SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL
OF
BYZANTINE
AND
MODERN GREEK STUDIES

Editorial

In this third volume of the Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, we are happy to welcome a guest-editor, Dr AnnaLinden Weller, who has edited five articles from a conference that she organized at Uppsala University in 2016 within the frame of the 'Text and Narrative in Byzantium' research network. The articles are written by Baukje van den Berg, Stanislas Kuttner-Homs, Markéta Kulhánková, Jonas J. H. Christensen and Jakov Đorđević, provided with an introduction by AnnaLinden Weller. In addition, the journal includes two more articles – one by David Konstan, based on his 2016 lecture in memory of Professor Lennart Rydén, and one by Adam Goldwyn – and two book reviews.

In October 2018, Modern Greek Studies in Lund will organise the 6th European Congress of Modern Greek Studies, and according to the number of submitted abstracts it promises to be an interesting event for scholars from many countries around the globe to come together.

The journal is open for unpublished articles and book reviews related to Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies in the fields of philology, linguistics, history and literature. It is published in collaboration with Greek and Byzantine Studies at Uppsala University and we welcome contributions not only from Scandinavian colleagues, but from scholars all around the world.

Vassilios Sabatakakis
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Instructions for contributors to

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Sin: The Prehistory

David Konstan

It is a great honor to have given the 13th memorial lecture in honor of Lennart Rydén, who contributed so greatly to Byzantine studies at Uppsala and worldwide. He founded the series, *Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia*, to which he contributed the volume on Nicephorus's *Life of St Andrew the Fool*, a companion to his earlier *Das Leben des heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis*, which was followed by his *Bemerkungen zum Leben des heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis*. With all this interest in fools, I make bold to believe that Professor Rydén would not have been intolerant of some foolish errors of my own. Indeed, error, or more particularly sin, is precisely my topic in this tribute to Professor Rydén. What I wish to determine is the boundary, if indeed there is one, between error and sin in classical thought – both what we call pagan, that is, the pre-Christian or non-Christian writers of ancient Greece and Rome, and early Christian literature. Is there a difference in the way error or sin was regarded? Was there a change in the classical conception under the influence of Judaism and Christianity, and if so, in what did it consist? That is the question I am raising. The problem arises because there is no lexical distinction in classical Greek between sin and error or fault; that is, there is no word that bears

a specifically religious connotation, as *péché* does in French or *Sünde* in German. It is necessary to derive the sense of the Greek term from the context. I will offer a hypothesis about the difference, which will be revealed further on. I believe that my hypothesis is novel, which if true is remarkable, given how much has been written on the nature of sin. Of course, novelty is no guarantee that my view is correct.

I begin with a well-known passage from the Gospel of Matthew (9:1-8):

> Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!" Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." Then the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to human beings (New International Version, slightly revised; cf. versions of the story in Mark 2:1-12 and Luke 5:17-26).

The Greek word for "sins" here is *hamartiai*, as is standard in the New Testament (173 occurrences according to Strong's *Concordance*). In classical Greek, the term commonly means "a failure," "fault," or "error" (these are the definitions given in the great Greek-English lexicon edited by Liddell, Scott, and Jones), although the same dictionary affirms that it signifies "guilt" or "sin" "in Philos. and Religion," citing Plato's *Laws* (660C) and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1148a3), alongside the Septuagint version of Genesis (18:20) and the Gospel of John (8:46). LSJ define the related word ἁμάρτημα again as "failure," "fault," noting that it is "freq. in Att. Prose," whether oratory, history, and philosophy; Aristotle, for example, says that *hamartêma* is "midway between ἀδίκημα and ἀτύχημα," that is, a wrong or criminal act and a misfortune (*EN* 1135b18, *Rhetoric* 1374b7); the lexicon also renders the word as "sinful action," and cites several passages in Plato for this usage

(*Statesman* 296B, *Apology* 22D, *Laws* 729E; *Gorgias* 479A). This word, by contrast, is rare in the New Testament, occurring only four times.

