in the Malatesta Cantos

Typography	*Bibliographic Reference*	*Passage in* **The Cantos**	*Passage in the Source Text*
Italics within quotation marks	Canto X (42.24-5)	*Et "anno messo a saccho el signor Sigismundo"*	"Da Siena ci è come anno messo a saccho el signor Sigismondo, et lui s'è fuggito sulli terreni nostri con poche genti." (Luciano Banchi, "La Guerra de' Senesi col conte di Pitigliano," *Archivio storico italiano*, Ser. 4, Vol. 3 (1879), 188 n. 3).
Italics without quotation marks	Canto X (47.7-8) and Canto XI (48.1-2)	*E gradment li antichi cavaler romanj davano fed a quisti annutii*	"Or considerate se lla victoria è nostra – che iera sera un'aquila gientile se posò sull cima del nostro padiglione; grandemente li antichi e valenti romani davano grandissima fede a questi annuntii chiamati agurii [...]." (Carlo Tonini, *Rimini nella signoria de' Malatesti*, Vol. 5, 283; Pound's source was Broglio, *Cronaca*, 272-4).
Standard citation: print within quotation marks	Canto IX (34.29-35.9)	And old Sforza bitched us at Pesaro; *(sic)*, March the 16th: "that Messire Alessandro Sforza is become lord of Pesaro through the wangle of the Illus. Sgr. Mr. Federicho d'Orbino, Who worked the wangle with Galeaz through the wiggling of Messer Francesco Who waggled it so that Galeaz should sell Pesaro to Alex and Fossembrone to Feddy; [...] Malatesta, should have Pesaro"	"[...] el 1444, al 16 di marzo, lo Illo Sgr. Mes Alisandro Sforza dovento Sgr. d pesaro per mezentia delo Illº Sgr mess Fedricho conte d orbino, il quale tramo dicta facenda col Sgr Galiazzo per mozentia dello Illº mess Francisco, la quale trama fo facto chl Sgr. Galiazzo vend pesaro al Sgr. miss Alexandro e la citta d fossanbrone al Sgr. miss fedricho [...]." (Broglio, *Cronaca*, 191).
Un-signaled citation: print without quotation marks	Canto XI (52.1-5)	And one day he said: Henry, you can have it, On condition, you can have it: for four months You'll stand any reasonable joke that I play on you, And you can joke back provided you don't get too ornry.	"Quod ipse Enricus debeat et teneatur per quatuor menses prossime futuros acedere cum prefato Magnifico domino ad Aucumpaiandum (?) ad Requisitionem ipsius Magnifici domini et equo animo supportare omnes nugas et omnia scripza fienda per ipsum Magnificum dominum in rebus et persona ipsius Enrici que sint tamen suportabilia nec ex ipsis altercari nec molestus esse nec Indignationem aliquam suscipere ex ipsis nugis et scripzis Dans ipse Magnificus dominus dicto Enricho etiam plenam licentiam nugandi et scrizandi cum ipso Magnifico domino ac promictens non molestam facere (?) aliquam nugam sive scrizum fiendos contra ipsum Enricum contra donationem suam Que sint tamen suportabilia et Recipienda." (Carlo Grigioni, "Un Capriccio di Sigismondo Malatesta," *Arte e Storia*, 40).

Pound's use of italics has been addressed previously, and as a technique for signaling appropriated text, is an unconventional feature of Pound's work. A discussion of the visual materiality of quotation hinges, first and foremost, on the use of standard punctuation; however, in the Malatesta Cantos the use of quotation marks is complicated not only by the different functions of the visual indicator itself, but also, and more significantly, due to Pound's frequent divergence from standard practice. His varied use of quotation marks—in conjunction with how he often introduces and frames the source text—results in a persistent ambiguity as to what exactly they signify. An examination of the functions and interpretations of the punctuation throughout the text, in order to demonstrate the underlying ideas regarding language and textuality, may be broken down as follows:

1) Special use of quotation marks around a term or phrase in order to elicit attention, identify it as ironic, imply doubt, or otherwise comment on the language itself in addition to its use within a sentence.
2) Artistic license taken for the sake of the action of the event(s) in question, or simply for the poem itself; i.e. those moments in the text when Pound has fabricated a quotation (primarily dialogue) to recount, dramatize, or illustrate a point.
3) Standard use indicating the language was taken from a source text. This use may be further broken down into three subcategories:
    a. The passage quotes the language of the source text's author.
    b. The passage quotes reported speech found in the source text.
    c. The passage quotes a textual citation found in the source text.

The first use only rarely occurs in the sequence, and is rather easily identified as highlighting the language as opposed to pointing to a source text.[42] With regard to the second use of artistic license, given the evident historical framework of the poems—hence, an awareness that the individuals referred to in the text are not Pound's own fictional characters—the reader would certainly not immediately assume that Pound had invented the quotation himself. Ironically, however, the first lines in

[42] Canto IX: "And stole that marble in Classe, 'stole' that is" (36.6); "And some more of it to the effect that / he 'lived and ruled'" (41.3). Canto X: "And against us we had 'this Æneas' and young Ferdinando" (46.13). Canto XI: "Ready to murder fatty Barbo, 'Formosus'" (51.2); "Little fat squab 'Formosus'" (51.18).

the sequence contain an example of precisely this use of quotation marks, and one that is easily recognizable as such; namely, Truth and Calliope's exchange of "Slut!" and "Bitch!" Due to the documentary aspect of the poems, and the factual overtones that accompany it, this technique of Pound's renders the typically inconspicuous punctuation especially ambiguous. In Canto IX, for example, Pound writes:

> And all you can say is, anyways,
> that he Sigismundo called a town council
> And Valturio said "as well for a sheep as a lamb" (10: 35.16-18)

Although Pound's source for these lines is again *Raccolto istorico* by the Riminese historian Clementini, the colloquialism he attributes to Roberto Valturio is entirely his own making. To be sure, Pound's invented idiom does convey the general sense of what actually took place; however, the quoted words are neither a translation of those spoken by Valturio, nor of those written by Clementini.[43] This type of quotation destabilizes the signification of the punctuation and its reliability as a visual marker, effectively blurring the boundaries between Pound's words and those of the poems' historical sources. This effect is reinforced by those moments in the text when the markers are absent from a passage whose construction would lead one to expect them. As seen in the fourth example given in figure 4.3, appropriated lines of this type are introduced by an attribution tag, which is followed by a colon and/or line break, and are written in the first person, as would a direct quotation.[44] Thus Pound explicitly informs the reader that the words originate elsewhere, while visually claiming them as his own composition. When Pound recounts Platina's (Bartolomeo Sacchi) response to questions concerning his conversations with Sigismondo, the multiple techniques for citation, which are combined in the same passage, remind the reader that Platina *said*, and Pound *wrote*:

> And Platina said afterwards,
> when they jailed him

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[43] In Clementini's work, the passage describing the episode is entirely explanatory, without any quotations included (*Raccolto istorico*, vol 2, 355). A very similar example is found in Canto VIII (31.30-34): "And they shut it before they open the next gate [at Ancona], and he says: / 'Now you have me, / Caught like a hen in a coop.' / And the captain of the watch says: 'Yes Messire Sigismundo, / But we want this town for ourselves.'" Though the source is unidentified, the same colloquial tone suggests that these lines also are not direct quotation, but composed by Pound himself as dramatization.

[44] For additional examples, see Canto X (46.24-26, 47.1-2, 47.6-11), and Canto XI (49.27-29, 50.4-9, 50.26-29).

And the Accademia Romana, for singing to Zeus in the catacombs
Yes, I saw him when he was down here,
Ready to murder fatty Barbo, "Formosus,"
And they want to know what we talked about?
"*de litteris et de armis, praestanibusque ingeniis*,
Both of ancient times and our own; books, arms,
And men of unusual genius,
Both of ancient times and our own, in short the usual subjects
Of conversation between intelligent men."

(11: 50.30-51.8)[45]

After the attribution tag, Platina "speaks" in the first person for three lines that are not enclosed in quotation marks. They are followed, however, by one signaled quotation that includes the original Latin phrase printed in italics, Pound's English translation, and Pound's commentary, included as if also spoken by Platina. As Pound does elsewhere in the Malatesta Cantos (e.g. 10: 42.3-8),[46] a single set of quotation marks may contain a true quotation, a fabricated quotation adapted from the source text's summation of the event, and even Pound's own supplementary words. In such instances the punctuation deviates from its conventional, expected signification to instead imply the process of written language's appropriation, and the issues of authorship that such an act inevitably elicits.

Even when the poems' quotation marks follow standard usage (the third item in the list above), the three subcategories of that function are frequently confounded. Though the reader may be aware that the language was taken from an historical text, he/she cannot be certain—short of consulting said source—of its exact nature, nor who originally produced it. This is often a consequence of Pound intentionally highlighting the ambiguity of quotation marks by preceding textual citations with speech tags (i.e "he *said*..."); in fact, only rarely does the poet introduce a signaled quotation by stating explicitly that it was written.[47] The following passages from

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[45] The entire Latin response is "De literis et de armis, de praestantibus ingeniis tum veterum tum nostrorum hominum." Ludwig Friedrich August von Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, vol. 2 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herer'sche Verlagshandlung, 1889) 384.

[46] The opening to the quotation ("Siggy darlint") was added by Pound himself, while the rest of the passage quotes *both* Luciano Banchi and Aldobrandino Orsini (Count of Pitigliano) in Luciano Banchi's "La Guerra de' Senesi col conte di Pitigliano," *Archivio storico italiano*, ser. 4, vol. 3. (1879): 184-97. See Canto X (42.28-9).

[47] Examples of the former case include: "[...] (as Broglio says '*bestialemente*')" (8: 32.7), "As old bladder said '*rem eorum saluavit*'" (9: 35.20), "And he said: / '*Caro mio*, I can not receive you'" (10: 43.1-2), and "And that nick-nosed s.o.b. Feddy Urbino / Said: '*Par che è fuor di questo... Sigis... mundo*'" (11: 49.5-6).

Canto IX (on the same topic, but split apart) are illustrative in how they are composed of dramatic adaptation, translation, reported speech, written language, and multiple sources:

> And he talked it over with Feddy; and Feddy said "Pesaro"
> And old Foscari wrote "*Caro mio*,
> "If we split with Francesco you can have it
> "And we'll help you in every way possible."
> . . . . . .
> And Feddy finally said "I am coming!...
> ... to help Alessandro."
> And he said: "This time Mister Feddy has done it."
> He said: "Broglio, I'm the goat. This time
> Mr. Feddy has done it (*m'l'a calata*)."
>
> (9: 35.34-36.3/37.1-5)

Drawing from Luigi Tonini's *Storia di Rimini* and Giovanni Soranzo's article "Un fallito tentativo di Sigismondo Pandolpho Malatesta su Pesaro," the history of the words themselves—whether originally spoken or written—is conveyed through a varied use of citation, by which the language first became historical record, and then poetic composition. The use of quotation marks points to the production of language and to its subsequent materialization, thereby focusing attention on the physical act of writing as an effective means of preservation and transmission. Playing an integral, though complex, role in the reception and interpretation of history, culture, and knowledge, Pound suggests that textual composition of any genre—even in the absence of visual markers—is, to some extent, quotation.

WEIGHING WORDS

The extensive research and incorporation of archival manuscripts and historical texts arises from Pound's "faith that the dead past can be resurrected through and in the written word."[48] To this one might add that much of the Malatesta Cantos resurrects and incorporates the past *of* the written word. The primacy of writing as an evolving process is foregrounded again and again throughout the sequence, where the historical action of the poems is repeatedly communicated through, or even

Examples of the latter case, apart from the post-bag letters, and excluding the one cited above, include: "As Filippo Strozzi wrote Zan Lottieri, then in Naples, / 'I think they'll let him through at Campiglia'" (10: 42.26-27), and "And the castelan of Montefiore wrote down, / 'You'd better keep him out of the district'" (11: 51.26-27).

[48] Michael F. Harper, "Truth and Calliope: Ezra Pound's Malatesta," *PMLA* 96 (January 1981) 99.

contingent on, the medium of text. Echoing Pound's comment that "The book shd. be a ball of light in one's hand,"[49] the critic Fred Moramarco states, "Pound seems to be reminding us that the printed word in these dusty books and brittle pages is a catalyst that reveals and can reawaken the emotions and intrigues that motivated the life of a distant time."[50] As the poet traces the writings of the various historical figures, their sensibilities and characters are distilled from the content, style, and tone of the language therein. Furthermore, while the written word may "reawaken the emotions and the intrigues" of the quattrocento, it consistently *is* the intrigue itself. The fundamental role that the printed word plays in the Malatesta sequence demonstrates the efficacy of the physical act of writing to effectuate change, the significance of its function within tradition, and the stability and durability of text throughout history.

Paired with the predominance of the written word, a recurrent theme in cantos VIII-XI is, inversely, the ineffectiveness of the transient, spoken word. While the former is linked to action, the latter is often framed within a sense of incapability or inutility. The first 125 lines of the opening canto, roughly three-quarters of the poem, are almost entirely dedicated to written documents:

> A letter (1449) from Sigismondo to Giovanni de' Medici concerning the Tempio, amongst other affairs.
> ⇒
> A written contract (1452) between Sigismondo and Agnola della Stufa ratifying the former's condotta with the Florentines.
> ⇒
> A reworked excerpt from a poem written (to Pound's knowledge) by Sigismondo to Isotta degli Atti.
> ⇒
> A letter (1449) from Sigismondo to Cosimo de' Medici regarding the former's condotta with Venice.
> ⇒
> An adaptation of the text describing Sforza and Visconti's wedding visit to Rimini in Cesare Clementini's work.

In these documents Sigismondo is the active and creative patron, condottiere, and ruler. Contrarily, the first "speaking" incident, given shortly thereafter in a dramatization of Sigismondo being penned in between the gates at Ancona, conveys a lack of activity. The first words that Malatesta speaks express his inability to take any action, either offensive or defensive: "And they shut it before they open the next gate,

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[49] Pound, *GK*, 55.
[50] Fred Moramarco, "The Malatesta Cantos," *Mosaic* 12.1 (1978) 115.

and he says: / 'Now you have me, / Caught like a hen in a coop'" (8: 31.30-32). Nine lines later, when Broglio "says '*bestialemente*,'" the adverb resonates with Sigismondo's speaking of himself not as a man on the move, but as a trapped animal. The same sentiment is picked up when Malatesta is next made to speak—for the only time—in Canto IX: "He said: 'Broglio, I'm the goat. This time / Mr. Feddy has done it (*m'l'a calata*)'" (9: 37.4-5). Once again, his words are tied to inaction, and indeed failure, as he was forced to abandon the attack to conquer Pesaro in 1450 and return to Rimini.

Despite the subtlety of these initial examples of the contrast between the written and the spoken word, its development in the post-bag letters does much to clarify the idea. In addition to the explicit and undisguised context of written language in this section of the series, several of the documents address the inefficacy of speech, often making a point of mentioning the recourse to writing. Thus, while conversations or exchanges between members of Sigismondo's court are frequently the subject of the letters, often they are so precisely for having failed to achieve anything.

The second letter in the series ends with a postscript informing Malatesta that Maestro Alvise deems it necessary to "*talk* to mister Albert" in order to clarify elements of the Tempio's design. It would seem, then, that in this case a written exchange was insufficient, and only by speaking of the matter will the issue be resolved. However, the opinion is challenged—if not controverted—by the artful errors of Pound's homophonous substitutions: "so as I can *no* / what he thinks about it *rite*" (9: 38.4-5). The insinuation is that Alvise will *not know* what Alberti thinks, or, at the very least, that he will *not* get it *right*.

Much more direct on the matter of writing versus speaking is the letter from Isotta's secretary, "D. of M." The letter makes clear the futility of the two women having gone to talk with Sr. Galeazzo's daughter: "[...] for all the good that did [...]" (9: 38.17). It is important to note that such an assessment is not found in the original document. Its insertion by Pound is in keeping with the contrast between written and spoken language, with the priority assigned to the former, which he carries through the sequence as a whole.[51] Indeed, the attempt to resolve the issue was not necessarily accomplished, but rather "Madame Ixotta" simply "exhausted the matter" (9: 38.19-

[51] Yriarte's transcription simply reads: "Ces jours-ci nous nous sommes rendus chez cette fille, et en somme elle a tout nié et nous a fait bon visage" [In recent days we visited that girl, and in short, she denied everything and put on a brave face] (396-97).

20). Pound re-emphasizes the ineffectiveness of mere talk by including the Italian phrase, and the obvious implication therein: "*Me pare che avea decto hogni chossia*" (It seems to me that she has *said* everything [that one could say]).[52]

The letter does impart a sense that the issue has, nonetheless, been closed; however, this is due more to the fact that the events were put down in writing and communicated to Sigismondo. As the secretary begins the letter, "Madame Isotta has had me *write* today about [the matter]" (9: 38.14, emphasis added), and the intentionality of Isotta's request lends a degree of conclusiveness to the act of writing, and by extension to the resultant text. As is re-encountered later in the sequence, the materialization of language on the page is equated with the realization of objectives.

The very same ideas are expressed in even more explicit terms by Lunarda da Palla in the subsequent document, which is also written (in part) on Isotta's behalf. The very reason Palla writes to Sigismondo is precisely that his *verbal* requests to Giorgio di Ranbutino ("Georgio Rambottom") have been unsuccessful in producing any action. Pound rather liberally translates the end of Palla's letter in order that it twice repeat, nearly verbatim, the same negative comment about prior efforts that Pound added to the secretary's message:

> [...] I have already told him a lot of times, *for all the good that does*, so I am writing to your lordship in the matter I have done all that I can, *for all the good that does* as noboddy hear can do anything without you.
>
> (9: 39.2-6, emphasis added)[53]

Moreover, by the same method used in the Alvise letter, Pound intentionally introduces textual errors into his translation to further stress the point. The letter implies (via the pun) that as "no one here can hear," verbal communication is utterly

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[52] In the earliest draft of the post-bag letters Pound handwrote the Italian phrase next to two different translations: "I think Isotta said about all there was to said [*sic*] / in the matter," and just below, "I think Isotta has about exhausted the subject / very nearly / about all one cd. say. EPP Box 70 f. 3146. From the facsimile of the document printed in Yriarte (158), though the handwriting is difficult to decipher, it does not appear that the Italian Pound included was in the original. Yriarte's French translation—which Pound's early drafts followed—reads, "Isotta, Monseigneur, selon moi, lui a dit tout ce qu'on pouvait lui dire."

[53] The relevant passage in Yriarte's transcription, upon which Pound's initial drafts were based—and which underwent only minimal revision—reads (all words as is): "[...] et io gli l'o recordato più volti: loro mi paga di ben farimo, ma non se ni fa percio nienti: a di la faccenda che me scrissi la vostra Signioria io ci o bona cura quanto a mi è possibili et fiù aqui non o possudo videri nienti, si ch'io n'aviso la vostra S. [...]" (446).

ineffectual, and thus the spoken word is again associated with a lack of action or accomplishment.[54]

At the same time, just as in the secretary/Isotta's letter, the primacy of the written word is conveyed in Palla's decision to put pen to paper: "so I am *writing* / to your lordship in the matter." To be sure, it is Sigismondo himself who is portrayed as the catalyst of change, and Palla essentially restates in more direct terms the secretary's statement that without Malatesta they are all "drifting without a rudder" (9: 38.23). Nevertheless, the goal of the letter, stated several lines earlier, is in fact to remind Sigismondo "to *write* to Georgio Rambottom or to his boss" (9: 38.33, emphasis added). Thus, while speaking is regarded as a futile effort, writing—and in particular that of Sigismondo—is presented as an effective method for making progress. In the specific context of this document, it is through the medium of text that the wall in the garden will be rebuilt; in other words, writing is constructive.

In the second half of the sequence, as Malatesta's political troubles accumulate and intensify, the subject of the written word is conceptually maintained, but functionally turns to Pius II and the role of his writings in Sigismondo's ultimate decline. Pound nonetheless precedes the shift in focus with another failed attempt at resolution and action through speech alone. As in the previous two cantos, Sigismondo's spoken words are bound up in conflict, and again recall (though in a different sense) Broglio's "bestialemente:"

> And Borso had the pair of them up to Bel Fiore,
> The pair of them, Sigismundo and Federico Urbino,
> . . . . . .
> For all the good that did:
> "*Te cavero la budella del corpo!"*
> *El conte levatosi:*
> *"Io te cavero la corata a te!"* (10: 43.9-17)[55]

While the circumstances and outcome of these lines more or less replicate the earlier examples, this passage is noteworthy for the position it occupies, acting as a bridge between Malatesta's post-bag letters and Pius II's written condemnations. Pound prefaces the Italian insults by repeating for a fourth time the statement the post-bag

[54] As mentioned earlier, in Pound's first draft of this letter, the phrase read, "as nobody can do anything here without you." EPP Box 70 f. 3146.

[55] The Italian reads: "'I'll cut your guts out!' / The count stood up: / 'I'll cut your heart out!'"

section tied to the futility of verbal exchanges. The language of those documents—in which Sigismondo is portrayed as one who "lived and ruled" (9: 41.3)—is thereby juxtaposed to the unavailing invectives spoken due to a loss of composure. At the same time, the violent and abusive tone of the language also points forward to Pius II and Andrea del Benzi's inflammatory oration. Therefore, the passage intentionally invites the reader to consider the image of Sigismondo offered in the post-bag letters with the conflicting view given in the papacy's speech. In Canto X, the latter is presented as intrinsically false, "manifest[ing] a lack of discrimination, the absence of an ordering moral intelligence and sensibility" and "trying to establish guilt by repetition and rhetorical elaboration."[56] These aspects of the papacy's verbiage is contrasted to the candidness and familiarity of Sigismondo's letters, and it is clear that for Pound the language of Pius and Benzi's speech is only effective insofar as it demonstrates the dishonesty of their own characters.

As Malatesta's story continues to unfold, the written language of Pius II punctuates, frames, or precipitates the development. The first occurrence is the passage from the papal bull, *Discipula veritatis*, describing Sigismondo's excommunication and burning in effigy. As it is printed in the poem, the permanence conveyed by the materiality of the language decisively monumentalizes the condemnation. The language itself communicates the primacy of the written word, which is relied upon as a means of clarification and confirmation:

> [...] NEM QUEM TAMEN IMAGO FALLERET,
> ET SCRIPTURA EX ORE PRODIIT, QUAE DICERET:
>
> ---
>
> Yet, that none mistake the image [for Sigismondo himself],
> An inscription came from its mouth, which stated:
> (10: 43.34-44.1)

The "speech" of the figure is materialized in order that the image of the written word establish the verity of the representation. The concrete typography in which Pound reproduces the passage implies that its significance with regard to Sigismondo's story is as much, or more, about the fact that what is expressed was *written* and *read*—"SCRIPTURAM / MULTI LEGERUNT" (10: 44.6-7)—than the information itself.

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[56] Harper, 96-97.

Canto X concludes with Sigismondo speaking for a second time in the poem, here to his soldiers before the battle of Nidastore on 2 July 1461. Contrary to previous instances, this speech *is* efficacious: the reader is told in the opening to Canto XI that Sigismondo's army "beat the papishes and fought / them back" and "broke them." (11: 48:18-23). However, the triumph is short-lived and quickly countered in the poem by Malatesta's final defeat—"But we got it next August" (11: 48.29). That defeat is reinforced, in particular, by more papal writings, of which the goal to ruin Sigismondo ultimately proved successful. First, Pound includes a list of towns to be forfeited under the written terms of "de mos' bloody rottenes' peace" imposed by Pius II (11: 49.14-23). Second, under Pius's successor Paul II, the papal inscription in the Malatestan houses in Fano is printed, whose typography (as previously analyzed) recalls the effigy passage, thereby re-emphasizing the authority and effectiveness of language materialized in writing. Third, and most significantly, while providing details from the conditions stipulated by Paul II, Pound explicitly refers to the physical act of writing, and follows it with a collated fragment of the Latin from the original document (see figure 4.4). In these lines, the steps of Pound's research and composition—i.e. the source text is (1) acquired, (2) read, (3) noted, (4) translated or not, (5) condensed and/or revised, and (6) arranged and typed on the page—are reorganized to instead recreate the process of materialization. Thus, in the first two lines the terms of the agreement are determined, then the language is to be set down in writing, and finally the exact wording is fixed on the page. The progression moves from abstraction to concretization, with the pivotal line being Pound's remark—not on the language's content, but on its form—in the third line. As in the Latin effigy passage in Canto X, Pound's arrangement suggests that the effect, and effectiveness, of the pronouncement is contingent on its being written "down on paper."

The Malatesta Cantos appropriate passages like the writs in Fano and Paul II's peace agreement as linguistic events, the very materiality of which had an impact on the characters involved, and influenced historical development. The document drafted by the papacy regarding Sigismondo's future activities has remained long after the condottiere's actions ceased entirely upon his death; likewise, the papal inscription in Fano continues to declare what was formerly of the Malatestas long after the dynasty's decline. The materiality of the written word, then, may also affect contemporary interpretations (and re-interpretations) of history, which take into

account the significance of such linguistic events. Pound illustrates in these poems that while an archival manuscript or codex may be (or have been) fragmented, erased, distorted, misused, copied or copied over, the palimpsest that is the historical record is ultimately what lasts and continues to outlast.

In primis prefatus **Illustris Dnûs Sigiſmundus de Malatestis** Vicarius, et Armorum Capitaneus reconduxit, et firmavit ſe ad ſervitia, et ſtipendia Ssmi Dñi Noſtri Papę, et S. Romanę Eccleſię pro tempore, de quo infra dicetur **cum Armigeris sexaginta quatuor**, qui ſint, et eſſe debeant Viri ſufficientes, et bene armati cum bonis equis et armaturis pro eorum perſonis, et cum ceteris oportunis more modernę militię, **nec teneatur habere plures**, quam ſexaginta quatuor armigeros, ut prędittitur, nec ipſe aut dicti ſui armigeri teneantur ad alias obligationes ultra ſupra, et infraſcriptas &c.

Item promiſit quod durante preſenti Conducta, erit in continuo exercitio armorum cum omni ſua comitiva, omnique faciet, que alii Capitanei, et Ductores ad Sanctę Romanę Eccleſię ſtipendia militantes facere, ſolent, aut debent.

Item fuerunt concordes dictę ambę Partes, quod preſens Conducta duret per unum annum a die ſexta decima menſis martii proxime prędteriti, qua die finita erat prior eiusdem D. Sigiſmundi conducta incipienda, et ut ſequitur finienda. Quo anno finito teneatur idem D. Sigiſmundus stare ad omnem obedientiam Ssmi Dñi noſtri Papę, ſive volet eam reconducere, ſive aliud diſponere.

Et e converſo prefati Rmus D. Cardinalis, et Dnûs Epiſcopus, quibus ſupra nominibus promiſerunt prędfato Illustri Dño Sigiſmundo Vicario, et armorum Capitaneo ſolvere, ſeu ſolvi facere proviſionem, et nomine proviſionis ſuę **ratione dictorum ſexaginta quatuor Armigerorum annis ſingulis** ipſa conducta durante **Florenos auri de Camera octo milia**, in hunc qui ſequitur modum, videlicet ſummam quatuormilium Florenorum ex nunc nomine prędstantię, et partis dictę totius proviſionis unius anni, reſiduum vero uſque ad integram eiusdem totius proviſionis ſolutionem promiſerunt ſolvi facere omni menſe pro eorum rata incipiendo in principio menſis Iulii proxime futuri primam ratam. Ita tamen quod ipſe Dnûs Sigiſmundus, aut dicti eius Armigeri **nihil ultra ad rationem octo milium Florenorum annis ſingulis** pro ſtipendio petere, aut exigere ab Apoſtolica Camera poſſint, aut debeant, ſed ſint contenti eis, loco ſtipendii.

64 lances in his company, and his pay 8,000 a *year*,
64 and no more, and he not to try to get any more
And all of it down on paper
sexaginta quatuor nec tentatur habere plures

Figure 4.4: Francesco Gaetano Battaglini, "Della vita e de' fatti di Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta," in volume two of *Basini Parmensis opera praestantiora nunc primum edita et opportunis commentariis illustrata* (Rimini: Ex Typographia Albertiniana, 1794) 669. Below is the resultant passage in Canto XI (51.10-13).

This idea is present throughout Canto XI, but is particularly evident in the closing lines, which were not added to the poem until very late. At an early stage of

the composition Pound ended the single Malatesta canto with the death of its protagonist: "And a July earthquake to help him, Si[gi]smundo dies. / (9 Oct. 68)."[57] By the completion of the Watson typescript, the now four-canto sequence ended with a long passage on the inevitable disintegration and fading of empires, punctuated by images of material decay (e.g. "(somewhat soiled) / cuff-lace" and "Caesarea [...] roof-deep in the marsh"), and ominously ending just prior to Sigismondo's death with the two-word line "Fatal August."[58] It is not until the later revisions of this draft that Pound decided on the current ending, which consists of a condensed translation of a humorous contract between Sigismondo and his steward Enrico Acquabello. Thus, the sequence ends not on a destructive note of finality, but with the irony of an open-ended agreement. It is the constructive Sigismondo who pens the final word, and Pound suggests that it is precisely written language that will carry Malatesta's ambitions, accomplishments, failures, and character through the history to come.

The poem, in fact, leaps backward to 31 May 1460—"one of the least turbulent and most calm years of Sigismondo's life"[59]—and quotes a document that projects the reader forward into the future. Pound foregoes Malatesta's public deeds as ruler of Rimini or condottiere to instead offer an image of his private life and the character that Pound suggests was maintained in the face of political and professional ruin. This is primarily expressed through the contrast drawn between the Acquabello contract and the aforementioned document from the papacy. Pound arranges his appropriation of Malatesta's agreement to parallel the structure of that from Paul II cited only fifteen lines earlier (see figure 4.5). A juxtaposition of the documents imparts the sense that despite his defeat Sigismondo was not utterly destroyed; indeed, where earlier his possessions were taken from him, he is seen here freely giving them away. Pound's original draft of the passage stated only that the contract was executed at a castle ("Actum in Castro").[60] The specification he later added that the castle belongs to Sigismondo, in effect counters the loss of resources under the conditions defined by Paul II, and before him Pius II. This opposition resonates with a

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[57] EPP Box 70 f. 3148.

[58] EPP Box 71 f. 3155.

[59] "Il documento è del 1460 (31 Maggio), uno degli anni meno burrascosi e più calmi ne la vita di Sigismondo." Carlo Grigioni makes this statement prior to reprinting the entirety of the archival contract in an article entitled "Un Capriccio di Sigismondo Malatesta" in *Arte e Storia*, 3rd series, 5-6, (March 1908) 40-41, which served as Pound's source.

[60] EPP Box 71 f. 3164.

statement Pound later made in *Guide to Kulchur*: "S. Malatesta gave away a lot of castles on, or shortly after, his accession. Such acts have a meaning and a social significance."[61]

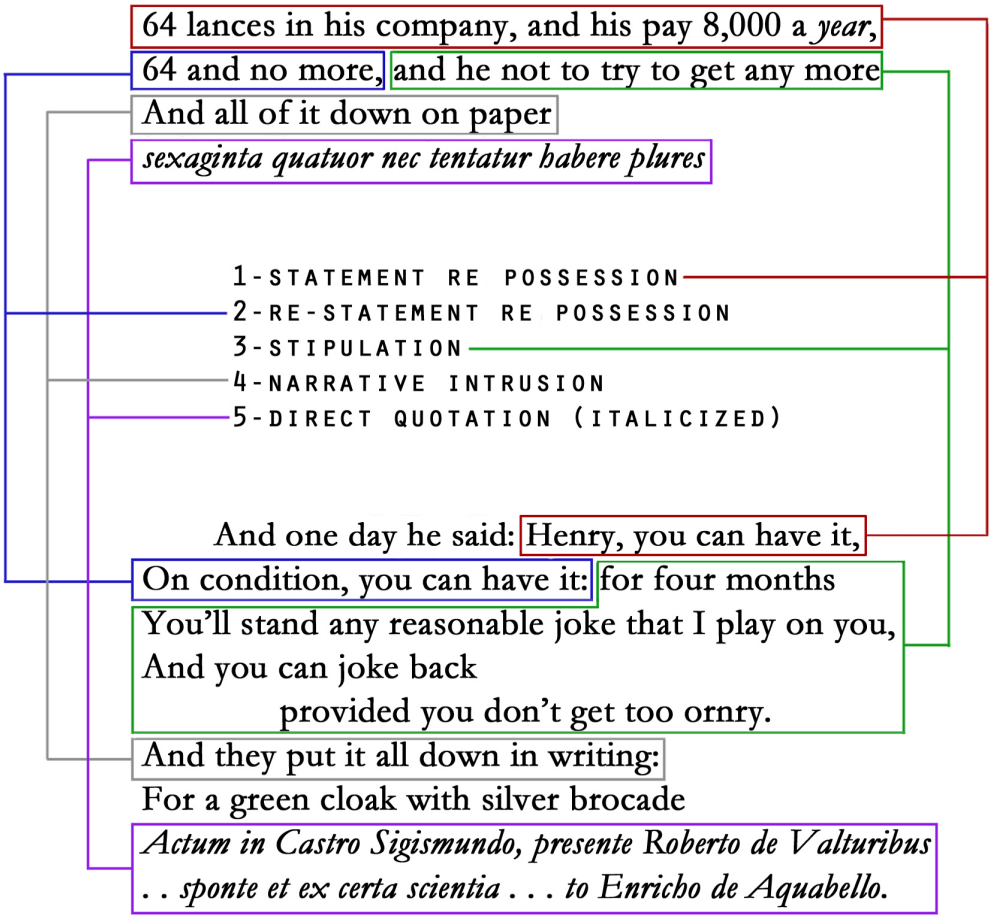


Figure 4.5: Diagram of the parallel structure in the content of two appropriated passages included in Canto XI (51.10-13 and 52.1-9).[62]

In any case, the events in both of the compared passages hinge on writing itself. Pound paraphrases his earlier line that focused attention on the material page ("And all of it down on paper") in order to again highlight the signification and efficacy of the written word ("And they put it all down in writing"). The subject then becomes the physical act of writing. It is the production of written language that is

[61] Pound, *GK*, 261.

[62] *Ornery* is misspelled differently in Pound's typescripts as "ornrey." New Directions's edition follows the spelling in *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (45). (At the same time, New Directions dropped one of the points of the first ellipsis (52.9), which Three Mountains Press included). In light of the context of the document, the current misspelling has, nevertheless, the one advantage of better reflecting the word's etymology as an early 19th-century "American English dialectal contraction of *ordinary*." *Online Etymology Dictionary* < www.etymonline.com >.

"executed" in Rimini, and the process of materialization is that to which Roberto Valturio is, in fact, witness. Through the inclusion of two lines of the source text's Latin, Pound also allows the reader to take the place of Valturio as witness to the document. He/she sees in Pound's poem that, like the Tempio, the material words of Malatesta have remained, and continue to carry meaning.

REVOLVING RECORDS

In addition to recalling the agreement with Paul II, the Acquabello contract frames all of Canto XI in the visual materiality of Pound's documentary poetics. The poem opens with a transcription from Broglio's *Cronaca universale*, found in Rimini's Biblioteca Civica Gambalunga, and closes with a quotation from a manuscript held in the Archivio Notarile di Rimini. The written word thus acts as the catalyst for and the conclusion to the events Pound retraces. Furthermore, as Peter D'Epiro observes, the canto "begins with two lines of Italian which, in the midst of war, hark back to the ancient Romans, whereas it ends with two lines of Latin which, as part of a joke, ratify a contract between two Italians."[63] These complementary lines are also drawn together typographically, and the poem in fact ends by visually blending two languages together.[64] Pound makes his own addition to the italicized quotation, and the English is all but imperceptible: "*to Enricho de Aquabello*." The words become a part of the same material by means of the compositional process, which effectively unifies fragments of languages through the act of setting them onto the page. The alterations and additions to these appropriated lines, and Pound's construction of the passage, demonstrates the significance of materiality, not only with regard to history and historiography, but also given that the poet himself "put[s] it all down in writing."

In *ABC of Reading*, Pound states, "It doesn't, in our contemporary world, so much matter where you begin the examination of a subject, so long as you keep on until you get round again to your starting point."[65] Just as the Acquabello contract mirrors the beginning of Canto XI, the concluding document's ellipses and italicized recipient also returns the reader to the start of the entire sequence on Malatesta by

[63] D'Epiro, 145 n.80.

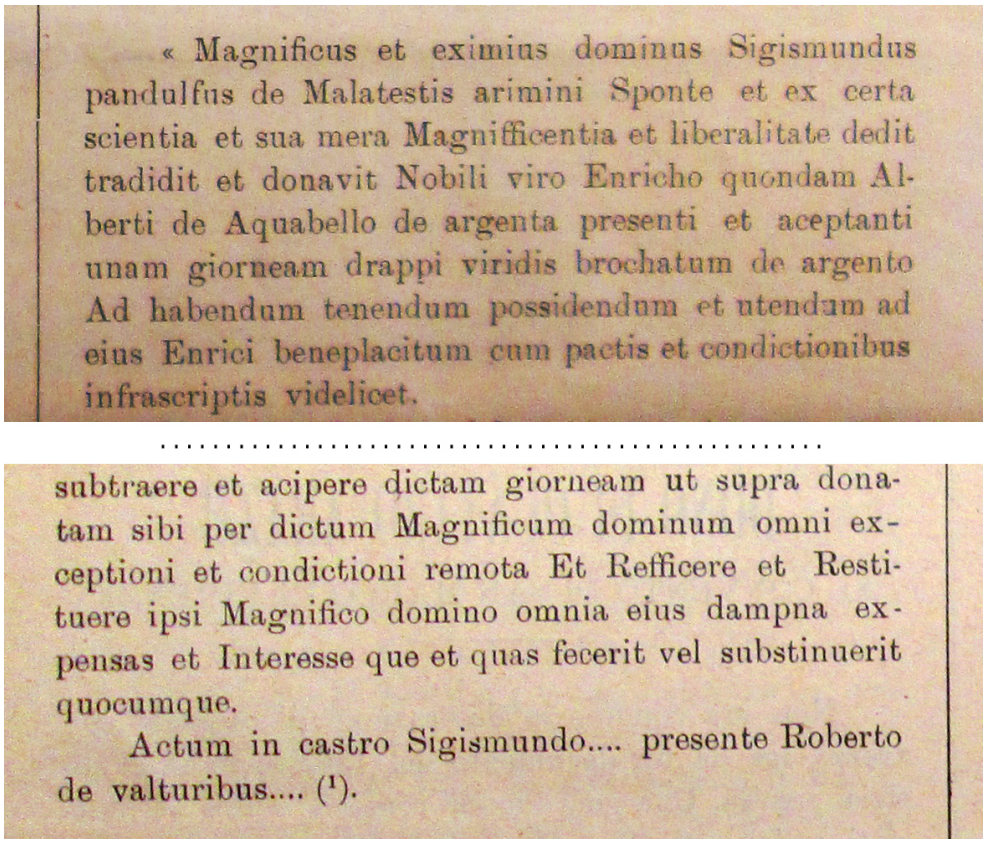
[64] This relates to the long passage at the beginning of the same canto, where the numbers Pound gives alternate from Italian to English, but are all printed in standard script with no visual distinction between them.

[65] Pound, *ABC*, 29.

recalling the letter to Giovanni de' Medici. The comparison provides a unique typographic frame to Pound's presentation of Sigismondo, beyond the immediate, strictly visual, cue of the printed script. It is noteworthy that while the five lines of Latin that open the Medici letter are fractured linguistically and spatially, the two lines of Latin that close the sequence are complete and collapsed. Such would suggest a definitive end, but Pound undercuts this sense of closure by reversing the metaphrastic process of documentary appropriation: whereas, in the opening to Canto VIII, the poet reconstructs the elliptical fragments and reproduces the entirety of the source document in translation, in the conclusion to Canto XI, he fragments the original text, and produces a significantly abridged, restructured adaptation.

In this final document, Pound begins by translating the essential elements from the second paragraph of the contract before flashing back to the first, in order to identify what it is "Henry" is actually to receive: "unam giorneam drappi viridis brochatum de argento." He then leaps forward to the last line of the document, only to again cycle back to the beginning of the text, transposing "sponte et ex certa scientia," to the conclusion (see figure 4.6). The insertion of this fragment into the Latin quotation makes what is done "voluntarily and in full knowledge" not the transfer of the cloak (as in the original text), but the actual drafting of the written agreement. Thus, while the final two lines appear as an italicized, direct quotation, they have both, in fact, been (re)composed by Pound. The ellipses, then, do signal a manipulation of the source document, but do not represent excised text in the conventional manner the reader would expect. As the article appeared in *Arte e Storia*, the dual ellipses are, like in Canto XI, part of the final two lines, but in Pound's text they have been re-associated to represent the antecedent gaps on either side of the displaced, textual fragment: "Magnificus et eximius dominus Sigismundus pandulfus de Malatestis arimini," and "et sua mera Magnifficentia [...] infrascriptis videlicet," respectively. Inversely, Pound himself added the ellipses in the address to the Medici letter, where the punctuation indicates the absence of prior text. While the techniques differ, both passages illustrate (1) Pound's interest in typographically reproducing the appearance of the original language on the page, and (2) a cyclical gesture whereby the textual fragments of the present moment are stitched together with the writing of the past. Thus, the Malatesta Cantos begin and end with attention being drawn to the material production of language through the act of writing. In both cases, the reader

becomes a recipient of the material text: a ghost reader in place of Giovanni de' Medici, and a ghost witness in place of Roberto Valturio.



« Magnificus et eximius dominus Sigismundus pandulfus de Malatestis arimini Sponte et ex certa scientia et sua mera Magnifficentia et liberalitate dedit tradidit et donavit Nobili viro Enricho quondam Alberti de Aquabello de argenta presenti et aceptanti unam giorneam drappi viridis brochatum de argento Ad habendum tenendum possidendum et utendum ad eius Enrici beneplacitum cum pactis et condictionibus infrascriptis videlicet.

. . . . . .

subtraere et acipere dictam giorneam ut supra donatam sibi per dictum Magnificum dominum omni exceptioni et condictioni remota Et Refficere et Restituere ipsi Magnifico domino omnia eius dampna expensas et Interesse que et quas fecerit vel substinuerit quocumque.

Actum in castro Sigismundo.... presente Roberto de valturibus.... (1).

Figure 4.6: The opening and closing paragraphs to Carlo Grigioni's article "Un Capriccio di Sigismondo Malatesta" as they appear in *Arte e Storia* (see footnote 59 in this chapter).

Furthermore, Pound's choice to append "to Enricho de Aquabello" to the end of the contract, following the ellipses, recalls the similar inclusion of the translated addressee of the Medici letter (8: 28.11-13). Given the familiar and jocular context of the contract, Acquabello certainly appears to be, like Giovanni de' Medici, Sigismondo's "Frater tamquam / Et compater carissime" (8: 28-6-7). The lines also resonate with each other linguistically: "Equivalent to," in Canto VIII, is visually flipped and echoed in Canto XI's "to Enricho," both being preceded and followed by the repeated nominal formulation "de Valturibus [...] de Aquabello" and "de [Me]dicis [...] of the Medici."[66]

[66] *Aqua*bello may also gesture to the antecedent lines' mention of Florence, in that (by some historians' accounts) under Roman rule the city was originally known as "Fluentia" (from the Latin *fluere*, "to flow") due to its particularly fertile location on the *waters* of the Arno River. The later name "Florentia" (from the Latin *florere*, "to flourish") thus stemmed from the earlier appellation. See

With the written language of Sigismondo opening and closing the sequence of poems, Pound brings the reader full circle from Malatesta leading the Venetian forces "contra Cremonam" back to his Riminese home. Framed within a personal letter and a personal contract, the documentary structure—whereby the primacy of the written word is consistently asserted—spans not only each individual canto, but also the length of the sequence's progression as a whole. The four cantos as an ensemble are anchored by the pivotal documentary events of the beginning, middle, and end sections of the composition (see figure 4.7). The texts that comprise these key segments (noted in red) are similar in content, in that each submits an alternative view of Sigismondo to that presented by, for example, the Catholic Church: first, the generous patron of the arts; second, the engaged and approachable domestic ruler; third, the friendly and lighthearted signore. This view does not necessarily disprove or negate the contrasting images found in the poems, but that it punctuates the Malatesta Cantos at the three major structural points of the sequence demonstrates the critic Robert McNamara's argument that Pound's choice of Sigismondo for *The Cantos* was to counter what Jacob Burckhardt claimed had been "the verdict of history":

> [...] Pound chooses this supposed exemplar of cruelty, ferocity and martial prowess because the reconstruction will enable him both to find in Malatesta the creative, constructive energies he seeks and to offer an alternative to the martial ideal [...] [which] emerged in the 1890s as the dominant version of the period's infatuation with action.[67]

As the connection McNamara makes to Burckhardt's book suggests, Pound's attempt at such a reconstruction is tied to textuality and those ideas fixed within written language, and it is precisely this framework that Pound's composition establishes. As suggested by these textual flashbacks, if a documentary poetics is necessarily fragmented, then bearing witness to the cyclical nature of history results in a palimpsest of increasing visio-spatial complexity. The network of relations between varying texts, created out of the figurative layering concomitant with such a cycle, provides as much opportunity for revision as restoration; or even for the realization of a form of re/visionary restoration, projecting equally into the past as into the future.

Images of Quattrocento Florence: Selected Writings in Literature, History, and Art, eds. Stefano Ugo Baldassarri and Arielle Saiber (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000) 22-24.

[67] Robert McNamara, "Pound's Malatesta: An Alternative to the Martial Ideal," *Pacific Coast Philology* 20.1/2 (November 1985) 58. The preceding Burckhardt quote is taken from *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S.G.C. Middlemore, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Phaedon Press, 1945) 278.

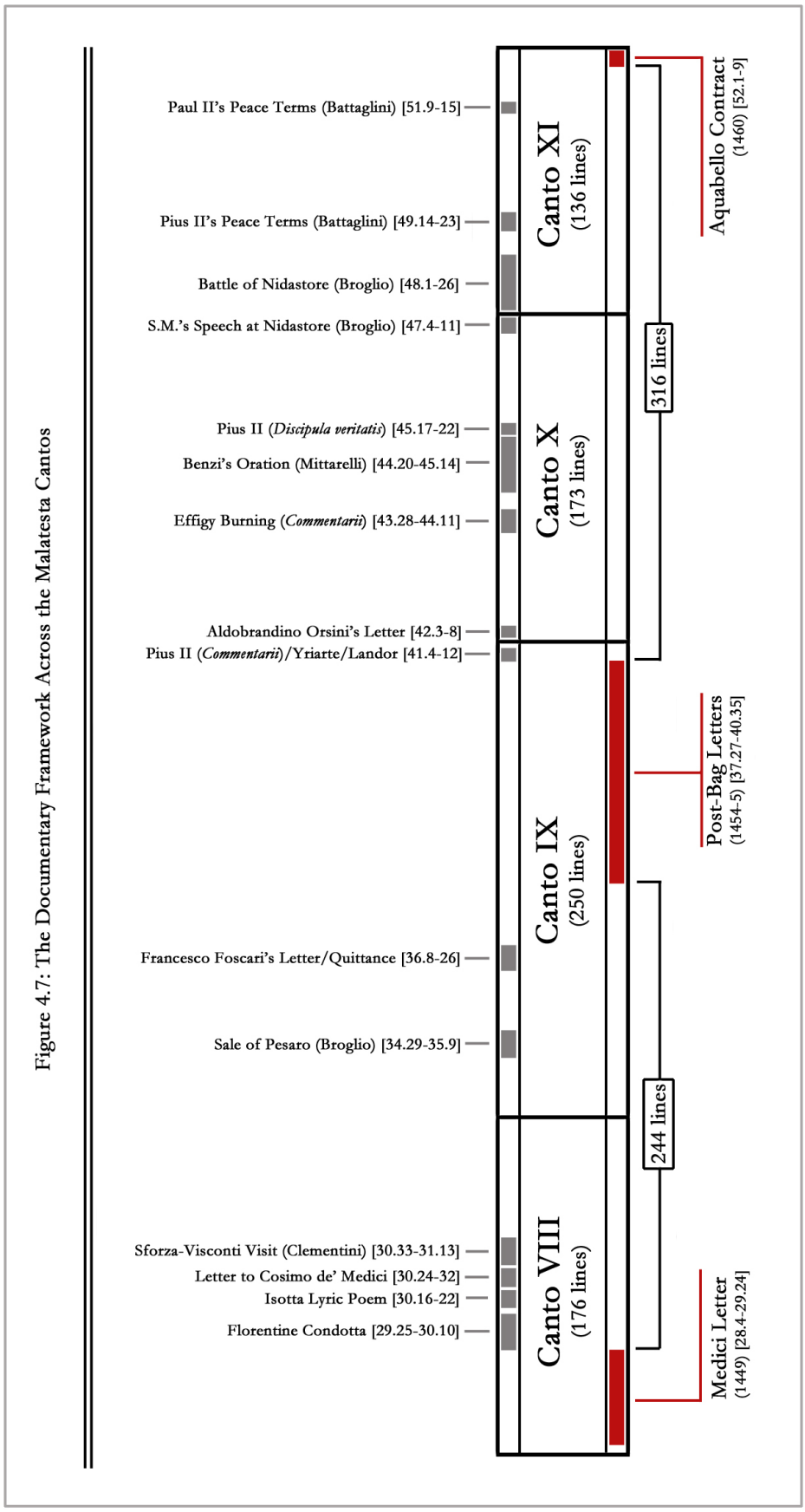


Figure 4.7: The Documentary Framework Across the Malatesta Cantos

In many ways it does not much matter which view or views of Sigismondo the reader of the Malatesta Cantos finally espouses, for Pound effectively illustrates the crucial role that the appropriation (or re-appropriation) of written language—and the subsequent arrangement of those textual materials—plays in the creation of any historical construction, or revision of it. Pound himself was undoubtedly convinced of Sigismondo's artistic achievement, and that his cultural significance made him an exemplary historical figure, but what the *poetics* of the Malatesta Cantos impart to readers is an understanding of how varying narratives and modes of discourse are layered upon each other, and fragment each other. The resultant archival structure is one that attests to a cycle of textual synthesis, which comprehends as many forms of writing as it does forms of emendation and erasure. The sequence of cantos suggests that in order to map the tangled routes of cultural traditions and genealogies—Pound's *sagetrieb*—one must plunge into the archives and navigate through the documents. By returning the reader again and again to the varied production and materialization of language—to the concrete *pages* of history—the Malatesta Cantos emphasize an understanding of the historical record as an ever-changing palimpsest, where the written word does not only include history, but contains histories.

PART TWO

SUSAN HOWE'S "MELVILLE'S MARGINALIA"

MEDIUM: FORM AND FORMULATION

"The backgrounds are full of truth."

— Anne Carson[1]

The documentary poetics developed in the Malatesta Cantos, and Ezra Pound's innovative engagement with the materials of history therein, are poetic interests that, as previously seen, were foundational to the work of Charles Olson as part of the post-war generation of poets. However, where the history and the archive in Pound's *The Cantos* are global in nature—reaching from Greece to Italy to England, and from the United States to China—Olson's *The Maximus Poems* are, initially, localized to Gloucester, Massachusetts. In the later books of Olson's epic, the historiography expands beyond Gloucester, but it is precisely the specific engagement with the local, much like William Carlos Williams's five-volume epic poem *Paterson* on the city in New Jersey, that would later prove greatly influential to the poetics and work of Susan Howe. Like Olson, Howe's work is anchored in New England, while also extending outside of the United States, primarily to Ireland and England. In her work *The Midnight*, for example, she discusses her "half-Irish or half-Anglo-Irish" background and upbringing, noting, "I felt my own vocabulary as something hopelessly mixed and at the same time hardened into glass."[2] Rooted in her transatlantic ancestry, Howe's poetry is invested, in comparable ways to Pound and Olson, in the geographies of cultural and literary identity. "Space," she writes, "is a frame we map ourselves in."[3]

Additionally, it is not only the notion of the "poem containing history" and the documentary poetics of archival space that Howe inherited from Pound and Olson, but also the fundamental interest in language as it is found on the page. The materiality of archival documents so crucial to Pound's compositional process of the Malatesta Cantos is one that Howe's documentary process would continue to advance. Pound's historical consciousness woven into his formal innovation of the material

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[1] Anne Carson, "Anne Carson, The Art of Poetry No. 88," interview by Will Aitken, *The Paris Review* 171 (Fall 2004).

[2] Susan Howe, *MN*, 75.

[3] Howe, *FS*, 9.

space of the poetic page sees further, and indeed more radical and experimental, development in the abstract re-figurations of the historical record in Howe's work. As discussed in prior chapters, the Malatesta Cantos present the reader with a poetic materialization of the Tempio Malatestiano in the typographically structured pages of a book. The juxtapositions and paratactic palimpsest reconstruct the collaged materials of the temple's walls as selected and collected by Sigismondo. Pound's visio-textual architecture of found materials in combination with his own poetic historiography finds a striking parallel in the Susan Howe's career as a poet.

It is, however, not only the documentary element of Pound's poetics that Howe inherited, but also the visual construction, or reconstruction, of those manipulated materials into the space of the page. The following chapter intends to establish the visual origins of Howe's compositional process, and its continuation, moving from found materials in various genres, to specific archival work around authorship, manuscripts, and editing. The results of this attention to materiality require a view of both the structures of the printed texts and the composition of white space that accompanies, or indeed shapes them. Furthermore, these elements of Howe's poetics extend to her own process of editing and revising, as her collections of poems are visually sharpened and sonically refined in order to impart the signifying potential of each book's materiality. After a brief examination of Howe's early and late work, the focus will shift to an important sequence from the middle of her career, entitled "Melville's Marginalia."

TRANSPOSED SUBSTRATES

Critical studies of Howe's work often cite her endeavors as a visual artist prior to her shift toward poetry. This is frequently done for the purpose of highlighting Howe's imagistic approach to the page, as she herself states in recounting the anecdote: "From start to finish in my work, I've been involved with images. The porous border between visual and verbal is always there."[4] Howe attended the School of Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, "making stained color-field paintings," later turning to more textually-based work:

[4] Susan Howe, "Susan Howe, The Art of Poetry No. 97," interview by Maureen N. McLane, *The Paris Review* 203 (Winter 2012).

> I started making lists of single words, usually nouns, bird names, or place-names, often cut from books and collaged with pencil lines and watercolor washes. I began incorporating old engineering instruction manuals, maps, and charts. Single words and the letters that formed them were what attracted me. Gradually I came to make books of watercolor stains, photographs, and words. After a time I just used words on drawing paper, or pasted on walls.[5]

Beyond the obvious visual nature of such artworks, it is important to take notice of several aspects of Howe's preliminary ventures into writing poetry: first, a compositional process that foregoes conventional syntax and grammar—indeed even complete sentences—for individual words, isolated and juxtaposed into a network of relations and resonances that allow language to speak back to language; second, an acute attention to the construction of words—"the letters that [form] them"— and the attraction to the specific graphic qualities of those letters; third, the significant role of found materials from which that language is taken, and thus of the operations of selection, appropriation, and manipulation (i.e. cutting and collaging); fourth, the hybrid, interdisciplinary nature of those materials, including everything from ornithology and geography, to engineering and cartography; and lastly, the focus on the spatial arrangement of such visio-textual works, themselves constellated, like the words they were composed of, on the walls of Howe's studio (see figure 5.1).[6] All five of these characteristics would remain of continual interest and significance to the decades of work that would follow.

As Howe goes on to say in the same interview, the texts "were both typewritten and cutout."[7] Such a practice remained fundamental to Howe's process of poetic composition, and also recalls Pound's own method of typing or re-typing the passages he had extracted from archival and/or historical documents, while simultaneously demonstrating how the more "direct" materiality of Howe's poetics—physically cutting and pasting text from found sources—advances Pound's documentary poetics. Even at this initial stage of Howe's career, her engagement with the materiality of language and the architecture of the page and the book are apparent: "I hadn't solved the problem of the font size, or of what you might do in terms of

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[5] Howe, Interview by McLane.

[6] Regarding this early work, Howe states in an interview with Lynn Keller, "[These books] were objects. I would get a sketchbook and inside I would juxtapose a picture with a list of words under it." *Contemporary Literature* 36.1 (Spring 1995) 5.

[7] Howe, Interview by McLane.

surface size, but that was because, in the long run, words and their sound, meaning, and letter shapes were what mattered. [...] I knew Duchamp's notes and studies for *The Large Glass*, of course, and was familiar with the concrete poets' minimalist use of page space and typography."[8] The reference to Marcel Duchamp, the early twentieth-century modernist artist famous for (among other things) his wholesale appropriation and manipulation of found objects as "readymade" artworks, is not inconsequential.[9] The conclusion to the story is the visit to Howe's studio of the poet Ted Greenwald, who upon observing the work remarked, "'Actually you have a book on the wall. Why don't you just put it into a book?'"[10] The resultant work would be *Hinge Picture* (1974), whose epigraph is taken from a note in Duchamp's *The Green Box*, itself a kind of typographic poem:

> Perhaps make
> a hinge
> picture.
> (folding yardstick, book . . . .)
> develop
> the principle of the hinge
> in the displacements
> 1st in the plane 2nd in space[11]

[8] Howe, Interview by McLane.

[9] It is interesting to note the simultaneities of the works of Pound and Duchamp, the innovations of which would later prove influential to Howe's writing. Duchamp's conception of "readymades" first originated, and later appeared, between the years of 1913 and 1915, a time when Ezra Pound was writing his book on the sculptures of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska: *Gaudier-Brzeska. A Memoir*, published in 1916. It was to such works that Pound later related, in *Guide to Kulchur* (1938), his poetic concept of Vorticism and its "arrangement of surfaces" and "design [...] from a very simple composition of lines and planes" (69-70). Duchamp's most (in)famous readymade, *Fontaine*, was first exhibited in 1917; *Le Grand Verre* (or *La Mariée mise a nu par ses célibatiaires, même*) was composed from 1915-1923—the subsequent notes and companion piece of which, *La Boîte verte* (1934), is referenced in Howe's work. D'Epiro traces Pound's interest in artistic patronage—a quality that led to Pound's choosing the "Vorticist condotierre" Sigismondo as a central figure to *The Cantos*—back to a letter written to John Quinn in 1915: "[the patron] is building art into the world; he creates" (xix). The start of the composition of the Malatesta Cantos, though certainly conceived earlier, began in 1922, to then be first published a year later: 1923.

[10] Howe, Interview by Keller, 6.

[11] Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even: A Typographic Version by Richard Hamilton of Marcel Duchamp's Green Box*, trans. Richard Hamilton (Stuttgart: Edition Hansjörg Mayer; New York: Jaap Rietman, 1976), n.p. Duchamp's note has the following additional lines (not included in Howe's epigraph): "find an automatic description / of the hinge // perhaps introduce it / in the Pendu femelle." In *Hinge Picture*, Howe does not retain the original spatial arrangement, and prints the underlined words in capital letters. *FS*, 32.

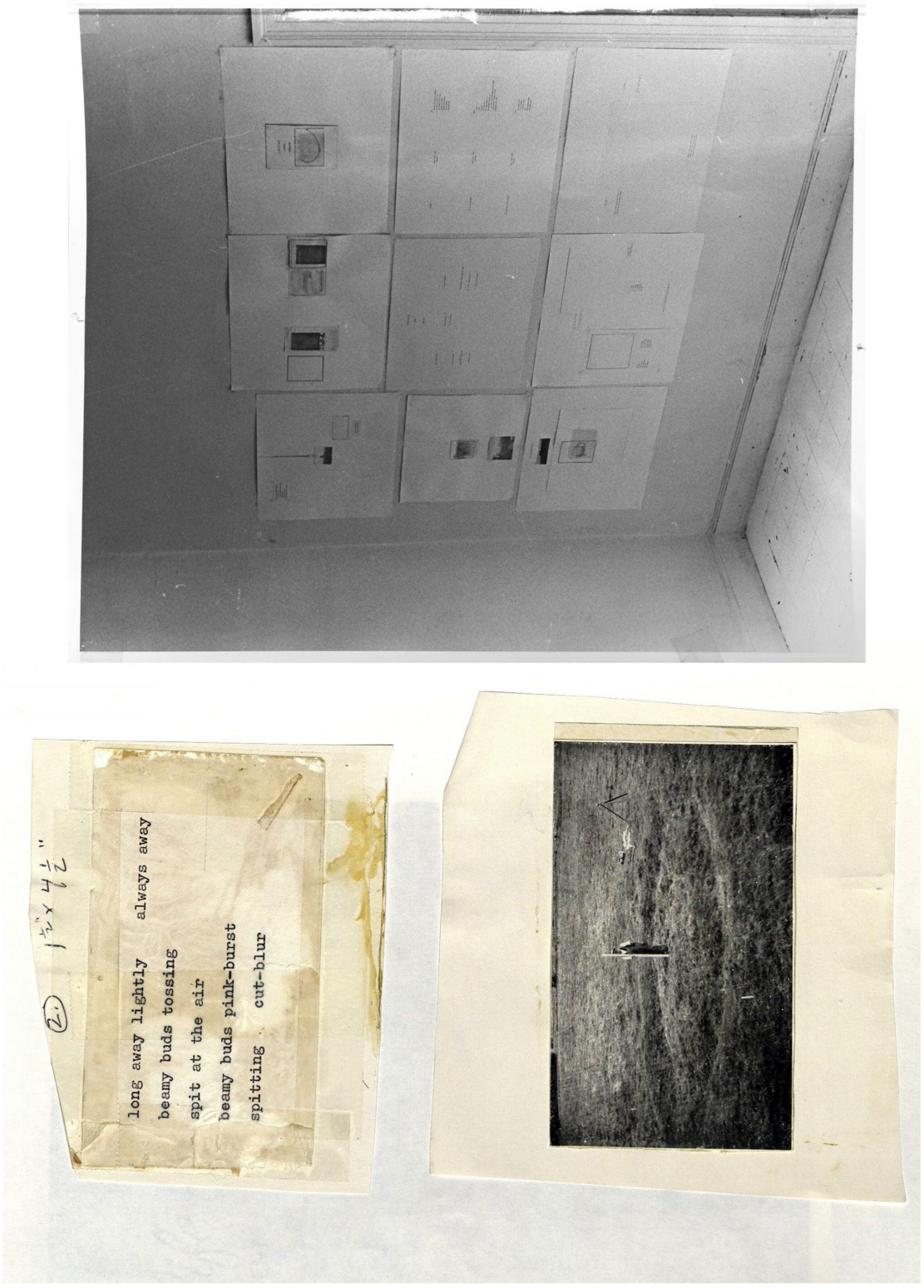

Figure 5.1: Examples of Howe's early textual-installation work, labeled "long away lightly" (lower image), SHP Box 15 f. 1, and "Photographs of walls and works ... 69-71" (upper image), SHP Box 15 f. 5.

The visual materiality expressed in the quotation's mention of architectural and sculptural planes and spaces is translated onto the page by Howe's poetry, whose initial state is described by the poet as "environments—rooms that you could walk into and be surrounded by walls, and on those walls would be collage, using found photographs (again a kind of quotation)."[12] Where Pound's Malatesta Cantos were a poetic reconstruction of the Tempio's "jumble and junk shop" onto the material page, Howe's first work of poetry was "a book of the wall."[13] Where Pound's documentary poetics of materiality were not realized fully until more than a decade into his poetic career, Howe's innovations of visio-spatial poetry began with her first foray into publication.

Howe's dedication to a poetics thoroughly devoted to materiality was no mere experimental phase, but has remained an element of fundamental importance throughout the more than four decades that have followed the publication of *Hinge Picture*. The critic Kate Lilley notes precisely this continuity, echoing Howe's own comment quoted above, when she writes, "The major volumes, especially, have something of the quality of retrospective exhibitions, a suite of rooms to move around in."[14] In fact, Howe's most recent books of poetry *That This* (2010), *TOM TIT TOT* (2014), and *Debths* (2017) are closer to visual art than any of her prior collections. Regarding the central sequence of the former, "Frolic Architecture," Howe states, "In a certain way you can also say the poems in *Frolic* might be some sort of drawing. I started with words on the wall, and now I've framed some of the page proofs from *Frolic*. And I love to look at them as if they are drawings. [...] So when I say I've broken everything open, maybe I've been moving in a circle."[15] The second collection of the three—a combination of text and artwork—is a collaboration between Howe and her daughter R.H. Quaytman, a visual artist, first appearing in October 2013 at a gallery exhibition at the Yale Union in Portland, Oregon. The following year, sixteen of the original sixty-seven poems were exhibited at the Whitney Biennial. The Library Council of The Museum of Modern Art published a limited, letterpress edition that same year.[16] The consideration of this recent "book" as visual art, then, is quite

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[12] Howe, Interview by Keller, 6.
[13] Howe, Interview by McLane.
[14] Kate Lilley, "Blackwork: On Susan Howe's *The Midnight*," *Heat Literary Journal* 21 (2009) 12.
[15] Howe, Interview by McLane.
[16] MOMA published both a main and deluxe edition, hand-printed by The Grenfell Press, which also previously published a luxury letterpress edition (26 copies at $7,500 each) of *Frolic Architecture*

evident. While Marjorie Perloff maintains that "Susan Howe's later style marks a departure from her earlier work[17]—a position that Howe herself indeed suggests—the poet's remarks on *TOM TIT TOT* also express that such radically visual work is in many ways a return to her poetic origins:

> *TOM TIT TOT* broke my poetry, opened a new path to follow that began with the poems in *Frolic Architecture* [...]. I still felt somehow that *Frolic* was anchored-down to some material, a document or fact—to Hannah Edwards' original text—whereas *TOM TIT TOT* tosses chance and discipline together in a more kaleidoscopic way [...]. So, at the very beginning of my work and now here so many years later in *TOM TIT TOT* [...] I have circled through spontaneous particulars (fable and folklore) ending with the beginning.[18]

The Grenfell Press's deluxe editions of Howe's poetry—combining visual art of various media, and produced with high-quality materials—have much in common with "artists' books."[19] Furthermore, the fine printing of these combinations of visual art and typographically innovative poetry resonant with the publication by Three Mountains Press of the "de looks edtn. of Malatesta," priced at "25 dollars per copy, and 50 and 100 bones for Vellum and illuminateds," that was Ezra Pound's *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*—a text accompanied by Henry Strater's tricolor illustrations.[20] As discussed earlier, Pound's close involvement in the typesetting and printing processes

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(2010) as a stand-alone sequence with the photograms by James Welling that appear in the New Directions edition. Several years later, the sequence *TOM TIT TOT* was included in New Directions's publication of the poetry collection *Debths*.

[17] Marjorie Perloff, "Spectral Telepathy: the Late Style of Susan Howe," *Transatlantica* 1 (2016). < http://transatlantica.revues.org/8146 >.

[18] Scott Howard, "'TANGIBLE THINGS / Out of a stark oblivion': Spellbinding TOM TIT TOT," < https://dulibraries.wordpress.com/2015/08/05/tangible-things-out-of-a-stark-oblivion-spellbinding-tom-tit-tot >. Howe's suggestion that *TOM TIT TOT* is not, or less, rooted in material documents than its predecessor is somewhat strange considering that the entirety of the work is composed of cited text. The comment is most likely referring to the specifically archival work at the core of "Frolic Architecture," in contrast to the later collection.

[19] The letterpress edition of *Frolic Architecture* on Somerset paper was bound "using handmade Izumo Mitsumata-shi and Cave papers." The included works from James Welling were printed in his studio, after a process involving Kodak Polymax Fine Art paper, paint, and three sheets of mylar (http://www.grenfellpress.com/books/susan-howe-james-welling-frolic-architecture.html). Grenfell's letterpress volume of *TOM TIT TOT* is "hand-bound in green Japanese buckram" (Howard, "TANGIBLE THINGS"). It should also be noted that in 1992 Grenfell Press published a limited edition book (65 copies) of the sequence "The Nonconformist's Memorial"—"printed on Somerset and Kozo/Gampi," and "bound in Timothy Barret's hemp paper"—which included six woodcuts by Robert Mangold (http://www.grenfellpress.com/books/robert-mangold-susan-howe-the-nonconformists-memorial.html). It is not, therefore, only those later works of Susan Howe that have been printed in deluxe editions.

[20] Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound to His Parents,* eds. Mary de Rachewiltz et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 511, and *L*, 256, respectively.

of that work included the poet's detailed indications to the printer regarding font style and size, punctuation, line breaks, and the overall spatial arrangement of the text and images. Pound's attention to, and concern for, the appearance of his poetry on the page continued throughout the composition of *The Cantos*. This is particularly the case with regard to the increasingly ideogrammic later sequences *The Pisan Cantos*, *Section: Rock-Drill*, and *Thrones*, whose "collocation of Latin and Provençal phrases, American slang, numbers, symbols, and Chinese ideograms" led to a form of "'concretionism'" that "reconfigured [the] page layout."[21]

The two poems in figures 5.2 and 5.3 would also certainly qualify as a kind of layered accumulation of poetic material, and one whose resultant palimpsest even more radically reconfigures the page. In such work, Howe's meticulous eye for the arrangement and appearance of her poems within the material space of the page is evident. In similar fashion to Pound, though, such visio-textual attention and active participation in the material specifics of her poetic output has not been confined to any particular period of Howe's career, such as only those works published in the 21st century.[22] While the three recent works mentioned above undoubtedly push the limits of material abstraction further than her earlier work, poems that are typographically innovative with regard to spatiality have been present in Howe's poetic œuvre from her first chapbooks in the mid-1970s (see figure 5.4). A total deconstruction of linearity through poems with truly multidirectional page layouts was first seen in *A Bibliography of the King's Book, or Eikon Basilike*, first published in 1989 by Paradigm Press.[23]

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[21] Marjorie Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010) 56-57. Accompanying these statements, Perloff reprints the first page of Canto 86 from *Rock-Drill* (page 580 in *The Cantos*).

[22] Howe's books published very near to, or after, the year 2000 have, nonetheless, included a greater amount of heavily visual material, certainly due in part to being afforded greater liberties, both technological and editorial. Christine Burgin's work for New Directions in overseeing the more recent publications has been of particular importance, as Howe related in a personal interview. Apart from *That This* (in which "Frolic Architecture" is found) and *TOM TIT TOT*, the collection *Pierce-Arrow* (1999) includes fourteen manuscript facsimiles; *The Midnight* (2003) has forty-nine images, the majority of which are photographs; *Souls of the Labadie Tract* (2007) contains only four images, but does include the fourteen-page sequence "Fragment of the Wedding Dress of Sarah Pierpont Edwards," the radically abstract poems of which are an explicit precursor to those of *Frolic Architecture*; the sixty-two pages of the main text of *Spontaneous Particulars: The Telepathy of Archives* (2014) have thirty-one manuscript facsimiles, for the first time printed in full-color.

[23] It should be noted that *Secret History of the Dividing Line* (first published in 1978) does, in fact, contain a page with a two-line poem where the title is printed above the same words inverted, and therefore that appear to read right to left (see figure 0.9). It would, however, be strained to argue that such a poem completely deconstructs linearity, and thus *Eikon Basilike* has been identified as the first

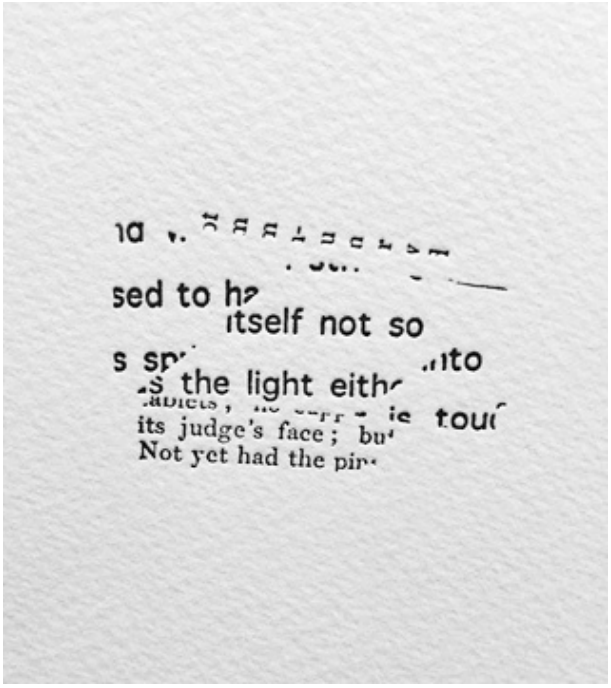

Figure 5.2: Poem from "Frolic Architecture," *That This* (New York: New Directions, 2010) 64.

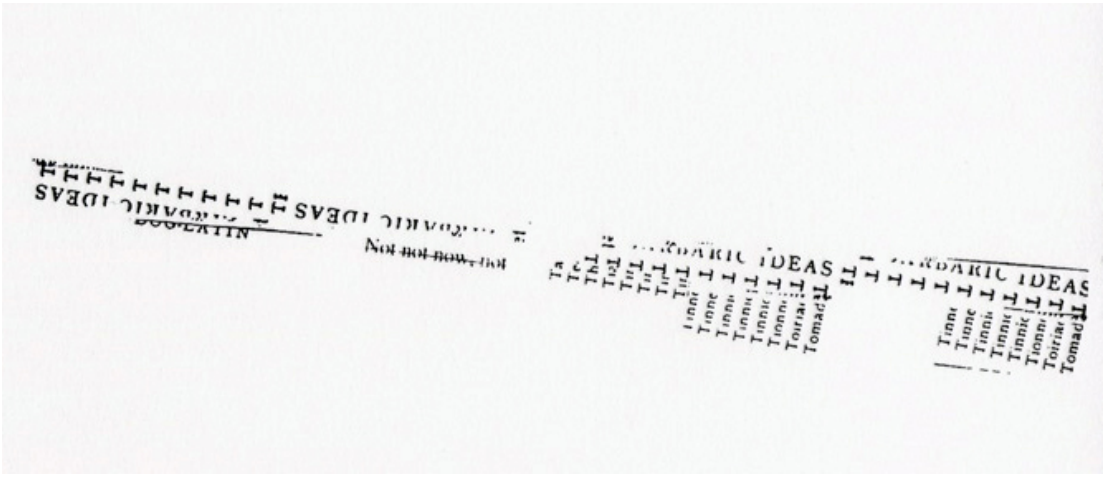

Figure 5.3: Extract from *TOM TIT TOT* (New York: Library Council of the Museum of Modern Art, 2014) n.p. The poem is also found in *Debths* (New York: New Directions, 2017) 56.

instance. "Thorow," though composed during the same period, was not published until the following year in *Singularities* (1990).

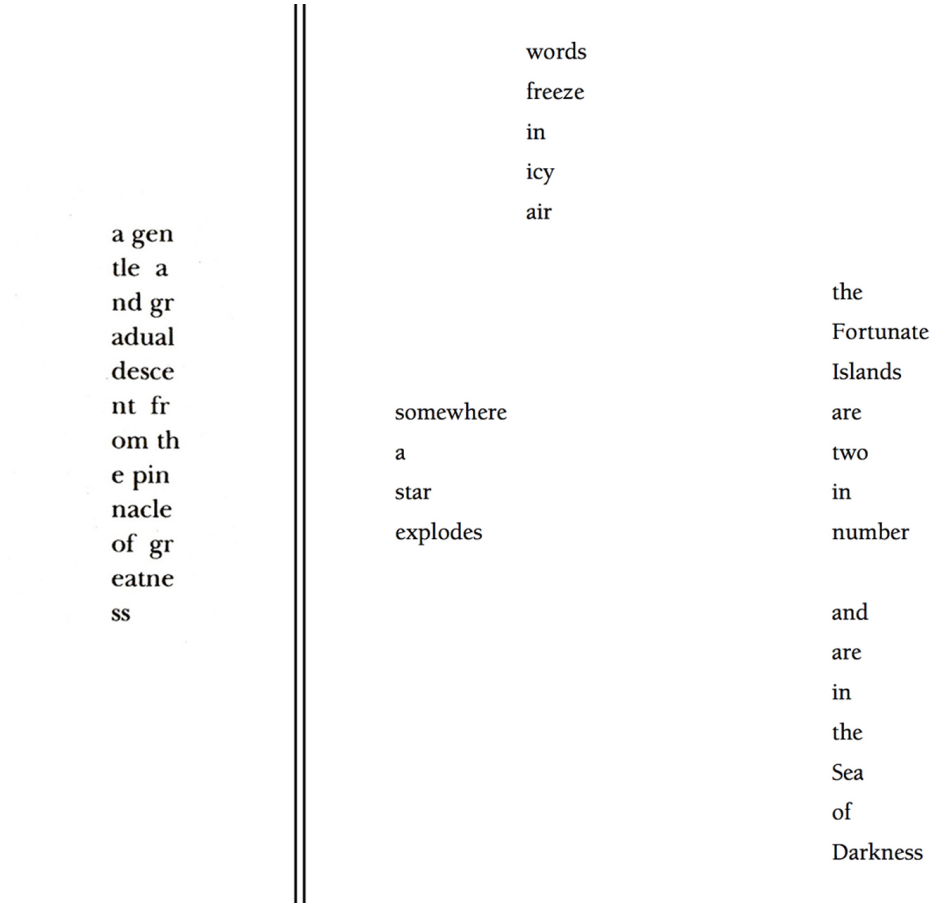

Figure 5.4: Examples of the typography in, respectively, *Hinge Picture* (1974) (*FS*, 46), and *The Western Borders* (Berkeley, CA: Tuumba Press, 1976), n.p.

