

Bathtub philology: Ezra Pound's annotative realism

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Ezra Pound's call to 'Make It New' spoke a sense of compositional immediacy to his literary contemporaries by way of an ancient motto: the inscription the ancient Shang Dynasty Emperor Ch'eng T'ang (1766–1753 BCE) made on the side of his bathtub and immortalised more than a thousand years later in the Confucian Da Xue (The Great Learning): 薪 日 日 薪 (xin ri ri xin). This is a timely phrase: Modernism Studies, like many areas of literary work, faces extraordinary challenges and opportunities in the digital shift taking place at the levels of textual studies, literary interpretation and literary theory. Pound's call for a cultural rinascimento demands not only that writers learn from the fullest range of venerable sources and traditions in the course of literary experimentation, but also that their readers sharpen an awareness as to how material forms of inscription directly shape the identity and meaning of texts. This challenge cuts across recent work in textual and manuscript studies, particularly in the representation of complex Modernist texts and their manuscripts (for example the Samuel Beckett Digital Manuscript Project).

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Introduction

When Ezra Pound announced his famous rallying call to 'Make It New', he adverted to his contemporaries an urgent demand for aesthetic innovation and compositional experimentation, for a Modernist revolt against the deadening habits he perceived in the arts of the previous century.¹ Yet this now-archetypal avant-garde *pronunciamento* was itself hardly new. It was in fact an ancient motto: the ancient Shang Dynasty Emperor Ch'eng T'ang (1766–1753 BCE) inscribed this phrase – 薪 日 日 薪 (*xin ri ri xin*) – on the side of his bathtub and it came to be immortalised more than a thousand years later in the Confucian classic text *Da Xue (The Great Learning)*.² Pound chose these words with etymological judiciousness: Shang Dynasty artefacts comprise the earliest evidence of Chinese writing, including the ox bone and turtle shell oracle inscriptions Pound viewed in the British Museum with his friend Lawrence Binyon, who was at that time the Keeper of Oriental Prints and Drawings. The imperative to 'Make It New' is simultaneously and purposefully ancient and modern as a call for the continual critical appraisal of one's aesthetic tools and methods, and to make evident the process and

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provenance of creative expression.³ Pound inscribed the Modernist ethos in a phrase that itself unpacks an entire history of written language and textual transmission, producing what Jerome McGann calls ‘a laced network of linguistic and bibliographical codes’ that binds the text and the reader in a materialist hermeneutics.⁴

Pound’s roving etymological eye and his judicious attention to the materiality of textual forms impelled him to survey a range of recondite literary and scholarly sources over the course of his writing career. Among these, early medieval text forms are especially conducive to the kinds of textual experiments upon which Pound was embarking in his poetry. The textual affinities shared by Modernist and medieval works in general are complex and profound: one might consider the foundational influence of medieval works on many of the major texts in the High Modernist canon, such as the thematic influence of Dante’s *Divina Commedia* upon James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and TS Eliot’s *Waste Land*, or the prosodic innovations of Troubadour poets for Pound and for the young Samuel Beckett. The field of Modernist textual studies has long drawn from the formidable advances of medieval textual studies, especially in renewed thinking about the status of manuscript documents within print culture, the materiality of texts and the particular ways in which bibliographical codes intersect with linguistic codes in different historical moments. Medieval studies has also produced significant advances in scholarly editing from which Modernist studies already benefits, especially in the production of digital scholarly editions. Following several decades in which hermeneutics and theory predominated in the literary academy, ‘the emergence of digital media in the late twentieth century is forcing a shift of perspective back to the view of traditional philology, where textual scholarship was understood as the foundation of every aspect of literary and cultural studies’.⁵ Textual critics have always required as an essential competency a ‘heightened awareness of medium as a methodological question’.⁶ Jerome McGann identifies a cognate literary tradition from William Blake and William Morris to Pound in which this ‘bibliographical imagination’ produces ‘an extensive record of its own making’.⁷ This essay explores how such a ‘textual condition’ is manifested in *The Cantos*, whereby the poem’s self-conscious understanding of its media ecology may bring digital potentialities into sharper focus, and how its ‘bibliographical imagination’ might produce a viable intersection of digital media and philology. What follows is not so much a technical evaluation of a digital edition of *The Cantos*, but rather a digital *theoria*, a consideration of the text as a ‘network of linguistic and bibliographical codes’ conducive in specific ways to scholarly editing in the digital medium.

