

TIGULLIO ITINERARIES : EZRA POUND AND FRIENDS

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Rapallo in Brief

Tigullio is the name of the gulf at the center of which is Rapallo, limited by Portofino to the south-west and Sestri Levante to the east. Ezra Pound mentions the Tigullio with affection several times in *The Cantos*, recalling for example a comment by W. B. Yeats during one of their walks:

“Sligo in heaven” murmured uncle William
when the mist finally settled down on Tigullio. (77/493)

The implication is that Yeats, being a man of Irish mists by birth and inclination, was most enthusiastic about the Tigullio when he got to see it on a misty day. On the other hand, EP was very much a sun-worshipper, in Venice, then at Lake Garda and finally in Rapallo. The name Tigullio also recurs in the final lines of canto 116, which is as close as EP ever got to writing a finale to *The Cantos*.

The history of Rapallo goes back to the first century A.D., though the oldest remains that have been preserved date from circa 1200 (the ruins of the monasteries of San Tommaso and Valle Christi in the valley behind the town). The village submitted itself to the Republic of Genoa in 1229. In 1293 the English

embassy on the way to the Khan of Persia stayed in Rapallo (Alt 121). Geoffrey Chaucer may also have visited when he went to Genoa on an embassy in 1373. The coastal road, Via Aurelia, is Roman in origin but was modernised in the days of Napoleon. Byron travelled from Sestri Levante to Genoa by coach in September 1822. In 1815 Genoa was annexed to the kingdom of Sardinia and in 1861 became part of the kingdom of Italy. The railway was inaugurated in 1868, and with it many visitors from Italy and elsewhere began to arrive. Soon several distinguished hotels were opened (Europa, Bristol, Excelsior, Savoia, etc.) In April 1922 the Soviet Union and Germany renounced claims to war reparations with the Treaty of Rapallo. Ernest Hemingway was in this area at the time as a correspondent at the Conference of Genoa (of which the Rapallo Treaty was an offshoot). During WW2 Rapallo suffered some damage from bombing. After the armistice of September 1943, until April 1945 the town was governed by the Italian Social Republic and its nominal head Mussolini, though the Germans were largely in control. Several Jewish families were deported at this time. The 1950s and early 1960s were quiet years, with a pre-war atmosphere and numerous foreigners living permanently in the region. In the 1960s, with the growing demand for affordable housing from residents of northern Italy, there was a building boom especially in the valleys behind the town, and Rapallo became infamous for mindless development, though luckily some of its beauty was preserved. The new marina and the ugly high-rise in the town center date from the early 1970s.

Traditionally Rapallo is divided in six sections or “*sestieri*”: Cerisola (the center), Costaguta (west of the Boate river), San Michele (westward from the port), Cappelletta (beyond the railway tracks and north of the Boate), Bòrzoli (from the Castle into the hills along the San Francesco creek) and Seglio (east). The six walks outlined below mainly refer to the following “*sestieri*”: 1: Cerisola; 2: Cerisola and Costaguta; 3: Cerisola; 4: Borzoli; 5: Seglio; 6: Seglio to Zoagli and Chiavari.

Ezra Pound in Brief

Born 1885 in Hailey (Idaho) and raised in Philadelphia, Ezra Pound lived in London and Paris (1908-1924), acquiring a reputation as a major poet and critic and befriending and promoting contemporaries like W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot and Ernest Hemingway. In 1924 he moved to Rapallo, with his English wife, the painter Dorothy Shakespear. In Rapallo he wrote the greater part of *The Cantos*, an epic poem which he called “the tale of the tribe,” and many works of criticism and polemic. He contributed to the local weekly *Il Mare*, created a literary circle, and organized concert seasons with his violinist friend Olga Rudge, who in 1925 bore him a daughter. He also composed a short opera, *Cavalcanti*. Dorothy’s son Omar was born in 1926. In 1930 his parents moved to Rapallo, where Homer Pound died in 1942. The Ezra Pounds lived in an attic apartment above Caffè Rapallo, overlooking the seafront, until spring 1944, when they moved to Olga Rudge’s house in Sant’Ambrogio di Zoagli. They brought to their Rapallo attic the massive *Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound* by the Vorticist sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. EP, who in 1943 had been indicted for treason by the U.S. Department of Justice for his broadcasts from Rome Radio, was arrested on 3 May 1945 and detained in Genoa and in the U.S. Army D.T.C. (Disciplinary Training Centre) at Metato, near Pisa, then flown to the U.S. where he was found of unsound mind and unfit for trial. In Metato he wrote the *Pisan Cantos*, the most lyrical section of his long poem, which in 1948 won the Bollingen Prize for Poetry. After twelve years in St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C., he returned to Italy in 1958 and to Rapallo in 1959, to write his last cantos. From 1962 until his death in 1972 he lived with Olga Rudge in Sant’Ambrogio and Venice.



Walk 1

ALESSANDRA ROTTA

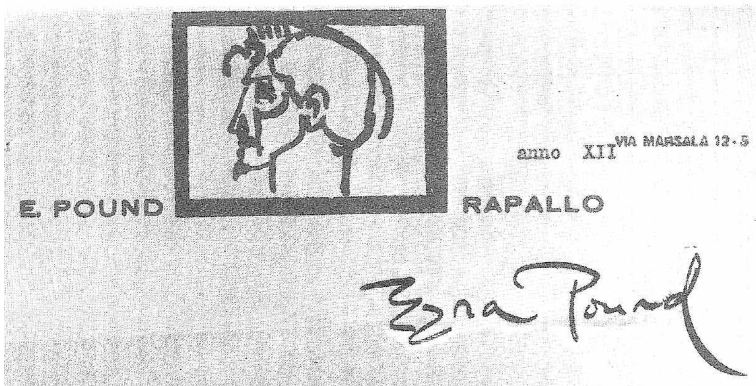
1. The Dorothy Pound Walk

This walk will take you from the Pounds' apartment through the old Rapallo center with its dark alleys, to the Cathedral and the City Hall which hosted the concert seasons EP organized.

Start from the west end of the seafront ("Passeggiata" or "Lungomare"), in front of Caffè Rapallo. Palazzo Baratti ①, is the imposing building with Caffè Rapallo on the ground floor. Behind it is Via Marsala, 20/5 (formerly 12/5), the entrance to the Pounds' attic residence, 1925-1944. It has a marble "M" above the doorway, in honor of Mary, with the inscription "Admirabile Nomen" ("Admirable Name"). The apartment is now privately owned and not accessible. To have a good view of the Pounds' terrace, cross to the sea side of the Passeggiata and look at the last floor above Caffè Rapallo. The terrace has a stone balustrade. The Pounds rented the eastern half of the top floor, directly over the archway between the seafront and Via Marsala.

Here W. B. Yeats visited EP in 1928:

Ezra Pound . . . a man with whom I should quarrel more than with anyone else if we were not united by affection, has for years



EP's letterhead, 1934.



Palazzo Baratti, circa 1930.

lived in rooms opening on to a flat roof by the sea. For the last hour we have sat upon the roof which is also a garden, discussing that immense poem of which but seven and twenty Cantos are already published. (*Packet* 1-2)

A photograph of EP standing on the roof of the attic over the terrace was taken about 1937 by James Jesus Angleton (1917-87), who was born in Idaho and grew up in Rome, and later became a CIA director. (The Robert De Niro feature *The Good Shepherd* starring Matt Damon was based on Angleton's career.) In the background of Angleton's photo you can see the frescos that decorate the cornice of the second building to the right of Palazzo Baratti, above Caffè Nettuno. (See back cover.)

James Laughlin, who in 1934 left Harvard to "study" with EP, remembered the Pound apartment's interior:

At age twenty, I had the good luck of taking in Rapallo two ses-

sions of several months each of the “Ezuversity,” as Pound liked to call it. He and his wife lived at the time on the fifth floor of a building, an apartment with a terrace overlooking the Gulf of Tigullio. The house was on the seafront, but the entrance to Number 12 was in the narrow and old Via Marsala. Behind the big terrace there were four or five small rooms, furnished with the simplicity that Pound always cherished; he himself had built most of the tables and chairs, with pieces of wood picked up in the shops of local carpenters. There were the fine Gaudier sculptures, small but very pure, and, among the paintings, a notable Max Ernst, an abstraction with two white shells. Some drawings in color by Wyndham Lewis hung in Dorothy Pound’s small sitting room, as well as several of her own sketches, which were of good quality. Bookshelves built by him lined the lower part of the walls; the books were fewer than one could imagine. Pound was always evaluating them carefully and had discarded those that were not worthy of the “canon” (my word, not his)... I had told my family that I had taken a leave from Harvard to give my over-worked eyes a rest. Often, after tea, Mrs. Pound would invite me to her small sitting room and read aloud one of Henry James’s stories. Of these she was an excellent interpreter, with her nice and expressive voice and her sensibility which was very close to the Master’s. (“Pound le professeur” 148-50)

The room where Ezra worked ... was interesting. He had it well organized. So that he could easily find them, he hung his glasses and his extra glasses, his pencils, his pens, his scissors, and his stapler from the ceiling over his desk. I watched him working sometimes. He would assault the typewriter with an incredible vigor. (*Pound as Wuz* 6-7)

Among EP’s Italian visitors was the poet (and future Nobel laureate) Eugenio Montale. In his reminiscences he portrayed EP on his seaside terrace as a lone survivor of the American expatriates of the 1920s:

Naive as a child, Ezra Pound was surprised by the war on his beautiful terrace. The world had changed and he had not noticed. Also Rapallo had emptied. Years earlier W. B. Yeats had returned

to Ireland, and other exiles were not to be expected from those parts. Rootless, incapable of finding a center to his life beyond his *Cantos*, Ezra at this point championed not the real Italy, for which he couldn't care less, but the setting of his waking dreams. An unwitting antiquarian, the custodian of the museum of his heart, he liked to read the old Italian chronicles in search of an exciting anecdote, an odd word. One night, when he came upon the word "lattizzo" [skin of a suckling animal, see 22/106], he ran out half-naked through the Rapallo streets yelling "lattizzo, lattizzo!", and his wife only got him back home after considerable effort. ("Laurel Fronds" 448-49)

Another early guest of E.P.'s attic in December 1925 was T. S. Eliot.

In the 1920s there was only one street between Palazzo Baratti and the sea. From his terrace, EP saw the heavy boats with lateen sails (called *leudi*) that brought over sand from Sardinia, and was reminded of ancient Mediterranean seafaring:

And in the morning, in the Phrygian head-sack,
Barefooted, dumping sand from their boat (23/108)

The paper sacks worn by the carriers over their heads looked just like the "Phrygian" beret of Odysseus.



Leudo.



Old lunch cabin.

An old pavilion stood out over the water opposite EP's balcony ②. It housed a restaurant, above which Friedrich Nietzsche had roomed, as EP (always interested in literary lore) reported to a correspondent in 1936:

Neitzsche [*sic*] was here, tho I didn't know it till I had been here for a long time. Roomed over an east pavilion where some years I ate; now carted up the tennis valley... just below my terrazza. N/ couldn't stand noise of the sea / coherent bloke said to have kept on walking away to escape it, and I suppose coming back from absence of mind. (McWhirter 118)

This memory of Nietzsche meditating across from EP's attic surfaces again in the Pisan cantos, where Nietzsche is referred to by the name of his persona Zarathustra, now out of fashion (as EP himself when he was in Pisa):

at Nemi waited on the slope above the lake sunken
in the pocket of hills
awaiting decision from the old lunch cabin built over the shingle,
Zarathustra, now desuete (74/458)

Above the archway between Via Marsala and the Lungomare



Terrace of Albergo Ristorante "Rapallo," circa 1930.

is a plaque, inaugurated in 1985 for the centenary of EP's birth:

QUI VISSE DAL 1924 AL 1945 IL POETA AMERICANO **EZRA POUND**
(1885 - 1972) CHE A RAPALLO DEDICÒ STUPEFACENTI PAGINE DEI SUOI CANTI
HERE LIVED **EZRA POUND** AMERICAN POET

MA SEGUENDO IL FILO D'ORO
NELLA TRAMA (TORCELLO)
AL VICOLO D'ORO (TIGULLIO).
AMMETTERE L'ERRORE E TENERE AL
GIUSTO:
CARITA' TALVOLTA IO L'EBBI,
NON RIESCO A FARLA FLUIRE.
UN PO' DI LUCE COME UN BARLUME
PER RICONDURRE ALLO SPLENDORE

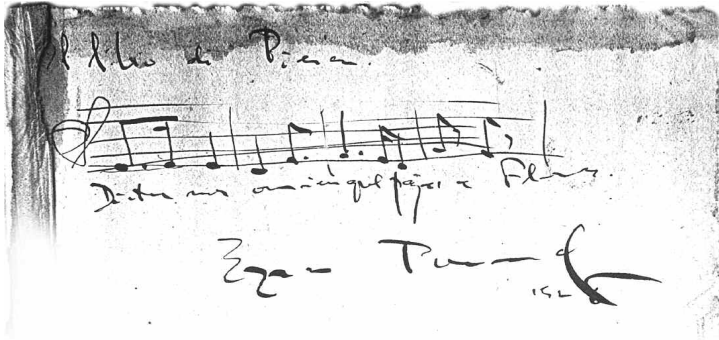
BUT TO AFFIRM THE GOLD THREAD
IN THE PATTERN (TORCELLO)
AL VICOLO D'ORO (TIGULLIO)
TO CONFESS WRONG
WITHOUT LOSING RIGHTNESS:
CHARITY I HAVE HAD SOMETIMES,
I CANNOT MAKE IT FLOW THRU.
A LITTLE LIGHT, LIKE A RUSHLIGHT
TO LEAD BACK TO SPLENDOR.

