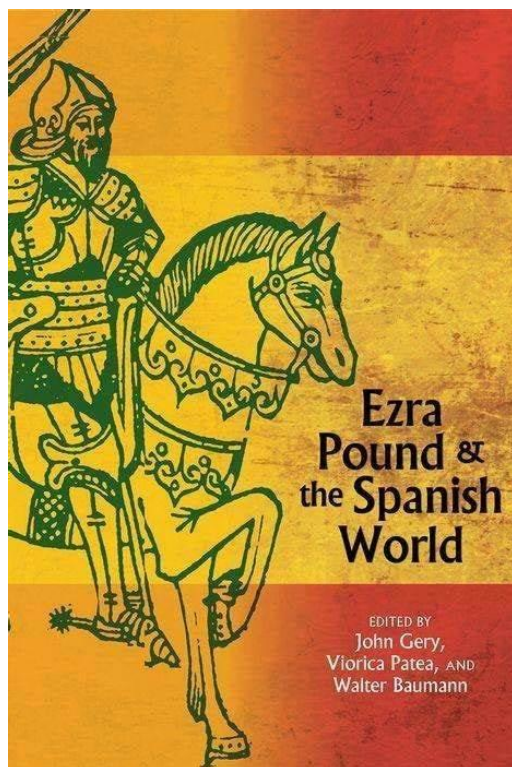


## BOOKS

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### Viorica Patea, John Gery, and Walter Baumann (eds.), *Ezra Pound & the Spanish World*, Clemson: Clemson University Press, 2024, 512 p.

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The legacy of the American poet Ezra Pound has been extensively researched for decades, but his life and work still offer food for thought to historians, critics and writers. A notable relatively recent international endeavour is the *Ezra Pound Center for Literature Series* by Clemson University Press, which encompasses critical monographs, scholarly studies, collections of essays, volumes of original poetry, reprints, translations and more. *Ezra Pound & the Spanish World* (2024) edited by Viorica Patea, John Gery and Walter Baumann is a significant contribution within this series.

As noted in the “Preface,” Ezra Pound (1885-1972) travelled to Spain on three occasions during his youth: first at 17 in 1902, accompanying his aunt to Granada and Seville; then at 21 in 1906, as a young PhD researcher funded by the University of Pennsylvania, studying Lope de Vega’s theatre; and again at 23 in 1908, revisiting Granada and Seville en route to Italy. Although his poetry was inspired by Spanish literature and the arts, and his work

and life influenced a number of Spanish-speaking writers, the studies on Pound’s two-way relationship to the Spanish world are scarce. Therefore, the aim of this edited collection is to survey these dynamic connections in more detail.

The book has two main parts: a set of essays and a reader of unpublished materials. The first part, which is three times bigger than the second, contains a set of seventeen academic chapters on Ezra Pound’s interest in and influence on the Spanish world and



a three-fold chapter containing three memoirs, all chapters grouped in five sections. The essays and the reader are complemented by visual elements: drawings, paintings, photographs, poems, letters, and postcards. The project has a multicultural approach as the contributors are experienced researchers from France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Romania, Switzerland and the USA, and it covers transnational and transhistorical topics.

The introductory essay in the first section, “A Dream Spain: The Legacy of Spain in Pound’s Œuvre” by Viorica Patea highlights the early Spanish reverberation on Pound’s approach to literature, interpreted as a “first love”: forgotten, but indelible. The critic covers elements of Spanish culture in *The Spirit of Romance*, Pound’s letters and *The Cantos*. Published in London, his first collection of essays on the literary European tradition, *The Spirit of Romance* (2010) is described as “a substitute for the doctoral dissertation Pound never completed” (xvii). His view on *El Cantar de Mio Cid*, his essay on Lope de Vega and the translation of some of the latter’s works into English constitute early testimonies of his interest in Spanish literature. Patea documents his stays in Spain and shows how his experiences, letters and the people he met emerged in his later works. Light is shed on his travels around Europe, which made him give up his ambition of becoming an American academic and follow his creative instinct and quest for originality, rooted in old traditions like that of the troubadours. Although he gives limited space to Spanish culture in his work, in comparison with other cultures, even though he sometimes supports the stereotype of Spanish “barbarism”, and in spite of his lack of knowledge regarding modern Spanish letters, Patea highlights his importance for Spanish poets like Jorge Guillén and the *novísimos* (poets of the 1970s), and reminds us that Spanish was the first language in which a complete edition of *The Cantos* was published, translated by José Vázquez Amaral in 1975.

