



Protestantse Theologische **Universiteit**
Amsterdam Groningen

Oldest story about Adam and Eve discovered

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Old Testament scholar dr. Marjo Korpel, working at the Protestant Theological University (Amsterdam) and Professor Emeritus J.C. de Moor of the same university, claim to have discovered the Myth of Adam on Ugaritic clay tablets dating from the 13th Century BCE. This myth sheds a new light on the creation story of the Bible.

Their book has just been published by Sheffield Academic Press. The two scholars presented their theory on May 16th in Kampen, The Netherlands, at a meeting of Old Testament scholars. Korpel carried out the research partly at Utrecht University where she worked until recently.

John Day (Oxford) on the publication: "It's truly one of the most fascinating books that I've read in a long time!" Meindert Dijkstra (Utrecht): "It has been the brainwave of Korpel and De Moor to read the two Ugaritics tablets as a unit." (Dutch newspaper Trouw).

The Myth of Adam

In the past bible scholars have suspected the existence of a so-called 'Adamic Myth' that would have formed the background of several chapters of the Hebrew Bible. Up till now, however, this myth was not discovered in reality. On the basis of a fresh interpretation of some Canaanite (Ugaritic) texts the two researchers have now reconstructed this myth.

Creation

The Canaanite creator of the cosmos and of mankind was a deity El. This was also a name of the God of Israel. The descriptions of the work of the Creator are surprisingly alike.

Paradise

The Canaanite equivalent of Eden seems to have been a 'vineyard of the great gods'. It was situated at the same location as the biblical garden. Adam and his wife were among the deities who had access to the Tree of Life.

Serpent

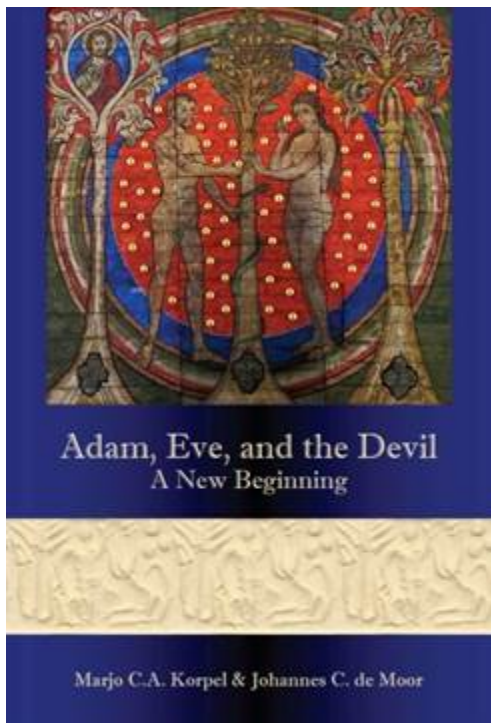
An evil god Horon wanted to take over El's position as head of the pantheon. El punished him by throwing him down from the mountain of the gods. Out of revenge Horon transformed himself into a giant serpent that poisoned the Tree of Life so that it became a Tree of Death. As a result, all life on earth was endangered. Korpel and De Moor regard Horon as the predecessor of the devil. Some of Horon's epithets are identical to those of the devil in other religions.

Adam and his wife

Fearing the loss of their immortality, the deities give one among them, Adam, total control over the earth, apparently to eliminate Horon. However, Adam fails miserably because the serpent sinks his poisonous fangs in his flesh. He thus becomes a mortal. However, at the initiative of the sun goddess humankind gets a consolation prize: through procreation they will live on as a species. To this end the sun goddess gives Adam a 'good-natured woman' and mobilizes all deities to force Horon to uproot the Tree of Death. Immortality was lost, but life could go on. The authors also think they have found the earliest pictures of these events ever identified.

Original sin

It is definitely remarkable that in this Adamic Myth the first sin against the highest deity was not committed by a human being, but by a god. Korpel and De Moor discuss both such differences and the similarities they found. Their theory elucidates many passages in the Bible, the Apocrypha and the pseud epigraphic literature, including the Dead Sea Scrolls.



Marjo Korpel & Johannes de Moor, *Adam, Eve, and the Devil: A New Beginning* (Hebrew Bible Monographs, 65), Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press 2014, ISBN 978-1-909697-52-2.
For more information about the PThU, [click here](#).

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