NEL CENTENARIO DELLA NASCITA
IL COMUNE DI RAPALLO
POSE

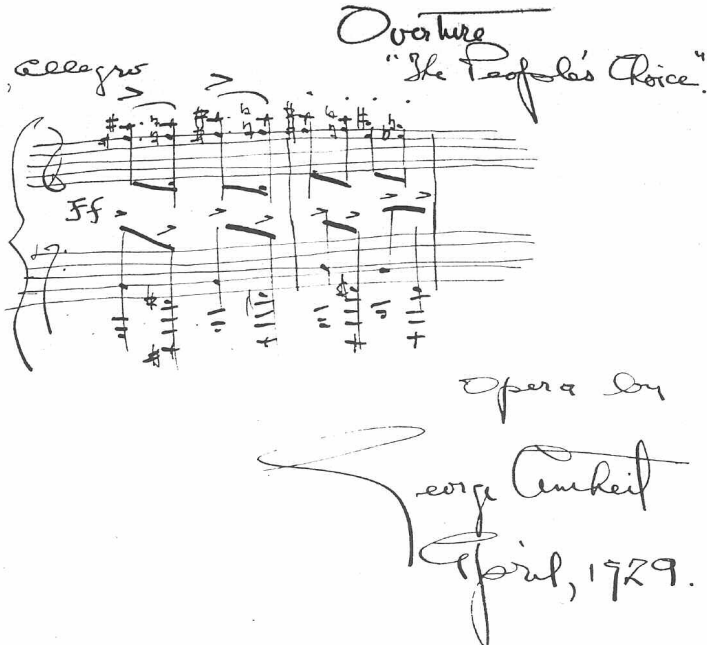
The quoted lines are from the end of canto 116, the last canto completed by EP, probably in Rapallo in 1959.

To the left of the archway is Caffè Rapallo (Lungomare Vittorio Veneto, 32 **3**). This used to be Caffè Aurum, next to the restaurant of the Albergo Rapallo in the same building. Here Ezra and Dorothy took their meals, entertained guests, and EP met his associates to launch ventures like the *Supplemento Letterario del Mare*

(1932-1933) and the concert seasons of the Amici del Tigullio (1933-39). EP was friendly with the hotel proprietors, the Majerna family, and gave their young daughter Piera a leather-bound autograph book on the first page of which he wrote "Il libro di Piera":



This is a stave from *Villon*, the opera on which EP was working with the assistance of George Antheil, who also autographed "Piera's Book":



A year later, Piera (1915-1978), probably instructed by EP, approached another distinguished-looking guest of the hotel and this is the resulting autograph:

*Much did I rage when young,
Being by the world oppressed,
But now with flattering tongue
It speeds the parting guest.*

W B Yeats, April 17, 1929

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Being by the world oppressed,
But now with flattering tongue
It speeds the parting guest.*

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In the following pages of Piera's autograph book we find the signatures of Gerhart Hauptmann, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, and many others, among them the co-editor of the Literary Supplement of *Il Mare*, Gino Saviotti, and three younger contributors: the Northumbrian poet Basil Bunting, the German Eugen Haas, and the Spaniard Juan Ramon Masoliver, who was to become an important critic and translator. "Piera's Book" is a document of the lively and creative Rapallo milieu during the EP era.

For some years, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's imposing *Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound* stood on the café floor, as EP recalled in 1960:

Finally there was sufficient cash balance to achieve transfer [from London] to the Gulf of Tigullio, and for some years the marble stood by my lunch table, ground floor of Majerna's Albergo

Rapallo (documentation can be furnished if desired). After Majerna had been ousted from proprietorship by one of the dirtiest small wangles that marred the second fascist decennio, one risked the structural firmness of the restored Palazzo Baratti (then No. 12 Via Marsala), stretched some large planks over what were presumed to be rafters, and the stone eyes gazed seaward. (*Gaudier-Brzeska* 146)

The marble head remained on the terrace until it was taken with EP's archive to Brunnenburg in the mid-1950s, when EP and Dorothy (in the U.S. at the time) gave up their Rapallo quarters. It is now in an American collection.

James Laughlin describes EP's lunchtime "classes" and the walks they took on the hills nearby:

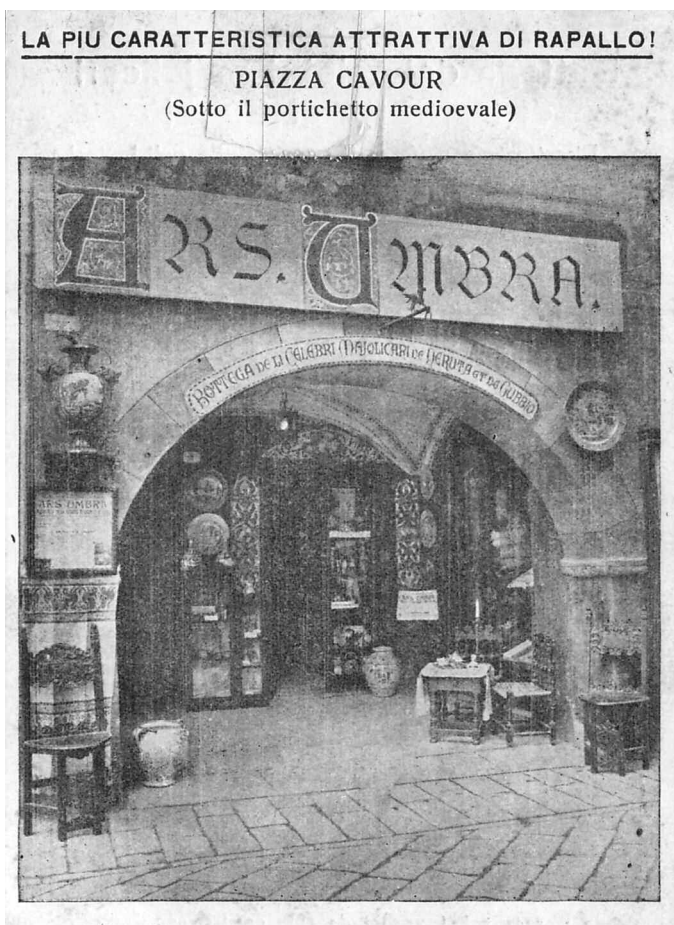
An invitation to lunch was followed by an invitation to dinner... It was suggested that "the Jas" should ... regularly dine at the Pounds' table with the other guests who would turn up, just as I had. I was to study Italian with Signorina Canessa, who seemed no bigger than her canary... The Eziversity's teaching was given (free of charge) without ceremony and always conversationally. It started at lunchtime (since Pound worked in the mornings) and often continued after the siesta, during the Pounds' long hikes on the rocky heights above Rapallo, through the small terraced farms and olive groves. Greek and Provençal were good to hear among the grey stones, the green olive trees and the blue and ancient sea, which glistened at the bottom of the bay. ("Pound le professeur" 149)

Leaving the seafront, walk through the archway, cross Via Marsala and go as far as the corner of Via Mazzini, locally known as "Carruggio Dritto" (Straight Alley). In the old days this was the main street. From here you can get a good view of the back windows of EP's attic. The house opposite, at Via Mazzini, 19, was damaged by a bomb, then replaced by a new building. The shop at the same number is Paglialunga, the local electrician (formerly in Piazza Venezia nearby), where in October 1931 EP (who did not own a radio) went to listen to the

BBC broadcasts of his opera *Villon*.

Walk left along Via Mazzini towards the main square, Piazza Cavour. The newspaper store on the right at No. 3 ④ was owned by Emanuele Bafico (1882-1956). During the war Bafico printed paper tokens in lieu of change, thus illustrating EP's monetary theories:

A perfect example of instinctive monetary good sense is met today in this small town. The newsvendor, Mr. Baffico [sic], cer-



tainly not an erudite man, because he lacked the necessary small change, and not wanting to use postage stamps as they lose their freshness and gum in a series of exchanges, has had some little tags printed which he now gives to his patrons as change. I found Signor Baffico indignant because other merchants had begun to accept his tags as money and he had to incur the expense of having another supply printed. (*Introduction to the Economic Nature of the United States*, original Italian edition 1944, *Selected Prose* 184, cf. *Lavoro ed usura* 96)

And Baffico had papers, daily papers, giornali. (97/692)

Beyond the newspaper store, at Via Mazzini, 1, notice the colorful tilework over the old arches, with an inscription and an image of Perugia. These decorations belonged to a gift-shop called “Ars Umbra,” which specialized in arts and crafts from central Italy. It was run by Luigi Monti, a minor writer from Cortona whom EP praised in *Guide to Kulchur*, father of the painter Rolando Monti.

Cross Piazza Cavour and enter the Rapallo cathedral, named after the martyrs Gervasius and Protasius, patrons of Milan ⑤. The right aisle was destroyed by a bomb on 28 July 1944. EP may refer to this (and to the bombing of the Tempio Malatestiano) in canto 76: “la scalza: Io son la luna / and they have broken my house.” The second altar on the right was restored at the expense of Fr. Desmond Chute (1895-1962), and has a Latin tablet designed and composed by Chute, recording his gratitude for surviving the war. Chute, an artist-priest from Bristol, was an associate of Eric Gill and David Jones, and a good friend of EP, Dorothy, and Olga. His funeral service took place in this church in September 1962, and was attended by EP and Olga. According to Mary de Rachewiltz, Chute looked like a survivor of the 1890s:

Thin and very tall, a long, pale face, with lots of hair and a beard (dyed red), melodramatically stretched out on couches with lay-

ers of capes and blankets and three kinds of curtains at the windows which had to be drawn according to the slightest change of light outside, a series of eyeglasses and eyeshades and reading lamps. His health was poor, his eyesight very delicate. But his discipline must have been adamant... (148)

The church also has a fine painting of *Saint Blaise Healing a Child* (1635) by Domenico Fiasella (to the right of main altar). Some of the stained glass windows over the entrance are the work of Rolando Monti.

Exiting the church on Corso Italia, turn right into Via Venezia, leading to the picturesque market square, Piazza Venezia ⑥, then turn left along Vico Rosa to the little square with a church on a hillock on the right (Santo Stefano or Oratorio dei Neri, perhaps the oldest church in town) and the Oratorio dei Bianchi on the left ⑦. Note near the cypress tree a bas relief of St. Sebastian by Italo Primi, a local sculptor of merit. If the Oratorio dei Bianchi is open you can see the massive crucifixes that are carried around town in the yearly procession of July 3, and the fine wooden processional statue of *St. Sebastian* by Anton Maria Maragliano (1664-1741). On Maunday Thursday (before Easter) the floors of the two Oratories (as well as those of the Cathedral and the other Rapallo churches) are decorated with flowers and white grass, symbolizing the Holy Sepulchre. "I must go see the flower carpets in the churches," Dorothy wrote EP in Easter week 1946 (*Letters in Captivity* 315). This is another local detail taken up in the *Cantos*:

The sea is streaked red with Adonis,
The lights flicker red in small jars,
Wheat shoots rise new by the altar,
flower from the swift seed.

(47/236-37)

Turn left into Via Magenta. Through a columned portico on the left you enter the City Hall (Palazzo Comunale, Piazza

delle Nazioni, 4 ⑧). Go up the old slate staircase and walk into the city assembly room or Salone Consiliare del Comune. The room has frescos of Rapallo notables, of children representing the outlying villages, and of Bartolomeo Maggiocco rescuing his betrothed during the pirate raid of 1559. This was the setting of the concerts which EP organized in 1934-39 under the heading “Amici del Tigullio,” featuring Olga Rudge, Gerhart Münch and others. The Amici del Tigullio bought a grand piano and gave it to the city on condition that it be not removed from the “Sala del Municipio,” and that it be played by musicians approved by them. EP outlined these conditions in a letter of 1934 to Silvio Solari, then “Podestà,” i.e. chief civilian authority (Bacigalupo, *Un poeta a Rapallo* 46). EP promoted the concerts tirelessly, occasionally even selling tickets at the entrance. He sometimes gave introductory talks, as noted in *Il Mare* for 11 April 1936:

Before beginning the “study session” devoted to the music of our Vivaldi, Ezra Pound addressed a few words of elucidation to the audience gathered last Wednesday in the Town Hall in Rapallo.

Walk back along Via Magenta and turn left into Via Torre Civica. The first narrow alley on your right is Vico dell’Oro ⑨, which crosses Via Venezia and Via Mazzini. This is the “Alley of Gold” cited in the close of canto 116, and read by EP as a symbol of the light of love penetrating darkness:

But to affirm the gold thread in the pattern (Torcello)
al Vicolo d’Oro (Tigullio)
To confess wrong without losing rightness...

When he returned to Rapallo in 1959 Pound noted the alley’s name and saw in it a covert significance, as if the love-goddess of canto 1 were signalling to him so many years later.

By way of Vico dell’Oro return to the seafront.



