Beyond Eden

The Biblical Story of Paradise (Genesis 2–3) and Its Reception History

Edited by

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Preface

The essays in this volume began as papers delivered at a conference held on October 19–20, 2007 at the Istituto Svizzero di Roma and the Facoltà Valdese di Teologia in Rome. The topic of the conference was the anthropology and theology of the biblical "Fall" narrative (Genesis 2–3), whose intellectual and cultural-historical relevance can hardly be overestimated. Genesis 2–3 is certainly one of the best known texts in world literature, formulating the fundamental premises and problematics of human self understanding in Judeo-Christian thought. For what reason is the concrete experience of human life interpreted as "paradise lost?" Why is the human acquisition of knowledge considered problematic? Why is society organized patriarchally? To what degree is freedom an integral part of the *conditio humana*? Why does human existence have intrinsic temporal limits?

In addition to being one of the most famous narratives, Genesis 2–3 is also one of the most multi-dimensional narratives of the Bible. It is typically known as the story of Adam, Eve, the apple, the Fall, and the punishment of humankind with mortality. However, of these popular elements, only "Eve" actually appears in the biblical story itself. The other elements owe their existence to the productive reception of the story in the Intertestamental and New Testament literature as well as the later history of reception. The Hebrew narrative speaks of *ha'adam*, which – as a result of the definite article – does not signify the proper name "Adam" but instead the category of "human." The fruit of the forbidden tree is not botanically identified, but later becomes regarded as an "apple" as a result of a wordplay arising from its Latin adaptation (*malum*). Eating the fruit is never termed "sin" in Genesis ("sin" appears for the first time in the Bible in Gen 4:7), and the first humans were created mortal, as is shown by their creation from dust and the formulation of Gen 2:16f., which is similar to a law of capital punishment. The consumption of the forbidden fruit is therefore punishable by the death penalty, not with the penalty of mortality, a notion that first develops in the later reception history.

These preliminary observations already reveal the importance of analysis both of the Bible itself and of its diverse interpretive potential and impact in order to get to an adequate understanding of Genesis 2–3. In light of this challenge the conference adopted an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the historical meaning of the story itself as well as its variegated reception and influences. The goal was, on the one hand, to profile

the anthropological and theological perspectives of the biblical paradise narrative in its historical context and evaluate its cultural historical importance (without reducing its multidimensionality), and on the other hand to survey the productive potential realized throughout its history of reception. This approach makes visible both the fruitfulness of ancient, Medieval, and more recent exegesis and hermeneutics of Genesis 2–3 in word and picture, and also the manifold interactions between historically conditioned interpretive situations and this foundational text.

Jean-Louis Ska's (Rome) contribution, "Genesis 2–3: Some fundamental questions" reviews the introductory and fundamental exegetical problems in Genesis 2–3, taking the literary relationship with Genesis 1 into special consideration. He designates Genesis 2–3 as a post-Priestly addition to Genesis 1, which does not attempt to answer the question of how the world came to be from the perspective of Babylonian science, but rather from the indigenous Israelite tradition.

In "Heaven on Earth – or Not? Jerusalem as Eden in Biblical Literature," Terje Stordalen (Olso) offers an overview of the implicit and explicit representations in the Bible of Jerusalem as Paradise. This essay reveals the contours of the innerbiblical discussion of the question of the thisworldliness or otherworldliness of Paradise.

The article by Konrad Schmid (Zürich), "Loss of Immortality? Hermeneutical Aspects of Genesis 2–3 and Its Early Receptions," addresses the anthropological constitution of the first humans (namely, the question of their mortality) from the perspective of Genesis 2–3 and early Jewish texts such as Ben Sira, Wisdom of Solomon, Josephus, and 4.Ezra among others. He concludes that, contrary to the widely held position, the Bible and its earliest receptions assume that humans were created mortal. This conclusion also provides an important backdrop for the interpretation of central New Testament passages such as Rom 5.

Hermann Spieckermann (Göttingen) asks, "Is God's Creation Good? From Hesiodus to Ben Sira." In his answer he presents a *tour d'horizon* of the various conceptions of creation from the regions of ancient Israel and Greece, analyzing the convergences and divergences of different positions.

Thomas Krüger's (Zürich) essay, "Sündenfall? – Überlegungen zur theologischen Bedeutung der Paradiesgeschichte," provides an exegesis of Genesis 2–3 and contrasts it with traditional Christian interpretations of this text.

In her essay, "The Earthen Human, the Breathing Statue: The Sculptor God, Greco-Roman Statuary, and Clement of Alexandria," Laura Nasrallah (Harvard) traces the conception of the formation of the first humans in relation to Greco-Roman statuary sculpture and shows which conceptual profiles connect with works of sculpture.

Michael Stone (Jerusalem), shows in his contribution, "Satan and the Serpent in the Armenian Tradition," the diverse conceptualizations in the Armenian sources of how the Satan and the snake in Genesis 3 become connected. Many of the texts he examines are difficult to access. In this essay they are presented to the wider academic community for the first time.

In "Das Verbot, vom Baum der Erkenntnis von Gut und Böse zu essen (Gen 2,17): Zeichen eines missgünstigen Gottes? Kaiser Julian und Kyrill von Alexandrien in einer virtuellen Debatte," Christoph Riedweg (Zürich/Rome) first of all discusses the views held by the Emperor Julian, called the Apostate, who in his sharp criticism of Genesis 2–3 takes up and further develops arguments of his Platonic precursors Celsus and Porphyry as well as Gnosticism. Riedweg compares Julian's position to that of Cyril of Alexandria and also offers an in depth analysis of the Greek version of the Paradise story which is authoritative for both.

Michael Signer's (Notre Dame) contribution, "Coming to Consciousness: Knowing, Choosing or Stealing? Approaches to the Story of the Garden (Genesis 2–3) in Medieval Northern French Jewish Exegesis," discusses various Rabbinic perspectives on Genesis 3 (such as Kimchi). It focuses on the inter-religious contact with the Christian interpretation of this text at that time, showing that the Christian and Jewish exegesis did not operate in *splendid isolation* from one another, but instead often integrated one another's positions.

In "The Four Rivers that Flowed from Eden," art historian Nira Stone (Jerusalem) displays numerous iconographic examples of the motif of the four rives from Gen 2:10–15, which, especially in Christian art, has been juxtaposed with the resumption of the motif in the Johannine Apocalypse.

Emidio Campi (Zürich) investigates the relationship between "Genesis 1–3 and the Sixteenth Century Reformers." Giving special attention to Petrus Martyr Vermigli as well as Calvin, Campi profiles the exegesis of Genesis 2–3 during the Reformation. As a compliment to Signer's essay, Campi demonstrates how the current Jewish exegesis exercised a strong influence on the reformers' understanding of this text.

Rüdiger Bittner (Bielefeld) concludes the volume by asking the question "Wozu Paradiese?" Bittner's contribution offers a close reading of Genesis 2–3 from a philosophic perspective and inquires about the logical coherence and lacunas in this text.

The present volume as a whole documents the manifold convergences between the various historical, exegetical, and reception-historical approaches to Genesis 2–3. On the other hand, the different accentuations in theological profile between Genesis 2–3 and its various receptions emerge through their juxtaposition with one another.

The abbreviations in this volume follow S.M. Schwertner, *Theologische Realenzyklpädie,* Abkürzungsverzeichnis, Berlin/New York 1994 and P.H. Alexander et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies,* Peabody, MA 1999.

We thank our collaborators in Zürich and Rome for their commitment and their help with putting on the conference and preparing the essays for print, especially Ms. Luise Oehrli for the manuscript preparation. We would also like to thank the Swiss National Science Foundation and the University of Zürich for their financial support, the editors of the series "Forschungen zum Alten Testament" as well as the publisher Mohr Siebeck in Tübingen for their cooperation.

Zürich and Rome, in July 2008   Konrad Schmid – Christoph Riedweg

Vorwort

Der vorliegende Band geht auf eine Tagung zurück, die am 19. und 20. Oktober 2007 am Istituto Svizzero und an der Facoltà Valdese di Teologia in Rom stattgefunden hat. Ihr Thema war die Anthropologie und Theologie der ausgesprochen wirkmächtigen Erzählung vom „Sündenfall" in der Bibel (Genesis 2–3), deren geistes- und kulturgeschichtliche Bedeutung kaum zu überschätzen ist. Genesis 2–3 ist wohl einer der bekanntesten Texte der Weltliteratur. Er formuliert fundamentale Prämissen und Problemfelder menschlichen Selbstverständnisses der jüdisch-christlichen Geistestradition. Weshalb wird die Erfahrung der realen menschlichen Lebenswelt als „paradise lost" interpretiert? Weshalb ist menschliche Erkenntnisfähigkeit problematisch? Weshalb ist eine Gesellschaftsordnung patriarchal organisiert? Inwiefern ist Freiheit ein elementarer Bestandteil der *conditio humana*? Weshalb ist menschliche Existenz notwendigerweise zeitlich begrenzt?