Pound’s early medieval textual awareness and its role in his recalibration of poetic space in *The Cantos* primarily stems from his intensive interest in the life and work of the ninth-century Hibernian-Carolingian philosopher and poet Johannes Scottus Eriugena. Pound’s deployment of Eriugena’s thought and writing in his own prose and poetry – as well as in extensive notes unpublished in his lifetime⁸ – opened the way for a more general investigation of late classical and early medieval textual forms and features. These forms include evolving methods of glossing and commentary, a consolidation of the indexical power of the page (which had almost entirely displaced the scroll as the preferred material textual medium by the fourth century) and the production of encyclopaedic compendia such as Martianus Capella’s *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, the most influential instrument of learning between the sixth and tenth centuries. Pound’s early medieval focus centres upon precisely the textual qualities of greatest conceptual allure to digital representation but which have proven to be deeply problematic in formal and architectural terms (for example, by digital analogy to medieval annotative practices, the false promise of the ‘democratic’ or ‘libertarian’ digital text

which is instead structured by a rigid set of hyperlinks⁹). Pound's poetic negotiations with his early medieval materials embody a type of philological argument, a statement of purpose for a way of understanding texts, and a way of assembling and moving between them, conceptually, in his poem. This essay will explore the potential for thinking through the digital scholarly representation of *The Cantos*, and whether Pound's early medieval textual negotiations might demand reconsideration of the logic of digital textual representation. Pound's poem demonstrates a kind of surface eclecticism seemingly conducive to digital representation: the question is whether, in its deep absorption of early medieval text forms, the poem demonstrates how textual features emergent in the early medieval period can manifest a textual logic consistent with the distribution of text within a digital structure.¹⁰ This essay is not so much an argument for a digital *Cantos* – although this is certainly an enterprise worth pursuing¹¹ – but an inquiry into the congruence of the logic of digital editions with long-abiding textual forms, foregrounded in crucial moments of Pound's poem but yet to be given systematic critical treatment.

Pound's early medieval textual awareness

Pound's poetry and prose engage a formidable range of source materials and a density of citation and allusion across numerous languages and genres. His expertise patently varies between one language and literary tradition and another, and he places different emphases upon the philological integrity of his source texts depending on their particular discursive or poetic function. Pound often seeks out the texts he considers to have been unjustly occluded from literary or philosophical canonicity. Eriugena's posthumous papal condemnations and book burnings make him exemplary in this regard, but other examples include such medieval Islamic philosophers as Avicenna and Averroes, rightfully seen by Pound as pivotal in the transmission of Neoplatonic and Aristotelian thought into the European High Middle Ages. This alternate intellectual history intersects with Pound's attention to textual form: he often invests outsized authority to fragmented texts¹² which, in their fragile states, can suggest instead the unbending light of transcendental knowledge. Pound's interest in texts with corrupted transmission histories or imbricated composition processes spans his poetic career: as early as Canto I he is careful to cite the Andreas Divus translation of the *Odyssey*, 'In officiana Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer' (I/5); and Canto XCIV cites the first Loeb edition of the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* by Philostratus, translated by the Oxford theologian Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, 'no full trans/till 1811./remarks F.C. Conybeare, the prelector' (XCIV/657). That Pound should take care to identify the edition of Philostratus's text is significant, as its authority has been in dispute since its composition and first circulation in the third century. *The Cantos* might be seen as a compendium of fragments that radiates across and beyond its structural boundaries, an encyclopaedia of neglected intellectual traditions embodied within fragile textual provenances. The inclusion of such 'reading notes' in Pound's poem establishes a case for a materialist philology, approaching what Paul Eggert describes as a 'work-site': 'a text-construction site for the editor and expert reader; and it is the site of study of the work (of its finished textual versions and their annotation) for the first-time reader'.¹³ This kind of textual immanence is thus collaborative, open-ended and more *wissenschaftlich* than ordinary literary scholarship is considered to be: not an archive as such, but a location where documentary facts are marshalled into evidence and where the text performs an argument of its own self-conscious status. The text demands a philological response from its readers, even if

the reader is only to gloss over (rather than actually gloss) such sedimented note-taking. While numerous scholars have noted the formal affinities between Pound's poem and that of digital textuality, usually by way of Pound's own theories of the vortex and the 'ideogrammic method', it may work in ways antithetical to the rigidities of pre-assembled links that have characterised much digital textuality. The connective tissue binding fragile ancient texts and modern poetic grafts is the late classical and early medieval evolution of textual forms: might this aid in producing new models of digitisation in scholarly editions?