2. The W. B. Yeats Walk

This tour will take you to places associated with Hemingway and Yeats and to mementos of the Rapallo of circa 1900 (when there was a substantial foreign colony) and later.

Start from Via Marsala and turn left into Via Cairoli to the medieval “Gate of the Saltworks,” Porta delle Saline ❶, decorated by a reproduction of the icon of Montallegro (the work of sculptor Agostino Pastene, an acquaintance of EP). An age-old butterbush grows from the wall on the outside. The gate is named after the saltworks that used to extend west of the village. Now the gate opens on Piazza IV Novembre (named for the end of WW1, 4 November 1918). On the other side is a monument to the war dead and the public gardens, Giardini Giuseppe Verdi ❷.

Yeats remembered visiting these gardens with EP:

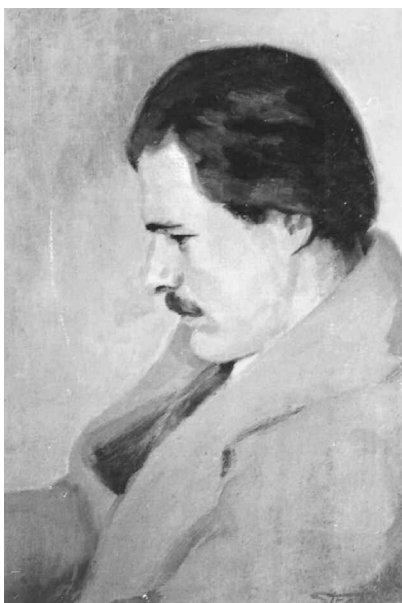
Sometimes about ten o'clock at night I accompany him to a street where there are hotels upon one side, upon the other palm trees and the sea, and there taking out of his pocket bones and pieces of meat he begins to call the cats. He knows all their histories... (*Packet* 4)

The street mentioned by Yeats is now called Via Gramsci. The first hotel, on the corner of Piazza IV Novembre, is Hotel Riviera ❸. Ernest and Hadley Hemingway stayed here in February 1923, at the urging of EP, who however departed during their visit leaving them to their own devices. Out of his weeks in Rapallo Hemingway produced the story “Cat in the Rain,” which is about a married couple, stranded out of season in an Italian resort:

There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel. . . Their room was on the second floor facing the sea. It also faced the public garden and the war monument. There were big palms and green benches in the public garden. In the good weather there was always an artist with his easel. Artists liked the ways the palms grew and



Rapallo War Monument,
by Giacinto Pasciuti (1921).



Hemingway in Rapallo
(1923) by Mike Strater.

the bright colors of the hotels facing the gardens and the sea... The sea broke in a long line in the rain and slipped back down the beach to come up and break again in a long line in the rain. (*The Short Stories* 168)

Mike Strater, an American artist, was at the Hotel Riviera with the Hemingways, and painted portraits of Ernest and Hadley. He recalled:

All of Hem's early manuscripts had just been lost; and he was writing and reworking the highly condensed one-page short stories that were later published as *in our time*, and which were the foundation of his literary style. For exercise, we used to box downstairs, our sole gallery an Italian taxi driver-timekeeper, who often was so appalled at our idea of fun that he forgot to signal the end of a round. (Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, jacket material.)

Strater was preparing the woodcuts for the first major installment of EP's cantos, in which Hemingway also appeared, published in 1925 in a sumptuous folio titled *A Draft of XVI Cantos for the Beginning of a Poem of Some Length*.

The war monument mentioned in "Cat in the Rain" was scrapped for metal during WW2. The present modernist monument was inaugurated in the early 1960s and is the work of Sandro Cherchi (1911-98), a Genoese sculptor who would have been familiar to EP.

In the summer, the sandy beach opposite the hotel is covered with bathing cabins and deck chairs. Here EP used to hire a small skiff (*pattino*) by the hour and row out into the bay to swim (and cast an appraising eye on lady bathers).

Walk along the seafront to the rotunda with the Christopher Columbus Monument ④, presented in 1914 by Italian emigrants who had returned home. There is a well-known photograph of EP and Ford Madox Ford taken below this landmark in 1932. In a letter from Rapallo of April 1936, EP, always a sun enthusiast, complains about a rainy spell:



Rapallo - Monumento a Cristoforo Colombo.

Very comforting after the damndest wettest winter known to the oldest inhabitants, and which has sogged and/or melted nearly everything except Chris Columbus's muniment. (McWhirter 115)

From this spot in May 1860, the limerick-poet and landscape painter Edward Lear made a sketch of Rapallo, then just a few houses on the sea. It's in the Osgood Field Collection of the Houghton Library at Harvard University. An enlargement hangs in the Rapallo Library.

Beyond the Columbus statue a footbridge crosses the river Boate. Walk over the bridge and follow the street for one block to Corso Colombo. If you walk left along Corso Colombo for about 50 meters you will see on the left the only remaining piece of the wall built by the Germans along the coast in 1943-44 as a defense against enemy landings. This bit of wall was preserved as a monument to the Partisan fighters who were killed here by Fascist loyalists (Monumento ai Partigiani ⑤).

Opposite the monument, Via Macera leads to the former

German Evangelical chapel. The hillside above is dotted with villas in which writers and socialites lived before and after WW2, among them the Americans Edwin H. Knopf, Arthur Sheekman and Gloria Stuart, Katharine Raffalovich, and Gerald Green, all of whom wrote about their time in Rapallo.

Walk back along Corso Colombo. Number 34, with an imposing portal, is Palazzo Cardile ⑥. W. B. Yeats and his wife “George” lived at this address, 1928-1930. The plaque to the left of the portal bears the opening passage of Yeats’s *A Packet for Ezra Pound* (reprinted with revisions in *A Vision*):

HERE LIVED 1928-1930
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939)
IRISH POET, WRITING
A VISION AND WORDS FOR MUSIC PERHAPS
‘HOUSES MIRRORED IN AN ALMOST MOTIONLESS
SEA, MOUNTAINS THAT SHELTER THE BAY FROM
ALL BUT THE SOUTH WIND... A VERANDAHED
GABLE A COUPLE OF MILES AWAY BRINGING TO
MIND SOME CHINESE PAINTING, AND RAPALLO’S
THIN LINE OF BROKEN MOTHER OF PEARL
ALONG THE WATER’S EDGE. THE LITTLE TOWN
DESCRIBED IN THE ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.
IN WHAT BETTER PLACE COULD I... SPEND
WHAT WINTERS YET REMAIN?’

IL COMUNE DI RAPALLO
POSE NEL CXX ANNIVERSARIO DELLA NASCITA
13 GIUGNO 1985

Yeats’s statement has been occasionally misunderstood as implying that Keats visited Rapallo. Actually, Yeats is saying that Rapallo reminds him of the town in Keats’s Ode. In March 1929 Yeats sent Olivia Shakespear, Dorothy Pound’s mother, the beautiful lyric “Lullaby,” and commented: “I am writing more easily than I ever wrote and I am happy, whereas I have always been unhappy when I wrote and worked with great difficulty” (761). However, in the autumn of 1929 he became very ill and even made a will. He recovered here and in Portofino

Vetta in winter and spring 1930, when he drafted one of his best-known poems, "Byzantium." "We sit in the sun –" he wrote Olivia in June, "George and the children on the sea-shore after a bathe – I on my balcony, as naked as usage permits – and then oil ourselves. We colour like old meerschaum pipes" (775-76). After the Yeats's departure in 1930, EP's parents, Homer and Isabel, took the Yeats apartment for some years.

On the top floor of the same house lived Lucy Mabel Riess ("Mother May," 1864-1953), an English lady who was a friend of Kokoschka and other artists, and the mother of the publisher Holroyd Reece. In 1934 James Laughlin, a protégé of EP and future publisher of *New Directions*, roomed with Mrs. Riess, as EP suggested in a letter of 26 June 1934:

The old MAAA of H. Reece, publr/ ov the Albatross, wd/ be suitable place for you to room. She occasionally funds Olga and the Münchs. (Houghton Library)

Many years later Laughlin remembered Mrs. Riess as follows:

Ma Riess's apartment was in a modern building in the western section of town, just beyond the footbridge that spans the ugly little river that comes down to the sea from the steep hills behind Rapallo. Not a large apartment but a pleasant one. It was on the top floor of the building, light and airy with a breeze coming in from the water. From my window I could look out to the small harbor, protected by a breakwater, where fishing boats and a few yachts were at anchor. Across the inner bay I could see the summer villa of the noble Venetians Robilants. Needless to say, I was never invited there, though I met some of the *nobili* when Ezra took me to the backstreet café (they wouldn't be seen at the seafront places frequented by tourists) where they had drinks before lunch. Ezra was a pet of the bluebloods. Their lives were boring and he made them laugh with his stories. . . I had my lunch and dinner with Ezra and Dorothy at the "albuggero," paying for my meals of course. In the corner of the dining room stood Gaudier-Brzeska's

“hieratic head” of Pound, one of the masterpieces of modern sculpture. The waiters would bring in tourists from the *terrasse* to see it.

Continue along Corso Colombo as far as the overarching medieval stone bridge (Ponte d’Annibale), a local landmark. (It used to span the river before its bed was moved one block east.) At the far end of Corso Colombo is Rapallo’s former Anglican Church of St. George ⑦, which Yeats considered attending, but finally decided to skip:

I am too anaemic for so British a faith; I shall haunt empty churches and be satisfied with Ezra Pound’s society and that of his travelling Americans. (*Packet* 6)

Left of the church, at the beginning of the road that goes uphill to Genoa (Via Aurelia Ponente), is a square with a modernist building, erected 1938-1941 to house the Rapallo Fascist Party headquarters ⑧. In 1936 EP urged in the local paper *Il Mare* that this “Casa Littoria” should be built according to plans by the late Futurist architect Antonio di Sant’Elia. Eventually a new plan by



Inauguration of “Casa Littoria,” 1939.

Luigi Vietti was chosen, and the building was finished in 1939 with a tower in front (later demolished) and sculptural decorations by Guido Galletti (chiefly remembered today for his underwater “Christ of the Deep” – “Cristo degli Abissi” – at San Fruttuoso di Camogli).

Via Aurelia Ponente climbs uphill towards Genoa and is flanked by the fine villas mentioned above. About one kilometer out of town, at Via Aurelia Ponente, 54, in the middle of a private park, is Villa Andreae (pronounced André). Here lived Pima Andreae (1873-1953), a patron and hostess who was a great friend of Gerhart Hauptmann and also entertained EP and his circle. The villa’s guestbook was signed on 28 July 1932 by Ezra, Dorothy, Homer and Isabel Pound, Basil and Marian Bunting. Composer and violist Tibor Serly and pianist Geza Frid performed for the company a program recorded in the guest book.

During the war EP and Pima Andreae joined forces to help the ailing Lev Nussimbaum (1904-42), a.k.a. Essad Bey, who was dying in Positano. In her wartime jottings (in German) Pima remembered EP as follows:

Who in Rapallo doesn’t know Ezra Pound? When you see in the distance a man running along with a stick and a flying jacket, mostly in striking attire, it must be Ezra Pound. He is usually hurrying to the Post Office and is always carrying lots of postal material. In summer he wears chiefly an open shirt, in winter a fur jacket; he writes poems, translates sonnets from the old Italian etc. . . . Ezra Pound is very lively, when you meet him he hands you some article of his or a program because he is a music enthusiast and organizes concerts. Then I am to listen to the radio where an opera of which he has written the libretto is to be broadcast. . . . Sometimes he will telephone me: Can he bring along a few musicians? Indeed he knows that I have a good Bechstein. I agree and make tea for at least twelve people and it is always fun. Last time it was Geza Frid and Tibor Serly, pianist and violist. He enjoys this kind of gathering very much, and was impressed by the works of the young composers. They both had just come from Rome where they gave a private concert for the Duce, the

1. Mozart : Fantasia e Fuga ^a 4 mains

2. Serly : Concerto
per viola ed orchestra

3. Frid : 12 caricatures musicales
per piano

TEE (il migliore numero)

4. = 2.

Tibor Serly

Serafridy

28. VII.

1932

Dorothy Pound.

Ezra Pound

Homer
+ Isabel Pound

Marian Bunting

Rail T. M. S.

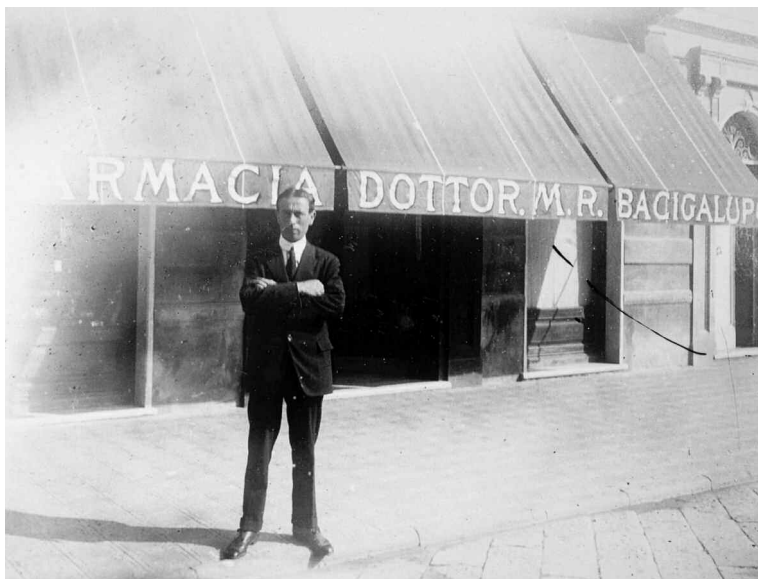
only other person present being Signora Mussolini. From 9 to 12 they had the Duce to themselves. In earlier days Pound loved to dance, and with such transport that he always closed his eyes, to the delight of onlookers. He's a great supporter of Fascism and is now indicted for treason in America. This doesn't keep him from recording speeches in Rome that are meant to open his compatriots' eyes. He helped me considerably in getting a ministerial position for Essad Bey, but unfortunately it was too late for death robbed us of that young genius.