The second section is focused on “Spanish beginnings from Averroes to the Baroque”, with four essays about Pound’s interest in the philosopher Averroes, the first troubadours, Lope de Vega and the Spanish Baroque epoch. Firstly, researcher Maria Luisa Ardizzone gives evidence that, when commenting on Guido Cavalcanti’s poem *Donna me prega*, Pound was already acquainted with the philosophical writings of Arabic authors such as Averroes. These works stemmed from a medieval discursive tradition distinct from the mainstream and introduced to a modern readership by historians like Ernest Renan. Secondly, Giuliana Ferreccio explores the genealogy of the alba as a genre of Old Occitan lyric poetry and the love cult of the troubadours in Pound’s poetry, tracing its illustrations from his early translations to his later poetry. The critic demonstrates how the meaning of the alba evolved from a traditional “poetic of absence” to a “Dantean *vita nuova*”. Thirdly, Natalia Carbajosa revisits Pound’s perspective on Lope de Vega’s drama, identifying some of the reasons why he found it brilliant and comparable to Shakespeare’s. To provide an example, she assesses his familiarity with de Vega’s work and illustrates his translation choices and poetic strategy in the play *El desprecio agradecido*. Fourthly, Paula Barba Guerrero reflects on Pound’s ambivalence regarding the Spanish Baroque and shows how *The Cantos* echo his modernist sensibilities, diverging from nostalgia by reimagining poetic discourse and the representation of time. While influenced by Baroque aesthetics, he rejected its artificiality and scepticism, opting for aesthetic austerity and a dynamic view of history that connects past and present, avoiding melancholy and highlighting hope and action.

The five essays in the third section, "Spain and/in *The Cantos*", analyse how Pound incorporated diverse themes like Camões, Menippean satire, Spanish and Japanese drama, and Velázquez's art in his epic poem. Firstly, Stephen Wilson's "Re-Reading Pound and Camões" explores Luís Vaz de Camões's epic, *Os Lusíadas*, which Pound admired alongside primary epics like Homer's. Wilson notes that Pound valued Camões's depiction of the "real" and linked literature with economics, and highlights that Pound's interest in Portuguese literature is significant due to shared histories with Spanish culture. Secondly, in "Menippean Satire and Carnivalism in Ezra Pound's Pisan Canto 74," J. Rhett Forman argues that recognizing Menippean satire, with its mix of genres, provides a new perspective on Pound's work. Forman highlights how this meta-genre, characterized by mixing high and low elements, digressive structure, and rhetorical effects, creates a carnivalesque atmosphere in "Canto 74". Thirdly, Yoshiko Kita, in "The Congruence of Lope de Vega's Plays and Noh in *The Pisan Cantos*," examines how Pound's poetry blends strategies from Spanish drama and Japanese Noh dance-drama. Kita highlights the presence of Noh in *The Cantos* and notes the contrast between elegiac and comic elements in *The Pisan Cantos*, showcasing Pound's interest in individual multiplicity over tragic unity. Caterina Ricciardi's "Washington Irving's Alhambra in *The Cantos*" discusses Pound's incorporation of Spanish culture through American literature, focusing on his 1902 visit to Granada with Aunt Frank and the influence of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Ricciardi connects Irving's descriptions of the Alhambra with Pound's references in *The Cantos*, exploring their visual and historical significance, notably in relation to Queen Elisabetta Farnese and the heraldic lion of Castile and Leon. John Gery's "Pound's Prado and the Glimpse of Velázquez" explores Ezra Pound's transformative experience in Madrid in 1906 at the Museo del Prado, particularly encountering Velázquez's paintings, which profoundly shaped his poetic development. Gery discusses how Pound's reflections in *Guide to Kulchur* and "Canto 80" capture the lasting impact of Velázquez's art on his poetic vision and concept of "paideuma" as the intricate web of deeply rooted ideas of any era.