Pound's poetic focus on annotation and glossing, strikingly evident throughout *The Cantos*, shows insight into the gradual but epochal shift in text structure from the late classical into the Carolingian tradition. This shift recalibrated the relation of integral text matter to its arrangement on the manuscript page (the scroll having been finally and comprehensively eclipsed by the codex), giving new focus to such features as the visual and conceptual relation of text and gloss, the mobility of text excerpts in the assemblage of florilegia, and the variety of annotative methods (marginal and line-by-line commentaries, annotations, diacritical interventions) bound by the material form of texts and their fragile provenances and legacies. Several of these practices were slowly absorbed into later medieval textuality and eventually into modern print culture – such as the evolution of diacritical annotation methods into footnotes. These features embody a history of textual forms not only in their arrangements on the page but also in their intent: they indicate hierarchical relations with integral text matter, by way of spatial, conceptual, rhetorical and logical indices. Christian Vandendorpe characterises such textual features as examples of *visual tabularity*, which 'enables readers to switch from reading the main text to reading notes, glosses, figures, or illustrations, all of which are present within the space of the double page'.¹⁴ Even those features that have faded from regular usage could be repurposed as quaint self-conscious anachronisms that retain (or simulate) specific modes of textual authority, such as the printed marginal glosses in the revised 1817 edition of Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. The emergence and codification of these textual features within Carolingian centres of learning reflect the ways in which scholarly and propaedeutic text usage developed into the practices underpinning the early European universities. Pound absorbs this textual culture into his epic poem – perhaps without realising the intimate connection with his own paideutic tendencies – initially via his reading in early medieval philosophy and especially Eriugena. Although Pound's wartime activity curtailed this productive line of study – his speechwriting and radio broadcasts as well as his burgeoning production of economic and cultural essays consumed much of his energies from the late 1930s until his arrest in 1945 – his reading of Eriugena offered a window into the late classical textual tradition by way of the Hibernian's translations of and commentaries upon the texts of Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, Gregory of Nyssa, Boethius and others.

Late classical and early medieval texts often cite patristic and classical texts according to highly structured rhetorical conventions. But numerous works to have survived from this time exhibit nuanced and strategic attitudes towards citation and elaboration of such sources, especially in the conventions of glossing and annotating. Evidence embodied in glosses 'can show both how much of an ancient text a medieval thinker understood, and how many of its arguments he accepted'.¹⁵ Glossing became a critical activity by which a glossator might introduce elements of his own argument or seek to augment that of the source text: 'Early medieval philosophers thought *through* the ancient texts they studied, but their ideas were not bounded by their sources.'¹⁶ Consequently, modern scholars cannot merely transcribe glosses from a single manuscript

without considering their provenance and transcriptional contexts: glosses were themselves often transcribed into subsequent copies of a text, becoming important textual matter in their own right, or were instructional tools to be shared among centres of learning. Equally, a set of glosses might not necessarily comprise a stable object in itself, nor often the work of one author, but can display signs of composite authorship and change across time. Eriugena's glosses display his critical facility: not only is he credited with inventing the line-by-line commentary in his gloss on Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*,¹⁷ his treatment of secular texts such as the Aristotelian *Categoriae Decem* inaugurated the method of commentary that came to dominate in the medieval universities.¹⁸

The implied sociality of glossing methods extended to collegial communities in the early medieval period. A persistent myth of Carolingian scholarship (and one to which Pound subscribed) is that Eriugena functioned largely in isolation as an authentic intellectual figure. The myth of the monadic philosopher rests largely upon the unusual extent to which Eriugena relied upon and cited Eastern sources, particularly Maximus the Confessor, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzus and Pseudo-Dionysius. But on close inspection the R manuscript (*Reims 875*) demonstrates the kind of intellectual sociality within which Eriugena functioned: 'two pupils, who were also scribes, and a number of other copyists, are employed to help him revise a manuscript which cannot have been the first text of his work to have been made.'¹⁹ At least three rescensions of the text were produced in Eriugena's lifetime, one of which exists in multiple manuscripts probably produced at Corbie, and whose erroneous additions suggest hands other than that of Eriugena himself,²⁰ as the R manuscript also gave rise to two significant florilegia: the so-called X (*Valenciennes 167*) and Y (*Paris BN 13953*) texts. These manuscripts provide valuable information regarding the learning of Greek in Carolingian France, their compilers demonstrating 'an enthusiasm for definitions [as] a guiding principle in their choice of extracts'.²¹ They also excerpt passages in order to give the appearance of a lexical definition, as in the two misleading 'entries' for ἐνέργεια: 'A fascination for Greek terms, especially theological ones, is linked to this taste for definition; the compilers are keener on no type of extract more than one which takes the form of a gloss on a Greek theological term.'²² The varying patterns of glossing and excerpting, and the Irish and Carolingian hands that mediate the text material, all indicate a much wider study of the *Periphyseon* during Eriugena's lifetime and in the following century than had been assumed.²³ Carolingian textual culture was one of intense engagement and exchange: a textual condition or culture that Pound attempts to invoke in his *Cantos*. The iconicity of the manuscript page is tempered by its radial architecture in glossing, annotation and other ways in which conceptual proximity overcomes a spatial remove. Pound's text invokes an argument for the iconicity of the page – McGann has argued similarly with regard to the way ideograms are assembled as 'symbols of themselves', often anchoring the centre of the page space – which presents a challenge and an alternative to digital textual architectures that often still rely upon a scrolling text.²⁴ A digital *Cantos* therefore demands an architecture centred upon an iconic page structure, just as the printed text so eloquently argues in its philological engagements.