The Pounds left some of their books with Pima during the war, and Dorothy wrote EP in May 1946:

I rescued all I could find at Villa Andraea [sic]. All the books, including large cantos, had been hidden by the servants in the rubbish heap – She herself had an awful time: a week in prison, with horrors, in our Castello: followed by great illness, at the Verdi hospital... (*Letters in Captivity* 339)

The Villa was vandalized immediately after the war, while poor Pima, in her seventies, was detained under suspicion (actually not in the Castello on the seafront, but in the former Fascist headquarters).

Walk towards the town center over the bridge by way of Corso Matteotti (named after one of the first of Mussolini's victims). The Rapallo Post Office, much resorted to by EP, used to be on the left where there is now a flower shop (No. 60). The present Post Office, on the next street (Via Boccoleri), is on the former site of the Scuola Tipografica Orfanotrofio Emiliani, a school for printing run as a charity⁹. EP turned to the "orphans" to publish his first bilingual Chinese pamphlet, *Studio integrale* (1942, Gallup B46). Once, after the war, he suggested jokingly to his New York publisher James Laughlin that he improve the production of his books by employing the Rapallo orphans. Corso Matteotti, 31, was formerly Bar Chufly, run by the brothers Raffaele and Giulio Bortolozzi, and patronised by the foreign colony and the well-to-do (it's



Massimo Ruggero Bacigalupo and his pharmacy, 1920s.



Ezra Pound, 1940,
by Pietro Ardito.

below the question: “Sono qui” (I am here). A few days later he was taken into custody.

In the 1970s-80s, Anna Maria Ortese lived over the pharmacy on the third floor. She was a reclusive Italian writer whose surreal fiction has been translated into English. (*The Bay Is Not Naples, The Iguana, The Lament of the Linnet.*)

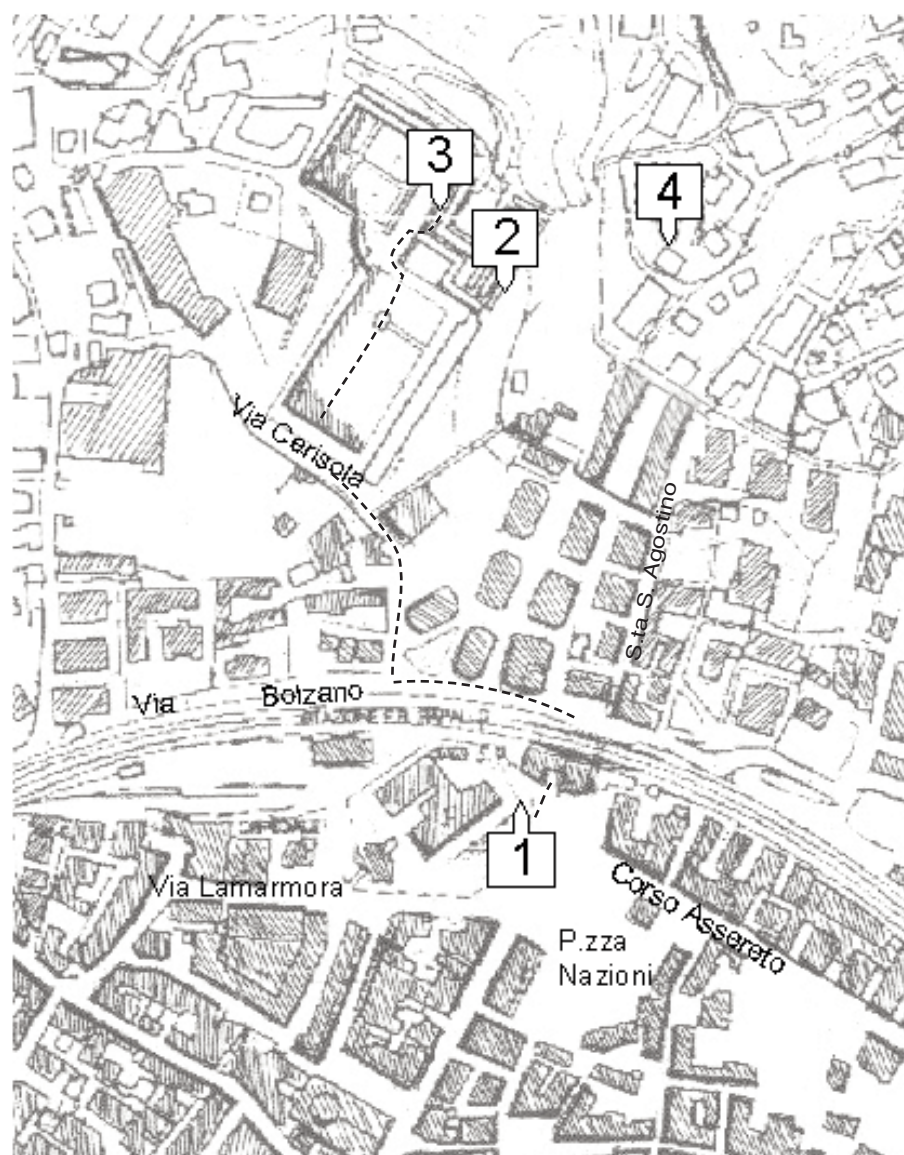
On the NE corner of the intersection is the Banco di Chiavari e della Riviera Ligure, where EP banked. This building, from ca. 1935, was Rapallo’s first reinforced concrete project. Walk along Via Libertà (another name that changed several times). At Number 4, above the bank, was the office and apartment of Giuseppe Bacigalupo and his American wife Frieda, where EP was often a guest during and after the war. Further along, No. 18 was the office and printing press of *Il Mare*, the Rapallo weekly that frequently carried items by and about EP.

Take the passage under the building, cross Via San Benedetto, and follow the back alley towards Via Mameli. Here, in the modern condominium at Passo Tigullio, 2001, EP and Dorothy set up house with Marcella Spann in summer 1959. (EP had given up his rental in Via Marsala in the mid-1950s.) The high-rise opposite was built only in 1967, so in 1959 EP still had a partial view of the bay from his balcony:

and a clear wind over garofani
over Portofino 3 lights in triangulation...
Sea, over roofs, but still the sea and the headland (113/807, 809)

Turn left along Via Mameli. The stationery shop at No. 39 (Cartoleria Canessa) was Tipografia Moderna Canessa, which in spring 1944 printed EP’s pamphlet *Oro e lavoro* (Gallup A52). After the war most of the print-run was scrapped by the Canessas to be on the safe side.

Via Mameli takes you back to Piazza Cavour and Via Marsala.



Walk 3

ALESSANDRA ROTTA

3. The Homer and Isabel Pound Walk

This is a quiet walk behind the railway tracks. As always, old cemeteries have stories to tell.

Start from railway station (Piazza Molino ❶). The big building on a bluff west of the station was the Rapallo hospital, where EP's mother Isabel was confined after breaking her hip in May 1946. (In 1947 she went to live with her granddaughter Mary in the Tirol, where she died in 1948.) Walk through the passageway under the station, then by way of Via Bolzano and Via Cerisola to the Cemetery. Walk straight from the entrance with cypress trees to the back where you will find the "Reparto Acatolico" ❷, a quiet section dotted with trees reserved for non-Catholics. At the entrance of this section is the grave of Elfriede Bacigalupo (1881-1973) and her parents. Elfriede, born in Berlin, was EP's physician in the 1930s and friendly with the older Pounds. She is often mentioned in Dorothy's letters to EP of 1945-46. Her son Giuseppe (1912-99) went on to become Homer and EP's doctor and to write his memoir of them in *Ieri a Rapallo*.

Walk up some steps to the farther part of this section. On the left, against the wall and nearly hidden by a giant palm bush, is the grave of Frederick Sefton Delmer (Hobart, Tasmania, 1864-Rapallo, 1931), a writer and educator who lived mostly in Germany, befriended EP in Rapallo and mentioned him in his *English Literature from Beowulf to Bernard Shaw*. Not far from this tomb is the freestanding grave of Pima Andreae (see Walk 2).

Near the top left corner of the area is the grave of Homer Pound. It is marked by a travertine column in which Homer's death-mask is incorporated. This small monument was commissioned by EP while he was at St. Elizabeths Hospital to the sculptor Agostino Pastene (1907-1962). The inscription reads:

HOMER

POUND

CHIPPEWA FALLS

28-6-1858

RAPALLO

25-2-1942

LA MOGLIE

ISABEL WESTON

GIACE A GAIS

NEL TIROLO

It is likely that Desmond Chute oversaw the work, but EP was not happy with the result, and complained in a letter to Olga Rudge of Pastene's "violation of agreement" (15 December 1954).

In their last years, Homer and Isabel Pound lived not far from here, back of the train station, in Villa Raggio, a house at the top of Salita S. Agostino, 24 ^④. Dorothy moved in with Isabel in May 1945 until June 1946, when she left for the U.S. In late October 1945 the two women visited Homer's grave, as Dorothy reported in a letter to EP in Pisa:

Did I tell you – yr. ma managed to get down to the cemetery ten days ago, it is in quite neat order – & I tidied up poor old Delmar's [*sic*] grave, while she rested. All souls & saints tomorrow. (*Letters in Captivity* 167)

Desmond Chute remembered EP's parents as follows:

I had come to Rapallo in 1923 and the Pounds in 1924, soon followed by Ezra's parents. Homer L. Pound, despite his total lack of Italian, was much liked by the denizens of Rapallo, who seldom failed to describe him, in a phrase lifted from the dialect, as "una pasta d'uomo" [a friendly, easy-going person]. If Ezra owed to his father that disarming simplicity so intextricably interwoven with his own sophistication, from his mother he derived more striking



Isabel and Homer Pound at Villa Raggio in Rapallo, ca. 1935.

characteristics: a fine carriage, a springy walk, a sybiline pose of the head, an occasional wilfulness in not admitting or even seeing the other side. Not even a long and tedious year in the local hospital could break Isabel Weston Pound's octagenarian determination never to allow the conversation to drop below a cultural level. Of course she and "Son" held differing conceptions of culture. She would insist on reciting his *juvenilia*, although several years had passed since T. S. Eliot had hailed him *il miglior fabbro* and the *Cantos* were already in spate. Any attempt to put in a word for the greater importance of his maturer work would be quenched with a glance while the early verses swept on to their Ninetyish close. (12)

Near Homer's grave are several tombs of Jews. Mrs. Riess's grave was also nearby but was removed in the 1990s to make place for new occupants (mainly Jehovah's Witnesses). One plot is reserved for children who died at birth. But most of the graves belong to former foreign residents, English, Americans, Germans, Russians etc., some dating back to the early 20th century, many belonging to the EP years and to the 1950s, which were still a flourishing period for the Rapallo foreign colony. Grey Gowrie's comments in the introduction to Patricia Highsmith's *Ripley* trilogy are apposite:

It is hard to explain to anyone under fifty today how paradisal, selfish paradise though it may have been, France and the Mediterranean were in the twenty years following the war. Seas were clean, fish plentiful, peasants picturesque and, superficially at least, accommodating; mass tourism and its architectural litter unknown, and sunlit idleness seasoned with culture available for as little as ten dollars a day. (xiv)

To a person growing up in Rapallo in the 1950s many of the English names on the tombstones recall striking faces and characters often seen reddening at cocktail parties and gatherings, all excitedly chatting away (and mostly ignoring the world at large). Some of them had known EP and took a quizzical view

of him, like the nice lady (a vicar's daughter named Lettice Langley Waldock) who once dismissed him as "tiresome."

In the Catholic section of the Cemetery are the graves of many of EP's associates: Fr. Desmond Chute (inscribed *PULVIS ATTAMEN SACERDOS* – "Dust, yet a priest"), sculptor Agostino Pastene, doctors Massimo Ruggero, Giuseppe and Frieda Baciagalupo (who have a family chapel with the names *BACIGALUPO-TAGLIAFERRO* over the arched entrance).

As you walk back towards the gate from the Reparto Acattolico, keep to the alley on the right (north) side, and you will soon see on your left a group of graves headed by a bronze bas-relief of a Pietà-like figure holding an olive branch or palm over a recumbent male figure. The inscription on the marble below reads *ALLA GLORIOSA MEMORIA DEI PARTIGIANI CADUTI PER LA CAUSA DELLA LIBERTÀ*. The bas-relief is by Agostino Pastene, the sculptor of Homer Pound's grave. This and other Partisan memorials are reminders of the dark years of warfare in Northern Italy between the Partisan fighters on one side and the Fascist loyalists and German occupation troops on the other (1943-45). Though only a spectator, EP was deeply involved in this struggle, as shown by the belligerent Italian cantos 72-73, written in 1944 in praise of the "boys wearing black."