In dieser Eigenschaft gehört Genesis 2–3 gleichzeitig zu den mehrdimensionalsten Erzählungen der Bibel. Sie ist etwa bekannt als die Geschichte von Adam, Eva, dem Apfel, dem Sündenfall und der Bestrafung des Menschengeschlechts mit der Sterblichkeit. Von all diesen populären Elementen findet sich nur „Eva" in der biblischen Geschichte selbst, die restlichen verdanken sich der produktiven Rezeption der Geschichte in der zwischen- und neutestamentlichen Literatur sowie der späteren Wirkungsgeschichte: Die hebräische Erzählung spricht von *ha'adam*, was – ausweislich des Artikels – nicht den Eigennamen „Adam", sondern die Gattung „Mensch" bezeichnet. Die Frucht des verbotenen Baumes wird botanisch nicht identifiziert, sondern wird im Sinne eines Wortspiels erst in der lateinischen Wirkungsgeschichte zum „Apfel" (*malum*). Der Genuss dieser Frucht wird in Genesis nirgends terminologisch als „Sünde" fixiert (der Begriff fällt in der Bibel zum ersten Mal in Gen 4,7), und die ersten Menschen sind, wie ihre Erschaffung aus Staub und die Gestaltung von Gen 2,16f. als Todesrechtssatz zeigen, von allem Anfang an sterblich geschaffen. Der Verzehr der verbotenen Frucht wird mit der Todesstrafe belegt, nicht mit der Strafe der Sterblichkeit. Diese Vorstellung ist erst in der späteren Wirkungsgeschichte entwickelt worden. Schon diese Beobachtungen zeigen, wie wichtig für ein angemessenes Verständnis von Genesis 2–3 ein kritischer Blick auf die Bibel selbst, aber auch auf ihre vielfältigen Potentiale und Wirkungen ist. Die Tagung verfolgte deshalb einen bewusst disziplinenübergreifenden Zugang, um den historischen Eigensinn ebenso

Heaven on Earth – Or Not?

Jerusalem as Eden in Biblical Literature

TERJE STORDALEN

1 A Terrestrial Paradise?

A persistent opinion in biblical scholars' apprehensions of Genesis 2–3 has been that the ancient audience imagined the Garden of Eden as a 'real' garden. According to modern views, they thought this garden was located in Babylonia or in Anatolia, or perhaps in the Far East, if not in the utmost West. In any event, it has been clear to most scholars that Eden was perceived as a 'real' place. A host of biblical scholars have commented upon notions of the location of paradise,[1] while simultaneously disqualifying such a view as primitive, mythical, etc. Admittedly, a few scholars did doubt geographical implications in the biblical text.[2] Still, the persistence of the view that the ancient audience conceived of Eden as a regular garden in time and space has been remarkable indeed.[3] Now, the translation 'east' for Hebrew מִקֶּדֶם in Gen 2:8 is far from obvious: the phrase could well mean 'beginning, earlier, first,' as rendered in the Vulgate (see more below). In that case, Gen 2:8 would place Eden in remote time rather than space. The earliest Jewish sources that explicitly relate a location for the Garden of Eden do in fact place it in some otherworldly realm.[4] So why should European scholarship so persistently portray an earthly, 'realistic' paradise in Genesis? This propensity is as much of an enigma as the interpretation of the text itself, and the present contribution aims to address them both.

Approaching the view of the Garden of Eden in European scholarship, one realises that the propensity to identify a paradise on earth has a long history and a prominent place in Western culture.[5] The view of the Garden of Eden as a paradise on earth had ancient roots, although most ancient interpreters tended to assume an Eden outside of space and time.[6] Christian interpreters of later Antiquity came to see the garden as a realistic landscape but simultaneously portrayed Eden as symbolic, even mythological.[7] However, the reflection on a terrestrial paradise came to pervade Western culture from the Middle Ages onwards,[8] spreading in culturally wide patterns and occurring in culturally central authors, artists and artefacts. Carolyn Merchant goes so far as to argue that Western thought and narrative is still inscribed with the idea of some Paradise. This inscription is so strong it keeps influencing even 'secular' reflection on nature.[9] Keeping with this mind-set, most biblical scholars would probably agree that the narrator of Genesis saw גַּן־בְּעֵדֶן as inaccessible, but they would nevertheless insist that when locating the park in known geography the author wished 'to demonstrate the reality of Paradise.'[10]

The notion that an ancient mind would require a *physical* garden in order to see the Garden of Eden as 'real,' is remarkable indeed. At the face of it, this idea seems to reflect modern rather than ancient preferences. More strikingly, this way of putting the issue stages a difference between modern thought – where utopias are not 'real' – and that of ancient authors – where 'paradise,' crudely, was a 'real place.' Alessandro Scafi has demonstrated that ever since the Renaissance it has been conventional to scold earlier attempts at locating paradise before launching one's own, final reply to the matter.[11] The present contribution will argue that this modern notion of the biblical idea actually misses the central point of the biblical concept. It further argues that an ancient audience would identify utopian qualities in biblical concepts of Eden, and so would not have expected to find the original park in actual geography.

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[1] The location of Paradise was a classic even before DELITZSCH, Paradies. From the 1880's onwards, the issue appeared on the agenda of different disciplines, among them historical cartography, cf. SCAFI, Mapping Paradise, 21–27. From the list of subsequent prominent biblical scholars contributing to the issue, consider for instance DELITZSCH, Genesis, 81–89; DILLMANN, Genesis, 56–64; GRESSMANN, Reste, 345f.; PROCKSCH, Genesis, 24–26; ALBRIGHT, Garden of Eden; SKINNER, Genesis, 59–66; MOWINCKEL, Paradiselvene; SPEISER, Rivers, 39f.; VON RAD, Genesis, 55f.

[2] For instance CASSUTO, Genesis, 118; WESTERMANN, Genesis, 294; cf. doubts in GUNKEL, Genesis, 8–9; WENHAM, Genesis, 66f.; SOGGIN, Genesis, 65–68 and explicit denial of geographical implications in MCKENZIE, Characteristics, 158; RADDAY, Four Rivers; AMIT, Utopianism.

[3] Recently DIETRICH, Weltbild; NOORT, Gan-Eden, 27–34; confirm continuing interest in this issue.

[4] The view first occurs in the earliest Enochic literature, in a kind of horizontal mythography, cf. TIGCHELAAR, Eden; COLLINS, Models, 65f.

[5] Cf. the recent, large-scale treatment of the topic in SCAFI, Mapping Paradise. See for instance pp. 27–29.365–373.

[6] For the early history, cf. HULTGÅRD, Paradies, 32–39.

[7] Cf. SCAFI, Mapping Paradise, 36–57.

[8] SCAFI, Mapping Paradise, 84–159, etc.; GIAMATTI, Paradise.

[9] MERCHANT, Reinventing Eden. While not always adequate on the biblical material, this book gives a fascinating cultural and psychological reading of Western mind-sets.

[10] Thus NOORT, Gan-Eden, 33.

[11] SCAFI, Mapping Paradise, 365–370.

2 Biblical *Weltbilder*, Communicative Competence

1) Especially in German-speaking scholarship considerable effort has been spent during the last 30 years to reconstruct ancient *Weltbilder* i.e. 'mental images of the world.'[12] The attempt has been undertaken on the basis of textual as well as iconographic sources, and a main impulse has been research by Othmar Keel and his students. Keel has even undertaken to draw – for didactic purposes – his own synthesis of an ancient Hebrew *Weltbild* documented in cosmic iconography and texts (fig. 1).[13] Professor Keel is of course aware of the anachronism in the undertaking and of the problem in constructing *one* image from very diverse sources. Still, his sketch may be useful if taken heuristically.

In this capacity it may serve as a framework for refining the question of whether or not the ancient Hebrews conceived of the Garden of Eden as 'real.' Translated into Keel's drawing, the question reads: would an ancient public have conceived of the Garden of Eden as part of the terrestrial realm, i.e. the world that in Keel's reconstruction is located between the heavenly ceiling and the seas? For our purpose the important issue is the distinction between a terrestrial and an extra-terrestrial or other-worldly realm in biblical literature. Precisely how the two realms were imagined is a challenging question, but it does not undermine the fact that there was some distinction.