The four articles in the fourth section, titled "Pound's Modernist Iberian Connections," transition from literary exploration to historical inquiry, emphasizing Pound's interactions with other modernist writers associated with Spain. Firstly, in "Pound and Unamuno: The History of a Collaboration," Miriam Borham-Puyal considers the American poet's correspondence with the Spanish existentialist philosopher. Starting in 1920, Pound aimed to introduce Spanish literature to *The Dial*. Borham-Puyal explores their shared literary tastes and the mutual influence reflected in unpublished archival material. Secondly, Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan's "Juan Ramón and the Imagists: A Reappraisal of 'Modernism(o)'" chronicles the literary friendship between Pound and Nobel laureate Juan Ramón Jiménez. The critic argues that, despite misinterpreting Pound and Imagism, Jiménez created his unique modernism, emphasizing exact language and everyday topics. His idiosyncratic translations of Pound highlight this poetic revolution. Thirdly, Jennifer Kilgore-Caradec's "Lines of Division: Nancy Cunard, Ezra Pound, Langston Hughes, and the Spanish Civil War" scans Cunard's and Pound's conflicting views on the Spanish Civil War, while highlighting their collaborative efforts. The critic researches Pound's influence on Cunard's poetry and publishing, her role in connecting Pound with Hughes's poetry, and her diverse, impactful literary and humanitarian endeavours. Fourthly, Massimo Bacigalupo's "Discovering the Mediterranean Sanity: Pound and Hemingway" explores how the two American authors found in Spain and

Italy a blend of nature and culture. Despite differing political allegiances, both celebrated Mediterranean life as a model for modern man, reacting against American provincialism and embracing the region's genuine contemplation of life and death.

The fifth section, entitled "Echoes of Pound in the Postmodern Spanish World", contains three academic essays and a three-fold memoir collection. Firstly, Emanuele Zoppellari Perale's "Pound's Amulet in Roberto Bolaño's Novels" highlights Ezra Pound's significant influence on Chilean author Roberto Bolaño, arguing that Pound serves not just as inspiration but as a model for the exiled poet's life. This impact is evident in Bolaño's work, which shares formal and narrative elements with *The Cantos*. Zoppellari argues that Pound's concept of the poet in exile profoundly shaped Bolaño's understanding of modern poetry. Secondly, in "Science and Silence: Reading Antonio Colinas in the Light of Pound's Theory of the Image," Melania Stancu argues that silence is crucial in both Pound's and Colinas's poetics. Stancu examines Colinas's poetry, highlighting its symbolic language and unity, influenced by Pound's ideogrammic method, which uses imagery as an epistemological tool, presenting the poetic image as a sacred revelation embodying harmony. Thirdly, Leonor María Martínez Serrano's "*The Cantos* in Translation: The Spanish Variations" reviews major Spanish translations of Ezra Pound's *The Cantos*. Highlighting José Vázquez Amaral's pioneering full translation and subsequent scholarly editions, Martínez contrasts it with newer translations like Jan de Jager's non-bilingual edition, offering insights into the diverse approaches in conveying Pound's complex masterpiece to a Spanish-speaking audience. The last part in this section, "Pound and the Novísimo Poets: Three Memoirs," includes essays by Antonio Colinas, Jaime Siles, and Luis Alberto de Cuenca, key figures of the Novísimo movement in 1970s Spain. They recount Ezra Pound's significant influence, inspiring a shift from socially conscious Spanish poetry to a more cosmopolitan and learned approach. Colinas reflects on his personal encounter with Pound, while Siles considers Pound's reception in Spain, and de Cuenca pays tribute to Pound's transformative impact on his poetic career.

"Part Two: Ezra Pound and The Spanish World: A Reader" compiles rare Pound material in chronological order, including letters from his Madrid stay, negotiations with the Palacio Real Library, correspondence with Viola Baxter, postcards from Burgos and Madrid, essays on Burgos and Francisco de Quevedo, essays not collected in his various prose volumes, an unpublished letter to his Spanish translator Vázquez Amaral, translations of Amaral's essays, and letters by Pound and his wife Dorothy from St. Elizabeths Hospital to Nobel Prize winner Juan Ramón Jiménez and his wife Zenobia Camprubí. Most of this material is supplemented by explanatory notes and detailed commentaries provided by the editors, showing the circumstances in which they were produced, their circulation throughout the years and their relevance today.

In conclusion, *Ezra Pound & the Spanish World* edited by Viorica Patea, John Gery, and Walter Baumann is a volume useful for researchers and scholars who study Ezra Pound's literary and cultural legacy, with a focus on his relationship with the Spanish letters, and a source of inspiration for literary historians and writers.

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