Walk back to the town center.



4. The Hemingway Walk – Montallegro

Montallegro is a sanctuary overlooking Rapallo from the height of over 600 meters. It was a favorite resort of EP and others like Hemingway and Max Beerbohm. Residents used to go there for walks and to escape the heat in summer. But only good walkers could manage the climb before the road and the funicular were built. It is a good starting point for hikes to Chiavari (east) and to the Portofino promontory (west).

Start at railway station ❶ and walk along Corso Assereto. Towards the end of this street on the left, opposite the gardens, is a modern building with a department store. In the 1920s this was the site of Mr. Henry Rhode's tennis club ❷. There is a well-known photo of EP playing here. A young fellow-player of those years, Giuseppe Bacigalupo, remembered EP's unusual tennis-court manners:

He used to jump about and sweat copiously, with very unorthodox yells and interjections. No wonder that in a club where good manners, low voices and sober dress prevailed, some eyebrows were raised. But for us youngsters it was great fun to challenge him, and we enjoyed his amusing antics. He played rather well, with little style but with inexhaustible energy and combativeness. (80)

When the Australian writer Frederick Sefton Delmer (1864-1931) arrived in Rapallo for the first time in September 1927, he was introduced to EP on Rhode's "immaculate tennis court." He recorded his impression:

met and played a live American poet, a curly haired man with a Byronic collar and a thin and unbyronic beard. Leighton tells me he takes himself so seriously that he ought to be taken down a peg. I was to play the poet this morn but the rain has ruled out the plan. His name is Ezra Pounds [*sic*] – very pleas'd to meet you Surr! (Fletcher 147)

Delmer imitates EP's characteristic burr (the rolling r's). A few days later Delmer discussed EP with Adrian Stokes, another Rapallo regular, who wrote books on the Quattrocento in a style reminiscent of Walter Pater:

Ezra Pound and his wife, a most charming and refined English woman, dropped in and asked me up to their flat for coffee and a chat and I stayed with them till midnight... I like "Ezra" as his friend Adrian Stokes, an Oxford man who is here, calls him. He showed me his printed poetry which I think from a hasty glance quite attractive. (Fletcher 147)

Delmer eventually rented a house on the hill behind the Church of San Francesco, where he died suddenly in April 1931. (For his grave, see Walk 7.) One of his last publications, in a Berlin journal, was "Biographical and Bibliographical Notes introductory to the study of Ezra Pound and to illustrate the origins and development of the School of Imagism."

In 1933 a new Golf Club opened in the valley behind Rapallo, and EP's tennis life continued there. You can see the courts and the clubhouse on the left of Via Mameli as you drive towards the Autostrada.

At the end of Corso Assereto, turn left under railway bridge and walk up Via Maggiocco along the San Francesco stream. Via Maggiocco, 12, "La Buona Terra" ③, was the house of Elfriede Bacigalupo, built in 1938 and occasionally visited by EP. (It was named after Pearl Buck's popular novel and the film of the same title.) The family survived by a hair's breadth a bomb that fell next door on 31 December 1944. In the 1950s it was not unusual to see EP's artistic friend Fr. Desmond Chute walk down Via Maggiocco, clad in black and wearing a visor, like a huge crow going downtown from his house across the river, Villa San Tommaso Moro (Via Aschieri, 31 ④).

Beyond Chute's house, in Villa Belvedere (Via Aschieri, 33), lived Gino Saviotti, co-editor with EP of the *Supple-*

mento Letterario del Mare (1932-33). Juan Ramon Masoliver and Eugen Haas, who were employed as language teachers at the University of Genoa and wrote for *Il Mare*, also roomed in Villa Belvedere. EP approved of Saviotti's novel *Mezzo matto*, and was delighted when it won in 1934 one of Italy's chief literary awards. Saviotti remembered:

When I got the Viareggio Prize, he hired a group of musicians and surprised me, the night I returned to the Villa, and was telling my wife and daughter about the ceremony. Suddenly a sonorous triumphal march with drums and trumpets rose from the dark garden, giving us quite a shock. Dear Ezra! (Bacigalupo, *Un poeta a Rapallo* 78)

At the end of Via Maggiocco, after the bridge on your left, is Piazza Silvio Solari with the station of the Funivia ⑤. Silvio Solari (1886-1945) was "Podestà" of Rapallo in the 1930s and was a neighbor of EP in Via Marsala, 12. He is mentioned in canto 110. It was through his initiative that the funicular was built in the 1930s. It is still the only such cable-car in Liguria. However, according to James Laughlin, "EP disapproved of the funivia. He preferred to walk."

Take the funicular to Montallegro to enjoy a magnificent view of the bay. At the top of the hill is the church with a 19th-century façade (Santuario di Montallegro). It was erected to commemorate the apparition of the Madonna to a peasant, Giovanni Chichizola, on 2 July 1557. As a token of benevolence towards the Rapallesi, the Lady is reputed to have left behind an early Greek icon (a *Dormitio Virgini*), and this is worshipped to this day on the church's main altar. Rapallo celebrates the event every year on 1-3 July by floating lights in the bay (as mentioned in cantos 47 and 91) and by spectacular fireworks, culminating on the night of 3 July with a religious procession and the "Burning of the Castle":

From the long boats they have set lights in the water,
The sea's claw gathers them outward. (47/236)

Though he made use of the floating lamps in his poetry, EP didn't like the noisy fiesta, and would beat a retreat during the celebrations (which reminded him of his spirited campaign against the bells of St. Mary Abbots, Kensington). He wrote his old friend H.D. on 26 June 1959:

as to fullness, I shall be away for 73 hours, while the damBBBbellZZZ
ring to show Mrs Gawd likes a bloody racket (not as bad as
St Murry Rabbits, except when it do a three day jampbagle) ...

In the weeks before 2 July the more devout Rapallesi walk to the shrine every morning for early mass. Here is a description of the festive scene at the mountain top in the early 1900s:

At daybreak the piazza is crowded with vendors of bread, biscuits, figs, and nuts strung in necklaces. As the people come out from church they buy their food, or produce their breakfasts from coloured handkerchiefs and leather bottles, to eat and drink under the ilexes near the church.

The women are picturesquely clad in bright dresses with scarves on their heads, though the men wear their sober Sunday garb; and one by one, men, women, children, with a medley of bundles, baskets, and babies, emerge from the sanctuary on to the piazza... (Alt 144)

Within the church, in the sacristy on the right, is a large collection of paintings of ships in distress. These are "ex-votos" presented by seamen, as EP explained in a note of 1939:

Sailor shrines at points commanding a view of the sea, for instance that on Monte Allegro on the limestone heights above Rapallo. The shrines are filled with votive offerings of ship models and pictures of shipwrecks from which the votators have been saved. ("European Paideuma" 229)

On the quiet ilex-lined path approaching the church is Hotel Ristorante Montallegro, a favorite destination of the Pounds and friends like Hemingway and Bunting. It is here that Hemingway met Edward O'Brien, editor of the series *The Best Short Stories*, who included "My Old Man" in the volume for 1923.

Good walkers can return to Rapallo by way of the footpath, which winds its way under the cables of the funicular. As you approach town you will pass the chapel of San Bartolomeo ⑥. In the Pisan cantos EP recalls (in Italian) a visionary encounter near this chapel:

At S. Bartolomeo I met the little boy
 nailed to the ground with outstretched arms
 in the form of the cross weeping
 said: "I am the moon"
 With her feet on the silver crescent, she seemed to me
 a piteous sight (80/520)

Basil Bunting, the Northumbrian poet and associate of EP, lived in a cottage near San Bartolomeo from 1931 to 1934. EP remembered in canto 78 that Bunting, a student of Arabic poetry, "wrote *Firdush*' on his door." Wanting the correct Arabic characters, EP suggested in 1946 that a photograph be taken in Rapallo: "Mebbe it is still there on Basil's door" (*Letters in Captivity* 271).

The walk downhill from Montallegro to Rapallo will take you nearly two hours.

5. The Gerhart Hauptmann Walk

EP is always remembered striding along the Passeggiata, stopping to greet friends. This walk takes you along his route to the quiet eastern quarter of Rapallo (Sestiere Seglio). It is also the first part of the longer walk to Sant’Ambrogio.

Start from the seafront, across from EP’s terrace, and walk east towards the Castle. You will reach the music kiosk of 1929, its dome decorated with portraits of musicians by Giovanni Grifo (Chiosco della Musica ❶). The Passeggiata’s pavement is inset with fine stonework images of fish. Luciano Bianciardi, a prominent Italian novelist of the 1960s (*La Vita Agra, or It’s a Hard Life*), introduced an allegorical account of these fish at the beginning of his comic novel *Aprire il fuoco*.

Just beyond the music stand is one of the oldest buildings in town, the fortress-like “Casa Garibaldi,” a massive pile with black and white stripes ❷. When it was erected in the 14th century it was directly over the water, the present promenade having been added in the 1900s. On the east wall is a plaque honoring the composer Jean Sibelius, who stayed here in 1901. The central, lower, part has a terrace garden, which in the 1930s and later did service as a night club. EP, a passionate though uncouth dancer, often went there with his tennis pal Carlo Devoto hoping to find partners uninhibited enough to dance with him. One of his young acquaintances, Irma Costa from Chile, remembered how she tried to escape his attention:

He danced like an old bear, without keeping step, and at night when we went to the cafe he would single me out from afar to dance with me, but I would hide behind other people or pretend I had lost something under the table... Nevertheless a good many times I was made to join him in that bear dance, the only dance he knew. (Bacigalupo, *Un poeta a Rapallo* 87)

Continue along the seafront to Piazzetta Est ❸, with palm trees, east of Casa Garibaldi. At the far end of Piazzetta Est, the rooms now occupied by the tourist information office were in the 1950s a bookshop owned by Agostino Macchia-vello (1900-1991), former editor of *Il Mare*, and a friend of EP. Near the tourist office, on what used to be the Locanda della Posta, is a plaque for Friedrich Nietzsche, who lived in this hostelry in 1882 and claimed that he first envisioned the prophetic Zarathustra during his daily walk from Rapallo to Zoagli.

Near the ice-cream bar at Lungomare Vittorio Veneto, 4, the artist Rolando Monti had his studio. It was here that EP stood for his full-length portrait of circa 1935. Monti also painted a portrait of Homer Pound, commissioned by EP. Both paintings are at Brunnenburg.

The square at the end of the Passeggiata, Piazza Pastene ❹, has a fountain with a bronze octopus (Fontana del Polpo), the work of Italo Primi (1903-1983), a notable local artist active between the wars and later. The square replaces a bridge that used to pass over the small San Francesco river and gave access to town by way of Piazza Garibaldi, the characteristic old square with medieval arches behind Piazzetta Est.

On the north side of Piazza Pastene is the historic Hotel Europa, where some of EP's concerts were held when the city hall was otherwise occupied. Behind the hotel, in a secluded spot, is the Church of San Francesco, the second church of Rapallo after the cathedral in Piazza Cavour.

Standing out towards the sea, at the mouth of the San Francesco river, is the Fortress or Castello ❺, erected by the Genoese in 1551, after the town was sacked by the pirate Dragut (July 1549). Since the 1930s the top floors have been used for exhibitions of artists and local crafts. The dungeons still served as a jail after World War II.

Opposite the Castello is the Hotel Italia e Lido, used by EP (who was friendly with the proprietors) as his Rapallo

address in 1959. Dorothy Pound wintered in this hotel in her last years.

Continue along the seafront to the Convento delle Clarisse ⑥, now housing an Auditorium and the Gaffoglio Museum for decorative arts, which is well worth a visit. The 1985 exhibition for the EP centenary was held here as a first gathering of materials related to EP's fruitful Italian years, and the volume *Ezra Pound: Un poeta a Rapallo* was published for the occasion. This was also the venue of the 2005 EP International Conference.

Walk along the sea to the small public garden, the former Giardini delle Rane (Gardens of the Frogs, after the stone frogs in the pool). In the 1980s EP's old friend Rolando Monti persuaded the Rapallo administration to rename the garden in honor of EP, who used to stroll by here on his daily walk. Monti told the administrators that "the frogs wouldn't mind," and was granted his wish. There is now a marker saying GIARDINI EZRA POUND – SCRITTORE ⑦. At the end of the garden is a rotunda with a eucalyptus tree, replacing a centenarian eucalyptus that figures prominently in historic photographs of Rapallo, and that collapsed in 2006.

Until circa 1955 the main road passed here, so to continue to S. Ambrogio EP would have left the sea and walked along Via Zunino to the railway crossing ⑧. The Albergo Villa Cristina at Via Zunino, 21, appears as *Villa Vittoria* in the literary thriller of that title by C. K. Stead (1997), based on a thinly disguised EP Conference. The railway crossing at the end of Via Zunino is now closed off, because the automobile road climbs beyond the Clarisse Auditorium and goes over the railway tunnel.

The old rail crossing features in a notable sequence of poems by James Laughlin, "In Another Country," his bitter-sweet account of an affair with a Rapallo girl. Laughlin begins by citing the Mussolini mottos that adorned the "passaggio a livello" in the 1930s:

CREDERE!

