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## EVE IN THE ODYSSEY

In the first book of Pope's *Odyssey*, one of the four, of course, that belongs to Fenton,<sup>1</sup> we are told that

Calypso in her caves constrain'd  
his stay,  
With sweet, reluctant, amorous  
delay. (1, 21-22)

While we may agree with Mack's sense that Fenton might have been wiser to send his materials for "full revision" to Pope (VII, cxciv), this particular couplet has a nice resonance because of its quotation in the second line from *Paradise Lost*. In Book IV, we read that Eve's

...unadorn'd golden tresses were  
Disshewell'd, but in wanton ringlets  
wav'd  
As the Vine curls her tendrils,  
which impli'd  
Subjection, but requir'd with  
gentle sway,  
And by her yielded, by him best  
receiv'd,  
Yielded with coy submission,  
modest pride,  
And sweet reluctant amorous  
delay.<sup>1</sup>

While the fall is many books away, and our attention here fixed on the marital bliss of the "admiral rural Landskip" (Pope's description of Calypso's bower in his note on *Odyssey*, V, 85), the wanton ringlets and required gentle subjection lend an appropriately sensuous overtone to the scene to which Fenton responds in his adoption of a line for Calypso, detainer of Ulysses for seven years, and principal temptress in the poem.

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1. See Alexander Pope, *The Iliad of Homer*, ed. Maynard Mack, *Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, VII (London, 1967), cxciv. All further citations of the *Odyssey* are to this edition.

2. John Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (Indianapolis, 1957), *Paradise Lost*, IV, 305-311.

SOURCES FOR MORRIS'  
"WANDERERS' PROLOGUE"

William Morris' likely uses of legendary and mythical sources in "The Wanderers' Prologue," the prefatory narrative to *The Earthly Paradise*, have never been reconstructed as exhaustively as have the antecedents to the poem's inner tales.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Morris may have drawn quite boldly on widely disparate sources and motifs.

The notion of an "Earthly Paradise" itself appears relatively early in the "Prologue." The chief narrator Rolf quotes his closest friend Nicholas, who

... said ... that an English Knight  
Had had the Earthly Paradise in  
sight,  
And heard the songs of those that  
dwelt therein,  
But entered not, being hindered by  
his sin.  
(*Collected Works*, III, 7)

Morris remarked on the provenance of this "English Knight" in a letter to O. F. Adams: "I meant Sir John Mandeville, but I have not his book by me, so I cannot be sure if he really does say that he did as my lines tell: I think he does. You may remember that he spins a long yarn

about the sham Earthly Paradise of the sheikh of Alamont."<sup>2</sup> The "long yarn" appears in *The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundeville*, ed. J. O. Halliwell (London, 1839), which was reprinted by Morris' friend F. S. Ellis in 1866. Halliwell's introduction singles out the passage as "most singular," and renders it into modern English "for the general reader." Compare also the "idle singer"'s complex self-deprecation with Maundeville's introduction:

Of Paradys we can not speken propurly; for I was nat there. It is fer bezonde; and that forthinke the me; and also I was not worthi. But as I have herd seye of wyse men bezonde, I shalle telle zou with gode wille.

(chapter 30, p. 303 of the reprint; the "sham paradise" itself appears in chapter 27).

In her introduction to volume III of the *Collected Works*,<sup>3</sup> May Morris remarks that her father had found another original for the Earthly Paradise in St. Brendan's Voyage, in Caxton's *Golden Legend*.<sup>4</sup> In it, the monk Brandon (Brendan and Brandan are variant spellings) hears of an Eden called the "land of Behest tofore the Gates of Paradise" and sets sail with fourteen other monks to find it. At their second landfall, they find a garden, fair tree, and birds who insist they are fallen angels, and sing in celebration of the various holidays of the Christian year, and at the third they encounter a hospitable abbot and twenty-four monks. When they continue their arduous sea-voyage, they are threatened by assorted

beasts, fiends, and a fiery monster, but they ultimately spend forty days in "the fairest country eastward that any man might see."<sup>5</sup> The voyage's episodic nature suggests the first version of the Prologue, and the abbot's hospitality may bear some analogy to the Wanderers' cordial reception by the twelve Elders. Like the Wanderers' voyage, Brandon's is his last: he dies in contentment and sanctity soon after his return.