ALTERNATIVE ARTICULATION

The aforementioned set of poems was later reprinted in the volume *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (New Directions, 1993), which also collected three other series: the title sequence (which first appeared the previous year through The Grenfell Press), "Silence Wager Stories," and "Melville's Marginalia." Like *Eikon Basilike*, the other sequences—except for "Silence Wager Stories," by far the shortest in the book, at only sixteen pages—contain several examples of multi-directional, typographically unconventional poems, in juxtaposition with those of a more straightforward arrangement. As a result, the pages of these works assume a unique hybridity of the abstract and the concrete, the verbal and the visual, the material and the immaterial. The present study will focus on the last sequence in the book, "Melville's Marginalia," which, at sixty-nine pages, is also the longest. Due to its specifically documentary and

archival origins, its particular compositional process, its collocation of genres, and its textual themes, the sequence is a complex and remarkable example of such hybrid materiality. At the time of its publication, "Melville's Marginalia" was Howe's longest sequence to date, and one of the most diverse in terms of the types of content included. In Howe's words in a letter from 1996, it was "far the most multi-layered problematical poem I have ever written [...]."[24] It may be broadly divided into two principal parts: the first twenty-eight pages, consisting of the paratext and a section which repeatedly and rapidly shifts back and forth from prose to abstract poetry, and the last forty-one pages comprised entirely of poems (see Appendix B).

The initial section begins with a three-page "brief chronology" of the quite brief life of the nineteenth-century Irish author James Clarence Mangan (1803-49). This is followed by the beginning of a preface that contextualizes the poetry by providing details concerning Herman Melville, and background on the Harvard dissertation of Wilson Walker Cowen, for which he transcribed and alphabetized all of the marginal markings in the editions of Melville's library. The preface is then interrupted for the next thirteen pages, constructed of a variety of materials: block quotations from some of Mangan's writings, and from critical studies of his life; editorial comments, footnotes, and excerpts from prefaces to Mangan's work; and poetry composed of fragments—almost all of which were marked in Melville's books—in typographic rearrangements. The lines of poetry, passages of prose, paratext, titles, bibliographic references, and marginalia, are interwoven throughout the pages. The remainder of the first section consists of a short prose piece with the pseudo-title of "Young America in Literature," which is somewhat a continuation of the preface. She recounts aspects of her compositional process, books she consulted at Harvard's Houghton Library, how she was drawn to Mangan and became convinced that he was the inspiration for the titular character in Melville's short story "Bartleby, The Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street," and ends with further biographical details about the Irish poet.

While these two authors—one American from New England, one Irish from Dublin, paralleling Howe's own dual nationality[25]—figure heavily in this section, they

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[24] SHP Box 50 f. 6. The letter, dated 4 July 1996, was written to Bénédicte Vilgrain and Bernard Rival, the translators for Théâtre Typographique's French publication of the sequence.

[25] Susan Howe's father, Mark DeWolfe Howe—described by the poet as "a Puritan of the old school" from Boston—was a professor at Harvard Law School, and official biographer of Oliver

are by no means the only voices Howe includes in the text. In addition to the numerous editors and scholars cited, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Andrew Marvell, Matthew Arnold, Jean de la Bruyère, Jean de La Fontaine, William Shakespeare, and James Joyce (amongst others) are all present. In short, the reader is immediately plunged into a layering of textual voices as diverse as those in Melville's collection of books. As the first line of the preface reads—quoting *Moby-Dick; or The Whale*—the reader, like Susan Howe herself, "[swims] through libraries."[26]

The forty-one poems comprising the final section to the sequence, and concluding the entire volume, are—with respect to spatial arrangement only—much more conventional. Only four poems bear Howe's signature typographic experimentation, which further on will be the focus of more detailed analyses. The majority of the poems are a single stanza of twelve to fifteen lines of varying lengths, most having a roughly even appearance, more or less the width of a standard newspaper column.

However, the deceptively simple visual constructions of these poems belie both their linguistic and literary density, and their typographic significance. Fragmentation and manipulation of source documents are ubiquitous, and Howe continues the collaged constellation of literary figures and texts so central to the preceding pages. Furthermore, the more standardized arrangements that result from such manipulations, which approximate a preconceived form, relate to the vision of the page and the editorial processes, both central to the sequence, to be discussed below. The section also follows a somewhat parenthetical structure, with the first seven poems, and the last seven poems being largely composed of Howe's own language, with, to be sure, occasional exceptions. In the "bracketed" group of poems, Mangan again predominates; nonetheless, Shelley is also a major figure who is frequently alluded to or quoted. The division between the collection's two major sections is rather apparent to the reader—both visually and generically—and such

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Wendell Holmes. Her mother was Mary Manning Howe, an Irish actress, playwright, director, and author, born and raised in Dublin. She later headed the Poets' Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Susan Howe herself was born in Boston, raised in Cambridge, and at eighteen had a short-lived apprenticeship at the Gates Theatre in Dublin, where her mother had worked. See Janet Ruth Falon, "Speaking with Susan Howe, *The Difficulties* 3.2 (1989) 29.

[26] Howe, *NCM*, 97.

differences are, in fact, key elements in the sequence's continued investigation of materialization, literary production, editing, and history.

As previously mentioned, Ezra Pound's awareness of, and investment in, the typographic precision of the Malatesta Cantos—and *A Draft of XVI. Cantos* in its entirety—from the slightest of punctuation marks, to the look of the page as a whole, was a precedent to Susan Howe's commitment to visual materiality in poetics. Certainly due in part to her involvement in the artistic world of the early 1970s, and her experience as an art critic,[27] with particular attention paid to the significance of even the slightest of minimalist gestures, Howe's keen eye for the graphic, physical qualities of language is a significant development of Pound's. Additionally, advancements in printing technology allowed for the realization of such typographic ambitions. Nevertheless, Susan Howe's compositional process for "Melville's Marginalia"—as in her prior collections—was indebted to her modernist predecessors: an attention to line length and alignment, inter- and intra-linear spacing, fonts, and the consideration of the page as a whole. This is not, however, intended to suggest that Howe's poetics are a mere recycling of high modernism. On the contrary, her inheritance of Pound's documentary materiality is advanced, in a work like "Melville's Marginalia," beyond the page, set of lines, or even individual word, to each singular mark of ink on paper. Whether an incomplete, agrammatical sentence, an indecipherable fragment of a word, or an isolated, graphic notation in the margin, Howe's work is a translation and transcription of her seeing, reading, and hearing the physical gesture of a mark made on the material page.

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[27] At the time, Howe wrote art reviews for several different journals. The most important of these reviews was entitled "The End of Art," which discussed the abstract/minimalist painter Ad Reinhardt, the famous concrete poet-artist Ian Hamilton Finlay, and the poet Robert Lax. At the end of the article, Howe writes, "[These three men] tell us that to search for infinity inside simplicity will be to find simplicity alive with messages. In my end is my beginning." *Archives of American Art Journal* 14.4 (1974) 7.

Additionally, the influence of Agnes Martin on Howe cannot be overestimated; she is an inspiration Howe has repeatedly expressed. Howe's early "grid poems," composed of arranged word lists, parallel Martin's line-grid works, about which the critic Olivia Laing writes, "[the early grids] refuse artistry, reducing painting to the simplest of mark-making procedures;" and further on, "every mark in a Martin painting is intentional, wholly meant." "Agnes Martin: The Artist Mystic Who Disappeared into the Desert," *The Guardian*, 22 May 2015 < https://www.theguardian.com/ artanddesign/2015/may/22/ agnes-martin-the-artist-mystic-who-disappeared-into-the-desert >.

Such observations echo those made by Howe herself, regarding Martin's work and her own: "[...] each [painting] had a title; it fascinated me how the title affected my reading of the lines and colors. I guess to me they were poems even then" (Interview by Keller, 4).

The poet's fascination with the "mark" and its linguistic polyvalence dates back to her early poetic output. At this stage of Howe's poetic practice, her primary lexical reference was the 1971 edition of Noah Webster's *Third New International Dictionary*. The diverse etymological roots and rich network of meanings is prominent in the entry for *mark*, and—as with other recurrent vocabulary in the poet's œuvre—she is particularly interested in the associations between them, as well as the connotations and slippages found in the word's usage:[28]

> **MARK** \ 'märk, 'mak \ *n* -s
>
> [ME, fr. OE *mearc*: akin to OHG *marha* boundary, boundary land, ON *mörk* boundary land, forest, wilderness, Goth *marka* boundary, boundary land, L *margo* edge, border, boundary, OIr *mruig* boundary land, district, W *bro* region, Per *marz* boundary land, district]
>
> **1. a.** (1) [2]MARCH (2) [G, fr. OHG *marha* boundary, boundary land]: a tract of land held in common by a Germanic village community in primitive or medieval times [...]
>
> **b.** something placed or set up to serve as a guide or to indicate position: as (1) a conspicuous object of known position serving as a guide for travelers [...] (2) something (as a line, notch, or fixed object) designed to record position (3) one of the bits of leather or colored bunting placed on a sounding line at irregular but frequent intervals — compare DEEP [...]
>
> **c.** (1) something toward which a missile is directed **:** a thing aimed at [...]
>
> **d.** (3) the point desired to made: the question under discussion [...] (4) the actual facts or true state of affairs **:** condition of being correct or accurate [...]
>
> **2**. **a.** (1) something that gives evidence of something else: SIGN, INDICATION, TOKEN [...] (3) an impression or trace (as a scar or stain) made on something (4) CHARACTERISTIC [...]
>
> **b.** (1) a character usu. in the form of a cross made as a substitute for a signature by a person who cannot or is unwilling to write and often witnessed by another; *also*: a personal cipher used in place of a signature [...] (2) a visible sign [...] (3) a character, device, label, brand, seal, or other

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[28] Noah Webster, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1971) 1382-83. Later in Howe's career, this twentieth-century publication of the dictionary would be replaced by the original version of Webster's work as a principal resource for her compositional process. Due to its prevalence in nineteenth-century New England, the earlier edition is extremely significant for Howe, who writes the following: "Since [using the 1971 edition] I have come to believe that what is crucial when trying to understand what makes the literary expression of Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Dickinson, and to a lesser extent Hawthorne singularly North American is their use—and in Dickinson's case, intentional misuse—of Noah Webster's original *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828). [...] Emily Dickinson herself owned an 1844 reprint of Webster's updated 1840 edition" (*BM*, xi). See Howe's essay "Incloser" (*BM*, 43-86) for an example of her frequent use and reliance on Webster's work.

sign put on an article esp. to show the maker or owner, to certify quality, or for identification [...] (5) a written or printed symbol [...]

3. **a.** ATTENTION, NOTICE [...]

b. IMPORTANCE, DISTINCTION [...]

To this very abridged list, one must also join the multiple corresponding definitions given for the word's use as a verb, further adding to its complexity. With regard to poetry, those definitions relating to inscription are particularly relevant in their highlighting of varying visual materialities—from writing and drawing, to intaglio and sculpture.[29] Nevertheless, as will be developed further on, part of Howe's poetry works to construct texts wherein the more immaterial, abstract meanings are bound up in the concrete.

An early example of this word's importance to Howe's poetics is her 1978 sequence of poems *Secret History of the Dividing Line*, which opens with a two-stanza poem, which—drawing from the aforementioned dictionary entry—evokes those marks that delineate, define, bind, and divide (see figure 5.5). Regarding this passage the poet, and former colleague of Howe's at SUNY-Buffalo, Charles Bernstein observes the multiple interpretations of this key word in Howe's poetics:

> The mark of an enclosure. The border between. That which mars the un-differentiated, soils the soil, establishes identity, fixes territory, announces sovereignty. For what's been marked is claimed, possessed—the sign of a stake (state). At the same time, a mark is a token, that which stands for something else, the visible trace of a sign, metaphor for a word, substitute for a signature and so standing for a name.[30]

While history's territorial marks, and the clashes of possession they create, are foregrounded in this collection, and the later "Thorow," it is Bernstein's latter observations that are more relevant to "Melville's Marginalia": those "visible trace[s]" made by the reader/writer in the margins that both identify presence, and signal

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[29] This aspect is more clearly seen in the first two definitions in the 1844 edition of Webster's dictionary as "A visible line made by drawing one substance on another," and "A line, groove, or depression made by stamping or cutting." Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols. (Amherst, Massachusetts: J.S. & C. Adams Brothers, 1844). Available at the website for the Emily Dickinson Lexicon < http://edl.byu.edu/webster >.

[30] Charles Bernstein, "'Passed by Examination': Paragraphs for Susan Howe," *The Difficulties* 3.2 (1989) 84.

absence. "Marginalia," Howe writes, "may be called speed reading or ghost writing."[31]

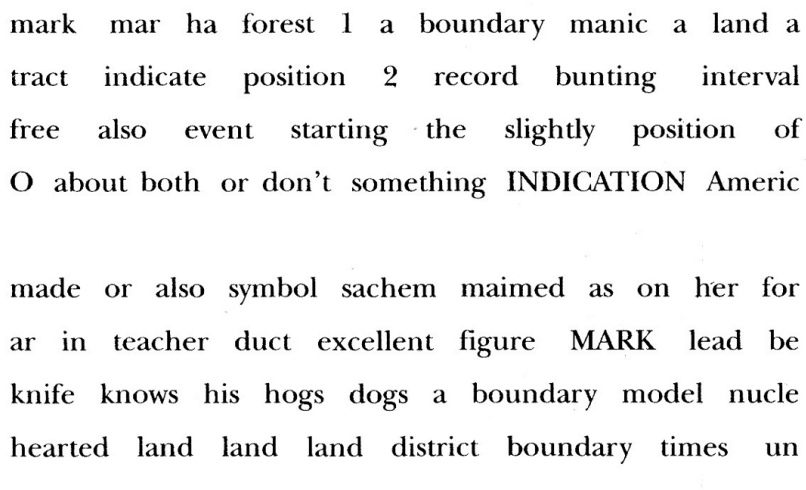
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Figure 5.5: The opening page *to Secret History of the Dividing Line* (*FS*, 89).

The sequence contains a variety of typographic deviations from the typescript page's uniform spatial grid: lines printed upside down and at all angles, phrases jammed together or overlapping, slices or fragments of words, and individual letters breaking apart or compacted into the same space. However, Howe's understanding of marginalia concerns its own singular iconography, occupying a unique category. As particularly imagistic in nature, it is situated in the liminal space between the verbal and the visual, or, as Howe has remarked, it exists "on the cusp between writing and drawing."[32] These markings are in many ways untranslatable, push the limits of transcription, or even simply escape explanation. In any case, such acts of transference will inevitably fall short in that the specific materiality of the original is lost. Nevertheless, much of Howe's typographic arrangements approximate the imagery of marginalia, in an attempt to impart the material context, and convey the poet's understanding of every mark on the page as signifying. Though the rearranged words and letters may still be distinguished, and therefore read, the immediate visual perception is often one of non-alphabetic markings. In the process of deciphering the language of/in the "marks," the reader thus partakes in Howe's invitation to read the

[31] Howe, *BM*, 15.
[32] Howe, Interview by Keller, 26.

visual materiality for meaning: "[...] words, even single letters, are images. The look of a word is part of its meaning—the meaning that escapes the dictionary definition, or rather doesn't *escape* but is bound up with it."[33] In her study of Henri Michaux's experimental "graphic writing," Margaret Rigaud-Drayton offers the following commentary, which is particularly applicable to this aspect of Howe's work: "[...] typographically unconventional fragments take on the function of visual signs, even as they remain discursively legible texts [...] they transcend the opposition between 'to show and name; to appear and say; to reproduce and articulate; to imitate and mean; to look at and read' [...]."[34] As in all of Howe's poetry, readers must approach the text with a different interpretive process, wherein the eye is not only acutely aware of differences between font sizes and styles, but also takes account of how materiality and semantics crossover.

For the French translation of "Melville's Marginalia" by Théâtre Typographique in 1997, a list of the various graphic signs Melville used to mark passages in his books—compiled by Wilson Walker Cowen—is reproduced on the cover page (see figure 5.6). Before even beginning the sequence, then, readers are introduced to the concepts of gestural iconicity and textual materiality.[35] The language of Howe's text—that is, the actual letters of the alphabet—shares a great deal of graphic qualities with these signs, many of which resemble letters themselves, or punctuation marks. Howe does, in fact, include those markings that could be reproduced on the typewriter: x, +, o, brackets, and underlining. Such qualities, along with a keen attention to the space and surface of the page itself, are part of the text's processes of signification, therefore requiring altered reading habits, wherein any attempted distinctions between a sign or symbol and a letter, break down. Such categories are, at the very least, called into question, as both are understood to possess communicative potential, and falter in the perfect transmission of poetic thought and meaning. There are junctures as well as disjunctures. In her essay "These Flames and

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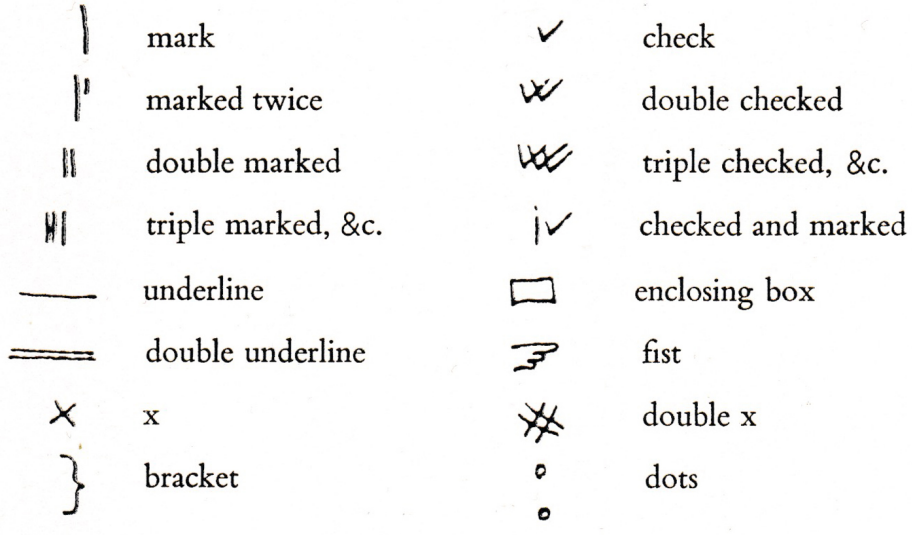
[33] Howe, Interview by Keller, 6-7.

[34] Margaret Rigaud-Drayton, *Henri Michaux: Poetry, Painting, and the Universal Sign* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 148.

[35] This volume also has the advantage of several facsimiles of passages Melville marked in his books: a bracketed quotation by Edmund Burke, from Matthew Arnold's *Essays in Criticism* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1865); two extracts from separate poems by Mangan (both "check-marked"), and a press clipping on the poet, all from *Poems by James Clarence Mangan* (New York: Haverty, 1859). Another such facsimile—Luke 13:34-5 in *The New Testament and the Book of Psalms* (New York: American Bible Society, 1844)—is reproduced in the front matter of Howe's book of essays *The Birth-mark.*

Generosities of the Heart," on the manuscripts of Emily Dickinson, Howe writes, "Spaces between letters, dashes, apostrophes, commas, crosses, form networks of signs and discontinuities"; she goes own to state that "In the precinct of Poetry a word, the space around a word, each letter, every mark, silence, or sound, volatizes an inner law of form—moves on a rigorous line."[36] Textual elements of this nature are, as Howe has often remarked in her criticism, all too frequently overlooked as non-expressive and thus non-essential, or simply ignored as superfluous. However, relating Dickinson's unconventionally visual use of dashes and crosses to Melville's marginal markings, Howe identifies both practices as "another kind of writing," which, so often seen to amount to nothing more than various "'imperfection[s],'" is unfortunately neglected.[37]



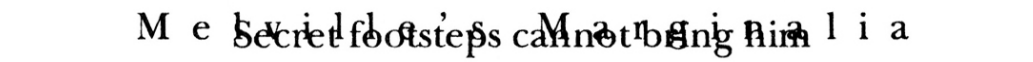


Figure 5.6: Cowen's list of Melville's marginal markings. *Melville's Marginalia*, Harvard Dissertations in American and English Literature, Vol. 1 (New York: Garland, 1987) xiv. Below is an example of the visual results of Howe's typographic arrangements (*NCM*, 113).

Marginalia, including that of Melville, is, of course, not composed solely of graphic signs. In consulting Cowen's compilation, Howe is certainly attune to the

[36] Howe, *BM*, 143, 145.
[37] Howe, *BM*, 9.

marks of this writing-drawing, but pays equal attention to the words, notes, and comments Melville jotted down in the margins. The "[other] kind of writing" seen in such spaces brings together on the page marks of both standard legibility, and those requiring one to read the illegible.[38] Such a combination is, in part, what leads Howe to consider marginalia as a form of automatic writing. Among Susan Howe's archival papers for "Melville's Marginalia" at the University of California in San Diego is an "outtake," in which the preface was to include passages on this topic. It begins by quoting two paragraphs from Maurice Blanchot's *The Space of Literature*, in which he states the following: "Automatic writing tended to suppress constraints, suspend intermediaries, reject all mediation. It put the hand that writes in contact with something original; it made of this active hand [...] an independent power, over which no one had authority anymore. [...] This hand seems to put the depths of language at our command." This type of freed writing, as Blanchot goes on to state, "give[s] form to the initial poetic demand," and is thus, in theory, hyper-expressive of an author's working mind, as it bypasses, to some extent, the trappings and slips of language. Handwritten above the passages Howe directly states, "Marginalia is automatic writing."[39] As Howe followed in Cowen's work "what trails [Melville] follow[ed] through words of others," such a view of marginalia leads her to the conclusion that "Melville's marks [are] so much a key again to his own character."[40] Howe finds the identity of Melville through such materiality: the author in the written gestures, comments, notes, and identifications of his marginal markings.

In the citations of Blanchot's work, there is, however, the sense that such writing is, in a certain manner, inaccessible, producing a language that is silent or unspeakable: "This is what automatic writing initially reminds us: the language whose approach it ensures is not a power—is not power to speak." And yet paradoxically this form of inspiration does not "[lack] when it lacks," but "express[es], in this lack

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[38] See Craig Dworkin's multidisciplinary study *Reading the Illegible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003).

[39] Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982) 179. Howe's citation contains a number of emendations to the passage, and does not include the latter portion of the quotation above. SHP Box 48 f. 1.

[40] The first part of the quotation is from *NCM* 100; the second part is from a letter written to Bénédicte Vilgrain and Bernard Rival. In the same letter Howe writes, "[...] this is what M[elville] always goes for the sadness of people and suffering characters"; and regarding one of Melville's marks to a Mangan poem (reproduced in the translation): "[The passage] has Byron, regret, and time—and the merest singular sad check from Melville." SHP Box 50 f. 1.

as well."[41] It is precisely this paradox that intrigues and fascinates Howe: communicative silence, marginal and marginalized, *other* languages. Several pages later in his text, Blanchot refers to Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Howe's typescript page includes the majority of the citation from his "The Letter of Lord Chandos" (1902): "[...] the language in which it might have been given me not only to write but to think is neither Latin nor English, nor Italian nor Spanish, but a language of which I know not a word. It is the language which mute things speak to me [...]."[42] Marginalia, in Howe's view then, captures something of the poetic impulse, thought, or "enthusiasm" that remains on the edge of articulation, sense and nonsense—a form of materialized silence or "unconscious talking."[43]

PARENTHETICAL AREAS

Howe's insistence on such textual features being of crucial importance to the understanding of the work and character of writers—like Dickinson, Melville, or Shelley (amongst others)—logically carries over into her own writing. Her process of poetic composition is indeed as engaged and attentive to the materiality of language on the printed page, which, Bernstein asserts, may be looked at as a kind of "border marking the intersection of sight and words [...] engendering a hyperactive awareness of the page's opacity and impenetrability."[44] Yet, in a work like "Melville's Marginalia," it is at least as often the case that the visibility of the material surface

[41] Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, 179-80. Howe's typescript outtake does not cite these words; in its stead, before a bracketed ellipsis, she simply writes, "The Limits of Language." SHP Box 48 f. 1.

[42] Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, 183.

[43] Howe, *BM*, 15. Earlier in her "Introduction" to *The Birth-mark*, Howe cites a passage from Edgar Allan Poe's "Marginalia" (in volume 16 of the *Complete Works*): "In the *marginalia* [...] we talk only to ourselves; we therefore talk freshly—boldly—originally—with *abandonnement* [...]. It may be as well to observe [...] nonsense [as] the essential sense of the Marginal Note" (7). Though printed in *The Birth-mark*, this passage was originally a part of the research materials (labeled "ca. 1991") for "Melville's Marginalia" in Howe's archival papers. SHP Box 49 f. 2.

As with *mark*, the word *enthusiasm* is a key term for Howe, who again takes her definition from Webster. She quotes the following meaning for an *enthusiast*: "'1. One who imagines he has special or supernatural converse with God, or special communications from him. 2. One who imagination is warmed, one whose mind is highly excited with the love or in the pursuit of an object; a person of ardent zeal; as, an *enthusiast* in poetry or music. 3. One of elevated fancy or exalted ideals'" (*BM*, 11). Later she quotes Emerson's essay "Circles": "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. The way of life is wonderful; it is by abandonment" (*BM*, 144). The mention of "abandonment" provides a link, through the citation from Poe, between *enthusiasm* and *marginalia*.

[44] Bernstein, *The Difficulties*, 84. Other critics have made similar statements in reference to Howe, such as Craig Dworkin, who writes of "the visible surface of discourse" and "the illusion of the transparency of the printed page. *Reading the Illegible*, 40-41.

occurs in the absence of words—not the printed page, but the page left blank. Handwritten marginal markings certainly differ graphically than the typeset language they annotate, but they are perhaps primarily identified in terms of their spatial relation to the text. The location on the page is fundamental in distinguishing and categorizing the main text from the paratext: [Greek] *para-* "beside" + [Latin] *textus* "tissue, literary style."[45] Decontextualized and stripped of its typographic qualities, a paratextual element might easily be construed as part of the principle text. Melville's rather eloquent annotation to "Maurice de Guérin," in his copy of Matthew Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, is a prime example: "So is everyone influenced—the robust, the weak—all constitutions—by the very fibre of their flesh, & chalk of the bones. We are what we were made."[46] On a purely linguistic basis, Melville's marginal notes would most likely be indistinguishable from Arnold's prose. This is especially true of editorial comments and footnotes, which also share the same page, but in contrast to marginalia, are typeset as well. Nonetheless, Howe equates the two on the basis of their mutual location *beside* or *outside* the body of the source text: "You could say the marginalia idea is something about letting footnotes take over the text. [...] That's one of the things I have such fun with in *Melville's Marginalia*; in a sense, it's one huge footnote [...]."[47]

It is in the second part of the sequence, which the poet identifies as the heart of the work,[48] where the marginal frame is most significant, and where the realization of Howe's comment may be seen. These poems, though certainly less abstract typographically than those in the preceding section, are not without their visual significance. In the poems at the sequence's start, the quotations used are scattered and overlapping in space, not bound by standard poetic lineation. In the later section, however, the syntactic accretion of documentary fragments and linguistic scraps is compacted into squared structural units, tightened into the exact center of the page's surrounding white space. Incorporating aspects and techniques from her years as a visual artist, Howe's "play with footnotes" begins with an approach to the page as a

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[45] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Third Edition, eds. Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[46] Herman Melville, marginalia on page 99 in Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1865). Houghton Library, *AC85.M4977.Zz865a.

[47] Howe, Interview by Keller, 27.

[48] SHP Box 50 f. 6. In a letter to Vilgrain/Rival, Howe writes, "[...] the poems in part 2 [...] are the heart of the work."

canvas, or field (in Olson's terminology). With regard to the *printed* page, the text would then occupy the place of the artwork, with the surrounding margins as the "absent" frame. In allowing the latter to "take over the text," Howe's method involves, in a sense, a reversal of the figure and the ground. The width of the majority of the poems approximates the standard measurements for margins of 2.5 to 3.5 centimeters. To be sure, there are variations in line length—and the occasional, significant difference—but a clear visual regularity is established when reading through the sequence.[49] It is as if a short column of words, originally written in the bordering white space, had been transposed to the center of the page, displacing the once foregrounded lines: the marginalia, or the footnote, overtakes the text.

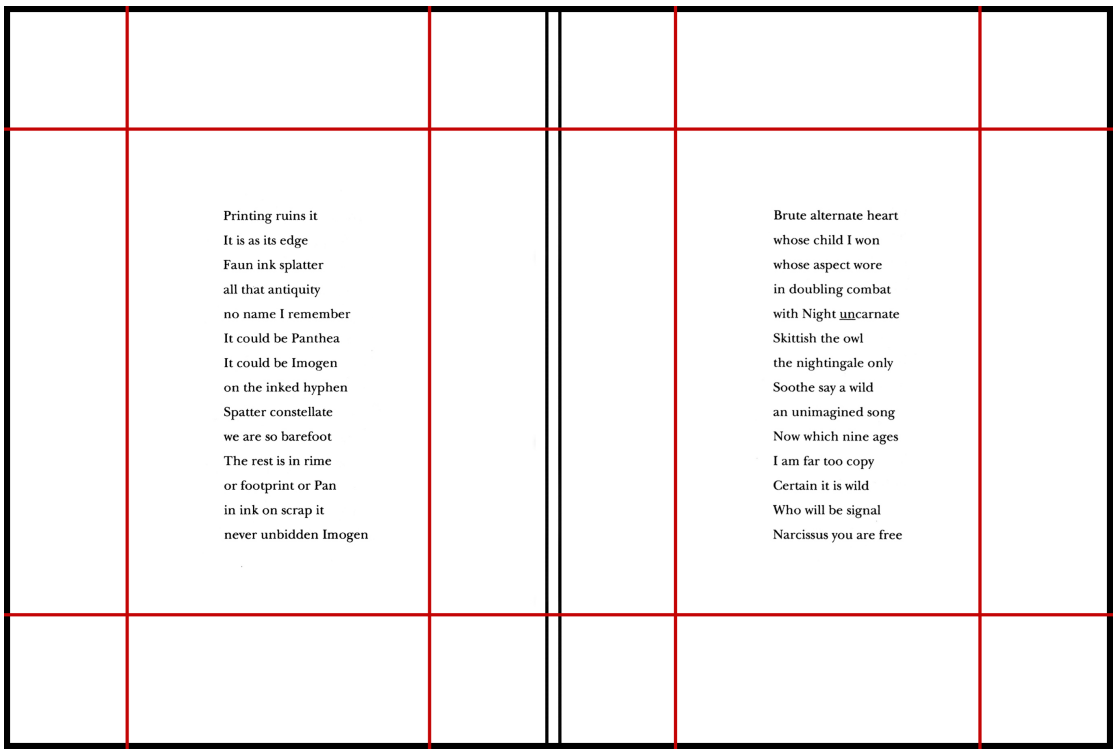

Figure 5.7: Diagrammed page opening of "Melville's Marginalia" (*NCM*, 156-57) showing the relative widths of the centered stanzas to an all-around 2.5 cm. margin indicated in red.

As well as the typographic form of the poems as they relate to paratext, further interpretations of the predominant white space of the pages are necessary. "In 'Melville's Marginalia,'" Howe states, "it was desperately important to have the space

[49] This is especially true for the last sixteen poems. The more prominent stanzaic regularity at the end of the sequence provides a typographic counterpart to the radical irregularity of the poems in the opening pages, as a part of the sequence's counter-envelope structure.

around individual sections. By and large, if I'd say I had to have something alone on a page, Peter [Glassgold, Howe's editor at New Directions at the time] would allow it."[50] The statement clearly demonstrates Howe's consideration of the page as the poetic unit in her compositional process, and thus, such interpretations should also account for the interaction between the blank space and the texts printed within it. First, though, it is worth noting Howe's insistence on the poems being perfectly centered on the page. In the numerous drafts of the poems found in Howe's papers at UCSD, one repeatedly finds typescripts with this typographic instruction, amongst others, inserted in bold print: "[CENTER THIS POEM VERTICALLY & HORIZONTALLY]," "center whole on page v & h," "center page h & v," etc.[51] In addition to the aforementioned inversion of "textual canvas" and "marginal frame," this strict page layout also creates the image of an expanded, double-width margin. This rearrangement is a visual opposite to the traditional, textually-dominant layout of the accepted, edited, published, canonized texts Howe's work eschews or pushes against. As a visual symbol for those writers outside of such literary conventions, as well as socio-cultural and academic institutions, here the margins dominate the page, thus metaphorically affording more space for the possibility of those lost or excluded voices to be heard.

Accordingly, the page left blank is to be seen as a space of unrestricted potential and literary, or artistic freedom. One of Howe's most intriguing and significant statements concerning visual materiality's place in her poetics was given during an interview conducted by Janet Ruth Falon on 3 December 1986, in which the following exchange took place:

> FALON: If you had to paint your writing, if you had one canvas on which to paint your writing, what might it look like?
>
> HOWE: Blank. It would be blank. It would be a white canvas. White.[52]

Nearly ten years later, citing suprematism and minimalist painting, as well as sculpture, the poet offered some clarifications as to its intended meaning: "[...] in

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[50] Howe, Interview by Keller, 18.

[51] The occurrences are too frequent to list; the examples given are from SHP Box 46 f. 8. The instruction is also frequently found in the correspondence with Vilgrain/Rival for the French edition; in particular, "As is clear, poems in part 2. all need to be centered vertically and horizontally on pages." Box 50 f. 4.

[52] Howe, Interview by Janet Ruth Falon, 42.

poetry I am concerned with the space of the page apart from the words on it. I would say that the most beautiful thing of all is a page before the word interrupts it."[53] The beauty of the blank page is in its boundless potential for creative expression, be it a line of poetry or a word, a drawing or a single mark. Like the color white itself, the page is, though seemingly an absence of color, in fact a uniform combination of all color. Through their emphasis on the unmarked page, the expanded margins in part two of "Melville's Marginalia," therefore, represent a freedom from the limitations of languages and the literary conventions so often imposed upon them. "Infinitely open," Howe remarks, "and anything possible."[54] Furthermore, these blank margins are, by extension, representative of silence, the limitless capacity for sound of which is permanently on the edge of interruption.

Paradoxically, the previous interpretation of the figure/ground reversal and this view of the poet's use of white space work together toward the same end, as the foundation for both is the prioritization of the marginal over the central, and the marginalized over the celebrated. In the first view, this is accomplished by an act of textual displacement; in the second, by a reconfiguration of spatial proportion. Ironically, Howe's deceptively simple, double-spaced stanzas actually pull the reader's attention in both directions at once. The immediately perceivable single-column forms of the texts, tightly compacted into the center of the page as they are, draw the focus away from the edges and margins. The reading, then, takes place as one would typically expect: left to right, top to bottom, squared on the page. At the same time, however, the atypically dominant blank space of the margins vies for the reader's gaze, inviting one to turn, or return, to the edges—to "dwell in possibility."[55] "The reader," therefore, "reads empty paper."[56]

Lastly, a third, alternative understanding of the spatial arrangement in this section further develops the typographic signification therein. In addition to ideas of marginalization, the sequence of poems also raises the more threatening act of erasure. As with the theme of the marginal, erasure is understood both in terms of

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[53] Howe, Interview by Keller, 7. The artists Howe mentions are Malevich, Ad Reinhardt, Agnes Martin, Robert Ryman, Marcia Hafif, and David von Schlegell (the poet's second husband).

[54] Howe, Interview by Keller, 7.

[55] This opening line from one of Emily Dickinson's most famous poems (nº657) reflects Howe's view of Dickinson's radically innovative compositional process, and use of the page as a field in a manner "Outside authority, eccentric and unique" (*My Emily Dickinson*, 28). As Howe writes, Dickinson was "Really alone at a real frontier, dwelling in Possibility [...]" (76).

[56] Howe, *BM*, 58.

materiality and language—i.e. the physical gesture of removing written words from the page—and in terms of socio-cultural issues—i.e. the metaphorical sense of intentional exclusion from study or memory. The two are never approached separately, though the former provides the means of reaching the latter. Accordingly, Howe's attention to even those marks left after erasure is first touched on in the opening pages of the preface to "Melville's Marginalia":

> Some marginal notes in Melville's books have been erased by someone. The erasures puzzle Cowen. Much of the erased material concerns Melville's feelings and reactions to women. [...] Still—before leaving the persistent problem of eradication in the marginal body of his subject matter Wilson Walker Cowen meditates on the provenance of the corruption. Elizabeth Shaw Melville is probably the culprit. She is the Perpetrator-With-Eraser.
>
> (*NCM*, 98)

The issue of erasure is thus introduced as not only problematic, but mysterious—a point of contention, and an act of transgression. It is only directly mentioned at two other points in the sequence, both in part two, extracted here:

> All other simulacra
> marked then ERASED
> Some green forest annotation
> failed have forgotten
> Between two negations (*NCM*, 120)

> Object is something erased
> is character the opposite
> An author-evacuated text (*NCM*, 122)

Both poems, and to a slightly lesser extent the prose citation, effectively link the material and immaterial acts of erasure. The marginalia and annotations—the simulacra representing the author—that are eliminated, translate to an "evacuation" of that author's character (as in the example of Melville's feelings toward women).

In the case of Mangan, it is not a material absence on the page, but a form of literary erasure at the hands of social and academic institutions. This aspect of

Mangan's life occurs throughout Howe's sequence, but is explicitly stated in a passage that opposes him to Melville, in the closing pages of the preface:

> While Herman Melville's literary reputation was being raised from near oblivion to preeminence during the 1920s James Clarence Mangan's critical rating was travelling the other way.
>
> In 1992, with the exception of David Lloyd's illuminating *Nationalism and Minor Literature: James Clarence Mangan and the Emergence of Cultural Nationalism* (University of California Press, 1987), the man with the name so remarkably like *margin*, has been all but forgotten by serious literary criticism.
>
> What is a parenthesis? (*NCM*, 114)

Melville's canonical status, well before the early 1990s when Howe began composing these poems, would certainly eliminate him as a candidate for a marginalized author. However, the erasure of some of his marginalia affords Howe an entryway, by metaphorical association, to the rather contrary situation of Mangan. It is the Irish poet who emerges as the central figure in part two of the sequence, and the parenthetical status, to which Howe suggests he had been relegated, appears merely a step toward being—as the poem states several pages later—"forgotten / Between two negations."

To return to the specific typographic layout in question, those "two negations" find visual parallels: first, in the punctuation of a parenthesis; and second, in the blank, left and right margins that enclose the poems addressing Mangan's life as a nonconformist. The "absent parentheses" of the margins convey a layering of erasure upon erasure. According to this alternative interpretation of the spatial arrangement, then, the surrounding space represents the encroaching danger of erasure. Consequently, while the occasional word, line, or stanza is fractured or broken down, the visual impression in this second section—following the very typographically abstract poems in the sequence's initial pages—is one of language and text compressed within the "blank" force of marginalizing parentheses. The dual Mangan-Bartleby figure the reader finds in these pages remains fixed and isolated in the space of the page, as an image of social and cultural exclusion.

Given Susan Howe's career-long poetic program to "tenderly lift from the dark side of history, voices that are anonymous, slighted—inarticulate,"[57] the latter interpretation should, in fact, be applied only insofar as it highlights such endeavors. Viewing the page in such a way serves as a recognition-through-representation of the danger of this type of "erasing" exclusion, in order to warn against its consequences, and speak out against the continuation of those similar practices that have plagued literary history. The surrounding white space so crucial to these poems, as Howe pointed out, is paradoxically twofold: a spatial domination of the margins (and marginalized) over and above the printed text, and the surrounding menace of erasure that would first relegate certain voices to parenthetical afterthought, then bury them in archival oblivion. It is simultaneously the blank canvas's unrestricted possibility of poetic language freed from the static restrictions of print, and a reminder of the importance of the materiality of the printed page in preserving the literary voices who have interrupted that silence. The material page is that porous border where text and blank space interact in the same field. "The relational space," as Howe writes elsewhere, "is the thing that's alive with something from somewhere else."[58]

PARALLEL MARKS

As the interaction that takes place on that relational page depends equally on the printed text and the space in between and around it, the structural composition of each line of poetry is another of Howe's principal concerns for the poems in part two of "Melville's Marginalia." Amongst the stacks of typescript drafts for this section—comprising hundreds of pages, with twenty to thirty versions of nearly all of the forty-one poems—several recurrent revisions may be noticed:[59]

1) Variations of single words and fragments, or the sequencing of words, in an individual line of verse.

[57] Howe, *ET*, 14.
[58] Howe, *MN*, 58.
[59] SHP Box 46 f. 2-3 together contain a roughly 4-5 cm. stack of typed pages; Box 47 f. 4-8 all contain sets of typescripts measuring approximately 2-3 cm. in stacked height; Box 48 f. 4-6 each contain stacks of 1.5-2.5 cm.

The listed revisions are particularly evident in Box 47 f. 4, labeled "Nonconformist's Memorial (1993) – 'Melville's Marginalia': drafts, outtakes, 1991. 'Outtakes Guilford Summer 1991' Part 1."

2) The shifting and rearranging of the order of lines in a poem, without alteration to any one of the lines.
3) The shuffling of lines across the entire section, whereby individual lines are displaced from one poem to another.
4) The splitting of one poem across two pages; or conversely, fusing two poems onto the same page.

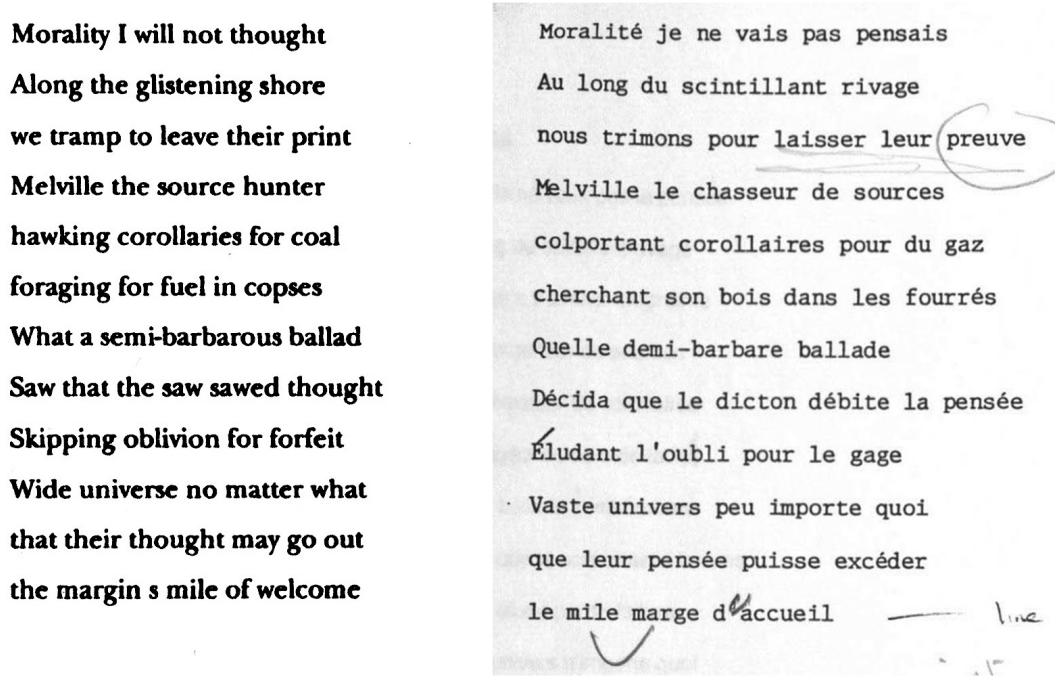
One might easily anticipate, or even expect, these types of revisions for any manuscript of poetry; however, what is characteristic of the alterations to this set of poems is Howe's priority for not necessarily the content or meaning of the poems, but for the sight and sound of the lines. Regarding number one of the above list, words are often swapped or modified for the purpose of perfecting either the length of the line on the page, or the sequence of sounds. As is most often the case, it is both simultaneously, for in Howe's view the visual and acoustic materialities of words are inseparable. Numerous times (in interviews, lectures, and publications) Howe has cited Joseph Beuys's statement that "every mark on paper is an acoustic signal." On one occasion she followed the quotation by stating, "Every piece of a letter, every shape of a letter, every word, how words are placed on the page, the minute you put a mark on a page, it's acoustic."[60] Elsewhere Howe writes, "Words sounding as seen the *same moment on paper* will always serve as the closest I can come to cross-identification vis-à-vis counterparts in a document universe."[61]

Evidence of this is seen in the correspondence between Howe and the French translation team of Bénédicte Vilgrain, Bernard Rival, and Dominique Fourcade. On a draft of a translation of the poem on *NCM* page 125, Howe's post-it states: "I <u>hate</u> the way it looks as is," and notes that the last line, particularly contentious to translate, is "too short" (figure 5.8). The concern for Howe is not only the multiplicity of meanings the line was intended to express, but also the visual relation it has with the

[60] David Grubbs, "Shadowy Hush Twilight: Two Collaborations," *Chicago Review* 55.1 (Winter 2010) 190. The quotation comes from Howe and Grubbs's lecture at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2008. Grubbs—a composer who has collaborated with Howe for multimedia performances of her work, including four recordings—followed the citation with these pertinent questions: "Does it mean that every mark is capable of being translated into sound? Does it mean that every mark waits to be translated into its unique, determinate sound? Should the emphasis in this particular quotation [...] be the suggestion that encoded within visual imagery is the experience of duration?" Amongst other places, similar comments from Howe are found in the Keller interview: "You're hearing something you see" (33).

[61] Howe, *MN*, 60, emphasis added.

eleven preceding lines.[62] Seen as a whole, the text and space of the page must harmonize.



Morality I will not thought
Along the glistening shore
we tramp to leave their print
Melville the source hunter
hawking corollaries for coal
foraging for fuel in copses
What a semi-barbarous ballad
Saw that the saw sawed thought
Skipping oblivion for forfeit
Wide universe no matter what
that their thought may go out
the margin s mile of welcome

Moralité je ne vais pas pensais
Au long du scintillant rivage
nous trimons pour laisser leur preuve
Melville le chasseur de sources
colportant corollaires pour du gaz
cherchant son bois dans les fourrés
Quelle demi-barbare ballade
Décida que le dicton débite la pensée
Éludant l'oubli pour le gage
Vaste univers peu importe quoi
que leur pensée puisse excéder
le mile marge d'accueil — line

Figure 5.8: [Left] *NCM* 125; [Right] SHP Box 50 f. 2. The handwritten notes to this draft attest to Howe's objection to the problematic nature of the irregularity of line lengths in the French translation of the poem. The same is the case for the early translations of many other poems in the sequence.

With regard to an earlier poem in the sequence (*NCM*, 121), the exchanges between Howe and the French translators reveal the primacy of the sight and sound of the poems in "Melville's Marginalia" over their semantic content. The line in question originally reads: "Drag handcuff along fence." To the initial proposed translation, Howe comments:

> I have to say that "Traine menotte le long de cloture" really bothers me. It is so musical without the "de." "le long cloture" is perfect and makes the line much better visually, but I am giving in to everyone here. Are you sure it *really* doesn't make sense? Can't we just not make sense once?"[63]

[62] SHP Box 50 f. 2. Among the many difficulties in translating this poem, the last line was particularly problematic, due to the double meaning of Howe's typographic arrangement: "the margin s mile of welcome." Her handwritten note on this early draft reads, "Smile—they have gone only for margin's mile not margin's smile + that is crucial [...]."

[63] SHP Box 50 f. 4. The italics are in the original, the underlining is added.

In Howe's compositional process, semantics are often subordinated to the musicality of words and the visual meanings of the shapes of written/printed language. The event of the sight of a line of poetry—which moves through vision into sound—is the meaning of language. In an personal interview conducted by Will Montgomery, Howe responded to the question of "non-meaning, sound, [and] the visual aspects of language" by stating, "But that *is* meaning."[64] In "Melville's Marginalia," as in all of Howe's poetry, the visual materiality of the word and the line is as crucial to the poetry's operations of signification as the dictionary. Howe again raises the same issue in her response to the proposed translation of the next page in the sequence. She writes to Vilgrain/Rival: "'the sleep gone steering row--' has to be perhaps said another way rather than straight translation for meaning? There are so many lines like that!"[65] Throughout "Melville's Marginalia" the lines of poetry are visually composed in relation to one another. The completion of a final draft depends, in part, on how those lines function visually within the overall form.

The next two types of revisions on the list, demonstrate the poet's attention to not only the visual and acoustic qualities *within* a line, but also *across* lines; that is, a view of the poem as a series of juxtaposed or paratactic lines that, while often fragmentary and with no explicit connection, form a visual whole of interwoven sounds. Examples of these edits are found in the drafts for (ultimately) the ninth poem in the sequence, one of the more idiosyncratic in the second section:

Narcis if I h
"Forct" in copy
"h" from bough
Thissby this
hishis spirt
I th For th

If I am the N
This an error
Fy (*NCM*, 127)

[64] Will Montgomery, *The Poetry of Susan Howe: History, Theology, Authority* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 130.
[65] SHP Box 50 f. 6. The line in question is from *NCM* 122.

This poem is one of several that break from the rectangular, block form that prevails in part two, and in three of the earlier drafts—which total thirty-five in all[66]—the typographic layout went even as far as abandoning the justified left margin (see figure 5.9). All other drafts are justified hard left, and the vast majority do approximate the column-like structure—more so than in the final poem—that results from Howe's extensive revisions of the line lengths. Though the poet is clearly not aiming for equal lengths in the three drafts below, it is noteworthy that the perfection of the lines is often a matter of a single letter: "th" or "the" in line three; "sh" or "th" in line four; and "Nar" or "Narc" in line five. Across drafts nº 33, nº 34, and nº 35, only two alterations are made: one letter is changed (and so the word as well), and one letter shifts between upper and lower case. The lines "as dedication m*u*st / *L*ure to reconquer" in the former, are amended to "as dedication m*o*st / *l*ure to reconquer," with the only revision in the final draft being a return to the capitalized /*L*/.[67] Minor though these changes may seem, for Howe they warranted retyping the entire poem on a new page.

Draft nº 10	*Draft nº 11*	*Draft nº 12*
Narcuss if I h	Narcuss If I h	Narcuss If I h
am if I	am if I	am if I
th N	the N	the N
I the For sh	I the For th	I the For th
I thou Nar	I thou Narc	I thou Narc
I will not	I will not	I will not

Figure 5.9: Three early drafts of *NCM* page 127 from the summer of 1991. SHP Box 47 f. 4.

Lastly concerning these three drafts, the line "I will not"—also appearing in twenty-one other drafts in the set—was not ultimately kept for this poem, but was

[66] The first twenty-two are found in SHP Box 47 f. 4; eight in Box 47 f. 5; one in Box 47 f. 9; and the final four in Box 48 f. 7.

[67] SHP Box 48 f. 7.

instead shifted to the middle of the first line of the poem two pages earlier in the final draft of the sequence: "Morality I will not thought" (*NCM*, 125). In addition to the internal rhyme, "thought," as Howe notes on a translated draft, was chosen for the "silent h."[68] The breath sound of a letter that is visible but silent, is a key aspect in the stuttering poem in which "I will not" originated: "'h' from bough" (*NCM*, 127). This example serves to demonstrate that as a part of Howe's meticulous revisions, shifting lines throughout the poems of the entire sequence often involves basing such changes on connections drawn between the materiality of each poem.

Surprisingly, an even earlier draft—number eight of thirty-five—contains all of the lines in the published version, in the same order. Apart from one extra letter and one lower-case letter, it differs only in its arrangement of the lines into stanzas. There are, furthermore, five other similar drafts in the set (see figure 5.10). While there is the occasional edit to a line internally, it is clear that the principal issues Howe was attempting to resolve in this version were the order and succession of the nine lines, and their layout on the page.[69] As the first four drafts demonstrate, a regularized form of three triadic stanzas seemed all but definitive, if not planned in advance. Given the level of spatial abstraction in section one of the sequence, such an arrangement would appear somewhat poetically divergent. However, the use of space in Howe's work—whether it be the violence of fractured text in *Eikon Basilike*, or the "tombstones" of the five or six-line, two-stanza poems in *Souls of the Labadie Tract*— is not merely innovative for the sake of innovation, but a fundamental agent in the process of creating meaning.[70]

In fact, regarding this set of drafts, the even arrangement may not be as conventional as it first seems, given the thematic elements of the poem. The first stanza addresses visual and/or acoustic elision: the fragmented "Narcis[sus]," the contracted "Forct" or "For'ct," and the silent, extracted /*h*/s. The second stanza, on the contrary, shifts to doubling and combinatory reflection: the multiplied "[This] by this"

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[68] SHP Box 50 f. 2.

[69] Interlinear variations from the published version include: capitalization ("THissby," "hishis Spirit," "if I am the N"), punctuation ("'For'ct'"), and the additional letter in "I the For th."

[70] Regarding *Eikon Basilike*, Howe tells Keller, "the sections that are all vertically jagged are based around the violence of the execution of Charles I, the violence of history, the violence of that particular event [...] (8). For analyses of this sequence see Back, Montgomery, Joyce, and Bloomfield. Working with David Grubbs, Howe described *Souls of the Labadie Tract* as "a graveyard poem, and likened the individual poems, surrounded as they are by the space of the page, to a collection of tombstones." Grubbs, 189.

and "hishis," and the suggested substitution in the last line. The third stanza acts as a form of conclusion to the preceding lines, responding to the approximate conditional statement in "If–[then]–This." The whole form, then, becomes vaguely reminiscent of a categorical or hypothetical syllogism: Stanza 1's major premise of fragmentation ⇒ Stanza 2's minor premise of duality ⇒ Stanza 3's conclusion of error. Although the final version may still impart a sense of the structures of logic, by drafts nº19 and nº31 such a spatial interpretation begins to break down. In nº19, a blank line is substituted for the implied exchange in line seven of the preceding draft, conveying an erasure of identity in the loss of the personal singularity of "I." This sense of loss is carried over into nº31 by restoring the seventh line of draft nº8: the "N" may stand, as one critic writes, for *Narrator*, *Narcissus*, and/or *Nothing*.[71] Moreover, the poet's closure of the gap between the first two stanzas offers a visual representation of the collapse of separation between the "I" and the reflected other, as well as between words and letters in copies and elisions.[72]

Draft nº8	*Draft nº13*	*Draft nº15*
Narcis if I h	Narcis if I h	if I am the N
'Forct' in copy	'For'ct' in copy	Thissby this
'h' from bough	'h' from bough	hishis spirit
Thissby this	Thissby this	Narcis if I h
hishis spirit	hishis spirit	'For'ct' in copy
I the For th	If I am the N	'h' from bough
if I am the N	I the For th	I the For th
This is an error	This is an error	This is an error
Fy	Fy	Fy

[71] Kim Robinson, "Woman's Borderline Figure: Representation and Woman's Voice in the Poetry of Lorna Goodison, Medbh McGuckian and Susan Howe (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2000) 245.

[72] In place of "Narcis" in line one, sixteen of the thirty-five drafts contain "Narcus" or "Narcuss," which has the advantage of providing a typographic image of linguistic collapse via elision (i.e. "Narc[iss]us"), as well as including the doubling in reflection (i.e. "us"). SHP Box 47 f. 4-5.

Draft n°18	*Draft n°19*	*Draft n°31*
Narcis if I h 'For' ct' in copy 'h' from bough if I am the N THissby this hishis spirit I the For th This is an error Fy	Narcis if I h 'For'ct' in copy 'h' from bough If I am the N hishis Spirit Thissby this That is an error Fy	Narcis if I h 'Forct' in copy 'h' from bough Thissby this hishis spirit I the For th If I am the N This is an error Fy

Figure 5.10: Six drafts of *NCM* page 127. The first five were composed during the summer of 1991 in Guilford, CT (SHP Box 47 f. 4). The last is "ca. 1992," in a folder labeled "Marginalia – almost" (SHP Box 48 f. 7).

The content of this poem is revisited in a subsequent chapter, but the initial examination of its compositional evolution vis-à-vis typographic organization and sequencing provides an illustration of Howe's method of revising with a particular focus on the surface of the page. Interestingly, in one instance Howe speaks of this spatial attention in the three-dimensional, gestural context of the theater: "Because when revising and arranging I judge and shift and move lines in the same way a director might plan actors' moves on stage during rehearsal. [...] Sounds that you see. Space in a single glance." Earlier in the same interview, Howe equates "the voices of actors" with "letters in typeface."[73] The composition and revision of Howe's poems are a matter of perfecting the materialization of those "voices" on the page itself.

Finally, the last revision on the aforementioned list—splitting or combining poems across the pages of the work—conveys Howe's engagement with the materiality of the codex format. This involves both how the text and space on the left-hand page interacts with that on the right-hand page, as well as how the sequence of pages, one after another, function as a whole. As previously seen, lines are

[73] Susan Howe, Interview by Jon Thompson, *Free Verse* 9 (2005) 2-3.

occasionally displaced from one poem/page to another, and, recurring figures like Mangan, Shelley, Prometheus, and Cain are threaded throughout the book, thereby tying it together. Two specific examples are Narcissus, who reappears thirty pages after the poem cited above (*NCM*, 157), and Philip Massinger, whose name appears only three times: on the very first page, in the chronology, and on the very last (*NCM*, 91, 95, and 159).

In the case of two facing pages, the event of seeing itself is significant. As Howe collages texts across continents and chronologies—Melville's Bartleby with James Clarence Mangan, Shelley's Prometheus with Shakespeare's female characters, Lord Byron with Greek mythology—so too is the reader called to see each page in light of the next, and each page-spread as a layer of the book's singular materiality. Part of Howe's compositional process entails precisely such a view of a book's pages. She describes the steps to Jon Thompson as follows:

> Even though I don't paint or draw anymore, I still do all my writing at a drawing table. [...] As each sheet of paper comes through the printer I lay it out as if it were a drawing. I work to a page and usually in a series. For many years I worked on an electric Smith Corona typewriter, and while it was easy to change over to a computer with prose, shifting from the typewriter to the computer in poetry was hard and I am sure changed my voice. The medium you use has to become your way of thinking. [...] On a typewriter it was easier to think of a page as a field because you could physically grasp each one and shift and pull it around the platen. You could scumble lines together and turn the paper sideways or upside down. [...] Because for me a poem doesn't exist until I see it (these days in Times Roman font) on paper. [...] I like to lay the pages out on the table so one speaks to and almost mirrors the other. I finish one and answer it with the next.[74]

First in this process, one notes the tangibility of the paper as a physical object in the typewriter (which Howe was still using for the creation of "Melville's Marginalia") that may be *grasped* and *shifted* and *pulled* and *turned*. This aspect of composition by the poet is translated to the experience of the reader via the multidirectional poems in the first section of the sequence. Consequently, the reader must reconstruct the poems, in much the same way that Howe created them, by participating in the materiality of the page and the book-object.

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[74] Howe, Interview by Thompson, 2-3.

Second, whether typing directly on the page or printing it, the poem's "existence" is contingent on its materialization on actual paper. Howe's comment here suggests that her poetry—as she asserts for that of Emily Dickinson, amongst other authors—cannot be separated from its materiality and still be accurately represented, or sufficiently experienced.[75] It only exists on paper, bound in a book, or perhaps hung on a wall. This necessity has much to do with the visual assessment of the third step in the process of arranging the typed/printed pages as they would be in an open codex: does the sight of the two-page spread result in the poems speaking to each other, or mirroring each other? The movement from the left page to the right is here expressed in terms of a question and answer; a visual reflection, and simultaneously, a cry and an echo.

Nevertheless, the mirrored image of Narcissus, and the repetition of Echo, is always an alteration of the original. In such re-visions and re-articulations lies the inherent progression of "Melville's Marginalia," as well as Howe's other work. But while the poems in the central sequences in Howe's three subsequent books—*Pierce-Arrow*, *The Midnight*, and *Souls of the Labadie Tract*—are progressively tighter and more spatially uniform, one important element of those in part two of "Melville's Marginalia" is precisely the formal push-pull. The reader is never given an exact mirror image, and recurrent words and figures are always found in modified contexts. This is in keeping with one of the sequence's fundamental concerns of the *original* in relation to the *edited copy*, and, to be fair, the three later collections cited above, have other thematic priorities. T.S. Eliot distinguished two types of free verse poets: those "taking a very simple form, like iambic pentameter, and constantly withdrawing from it," or those "taking no form at all, and constantly approximating to a very simple one."[76] Howe's poetry walks a fine line between the two: she does take a form—the dimensions of the "marginal column" previously discussed—but it is an "invented" form, in that it does not fall under any traditional poetic structure or meter. It is neither sonnet nor ballad, and is not restricted to the alexandrine or the iambic

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[75] In addition to *My Emily Dickinson*, see also Howe's comments in "Transcription and Transgression," *The Networked Recluse: The Connected Worlds of Emily Dickinson* (Amherst, MA: Amherst College Press, 2017), and in "These Flames and Generosities of the Heart: Emily Dickinson and the Illogic of Sumptuary Values," in *The Birth-mark*. All three texts reveal as much about Howe's poetics as they do Dickinson's.

[76] T.S. Eliot, "Reflections on *Vers Libre*," *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975) 33.

pentameter that Eliot cites. At the same time, the poems in part two approximate that form as much as they withdraw from it: lines are shortened or lengthened for visual coherence, or stanzas, lines, and words are broken so as to stray from such uniformity. Howe manages to leave the overall impression of an approximation of the margin, while withdrawing from that form enough to keep the reader aware of the aim of editor's and printer's to *fix* language into a pre-authorized form.

Lastly, as Howe notes in her description, she composes her pages as part of a series. Each page may be typed individually, and each page-spread viewed separately, but both steps are done in light of the whole sequence. Several examples of how certain overarching themes and references thread the pages together have already been mentioned, but here it is important to note that Howe's statement comes immediately after having said the pages are laid out and looked at as if drawings. These remarks from 2005 are directly linked to those made with regard to the poet's visual-arts-based compositional process for the debut collections, like *Hinge Picture*, of the mid-1970s. Thus even while composed on an electric Smith Corona typewriter, the mechanistic spacing and manufactured materiality of ink on paper—both relatively restrictive with regard to painting or drawing—is used to maximum graphic effect in the endless permutations of marks that may be made in the open field of a directionless blank page. Moreover, as "drawing," each material aspect of the poetic process is given proper attention: the paper, the ink, the typeface, the format, and ultimately the binding. This is apparent, once again, in the correspondence available in the UCSD archives between Howe and Vilgrain/Rival:

> Bembo [typeface] particularly on
> pp 11, 13, 14 doesn't work.
> What is the typeface of
> your Goethe book? Almanach
> de 1822? p.ps 5+6
> That would seem more appropriate
> more like font in ND?

> FIRST the font on this last batch you sent me is LOVELY. Perfect perfect. This is an excellent font. Why can't you use it for all the poems--abstract and formal?
>
> The off-white (sandy) paper is perfect. I also like its smooth surface. The size is fine. I don't see any necessity for something larger [...].

> [...] I know I could never have finer typography for a piece that is in many ways about book making and binding. Obviously the layout is a crucial part of the work.[77]

With as much concern as any visual artist would have for the qualities of a work's substrate, the materials and method of marking upon it, and the positioning and frame that displays it, Howe demonstrates the significance of materiality's role in the production of language, in a work like "Melville's Marginalia," through her unwavering dedication to the visual, acoustic, and tangible effects of everything from the fragmentary mark to the bound codex. The work is not completed until it is, as Pound wrote of his own poetry, "placuit occulis."

The preceding pages have traced Susan Howe's investment in visual materiality as a fundamental element in the process of poetic composition from the justified, geometric arrangements of text in the early collections in *Hinge Picture*, to the radical fragmentation and layering of text free of the typewriter's spatial grid in recent works like *That This*. Taking into account the continuity and development of Howe's focus on textual and spatial constructions is important for analyzing her works, for in not one—no matter how visually simple the pages may appear—has Howe overlooked or disregarded such materiality. In "Melville's Marginalia," it was seen that while the poems in the second section appear more formally straightforward, the significance of the relation between printed text and surrounding space plays an important role in Howe's engagement with the concept of margins and marginalia.

Furthermore, just as the poet had gone to great lengths to achieve the justified poems in *Hinge Picture*, so too did she for the sight and sound of the lines and stanzas of these poems (often at the expense of their semantic meaning). The extensive editing process is undertaken in order to ensure the material precision of each individual page, of two facing pages, and of the work in its entirety. Thus—as was the case for Pound's Malatesta Cantos—the archival work and documentary method so crucial to the composition of "Melville's Marginalia" entails the poetic reproduction

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[77] Top citation: SHP Box 50 f. 3. The absence of punctuation, and the spacing of this Post-It note has been maintained for clarity. Middle citation: SHP 50 f. 4. This letter is dated "Nov 10," in a folder labeled "correspondence ca. 1996-1997." Bottom citation: SHP Box 50 f. 6. The letter is dated 4 July 1996.

of the attention and significance the poet-historian gives to the visual materiality of that research. Everything from punctuation to typeface, to spatio-textual relations both horizontal and vertical, is assumed into the signifying practices of the poetry. For "Melville's Marginalia," the reader's attention to the textual surface and space of the page is, of course, first established in the collaged preface and abstract, non-linear typography of Howe's poems in part one of the sequence. In that section, the subject of the following pages, visio-spatial constructions serve other purposes relating to her documentary poetics. In particular, the archival basis of such poetics is more readily apparent, as these pages are constructed as material traces of the intersecting voices and languages of Howe's exploration of other textual histories.

DESIGN: ABSTRACTION AND STRATA

"Erase everything you have written but keep the notes in the margin."

— Osip Mandelstam[1]

The centrality of page layout to "Melville's Marginalia is quickly made evident in the opening section of the sequence. But whereas the spatial arrangements in the second section draw as much attention to the surrounding space as to the poems themselves, thereby highlighting the interaction of blank and printed space, part one is more directly concerned with the intertextuality that arises from utilizing the open space of the page. Nonetheless, it would be erroneous to assert that the poems in part two break with the principal interests in the preceding section. Craig Dworkin's comments on the sequence address this continuity of visual materiality in conjunction with the intertextual theme across the two sections:

> Indeed, even on those pages of "Melville's Marginalia" that do not have the confused look of palimpsest, the visual layout of centered columns of equally lengthed lines moving paratactically in fragmented units creates the appearance of larger, originally coherent texts read through a narrow window. These pages give the reader the impression of browsing through library catalogues, skimming over title pages, flipping and scanning as the eye and the mind catch isolated words and phrases. In short, this visual layout situates the reader in a position which simulates that of the poem's subject: the roving librarian Mangan [...].[2]

To this it should be added that any impression of browsing in libraries or archives is mediated by Howe's own experience of discovering, and thus the simulated position is as much (if not more so) that of Howe, the poet-historian "[swimming] through libraries" (*NCM,* 97), as "the roving librarian Mangan."

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[1] Quoted in Ilya Kaminsky and Jean Valentine's notes to the translation of Marina Tsvetaeva's "Poems to Czechoslovakia," *Poetry* 199.6 (March 2012) 569. The quotation is also found in the afterword to *Dark Elderberry Branch: Poems of Marina Tsvetaeva*, trans. and eds. Ilya Kaminksy and Jean Valentine (Farmington, ME: Alice James Books, 2012).

[2] Craig Dworkin, *Reading the Illegible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003) 41-42.

Furthermore, the ghosted appearance of "originally coherent texts" offers a visual counter to the palimpsestic poems referred to, at the same time that the sense of bibliographic and archival research Dworkin gathers from it is a thematic continuation of those same poems. The abstract, collaged texts, found in part one of the sequence, are where Howe initially establishes the archive's intertextuality through the palimpsest's scattered construction of fragmentary quotations. "A poem—that place Duncan calls a 'meadow,' occurs in a precinct of relations, recognitions, parallels, mirrors, doublings."[3] As illustrated in the previous chapter, for Howe, the blank paper—whether being manipulated on the typewriter's platen, or laid flat on the desk as a substrate for textual collage—is entirely directionless. Approached as a white canvas or an open field for composition, the page is seen without any sense of right side up or upside down, backwards or forwards, nor any boundaries of some pre-existing format. An archive may be catalogued, organized, and filed, but Howe's compositions suggest the experience of engaging with such materials is far less straightforward.

As a result, the initial twenty-six pages of the series eschew not only conventional, unidirectional (i.e. left to right) poetic forms, but also typographic distinctions of genre, and any compartmentalizing of prose and poetry. "The precinct of relations" in this section consists of a frequent shifting between Howe's prefatory paragraphs, the quotations collaged into typographic palimpsests, and juxtaposed, block quotations from footnotes and other prose sources. The poet's compositional method of cut-and-paste for this section allows the reader to trace Howe's reading of the library and archive: the stacks of aligned books, the piles of manuscripts and transcriptions, the catalogs and cross-references. Moreover, the rotated, overlapping, or fractured phrases, and the repositioning of paratextual elements and bibliographic notes, convey the unique materiality—and materialities—that such a process involves. The following pages examine how the manipulation, association, and typographic arrangements of the source materials for part one of "Melville's Marginalia" reproduce Howe's palimpsestic experience of the polyphony of the archive, as she moves from text to text, and margin to margin.

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[3] Susan Howe, "Leaf Flower in the Wind Falling Blue The Dark River," *Jacket* 31 (October 2006) < http://jacketmagazine.com/31/rc-howe.html >. The text was written for a reading on 12 April 2005 at The Drawing Center in New York City in conjunction with the show called 3Xabstraction, featuring artworks by Agnes Martin, Hilma af Klint, and Emma Kunz.

In his critical study of modernist and contemporary poetry, Michael Davidson introduces the neologism "palimtext" to describe "modern writing's intertextual and material character, its graphic rendering of multiple layers of signification."[4] While this type of poem may still read left to right and top to bottom, as do several of the examples Davidson includes, in the case of Howe's work in "Melville's Marginalia," the multiple layers are, in fact, typographically represented by superimposed fragments literally *writing over* others. Thus, the materiality central to the notion of the palimpsest (or "palimtext") is emphasized to an even greater extent. Part of the significance of the textual intersections and crisscrossing is to visually impart the associations Howe draws between more or less disparate texts and figures; indeed, apart from her own prose in the preface, the writing is constructed and formed out of other, found texts. By providing a typographic map to the process of Howe's documentary poetics within the archive, the palimpsestic poem is, as Davidson later writes, "the still-visible record of its responses to those earlier writings."[5] The poems, therefore, document how those prior records are continually reworked at the hands of the poet-historian.

For Davidson this results in a text that is not a fixed object, or any kind of definitive, authoritative version, but rather "an arrested moment in an ongoing process of signifying, scripting, and typing."[6] However, while the radical typography of the palimpsestic poem may convey a sense of textual instability—and thus, perhaps, of perpetual fluidity—in "Melville's Marginalia" Howe also counters assertions of a text's continual evolution (through archival or editorial work, for example) by stating print's effect of seemingly static materialization: "print settles it [...] print is sentinel" (*NCM*, 159). The compositional *process* is displayed in the poet's typographic arrangements, but Howe simultaneously acknowledges the implications of creating the *product* of a material book by setting down immaterial thought as words on paper. The progressive sense of temporality in the palimpsest certainly opens the language to new, future readings; but even as the spatial rendering of that temporal process

[4] Michael Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material Word* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 9.
[5] Davidson, 68.
[6] Davidson, 9.

suggests an eventual continuation of textual accretion and layering, it also reasserts the specific acts and gestures of writing and printing, which fix words as objects in a precise historical moment. That historicity is, in part, expressed through the materiality of the product: paper and ink, typeface and signature, page layout and book design. Therefore, the "palimtext" is properly seen as a paradoxical site, where the settled and unsettled occupy the same space between permanence and ephemerality. Such an understanding is helpful when approaching "Melville's Marginalia," due to Howe's concern for the ways in which the material and immaterial interact in the compositional process, and for how a documentary poetics engages with an historical cycle of loss and recovery.

The palimpsest, then, may be understood as its own kind of archive on the page: a record or index of textual resonances across history, and even, in its necessarily fragmentary attempt at preservation, of the shifting sands of history itself. The reader is thereby invited by the poet into this "archive" as if a physical space to occupy, in much the same way that the pages of Pound's Malatesta Cantos represent an architectural space allowing the reader to enter the structure of the Tempio Malatestiano. As Rachel Tzvia Back writes, "The writing-over-writing of the palimpsest-poem transforms the 'physical medium' of the page into a site of meaning and transforms the reader of the palimpsest [...] into a fervent 'seeker' after the half-erased and the partially forgotten embedded in every written document."[7] The diverse quotations and sources collaged into palimpsestic structures create a parallel between Howe—the "fervent seeker" in Temple University Library, Yale's Sterling Library, and the archives of the Houghton Library at Harvard—and the reader of "Melville's Marginalia"—moving through the pages and piecing together "the half-erased and partially forgotten" fragments the poet has gathered there.

It is also worth commenting upon Back's remark concerning the inherent partiality of written documents, for indeed the vast majority of part one of Howe's sequence is composed of quotations that range from a single isolated word to complete, nearly page-length paragraphs. Despite the varying degrees of fragmentation, the written document that is "Melville's Marginalia" consistently speaks to the erasure bound up in the intertextuality of quotation. Gérard Genette's

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[7] Rachel Tzvia Back, *Led by Language: The Poetry and Poetics of Susan Howe* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002) 138-39.

definition of intertextuality, in his work on palimpsests in literature, is useful for distinguishing certain complexities in Howe's poetic practice:

> [...] a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another. In its most explicit and literal form, it is the traditional practice of *quoting* (with quotation marks, with or without specific reference). In another less explicit and canonical form, it is the practice of *plagiarism* [...] which is an undeclared but still literal borrowing.[8]

The three forms of intertextuality Genette defines in this passage are all present in part one of Howe's sequence: signaled citation (through quotation marks or block-format indentation) including the bibliographic reference, the same without any indicated source, and passages appropriated with no punctuational or paratextual indication. The last page of part one includes all three (see figure 6.1). The top four lines are the end of a block quotation of Joyce from the previous page (the full reference being provided just below); the undeclared, decontextualized quotation "The pale bright margins" is taken from Mangan's translation "O'Hussey's Ode to the Maguire"[9]; the italicized quotation in Italian—signaled but sans bibliographic reference—is the first line to "Sonetti CIV" from *Li Tre Giulj* by Giambatista Casti.[10]

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[8] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) 1-2. Gerard defines intertextuality as one of five types of *transtextuality*. The other four also apply to "Melville's Marginalia": Howe's extensive use of marginalia and footnotes relate to *paratextuality*—"the generally less explicit and more distant relationship that binds the text properly speaking [...] to what may be called its *paratext*" (3); Howe's discussion of Cowen and Mangan's work, amongst the mention of many others is a type of *metatextuality*—"the relationship most often labeled 'commentary.' It unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it [...]" (4); the primary source of Cowen's dissertation qualifies as *hypertextuality*—"any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted [...]. i.e., a text derived from another preexistent text" (5); finally, Howe's documentary, historical poetry links it to other similar works (such as Pound's *The Cantos*) according to *architextuality*—"a relationship that is completely silent [...] but which remains in any case of a purely taxonomic nature" (4).

[9] James Clarence Mangan, *Poems by James Clarence Mangan* (New York: P.M. Haverty, 1859) 395. This book, with an introduction by John Mitchel, is frequently referenced by Howe throughout the entire sequence.

[10] Giambatista Casti, *Li Tre Giulj* (Milan: Nella Nuova Stamperia in Santa Margherita, 1803) 208. Some later Italian editions list the sonnet as number LXXXIV. The line may be translated as "If clever Daedalus unites to his sides." The fragmentary reference given in the last line on this page does provide an indication of Howe's source for the line: James Clarence Mangan, "The Three Half-Crowns," *The Dublin University Magazine: A Literary and Political Journal*, 20.120 (December 1842) 684. Nevertheless, as is, Howe's reference remains insufficient, and is furthermore significantly spatially removed from the Italian citation, such that the reader would not associate the two. Given the context of the present discussion, it is worth noting that one of the subjects of this essay by Mangan is the literary practice of artistic borrowing.

Throughout the sequence, the role of the reader as archival seeker is thus complicated by a text whose "relationship of co-presence" with earlier texts is, at various moments, revealed or concealed by explicit citation of sources, unattached quotation, and (taking Genette's terminology) plagiarism. There is, moreover, Howe's own recurrent words, which a reader may hesitate to assign to her, or to unattributed secondary sources. According to the conventions of citation, what is included or excluded? How is the reader to rely on the printed text to distinguish voices? An awareness of Howe's combining all three types of intertextuality ultimately heightens the sense of the written document as embedded with erasures and half-erasures. Back's comment may therefore be expanded, in that it is not only the text proper that is subject to fragmentation and omission, but also those paratextual elements, which, though often overlooked, are fundamental to a documentary poetics. In some instances the poet directs the reader to a specific place in the archive, while in others the reader is simply left to sort through that palimpsestic space on their own.