OBBEDIRE! COMBATTERE! I guess

it was the same then every-
where all over Italy in big
white letters painted up on

walls and especially on railroad
retaining walls at the
grade crossings and to make
a good record and show how

things were *in ordine* they
would let down the crossing
bars ten minutes before the
trains came so people were

backed up on both sides in
crowds shouting across to
each other all a big joke
and that's how we met where

we first saw each other I
was on the up side walking
back to town from swimming
& she was on the other with

her bicycle heading to the
cove wearing her tight white
sweater with nothing under
it & her grey checked skirt ...

(*Selected Poems* 56-57)

Walk back to the rotunda with the eucalyptus and continue along the sea by Via Avenaggi. Just beyond the rotunda is a small beach, Le Nagge, which is used by fishermen and for boat rentals⁹. It is still a quiet spot, but was surely more picturesque in the old days:

The handsome fishermen (most of them relations and working in partnership) are seldom idle, and if they are not taking their nets out to sea, hauling them in, or selling their fish about the town in large baskets, they are occupied in repairing nets or dyeing them in great cauldrons... They always make a charming picture... (Alt 16)

EP used to swim near here, at Bagni Tigullio, as late as the 1960s, while the old lifeguard Pippo kept a worried lookout and called him back (“Erza! Erza!”). The American critic and storyteller Guy Davenport describes one such occasion in his sketch “Ithaka.”

The house at Via Avenaggi, 23 ⑩, bears a plaque honoring dramatist and poet Gerhart Hauptmann:

IN QUESTA CASA
GERHART HAUPTMANN
PREMIO NOBEL PER LA LETTERATURA (1912)
GIUNGEVA NEL 1925
ALLACCIANDO CON RAPALLO
DA LUI DEFINITA “INCANTEVOLE”
UNO STRAORDINARIO VINCOLO D’AFFETTO
CHE SI PROTRARRA’ PER QUASI TRE LUSTRI
E CHE TRASPARE ANCHE DALLE SUE OPERE
LA CIVICA AMMINISTRAZIONE RAPALLESE
E L’ASSOCIAZIONE “CAROGGIO DRITO”
NE FISSANO IL RICORDO
23 SETTEMBRE 1995

(In this house Gerhart Hauptmann, Nobel Prize for Literature 1912, settled in 1925, thus beginning a most affectionate friendship with Rapallo, which he called “enchanting,” a bond that was to last nearly fifteen years and is recorded in his works...)

The Hauptmanns wintered regularly in Rapallo between the wars and lived in various villas, later at Hotel Excelsior. On 2 March 1929 the Pounds gave a dinner for the two resident

Nobel laureates and their spouses at Albergo Rapallo, as EP gleefully reported to his mother:

Ceremony of introducing Yeats and Hauptmanns passed off calmly last evening with sacrifice of two pheasants, no other bloodshed.

EP kept seeing Hauptmann over the years, and in 1937 asked him to autograph James Joyce's copy of Hauptmann's play *Michael Kramer*. He wrote Joyce about this on 8 December 1937:

Send the bloody book here, and when his nibs gets here I will lay it on the café table before him and say the great Jayzus James the Joyce in excelsis, rejoice in excelsis, wants the Xmas engels to sign it. (*Pound/Joyce* 259)

Apparently Hauptmann wrote in the dedication, "To James Joyce – the best reader this play has ever had." EP's comment in conversation: "Joyce must have sat on that one till it hatched."

EP and his associates took a quizzical view of Yeats and Hauptmann, as members of an older generation whose foibles were a source of amusement. Accordingly, Basil Bunting portrayed Hauptmann self-consciously making his entrance in the Rapallo arena:

The renowned author of
more plays than Shakespeare
stopped and did his hair
with a pocket glass
before entering the village,
afraid they wouldn't recognize
caricature and picture postcard,
that windswept chevelure.

("Aus dem Zweiten Reich," *Collected Poems* 26-27)

Max Beerbohm was also ironic in his caricature of a Goethe-



Gerhart Hauptmann by Max Beerbohm.

lookalike Hauptmann “making the most of the Riviera di Levante” (Behrman 209).

Continue along Via Avenaggi to Parco Casale. Privately owned before the war, it is now a public park. It was secured for the city by Giovanni Maggio, Rapallo mayor 1945 to 1950. (A bronze bust of Maggio is on the path that crosses the park.)

In October 1948, Mayor Maggio and numerous fellow-citizens signed a document stating that EP, “resident in Rapallo since 1923,” had never participated in Fascist organizations

and meetings, that during the war he had enjoyed no privileges, that he was respected “also by those who did not share his political views,” and that “he always behaved correctly and never was party to any anti-semitic acts.” Maggio added above his signature: “The statement is approved in consideration of the fact that in Rapallo the aforementioned person has always done good deeds.” Among the other signatories were Desmond Chute, Pima Andreae, “Baccin” Solari, Emanuele Bafico and the Bacigalupos (who may have helped to type it). The moving spirit behind this was surely Olga Rudge, who hoped that it would be useful to EP’s defense in Washington. Yet it does express the general Rapallo sentiment about EP.

As you cross Parco Casale, you pass on your right Villa Porticciolo on the sea, and beyond this (slightly off the path to the right) Villa Tigullio with its beautiful gardens and view. It now houses a museum of lacework (a traditional Rapallo craft) and the International Library ①. The “Biblioteca Internazionale” is a good place to relax while exploring its books in four languages, many associated with Rapallo’s former residents. There are numerous volumes on religious subjects from Desmond Chute’s library, and a good choice of printed books by and about EP.

You can return to the town center, or continue on the next walk.

6. The Olga Rudge Walk – Sant’Ambrogio

This is a classic Pound walk which takes you out of Rapallo to the hillside that EP appropriated and celebrated in his poetry: the looms, the olive-presses, the birds, the peasants, the cats, and above all the Beloved (Olga Rudge as modern Circe-Aphrodite). Sant’Ambrogio can also be reached by car or bus (see Walk 7).

Start from Giardini Ezra Pound ❶, walk through Parco Casale and exit on the main thoroughfare, Via Aurelia Orientale. Around the curve to your left is the Chapel of San Rocco ❷, the scene of a wartime episode recounted by EP’s daughter Mary:

One day as we passed by the Cappella di San Rocco on our way to Rapallo, we saw a man on the other side of the street, stretched out as though dead. Babbo [EP] rushed over to him and the man started to shiver violently, upon which Babbo ran to the nearest house, and banged on the door, and rang the bell furiously. A woman came to the door. “Quick, some water, a man is sick. Do you have a telephone?” The woman merely looked up the street and said: “*Ah, quello lì fa apposta* – he does it on purpose.” But Babbo was firm: a glass of water, please. He rushed back to the man and lifted his head and made him drink. The man stopped shivering and stretched out his hand to beg. Babbo gave him some lire and I took the glass back to the house. The woman had not moved. “Only a foreigner would be fooled,” she exclaimed. Babbo merely said: “*Scusate, grazie.*” He seemed puzzled. So was I. It was the only time I ever witnessed an Italian being nasty to Babbo. As for being fooled by a tramp – we never mentioned the incident. It seemed to me as though Babbo attached some ill omen to it. (161-62)

Return to the exit of the Park and cross Via Aurelia to Via Pietrafraccia. Turn right on the footbridge ❸ over the creek to begin the old “Salita” (i.e., “way up,” “climb”) to S. Ambrogio. It will take you about thirty minutes to reach the church and another fifteen to Olga’s house.

About halfway up the path stood a landmark eucalyptus tree (opposite Salita S. Ambrogio, 17 ④), a seed of which EP carried in his pocket when he was arrested in 1945:

so that leaving America I brought with me \$80
 and England a letter of Thomas Hardy
 and Italy one eucalyptus pip
 from the salita that goes up from Rapallo
 (if I go) (80/520)

Mary de Rachewiltz remembered walking at night along this path with her mother in spring 1939:

The walk up to Sant'Ambrogio in the dark had something unfathomable, something fluid, almost eerie. Mamile seemed familiar with each stone, but she flashed a torch for me in spots where the sky and the sea were hidden and the fireflies provided the only specks of light. In high open spaces the darkness was attenuated by the reflection from the lights in the bay and the stars above. We had hidden a pair of espadrilles at the bottom of the *salita*. – “That’s what all the peasant women on the hills do when they go to town. One can’t walk on these stones with proper shoes. After concerts I sling the fiddle over my shoulder; I need both my hands free to carry my music and the shoes and hold up my evening gown...” Mamile was in a talking mood. After the last flight of stone stairs, under the church, we sat down for a while on a narrow bench in front of the long gray stone house at the top. – “I always have to sit down here. Gee, I am tired sometimes.” (119-20)

EP celebrated Olga’s solitary courage when returning home at night in lines written after he went back to live with her in S. Ambrogio in 1962:

flood & flame
 thru the long years
 by night and hill path
 great courage in frail frame
 toughened by four decades

of climbing thru dark on hill paths,
 knowing each stone
 almost as if by name (*Canti postumi* 262)

When you reach the top of the salita, just below the church, you can sit on the bench described by Mary. When EP returned to Rapallo with Olga in spring 1962, they went to live in a cottage on the property below this “long gray stone house.” (The owner was a Miss Beltrami.) They stayed there until summer 1964, when they moved back to Olga’s old place, between the churches of S. Ambrogio and S. Pantaleo.

Walk up the steps to the Church of Sant’Ambrogio ⑤, in front of which there is a piazza with two monumental oaks. From here you can enjoy a spacious view of Rapallo, southwest to Portofino and, to the east, of Olga’s house, the chapel of S. Pantaleo and the Castellaro hill. These names are all familiar to EP’s readers. The church itself was renovated and covered with cartoon-like frescos in the 1970s. The Zoagli hills used to produce silk, and EP noted with rapt attention “the peasant women bringing their silk cocoons into church about Easter time to get ’em blessed” (“European Paideuma” 236). This little-known custom and the lamps floating in the bay were to EP examples of a natural religion, “luminous details”:

They set lights now in the sea
 and the sea’s claw gathers them
 The peasant wives hide cocoons now
 under their aprons
 for Tamuz (91/632)

Behind the church is the local cemetery, where EP’s Sant’Ambrogio neighbor Gio Batta “Baccin” Solari is buried. EP and Olga were fond of this man, and in 1964 they asked me to take a picture of his gravestone. Baccin (pronounced “baiceen”) is not to be confused with Podestà Solari, the builder of the Funivia to Montallegro, who was EP’s neighbor in Via Marsala.

From the church proceed east along Cornice S. Ambrogio (or Via Ezra Pound just below it) to Olga Rudge's house (Cornice S. Ambrogio, 52 ⑥), often referred to as "Casa 60" from its earlier number. The plaque on the house reads:

QUI DIMORÒ PIÙ VOLTE IN MEZZO SECOLO
EZRA POUND
HAILEY, IDAHO, U.S.A. 30-X-1885
VENEZIA 1-XI-1972
GRANDE INNOVATORE DELLA POESIA
MIGLIOR FABBRO D'ARTE E D'ARTISTI
RIVELATORE DI LONTANI ORIZZONTI
A CENTO ANNI DALLA NASCITA
IL COMUNE DI ZOAGLI

(Here lived at various times in the course of half a century Ezra Pound... great innovator of poetry, better craftsman of art and artists, discoverer of distant horizons. Placed by the Township of Zoagli for the centenary of his birth.)

The house, now privately owned, has been completely renovated. Olga lived here (first on the top floor, later on the middle floor) from 1930 to about 1985, and was joined by EP in 1944-1945 (with Dorothy) and in 1964-1972.

Their daughter Mary remembered her mother's rural retreat as she first saw it in 1939:

Casa 60 was then orange-colored, with Ionic columns painted on the outside walls, a flight of smooth black lavagna steps leading up to the green door half hidden by Virginia creepers and honeysuckle. *Thk thk thk GRR*: the sound of the olive press on the ground floor. *Plof, chhu*: the bucket hitting the water in the well... The house inside: light. White and empty. Polished red brick-tiled floors. A square entrance, and four doors open on rooms with a view to the sea, olives and blossoming cherry tree. Pale blue and pink vaulted ceilings with painted morning glory convoluting into bouquets and wreaths. The furniture, unpainted, was all made by Babbo. (115-16)

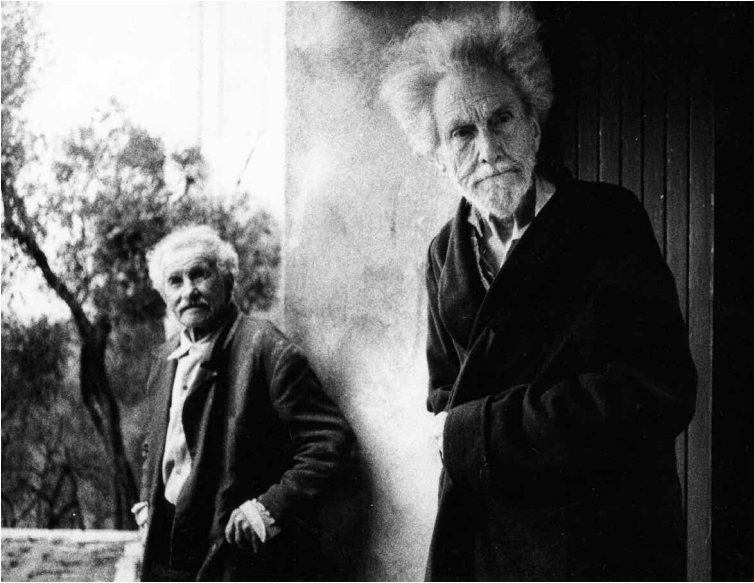
The entrance to Olga's floor was at the top of the "lavagna steps" to the right of the plaque. On the ground floor was the olive press. In the lower group of white houses to the east lived Anita Donati, Olga's housekeeper, and Baccin Solari, a meditative bachelor whose simple life EP admired:

Bombs fell, but not quite on Sant'Ambrogio
Baccin said: I planted that tree, and *that* tree (ulivi) (87/593)

When EP and Olga returned to "Casa 60" in 1963, they moved into the middle floor, the door to which was on the ground floor on the east side and opened on an inner flight of steps. In later years Robert Lowell, Allen Ginsberg, Cyril Connolly, James Laughlin, Sister Bernetta Quinn, G. Singh and others came to visit. On 11 February 1966 the photographer Lisetta Carmi took a series of candid shots of a dishevelled EP who came to the door when she rang the bell unannounced. These pictures have been described as cruel, but Carmi is a compassionate photographer, and they are a revealing record of EP's last years, when he was often silent and depressed.