2) Although scholars describe Genesis 2–3 as a particularly 'isolated' piece of literature, biblical reflections of the Garden of Eden do in fact come in a large number.[14] However, identifying these reflections is complicated. In order to adequately find allusions, one would need to have a command of ancient Hebrew perceptions of gardens, trees, rivers, etc., and of their associations. Only thus could one build the communicative competence required to recognise reflections and echoes of Genesis 2–3. The result would be that גַּן־בְּעֵדֶן hovers behind at least 30 biblical passages, possibly many more. This is not the place to argue the case. I can only quote a selection of passages, briefly state my apprehension of these, and beg the reader's pardon for referring to my own and others' previous works for further arguments and higher precision.

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[12] See contributions in JANOWSKI/EGO, Weltbild, with sources and secondary literature.

[13] KEEL, Weltbilder, no. 13, = KEEL/SCHROER, Schöpfung, no. 85.

[14] For this and the following, see STORDALEN, Echoes, 21f.28–30.71.305–317, etc.

3 Eden and the Garden as Topography: Some Passages

3.1 Explicit References

We limit ourselves to topographical applications of Eden as a symbol, and for practical reasons to literature in Tanak. The most obvious references would be four similes. In these passages Jordan (like Egypt) as well as Zion and the land around Jerusalem are all compared to Eden, the Garden of Eden, or the Garden of YHWH:

Gen 13:10
Lot lifted his eyes, and he saw the entire plain of Jordan, that all of it was well watered – this was before YHWH destroyed Sodom and Gomorra – like the garden of YHWH, like the land of Egypt, all the way to Zoar.

וַיִּשָּׂא־לוֹט אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא אֶת־כָּל־כִּכַּר הַיַּרְדֵּן כִּי כֻלָּהּ מַשְׁקֶה לִפְנֵי שַׁחַת יְהוָה אֶת־סְדֹם
וְאֶת־עֲמֹרָה כְּגַן־יְהוָה כְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בֹּאֲכָה צֹעַר׃

Isa 51:3
Yes, YHWH has pity on Zion. He has compassion for all her wasteland.
He made her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of YHWH.
Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of song.

כִּי־נִחַם יְהוָה צִיּוֹן נִחַם כָּל־חָרְבֹתֶיהָ
וַיָּשֶׂם מִדְבָּרָהּ כְּעֵדֶן וְעַרְבָתָהּ כְּגַן־יְהוָה
שָׂשׂוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה יִמָּצֵא בָהּ תּוֹדָה וְקוֹל זִמְרָה׃

Ezek 36:35
They will say [about Zion]: This desolated land has become like the Garden of Eden,
and the wasted, deserted and ruined cities — people now live in their strongholds.

וְאָמְרוּ הָאָרֶץ הַלֵּזוּ הַנְּשַׁמָּה הָיְתָה כְּגַן־עֵדֶן
וְהֶעָרִים הֶחֳרֵבוֹת וְהַנְשַׁמּוֹת וְהַנֶּהֱרָסוֹת בְּצוּרוֹת יָשָׁבוּ׃

Joel 2:3
Before them fire devours, and behind them a flame consumes.
The land before them is like the Garden of Eden, while behind is waste wilderness.
Indeed, nothing escapes them.

לְפָנָיו אָכְלָה אֵשׁ וְאַחֲרָיו תְּלַהֵט לֶהָבָה
כְּגַן־עֵדֶן הָאָרֶץ לְפָנָיו וְאַחֲרָיו מִדְבַּר שְׁמָמָה
וְגַם־פְּלֵיטָה לֹא־הָיְתָה לּוֹ׃

In Ezekiel 31:2–9 Pharaoh and Egypt are compared to Assyria and its king. Both princes are portrayed in the image of a major tree in Eden. Within this allegorical mode, the lands of Egypt and Assyria respectively then compare to the Garden of Eden:

Ezek 31:3.8–9

Behold, Assyria , that cedar of Lebanon, beautiful branches and high stature.
Among clouds was his crown.

הִנֵּה אַשּׁוּר אֶרֶז בַּלְּבָנוֹן יְפֵה עָנָף וְחֹרֶשׁ מֵצַל וּגְבַהּ קוֹמָה וּבֵין עֲבֹתִים הָיְתָה צַמַּרְתּוֹ:

...

Cedars did not overshadow him in the Garden of God,
cypresses did not compare [even] to his limbs,
plane trees were not [even] like his boughs.
No tree in the Garden of God matched him in his beauty.

אֲרָזִים לֹא־עֲמָמֻהוּ בְּגַן־אֱלֹהִים בְּרוֹשִׁים לֹא דָמוּ אֶל־סְעַפֹּתָיו
וְעַרְמֹנִים לֹא־הָיוּ כְּפֹארֹתָיו כָּל־עֵץ בְּגַן־אֱלֹהִים לֹא־דָמָה אֵלָיו בְּיָפְיוֹ:

Because of his many branches they envied him,
every Eden-tree that was in the Garden of God.

יָפֶה עֲשִׂיתִיו בְּרֹב דָּלִיּוֹתָיו וַיְקַנְאֻהוּ כָּל־עֲצֵי־עֵדֶן אֲשֶׁר בְּגַן הָאֱלֹהִים:

The point in this passage is that Pharaoh will fall, just like the king of
Assyria did. Both fall because of self-glorification, like Adam in Gene-
sis 3. For Assyria this symbolic fall connects to a past catastrophe, whereas
for Egypt it is a warning for the future.

Ezekiel 28:11–19 must have had a complicated textual history and be-
fore that an intricate redaction history. As indicated in studies by Em-
manuel Tov, the LXX often reflects an earlier text in Ezekiel.[15] In Ezek
28:11–19 the text of MT is best explained as an alteration of a Hebrew
base text for the LXX. Due to the parallel between Ezek 28:13 LXX and
the description of the priestly robe in Exod 28:17–20 and 39:10–13, this is
one of the few instances where it would seem possible to work back from
the Greek towards its assumed Hebrew *Vorlage*.[16] Still, I limit myself to
quoting the translation of the presumed earlier text only:

Ezek 28:12b–15*

You were a seal of perfection, perfect in beauty.
In Eden, the Garden of God, you were,
covering yourself with precious stones:
sardius, topaz and emerald; carbuncle, sapphire and jasper; and silver and gold,
ligure, agate and amethyst; chrysolite, beryl and onyx.
The handwork on your tambourines were gold,
and your larger drums (?) were with you.
On the day you were born, I placed you with the cherub.
You were on the Holy mountain of God, among fire stones.

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[15] Tov, Recensional Differences; cf. Tov, Textual Criticism, 333f.

[16] For all this, see STORDALEN, Echoes, Appendix 2 (pp. 478f.) and discussion pp.
335–348.

You were blameless in your ways from the day you were born
until there was found inequity in you.

The enumeration of precious stones in the 'covering' matches that of the
high priest outfit in Exod 28:17–20; 39:10–13. It seems to me, therefore,
that Bernard Gosse must be correct when concluding that we have here an
example of a redirected oracle.[17] The original oracle behind Ezek 28:11–19
would have been directed at the high priest in Jerusalem. It was later re-di-
rected to the priestly ruler of Tyre. For our purpose the point is that the
oracle then indicates that the temple in Zion and also the one in Tyre could
be seen 'as Eden,' and their princely priests 'as being in the role of Adam.'

These six passages – no less than half of them from the Book of Ezekiel
– are the non-ambiguous references to Eden in Tanak outside Genesis 2–4.
However, this text basis allows detection of further allusions to Eden in
biblical Hebrew literature.

3.2 Samples of Implicit References

1) First, the temple is the source of a fantastic, life-supporting river in
Ezek 47:1–12.[18] For the topographically competent it is clear that the river
emanates in the vicinity of the historical spring Gihon, which is, of course,
a homonym of one of those rivers in Gen 2:10–14. Eden is the source of
the river (נָהָר) in Gen 2:10, and in Ezekiel 47 the river goes forth under the
House (וְהִנֵּה־מַיִם יֹצְאִים מִתַּחַת מִפְתַּן הַבַּיִת, v. 1). Along its course the river
brings healing and life. On the shores grow trees that yield harvest every
month, their fruit for food and their leaves for healing. Similarly the trees
in the Garden of Eden yielded their fruit richly, and at least one of the trees
apparently had the capacity to support enduring life. Given the prominence
of the motif in the book, this should be understood as yet another vision of
Zion 'as Eden.'

Similar visions occur in Zech 14:8–11 and Joel 4:18. Additional termi-
nological indications confirm that these passages do allude to the Eden
complex.