Furthermore, Howe's use of quotation and bibliographic references may simultaneously be understood as functioning internally, sending the reader to other areas within her own text. The cited sources in part one of the sequence—such as the *Dublin University Magazine*, Mangan's works, or those from James Meehan, C.P. Meehan, and Louise I. Guiney—progressively bind the network of relations within Howe's work by recurring in various places, thereby allowing the reader to cross-reference the fragments and quotations across the pages. Like the Malatesta Cantos, "Melville's Marginalia" is as much *intra*textual as it is *inter*textual. In cycling the reader back through the preceding pages as the series moves forward, Howe's text enacts a process of archival discovery and recovery, marking and remarking. As the poet-historian, the documentary nature of her work attempts to return to the source and to the beginning. As Pound wrote, "It doesn't, in our contemporary world, so much matter where you begin the examination of a subject, so long as you keep on until you get round again to your starting point."[11] In "Melville's Marginalia," this type of poetic or historic turning and returning is linked to the materiality of quotation. The epigraph on the title page of the sequence cites the death of an author: "March 20, 1639-40— / buried Philip Massinger / a stranger" (*NCM*, 91). In the book's final poem, he re-emerges and speaks: "Massinger smiled and he / said you

[11] Pound, *ABC*, 29.

know print settles it" (*NCM*, 159). "Melville's Marginalia" begins with an end, and concludes with the material production of language that, while momentarily static, will be (Howe's work suggests) newly unsettled by the revision, rearrangement, and fragmented quotation of future editors and archivists, critics and poets. In Howe's words, "Poets are always beginning again."[12]

hour that will end his sad days of penance. Weaker than Leopardi, for he has not the courage of his own despair, but forgets every ill and forgoes all scorn when someone shows him a little kindness, he has, perhaps for this reason, the memorial that he wished, a

[*one page missing*]

James Joyce, from "Giacomo Clarenzio Mangan," one of three public lectures in Italian at the Università Popolare in Trieste. 1904. Editorial note in brackets.

Before Modernism.

The eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1911) says his fame has been deferred by the inequality and mass of work, much of it lying buried in inaccessible newspaper files under so many pseudonyms . . . .

"Lamii's Apology for his Nonsense, (From the Ottoman.)"

The pale bright margins

* * *

"Se Dedalo ingegnoso, ai Fianchi uni."

In Sonnet XVIII., seeing an eagle soaring over his head, he thinks how happy it is for the birds that they can pass from one country to another without being arrested on their way by a demand for "Three Giulii."

In the next novel thought strikes him, and —

"The Three Half-Crowns."

* * *

Figure 6.1: The final page to the preface, and to part one, of "Melville's Marginalia. *NCM*, 118.

[12] Susan Howe, Interview by Tom Beckett, *The Difficulties* 3.2 (1989) 26.

Unsettling materiality is precisely what Susan Howe undertakes in part one of the sequence, having once plunged and penetrated into the libraries of Yale and Harvard. Such locations are areas of contention for Howe, embodying the forbidden as much as the unbounded. In the introduction to *The Birth-mark*, she recounts her initial encounter with Widener Library in Cambridge: "I needed out-of-the-way volumes from Widener Library. My father said it would be trespassing if I went into the stacks to find them. I could come with him only as far as the second-floor entrance. There I waited while he entered the guarded territory to hunt for books." However, despite this experience of strictly delimited and controlled spaces, the very fact of their remaining off limits leads Howe to maintain, "The stacks of Widener Library and of all great libraries in the world are still the wild to me. [...] I go to libraries because they are the ocean."[13] Her documentary poetics, therefore, engages with a "territory" that is at once a *space*—that is, an undefined and unmarked wilderness—and a *place*—that is, a demarcated and labeled location. Once inside, the libraries and archives Howe previously knew to be authoritative environments of controlled selection become sites of free exploration—boundless textual landscapes. Thus, paradoxically, the archives so critical to Howe's poetics are as ostensibly static and enclosed, as they are potentially dynamic and directionless.

Jacques Derrida's work *Archive Fever* elucidates many of the aforementioned issues regarding Susan Howe's conception and engagement with the archive. Derrida begins by tracing the etymology of "archive"—*arkheion,* a location and address, to *arkhe*, commencement and commandment—and thereby links it with history and ontology, as well as authority and the exercise of social order. Howe's experience is echoed in Derrida's association of the archive, via the Greek etymological roots, with "the *archons*, those who commanded," and "the documents' guardians. They do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and of the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives."[14] For "Melville's Marginalia," as in her other works, Howe assumes the role of the poet-historian who participates in the materiality of the "contained" in order to subvert such authoritative interpretations and definitions. The documents,

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[13] Howe, *BM*, 18.

[14] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 2.

Derrida writes, "are only kept and classified under the title of the archive by virtue of a privileged *topology*. They inhabit this uncommon place, this place of election where law and singularity intersect in *privilege*."[15] Formerly denied such a privilege, Howe's later access to these guarded archives is focused on rearranging and reconstituting the pre-established textual interrelations and hierarchies. The abstract typography in part one of "Melville's Marginalia" is a material representation of Howe's "trespassing" in these areas, and destabilizing the "the functions of unification, of identification, [and] of classification" associated with the archive.[16] Derrida's "stable substrate" of the archive is transformed and transposed in Howe's work to the collaged, palimpsestic page, which displays an unconventional appropriation of previously selected and catalogued contents.

Regarding the documentary poetics of the Malatesta Cantos, the poet-historian for Ezra Pound meant incorporating the archive into the materiality of epic poetry. For "Melville's Marginalia," Susan Howe advances Pound's concept of a "poem containing history" by shifting from the archive as a source for poetic composition, to the archive as equally a subject of such composition. "Perhaps the cultural significance of modern poetry lies not so much in its ability to contain the library as a substitute for the British Museum," as Pound said, "but to represent its own tenuous hold on a history that seems to be dissolving."[17] An historical-poetic work like Howe's incorporates the library/archive into its pages at the same time that it continually comments, explicitly or implicitly, on those very sources and texts out of which the fragmentary structure of the collage or palimpsest is formed.

Early in the preface, discussing the subject and larger context of Cowen's Harvard dissertation, Howe writes the following paragraph:

> Scholarly investigators have consulted and are still consulting Melville's marginal notations. The notations and annotations have been marshalled to support one critical reading or another. Wilson Walker Cowen's approach is loving. His informative and detailed introduction shows us why this author's marks seem to indicate agreement with what he was reading; when Melville disagreed he argued in the margin (*NCM*, 98).

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[15] Derrida, 3.
[16] Derrida, 3.
[17] Davidson, 33.

There is a hint of skepticism, if not tacit criticism, in Howe's view of the potentially manipulative "marshalling" of Melville's notations in the name of scholarship. Her praise of Cowen's work is certainly due in part to its comprehensiveness, but is primarily for its lack of editorial regularization and/or rearrangement in order to simply allow Melville's character to speak for itself. While Howe's appropriation of Melville's markings is selective quotation, and so inclusive and exclusive at once, her use of the archival source has much in common with Cowen's. Consequently, when the reader encounters the transcribed citations of marginalia, and the fragments of the text they accompanied, he/she is invited to interpret them with regard to several different aspects:

1) The semantic content as is.
2) The material context of the quotation.
3) The relation to, and expression of, Melville's character.
4) The documentary process of poetic composition employed by Howe.
5) The broader scholarly context of the practice, or practices, of using archival sources.

The reader and critic, therefore, are offered an experience of the archive and its materiality via Howe's trajectory through it, and are called to consider and question that very same experience. In other words, he/she is led inside the archive and the texts, while maintaining a wider, external view from the outside.

The nonlinear spatial arrangements of the poems interspersed between the paragraphs and pages of the preface, draw attention to Howe's resistance to "marshalling" and aligning the gathered fragments according to standardized formats. Furthermore, they demonstrate her resistance to any established convention of remaining strictly within authorized textual boundaries, choosing instead to move into the margins of books and libraries, which "shelter the inapprehensible Imaginary of poetry."[18] In those areas a reader finds one author reacting and responding to another, outside of institutionalized channels and grammatical norms. As Howe touches on in the quotation above, in this space of printed texts that remains open, there are agreements and disagreements, complimentary and argumentative remarks, some of which even address an imagined reader. Some of Melville's annotations to Ralph

[18] Howe, *BM, 29.*

Waldo Emerson's essays "Prudence" and "Heroism" demonstrate the immediacy and variety of marginalia that fascinated Howe:

> [X] God help the poor fellow who squares his life according to this.
>
> ---
>
> [X] Look squarely at this, & what it is but more Theology – Calvinism? – The brook shows the stain of the banks it has passed thru. Still, these essays are noble.
>
> ---
>
> [Alas! the fool again!]
>
> ---
>
> This is noble again[19]

Howe's appropriation of these types of markings and comments as her poetic material lends her work a unique form of polyphony, which combines formal and informal language, private/handwritten and public/printed writings, and thoughts addressed to a diversity of readerships (ideal, imagined, or otherwise).

ECHOIC OVERTYPE

This polyphony is further complicated by how the words and phrases are spatially arranged on the page to communicate simultaneity. The innovative multiplicity of voices one finds in the Malatesta Cantos, or *The Waste Land* (a work whose preliminary title was *He Do the Police in Different Voices*), may be understood, due to sequences of juxtapositions, to be occurring in more or less the same moment; for example, the various authors of the read or scanned letters in Sigismondo's post bag, or the conversations in the pub scene at the close of "A Game of Chess" (respectively). However, the simultaneity in these poems does not occur as much on the material page as in the immaterial imagination of the reader. Conversely, in part one of "Melville's Marginalia" the abstract poems render visible how the multiple voices speak with, against, and/or over each other. Phrases begin and then are cut short, words are rendered nearly illegible by others, and the text as a whole

[19] Wilson Walker Cowen, ed., *Melville's Marginalia*, Harvard Dissertations in American and English Literature (New York; Garland, 1987) 522. The /*x*/s, brackets, and punctuation are Melville's own. Howe's copy of Cowen's text is found in her papers at the UCSD archives. This particular page is found in SHP Box 49 f. 4.

often contains false starts, hesitations, and stammering. Regarding this type of work for a poet, Howe has stated, "You open your mind and textual space to many voices, to an interplay and contradiction and complexity of voices. These voices are marks and sounds and they form a polyphony that forms lines and often abolishes lines."[20] Figure 6.2 exemplifies the visual materiality of Howe's textual fragmentation and spatial (re)arrangement. Composed of passages and words from several different essays by Matthew Arnold (marked by Melville in his copy of *Essays in Criticism*), the typographic palimpsest consists of obscured text, orthographic breakdown, counter-direction, splits and deviations, and all manner of vertical and horizontal manipulations to typesetting. In short, every standard of printing is subverted. In doing so, Howe destabilizes the "settled" materiality of the once uniform, and univocal, text to draw out the polyphony and palimpsestic history that, as she is aware, is always inherent to any piece of writing. Her practice of quotation in such a poem, attempts to visualize Emerson's idea that "Every book is a quotation; [...] and every man is a quotation from all his ancestors."[21] The historical network of the archive is embedded in the page.

This poem is, apart from Howe's "title" of "VERBAL PHANTOMS," technically Arnold speaking back to Arnold; however, the reader cannot be immediately sure to whom each untagged fragment belongs. Howe's small but significant addition suggests that Melville, as well as herself, and perhaps even Cowen, are equally present—other figures are invisibly voiced, over and under the referenced author. Although the reader must ultimately read one fragment after another, even the temporal process of a sequential reading is undercut by the absence of any clear indication as to how those fragments are to be ordered. Onto the blank space of the page, Howe imposes not one direction, but multiple directions, thus requiring the reader to, in turn, select a starting point and the directions that will be followed to reach the ending point. Subsequent readings are also likely to alter the previously decided order, again destabilizing the reading process and whatever textual hierarchies might result from it. Due to the almost total absence of punctuation (most notably, quotations marks) and typographic distinctions between the different authors/voices in these poems, tracking who is "responding" to whom—that is, what

[20] Howe, Interview by Tom Beckett, 24.

[21] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Quotation and Originality," *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. 8, *Letters and Social Aims* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904) 176.

is marginalia and what is printed text—requires tracking down the archival sources. Assuming this is done, the reader's study of the source texts is, in a certain sense, overlaid onto Howe's reading of them, itself overlaid onto Melville's initial reading.

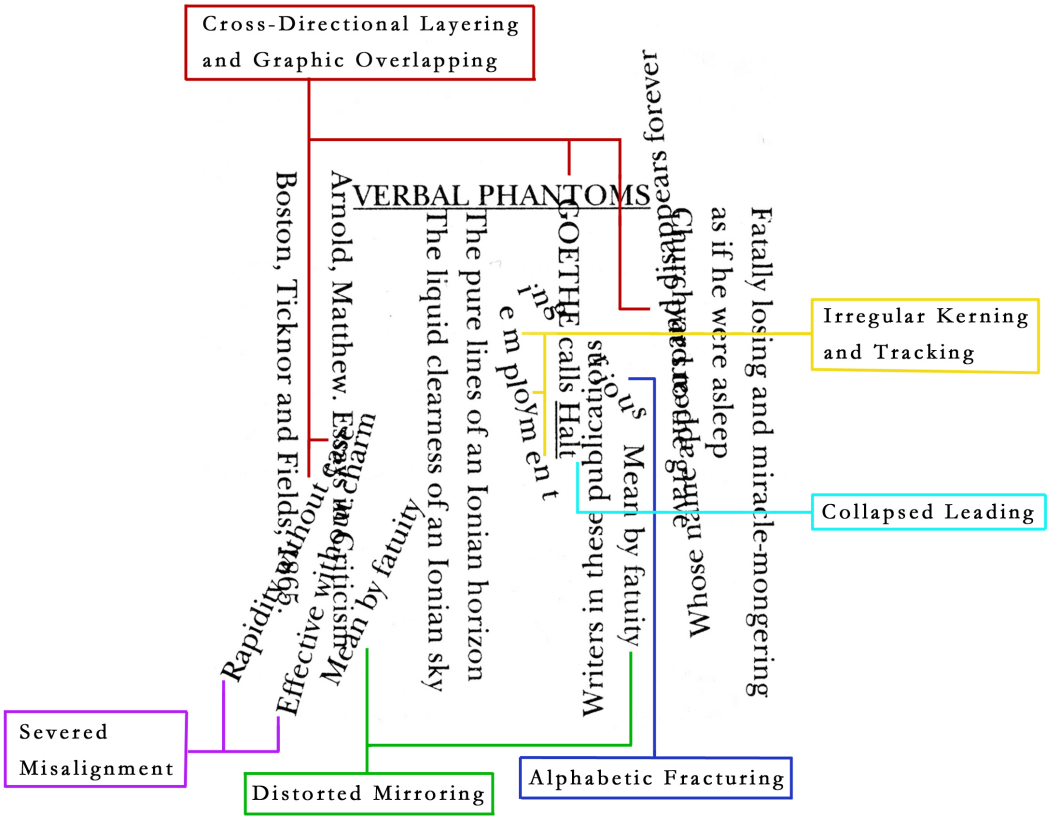

Figure 7.2: Diagrammed example of Howe's palimpsest of collaged quotations, indicating the various typographic manipulations. (*NCM*, 108).

By compacting or scattering the original textual space of her work's materials, Howe also effectively collapses the temporalities of a polyphonous text into a singularity. The latter term, the plural form of which is the title to a collection published in 1990, is an important one is Howe's poetic lexicon. In physics and mathematics, a singularity is defined as "a point at which a function takes an infinite value, especially in space-time when matter is infinitely dense [...]."[22] Expanding up this definition, the poet described her understanding and use of the word in an interview with Edward Foster:

[22] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Third Edition, eds. Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

> In algebra a singularity is the point where plus becomes minus. On a line, if you start at *x* point, there is +1, +2, etc. But at the other side of the point is –1, –2, etc. The singularity [...] is the point where there is a sudden change to something completely else. It's a chaotic point. It's the point chaos enters the cosmos, the instant articulation. Then there is a leap into something else.[23]

For the present study, what is significant in these definitions is the notion of matter collapsed in space and time—represented textually through the density of over-writing, where the words of superimposed print occupy the same space and moment—and the concept of a poetic singularity as "the instant articulation" (i.e. immediate linguistic materialization). Moreover, this polyphonous, textual simultaneity results, as Howe states, in something new and other. The collaged fragments—where, for example, Melville's writing is in dialogue with that of Matthew Arnold or Jean de La Bruyère—by virtue of being seen and read together, yield a third textual space and voice. This would most readily be identified as Howe's poetic voice, but it may also be read as "something completely else," outside even the poet.

In her monograph *"The Small Space of a Pause"* on Susan Howe's poetics, critic Elisabeth Joyce relates this third space with the idea of the *taskscape*, which, citing Tim Ingold's work, is defined as "'[...] an array of related activities [...]' and "the concatenation of those individual behaviors." For her study, Joyce then identifies the taskscape with the margins. She writes, "The margin becomes a place of neither the poem nor the poet, but a fusion, a convergence, a taskscape," and later expands on this thought: "[...] the margin represents the precursors of the poet and the poet's immersion in the words of those writers, out of which the poem develops, the result of reading and thinking and corresponding synthetic action via the margins."[24] Such instances of spatial polyphony are neither Howe nor Melville nor Arnold, neither poetry nor prose nor marginalia, but all at once, outside of the original, univocal text. Somewhat related to Davidson's view of the "palimtext" as the ongoing process of writing, here the material page of these layered, polyphonous poems is meant to contain both the textual characteristics of marginalia (i.e. the actual language) and all

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[23] Howe, *BM*, 173. The "*Talisman* Interview, with Edward Foster" was originally published in *Talisman* 4 (Spring 1990).

[24] Elisabeth W. Joyce, *"The Small Space of a Pause": Susan Howe's Poetry and the Space Between* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2010) 199-202.

of the prior activities and gestures that resulted in them. Joyce identifies these "'collapsed acts'" as "the poet's hand, the poet's reading, the poet's thinking, and the poet's response."[25] Given the context for the composition of "Melville's Marginalia," it is important that this list is made to include the editor's reading and copying, the printer's typesetting and binding, and the researcher's archival work and documentary process. Thus, for a sequence grounded largely in the process of editing, whereby a network of texts and authors is fused with subsequent collaborations of archivists and publishers, the singularity enacted on the material surface of the page aims to include the entire polyphonous history of writing over, and through, the palimpsest of quotations that informs any poetic composition. Susan Howe's technique of documentary collage dissolves the restrictive categorization of different textual, critical, and scholarly disciplines to create a hybrid form of poetry, which, like that of Ezra Pound, shifts as abruptly from the prosaic to the poetic, from the historical to the lyrical, and from citation to original composition.

This mixture of disciplines is partly due to Howe's method of composition for the sequence, which she discusses in the preface. Her remarks provide several key concepts for interpreting the construction of the writing in part one. One aspect that is particularly striking is an archival process that somewhat resembles a "chance" operation. The project, in fact, begin with the fortuitous discovery of Cowen's work: "One day while searching through Melville criticism at the Temple University Library I noticed two maroon dictionary-size volumes, lying haphazardly, out of reach, almost out of sight on the topmost shelf. That's how I found *Melville's Marginalia* or *Melville's Marginalia* found me" (*NCM*, 97). Having stumbled upon this extensive work, Howe's use of it followed a method of textual wandering, whereby the writing stemmed from first selecting and extracting "a phrase, sometimes just a word or a name, at random [...] and letting that lead me by free association to each separate poem in the series" (*NCM*, 114). This specificity of Howe's documentary poetics in "Melville's Marginalia" relates to her notion of "poetry [as] *factual telepathy*," which, in her essay "Sorting Facts," she ties to the role of working intuitively in nonfiction filmmaking.[26] For Howe, documentary poetry is both grounded in facts—that is, the material for composition—and involves the "fringes of consciousness or marginal

[25] Joyce, 202.

[26] Susan Howe, *Sorting Facts: or, Nineteen Ways of Looking at Chris Marker* (New York: New Directions, 2013) 7.

associations" (*NCM*, 99)—in other words, the immaterial in composition. Howe directly mentions this concept in the preface in describing how "by shock of poetry telepathy" she knew that Mangan was (or could be) the progenitor of the titular character of Melville's short story "Bartleby, The Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" (*NCM, 115*).[27] Nevertheless, despite this element of chance or intuition, the process takes place entirely within the bounds of the chosen source texts, and Howe's language of quotations is ultimately dependent on, and limited to, that which is contained therein. Acknowledging the necessary negotiation of this constraint, she writes, "Free association isn't free" (*NCM*, 114). Concerning the readers, this adds to the multi-layered interpretive process, for one reads Howe's choices of citation and combination—that is, the compositional process—as much as the quoted authors' words themselves.

The results of this method are also influenced by Cowen's own prior work. Howe describes the text as follows:

> Only the pages Melville marked in each book are included so there is little forward trajectory to whatever novel, narrative, or poem. Each marked passage is a literal transcription from the particular edition Melville used. Because Cowen used each original's type-set line-lengths, prose often looks like poetry. Texts in the *Marginalia* are alphabetically arranged by an author's name so authors and writers meet by letter. (*NCM*, 98)

First, the primary source is itself fragmentary, and at least approximates a palimpsest by transcribing non-sequential passages or pages and often printing them together, be they from a single work, or from several. Second, Cowen's work demonstrates an attention to, and precision of, textual materiality in maintaining the spatial arrangement of the original copy (see figure 6.3). Consequently, the pages also blur the visual distinctions between prose and poetry, and Howe makes the further remark that "At first glance, this alphabetically arranged collection of quotations from

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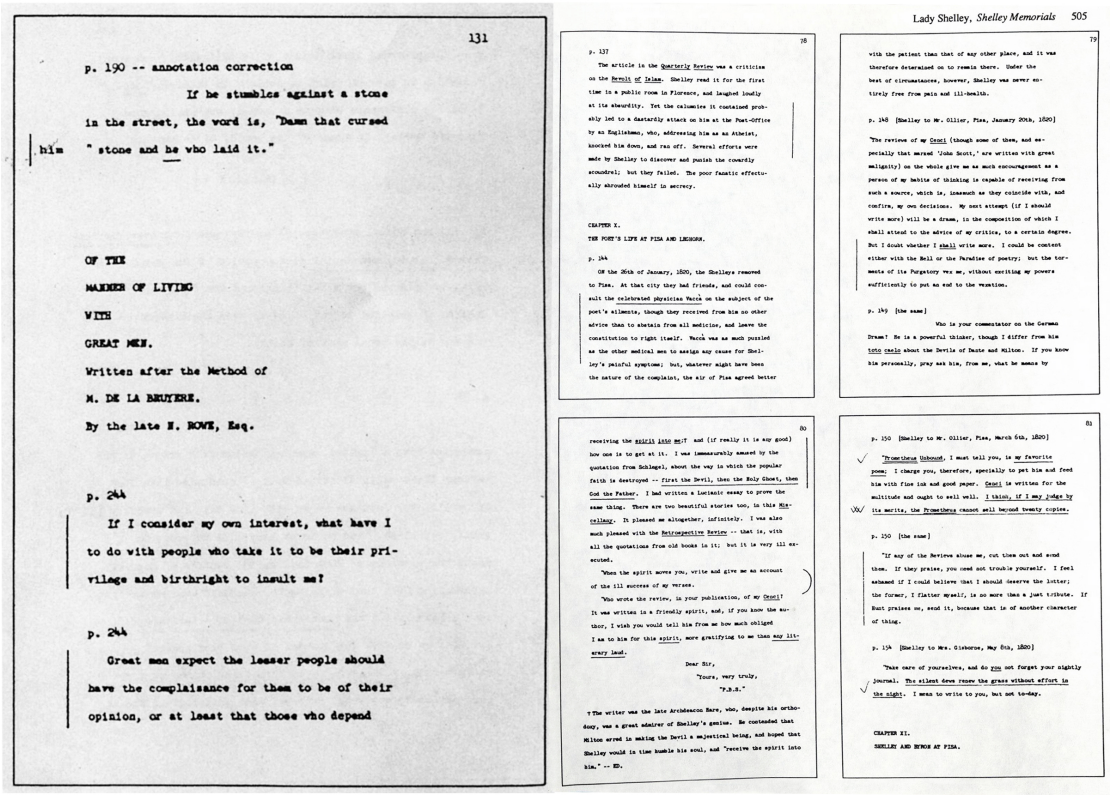
[27] In the original English version of the preface, Howe stated the Mangan-Bartleby connection as a fact: "[...] Mangan *is* [...]" (*NCM*, 115). However, most likely due to issues of chronology and/or a lack of indisputable proof, for the French translation, Howe asked that "is" be changed to "could be." SHP Box 50 f. 1.

The term *telepathy* is also used earlier in part one, where it is again linked to the marginal in poetry: "The brink or brim of anything from telepathy to poetry. *NCM*, 100.

numerous authors resembled a giant Charles Olson poem."[28] This characteristic is also shared by Howe's preface (see, for example, figure 6.1), and suggests the hybrid, cross-disciplinary form present throughout the sequence. Lastly, the constraint of alphabetization in Cowen's method creates "chance" encounters between authors on the basis of language, similar to Howe's linking of texts according to lexical affinities.



131

p. 190 -- annotation correction

If he stumbles against a stone

in the street, the word is, "Damn that cursed

him " stone and he who laid it."

OF THE

MANNER OF LIVING

WITH

GREAT MEN.

Written after the Method of

M. DE LA BRUYERE.

By the late N. ROWE, Esq.

p. 244

If I consider my own interest, what have I

to do with people who take it to be their pri-

vilege and birthright to insult me?

p. 244

Great men expect the lesser people should

have the complaisance for them to be of their

opinion, or at least that those who depend

Lady Shelley, *Shelley Memorials* 505

78

p. 137

The article in the Quarterly Review was a criticism on the Revolt of Islam. Shelley read it for the first time in a public room in Florence, and laughed loudly at its absurdity. Yet the calumnies it contained probably led to a dastardly attack on him at the Post-Office by an Englishman, who, addressing him as an Atheist, knocked him down, and ran off. Several efforts were made by Shelley to discover and punish the cowardly scoundrel; but they failed. The poor fanatic effectually shrouded himself in secrecy.

CHAPTER X.

THE POET'S LIFE AT PISA AND LEGHORN.

p. 144

Of the 26th of January, 1820, the Shelleys removed to Pisa. At that city they had friends, and could consult the celebrated physician Vacca on the subject of the poet's ailments, though they received from him no other advice than to abstain from all medicine, and leave the constitution to right itself. Vacca was as much puzzled as the other medical men to assign any cause for Shelley's painful symptoms; but, whatever might have been the nature of the complaint, the air of Pisa agreed better

79

with the patient than that of any other place, and it was therefore determined on to remain there. Under the best of circumstances, however, Shelley was never entirely free from pain and ill-health.

p. 148 [Shelley to Mr. Ollier, Pisa, January 20th, 1820]

"The reviews of my Cenci (though some of them, and especially that marked 'John Scott,' are written with great malignity) on the whole give me as much encouragement as a person of my habits of thinking is capable of receiving from such a source, which is, inasmuch as they coincide with, and confirm, my own decisions. My next attempt (if I should write more) will be a drama, in the composition of which I shall attend to the advice of my critics, to a certain degree. But I doubt whether I shall write more. I could be content either with the Hell or the Paradise of poetry; but the torments of its Purgatory vex me, without exciting my powers sufficiently to put an end to the vexation.

p. 149 [the same]

Who is your commentator on the German Dream? He is a powerful thinker, though I differ from him toto cœlo about the Devils of Dante and Milton. If you know him personally, pray ask him, from me, what he means by

80

receiving the spirit into me:† and (if really it is any good) how one is to get at it. I was immeasurably amused by the quotation from Schlegel, about the way in which the popular faith is destroyed -- first the Devil, then the Holy Ghost, then God the Father. I had written a Lucianic essay to prove the same thing. There are two beautiful stories too, in this Miscellany. It pleased me altogether, infinitely. I was also much pleased with the Retrospective Review -- that is, with all the quotations from old books in it; but it is very ill executed.

"Does the spirit move you, write and give me an account of the ill success of my verses.

"Who wrote the review, in your publication, of my Cenci? It was written in a friendly spirit, and, if you know the author, I wish you would tell him from me how much obliged I am to him for this spirit, more gratifying to me than any literary laud.

Dear Sir,

"Yours, very truly,

"P.B.S."

† The writer was the late Archdeacon Hare, who, despite his orthodoxy, was a great admirer of Shelley's genius. He contended that Milton erred in making the Devil a majestical being, and hoped that Shelley would in time humble his soul, and "receive the spirit into him." -- ED.

81

p. 150 [Shelley to Mr. Ollier, Pisa, March 6th, 1820]

"Prometheus Unbound, I must tell you, is my favorite poem; I charge you, therefore, specially to put him and feed him with fine ink and good paper. Cenci is written for the multitude and ought to sell well. I think, if I may judge by its merits, the Prometheus cannot sell beyond twenty copies.

p. 150 [the same]

"If any of the Reviews abuse me, cut them out and send them. If they praise, you need not trouble yourself. I feel ashamed if I could believe that I should deserve the latter; the former, I flatter myself, is no more than a just tribute. If Bust praises me, send it, because that is of another character of thing.

p. 154 [Shelley to Mrs. Gisborne, May 6th, 1820]

"Take care of yourselves, and do you not forget your nightly journal. The silent dews renew the grass without effort in the night. I mean to write to you, but not to-day.

CHAPTER XI.

SHELLEY AND BYRON AT PISA.

Figure 6.3: [Left] Wilson Walker Cowen, *Melville's Marginalia*, Vol. 2 (New York: Garland, 1987) 164. The image demonstrates the spatial variety of the page's cited texts. [Right] An example of the four-page spread in Howe's photocopied version of Cowen's work. SHP Box 49 f. 6.

By following those encounters further and examining the actual archival copies of, amongst others, Shakespeare, Hawthorne, Emerson, and Arnold, Howe's work responds equally to Cowen and Melville. "Wilson Walker Cowen was a burrower whose commentator I am" (*NCM*, 99), Howe writes, in that the sequence relates to the source text by means of archival re-collection and editorial transcription. She effectively parallels Cowen's work, as she also reads through Melville's books and gathers quotations and marginalia that, once incorporated into her own writing,

[28] Susan Howe, "Susan Howe, The Art of Poetry No. 97," interview by Maureen N. McLane, *The Paris Review* 203 (Winter 2012).

comment on the encounters and associations resulting from Cowen's prior copying. At the same time, the poetry also conveys Melville's character and wanderings, here through his own library. Howe's project involves "follow[ing] what trails he follows through words of others [...]" (*NCM*, 99). The language of tracking, or hunting, resurfaces at various moments throughout the two sections; in particular, the image of the trail is transformed to "print," as both *footprint* and *printed book*. The "trails" Howe follows are, in fact, the diverse marks traced by Melville in the textual landscapes of page, book, and library. "If there are things Melville went looking for in books so too there were things I looked for in Melville's looking" (*NCM*, 114)."

The paths of Melville, Cowen, and Howe, thus inevitably crisscross, overlap, and become interwoven. Separating the tangled materialities of marginalia, transcription, and poetic composition, requires that the reader attempt to follow those same paths through archival research. Such a task is not always rendered easy, or fruitful, by this type of writing. As in Ezra Pound's work, at times, complete bibliographic references are given; other times, sources are merely alluded to; and often, citations (if indicated at all) remain detached or stripped of their context. Not doing so, however, may actually undermine the very process that would, if experienced, parallel that of Howe, and the others before her. That process, as discussed above, embraces seeking out texts and authors by means of conventional cross-referencing (i.e. footnotes, bibliographies, catalogs, etc.), as well as chance discoveries or "factual telepathy." The "difficulty" encountered in moving from one point to another, and from layer to layer, is precisely the poetic experience Howe's visual materiality enacts on the pages of her resultant writing.

Although the reader might certainly take up the challenge so as to clarify the documentary process and construction, the question of whether or not this is actually Howe's intention is another matter. Peter Nicholls draws a distinction between Pound and Howe, contending that unlike the former poet, "Howe has no desire to send us back to her sources, or, indeed, to encourage us to read them in tandem [...]."[29] Given that, generally speaking, it is not Howe's practice to include bibliographic or archival references within her poems, Nicholls's conclusion is certainly logical. His comment

[29] Peter Nicholls, "Unsettling the Wilderness: Susan Howe and American History," *Contemporary Literature* 37.4 (Winter 1996) 596. Nicholls, nonetheless, does state, "Perhaps, then, the source is irrelevant, though, when we do have it before us we gain a particular insight into Howe's mode of composition." It is precisely Howe's compositional method that the current study takes as its focus.

was made in conjunction with the sequence *Articulation of Sound Forms in Time*, where, in the poems themselves, one has little more than proper names to use as indications of sources; not a single reference for a textual source, complete or fragmentary, is found in the series. In tracking Hope Atherton, Howe's tracks are more or less covered. However, in this regard, "Melville's Marginalia" marks a departure from the earlier practice found in the aforementioned sequence, and the others that make up *Singularities*.[30] Across the abstract poems in the first section, one does find titles of books, essays, and poems, mentions of source texts or authors, and even complete bibliographic references (date, editor(s), and publisher).[31] In this particular case, then, it would seem that while Howe may not actually expect her readers to seek out the documentary material, she also, by providing a significant amount of source identification, does not inhibit them from doing so. Such an invitation coincides with Howe's critical work—e.g. *My Emily Dickinson*, many of the essays in *The Birth-mark*, and *Spontaneous Particulars*—which consistently advocates for the necessity of seeing and handling the materiality of the archives firsthand. This would allow the significance that Howe places on the graphic qualities of Melville's markings that are not reproduced in the book—the "penciled single double and triple scorings arrows short phrases angry outbursts crosses cryptic ciphers sudden enthusiasms mysterious erasures" (*NCM*, 100)—to be more fully understood.

INCITED VARIANCE

The first abstract poem in part one, while very short, introduces some of the aforementioned aspects of the poetics at work in the sequence (see figure 6.4). The imagery of bats and tatters in the first line invokes the idea of obscurity due to poverty, here certainly the result of socio-capital marginalization, a theme that recurs throughout the sequence. James Clarence Mangan is the associated figure, and below

[30] These are "Thorow" and "Scattering as Behavior Toward Risk." The former also does not contain any bibliographic references; the first page of the latter, however, does note the source of the poem as "*Billy Budd*: The Genetic Text" at the bottom right of the page (*Singularities*, 63). It should be noted that these comments refer to the poetry alone; Howe's prose introductions name several of the books she used as source material.

[31] To be sure, these instances are relatively few; see Appendix C, which demonstrates the extent of "independent" research demanded by some of Howe's collage-poems. Nonetheless, their inclusion attests to the genealogical link of Howe's documentary poetics to that of Pound. The position of this study is, in fact, that the absence of explicit indications of textual sources is a tacit invitation to the reader to follow a similar archival process to the sequence's arc of seeking out the original text.

the poem is an excerpt from his "Fragment of an Unfinished Autobiography."[32] The quoted paragraph is centered on the notion of a parenthesis—itself a means of relegating or marginalizing information—and Mangan's account defines it as "something included [...] but which might be omitted." Addition and omission, inclusion and exclusion, or thus bound up in the punctuated space. The parenthesis is visually represented in the poem at the top of the page by the duplicated, inverted line, which may also be read as a returning echo. Through the collapsed, slightly overlapping leading, the "fellow creatures" in between the repetition appear to be emerging out of the parenthetical obscurity, into a greater visual clarity. In the poem, one textual voice speaks back to itself, and in so doing creates a marginal space where other "fellow" voices are "let in."[33]

Two pages later in the New Directions publication, the texts of those other voices enter the sequence in a palimpsestic display of counter-narrative (see figure 6.5, left). The reader is immediately struck by the three, descending opening lines that typographically dominate the poem: "THE MANNER OF LIVING / WITH / GREAT MEN." The phrase is taken from a copy, owned by Melville, of *The Works of M. de La Bruyère: In Two Volumes. To Which is Added the Characters of Theophrastus. Also The Manner of Living with Great Men; Written After the Manner of Bruyère, by N. Rowe, Esq*. (London: J. Bell, 1776). The appropriated words are already, excluding Howe herself, polyphonous, in that the essay in question is, in fact, an imitation of La

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[32] This poem was originally intended to be on the left-hand page, with the excerpt from Mangan on the right. Each page, therefore, would speak to the other in this spatial arrangement. For the French translation Howe was not constrained by the limitation on the number of pages imposed by New Directions. As a result, along with several additions, the sequence was printed with the page layout of Howe's final manuscript draft (see, in this case, *MM*, 18-19). In a letter to the translators, dated 4 April 1996, Howe writes: "Some things were meant to be on pages by themselves but had to be crammed in to one page there because of a limit on pages I was allowed by ND. New Directions is ok but if I had a chance I would like to rectify that a little." SHP Box 50 f. 1. On this same subject, Bernard Rival writes the following: "L'édition américaine, qui nous était familière, mettait le texte (poèmes et proses sont dans ces pages entrelacés) à la queue leu leu ; on peut ainsi caser dans une page de livre une page et demi du manuscrit, ou un peu plus, ou un peu moins—la construction spatiale et visuelle du livre voulue par l'auteur en est faussée." [The American edition, which was familiar to us, set the text (poems and prose are interlaced on the pages) in single file; thus one can fit into one page of the book a page and a half of the manuscript, or a bit more, or a bit less—the author's desired spatial and visual construction of the book is distorted]. "Causerie à l'Abbaye d'Ardennes," *Formes critiques contemporaines*, eds. Vincent Broqua and Jean-Jacques Poucel (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Nouveau Monde, 2012) 386.

[33] The first and third lines are Howe's own. Line two may have been adapted from a letter written by Mary Shelley, dated 25 February 1822: "[...] *let me in my fellow creatures* love that which is & not fix my affections on a fair form endued with imaginary attributes [...]." *The Journals of Mary Shelley: 1814-1844*, Vol. 2, eds. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) 399-400, emphasis added.

Bruyère's style, which was influential for having employed a literary approach to historical matters. For Howe, the poet-historian, such a style is particularly resonant for how both poetry and historiography may over-write and re-write generic boundaries as a way of subverting traditional narratives, i.e. those of the "GREAT MEN." Thus, the very appropriation and decontextualization of the title—the arrangement only slightly modified from Cowen (see figure 6.3, left)—casts the phrase in irony: La Bruyère's originally unconventional writing is copied by Rowe, suggesting a mainstream acceptance of its influence, and later recopied by Howe, as an act of nonconformity against the very subject it puts forward. In Howe's poem the capital letters are carried over from the page in Cowen's work, thereby continuing to visually act as a title, albeit to a text that undercuts the material superiority of such (i.e. font size and placement on the page).

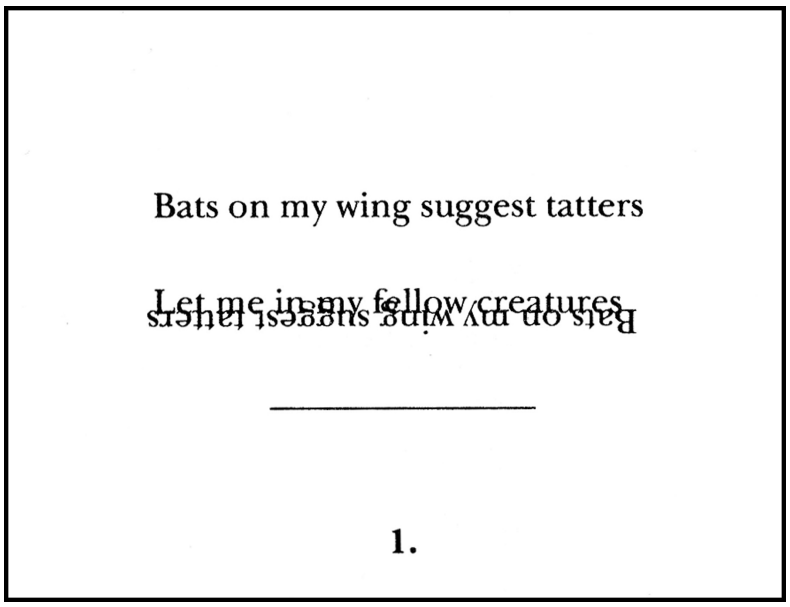

Figure 6.4: The first poem in section one of the sequence (*NCM*, 101).

Immediately below the lines, an outside voice (in Howe's own words) further reinforces the sense of opposition and objection to the authoritative voice by projecting an image of blind dependence. Continuing the reading in an uninterrupted top-to-bottom, left-to-right fashion—as Howe herself reads the poem[34]—one finds that what went unnoticed by this formerly "blind" speaker was the itinerant life of a

[34] Susan Howe and David Grubbs, "Melville's Marginalia," *Thiefth*, Blue Chopsticks, BC15, 2005, CD.

third voice, unfixed and "going from one house / to another." The lines may obliquely refer to Mangan, who, in John Mitchel's introduction to the collection of poems that is a principal source for Howe's work, is said to have lived in a number of different homes and places, even nowhere to be found for a period.[35] The capitalized "Whose," however, indicates a break in fragments, and the line is, in fact, not a continuation of Howe's words, but a return to La Bruyère: "[…] they will be told of Persons, whose Life was spent in going from one House to another; of honest Women, who kept neither Shops nor Inns, yet had their Houses open for those who would pay for their Admission […]."[36] The original passage does a great deal to identify the expressed itinerancy with social marginalization (in particular, that of women). Those unbound by location are unheard "Persons," out of view. Howe effectively splits La Bruyère's work into two, typographically distinct, voices: one, the uppercase "GREAT MEN," and the other, the lowercase, anonymous vagrants.

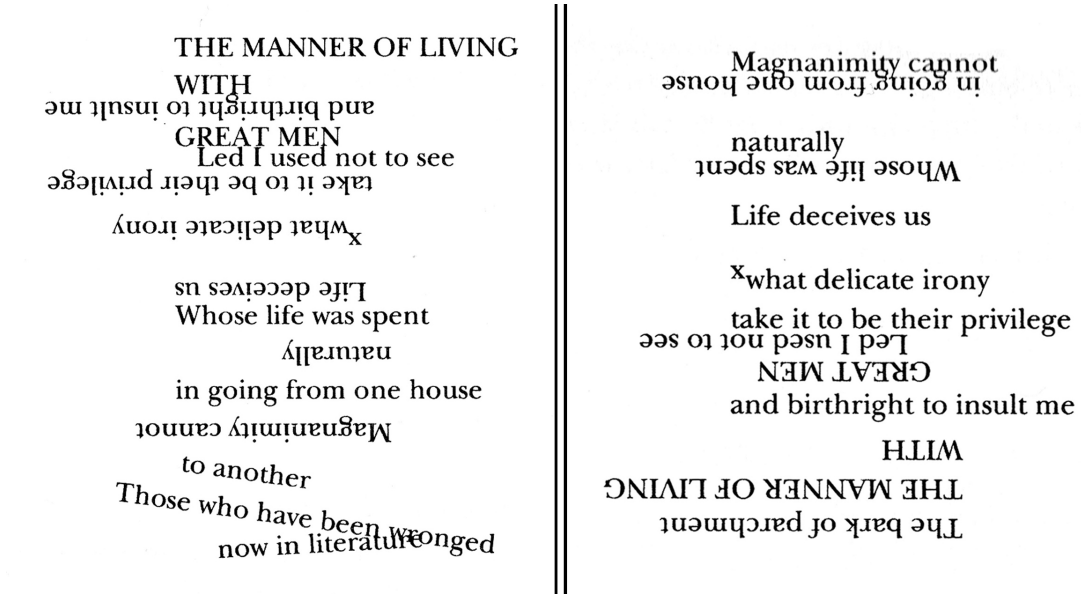

Figure 6.5: [Left] The abstract poem in the center of *NCM,* 103. [Right] The counterpart poem at the top of the following page.

Tilting the last part of the phrase, "to another," not only spatially conveys the subversiveness of these figures, but also serves to align it with those, who in the last two lines, are said to have been neglected, presumably by the established order.

[35] Mangan, *Poems*, 9-11.

[36] Jean de La Bruyère, "A Prefatory Discourse Concerning Theophastus," *The Works of M. de La Bruyère*, Vol. 1 (London: E. Curll and J. Pemberton, 1713) xiv.

Ironically, it is precisely these marginal, nonconformists that are "now in literature;" in other words, bound in print. Angling the lines slightly against each other, Howe has "literature" and "wronged" touch, contending for the same space.[37] It is within the pages of literature that the multiplicity of history's voices are copied, written over, or stricken out.

Earlier in the poem, the past-tense framing of "used not to see" implies a perspectival shift. The suggestion is quite literal: the reader must rotate the book 180º in order to read the counter-narrative. It begins with a fragmentary statement on *magnanimity*: from the Latin "*magnus*, great, and *animus* mind," and therefore partially defined by Noah Webster as "greatness of mind."[38] Within the poem, the attribution of the concept is ambivalent, for its definition would immediately link it to the previously mentioned "great men," but its inverted position identifies it with the contrary voices. The opposition is further evident in the negative statement that "Magnanimity cannot / naturally," the meaning of which is elucidated by the possible allusion to Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. The two philosophers disagreed on the ethical nature of this virtue, with the former, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, positing that it is a matter of "honors and dishonors," and so incompatible with humility. It is the virtue reached and possessed by those who are "good or excellent;" in other words, a quality of "great men."[39] To the contrary, in *Summa Theologiae*, which cites Aristotle's work, Aquinas maintains that humility is the "duplex virtus" (twin virtue) of magnanimity: the two are not opposed, but coincide.[40] For Aquinas, magnanimity is not a matter of receiving honors, but rather pursuing "things as are deserving of honor."[41] Typographically flipping the word against the preconceived notion of greatness, Howe's line would appear to align with Aquinas's more "marginalized" magnanimity: "[It] cannot / naturally" exist without humility. Most certainly significant to Howe,

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[37] The significance to Howe of words and lines touching or overlapping is evident in the work of translating the sequence into French. Howe notes to Vilgrain/Rival that "[...] of course the translation changes lengths and where words meet and come up against each other etc. [...]" (letter dated 27 October 1996, SHP Box 50 f. 3). For these particular lines, regarding an early attempt at the correct typography, Howe attached a post-it with the following comment: "Here the maintenant for now of course changes everything. I don't want literature [*sic*] coming over injure [...] Is it possible to put maintenant at steeper angle[?]." SHP Box 50 f. 3.

[38] Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 2 (New York: S. Converse, 1828) 86.

[39] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, trans. F.H. Peters, 5th ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner & Co., 1893) 114-15.

[40] Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benzinger, 1947) II-II q. 161.

[41] Aquinas, II-II q. 129.

the proximity of the word with margin(alia) and Mangan—a poet who neither received honors, nor possessed fortune in his lifetime—further suggests that it is, in fact, the disenfranchised Irish poet who is associated to the virtue of "greatness of mind."

In the midst of La Bruyère, Aristotle, Aquinas, and Mangan, Melville's voice cuts in, and succinctly clarifies this thought: "[X]what delicate irony." Here, the marginal writing—complete with the graphic mark—enters into the middle of the poem as a "simultaneous" interjection, read over or beneath the interrupted text. Howe is undoubtedly speaking through Melville's appropriated annotation, and continues to do the same through another passage from La Bruyère, which concludes the poem.[42] The lines are interpolated within the title of Rowe's essay, from which they are cited: "If I consider my own Interest, what have I to do with People, who take it to be their Privilege and Birth-right to insult me."[43] The polyphony therefore ends with a *détournement* of the same text into two voices, whereby Howe typographically represents a clash of socio-cultural status. The challenge is present in Rowe's essay, which relates to the prior question of magnanimity in its discussion of the morality and the nature of man, touching on both humility and greatness. Like Howe, Rowe is critical of "great men" and of seeking their conversation or favor, but he nonetheless concludes by asking whether one should not rather become a "great man," as opposed to being dependent upon them.[44] Howe's documentary poetics embodies this tension in its resistance to, and simultaneous obsession with, historical authority and hierarchy. In her work, writes Peter Quartermain, one finds the poet's "enchanted fascination with and desperate possession by history and with language, and her intense desire to be free of them; between her desire for the secure, the stable, and the defined, and her apprehension of them as essentially false; between her impassioned attraction to, and sheer terror of, the wilderness."[45] This interplay and tension is communicated, in one respect, through poems whose typographic innovation counters and undercuts the very narratives from which they quote.

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[42] Reading the poem from top to bottom, and then in the reverse direction, is by no means the definitive order; each line, regardless of direction, may be read in succession. The order presented above follows that of Howe's public readings of the poem (see Howe, *Thiefth*).

[43] La Bruyère, "Of the Manner of Living with Great Men," *Works*, 5.

[44] La Bruyère, "Of the Manner of Living with Great Men," *Works*, 8.

[45] Peter Quartermain, *Disjunctive Poetics: From Gertrude Stein and Louis Zukofsky to Susan Howe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 199) 183.

The counterpart to this poem is a slightly modified copy, which has been inverted on the page (see figure 6.5, right). In addition to cutting the last two lines of the poem, Howe has also added "The bark of parchment" (*NCM*, 104) to the start of the lines that read upside down. This line is logically associated with the "official voice" by the critic Uta Gosmann, who writes, "The 'bark' refers to the materiality of parchment or paper but also puns on the verb 'to bark' and invokes the commanding violence of the paper inscribed by 'great men.'"[46] In this second version of the poem, that materiality is reversed and used against itself. Typographically flipped, the fragmentary sentence betrays the regularization and textual conventions of the authoritative voices, whose "bark" is subdued under the text stacked over it, and, in particular, the formerly alternative narrative. Approaching this poem in the same manner as the previous one, the spatial inversion results in a temporal shift for the reader, whereby the returning voices of the "repressed,"[47] now at the top of the typographic hierarchy, are heard first. In analyzing the technique of mirroring and inverting the abstract poems, Rachel Back notes that it "strengthen[s] the impact of the visual design on the page." Although discussing this aspect in relation to *Eikon Basilike*—whose abstract poems and page layout are different from "Melville's Marginalia"—her interpretation is equally applicable, and particularly useful, to the poems of the latter sequence: "[...] placing these two 'versions' of the same text [...] so that they figuratively reflect each other, Howe counters the authority, legitimacy, and limits of the monovocal tale with a wild and open field of multiple readings."[48] Individually, the two poems are already plurivocal, with two contrasting narrative voices; additionally, though, being read in succession, the pair challenges the reader's understanding by offering an alternative visual materiality. In other words, the modified layout of the second version puts a mirror up to the reader's interpretive method. One of the more subtle differences is the increased visibility of the line "Life

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[46] Uta Gosmann, *Poetic Memory: The Forgotten Self in Plath, Howe, Hinsey, and Glück* (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012) 96-97.

[47] In reference to other similar poems in *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, Howe tells Lynn Keller, "If I read the poem aloud I whisper all the upside-down words, and that way they sound like another voice—the hissing return of the repressed." *Contemporary Literature* 36.1 (Spring 1995) 11.

[48] Back, 143-44. The scattered poems in *Eikon*, much different than the tight arrangements in "Melville's Marginalia," are also placed on facing pages. As previously mentioned, the two poems under study here are on subsequent pages, which happen to be recto and verso. In the French translation, following Howe's intended page layout, each poem is on the left-hand side, opposite selections of prose (*MM*, 22-25). Thus, while not mirroring each other, the two-page openings do visually parallel each other.

deceives us," which is given more weight by being set apart spatially from the text above and below. With regard to the concepts of authority and marginalization, the poem suggests that readers take greater notice of potential deceptions and/or assumptions, and revise them from a new perspective—setting the upside down, right side up.

In New Directions's publication, below this poem on the same page is another typographically abstract text, which, instead of La Bruyère as the principal source, is constructed out of quotations from Matthew Arnold's essay "The Literary Influence of Academies" (figure 6.6). The subject of Arnold's critical text resonates with the themes of the previous poems, in its advocating for "conscience in intellectual matters."[49] However, concerning the documentary mode of poetic composition, the poem's collaged construction illustrates Howe's reading of Arnold's essay via Melville's marginal annotations and marks, and the manner in which she engages the materiality of that process. The poem, as others in the sequence, performs the act of archival reading and re-collecting.[50] Following Howe's traces through the text, and how she reconfigures Arnold's words, the poem becomes "an action of the mind captured on a page."[51]

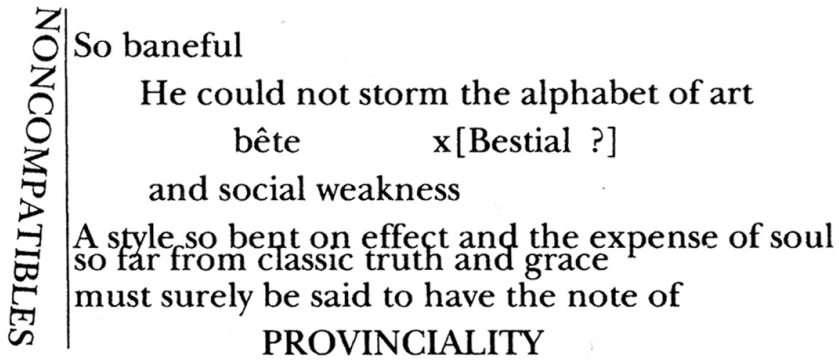

Figure 6.6: The lower poem on *NCM* page 104 (New Directions edition).

[49] Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1865) 44. It is this edition that Melville owned, and that Howe consulted for her work.

[50] On this process, Howe makes the following statement: "Echoes. Fragments. When you're reading, you're doing also re-collecting. It's detective work." Susan Howe, "Detective Work," interview by Catherine Halley, *The Poetry Foundation* < http://www.poetryfoundation.org/article/249896 >.

[51] Anne Carson, "Anne Carson, The Art of Poetry No. 88," interview by Will Aitken, *The Paris Review* 171 (Fall 2004).

As cited earlier from Howe's preface, she would often begin a poem by selecting a word or phrase from Cowen's arrangement of marked passages. Cowen's work only transcribed the adjacent fragments from the original text, and thus, Howe, in reading from marginalia to marginalia, also moved through Arnold's text in a fragmented, nonlinear fashion: page order is maintained, but significant portions of the text are absent. Later, however, she consulted Melville's actual copy of *Essays in Criticism* at Harvard's Houghton Library. She thus experienced firsthand the materiality of both the book—in particular, the sequencing of the worn pages—and Melville's penciled markings. In examining Howe's selections from Arnold's essay, as prompted by Melville, and their subsequent rearrangement for the final poem, one finds Howe allowing that materiality to supersede Cowen's alphabetization or front-to-back methodology (see figure 6.7). "The thing that reminded me," Howe says, "about Joyce—or Pound, say—is you pull out a word or a sentence or a fragment and go with it; you let it lead you somewhere. [...] I write the way I read."[52]

Parts of the passages are underlined or flagged by Melville, but Howe does not limit herself to these words alone. Instead, she is "led" by Melville to different paragraphs and pages of Arnold's work (in this case, the conclusion to the essay). For the resultant poem, she fuses her reading to Melville's by combining his annotations with her own quotations. Howe only once alters Arnold's original language (in line two); the more significant changes are in spatial organization and typography. The modifications are ironic in how they rearrange the content in order to shift Arnold's criticism into a very subtle form of praise for the nonconformity of the Mangan/Bartleby figure at the poem's center. Howe collages fragments of the source document—some of which is quotation itself—in such a manner as to highlight the academies' or institutions' rejection ("so baneful," "bête") of the writer they consider to be stylistically unconventional ("so far from classic") and socio-culturally inferior ("provinciality"). Mangan's penchant for pseudonyms, writing faux-translations and, as James Joyce noted, "poetry record[ing] injustice and tribulation" (*NCM*, 117), certainly set him at odds with the literary establishment. Howe's poem portrays Mangan as precisely the *other* voice amongst other voices. But the typographic disturbances of the appropriated text make clear Howe's siding with the marginalized

[52] Howe, Interview by Keller, 31.

over the authoritative. What she documents in such a poem is not the imposition of univocal power structures, but their destabilization, represented here typographically.

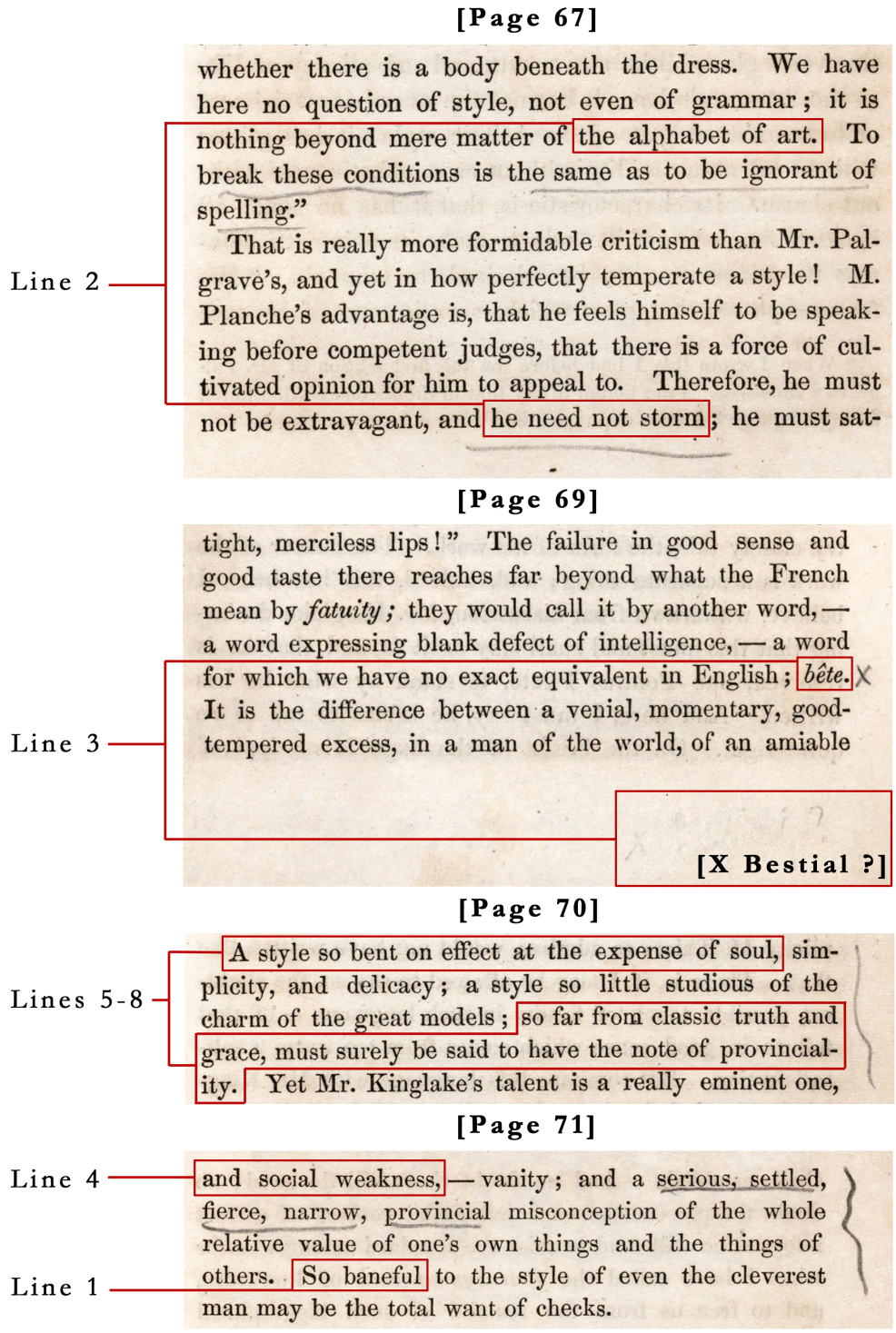

Figure 6.7: Diagram of the four excerpts from Matthew Arnold's "The Literary Influence of the Academies" that provided the lines for Howe's abstract poem at the bottom of *NCM*, 104. Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1865) 67-71. Houghton Library, *AC85.M4977.Zz865a. The penciled marginalia is Melville's. On page sixty-nine, his annotation at the bottom of the page has been erased; the textual insert follows Cowen's transcription (*Melville's Marginalia*, Vol. 1, 27).

The poem's inclusion of Melville's annotation attempting to find a suitable English translation of the French *bête*, despite Arnold's statement, takes on a double meaning: an elitist insult (given in a language with "no equivalent in English") of the "provincial," and a third-party objection to such condescension from an outsider (Howe via Melville). Mangan, it must be noted, completely shunned the British literary establishment; like Bartleby, "he preferred not to."[53] In the preface, Howe quotes a paragraph from Mitchel's introduction to the collection of Mangan's poems, "heavily scored" by Melville:

> [...] British criticism [gave] the law throughout the literary domain [...] but throughout his whole literary life of twenty years, he never deigned to attorn to English criticism, never published a line in any English periodical, or through any English bookseller, never seemed to be aware that there was a British Public to please. [Mangan] was a rebel politically, and a rebel intellectually and spiritually [...].
>
> (*NCM*, 115-16)

Typographically, there are two significant ways in which Howe alters the quotations composing the poem. The first is the crowded leading between lines five and six, visually communicating that the proposed criticism itself is "cramped" in style, undistinguished in its "misprinting." The second is the capitalizing, and spatial separation, of "PROVINCIALITY." The word becomes a visual exclamation that provides an unambiguously defined, one-word conclusion to the preceding rhetoric. The word is recalled on page seventy-one in Arnold's essay, where it is aligned with a "narrow [...] misconception," and so Howe's dismissal of this academic rejection is made clear. It would be erroneous, however, to assume that she refutes Arnold himself (as she seems to do later in the sequence), whose essay, in fact, praises the "flexibility of intelligence" of the French concerning critical reception.[54] The documentary poetics of "Melville's Marginalia" involves not only a multiplicity of voices, but also the reassigning of voices. As seen before, the texts from La Bruyère's *Works* are re-contextualized so as to counter themselves. Here, Arnold's criticism is fragmented and appropriated for the purposes of turning that criticism back onto the voices to which it is reattributed. The techniques of polyphony and citation in Howe's

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[53] Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street," *Billy Budd and Other Stories* (London: Harper Collins, 2014) 13. This page number is but the first instance of the signature phrase of Melville's character.

[54] Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, 46.

poetics are thus further complicated: not only is the reader confronted with the question of who is speaking, but also of who is speaking for whom. Furthermore, the untagged quotations that the reader has sourced, may, in the context of the poem, need to be re-identified to a third text or speaker. In the example above—for the reader willing to trace the poem's material history—the question of who makes the claim of provinciality layers voice upon voice: Howe ⇒ Melville ⇒ Arnold ⇒ Literary Academies. Consequently, while this poem does not visually illustrate the overlapping textual accretion of the palimpsest, its technique of quotation as polyphonous *mise en abîme* invites the reader into a structure of poetic composition where archival reading writes one text over another.

The capitalization of "provinciality" also links it to Howe's singular addition to the poem: "NONCOMPATIBLES." The typographic connection makes the nonconformity of the provincial (i.e. marginal) status visually dominant the rest of the text's claims of social inferiority or superior classicism. The two words, as it were, visually speak *over* the rest of the poem, an effect that is equally dependent on their position on the page: "PROVINCIALITY" concludes the poem, and, in Howe's public and recorded readings, "NONCOMAPTIBLES"—which spatially spans the entire poem from beginning to end—opens the poem.[55] The position of the latter term is, nonetheless, distinguished by its off-axis, vertical direction, and the line that separates it from the rest of the text. In doing so, Howe effectively approximates the materiality of her source text. The word is Howe's own annotation to Melville's annotated copy of Arnold—one writer's marginalia layered onto another's. The vertical line marks both the distinction of voices, as well as the physicality of the original book; it is the margin and the edge of the page. The misalignment of the word also mimics a handwritten marginal annotation, which, figuratively written in the page's open space, stands in contrast to the horizontally fixed lines of the principal text.

The thoroughness of Howe's attention to the typography of the entire poem is seen in her handwritten notes to the layout of Vilgrain/Rival's French translation: the upper-case words should be in "Reg caps" (i.e. not vertically compressed), the vertical line must be a "hair line," the brackets around Melville's comment are "too bold," the word they enclose has "too much space between letters," and the collapsed lines from

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[55] Howe, *Thiefth.* Howe's reading also "reproduces" the typography of the two words by vocalizing them at a louder volume, therefore making them "over and above" the other lines.

Arnold's text "could be a little closer."[56] Such instructions—which are consistently found throughout Howe's manuscripts for the sequence—are intended to reproduce both the materiality of the source texts and Howe's reading of them. The poems typographically reconstitute the network of quotations and materialities that an archival, documentary-based methodology assumes as its poetic structure.

The spatially reproduced marginalia continues throughout part one, the most visually abstract examples of which are two poems that were to be found on the following two pages, according to Howe's original intentions for the book. Unfortunately, in the publication by New Directions only the first of these was included, a problem that was later remedied for Théâtre Typographique's edition. On a copy of the omitted poem sent to the French publishers, Howe's handwritten note reads, "Trace of the word Because. It hardly matters what word – This was not in the book – too much for ND but in my ideal book 16 + 17 here would be on facing pages."[57] Being closer to minimalist drawings, the two poems are by far the least textual, and most purely graphic, in the entire work (figure 6.8). Their position within the sequence reinforces the ideas and typography of the previous poem, both clarifying and developing the significance of each. The marginal "NONCOMPATIBLES," and the vertical line separating it, are carried over spatially to the next page (the layout being nearly identical), where it is replaced by "SIMPLETONS" (in the English version).[58] The linguistic substitution reiterates the establishment's criticism and disdain for the literary nonconformists in a more explicit manner, while visually still communicating their marginal, and marginalized, status. On the following page, the explanation or justification for such actions—the "because"—has been all but entirely eliminated.

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[56] SHP Box 50 f. 3.

[57] SHP Box 50 f. 3. The French edition, as seen below, kept the English as is.

[58] The word is quoted (and pluralized) by Howe from a passage on lexical precision in Matthew Arnold's essay "On Translating Homer: Three Lectures," in *Essays in Criticism*: “To be sure, here as elsewhere, the consulter must know how to consult,—must know how very slight a variation of word or circumstance makes the difference between an authority in his favour, and an authority which gives him no countenance at all ; instance, the ‘Great simpleton !’ [...] of Mr. Newman, and the ‘Thou fool !’ of the Bible, are something alike ; but ‘Thou fool !’ is very grand, and ‘Great simpleton !’ is an atrocity" (365). The underlining is Melville's, who also marked the latter portion of the passage with a wavy, vertical line.

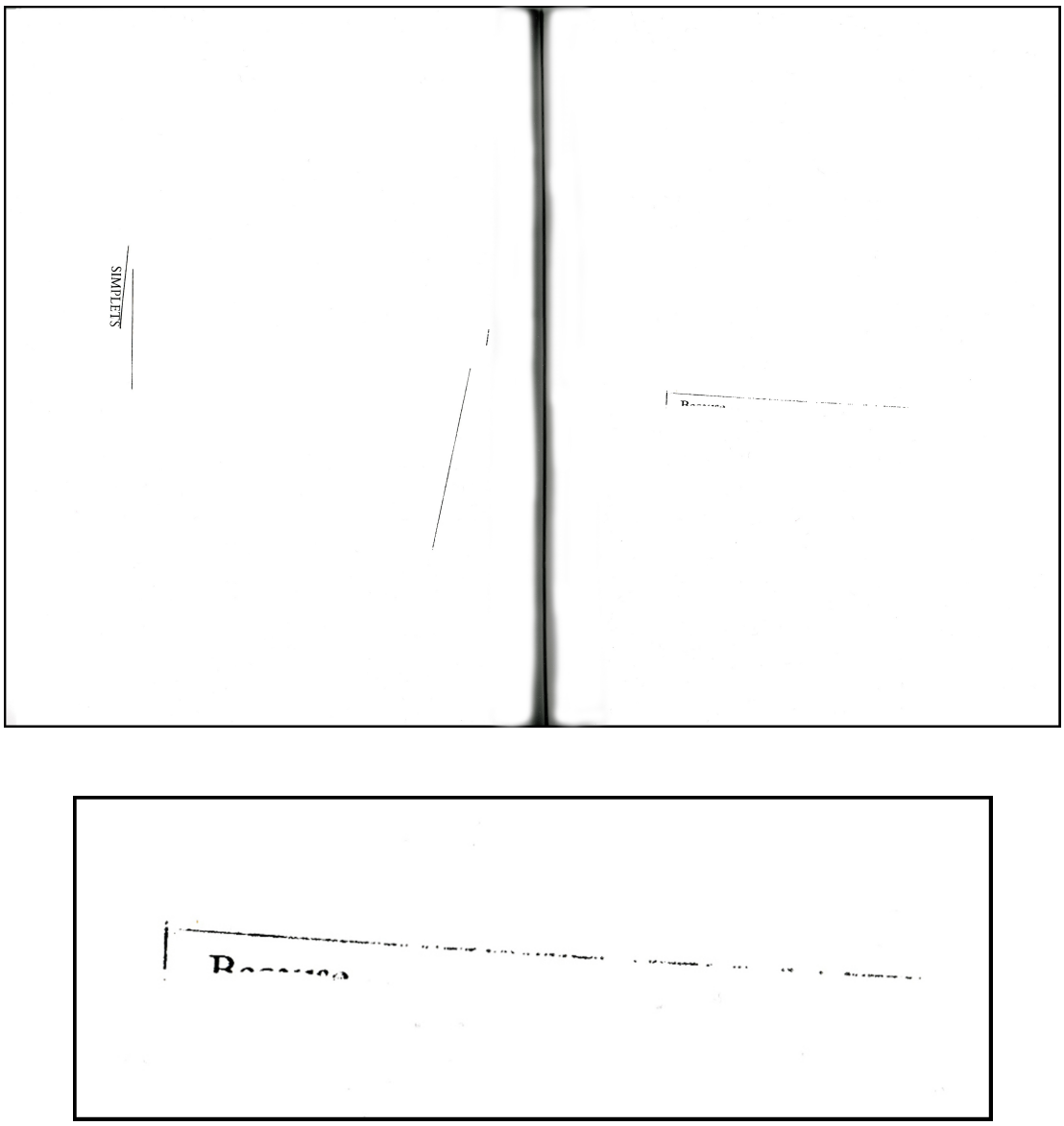

Figure 6.8: [Above] Two-page spread from Théâtre Typographique's publication *Marginalia de Melville* (26-27). [Below] Detail of page 27.

Of course, as Howe's note states, the significance of the word itself is far less important than the fact that a barely legible trace is all that remains of it. The reader is not necessarily expected to recover the word, but rather to see the illegible graphic marks as a means of reading the erasure, and considering the implications of such a textual manipulation. Howe herself has not, in fact, recovered this invented fragment of erased marginalia, so much as recopied the loss of it. Although no layering of text is present on the page, it reminds the reader nonetheless of the palimpsestic form, to which effacement and only partially visible traces are inherent. Leaving only textual traces of print alongside, or stranded within, the blank space of the page, the poet

foregrounds the material of the palimpsest—the "radical visible subsurface" (*NCM,* 106). In a letter sent to the translators later in the same year (1996), the poet restated the importance of the poems being printed opposite one another in order to achieve the intended visual effect: "The 'simpleton' page and 'because' must face each other. [...] It all connects with mirroring effects in other poems of mine as in *Eikon* where words spill on the page -- only this time simply space and lines."[59] The visual cry of the capitalized "SIMPLETONS" certainly stands in stark contrast to the inarticulate whisper of the disappearing response of "Because," but it is the non-textual elements of the pages that take precedence. Viewing the two together amplifies the dominance of blank space, where one would normally expect to find the body of text. All that remains, however, are marginal traces, and in the place of "lines of text" are actual drawn lines. In one sense, these reproduce the single or double vertical lines, and underlining, with which Melville frequently marked his books. In another, they recall the marks used by printers and editors to delineate text (e.g. sections, sub-sections, or paratext),[60] as well as the actual material edges of the page. As with the graphic lines in other abstract poems, as per Howe's instructions, they were not to be printed as thick or bold marks, but as light, "hair line" material traces—a faint mark in pencil, or a thin, shadowed edge of a page.[61] The inclusion of these two facing poems, both composed of "space and lines," draws the reader away from a strict attention to text, and illustrates the significance of visual materiality as part of the process of reading the archive. Howe's fascination with Melville's marginalia is often focused more on the expressivity of his non-alphabetic marks—the triple-checks and double-/*x*/s, for example—than his English annotations. The marginal, the graphic, the illegible, and the blank or erased, are all of equal importance to Howe's project.

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[59] Howe, letter dated 10 November, SHP Box 50 f. 4.

[60] Howe herself uses such lines in the first section of the sequence (see *NCM* 95, 101, 102, 106, and 119).

[61] In drafts for the typographically abstract poems in French, Howe noted the need for a "hair line" for every single one, where such applied. On one draft of the "Simpletons" poem, she even asked, "line could still be thinner?" See SHP Box 50 f. 3. Théâtre Typographique achieved the desired effect, and in comparison with New Directions's edition, it is clear that the latter's reprints of the book have unfortunately resulted in bold, less sharp typography. The effect is also noticeable simply by comparing the first edition by New Directions with their subsequent printings.

The final four typographically abstract poems in section one return to the intertextual polyphony of the first several poems, again taking Arnold and La Bruyère as the primary textual sources. Furthermore, thematically the compositions continue to address the rigid, exclusionary authority of the established literary institutions. However, with regard to both typography and content, the poems advance these aspects of the sequence in significant ways. Formally, they include the most visually palimpsestic arrangements and literal "writing over" in the sequence, with the layouts increasing the sense of simultaneous voices speaking. That multiplicity is matched by the fact that the poems are composed from a greater number of texts and authors than the preceding poems. The textual network created by Howe's program of quotation moves beyond a single essay or single author, resulting in more complex spatial arrangements that continue to perform her documentary approach to, and reading of, the archive. Melville's library and the archive are also more immediately present due to the inclusion of bibliographic references, which explicitly provide the reader with the primary source. Contextually, the poems progress from the opposition between "major" and "minor" literatures—namely, critical marginalization—to the lasting socio-cultural effects of such clashes for the nonconformist writers. The opposition is, of course, reinforced visually through typographic intrusions, interruptions, responses, and annotations, and thus the poems' processes of signification are as bound up in the materiality on (and of) the page, as in the immaterial concepts the cited passages address.

The first three poems all draw heavily, though not solely, on Arnold's essays, and the linguistic and structural similarities between them are apparent. In both the English and the French version, the first two are printed on the same page—with a short paragraph of prose on Mangan as a child separating one from the other—with typographic "titles" that echo each other: "A SPEECH AT ETON," and "A FRENCH ETON" (see figure 6.9 below). A turn of the page later, the third poem follows suit with "VERBAL PHANTOMS" printed at the top of the predominately vertical poem (see figure 6.2). Given the bibliographic and typographic connections, the three may be read together as a single poem developing the same themes and compositional approach in three parts.