Pound's knowledge of medieval textual practice may not have been honed to every minutiae of Carolingian intellectual culture. But he was sensitive to general matters of manuscript annotation, glossing and patterns of excerption evident in his reading and annotating Eriugenan sources (especially *Patrologia Latina* volume 122). In his working notes held in the Beinecke Library, Pound indicates by way of page numbering and title

and phrase abbreviations the range and depth of his reading. His rhetorical instincts will direct him to particular words and phrases, several of which – ‘omnia quae sunt lumina sunt’/‘all things that are are lights’ or ‘auctoritas ex vera ratione processit ratio vero nequaquam ex auctoritate’/‘authority comes from right reason, never the other way on’ – are then deployed strategically and serially in his prose as well as in *The Cantos*. Pound honed this annotative technique in his work on the Troubadours from his university days and his attempts to publish a critical edition of the *Rime* of Guido Cavalcanti over many years. Pound’s working notes demonstrate considerable efforts to track down all extant manuscript sources of Cavalcanti’s poetry – he scrupulously records every library collection he consults in abbreviation beside the relevant textual variant, also evident in his essay ‘Cavalcanti’ in *Make It New* of 1934. Elsewhere, his annotations of philosophical texts (Francesco Fiorentino) and Byzantine Studies (Michael Psellus) provide just two examples of acute, if not philologically specialised, textual awareness. In the case of Carolingian texts, manuscript sources are rare, and offer dispersed, scant information in the form of glosses and annotations from which certain inductive postulates of influence, filiation and philosophical advancement might be made. The dissolution of the monasteries in France following the Revolution of 1789 severely affected the study of Carolingian texts, and thus its history, but the nineteenth-century publication of both the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* and the *Patrologia Latina* fundamentally changed the landscape, even accounting for the flawed and fragmented nature of many texts in both series. Those newly available manuscripts shed light on the scholarly and teaching practices at Laon and among cultural centres nearby such as Liège, Corbie and Reims. Many volumes comprised fragmented, incomplete or misattributed sources (including *Patrologia Latina* 122): if at first this publishing effort seemed to provide scholarly bedrock, it came to be understood as a contingent network of radiating sources requiring careful philological appraisal and revision. All of this prompts the question: How does Pound deploy this knowledge, and what material forms does it take in his poetry? How might it direct a vision of a digitised *Cantos*?

Pound’s Eriugena: manuscript notes, gloss, commentary, edition

Eriugena’s pivotal role in Western intellectual history was long overshadowed by accusations of heresy and papal condemnations, but work in recent decades has gone a long way in balancing the record. His translations of Greek patristic texts and his own efforts to compose poetry in Greek brought a rich tradition of Neoplatonism back into Western Europe, and his work on the Aristotelian *Categories* in Book I of his masterwork the *Periphyseon* advanced the cause of ontology unmatched for centuries either side of his own life. Eriugena’s methods of annotation, glossing and commentary established practices that were emulated by his students and by others in the emergent cathedral schools and Carolingian palatine schools, precursors to the early European universities. Each of these elements in Eriugena’s intellectual constitution was to have a surprisingly radical effect on Pound’s own poetic practices.²⁵ His treatment of Eriugena’s thought is thus conditioned by the specific ways in which those texts manifest themselves, in the form of early medieval manuscripts, later manuscript transcriptions, and in glosses and florilegia. Scholars have long studied Pound’s technique of clustering ideas into ‘ideograms’ or associative networks in his poetry (and prose): close attention to how he understands Eriugena’s texts and their conditions illuminates not only how Pound deploys his materials thematically, but how he emulates a kind of thinking manifested textually in the transition from the late classical to the early medieval era. This engagement with textual

form installs a kind of archival trace at the level of allusion or citation, from which textual filiation may be drawn, and which forms the basis for conventions of intertextual reference still operative in the modern era. The role Eriugena was evidently to play in the *paradiso* phase of *The Cantos*, before wartime events intervened, bears its residue in references to Neoplatonism in the later cantos. Pound almost always combines Neoplatonic reference with Confucian metaphysics and with Chinese script, thereby giving both systems of thought an iconic role on the page, manifestly both radiant and pivotal.