Zech 14:8–11:
On that day, running water shall go forth (יָצְאוּ מַיִם־חַיִּים) from Jerusalem,
half to the Eastern Sea and half to the Western Sea.
Thus it shall be in summer and in winter.
YHWH shall be king over the entire earth.
On that day, YHWH will be one, and his name one.
It shall go around the entire land – [now being] like the desert
(יִסּוֹב כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כָּעֲרָבָה)
from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem.

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[17] GOSSE, Ezéchiel 28,11–19; GOSSE, Recueil d'oracles.

[18] For the following, see STORDALEN, Echoes, 363–368.

She [Jerusalem] shall be high, residing in her site,
from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of the former gate,
to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel
to the king's wine presses.
They shall live in her, and there shall be no more destruction.
Jerusalem shall dwell in security.

Joel 4:18:

On that day, mountains shall drip new wine,
the hills shall flow with milk, and every ravine of Judah will flow with water.
A source shall go forth from the House of YHWH, watering the brook of Shittim.

וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא יִטְּפוּ הֶהָרִים עָסִיס וְהַגְּבָעוֹת תֵּלַכְנָה חָלָב וְכָל־אֲפִיקֵי יְהוּדָה
יֵלְכוּ מָיִם וּמַעְיָן מִבֵּית יְהוָה יֵצֵא וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת־נַחַל הַשִּׁטִּים:

2) Biblical literature portrays gardens as shrines – despite theological op-
position to such cults in certain trajectories of the collection. From the
Book of Jubilees it is evident that an ancient Jewish audience would indeed
have been able to see the Garden of Eden as a shrine.[19] One reason to see
the garden as a temple is found in the guarding cherubs in Gen 3:24, as has
long been noted.[20] The constellation of a tree guarded by theriomorph fig-
ures is fairly universal in ancient Near Eastern iconography: such creatures
guard entries to cultic domains. As part of the vision of the new temple
(chs. 40–48) Ezekiel gives this description of the ornamentation of the
central hall of the temple:

41:17b–20, 25f (NRSV):
And on all the walls all around in the inner room and the nave there was a pattern. It was
formed of cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. Each cherub
had two faces: a human face turned toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of
a young lion turned toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved on the
whole temple all around; from the floor to the area above the door, cherubim and palm
trees were carved on the wall.

...

On the doors of the nave were carved cherubim and palm trees, such as were carved on
the walls; and there was a canopy of wood in front of the vestibule outside. And there
were recessed windows and palm trees on either side, on the side-walls of the vestibule.

Add to this palm trees in the inside ornamentation (Ezek 40:22.26.31.
34.37), and it would seem unavoidable that the temple in Ezekiel's vision
relates to the Garden of Eden.

3) We turn to Qoh 2:1–11, keeping in mind the above symbolic identifica-
tion of Jerusalem as Eden. Obviously, גַּן־בְּעֵדֶן was a garden; most likely it
was conceived of as a grandiose park like royal parks in Assyria or Baby-

[19] See recently RUITEN, Eden.
[20] Explicitly already in JAROŠ, Bildmotive; WENHAM, Sanctuary Symbolism.

lonia.[21] The existence of similar gardens in West Semitic culture is attested
in Mari (the Court of Palms) and reflected in Ugarit (Keret as well as
Aqhat). Generally, biblical descriptions of royal fertility (as in Psalm 72)
coincide well with the ideology Assyrian rulers expressed in their royal
gardens. And in a recent article Francesca Stavrakopoulou argued for see-
ing the Garden of Uzza (2.Kgs 21:18.26) as a site for a royal ancestor
cult.[22] This, if accepted, would be an example of a cultic garden in Jerusa-
lem, and one confirming chthonic associations of gardens found elsewhere
in the ancient Near East.[23] On this background Qoh 2:1–11, reports a
'royal experiment' that brings us as close as we ever get to a royal park in
biblical literature:

Qoh 2:4–6
I enlarged my works, I built myself houses and planted vineyards.
I made me gardens and parks and planted in them every fruit tree.
(עָשִׂיתִי לִי גַּנּוֹת וּפַרְדֵּסִים וְנָטַעְתִּי בָהֶם עֵץ כָּל־פֶּרִי:)
I made myself water pools to fertilise a forest of flourishing trees.

Qohelet creates a *pardes*, which is here a Persian loan word that originally
denoted royal parks. As described recently again by Hultgård, this Persian
word gave birth to Western words for 'paradise,' and it also created,
through its use in LXX Gen 2:8 an associative connection between the
phenomenon itself and the kind of installation described in Genesis 2–3.[24]
If, indeed Qoh 2 is later than LXX Gen 2:8, the implication would be that
Qohelet created something like a local Eden. And more: unlike Adam he
retained his wisdom, and in contrast with Eve, he was able to follow the
desire of his eyes without falling into vanity. He achieved a state of bal-
ance when enjoying the blessings of Eden.

Qoh 2:9–10
I became great and I surpassed everyone before me in Jerusalem
– even my wisdom remained with me.
(וְגָדַלְתִּי וְהוֹסַפְתִּי מִכֹּל שֶׁהָיָה לְפָנַי בִּירוּשָׁלִָם אַף חָכְמָתִי עָמְדָה לִּי:)
Anything my eyes asked for, I did not restrain from them.
(וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר שָׁאֲלוּ עֵינַי לֹא אָצַלְתִּי מֵהֶם)
I did not refuse my heart any kind of pleasure,
indeed my heart took pleasure in all my work,
and this was my portion from all my toil.

4) Rounding off, I would state that it is not novel to claim allusions to
Eden in any single one of these passages, although the allusions are usually

[21] See STORDALEN, Echoes 94–102 (with literature) and recently HULTGÅRD, Para-
dies.
[22] STAVRAKOPOULOU, Garden of Uzza.
[23] See STORDALEN, Echoes, 105–111, *et passim*.
[24] HULTGÅRD, Paradies, 12–20.

not accumulated and interconnected in the way set out here. A web of additional allusions could be spun. Among the instances would be passages depicting Jerusalem or Zion as a garden, as a source of brooks and rivers (physical or spiritual), as a spender of abundance, as a location for peace and harmony, etc. This web would tie Eden symbolism into the blessings and curses in Leviticus 26 and include the אַשְׁרֵי־הָאִישׁ of Psalm 1. However, remaining within our designated focus, we can ascertain that Eden is applied frequently in literature from the Persian and the Hellenistic era, within literary symbolic modes, to various topographical entities, and for a number of rhetorical purposes. In all these passages Eden symbolises qualities of life, abundance and peace, all according with the popular etymology of the root עדן; luxuriance[25]:

Passage	Literary Mode	Topographical entity	Denoting....
Gen 13:10	Simile	Jordan (like Egypt)	Present blessing
Isa 51:3	Simile	Zion	Expected future restoration
Ezek 28:11–19	Metaphor (allegory)	Jerusalem (Tyre)	Past glory and loss
Ezek 31:2–9	Allegory	Assyria (Egypt)	Past/future glory and loss
Ezek 36:35	Simile	The land of Israel	Expected future restoration
Ezek 41:17–25	Visionary report	Envisioned temple	Envisioned glory
Ezek 47:1–11	Symbolic vision	Envisioned Zion	Envisioned blessing
Joel 2:3	Simile	Zion with land	Present glory, future loss
Joel 4:8	Metaphor (allegory)	Temple, Judah	Future bliss
Zech 14:8–11	Metaphor (allegory)	Jerusalem with land	Future bliss
Qoh 2:1–11	Narrative	Jerusalem	Present blessing (?)

4 Jerusalem as Eden

4.1 Figurative Speech

The above passages are cast mostly in figurative speech: similes, metaphors (on the brink of extending into allegories[26]), and one full blown allegory (Ezek 31:2–9). Even the visions and the visionary reports would be figurative literature, since they report something that does not (yet) exist, and they do so by the use of symbolism. As figures of speech and symbolic literature, these references do not suggest that Jerusalem and Eden are identical or even simply similar. On the contrary, figurative speech names associations *despite* recognised differences. In symbolic similes one would expect that the comparison be done between entities of different catego-

ries,[27] in which case Eden would not be a garden or landscape of the same kind as Jerusalem-Zion. There are of course also non-metaphorical similes, so one cannot draw firm conclusions from this argument alone. Still, the assumption that Jerusalem is not identified as Eden is evident also in the fact that the figure applies to Jordan, Tyre, Egypt (twice) and Assyria as well, and in fact to more than one entity in two or three of the passages (Genesis 13, Ezekiel 31, and probably 28).

