



Rudolf Schlichter

(Litho des Malik-Verlags)

## LAW AND THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

by  
EZRA POUND

Partly as the result of the appalling, bigoted, spinsterly era through which our immediate forebears persisted; and from which we have so sporadic, faint, and apparently unavailing a series of hopes to escape; partly as the result of the tedesco-american system of higher learning wherein all students are subjugated, utilitarianized, id est, specialized to the point of knowing nothing save the data contained in the Zeitschriften dealing with their particular branch of philology, and defended from reflecting upon anything therein implied, or connecting it mentally with anything else whatsoever; we have lost the flavour of a much discussed Shakespearean play (*The Merchant of Venice*).

The badwy Elizabethan audience would have needed no foot-notes.

Heinrich Leo, writing between 1820 and 1840 was possibly deprecated by his contemporaries; he did not treat history as a series of baroque and romantic incidents, and in one of his moments of reflection upon the development of laws and institutions he remarks that: Venice, in the eighth century plunged actively into the slave trade "and was then as is Siout in our day, the most important eunuch factory in the world".