Let us look, then, at the passage in Plato's *Laws* that the great lexicon cites for an instance of *harmartia* used in the sense of "sin." The anonymous Athenian has just affirmed that the good legislator will try to persuade the poet, or else force him, "to portray men who are temperate, courageous, and good in all respects" (2, 660A). He then corrects himself and says that he was not referring to contemporary poets: "To denounce things that are beyond remedy and far gone in error is a task that is by no means pleasant; but at times it is unavoidable." The phrase "far gone in error" is literally, in Greek, "having advanced far in *hamartia*," an expression that, in context, seems far removed from what we might think of as "sin."

In the passage cited from the *Nicomachean Ethics* (7.4, 1148a3), Aristotle is discussing incontinence, that is, lack of restraint or self-control (*akrasia*), and he explains that incontinence in regard to bodily pleasures is blamed "not only as an error [*harmartia*] but also as a vice [*kakia*]. Clearly the latter is the stronger term, and so this again is hardly a case in which we would employ the charged word "sin" as the equivalent for *hamartia*.

If LSJ seems deficient in its account of *hamartia*, the entry in the enormous but still incomplete *Diccionario Griego-Español*, edited by Francisco Adrados, takes a different approach. Here, *hamartia* is defined as *error*, *falta*, *equivocación*, *error de juicio* (the passages from Plato and Aristotle are listed under this sub-heading), and also as *delito*, *hecho ilegal o injusto*. The definition *pecado* or "sin" is also given, but only in connection with "lit. judeo-cristiana," with citations from the Septuagint, the New Testament, and the Church Fathers.

In what sense, however, is the word *hamartia*, as employed in Judeo-Christian literature, distinct from the meanings "fault" or "error"? Modern dictionary definitions of sin largely agree in associating it with religious vocabulary, as in this from the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "An immoral act considered to be a transgression against divine law," with a secondary definition as "An act regarded as a serious or regrettable fault, offense, or omission." The Merriam-Webster dictionary gives as

the primary sense "an offense against religious or moral law," along with "transgression of the law of God," and "a vitiated state of human nature in which the self is estranged from God," although it also offers the more secular meanings, "an action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible," and "an often serious shortcoming: fault." The Wikipedia article on "sin" informs us: "In a religious context, sin is the act of violating God's will. Sin can also be viewed as any thought or action that endangers the ideal relationship between an individual and God; or as any diversion from the perceived ideal order for human living." The modern idea of sin clearly derives from a specific religious conception going back ultimately to biblical usage, as this has been interpreted over successive centuries.

But are there particular features to the notion of sin, as it appears in the Bible, that differentiate it securely from ideas of wrong-doing, error, and fault in classical Greek and Latin usage? Does the *Diccionario Griego-Español*, for all its comprehensiveness and manifestly correct classification of the two passages from Plato and Aristotle, lapse into an inherited distinction between ostensibly pagan and Judeo-Christian thought by listing the meaning "sin" under a special sub-heading for "literatura judeo-cristiana"? In other words, is there truly a "prehistory" of sin, or are we dealing with a broad concept that from the beginning extends from purely social offenses to the violation of religious strictures, whether we look to classical or Judeo-Christian texts?

The word *hamartia* does not occur in the Homeric epics (although the verb *harmartanô* does), but there are several episodes that might seem to suggest the idea of sin. The *Odyssey*, for example, opens with a conversation on Mount Olympus, in which Zeus complains of the human tendency to blame the gods for their misfortunes: "for in his heart he thought of noble Aegisthus, whom far-famed Orestes, Agamemnon's son, had slain. Thinking of him he spoke among the immortals, and said: 'Look you now, how ready mortals are to blame the gods. It is from us, they say, that evils come, but they even of themselves, through their own blind folly, have sorrows beyond that which is ordained."[1]

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[1] Trans. Murray 1919.