4.2 Utopian Biblical Literature

Scholarly debate on utopian biblical literature is less than extensive.[28] Clearly, the Bible does not contain any full-fledged utopia in the pattern of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. Nevertheless, scholars like Steven Schweitzer and Kathleen O'Connor have convincingly argued that it is reasonable to identify utopian contents and literary techniques in biblical literature.[29] A few biblical scholars have in fact recorded Genesis 2–3 as utopian,[30] and in this view they are accompanied by literary critics.[31]

Steven Schweitzer (relying on Roland Boer and others) lists some of the more striking identifiers of utopian literature. Among them he recognises a 'contraction between narrative and description of the utopian place, contraction between the description itself and any efforts at graphic presentation, and a dialectic of disjunction and connection between the constructed utopia and the outside world' (p. 20). He further claims that while utopian literature appears to present a closed, inaccessible system, this is an illusion: the utopian systems actually resist closure and remain remarkably open to inconsistencies and change as well as to cross-referencing towards the world from which they are so programmatically distant.

This is not the place for a lengthy argument on utopianism in biblical literature. Suffice it to state one major point that is salient for our purpose. Utopias are a particular kind of 'place': they have space and yet they cannot be located. According with this paradox there is a kind of realism in utopias. They present realities that are not, but that could or should or would have been. Hence, utopian literature sometimes provokes the reader

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[25] See STORDALEN, Echoes 257–261, with literature.

[26] For theory on such extension, see BJØRNDALEN, Untersuchungen.

[27] With FOGELIN, Figuratively Speaking.

[28] I rely in particular upon entries in BEN ZVI, Utopia and Dystopia; cf. COLLINS, Models; entries in AICHELE/PIPPIN, Violence; TARLIN, Utopia; AMIT, Utopianism, and earlier EBACH, Kritik.

[29] SCHWEITZER, Utopia, 13–16; O'CONNOR, Visions, 86f.

[30] BEN ZVI, Utopias, 56, n. 1; COLLINS, Models, 51f.

[31] CLAEYS/SARGENT, Utopia Reader, 6; NEVILLE-SINGTON/SINGTON, Paradise Dreamed, 4.

to implement realistic blueprints of the utopian vision.[32] Utopia as a figurative mode seems to rely heavily upon this functionality.[33]

4.3 Eden as Utopia

1) Two of the above passages associate the temple of Jerusalem to Eden: Ezek 28:11–19 and 41:17–25. In a recent article Hanna Liss deals at length with Ezekiel's temple vision as utopia.[34] She claims its temporal data constitute a 'fictionalised chronology' (p. 131) loaded with symbolic sense, a 'liturgical reality' (p. 130): 'in place of the prophetic experience, headed by an exact date, one finds a text, alluding to a variety of dating possibilities' (p. 132). The spatial information of the plot similarly carries symbolic sense. It 'functions as a "map", allowing the "house" to exist outside of a geographical […] place.' (p. 136). In view of the complete lack of humans in the envisioned temple as well as the unmediated and permanent presence of the divine כָּבוֹד, Liss concludes: 'The author(s) of Ezek 40–43* describe(s) a *temple that should never be built* (since it had already been erected by God or whomever when Ezekiel entered it in his vision) as well as a temple that *was never built* (since no one ever built the temple described in the vision)' (p. 142, with italics). In this reading the temple in Ezekiel 40–43 occurs as a classic utopia; a place that never existed but still inspired the creation of concrete replicas. As seen in 41:17–25, this non-existent model carried connotations of the Garden of Eden. Similar connotations are found also in the description of the Solomonic temple in 1.Kgs 6:29.[35] One might note that this view of Eden as a kind of model for the Jerusalem temple concords with Thomas More's depiction of Utopia as a land devoid of disruptive social forces. In a very interesting discourse David Harvey analyses this aspect of Utopia and its relevance to the temporarily enacted utopias.[36]

Seen from with inside of such a symbolism, a priest serving in a temple that is a 'blueprint' of Eden, would of course himself be 'as in Eden.' This gives a perfect rationale for addressing the High Priest 'as Adam' in Ezekiel 28. Therefore both of Ezekiel's applications of the Eden motif to the cultic realm may see Eden as utopian. The symbolism stretches beyond the Book of Ezekiel and founds additional Eden allusions, such as those de-

scribing the pious as flourishing trees in the court of the Lord (Ps 52:10; 92:13–15).[37]

2) The literary mode in Qoh 2:1–11 is perhaps less obvious. On the surface this is a narrative report of constructional undertakings. However, the report is clearly fictional, classified as a typical 'fictional autobiography' by Tremper Longman.[38] Add to this the above convention of seeing Jerusalem 'as Eden' and the identification of wisdom as a tree-of-life in Prov 3:18; 11:30; 13:12 and 15:4[39] – the only occurrences of עֵץ־חַיִּים outside Genesis 3. In light of this Qoh 2:1–11 could be read as a report on a fictional attempt to create an Eden in Jerusalem.[40] That would again be a local blueprint of an utopian Eden.

4.4 Rivers from Eden: Cosmic Symbolism

Three of the above passages portray rivers emanating from Zion just like the river emerged from Eden in Gen 2:10 (וְנָהָר יֹצֵא מֵעֵדֶן): Ezek 47:1–11; Joel 4:18; Zech 14:8–11. Many of the observations by Hanna Liss on Ezekiel 40–43 apply also to Ezek 47:1–11. The measuring (with numeric symbolism) is similar. The fantastic trees have a parallel in the fantastic (and symbolically more poignant) appearance of כְּבוֹד־יהוה in ch. 43. The temple in the vision did not exist, nor could a river like the one in 47:1–11 be spotted in daily life.

However, the visions in Ezek 47:1–11; Joel 4:18; Zech 14:8–11 change as the rivers reach the land around Jerusalem. While exaggerated, the described transformations resemble those of, say, Ps 65:10–14. In Walter Zimmerli's commentary to Ezekiel 47, precisely this element of the text was seen as problematic: it seemed to him to constitute points of contact between the utterly holy temple and the clearly unclean Dead Sea.[41] His solution was to assume a surge of 'non cultic' reflection in the middle of the temple vision. However, a better solution is to regard this as part of a conventional *cosmic* repertoire on divine presence, creation and rejuvenation of the earth. These cosmic dimensions of the shrine go alongside the cultic ones and have a different symbolical grammar: their point is precisely to bring the effect of the deity to the world. The wording in Ezek. 47:9 confirms a cosmological orientation: 'all living creatures that swarm' (כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁרֹץ) is priestly cosmological phraseology. We now

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[32] This is a main point in Neville-Sington/Sington, Paradise Dreamed, see 83f., etc.

[33] It seems to me that this apprehension of utopian literature is at odds with some of the biblical utopias proposed in BEN ZVI, Utopia and Dystopia.

[34] LISS, Temple Vision.

[35] BLOCH-SMITH, King of Glory, 27 associates these to Eden. See recently SMITH, Like Deities, 7 (with further literature).

[36] HARVEY, Spaces of Hope, 159–173. Thanks to Prof. Sidsel Roaldkvam, Oslo, for pointing out this connection.

[37] See more in STORDALEN, Echoes, 430–437.

[38] LONGMAN, Autobiography, 120–123.

[39] And very similarly in Sir 1:20; 40:27.

[40] See for all this STORDALEN, Echoes, 397–406.

[41] ZIMMERLI, Ezechiel, 2, 1191–1193.

turn, therefore, to the cosmological rivers of Eden and to their ancient Near Eastern iconographical context.

5 Interlude: Rivers Flowing into New Sources

The motif of streams from a divine source is well known in ancient Near Eastern iconography. They may flow from one or more vases, (as in figure 2) and sometimes they emanate directly from a deity. They sometimes symbolise the fertility of various deities, and sometimes they seem to be the epithet of a given deity (like Ea).[42] Often there are two rivers.[43] However, one conventional constellation portrays them as four,[44] a number that could represent some spatial symbolism.

Whether as two or as four, such flowing rivers sometimes run into a *second set of vases*, and this particular motif constitutes our present focus. The 'second sources' seem to illustrate a distribution of cosmic water to the human realm. Commenting upon the image shown in fig. 2 – a Cassite seal from the 14th century – Keel and Schroer refer to the second sources as 'the vase of the earth (sources, rivers).'[45] The so-called statue N of Gudea portrayed water flowing from the king into a new vase at the base of the statue.[46] The best part of the inscription on this statue is identical to those of other inscriptions in the Gudea corpus. The one distinct line for this statue says the goddess gave Gudea 'life.' It is reasonable to interpret the water flowing from the king as an illustration of his receiving and spending life. This may be verified by a detail in the Gudea cylinder where the king is introduced to the seated Enki (fig. 3). The god holds a vase in each hand, and seems to pass one of them into the hands of Gudea through Ningišzida. Underneath the divine throne water from the vases flows into no less than six new vases.[47]

Such sets of second vases appear to be conventional. They occur for instance in a roll seal found in a grave at Jericho (18th century B.C.E.),[48] in a

10th century Assyrian cylinder seal (fig. 6, below), and possibly in a stone tablet with building inscription from Sippar (early 9th century).[49] In the latter an apparent subterranean stream flows under the divine abode, and in the stream are four star-shaped items that could be representing sources.