Pound developed intensive research interests in Eriugena's life and thought in two main phases – firstly from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s and secondly in a very concentrated moment in 1939–40. In the first phase he was entirely reliant on secondary sources such as Étienne Gilson's *La Philosophie au moyen âge* (1922) and Ernest Renan's *Averroès et l'Averroïsme* (1852), but especially Francesco Fiorentino's *Manuale di storia della filosofia* (1921) and *Compendio di storia della filosofia* (1929), both of which were Italian *liceo* textbooks. Pound's second intensive phase of research on Eriugena had him working directly with edited source material, namely volume 122 of the *Patrologia Latina* in the *Biblioteca Marciana* in Venice: this volume, edited by Joseph Henry Floss, comprises an edition of nearly all of Eriugena's texts. Pound records Floss's name in his notes and in correspondence, as well as names of contributing authors such as CB Schlueter, the 'prete' to which Pound refers in Canto LXXXIII (p. 528). Pound's reading notes consist of quotations, abbreviations, glosses, translations, as well as some original poetic composition of his own. Pound's horse-sense tells him that Eriugena is crucial not only in the intellectual history of Western Europe as a conduit of late classical learning (Martianus Capella, Boethius) of Greek prosody and translator of works by figures such as Pseudo-Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, Priscianus Lydius, and Eastern patristic texts by Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory Nazianzus. Pound glimpsed at the potential for Eriugena's textual awareness to inform his own poetics. He also saw in Eriugena's 'stitching' Greek into his poetry a mind receptive to renovating poetic forms in danger of eclipse:

the queen stitched King Carolus' shirts or whatever
while Eriugena put greek tags in his excellent verses
in fact an excellent poet, Paris
toujours Pari'

(Charles le Chauve)

(LXXXIII/548)

The court poet is occupied with his Greek verses (στίχοι), whilst the Carolingian queen is engaged in her own domestic occupation, stitching cloth (*textus*) in a weave of creativity (τέχνη). Eriugena's poem in praise of Irmintrude ('*Laudes Yrmintrudis Caroli Calvi uxoris*') appears fourth in the *Versus* of *Patrologia Latina* 122, following three long poems on Christological themes. Eriugena employs a number of Greek words to strengthen the associations between Irmintrude and both Athena and Arachne (also allowing him to indulge in characteristic translanguistic punning, a sure sign of *hilaritas*). The poem 'may have been written in 864 to compliment the queen in helping her husband in a negotiation with Pope Nicholas I, to whom was given a garment made of gold and gems, woven, in all likelihood, by Irmintrude herself'.²⁶ There are strong analogies with how Pound begins to use Chinese ideograms (both poetically and politically) in *The Cantos* after this work on Eriugena, where specific ideograms appear alongside their transliterations and translations, are subject to commentary and are fused into

networks of filiation and association: the ‘ideogrammic method’ Pound had developed over the preceding two decades. The visual iconicity of Pound’s ideograms reinforces the materiality of the poetic page and the kind of philological argument at work in these moments and throughout the poem. When ideograms combine with Eriugenian reference – the first Pisan canto has Eriugena associated with both ‘Sung on Mt Taishan’ and the Confucian ‘light tensile immaculata’ (LXXIV/449) – a radiating textual function is in play, consistent with annotation, glossing and the production of florilegia in Carolingian textual culture.

By the time Pound was composing *The Pisan Cantos* in conditions of deep estrangement – he was under military arrest on charges of treason and held at the United States Army Detention Training Center outside Pisa from May to September 1945 – some instances of ideograms in his poetry begin to complicate this relation of exotic script and interpretive gloss:

and for all that old Ford’s conversation was better,
 consisting in *res non verba*,
 despite William’s anecdotes, in that Fordie
 never dented an idea for a phrase’s sake

and had more humanitas 仁 jen (LXXXII/545)

Here Pound’s textual ideogram of the ‘light of intelligence’ or νοῦς gathers the fields of ethical action and precise language together with the notions of *humanitas* and *jen*. The character 仁 (*ren*) – the form of perfect virtue, and also the ontological–social process of person-making²⁷ – appears in *The Pisan Cantos* but as an integrated element of the text proper. It performs a grammatical function within the poetic phrase but is also the ‘thing’ towards which the alphabetic text points, in a circulating relation of text and gloss and text. Although Pound frequently romanises Chinese words according to their Wade-Giles transliterations and provides commentary, gloss and analogy, he does so in order to induce equations between systems of ideas and scripts. In this example from the last of *The Pisan Cantos*, the equation is made between Greek and Chinese moral attributes:

quand vos venetz al som de l’escalina
ἠθος gradations
 These are distinctions in clarity

ming² 明 these are distinctions (LXXXIV/559)