Morris could also have found an account of St. Brandon's voyage in Sabine Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* (second enlarged edition, London, Oxford, and Cambridge, 1868), which included a chapter-length comparison of different forms of "Terrestrial Paradise." If so, he would especially have noted a Scandinavian version, which Baring-Gould singles out as "the most remarkable account of the terrestrial Paradise ever furnished."<sup>6</sup> In this tale, a Norwegian, Eirek, seeks to find the "Deathless Land of pagan Scandinavian mythology,"<sup>7</sup> and visits the Emperor of Constantinople before travelling east.

Morris seemed to read almost every contemporary account of medieval history and legend, and enjoyed antique compendia and narrative summaries, for example, *The Golden Legend*, *Gesta Romanorum*, and *Acta Sanctorum*. Baring-Gould's clearly schematized and very readable compendium may have refreshed Morris' memory of tales he had read in the original, and suggested further use in *The Earthly Paradise*. For example, his chapter

on "The Terrestrial Paradise" includes the tale of Ogier the Dane, and other chapters discuss "The Mountain of Venus" (cf. Morris' "The Hill of Venus") and "The Swan Maiden" (cf. "The Land East of the Sun"). Another chapter on "The Fortunate Isles" includes a legend of 15th century Portuguese explorers who find an island peopled by refugees from the Mohamadan invasion of Spain, who have preserved their ancestors' customs with care (cf. Morris' Greek Elders). One of this chapter's specific allusions, to the Icelander Bjorn of Bradwick,<sup>8</sup> also occurs on page 23 of the "Prologue." *Curious Myths'* unusual clarity and interpretative interest in the structure of its legends may well have appealed to Morris' general tendency to read folk narratives as documents of cultural history.

More elusive are the possible antecedents for the Wanderers' explorations in a tropical *terra incognita*. Oscar Mauer's "Some Sources of William Morris' 'The Wanderers,'" examines Morris' use of Froissart's *Chronicles*, and of Scandinavian sources (especially Samuel Laing's 1844 translation of Snorre Sturleson's *Heimskringla*, London, 3 vols.), but he finds no direct source for Morris' New World material in William Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* or *Conquest of Peru*. Indeed, he concludes that the remainder of the voyage "follows no definite literary or historical source."<sup>9</sup> I believe this conclusion should be qualified. Isolated anthropological details from

Prescott's histories are suggestive of passages from the Prologue: for example, Prescott's description of Aztec sacrifices of young men and women (*Mexico*, Book I, Chapter 3; compare *Collected Works*, III, 73), or of the conquerors' credulous hopes for a "terrestrial paradise" (Book II, Chapter 7; compare *Collected Works* III, 28); or their excitement as they look down over the valleys of Mexico City (Book III, Chapter 8; compare III, 54); or the ritual slaughter of a dead Incan ruler's relatives, who join their sovereign in a ghastly necropolitan court (*Peru*, Book I, Chapter I; compare III, 52).

In his dissertation *William Morris' Treatment of Sources in 'The Earthly Paradise'*, Ralph Bellas notes in passing that a contemporary account of the New World had appeared, Irving's popular *Life of Christopher Columbus* (London, 1828).<sup>10</sup> A number of parallels suggest that Morris may in fact have read and used Irving's *Life*. Morris was quick to absorb and modify details associated with character, emotional states, or dramatic human situations, and Irving's explorers resemble Morris', not only in several specific features of their fates, but in their motivations and patterns of emotional response.