Figure 4 is a cult basin from Assur picturing two deities that emanate water. Priests (probably for Ea) administer this water. The stream from each deity separates into four streams (as seen in the *en face* goddess), but the image pursues only one of these – conceivably the one manifesting itself in the shrine where the cult basin is in use. Before and after reaching the priests, the stream flows in to and out from new vases.

Figure 5 seems rather to take a deity's perspective. This is an Assyrian wall carving from the mid second millennium B.C.E. A stream from the god spreads and runs – at some distance – into four new vases. It seems likely that from these second vases cosmic water passes into the four regions of the human world. In sum, the role of these second vases appears to be to channel cosmic water, life, and blessing, into the human realm. Given the iconographical emphasis, one would expect that these second sources too were considered important, perhaps numinous.

Figure 6, an Assyrian cylinder seal from the tenth century B.C.E. speaks to the relation between the river and the vase. It portrays a holy tree on a mountain attended by what appears to be a divine figure on the right and a priest on the left. From the winged sun disk hovering above the three are running two rivers down into two vases, one on each side of the tree. The tree itself grows out of a third, identical vase. That vase is not graphically connected to the two streams. However, for conventional reasons the tree must be supported by the same pouring cosmic water, and so the third vase would somehow be connected to the other two. This image, therefore, is in fact a picture of the invisible connection between the streams and the third source supporting the sacred tree.

6 Cosmography in Genesis 2–3

6.1 In 'the East' or In 'The Beginning'?

Modern bibles tell you that 'The Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the East' (Gen 2:8). However, the Hebrew phrase מִקֶּדֶם has temporal as well as spatial sense. The phrase גַּן־בְּעֵדֶן מִקֶּדֶם could also mean 'in the first/primeval Eden.'[50] The history of early translations along with syntactic and semantic features of biblical Hebrew render a temporal translation

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[42] See conveniently BLACK/GREEN, Dictionary, 184.

[43] For gods with two rivers, see for instance KEEL/SCHROER, Schöpfung, nos. 14, 47; KEEL, Bildsymbolik, nos. 42, 153, 285, and possibly also 43, LEICK, Dictionary, pl. 32, 42, 43; BLACK/GREEN, Dictionary, nos. 60, 80, 153.

[44] Wall painting in Zimrilim's palace at Mari (18–17th century B.C.E.): KEEL, Bildsymbolik, no. 191; a roll seal from Ur (2350–2150 B.C.E.) or the relief from a cistern in the Assur temple (1800–1500 B.C.E.): KEEL/SCHROER, Schöpfung, nos. 11 and 13.

[45] KEEL/SCHROER, Schöpfung, 48, on no. 14, a Cassite roll seal 14th century B.C.E.

[46] EDZARD, Gudea, 56f.

[47] BLACK/GREEN, Dictionary, no. 115.

[48] KEEL/SCHROER, Schöpfung, no. 12.

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[49] See KEEL, Bildsymbolik, no. 239, cf. BLACK/GREEN, Dictionary, no. 73.

[50] For the argument, cf. STORDALEN, Echoes, 261–270 and the literature listed there.

rather more probable than a geographical one. The LXX rendered κατὰ ἀνατολὰς, and thereby founded the geographical reading of this verse. The Vulgate, on the other hand, rendered *paradisum voluptatis a principio*. Jerome's *Quaestiones in Genesim* verifies that he deliberately sided with the Greek versions Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion in rendering a temporal sense at this point. It is also possible that he may have been influenced, through his rabbinical colleagues in Bethlehem, by the temporal renditions in Targums Onqelos, Pseudo Jonathan and Neofiti, as well as in Bereshit Rabbah and Talmud Pesachim.[51] Incidentally, it could also be noted that 4Q504, which is a paraphrase of Genesis and Exoduss refers to the events in the Garden of Eden as 'marvels of old' (נפלאות מקדם).[52]

As for linguistic arguments, a topographical static partitive sense of the preposition מן is rarely found without a relative locator. In other words, when using the phrase מקדם in a geographical sense, biblical Hebrew usually follows up with a preposition ל and a name or some topographical reference relative to which the partitive sense of מן comes into play. As opposed to this, a static temporal sense, 'in the beginning,' is very common. From a linguistic perspective, therefore, it would seem that the rabbinical reading accords more with biblical Hebrew than the one represented in LXX.

If a geographical sense is nevertheless preferred, מקדם would still not be read as a simple reference to any 'easterly location.' In biblical Hebrew the only directive noun used with מן in a static partitive sense without topographical locator, is מעל, 'above.' The two entities located ממעל (in the absolute) are the heavens and Eloah.[53] In these cases ממעל clearly names an utmost extremity. Assuming a parallel, 'absolute' topographical מקדם in Gen 2:8, would locate Eden in the utmost east. This is a numinous location in the biblical universe (cf. Ps 139:9), and clearly still beyond human reach.

Eibert Tigchelaar observed that both LXX Gen 2:8 and 1.Enoch 32:3-6 – broadly contemporary – render *pardes* for the Hebrew גן in MT Gen 2:8.[54] The travel accounts of 1.Enoch 21–36 employ a horizontal mythography, locating the *pardes* of Righteousness in the easternmost vicinities, well out of human reach. While the sources are corrupt or fragmentary, Tigchelaar suggests that the passage '... describes three concentric circles. The first and inner part is the inhabited world. The second part ... was probably described as consisting of water and darkness, whereas, according to the Aramaic fragment, the third and outer part con-

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[51] For this and the following see STORDALEN, Echoes, 261–270.

[52] Fragment 8, recto, line 3, according to TIGCHELAAR, Eden, 54.

[53] Jer 4:28; Ps 78:23; Job 3:4; 31:2.28.

[54] TIGCHELAAR, Eden, 44–46, cf. 39–47.

sisted of deserts and the "Pardes or Righteousness".' Interestingly, the Jerusalem Targum to Gen 2:8 renders: 'a garden in the Eden of the just,' reflecting precisely an association between the Garden of Eden and the *pardes* of Righteousness. Yet another early passage, 1.Enoch 77:3, also mentions a '*pardes* of Righteousness.' It would seem, therefore, that a historical exegesis of LXX Gen 2:8 in light of broadly contemporary Jewish literature, indicates that the παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ κατὰ ἀνατολάς in LXX is in fact also outside of the human realm. Interestingly, several Christian cartographers of the Medieval ages do depict the Garden of Eden in an unreachable portion of the east[55] – even though they must be supposed to have relied on the Vulgate, with its temporal translation in Gen 2:8, for their biblical knowledge.

6.2 One River, Four Heads

Attempts to make plain geographical sense of the fragment about the four rivers in Gen 2:10–14 generally fail to convince. Along with McKenzie, Radday, Amit and others, I argue for seeing the pericope as symbolic.[56] Arguments for this position are not repeated here. Suffice it to say I think גיחון in 2:13 denotes the Nile, while פישון in 2:11 is best seen as the joint Arabian Ocean and the Red Sea. These rivers are *not* seen as spreading from one source into four directions. Rather, they flow from the four corners of the *terra cogna* towards the centre of the biblical world. This centre would be in a triangle between, say, Memphis, Nineveh and Babylon. Roughly speaking, Jerusalem is in the middle.

Let us turn to the question of how the cosmic rivers make contact with the known world in Gen 2:8–14, and let us first consider the precise relation between Eden, the river and the sources in Gen 2:10.

וְנָהָר יֹצֵא מֵעֵדֶן לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת־הַגָּן וּמִשָּׁם יִפָּרֵד וְהָיָה לְאַרְבָּעָה רָאשִׁים:

"A river sprang forth from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became four heads."

So the river runs into four new sources much like the second vases in conventional iconography (above). These sources would then be four entry points for distributing cosmic water to the world.

We could perhaps venture – in the spirit of Othmar Keel – to draw our own picture of all this. If so, I would imagine the human and the divine

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[55] SCAFI, Mapping Paradise, see esp. figures 6.3, 6.5, 6.8, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12 = 6.15, 6.20, 7.1, 7.3.