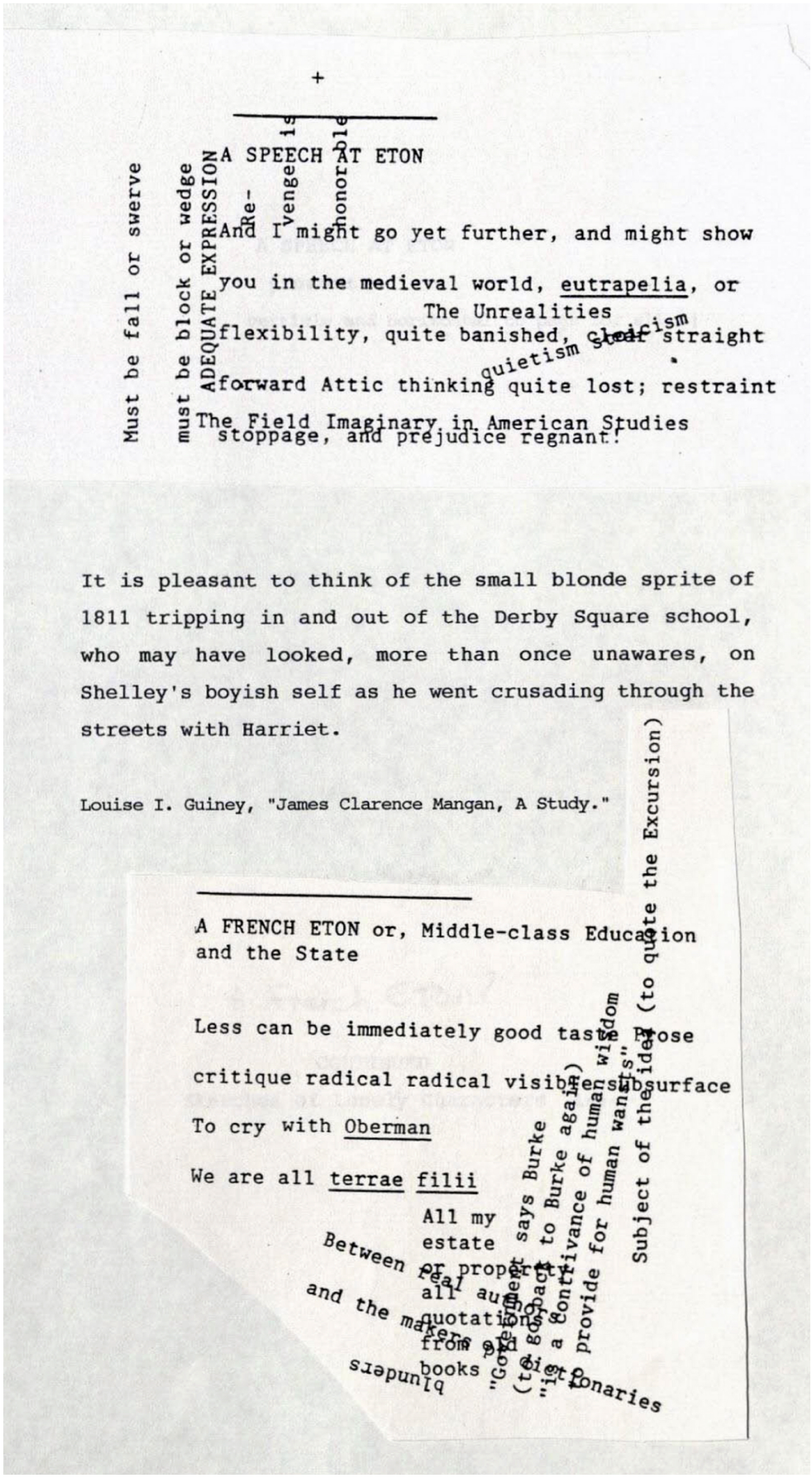

Figure 6.9: Typescript "paste-up" of *NCM* 106. SHP Box 46. f. 4.

Howe's method of free association and "poetic telepathy," discussed earlier, is particularly evident in these poems. As mentioned above, Howe's reading of Melville's marginalia leads her from essay to essay, and even outside of Arnold's criticism altogether. Following Howe's reading of not only one text, but of multiple texts in and out of the archive of Melville's library, is therefore perhaps even more significant in this case, for the fact that the poems' originality lies largely in how the quotations are collaged into a visual palimpsest. At Peter Nicholls writes, for Howe "'A poem is an icon' [...] and, we might add, it is also a kind of forgery, having no claims to full originality."[62] Nicholls's statement is accurately applied to the entirety of Howe's œuvre in that it reflects her Emersonian position that no writing is ever *fully* original, but always inevitably a form of quotation—however direct or indirect—that is full of literary debts and depths.[63]

At the same time, part of Howe's method of quotation in "Melville's Marginalia" entails the lack of identification by punctuation. In the three aforementioned poems, Howe does, in fact, either include her own additions, or makes her own textual alterations and edits. However, lacking any visual indication, her own words and manipulations are confounded with her sources; only by retrieving the source texts may one attempt to distinguish one voice from another in Howe's polyphonous textual constructions. Such distinctions are crucial for any analysis of the compositional method of Howe's documentary poetics, but the significance of her typographic fusion of the individual pages into a single text should not be overlooked. Howe's layering of materialities in "Melville's Marginalia" is precisely what creates the intertextual, cross-historical network that pulls the marginal into the once excluded middle of the now rearranged frame.

The sources of Howe's freely associative archival reading for these three poems is compiled and listed in the tables of Appendix C. In the first poem, Howe arranges the principle citation from Arnold's "A Speech at Eton" in the more or less conventional manner of parallel, triple-spaced lines that read from left to right. However, she does "go yet further" (as the quotation begins) by subtly turning Arnold's observation about the past into a protest concerning the present. She first eliminates the original commas that set off "in the mediæval world," thereby shifting

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[62] Nicholls, "Unsettling the Wilderness," 599.

[63] See Howe's most recent collection *Debths*—the title of which, in fact, is a "quotation" of a neologism taken from James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*—and the foreword therein.

the second-person pronoun "you" from being at a remove from such a society, to being currently within it. This is further emphasized by Howe's line break between the verb and its direct object: "you in the mediæval world" is spatially positioned on its own. The past medievalism in Arnold's work becomes the present in Howe's. Furthermore, the poet replaces the period at the end of the phrase with an exclamation point, marking the poem's defiance against the inflexibility and prejudice that would regularize or reject nonconformist, poetic innovation. Howe's use of quotation, therefore, is not necessarily a matter of reconstituting a lost narrative, but of recreating one that was, according to the poem, suppressed, and so never heard to begin with.

It is not, however, a single narrative that Howe's work aims to communicate, but rather how layers of different voices may, in their fragmentary state, be read together as a whole. The increased separation between Arnold's lines of prose serves to afford space to such multiplicity. Typographically at variance with the source text is the fragmented statement "Re- / venge is / honorable," set perpendicular to, and over, the capitalized title of the essay.[64] Potentially quoted from the philosopher Thomas Hobbes (see Appendix C), the citation is positioned as a dissident, and just, voice. Several lines later Howe inserts a title of one of Mangan's poems. John Mitchel notes in his introduction to the collection of Mangan's work, "The Unrealities" was the title that Mangan chose for his translation of a poem by Friedrich Schiller, which Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, in his translation, had titled "The Ideal." Mangan's version is "true to the soul and spirit, and infinitely more poetic."[65] Howe's inclusion of this title, inserted between her shifting of Arnold's "mediæval world" to the contemporary literary society, conveys the falsity of the established premises of that society: the proposed "ideal" is, in fact, a mistranslated "unreality." The complexity of the compositional process at the heart of Howe's documentary poetics is seen in taking the contextual background of her sources—in this case, of Mangan's poem—into account. Her choices of quotation, and their typographic integration into her poetry,

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[64] In the French version of the poem, the spatial arrangement is more intricately subversive: the upper-case /*A*/ of "UN DISCOURS A ETON" doubles as the missing /*a*/ in "honor[a]ble" (28). The translation also restores the /+/ sign (Howe's reproduction of marginalia) that was meant to be printed above the entire poem (see figure 6.9), but was inadvertently left out by New Directions. One of Howe's post-it notes reads, "my little + got left out in ND version." See also SHP Box 50 f. 1-6 where the translated version is frequently worked, noted, and reworked.

[65] Mangan, *Poems,* 26.

reveal as much as conceal the polyphony of the palimpsest. The page is a crowded one: through Cowen's transcription of Melville's reading, Howe brings Mangan's rewriting of Bulwer's translation of Schiller's poetry in relation to Arnold's essay.

The poet continues to typographically challenge, not necessarily Arnold himself, but the topics his essay addresses, by piecing together and altering a passage from another of Mangan's poems. She fragments and edits the line "Thou must either serve or govern"[66] to "swerve," undercutting the oppositional hierarchy in favor of a movement dodging such a system. These vertically rotated lines call the writer to be a "block or wedge" in the rigidly imposed system of editing and binding. The lines are positioned, to borrow Pound's words regarding Sigismondo, "*against* the current of power,"[67] and they are aligned with the typographic rebuttal "ADEQUATE EXPRESSION." The marginal status of such a position is finally shifted from the British/European context of Arnold's essays to an American one by Howe's single-phrase gloss on Donald Pease's essay, which advocates for the representation in critical studies of absent subjects, who have since been disenfranchised by "the repressed relationship between the literary and the political."[68] The widespread historical reach of the archive is embodied in Howe's documentary method; here, by means of her poetic appropriation, she fuses 19th-century England (Arnold), Ireland (Mangan), and America (Melville), to literary and historical criticism in the academia of 20th-century America (Pease).

This both relates to Ezra Pound's intertextual poetic technique in the Malatesta Cantos, and diverges from it. In Pound's sequence, the focus, with very few exceptions, is almost exclusively on Italy in the quattrocento. The diversity of archival sources that he uses is appropriated so as to reconstruct an epic-poetic narrative that, while not entirely linear, traces the overlooked, or falsified, story of Sigismondo Malatesta's successes and defeats. He is the "factive personality"[69] to which all other textual references are gathered. In Howe's work, while Mangan stands as the central figure—with Melville always in the margins—her textual sources are not subsumed under a single historical narrative. The resultant poem of Howe's practice of quotation is certainly wholly contemporary—history is drawn into the

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[66] Mangan, *Poems,* 198.
[67] Pound, *GK*, 159.
[68] Donald Pease, "New Americanists: Revisionist Interventions into the Canon," *boundary 2* 17.1 (Spring 1990) 31.
[69] Pound, *GK*, 194.

present, in a manner related to Pound's juxtaposition of the quattrocento with Europe and America in the early 20th century. But the form of palimpsestic, visual materiality in Howe's poetics demonstrates the evolution of poetic historiography—Pound's "poem containing history" that Howe's œuvre has advanced—from the radial compression of various sources into a coherent whole, to the explosion of that very same coherency into its constituent parts. "Melville's Marginalia" pushes the typographic distinction of the documentary poetics of the Malatesta Cantos to typographic dissonance.

In the second poem, Arnold's original essay, the title of which is the first two lines of the poem, argues for the extension of high-class educational establishments to the middle class. The "high, magnanimous, governing spirit,"[70] which Arnold often discusses, recalls the magnanimity and intellectual greatness addressed in the poems of the preceding pages. The poem continues Howe's challenge and questioning of the gap between the elite and the marginal, as a trope for the literary distinctions between different compositional practices. The third line splices together pieces of two different quotations (from a second essay by Arnold) on the subjects of genius, intelligence, and taste in writing. The result is an ironically fragmented line of poetry that undercuts the officially approved "Prose" it addresses (which Howe herself capitalizes). At the bottom of the poem, those same subjects resurface with regard to "real authors" and "makers of dictionaries," quoted from *Shelley Memorials*. The distinction of originality (i.e. genius) from unoriginality (i.e. copyist/scrivener) is countered by the upside down word, extracted from a third essay by Arnold, as an error ("blunders"). The angled lines are further interrupted by the overwritten, or underwritten, fragment stating that "all [is] quotations from books." Interpreted together according to the typographic contact between the words, the lines read: "authors all quotations from/of dictionaries." Howe's spatial arrangement of the quotations conflates the two types of writers and works—authors/books and copiers/dictionaries—on the "visible subsurface" (l. 4) of the material page. In fact, Howe's desired layout for the poem, as seen on the manually constructed typescript page in figure 6.9, involved much more overlapping than the published version by

[70] Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, 465.

New Directions.[71] Nonetheless, the palimpsest of textual voices from different sources—to be seen simultaneously, and read both individually as well as for how they interact and fuse—is evident.

The previous poem's air of protest is picked up in the fragment "to cry with *Oberman*" [*sic*], which, in Arnold's essay, is followed by a citation from Etienne Pivert de Senancour's novel: "*Périssons en résistant.*"[72] Howe also re-contextualizes Arnold's satiric remark, "'We are all *terrae filii*,' cries their eloquent advocate; 'all Philistines together [...],'"[73] by replacing the character of Obermann's actual quotation with the inclusive first part of the sentence. In light of the sources, a paraphrase of the lines might read, "Let us shout out our resistance to exclusion," thus soliciting the reader to insist on this sense of equality, along with the poet herself. This unity of the marginalized figures like Mangan, who refused to publish in British journals, and Bartleby, who "preferred not to" continue working as a scrivener, is embodied by the poem's materiality, the radical typography of which combines the voices of Arnold, Senancour, Shelley, Emerson, and Edmund Burke.

In contrast to prior poems in the sequence, unique to this poem is also Howe's signaling of quotation; in fact, more precisely, the tagged lines are quotation-within-quotation. She draws together Arnold's citation from Burke's "Reflections on the Revolution in France," and from Emerson's *The Excursion*, into a typographic accretion of Anglo-Irish-American socio-cultural commentary. This figurative palimpsest-via-quotation of voices over voices, and text written through text, is a fundamental aspect of Howe's documentary poetics in "Melville's Marginalia." "It is crucial," Howe writes to Théâtre Typographique, "that when it does come out in French the multiplicity of voices and texts that make it up take on the life they have in English. Obviously translation changes things nevertheless the change here must be a Melvillian-Joycean-Manganesian sub-marine change into something rich and strange. The stranger the better."[74]

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[71] As done for the preceding poem, the French translation corrects this, and two other errors in the New Directions version: the first /*i*/ in "critique" (l. 4) is restored, and the stray quotation marks that follow "books" (at the bottom of the poem) are reset to their correct position before the adjacent "Government" (*MM*, 28).

[72] Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, 26.

[73] Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, 25.

[74] Letter dated 4 July 1996, SHP Box 50 f. 6.

This quality is expressed in the "title" to the following poem—"VERBAL PHANTOMS" (*NCM*, 108)—which, along with the subsequent poem, shifts to the consequences of the literary censorship suggested in the previous pages. The author whose writing is judged to be "effective without charm," or have "rapidity without ease"—two criticisms leveled by Arnold in "The Literary Influence of the Academies"—falls into literary obscurity. Howe's fragmented quotations state the writer's "name appears and disappears forever," and the critically dead author/work moves from the "Churchyard to the grave." As in the two earlier poems, Howe once again typographically conveys this idea by superimposing these two lines, which read in opposite directions, in such a way as to visually represent textual effacement: "name" and "grave" are compounded, and "appears and" is overlaid onto "yard to the," rendering the words all but illegible (see figure 6.2). The majority of the lines in this almost entirely vertical poem are printed so as to read from the top of the page toward the bottom. Visually, then, the descending text mimics the fall and burial in underground oblivion, with only the underlined "VERBAL PHANTOMS" resting, so to speak, above the textual surface.

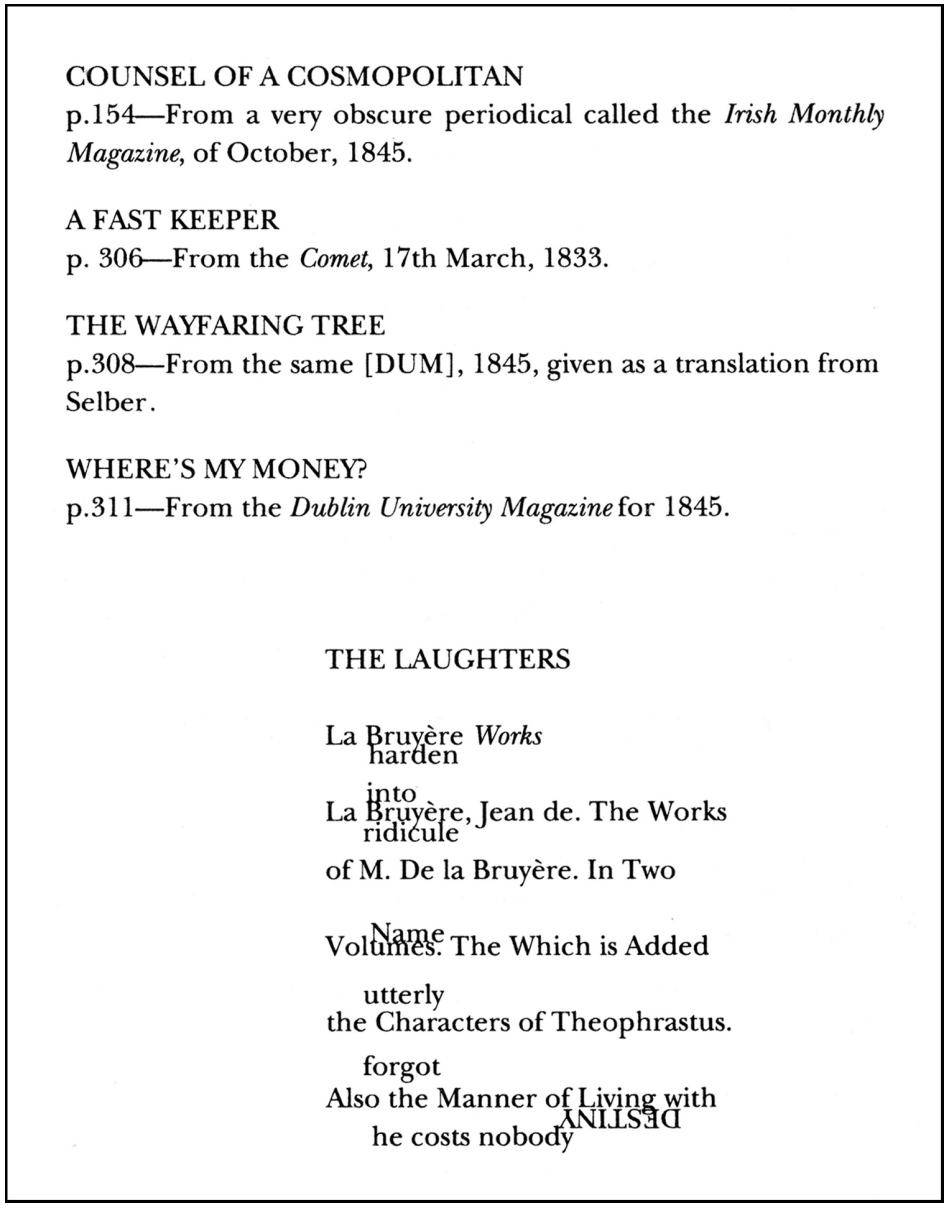
Whereas the prior pages were collaged from a variety of books, for this poem Howe draws exclusively from Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, though she does cite from six different essays in total. In the passages she quotes from, Arnold is predominately condemning the so-called popular authors, who, in Arnold's opinion, have not achieved "genuine poetry" (or literature), and whose "failure in good sense and good taste there reaches far beyond what the French mean by *fatuity*."[75] In contrast to these lost and forgotten authors, the bibliographic reference for Arnold's work is given in full. In providing the documentary trace to Arnold, Howe highlights the absence of the same information for the work of the "phantom" writers who have been more or less erased from the archive. In following Howe's reading through the different essays, the reader, in fact, never encounters the words of another author. Only Melville's ghostly presence lingers beside and behind the texts.

A similar documentary technique is used in the last abstract poem to further emphasize the politics of the archive. On page 110, Howe juxtaposes four, more traditionally arranged, bibliographic references for writings by Mangan, with the nearly full title of La Bruyère's *Works*, broken over five lines (figure 6.10).

[75] Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, 2, 70. See Appendix C for the complete passages.

Clarification of the choice of those writings is aided shortly after the poem, in the continuation of the prefatory prose, where Howe relates the obscurity of Mangan's work:

> I have traced what books I can find by or about you in America. [...] In Dublin I may discover the undated third edition of *The Poets and Poetry of Ireland*. So far I have only seen one tattered shambles of a copy in the sub-section of Sterling Library where damaged books go for rebinding. Pages of "Fragments From An Unfinished Autobiography" are so brittle pieces break off when I turn. [...] Recent books about you or your work are thin as physical Bartleby."
>
> (*NCM*, 117)



COUNSEL OF A COSMOPOLITAN
p.154—From a very obscure periodical called the *Irish Monthly Magazine*, of October, 1845.

A FAST KEEPER
p. 306—From the *Comet*, 17th March, 1833.

THE WAYFARING TREE
p.308—From the same [DUM], 1845, given as a translation from Selber.

WHERE'S MY MONEY?
p.311—From the *Dublin University Magazine* for 1845.

THE LAUGHTERS

La Bruyère *Works*
harden
into
La Bruyère, Jean de. The Works
ridicule
of M. De la Bruyère. In Two
Name
Volumes. The Which is Added
utterly
the Characters of Theophrastus.
forgot
Also the Manner of Living with
DESTINY
he costs nobody

Figure 6.10: Page 110 from *The Nonconformist's Memorial*. The four references at the top are to writings by James Clarence Mangan. In "paste-up" drafts, Howe included the bibliographic reference: "D.J. O'Donahogue, 'Notes on the Sources of the Poems.'" SHP Box 46 f. 4.

The references allow the reader to retrace Howe's archival research, and potentially discover, or recover, the decaying materiality of these printed works. That materiality and the obscurity of the texts are parallels to Mangan himself, who, like Melville's Bartleby, is thought to have died from starvation. In fact, the four writings that Howe references relate the poet's difficult relation to society as a type of vagrant, continuously in financial difficulty. The entirely capitalized, obscure titles are responded to by "THE LAUGHTERS" (which "harden / into / ridicule") in the middle of the page, and finally the upside-down "DESTINY" at the very bottom. The latter is substituted for the original title's "GREAT MEN," creating an intertextual link with the earlier poems' criticism thereof. What that destiny entails is expressed in the lines intervening among the title of La Bruyère's collection: "Name / utterly / forgot."

In her typescript drafts, these three words were originally a part of a separate poem for the facing page, in which the socio-economic ruin is made more explicit, in relation to a destiny of obscurity (figure 6.11). Howe's fragmentary quotations from La Bruyère's text (see Appendix C) are appropriated as an anonymous, other voice—one that interferes and disrupts the bibliographic citation. As a result of this material writing-over, the poet creates polyphony out of a univocal text (i.e. La Bruyère's *Works*). Howe's palimpsestic practice of quotation not only draws the cited author into the poem, but also works to introduce and include the "verbal phantoms" that are found in between lines of text.

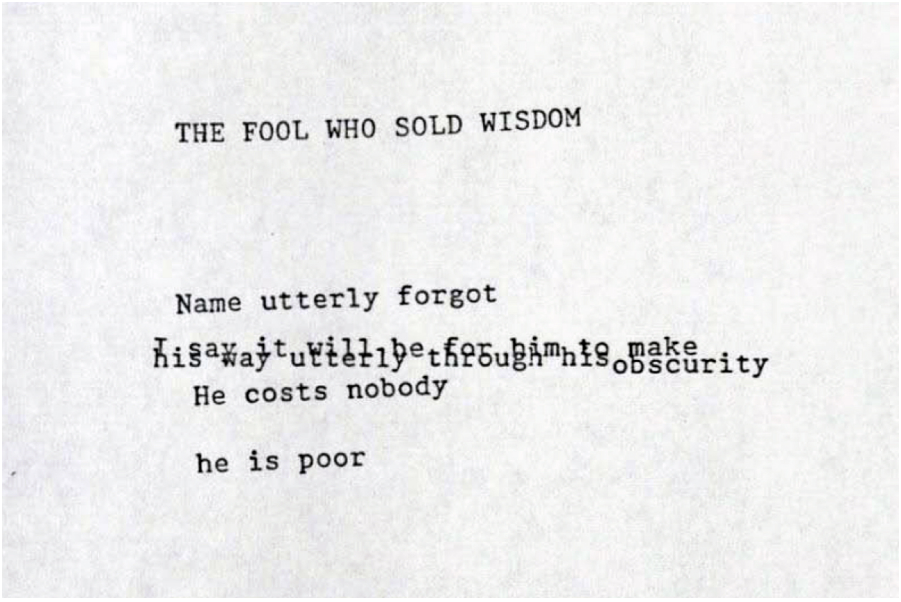


Figure 6.11: An unused poem from the archival drafts for "Melville's Marginalia." Two of the lines were retained and integrated into the lower text on *NCM*, 110. SHP Box 46 f. 4.

The concept and materiality of the palimpsest provide the visual form whereby Howe's textual and authorial associations as the poet-historian are rendered typographically. Her method of "free association," which coalesces the material and the immaterial through a negotiation of textual constraints and artistic liberties, allows one to read the compositional process along with its results. Consequently, the page acts as a type of archive itself, tracing the poet's selection, fragmentation, rearrangement, and reworking of pre-existing, found texts. Equally communicating the continually evolving process of writing and the product of writing-over, in Howe's work the palimpsest is conceived as a paradoxical space between the sense of permanence in materialization, and the ephemerality of an historical cycle that involves textual fragmentation and erasure.

The structure of these palimpsests stems from a program of quotation that involves passages which may or may not include punctuation and/or bibliographic tags. The series of poems thus contains varying degrees of direct intertextuality, inviting the reader to assume a more active role in the documentary poetics at work. This type of participation entails an experience of archival research and textual sourcing that parallels Howe's own, and engaging an interpretive process that reads the fragmented materiality of quotations and narratives as a new whole. Howe's creation or recreation of marginal voices through the texts of others relies in part upon those interrelations between seemingly disparate, or even contradictory, texts and authors. Following the analysis of Howe's poetic use of quotation, the multiplicity of voices, so essential to "Melville's Marginalia," develops precisely from such documentary connections and layering. In conjunction with the exercise of the reading practice mentioned above, the polyphony found in the sequence's abstract poems produces a poetic simultaneity achieved through unconventional typographic arrangements. This spatio-temporal aspect of these poems works to disrupt the uniform and univocal text, so as to impart the historical network of voices, documents, influences, and exchanges, which Howe demonstrates as being fundamental, even inherent, to literary production. One of the poet's aims is, in fact, to illustrate the polyphonous history of the continually evolving materiality of textual composition, which includes the collaborative work of writing, editing, and printing.

In the visually abstract, source-based poems in part one of "Melville's Marginalia," the poet's visually unique demonstration of narratives and counter narratives—both historical and contemporary—establishes several of the sequence's

principal themes regarding the exercised authority of literary and critical institutions in relation to marginalized authors. Howe's unconventional poetics, on full display in these poems, demonstrates the ways in which the polyphony and palimpsestic form embody the tensions she perceives between such socio-cultural, hierarchical power and the nonconformist authors it excludes or obscures. Destabilizing her source texts by fracturing internal voices and/or interpolating external voices, the network of quotations and materialities Howe's archival, documentary-based methodology produces, questions and challenges the historical record.

The poet's integration within the material space of the page of these three poetic features—the palimpsestic form, the practice of citation, and polyphony—provides a visual representation of her engagement with archival space. Combining both the experience of access to, and exclusion from, the materials therein, Howe's poetry unsettles and transforms the "stable substrate" of the archive by incorporating the specific materialities, structures, and processes characteristic of such a location into those of the spatio-textual reconfigurations in "Melville's Marginalia." The poems of the sequence analyzed here not only display the methodology of Howe's selection and (re)organization, they also demonstrate how such compositional choices—on account of interactions between the poet-historian and the various collections—relate and respond to the politics of the archive. For the reader, then, the poems also impart Howe's experience as a researcher and "library cormorant,"[76] mapping her critical reading in addition to her poetic writing. As stated earlier, the archive acts not only as a source—or a means to others sources—but also as a central subject of Howe's documentary poetics. In order to further develop this subject, the subsequent chapter will focus more specifically on the poet's approach to the archival materials as written and edited documents, and her interpretation of them in relation to authorial intention. Additionally, the study turns to Howe's conception and reception of the printed page as part of literary production, and the manner in which it informs the notion in "Melville's Marginalia" of writing's process of materialization.

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[76] Howe, *BM*, 18. Later in *The Birth-Mark* Howe explains the phrase by providing a short description of the bird, and by identifying its source in a passage written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. She goes on to state, "I am, & ever have been, a great reader—& have read almost every thing—a library-cormorant—I am *deep* in all out of the way books [...] I am almost always reading" (26).

TRANSFER: CONCEPTION AND PERCEPTION

> "Only the original concept is 'conceptual'—that is, clean thought. In contrast, the realization is as filled with glory, ferocity, and clarity as with rubble, loose ends, and the incompletely realized."
>
> — Rachel Blau DuPlessis[1]

In assembling the four sequences of poems that comprise *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, Howe divided the book into two major sections. The first of these is entitled "Turning." As is most often the case in Howe's poetry, the multiple meanings of the word—to be considered individually and collectively—are intentionally woven into the text, in order to inform and complicate the principal themes. "Turning," in this instance, indicates not only to shift in direction or position, but also to "change in nature, state, form, or color; become."[2] This definition, in particular, is given greater emphasis through the epigraph printed on the section's title page: "The enthusiast suppressed her tears, crushes her opening thoughts, and—all is changed" (*NCM*, 1). Excerpted from Mary Shelley's *Journal* (7 February 1822), the passage is quoted by Howe from *Shelley Memorials*, having been marked by Melville in his copy of the book. The enthusiasm Shelley addresses is that of the artist—specifically writers and poets—who, excited by "some word, some look," then find it "painful to check expression, and make the overflowing mind return to its usual channel."[3] Set in the context of writing and literary production, the change of state or form referred to in the epigraph is that of the enthusiastic, "opening thoughts" of an author—such as Mary or Percy Shelley, Melville, or Mangan—into the material object of the page. This chapter of the present work focuses on the implication found in the quotation from Shelley that this process of materialization necessarily involves the occasionally

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[1] Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Graphic Novella* (West Lima, WI: Xexoxial Editions, 2015) 11.

[2] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Third Edition, eds. Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[3] Lady Jane Gibson Shelley ed., *Shelley Memorials: From Authentic Sources, to Which Is Added an Essay on Christianity, by Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1859) 181. Melville's copy of this book was published in 1859 by Ticknor Fields in Boston.

contentious negotiation of authorial intention, editorial transcription, and the often indefinite interpretations that result.

While the contexts, lenses, themes, and methods differ throughout the four sequences in *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, Howe questions the role and function of materiality within an on-going process of literary production that involves a diverse community of persons (i.e. authors, editors, publishers, critics/scholars, and readers). In certain respects, this subject is most specifically realized in the final, and longest, sequence, "Melville's Marginalia." In this study's earlier section on "The Malatesta Cantos," the collaborative production of *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*—from handwritten notes and preliminary sketches, to typescript drafts, and eventually the illustrated publication—was seen to be an integral part of Ezra Pound's project, and, consequently, of the reader's reception of it. However, while Pound incorporated the materiality of the page and the book into the poetics of his sequence, in doing the same, Susan Howe's work also takes materiality as a subject in and of itself. This is done in concert with Howe's development of the Poundian archive within poetic composition examined in the previous chapter.

One aspect of this poetic investigation of visual materiality touches on a third definition of *turn*. In the domain of printing, the verb is used to mean, "set or print (a type or letter) upside down."[4] With regard to the documentary poetics in "Melville's Marginalia," this example of unconventional printing relates to the irregular typography characteristic of manuscript pages and marginalia. These forms of writing, which Howe sees as materializing the original poetic thought or enthusiasm, eschew the standardized structure and organization of texts published after undergoing the revisions of an editor, who is potentially spatially and/or temporally remote. As will be discussed and analyzed in detail in the pages below, Howe's poetic response to archival materials of this nature attempts to recreate or convey the typographic irregularity, which constitutes their unique form of authorial expression, against the general editorial practices of normalizing such documents according to conventional grammar, syntax, and page layout. "Melville's Marginalia" thus inevitably confronts the difficulties and issues regarding methods of transcription, and the significance of visual materiality within that process.

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[4] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.

The preceding chapter also discussed Howe's application of the mathematical concept of a *singularity* to the process of poetic composition. Defined as the point at which something becomes something else, in "Melville's Marginalia" the singularity is introduced in part one of the sequence, where Howe speaks of an author's "fringes of consciousness" (*NCM*, 99) being found in the "something else" that is the automatic writing of marginalia. The analysis of the poems in that section demonstrated how the poet's techniques for approximating marginal markings, via abstract typography, direct the reader to the materiality of the original, annotated text. With respect to the notion of a change in form, Howe's redirecting the attention of the reader to writing outside of her own, effectively highlights how her documentary poetics includes "turning" the handwriting on one page, into the print on another, just as Cowen had previously done in his work with the same title. But a similar material change is also found entirely within Howe's text. As she stated to the French translators of "Melville's Marginalia," the sequence is "a piece that is in many ways about book making and binding."[5] The term "turning," then, may also refer to the physical act of a reader successively turning the bound pages of a book. From the very first page of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, Howe calls the reader to actively consider the materiality of the codex format. As one progresses through the book, each page visually and typographically "turns" into another; every blank, directionless, 6 x 9-inch piece of paper is transformed by what is printed on it.

The theme of the materialization of the initial poetic thought into a manuscript or typescript is further developed in the second section of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*. The collective title given to the last two sequences in the book, the latter of which is "Melville's Marginalia," is "Conversion." The prior sense of a change of state and/or form is thus made more explicit, and, as in the first section, the reader is invited to consider, throughout the following sequences, the relationships between those forms turned/converted from, and those turned/converted to. This entails not only the initial materialization—that is, from an idea, image, or sound, to a written page—but also the successive shifts from one materiality to another; for example, from a handwritten manuscript, to a fair copy typescript, to an edited publication. The titles of the book's two sections are even more tightly bound through the etymology of

[5] SHP Box 50 f. 6. The quotation is from the previously cited letter, dated 4 July 1996, sent to Bénédicte Vilgrain and Bernard Rival at Théâtre Typographique.

the word *conversion*: from the Latin *conversio*, from *convers*-, meaning "turned around."[6] While the title of the first third of Howe's collection imparts the idea of a turn *to* the page, that of the latter portion additionally suggests a turning *back*. This reversal implied in the linguistic roots of "conversion" is a shift toward the origins of the documents, texts, and poetry being read and studied. In other words, Howe's composition of both *Eikon Basilike* and "Melville's Marginalia" begins with the material product of printed and bound texts: for the former, Edward Almack's *A Bibliography of the King's Book, or Eikon Basilike*—and by extension, King Charles I of England's *The Eikon Basilike, The Pourtraicture of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings*, and John Milton's *Eikonoklastes*; for the latter, Wilson Walker Cowen's *Melville's Marginalia, Harvard Dissertations in American and English Literature*—and by extension, the original books in Melville's personal library. Recognizing that the materiality of such texts trace the successive "conversions" of immaterial thought(s) into handwritten marginalia or mechanical typography, one component of the methodology to Howe's documentary poetics in these two sequences involves a turn back toward the textual history. Her interest in the process of materialization reflected in such a turn, stems in part from the diversity of documents Howe encounters in the archive. The assembly of retyped passages in Cowen's work led Howe to examine Melville's original books at Harvard, just as she also studied images of Percy Bysshe Shelley's manuscripts in relation to their typographic transcriptions.[7] The poetry resulting from Howe's archival research progressively tracks and reveals the prior stages of materialization as a part of literary production.

Although not explicitly associated with "Melville's Marginalia," as is the case with *Eikon Basilike*, the subject of bibliography is nonetheless present in the

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[6] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.

[7] See pages 20, 22, and 23, in the introduction to *The Birth-mark* for reprints of pages from Shelley's manuscript notebooks, and transcriptions from *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts: A Facsimile Edition, with Full Transcriptions and Scholarly Apparatus*, Vol. VII, ed. Donald H. Reiman (New York: Garland, 1989). The illustration on the front cover of *The Nonconformist's Memorial* is "the final page of *The Note Books of Percy Bysshe Shelley*." as noted on the back cover, which also provides a transcription of the words in the image. In a personal interview, Howe describes Shelley as "such a visual poet," who "drew all over his manuscripts too." Speaking about the aforementioned Garland edition—in which a facsimile of a manuscript page, on the left-hand side, faces its transcription on the right—she says, "But what I find finally that thrills me, is *not* the original, but the copy. [...] When you're reading a thing like that with the transcription, you tend to look at the transcription. [...] visually it does something for me."

sequence's inclusion of the details—historical, contextual, and material—regarding specific editions, and in Howe's attention to matters of authorship and the publication process. She is primarily concerned with the idea of discovering, or rediscovering, the material object that is the original text. This issue is stated clearly in the preface to *Eikon Basilike*, and developed across the entirety of the two sequences comprising the "Conversion" section of the book:

> A bibliography is "the history, identification, or analytical and systematic description or classification of writings or publications considered as material objects." Can we ever really discover the original text? Was there ever an original poem? What is a pure text invented by an author? Is such a conception possible? Only by going back to the pre-scriptive level of thought process can "authorial intention" finally be located, and then the material object has become immaterial.
>
> (*NCM*, 58)

One concern of the poems in part two of "Melville's Marginalia" is an investigation of the material and immaterial with regard to the poetic process, with the aim of negotiating the transition and border between the two. Paradoxically, the surface of the page provides the means for the materialization of an author's thoughts, while also acting as a type of border that complicates and obstructs such a conversion. However, as is mentioned in the quote above, it is the thought *process* that Howe seeks to uncover, by moving backward through the development of the product. She understands the materialization within poetic composition as the historical trace and embodiment of authorial intention, but acknowledges, nonetheless, that the resultant documents can only ever offer an imperfect, or incomplete, version of an author's original, immaterial ideas. The surface of the printed page, therefore, is a communication of presence and absence. A comment from Howe's critical work *The Birth-mark* is relevant to this material condition: "Unknownness did your sense of touch re-trace my own nothingness? [...] Is a poetics of intervening absence an oxymoron? [...] Look we are reading a false conception."[8] Constructing the pages of her work, discussed in detail below, Howe integrates the paradox of "a poetics of intervening absence" into her use of the page. The immaterial, and thus absent, is expressed through the present intervention of the material.

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[8] Howe, *BM*, 27.

As mentioned earlier, a continual aspect of Howe's poetry in the first section of the sequence is the relating of her experience navigating the archive, which included the examination and interpretation of different types of textual materials: published books (of various genres), critical dissertations, manuscripts, and typed transcriptions. In a similar fashion, the second section often illustrates her approach to those materials of the archive that speak to the process of composition and conversion. Typographically reproducing marginalia, the accidentals of language, and the spatiality of manuscripts in "Melville's Marginalia," the poems communicate and display an author's relationship with materiality throughout the compositional process, as he/she attempts to put the immaterial into words. But Howe is also conscious of the fact that such poems only approximate the margin or manuscript, and thereby convey the inevitable loss that occurs in moving from abstract thought, to manuscript, to typescript, and so on. Her documentary process of poetic composition reflects the very issues of materiality found in the archival sources it appropriates. Thus, in seeking to reach the thought process behind the composition of an original, "pure" text, Howe reveals a sense of struggle and/or resistance embedded in the shift from amorphous idea to materialized language.

OPEN ABSENCE

Corresponding to the structure of part one, the second section of "Melville's Marginalia" begins with a typographically unconventional poem-cum-introduction, which—mirroring its earlier counterpart—is indicated by a thin line printed beneath the text, followed by an Arabic numeral several lines later (see figure 7.1).[9] Functioning as a kind of preface, it lays the groundwork for the central themes regarding materialization to be developed throughout the subsequent poems. However, this is not achieved by means of straightforward explanation, but rather by a self-reflexive poetic response, which visually demonstrates those issues that Howe's method aims to further explore and study. Thus, the poem not only introduces the fundamental concepts related to materiality, as well as the poet's relevant

[9] See figure 6.4 for the introductory poem to part one (*NCM*, 101). In addition to those typographic elements mentioned above, in each of the two poems are also found similar structural aspects, such as lines printed upside down, irregular leading, and the exact repetition of phrases.

presuppositions (carried over from the preceding section), but also allows the reader to engage with the actual incorporation of them into poetic composition.

Two thirds of the poem's nine, compact lines consist of a relatively short, fragmentary quotation, the partial repetition of which only intensifies the brevity and density of the text. The source for these lines is Revelation 22:19 in the King James Version of the Bible: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."[10] As the final portion of the third to last verse in the entire Bible, part two of "Melville's Marginalia" begins at the end of a book—a printed, material "revelation"—and progresses toward its creation out of an immaterial beginning (in the Biblical context, Genesis 1:1). This is in accordance with Howe's fundamental search to discover the "pure text," as stated above, by working backward through the compositional process to its origins. Howe's partial appropriation makes several minor changes to the verse, but, most significantly, her spatial arrangement of the words invites multiple interpretations, whereby the central concepts are introduced. With respect to this poem, they may be organized into two broad, principal themes.

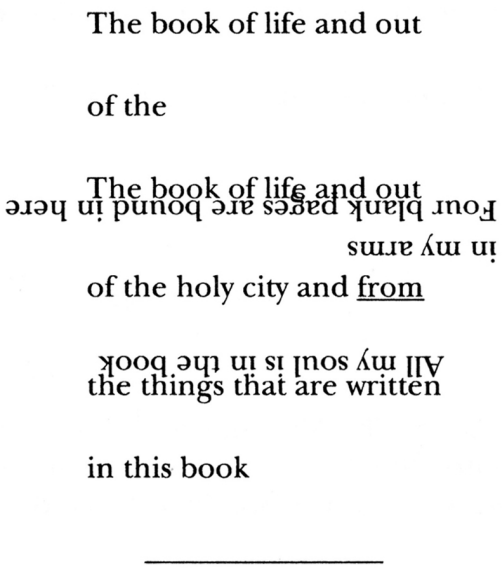

Figure 8.1: The introductory poem that begins part two of "Melville's Marginalia" (*NCM*, 119).

[10] *Holy Bible*, Authorized King James Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1962) 701.

The first of these regards the process of literary production, the underlying question of which is concerned with the origin of any given text (although, in light of the main figures of the sequence, primarily of poetry). The fragment Howe has modified as the start of the phrase is fractured even further over the first two lines. The choice of line breaks results in a significant amount of white space, both around and within the opening words. As in the abstract poems in part one, the reader is again immediately confronted with the presence of the material substrate in relation to the printed text. But while in the earlier section attention was drawn to the spatial manipulation of the text, part two opens with an example of a poetics of intervening absence, briefly mentioned in *The Birth-mark*, which focuses more specifically on the space itself. The presence of the seemingly empty area following the fragments in the first two lines is, in fact, a visual completion of the phrase. While line one pulls the reader's gaze from "The book," in the center of the page, "out" toward the blank space of the margins, the enjambment has the grammatical effect of pushing the reader forward through the text to line two, and the temporal effect of that line being accelerated. The momentum, though, is short lived, as Howe includes another, even heavier enjambment, the abruptness of which amplifies the silence of the already remarkable gap of white space where one would expect to find the continuation of the printed text. In the absence of any more of the quotation, visually the conclusion to the fragment becomes the gap. It is by the means of this space of lost or erased text that the introductory poem's opening lines put forth the question of a text's origins. Howe's use of space, here, would appear to leave that question entirely unanswered; however, through this technique she also implicitly states that the discovery of such origins necessitates a turn to the materiality of the page, and the traces contained therein. The blank gap, then, may also be understood as proposing both a concrete answer, as well as a more abstract one. Regarding the former, as the reader moves from the printed and bound object of the book to its prior material state, Howe's visual poem suggests that the text quite simply originates "out / of the" blank page. Regarding the latter, the white space, in a less literal sense, does also imply the possibility that one simply does not, or perhaps cannot, ultimately know the origin of any written work. According to this view, a text emerges "out / of the" undefined, or, from what escapes definition, transcription, and/or materialization. In either case, beginning part two at the end point of the printed and published book-object, Howe

establishes the page as a primary interest of the poems to follow through her strategic use of its space.

The focus on materiality also certainly includes that of the actual texts being studied as external sources and/or appropriated as poetic material. Furthermore, the *documentary* aspect of Howe's poetics involves tracing textual histories within a single source, and across or between multiple works. Archival research, therefore, is an essential process to the development of her compositions. For the poem in question, the source of the lines printed right side up, as stated above, is the King James translation of the Bible. More precisely, it is Herman Melville's copy of *The New Testament and Book of Psalms*, wherein the verse in question (Revelation 22:18) happens to be the only one marked by Melville on that page.[11] Having first discovered the passage and marginalia in Cowen's work, and having later examined Melville's original copy (*NCM*, 114), the construction of Howe's poem alludes to the practice of archival research by visually demonstrating the reconstruction of fragmented text. In light of the specific material details of the source used—and the material background of the verse itself—this notion of recovery is particularly apparent. Even apart from Howe's work, it is found within Melville's copy itself, where the passage—initially boxed and /*X*/d out—is, in a figurative sense, "restored" by, ironically, the erasure of those marks. Howe's poem, though, is more direct in this regard, as the reader is allowed to witness the poem's recovery of the second half to the now reprinted, half-erased phrase of the first two lines.

Nevertheless, with only twenty of the forty-four total words included, the verse remains very much incomplete. In one respect, this reiterates Howe's previously mentioned suspicion of the impossibility of ever finally reaching the original, pure text; in another, however, the partial reconstitution of the fragment conveys the notion of a text as continually evolving on account of the various findings that stem from ongoing research. The verse itself makes mention of potential alterations being made to "the book of life," a point that Howe emphasizes by isolating the phrase "the things that are written" toward the bottom of the poem. If in the past tense, "*were* written" would point to the completed act of materialization, whereas the present tense of "*are* written" focuses attention on the existing product thereof. In their present form, the

[11] *The New Testament and the Book of Psalms* (New York: American Bible Society, 1844) 431. Houghton Library, *AC85.M4977.Zz844b.

"things" converted into the material marks and language of a physical page, or text, are susceptible to future changes.

Howe's quotation continues over a final line break before the last three words, putting an otherwise absent emphasis on the preposition of "in the book." Materially, the phrase recalls the physical binding of pages *in* a book. But the implied spatialization also suggests enclosure, and thus raises the question of what that delimited space includes and excludes. On the level of the page, does "*in* the book" refer only to what is part of the main, printed body of text, to the exclusion of the *outside* marginalia? The issue invites one to reread the previous line for the questions it implicitly asks: what things are *not* written in this book, and what things have been erased? For Howe, in order to answer such questions, it is necessary that the poet-scholar revert to the prior stages of textual history. As the second part of the sequence unfolds, the backward trajectory through literary production leads Howe's archival tracing of materiality from the assumed stability of printed works to the nonconforming fragments and erasures of manuscripts.

The second of the introductory poem's two principal themes focuses on the conception of an author him/herself, as embodied by the written works they produce. Through a supplementary consideration of the larger social context of writing and publishing, this theme also touches on many of the issues and ideas discussed above. Returning to the construction of the central quotation, one effect of Howe's modified appropriation is impeding the fluidity of the phrase. Breaking the fragment into four smaller fragments—visually separated on the page by intervening absences, or interrupted by counter-text—lends each line the sense of a unit juxtaposed to the others. As previously seen, Howe's line breaks are anything but haphazard, and one additional structural outcome of her textual manipulation is a parallelism between the first two lines of the repeated biblical quotation, which may then be interpreted according to (1) a distributive, left-to-right reading of each line's dual structure, and (2) a combinatory, top-to-bottom reading of the lines' two halves:

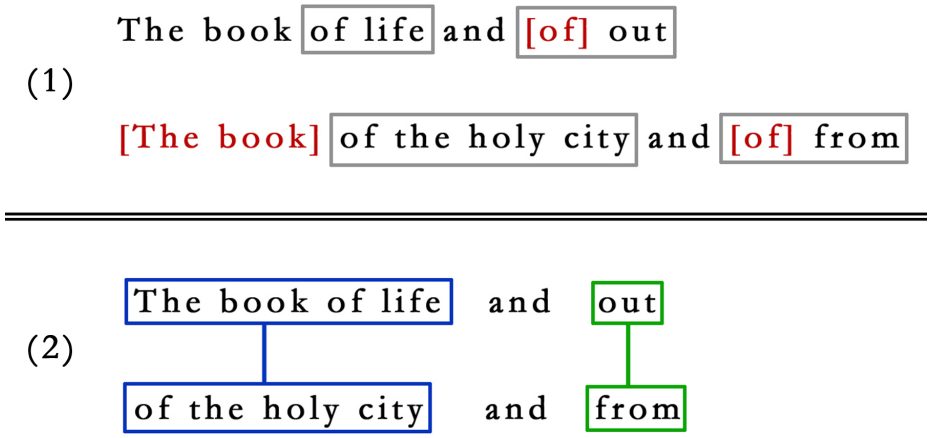

Figure 7.2: Two diagrams of lines three and six from *NCM* 119: the horizontal parallels, with the distributed words in red (above), and the vertical parallels, with added internal spacing (below).

Part of the complexity of the documentary poetics in "Melville's Marginalia" stems from the manner in which Howe's typographic revisions to the source text effectively unsettle the received process of signification, so as to extend its, now splintered, reach into multiple themes. In doing so, her exacting and judicious manipulation of the space of the page also works to maintain the density and interaction of the various readings. The following two-part table breaks down the analysis of the phrasing in the lines diagrammed in figure 7.2.

Intralinear Analysis (Authorial/Social Context)

Component 1	*Thematic Implication*	*Component 2*	*Thematic Implication*	*Synthesis*
"The book of life"	Notion of an official, exclusive text; alternatively, the background, identity, and evolution of an author.	"[the book of] out"	"*Out*side" and "*out*sider;" by extension, the margins and the marginalized.	A book about the life of those authors existing (figuratively) in the margins of official canons.
"[the book] of the holy city"	Authoritative and selective society (in particular, the artistic/literary establishment, institutions, etc.).	"[the book of] from"	Socio-cultural context, which includes the relevant origins and sources.	A book about the literary society and artistic cultural context from which it originates.

Interlinear Analysis (Authorial/Social Context)				
Vertical Pair 1	*Thematic Implication*	*Vertical Pair 2*	*Thematic Implication*	*Synthesis*
"The book of [the] life [...] of the holy city"	Characteristics and functioning of social authority and hierarchy (especially, within the domain of literature).	"[the book of] out [...] and <u>from</u>"	"Out from," as in, the margins being at a remove; or, "the marginalized from."	A book about the author(s) marginalized from the dominant literary society by the authorities thereof.

Figure 7.3: Table of combinatory thematic interpretations of figure 7.2. Above are horizontal readings of each line individually, and below are vertical readings of the lines as a couplet of parallels.

Close examinations of the politics of the literary canon's formation, and, even more generally, of a writer's social position and relation to the economics of the established cultural authority, are outside the scope of the present study. "Melville's Marginalia" certainly does comment a great deal on the matter, but for the purposes of this chapter, it is Howe's approach to the topic through textual materiality that is of relevance. The lines parsed above introduce a purposive contrast of interpretations between the "life" of an author, and that of, or as defined by, the dominant literary institutions. In both cases, however, the life in question is embodied by a material book. Prior to the development in the remainder of the sequence, it is important that Howe first establish her view that a writer's identity is translated into his/her written works. Through the materialization of experiences and ideas, the life of an author is contained in the printed book, through which it thereby continues into the present. Howe's statement, cited earlier, that central to "Melville's Marginalia" are the concepts of editing and binding, points not only to the material process of making a published book, but also to the antecedent materialization of the author.

The poem's contrast between the "official" book of life—which excludes those who are "out" and not "from" the "holy city"—and the book containing the author's life is most clearly expressed by the counter-narrative Howe typographically places in opposition to the other set of lines. As in part one, physically turning the entirety of *The Nonconformist's Memorial* upside down in order to read the text, disrupts the preconceived notions of textual conformity. This group of lines begins by stating, "All

my soul is in the book // in my arms." Implicit in the line is the act of transformation into an external, material book, emphasized by Howe's placement of it directly over (and slightly touching) "the things that are written" (see figure 7.4). According to Revelation 22:19, a *soul* is precisely what is written in the book of life—the immaterial is thus translated into written language on the page. However, the sense of concrete finality and totality (i.e. "*All* my soul [...]") is undercut by Howe's addition of a third, flipped line: "Four blank pages are bound in here." The repeated grammatical structure of a copula in the present tense, followed by a past participle and spatial preposition—"are written / in" and "are bound in"—links a book's text with its blank space, as each is an inherent part of materialization. By mentioning the inclusion of blank pages in the last line of the poem, Howe again directs the reader's attention to the intervening absence of the material page.[12] As a result, the introductory poem remains open-ended, concluding with a sense of what of the author's life and thoughts could not be, or has not yet been, materialized in writing.

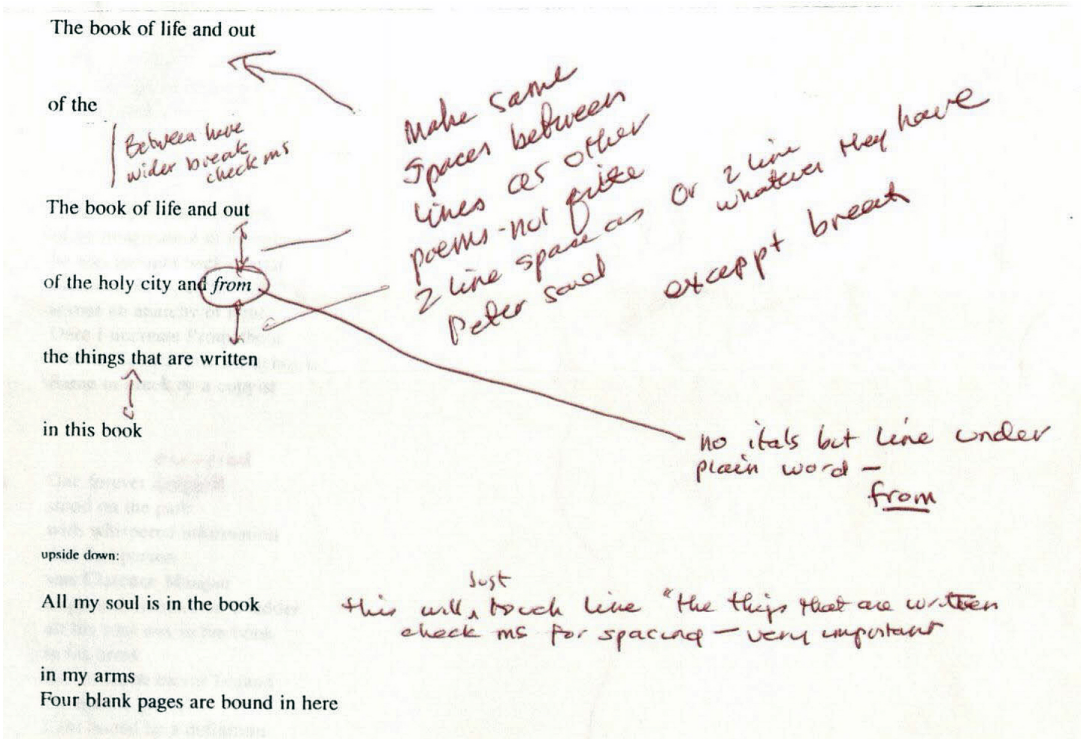

Figure 7.4: Howe's handwritten notes and corrections to the galley proof for *NCM*, 119. SHP Box 48 f. 10. The last comment explicitly underlines the importance of typography to the poem's effect.

[12] In the recording of Howe's reading of "Melville's Marginalia" as part of *Thiefth*, all of the lines are read top to bottom, in the order they appear on the page. The lines printed upside down become, then, lines four, five, and seven. This is done to create an effect of interruption for the listener; a reader, however, is likely to, at least initially, read the two groups of lines separately in succession.

The source for these lines is John Mitchel's introduction to a collection of poems by James Clarence Mangan, much of whose life does, indeed, remain unknown. Howe herself alludes to the *blanks* in Mangan's biography at several points in part one of the sequence, also including a number of (tagged) quotations from his own attempt to document his life in writing, which bears the telling title "Fragment of an Unfinished Autobiography."[13] In addition to Mangan's poetry, Mitchel also provides a condensed biography. About Mangan, he writes, "The blanched hair was totally unkempt ; the corpse-like features still as marble ; a large book was in his arms, and all his soul was in the book."[14] Howe makes two important edits to the quotation, the first of which is the change of the possessive pronouns from "his" to "my." In the absence of any other subject to which "my" may refer, and due to the substituted pronoun's unrestricted associability, the speaker of these lines is rendered both unidentifiable and universal: equally Mangan, Melville, and Howe, and as much any given author, as any given reader. The implication of the passage's authorial ambiguity is that since no single, potential figure can be definitively pinpointed or eliminated as the speaker, the statement is voiced by all of them in the here and now of being read.

The simultaneity concomitant with this implicit polyphony is reinforced by the second alteration, whereby the past tense ("was") is shifted to the present ("is"). An author *is* continually embodied in the materiality of their written works, after the initial composition and later publication of those pages, and even after the author's own death. Howe's view of printed and bound books as the materialization of the writer's life and soul—however incomplete the product may ultimately be—stems in part from her observation that "certain works go on saying something else," and the

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[13] This rather brief biographical sketch was first printed in the third edition of *The Poets and Poetry of Munster: A Selection of Irish Songs by the Poets of the Last Century with Poetical Translations by the Late James Clarence Mangan*, edited by C.P. Meehan, and published in Dublin in 1883 by J. Duffy and Sons. There is, however, confusion about the dates of the various editions; for a detailed discussion see Anne MacCarthy, "A Study of the Sources for James Joyce's Essays on James Clarence Mangan," *Papers on Joyce* 7.8 (2001-2002).

Howe quotes from Meehan's preface to this work on pages 103 and 107 (though referencing the publication date as "1883?" and "undated," respectively). In "Melville's Marginalia," Mangan's autobiography is first cited in the "Brief Chronology of James Clarence Mangan" (*NCM*, 95), which contains just twenty-three entries (years only). Four other mentions/quotations follow on pages 101, 105, 109, and 117; the latter two cite the work as "Fragments *From* An Unfinished Autobiography."

[14] John Mitchel, "James Clarence Mangan: His Life, Poetry, and Death," *Poems by James Clarence Mangan, with Biographical Introduction by John Mitchel* (New York: P.M. Haverty, 1859) 13.

preliminary conclusion from it that "a text develop[s] itself."[15] As one of its foundational concepts, "Melville's Marginalia" maintains that for all of its apparent immutability as a fixed form, a written document continues to evolve, as if the living author him/herself.

In one respect, a book's evolution amounts to a variety of material changes. One example of this, earlier in the sequence, is the copy of Mangan's autobiography that Howe consulted in "the sub-section of Sterling Library" at Yale University (*NCM*, 117). The fragmentary and unfinished state of the work's content is actually manifested in its material condition: held "where damaged books go for rebinding," the pages of Mangan's life-in-words "are so brittle pieces break off when I turn." In the materiality of books by and about Mangan, Howe sees a materialization of his physical body, and life of frequent poverty, which eventually ended due to starvation: "Recent books about you or your work are thin as physical Bartleby." According to this statement, not only are the expression of Mangan's thoughts and the recounting of his life's experiences bound up in a variety of published materials, but also, in the fictional character of Melville's Bartleby, Howe finds even his persona and spirit on the page.

Apart from its physical state, another aspect of the evolution the author-as-book undergoes concerns the actual language on the pages that comprise it. From one point of view, the changes to the text are abstract, in that they involve semantic shifts (e.g. the definitions of words) and cultural shifts (e.g. the perception and usage of words). The link, and perhaps inextricability, of author and text is particularly evident in the case of alternate readings and interpretations of a written work, as they often result from new revelations about that writer's biography. From a different perspective, however, the evolution of the pages is more concrete, as new language may, in fact, be added to the text. The "four blank pages" Howe points out in this poem may suggest, as stated above, what is missing from the incomplete text; at the same time, however, they provide the space for future additions toward potential, if often illusory, completion. Such changes may include the restoration of previously lost text, the inclusion of a paratextual apparatus comprised of new editorial information (e.g. annotations, footnotes, critical essays, etc.), or the addition of handwritten marginalia, like that of Melville. Each of these three examples constitutes

[15] Howe, *BM*, 46.

a transformation of the material page through the actions of printing or writing. The blank space of margins and empty pages, which is an integral part of the realization of a published book, metaphorically represents, and materially allows for, the ongoing evolution of the text.

An awareness of the multiplication and revision of readings and publications of the same text, and of merely the potential for any of the changes mentioned above having taken place in the past, confronts a contemporary reader and researcher, like Susan Howe, with the difficulties of textual history and authorial intention. In order to recover the original text, then, one must track the author in question through archival research. For Howe's documentary poetics, doing so is equivalent to tracking the materiality of their writing, which includes negotiating the historical palimpsest of a text's evolution from thought to print, as well as following the traces of their reading of other written works. She, in turn, works these issues of materialization into her compositional process. In a poem like that analyzed above, she confronts her readers with the same complexities of textual and material origins by embedding them in the multiplicity of themes and interpretations encountered in her own archival reading.

ORIGINAL ERRANCY

Although Howe's research comprises a network of writers spanning several centuries, and of texts from a range of diverse genres, in both parts of the work there is a distinct focus on Herman Melville and James Clarence Mangan. This is particularly evident in how the opening poems in section two parallel the prose of the sequence's preface. In the latter, Howe discusses and illustrates her "discovery" of Melville's character through the exploration and analysis of the paratext in the books of his personal library—marginal notes, title pages, publication dates and locations, dedications, and fragments tipped-in between the covers. Tracing Melville's books and markings subsequently led her to the somewhat obscure and marginalized poet Mangan, the identity of whom she collages together from the relatively few copies of his works, and the books written about him. In short, Howe discovers, initially through Cowen's work, that Melville too tracked authors' through their work, and in the case of Mangan, "knew" him only as he existed in published materials.

The first six poems following the introduction begin part two of "Melville's Marginalia" by developing this concept and process of seeking a writer in print, to

later re-materialize him/her in a new literary form. Melville and Mangan converge in Howe's conception of the materialized author, primarily through the short story of "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street." First mentioned in part one, Howe sees the narrative of the principal character as an adaptation of Mangan's life; her reading of the Irish poet is therefore done in conjunction with her interpretation of Bartleby. The archival papers for "Melville's Marginalia" include Howe's photocopies of Melville's story, which include her handwritten comments. The first of those notes is a gloss and quotation of Leo Marx's essay, in which he argues that the story is a "self-critical statement" about Melville's artistic struggles.[16] Howe adopts this idea, making her understanding of the nonconforming Bartleby to be an amalgamation of Melville *and* Mangan that takes place on the page. Moreover, she also expands upon Marx's main premise that *walls* are the overarching symbol. In the printed title of the story, Howe twice underlined "Wall," and her annotations beneath it link the symbol to "Enclosure," and further state that they "[...] hem in the meditative artist."[17] Although she primarily understands this symbol as pertaining to the relation between a writer and society (which is stated in the same handwritten notes), from a strictly textual point of view, the walls may also be understood in "Melville's Marginalia" as doubling for the material book. Echoing Pound's translation of his view that the Tempio Malatestiano's walls contained the personality and sensibilities of Sigismondo, Howe also addresses the "enclosure" of her sequence's central figures within textual walls. Where her sequence diverges from the Malatesta Cantos is that while Pound's work is more concerned with demonstrating how a fragmentary structure imparts a sense of a unified whole, Howe's takes a greater interest in the significance of its gaps and absences.

Following the introduction, the next poem in part two opens by establishing this focus, and specifying that where Howe believes to find an author (in this case, Melville) is—contrary to the reader's likely expectations—not necessarily in the actual written text, but rather in the spaces within and around it. The first four lines of the poem read as follows:

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[16] Leo Marx, "Melville's Parable of the Walls," *The Sewanee Review* 61.4 (Autumn, 1953) 603. Howe's partial note does slightly misquote Marx's phrase. SHP Box 49 f. 1.

[17] SHP Box 49 f. 1.

I think him to be natural
deeply and by those books
In those places think him to be
In those breaks and pauses (*NCM*, 120)

The poem begins with the poet's research and compositional process "follow[ing] what trails he follows through words of others" (*NCM*, 100). Those paths *through* the text are, indeed, the blank spaces between the printed language. The sense of existing in such a liminal space continues in the image of the two lines subsequent to those cited. Melville has "Turned to the boats," and directs his attention to the point where the "landscape meets air." His gaze projected into the natural distance is the same as Howe's projected onto the material page: the focus is on the threshold where the concrete (i.e. the earth's landscape, and the text) meets the abstract (i.e. the air, and the white space of the page). This space recalls Howe's view of marginalia as being somewhere between drawing and writing, always on the verge of verbal communication, but never quite crossing over, and thus never entirely one or the other. It is precisely by way of Melville's marks of this kind that Howe meets him, as the poem states, "Between two negations."

The duality of marginalia is conveyed more directly when Howe abruptly shifts the poem's attention from the image of the seascape to the glimpse of a margin. The poet refers to the writing found there as *simulacra*, defined as "image[s] or representation[s] of someone or something."[18] The words and markings constituting the images of marginalia are a visual representation of their author. The approach to marginalia as a type of visio-verbal drawing hinges on an interpretation of written language as a concrete and opaque, material object, and thus, logically, that such materiality is crucial to the given language's process of signification. Nevertheless, the view of the very same marks as simulacra representative of a writer's thoughts and/or identity, assumes a certain abstract transparency of language. The paradoxical understanding of this dual perspective reiterates and reframes marginalia's liminality as situated between the material and the immaterial, or the present and the absent. Howe's poem foregrounds the paradox in the subsequent lines:

[18] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.

All other simulacra
marked then ERASED
Some green forest annotation
failed have forgotten (*NCM*, 120)

The implication of the *once written* in the second line recalls the fragmentary white space and warning of erasure in the preceding poem (which happened to be on the facing page in New Direction's first edition of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*).[19] However, contrary to the empty space of that poem, here the blank page is no longer the untouched wilderness of a "green forest," but is now only seen through the still present "transparency" of an erased annotation.

Through the poem's single use of capital letters, Howe typographically conveys the particular importance of the material traces of the "ERASED." The irony of the dominant visibility of *erasure* on the page suggests that the materiality of what once was on the page, may, in fact, be more significant than what still is. To "have forgotten" the erased is considered a form of critical failure, which Howe's documentary poetics seeks to rectify. In a review of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, Valerie Fox writes that in the "Conversion" section, one of Howe's principal concerns in tracking a writer is precisely the silence of a person, or a personality, that results from erasure.[20] With regard to Melville, these lines recall the preface to the sequence, wherein Howe briefly discusses those marginal notes that were mysteriously erased from books in his library. Cowen's analysis traces "the nearly obliterated markings" back to Elizabeth Shaw Melville, "the Perpetrator-With-Eraser" (*NCM*, 98-99), and Howe's inclusion of his explanatory remarks and conclusions foreshadows part two's specific interest in the issues and significance of erasure. The emphasis in the aforementioned poem, for example, suggests that when erased, the visibility of Melville's "absence" is a "silence" that speaks louder than any surrounding writing. Too frequently overlooked, in the poet's opinion, an erasure—similar to the poem's portrayal of Melville—is also caught "between two negations": the material disappearance from the page, and the exclusion from critical study. The poem's

[19] The first edition's layout for those two pages (110-11) is retained in Théâtre Typographique's publication (42-43), for which Howe's desired page-layout was realized. The reason for this intended arrangement is, in part, certainly for the purposes of the interaction of the facing poems, as is the case in many other sequences in Howe's books.

[20] SHP Box 47 f. 3, labeled "NCM (1993) – Reviews, 1993-1994."

typographic accentuation of missing marginalia sets forth an alternative documentary approach, whereby even the most minute details of textual materialization occurring in the margins are given greater attention.

Touching on this subject, the critic Megan Williams writes, "Margins speak of a space that has remained unwritten, new, and uncolonized. Contradictorily, they also speak of a space that fixes and immobilizes words, authors, and meaning on a page. A margin cannot exist if there is no writing on the page."[21] In relation to the view of the page expressed in this poem from "Melville's Marginalia," the first portion of the quotation would best be rephrased so as to reflect the material evolution of margins: a space that *was* originally "unwritten," or was *intended* to remain "new, and uncolonized." A part of the intention to preserve the unmarked margin is to ensure the space's function, as noted by Williams, of redirecting the reader to the materialization of the author's ideas as set, printed text. The visual contrast by which the effect is achieved also implies a distinction between the apparent fixity of the central space, and the variability of the space around it. The potential of the initial blankness for visual alterations—which, as alterations, challenge the intentionality associated with the original formal condition—also makes margins a space of contention. For critics, marginalia may be considered a fitting addition to the text that should be preserved and made available for study, or an unauthorized corruption that should be erased and disregarded. Furthermore, once the blank margins have been "colonized" with notes, they are also perhaps less likely to highlight the settled text than they are to signal a destabilization of textual materiality. While this too may be embraced or rejected, for readers like Howe it is a positive aspect. In her view, margins provide a space for dissenting voices to challenge the authority of the published text and unsettle its meaning. In doing so, the prior immobility of the text is broken down, and moved into and out of various reinterpretations.

The erasure of such marginal voices is certainly as significant as their initial transcription. If Melville "argued in the margin" (*NCM*, 98), thus leaving a material trace of his mind, the erasure of select notes by another hand is yet a further argument as to what the materialization of the writer should contain. The intervening absences of the "marked then ERASED" exemplify the shifting materiality that takes place

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[21] Megan Williams, "Howe Not to Erase(Her): A Poetics of Posterity in Susan Howe's 'Melville's Marginalia,'" *Contemporary Literature* 38.1 (Spring 1997)

after a book's publication. They have the dual function of pointing to specific revisions in the past, and prefiguring the potential revisions to come. In "Melville's Marginalia," following textual modifications of this nature is a part of Howe's method of using a book's material history to track those authors whose writing, and/or lives, she associates with liminal spaces that are equally Janus-faced. Nonetheless, the very same modifications bring that materiality into question: how accurate of an understanding of Melville or Mangan can be constructed from textual histories fraught with "the persistent problem of eradication" (*NCM*, 98)? In conjunction with the acknowledgment that any materialization of a writer is ultimately incomplete, Howe also recognizes the ambiguities of the space she has entered: "I am in the margins of doubt" (*NCM*, 99).

The sequence continues to develop the notion of the materialized author two pages later, in a poem that specifically addresses the uncertainties of incomplete representation. Beginning to move beyond a particular focus on Melville to a more general view, the poem begins by seemingly responding to the limited view any text offers of the writer's mind. The two reflective fragments that open the poem are then followed by a brief meditation, and affirmation, that, as Howe says, "[...] the material—the fragment, the piece of paper—is all we have to connect with the dead."[22]

Question of a happy life
any asylum in moderation
Object is something erased
is character the opposite
An author-evacuated text
triple-checked double-marked
Ghost of one's own glory
into the subjectless abject
by distance or by stillness
sleep gone steering row
Title of an After-Thought
he put a veil on his face (*NCM*, 122)

[22] Susan Howe, "Susan Howe, The Art of Poetry No. 97," interview by Maureen N. McLane, *The Paris Review* 203 (Winter 2012).

Line three reasserts that the object of study in these poems is, in fact, something absent; however, once again, the identification of that object as being erased is only possible if some original trace remains. The dead author, then, is not *completely* absent. The unpunctuated question in the following line—a paraphrase of which may read, if death "erases" the author, does it do the same of his/her character?—is a rhetorical one. The position Howe aims to set forth in these first six poems, expressed in the previously cited letters to her French translators, is that even if only fragmentary notes and marginal marks may remain, something of the character of a writer is contained and carried forward in that materiality. Howe's documentary study of the "paradoxes and ironies of fragmentation"[23] and erasures is, in one sense, an attempt to link the absence to the significance of the material interventions that preceded it.

This reassertion, however, is complicated in the two subsequent lines, which draw a comparison and a contrast between printed text and handwritten marginalia. The mechanically produced "text"—that is, the book object—in line five, is considered as "author-evacuated" due to the loss of unique materiality resulting from the standard uniformity of print, and, most often, the elimination of those revisionary or stray marks deemed errors or imperfections. A central premise to Howe's body of work, with Emily Dickinson being the primary example, is that the translation from the original manuscript's materiality to that of the typeset book necessarily involves at least the partial removal of the work's meaning and the writer's personality.[24] In contrast, the marginalia of the "triple-checked double-marked" page in line six speaks directly to a writer's presence—a visual intervention into the "author-evacuated text." As the poet writes in the preface, "what if these penciled single double and triple scorings arrows short phrases angry outbursts crosses cryptic ciphers sudden enthusiasms mysterious erasures have come to find you too, here again, now" (*NCM*, 100). Contemplating the materiality of the book, Howe positions herself on the brink between presence and absence, aware of the "subjectless" (l. 8) and the "distance" (l.

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[23] Howe, *BM*, 45.

[24] See, in particular, Howe's book-length study *My Emily Dickinson*, and the later essay "These Flames and Generosities of the Heart: Emily Dickinson and the Illogic of Sumptuary Values" in *The Birth-mark*. The essay "Incloser," in the latter work, also examines the same idea with regard to Thomas Shepard. For more on the subject, besides Howe's critical work, see Marta Werner's *Emily Dickinson's Open Folios: Scenes of Reading, Surfaces of Writing* and *Radical Scatters: An Electronic Archive of Emily Dickinson's Late Fragments and Related Texts, 1870-1886*, as well as Jerome McGann's discussion of Dickinson's manuscripts in *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism*.

9) found as much in the typographic rendition of a manuscript, as in the marginalia. Therefore, despite the contrast, both print and handwriting exemplify "the shadow reflex of art" mentioned earlier in the sequence (*NCM*, 99). A work of art is instinctively, or naturally, a shadow: the visible absence of the artist made possible only by his/her, in this case, invisible presence. The black text cast on the page acts as the trace of the author's erasure by death.

The interplay of the visible and the invisible is emphasized by the "ghost" in line seven. As the equal-but-opposite substitution of the shadow, the image is perhaps more fitting to the sequence, given its focus on blank space and the margins of the page. Furthermore, "Ghost of one's own glory" relates more closely to the poem's penultimate line, to which Howe's notes clarify as relating to an author's death: "After you are dead there is no thought. You could title something by a quick thought an after thought [*sic*] some chance suggestion – But as a title is like an Epitaph so writing is a trace of an author after his or her thought."[25] To rephrase the two lines in question, then, the material text—whether a title, an annotation, or otherwise—is the ghost of a past author's thought(s). The poet's choice to split *afterthought* draws attention to the chronological sequence of materialization in writing, and the capitalization of the hyphenated words makes them a kind of internal title communicating the main subject matter. Howe's connection of the textual object with death also suggests that in the process of translating a thought into language on the page, something of the immaterial idea is lost, rendering its continued existence in print only a ghost of the original. The veil in the concluding line of the poem provides a final image of death (i.e. a shroud), while also doubling as a counter to the direction toward revelation, however incomplete, in the opening lines. Although an author may be materialized in a written work, whatever that text may reveal, the very means of creating it yields alterations that conceal the source to varying degrees.

In the two following pages, Howe's response to the premises of this first section of part two is a rephrasing and development of an idea first mentioned in the preface to the work. Rather than scouring through their own published works, Howe walks the line between telepathy and poetry by allowing herself to be led through the

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[25] SHP Box 50 f. 2. This line, and its annotation, is also echoed later in the sequence: "originality dies out / an essay on Epitaphs" (*NCM*, 133). In the same box and folder, the poet's note to this line reads, "Wordsworth's essay on Epitaphs/copyright fights etc." Here again, Howe's interest in the "material life" of an author after death is demonstrated.

archive according to the traces the writers themselves left in "Tracking a favorite writer / in the snow" (*NCM*, 124). In other words, Howe's research is not centered on Melville the author, but "Melville the source hunter" (*NCM*, 125). Assuming the role of the bibliographic tracker, she—like the description of Melville in the same poem—documents the poetic inspiration (or, to use Howe's preferred term, *enthusiasm*) found in the archive's textual wilderness. Exploring the "shore" (l. 2) and "copses" (l. 6), Howe's poetics is one that traces the concretization of the immateriality of free associations (i.e. the "corollaries" in line five), and the transformations of one materiality to another (i.e. the wood turned to fuel in line six). In the process of "hawking" and "foraging," as Howe notes, "we tramp to leave their print" (l. 3). The line is peculiar for its mixture of pronouns lacking referents: where one might expect to find "*they* [the authors] tramp to leave their print," the inclusivity of the first person plural "we" points to readers, scholars, researchers, editors, and critics as well. This group would, of course, include Howe herself, and if read in such a self-reflexive manner, the line may be seen as advocating for the effacement of that group's presence in favor of preserving the mark(s) left by the author being studied. Alternatively, or simultaneously, the combination of unidentified pronouns implies that just as authors leave their mark on the page through printed text, readers (such as Melville) leave their own in the form of marginalia, which is visual evidence of their engagement with a text's materiality.

A handwritten note to the poem clarifies Howe's use of *print* as designating a "foot print" and a "printed book."[26] The former sense recalls the "tracking" in the line from the previous poem quoted above, and, in conjunction with the latter sense, connects the image of the white snow with the white page (more specifically, the margins). Both are equally marked by the writer/reader's presence, and in the second half of Howe's poem the visual materiality of the language constituting those marks is emphasized. In line eight Howe writes, "Saw that the saw sawed thought." The source of the phrase is a poem written by Mangan entitled "The Saw-Mill"; in Melville's copy, he bracketed the first four words of the line "I saw the saw in the Saw-Mill!"[27] Although each use of "saw" in Howe's appropriation is semantically different, all three instances share an aspect of materiality:

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[26] SHP Box 50 f. 2.

[27] James Clarence Mangan, *Poems by James Clarence Mangan* (New York: P.M. Haverty, 1859) 443. Houghton Library, *AC85.M4977.Zz859m.

1) The preterit of the verb "to see."
2) A proverb or maxim, and/or a hand tool used for cutting materials.
3) The preterit of the verb "to saw."

The second usage is particularly relevant. Etymologically, the first part of the definition given comes from the Old English *sagu*, meaning "a saying, speech."[28] However, in the poem, for this verbal language to have been *seen* would require that it first be materialized in writing. Taking this into account, the "hand tool" of the second portion may then imply a writing utensil as much as an actual saw, a plausible connection given the poetry's context. Both objects, moreover, effectively alter or reform materials of a shared nature (e.g. wood and paper). A possible interpretation of the third usage, therefore, would be that the transformation of immaterial thought to printed language on the material page entails a separation: the thought split from the writer, and the rupture between the idea and the words attempting to capture it.