In these lines Pound traces the idea of gradations from Dante’s presentation of Arnaut Daniel in the *Purgatorio*, to the Greek and English words and their glossed annotation (‘distinctions in clarity’), before silence replaces this cacophony of utterance with the empty line (*tempus loquendi, tempus tacendi*). Finally, the romanised character *ming* is again presented in its ideogrammic form. It is Pound’s ‘total light’ in script and in speech: all of textual object, linguistic process and a ray of intellectual light striking across languages and historical epochs and hermeneutic processes of glossing and commentary – not to mention its manifold prosodic virtues. Pound’s citation of light as bearing both metaphysical intent and textual immanence provides a guide to thinking

through digital text networks and structures: despite the change of medium from book to screen, the binding logic of discrete inscription (across languages and scripts) and the collapse of spatial remoteness and proximity in the force of association unite Pound's ancient and early medieval sources with his own poetic practices. This could be made cognate with the logic and structures of digital textuality were a digital framework to combine the iconic (or indexical) page with textual elements radiating across textual space and the time of reading. The notion of Pound's iconic text page as a 'symbol of itself' calls upon McGann's assessment of Pound's ideograms, which combine and fuse the categories of melopoeia, phanopoeia and logopoeia: the unity of sound, visual image and concept.²⁸ Chinese writing is the index for all scripts in Pound's work, for McGann, bringing compositor, printer and poet together in a medium where 'poetry would be brought forth not simply at the linguistic level, but in every feature of the medium available to the scriptural image'.²⁹

Pound's use of gloss, commentary and poetic citation takes his ostensibly linear equations between words and concepts and radiates them into a field in which governing and subordinate textual and rhetorical functions are liberated from such hierarchy. He draws Eriugena's thought into the orbit of classic Confucian ideas, and arranges his textual space as part of this logic and rhetoric. These textual forms take shape in uncanny ways: Pound was unlikely to be explicitly aware of the revolution in glossing techniques in the cathedral and palatine schools of the Carolingian age, or of the new scholastic arrangements of text space that saw the development and transmission of teaching texts. But his textual practices in *The Cantos* and in his extensive prose works perform strikingly similar functions to those of the texts produced in the emergent European universities. The production of linear commentaries, florilegia and 'editions' of glosses that were passed down through later manuscripts in stemmatic lines of descent are all basic to a post-classical understanding of textual apparatus, and developed into forms naturalised into medieval manuscript culture and beyond. These dispersed, circulating textual entities recombine in different forms specific to the needs of the scholarly community. To reify glosses and florilegia into print is to fundamentally constrict the intellectual dexterity and adaptability they represent. Pound's poetic emulation of these processes engages with their radical hermeneutic functions. So how might the relation between modern poet and early medieval textual matter be best represented?

In taking on various kinds of documentary functions, Pound's poetic text is a philological argument taking the form of a reference work. When considered in relation to aesthetic effects such as prosody and imagery, this extended pan-generic gesture augments the conceptual roles of text and gloss, quotation and citation, text space and marginal space, and the relation between source languages and translations into a generalised field of relations, pressing the reader to make critical and evaluative judgements as to their utility. Pound's poem attempts to be a masterwork of instruction and a monument to the page and its post-classical apparatus. Pound's notes on Eriugena, unpublished and unrealised, intersect in important ways with his published work: not only in providing an insight in his methods and processes of composition, but as an evolving 'work-site' and philological argument. The contingencies and recombinations of textual forms and textual space seem to indicate a logic of digital representation: Pound's sources, his notes and his own poem are not so much proto-digital, but rather call upon digital textuality to remediate some of the most radical innovations in textual form in the Western tradition embodied in Pound's poem, in ways that shed new light on the profound continuities between early medieval textuality and Modernist poetry: a critical digital philology.

Early medieval Modernism and digital scholarly editing

Pound's emulation of early medieval textual practices may have been part-serendipity and part-strategy, but such an historical convergence with Modernist textuality surely yields potentially transformative insights. The medieval inheritance in Modernist literature and art is considerable and foundational. Yet Pound presents something of a special case in Transatlantic Modernism by virtue of his exacting critical evaluations of early medieval writers – theologians and philosophers as well as poets. Such a specialist interest is perfectly consistent with his search for outlying examples of 'the best that has been thought and read', and a recuperation of those writers unfairly occluded from the tradition. Further, his intensive work on the Confucian classics, and his mediation of classical Chinese and Japanese aesthetics in Canto XLIX, the 'Seven Lakes' canto, and elsewhere, extend his vision into traditions not sufficiently well understood in his time. But Pound's intensive research into the worlds of Emperor Justinian and Charles Martel and Eriugena enunciates the shift from the late classical textuality of Proclus, Macrobius and Martianus Capella to their uses in the early palatine and cathedral schools in which the seeds of the medieval university were sown. The material reproduction of manuscripts and the texts within them came to be codified in new ways during this time, in dialectic with newly emergent pedagogical structures: the gloss took on primary importance as a teaching tool, such as Eriugena's commentary on Martianus Capella, which was enlarged in the twelfth century by Averroes in his application of the genre of the long commentary (*tafsir*) to the available texts of Aristotle.³⁰