[56] McKENZIE, Characteristics, 158; RADDAY, Four Rivers; AMIT, Utopianism, and cf. further STORDALEN, Echoes, 270–286.

world as two sides of a two-sided amulet of some kind.[57] On the obverse, divine side would be an image something like fig. 5, portraying the deity and the cosmic river that divides and becomes four sources. On the reverse, human side would be a very approximate image of the ancient world. The entry points of cosmic water would be at the periphery of the human world, just as the exit points are at the periphery on the obverse side. (This pattern of peripheral points of transition between the human and the divine world is known for instance in tablet IX of the Neo-Assyrian *Gilgamesh* where the hero enters the jewel garden in the land *Mashu*.) Once commuted into the reverse, human world, one could perhaps still expect the cosmic rivers to make 'leaps' (as implied in fig. 6). This could be one explanation why Gihon of Jerusalem would be connected to the Gihon–Nile (through a word pun, no less!). According with Ezekiel 47:1–11 these rivers grow forcefully along their courses. When they converge towards the centre of the world, they accumulate a veritable potential for echoing Eden in the central regions. From an ancient Hebrew point of view, this allows for recognising divine qualities in Jordan, Tyre, Egypt, Assyria, and of course Jerusalem.

While admittedly creative, this way of reading corresponds to what Alessandro Scafi in his cartographic *tour de force* called a new road to the past. It is preferable over the historical-critical road for one important reason. Instead of presuming the adequacy of modern, geographical and other analytical perceptions, it tries to make use of whatever iconographical and topographical concepts are known to have existed in the the cultural context of Gen 2:8–14.

7 *Ou-topos:* The Garden of Eden in a New Key

7.1 Paradises On Maps

Translating the above insights back into Othmar Keel's *Weltbild* (fig. 1), we would say that to an ancient Hebrew mind the Garden of Eden was located outside of the human world. It related to the human world through cosmic rivers transmitted through cosmographical sources into historical rivers. While not generally entertained in exegetical scholarship, such a view of the Garden of Eden corresponds for instance to Eliade's interpretation of paradise as utopia or to the view of Fritz Stolz that paradises are

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[57] My two models for imagining such an amulet are first the Assyrian bronze tablet rendered in KEEL, Bildsymbolik, nos. 91–92, and secondly the so-called Babylonian World Map, cf. HOROWITZ, Cosmic Geography, 402.

Gegenwelten ('contrast worlds').[58] Similarly, Northrop Frye identifies a number of paradises (including Genesis 2–3) as utopian.[59]

In his study of mediaeval cartography, Allesandro Scafi found that the Garden of Eden plotted onto a map was usually a cognitive representation of aspects of reality thought to be accessible through, say, a spiritual journey or an imaginary journey in time.[60] He also found that this cognitive representation became increasingly strange, indeed untenable, to scholars of the Renaissance and later eras. Gradually, Western scholars became unable to grasp the very sense of the representations on the maps. Instead, they engaged in a new discourse on the whereabouts of Paradise, gradually more restricted by 'realistic' geographical and cartographical concepts.

Biblical and assyriological scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth century and their attempts to identify locations of Eden were of course conditioned by this general development: as scholars we always construct the objects of our scholarship according to how they are conceived of in our cultural context. The inevitable implication is that scholarly interpretations of the Garden of Eden missed the overall character and the salient points of the biblical vision. The present contribution is an attempt to restore in biblical scholarship a memory, a construction of utopian space that allows us to make sense of the many references seeing Jerusalem (and other topographical entities) 'as Eden.'

7.2 Cosmology in (Christian) Theologies

The idea of a Garden of Eden is part of cosmology. However, subsequent to the abuse of biblical cosmology by *das Dritte Reich,* Christian theologians have avoided according much significance to biblical cosmology.[61] The fear was that cosmological theology would again be self-uncritical and oppressive, lending itself to disastrous ventures. The bulwark against biblical echoes of *Blut und Erde* was a consistent focus upon the role of history in biblical theology and something close to negligence of cosmology and mythology.

Support for this evaluation of cosmology could be distilled from the book *Map Is Not Territory* by Jonathan Z. Smith. This intriguing book identifies in religion two competing models for perceiving sacred space: the central-locative and the peripheral-utopian models.[62] The central-locative model identifies the universe as a closed, bounded and regulated world. Sacred space is integral to social order, and cosmic harmony is at-

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[58] ELIADE, Paradise; STOLZ, Paradiese.

[59] FRYE, Literary Utopias, 34–36.

[60] SCAFI, Mapping Paradise, 27f.182f., etc.

[61] Evidently so already in VON RAD, Problem.

[62] For this paragraph, see SMITH, Map, xi–xii; 130–46.160–171.293f.

tained by everyone taking his or her proper place. In this world deities fight cosmic powers to establish cosmic order. Human rulers fight historical enemies to establish social order, and the cosmic and social rulers are associated. Gods and kings establish centres, palaces, temples that become points of reference in a universe of categories and boundaries. Salvation is communicated in time and space and is controlled by those managing the centres and the boundaries. The challenge for the central-locative model, according to Smith, is that individuals and societies sometimes need to escape from the despotism of this world to attain a world of freedom and openness.[63] For this purpose the peripheral-utopian model emerges. This is a vision where humans are challenged to rebel against the present world order, where truly sacred space lies not in the cosmos but beyond it. Rather than taking one's place, one must escape the restraints of one's place and ravage the ruling order – because it is perverse.

Smith claims that both models remain existential possibilities and may be appropriated when relevant. The fact that one view dominates a given culture does not affect the availability of both.[64] One could in fact see this book as an attempt to restore the academic (and religious) relevance of temple and ritual.[65] Still, Smith's association between the central-locative model and the ruling classes renders this religion as potentially problematic. Smith himself portrayed how the central-locative model spread in biblical studies after the discovery of Mesopotamian mythologies in the 1870's.[66] The view is typical to ancient Near Eastern elite literature and it reflects urban bureaucracy values.[67] It has become common to interpret dynastic Hebrew religion (the kind mainly expressed in the Hebrew Bible) as ruled by a central-locative view of the universe.[68]

All this invites the view that a vision of Jerusalem 'as Eden' could be part of a socially repressive elite strategy to enforce boundaries and regulate the ancient Hebrew social universe. As interpreters of this all-important cultural document called the Bible, we need to ask ourselves: can we defend dignifying cosmologies of Eden by studying them?

7.3 Eden Cosmology – Symbolic and Utopian

1) Symbolic cosmology. Jerusalem is *symbolically* identified as Eden, and several of the passages above emphasise present or future *discontinuity* between the model and its target. The cities in Isa 51:3 and Ezek 36:35 are

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[63] See in particular SMITH, Map, 138–40.160–169.185–89.
[64] SMITH, Map, 101, cf. 188f.
[65] Cf. also SMITH, Take Place.
[66] SMITH, Map, 293.
[67] SMITH, Map, xi.
[68] As much was recently explicitly stated by CRENSHAW, Deceitful Minds, 107–110.

presented in an embarrassing state. The temple in Ezekiel 40–43 was never built. Such constructions point to shortcomings of Jerusalem or the temple 'as Eden.' Obviously, the party that has the privilege to define the model (i.e. the *literati*) also has more power to interpret and apply it. That, however, goes for any system and not just central-locative ones. The point is that the positively existing temple is *not* identified as the norm: the system provides a measure against which the actual city or temple may be (and in fact: were) criticised. Since the symbolism is fairly open and the story possibly popular, this view of Eden as Jerusalem invites a distribution of the power symbolism. It could be argued, I maintain, that myths in general are part of symbolic speech.[69] If that is correct, the notion that cosmology is consistently authoritarian, is perhaps up for review.

Returning to Genesis 2–3, we find that the hero – who is symbolically to be identified as a ruler – is portrayed doing something that is not condoned by the deity. The same possibility applies to any historical person aspiring to assume the role of 'Adam.' In Ezek 28:11–19* the Eden story is in fact used to criticise the high priest (and a similar use may be read in 2.Chron 26:3–13).[70] Ezekiel 31 and 28:11–19 testify to the critical potential of the story by applying it to princes of Tyre, Assyria, and Egypt. The view of Jerusalem as Eden did indeed nurture a potential for criticism against the authorities.