Nonetheless, as stated previously, Howe's recognition of this inevitable breakdown is not considered as a critical impasse, but an entry for further (and necessary) study. The poem ends by positing that margins provide a space for expression that is unique for how open and unrestrictive they are: "Wide universe no matter what / that their thought may go out / the margin s mile of welcome" (l. 10-12). The apparent freedom margins offer—where, as Howe affirms via Poe, "'we talk only to ourselves [...] freshly—boldly—originally'"[29]—is a "wide universe" or "mile of welcome," and a characteristically expressive "smile of welcome" to the materialization of any thought "no matter what."[30] Therefore, in light of the type of fracturing that occurs in the successive shifts from one materiality to another—such as a verbalized thought to a handwritten manuscript to a published text—one aim of Howe's archival work in "Melville's Marginalia" is to reconnect these sawed-off shifts by documenting the material traces of an author's marginalia as analogous to the process of literary production itself.

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[28] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.

[29] Howe, *BM*, 7. The quotation is from Poe's essay "Marginalia."

[30] In a handwritten note to the translation of this poem, Howe specifically clarifies the intentionality of the dual reading made possible by the lack of apostrophe and spacing in "margin s mile": "They have gone only for margin's mile not margin's smile + that is crucial maybe could translate it smile as opposed to mile." SHP Box 50 f. 2.

At this point in the sequence, the poet shifts to a series of poems that focus the reader's attention on the specificities of manuscripts. In particular, Howe is interested in those aspects that illustrate the immaterial creative process, whereby a writer moves from the figurative visualization of an idea or text to its literal visualization as language on the page. Prior to examining these poems in detail, however, it is useful to return to an earlier moment in *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, in order to clarify Howe's approach to manuscript drafts and her later, idiosyncratic method of transcription.

The epigraph to the second major section of Howe's book is a short statement spoken by the titular character from "Bartleby, the Scrivener": "I like to be stationary" (*NCM*, 51).[31] The quotation's link to the notion of "conversion," in the sense of a change in form, is established by means of Howe's intentional pun on "station*e*ry." The homophone most immediately implies the fixed, immobile state of the material page. In this instance, *stationery* also functions metonymically to signify a text, whether mechanically printed, or (as in Melville's story) copied by hand. Additionally, however, the pun also indicates a transformation: the figure of Bartleby becoming the material page(s) onto which the texts he copies are written. While an author of original works is not typically considered to be a copyist per se, the material stages of composition Howe is interested in do require the writer to "copy" down, in a certain sense, the language of the immaterial thoughts, and later "recopy" any number of drafts. Therefore, placing this latter meaning in the context of the theme of literary composition and materialization, the epigraph suggests that, again via metonymy, the poet, or author—having first turned to the page, and having then converted the thought process into textual materiality—is bound up in the material object of the resultant book. As stated earlier in this study, for Howe, the graphic marks—alphabetic or otherwise—found in the automatic writing of marginalia, as

[31] On the subject of the epigraph's connection to "Melville's Marginalia"—apart from the obvious basis on Melville—Howe writes the following in a letter to Théâtre Typographique from 23 July 1996: "We must have the stationary citation from Bartleby somewhere in this text because of it creeping up with Mangan. [...] The citation should be Bartleby not Melville and preferably the epigraph/quote remain in English. Thus making B[artleby]'s desire to be stationary a refusal to move into translation -- preferring not to. [...] In my N[ew] D[irections] book it's the epigraph to section II Conversion but we need it for this poem!" SHP Box 50 f. 4.

well as in the linguistic and visual specificities characteristic of manuscripts, capture something of the writer's personality and thinking mind. By interpreting and appropriating archival documents with particular attention given to the visio-spatial qualities of the language, Howe's poetics, in a work like "Melville's Marginalia," tracks the compositional process in an effort to demonstrate and clarify the interaction of the material and immaterial.

"I prefer not to," the most well known statement from Bartleby, and one repeated throughout Melville's short story, is the character's refusal to comply with the established, socio-cultural opinions and conventions.[32] The quotation chosen for the epigraph is very much the same, with Bartleby's preference to remain fixed in place being an implicit refusal to comply, or, in a more general sense, to change. In other words, ironically countering the title printed above it, the phrase communicates a resistance to "conversion." If one continues to see Bartleby as representative of authors—in particular, Herman Melville and James Clarence Mangan, as considered above—the epigraph suggests that the ongoing struggle of the writer to capture and settle his/her thoughts within a stationary form is further complicated by a resistance to precisely that process, knowing that something in those ideas will inevitably escape materialization.

Moreover, the epigraph's tacit opposition is also combined with the sense of materiality conveyed in the alternate reading of "station*e*ry." As a result, the static nature of a handwritten, or printed, page is understood as its inherent resistance to any subsequent changes. But as draft leads on to draft, and one edition replaces another, Howe's "Conversion" section, in fact, imparts the idea that despite the apparent finality of materialization and the bound book, any text or author (dead or alive) continues to evolve and transform in the hands of editors, scholars, and readers. This is partly due to continual attempts to establish authorial intention by recovering what was lost or removed during the sometimes long and convoluted production of literary texts. Howe's awareness of such changes taking place not only during composition, but long after as well, is a part of her motivation for turning back, and moving through the compositional process to the genesis of a particular work.

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[32] Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street," *Billy Budd and Other Stories* (London: HarperCollins, 2014).

While the first six poems of part two in "Melville's Marginalia" are centered primarily on Melville, Howe then abruptly shifts to the manuscripts of another key author in the sequence, Percy Bysshe Shelley. And yet, what may appear as an "absence of a continuous narrative," as one critic writes, has the advantage of "focus[ing] the reader's attention onto the surface of the text. The story is of the language unfolding."[33] This type of textual progression is seen in the first of these poems:

> A full stop at *Pursue*
> for some occult reason
> And two false starts
> of line 2 with *Angel*
>
> The beautiful passage in *Prometheus*
> The nether millstone (*NCM*, 126)

The first two lines read as if an editorial footnote to Howe's research while examining one of Shelley's manuscripts by means of the prior archival work conducted by Donald and Hélène Reiman at Oxford's Bodleian library. This relates to her previously cited comment that the entire sequence is akin to an extended footnote. It is noteworthy that Howe begins her poetic documentation of manuscripts with an attention to the most minute of linguistic marks: the single dot of a full stop. As per her contention, every single mark—no matter how seemingly inconsequential—is significant to the textual materiality of the compositional process. It is, of course, doubtful that any textual scholar would discount any punctuation, but the purpose of Howe's consideration for such a mark is not so much for how it may or may not alter the deciphering of the poem's meaning than how it exemplifies the materialization in Shelley's creative process. In following the written traces of the poet, she aims to move beyond explicatory interpretation to *pursue* the cognitive source of the materiality. Were it otherwise, it would only be logical that Howe provide a possible explanation of the grammatical choice; however, in line two, she instead only acknowledges the inexplicable "occult reason" for the punctuation. Howe's decision to use the term "full stop"—entirely appropriate with regard to Shelley's British

[33] Joel Lewis, "Grappling Bigman: The Secret History of the Dividing Line," *The Difficulties* 3.2 (1989) 61.

nationality—as opposed to the American term "period," is itself not without its own significance, for it is precisely with this mysterious punctuation that the trail of Howe's pursuit fully *stops*. The implication of pushing the matter no further is that something of the immaterial thought (that is, the reason for Shelley's initial decision) quite simply escapes translation into visible language. Contrary to the traditional work of textual scholars to decode the authorial intention of literary choices that may appear agrammatical or illogical, Howe asserts the recognition of the mystical quality of poetic materialization as sufficient in and of itself. Indeed, the Biblical basis of the introductory poem to part two of the sequence begins the section on a spiritual note, according to which the *blank* page is suggested as perhaps the only material form such abstractness may ultimately take. Developing this idea here, the reader sees that Howe has, in fact, eliminated the very mark of punctuation she describes. Aside from the poet's concerns for the uniformity of the actual printed text, one may then read the emptiness of the adjacent marginal space as the untranslatable quality characterized as immaterial in the subsequent line.

A fundamental aspect of Howe's documentary poetics is embracing the indeterminacy often found in a writer's manuscripts as significant not only as a key to authorial intention, but also—and perhaps more so—as an insight into the necessary materialization of the creative process. This point is reasserted two pages later in the last four lines of that poem:

> across "?fury" may be
> "day" or "fiery"
> by mischief superimposed on *wild*
> tercet mask tercet (*NCM*, 128)

The poet's method of transcription here, as in the poem cited above, is not one of typographic reproduction, but opts instead to explicitly draw attention to certain aspects of the manuscript that, in many ways, defy transcription.[34] The "mischief" echoes the "occult" in the earlier poem, and while any explanation remains absent, in

[34] For more on the inherent challenges of transcribing uniquely visual manuscripts see "Transcription and Transgression" and "Textual Preface: Transcriptions as Thin Maps," the latter written by Marta Werner, a former student of Howe's. *The Networked Recluse: The Connected World of Emily Dickinson* (New York: Amherst College Press, 2017). The publication accompanied the early 2017 exhibition "I'm Nobody! Who are you? The Life and Poetry of Emily Dickinson" at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York.

both instances the poems convey a sense of a potential decipherable significance. The palimpsestic superimposition of the four cited words imply a convergence of their separate definitions—a textual and semantic complexity that would otherwise be lost if such ambiguities in the manuscript were discarded as merely rejected options. Howe does not offer readers of this poem a suggestion as to which word she concludes should be privileged, directing their attention to the materiality of the layering itself. The visual perception of word upon word results in an uncertain graphic amalgamation that then requires the work of transcription, and perhaps additional paratactic critical apparatus, but is also indicative of the inherent difficulties of putting words down on the page. By highlighting the purely visual aspects of the three proposed words—all set off in quotation marks—the lines draw the reader into the archive, and confront him/her with the reception of such difficulties: how might one successfully distinguish a handwritten /*f*/ from a /*d*/, a cursive /*u*/ from /*ie*/ or /*a*/, or /*ry*/ from /*y*/?

Howe's typographic reproduction of these words, of course, makes the differentiation clear. But this effect is precisely one of the ideas the poem expresses: innate to any shift from one materiality to another—a thought to a page, or a manuscript to a typescript—is a degree of loss of materialization's "wild" expressivity. Typographically, this is suggested by distinguishing the one word of the manuscript Howe is sure of in italics, which approximates the original handwriting. The juxtaposition of the tagged quotations in standard print to the untagged quotation in italics emphasizes the inherent failures of transcription, and thus simultaneously the importance of visual materiality to literary production. Recalling the meticulous attention to the full stop two pages earlier, this poem, in fact, advances Howe's visual focus even further by beginning with a mark that is wholly untranslatable: "Shelley's pen slipped" (*NCM*, 128). Although not ultimately included in the New Directions edition, a poem from Howe's archival papers at the University of California in San Diego—later published in an alternate version (though still in English) as part of section one in the French translation—provides further insight into the significance of the line to the sequence as a whole:

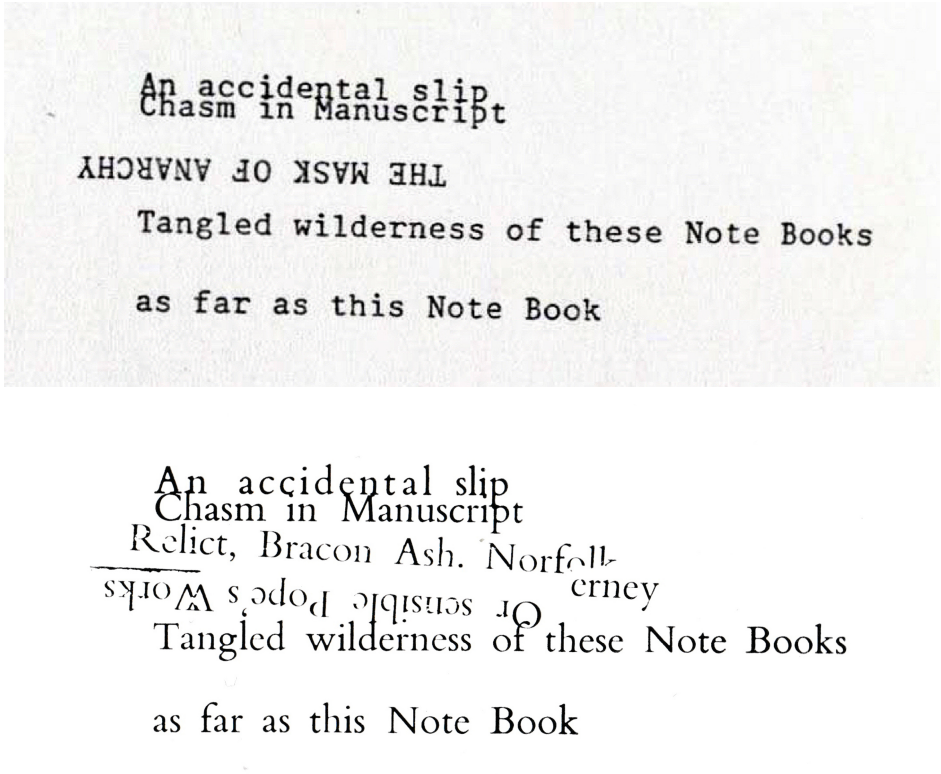

Figure 7.5: Unpublished poem from SHP Box 46 f. 4. Below is the revised poem as it appears in *Marginalia de Melville* (21).[35]

Purportedly accidental, the stray slip of the pen would most likely be overlooked as insignificant, and therefore certainly excluded from an edited, published book. But Howe's mention, and inclusion, of it suggests otherwise. The typographically flipped title of Shelley's work "The Mask of Anarchy" in the typescript draft offers a visually counter view: erroneous or not, it is the *mark* of anarchy.

The margins are, of course, the space for such nonconformity. Howe eventually replaced the title with two contrasting elements; the first being the fragmentary details accompanying the image of a nineteenth-century bookplate (figure 7.6 below), and the second being a reference to Alexander Pope's writing. The former, spatially arranged in the same direction as the "accidental slip," reinforces the visual materiality of manuscripts, and written language in general. The latter, typographically oppositional, draws a contrast between the unconventional marginalia of "these Note Books" of the Romanticist Shelley with the "sensible [...] Works" of

[35] Had the poem been included in the New Direction's publication, it would appear after the two lines of prose and accompanying reference at the bottom of page 102, and before the block of prose at the top of page 103.

the Classicist Pope.[36] The capitalization of "Works" denotes an edited and published book; the choice to also capitalize the un-edited "Note Books" appears to position them as being of equal literary import. The liminality of the non-alphabetic, handwritten marks between image and language contained in those notebooks leads Howe to pair the line, in both versions of the poem, with "Chasm in Manuscript." With regard to the later draft, the capitalization of "Manuscript" is a quite literal visual reversal, and challenge, to the authorized "Works" two lines below: the official /*W*/ turned upside down as the unofficial /*M*/. The final two (unchanged) lines of the poem summarize Howe's view that the singularity of each "Note Book" amongst "Note Books" is its own "tangled wilderness" of language that may ultimately escape definition, transcription, or any form of re-materialization. A manuscript may elicit further archival research "as far as" a full stop (on page 126) or a palimpsest of indecipherable words (on page 128). But while such instances of resistance to clear explication are examples of "chasm[s]" in critical interpretation themselves, Howe's word choice implies a third option that is specifically spatial in nature. The "chasm" of a page, of a manuscript or typescript, is equivalent to its blank space, and both of the poems under discussion address the significance of it in different ways.

In the earlier poem (*NCM*, 126), the "false starts" in line three are precise examples of the accidentals of a manuscript—*slips* in the compositional process. However, there is a sense of contradiction in the term "false," given that the abandoned initial attempts did, in fact, truly occur. As part of the lexicon of Howe's work, the word *stutter* and *stammer* are of particular importance for their embodiment of the hesitations and obstacles to materializing (in this case, primarily acoustically) intentional expression.[37] Her opting for the standard expression of a "false start" should be understood, as she writes in her book *The Midnight*, as an example of dialetheism: "A di-alethia is a two(-way) truth so it's the view that there are true contradictions. [...] If at the heart of language lies what language can't express, can it

[36] The contrast should not be considered an attempt to diminish the talent and influence of Pope's writing—Melville owned a copy of Pope's poetical works, translations of Homer, and works containing his translations of Horace, and Ovid. Moreover, Melville made numerous annotations to Matthew Arnold's essay "On Translating Homer," in which Pope's work is repeatedly referenced. Arnold's essay is also included in his book *Essays in Criticism*"—the similarity of the title to Pope's highly influential "An Essay on Criticism" is unlikely to have escaped Howe's attention when making the revision mentioned above.

[37] Howe clarifies her defintion writing, "HESITATE from the Latin, meaning to stick. Stammer. To hold back in doubt, have difficulty speaking." *My Emily Dickinson*, 21.

be false to say that the golden mountain which exists exists?"[38] Within the context of "Melville's Marginalia," the truth of Shelley's false starts—the term alliteratively recalling "*fu*ll *st*op" in line one—are their demonstration of the obstacles to materializing poetic enthusiasm. They are, in other words, the visual evidence of the writer's mind at work in the process of converting thought to language.

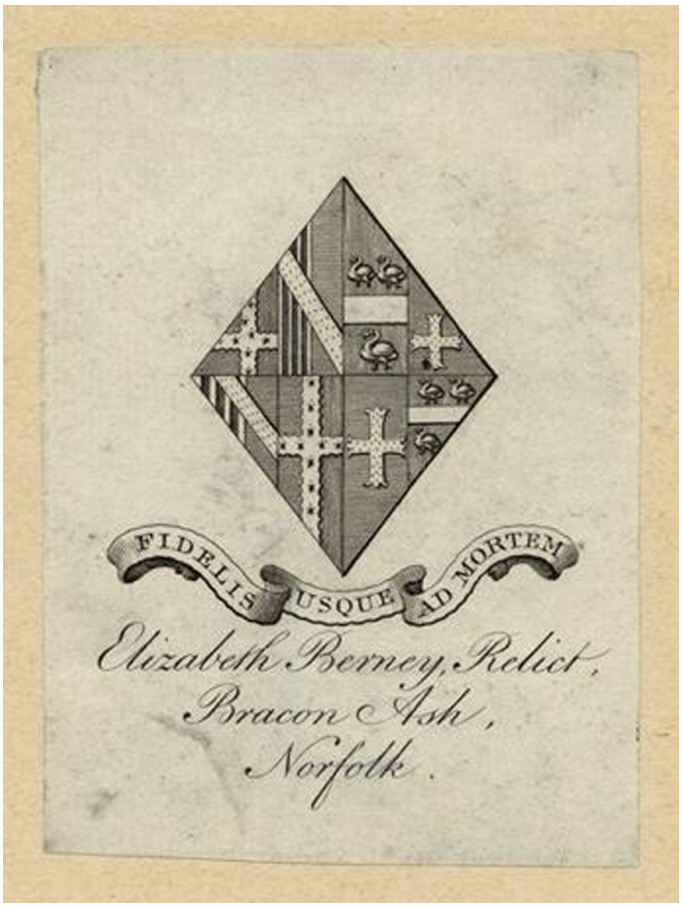

Figure 7.6: Center coat of arms of the Elizabeth Berney bookplate (1003), dated 1800, held in the William Augustus Brewer Bookplate Collection, as part of the Special Collections Department at the University of Delaware Library.

A similar idea is conveyed in the somewhat oxymoronic combination of the "supernatural" connotation of *occult* with the more "natural" implication of *reason*. As parallel terms for immaterial and material, the consideration of these kinds of details in manuscripts leads the poet to conclude (or rather reaffirm) that the process of writing poetry involves two types of thinking, so to speak. The result is a unique visualization of presence and absence, which is seen as the poem shifts from the

[38] Howe, *MN*, 70.

unfinished drafts of lines from what is ostensibly an initial, or early, manuscript, to the revised, final version: "The beautiful passage in *Prometheus* / The nether millstone." The white space that divides the stanzas in the poem represents this transition from the inarticulate stutter to articulated beauty. According to this spatial turn, therefore, the process of progressively and repeatedly refining drafts to arrive at the final text is highlighted as a matter of transforming the page's blank space into printed space. However, the materialization of language that occurs in this gap, where the writer advances from the initial manuscripts to the publication, remains a mystery—an immateriality *absent* to the reader of the printed book. Howe later reinforces this idea in the line "tercet mask tercet" (*NCM*, 128). A single-line transcription of a seven-line spatial arrangement (i.e. two three-line stanzas divided by one blank line), it points to two components of visual materiality: the presence of "revealed" text, and the absence in "concealed" space. Howe's translation of the blank space in this line gives it explicit semantic significance. The empty space is seen as a "mask," behind which is that part of the process of literary production, or even of documentation, that cannot be captured in words on the page.

The word "passage" itself is an example of the focus on poetic process in Howe's engagement with archival manuscripts. As the preceding four lines of apparently unsatisfactory, inadequate, or even erroneous language are (in Howe's poem) condensed into a single line, the referenced phrase figuratively embodies every *passing* of one word(ing) to another. Stated differently, the printed text is a symbolic materialization of the entire compositional process. And yet there is also a sense of instability, as the so-called final version may prove to simply be another momentary passage towards a later edition in the continued evolution of the text. Again paired with the poem on page 128, this is evoked in the suggested palimpsest. Words are materialized, overwritten, or erased, as the language unfolds on the surface of the page, and such emendations may continue to be made in conjunction with future archival research and critical editing. In this same group of poems in the sequence, Howe's poetic footnotes address this very notion:

> Shelleyan but may be Mary
> Traces u pon the comin g
> . . . . . .
> the bracket isn t closed

Mary tried to mend "wrecht" (*NCM*, 130)

These lines shift repeatedly between certainty and uncertainty. The visual traces are Shelleyan, but whether Percy or Mary is unclear; contrarily, it is apparently sure that Mary is responsible for the editorial intervention in the last line. The manuscript as a whole is summarized in the metaphor of the note (and image) of the missing bracket: in the absence of any final closure, or unmistakable conclusion, the work remains open to continual material alterations. In the foreword to *Debths*, Howe writes, "[...] overwriting signified by a vertical brace—superimposed letters with others underneath—sometimes empty brackets signify a tear or a worn place."[39] Her comment evokes the materiality of the page that is foregrounded by the sight of an unclosed bracket—a form of parenthesis that "tears" open the page, revealing the ever-evolving palimpsest.

The evocation of Mary Shelley and the term "wrecht" in the concluding line also echo that of the earlier poem: "The nether millstone" (*NCM*, 126). The phrase serves two functions, which in combination link the poem's emphasis on materialization back to the central concept of the margins. The symbol is a complex one, whereby the poet combines the effects implied by the multiple definitions of *millstone* as (1) "stones used for grinding grain," and (2) "a heavy and inescapable responsibility," and that of *nether* as "lower in position" (etymologically, "down").[40] Howe's handwritten notes to the line read as follows: "Millstone – something in fairy tales nursery rhymes [...] something that grinds or crushes," "Caught under a heavy burden of guilt," and "nether is a lonely word."[41] In addition to the definitions, the line contains several textual references:

1) Shelley's poem "The Masque of Anarchy" (l. 16-17): "His big tears, for he wept well / Turned to mill-stones as they fell."
2) Job 41:24 in the King James Version of the Bible: "His heart as firm as stone ; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether *millstone*."

[39] Howe, *Debths* (New York: New Directions, 2017) 22.
[40] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.
[41] SHP Box 50 f. 2. The underlining and punctuation are in the original notes, and the separation of the quoted portions follows their spatial division in the margin of the page.

3) Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*: "They wandered onward till they reached the nether margin of the heath, where it became marshy, and merged in moorland."[42]

The key to interpreting the intertextual network of Howe's line is, in fact, a fourth reference, being the epigraph to the "Turning" section of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*. As stated earlier in this chapter, the quotation from *Shelley Memorials* expresses the artistic struggle of the "enthusiast," or poet, who "suppresses her tears, [and] crushes her opening thoughts" (*NCM*, 1). As both the fairy tale aspect, and the physical tool (referred to in Howe's marginal notes), the millstone is the symbol connecting the immaterial thoughts of the poetic process with the material words they are grinded into. Though a "beautiful passage" may result, there is, nonetheless, a concomitant sense of loss and "guilt" (as per Howe's annotation).

Finally, via the allusion to Hardy's work, the millstone is also tied to the margin, which, hierarchically "nether" to the main printed text, is that removed space where Howe seeks to find what of the original enthusiasm was suppressed. This draw away from the edited text to the area of marginalia and footnotes is reflected typographically in the three words Howe chose to italicize in the poem. To paraphrase the visual progression these words create, Howe's material tracking (*Pursue*, l. 1) of the spiritual/immaterial (*Angel*, l. 4) in the writing process leads her to a symbolic combination of the two (the demigod *Prometheus*, l. 5).[43] It is in the margins, in fact, where this fusion takes place, expressed by Howe's exclusion of the rest of Shelley's title—*Unbound*. The absent word is substituted by the blank, free space of the page that is quite literally outside the boundaries of the printed text.

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[42] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1885) 429. See also the related images in the opening lines to "Epipsychidion" (310) and "Adonais" (322).

Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version, 328. For further discussion on the connection of this passage in Job to "The Masque of Anarchy" see Sally West's *Coleridge and Shelley: Textual Engagement* (London: Routledge, 2016) 35.

Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (New York: Modern Library, 1920) 255. Below those handwritten notes cited above, Howe also wrote out part of this passage (though misquoting it slightly): "They wandered forth until they reached the nether margin of the hill." SHP Box 50 f. 2.

[43] In addition to being an historically important literary/artistic figure, Prometheus's defiance of the authority of Zeus in recovering fire—in "Melville's Marginalia" a symbol for poetic inspiration—also makes him a type of *memorial* of *nonconformity*. Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (as well as Lord Byron's poem "Prometheus") rewrites the mythological figure in Aeschylus's play as the triumphant protagonist. Of note is also Mary Shelley's subtitle to the marginal character of Frankenstein as "The Modern Prometheus."

The next page in the sequence names another figure of Greek mythology, as the poet moves from paraphrastic translation in the style of footnotes to a more straightforward typographic transcription of manuscript pages. The reference to Narcissus in the fragmentary first line of the poem suggests the process of materialization results in a uniquely visual *reflection* of the author, even in the absence of clearly determined semantic content.

Narcis if I h
"Forct" in copy
"h" from bough
Thissby this
hishis spirit
I th For th

If I am the N
This is an error
Fy (*NCM*, 127)

In attempting to reproduce the typographic eccentricities of manuscripts, Howe's poem reaffirms that "The look of a word is part of its meaning—the meaning that escapes the dictionary definition, or rather doesn't *escape* but is bound up with it."[44] The surface of the page, then, is imagined as reflective materiality that returns an image, which captures the gesture of writing, while failing to contain the desired totalizing explanation. Howe's work demonstrates that manuscripts, to appropriate Pound's words, "contain history," but the picture they provide can no more be considered complete than they can be assumed to be absolutely accurate. Pound, too, acknowledged the fragmentation one encounters in conducting archival research by incorporating it into his poetry; notably, the opening to Canto VIII. However, contrary to Pound, Howe makes no attempt to reconstruct or correct the fragments. The reader may complete "Narcis" as "Narcissus" in line one, but it is done by means of his/her own participatory activity. In fact, in many ways, Howe's approach runs counter to Pound's, in that her re-materialization of manuscript/archival pages emphasizes the

[44] Susan Howe, Interview by Lynn Keller, *Contemporary Literature* 36.1 (Spring 1995) 6-7.

obstacles to such a task. The reflection of any author in the written language of a page is, like that of Narcissus in the water, necessarily distorted.[45] In order to communicate this, Howe produces a highly fragmentary poem—e.g. "I th For th // If I am the N" (l. 6-7)—and one which draws particular attention to the complicated shift from the acoustic materiality of a vocalized thought to the visual materiality of the text.

Howe's comment regarding *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, incorporated into her work *Singularities*, is equally applicable to this poem in "Melville's Marginalia": "[...] when I chanced on that edition of his papers transcribed with the original errant spelling and punctuation, I vividly felt the effect of sonic sources typographically reproduced on paper."[46] A visual transcription is thus a negotiation of multiple materialities, and Howe's statement in her recent essay "Vagrancy in the Park" that "Sound is sight sung inwardly,"[47] implies that in her poetic œuvre the separation of the sonic and the visual is a false dichotomy. The two cannot be entirely compartmentalized. Nevertheless, the sequence of materialization—the copying as part of the process of transcription, the production and reproduction—carries an inherent distinction. The question of origins resurfaces, and, more precisely, the issue of how a reader is to navigate "[...] the impossibility of [and author] putting in print what the mind really *sees* [...]."[48] On the reader's engagement with Howe's poetry, Rachel Back identifies the following characteristics:

> Howe's radical linguistic and visual strategies invite the reader to employ a "reading" process that is multifaceted and more varied than what is conventionally thought of reading functions. The reader, first of all, *listens* to words and their musical patterns, which may, in fact, have no ready translation or interpretation. The reader then *looks* at the page's design, as one would look at a painting [...] to consider its visual features, its function on the white canvas. Thirdly, the reader sometimes becomes *tactually* engaged with the physicality of the book [...].[49]

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[45] A part of Howe's research and examination of Shelley's manuscripts in facsimile included the Romantic poet's "Drowned Notebook," referred to as such for having been recovered, severely damaged by its immersion in water, by Captain Roberts after Shelley's death at sea on 8 July 1822, as the poet was sailing his boat the *Don Juan* from Livorno to Lerici. The notebook is a part of the collection in the Bodleian Library at Oxford University.

[46] Susan Howe, "Detective Work," interview by Catherine Halley, *The Poetry Foundation* < http://www.poetry foundation.org/article/249896 >. Accessed 16 January 2015.

[47] Susan Howe, "Vagrancy in the Park," *The Quarry: Essays* (New York: New Directions, 2015).

[48] Howe, *BM*, 175, emphasis added.

[49] Rachel Tzvia Back, *Led by Language: The Poetry and Poetics of Susan Howe* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002) 7.

It is important, however, to clarify that while Howe's poetry exemplifies the complex entanglement of authorship and readership, it also distinguishes those experiences in a manner that requires a reorganization of Back's commentary. The poem quoted above is an exceptional illustration of the fact that a reader first *looks* at a text, and only upon seeing it does he/she then *listen* to the words. The poem "performs" this process at the same time that it suggests the entirely opposite experience of the author, who first vocalizes the language of a thought, to then materialize it onto the visual page. The isolated "h" in the first line is a visual materialization of untranslatable breath. This notion is repeated more explicitly in line three, where Howe's inclusion of the word "bough" is meant to draw the reader's attention to that element of a word that though materialized visually, resists any *de*-materialization back into a defined sound. The /*h*/ in bough, being unpronounced, and the unutterable lone "h" in line one, are examples of the inevitable absence that occurs in the translation of one materiality to another. In short, once written/printed on the page, the visible /*h*/ is sonically lost. Far from neglecting the significance of the written word, or from hierarchizing sound over sight, Howe's poetic response to manuscripts and marginalia focuses on the complex significance of language's materialization by attempting to visually render the intervening absence of what is essentially untranslatable.

In "Melville's Marginalia, as in other books by Howe, such a loss is of the utmost importance. "Poetry," she states, "is language stripped to its *un*translatability."[50] The juxtaposition of the silent /*h*/ with a variety of what line eight identifies as other apparent "error[s]"—misspellings ("Forct," l. 2), mispronunciations ("Thissby," l. 4), mirrored/echoed stutter ("hishis," l. 5)—result in a poem that, as an approximation of the overlooked materiality of a manuscript, aims to transcribe the process of writing instead of its product. Line three of this poem is, in fact, a reiteration of Howe's deliberate repetition of the word "thought" in the preceding poem on page 125 (l. 1, 8, and 11). Howe's succinct note to the first instance in that poem simply states: "thought – silent h."[51] The final occurrence of that word in the line "that their thought may go out" expresses an intention toward external reception. But the insinuation (confirmed in the reappearance of the silent /*h*/ on page 127) is that the very process of writing involves an erasure, which occurs not only on the

[50] Susan Howe, Interview by Tom Beckett, *The Difficulties* 3.2 (1989) 19.
[51] SHP Box 50 f. 2.

level of critical interpretation, as expressed earlier in the sequence, but also with regard to the actual appearance of a word on the page. An author can no more seamlessly transmit a thought through language than a reader can definitively receive that language as a transparent means of arriving at its origin.

Howe, then, invites the reader to approach this poem in the same manner she reads and appropriates the manuscripts; namely, by attending to the composition of voice(s) visually rendered on the page. On the subject of translating the line "'h' from bough," Howe writes, "Also this is a case where breath and sound are more important than meaning. As Melville well knows when he says the silent h in whale is its whaleness."[52] The silences of certain aspects of a manuscript, materialized though they may be—as letters and words, as analphabetic marks, or as something between the two—are the "echo-fragments"[53] of the poetic process that express the difficulties of translation (on the part of the author) and transcription (on the part of the reader). The multiple meanings of the final line combine several of the poem's central concepts into a single fragment. An initial interpretation may read "Fy" as a phonetic alteration of the interjection *fie*—from the Latin *fi*, "used to express disgust or outrage—"[54] and/or an aphetic form of *defy*. In context, such a reading communicates a sense of frustrated materialization, which falls short of capturing an original thought resisting translation. This sense is reinforced by a second interpretation as the partially erased word *fly*, the missing /*l*/ being that now-silent element that escapes the material page.[55] Both readings are further tied together by a third understanding of the fragment as the suffix *-fy*, from the Latin verb *facere*, "do, make":

1) (Added to nouns) forming verbs denoting making or producing.
2) Denoting transformation or the process of making into.
3) Forming verbs denoting the making of a state defined by an adjective.

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[52] SHP Box 50 f. 4. Vilgrain and Rival's initial translation of this line was "'h' de blanche," with the following note on the page sent to Howe: "h de blanche; the h in french is mute, so is the e here, but pushed by the e h becomes final and sonorous letter here." Dominique Fourcade's earlier translation (ultimately chosen for publication) translates the line as "'h' de phné." On this page, again sent to Howe, Richard Sieburth's note states, "[...] phné is Daphne another fleeing maiden we introduced because of h to keep the h – / breath sound / silent letter / ciisse [referring to line five of the translation] – ce trace of Narcissus." SHP Box 50 f. 2.

[53] Howe, *That This* (New York: New Directions, 2010) 29. The passage in its entirety reads: "Can a trace become the thing it traces, secure as ever, real as ever—a chosen set of echo-fragments?"

[54] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.

[55] In an early draft of the French translation of this poem, the line was rendered as "Pfff" (i.e. interpreted as the interjection mentioned above). A handwritten post-it from Howe reads, "ugg no good because the i sound of fly." SHP Box. 50 f. 2.

4) Forming verbs expressing a causative sense.[56]

The various definitions all center on the gesture of *re*forming language, and, according to the etymology, the more general act of giving form to something.

TRANSCRIBED ELUSION

For readers of "Melville's Marginalia," as well as Howe herself in creating this poem, the specific process of (re)formulation is that of transcription. The examined manuscript offers a glimpse of its author's mind in the midst of the work of handwritten materialization, and in parallel, Howe's poem offers a view of the work of typographic re-materialization. On this process the poet makes the following statement:

> For so long I have been fascinated by the original manuscript page, but now my fascination is with the transcription. And now I even see that all my work is really in influence by transcriptions, by the solutions transcribers imagine for textual problems. What are you going to do with text positioned upside down, or with crossed writing? How are symbols and authorial marks represented?[57]

In her earlier sequence "Scattering As Behavior Toward Risk," Howe included a poem relating to Melville's writing that addresses this issue in a much more direct fashion, beginning the work with a reprinted copy of a previously typed copy (figure 7.7). As part of the issue of *The Difficulties* dedicated to Susan Howe's poetic œuvre, Peter Quartermain provides the following insightful commentary on this text:

> What this poem does, by making both Melville's and the Genetic text visible, is point to the incoherence, the uncertainty, the groping of Melville's text—those features of his writing which are erased, made invisible, liquidated, in the Reading Text—and assert them as a compositional principle, insisting that we attend to the writer in the act of composition, responsive to the detailed notation of uncertainty's hesitation and accuracy's register.[58]

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[56] *The New Oxford American Dictionary*.

[57] Howe, "Transcription and Transgression," 131.

[58] Peter Quartermain, "And the Without: An Interpretative Essay on Susan Howe," *The Difficulties* 3.2 (1989) 78.

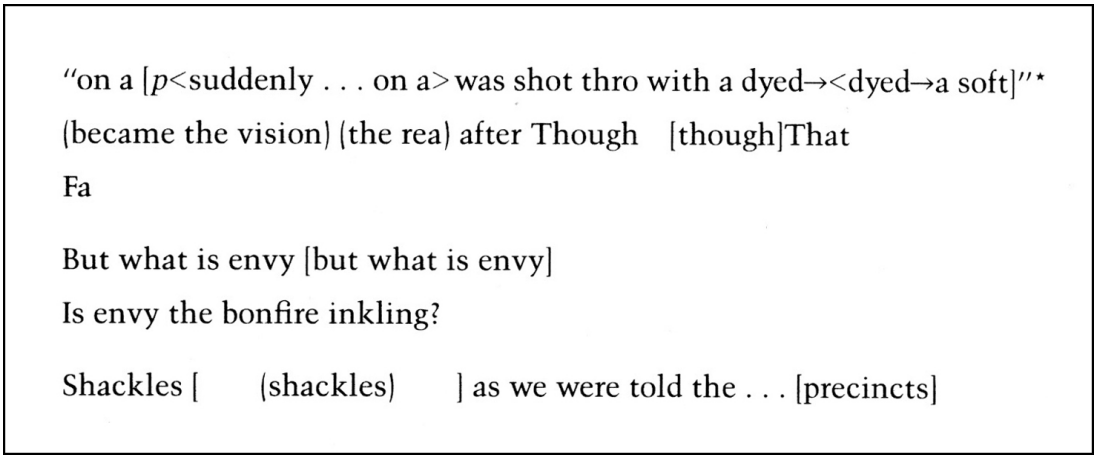

Figure 7.7: The first poem to "Scattering As Behavior Toward Risk, *Singularities* (63). The asterisk at the end of line one refers to a textual note added in the bottom right corner of the page: "*Billy Budd*: The Genetic Text."

Howe's attention to the original compositional process—and in particular, the uncertainty and hesitation Quartermain mentions—is seen earlier in "Melville's Marginalia" with regard to Shelley's false starts. But, as demonstrated several pages later, equal attention is given to the process of appropriating found texts (in this case, archival manuscripts). Readers of the sequence witness the past writer's grappling with the textual materiality of composition at that the very same time he/she reads the present writer's struggle toward a solution pertaining to the altered materiality of transcription. In the above poem from *Singularities*, Melville's words, fragments, and revisions, are read in juxtaposition to the transcriber's punctuational and spatial decisions for accurate *re*presentation. Faced with the same challenge of translating Sappho's fragments, and her use of brackets to "imply a free space of imaginal [*sic*] adventure"[59] in response to it, Anne Carson states, "There is the space where a thought would be, but which you can't get hold of. [...] the suggestion of a thought that the space gives you. Nothing fully worked out could be so arresting, spooky."[60] Unclosed, erased, or palimpsestic space—and their resultant indeterminacy—are

[59] Anne Carson, *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho* (London: Virago Press, 2003) xi. On this same page of the introduction, regarding her engagement with materiality, Carson writes, "When translating texts read from papyri, I have used a single square bracket to give an impression of missing matter, so that] or [indicates destroyed papyrus or the presence of letters not quite legible somewhere in the line. [...] Even though you are approaching Sappho in translation, that is no reason you should miss the drama of trying to read a papyrus torn in half or riddled with holes or smaller than a postage stamp [...]."

[60] Anne Carson, "Anne Carson, The Art of Poetry No. 88," interview by Will Aitken, *The Paris Review* 171 (Fall 2004).

examples of precisely those material aspects Howe is interested in emphasizing in this group of poems in the sequence.

The immateriality embedded in the necessarily fragmented materialization "Melville's Marginalia" examines is the untranslatability Howe aims, not to wholly capture, but rather to partially express. However, while the poem referring to Melville's *Billy Budd* approached the issue of materialization by means of assuming the role of the typesetting copyist (i.e. the page is a straight reproduction), in this later work the poet appropriates the characteristics of manuscripts' uncertainties into a completely new composition. Progressing from the annotative line indicating false starts (*NCM*, 126) to the utilization of incompletion and signifying erasure (*NCM*, 127), Howe then includes a poem whose construction and typographic experimentation approximates even more closely the visual development of a manuscript's textual idiosyncrasies (see figure 7.8). On this page the uncertainty is suspended between that of the author, repeatedly revising the same line, and that of the reader, making repeated attempts to settle on the author's intended wording. The "Narcis if I h" poem, as the poet's notes indicate, focused on the acoustic materiality of language that escapes written materialization; here, however, the sequence specifically illustrates how even the visual translation itself presents obstacles to seamless expression. The superimposed, or disjointed, letters of the first three lines do not allow for an easy disentanglement of the intended word: *sea*, se/?/*a*, *sea wood, sea word*, or *seaward*? The matter is further complicated in the last three lines with the substitution of the /*w*/. While these typographic "irregularities" may be separated and/or rearranged, they are also meant to be *seen* as graphic marks, significant outside of translatable grammar and semantics. Such typography is an example of those textual problems found in archival manuscripts that inform "Melville's Marginalia."

Nevertheless, setting aside the poet's intentional obfuscation of any definitive reading, the poem most certainly demonstrates the progression of poetic composition through the alternative endings (or non-endings) of the lines beginning "Coffin the [...]." One finds the phrase "I rewrite" within the scrambled lettering of line four, and in "ebly" one reads a distorted reflection (or slant echo) of Bart*leby*, whose job was, indeed, to (re)copy documents. Ultimately, it is less a matter of settling on a precise explication of the words and lines themselves in this poem, than it is a matter of understanding the way in which it documents the difficulties of composing the immaterial by means of the material.

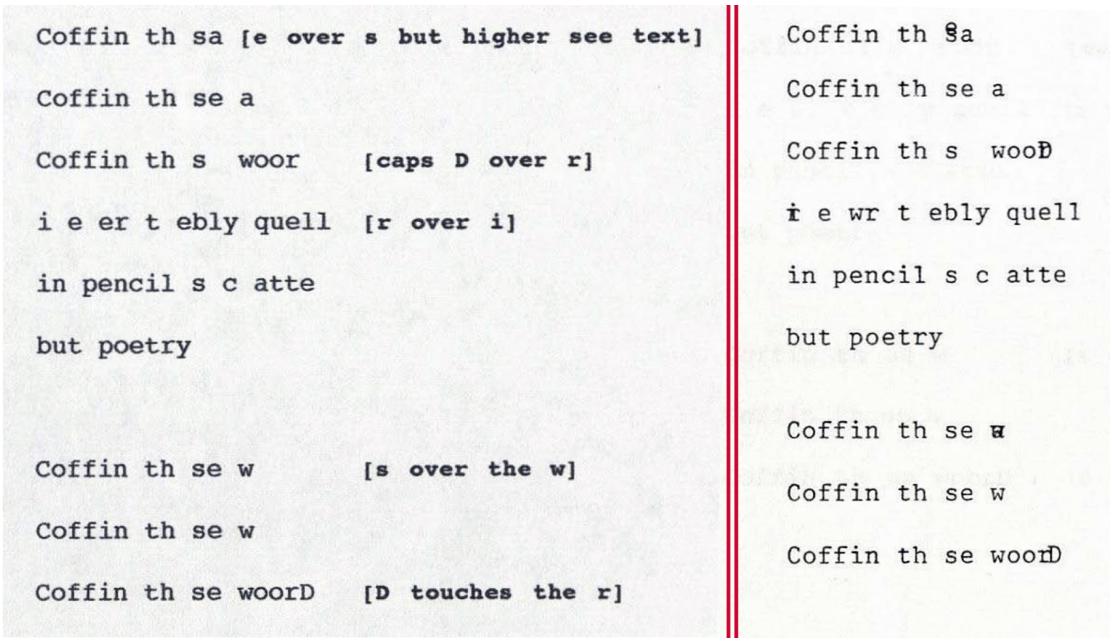

Figure 7.8: Two stages for the typescript of *NCM* 132, with the specific instructions for the letters' spatial arrangements in the left-hand image, realized in Howe's retyped version on the right. SHP Box 48 f. 9.[61]

This notion is further expressed, and connected to Melville's works, by Howe's deliberate use of the multiple definitions of *coffin*. On this word choice, she notes in pencil, "Coffin – such a big deal in Moby but coffin word + name."[62] In "Melville's Marginalia" the word is to be interpreted, then, as much in the sense of a materially constructed object—the "wood" one reads in the poem—as for that meaning of "to hide," or, more literally, to confine in a box.[63] As per Howe's note, the word is a direct intertextual allusion to *Moby Dick, or the Whale*; more precisely, chapter 110 "Queequeg in his Coffin." It is, furthermore, this material coffin that allows Ishmael

[61] The indications in bold were apparently made for Howe herself (as opposed to the editors at New Directions): the later "final" draft on the right is pasted over a reprint of the prior typescript, which is visible through the verso of the page, suggesting Howe retyped the poem on her own typewriter. Both archival pages are part of the same folder, marked "paste-ups"—one stage in Howe's compositional process for typographically abstract poems, which are subsequently sent to the publisher.

[62] SHP Box 50 f. 2.

[63] See again the notes exchanged between Howe, Sieburth, Vilgrain, and Rival in negotiating the French translation, which, over the successive lines, includes "cell," "cel," and "cele" (55). One such note reads, "sounds same as celer, je cèle = keep secret, keep silent." SHP Box 50 f. 2.

Megan Williams also picks up on this double sense: "As a noun, it suggests that 'th se woorD' or 'these words' of Howe's are dead. As a verb, however, it suggests that death, the death of the voices of lost authors, is being packaged and carted off in *Melville's Marginalia*. [...] Her writing is formed by layers, collisions, and multiple word possibilities." *Howe Not to Erase(her)*, 126.

to survive, and thus write the maritime history. Comparably, Melville's literary works and marginalia are the materials allowing Howe to write, or rewrite, Mangan as Bartleby, by which his obscured history resurfaces and survives. Many passages of Melville's chapter may be linked to Howe's poem, but the concluding excerpt below is particularly applicable for its relation to the process and convergence of the writing and drawing of visual materialization, and to specific words and concepts suggested in the poem:

> With a wild whimsiness, he now used his coffin for a *seachest* [...] Many spare hours he spent, in carving the lid with all manner of grotesque *figures and drawings*; and it seemed that hereby he was striving, in his rude way, to *copy* parts of the twisted tattooing on his body. And this tattooing had been the work of a departed prophet and *seer* of his island, who, by those *hieroglyphic marks*, had written out on his body a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on *the art of attaining truth*; so that Queequeg in his own proper person was *a riddle to unfold*; a wondrous work in one *volume*; but whose *mysteries not even himself could read* [...] and these mysteries were therefore destined in the end to moulder away with the *living parchment* whereon they were *inscribed*, and so be unsolved to the last.[64]

In many ways Howe's poem rewrites this passage, condensing its focus on the elusive significance of the process of deciphering the results of inscription and/or transcription, which seem to resist any definitively fixed, authoritative understanding. Although an author, or reader, may attempt to contain a thought within the boundaries of language predefined, the "figures and drawings" of its translation—far from dead—continue "living" in the inscribed/printed material.

Thus, similar to the genetic text cited above, these "unparaphraseable" lines of Howe's poem, to again borrow Quartermain words, "seem to register a process of perception and thought subject perpetually and continuously to re-casting, re-seeing, re-vision."[65] The statement's hyphenated verbs are illustrative, in that they highlight the visual component of the materialization into writing. In fact, in other poems within this group of part two of the sequence, the poet goes so far as to include certain elements of Shelley's manuscripts that bypass language altogether. The untranslatable materiality of such qualities are neither described, nor poetically reinterpreted, but

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[64] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick, or the Whale* (New York: Modern Library, 1950) 477, emphasis added.

[65] Quartermain, *The Difficulties*, 75.

merely mentioned. Short of providing a facsimile of the manuscript in question, the poem on page 130 simply states that on the page is found "a doodle meadow in pencil."[66] The sketch is significant in relation to the handwritten text it accompanies, and to Shelley's compositional process, but the paratactic inclusion of this "marginal" drawing, beyond the bounds of the dictionary, escapes the typography of transcription. The line remains one fragment in a poem composed of six lines of fragments, which together reflect the abstract, nonlinear composition of the manuscript.

The subsequent poem stretches the possibility of the accuracy of visio-textual representation even further. The previous page's brief notation of a drawn "meadow" is followed, or juxtaposed, with that of a nonfigurative mark of the material degradation of Shelley's notebook: "? water stain to right" (*NCM*, 131). Howe's source is the black and white facsimiles included in Oxford University's publication of *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts*. While the accompanying transcriptions do mention the sketches found in the manuscripts,[67] they do not include any descriptions of the material state of the page: the rips and tears, stains from ink, water, or mildew, or damage done from past attempts to restore the notebook. The initial question mark in the line of Howe's poem is evidence of her personal experience of the manuscript—that is, by means a published reproduction—and draws attention to the fact that archival manuscripts pose not only textual problems, but also questions of materiality. Howe conveys this shift of focus by preceding the statement with two lines that approximate the unconventional spacing (in this case, kerning) of handwritten drafts, following the method of transcription used by Donald and Hélène Reiman (see figures 7.9 and 7.10). Howe, therefore, begins with an example of the kind of textual indeterminacy transcribers and readers encounter when faced with visually nonconforming manuscripts: "half flight" and/or "half light." The poem, however, then goes on to suggest that even the typographic solutions for these

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[66] Concerning later works in Howe's œuvre (specifically from *Pierce-Arrow* onward), Will Montgomery notes a shift whereby the poet would, in this case, perhaps reproduce the actual drawing: "Howe moves away from the typographical experimentation of works such as *Eikon Basilike* or *Thorow* toward a visual aesthetic that depends on actual reproductions of the books and papers of others. What she achieves, therefore, is a new form of visual citation that is distinct in important ways from the modernist tradition of textual citation." *The Poetry of Susan Howe: History, Theology, Authority* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 132.

[67] See *BM*, 26-27. The reproduced transcription twice reads "[SKETCH / OF / TREES]" where Shelley's drawings occur on the facsimile page.

problems, such as those seen in the Reimans' transcription in figure 7.10, fall short of communicating the full experience of manuscripts by not attending to the specifically material qualities of the pages themselves.

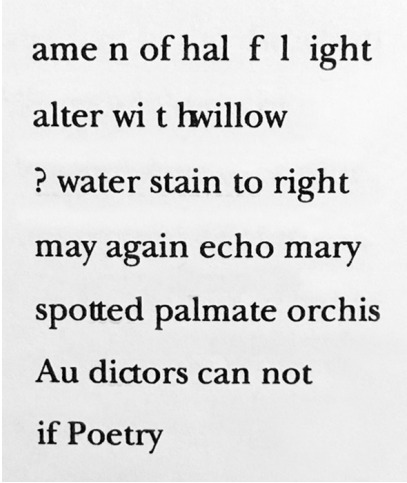

Figure 7.9: *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, 131.

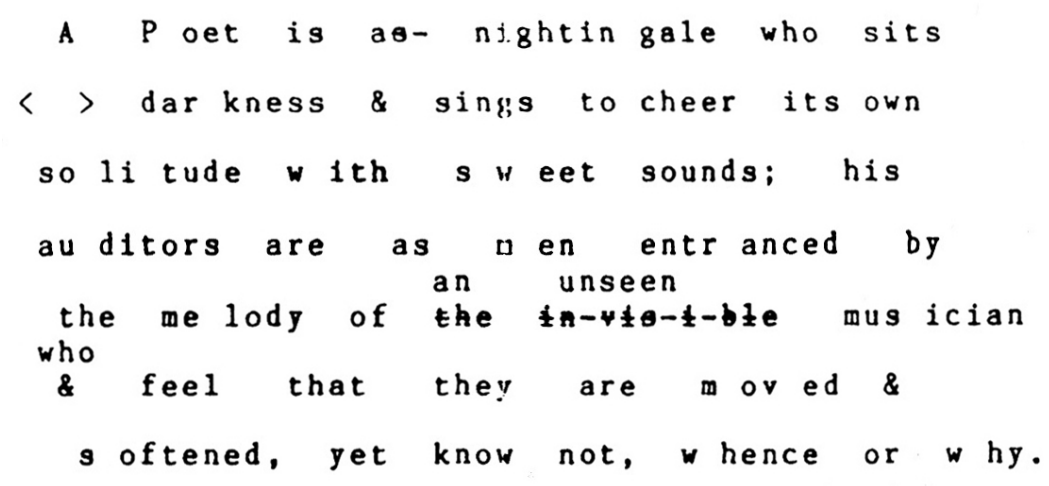

Figure 7.10: A transcription from an early draft of Percy Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry" found in the "drowned notebook," i.e. Bodleian Manuscript Shelley adds. e.20. *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts*, Vol. VII, 169. It is reprinted in Howe's introductory essay to *The Birth-mark* (20).

Doing so, of course, one inevitably confronts the untranslatable dimensions of composition and materiality, and thus the impossibility of the task. Howe demonstrates this in "Melville's Marginalia" in the succession of this group of poems. It turns from marks of punctuation (page 126), to indeterminate linguistic fragments (page 127), to non-alphabetic marks (page 128), to doodles or sketches (page 130), to the sight of the material page itself (page 131). The progression is increasingly visual,

as well as increasingly material. The documentary poetics leads the reader through the process of materialization, and it is precisely an illustration of a written composition unfolding with which the short series of poems ends (page 132). Still unfinished, the stuttering fragments of the poem—"in pencil s c atte[red]"—make clear that the results of a typographic approximation of the liminality of marginalia and the abstract spatiality of handwritten manuscripts are always incomplete re-materializations. The visual and tactile evidence of the compositional process contains aspects, in Howe's view, that utterly disrupt the work of textual documentation. And yet, despite the highly fragmentary nature of these poems, Howe asserts the significance of this language that breaks down semantically, and of this visual materiality that does not conform to standard spatio-textual arrangements. The final line on page 131, "if Poetry," registers an uncertainty as to the *official* status—connoted by the capitalization—of these false starts, fragments, slips, drawings, and stains. On the subsequent page, however, the poet responds: "but poetry" all the same.

Progressing forward in the sequence, the analysis above follows the reverse trajectory that Howe takes in part two of "Melville's Marginalia." The poet's immersion in the textual complexities of the archive leads her from printed books to manuscripts, seeing the former as a means of approaching the original concepts and thoughts behind the writing. In Howe's poetics, this development is equivalent to tracking the process of materialization, documenting an author's attempts to translate and transfer the immaterial to the material, or one form of writing to another. She asserts that while marginalia and manuscripts are uniquely expressive of a writer's mind at work, authorial intention remains a matter of contention for readers and textual scholars who attend to the often overlooked, but no less significant, specificities of visual materiality found in the successive stages of literary production. As a further development of the first section of "Melville's Marginalia," the poems examined above demonstrate that the documentary angle of Howe's compositional process incorporates the difficulties and depths of the materiality one visually and acoustically "reads" in language and graphic marks, illustrating the "turning" and the "conversion" inherent to the act of writing. The archival fragments she appropriates, and repurposes, convey the resistance of the immaterial to language's ability to capture it on the page. On the subject of this stage of Howe's poetic œuvre, Will

Montgomery concisely states, "The moment of writing—the transaction between intellection and its material realization—is shown to be a moment that is both unstable and open to the potential for visual figuration."[68] The discussion of the introductory poem early in this chapter elaborates on the notion of instability and openness by detailing its exemplification of a poetics of intervening absence, which, through fragmented (re)construction, draws attention to the erasures resulting from the negotiation of the immaterial and the material. The incomplete first line of that poem ends with a definitive article pointing to the blank space of the page, which poses a question of genesis: "out / of the [?]" The subsequent poems suggest the answer to this absence is that such an origin cannot finally, or completely, be materialized into writing. Perhaps only the pure possibility of the blank material substrate of the page, ironically, can convey a sense of this original, resistant immateriality.

That same poem also conveys the author as embodied in written works through the materialization in both the *object* of the book (i.e. pages, binding, etc.), as well as in the visible language. As explained above, the first group of poems in the second section of the sequence expands upon the notion of seeking a writer in print by further insisting on the significance of the gaps and erasures, and the liminal space marginalia occupies, all of which is visual evidence of an engagement with the materiality of literary production. As the sequence progresses, the poetics has a central concern for approximating, and/or highlighting, the typography of manuscripts, in order to illustrate the compositional process, and the obstacles such a process presents to transcription. Although in reference to a later work by Howe, Montgomery's commentary on this subject is befitting to this study's reading of this specific group of poems in "Melville's Marginalia": "The materiality of the handwritten manuscript is integral to this project. A writer's handwriting and doodles open a figural window to the unconscious dimension of composition. [...] In Howe's work, then, material and immaterial, mediated and immediate are interdependent terms [...]."[69] Howe's documentary method asserts the significance of the written

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[68] Montgomery, 142.

[69] Montgomery, 143. In his monograph on Howe's body of work, Montgomery contends that *Pierce-Arrow*, the book to which he is referring in the above citation, is part of a continued development of *The Nonconformist's Memorial* with regard to Howe's technique of "visual-verbal collage."

marks that exemplify the complex relation of abstract and concrete materialities, as well as what escapes the visio-spatial trace of this interdependency on the page.

Underlying the meticulousness of Howe's typographic compositions in addressing the aforementioned themes is, as previously suggested, the problematic task of transcription. Such a task is inevitably bound up in editorial decisions, and in the final portions of Howe's sequence, it is precisely the effects of editing the written histories of texts, and the authors thereof, that forms one of the poet's fundamental interests. The following chapter on the concluding series of poems in "Melville's Marginalia" will concentrate on Howe's continued investigation of the issues upon which a documentary poetics hinges, addressing specifically the collision of historicity and contemporaneity that occurs through the agency of editors.

FRAMEWORK: ERRATA AND ERASURE

"Other words constantly shift or invert themselves without ending, these could be called 'suspended words.'"

— Robert Smithson[1]

Accessing the archive under the premise that history is the product of exercised authority, for Susan Howe, as for several of her 20th-century predecessors, the ensuing engagement with the constructed details of historiography is invested in new interpretative processes that break down disciplinary barriers. The historical voices sheltered in poetry that Howe seeks out, are lifted from a transgressive textuality. If not the central subject itself, the materials of history consistently act as the backdrop, or underlying structure, to Howe's writing. In the poet's own words to Tom Beckett, "My poems always seem to be concerned with history. No matter what I thought my original intentions were that's where they go. The past is present when I write."[2] This inextricability of history and poetry is, in many ways, a restatement of Pound's famous definition of epic poetry as "containing" or "including" history. Certainly in the Malatesta Cantos, as seen earlier, the two cannot be disentangled, or, at the very least, the techniques of Pound's historical/archival poetics complicate the task of sifting one from the other. At the same time, Howe's poetry pushes this interdisciplinarity even further by asserting that the architecture of history surfaces and/or frames the materiality of not just *epic* poetry, but all poetic genres. In a separate interview from the same year of 1989, Howe tells Edward Foster, "It would be hard to think of *poetry* apart from history."[3] Beyond this general expansion, however, the clarification of further connections and distinctions between Howe's documentary approach and that of Pound's are important to the continued analysis of "Melville's Marginalia." Building on the previous chapter's focus on manuscripts, and

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[1] Robert Smithson, "Language to Be Looked at and/or Things to Be Read," *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 61. In this book, the short text accompanies Smithson's handwritten work "A Heap of Language" (1966).

[2] Susan Howe, Interview by Tom Beckett, *The Difficulties* 3.2 (1989) 20.

[3] Howe, *BM*, 158, emphasis added. This interview, conducted in July 1989, originally appeared in *Talisman* 4 (Spring 1990).

their materialization, as part of the textual history of poetic composition, the following pages will examine the theme of the poet-historian in relation to the editing of printed texts, as it is introduced in Howe's sequence and later demonstrated in the concluding series' of poems.

Two of the most frequently cited quotations from Howe with regard to her poetic work—both of which are indeed fundamental concepts and aims—come from the preface "THERE ARE NOT LEAVES ENOUGH TO CROWN TO COVER TO CROWN TO COVER," written for the book *The Europe of Trusts*, which collected three sequences from the early 1980s. The first of these is the contention that "History is the record of the winners."[4] This statement, or rather restatement, is not unique to Howe alone, and recalls Pound's suspicion in the Malatesta Cantos (as elsewhere in *The Cantos*) of the accuracy of the historical record.[5] The critic George Dekker somewhat derisively stated that Pound "is obsessed with the idea that history has everywhere been falsified by the ruling interests."[6] In response, however, Michael Harper points out, "[...] most historians (see Jones's 'It is now understood...') would presumably agree that in Malatesta's case it *has* been."[7] What is significant to note, with respect to the relation between Pound and Howe's poetics, is what follows Dekker's statement; namely, that for Pound "the honest investigator must always read between the lines." With this assessment of Pound's position, Harper agrees: "The Malatesta sequence is a critical *reading* of some of the chief primary sources [...]."[8]

Assuming a similar stance as that of her modernist predecessor, Howe's methodology would seem to reject Dekker's apparent dismissal of Pound's approach. This is conveyed by what is too often excised from the above quotation from *The Europe of Trusts*; what precedes and succeeds Howe's paraphrase reads as follows: "Malice dominates the history of Power and Progress. [...] Documents were written by

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[4] Howe, *ET*, 11. The three sequences, as presented in the collection, are: *Pythagorean Silence* (1982), *Defenstration of Prague* (1983), and *The Liberties* (1980). *The Europe of Trusts* was published in 1990.

[5] The source of the original quotation, which has since become somewhat axiomatic, is a matter of debate. Variations of it have been formulated from approximate statements made by Niccolò Machiavelli, Napoleon Bonaparte, Walter Benjamin, Jawaharlal Nehru, George Orwell, and Winston Churchill.

[6] George Dekker, *Sailing after Knowledge: The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963) 138.

[7] Michael Harper, "Truth and Calliope: Ezra Pound's Malatesta, *PMLA* 96.1 (January 1981) 100. Harper refers to P.J. Jones's Oxford dissertation, written some twenty years before its publication in 1974.

[8] Dekker, 138, and Harper, 99.

the Masters. But fright is formed by what we see not by what we say." The insinuation of falsification is found in the term "Malice," but, while in the case of Pound's work "Power and Progress" is specifically equated to the papacy of the quattrocento, Howe extends the notion to the more widespread reach of those gatekeepers of historical and literary canon. Furthermore, in the latter part of the statement, Howe focuses on the physical act of writing, and the material product of documents. History, in other words, exists and survives by means of materialization onto the page, and within the bound object of a book. Howe, in the same manner as Pound, turned to the archives as a means of accessing history. The previous chapter in this study analyzed Howe's engagement with archival manuscripts, the resultant poems of which communicate, as Harper wrote of the Malatesta Cantos, "a critical *reading*" of them as material evidence of the compositional process, and as a means of piercing the received texts—as handed down by historical transmission—in order to highlight the significance of editorial decisions, oversights, or even manipulations. Thus, what is relevant in the present context of a poetic thread between Pound and Howe with regard to the documentary poetics of an *archival* poet, is less the veracity of whether or not the claim that historiography is, ipso facto, untrustworthy due to the underpinning context of its (perhaps dubitable) sources, than it is the compositional approach taken in constructing a poetic response to such a proposition. In addressing the recognized collision of writing history and writing poetry, the material poetics of both Pound and Howe seek out the *origin* of writing. As argued earlier, the trajectory of "Melville's Marginalia" moves from the printed text, to handwritten manuscripts, to intangible poetic enthusiasm; in short, from the material to the immaterial. Pound also did not content himself with secondary sources, but was determined to consult the original documents, and in doing so discovered visual and linguistic materiality—the slips, misspellings, syntactic oddities, typographic abnormalities, emendations, and graphic specificities—as uniquely communicative of the construction of history through its diverse forms of textuality.

The second of the two quotations from *The Europe of Trusts*, which is interwoven through all of Howe's publications, and forms the basis for much of the criticism thereof, is her self-declared aim to "tenderly lift from the dark side of

history, voices that are anonymous, slighted—inarticulate."[9] In Pound's attempt in *The Cantos* to "reanimate" certain historical figures through their own writings, one may find a correlation with this statement. While certainly not "anonymous," many of the key figures in Pound's work, such as Sigismondo Malatesta, were those whose voices he considered had been somewhat buried in the archival annals, and thus lesser known (especially to American readers). Nonetheless, Pound's historical network is dominated by prominent individuals (i.e. Homer, Dante, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams et al.), and while Howe's poetry is not lacking in well-known historical/literary figures—like Shelley, Dickinson, and Melville—more characteristic of her body of work is its focus on overlooked or unknown persons. "If history is a record of survivors," she states, "Poetry shelters other voices."[10] Later, in *The Birth-mark*, preceding a short list of some of these *other* figures, she writes, "Voices I am following," she writes, "lead me to the margins."[11] Thus, though the work of both of these poet-historians is populated with archival writings of varying degrees of obscurity, a divergence between them, with respect to the aim of a documentary process of rediscovery, is found in the fundamental concern of Howe's poetics for so-called "minor literature" and marginalized texts and voices.

A further distinction may be made in that the shared interest in recovery takes the form in the Malatesta Cantos of historical gathering and reconstruction, where Howe's poetics in "Melville's Marginalia" (as elsewhere) attempts to scatter and deconstruct an inherited past through the language of archival documents. Acknowledging the relation between the poetic sequences of Howe and Pound for being "transhistorical and polyphonic," as well as fragment-based, Will Montgomery expresses this difference when he writes, "Howe's rhetorical feat is to reach into the past to meddle with destiny and unsettle the teleology of predestination."[12] In previous sequences—such as *Articulation of Sound Forms in Time*, to which Montgomery's statement specifically refers—historical narratives have been Howe's focus, with the unique purpose of challenging and counteracting the "totalizing" history of any closed forms of representation. In "Melville's Marginalia," on the other hand, the poet turns

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[9] Howe, *ET*, 14.
[10] Howe, Interview by Beckett, 25.
[11] Howe, *BM*, 4.
[12] Will Montgomery, *The Poetry of Susan Howe: History, Theology, Authority* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 88-89.

her attention to *textual* histories traced through the stages of literary production. It is important to note that the means for this process of unsettling is objectivist appropriation via archival access and research; destabilizing, or "rewriting," the past becomes a matter of manipulating the materiality of (allegedly authoritative) historiography. Howe conveys this idea when she states the following to Jon Thompson:

> I need to ground my work in particulars. In my case this usually means a material object such as a book, or a manuscript [...]. Often a historical moment, or a specified person. [...] Esther Johnson, Emily Dickinson, Mary Rowlandson, Hope Atherton, Anne Hutchinson, Thomas Shepard, Clarence Mangan, Herman Melville, Charles and Juliet Peirce—the only way for me to reach them, or for them to reach me, is through the limited perspective of documents.[13]

Pound took a comparable approach to the composition of the Malatesta Cantos, the process of which then marked an important shift in his poetics toward the documentary. In fact, in a letter to his mother, Isabel Weston Pound, dated 1 November 1924, Pound makes a statement very similar to that of Howe quoted above: "Am, as I possibly wrote him [Homer Pound], ready for another long chunk; and trying to find some bhloomin historic character who can be used as illustration of intelligent constructivity. Private life being another requisite. S[igismundo]. M[alatesta]. amply possessed of both; but other figures being often fatally deficient."[14] Such characters are, as Howe notes, accessed through the material objects of written language.

On the subject of this convergence of poetics, the scholar Peter Nicholls writes the following: "Howe clearly believes with Pound that the poetic medium offers a means by which to reactivate a 'history' long since atrophied under the dead hand of the academy."[15] A further precision may be made to this comment, for it is

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[13] Susan Howe, Interview by Jon Thompson, *Free Verse: A Journal of Contemporary Poetry and Poetics* 9 (Winter 2005) < https://english.chass.ncsu.edu/freeverse/Archives/Winter_2005/interviews/S_Howe.html >. Accessed 24 June 2015. This idea is later echoed in *Souls of the Labadie Tract* (2007): "My retrospective excursions follow the principle that ghosts wrapped in appreciative obituaries [...] can be reanimated by appropriation" (15).

[14] Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound To His Parents: Letters 1895-1929*, eds. Mary de Rachewiltz, David Moody, and Joanna Moody (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 547. The letter to his father referred to by Pound is from 25 October 1924, which mentions the U.S. Presidents (specifically Jefferson) as possible figures to follow the precedent of Malatesta (545). Both letters were written in Rapallo.

[15] Peter Nicholls, "Beyond *The Cantos*: Pound and American Poetry," *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*, ed. Ira B. Nadel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 155.

specifically the material remnants of history, in the libraries and archives of the academic network, which are incorporated into the poetic medium. In doing so, however, Pound is often more concerned with the corrective gesture regarding history—that is, setting the record straight—while Howe purposively draws attention to the frequently problematic aspects of such textual "corrections." The result is a poetry, to borrow Nicholls's words, which "offers not a medium for dealing with historical 'facts,' but rather a kind of 'counter-memory,'"[16] which is directed more toward history's illegibility (e.g. erasures), and thus uncertainties. If at the end of *The Cantos* Pound lamented that he was unable to make his epic "cohere," Howe actually takes up this very notion of incoherence—or resistance to coherence—enacting a documentary poetics whose inclusion of material fragments actually emphasizes the structural gaps in poems that "contain" history. Hélène Aji asserts that in Susan Howe's poetry "it is the prevalence of history at the same time as its disquieting instability which is foregrounded," and finds in the earlier collection *Singularities* the poet asking a series of questions on this matter: "Is history coherent? Is it the poet's domain to make it cohere? Shouldn't one accept to live among the uncertainties of impossible coherence? Howe is one to understand the persistence of assemblage and composition even in the face of scattering and decomposition?"[17]

In "Melville's Marginalia," these questions are addressed within the specific context of textual histories and materialities. Aji's comment, which follows the above questions, that "[Howe's] modes of conveying a poetics of history are caught between an acute awareness of the individual's constant efforts at recomposing the past into visible, if not always legible, configurations, and the recognition of the recomposition's provisional status," was reflected in the preceding chapter's analysis of Howe's archival engagement with the material object of manuscripts and drafts.[18] The visibility and/or legibility of her poetic *re*-compositions, and their temporality, were shown to be against common editorial practices and methods of transcription that would exclude the indeterminate marks of any illegibility by means of typographic and/or grammatical regularization. As a result of this attempt "to undo the

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[16] Nicholls, "Beyond *The Cantos*," 155-56. The term "counter-memory" is Howe's term (*BM*, 125).

[17] Hélène Aji, "'I [will not] Gather the Limbs of Osiris': Susan Howe's Transcendent History," *Jacket 2* (2010) < http://jacketmagazine.com/40/howe-s-aji.shtml >. Accessed 8 February 2015.Aji's title is a reference to Ezra Pound's important essay "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris," which was first published, in twelve subsequent parts, in *The New Age* from November 1911 to February 1912.

[18] Aji, "'I [will not] Gather the Limbs of Osiris.'"

hegemony of the editor who would arrest or render invisible the process unleashed by the texts/subjects,"[19] the poems were seen to convey the aforementioned notion of resistance by pointing to the immaterial source that escapes the fixity of materialization in print. The poetry thus displays and performs the complications and difficulties encountered when following the compositional process of a text back through its material history to its origins.

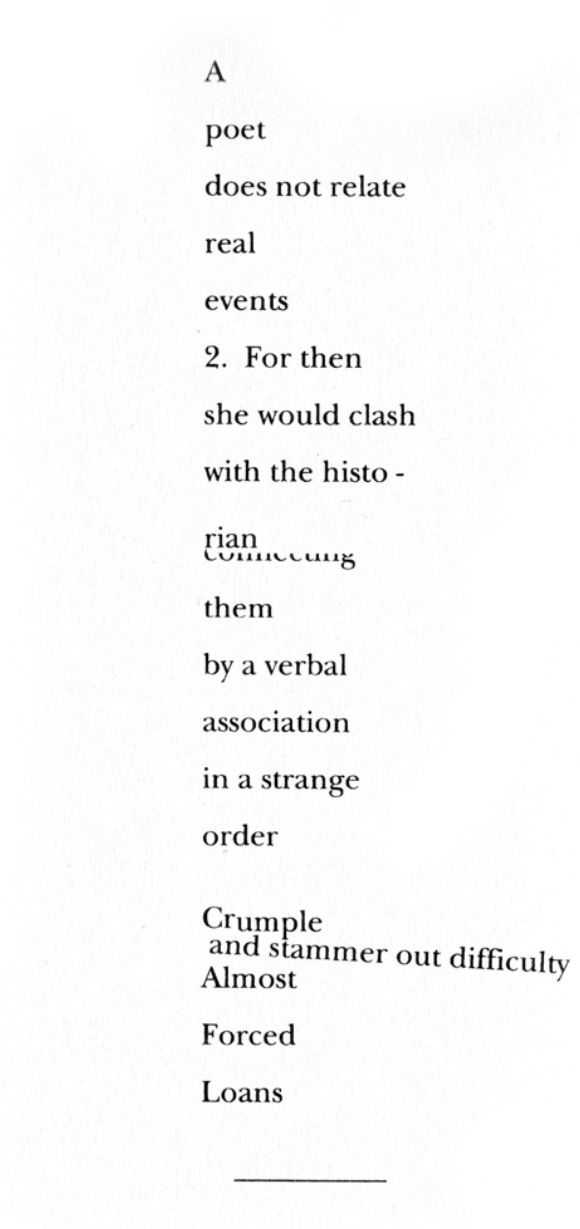
CROSS LOGICS

The solutions editors ultimately adopt, of course, eventually become a part of the documentary history, and in influencing the production and development of a text, the author who continues to inhabit that material object is also shaped by such decisions. This investment in the editorial process in "Melville's Marginalia" coincides with other historical factors that Megan Williams sees as a catalyst for "a poetics of cultural intervention that desires to change the ways the present perceives and creates history, literature, and 'lost' authors."[20] With regard to typography and materiality, one particular example Williams notes is Howe's recurring use, in the abstract poems of the sequence's first section, of lines printed upside down to suggest an alternative perception to those printed in the conventional manner with which they are paired. The technique engages the reader in the acts of historical interruption and textual manipulation, and as the sequence continues these operations are gradually shifted and developed within the framework of the editorial process. Before proceeding to the remaining poems in part two, it is first necessary to return to several earlier poems in the sequence, wherein these issues are initially introduced. In fact, following the short, abstract prefatory poem to part one (at the top of page 101), the very first poem in the section addresses a particular distinction drawn between a poet and an historian (see figure 8.1). If Howe's poetry does indeed contain

[19] Kim Robinson, "Woman's Borderline Figure: Representation and Woman's Voice in the Poetry of Lorna Goodison, Medbh McGuckian and Susan Howe" (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2000) 226-27. This statement is made on the subject of *Eikon Basilike*, and is followed by Robinson's comment that the role of editors and printers is "to enjoin meaning to a specific subject in order to prevent its slippage. In pursuit of a stable subject, this team then turns to rules of law, of grammar, of propriety, of identity. What becomes the unspoken or erased, by implication, is all that is 'written over' by the totalizing project." "Melville's Marginalia," as argued earlier, develops the concepts introduced in *Eikon Basilike*.

[20] Megan Williams, "Howe Not to Erase(Her): A Poetics of Posterity in Susan Howe's 'Melville's Marginalia,'" *Contemporary Literature* 38.1 (Spring 1997) 107.

history—following in the line of Ezra Pound and Charles Olson—it does so only in so much as it *responds* to history in its own unique fashion, which circumvents the traditional route of textual gathering toward an authoritative whole, for a nonlinear approach of "free association" and scattering.


A
poet
does not relate
real
events
2. For then
she would clash
with the histo -
rian
connecting
them
by a verbal
association
in a strange
order

Crumple
and stammer out difficulty
Almost
Forced
Loans

Figure 8.1: Page 102 of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*.

In this poem Howe is seen untangling the concept of the poet-cum-historian, but the differentiation should not be understood as a rigid dichotomy. As many of the remarks from the poet cited above make clear, while the methodologies of these two disciplines may differ, for her, poetry and history remain inextricably linked.