Like Rolf, Irving's Columbus collects legends of imaginary voyages, including that of Sir John Mandeville (190); he also enlists the aid of a learned priest, is becalmed on the voyage out, and encounters peaceable natives, lush vegetation, and illusory marvels. Both expedi-

tions benefit from the services of a friendly female interpreter, and both are greeted by the natives who trustingly assume their invaders have "descended from above" (87). Both witness the pathetic suicide of a native captive. Both groups of explorers battle with more warlike enemies of their native allies, voyage restlessly after a period of settlement, and eventually split sadly into two groups, one which remains and one which returns home. Columbus is deeply attached to his brother and co-explorer Don Pedro, who dies on the return voyage, as does Rolf's lifelong friend Nicolas. More tenuous comparisons might be drawn—for example, between the exhaustion of the aged Wanderers and the wasted condition of the Columbus expedition on its return; or between Rolf's relief and Columbus' tears upon receiving a kindly reception.

More importantly, there are strong similarities between Morris' ardent visionary Rolf and Irving's Columbus, who is described as

a visionary of an uncommon kind. . . . The manner in which his ardent imagination and mercurial nature were controlled by a powerful judgment, and directly by an acute sagacity, is the most extraordinary feature of his character. (396)

A peculiar trait in his rich and varied character remains to be noticed; namely, that ardent and enthusiastic imagination, which threw a magnificence over his whole course of thought. A poetical temperament is discernible throughout all his writings and in all his actions. (395)

With all the visionary fervour of his imagination, its fondest dreams fell short

of the reality. He died in ignorance of the real grandeur of his discovery! (397)

Indeed, Irving's many reconstructions of his explorers' emotions often parallel those of the Wanderers. Irving describes Columbus' hopes at landfall as follows:

The thoughts and feelings of Columbus in this little space of time must have been tumultuous and intense. At length, in spite of every difficulty and danger, he had accomplished his object. The great mystery of the ocean was revealed. . . . he had secured to himself a glory which must be as durable as the world itself. (85)

Morris describes the Wanderers' ecstatic confidence the night before they disembark:

All hearts were melted, and with happy tears,  
Born of the death of all our doubts  
and fears,  
Yea, with loud weeping, each did each  
embrace  
For joy that we had gained the  
glorious place.  
Then must the minstrels sing, then  
must they play  
Some joyous strain to welcome in the  
day,  
But for hot tears could see nor bow  
no string,  
Nor for the rising sobs make shift  
to sing;  
Yea, some of us in that first ecstasy  
For joy of 'scaping death went near to  
die. (28)

Note Morris' much more acute response to the situation's irony and latent sorrow.

Like Morris' narrator, Irving also compares his explorers' quest

with other imaginary or fabulous voyages, and comments on their credulity: "As fast as one illusion passed away, however, another succeeded" (98). Again, Morris' version is more reflective and empathetic:

And yet . . .  
 Once more the stories of the past we  
 weighed  
 With what we hitherto had found;  
 once more  
 We longed to be by some unknown far  
 shore;  
 Once more our life seemed trivial,  
 poor and vain,  
 Till we our lost fool's paradise  
 might gain,  
 Yea, we were like the felon doomed  
 to die,  
 Who when unto the sword he draws  
 anigh  
 Struggles and cries, though erewhile  
 in his cell  
 He heard the priest of heaven and  
 pardon tell,  
 Weeping and half contented to be  
 slain. (60-61)

Irving's enthusiasm and special pleading do not entirely gloss the Spanish adventurers' brutal treachery, or their obsession with gold and domination — traits more compatible with the pirate-mariners of the first version of the Prologue. The second version's Wanderers do not colonize or exploit, and it is they who are tricked. Their quest is not for wealth or European reputation, but for a significant life. They are a company of comrades, devoted to each other and to their search to understand the limits of their experience.