Pound's intensive interests in the genres and philosophical concepts of early medieval texts operated in dialectic with his careful examination of textual form: the ways in which the arrangement of text matter inflected the production and transmission of meaning. In this way, Pound's apparently antiquarian interests may resolve into acute models for rethinking textual form in the Modernist frame on two levels: firstly, in terms of how Pound adapted early medieval textuality into his poetic practice, notably his experiments with the function of glosses in *The Cantos*, and the virtual florilegia he created in the distributed network of citations across his texts, radio speeches and conversations; and secondly, in examining how early medieval textual characteristics might be well suited to the transformation of texts in a digital environment. Several of these textual mechanisms are peculiarly apposite when rethinking the modern text within a digital framework: variegated and discontinuous text surfaces mediated by glosses and annotations are obviously conducive to digital representation, but are best considered in the case of *The Cantos* as demanding both an iconic page and a radiating model for glosses, annotations and other philological apparatus. 'Make It New' is a timely phrase for the contemporary phase of Modernist Studies – as with many areas of literary scholarship, this field faces significant challenges and opportunities by virtue of the digital shift taking place at the levels of textual studies, literary interpretation and literary theory. Pound's call for a cultural *rinascimento* demands not only that writers learn from the fullest range of venerable sources and traditions in the course of literary experimentation, but also that their readers sharpen an awareness as to how material forms of inscription directly shape the identity and meaning of texts. This challenge cuts across recent work in textual and manuscript studies, particularly in the representation of complex Modernist texts and their manuscripts in both print and digital editions. Pound's readers 'are enjoined to see that "reading" is not a natural but an acquired skill, a skill deeply imbedded in distinct societies and distinct histories'.³¹ Pound's motto applies, then, to reading his text radially, whereby it retrieves the elegance and dexterity of

earlier textual and scribal forms, and in deploying them to reconceptualise even the most contemporary ideas of text structure. Pound's enduring philological gesture informs any digital 'page design' and the visual and logical structures of a yet-unimagined digital edition of *The Cantos*.

Endnotes

1. Jerome J McGann notes that Pound's reaction again Victorian poetry was qualified by his admiration for the late-nineteenth-century revolution in printing embodied in the artisanal Kelmscott Press and the Bodley Head, which was a very 'modern' concern. Drawing on these influences, Pound had illuminated capitals made up for the first three instalments of *The Cantos* – these were designed by Henry Strater for *A Draft of XVI Cantos* (Three Mountains Press, Paris, 1925), by Gladys Hines for *A Draft of Cantos 17–27* (John Rodker, London, 1928) and by Dorothy Shakespeare for *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (Hours Press, Paris, 1930). McGann sees a materialist hermeneutic at work in these compositional choices: 'The graphic representation of Pound's books thus made an index of their aims', where '[t]hrough book design Pound makes an issue of language's physique, deliberateness, and historicity', in *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993, p. 80.
2. Pound first cites this phrase in Canto LIII: 'T'ching prayed on the mountain and/wrote MAKE IT NEW/on his bath tub/Day by day make it new.' The text includes the four characters running down the right-hand side of the page, themselves glossed by standard Wade-Giles transliterations ('hsin¹/jih⁴/jih⁴/hsin¹'): Ezra Pound, *The Cantos*, 15th printing, New Directions, New York, 1996, p. 265. All subsequent quotations from *The Cantos* are from this edition and refer to Canto and page number: for example, LIII/265. Pound cites all or part of the formula elsewhere in *The Cantos* in various combinations of English, French, Wade-Giles transliteration and Chinese characters: LIV/278; LXXXVII/591; XCIII/649; XCIV/662; XCVII/695; XCVIII/704; and, CX/800. The iconic force of this phrase for Pound is evident in his decision to use it as the title for a book of his most philologically rigorous essays on Troubadour poetry, Guido Cavalcanti, Elizabethan classicism, French poets and Henry James: see Ezra Pound, *Make It New*, Faber and Faber, London, 1934. The phrase appears in large Chinese characters below the title on the book's title page.
3. This imperative bears relation to what McGann and DF McKenzie identify as the traditional role of philology, where 'documents carry the evidence of "the history of their own making"': Jerome J McGann, 'Why Digital Scholarship Matters; or, Philology in a New Key', in Neil Fraistat and Julia Flanders (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013, p. 274.
4. Jerome J McGann, *The Textual Condition*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991, p. 13.
5. McGann, 'Why Digital Scholarship Matters', p. 275.
6. Neil Fraistat and Julia Flanders, 'Introduction: Textual Scholarship in the Age of Media Consciousness', in Fraistat and Flanders, p. 1.
7. McGann, 'Why Digital Textual Scholarship Matters', p. 277.
8. These notes have now been transcribed and extensively annotated in Chapter 3, 'The Missing Book of the Trilogy', of Mark Byron, *Ezra Pound's Eriugena*, Bloomsbury, London, 2014, pp. 113–206.
9. Christian Vandendorpe addresses this paradox in digital texts – of the rhetoric of liberty, on the one hand, and the reality of highly organised and programmed decision structures on the other – in *From Papyrus to Hypertext: Toward a Universal Digital Library*, Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott (trans), University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 2009. See especially 'Aporias of Hyperfiction', pp. 82–6.
10. Vandendorpe refers to discontinuous text as *tabular*: whether the Barthesian or Benjaminian collection of fragments in codex form, or the structures of early hypertext fictions such as Michael Joyce's *Afternoon* or Stuart Moulthrop's *Hegirascope*. Vandendorpe overstates the difference between fragments in print and in the digital medium – the latter existing as a 'pure atoll of meaning' (p. 144). At the same time, print fragments may still be assembled