Substituting them for Ralph Waldo Emerson's terms of "cause and effect," they also are "two sides of one fact."[21] Quoting Emerson's contemporary Henry David Thoreau, Howe writes "exaggerated history is poetry," and the poem here conveys the poetic *effect* from the alteration of the conventional linearity in the historical *cause*.[22] This non-chronological compositional process is made explicit in the poem's central statement—broken over eleven lines (l. 1-5, l. 10-15)—that the poet connects events "by a verbal / association / in a strange / order." However, it is also conveyed in the spatial construction of the poem itself, as this phrase is split and separated by the insertion of the "clash" with the method of the historian (l. 6-9). The four-line textual fragment appears as a visual interruption, cutting off the top half of the word "connecting" with the word "histo- / rian," ironically disconnected from itself. The interjection is preceded by the Arabic numeral "2," as an indication of the kind of structural label used by the historian to achieve a linear ordering of events and language. The implied organization—whereby "2" (once in its "correct" position) would logically be followed by "3," then by "4," and so on—recalls a line from one of the first poems in *The Nonconformist's Memorial*: "As if all history were a progress" (*NCM*, 7). Howe's implicit rejection of such a notion of history in this line is demonstrated in the deceptively simple visual structure of the poem above, which suggests an alternative view of history, to quote Rachel Back, as "rather a repetition of *images*, a constant negotiation of *contending voices*, and a function of reading strategies."[23] An example of this type of structure, offered by Howe herself, is Pierre Bayle's *Historical and Critical Dictionary*. As a "'collection of mistakes which have been made by compilers and dictionaries as well as other writers,'" Howe writes that the work "follows the spirit of coordination's lead rather than a definite plan. Trivial curiosities and nonsensical subjects are kernels to be collated like tunes for a fact [...]." Howe concludes this brief reference with Bayle's "sceptical aphorism" that "A

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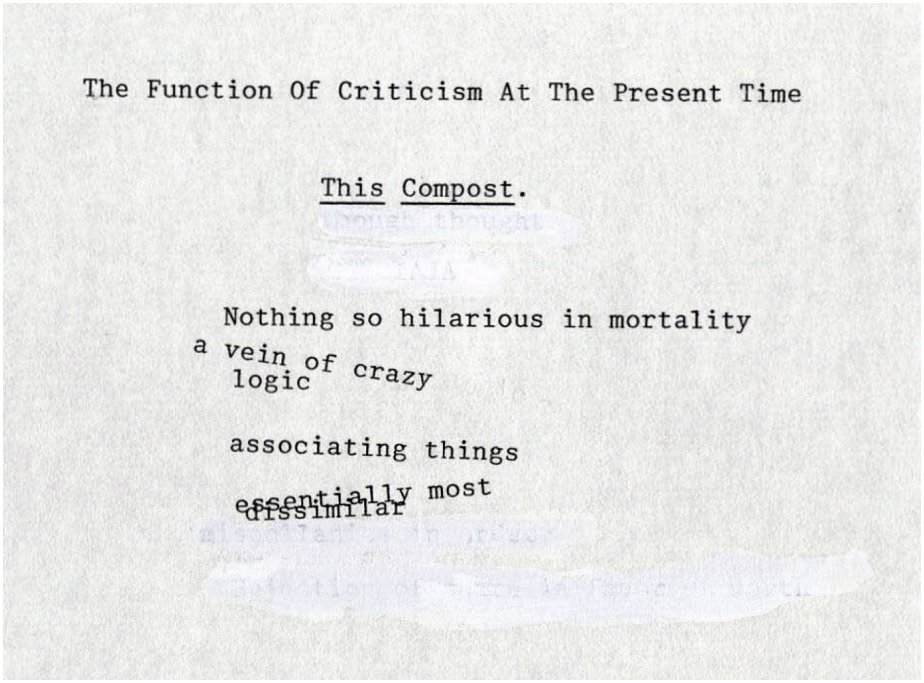
[21] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Circles," *The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* Vol. 2, *Essays First Series* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904) 314.

[22] Howe, *BM*, 96. Thoreau's full statement, not quoted by Howe, is as follows: "The lightening is an exaggeration of the light. Exaggerated history is poetry, and truth referred to a new standard. To a small man every greater is an exaggeration. He who cannot exaggerate is not qualified to utter truth. No truth we think was expressed but with this sort of emphasis, so that for the time there seemed to be no other." *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau: Early Essays and Miscellanies*, ed. J.J. Moldenhauer, E. Moser, and A. Kern (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) 264-65.

[23] Rachel Tzvia Back, *Led by Language: The Poetry and Poetics of Susan Howe* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002) 171, emphasis added.

perfect history is 'unacceptable to all sects and nations.'"[24] Back's assessment is further substantiated by a line, from an unused poem from Howe's archival papers for "Melville's Marginalia," which somewhat paraphrases the main statement of the text in figure 8.1: "a vein of crazy / logic / associating things / essentially most / dissimilar." The spatial arrangement of this line is more recognizably nonlinear, but it also clearly states a "logic" still does exist ("crazy" though it may be), and that the dissimilar things are not only associated, but also *connected* by the lifeline, or thread, of a "vein."


The Function Of Criticism At The Present Time

This Compost.

Nothing so hilarious in mortality
a vein of crazy
logic

associating things

essentially most
dissimilar

Figure 8.2: Unused poem in a "draft, ca. 1992" of "Melville's Marginalia" from Howe's archival papers. It is found in a folder labeled "Marginalia – almost." SHP Box 48 f. 7.

Considering these two related poems together, the unpublished text also helps to clarify the "strange order" of the poet's "crazy logic" as involving material "things." The "real events" in "Melville's Marginalia" are of a physical, textual nature—Melville's books, and his markings therein, Cowen's transcriptions, Shelley's manuscripts, etc.—and the fragmentation of the published poem's otherwise relatively straightforward syntax regarding a poet's interaction with them, suggests the material language of the resultant composition, just as the materialized history it contains, cannot be perfectly linear. In the unused poem, textuality is immediately

[24] Howe, *FS*, 18.

communicated in the appropriated title of Matthew Arnold's essay, whose subject matter addresses how one is to engage with a particular written work. In fact, Arnold writes, quoting his own prior essay "On Translating Homer," that in assessing a text the critic ought "to see the object as in itself it really is."[25] Howe then follows the title by highlighting the materiality of a work of literary criticism, which is necessarily tied to history and textuality, by drawing out the "compost" in *composition*. On Susan Howe's poetics, Charles Bernstein writes, "Look at words as site of historical memory, as compost heap decomposing the past."[26] Returning to the published poem, the sense of historical *de*construction in Bernstein's comment is found in the typographically misaligned "Crumple," and the slanted injunction to "stammer out difficulty." Where the conventional historian would theoretically *stamp out* any textual or linguistic difficulty for the sake of logical stability, Howe's poet-historian translates those difficulties onto the page in precisely the same stammering and stuttering state she finds them: language breaking down, material text decomposing.

The alternate ending to an early "outtake" of the poem communicates the linguistic and material instability in, at first, a more mimetic fashion, followed by a couplet of explicit reference. After the initial nine lines (unchanged from the final, published version) the typescript draft reads:

Injury
poetry
which
was
va-
ac-
nt

delusion but destructive
ridiculous but distorted [27]

Fracturing the word "vacant" over three lines provides a spatial example of a breakdown of materiality, introducing a sense of visual vacancy to the page. Within the poem this linguistic and/or semantic fragmentation (complete with the standard

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[25] Matthew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," *Essays in Criticism* (Boston: Ticknor and Field, 1865) 1.

[26] Charles Bernstein, "'Passed by Examination': Paragraphs for Susan Howe," *The Difficulties* 3.2 (1989) 84. The wording also echoes Smithson's "A *Heap* of Language" noted above.

[27] SHP Box 47 f. 7. The folder is one of five consisting of outtakes from 1991; in this case, the second folder of "Outtakes for Marginalia – Philadelphia 1991." The first nine lines of the poem are aligned with the final couplet.

dashes) recalls the prior division of the word "histo- / rian." The typographic association equates the conventional historiography alluded to—relating real events according to linearity—with a kind of *empty* poetry. However, the text also advances the connection a step further in the compositional process by indicating that this *injurious* form of poetry "was" vacant, and thus has since undergone some fundamental shift. Howe, in an extremely subtle manner, conveys that a formal manipulation of the inherited, strictly linear history results in the substance of poetry: the inversion of /*c*/ and /*a*/ in "vacant" imparts the "strange order" communicated in the final version of the poem.[28] By altering the logical, authoritative spelling of the word—in addition to the expected layout—semantically it becomes anything but *vacant*: it is charged with meaning in its demonstration of "stammer[ing] out difficulty." A stutter, or slip, of this kind is precisely the kind of textual event Howe reproaches the historian for erasing from the material record. She suggests that the poet, on the other hand, embraces the nonconformity of such instances, seeing in the compost-like scatter of errors and emendations the essential materiality of poetic-historical documentation.

Having simultaneously defined and blurred the distinction between historiography's logical articulation and poetry's form of inarticulation, this early draft concludes with a parallelism, the ambiguous reading of which cuts down the middle. The couplet—typographically jammed together, without any interlinear spacing—may be read as referring to the writing of "the historian," or that of "the poet." In light of Howe's arguments in the poem, these two readings hinge on the connotation of the conjunction "but," as either negative or positive, respectively. One reading suggests that though the presentation of real events "As if all history were a progress" may be determined a "ridiculous" type of "delusion," it should not be simply disregarded as innocuous, for it is still ultimately "destructive" for propagating

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[28] As this typescript is, in fact, a draft/outtake of the poem, one must at least consider the possibility of this "misspelling" being an actual error in typing. However, it remains unlikely that such is the case here. As with Howe's prior sequences of poems, those in *The Nonconformist's Memorial* frequently include misspellings and other typographic errors as part of Howe's documentary poetics. This technique is, indeed, characteristic of much of Howe's work. In "Melville's Marginalia" this was illustrated in the previous chapter's discussion of the poet's use of Shelley's manuscripts. More specifically, in Howe's archival papers for "Melville's Marginalia," a second typescript of this draft—wherein the purported error is corrected—is not found. Amongst the folders of typed drafts, Howe's practice of retyping a poem for even the slightest of changes is apparent (see the prior analysis of *NCM* 127 in chapter six for one such example). The absence of an alternate, "corrected" revision of this draft, then, suggests the inversion was intentional.

a "distorted" version of the material documents. A possible alternate reading implies that although poetry's "crazy logic" may be dismissed as merely delusional, or ridiculous, it is valuable precisely because its distortions are destructive to the potential "injury" of canonical hegemony. Having abutted these two lines on the page, Howe's spatial arrangement invites both an association of terms, as well as a reconsideration of their definitions; in particular, that of the repeated, contrastive conjunction.

The ambiguity that the context of Howe's poem coaxes out of these four terms, as either rejecting or redeeming, illustrate that while the materials of history provide a means for discovering (or re-discovering) textual interventions—whether additive, exclusionary, or erroneous—they are equally a key documentary source of information regarding a reader's relation to historiography, and, perhaps more importantly here, their interpretation of the practice of writing history, or writing poetry "containing history." The terms Howe uses in this draft convey the perceptions and reactions of potential readers to the portrayal of history through the medium of written language. The question is then raised of how one's experience of history is shaped by one's experience of a document. How might one's response to a poet-historian's work, in contrast with that of a historian, conflate or isolate the genres of poetry and history? With regard to the principal themes of "Melville's Marginalia," as the sequence continues this issue finds a more specific focus on the textual-historical work of editors, for whom the materiality of historical documents, having acquired the status of "factual" objects, both represent and reflect history, and, having become cultural artifacts, are also understood as shaping the history they may purport to simply recount.

EDITORIAL HINGE

Ten pages after Howe's poem concerning the poet-historian, is the first of only two explicit references to editing within the poetry of the sequence.[29] To be sure, the editorial process is in the background, or substructure, of the entire sequence, and is occasionally mentioned directly in the footnotes incorporated into the prose of part

[29] The second is on page 141 (l. 9), discussed below.

one. However, in this short poem, two-thirds of the way through the first section, the poet focuses the reader's attention specifically on the question of textual editing:

> False news
> WHY SHOULD MEN
> be blamed
> What edits (*NCM*, 112)

The first line evokes the previously mentioned suspicion of documentary falsification that Howe shares with Pound as part of their archival research. As seen in both poets' work, the utility of an historical text may reside less in what objective events or facts it relates, than in what it reveals of how that telling has evolved, been altered, or even corrupted. Howe is particularly interested in the gesture of erasure, and the poet follows the traces of this act with the conviction that the story of the text's materiality bears on that of the content and author. In the preface, Howe notes the puzzling editorial interventions whereby some of Melville's marginal marks concerning women were erased, raising questions of falsification and veracity. At the same time, she also demonstrates that "the erased material" (*NCM*, 98) may, in its attempt to conceal, actually reveal more than intended. These several paragraphs focus on the "provenance of the corruption"—who is the "Perpetrator-With-Eraser"—and the poem above takes a similar turn in the next two lines.

The capitalization of the second line typographically associates the subject to the dominant "GREAT MEN" of the prior abstract poems (*NCM*, 103-04). While the reader is undoubtedly intended to make this connection, a more immediate visual combination is found in the two lines on the recto of the same page, which are also printed in all upper-case letters: "THE LARK WITH HER YOUNG ONES, WITH THE / OWNER OF THE FIELD" (*NCM*, 111).[30] From the former link, the notion of authority and power is introduced into the poem, which is then coupled with the idea of ownership evoked in the latter. With regard to materiality in relation to editing, "the

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[30] In the first edition of *The Nonconformist's Memorial* these lines, almost as if a title, appear directly above the four-line poem on the same page (103). Why the two were separated for subsequent printings is unclear, but for the later French translation, Howe had the six lines returned to the layout of the first edition. It follows, then, that this was the poet's definitive arrangement.

The phrase itself is the English translation of the title to Jean de la Fontaine's fable "L'Alouette et ses petits, avec le Maître d'un champ." One passage from the text reads, "The owner of this field, said she, / Will come, I know, his grain to see. / Hear all he says; we little birds / Must shape our conduct by his words." *The Fables of La Fontaine*, trans. Elizur Wright, Jr. (London: William Smith, 1842) 27.

field" owned by the men in question would refer to the visual page itself. Inherited from Charles Olson, himself indebted to Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams, the concept of "composition by field"[31] is fundamental to Howe's poetics. Ironically, such a reference to "projective or OPEN verse" is made in the context of *closed* authority and editorial control: the ownership of the field is communicated by a visual boundary, marking the point at which errancy becomes trespassing.[32] Howe's lines challenge the presumed innocence of the owner-editors suggested by the apparently rhetorical question "What edits [?]" The missing interrogative punctuation, allowing the phrase to also be read as a kind of reported statement, again reasserts the sense of closure—an erasure of inquiry.

In *The Birth-mark*, Howe very plainly connects "attempted erasure" to "the issue of editorial control," as well as "magisterial control" of copyrights and archival access.[33] The process of feminization followed by marginalization that Howe identifies in her essay is expressed in more detail in a passage from the preface to *Frame Structures*, which also situates the issue within the context of materiality:

> Documentary histories, registers, and catalogues, often lovingly gathered by local amateurs, tend to be filed, boxed, sheltered: shut up. What is it about *documents* that seems to require their relegation to the bedroom (a private place) as if they were bourgeois Victorian women? Honored, looked to for advice, shielded from the rabble by guardians of "tradition"/"aesthetic taste," available only to particular researchers (husbands or bachelor machines) and caretakers (librarians cataloguers secretaries) so long as they are desirable (readable not too tattered) capable of bearing children (articles chapters books) rearing them (aiding research), they remain sheltered at home (museum collections libraries).[34]

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[31] Charles Olson, "Projective Verse," *Selected Writings of Charles Olson*, ed. Robert Creeley (New York: New Directions, 1966) 15. The first lines of the essay cite the work of Pound and Williams as precursors of the open-field poetics Olson theorizes.

[32] Errancy and trespassing, in connection with authority and control, are ideas that surface in a number of Howe's works. Both are seen in the following passages from *The Birth-mark*: "I needed out-of-the-way volumes from Widener Library. My father said it would be trespassing if I went into the stacks to find them. I could come with him only as far as the second-floor entrance. There I waited while he entered the guarded territory to hunt for books. [...] Thoreau said, in an essay called 'Walking,' that in literature it is only the wild that attracts us. What is forbidden is wild. The stacks of Widener Library and of all great libraries in the world are still the wild to me. [...] I go to libraries because they are the ocean" (18).

[33] Howe, *BM*, 1-2. Howe's example in these passages is what she calls the "antinomian controversy" surrounding the letters, poetry, and manuscripts of Emily Dickinson.

[34] Howe, *FS*, 18.

Restrictions of this kind inhibit, or even bar, scholars, historians, or poets—as Howe herself has experienced—from seeking out the original documents and textual sources, the consultation of which would reveal any subsequent editorial emendations to be exactly that: material manipulations. In the short poem from "Melville's Marginalia," this is conveyed in the final words, "What edits." In the absence of any punctuation, it is possible to interpret the line as a fragment of a longer statement, in which *what* is a relative pronoun, not an interrogative one: *That which edits [...]*. The comments from *The Birth-mark* on the issue of authority quoted above may point to the phrase being succinctly completed as "What edits, erases." If so, Howe's technique of fragmentation results in a line where this visual effect of editing is replaced by an actual erasure, leaving the blank page to signify on its own.

Alternatively, if considered a question, two readings are possible—distinct, yet closely related—depending on "edit" acting as either a verb or a noun: (1) What [is it that] edits [?], or (2) What edits [were made?].[35] In light of the preceding lines in the poem, the answer to the former would most readily be the "MEN" from line two. Consequently, the use of the depersonalized interrogative pronoun (as opposed to "who") reinterprets the plural subject as representative of the academic institutions—such as the Houghton Library and the Belknap Press of Harvard, with whom Howe had to negotiate regarding "Melville's Marginalia"—which would perform, or oversee, any editing of the materials in their possession. Accordingly, the capitalization would then provide a typographic equivalent of the monumental architecture of these dominant establishments.[36]

The latter understanding of the interrogative line relates to the aforementioned idea of editorial erasure, in that it reads as a rhetorical question with an implicit denial of any textual intervention whatsoever, and thus also dismissing any blame for the "False news." Alternate paraphrases corresponding to this reading might be, "What edits [are you referring to?]," or perhaps, "What [do you mean] 'edits' [?]" At the same time, the initial proposition of "What edits [were made?]" may also be understood as being spoken by the poet-historian, who, having gained access to the archives, has

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[35] In *Marginalia de Melville*, the translation opts for the reading of "edits" as a third person verb: "Quoi édite" (33). Assuming Howe approved the translation, one may be inclined to favor this interpretation, although such should not be to the exclusion of the alternative.

[36] This interpretation of the use of upper case letters is very similar to that argued earlier in this study with regard to Pound's capitalization of "TEMPIO" as a means of visually representing the materiality of the building.

undertaken the task of discovering (or uncovering) the original text. A part of Howe's interest in Melville's marginalia and Shelley's manuscripts concerns not only what editorial decisions are made in the process of transcription and transmission, but also what editing to the materiality of the original documents has been done: traces of Elizabeth Shaw Melville's erasing, for example, or evidence of Mary Shelley's attempt "to mend 'wrecht'" (*NCM*, 130). Depending on which subject is designated as the speaker of the line, as read in this sense, the question presupposes either the absence of material alterations, or the strong probability of them. By combining these two approaches to archival texts and documents in the same two-word line, Howe confronts the reader with the issue of how the materiality of any text is to be received: will the page be read as an authentic record of original facts, or investigated as an evolving record of palimpsestic edits?

This issue of editing again resurfaces, albeit in a more indirect manner, in the introductory poem to part two (*NCM*, 119), as part of that section's group of central themes presented therein. The development of the subject from the earlier poems resides in Howe's strategic use of quotation and typography to shift this attention to textual reception to a specific concern for inclusion and exclusion. It was noted in the preceding chapter that the poem is composed primarily from the concluding verses to The New Testament in the book of Revelation, whose title is of particular relevance to Howe's poetic project. In fact, verses 22:18-19 explicitly warn against making any editorial modifications to the text, declaring that "If any man shall add unto these things," or "if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy," God will strike his person with plagues, and strike his name from "the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things that are written in this book."[37] In short, as a consequence for any additive or subtractive textual alterations, the perpetrator-as-editor will be *edited out* of the book.

Included in "Melville's Marginalia," then, the poem might appear to advocate for a non-interventionist, or non-revisionary, editorial practice. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the prior analyses, Howe's own meticulous attention to the minutest typographic mark of Shelley's manuscripts, and her attempts to transcribe them, would also seem to favor a methodology whereby the apparent "absence" of the editor allows the materiality of the original document to be transmitted as seamlessly as

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[37] *Holy Bible*, Authorized King James Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1962) 701.

possible. Wilson Walker Cowen's own approach to copying the margins of Melville's books also opted for noticeably literal transcription, reproducing Melville's variety of graphic marks, along with their spatial position, and maintaining the typeset line-lengths of the original works' passages. Considering such observations makes the fragmentary, citational construction of Howe's text particularly paradoxical. Jessica Wilkinson notes that "Howe's appropriation of the words 'the book of life and out' is ironic, then, for she *does* literally 'take away' the words and appropriate them to new ends, and we, the readers, 'add to' these words multiple interpretations."[38] To Wilkinson's comment one may add that the reader who, in fact, re-actualizes Howe's documentary poetics in order to track down and consult her textual sources, also figuratively, or immaterially, adds to the text of Howe's poem by completing its fragments with the excised words. Regardless of Howe's intentions or expectations for what research her readers may or may not conduct,[39] for those who do attend to her documentary sources as extensively and thoroughly as Howe herself does—including their genealogy and necessary contextualization—the process in this case effectively draws them through a rather complex, multi-stage route of syntactic-semantic transmission:

1) Dictation: the Revelation of Jesus Christ, given by God, is "sent and signified" to John by an angel (Rev. 1:1).
2) Verbal visualization: on the island of Patmos, John "*heard* behind [him] a great voice" and "turned to *see* the voice that spake" (Rev. 1:10, 12, emphasis added).
3) Written materialization: "What thou *seest*," John is instructed, "*write* in a book" (Rev. 1:11, emphasis added).
4) Textual Reproduction: the Koine Greek of the original papyrus was included, notably, in the Codex Sinaiticus (4th century), the Codex Alexandrinus (5th century), the Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (5th century), and as a part of Erasmus's Greek and Latin version of the New Testament (1516).
5) Translation: the subtitle to the 1611 King James Bible reads: "Translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently

[38] Jessica L. Wilkinson, "Out of Bounds of the Bound Margin: Susan Howe Meets Mangan in 'Melville's Marginalia,'" *Criticism* 53.2 (Spring 2011) 276.
[39] See footnotes 29-31 in chapter seven of the present study.

compared and revised, by His Majesty's special command." Translating the original Koine Greek of the papyrus, the scholars also relied on a list of earlier English translations: the *Tyndale Bible* (1526), the *Coverdale Bible* (1535), the *Matthew Bible* (1537), the *Great Bible* (1539, authorized by King Henry VIII), the *Geneva Bible* (1557), and the *Bishops' Bible* (1568).[40]

6) Mechanical reproduction: 19th and 20th-century editions of the King James Version.
7) Reception and annotation: Herman Melville obtains a copy of *The New Testament and the Book of Psalms* ("From Aunt Jean," 1846) and makes handwritten marks to Revelation 22:19.[41]
8) Material manipulation: Melville's marks in pencil are subsequently erased, allegedly by one of his daughters, Elizabeth or Frances, according to Wilson Walker Cowen's conclusion (*NCM*, 99).
9) Archival transcription: Cowen consults Melville's library, transcribing all marginalia aphetically, for his Harvard dissertation in American and English literature (1965).
10) Edit and Reprinting: Cowen's two-volume work *Melville's Marginalia* is edited by Stephen Orgel (Stanford University), and published by Garland Publishing Corporation (1987).
11) Poetic appropriation and re-composition: Susan Howe's textual manipulation in typescript (c. 1991) of Cowen's work and Melville's original copy of *The New Testament and the Book of Psalms* (*NCM,* 114).
12) Republication: Howe's sequence "Melville's Marginalia" is included in New Directions's publication of *The Nonconformist's Memorial* (1993).
13) Reception by contemporary readers: the fragmented passage from the KJV is read on page 119 of Howe's book.
14) Bibliographic research: said reader identifies and consults the source of Howe's poem, thereby "completing" the truncated quotation with its textual origin in the verbalization of reading.

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[40] The subtitle in the copy Melville owned reads: "Translated out of the / original Greek; / and with the / former translations / diligently compared and revised." *The New Testament and the Book of Psalms* (New York: American Bible Society, 1844).

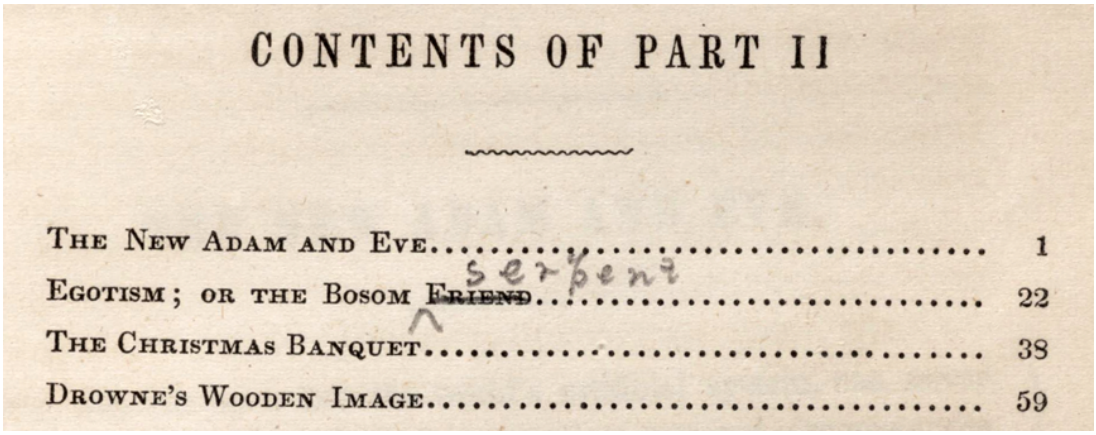
[41] Melville, *New Testament*, Houghton Library, *AC85.M4977.Zz844b.

With regard to the themes of "Melville's Marginalia," several aspects of this process are noteworthy: first, the visual conception of language as something *seen*, to then be materialized into writing; second, the variety of methods of material reproduction (hand-copying, (re)typing, and reprinting); third, the continual presence of editors after the creation of the original text, working as scribes, translators, typesetters, publishers, or poets. Furthermore, it is significant that Howe's own edit and arrangement of the verse is such that, as mentioned earlier, the reader is sent back to the original in precisely the same manner as Howe's archival methodology for the entire poetic sequence. This, in fact, mimics the stages outlined above, which begin with the immaterial voice of the angel, and—after moving through a sequence of material representations—ends with the immaterial voice of the reader. Therefore, the textual history embodied in this poem, taken as a whole, actually performs the dynamic evolution of a momentarily static text due to editing's recurrent shifts in materiality.

The potential rationale for Howe's seemingly contradictory manipulation of a text expressly condemning editorial alterations may be the recognition of the prophecy's clear statement that God—the ultimate authoritative voice—will, in fact, modify and edit "the book of life" by removing the names of those who meddle with the revelation as given. Thus, this *definitive* text is itself still evolving, subject to subsequent edits in relation to unauthorized editorial interventions. To further complicate the matter, textual changes of this nature—words and names crossed out, replaced, or added—are not by any means shunned by Howe's poetics; on the contrary, they are fully embraced. The heavily punctuated genetic text of *Billy Budd*, and the stuttered articulation of the manuscripts of Shelley's poems, illustrate the investment of Howe's documentary poetics in the textual development of an original composition; however, in the case of each of the three aforementioned texts, it is only the original author who is responsible for those edits. But to this claim of authority, or authorization, Howe's work has also juxtaposed an extension of that investment to received texts altered by the pen of someone other than the author. In *The Birth-mark* she notes the follow editorial correction made by Melville (see figure 8.3):

> The contents page of Melville's edition of *Mosses from an Old Manse* has a printer's error. "Egotism, or; the Bosom-Friend, FROM THE UNPUBLISHED 'ALLEGORIES OF THE HEART'" should read

"Egotism, or, the Bosom-Serpent." Melville corrected the misprint by drawing a line through the word "friend" and writing "serpent" above it."[42]


CONTENTS OF PART II

THE NEW ADAM AND EVE..... 1
EGOTISM; OR THE BOSOM ~~FRIEND~~ serpent..... 22
THE CHRISTMAS BANQUET..... 38
DROWNE'S WOODEN IMAGE..... 59

Figure 8.3: Melville's correction to the table of contents in his copy of Nathaniel Hawthorne's work *Mosses from an Old Manse*, Vol. 2 (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846). Houghton Library, *AC85.M4977.Zz846h.

Although not included in "Melville's Marginalia," Howe's commentary on the very same topic in the essays of *The Birth-mark* are rightfully considered in conjunction with the sequence of poems. The collection of criticism was published by Wesleyan University Press in 1993, the same year as *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, and Howe, in fact, later expressed her desire for "Melville's Marginalia" and "Submarginalia"—an essay grouped together with the "Introduction"—to be "in one book."[43] The inclusion of this note is an important indication of the poet's reading of Melville's books: it is not only his markings in and of themselves, isolated from their context, which is her interest, but both their relation to the printed text they accompany, as well as their disruption of that very same materiality. In the aforementioned instance, Melville's intervention does not merely respond to the typographic error of the publisher, but physically alters the page's materiality: a word deleted, and a word inserted. The materiality of editing is particularly evident in this

[42] Howe, *BM*, 8.

[43] Howe, Interview by Lynn Keller, *Contemporary Literatur*e 36.1 (Spring 1995) 28. Howe's statement in her interview with Janet Falon reiterates this position: "For me, [the essays] are a kind of poetry. I have the same problem with meaning and sound when I write them than I do when I write a poem. I don't like separating things into categories." *The Difficulties*, 32.

The book was recently republished by New Directions as *The Birth-mark: Essays* in December 2015, in conjunction with *The Quarry: Essays*, which is comprised of uncollected essays spanning Howe's poetic career. These republications attest to the continued importance of Howe's critical commentary with regard to the interpretation of her poetic œuvre.

example, as the unique graphic qualities of Melville's handwriting is juxtaposed with the typesetter's uniform print. From a visual perspective, Melville's edit resembles a revised typescript or galley proof, and Howe's attention to this typographic detail seizes upon the page as existing in a continual state of material flux.

At the same moment in Howe's essay, under the sub-title "Marginalia," she offers a concise definition of her view of editing, the above instance standing as an example thereof:

> Editing is the art of discipline; the mastery of detail. Eccentric punctuation, blots, dashes, smudged letters, gaps, interruptions, aborted sketches, "textually irrelevant" numbers, uncanceled or canceled alternatives in the manuscript are a profitless counteraction. Editing is sensible partitioning.[44]

In the poem from "Melville's Marginalia," this acute attention to typographic particulars is illustrated in a small, but significant, visual detail, whereby Howe's presence as an editor mechanically reproducing a modified text is conveyed. In the King James Bible the editorial decision was made that any words deemed necessary to be added for the English translation—where implied by the Hebrew or Greek—for the purpose of clarity of meaning were to be indicated by a distinct typeface; in modern editions such words are printed in italics.[45] Thus, in the previously cited passage from Revelation 21:19, the text reads, "[...] and *from* the things that are written in this book." At this point in her career, Howe continued to compose her poems using a typewriter, which does not allow for the reproduction of the italics. As per standard practice, typing the word with an underline signals the change in font. Typically, when the text is typeset and published, the underlined words are, then, printed in italics as indicated; this is the case, for example, of Pound's typescripts for the Malatesta Cantos. In this particular poem, on the other hand, Howe's handwritten correction to the galley proofs—for which the publisher did, in fact, convert the underlining to italics—states, "no itals but line under plain word – <u>from</u>."[46] As a result, the typography attests to the specific textual conditions of Howe's poetic re-composition, and to the material process of documentary appropriation and literary

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[44] Howe, *BM*, 8.

[45] David Norton, *A Textual History of the King James Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 10. The paratext to the King James Bible states, "Italic type in the text indicates words that the original texts do not contain but which English requires for clarity" (xvii).

[46] SHP Box 48 f. 10. See figure 7.4 for an image of the corrected page.

production from the pages of the Bible, to Howe's typewriter, and finally to New Directions's bound book. Furthermore, in addition to the poet's spatial fragmentation and rearrangement, this detail bears witness to her active role as not merely a copyist, but an editor, whose alteration of the printed text's materiality is visible on the page. In the absence of the original, Howe's typography points to the presence of those traces marking the document's ongoing material evolution and manifestations.

The poet-historian's rearrangement of the documentary materials of history, the erasure and fragmentation of the archival researcher's textual reconfiguration, and the reader-editor's material interventions, are each stages in the unending negotiation of the simultaneous rigidity and elasticity of any text's material history. Howe's position as a "library cormorant" amidst the stacks and folders of archival documents places her at the intersection between the dual intentions—converging or diverging as they may be in any particular instance—of author and editor. "Does the printing modify an author's intention," she ponders, "or does a text develop itself?"[47] Situated between the immaterial author of the past and the material text mechanically reproduced in the present, Howe finds herself in a position equally invested in the roles of archival documentarian, historical poet, and critical editor.

SHAPESHIFTING TYPE

After the series of poems centered on Shelley's manuscripts in part two, the sequence shifts to a group focused on the life of James Clarence Mangan, where this tripartite textual approach is demonstrated in Howe's reconstructions of biographical materials. One of the recurrent notions in these poems is the ambiguity surrounding Mangan, due to the relative paucity of clear details regarding his career as a writer, literary output, and social life. Though certainly not an unknown figure—Howe's work itself argues that an American readership in the 1850s, including Melville, existed—anecdotal fragments and various speculations about Mangan's life, compounded by the writer's own propensity for pseudonyms, anonymity, and misdirection, result in a history somewhat riddled with holes and parentheses. In *Radical Affections: Essays on the Poetics of Outside*, the conclusions to Miriam Nichols's biographical overview of Mangan illustrate this point:

[47] Howe, *BM*, 46.

> Mangan left an unfinished autobiography in which he mythologizes his life, thereby deepening the mystery surrounding him and blurring the lines between fiction and fact. [...] Kilroy, editor of this *Autobiography*, writes that "as a source of information on the poet's life, the *Autobiography* is of dubious reliability" [...].
>
> This thumbnail sketch indicates some of the difficulties in tracking a figure like Mangan. First, the multiple biographies lead to a rumor in one direction and the history of Irish nationalism in another. Mangan's own account of himself is not only apocryphal but also trails off in midsentence after only a few chapters. David Lloyd's assessment of early biographical stories of Mangan, like Mitchel's introduction to the first collection of poems, is that Mangan was *constructed* by others as a type of Ireland by ignoring evidence to the contrary in his work.[48]

This uncertain duality of Mangan's construction by editors and critics provides the architectural backdrop to Howe's own portrayal of his history, which does include many of the details Nichols mentions: "Mangan was not the polyglot / he pretended to be" (*NCM*, 137), "he loved to loose himself / In Ireland's past and future / To go astray in the world" (*NCM*, 140), and "There were then as I / have said two Mangans" (*NCM*, 146).[49] Historical gaps of this type leave a great deal of room for interpretation, resulting in Mangan's life being "edited" by future authors in service of a particular reconstruction. Ironically, this is not altogether dissimilar to the man's own manipulations of his biography.

There is, then, a need to separate fact from fiction, and to do so, much like Pound's selective retelling of Sigismondo's life, Howe turns to a variety of primary and secondary sources, in addition to the writings of Mangan himself. In the latter texts, however, one persistent issue is that their author intentionally blurred the distinction between fact and fiction, biographical and autobiographical. Such a space provides the kind of situation wherein the poet and historian clash over "real events" and the "strange order" in which they are often found. But Howe appears less interested in an editorial practice that appropriates such sources for the purpose of

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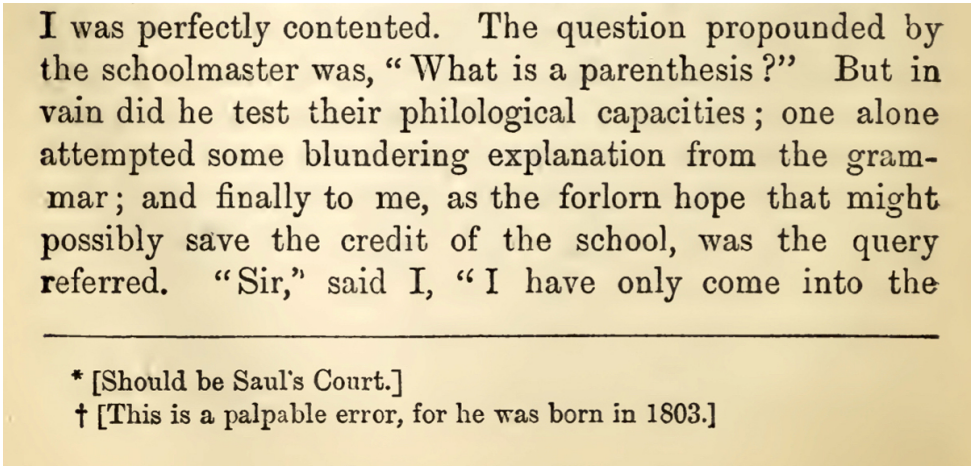
[48] Miriam Nichols, *Radical Affections: Essays on the Poetics of Outside* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010) 236.

[49] The first quotation here is in reference to Mangan's output of false "translations," many of which were purportedly from languages he was, in fact, rather unlikely to be familiar with (e.g. Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Welsh, Coptic, Danish, Frisian, Bohemian etc., all of which are noted in Howe's poem). The third quotation above is a citation from page fourteen of Mitchel's introduction (a passage Melville marked in his copy). "James Clarence Mangan: His Life, Poetry, and Death," in *Poems by James Clarence Mangan, with Biographical Introduction by John Mitchel* (New York: P.M. Haverty, 1859).

mending biographical gaps, than she is in one that illustrates the material structuring, and often breakdown, of history. She continues to rely heavily on quotation throughout this part of the sequence, but the central role of edited, material documents does not necessarily work towards accomplishing the goal one might perhaps expect. In fact, the passages Howe chooses to include seemingly do more to further unsettle the already fragmentary nature of contemporary knowledge of this historical figure. Ironically, the entire sequence of "Melville's Marginalia" begins with a rather traditional "brief chronology," by which Mangan's life is represented by an ordering of written language. However, the main title of "Parenthesis" printed over the chronology undermines this very logical ordering, suggesting the factual list is an example of textual *digression*.



I was perfectly contented. The question propounded by the schoolmaster was, "What is a parenthesis?" But in vain did he test their philological capacities; one alone attempted some blundering explanation from the grammar; and finally to me, as the forlorn hope that might possibly save the credit of the school, was the query referred. "Sir," said I, "I have only come into the

* [Should be Saul's Court.]
† [This is a palpable error, for he was born in 1803.]

Figure 8.4: Two of C.P. Meehan's footnotes to Mangan's "Fragment of an Unfinished Autobiography" as they originally appear in *The Poets and Poetry of Munster*, 3rd ed. (Dublin: J. Duffy and Sons, 1883) xxxviii. Howe's extended quotation from this page and the next re-edits the annotations.

On the first page following the preface, Howe reproduces a passage from Mangan's autobiography that asks, "'What is a parenthesis?'" (*NCM*, 101), a key question that returns on page 114, and again, as a statement, in one of the Mangan poems in part two (page 139). Father Charles Patrick Meehan, Mangan's friend and editor, added two footnotes to this passage (see figure 8.4), both of which Howe—making her own editorial decision—repositions within the page's main body of text. Setting them off typographically in italics and within brackets, in Howe's text the footnotes become parenthetical statements. This rearrangement, however, actually counters the young Mangan's alleged answer to the question that a parenthesis "might be omitted from the sentence without injury to the meaning [...]." Howe's editing, on

the contrary, makes it clear that without Meehan's prior editorial corrections—the true name of the Academy Mangan attended, and the true year of his birth—the meaning of the sentences is undoubtedly distorted.

Howe's practice of privileging the annotations and corrections of the various editors, critics, and biographers included in her group of source texts continues in the remainder of this section of part one. Her technique involves a spatial reconfiguration of the page, whereby paratextual edits and bibliographic references are converted into the main text. In total, pages 101-118 include thirteen prose citations concerning Mangan's works and/or life. Six of these are the words of Mangan himself, two of which are the Irish poet's own footnotes to his writing, and three others of which contain Howe's insertion of Meehan's editorial footnotes. The remaining seven passages are all from secondary sources: editor Brendan Clifford's work *The Dubliner: The Lives, Times and Writings of James Clarence Mangan* (1988), C.P. Meehan's "Preface" and footnotes to Mangan's unfinished autobiography in *The Poets and Poetry of Ireland* (1883), Louise Imogen Guiney's essay in *James Clarence Mangan. His Selected Poems, with a Study* (1897), John Desmond Sheridan's biography *James Clarence Mangan* (1937), and James Joyce's lecture/essay "Giacomo Clarenzio Mangan" (1907).[50] Therefore, the image of Mangan that Howe's work presents to the reader is indebted as much to the work of editors and critics, as it is to that of the writer himself. Moreover, a reading that seeks any kind of authoritative conception of Mangan is repeatedly disrupted, due to the content of the passages Howe collages together. The series of quotations centers around Mangan's nonconformity, and the resistance of both the man and his writing to being pinned down. They confront the reader with the erroneous and erratic quality of the poet's writing (Meehan); the occasional unreliability, and even absence, of his texts (Clifford); the man's countercultural opinions and behavior, as well as his uniquely strange appearance (Meehan, Guiney, Sheridan); and Mangan's noble suffering and "vastation of soul" (*NCM*, 117) as an outsider (Joyce). The sense of Mangan's identity

[50] On page 103 and 105, Howe's bibliographic references cite "*James* Meehan" as the editor, an error found in Howe's typescripts (SHP Box 46 f. 4), and one reproduced in a number of critical works on "Melville's Marginalia." Furthermore, Howe mistakenly dates Joyce's essay as 1904. See James Joyce, *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, eds. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (London: Faber and Faber, 1959). For further publishing details on these and other works about Mangan, excluding those by Clifford and Sheridan, see Anne MacCarthy, "A Study of the Sources for James Joyce's Essays on James Clarence Mangan," *Papers on Joyce* 7.8 (2001-2002).

as a writer being particularly unstable and elastic, and subject to constant re-examination and revision, is the interpretative thread running through these fragments.

"Melville's Marginalia" reflects this biographical instability through a bibliographic lens, which foregrounds the critical editor's role in both clarifying and complicating the textual transmission of the writer. In one instance Mangan—acting as an editor to his own alleged "translation"—notes that "Fortunately [the text] is of questionable authenticity" (*NCM*, 102). Shortly thereafter, Meehan's editorial comment controverts Mangan's account of a childhood home, stating it is "purely imaginary"; the Irish poet's response to Meehan's objection to this less than "faithful picture" was simply to admit "he dreamt it" (*NCM*, 105). Howe's integration of the editorial apparatus within the original writing, or its decontextualization from that writing, catches the reader between two texts that each unravel the other. The spatially fragmented reorganization of the pages of these documentary materials visually reinforces the temporal nonlinearity of their presentation: the earlier chronology of Mangan's life is effectively scattered in this section. Furthermore, Howe's editorial selectivity in quoting these materials works towards destabilizing them as distinct, and reliable, sources. Uta Gosmann writes that the apparent objectivity of the poem's quoted passages forces the reader to question memory's preconceptions. More immediately, though—given the obscurity of textual details Howe provides regarding Mangan—it is the reader's preconceptions of material history and historiography that are challenged. Gosmann goes on to offer the following commentary, which, in fact, seems more closely related to these concepts than to that of memory:

> [...] the quotations unsettle our literary predispositions: they confuse our expectations of literary genres, our assumptions of original texts created independently by authors, and our wish to identify the writer behind the text. The quotations even destroy our confidence in quotation: they do not reproduce meaning, but they add layers of meaning when contextualized differently by the poet.[51]

Fragments of Mangan's literature and Mangan's history become intertwined to such an extent that the editing of one is indistinguishable from an editing of the other. The accessibility of the original poetry, or the original history, is always at one further

[51] Uta Gosmann, *Poetic Memory: The Forgotten Self in Plath, Howe, Hinsey, and Glück* (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012) 83.

remove with each encounter of another palimpsestic layer of edits. As the reader works through Howe's image of Mangan by unveiling one quotation after another, the foreshadowing of his disappearance—

> If you step forward to meet him, he
>
> (NCM, 113)

—is realized at the end of this section, when the self-titled "Man in the cloak" appears only as the parenthetical materiality of "[*one page missing*]" (*NCM*, 118).[52]

Howe continues her program of quotation and fragmented editing in the group of poems in part two that further develops her study of Mangan, and her premise that he was the model for Melville's Bartleby. Despite his "disappearance," and the atmosphere of mystery and obscurity surrounding his life and death, the poems' use of primary and secondary sources attest to the ongoing critical reading and writing that figuratively edits Mangan's past into a kind of future textual materiality. The poem on page 133 of "Melville's Marginalia" acts as a transition from the previous set of poems on Shelley's manuscripts. Following the abstract poem that repeatedly evoked the seaward coffin, or coffining, of words, this poem shifts the death motif into the after/thought of subsequent decades:

> we come to a headland
> source of all that past
> Look boldly at futurity
> at the iron issue of necessity
> originality dies out
> an essay on Epitaphs (*NCM*, 133)

The temporal collapse suggested by Howe's command to look *at* the future, rather than *to* or *toward*, relates to her own vantage point, from which many of the sequence's major sources published after Mangan's death are nearly a century old.[53]

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[52] The title was one of Mangan's many pseudonyms. His prose piece "My Bugle, and How I Blow It," for example, is signed "By the Man in the Cloak," and in one of the writing's many iterations of the same kind, Mangan states, "I am the *Man* in the Cloak. *Mettez cela dans votre pipe, et fumez-le, mon public!*" *The Prose Writings of James Clarence Mangan*, ed. D.J. O'Donoghue (Dublin: O'Donoghue & Co., 1904) 285-86.

[53] "Not we look," Howe notes, "but Look as command – I am telling you to look." SHP Box 50 f. 2. The verb further underscores the place of visual materiality in relation to the issue.

The "issue of necessity" may, in fact, be the matter of how an author's manuscripts and publications will be handled, altered, and made available (or not), after his or her "originality," quite literally, "dies out." The connection of the latter phrase to artistic community, and, in literary terms, the process and effects of editing, is understood upon consulting its source. The fragment is taken from a passage out of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Marble Faun: or, The Romance of Monte Beni*, beside which Melville added a single check mark in his copy:

> Nevertheless, in spite of all these professional grudges, artists are conscious of a social warmth from each other's presence and contiguity. [...] For the sake of such brotherhood as they can find, more than for any good that they get from galleries, they linger year after year in Italy, while their originality dies out of them, or is polished away as barbarism.[54]

Howe's sequence challenges the editorial practice that normalizes the radical unconventionality of certain authors' originality, and so also marginalizes the author him or herself from posterity. The "barbarism" of nonconformity is polished until erased from the material page.

Situated at this point in the sequence, the line applies equally to the visually "untranslatable" manuscripts of Shelley, and the textually divergent publications of Mangan. The bridge between them, which Howe provides in this poem, is built on the complications attending the future of the textual history that continues after it passes from the author to editors, publishers, and critics. The next line in the poem makes this shift to a future literary community even clearer by responding to the "professional grudges" and artistic conflicts evoked in Hawthorne's work with a reference, as Howe notes, to "Wordsworth's essay on Epitaphs/copyright fights etc."[55] The implication—in conjunction with the poem's earlier demand to consider the future in the face of history (the "source of all that past")—is a concern for how control and ownership of the actual documents comprising an author's archival papers, or literary estate, might edit or omit the material traces of history, in order that an author's biography (and bibliography) be "marshalled to support one critical reading

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[54] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun: or, The Romance of Monte Beni*, Vol. 1 (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1860) 169. Houghton Library, *AC85.M4977.Zz860h. See also page 598 in Cowen's work, a photocopy of which is found in SHP Box 49 f. 5.

[55] SHP Box 50 f. 2.

or another" (*NCM*, 98). With regard to Mangan, his staunch refusal of being in any way associated with English periodicals and booksellers exemplifies his resistance to the political and financial ramifications that come with the institutions of publishing and criticism that give "the law throughout the literary domain" (*NCM*, 115).[56] The relative anonymity that resulted from this decision has led, in one respect, to future editors and critics seeking to clarify the scattered details of Mangan's life and publishing history, and somehow distinguish the "real" Mangan from the "textual" Mangan. Howe, though, once again affirms later in this poem that "The obscurity is poetry." To dispel that obscurity would, then, do damage to the expressive originality of Mangan's work, which so thoroughly blurred the distinction between his story and the history told through his writing.

Several of the same documentary sources mentioned earlier are included in Howe's continued examination of Mangan (e.g. Clifford and Guiney), but there is a marked dominance of passages extracted from John Mitchel's introduction to the collected *Poems*. Additionally, there is a greater use of Mangan's own writings—in particular, "Literae Orientales," published in the *Dublin University Magazine*—as well as more of Howe's own language, collaged or otherwise. The latter balances the historical, found texts with a contemporary poetic reworking, while the former levels those posterior interpretations with the original materials upon which they were founded. Throughout this set of poems, Howe weaves together snippets of Mangan's language—titles, proper names, and other specifically Irish words—references, descriptions, and quotations concerning his writing practice—"false" translations, pseudonyms—and biographical observations of his peculiar habits. The result is a documentary fabric that blends the literary with the historical. Arranging the writings *of* Mangan contiguous to, or contained within, those *about* Mangan, invites the reader to view the author as "living" through a materiality of language that is a product of, and subject to, a network of temporally diverse influences. Beyond Mangan himself, the fundamental commonality of these various documents, is, of course, that all of them are subject to Howe's editorial hand. To be sure, her sources here are certainly not readily apparent—this section does not include any bibliographic references, as

[56] This quotation is quoted by Howe from a longer passage from Mitchel's essay on Mangan (the entirety of which was marked by Melville), which goes on to state, "He was a rebel politically, and a rebel intellectually and spiritually, —a rebel with his whole heart and soul against the British spirit of the age." *NCM*, 116.

were occasionally found in the sequence's earlier abstract poems. But at the same time, her spatial arrangement of the text on the page does, in fact, speak to her appropriation of research materials.

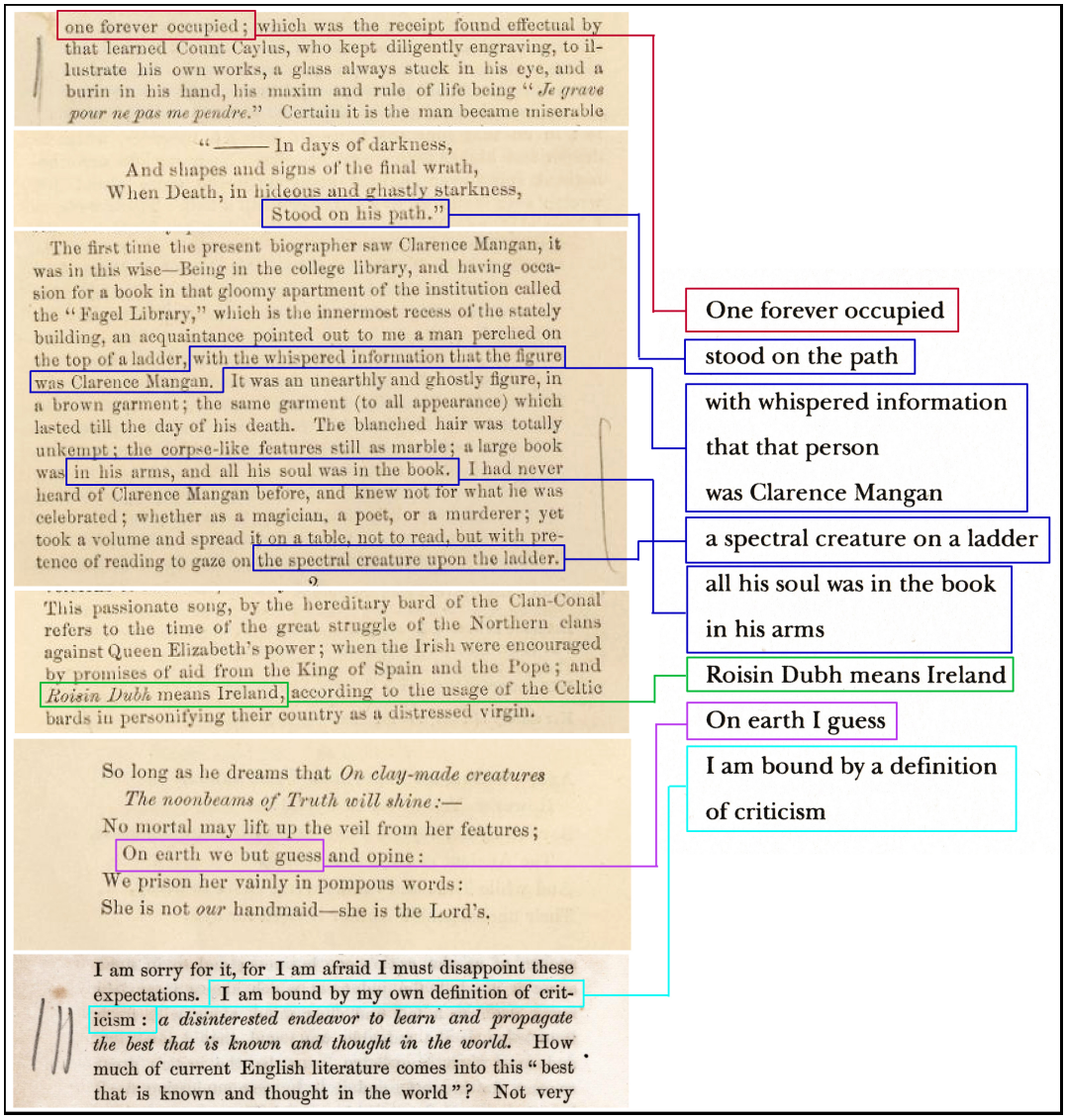

Figure 8.5: Diagram displaying the textual sources for Howe's poem on *NCM*, 134: Mitchel's essay on Mangan in *Poems*, pg. 12 [red]; Mitchel, pg. 13 [dark blue]—the first passage quotes Mangan's poem "The Nameless One" (printed on pg. 453); Mitchel, pg. 21 [green]; Mangan, "The Words of Delusion" in *Poems*, pg. 86 [violet]; Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," *Essays in Criticism*, pg. 36 [light blue].[57]

[57] The single scores in pencil on pages twelve and thirteen of Mitchel's introduction, and the triple score on the page from Arnold's work are Melville's. Though not shown, the other passages are marked as well: page twenty-one of Mitchel has a single score above and below the above excerpt; and the preceding stanza to Mangan's poem is marked with a single score, as well as the title being triple-checked. Mangan, *Poems*, Houghton Library, *AC85.M4977.Zz859m, and Arnold, *Essays*, Houghton Library, *AC85.M4977.Zz865a.

The first poem in this group is composed of six conjoined parts, bringing together several pages from Mitchel's introduction, an allusion to Mangan's poetry, and a passage from Matthew Arnold (figure 8.5 above). Howe's technique of appropriation is particularly visual: she makes only subtle, though not negligible, changes to Mitchel's words and phrasing, but significantly alters their spatial arrangement. By doing so, she produces a textual copy that highlights its own editorial interventions. While not on the same level of formal abstraction as later sequences in Howe's œuvre, Ben Lerner's comment, regarding *Frolic Architecture* (2010), that "Howe's collages sculpt poetry out of prose" is certainly the case here. "A lyrics immediacy," Lerner continues, is sculpted "out of a narrative past."[58] The reference to sculpture draws attention to the foregrounding of materiality in Howe's poetic construction, and, furthermore, recalls Ezra Pound's relation of the compositional process of Vorticist poetry with the "planes in relation" and "the organization of forms" in Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Jacob Epstein's sculptures.[59] The combination of the lyrical and the historical are achieved by means of Howe's revision of the prose's structure so as to allow the resonances of the fragments to reach beyond the straightforward narrative mode. Thus, Mitchel's partial history of Mangan is re-edited in a nonlinear fashion that reproduces the experience of a fragmentary *reading* of documents, which, in fact, are themselves also stitched together from a variety of sources.

Discussing Howe's sequence *Articulation of Sound Forms in Time*, Peter Nicholls draws a distinction between her mode of composition and that of the modernists:

> To begin with, it is very visually conditioned, producing constellations of words which combine in a way that forces prosody *against* syntax. This move carries us beyond the more familiar, modernist forms of fragmentation which tend to break discourse into phrases to recombine their elements into new wholes. In contrast, Howe attends to sound and to individual words, recombining these in an order that defies syntactical logic.[60]

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[58] Ben Lerner, "Letter from New York," *Lana Turner: A Journal of Poetry and Opinion* 4 < http://www.lanaturnerjournal.com/archives/lernerletter >.

[59] Pound, *GB*, 107.

[60] Peter Nicholls, "Unsettling the Wilderness: Susan Howe and American History," *Contemporary Literature* 37.4 (Winter 1996) 596.

With regard to "Melville's Marginalia," this differentiation is illustrated in the previously examined group of poems on the visual materiality of manuscripts. Lines such as "I th For th" (*NCM*, 127), and "ir e wr t ebly quell" (*NCM*, 132) disrupt syntax and semantics in ways that Pound's documentary poetics do not. However, the different sections of "Melville's Marginalia" do not subscribe to a sole technique of fragmentation. Indeed, the majority of part two's poems on the figure of Mangan/Bartleby, as exemplified in the page cited above, much more closely resemble the paratactic structuring of quotations found in the Malatesta Cantos, and other modernist texts. Each of these poems do read as a "new whole," not fragmenting the source document on the level of the single word, but rather reworking the line within the poetic unit of the page's spatial framework. For example, page 135 of the sequence, although composed of fragments from three separate pages of Mitchel's introduction—fourteen, thirteen, and twenty, respectively—is a poem of quite seamless progression. Howe's varied documentary approaches to poetic composition in this sequence have the cumulative effect of reevaluating the role of fragmentation in the material construction of historical narratives. The experience of semantic fracturing, which Howe proposes as that of the original, archival manuscripts of Shelley, gains in significance when juxtaposed to the syntactic fluidity of the individual fragments of the secondary sources on Mangan. The reader's previous position of being suspended between two documents is now translated to being caught between two documentary modes of composition. Whereas the influence of editors and critics on textual history was expressed earlier via negation—that is, its absence from the unconventionality of an author's original writings—Howe affirms it later by contrasting the standard articulation of their historical (re)writings with her own counter-historical technique of spatial recombination. "Her position" is, therefore, understood as "poised between the alert passivity of the *medium* and the organizing activity of the *editor*."[61]

The portrayal of Mangan/Bartleby in this set of poems, however, is not without its linguistic and spatial obstructions to straightforward explanation. Formally, several of the poems are composed of lines that break off into the white

[61] Montgomery, 122. In his half-chapter on "Melville's Marginalia," Montgomery equates Howe's "reorganization of materials" to a psychoanalytical "restructuring of the past," as described by Christopher Bollas (122-23). Specifically, Montgomery derives this reading from the notion of "nachträglichkeit," mentioned in one of the poems in part two (*NCM*, 152).

space of the page without any apparent sense of completion. Consequently, the reader is left with a pairing of the material and the immaterial, in a manner that reframes the more abstract indeterminacy of the preceding poems of part one in a set of verses whose typographic regularization belies their discontinuity. The first half of one poem, in particular, demonstrates how the poet's compositional process occasionally retains the integrity of the individual line, while simultaneously inhibiting the continuity of reading one might expect from a single-stanza poem:

> Sect him I cannot
> to go skin deep two
> in his triune cloak
> for selfsame Selber
> a German derivative
> the poet-Cain's crime
> Dash to the right Kathaleen
> Ny—is the feminine (*NCM*, 141)[62]

The dissimulated fragmentation of this poem illustrates Will Montgomery's comment on Howe's poetic structuring:

> Each line stands under threat of effacement by the succeeding line [...]. The cumulative effect of this appearance and disappearance of linguistic fragments gives the same prominence to the silent moment at which sense and syntax are disrupted as to the actual words of the text. [...] With prior determination and retrospective interpretation equally in suspension, the enigmatic order of the line break is felt as a foreign structuring element.[63]

The gaps in the telling of Mangan's history are, in such a poem, of equal importance to the written record itself. Howe's treatment of her subject invites one to read the immaterial absences of a history in conjunction with, and indeed *within*, the received text by which they are communicated. The latter is conveyed through her

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[62] "Selber," in line four, is one of Mangan's pseudonyms; the mention of Cain in line six alludes to Mangan's poem "Grabbe": "Alone the Poet lives—alone he dies. / Cain-like, he bears the isolating brand / Upon his brow of sorrow" (*Poems*, 284); line seven refers to Mangan's poem "Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan" (*Poems*, 397). Mitchel's introduction notes that "Kathaleen Ni Houlahan, here spelled in the Gaelic manner, is again but an emblematic name for Ireland" (22).

[63] Montgomery, 127-28.

documentary approach to archives and libraries, while the editing of those texts—so as to disrupt syntax and interpretation, as Montgomery states—suggests that the experience of fragmentation (or suspension) is a fundamental aspect of Mangan himself. "This writing, with its difficult layers and retracings," Megan Williams writes, "requires the reader to recognize erasures and to transform them into physical presences."[64] Thus, Howe's poetry makes the reader a participant in a practice of critical editing, which first identifies editorial erasures, then reinterprets the blank spatiality of the page as, in this case, a materialization of the seemingly evasive character of Mangan's history.

In *Frame Structures*, this process is expressed more directly in Howe's statement, "Historical imagination gathers in the missing."[65] Through the process of unsettling the textual materials of history, her technique of editing source texts encourages an historical imagination that acknowledges the discovery of narrative continuity, while at the same time calls its construction into question. Her spatial manipulation fractures the reader's temporal experience of the syntax therein, resulting in a textual interpretation suspended in the process of semantic accumulation. In the first line of the above poem, the admission of an inability to "[dis]sect" and/or "[inter]sect" Mangan, frames the subsequent lines in the paradox that results from attempting to follow the poet's history.[66] This is conveyed in one sense by the poem's numerical progression from "two" (l. 2), to the "triune" (l. 3), and then to a quadruple intersection: "Mr. Editor you took / the part where four / roads meet Scattery" (l. 9-11). However, while the poem's fragments might thus appear to gradually coalesce, Howe subverts this accumulation by ironically implying their resistance to *meet* at a point of *scatter*. This spatial proximity and dispersal is reinforced by the next line's mention of Drumcliffe: Scattery Island, or Inis Cathaigh, and Drumcliffe are both located in Ireland's County Clare, but are separated by a distance of roughly 250 kilometers. Howe's association of the two is partly based on architecture; both locations are home to a landmark "ratoo" (the word immediately following Drumcliffe in the poem), a type of medieval, cylindrical bell tower found predominately in Ireland and Scotland. Thus, at the same time that the juxtaposition

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[64] Megan Williams, 118.

[65] Howe, *FS*, 3.

[66] "Sect," from the Latin *secta,* "following," itself from the stem of *sequi*, "follow." *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, Third Edition, eds. Angus Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

of these geographic and material references suggests their proximity, her fragmented lineation imparts the notion of spatial scattering. The role of "Mr. Editor," here, is evidently to reconcile this approximation and differentiation, taking only that part where histories align. But the typographic arrangement of Howe's poem disjoints this effort, asserting the underlying piecemeal construction of even a relatively seamless reading (i.e. lines 9-11) by juxtaposing it with the jarring truncation of the previous lines in the poem. The reader is initiated into a fragmented reading of the historical record of Mangan, and so is consequently led to question the instances of more or less straightforward textual collations encountered later, with specific relation to the "invisible hand" of the editor.

This type of interplay between textual divergence and convergence implies the material breakdown of Mangan's history, while still keeping it loosely intact. "Howe's rewriting of history is a scattering more than a gathering, but it is not an undoing: this poetry of history is 'affirmation in negation' [...]."[67] This conclusion is exemplified typographically in the poem cited above, in which Howe's documentary fragmentation enacts a form of textual elimination, in order to emphasize the significance of erasure's role in history, and in poetry containing history. Howe's deliberate choice to double-space the lines in these poems visually emphasizes their individual consideration as fragments, while the page as a whole argues that even a diverse collection of quotations from a fragmented biographical record be read as its own form of edited history that affirms the origin through negation.[68]

This section of "Melville's Marginalia" centers around the premise that Mangan's textual history—that is, the combination of the production of his own works with that of those published about him—cannot be accurately grasped apart from the poet's fundamental, historical nonconformity. The Irish poet, as Howe's sequence repeatedly notes, scattered his own identity through a plethora of pseudonyms and textual misdirection—a form of *cloaking* himself; or, like Melville's Bartleby, disappearing behind "a high *green folding* screen [...]."[69] Mangan's authorial rebellion is reframed in this section—however subtly, for it is never explicitly

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[67] Hélene Aji, "I [will not] Gather the Limbs of Osiris."

[68] Howe's handwritten notes to New Directions's galley proofs for this section of "Melville's Marginalia"—all of which were single-spaced—indicate that the poems should "all [be] spaced differently," and again, on the following page, "all double space." SHP Box 48 f. 10.

[69] Herman Melville, "Bartleby, The Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street," *Billy Budd and Other Stories* (London: Harper Collins, 2014) 11, emphasis added.

mentioned—within the copyist Bartleby's persistent opposition to societal norms. A passage from the opening paragraph to Melville's short story concisely summarizes Howe's approach to Mangan's textual history in this group of poems:

> While of other law-copyists I might write the complete life, of Bartleby nothing of that sort can be done. I believe that no materials exist for a full and satisfactory biography of this man. It is an irreparable loss to literature. Bartleby was one of those beings of whom nothing is ascertainable, except from the original sources, and in his case those are very small.[70]

As this excerpt mentions, *writing* the story of this figure—Bartleby, or Mangan—demands recourse to the extant "materials" and "original sources." Confronted with the scarcity and partial nature of such documents, Howe's poetic treatment is one that foregrounds the multiplicity of approaches to the subject. The aforementioned "four roads" that meet in the concept of the editor, may, in fact, be interpreted as the intersection of Mangan's work, Melville's writing and marginalia, Cowen's dissertation, and Howe's historical poetry. Although each relates to the editorial process in its own way—from revision to annotation, and transcription to appropriation—it is Howe as poet-historian and editor that translates this gathering and scattering in the pages of "Melville's Marginalia." But far from reconfiguring this set of texts into a conventional order, the documentary dimension of the sequence places that materiality at the center of an historical transmission and evolution, which, like Bartleby/Mangan, resists authority.

> Howe's rewriting of 'Bartleby' from the perspective of Mangan transforms Melville's story into a text that is centrally concerned with addressing an author's refusal to participate in the single and dominant discourses of history. Howe's interpretation of Bartleby as a 'real' author makes Melville's story into a commentary on the same issues of narrative history that frame her own poetry.[71]

The historical issues are equally ones of editing, for Howe's incorporation of discursive materials breaks apart what the previous author and editor joined into a streamlined narration. Formally, Howe's portrait of Mangan and Bartleby performs their nonconformity.

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[70] Melville, "Bartleby," 3.
[71] Megan Williams, 123.

Furthermore, it is not only those sources written from an external perspective that Howe works into her fragmentation of historical materiality in these poems. After the first four poems in the series, words from Mangan's poems and prose—often those with specifically Celtic roots—are increasingly interspersed within those of the poet's biographers and critics, as well as of Howe herself. The appropriation of these terms, however, is not always a simple transference from one page to another. On page 138, for example, Mangan's phrase "If the Mooslemin of Aalyastan be kith or kin of mine, / Let dust for ever darken the glory of my hair!" is edited to "and if the Modeem of / Alystan be kith or / kin of mine let dust / derange so ever darker / the glory of my hair."[72] Howe's poem concludes with a line that appears to comment on this textual manipulation, stating "Simile is always poetry." Visually the edits noticeably approximate the original: Howe's verse is typographically *like* Mangan's. Her revisions point, therefore, to the significance of language's materiality in its appearance on the printed page. At the same time, and perhaps more importantly, in the context of textual history and transmission, these alterations also exemplify the kind of editorial errata that may occur in the process of copying and reprinting: the /*osl*/ of "Mooslemin" bleeds into /*od*/, several /*a*/s of "Aalyastan" are dropped, and the first half of the final line is "misread" or "misremembered," and so linguistically rearranged. What Howe conveys in these alleged "mistakes" in editing is how an author's work, in passing from one material form to another, as it is reprinted in edition after edition, may be materially distorted, and history consequently misinterpreted.

ALTERED CONTINUITY

As the sequence progresses there is an important shift after the first nine poems of the group, when Howe includes a text composed almost entirely of Mangan's writing. The poem is also significant for two other reasons: first, the texts Howe appropriates are not his poems, but his prose; and second, contrary to the immediately preceding poems, Howe sets off the first appropriated passage in quotation marks. In yet a further derivation from the earlier pages in the second part

[72] James Clarence Mangan, *His Selected Poems, with a Study* (Norwood, MA: Norwood Press, 1897) 261.

of the sequence, the poem is divided into two stanzas, each composed of a separate, typographically edited, publication (figure 8.6).

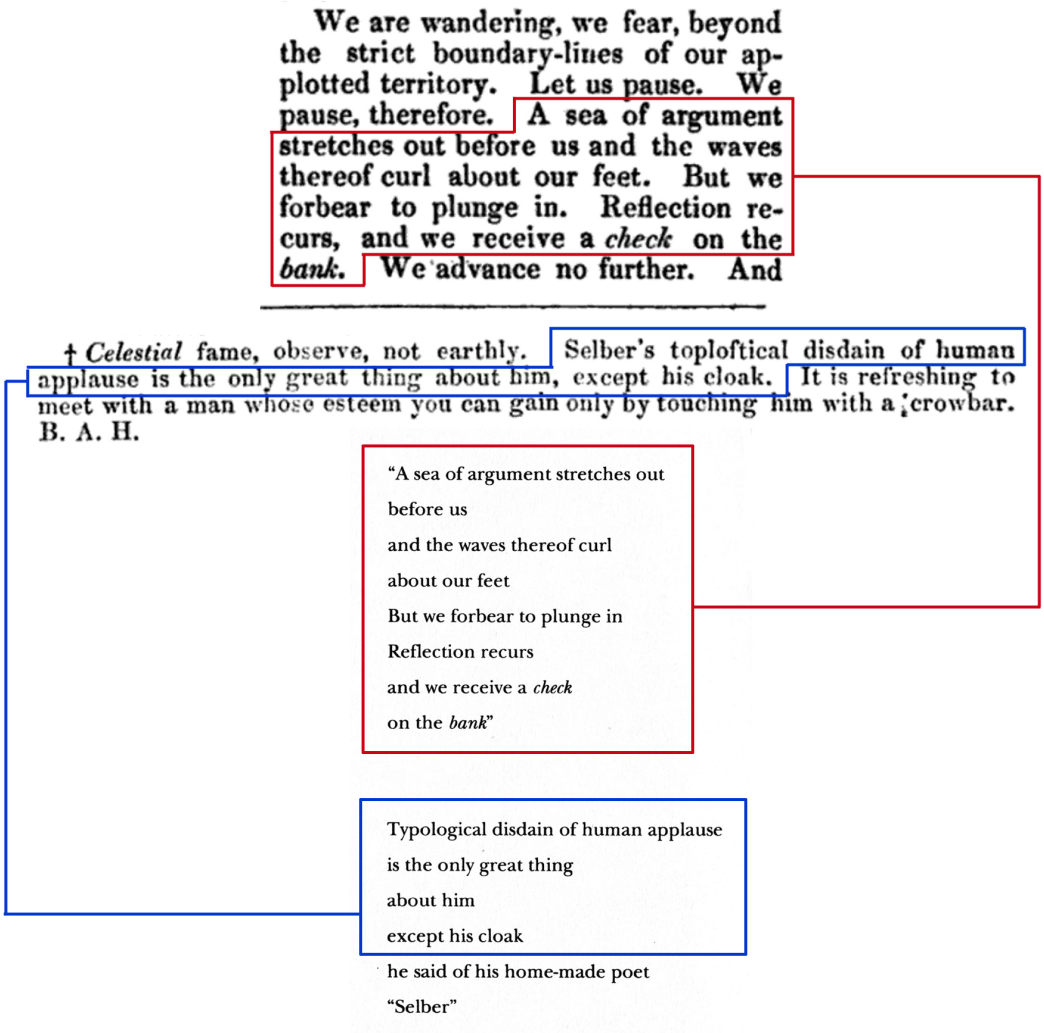

Figure 8.6: Mangan, "Literæ Orientales. Persian and Turkish Poetry," *Dublin University Magazine* 10.57 (September 1837) 282, followed by one of Mangan's footnotes, under the name of Dr. Berri Abel Hummer, to his poem "Eighteen Hundred Fifty," written under the pseudonym of "Selber" (German for "oneself") in "Anthologia Germanica No. XIX Miscellaneous Poems," *Dublin University Magazine* 25.145 (January 1845) 106. Below is Howe's poem on *NCM* 143.

The blurring of identity between the scholar Mangan, the poet Selber, and the editor Hummer, represented in this combination of quotations, becomes one of genres as well. Howe's manipulation of the original documents' typography transforms the imagistic prose, and the editorial footnote into a kind of lyric poetry. In the first stanza, for example, Howe's spatial reconfiguration seems to respond to the words immediately prior to the quotation: "Let us pause. We pause, therefore." Howe retains the original wording and italics of this passage, but does alter the punctuation: the

three full stops, and comma are removed, while quotation marks are added on both ends. These modifications further contribute to the aforementioned textual and authorial uncertainty. The stanza at once signals to the reader that the language is not Howe's, while at the same time, in comparison to the source text, clearly displays her choices in editing. The materiality and form of that language, then, is attributed to Howe. Mangan may speak for himself, but his words reach the reader bearing the traces of an editor. The first person plural pronouns in the quotation further reinforce this ambiguous duality of textual origin, which is reiterated in the image of the recurring "reflection" in line six.

The second stanza goes a step further in actually rearranging the figurative page itself, by repositioning the relegated language of footnotes in the visual center. The group of lines, therefore, may be understood as equally commenting on the stanza above it, and on itself as a part of the main body of text. Both stanzas, in fact, contain edits that deliberately inhibit classification of the text(s) and author(s) according to predefined types. In line nine Howe annotates the annotation by modifying the original "toploftical" to instead read "Typological disdain." The poem continues to materially blur the "strict boundary-lines of [its] applotted territory" (as per the passage from "Literæ Orientales"), but in a slightly different fashion. In the second stanza, Howe does not add quotation marks, thus assuming the identity of "Dr. Berri Abel Hummer" in precisely the same way Mangan himself did. Her addition of the poem's last two lines to the passage, without any interlinear space, only add to the confusion of to whom exactly this printed language should be attributed. Moreover, the final inclusion of "Selber" within quotation marks ends the poem by casting doubt on not only Mangan's many names, but also on the punctuation as a reliable visual marker. The reader's expectations are, once again, overturned. Howe's use of documentary sources materially reshapes the image of Mangan on the page, as a means of challenging presuppositions regarding typology, and history's dependence on those identifications. Consequently, he appears to the reader as much in the guise of each kind of writer, as he does in none of them; in parallel, Howe's role in the composition of the text waivers indistinguishably between that of poet-historian, and that of editor.

The engagement with Mangan through the materiality of his corpus, biography, and criticism in "Melville's Marginalia" is, from a perspective toward composition and poetics, ultimately less about the poet himself than about the

ongoing "life" of texts through the editorial process. For a colloquium in Berlin, Howe gave two lectures, collectively entitled "The Negative of Time. Poetry and Documentary," composed of a discussion of Emily Dickinson's late manuscripts, portions of Howe's essay on Chris Marker's films, and a reading from "Melville's Marginalia." On a page from the correspondence regarding these lectures, Howe's handwritten note indicates, "So it is all around editing."[73] Having thus far examined the visual complexity of editing manuscripts, and the role of the editor in shaping an author's textual history, the sequence shifts its focus to the implications of the continuation of that history due to its materialization in the last set of poems. "What is writing but continuing?" Howe comments in *The Birth-Mark*.[74] After the death of an author, and thus the closure of their creative output, the perpetuation of the work falls into the hands of readers and scholars, both of whom embody, in certain respects, the characteristics of an editor. As one poem in this group suggests, the repetition of successive generations' engagement with an author's œuvre results in a kind of palimpsestic documentary history, which layers new intentions of revelation over previous ones: "Veil and concealment [...] each reader or marauder / reading over then over" (*NCM*, 151).