Sant'Ambrogio, house of Olga, 1964.



Sant'Ambrogio, 11 February 1966. Photo by Lisetta Carmi.

A Note on EP's Arrest

The door at the top of the stairs in front of Olga's house is the one at which two Italian Partisans knocked on the morning of 3 May 1945 with orders to arrest EP, who was alone in the house. This is Mary's account of the episode:

Two partisans, two common ex-Fascist convicts, had heard there was a ransom of half a million lire on the head of the Poeta Americano... They knocked with their gun butts on the door. Babbo was at home, working on his translation of Confucius. He went to open. "*Seguici, traditore*" ["Come along, traitor"]. He put the volume of Confucius in his pocket and followed them. With a joking gesture he made a noose around his neck with his hands as he stopped to leave the key with Anita [the housekeeper] . . . She asked the men: Where do you take him? "To the *comando* in Zoagli."

‘Il Signore è un galantuomo, non stategli a far male’ – in her Genoese singsong – he is a good man, don’t do him any harm. (241)

In a letter to Mary of 1962 EP recalled the events leading up to his arrest and suggested that he knew of the rumor of a reward for his capture, and that at least one neighbor behaved suspiciously:

I went down hill to greet Americans
Met only one black man saying he was looking for his comman’
And wishing to sell me a bicycle.
Came back. Next day saw the bitch from the lower level, Merlo’s
sister in law and Egeria, look in her eye meant she was after what-
ever rewards etc. and was prepared for the two partigiani.
Yr/ mother can tell about them and Anita. Her prose style in simple
narration is far better than mine.
Anyhow, two chaps with tommygun, down to Zoagli, saying not to
Rap/ where known but Chiavari.
In midst of flurry your sainted progenitrix [Olga] with DEElicious
ham sandwich.
If anyone says beer cans are not opened with bayonet, they lie.

As EP gratefully remembers, Olga lost now time in discovering his whereabouts and coming to his aid. She gave a lucid account of that fateful 3 May in a letter to James Laughlin:

The morning Partigiani came for E. I was not in but coming home and finding him gone I followed down to Zoagli. E. had asked to be taken to American Command which turned out to be in Lavagna, so I said I was an American citizen & said I wanted to go to the American Command too. They consented to this after waiting hours in Zoagli (luckily English soldiers in Sem Benelli’s castle provided me with sandwiches...). We were taken to Chiavari where E. was told he was free as far as they were concerned. He insisted on being taken to American Command at Lavagna. Coloured troops at last found Colonel, very correct, fed us sandwiches – then about five o’clock sent us in to Genoa to C.I.C. I said

I wanted to go too – as anxious to know what would happen. At C.I.C. we were kept waiting in hall from 7 p.m. till 2 p.m. next day (with, incidentally, nothing to eat or drink) then put in a sitting room (where I remained four days) quite comfortable... I must say I enjoyed the four days I spent there very much.

So EP went from S. Ambrogio to Zoagli to Chiavari, where he seems to have feared that he might be shot. Instead the senior Partisan who was now in charge was willing to release him, and it was only at EP's insistence that he took him to the American command. EP asked this man to write his name in the volume of Confucius he had taken along from his desk that morning:

... when the partigiani took me I had presence of mind to grab the Confucio. That is pivotal / was working on 4 items / Kung, and condensation of Angold's shot at economics. Forget what the other two were / probably Mencius...

Chiavari court yard that had obviously been used for executions.

"Damn If I'll give you up to the Americans unless you want it"

That fellow's signature is in the Kung/ vol/ rebound with surgical tape bands (proper wording, bands of surgical tape).

This Confucius volume was James Legge's bilingual edition of *The Four Books*. It is now in the Hamilton College Library, "rebound with surgical tape." On the first page, in simple and large lettering, is the signature of EP's amicable captor: "*Bussoli Angelo, Lavagna*." I have discovered that Angelo Bussoli (1912-1967) was a respected member of the Resistance, though no surviving relative remembers him mentioning his encounter with EP. We may have to thank Bussoli for EP's safety in those days of extrajudicial settling of accounts.

EP remained at the U.S. Counter Intelligence Corps Offices in Genoa (Via Fieschi, 6) for three full weeks, "in a state of Confucian serenity" (as Olga wrote to T. S. Eliot). The house

in S. Ambrogio was searched on the afternoon of 3 May by two Italians, who “took away a book of cuttings” (*Letters in Captivity* 252). On 7 May two American intelligence officers drove Olga home from Genoa. EP had taken a benevolent attitude towards his interrogators, and instructed Olga and Dorothy to give them access to his papers. He had, he believed, nothing to conceal, and was only too happy to air his views on the recent war and its aftermath, as he was to do at length in the Pisan cantos. On Thursday 24 May he was driven from Genoa to the U.S. Disciplinary Training Center north of Pisa by “several Jeep loads of MP’s” (*Letters in Captivity* 11).

Walk 6 Continued: San Pantaleo and Castellaro

Continue along the Cornice to the ancient Chiesa di San Pantaleo (Località S. Pantaleo, Cornice S. Ambrogio, Zoagli ⑦). This is a 13th-century chapel built on the spot where the Roman Via Aurelia went over the top of the hill between Zoagli and Rapallo. On the north wall of the church old arcades are still visible. EP could look at San Pantaleo from his study in Olga’s house and often walked this way along the footpaths (in those days there was no road):

The sexton of San Pantaleo plays “è mobile” on his carillon
in the hill tower. (*Cantos* 820)

The sexton was Pasquale Sanguineti, known as “Giacomotto,” who owned a wine shop next to the church. His son Luigi still ran the shop in 1985, when Carroll Terrell, editor of *Paideuma*, with a group of enthusiasts including Marcella Spann and Jerome Kavka, visited the “sacred places” of the *Cantos*. He is not to be confused with the peddler Luigi, another Sant’Ambrogio character who appears in some cantos as a kind of peasant saint:

The house just below the road as you look towards Rapallo (No. 34) was coveted by EP who once joked with his daughter that he would buy it with his Nobel Prize money.

Beyond the U-turn, the road descends towards the modern Via Aurelia (you can see remains of the old one coming down from S. Pantaleo), and crosses a footpath called Crosin del Diavolo, which actually leads uphill to Olga's house and downhill to the sea. This crossing of the ways may be the place called "Triedro" in the Pisan cantos:

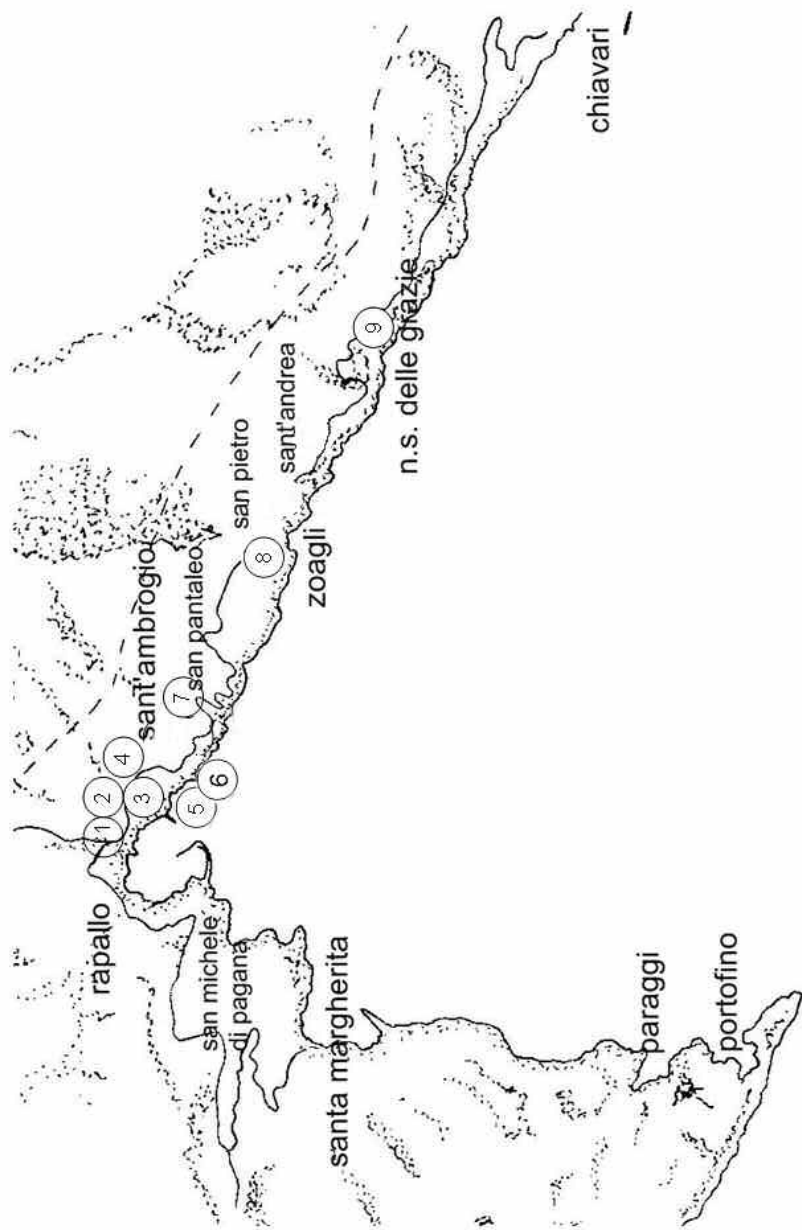
E al Triedro, Cunizza
e l'altra: "Io son la Luna" (74/458)

from il triedro to the Castellaro
the olives grey over grey holding walls
and their leaves turn under Scirocco

la scalza: Io son la luna
and they have broken my house (76/472-73)

In her copy of the *Cantos*, Sheri Martinelli (a protégée of the St. Elizabeths years), annotated "triedro" as "Tri Cornered place... tri road." So EP was probably thinking of what is usually called a "trivium." "Triedro" is a personal name for a mysterious landmark, the background of encounters with real and imaginary figures like "la scalza" – the barefoot girl. In the last years of the war it was not unusual to meet vagrants and these coalesced in EP's fantasy with victims of earlier disasters.

You can return to Rapallo by way of S. Ambrogio or along the Via Aurelia at the bottom of the hill (see Walk 6).



Walk 7

ALESSANDRA ROTTA

7. The Max Beerbohm Walk – To Zoagli and Chiavari

As you walk from Rapallo to Zoagli along the Aurelia you pass several sites important to EP and his circle. You can follow this itinerary by car, or take the bus for Zoagli and Chiavari. You may want to walk the first couple of miles.

