

Beyond Eden

The Biblical Story of Paradise (Genesis 2-3) and Its Reception History Edited
by Christoph Riedweg and Konrad Schmid

[Beyond Eden]

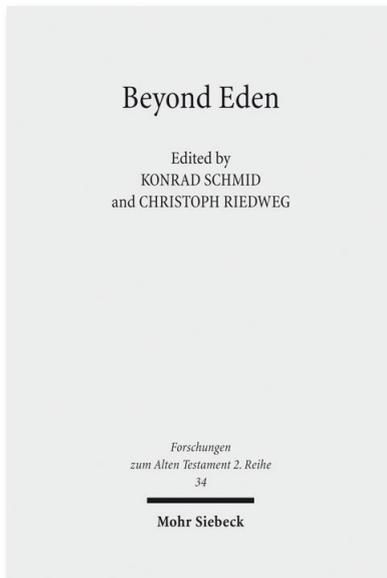
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The biblical story of paradise (Genesis 2-3) is probably one of the best known texts in world literature. It has had a rich reception history over many centuries. Genesis 2-3 formulates fundamental premises and problems of human self-understanding in the Western world. The biblical text of Genesis 2-3 itself has almost been buried under its traditional interpretations. In the Christian realm, it is commonly known as the story of Adam, Eve, the apple, the fall and the punishment of humankind with mortality. However, only Eve is really present in the biblical text, all the other elements are the result of a productive history of reception in later periods. The forbidden fruit is never identified in terms of botany. It was the Latin reception history that transformed it into an apple (*malum*), because evil (*malum*) came into the world through it. The so-called fall is not described in terms of sin in Genesis 2-3, since sin is mentioned for the first time in the Bible in Genesis 4:6-7, and the first human beings are made mortal from the very beginning, as their formation out of dust and the formulation of Gen. 2:16-17 as a traditional legal sentence implying death penalty indicate. Thus the penalty for eating from the forbidden fruit is death, not mortality. However, the meaning of the story has been substantially transformed in this point throughout the centuries, and it is claimed that mortality is the result of the fall. The authors of this volume explain both the theological profiles of the biblical text and its consequences. Its contributions stem from the fields of Biblical Studies, Religious Studies, Art History, Jewish Studies, Classical Studies, the History of Christianity and Philosophy.

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