It is, however, precisely due to such a process that manuscripts and printed works evolve beyond the materiality of their initial state, and with them, as demonstrated in the preceding poems, the author him or herself. One of Howe's lines reads, "Under this reading an author" (*NCM*, 154). The absence of punctuation allows for two different interpretative reconstructions: under this reading [there is] an author, or, under this [document], [one is] reading an author. In either case, the materiality of the text acts as a medium through which the writer is encountered. Furthermore, in that act of reading *through* the page, one is participating in a history of textual transmission, however concealed it may or may not be, in a manner that presupposes an original composition. Howe draws particular attention to the assumption of the stability of print. This is initially conveyed by pointing out the static nature, strictly speaking, of materiality. An unused poem handwritten on a draft of the poem on page 129 appears as follows:[75]

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[73] SHP Box 48 f. 3.
[74] Howe, *BM*, 143.
[75] SHP Box 47 f. 5.

From German into French
history of the inconstant lover
who put his thoughts on paper

Into dead matter

I had thought of a stay

<u>to think of a stay</u>

The materiality of paper provides a means for written language to remain present after the act of composition; however, the poem also conveys that the very same material fixes the translated thoughts of said language in a state of arrest. In "Melville's Marginalia," Howe expresses this idea through a series a lines across several of the sequence's concluding poems. First, she writes, "I can compose my thought" (*NCM*, 155), relating both the *settling* of a writer's enthusiasm, and the *materialization* of it in writing. In the following poem, the poet responds to this conversion of thought to writing by stating, "Printing ruins it / It is as its edge" (*NCM*, 156). The loss in the act of translation to a materially finite form (i.e. with defined edges) implied in these lines was explored in the previous chapter on the subject of manuscripts; but, as in that discussion, this later poem reasserts that the material page does nevertheless provide a kind of historical record of composition seen in the traces of the author's written gestures.

Faun ink splatter
. . . . . .
on the inked hyphen
Spatter constellate
we are so barefoot
The rest is in rime
or footprint or Pan
in ink on scrap it (*NCM*, 156)

Howe's fragmentary construction typographically reinforces the incompletion expressed in the poem's mention of a stray "inked hyphen," the analphabetic ink "sp(l)atter," and the "scrap" missing its article. While fixed on the page, the fragmentation and/or illegibility of these sorts of marks provide readers with material for ongoing interpretation, whereby the "dynamic" page is figuratively shaped and reshaped.

At the same time, it is precisely these aspects of materiality that are so frequently edited out of the textual history, in an attempt to stabilize and arrest the

written work through the publication of definitive versions. "Authoritative editions," Howe writes, "freeze poems into artifacts," in the sense that they trap the history of texts on the premise of a now closed, and bound, evolution.[76] The conventional editing Howe associates with this type of authority would have that history set in the logical order mentioned earlier in "Melville's Marginalia," and discussed previously in this chapter. This method of the historian resurfaces at this point in the text: "Something orthodox an order / sequence canto sonnet cut" (*NCM*, 154). Juxtaposed to these lines, however, is an example in the subsequent poem of the poet's process of visual association and "strange order": "I will dismember marginalia / 'l' for 'i' and 'i' for 'l' / Ophelia Juliet Cordelia" (*NCM*, 155). Carrying out the textual manipulation with respect to the words listed—i.e. Ophe*il*a, Ju*il*et, and Corde*il*a—yields a set of examples the traditional editor would identify as textual errors and obfuscations that require correction. The implication of editorial intervention to rearrange the dismembered words and marginalia is then addressed directly several pages later:

> Come afterward compiler
> the impediment of words
> torn to pieces by memory
> No questions unanswered
> there is no contending
> . . . . . .
> Between ourself and the story
> so low almost a whisper
> . . . . . .
> I put down my thoughts
> Vulturism trimmed for binding
> who will be interpreter (*NCM*, 158)

Howe's poem tacitly denounces the power exercised by the editor who clarifies any challenging and/or fragmented language, definitively settles any remaining questions or matters of contention, plunders the text, and cuts down the material for neat publication. The editorial "voice" is thus infused into the pages of the work—a

[76] Howe, *BM*, 19. Much later in the same book, Howe relates Emily Dickinson's silence to "a space [...] where the idea of a printed book appears as a trap" (170).

"whisper" below the printed words. With regard to the effects of such actions on the historical transmission and reception of texts, her objection is to the position of the editor as eventual interpreter standing between readers ("ourself") and "the story" of the original documents' materiality.

As the above poem relates, once the thoughts of an author are "put down" on paper, they are soon enough turned over to the hands and interpretations of future editors and publishers. Howe's final poem for the sequence restates this notion in terms of her own history and work, which she recognizes will be subject to critical re-readings and possible editorial revisions: "Obedience we are subjects Susan" (*NCM*, 159). However, at the same time, this acknowledgment is equally a reassertion that texts are not forever set in stone, but do, indeed, continue evolving, albeit outside of the author's influence. Therefore, although the poem twice rephrases the view of print's static finality introduced earlier—first as "you know print settles it," and two lines later as "print is sentinel so sages say"—it is undercut by a sense that those very same printed texts may, in fact, be *un*settled in the future. The poem develops an image of a distant light, and in so doing offers a perception of continuation: "Light in which we were rushing" (l. 2) becomes "Out of view of the rushing light" (l. 9), which is then suggested in the last line, "Scared millions and on he rushed" (l. 15).

The "rushing light" in line nine is quoted from a quatrain of Shelley's *The Masque of Anarchy*, in which the notion of a resurrection is prominent:[77]

> A rushing light of clouds and splendour,
> A sense, awakening and yet tender,
> Was heard and felt — and at its close
> The words of joy and fear arose.

Additionally, though, this reference bears a striking resemblance to the final lines to Canto CXVI, one of the last poems from the latest section, *Drafts & Fragments*, to Pound's epic: "A little light, like a rushlight / to lead back to splendour" (817.19-20). Howe's concluding poem resonates even more with Pound's in light of the shared

[77] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Masque of Anarchy. A Poem* (London: Edward Moxon, 1832) 18. In a note regarding Shelley's return in the final poem to "Melville's Marginalia" that was attached to a manuscript of the sequence Howe sent to Michael Davidson, she writes "He [Shelley] is buried here and there elsewhere." Michael Davidson, "Refiguring Shelley: Postmodern Recuperations of Romanticism," *Keats-Shelley Journal* 42 (1993) 57.

theme of questioning how an already palimpsestic text will evolve through a continued process of editorial accretion:

> As to who will copy this palimpsest?
> al poco giorno
> ed al gran cerchio d'ombra
> But to affirm the gold thread in the pattern
>
> (116: 817.9-12)

"Melville's Marginalia" poses analogous questions in its closing poems with regard to future textual appropriation: "who will be signal" and "who will be interpreter" (*NCM*, 157 and 158, respectively). Pound and Howe each acknowledge that their writing and biography, just as that of Sigismondo and Mangan, will become *subjects*—of reprinting, of study, and perhaps of revision.

However, despite this focus on documentary materiality, the excerpts from Shelley and Pound both imply an ethereal pattern of shadow and light that moves beyond the written word. The thread of light in Howe's poem, as well, ends her sequence with a return to a form of *immateriality*. Typographically this is expressed in the absence of the printed word "light" in the final line, which instead *rushes on* into the white space of the page. "Melville's Marginalia," in fact, ends with the suggestion of an envelope structure, which sends the reader backward through its pages. The cyclical pattern of textual history developed throughout the sequence is thus embedded in that very development, and particularly in the final group of poems. In this way, the "gold thread in the pattern" of Pound's "gran cerchio"—demonstrated in the documentary poetics of the Malatesta Cantos—is reenacted here in the context of a contemporary view of editing. Pound stated this structure in more direct terms in *ABC of Reading*, writing, "It doesn't, in our contemporary world, so much matter where you begin the examination of a subject, so long as you keep on until you get round again to your starting point."[78] Howe expresses a similar view in her interview with Edward Foster when she explains that the prose statements that begin many of her sequences are actually composed after the poetry: "I begin with fragments and bits

[78] Pound, *ABC*, 29.

and pieces, and they take me to what I find, and then I write an introduction to anchor the poem. The beginning is usually the end."[79]

In "Melville's Marginalia" the sequence's poetic "end" achieves a textual return to its prose "beginning" in several respects. The last poem's "rushing light" is included as an inspirational symbol connected to the notion of an immaterial poetic enthusiasm—the *original* impetus for composition, represented materially in the blank page which surrounds the poem. The sequence, therefore, leaves its readers where they began, with the absent center of the original thought's escape from the material page. Will Montgomery is correct in seeing this symbolic rushlight as "anticipated by the epigraph to 'Turning,' the first section of the book *The Nonconformist's Memorial*. [...] For Mary Shelley, the intense seclusion of the enthusiast harbors a generative, law-smashing energy, much as Bartleby's messianic rebellion is characterized by withdrawal."[80] As it relates to the final page of "Melville's Marginalia," Shelley's statement that "all is changed" is reframed within the context of editorial emendations, and the seclusion and withdrawal Montgomery identifies within the final absence after an author's death.

Herein lies the second manner in which the conclusion circles back to its starting point. In almost the exact vertical and horizontal middle of the poem Howe writes, "and Massinger smiled" (*NCM*, 159). Philip Massinger is mentioned in only two other places in "Melville's Marginalia." The third to last entry in the "Brief Chronology of James Clarence Mangan," notes that Mangan's unfinished, fragment of an autobiography opens with a quote from Massinger: "... A heavy shadow lay / On that boy's spirit: he was not of his fathers" (*NCM*, 95). The historical shadow of nonconformity evoked in this epigraph ties in with the notions of death and spirit present on the last page. The first mention, however, is much more representative of Howe's statement that "The beginning is the end"; indeed, the entire sequence starts with an epigraph that quotes Massinger's epitaph: "March 20, 1639-40— / buried Philip Massinger / a stranger" (*NCM*, 91).[81] Megan Williams's article on the theme of posterity in the sequence states the following on this opening:

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[79] Howe, *BM*, 165. Howe later mentions the cyclical process of her work, stating, "I think a lot of my work is about breaking free: starting free and being captured and breaking free again and being captured again" (166).

[80] Montgomery, 129.

[81] In an early manuscript of the sequence, this epigraph did not include the dates in the first line. On that typescript, Howe also circled in pencil "a stranger," writing "change" next to it, so as to

> The title page of 'Melville's Marginalia' announces the text's primary concern with eradicating the possibility of historical erasure. [...] This opening page contains an implicit statement of the poetics of 'Melville's Marginalia.' The reader is faced, in the blankness that surrounds Howe's title and this note, with the threat that words and literary stature can be reduced and written out of history.[82]

The threat Williams mentions, however, is countered in the concluding poem by the very suggestion of a cyclical textual pattern, which returns the reader to the origin. This return is by means of an archival process—demonstrated throughout Howe's sequence—that progresses through the materiality of successive edits in order to reveal in the seemingly static text, an evolving history. Howe bookends her work with Massinger's corporeal absence and his textual presence ("Massinger smiled and he / said you know print settles it"), but undermines the apparent closure of both events by suggesting the finality of the former is, in fact, extended in the latter through the continuity of historical documentation.

Massinger is, furthermore, drawn into Howe's work through Mangan's writing, and itself via Melville's marginal notes. These three dead authors, therefore, have been reanimated by the documentary connections resulting from Howe's archival research. At once fixed, and bound in whatever book(s), Howe's fragmentary unsettling of their combined textual history highlights how, despite its apparent stability, no text is ultimately beyond the bounds of historical alteration. Howe's reiteration that "print settles it" on the last page, harkens back to the more immediate epigraph to the "Conversion" section of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, where Bartleby, the literary copy of Mangan, declares, "I like to be stationary" (*NCM*, 51).

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indicate the extension of the underlining. In Hartley Coleridge's introduction to *The Dramatic Works of Massinger and Ford* (London: Edward Moxon, 1840), the following precedes and follows the epitaph: "No stone marked his neglected resting-place, but in the parish register appears this brief memorial [...]. His sepulchre was like his life, obscure : like the nightingale, he sung darkling—it is to be feared, like the nightingale of the fable, with his breast against a thorn" (liv). The figure of the nightingale appears in the poem on *NCM* 157.

Given the appropriative aspect of Howe's poetics, it is also noteworthy that her inclusion of Massinger's epitaph recalls T.S. Eliot's essay "Philip Massinger." The famous passage from that essay is particularly relevant to "Melville's Marginalia": "One of the surest tests is the way in which a poet borrows. Immature poets imitate ; mature poets steal ; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling that is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn [...]. A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest." *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen & Co., 1920) 114.

[82] Megan Williams, 110.

Howe later quotes the Irish poet as first resisting such material stability—"for me there is no stopping in place or country"—but then countering his own words of vagrancy with the admission that "even the March of Intellect must one day halt; already we see that pens, ink, and paper are—stationary" (*NCM*, 113). The return of the reader to the preface, and even to the title page, of "Melville's Marginalia" in the sequence's final poem, subverts the expected finality, and instead asserts that no station*e*ry will remain station*a*ry. Marginalia, footnotes, quotations, prefaces, scholarly studies, critical editions, and even the documentary methodology of poetry containing history, will continue to complicate the palimpsest of literary production.

PLUME: THE MAGPIE AND THE CORMORANT

"TEMPUS loquendi, / Tempus tacendi."
— Ezra Pound

"But then language has its own message."
— Susan Howe[1]

Exactly seventy years separate the first publication of Ezra Pound's Malatesta Cantos (1923) and Susan Howe's "Melville's Marginalia" (1993). Galvanized by his visit to Rimini's Tempio Malatestiano in May of 1922, Pound sketched some early drafts and notes in Sirmione in June, before returning to Paris the following month and continuing to work on the Malatesta Cantos until January of the next year. It was, however, the poet's research tour in Italy from the sixteenth of February 1923 to the twentieth of April that marked a significant breakthrough in the poetry's development.[2] Out of his visits to archives and libraries throughout Italy, a new documentary method of poetic composition arose, and by May—almost precisely a year after the initial inspiration from Sigismondo's temple—Pound had completed the pivotal sequence in what would remain his long-life project *The Cantos*. Coincidentally, Susan Howe's composition of "Melville's Marginalia" followed a strikingly similar poetic thread. Although work on other sequences to be included in the collection *The Nonconformist's Memorial* was undertaken in June of 1989, it was not until the spring of 1991 that the inspiration for the book's central long poem came in the form of a serendipitous encounter in Philadelphia, where Howe was teaching a graduate seminar on Herman Melville's novel *Billy Budd.* While searching through criticism on Melville, she discovered the two volumes of Wilson Walker Cowen's Harvard dissertation *Melville's Marginalia*. This occurred in the library of Temple

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[1] Ezra Pound, Canto XXXI (153.1-2). "There is a time to speak, there is a time to be silent," Ecclesiastes 3:7, as translated in the Latin Vulgate. Pound's quotation reverses the order of the original. The phrase was also the personal motto of Sigismondo Malatesta, and is inscribed, at his request, on the tomb of Isotta degli Atti in the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini. Susan Howe, Interview by Lynn Keller, *Contemporary Literature* 36.1 (Spring 1995) 23.

[2] From start to end, Pound's trip in 1922 progresses as follows: Genoa, Rapallo, Carrara, Pisa, Siena, Cortona, Perugia, Assisi, Spello, Ancona, Rimini, Ravenna, Venice, Verona, Sirmione, and Milan. In 1923 he visited archives and libraries in the Vatican, Florence, Cesena, Modena, Bologna, Ravenna, Rimini, Venice, Milan, and perhaps also in Pesaro, Fano, and Ferrara.

University, and produced the same kind of poetic spark that the Temple in Rimini had for Pound on the opposite end of the twentieth century. Initial work for the sequence began in the summer of 1991, and later continued with Howe's own research *periplum* to American university libraries in New England.[3] The final typescript draft was completed around the summer of 1992, thus making the total time of composition, as in the case of Pound, roughly a year.

That the literal monument constituting the foundation of the Malatesta Cantos finds an analog in the figurative monument of an archival book that formed the basis for "Melville's Marginalia" is not without consequence with regard to the two poet's documentary projects. In Pound's work, the Tempio figures as the embodiment of Sigismondo Malatesta, and a material record of the cultural and artistic ambitions that the "Vorticist condottiere" achieved by ordering a visually communicable concept out the civilization that surrounded his chaotic life.[4] With respect to Howe, the personalities of authors like Melville, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and James Clarence Mangan are materialized in the visual language of marginalia, the sketches and stammering of manuscript drafts, and even the printed pages of a bound book. Where the two poets' understanding of their separate historical materials converge is in Pound's taking the materiality of the temple for a "textual" parallel and structural metaphor for the poetic composition of his sequence, and in Howe's engagement with the materiality of her collection of documents as if the architectural space of an historical archive.

At the point of intersection, as suggested, is the concept of materiality. In transforming the exterior construction and interior walls of the Tempio into a textual archive of documentary fragments, and in reforming the design of the codex format and the individual pages therein, Pound and Howe both exercise a poetic practice of

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[3] The visited libraries and archives include Paley at Temple University, Houghton at Harvard, and Sterling at Yale. "Periplum" is a Poundian term derived from Greek, and signifying a voyage or journey. Pound uses it in cantos LIX, LXXIV, LXXVI, XCV, and CVII, as well as in *ABC of Reading* (44).

[4] Robert McNamara describes Malatesta as "a vortex of creative intelligence which would, in Pound's terrestrial paradise, be aligned with vortices of social power; in the decadent Renaissance world these vortices are opposed." "Pound's Malatesta: An Alternative to the Martial Ideal," *Pacific Coast Philology* 20.1/2 (November 1985) 61.

With specific regard to Canto IX, Pound makes the point concerning the chaos of Malatesta's saga in a letter to John Quinn, dated 10 August 1922: "If I find [Sigismondo] was TOO bloody quiet and orderly it will ruin the canto. Which needs a certain boisterousness and disorder to contrast with his constructive work." *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn: 1915-1924*, ed. Timothy Materer (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991) 217.

metaphrastic materiality with regard to their respective subject matters. Eventually, both poets found themselves situated squarely within the archives. While Pound was certainly no stranger to grounding the poetry of his modern epic in textual specifics—including even the "Ur-Cantos"[5]—and Howe's work prior to "Melville's Marginalia" had already made extensive use of archival materials, the results of each poet's research for these sequences were unique at that stage of their poetic careers. The method Pound employed for the Malatesta Cantos allowed him to greatly expand the horizons of his epic verse, so as to combine the prose and structural dynamics of a documentary poetics with lyric poetry and the narrative mode of historical chronicle. "The modern mind," Pound states, "contains heteroclite elements." Epic subjects, he goes on to explain, must be "condensed to get into the form. The nature of the individual, the heteroclite contents of contemporary consciousness."[6] The ideogrammic method that Pound had developed out of his understanding of Ernest Fenollosa's study of Chinese characters as a poetic medium is applied to a "poem including history" in the Malatesta Cantos on the basis of diverse textual materials—such as the epistolary documents of the Quattrocento—and architectural structures—such as the Tempio Malaestiano—providing the form according to which the abstract complex of ideas expressing culture could be rendered concrete. This tangled "mind of an era," or *paideuma*, was thus incorporated into the materiality of Pound's poetic vision through the technique of archival documentation.[7]

The sequence of poems developed out of the network of writings Susan Howe had formed found the poet also extending her own poetic reach. "Melville's Marginalia" comprises a wider range and greater number of texts and documents than in her prior sequences. Key works in her œuvre like *Articulation of Sound Forms in Time*, "Thorow," and *A Bibliography of the King's Book or, Eikon Basilike* are

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[5] Originally titled simply "Three Cantos," these poems were first published in *Poetry* magazine in 1917, and constitute Pound's initial foray into *The Cantos*. Parts of these drafts form certain sections of the final version of the cantos, especially Cantos I-III. Of relevance here, for example, is Pound's ending of Ur-Canto III with an adaptation of Andreas Divus's 1538 Latin translation of Homer's *Odyssey* (in particular, a portion of the *Nekuia*).

[6] Ezra Pound, "Ezra Pound, The Art of Poetry No. 5," interview by Donald Hall, *The Paris Review* 28 (Summer-Fall 1962).

[7] The quotation of Pound's definition of an epic is from his essay "Date Line," *Literary Essays*, 86. The latter quote is a portion of the poet's definition for "paideuma," a term borrowed from the German ethnologist Leo Frobenius. *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose: Contributions to Periodicals*, Vol. 7, eds. Lea Baechler, A. Walton Litz, and James Logenbach (New York: Garland, 1991) 77.

specifically anchored in a single historical figure or text.[8] In "Melville's Marginalia," however, Matthew Arnold and Percy Shelley are amongst a constellation of authors as present in the text as the central figures of Melville and Mangan. Later installments of *The Cantos*, and future collections by Howe, would find both poets centripetally drawing materials into the poems around a markedly pivotal figure, while still functioning within the documentary mode: Pound's Adams Cantos involved a practice of extensive citation out of a single source (i.e. *Works of John Adams*), a technique he also applied to the late sequences *Section: Rock-Drill* and *Thrones*; Howe's *Pierce-Arrow* is based primarily on the writings of Charles Sanders Peirce, and *Frolic Architecture* takes Jonathan Edwards's archival papers as it central source. This is not to suggest that the polyphonous quality of all of Pound and Howe's later works is necessarily diminished, but rather to highlight the singularity of the Malatesta Cantos and "Melville's Marginalia." Regarding the latter, the multiplicity is due in large part to Howe's documentary method of freely associating textual fragments across the various books constituting Melville's personal library. Such a compositional process can be traced back to Pound: in one respect, as Howe remarks, concerning his method of "pull[ing] out a word or a sentence or a fragment and [...] let[ing] it lead you somewhere;" and in another, for its absorption of history through the re-materialization of archival documents as a tangible reconstruction.[9] In foregrounding her sequence in the documentary mode, however, Howe's poetics mark a considerable advancement of the materiality of the Malatesta Cantos, in that her radically abstract typographic arrangements not only draw such materiality to the forefront of the poems, but also make it the subject of those poems.

The same may be said for the conception of the archive. For Pound it is a means by which the Tempio Malatestiano and the history of Sigismondo may be represented and contained in modern epic verse. The metaphrastic materiality of his documentary process allows the reader to enter an architectural space that acts as a type of archival monument of civilization, history, and culture. For Howe, the actual experience of the archive—along with the history and larger socio-cultural implications contained therein—is itself a key thematic element of the poetry. Her

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[8] Respectively, Henry David Thoreau (though Sir William Johnson's papers are also an important source), Hope Atherton, and Edward Almack's book of the same title.

[9] Susan Howe, Interview by Lynn Keller, *Contemporary Literature* 36.1 (Spring 1995) 31. Howe also cites James Joyce in this statement.

own process of metaphrasis draws the reader into the often contentious textual zones that structure the archival space, to then explore the historical palimpsest of documents. Nevertheless, in both instances the spatial metaphor for the text as a material site is established. Thus, if the sequences include history it is due in no small part to how they appropriate and contain the visual materiality of the archive. Such sites are, of course, "constructed," and possess a variety of complex socio-cultural mechanisms that influence the transmission and reception of the historical record. Pound and Howe's compositional choices, whereby the pages of their poetry bear the tracks of their archival research, effectively implicate the reader within those mechanisms, as he/she shadows the (re)cycling processes of (re)discovery, which find the poets confronting the issues of institutional authority, falsification, and marginalization. The archive is not conceived by either poet as a mere repository of the textual past, but a unique crossroads of interacting powers, discourses, and voices, which require an active engagement and navigation. By materializing the poets' involvement, the sequences of poems mirror the sites and texts they appropriate and annotate. Consequently, the works renegotiate historiography by, first, a selection of documents according to an objectivist view of them in their materiality, and second, the indexing and palimpsestic restructuring of excerpted and reworked fragments. The parataxis intrinsic to such a methodology translates to Pound's ideogrammic method, and to Howe's typographic multi-directionality, both of which relay the nonlinearity of each poet's archival experience to the reader's participation in the reforming—or transforming—of textual history.

While the Malatesta Cantos and "Melville's Marginalia" each implicitly embody the archival aims of conservation and/or restoration, the aforementioned process of selection is an aspect where Howe diverges from her modernist predecessor. Ezra Pound recognized that a metaphrastic materiality was required to find a textual form "elastic enough to take the necessary material" of a subject such as Sigismondo and the Tempio. Recognizing as well that such a process "demand[ed] obscurities and penumbras," the poet was confronted with "the problem of rectification without giving up what is correct."[10] In other words, Pound sought to rework the materials in such a way that the form would clarify the ambiguities and enact a corrective gesture, thereby crystallizing the golden thread of history, and the

[10] Pound, Interview by Hall.

sagetrieb—or passing on of cultural traditions—in which Pound saw the poetic medium playing a vital role.[11] Hélène Aji concisely addresses Pound's poetic goals, concluding, "*The Cantos* aim to be an initiative towards a total comprehension and interpretation of the world, which must result in an absolute knowledge and the reduction of the multiple into the singular [...]." Further on she states that Pound's struggle "emanates from a desire to impose a form on the world, to shape the world in accordance with an ideal, to center it and to model it on his own imagination."[12]

If Pound's *ego scriptor* refashions a socio-cultural ethos via the poetic composition of source-based materials, in parallel the poet also attempts to reform the discerning knowledge and taste of his readers. Through a poetics that connects apparently disparate objects and concepts, Pound viewed poetry as a medium that could achieve what remained outside of the strict boundaries of scholarly criticism and the formal conventionality of historical narratives. The signifying capabilities of the visual materiality in the Malatesta Cantos are one such example, as is the elasticity of genres and languages. In one respect, this ambition stems from what Pound saw as a cultural and literary gap in the knowledge of the twentieth-century reading public, or simply a fracturing diversity of experiences between individuals that consequently poses difficulties to successfully articulating the kind of correlated concepts that structure Pound's poetry:

> I'll tell you a thing that I think is an American form, and that is the Jamesian parenthesis. You realize that the person you are talking to hasn't got the different steps, and you go back over them. In fact the Jamesian parenthesis has immensely increased now. That I think is something that is definitely American. The struggle that one has when one meets another man who has had a lot of experience to find the point where the two experiences touch, so that he really knows what you are talking about.[13]

Part of Pound's response to this phenomenon, which he identifies as characteristic of modernity, is a return to cultural origins buried in the patterns of history through the documentary channel provided by archives. Seeing the forces of history—detrimental

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[11] The gloss on "sagetrieb" paraphrases Carroll Terrell's note on Pound's neologism, itself based on David Gordon's definition as per conversations with Pound. *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 479.

[12] Hélène Aji, *Ezra Pound et William Carlos Williams : pour une poétique américaine* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001) 241, 246.

[13] Pound, Interview by Donald Hall.

or otherwise—at work in the materiality of the written record, Pound's metaphrastic techniques of appropriation and collage impart to *The Cantos* both the capacity to encompass the mass of heteroclite elements in the "jumble and junk shop" of the modern world, and the capability to recreate and perform the historical world according to his own idiosyncratic poetic vision.[14] Adopting the archive's characteristic nature of conservation, Pound draws the materials of the past into the contemporary moment, simultaneously activating the ideals he identifies in their language. In this manner, a sequence like the Malatesta Cantos seeks to position readers within a palimpsestic space, which, in layering the past and present, communicates a sense of the continuously evolving history that such readers contain, or are contained within.

The success of this method in effectuating social change on either a collective or individual level, remains a matter of endless debate. Toward the end of his life, Pound himself appeared somewhat ambivalent about his ambitious modern epic, at once admitting to lasting obscurities and to a lack of coherence, while still affirming moments of clarity:

> I cannot make it cohere.
> . . . . . .
> to "see again,"
> the verb is "see," not "walk on"
> i.e. it coheres all right
> even if my notes do not cohere.
> Many errors,
> a little rightness,
> . . . . . .
> To confess wrong without losing rightness :
>
> (116: 816.3/27-817.1-4/16)[15]

[14] Pound, *GK*, frontispiece.

[15] Further evidence of this uncertainty is found in Pound's response to Donald Hall's question of whether he intended to revise *The Cantos* once finished: "I don't know. There's need of elaboration, of clarification, but I don't know that a comprehensive revision is in order." Interview for *The Paris Review*.

These doubts, however, arose decades after the composition of the Malatesta Cantos, and in the wake of the latter's publication, particularly in the 1930s, Pound was quite confident—perhaps over-confident—in his abilities as a poet and critic. In *Guide to Kulchur* (1938), which Pound described to one of his undergraduate professors as "a universal history of all human Kulchur or whatever, in approx. 70;000 [*sic*] words," Pound boldly states, "No one has claimed that the Malatesta cantos are obscure. They are openly volitionist, establishing, I think clearly, the effect of the factive personality, Sigismundo, an entire man."[16] That Pound singles out the sequence fifteen years after it was printed attests to its exceptional status in the poet's mind, and in many ways the Malatesta poems precede his intellectual over-extension that came with later series. Though bearing much in common with subsequent installments of *The Cantos*, they also stand apart from them in that Pound shifted from a figure like Sigismondo, whom he considered *against* the establishment, and thus outside of it, to those within the structures of power and authority, such as Thomas Jefferson, Benito Mussolini, and various emperors of China. Despite the sequence's singularity, Pound apparently failed to recognize the "Jamesian parenthesis" that existed between his scrupulous archival experience of the Quattrocento and the relative unfamiliarity of readers of the Malatesta Cantos. Only in the latter years of his life—the interview cited above was conducted in March 1960—did this gap seem to come to light.

Several years after Pound's death in 1972, Susan Howe's poetic career began, with the publication of *Hinge Picture* (1974). In the two decades leading up to the publication of *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, Howe developed her own distinct approach to the archive. Juxtaposing "Melville's Marginalia" to Pound's sequence, Howe may be seen as continuing a poetry grounded in a central "outsider" figure, and yet her documentary poetics reacts to the totalizing view of Pound's "archive" in verse, by undertaking the poetic incoherency and historical parenthesis the elder poet eventually saw therein. The palimpsestic nonlinearity and achronological rearrangement of the Malatesta Cantos are assumed by Howe, and advanced as history's resistance to cohesion. The concept of the palimpsest is much more prominent in Howe's sequence—both typographically and thematically—and imparts a heightened sense of her writing as existing in a state of continual evolution and

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[16] Ezra Pound, *Letters to Ibbotson, 1935-1952*, eds. Vittoria I. Mondolfo and Margaret Hurley (Orono, ME: National Poetry Foundation, 1979) 67 and Pound, *GK*, 194.

transition. In this respect, to Pound's question in Canto CXVI of "who will copy this palimpsest?" (116: 817.9), Howe proposes Melville's nonconformist scrivener Bartleby. Alongside his Irish progenitor—the political, intellectual, and spiritual rebel James Clarence Mangan—the copyist's insistent preference not to follow the socio-cultural conventions attempting to wall him in, reflects the obstacles to the systematic absorption of the past into a simple historical index, made to appear as accessible as it is communicable.

Howe's documentary method translates this to the domain of poetry and language, taking the archive as a material manifestation of the complex parenthesis, which paradoxically joins history to contemporaneity. Integrating the materiality of the archive into the spatially fragmented pages of "Melville's Marginalia," Howe posits the limitations of language and writing as a gap inherent to poetic transcription. The analphabetic marginal markings she traces in scouring Melville's library, and the almost mystical typography she discovers in the elusive poetic enthusiasm of Shelley's manuscripts, suggest to the reader that the original text—the first copy—always at least partially escapes the materialization of writing. Thus, there can be no "total" interpretation of history, nor any ultimately complete archive. As it is represented in Howe's documentary poetics, the archival experience, in fact, is but an encounter with the inevitable admission that insofar as everything cannot be known, everything cannot be transformed into text. The resistance to metaphrasis, then, is subsumed under the process of signification at work in the materiality of "Melville's Marginalia." This finds particular expression in the exacting use of the blank space of the page's visual field as a means of performing the intervention of absence that permeates the ever-evolving archive. In the Malatesta Cantos, documentary collage effectively dissolves generic categorizations into a hybrid form of archival writing, and while Pound's lexical and scholarly inserts do fragment the text with parentheses (often literally), they also serve as a reparative act—a way of bridging the textual gap. In the case of Howe, on the other hand, the sequence interweaves the academic prose of editorial footnotes, other snippets of bibliographic paratext, and source-based poetry, with an aim to reevaluate such corrective gestures to the historical record by drawing attention to the erasures and blanks that remain in the interstices of those textual seams.

Parallel to this development, the figurative overlapping of Pound's palimpsestic structure of archival documents becomes a literal superimposition in Howe's work, pushing typographic distinction to typographic dissonance. In so doing, the crystallizations of meaning that Pound seeks to create through his documentary mode are inverted in Howe's compositional process, whereby "the overbearing and legislating voices that drive the epics of Olson and Pound" are displaced by "a faltering style of enunciation that enacts the resistance of that historical material to revisiting by contemporary investigation."[17] Considering these two poets as part of the same genealogical line, however, this distinction may be an equal-but-opposite form of continuity: on one surface of the documentary mode is the "cause" of Pound's interrogation, or interpellation, of the historical archive, and on the verso of that same page is the "effect" of Howe's poetics of stammering, stuttering, and hesitant inarticulation.

Tracing such connectives is profitable in terms of clarifying the role of metaphrastic materiality in a documentary poetics that seeks to include, and contain, history, and in the process "make it new." Pound's totalizing, or legislating, poetic voice notwithstanding, the pages of the Malatesta Cantos bear witness to the *construction* of history. His attempt to stabilize the contemporary moment by grounding it in a series of fixed fragments from the past—rebuilt as if with the architectural durability of a temple or an archive—ironically raises the question of instability, and the historical meddling that shadows the multiplicity of interpretive readings. "Melville's Marginalia" draws out the implications of such constructional processes by shifting the documentary focus to forms of writing that are lost and/or erased—intentionally or otherwise—in the archival objective of historical conservation and restoration. The single, unified narrative that an epic seeks to coalesce from the re-materialization of fragments is upended by a reversal of figure and ground, resulting in the substrate and margins being centered in front of the reader. Language originally external to the text, therefore, is made to scatter the clean typography of the source material. The investment of Howe's sequence in the infinite possibility of the blank page in concert with the finite inarticulation of stray half-erasures, fractured syntax, and layered illegibility, counteracts closed forms of

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[17] Will Montgomery, *The Poetry of Susan Howe: History, Theology, Authority* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 93.

historical and/or literary representation. In her method of simultaneously opening up history to poetry, and poetry to history, Howe advances one of the principal innovations of the Malatesta Cantos, and *The Cantos* as a whole, in directions other than Pound himself traced.

When Ezra Pound mentions that "the problem" in writing a modern epic "was to get a form," and that the *Rock-Drill* sequence implied the "hammering" required to "[get] a certain main thesis across," he is primarily concerned with identifying—or establishing—the precise structure of material language suitable to his poetic vision.[18] Carrying on the tradition of the objectivist poet-historian, Charles Olson noted that what Pound had succeeded in offering future generations of poets was the form of the "RAG-BAG" and the "space-field" that allowed for a diversity of historical materials.[19] Of course, the poetic methodology remains embedded in such forms, and while Olson recognized the dangers of "the beak of [Pound's] ego"—in other words, his aforementioned "hammering" through the material—he nevertheless assimilated a comparable dominating voice for his own major work. Susan Howe does extend the tradition in adopting the textual heterogeneity of Pound's poetry combined with the openness of Olson's typographic field composition, but, though assuming the form, she then questions the act of getting the material onto the page—that is, the compositional process and methodological decisions "underneath" the form. Consequently, in a manner similar to her unsettling of history, a sequence like "Melville's Marginalia" draws on a kind of deconstruction of the poetic mode inherited from Pound, laying bare the editorial apparatus that is, perhaps ineluctably, written into the text of any historiographic poetry.

Developing certain key structural and formal elements of Pound's documentary poetics in such a way as to alter them according to the very compositional implications rooted therein, Howe also continues the thematic aspect of the Malatesta Cantos concerned with manipulated histories. She essentially responds to Pound's call for a more acute sense of written language's pivotal role in such manipulation, and the closer textual re-examination that ought to attend it, which was

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[18] Pound, Interview by Hall.

[19] Charles Olson, *Letters for Origin*, ed. Albert Glover (New York: Cape Goliard, 1970) 129; and *Selected Writings of Charles Olson*, ed. Robert Creeley (New York: New Directions, 1966) 82.

precisely the action Pound had taken.[20] A month after returning to Paris on 2 July 1922 following his trip to Italy, Pound had rough drafts of five new cantos (numbers nine to thirteen at the time), and writes to John Quinn on 10 August about the poem he had written on Malatesta:

> Am reading up historic background for Canto IX. [D]on't know that it will in any way improve the draft of the canto as it stands; shall probably only get more bewildered; but may avoid a few historic idiocies, or impossibilities. [...] the *minor* points that might aid one in forming an historic rather than a fanciful idea of his character seems "shrouded in mystery" or rather lies.[21]

The single canto Pound had considered more or less completed, however, would eventually grow into four, following the poet's decision to consult the original documents in the list of archives mentioned above. The mystery shrouding the subject, he determined, could only be satisfactorily addressed by examining the actual materials out of which it was formed. Susan Howe repeats the procedure, and, like Pound, produces a sequence of poems that does not dispel all myth or unravel the mystery, but invites readers into an intertextual network allowing them to also take part in the archival research. Where the structure and themes of the Malatesta Cantos imply the ongoing evolution of the historical record, "Melville's Marginalia" is actually premised on the understanding of authors as embodied in the materiality of texts, which, along with history, are subject to a cycle of revision as they continue "living." As illustrated in the typographic materiality of Howe's poetry, the palimpsest is copied and recopied, written and written over.

In a certain sense, Pound never actually stopped writing the Malatesta Cantos. The "factive personality" of Sigismondo acted as the model and substrate for the historical figures reconstructed textually in later sequences of the poet's epic work. "Verse consists of a constant and a variant," Pound wrote to Robert Creeley, "a center around which, not a box within which, every item."[22] The Tempio Malatestiano, and by extension Sigismondo, remained a constant presence throughout *The Cantos*, with

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[20] On this matter, Howe states the following: "Of course, I know that history can be falsified, has been falsified. Still, there are archives and new ways of interpreting their uncompromising details. I am naive enough to hope the truth will out." *BM*, 158.

[21] Pound, *Letters to Quinn*, 217.

[22] Quoted by Creeley in *The Collected Essays of Robert Creeley* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989) 591.

nearly a hundred references to the Malatesta sequence in the subsequent poems, all the way up to Canto CX. Pound's magpie poetics never ceased collecting and recycling fragments, even cutting and pasting language from the pages of his own text. Appropriating the words of Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi, Pound writes in Canto LXXXVI:

[...] je peux commencer
une chose tous les jours, mais
fiiniiiir (86: 580.18-20)

[...] I can begin
something every day, but
to fiiniiiish

This phrase, too, Pound reshapes in Canto XCVII with an intervening absence: "[...] / mais fi– – –nir!" (697.27-28). *The Cantos* were not ultimately finished, and in many ways the project was never intended to be, nor could be, completed. It is "the trace of a temporal process," as Christine Froula argues, "neither contained and bounded by the author during his life nor concluded and closed off by his death."[23] In correspondent fashion to the palimpsestic history it contains, the project ends with the parenthesis of drafts and fragments.

Fittingly, Susan Howe ends "Melville's Marginalia" by acknowledging that while a printed document may settle an author or a poetic thought into a concrete form, materiality belies its own apparent static surface. It rushes on into the blank space of another page, and another future. In light of the archival context out of which the poetry was formed, the mirror that Howe holds up to her own name in the final poem points to the eventual position of the fragments in the bound pages of *The Nonconformist's Memorial* being—like Pound self-reflexively wrote—"shelved" in archives unknown. In such a space of wilderness, authority, and trespassing, "Melville's Marginalia" joins the original marginalia of Melville's books, equally

[23] Christine Froula, *To Write Paradise: Style and Error in Pound's* Cantos. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984) 176.

subject to the research and re-vision of other "library cormorants" like Howe herself.[24] Following in Melville's footsteps, the cormorant Howe dove and "swam through libraries"—collecting and quoting, fragmenting and collaging—and so in turn left her own print in the archive.[25] With "Melville's Marginalia" behind her, Howe's documentary poetics continues to plunge into the same textual depths, pushing the blank space of the page with which every poem ultimately concludes to even greater prominence in the metaphrastic process of her poetic œuvre, whose materiality is evolving yet. Across time and space, perhaps Howe replies to Pound's experience of being unable to finish what was begun each new day: "And in the not yet is poetry."[26]

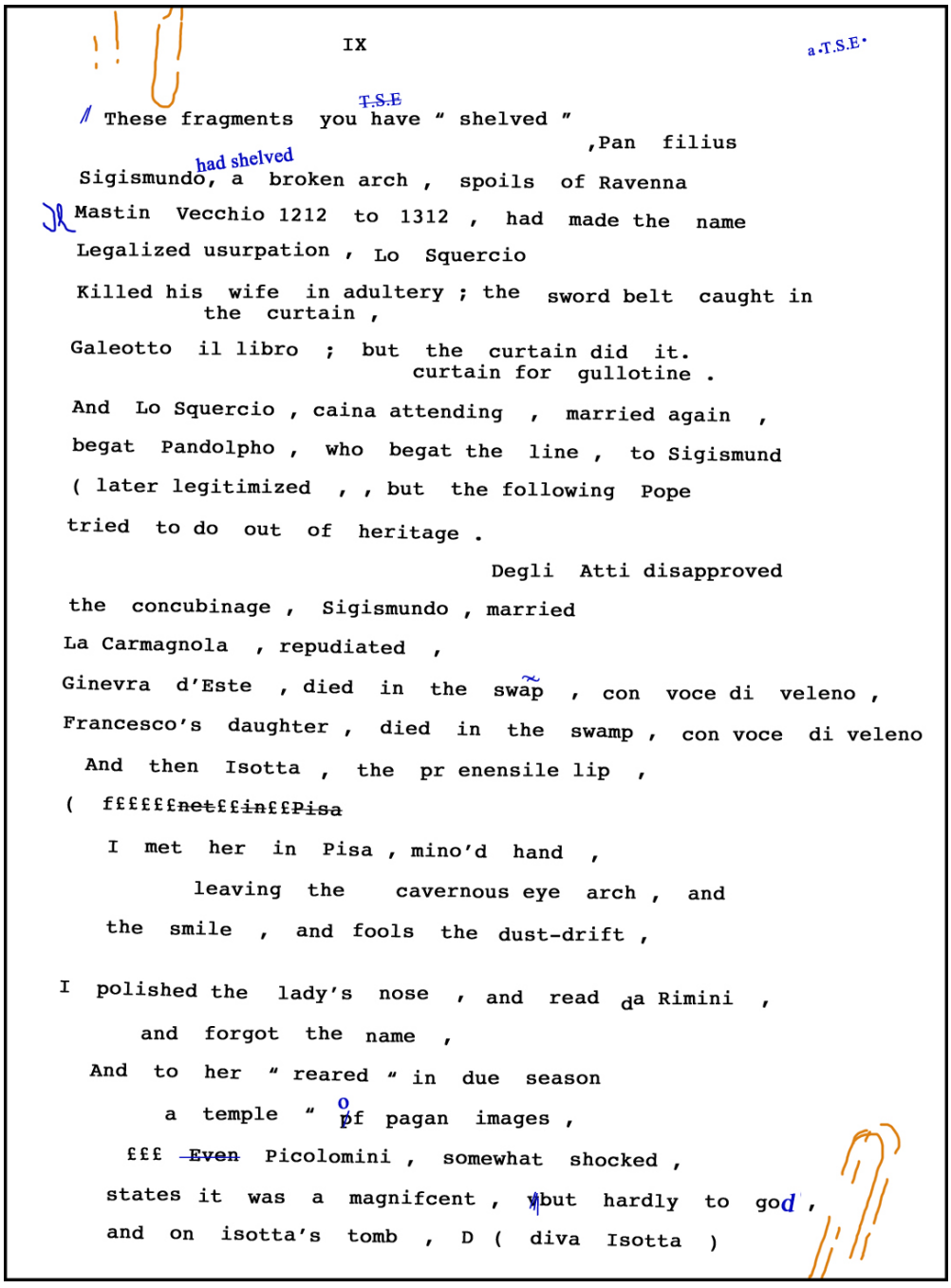
[24] Howe, *BM*, 26. The phrase is appropriated by Howe from *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol. 12, *Marginalia I: Abbt to Byfield*, ed. George Whalley (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980) ciii. Howe's essay "Submarginalia," from which the words are quoted here, was considered by her as a companion piece to "Melville's Marginalia." See also the multiple uses of the phrase on *BM* 3 and 5.

[25] Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (New York: Random House, 1950) 131. The quote also serves as the epigraph to Howe's preface for "Melville's Marginalia" (*NCM*, 97).

[26] SHP Box 50, f. 6.

APPENDIX A

Transcription of Ezra Pound's first typescript draft of the Canto IX, the present Canto VIII, located in the Beinecke Library at Yale University, EPP Box 70 f. 3149. At this stage of the composition Pound had only envisioned a single canto dedicated to Sigismondo Malatesta. The earliest manuscript pages of the canto were composed in Sirmione, Italy in June 1922 (EPP Box 70 f. 3139). Early typescript pages—primarily, f. 3145 to 3148—consist of typed fragments from Pound's reading notes, as well as various passages to be incorporated into the canto. In the "Drafts Pre-Ital," for example, at the top of the second page Pound typed "Notes Dec. 24." Composed in Paris in July 1922, after returning from Italy, the draft below is Pound's initial attempt at a "complete" canto. It is the first to be titled (i.e. "IX"), and the only to include a dedication (to T.S. Eliot). All spacing, punctuation, and spelling are as they appear in the typescript. The British pound symbol, for example, was used by Pound to overwrite/cancel text. Handwritten additions and revisions are in blue, similar to the ink used, and grey, when a pencil was used. The orange marks are from rusted paperclips, and the red is Pound's marks with a colored pencil.



IX

a·T.S.E·

~~T.S.E~~

These fragments you have " shelved "

,Pan filius

had shelved

Sigismundo, a broken arch , spoils of Ravenna

Mastin Vecchio 1212 to 1312 , had made the name

Legalized usurpation , Lo Squercio

Killed his wife in adultery ; the sword belt caught in the curtain ,

Galeotto il libro ; but the curtain did it.

curtain for gullotine .

And Lo Squercio , caina attending , married again ,

begat Pandolpho , who begat the line , to Sigismund

(later legitimized , , but the following Pope

tried to do out of heritage .

Degli Atti disapproved

the concubinage , Sigismundo , married

La Carmagnola , repudiated ,

Ginevra d'Este , died in the swap , con voce di veleno ,

Francesco's daughter , died in the swamp , con voce di veleno

And then Isotta , the pr enensile lip ,

(f£££££~~net~~££~~in~~££~~Pisa~~

I met her in Pisa , mino'd hand ,

leaving the cavernous eye arch , and

the smile , and fools the dust-drift ,

I polished the lady's nose , and read da Rimini ,

and forgot the name ,

And to her " reared " in due season

a temple " of pagan images ,

£££ ~~Even~~ Picolomini , somewhat shocked ,

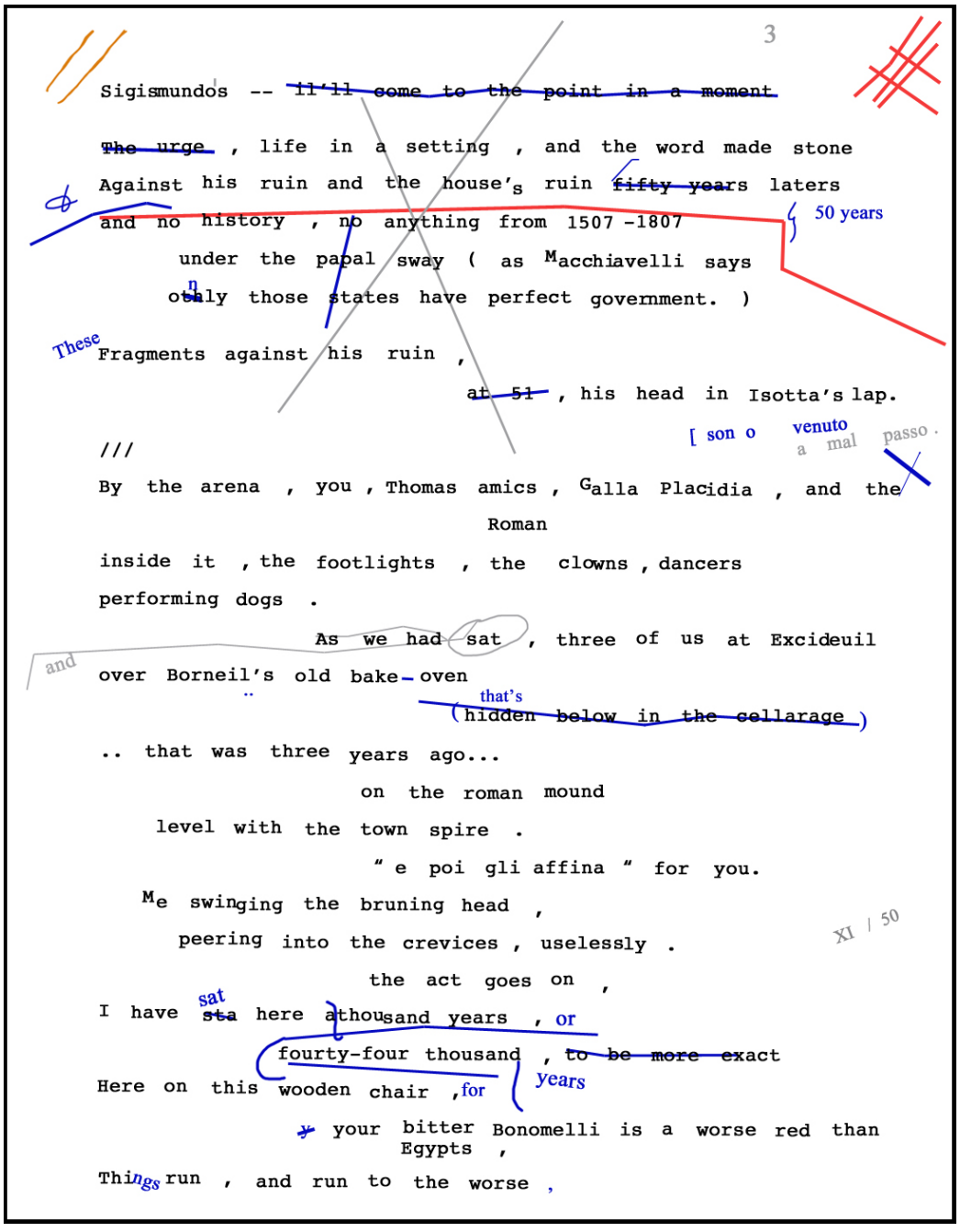
states it was a magnifcent , but hardly to god ,

and on isotta's tomb , D (diva Isotta)

Black basalt elephants , hold his own empty tomb ,
the marble waters flow over marble feet
" Primaverile " fat-rumped putti sprout from the balustrades
The mediaeval error is lifted ,
Battista Alberti , and di Duccio
turning to pagan gods ,
Ravenna's marble stolen , but carved ,
Here Pisanello , and Mino , as I have said
of Fiesole , and Pier Francesa , and the latinists ,
(the heavy tombs along the west wall still hold one ,
///
Charlemagne , Poictiers , bringing his
jongleurs , and viel players out of Spain ,
but here Rimini , the voice , the stone ,
e gai saber ,
behind it all , the urge to refound the world

life in the singers pouch
the viel slung
to the shoulder
voyageant .

La Roca , necessity ,
Il tempio , --- theft ,
oh well , you can replate Appollinaire in C£££ Classe
with flat marble slabs , whenever the wish takes you
no idea is needed .
I say that the thing had been
and a small push of cash and will , can put the
scar right again ,
carrara is handy now ,
Neptunes seat , Apollinaire , raised from the sea
washed marbles , but here ⟨ Rimini , ⟩ and the graces ,
and the genius loci ,
Fragments against his ruin ,


3
Sigismundos -- ll'll come to the point in a moment
The urge , life in a setting , and the word made stone
Against his ruin and the house's ruin fifty years laters
and no history , no anything from 1507 -1807
50 years
under the papal sway (as Macchiavelli says
otaly those states have perfect government.)
These
Fragments against his ruin ,
at 51 , his head in Isotta's lap.
[son o venuto a mal passo .
///
By the arena , you , Thomas amics , Galla Placidia , and the Roman
inside it , the footlights , the clowns , dancers
performing dogs .
As we had sat , three of us at Excideuil
and
over Borneil's old bake- oven
that's
(hidden below in the cellarage)
.. that was three years ago...
on the roman mound
level with the town spire .
" e poi gli affina " for you.
Me swinging the bruning head ,
peering into the crevices , uselessly .
XI / 50
the act goes on ,
I have sat sta here athousand years , or
fourty-four thousand , to be more exact
Here on this wooden chair , for years
your bitter Bonomelli is a worse red than Egypts ,
Things run , and run to the worse ,

Ti , Galla's hypostasis , had herself better painted

in the grey stone , cut• intgli[?] the shadow falls in from the grasses edge.

, yes a better red that analine stuff that d[?]ing your

doth the tfi red sproting straw incarnadine sucking• straw

that sa[?]y

. Ti and the Chine s empress . then , a[?] that

and the arena behind us soaks

all these are sprouts in the loam , to your

The roman takes her form from the stones , yellow

+ more clearly , straw,

(I have sat here for , you know , for fourty four
thousand years)

The Byzantine , disintegrates ,

puts on Venetian clogs ,

digs into your powdered past ,

smells e sniffs your soild cuff lace ,

At which time I ?

was lifting sedan chairs , preparing the
revolution ,

in a
(brown fustian coat).

paying the bill ,

ffffffd for the " banquet " , by Veronese .

+ ... never learning ...

hell , do we ever learn ...

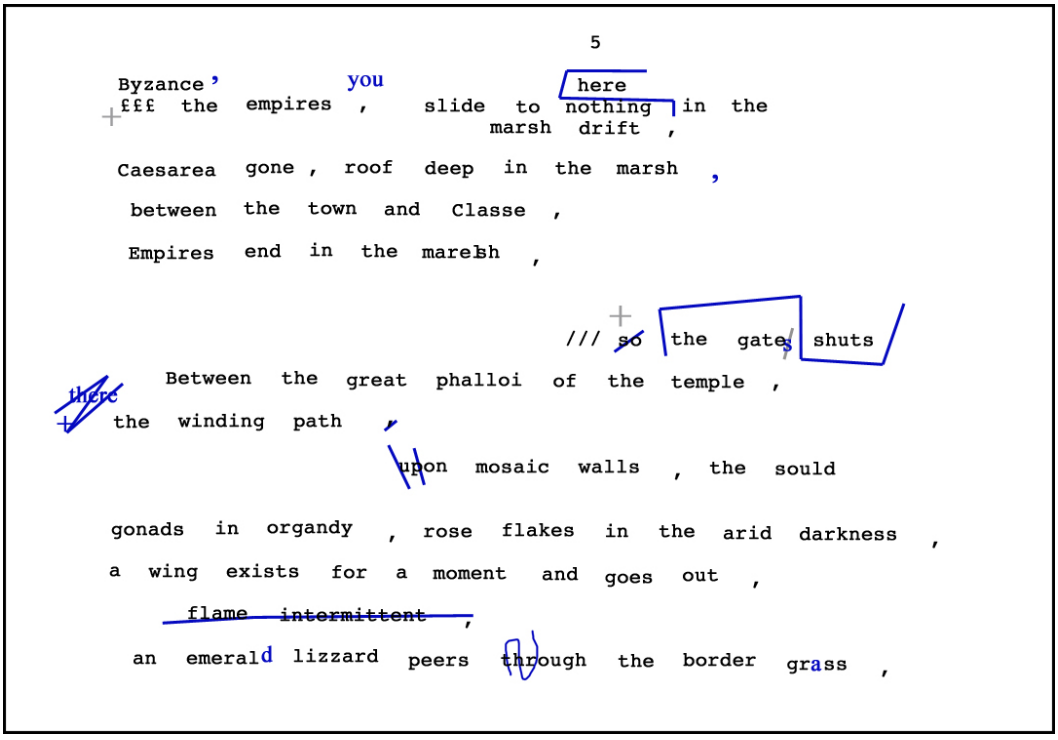
and she's burried in Ravenna ,

lit by the alabaster panes ,

yellow, sun yellow , in the gloom the gold

gathers the light against it ,

XI / 51


5
Byzance, you here
fff the empires, slide to nothing in the
marsh drift,
Caesarea gone, roof deep in the marsh,
between the town and Classe,
Empires end in the marsh,
/// so the gates shuts
Between the great phalloi of the temple,
there
the winding path,
upon mosaic walls, the sould
gonads in organdy, rose flakes in the arid darkness,
a wing exists for a moment and goes out,
flame intermittent,
an emerald lizzard peers through the border grass,

APPENDIX B

The structure and page layout of the various sections of "Melville's Marginalia" as found in two printings of The Nonconformist's Memorial, *and in the French translation of the sequence. In order to give a sense of the differences in double-page spreads in each publication, an asterisk indicates a left-hand page, and a superscript "degree" symbol indicates a right-hand page. The layout of the French publication corresponds to that found in Susan Howe's typescript drafts, and should therefore be considered the intended presentation.*

		First Edition *(New Directions)*	**Current Edition** *(New Directions)*	**French Edition** (***Théâtre Typographique***)
PARATEXT	Title Page	83º	91º	7º
	Chronology of James Clarence Mangan	85º – 87	93º – 95	9º – 11
	Preface	89º – 92	97º – 100	13º – 17
PART ONE	Abstract Poems & Prose Excerpts on Mangan	93º – 104	101º – 113	18* – 34
	"Young America in Literature"	105º – 109	114* – 118	35º – 40
PART TWO	1st Series: Herman Melville's Library	110* – 116	119º – 125	42* – 48
	2nd Series: Percy Shelley's Manuscripts	117º – 124	126* – 133	49º – 56
	3rd Series: J.C. Mangan's Biography	125º – 139	134* – 148	57º – 71
	4th Series: Miscellany & Conclusion	140* – 150	149º – 159	72* – 82

APPENDIX C

The textual sources for the poems in part one of "Melville's Marginalia" (pgs. 91-118). The underlined words are those appropriated by Howe. Unless otherwise noted, the referenced works are those owned by Melville.

POEM	SOURCE TEXT	PASSAGE(S)
Epigraph (*NCM*, 91)	Philip Massinger, *The Plays of Philip Massinger in Four Volumes*, Vol. 1 (London: G. and W. Nicol, 1805). [Not in Melville's library].	"[...] even the memorial of his mortality is given with a pathetick brevity, which accords but too well with the obscure and humble passages of his life: "March 20, 1639-40, buried Philip Massinger, A STRANGER"! (xliv-xlv)
"Bats on my wing suggest tatters" (*NCM*, 101)	Mary Shelley, *The Journals of Mary Shelley: 1814-1844*, Vol. 2, eds. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). [Not in Melville's library].	"[...] *let me in my fellow creatures* love that which is & not fix my affections on a fair form endued with imaginary attributes [...]" (399-400).
"THE MANNER OF LIVING WITH GREAT MEN" (*NCM*, 103, 104)	Jean de La Bruyère, *The Works of M. de La Bruyère: In Two Volumes. To which is Added the Characters of Theophrastus. Also The Manner of Living with Great Men; Written After the Manner of Bruyère, by N. Rowe, Esq.*, Vol. 2 (London: J. Bell, 1776).	1. Title page, 239, and 241. 2. "[…] they will be told of persons, whose life was spent in going from one house to another ; of honest women, who kept neither shops nor inns, yet had their houses open for those who would pay for their admission […]" (155). 3. "If I consider my own interest, what have I to do with people, who take it to be their privilege and birth-right to insult me" (244).[1]
	Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle,* trans. F.H. Peters, 5th ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner & Co., 1893). St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benzinger, 1947).	1. Aristotle, 114-15; Aquinas, II-II q. 161 [see chapter two].

[1] Both passages marked by Melville.

"NONCOM-PATIBLES" (*NCM*, 104)	Matthew Arnold, "The Literary Influence of Academies," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).[2]	1. "[…] —vanity ; and a serious, settled, fierce, narrow, provincial misconception of the whole relative value of one's own things and the things of others. So baneful to the style of even the cleverest man may be the total want of checks" (71). 2. "We have here no question of style, not even of grammar ; it is nothing beyond mere matter of the alphabet of art. To break these conditions is the same as to be ignorant of spelling.' […] Therefore, he must not be extravagant, and he need not storm ; he must satisfy the reason and taste,—that is his business" (67). 3. […] *bête*. It is the difference between a venial, momentary, good-tempered excess, in a man of the world, of an amiable and social weakness,—vanity ; […]" (71). 4. "A style so bent on effect at the expense of soul, simplicity, and delicacy ; a style so little studious of the charm of the great models ; so far from classic truth and grace, must surely be said to have a note of provinciality" (69).
"SIMPLE-TONS" (*NCM*, 105)	Matthew Arnold, "On Translating Homer: Last Words," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	"To be sure, here as elsewhere, the consulter must know how to consult,—must know how very slight a variation of word or circumstance makes the difference between an authority in his favour, and an authority which gives him no countenance at all ; instance, the 'Great simpleton !' (for [Greek]) of Mr. Newman, and the 'Thou fool !' of the Bible, are something alike ; but 'Thou fool !' is very grand, and 'Great simpleton !' is an atrocity" (365).[3]
"A SPEECH AT ETON" (*NCM*, 106)	Matthew Arnold, "A Speech at Eton," *Mixed Essays, Irish Essays, and Others* (New York: Macmillan, 1883).	1. Title (409) 2. "And I might go yet further, and might show you, in the mediæval world, *cutranelia*, or flexibility, quite banished

[2] All cited pages were marked and/or annotated by Melville.
[3] Marked by Melville.

"A SPEECH AT ETON" (*NCM*, 106)	Matthew Arnold, "A Speech at Eton," *Mixed Essays, Irish Essays, and Others* (New York: Macmillan, 1883).	vicissitudes, coming into honour; […]" (427).[4]
	Thomas Hobbes, "The Whole Art of Rhetoric," *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Vol. VI, ed. Sir William Molesworth, Bart, (London: John Bohn, 1840). [Not in Melville's library].	"And *honourable* are those things which are just. And revenge is *honourable*. And victory. And honour. And monuments. And those things which happen not to the living. And things that excel. And what none can do but we. And possessions we reap no profit by" (438).[5]
	Matthew Arnold, "Sweetness and Light," *Culture and Anarchy; and Friendship's Garland* (New York: Macmillan, 1883).	"The impulse of the English race towards moral development and self-conquest has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in Puritanism; nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organisation of the Independents. The Independents have a newspaper, the *Nonconformist*, written with great sincerity and ability" (21).[6]
	James Clarence Mangan, "The Unrealities," and "Another Coptic Song," *Poems of James Clarence Mangan* (New York: P.M. Haverty, 1859).	1. Title (77). 2. "*Thou must either soar or stoop, / Fall or triumph, stand or droop ; / Thou must either serve or govern, / Must be slave, or must be sovereign ; / Must, in fine, be block or wedge, / Must be anvil or be sledge"* (198).
	Matthew Arnold, "Spinoza and the Bible," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	"And, as a pendant to this denial by Spinoza of final causes, comes his stoicism : — 'Non studemus, ut natura nobis, sed contra ut nos naturae pareamus.' (*Our desire is not that nature may obey us, but, on the contrary, that we may obey nature*). [...] And a moral lesson not of mere resigned acquiescence, not of melancholy quietism, but of joyful activity within the limits of man's true sphere" (248).[7]

[4] The only passage from the essay that Melville marked (a single checkmark).

[5] This is only a possible source that remains unconfirmed. As the subsequent poem, on the same page, cites Arnold's essay on translating Homer, the phrase may be Howe's own, stemming from a Homeric context of Greek revenge and honor (e.g. Hector, Achilles, etc.), subjects mentioned in Arnold's essay.

[6] Melville did not mark this passage in his copy; it was therefore not included in Cowen's work. However, considering the title of Howe's work, Arnold's discussion of the *Nonconformist* may certainly have brought the pages to Howe's attention. An alternative source, though one not in Melville's library, is a letter from December 1857 sent by Arnold to his brother Thomas, in which he writes the following: "The eternal greatness of the literature of the Greece of Pericles is that it is the adequate expression of a first-class epoch. Shakespeare again is the infinitely more than adequate expression of a second-class epoch." Robert Liddell Lowe, "Two Arnold Letters," *Modern Philology* 52.4 (May 1955) 263.

[7] The paragraph with the Latin quotation and English translation is marked with a triple line in Melville's copy, as well as another of the same, which immediately follows the above citation. On the previous page, Melville has marked another passage that reads, "[...] and his stoicism, a stoicism not passive, but active" (247). Both mentions of stoicism are thus found in Cowen's work.

	Donald Pease, "New Americanists: Revisionist Interventions into the Canon," *boundary 2*, 17.1 (Spring 1990). [Not in Melville's library].	1. "By the term field-Imaginary I mean to designate a location for the disciplinary unconscious" (11). 2. "The political unconscious of the primal scene of their New Historicist readings embodies *both* the *repressed relationship between* the literary and the political and the *disenfranchised groups previously unrepresentable in this relationship*. And as conduits for the return of figures and materials pressed through the denial of the relationship of the field to the public world, New Americanists occupy a double relation. For as *liaisons between* cultural and public realms, they are at once within the field yet external to it. Moreover, as representatives of subjects excluded from the field-Imaginary by the previous political unconscious, New Americanists have a responsibility to make these absent subjects representable in their field's past and present" (31).

"A FRENCH ETON" (*NCM*, 106)	Matthew Arnold, "A French Eton; or, Middle Class Education and the State" *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	1. Title (425). 2. "Whether this really is so or not, it seems as if it *ought* not to be so. 'Government,' says Burke (to go back to Burke again), 'is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom."[8]
	Matthew Arnold, "The Literary Influence of Academies," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	1. "[...] qualities which are the distinctive support of poetry. But, as I have said, the qualities of genius are less transferable than the qualities of intelligence ; less can be immediately learned and appropriated from their product ; they are less direct and stringent intellectual agencies, though they may be more beautiful and divine" (49). 2. "I say, that is extravagant prose ; prose too much suffered to indulge its caprices ; prose at too great a distance from the centre of good taste ; prose, in short, with the note of provinciality" (58).[9]

[8] Text marked by Melville. Burke's writing on the French Revolution, from which the quotation originates, is also mentioned in Arnold's essay "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (12-13).

[9] Both passages are marked by Melville. Also note the phrase "note of provinciality," which Howe quotes (from page sixty-nine of the same essay) in one of the poems on *NCM*, 104. The poet's use of quotation in this manner creates intratextual documentary links across the sequence.

	Matthew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	1. "It is true that the critic has many temptations to go with the stream, to make one of the party movement, one of these *terrae filii* ; it seems ungracious to refuse to be a *terrae filius,* when so many excellent people are; but the critic's duty is to refuse, or, if resistance is vain, at least to cry with Obermann : *Périssons en résistant*" (26). 2. "So immersed are [people] in practical life, so accustomed to take all their notions from this life and its processes, that they are apt to think that truth and culture themselves can be reached by the processes of this life, and that it is an impertinent singularity to think of reaching them in any other. 'We are all *terrae filii*,' cries their eloquent advocate; 'all Philistines together. [...]'" (25).[10]
	Lady Jane Gibson Shelley, ed. *Shelley Memorials. To Which Is Added, an Essay on Christianity* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1859).	"The compilers are a sort of middle class between the real authors and the makers of dictionaries" (56).
	Matthew Arnold, "Eugénie de Guérin," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	"This quality at last inexorably corrects the world's blunders, and fixes the world's ideals. It procures that the popular poet shall not finally pass for a Pindar, nor the popular historian for a Tacitus, nor the popular preacher for a Bossuet" (139).[11]
	William Shakespeare, "King Lear," *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*, Vol. 7 (Boston: Hillard, Gray, 1837).	The explanatory footnote to the Fool's line, "If I gave them all my living" (I, iv) reads, "All my *estate* or *property*" (31).[12]
	Matthew Arnold, "On Translating Homer: Last Words," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	"Poets receive their distinctive character, not from their subject, but from their application to that subject of the ideas (to quote the Excursion) 'On God, on Nature, and on human life,' which they have acquired for themselves" (418).[13]

[10] In Melville's copy, in the first passage "Obermann" is double underlined, and the passage is marked with a checkmark. For the second quotation, he has drawn a long vertical line beside two thirds of the page.

[11] Passage marked by Melville.

[12] The Fool's next line, "Truth's a dog that must to kennel," is underlined by Melville in his copy of the book. The Shakespearean reference also links the citation from his play *Cymbeline* to the line "My fool is here," on the facing page in New Directions (*NCM*, 107).

[13] The entire passage is marked by Melville, with the word "distinctive" underlined."

"I am sprighted too" (*NCM*, 107)	William Shakespeare, "Cymbeline," *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*, Vol. 6 (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, 1837).	"I am sprighted with a fool" (252).[14]

"VERBAL PHANTOMS" (*NCM*, 108)	Matthew Arnold, "Spinoza and the Bible," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	"[...] instead of the phantom with which they have so long been cheated. [...] instead of institutions informed with the spirit of the false phantom" (240-41).[15]
	Matthew Arnold, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	"'The writers in these publications,' (the Reviews,) 'while they prosecute their inglorious employment, cannot be supposed to be in a state of mind very favorable for being affected by the finer influences of a thing so pure as genuine poetry" (2).[16]
	Matthew Arnold, "Maurice de Guérin," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	1. "And the popular authors,—those 'whose name appears once and disappears forever, whose books, unwelcome to all serious people, welcome to the rest of the world, to novelty-hunters and novel-readers, fill with vanity these vain souls, and then falling from hands heavy with the languor of satiety, drop forever into the gulf of oblivion' [...]" (84). 2. "[...] a store of that which Goethe calls *Halt* ; — since greatness can never be founded upon frivolity and corruption" (79).[17]

[14] Passage underlined and checked by Melville. The annotation to the phrase reads, "i.e. haunted by a fool, as by a *spright*."

[15] Melville's marginal markings are found on both pages, though not precisely next to the cited passages. "Phantom" is also frequently found in Mangan's poems, as well as in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales*. Its reoccurrence in these sources for Howe's sequence may have led to her line "verbal phantoms."

[16] "Inglorious employment" was underlined by Melville in his copy. On the following page, Arnold writes, "But is it true that criticism is really, in itself, a baneful and injurious employment?" (3). The proximity of "inglorious" and "injurious," and the reoccurrence of "baneful" (which appears on *NCM* 104) is noteworthy.

[17] A part of this passage is underlined by Melville.

	Matthew Arnold, "Eugénie de Guérin," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	1. "[...] to be fatally losing itself in the multiplication of dogmas, Mariolatry, and miracle mongering" (127). 2. "How we have gazed at him and loved him, and kissed him, — his wife, and we, his sisters; he lying lifeless in his bed, his head on the pillow as if he were asleep ! Then we followed him to the churchyard, to the grave, to his last resting-place [...]." (136).[18]
	Matthew Arnold, "The Literary Influence of Academies," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	1. "[...] it has not the over-heavy richness and encumbered gait of the Asiatic style ; it has glitter without warmth, rapidity without ease, effectiveness without charm" (68). 2. "The failure in good sense and good taste there reaches far beyond what the French mean by *fatuity* ; they would call it by another word, — a word expressing blank defect of intelligence, — a word for which we have no exact equivalent in English ; *bête*" (70).[19]
	Matthew Arnold, "On Translating Homer: Last Words," *Essays in Criticism* (Ticknor and Fields, 1865).	"Certainly his poetry has all the energy and power of the poetry of our ruder climates ; but it has, besides, the pure lines of an Ionian horizon, the liquid clearness of an Ionian sky" (368).[20]

"THE LAUGHTERS" (*NCM*, 110)	Jean de La Bruyère, *The Works of M. de La Bruyère: In Two Volumes. To which is Added the Characters of Theophrastus. Also The Manner of Living with Great Men; Written After the Manner of Bruyère, by N. Rowe, Esq.*, Vol. 1 (London: J. Bell, 1776).	1. "It is in vain to pretend to turn a rich blockhead into ridicule ; the laughers are still on his side" (133). 2. "Homer lives still and will ever flourish, whilst a thousand Treasures and Collectors are no more : they are utterly forgot : Are their names, or their descent, or their country known?" (148). 3. "[...] angry with the age, and but indifferently pleased with the ministiry ; he seldom opens his mouth but to reply ; blows his nose under his hat, spits in his handkerchief, gets into a corner to freeze, that the company may not hear it ; he costs nobody a compliment, or a salute : he is poor" (159).

[18] Both passages are marked by Melville.

[19] The entire paragraph, within which the first passage is found, is marked by Melville, with the exact sentence being flagged by a double line and an /x/. The emphasized words were also underlined by Melville himself. Regarding the second citation, words from this passage, annotated by Melville, were used by Howe on *NCM* 104.

[20] In the margin next to this phrase, Melville has drawn a vertical line and a double checkmark.

		4. "[...] where Men are straitened [*sic*]; after having attempted beyond their Fortune, and forced, as I may say, their destiny ; having neither virtue to forbear being rich, nor Prudence to continue rich" (151).[21]

"THE LARK WITH HER YOUNG ONES, WITH THE OWNER OF A FIELD" (*NCM*, 111)	Jean de La Fontaine, *The Fables of La Fontaine*, trans. Elizur Wright (London: William Smith, 1842). [Not in Melville's library].	[Title] (27).[22]

"False news" (*NCM*, 112)	Jean de La Bruyère, *The Works of M. de La Bruyère: In Two Volumes. To which is Added the Characters of Theophrastus. Also The Manner of Living with Great Men; Written After the Manner of Bruyère, by N. Rowe, Esq.*, Vol. 1 (London: J. Bell, 1776).	1. "We must, therefore, accommodate ourselves to every one ; we must suffer, as irremediable evils, false news, vague reflections on the government, or the interests and designs of princes [...]" (104). 2. "Why should men be blamed because Women have no Learning? What laws, what edicts prohibit them from opening their eyes, from reading, remembering, or introducing what they have read in their writings and conversations?" (78-9).[23]

(*NCM*, 113)	Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846)	1. "[…] that he never trust himself within the grasp even of his most intimate friend. If you step forward to meet him, he readily advances; if you offer him your hand, he extends his own with an air of the utmost frankness; but, though you calculate upon a hearty shake, you do not get hold of his little finger. Ah, this Monsieur du Miroir is a slippery fellow!" (153). 2. "[…] when they shall be laid in that dark chamber [coffin], whither his swift and secret footsteps cannot bring him,—then what is to become of poor M. du Miroir!" (154).[24]

[21] The first two phrases are marked by Melville, as well as the passages that precede the third.

[22] The line "THE FOOL WHO SOLD WISDOM," ultimately not included in the publication of "Melville's Marginalia," is another title of a fable from La Fontaine (64).

[23] Both passages noted by Melville. Regarding the second, see also Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*: "Why should we ever treat of any dead authors but the famous ones?" (308); and Mangan, *Poems*: "Why should a man, like a girl or a sickling, / Suffer his lamp to quenched in the tomb?" (297).

[24] In the margin next to the first passage, Melville has drawn a wavy vertical line and notes, "What can be finer." Next to the second passage is a checkmark.

APPENDIX D

La matérialité métaphrastique : l'archive typographique d'Ezra Pound et de Susan Howe

Soixante-dix ans séparent la première publication des « Malatesta Cantos » d'Ezra Pound, en 1923, et celle de « Marginalia de Melville » écrit par Susan Howe en 1993. Galvanisé par sa visite au Tempio Malatestiano à Rimini en mai 1922, Pound rédige les premières notes et ébauches de son poème à Sirmione le mois suivant, avant de retourner à Paris en juillet où il continue à travailler sur les poèmes consacrés à Sigismond Malatesta jusqu'en janvier 1923. Or, c'est son séjour de recherche en Italie—pendant lequel il visite au moins neuf archives, du Vatican à Venise—du 16 février au 20 avril qui constitue une expérience décisive dans sa composition. Ce tour des bibliothèques italiennes constituait une nouvelle méthodologie documentaire dans sa composition poétique, et approximativement une année après l'inspiration initiale du temple de Sigismond, Pound termina la séquence cruciale du projet poétique des *Cantos* qu'il développerait jusqu'à la fin de sa vie. Incidemment, la composition de « Marginalia de Melville » suivit un cheminement poétique dont la ressemblance avec celui de Pound est frappante. Alors que Susan Howe avait commencé à travailler sur d'autres séries de poèmes qui seraient regroupées dans la collection intitulée *The Nonconformist's Memorial* en juin 1989, ce n'est qu'au printemps 1991 que l'inspiration pour la séquence centrale du livre lui vint à travers une trouvaille fortuite à Philadelphie où Howe enseignait un cours de master sur le roman de Herman Melville *Billy Budd*. En fouillant et en feuilletant des ouvrages critiques sur Melville, elle découvrit les deux gros volumes de la thèse de Wilson Walker Cowen soutenue à l'université de Harvard, dont le titre était justement « Marginalia de Melville ». Cet événement eut lieu dans la bibliothèque de l'université de Temple, et déclencha le même élan poétique que le temple à Rimini avait éveillé en Pound presque soixante-dix ans plus tôt. Le travail initial sur ce long poème débuta à l'été 1991, suivi, tout comme pour Pound, d'un séjour de recherche dans les universités américaines de Nouvelle-Angleterre, notamment la bibliothèque Houghton de Harvard et la bibliothèque Sterling de Yale. Le tapuscrit final de la séquence fut achevé pendant l'été 1992 ; la composition dura donc environ une année. D'une archive à l'autre,

Howe semblait retracer inconsciemment le parcours de Pound en écrivant cette œuvre dont la poétique documentaire prenait comme modèle celle de son prédécesseur moderniste.