2) Utopian cosmology. Biblical Eden is a place that never 'really' existed, but that nevertheless is conceivable through its echoes (blueprints) in the human world. By modern standards, a characteristic function of the utopian is its potential for social critique.[71] David Harvey in his marvellous book on utopia and hope makes a distinction between genuine and 'degenerate' utopias. The category 'degenerate utopia' (taken from L. Marin) names installations like Disneyland: fantasy worlds that have lost the potential for social critique.[72] Genuine utopias, on the other hand, retain this potential. Harvey demonstrates that genuine utopias promote hope through social and cultural criticism even in modern urbanism. In a thematically parallel discussion Martin Parker points to the devastating effects of simply identifying aspects of the modern American Utopia in the actual Manhattan and its social and economic organisation, embodied in the World Trade Centre.[73]

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[69] STORDALEN, Echoes, 62–67; ID., Mother Earth.
[70] Cf. STORDALEN, Echoes, 446f.
[71] NEVILLE-SINGTON/SINGTON, Paradise Dreamed and entries in PARRINDER, Learning.
[72] HARVEY, Hope, 163–169, etc.
[73] PARKER, Utopia, esp. 1f.

It seems to me the most common way for a utopia to loose its critical potential is when the distance (topographically, qualitatively, etc.) between a utopian model and its historical implementation evaporates. Further, I suggest that the mind-set that has historically forgotten this distance – or, in fact, tried to overcome it by implementing full scale utopian social and economic experiments – is the same mind-set that invited biblical scholars to identify a *geographical* Eden in the ancient text. It is in the rich, late nineteenth and twentieth century western civilisations that a general lack of awareness about the distance between a utopia and its historical blueprints is at all possible.

As opposed to this, the biblical גַּן־בְּעֵדֶן מִקֶּדֶם retains a potential for social critique by its being portrayed as a non-place, an *ou-topos*. As part of the otherworldly realm the garden would have been in a liminal state.[74] A central aspect of liminality is its potential to reverse social order.[75] That potential is evident in Genesis 2–3. The world of the narrative pairs with that of the medieval annual carnival as interpreted by Mikhail Bakhtin: an upside-down world existing only as an enacted fantasy and only within a window of space and time.[76] Genesis 2–3 has a strand of reversals: stated aims are achieved in unexpected fashions and with unforeseen consequences.[77] For instance, had Adam not eaten of the forbidden tree, we would all still be running naked around in front of YHWH, which would not be a good thing according to biblical values.[78] With its cunning beast, controlling woman, weak male/king, and a God failing to foresee the outcome of the story, this narrative certainly suspends established social conventions for a while.

James Crenshaw has addressed what he regards as divine oppression in the Bible. In his view, wisdom literature is the only biblical voice really challenging divinely legitimated oppression. Apparently, sapiential sages developed the mental and moral capacities required for such a task.[79] Now, with Macdonald, Alonso-Schökel and others one could argue that Genesis 2–3 is indeed a *sapiential* discourse.[80] Two of the Eden passages express a critique of the Eden motif itself. In Genesis 2–3 there is a narrator speak-

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[74] There are indications that cultic and mythic gardens were conceived of as border areas between the human and the divine realm, see STORDALEN, Echoes, 161.

[75] TURNER, Ritual Process, esp. 94–97.

[76] BAKHTIN, Rabelais. On the matter of using Bakthin's interpretation of mediaeval literature to apprehend biblical wisdom, see STORDALEN, Dialogue, 35–37.

[77] See further STORDALEN, Echoes, 217f.

[78] This apprehension of the knowledge gained by eating is now fairly common among scholars. Arguments in STORDALEN, Echoes, 228f.235–237.

[79] See CRENSHAW, Whirlpool; ID., Education, 255–277; and recently ID., Deceitful Minds.

[80] STORDALEN, Echoes, 206–210, with further literature.

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ing from the point of view of present human realities.[81] The implication is that Eden was perhaps not all that perfect after all. A parallel critique is aired in Qohelet 2:11, where building and enjoying a replicate of Eden amounts to 'vanity and a chasing after wind' (NRSV).

7.4 Eden – Simultaneously Locative and Utopian

In Jonathan Smith's terminology, the view of Eden as Jerusalem combines the central-locative and the peripheral-utopian into one model. On the one hand, the Eden narrative confirms human desire for gratuity and blessings and also human abilities to identify, apparently intuitively, what is in fact good and desirable. In so doing this biblical utopia verifies the very world itself. Although Eden can not be located, it does have space (Schweitzer) and so it is experienced in specific topography. One might assume the real enigma of Eden is the model's ability to give shape to an otherwise silent cognition about the fabric of boons, values, propensities, and abilities that support human well-being.

On the other hand, the biblical story resists any plain identification between the Garden of Eden and any given historical blueprint. Thus it also resists being used for legitimising purposes. Granted, there are examples, even inside biblical and early Jewish tradition that *did* apparently turn the story into religious propaganda. The most obvious example is Hodayoth 16.[82] In this song an allegory of Eden is applied to legitimise the singer's congregation 'as Eden' despite its apparent humility. More grandiose competing religious communities are labelled as usurpers of Eden. In Ezekiel 28:11–19* we seem to hear the echo of a similar application of the story to the benefit of the princely priest in Jerusalem. As opposed to this, the biblical material in general defies identifications between historical entities and the Garden of Eden.

While clearly recognised as examples of supreme blessing and bliss, the priest of Jerusalem, the prince of Tyre, or the king of Assyria could not convince the biblical reader that their version of Eden is indeed the ultimate one. The story contains, so to speak, its own antidote. This simultaneous confirmation of radiant blessing and disallowance of its claim for finality is the great contribution of this story. It locates humankind always 'beyond Eden': anyone claiming to 'actually' be inside the Garden, has in fact entered a different Eden than the one found in biblical literature.

This is rather different from industrial Western culture where utopian ideals are first scaled down a little, converted into social, political, or eco-

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[81] For arguments, see STORDALEN, Echoes, 216f.225f.229.249.

[82] 1QH 16 according to the current reconstruction. This was col. 8 according to Sukenik's system. For a discussion of this passage, see STORDALEN, Echoes, 431–433.

nomical visions, and then actually implemented in large-scale experiments. The mythologies of industrial European political utopias aim to locate us all, realistically, within their promised lands.[83] I propose it must have been the inscription by such, often subconscious, concepts of utopia that convinced biblical scholars and assyriologists that the ancients too operated with basically realistic paradises. And because of the geographical framework in Gen 2:8–14, the expected realism was identified as geography and the Garden of Eden became a terrestrial paradise. Hopefully the present paper has shown there may be advantages for reflection on historical as well as on contemporary matters if modern unconscious mythologies are suspended when trying to make sense of biblical references to Jerusalem as Eden.

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[83] See, instructively, JACQUES, Crypto-Utopia, esp. 29–33, stating for instance that 'a crypto-utopia […] is a vision of the world that pretends not to be a vision at all.' (31).

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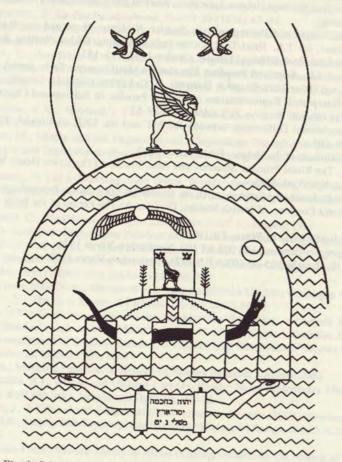ZIMMERLI, W., Ezechiel 25–48 (BKAT XIII/2), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969

Figures

Fig. 1: Othmar Keel's drawing of the biblical *Weltbild,* KEEL/SCHROER, Schöpfung, no. 85.
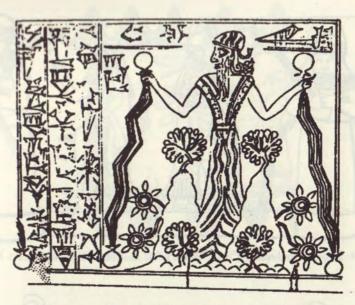

Fig. 2: Cassite roll seal 14th Century B.C.E., KEEL/SCHROER, Schöpfung, no. 14.

Fig. 3: Cylinder of Gudea, Neo-Sumerian Period. Gudea is introduced to Enki by Ningišzida, BLACK/GREEN, Dictionary, no. 115.
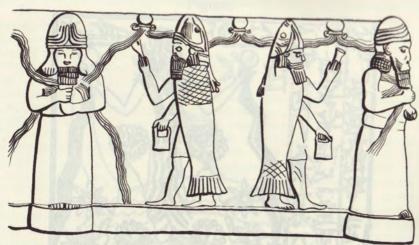
Fig. 4: Assyrian wall relief, 8th – 7th Century B.C.E., KEEL, Bildsymbolik, no. 185.

Fig. 5: Assyrian wall carving, around 1500 B.C.E.,
KEEL, Bildsymbolik, no. 153a.

Fig. 6: Assyrian roll seal, 10th Century, KEEL, Bildsymbolik, no. 23.