- into a cognitive, readerly whole, whereas a digital tabular text structure obviates a text 'whole' and induces a necessarily segmented reading experience.
11. In 1997 Gail MacDonald and Ned Bates attempted to model *The Cantos* for digital representation in their project 'Kybernekyia: Ezra Pound's Canto LXXXI as Hypervortex', the webpage for which no longer exists. Kent Emerson of the University of Tulsa has created a digital timeline of Pound's *Cantos*, available at the blog page <<http://kentemerson.wordpress.com/digital-projects/ezra-pounds-cantos-project/>>, accessed 10 June 2014. Roxana Preda is currently coordinating a digital *Cantos* annotation project under the auspices of the Ezra Pound Society: see <<http://www.ezrapoundsociety.org/index.php/the-cantos-project>>, accessed 10 June 2014.
 12. Timothy Materer, *Modernist Alchemy: Poetry and the Occult*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1995, p. 29.
 13. Paul Eggert, 'The Book, the E-text and the "Work-site"', in Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland (eds), *Text Editing: Print and the Digital World*, Ashgate, Farnham and Binghamton, VT, 2009, p. 81.
 14. Vandendorpe, p. 38.
 15. John Marenbon, *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre: Logic, Theology and Philosophy in the Early Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, p. 8.
 16. *ibid.*, p. 8, emphasis in original.
 17. Dermot Moran, *The Philosophy of John Scottus Eriugena: A Study of Idealism in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 1989, p. 41.
 18. Gangolf Schrimpf, *Das Werk des Johannes Scottus Eriugena im Rahmen des Wissenschaftsverständnisses seiner Zeit: Eine Hinführung zu Periphyseon*, Aschendorff, Münster, 1982, p. 39.
 19. Marenbon, p. 97.
 20. John J O'Meara, 'Eriugena's Immediate Influence', in Werner Beierwaltes (ed.), *Eriugena Redivivus*, Carl Winter, Heidelberg, 1987, p. 16.
 21. Marenbon, p. 104.
 22. *ibid.*, p. 104.
 23. To these early florilegia might be added two twelfth-century manuscripts: the edition produced at Malmesbury by several scribal hands that came into William's possession and is now housed at Trinity College Cambridge (*Trin. Coll. 0.5.20*); and *Clavis physicae*, an important if flawed *liber excerptus* by Honorius Augustodunensis, a modern edition of which Paolo Lucentini has prepared.
 24. McGann, *The Textual Condition*, p. 107.
 25. Several scholars have addressed Pound's intermittent citation of medieval textual practices, although not systematically. For an early example, in the first number of *Paideuma*, see William Chase, 'The Canto as Cento: XXXIII', *Paideuma*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1972, pp. 89–100.
 26. Johannes Scottus Eriugena, *Carmina*, Michael W. Herren (ed.), Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, Dublin, 1993, p. 140.
 27. Feng Lan, *Ezra Pound and Confucianism: Remaking Humanism in the Face of Modernity*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2006, p. 86.
 28. McGann, *The Textual Condition*, p. 107.
 29. *ibid.*, p. 137.
 30. Such was the influence of Averroes upon subsequent scholastic philosophy that Thomas Aquinas simply called him 'The Commentator', in counterpoint to Aristotle as 'The Philosopher'. Averroes also appears in the first circle of hell in Canto 4 of Dante's *Inferno* along with the classical poets and philosophers, as well as in Raphael's fresco, *The School of Athens*, housed in the Stanza della Signatura in the Vatican Museum.
 31. McGann, *The Textual Condition*, p. 118.