Start from the Teatro-Auditorium delle Clarisse ❶ and proceed along the Via Aurelia. This goes uphill over the railway, then curves right and passes near what used to be James Laughlin's railway crossing (see Walk 6). A little farther on the right is the Chapel of San Rocco ❷, where EP met the beggar who pretended sickness (see Walk 6). Around the corner is the entrance to the park (right) and Via Pietrafraccia (left) with the bridge ❸ that leads to the footpath to Sant'Ambrogio. Continue along Via Aurelia. The first street on your left, Via Privata Sage, is named after a Mrs. Sage, the mother of the artist Kay Sage (see below), and the owner of beautiful Villa Fine Strada at the top of the hill and the end of the street (as its name suggests). Via Sage leads into Via Privata Uliveta and to the clinic Villa Chiara ❹, where EP was hospitalized and underwent prostate surgery in 1962 and 1963. Villa Chiara was run by Dr. Giuseppe Bacigalupo (1912-1988), who as a youngster was EP's tennis companion, and later was his doctor and wrote about him in his book *Ieri a Rapallo*. Max Beerbohm spent the last months of his life at Villa Chiara, and Robert Lowell's mother died here in February 1954, as Lowell remembered in the poem "Sailing Home from Rapallo," and in some prose notes:

I arrived at Rapallo half an hour after Mother's death. On the next morning, the hospital where she died was a firm and tropical scene from Cézanne: sunlight rustled through watery, plucked pines, and streaked the verticals of a Riviera villa above the Mar Ligure. Mother lay looking through the blacks and greens and tans and flashings from her window. (Hamilton 203)

In a draft of the poem he also described his mother's doctor:

The young, very au courant hospital doctor
 Owned a presentation copy of Ezra Pound's *Cantos*.
 Worried by my hypo-mania
 He gave me a bottle of chlorpromazene [sic]. (Hamilton 489)

Lowell probably made up the story about Bacigalupo owning an inscribed copy of the *Cantos*. At the time Lowell was engrossed by EP and must have wanted to bring him into the poem. In the end, only Rapallo remained in the title, but for Lowell Rapallo meant EP. In fact he wrote in a letter to EP at St. Elizabeths of 20 March 1954:

Well now to my reason for writing you – she died in the clinic of your friend Dr. Bacigalupo – the young man, not his father [i.e. Massimo Ruggero Bacigalupo the pharmacist, see Walk 2]. So for a week or so – I was also in Siena picking up Mother's belongings – I was very close to you. And I think I know better now my old friend, the man under the masks, under the “agenda,” much better than I did – say when I was in Washington last November or December. (*Letters* 222)

Return to the main road. The imposing old villa at Via Aurelia Orientale, 99, is Villa San Faustino ⑤, the former residence of Prince Ranieri di San Faustino (b. 1901) and his wife, the American painter Kay Sage (1898-1963). Ranieri and Kay were friends of EP. Kay wrote about her years in Rapallo in her memoir *China Eggs*. Ranieri's sister Virginia (1899-1945) married Edoardo Agnelli of Fiat and was the mother of Gianni, Susanna and Umberto Agnelli. James Laughlin remembered that the sculptor Heinz Henges (Hamburg 1906-Bordeaux 1975), living in Rapallo in the 1930s, was introduced by EP to the Agnelli circle and got commissions from them. Montino di San Faustino (b. 1942), Ranieri's son from his second marriage to Lydia Bodrero, is mentioned in 83/549. Besides knowing the San Faustinos socially, EP had a working relation with Ranieri,

who was head of radio propaganda in Rome during the war.

Continue along Via Aurelia Orientale, passing Hotel Bristol on the left. Immediately after the Bristol are three villas, of which the central one, Villa Carlevaro, was one of Gerhart Hauptmann's rentals. In 1930 Lavinia Mazzucchetti, an Italian critic, visited the German playwright here, and remembered meeting EP among Hauptmann's guests.

Continue to Via Aurelia, 358. On the right a flights of steps leads by a passage under the railway to a rocky cove, "Il Pozzetto." ⑥ This was a favorite swimming spot for the Rapallesi, and for EP, who in less than half an hour could walk from here to Olga Rudge's house in Sant'Ambrogio. A vignette in canto 74 recalls a moment when the quiet swimming scene was broken by a squadron of Allied bombers approaching the coast:

"C'è il babao" said the young mother
 and the bathers like small birds under hawk's eye
 shrank back under the cliff's edge at il Pozzetto
 al Tigullio. (74/458-459)

Just beyond the Pozzetto, on the left of the main road, is a pub (Via Aurelia Orientale, 353, Zoagli). Max Beerbohm wrote a notable sketch, "The Golden Drugget" (1918), about this little inn, which must have been more picturesque in his days. Continuing along Via Aurelia you pass on your left Max Beerbohm's house, Villino Chiaro (Via Aurelia Orientale, 250, Zoagli ⑦). A plaque on the wall reads:

Here lived, 1910-1956
 SIR MAX BEERBOHM
 1872-1956
 English writer and caricaturist
 "The incomparable Max"

Beerbohm is the subject of EP's mischievous poem "Brennbaum," but the two men became friendly in Rapallo.

Max produced a few caricatures of EP, and EP mentioned with approval in canto 46 a “couple of Max’s drawings.” Max’s satire could be quite savage, ergo to EP’s liking. He had many friends and admirers in Britain and America, and his visitors included Ernest Hemingway, Edmund Wilson, and Gordon Craig (who lived nearby in the 1920s).

Shortly beyond Max’s house, a turn-off to the left takes you to San Pantaleo and Sant’Ambrogio (see Walk 6).

Via Aurelia descends to the village of Zoagli ❸, which EP could see from his Rapallo attic as he sat at his desk writing:

That day there was cloud over Zoagli
And for three days snow cloud over the sea
Banked like a line of mountains. (46/231)

Zoagli is crossed by a massive railway bridge, and thus was a preferred target for air raids during the war. The worst incursion took place on 27 December 1943, and left many dead. EP noted wryly:

Bombs fell, but not quite on Sant’Ambrogio (87/593)

He may be suggesting, tongue-in-cheek, that the English and American planes were aiming not at the bridge, but at himself.

Continue beyond Zoagli along the Aurelia. At no. 38 (on the right) is the “Castle” of Sem Benelli, a Tuscan playwright who built this “folly” in 1914, and then went bankrupt.

The road begins the descent towards Chiavari. Just before a long tunnel, a right-hand turn-off leads to a small whitewashed church, the Madonna delle Grazie ❹, well-known to the Pounds as a destination of their hikes (there is a fine view, and the frescos inside the church are remarkable). Dorothy made a sketch of the approach to the church with its attractive porch, and EP wrote of it in some drafts of cantos (*Canti postumi* 184).

On 3 May 1945 EP was taken from S. Ambrogio to the Chiavari jail, where summary executions were taking place

(Via del Gasometro, 2, near the port and Piazza dell'Umanità). But the Italian Partisans handed EP over to American soldiers, who got him to Genoa by the end of the day. So he was driven back through Rapallo and on to Genoa along the Via Aurelia and saw once more all the places mentioned here. EP was to follow the same itinerary by jeep on 24 May 1945, this time southward from Genoa to Pisa.

When EP returned to Italy a free man in 1958, he disembarked from the *Cristoforo Colombo* in Genoa on 10 July, had lunch in town with his friend Carlo Rupnik and his son Jack, then asked to be taken to Rapallo, where he revisited his old haunts. As you drive back from Chiavari, you can reflect on the journeys EP took along this coastal road, under more and less happy circumstances, and at different times of his life. He has now become one of the ghosts that haunt the Aurelia “by la vecchia sotto San Pantaleone.”

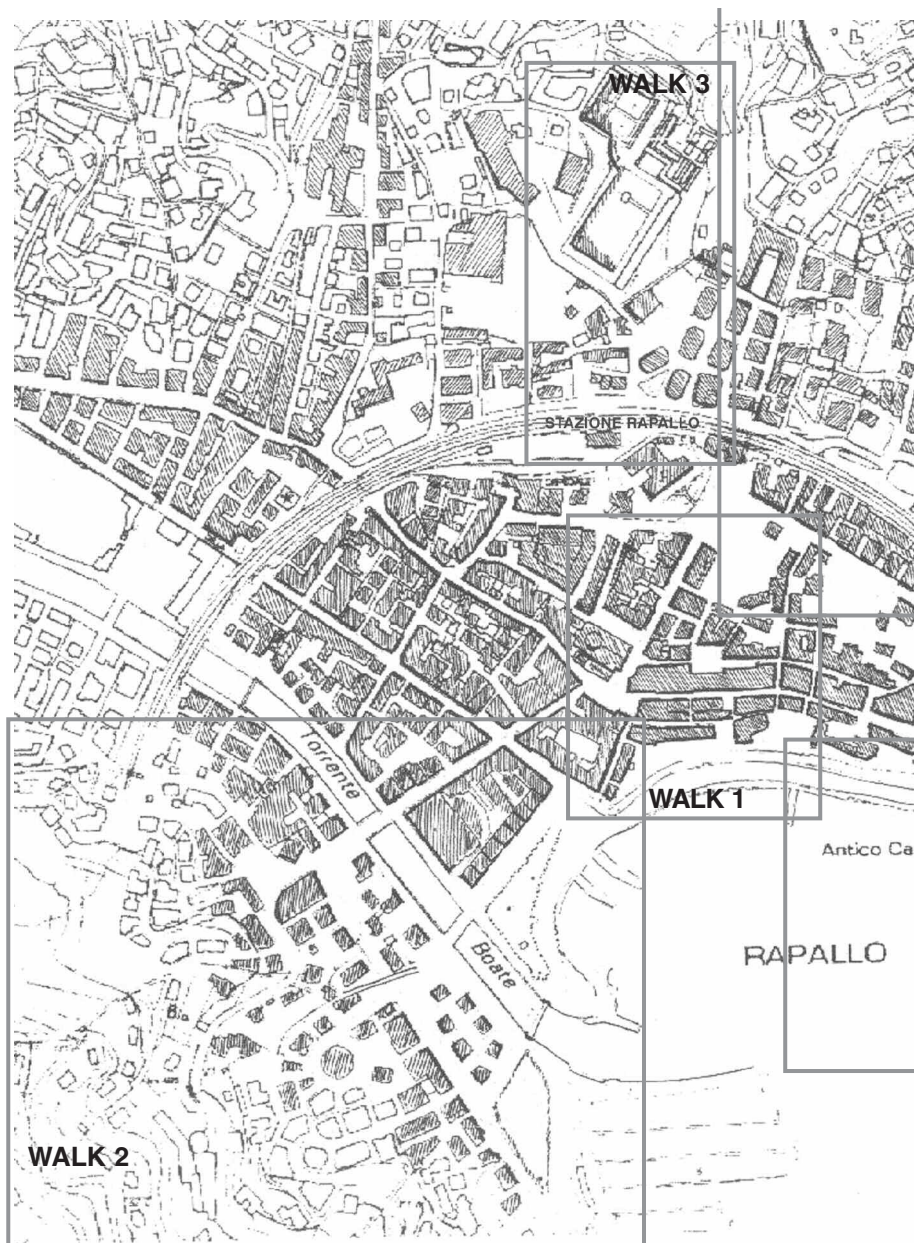


View from Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Chiavari.

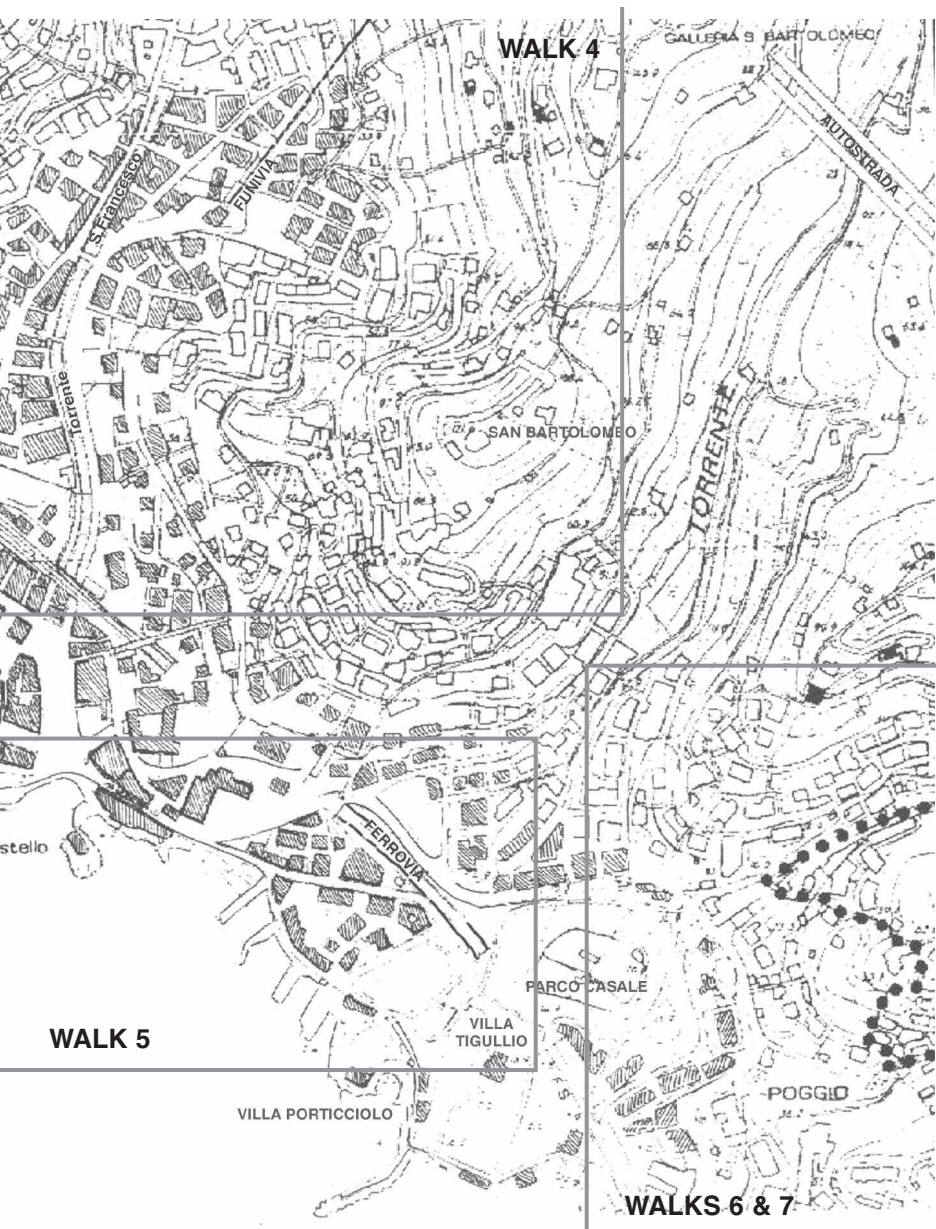
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UNION MAP



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