The Garden of Communion and the Ground of Dominion:  
Genesis 2,4b-3,24 as an Aetiology of Domination

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Source-critical studies on Gen 2,4b-3,24 had assigned a very early pre-exilic date to its composition. But recent research has challenged this century long hypothesis. There is a growing consensus that the final text of the second creation narrative was completed during the post-exilic period. There are similarities between in Gen 2,4b–3,24 and late texts in Ezekiel, Second Isaiah and Job. Furthermore pre-exilic texts of the OT hardly refer to the second story of creation. These reasons prompt the exeges to posit a post-exilic date to the final version of the text. Without excluding the possibility that the text contains redactional layers, it is possible to consider it as a post-exilic work.

Interpreting the symbol of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” as “freedom” and the serpent/ground as the unorganised appetite, it is possible to see an evaluation of the Ancient Israelite History in Gen 2,4b,3,24. Israel was expelled from the garden of communion because of the loss of equilibrium between the world of freedom and the world of the appetite. While presenting a historical evaluation, the second story of creation also functions as an aetiology of domination.

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