One much more oblique conjectural source may also deserve men-

tion: Robert Southey's *Madoc* (London: Longman, 1812), in which the eponymous prince from medieval Wales siezes part of Aztec Mexico, returns to recruit colonists in Wales, and dies in the region of the New World he has conquered. Part 1, "Madoc in Wales," narrates the initial conquest, Part 2, "Madoc in Aztlan," his return. Madoc and his band also encounter hospitable natives and corpses buried above ground (compare III, 32) and struggle to prevent human sacrifices. Here the resemblance ends: Southey's narrative glorifies a succession of slaughters in the name of Christianity. Nevertheless, Morris, who had read all the Waverly novels at seven, may have recalled elements of this potboiler from his omnivorous boyhood.

Finally, there is one rather obvious but distinctly more cheerful precedent for the Wanderers' encounter with Greek-speaking Elders: Raphael Hythloday's well-known discovery that the distant Utopians speak a language "somewhat related to [Greek]." Morris later mentioned that More's *Utopia* was one of his favorite books.

All of these texts — *The Golden Legend*, Mandeville's *Travels*, Sabine Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths*, Prescott's *Conquests*, Irving's *Columbus*, More's *Utopia*, Froissart, the Heimskringla — may thus have contributed in various degrees to the identity and provenance of Morris' "Wanderers' Prologue." If so, Morris' redaction of legendary material reflected a complex and ramified interest in

their accounts of utopian exploration and discovery.

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1. See Oscar Mauer's "The Sources of William Morris' *The Wanderers*," *University of Texas Studies in English*, vol. 29 (1950), 22-30, and Ralph Bellas, *William Morris: Treatment of Sources in 'The Earthly Paradise'*, Diss. University of Kansas, 1960.

2. O. F. Adams and W. J. Rolfe, eds., *Atlantis's Race and Other Tales from The Earthly Paradise*, Boston: Ticknor, 1888, 197.

3. xviii.

4. Reprinted in 1900 as "Life of St. Brandon," vol. 7 of *The Golden Legend of Lives of the Saints as Englished by William Caxton*, ed. F. S. Ellis, London: J. M. Dent, 1900, 48-66.

5. *Ibid.*, VII, 65.

6. *Curious Myths*, I, 260.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, II, 286.

9. "The Sources of William Morris; 'The Wanderers,'" *op. cit.*, 230.

10. *William Morris: Treatment of Sources in 'The Earthly Paradise'*, *op. cit.*, 27.

"OLD LADY, NOW HERE IS  
WHERE THE 'WOW' IS"

The fictive "Old Lady" in the treatise, *Death in the Afternoon*, asks Hemingway if he knows any stories about "those unfortunate people."<sup>1</sup> Hemingway then tells the

story of two effeminate young men who disturb a newspaperman one night in his Paris hotel. The significance of this story, as related to the Old Lady, may be found in the probability that the homosexual motif generates from an earlier, still unpublished manuscript, #743 (John F. Kennedy Library) "There's One in Every Town," in which Hemingway records the major portion of the events in the *Death in the Afternoon* vignette.

Hemingway relates the story to the Old Lady of *Death in the Afternoon* as follows: An indigent young man, given a trip abroad by his rich friend, comes to the door of the newspaperman at two a.m.; the young American is distraught and hysterical, almost suicidal, and refuses to go back to the adjoining room with his older friend. The journalist gives both of them a drink, and the young man returns with his friend to the room. But the journalist is reawakened by the shouts of the younger man, "I didn't know it was that. Oh, I didn't know it was that! I won't. I won't."<sup>2</sup> When the newspaperman again volunteers help, the rich young man tells him to mind his own business. After much sobbing by the younger man, the row ceases. The journalist sees them the next day outside the Cafe de la Paix "chatting together happily."<sup>3</sup> Hemingway, as narrator, then tells the Old Lady that he himself has seen the two sitting in the terrace of the Cafe des Deux Magots looking as clean cut as ever, except that the young man who had earlier threat-