Le fait que le monument, au sens propre, qui constitue la fondation des « Malatesta Cantos » ait trouvé son équivalent dans le monument figuratif d'un livre d'archive qui a formé la base de « Marginalia de Melville » n'est pas sans importance, en ce qui concerne les projets documentaires des deux poètes. Dans l'œuvre de Pound, le Tempio représente l'incarnation des idéaux que celui-ci voyait dans la vie de Sigismond, ainsi qu'une trace matérielle des ambitions culturelles et artistiques que le condottiere « vorticiste » avait réalisées en façonnant la civilisation qui entourait sa vie chaotique en un concept communicable visuellement. Sigismond est présenté dans le paradis terrestre de Pound comme un « tourbillon » d'intelligence créative liée aux pouvoirs sociaux. Pour Howe, d'autre part, les personnalités d'auteurs tels que Melville, Percy Bysshe Shelley, et James Clarence Mangan sont matérialisées dans le langage visuel des notes marginales, les esquisses et les hésitations qui caractérisent les ébauches manuscrites, et même sur les pages imprimées d'un livre relié. Les interprétations du matériau historique de chacun des deux poètes convergent alors dans la décision de Pound de considérer la matérialité du temple comme parallèle « textuel » et métaphore structurale de la composition poétique de sa séquence, et dans l'investissement de Howe dans la matérialité de sa collection de documents, comme s'il s'agissait de l'espace architectural d'une archive historique.

Au cœur de cette intersection réside, comme nous l'avons suggéré, le concept de matérialité. En transformant la construction extérieure et les murs intérieurs du Tempio en archive textuelle composée de fragments documentaires, et en y recréant le format du codex et des pages individuelles, Pound et Howe mettent tous deux en pratique une poétique ancrée dans une matérialité métaphrastique en rapport avec leurs sujets respectifs. Il s'avère que chaque poète se trouve être au centre de ses archives. Il est vrai que pour Pound l'idée de fonder la poésie de son épopée moderne sur les spécificités de la textualité n'était pas tout à fait nouvelle : déjà les trois poèmes préliminaires du projet—connus sous le titre « Ur-Cantos », et publiés en 1917—comprenaient des textes classiques comme encadrement poétique. Pour les œuvres qui précédaient « Marginalia de Melville » Howe utilisa également des matériaux d'archives de manière approfondie. Néanmoins, les résultats des recherches

des deux poètes pour les séquences en question étaient uniques à ce stade-là de leurs carrières poétiques. La technique adoptée par Pound pour les « Malatesta Cantos » lui permettait d'étendre les horizons de sa poésie épique afin de fusionner la prose et les dynamiques structurelles d'une poétique documentaire avec la poésie lyrique et le mode narratif du récit historique. « L'esprit moderne », dit-il, « contient des éléments hétéroclites ». Les sujets des épopées, il explique par la suite, doivent être « condensés pour qu'ils rentrent dans la forme. La nature de l'individu, les éléments hétéroclites de la conscience contemporaine[1] ». La méthode de l'idéogramme que Pound développa à partir de son interprétation d'une étude sur les caractères écrits chinois comme matériau poétique, menée par l'historien de l'art Ernest Fenollosa, est appliquée au concept d'un « poème comprenant l'histoire » dans les « Malatesta Cantos » sur la base des divers matériaux textuels—tel que les documents épistolaires du quattrocento—et structures architecturales—tel que le Tempio Malatestiano—dont la forme permet au réseau abstrait des idées culturelles d'être rendu concret. Cet « esprit d'une époque » emmêlé, ce que Pound appelait *paideuma*, était donc intégré dans la matérialité de la vision poétique de Pound grâce à la technique de documentation archivistique.

La séquence de poèmes développée à partir du réseau d'écritures construit par Susan Howe élargissait également sa portée poétique. « Marginalia de Melville » comprend une étendue plus vaste ainsi qu'un plus grand nombre de textes et documents que les séquences précédentes. Certains longs poèmes importants dans son œuvre poétique comme *L'Articulation temporaire des formes sonores*, « Thorow », et *Une bibliographie du livre du roi, ou Eikon Basilike* sont principalement ancrés dans une seule personnalité historique ou dans un seul texte, respectivement, Hope Atherton, Henry David Thoreau, et le livre d'Edward Almack qui porte le même titre. Dans « Marginalia de Melville » en revanche, Matthew Arnold et Percy Shelley font partie d'une constellation d'auteurs qui sont aussi présents dans le texte que les personnalités centrales de Melville et Mangan. Dans les parties ultérieures des *Cantos*, et dans les recueils futurs de Howe, les deux poètes rassemblent leurs matériaux de façon centripète autour d'un individu clé, tout en fonctionnant dans un mode documentaire. Les « Adams Cantos » de Pound mettent en pratique une

[1] Ezra Pound, "Ezra Pound, The Art of Poetry, No. 5," interview mené par Donald Hall, *The Paris Review* 28 (Summer-Fall 1962).

technique de citation considérable à partir d'une seule source textuelle (i.e. *L'Œuvre de John Adams*), une méthodologie choisie aussi pour les séquences tardives *Section: Rock-Drill* et *Trônes*. L'œuvre de Howe intitulée *Pierce-Arrow* est basée principalement sur les écritures de Charles Sanders Peirce, et Howe s'approprie les documents d'archives de Jonathan Edwards comme source poétique dans *Frolic Architecture*. Cela n'a pas pour but de suggérer que l'aspect polyphonique de toutes les dernières séquences de Pound et de Howe en est forcément atténué, mais plutôt de souligner la singularité des « Malatesta Cantos » et de « Marginalia de Melville ». En ce qui concerne ce dernier, la multiplicité des voix écrites est en grande partie due à la méthode documentaire de Howe qui consiste à associer librement des fragments textuels découverts dans divers livres se trouvant dans la bibliothèque personnelle de Melville. Un tel processus compositionnel remonte aux innovations de Pound : d'une part, sa méthode, comme Howe elle-même l'explique, qui consiste à « tirer un mot ou une phrase ou un fragment et [...] de se laisser guider ailleurs par cela » ; d'autre part, l'intégration de l'histoire au moyen de la rematérialisation des documents d'archives comme reconstruction matérielle[2]. Pourtant, en fondant sa séquence sur le mode documentaire, la poétique Howienne représente un avancement important de la matérialité des « Malatesta Cantos » dans le sens où la typographie radicalement abstraite de la mise en page non seulement met en relief cette matérialité, mais aussi la traduit en sujet de ces poèmes.

La même idée s'applique à la conception de l'archive. Pour Pound c'est un moyen par lequel le Tempio Malatestiano et l'histoire de Sigismond pourraient être représentés et assimilés à la poésie d'une épopée moderne. La matérialité métaphrastique de son processus documentaire permet au lecteur d'entrer dans un espace architectural qui sert, en quelque sorte, de monument archivistique de civilisation, d'histoire et de culture. Pour Howe, l'expérience-même de l'archive—accompagnée de toute l'histoire et toutes les implications socioculturelles qui y sont associées—est un élément thématique clé de sa poésie. Son propre processus de transformation matérielle mène le lecteur dans les zones textuelles, souvent controversées, qui structurent l'espace d'archives dans le but d'explorer le palimpseste historique des documents. Néanmoins, dans les deux cas la métaphore spatiale du texte comme site matériel est établie. Par conséquent, si les séquences «

[2] Susan Howe, interview mené par Lynn Keller, *Contemporary Literature* 36.1 (Spring 1995) 31.

contiennent » l'histoire c'est en grande partie grâce à la manière dont elles s'approprient la matérialité visuelle des archives et l'intègrent. De tels sites sont évidemment « construits », et comprennent tout une variété de mécanismes socioculturels qui sont complexes et exercent une influence importante sur la transmission et la réception de l'histoire écrite. En effet, les choix compositionnels de Pound et Howe, selon lesquels les pages de leur poésie portent les traces de leurs recherches dans les archives, impliquent les lecteurs dans ces mécanismes, car ils s'immiscent eux aussi entre les sources textuelles et suivent le processus de la (re)découverte au cours duquel les poètes confrontent les questions de l'autorité institutionnelle, de la falsification de l'histoire et de la marginalisation. L'archive n'est pas conçue, ni par l'un ni par l'autre, comme un simple dépôt du passé textuel mais, au contraire, comme au carrefour unique des discours, des voix et des pouvoirs qui s'influencent mutuellement. De ce fait, l'archive, chez Pound et Howe, exige une plasticité et une participation actives. En matérialisant l'engagement des poètes, les séquences de poèmes reflètent les sites et les textes qu'elles s'approprient et qu'elles annotent. Par conséquent, les œuvres renégocient l'historiographie, premièrement par le biais d'une sélection de documents selon une perspective objectiviste qui prend en compte leur matérialité, et deuxièmement par une restructuration palimpsestique des fragments extraits et manipulés. Le parataxe intrinsèque à une telle méthodologie se traduit dans la méthode de l'idéogramme chez Pound, et dans la typographie multidirectionnelle chez Howe. Dans les deux cas, les techniques transfèrent la non-linéarité de l'expérience des archives de chaque poète à la participation du lecteur dans la reformulation, ou la transformation, de l'histoire textuelle.

Alors que les « Malatesta Cantos » et « Marginalia de Melville » incarnent implicitement les objectifs des archives que sont la conservation et/ou la restauration, le processus de sélection mentionné ci-dessus est un aspect sur lequel Susan Howe diverge de son prédécesseur moderniste. Ezra Pound a reconnu qu'une matérialité métaphrastique était indispensable afin de trouver une forme « suffisamment élastique pour traiter le matériau nécessaire » d'un sujet comme Sigismond et le Tempio Malatestiano. Reconnaissant en plus qu'un tel processus « exige[ait] des obscurités et des pénombres », le poète était confronté au « problème de rectification sans perdre ce

qui est juste[3] ». Autrement dit, Pound cherchait à retravailler les matériaux de manière à ce que la forme clarifie les ambigüités et exécute un geste correctif, qui par la suite cristallise le fil rouge de l'histoire et le *sagetrieb*—ou la transmission des traditions culturelles—dans lequel Pound voyait la poésie jouer un rôle essentiel. Dans sa monographie sur la poétique américaine d'Ezra Pound et de William Carlos Williams, la critique Hélène Aji, au sujet des objectifs poétiques de Pound, conclut avec concision, « Les *Cantos* se veulent une entreprise de compréhension et d'interprétation totale du monde qui doit aboutir sur une connaissance absolue et la réduction du multiple à l'unique [...]. » Elle écrit peu après que la lutte de Pound « émane d'un désir d'imposer une forme au monde, de façonner le monde en accord avec un idéal, de le centrer et de le calquer sur sa propre imagination[4] ».

Si l'*ego scriptor* de Pound refaçonne l'esprit socioculturel via une composition poétique à partir des matériaux tirés d'autres sources écrites, le poète tente également, en parallèle, de reformuler les connaissances et le goût de ses lecteurs. Par une poétique qui relie des objets et des concepts à première vue incompatibles, Pound considérait la poésie comme un moyen qui pourrait comprendre ce qui échappe aux limites strictes de la critique académique et de la conventionalité formelle des récits historiques. Les capacités signifiantes de la matérialité visuelle dans les « Malatesta Cantos » ainsi que l'élasticité des genres et des langages sont des exemples de la façon dont la poésie peut innover l'écriture. Dans un sens cette ambition provient de ce que Pound voyait être une lacune culturelle et littéraire dans les connaissances du public du vingtième siècle, ou simplement une diversité d'expériences fracturante entre les individus, qui rend ensuite difficile l'articulation efficace des concepts corrélés qui structurent la poésie de Pound :

> Je vous dirai quelque chose que je crois être une forme américaine, c'est la parenthèse Jamesienne. On se rend compte que la personne à laquelle on parle n'a pas suivi les mêmes étapes, et donc on les retrace. En fait la parenthèse Jamesienne est beaucoup plus présente de nos jours. Ceci, je pense, est quelque chose d'indubitablement américain. La difficulté quand on rencontre un autre homme qui a beaucoup d'expérience de trouver le point où la sienne et la vôtre se croisent, afin qu'il comprenne vraiment ce dont vous parlez[5].

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[3] Pound, interview pour *The Paris Review*.

[4] Hélène Aji, *Ezra Pound et William Carlos Williams : pour une poétique américaine* (2001) 241, 246.

[5] Pound, interview pour *The Paris Review.*

Une partie de la réponse de Pound à ce phénomène, qu'il identifie comme caractéristique de la modernité, est un retour aux origines culturelles enterrées dans les dessins et les configurations de l'histoire à travers les canaux documentaires offerts par les archives. Voyant les forces de l'histoire, nuisibles ou non, en action dans la matérialité des traces écrites du passé, les techniques transformatives de l'appropriation et du collage employées par Pound donnent autant aux *Cantos* la capacité d'englober la masse des éléments hétéroclites dans « le bazar et la brocante » du monde moderne, que celle de recréer et jouer le monde historique selon les idiosyncrasies de sa propre vision poétique[6]. Partant de la nature caractéristique de la conservation des archives, Pound fait ressortir le matériau du passé pour le faire fusionner avec le moment contemporain, invoquant simultanément les idéaux qu'il identifie dans le langage de ses documents. De cette façon, une séquence telle que les « Malatesta Cantos » cherche à plonger les lecteurs dans un espace palimpsestique qui, de par la superposition du passé et du présent, communique un sens de l'évolution continue de l'histoire dont ces mêmes lecteurs font partie.

Que cette méthode réussisse ou non à effectuer un changement social au niveau collectif ou individuel, cela reste à débattre. Vers la fin de sa vie, Pound lui-même semblait quelque peu ambivalent à l'égard de son épopée moderne très ambitieuse. Il avoue que certaines obscurités s'y trouvent toujours et qu'il y voit un manque de cohérence, mais il affirme tout de même qu'il y a également des moments de clarté. Dans un des derniers poèmes de l'œuvre (Canto CXVI), il déplore le fait qu'il « n'arrive pas à la cohérence » et puis plus tard dans le texte il déclare : « tout se tient assez bien / même si mes notes ne se tiennent pas. / Beaucoup d'erreurs, / un peu de justesse ». Quoi qu'il en soit, ces doutes furent soulevés plusieurs décennies après la composition des « Malatesta Cantos » et, dans le sillage de leur publication, particulièrement dans les années trente, Pound ne manquait pas de confiance en lui et en ses capacités en tant que poète et critique, peut-être même à son propre détriment. Dans son œuvre *La kulture en abrégé*—que Pound décrit dans une lettre à un de ses anciens professeurs d'université comme « une histoire universelle de toute la culture humaine ou n'importe quoi d'autre en approximativement 70 000 mots »—l'auteur affirme hardiment, « Personne n'a déclaré que les Malatesta cantos sont obscurs. Ils

[6] Ezra Pound, *Guide to Kulchur* (1938) frontispice.

sont ouvertement volitifs et établissent clairement à mon avis l'effet de la personnalité factive, Sigismond, un homme entier ».[7] Le fait que Pound ait choisi cette séquence de poèmes en particulier quinze ans après qu'elle a apparu dans la revue *Criterion* témoigne de son statut exceptionnel pour le poète, et il est vrai que d'un certain point de vue les poèmes sur Malatesta précèdent la période où Pound se disperse intellectuellement et où ses ambitions semblent dépasser quelque peu ses capacités. Bien qu'ils aient de nombreux points en commun avec des séquences ultérieures des *Cantos*, ils s'en distinguent par le choix d'une personnalité centrale qui, selon Pound, était *contre* l'ordre établi, et donc en dehors du système de pouvoir, alors que plus tard Pound opta pour des individus faisant partie de ces structures d'autorité, tels que Thomas Jefferson, Benito Mussolini et certains empereurs de Chine. Malgré la singularité des « Malatesta Cantos », il apparaît que Pound n'ait pas eu conscience de la « parenthèse Jamesienne » qui séparait son expérience archivistique et scrupuleuse du quattrocento et la méconnaissance relative chez les lecteurs des poèmes. Ce n'est que vers la fin de sa vie—l'interview citée ci-dessus a été menée en mars 1960—que cette lacune sembla lui être révélée.

Plusieurs années après la mort de Pound en 1972, la carrière poétique de Susan Howe commença avec la publication de *Tableau de charnière* (1974)[8]. Au cours des deux décennies qui séparent cet événement et la publication de *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, Howe développa une approche distincte à l'archive. Juxtaposant « Marginalia de Melville » à la séquence de Pound, l'œuvre de Howe pourrait être considérée comme la continuation d'une poésie centrée sur une personnalité marginale ; néanmoins sa poétique documentaire va à l'encontre de la perspective totalisante de l'archive Poundienne en adoptant l'incohérence poétique et la parenthèse historique dont le poète aîné s'était finalement rendu compte. La non-linéarité palimpsestique et l'organisation non chronologique des « Malatesta Cantos » sont adoptées par Howe et avancées comme la résistance de l'histoire à la cohésion. En effet, le concept du palimpseste est beaucoup plus visible dans la poésie de Howe—aussi typographiquement que thématiquement—et révèle une conscience élevée de l'état d'évolution et de transition constantes de son écriture. En réponse à la question que Pound pose dans le Canto CXVI, « qui copiera ce palimpseste ? », Howe propose le

[7] Ezra Pound, *Letters to Ibbotson, 1935-1952* (1979) 67. Pound, *Guide to Kulchur* (1938) 194.
[8] Ce titre est une citation de *La Boîte Verte* de Marcel Duchamp.

scribe non-conformiste de Melville nommé Bartleby, accompagné dans la séquence de l'Irlandais qui l'a inspiré—le rebelle politique, intellectuel et spirituel James Clarence Mangan. La préférence insistante du copiste de ne pas suivre les conventions socioculturelles qui l'enferment reflète les obstacles à l'absorption systématique du passé dans un simple index historique, construit pour paraître aussi accessible que communicable.

La méthodologie documentaire de Howe traduit cette idée dans le domaine de la poésie et du langage, où elle considère que l'archive est une manifestation matérielle de la parenthèse complexe qui relie paradoxalement l'histoire à la période contemporaine. Intégrant la matérialité de l'archive dans la spatialité fragmentée des pages de « Marginalia de Melville », Howe pose les limitations du langage et de l'écriture comme lacune inhérente à la transcription poétique. Les marques marginales non alphabétiques qu'elle trace en explorant la bibliothèque personnelle de Melville, et la typographie presque mystique qu'elle découvre dans l'enthousiasme poétique fugace des manuscrits de Shelley, suggèrent au lecteur que le texte original—la première copie—échappe toujours, au moins partiellement, à la matérialisation de l'acte d'écriture. Ainsi, il ne peut y avoir d'interprétation « totale » de l'histoire, ni d'archive qui ne soit finalement complète. Représentée dans la poétique documentaire de Howe, l'expérience de l'archive n'est en fait qu'une rencontre avec la reconnaissance inévitable que, dans la mesure où tout ne peut pas être connu, tout ne peut pas non plus être transformé en texte. La résistance au passage d'une forme à une autre est donc assimilée au processus de signification à l'œuvre dans la matérialité de « Marginalia de Melville ». Cela s'exprime en particulier dans l'utilisation exacte de l'espace blanc du champ visuel de la page en tant que manière d'illustrer l'intervention de l'absence qui imprègne l'archive en évolution continuelle. Dans les « Malatesta Cantos » le collage documentaire efface les catégorisations génériques, créant une forme hybride de l'écriture archivistique, et bien que les insertions lexicales et académiques de Pound fragmentent (souvent littéralement) le texte de parenthèses, elles sont aussi un acte réparateur, puisqu'un moyen de réduire l'écart textuel. Dans le cas de Howe, en revanche, la séquence tisse la prose académique des notes éditoriales de bas de pages, autres fragments du paratexte bibliographique, et de la poésie composée à partir des sources existantes, avec l'objectif de réévaluer de tels actes

rectificatifs en réorientant l'attention vers les effacements et les blancs qui demeurent dans les interstices de ces coutures textuelles.

En parallèle de ce développement, le chevauchement figuratif de la structure palimpsestique des documents d'archives chez Pound devient la superposition littérale dans l'œuvre de Howe, poussant la distinction typographique à la dissonance typographique. Ce faisant les cristallisations des significations que Pound cherche à créer par son mode documentaire sont inversées dans le processus compositionnel de Howe où « les voix dominatrices et autoritaires qui actionnent les épopées d'Olson et de Pound » sont déplacées par « un style d'énonciation hésitant qui représente la résistance de ce matériau historique à être le sujet des investigations contemporaines[9] ». En même temps, si l'on considère que ces deux poètes font partie de la même ligne généalogique, cette distinction pourrait être une forme, contraire mais équivalente, de continuité : au recto du mode documentaire est « la cause » de l'interrogation, ou l'interruption, Poundienne de l'archive historique, et au verso de la page est « l'effet » de la poétique Howienne du bégaiement, de l'hésitation et de l'inarticulation.

Retracer ces croisements permet de clarifier le rôle de la matérialité métaphrastique dans une poétique documentaire qui cherche à inclure et contenir l'histoire afin de renouveler le matériau et donc sa compréhension. En dépit de la voix totalisante ou autoritaire de Pound, les pages des « Malatesta Cantos » témoignent de la *construction* de l'histoire. Sa tentative de stabiliser le moment contemporain en l'ancrant dans une série de fragments fixes du passé—reconstruits avec le matériau architectural pérenne du temple ou de l'archive—soulève ironiquement la question de l'instabilité, et de l'ingérence historique qui accompagnent la multiplicité des lectures interprétatives. « Marginalia de Melville » fait ressortir les implications de ces processus de construction grâce à une focalisation sur les formes de l'écriture qui ont été perdues et/ou effacées—intentionnellement ou non—dans les démarches de conservation et de restauration historiques pratiquées dans les archives. Le récit singulier et unifié qu'une épopée cherche à formuler à partir de la rematérialisation des fragments est détourné par une inversion de la figure et du fond dont le résultat est que la surface matérielle et les marges sont mis en exergue pour le lecteur. Le langage « extérieur » du texte principal selon les conventions disperse la typographie propre et nette du matériau de la source. L'investissement de la séquence de Howe dans la

[9] Will Montgomery, *The Poetry of Susan Howe: History, Theology, Authority* (2010) 93.

possibilité illimitée de la page blanche, en parallèle de l'inarticulation limitée des effacements partiels, de la syntaxe fracturée et de l'illisibilité superposée, agit contre les formes fermées de la représentation historique et/ou littéraire. Grâce à sa méthode qui ouvre simultanément l'histoire à la poésie, et la poésie à l'histoire, Howe fait avancer une des innovations principales des « Malatesta Cantos », et les *Cantos* dans l'ensemble, dans d'autres directions que celles tracées par Pound lui-même.

Quand Ezra Pound mentionne que la difficulté d'écrire une épopée moderne « était de trouver une forme », et que la séquence tardive *Rock-Drill* laisse entendre « le martèlement » nécessaire à « transmettre une certaine thèse », son intérêt principal est d'identifier et d'établir précisément la structure du langage appropriée à sa vision poétique[10]. Charles Olson, qui continuait la tradition objectiviste du poète-historien au milieu du vingtième siècle, a noté que la réussite de Pound avait été d'offrir aux poètes des générations suivantes la forme du « sac fourre-tout » et le « champ spatial » qui permettaient de rassembler une diversité de matériaux historiques[11]. La méthodologie poétique, évidemment, reste intégrée dans cette forme, et bien qu'Olson ait été conscient des dangers du « bec de l'égo de Pound »— c'est-à-dire sa méthode de percer le matériau à coup de « marteau »—il a tout de même adopté une voix dominatrice comparable dans son œuvre majeure *The Maximus Poems*. Il est vrai que Susan Howe aussi développe la tradition en assimilant l'hétérogénéité textuelle de la poésie Poundienne dans la composition ouverte par champ typographique d'Olson, mais elle s'approprie à cette forme tout en questionnant l'acte de transférer le matériau à la page poétique—autrement dit le processus compositionnel et les décisions méthodologiques *derrière* la forme. Par conséquent, de la même façon qu'elle déstabilise l'histoire, une séquence comme « Marginalia de Melville » fait preuve d'une sorte de déconstruction du mode poétique hérité de Pound, révélant le dispositif éditorial qui, peut-être inéluctablement, est écrit dans le texte de n'importe quelle poésie historiographique.

Un aspect de la continuation de cette tradition chez Howe consiste à développer certains éléments structurels et formels clés de la poétique documentaire de Pound de manière à les modifier en fonction des implications compositionnelles qui y sont enracinées. De plus, elle fait avancer les intérêts thématiques des «

[10] Pound, interview for *The Paris Review*.
[11] Charles Olson, *Letters for Origin*, ed. Albert Glover (1970) 129. *Selected Writings of Charles Olson*, ed. Robert Creeley (1966) 82.

Malatesta Cantos » liés aux manipulations de l'histoire. Elle répond en fait à l'appel de Pound pour un sens plus aigu du rôle essentiel du langage écrit dans ces manipulations—ainsi que l'analyse textuelle plus pointue qui devrait l'accompagner—ce qui était justement l'action menée par Pound lui-même. Un mois après son retour à Paris le 2 juillet 1922 à la suite de son séjour en Italie, Pound avait le manuscrit de cinq nouveaux poèmes (les cantos neuf à treize à ce moment-là). Il écrit à John Quinn le 10 août au sujet du poème sur Malatesta :

> Je fais de la recherche sur le contexte historique du Canto IX. Je ne suis pas sûr qu'elle serve à améliorer la version actuelle du poème. Probablement je ne serai qu'encore plus confus, mais peut-être éviterai-je quelques bêtises historiques, ou impossibilités. [...] les points *mineurs* qui pourraient aider à former une idée historique plutôt que fantaisiste de son caractère [Sigismond] semblent « entourés de mystère » ou plutôt de mensonges[12].

Pourtant ce poème unique que Pound considérait plus ou moins terminé finirait par en devenir quatre à l'issue de la décision du poète de consulter les documents originaux aux archives mentionnées plus haut. Le mystère cachant le sujet ne pouvait selon lui être élucidé de manière satisfaisante qu'en étudiant les vrais textes à partir desquels il avait été créé. Susan Howe suit les mêmes démarches, et tout comme Pound, rédige une séquence de poèmes qui ne dissipe pas le mythe et n'essaie pas de résoudre le mystère, mais invite plutôt les lecteurs à parcourir un réseau intertextuel qui leur permet de participer eux aussi à la recherche d'archives. Alors que la structure et les thèmes des « Malatesta Cantos » *suggèrent* l'évolution continue de l'histoire écrite, « Marginalia de Melville » est en fait *basé* sur l'idée que les auteurs sont représentés par la matérialité des textes qui, en parallèle de l'histoire, sont soumis à un cycle de révisions pendant qu'ils continuent à « vivre ». Illustré dans la matérialité typographique de la poésie Howienne, le palimpseste est copié et recopié, écrit et réécrit.

D'un certain point de vue, Pound n'a en réalité jamais cessé d'écrire les « Malatesta Cantos » . La « personnalité factive » de Sigismond est devenue le modèle et la base de toutes les personnes historiques que les séquences successives du projet épique du poète ont reconstruites textuellement. « La poésie consiste en une constante

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[12] Ezra Pound, *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn: 1915-1924*, ed. Timothy Materer (1991) 217.

et une variante » écrit Pound à Robert Creeley, « un centre autour duquel, non pas une boîte dans laquelle, toute chose[13] ». Le Tempio Malatestiano, et par extension Sigismond, demeurait une présence constante tout au long des *Cantos* dont les poèmes ultérieurs, jusqu'au Canto CX (sur 117), font référence à la séquence sur Malatesta presque cent fois. Tel une pie, Pound n'a jamais cessé de ramasser et de recycler des fragments, coupant et collant même le langage sur les pages de son propre texte. Dans le Canto LXXXVI, Pound insère la citation suivante du sculpteur roumain Constantin Brancusi :

> [...] je peux commencer
> une chose tous les jours, mais
> fiiniiiir[14]

Pound modifie et réécrit également cette phrase dans le Canto XCVII, ajoutant une absence intermédiaire : « [...] / mais fi– – –nir! ». Le projet des *Cantos* ne fut finalement pas achevé, mais en un sens, Pound n'avait jamais eu l'intention de le terminer. Il est « la trace d'un processus temporel », selon l'argument de Christine Froula, « ni contenu et délimité par l'auteur pendant sa vie, ni conclu et fermé par sa mort ».[15] Correspondant à l'histoire palimpsestique qu'il contient, le projet se termine avec la parenthèse d'ébauches et de fragments.

De façon appropriée, Susan Howe conclut « Marginalia de Melville » en reconnaissant que même si un document publié semble fixer un auteur ou une pensée poétique dans une forme concrète, la surface apparemment statique de la matérialité est en réalité trompeuse. Elle court vers l'espace blanc d'une autre page et d'un autre avenir. Au vu du contexte d'archives dans lequel la poésie a été créée, le miroir que Howe tient devant son propre nom dans le dernier poème indique que les fragments trouvés sur les pages reliées dans *The Nonconformist's Memorial* finiront un jour sur les étagères des archives inconnues. Dans cet espace d'ouverture, d'autorité et de transgression, « Marginalia de Melville » rejoindrait les notes marginales des livres de Melville, et la séquence pourrait également être le sujet de recherches et de révisions

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[13] Cité par Creeley dans *The Collected Essays of Robert Creeley* (1989) 591.
[14] Ezra Pound, *The Cantos* (1993) 86.
[15] Christine Froula, *To Write Paradise: Style and Error in Pound's* Cantos (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984) 176.

d'autres « cormorans des bibliothèques » comme Howe elle-même[16]. Suivant les pas de Melville, Howe a plongé et « nagé dans des bibliothèques[17] », collectionnant et citant, fragmentant et collant, et a donc à son tour laissé sa propre empreinte sur l'archive. La poétique documentaire de Howe continue d'explorer les mêmes profondeurs textuelles, donnant à l'espace blanc de la page—où tout poème trouve sa fin—encore plus d'importance dans le processus transformatif de son œuvre poétique dont la matérialité continue d'évoluer.

[16] Susan Howe, *The Birth-mark* (1993) 26.
[17] Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (1950) 131.

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INDEX

A

ABC of Reading. See Pound, Ezra
Acqua, Madonna dell', 167
Acquabello, Enrico, 275, 287, 289, 291, 293
Adams, John, 30, 47, 49, 157, 161, 310, 433, 481, 538
Aeschylus, 415
Ahearn, Barry, 153, 502
Aji, Hélène, 11-12, 23, 27, 50, 435, 465, 483, 532, 536
Alberti, Leon Battista, 139-40, 144, 150, 156, 167-68, 175, 192, 196, 199, 206, 208, 217, 219, 245, 254, 258, 281, 493
Aldington, Richard, 20-21, 531
Alexander, Michael, 174, 410, 528
Alighieri, Dante, 70, 237, 433, 527
  Divina Commedia, 70
Alfonso of Aragon, 80, 82, 135
Almack, Edward, 383, 481
Altieri, Charles, 28-29, 531, 533
Alvise, Luigi, 190, 195, 197-200, 211, 216-17, 219, 281-82
Amphion, 152
Ancona, 106, 277, 280, 478
Aphrodite, 70, 167, 252
Aphrodite, Arsinoe, 252
Apollinaire, Guillaume, 52
Apollo, 152, 263
Apollonius of Rhodes, 70
  Argonautica, 70
Aquinas, Saint Thomas, 357-58, 498, 525
Aretino, Pietro, 244
Argonautica. See Apollonius of Rhodes
Aristotle, 68, 157, 357-58, 498, 525
Armory Show of 1913 (New York City), 20
Arnold, Matthew, vi, 307, 312, 316, 346-48, 351, 360-65, 368, 370-75, 411, 440, 460-61, 481, 499-505, 525, 540
  Culture and Anarchy, 499, 525
  Essays in Criticism, vi, 312, 316, 346, 360-65, 369, 373-75, 411, 440, 460, 499, 501-505, 525
  Irish Essays, 369-70, 494
  Mixed Essays, 499, 525
Assisi, 478
Atherton, Hope, 353, 434, 481
Atti, Isotta degli, v, 58, 69, 113, 126, 136-37, 139-40, 145, 165, 170, 173-74, 176-81, 183, 187, 204-05, 207, 209, 212, 216-18, 223-25, 228, 233, 239, 249, 252, 280-83, 293, 478, 492, 494
Auerbach, Erich, 121, 534
Augustus, Arch of (Rimini), vi, 140, 161, 175, 412

B

Back, Rachel Tzvia, 327, 338, 340, 359, 417-18, 438, 532
Baldassarri, Stefano Ugo, 292, 541
Banchi, Luciano, 89, 215, 275, 278, 541
Barbo, Pietro (Pope Paul II), 84-85, 136, 155, 276, 278, 285, 287, 289, 357, 431, 498, 525, 534, 537, 540
"Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street. *See* Melville, Herman
Bathsheba, 115, 174
Battaglini, Francesco Gaetano, v, 126, 286, 541
Baudelaire, Charles, 188
Bayle, Pierre, 438
Beasley, Rebecca, 158, 529
Beckett, Tom, 341, 346, 418, 430, 433, 523
Beinecke. *See* Yale University, viii, 29, 59, 74, 111, 128, 202, 269, 522, 525
Beltramelli, Antonio, 126, 137, 173, 176, 238, 541
Benjamin, Walter, 186-87, 211-12, 431, 539
Benzi, Andrea del, 83, 127, 130, 132, 215, 230, 232, 284, 293
Bergson, Henri, 6
Berney, Elizabeth, vi, 412
Bernstein, Michael André, 33-34, 183-84, 529
Bernstein, Charles, 310, 315, 440, 532
Berry, Eleanor, 14-15, 536
Beuys, Joseph, 323
Bibliography of the King's Book or, Eikon Basilike, A. See Howe, Susan
Biblioteca Civica Gambalunga (Rimini), 201, 269, 289, 541
Biblioteca Malatestiana (Cesena), 243-45
Billy Budd. See Melville, Herman
Biondo, Flavio, 244
Bird, William, 58, 93, 103, 127, 162, 180
Blackmur, R.P., 244
Blanchot, Maurice, 314-15, 538
Bloomfield, Mandy, 327, 532
Bodleian Library (Oxford University), vi, 383, 407, 417, 425-26, 527
Bollard, Margaret Lloyd, 31, 536
Bollas, Christopher, 462
Bóllobás, Enikö, 14-15
Bologna, 159, 478, 541
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 431
Bonomelli, Geremia, 494
Borneil, Girart, 494
Borgia, 164
Bornstein, Daniel, 67
Bornstein, George, 9-10, 60, 274, 529, 536

Boston, 1, 20, 37, 297, 306, 312, 316, 346-47, 360, 362, 380, 438, 440, 458
Bracciolini, Poggio, 221
Bradley, F.H., 6
Broglio, Gaspare, 79, 86, 88, 126, 143, 149, 266, 269, 275, 278-79, 281, 283, 289, 293, 541
Cronaca universale, 79, 86, 88, 289, 541
Buffalo, 12, 37, 535
Bunting, Basil, 271
Burckhardt, Jacob, 47, 292, 541
Burgin, Christine, 303
Burke, Edmund, 312, 369, 374, 501
Bush, Ronald, 274, 529
Buss, Kate, 58, 180
Butterick, George, 34, 524
Byron, George Gordon (Lord), 314, 330, 415
Byzantium, 166, 251-52, 494-95

C

Caesarea, 166, 251-52, 287, 495
Cage, John, 6, 52, 83, 190, 525, 531
Cain, 330, 463
Callicrates, 252
Calliope, 47, 68-69, 99, 101, 113, 128, 221, 261, 263, 274, 277, 279, 431, 530
Campiglia, 89, 279
Carmagnola, La, 492
Carrara, 478
Carson, Anne, 296, 360, 421, 525, 542
Castalia, 152
Casti, Giambatista, 339, 341, 525
Cavalcanti, Guido, 268
Cesena, v, 119, 227, 242-49, 253, 255, 478
Charlemagne, 493
Charles I (King of England), 383
Childs, John Steven, 200, 529
Christianity, 139, 170, 173, 225, 380, 497, 527
Churchill, Winston, 431
Classe, 159, 160-61, 163, 166-71, 174, 219, 231, 239, 251-52, 266, 273, 276, 493, 495
Clementini, Cesare, 270-72, 277, 280, 293, 541
Clifford, Brendan, 455, 459
Codex Alexandrinus. *See Holy Bible*
Codex Sinaiticus. *See Holy Bible*
Coleridge, Hartley, 476
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 255, 379, 415, 476, 490, 525, 540
Commentarii, I. See Piccolomini, Enea Silvio
Cortona, 478
Coup de Dés, Un. *See* Mallarmé, Stéphane
Coverdale, Myles. *See Holy Bible*
Cowen, Wilson Walker, vi, 45, 55, 306, 312-13, 320, 339, 343-46, 349-52, 355, 361-62, 372, 382-83, 388, 395, 398, 439, 447-48, 458, 466, 478, 500, 540
Creekmore, Hubert, 13, 21, 190
Creeley, Robert, 33, 35, 43, 444, 488-89, 524, 525, 527
Cremona, 104
Criterion, The, 108, 164, 520-21
Cronaca universale. See Broglio, Gaspare
Cubism, 8, 20-21
Culture and Anarchy. *See* Arnold, Matthew
Cummings, E.E., 16, 153, 521, 530
Cunard, Nancy, 60
Cymbeline. See Shakespeare, William

D

Da Xue. *See* Pound, Ezra, *Ta Hio*
Davidson, Michael, 33, 43, 52-53, 337, 343, 348, 473, 529, 533, 539-40
Davis, Alex, 1, 86
Dazzi, Manilo Torquato, 244
Debths. See Howe, Susan
Dekker, George, 68, 431, 529
Delphi, 152, 155-56
Demeuth, Charles, 26
Derrida, Jacques, 342-43, 535
Dewey, John, 37
Dial, The, 74, 151, 160, 191, 233, 522, 539
Dickinson, Emily, 19-20, 156, 309-10, 313, 315, 319, 331, 353, 359, 401, 408, 411, 433-34, 444, 456, 470, 472, 523-24, 530, 533, 540
Discipula veritatis. See Piccolomini, Enea Silvio
Divina Commedia. See Alighieri, Dante
Divus, Andreas, 70, 480
Doria, Charles, 33, 529
Drafts & Fragments of Cantos CX-CXVII. See Pound, Ezra, *Cantos*
Draft of XVI. Cantos, A. See Pound, Ezra, *Cantos*
Draft of XXX Cantos, A. See Pound, Ezra, *Cantos*
Drucker, Johanna, 10, 536, 542
Drumcliffe (Ireland), 464
Dublin, 306-07, 376, 393, 454-55, 457, 526
Dublin University Magazine, vii, 339-40, 459, 468, 526-27
Duccio, Agostino di, 140, 150, 156-57, 223, 493
Duchamp, Marcel, 8, 20, 38, 299, 525, 531, 537
Duncan, Robert, 8, 67, 262, 336, 530, 537
Dunciad, The. See Pope, Alexander
DuPlessis, Rachel Blau, 380, 525, 533, 539
Dworkin, Craig, 52-53, 314-15, 335-36, 523, 533

E

Eaves, Duncan T.C., 67, 262, 530

Edmond, J.M., 101
Edwards, Hannah, 302
Edwards, Jonathan, 80, 267, 302, 481, 523, 529
Edwards, Sarah Pierpont, 303
Egoist, The, 21, 24, 521, 536
Eleven New Cantos XXI-XLI. See Pound, Ezra, *Cantos*
Eliot, T.S., 2, 6, 8, 11, 18, 43-44, 61-67, 86, 97, 102, 106, 108, 140, 158, 160, 165, 189, 250, 259-61, 263, 274, 331, 476, 492, 494, 520-21, 525-26, 529-30, 537
Sacred Wood, The, 6, 160, 476, 525
The Waste Land, 18, 44, 61-65, 69-70, 94, 97, 147, 165, 259-60, 345, 537
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 1, 8, 307, 309, 315, 345, 346, 351, 374, 438, 526
Epicurus, 127, 232
Epistolae. See Piccolomini, Enea Silvio
Epstein, Jacob, 257, 461
Erasmus, 447
Essays in Criticism. *See* Arnold, Matthew
Este, Borso d', 126, 136, 283
Este, Ginevra d', 492
Europe of Trusts, The. See Howe, Susan
Eysteinsson, Astradur, 1, 536

F

Falon, Janet Ruth, 307, 318, 450, 505
Fano, 155, 193, 196, 201, 208, 227, 238-42, 245, 247, 253, 255, 285, 478
Fenollosa, Ernest, 21, 35, 480, 540
Ferrara, 155, 478
Finaly, Ian Hamilton, 308
Finnegan's Wake. See Joyce, James
Fletcher, Catherine, 261, 541
Florence, 74-75, 77-78, 80, 88-89, 91, 97, 99, 104, 115, 118, 148, 150, 155, 240, 254, 261-62, 267, 291, 293, 478, 541
Foglia, 119-20
Forlì, 165
Foscari, Francesco, 279, 293
Fossombrone, 266, 275
Foster, Edward, 347-48, 430, 474, 524
Fourcade, Dominique, viii, 323, 419, 522-23
Fox, Valerie, 398, 536
Frame Structures. See Howe, Susan
Francesca, Piero, 40, 67, 77, 106, 108, 110-11, 142, 268, 493
Franklin, R.W., 19
Free Verse, 11-20
Frobenius, Leo, 134, 480, 540
Frolic Architecture. See Howe, Susan
Froula, Christine, 121, 490, 518, 529
Frow, John, 94, 540
Furia, Philip, 167, 197, 200-01, 226, 529

G

Galla Placidia, 251-55, 494-95
Garuffi, Giuseppe Malatesta, 126
Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir. *See* Pound, Ezra
Gaudier-Brzeska, Henri, 257, 299, 461. *See also* Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*
Genari, Pietro di, v, 190, 196, 199, 200-01, 203, 207-08, 216-17, 219-20, 223-24, 227, 229, 234
Genette, Gérard, 338-39, 539
Genoa, 478
Gianozio, 266-67
Gibbon, Edward, 38
Ginsberg, Allen, 19, 529
Glassgold, Peter, 318
Godwin, Joscelyn, 156, 541
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 332, 347, 498
Golding, Alan, 33, 529, 533
Gosmann, Uta, 359, 456, 533
Gragg, Florence, 91-92
Graves, Robert, 7, 100
Greaney, Patrick, 68, 540
Greenwald, Ted, 299
Grenfell Press, 301-02, 305
Grigioni, Carlo, 275, 287, 291, 541
Grubbs, David, 323, 327, 355, 524, 533
Guérin, Eugénie, 497, 499
Guérin, Maurice, 316, 497, 499
Guide to Kulchur. *See* Pound, Ezra
Guilford, 322, 329, 524
Guiney, Louise, 340, 369, 455, 459, 526

H

H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), 5, 8-9, 20, 30-31, 526, 533, 537
Hafif, Marcia, 319
Haiku. *See* Hokku, 22
Hakutani, Yoshinobu, 22, 518
Hall, Donald, 40, 222, 480, 482-84, 488
Hallberg, Robert von, 34-36, 40, 530, 533
Halley, Catherine, 43, 360, 417, 524
Hamilton, John, 80, 299, 308, 529
Hamilton, Richard, 525
Hamilton, Scott, 530
Hannibal (Barca), 215, 229
Hardy, Thomas, 415, 526
Harper, Michael, 46-47, 68, 73, 80, 125, 128, 142, 185, 210, 221, 265, 279, 284, 363, 431-32, 465, 527, 530-31, 542-43
Harvard University, vii, ix, 223, 243, 306, 313, 338, 342-43, 345, 361, 383, 445, 448, 478-79, 532, 540-41
Houghton Library, vii, ix, 1, 20, 306, 316, 338, 346, 361-62, 388, 403, 438, 445, 448, 450, 458, 460, 479, 540, 551
Widener Library, 342, 444

Hawthorne, Nathaniel, vii, 307, 309, 351, 450, 458, 498, 505, 526
Helen of Troy, 70, 173, 174
Henry VIII (King of England), 448
Hesse, Eva, 80
Higginson, Thomas, 19
Hinge Picture. See Howe, Susan
Hobbes, Thomas, 371, 494, 526
Hofmannsthal, Hugo von, 315
Hokku, 22
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 5, 307, 526
Holy Bible, 139, 312, 365, 386, 388, 392, 408, 414-15, 446-49, 451, 499, 542
Codex Alexandrinus, 447
Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, 447
Codex Sinaiticus, 447
Coverdale, Myles, 448
Matthew, Thomas (John Rogers), 448
Tyndale, William, 448
Homer, 26, 70, 169, 174, 411, 433-34, 480, 500, 504
Odyssey, The, 70, 480
Homeric Hymns, 70, 272, 500
Horace, 411
Houghton Library. *See* Harvard University
Hours Press, The, 60, 194, 265, 520
Howard, Scott, 302, 519, 525
Howe, Mark DeWolfe, 306
Howe, Susan, iv-x, 20, 29, 37-43, 45-46, 49-53, 55, 257, 296-482, 485-91, 497-98, 500-01, 503-04, 522-25, 532-36
Birth-mark, The, viii, 50, 309, 311-13, 315, 319, 331, 342, 344, 348, 353, 379, 383-84, 387, 394, 401, 404, 417, 425-26, 430, 433, 435, 438, 444-45, 449-52, 470, 472, 474, 489-90, 523-24
Debths, 301, 302, 304, 370, 414, 522
Europe of Trusts, The, viii, 322, 431, 432-33, 522
Frame Structures, iv, v, viii, 38, 296, 299, 438, 444, 464, 522
"Secret History of the Dividing Line," iv, v, 41, 303, 310-11, 407, 534-35
Hinge Picture, v, 37, 38, 299, 301, 305, 332, 333, 485
Midnight, The, viii, 38, 296, 301, 303, 322-23, 331, 411-12, 522, 532, 534
My Emily Dickinson, 20, 319, 331, 353, 401, 411, 523
Nonconformist's Memorial, The, viii, 307, 313-14, 317, 320-21, 323-27, 329-30, 335, 337, 340-41, 343, 347, 349-51, 353, 355-56, 359-63, 367, 369, 375-77, 380, 382, 384-86, 388, 390, 392-94, 397-403, 405, 407-09, 411, 413-16, 422-23, 425, 438, 441, 443, 446, 448, 453-57, 459-60, 462-63, 468, 470-76, 491, 498-99, 501-05
"Bibliography of the King's Book or, Eikon Basilike, A," 303, 305, 327, 359, 367, 383, 425, 436, 480, 532, 534
"Melville's Marginalia," 43, 45-46, 50-56, 296-482, 485-91
"Silence Wager Stories," 305
Pierce-Arrow, 45, 52, 303, 331, 425, 428, 481, 522, 534
Quarry: Essays, The, 417, 450, 523
Singularities, iv, vi, 39, 304, 353, 417, 421, 435, 522, 534
"Articulation of Sound Forms in Time," 38, 353, 433, 461, 480
"Scattering As Behavior Toward Risk," iv, vi, 39, 420-21, 534
"Thorow," 38, 304, 310, 480, 523, 535
Sorting Facts, 349, 523
Souls of the Labadie Tract, 257, 303, 327, 331, 434, 522, 524
Spontaneous Particulars, 303, 353, 522
That This, v, 301, 303-04, 333, 419, 523
"Frolic Architecture," 301-04, 461, 481, 524
Thiefth, 355, 358, 364, 392, 524
Tom Tit Tot, v, 301-02, 304, 523, 534
Western Borders, The, v, 121, 305, 523, 539
"Where Should the Commander Be?," 39, 523
Huisman, Rosemary, 11-13, 540
Hulme, T.E., 20, 158, 529
Hutchinson, Anne, 434
Hynes, Gladys, 60

I

Ibbotsen, Joseph Darling, 485, 521
Ilion. *See* Troy
Imagism, 5, 18, 20-21, 23, 28, 46, 101, 196, 257, 520
Ingold, Tim, 348
Inis Cathaigh (Ireland), 464
Isaiah (Biblical prophet), 157
Iseult, 115, 174, 178
Italian Cantos. *See* Pound, Ezra, *Cantos*

J

Jackson, Andrew, 252
Jackson, Laura Riding, 7, 100, 529
Jackson, Thomas, 6-7, 47, 100, 252, 526, 529, 530
Jarrell, Randall, 33, 537
Jefferson and/or Mussolini. *See* Pound, Ezra
Jefferson, Thomas, 3-4, 47, 49, 433-34, 485, 521
Jenkins, Lee M., 86, 536
Johnson, Sir William, 417, 434, 481
Joost, Nicholas, 151, 539
Joyce, Elisabeth, 50-51, 327, 348-49

Joyce, James, 44, 50-51, 307, 327, 339, 341, 348-49, 361, 370, 393, 455, 481, 526, 534, 537
Finnegan's Wake, 370
Ulysses, 44

K

Kaminsky, Ilya, 335, 528
Kandinsky, Wassily, 257
Keller, Lynn, 38, 298-99, 301, 308, 311-12, 316, 318-19, 323, 327, 359, 361, 416, 450, 478, 481, 524
Kennedy, Richard, 16, 516
Kenner, Hugh, 4, 16, 26, 101, 140, 157-59, 184, 186, 188-91, 209, 216, 252-54, 530, 539
Kern, Stephen, 1, 438, 528, 537
Kimpel, Ben D., 67, 262, 530
King Lear. See Shakespeare, William

L

La Bruyère, Jean de, 307, 348, 351, 354, 356, 358, 360, 363, 368, 375-77, 498, 504-05, 526
La Fontaine, Jean de, 307, 443, 505, 526
Laing, Olivia, 308, 542
Landor, Walter Savage, 173-74, 247, 293
La Roca, 493
Latin Vulgate, 478
Latium, 172-74, 180
Lax, Robert, 308
Leaves of Grass. See Whitman, Walt
Legge, James, 3
Lerner, Ben, 134, 461, 534, 539
Levenson, Michael, 7, 537
Lewis, Charlton, 1, 80, 92, 125, 142, 186, 250, 265, 407, 534, 537, 542
Lewis, Joel, 407, 534
Lewis, Pericles, 1, 537
Liebregt, Peter, 156-57, 530
Lilley, Kate, 301, 534
Little Review, The, 21, 263, 521, 528
Liveright, 16, 102, 521, 530
Lloyd, David, 31, 321, 453, 536
London, 7, 20, 60, 100
Lottieri, Zanobi, 89, 279
Lowe, Robert Liddell, 500, 540
Lowell, Amy, 20, 537-38
Lustra. *See* Pound, Ezra
Lytton, Sir Edward Butler, 371

M

Ma, Ming-Qian, 50, 534
Mac Low, Jackson, 6, 526
MacCarthy, Anne, 393, 455, 537
Machiavelli, Niccolò, 431, 494
Make it new, 1-9
Makin, Peter, 157, 530
Malatesta Cantos. *See* Pound, Ezra, *Cantos*, *Draft of XVI. Cantos*
Malatesta, Galeazzo, 142, 266, 275, 281
Malatesta, Novello, 136, 243-45, 260
Malatesta, Sallustio, 126, 207, 209-13, 216-17, 224, 241, 273
Malatesta, Sigismondo, iv-v, ix, 5-6, 11-12, 15, 30, 22, 24, 31, 47-48, 55, 58, 61-99, 102-299, 345, 372, 396, 431, 433, 453, 474, 478-79, 481-82, 485, 489, 492, 494, 541-42
and effigy, 91-92, 121-27, 228-30, 241, 284-85, 293
and Medici letter (Canto VIII). *See* Medici, Giovanni de'
and Post-bag letters, 183-225
and Pius II. *See* Piccolomini, Enea Silvio
and Tempio. *See* Tempio Malatestiano
Mallarmé, Stéphane
Coup de Dés, 13, 126
Mangan, James Clarence, vii, 45, 51, 55, 306-07, 312, 314, 320-21, 330, 335, 339-41, 350, 353-63, 368, 371-77, 380, 393-96, 400, 403-06, 424, 434, 447, 452-69, 474-81, 486, 489, 497, 499, 503, 505, 526, 536-37
Manning, Mary, 38, 307
Marangoni, Francesco, 201
Marche, Le, 120
Marecchia River, 115, 141
Marginalia de Melville. *See* Théâtre Typographique
Marinetti, Filippo, 127
Marker, Chris, 349, 470, 523, 535
Martin, Agnes, 308, 319, 336, 542
Marvell, Andrew, 307
Marx, Leo, 396, 540
Massèra, Aldo Francesco, 113
Massinger, Philip, 330, 340, 475, 476, 498, 527
Maximus Poems, The. See Olson, Charles
Mazzuchelli, Gianmaria, 126
McCaffery, Steve, 6, 508
McGann, Jerome, 12-13, 19, 60-61, 127, 203, 401, 530
McLane, Maureen, 37, 297-99, 301, 351, 400, 524
McNamara, Robert, 47, 292, 479, 530
Medici (family), 104, 108, 261
Medici, Alessandro de', 71, 99, 261, 279, 541
Medici, Cosimo de', 69, 106, 113, 115-16, 118, 136, 280, 293
Medici, Giovanni de' (and letter in Canto VIII), iv, 63-64, 66-67, 69, 74, 95-97, 99, 102-03, 105-08, 111-19, 142-47, 154, 170, 219, 262, 267-68, 271, 290-91, 293
Medici, Giulio de', 261
Medici, Lorenzo de', 67, 261, 267
Meehan, C.P., 340, 393, 454-56, 526

Meehan, James, 340
Melville, Elizabeth Shaw, 320, 398, 446, 448
Melville, Herman, vii, ix, 45, 51, 55, 306-07, 312-16, 320-21, 330, 343-54, 358-72, 375, 377, 380, 383, 388, 393-400, 403, 405-07, 419-24, 433-34, 439, 443-52, 457-58, 465-66, 476-81, 486, 490-91, 497-505, 527
Bartleby, the Scrivener, 306, 330, 350, 361, 363, 374-77, 394, 396, 405-06, 422, 424, 457, 462, 465-66, 475-76, 486
Billy Budd, 353, 363, 406, 421-22, 449, 465, 478, 527
Moby-Dick, 423-24, 527
Metamorphoses. See Ovid
Micah (Biblical prophet), 157
Michaux, Henri, 312, 542
Midnight, The, See Howe, Susan
Milan, 59, 80, 83, 114, 150, 339, 478, 525, 541
Milano, Jacobi di, 201
Milton, John, 70, 383
Paradise Regained, 70
Mitchel, John, 339, 356, 363, 371, 393, 453, 459, 460-63, 526
Mixed Essays, Irish Essays, and Others. See Arnold, Matthew
Moby-Dick; or, The Whale. See Melville, Herman
Modena, 478
Moe, Henry Allen, 111
Montefeltro, Federico da, 79, 106, 136, 149, 233-34, 261, 266, 275, 278-79, 281, 283
Montefiore, 279
Montgomery, Will, 42, 45, 51-52, 325, 327, 425, 428, 433, 462-64, 475, 487, 534
Morea, 136, 242, 252, 258
Moses, 139
Mottram, Eric, 31, 518
Museum of Modern Art, 20, 297, 301, 304, 343, 408, 523
Mussolini, Benito, 49, 485

N

Naples, 89, 142, 279
Narcissus, 328, 330-31, 416, 419
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 431
Neoplatonism, 156-57, 170, 530
Neoplatonsim, 139-40, 150, 156
Neptune, 138, 157. *See also* Poseidon
New Directions, i, 70, 85, 92, 95, 99, 102, 104-05, 107, 110, 113-14, 120, 123, 165, 193-94, 206, 215, 221, 230, 246, 259, 273, 288, 302-03, 305, 318, 354, 360, 365, 367, 371, 374, 409, 423, 444, 448, 450, 452, 465, 497, 502
New Latin Dictionary. *See* Lewis, Charlton
Nicholls, Peter, 4, 5, 8, 50, 352, 370, 434-35, 461, 531, 534, 537
Nichols, Miriam, 452-53, 534
Nidastore, 272, 285, 293
Nikolova, Olga, 127, 274, 531
Nonconformist's Memorial, The. See Howe, Susan
North, Michael, 1-3, 26, 48-49, 309, 531, 538, 540
Nuti, Matteo (da Fano), v, 193, 196, 201, 208, 216-20, 244-45

O

Objectivism, 9, 11, 20, 24-25, 27-29, 41-42, 517-18, 539
Odysseus, 169
Odyssey, The. See Homer
Olson, Charles, iv, 8-9, 18, 29, 33-43, 254, 296, 317, 351, 437, 444, 487-88, 523, 527, 529-30, 538-39
Maximus Poems, The, iv, 18, 33- 38, 40, 43, 254, 296, 538, 542
Oppen, George, 28-29
Orgel, Stephen, 448
Orsini, Aldobrandino, 215, 278, 293
Pitigliano, 89, 215, 278, 541
Orwell, George, 431
Oudart, Clément, 8-9, 537
Ovid, 411
Metamorphoses, 70

P

Palla, Lunarda da, 191, 207-08, 212, 217, 223-24, 282-83
Paley Library. *See* Temple University
Paris, 58, 60-61, 74, 153-54, 478, 489
Paris Review, The, ix, 37, 40, 222, 296-97, 351, 360, 400, 421, 480, 484, 522, 524, 542
Parnassus (Mount), 152
Pasti, Matteo de', v, 144, 150, 157, 179, 199, 200-01, 203, 207-08, 216-19
Pastor, Ludwig Friedrich August von, 278, 541
Paul II (Pope). *See* Barbo, Pietro
Pauthier, M.G., 3
Pavannes and Divigations. *See* Pound, Ezra
Pease, Donald, 372, 496, 540
Peirce, Charles Sanders, 434, 481
Pennabilli, 113, 115
Pericles, 495
Perloff, Marjorie, 7, 8, 35, 44, 46, 48, 50, 83, 190, 221, 267, 302-03, 523, 531, 533-34, 539
Perugia, 478
Pesaro, 79, 149, 170, 266, 275, 279, 281, 293, 478
Philadelphia, 14, 440, 478, 526, 528
Picabia, Francis, 20, 26
Piccinino, Jacopo, 106

Piccolomini, Enea Silvio (Pope Pius II), iv, 78-83, 90-92, 121, 123, 125, 127-28, 130-32, 136, 143, 150, 155, 167, 172-74, 215, 228-34, 240-41, 276, 283-85, 287, 293, 492, 541-42
Commentarii, I, 79-80, 82, 84, 90, 92, 121, 150, 167, 172-73, 231-32, 541
Discipula veritatis, 82-83, 284
Epistolae, iv, 83-84
Pierce-Arrow. See Howe, Susan
Pindar, 497
Piombino, 192
Pisa, 478, 492
Pisan Cantos, The. See Pound, Ezra, *Cantos*
Pisanello (Pisano, Antonio di Puccio), 125-26, 170, 179, 493
Pitigliano, Count of. *See* Orsini, Aldobrandino
Pius II (Pope). *See* Piccolomini, Enea Silvio
Platina. *See* Sacchi, Bartolomeo
Plethon, Georgios Gemistos, 150, 155-57, 170, 224, 254, 541
Poe, Edgar Allan, 315, 404, 527
Poetry magazine, 18, 20-22, 27, 196, 335, 480
Poictiers, Guillaume, 138, 141, 147, 493
Pope, Alexander, 410-11
Dunciad, The, 70
Poseidon, 155-57, 170, 493
Pound, Dorothy Shakespear, 60, 99, 194
Pound, Ezra, iv-v, viii-x, 1-49, 53-54, 56, 58-204, 206-303, 308, 333, 338-40, 343, 349, 352-53, 361, 372, 381, 396, 416, 430-31, 433-35, 437, 443-45, 451-53, 461-62, 473-74, 478-90, 520-22, 526, 528-32, 536, 538
ABC of Reading, viii, 21, 68, 173, 222-23, 247, 258, 262, 264, 271, 289, 340, 474, 479, 520, 528
Collected Poems of Ezra Pound (1926), 22
Cantos LII-LXXI, iv, 2-4
Cantos, The, ix, 2, 4-6, 10, 28-29, 33-34, 38-39, 44, 46-48, 54, 58-73, 79-80, 88, 90, 93-94, 99, 103, 108, 120-21, 133, 135-37, 140-41, 144, 147, 150-52, 155, 157, 160, 165, 168-69, 172-74, 180, 182-85, 190, 193, 203-04, 212, 217, 220-21, 223, 228, 234, 236, 238, 241-42, 251-55, 259-60, 263, 265-66, 268, 274, 280, 283, 292, 294, 296, 299, 303, 339, 431, 433-35, 478-81, 483-85, 488-90, 520, 529-31
Cantos LII-LXXI, 2
Canto LIX, 479
Draft of XVI. Cantos, iv, v, 58, 60, 63, 70, 75, 85-86, 88, 92, 95, 99, 103-109, 112, 114, 120, 122-23, 126-27, 137, 162-63, 180, 186, 193-94, 196-97, 204-05, 213, 215-16, 221, 222, 228, 235, 244, 246, 265, 273, 288, 302, 308, 381, 520
Canto VII, 71
Malatesta Cantos (VIII-XI), 43-49, 53-55, 58-294, 478-90
Pre-Italy Drafts, 130, 131, 137, 145, 146, 177, 232, 247
Watson Typescript, 74, 76, 81, 88, 90, 97, 99, 107-10, 116, 123-24, 130-31, 136, 145, 147, 151-52, 160, 164, 166, 175, 191-92, 198-99, 202-03, 205-06, 214-15, 219, 228, 230-31, 233, 239, 250, 252, 254, 267-68, 270-71, 287
Draft of XXX Cantos, 27, 29, 60, 99, 110, 194, 203, 236-37, 265, 520
Canto XXX, 241
Drafts & Fragments
Canto CX, 235-36, 490
Canto CXVI, 152, 237, 473-74, 484, 486
Canto CXVII, 152
Eleven New Cantos XXXI-XLI
Canto XXXI, 478
Italian Cantos
Canto LXXII, 165
Pisan Cantos, 29, 49, 303
Canto LXXIV, 244, 479
Canto LXXVI, 241, 479
Canto LXXX, 241
Canto LXXXIII, 241
Rock-Drill, 29-30, 49, 59, 303, 481, 488
Canto LXXXVI, 490
Canto LXXXIX, 152, 252
Canto XC, 152
Canto XCV, 479
Thrones, 29, 49, 59, 303, 481
Canto CIII, 149, 152
Canto CV, 246-47
Canto CVI, 152, 252
Canto CVII, 152, 479
Ur-Cantos, 480
Ezra Pound to His Parents, 58, 180, 302, 521
Gaudier-Brzeska, viii, 23, 35, 118, 157, 257, 299, 461, 521, 526
Guide to Kulchur, viii, 35, 62, 104, 126, 134, 139, 142-44, 146, 150, 156, 158, 160, 164, 167, 170, 173, 180, 228, 230, 238, 253, 267, 280, 288, 299, 372, 484, 485, 521
Instigations, 21, 223, 521, 532
Jefferson and/or Mussolini, 3, 4, 521
Letters of Ezra Pound, 13, 21, 58, 126, 162, 180, 244, 190, 302
Literary Essays, 189, 263, 521
"Date Line," 222, 480
Lustra, iv, 13, 21, 22, 100, 102, 520
"In a Station of the Metro," iv, 7, 21-24, 196, 257, 520
"Papyrus," iv, 100-02, 255, 529
"Machine Art," 26, 521
Pavannes and Divigations, 221, 521
"A Retrospect," 11, 189

"A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," 18, 20, 23, 196, 521
Ripostes, iv, 16-17, 20, 257, 415, 520, 526, 532
"The Return," iv, 16-18, 257
"The Seafarer," 190
Spirit of Romance, The, 74, 521
Ta Hio (*Da Xue*), 2-3, 521
Visual Arts, 26, 237, 250, 257
Pound, Isabel Weston, 180, 434
Pozzo, Luigi dal, 169
Projective Verse, 29, 35, 444, 539
Prometheus, 330, 407, 413, 415, 528
Provençal song, 138, 141, 303, 493
Purtheo, Aloysius, 169
Pythagoras, 139-40, 171, 431

Q

Quarry: Essays, The. See Howe, Susan
Quartermain, Peter, 358, 420-21, 424, 535, 539
Quattrocento, 134, 158, 164, 166, 292, 373, 480, 485, 541
Quaytman, R.H., 301
Quinn, John, 110, 299, 479, 489, 522

R

Rabaté, Jean-Michel, 7, 537
Ragusa, 164, 233
Rainey, Lawrence, 44, 47-48, 73-74, 79, 83-84, 86, 90-91, 111, 113, 123, 125-26, 137, 161, 165, 173, 177, 179, 204, 215-16, 254, 262, 531
Ranbutino, Giorgio di, 191, 207, 282
Rapallo, 26, 74-75, 237, 434, 478
Ravenna, 62, 160, 162, 165, 167, 174, 227, 251-56, 478, 492-94
Reiman, Donald H., vi, 383, 407, 425, 527-28
Reinhardt, Ad, 308, 319
Reynolds, George, 153-54, 531
Ricci, Corrado, 126, 140, 180-81, 238, 541
Rimbaud, Arthur, 44, 46, 83, 190, 267, 531
Rimini, 54, 67, 85-86, 97, 106, 113, 115, 117, 129, 134, 137-42, 146, 156-57, 159, 161, 163-65, 167, 168, 170, 173-74, 178-79, 187, 201, 225, 227, 231, 234, 238-40, 242-43, 245, 247, 249-56, 267, 269-70, 279-81, 286-87, 289, 478, 492-93, 521, 541-42
Ripostes. See Pound, Ezra
Rival, Bernard, viii, 306, 314, 316, 318, 323, 325, 332, 354, 357, 364, 382, 419, 423, 503-04, 535
Rock-Drill De Los Cantares LXXXV-XCV. See Pound, Ezra, *Cantos*
Robinson, Kim, 42, 328, 436, 535
Romagna, 137, 142, 542
Rome, 59, 90, 92, 121, 123, 127, 140, 173, 196, 215, 227, 229, 241, 541
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 237, 527
Rowe, Nicholas, 354, 358, 498, 504-05, 526
Rowlandson, Mary, 434
Ryman, Robert, 319

S

Sacchi, Bartolomeo, 277-78
Sacred Wood, The. See Eliot, T.S.
Sagramoro, Jacopo (da Soncino), 196, 198-02, 219
San Francesco (Church of), 128, 137, 139-41, 150, 167-68, 170, 175, 196, 206, 245
San Vitale, 145, 172, 174-75, 227, 253
Sant'Apollinare, Basilica di, 138, 159-60, 167, 169, 171, 174, 493
Santa Maria del Fiore, 254, 283
Santa Maria in Trivio, 160, 167-68, 240
Sappho, 70, 100, 421, 525
Saussy, Haun, 21, 540
Sayre, Henry, 12, 24, 537
Schiller, Friedrich, 371
Schlegell, David von, 319
Schultze, Fritz, 156-57, 541
Scratton, Bride, 250
Senancour, Etienne Pivert de, 374
Serdini, Simone, 113
Sforza, Alessandro, 79, 266, 275
Sforza, Drusiana, 106
Sforza, Francesco, 79, 106, 113, 117, 135-36, 143, 149, 181, 266, 269, 270-71, 280, 293
Sforza, Polissena, 148, 181
Shakespeare, William, 307, 330, 351, 500, 502-03, 527
Cymbeline, 502-03
King Lear, 502
Shang dynasty, 2
Sheeler, Charles, 26
Shelley, Lady Jane Gibson, 380, 502, 527
Shelley Memorials, The, 351, 373, 380, 415, 497, 527
Shelley, Mary, 354, 380, 413-15, 446, 475, 498
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, vi, 55, 307, 315, 330, 354, 369, 373-74, 380, 383, 407-17, 421, 424-26, 433, 439, 441, 446, 449, 452, 457-58, 462, 473-74, 479, 481, 486, 497-98, 497, 527-28, 540
Shepard, Thomas, 401, 434
Sheridan, John Desmond, 455
Short, Charles, 80, 92, 121, 125, 142, 186, 250, 265, 425, 542
Sieburth, Richard, viii, 65, 223, 226, 247, 419, 423, 522, 532
Siena, 89, 136, 187, 191-93, 197, 201, 213-15, 217, 478
Simonsen, Peter, 16, 532

Singularities. See Howe, Susan
Sirmione, 478
Slatin, Myles, 44, 532
Smithson, Robert, 430, 440, 528
Sorano, 89, 192
Soranzo, Giovanni, 126, 279, 542
Sorting Facts; or, Nineteen Ways of Looking at Marker. See Howe Susan
Souls of the Labadie Tract. See Howe, Susan
Sparta, 155, 242, 252
Spello, 478
Spinoza, Baruch de, 499, 503
Spirit of Romance. See Pound, Ezra
Spontaneous Particulars: The Telepathy of Archives. See Howe, Susan
Stein, Gertrude, 8-9, 358, 532, 534-35
Stephen, Fredman, 8, 537, 539
Sterling Library. *See* Yale University
Stieglitz, Alfred, 26
Stokes, Adrian, 164, 242-43, 250, 523, 542
Strater, Henry, iv, v, 58-59, 99, 122-23, 125-26, 162-63, 180, 194, 216, 228, 230, 234-35, 302
Strozzi, Filipo, 89, 279
Stufa, Agnola della, 280
Sutton, Walter, 19, 160, 191, 233, 522, 538
Symonds, John Addington, 126

T

Ta Hio. See Pound, Ezra
Tching Tang, 2
Tempio Malatestiano, i, iv, 48, 54, 82, 106, 125, 128-29, 133-87, 192, 195-208, 212-60, 280-81, 289, 297, 301, 338, 349, 396, 445, 478-82, 487, 489, 492-93, 531
Temple University, 338, 349, 478
Paley Library, 479
Ten Eyck, David, 30, 49, 161, 538
Terrell, Carroll, 2-3, 80-82, 86, 90-92, 145, 149, 152, 170, 201, 215, 226, 242-43, 250, 267, 483, 532
Thayer, Scofield, 151, 160, 191, 233, 522, 539
Théâtre Typographique, viii, ix, 306, 312, 365-67, 374, 382, 398, 405, 497, 522-23
Marginalia de Melville, 354, 359, 374
Thiefth. See Howe, Susan
Thompson, Jon, 329-30, 434, 524
Thoreau, Henry David, 8, 309, 438, 444, 481, 528, 538
Three Mountains Press, 58, 60, 93, 103, 122, 180, 193-94, 288, 302, 520
Thrones de los Cantares XCVI-CIX. See Pound, Ezra, *Cantos*
Tichi, Cecelia, 26, 538
Todd, Mabel Loomis, 19, 529
Tom Tit Tot. See Howe, Susan
Tonini, Luigi, 279, 542
Trachulo, 210, 213-17, 220, 229
Troy, 70, 173-74
Tryphonopoulos, Demetres, 157, 532
Tsvetaeva, Marina, 335, 528
Tyndale, William. *See Holy Bible*

U

Ulysses. See Joyce, James
University of California-San Diego, viii, 314, 318, 332, 345, 409, 525
Urbino, Federico d'. *See* Montefeltro, Federico da

V

Valentine, Jean, 335, 528
Valturi, Carlo, 113, 148, 277, 289, 291
Vasse, William, 80, 267, 529
Vatican, 180, 478
Vecchio, Mastin, 64, 492
Venice, 85, 113, 116, 135, 142, 169, 170, 232, 242, 280, 292, 478, 527, 494
Verona, 136, 202, 208, 250, 478, 494
Vilgrain, Bénédicte, vi, viii, 306, 314-18, 323, 325, 332, 357, 364, 382, 419, 423, 522
Villari, Pasquale, 137
Virgil, 174
Visconti, Bianca, 106, 269, 280, 293
Vorticism, 23-24, 99, 194, 257, 299, 461, 479, 521

W

Waldrop, Rosmarie, 58, 134, 539
Waste Land, The. See Eliot, T.S.
Watson, James Sibley, 74, 151, 160, 191, 522
Watson Typescript. *See* Pound, Ezra, *Cantos, Draft of XVI. Cantos,* Malatesta Cantos
Weaver, Mike, 11, 533
Webster, Noah, 43, 185, 309-10, 315, 357, 542-43
Welling, James, 302
Werner, Marta, 401, 408, 524, 540
Wesling, Donald, 14-15
Western Borders, The. See Howe, Susan
Whistler, James McNeill, 257
Whitman, Walt, 8, 12-15, 18-19, 514
Leaves of Grass, 13-14, 528
Whitney Biennial, 301
Widener Library. *See* Harvard University
Wilkinson, Jessica, 51, 447, 535
Williams, Megan, 51, 399, 423, 436, 463-64, 466, 475-76, 536
Williams, William Carlos, iv, 9-42, 51, 153, 236-38, 296, 399, 423, 436, 444, 464, 466, 475-76, 483, 522, 528, 530, 536-38
Autobiography, 25, 35, 37
Collected Poems, 15

"Later Pound, The," 29, 528
Paterson, iv, 28-38, 296, 528, 536-38
"Reader Critic, The," 21, 528
Selected Essays, 13
"Speech Rhythm," 11
Spring and All, 24-27, 31, 33, 528, 531-38
Wedge, The, 26, 35, 42
Witemeyer, Hugh, 101, 153, 522, 538
Wordsworth, William, 13, 24, 402, 458, 523

Y

Yale University, viii, 29, 31, 59, 86, 121, 292, 301, 338, 342, 394, 479, 522, 525, 529, 531, 541
Sterling Library, 338, 376, 394, 479
Yeats, William Butler, 1, 190, 528
Yriarte, Charles, 67, 71, 74-75, 78, 89, 90-91, 97, 99, 113, 121, 125-26, 137, 178-80, 187, 195, 197, 201-02, 206, 209-19, 238, 243-45, 265-68, 281-82, 293, 542

Z

Zukofsky, Louis, 19, 27-28, 358, 536, 538

Set against the tradition of the 20th-century poet-historian, the documentary poetics practiced in distinct yet related ways by Ezra Pound and Susan Howe serves as the basis of this study's investigation of the complex materiality underpinning each writer's compositional process. Pound's "Malatesta Cantos" and Howe's "Melville's Marginalia" are the focus of detailed analysis specifically grounded in the archival materials for each sequence in order to explore the development of typographic metaphrasis. Throughout this critical work, Steven Paschall sets the processes of materiality's signification in parallel to Pound and Howe's conceptions of, and engagements with, the historical archive and literary production. Pound's reading of the quattrocento and the saga of Sigismondo Malatesta, and Howe's reading of marginalia and manuscript drafts, resulted in unique source-based poems, the structural and formal techniques of which redefine conventional notions of historiography and interpretative poetic practice. In addressing the mechanics of literary appropriation, editing written language, and the visio-spatial page, Paschall asserts a genealogical thread between the archival materiality of Pound's "poem containing history" and the visual experiments in articulation of Howe's palimpsestic reconfigurations thereof.

Key words: Ezra Pound, Susan Howe, American poetics, archival studies, materiality, typography, modernism

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En rapport avec la tradition du poète-historien du vingtième siècle, la poétique documentaire pratiquée par Ezra Pound et Susan Howe de manières distinctes mais liées sert de base à une étude de la matérialité complexe au sein du processus compositionnel des deux écrivains. Fondée sur les matériaux d'archives des deux séquences, une analyse détaillée des « Malatesta Cantos » de Pound et de « Marginalia de Melville » de Howe permet une réflexion sur le développement de la transformation typographique dans le domaine de la poésie. Tout au long de cette critique, Steven Paschall aborde les processus de la signification de la matérialité en parallèle aux conceptions et expériences Poundiennes et Howiennes de l'archive historique et de la production littéraire. Pour Pound l'interprétation du quattrocento et de la saga de Sigismond Malatesta, et pour Howe celle des notes marginales et des ébauches manuscrites, a mené à la composition des poèmes innovateurs qui, à partir des sources textuelles, redéfinissent les idées conventionnelles de l'historiographie et de la pratique interprétative poétique au moyen des techniques structurelles et formelles. En examinant les opérations de l'appropriation littéraire, de la révision du langage écrit et de la page visuo-spatiale, Paschall avance un lien généalogique entre la matérialité archivistique du « poème contenant l'histoire » de Pound et les expériences visuelles d'articulation effectuées dans les reconfigurations palimpsestiques de Howe.

Mots clés : Ezra Pound, Susan Howe, poétique américaine, études d'archives, matérialité, typographie, modernisme