Zeus complains that Aegisthus married Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, and killed Agamemnon when he returned home from Troy, even though Zeus had sent Hermes to warn him precisely not to do this, or else Orestes, Agamemnon's son would kill Aegisthus in turn – which is just what has happened (1.29-43). The phrase "blind folly" represents the Greek word *atasthaliai*, the plural of *atasthalia*, which LSJ defines as "presumptuous sin, recklessness, wickedness" (compare the *DGE* definition "*orgullo insolente*, *arrogancia*, *insensatez culpable*"). Ancient grammarians connected the word with *atê*, "ruin," "blind and criminal folly, infatuation," but that is uncertain, and it is best to interpret it by its uses rather than its possible etymology. In the present instance, then, why not translate it as "sins"? After all, Zeus himself sent Hermes, his messenger, to warn Aegisthus not to murder Agamemnon, and Aegisthus ignored the command, to his sorrow. This would seem to be an act of sheer disobedience to a god, indeed the chief god of the Greek pantheon.

We may compare the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as recounted in Genesis, in the very passage that both the English and the Spanish dictionaries cite first in illustration of *harmartia* in the sense of sin: "Then the Lord said, 'The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sins [*hamartiai*, plural] so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know'" (18:20-21). He sends some angels to investigate, who are entertained in the house of Lot; but when the inhabitants of Sodom sought to have intercourse with them, God wiped out the city. We might regard the behavior of the Sodomites as comparable to that of Aegisthus in killing the legitimate king in his own palace. There are differences, to be sure: in the Homeric passage, Aegisthus is punished by Orestes, Agamemnon's son, whereas in Genesis God acts himself to punish the Sodomites; we might add that the guilt of the Sodomites is collective rather than individual. But is this enough to warrant a fundamental divergence in the connotations of the words *hamartia* and *atasthalia*?

In the *Iliad*, Achilles, after slaying Hector in retaliation for the death of Patroclus, drags the Trojan hero's corpse behind his chariot, defiling

it in the dust. His behavior is such as to offend even the gods, or most of them, but "Hera and Poseidon and the flashing-eyed maiden [i.e., Athena] ... continued even as when at the first sacred Ilios became hateful in their eyes and Priam and his folk, by reason of the sin of Alexander" (24.25-28).[2] "Sin" here, in Murray's archaizing translation, renders *atê*, though given that the offense in question was awarding the prize for beauty to Aphrodite rather than to Hera or Athena, we might in this case justifiably render the word as "foolishness" or "lack of judgment."

Let us return, now, to the story of the paralytic, as narrated in the Gospels. Jesus tells the man: "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven," and he then rises and carries his mat home with him, evidently cured of his ailment. It is entirely natural to suppose that his condition was a consequence of his *hamartiai*, and when Jesus remitted these, the man was healed. Nothing is said here about the nature of these offenses, but one may assume that they were of the conventional sort. One commentator opines: "The man might have brought on this disease of the palsy by a long course of vicious indulgence," and in illustration of such license he mentions "gluttony, intemperate drinking, lewdness, debauchery"[3] – faults that resemble the *akrasia* or incontinence analyzed by Aristotle. There is no indication that the man ignored a specific warning from God, as in the case of Aegisthus: it is enough that he violated what were understood to be prohibitions grounded not just in human law but in divine precepts, of the sort that are enumerated in various books of the Hebrew Bible. Did the man break any secular laws, for which he might have been held accountable? It is impossible to be certain, but it would seem not; otherwise, he would have been prosecuted (perhaps he was so in the past); in any case, Jesus does not claim to be exonerating him for any crimes he may have committed. The retribution for his sins comes from God, or by divine dispensation, in the form of his illness. His sins, we imagine, must have been specifically of the kind that God condemns, irrespective of their juridical status – such offenses as gluttony, intemperate drinking, lewdness, and debauchery fit the bill rather well. Sins of this type, which are regarded as serious enough in the eyes of God

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[2] Trans. Murray 1924.

[3] Barnes 1884, 43.

to be chastised by severe disability, can be forgiven only by God. This is why the Jewish scribes were outraged, and muttered, "This fellow is blaspheming!" To pretend to forgive sins of this kind is to assume the role of God.

Jesus' reply to the Jewish teachers comes in two stages. The first instructs the objectors to judge his ability by the results: "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?" Anyone can utter the words, but curing the man is evidence of special powers. But he follows this with a frank statement of his divine status: "the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Despite the somewhat opaque formula, "Son of Man," as opposed to "Son of God," Jesus clearly means to claim divinity, which of course only confirms the view of the scribes that he is blaspheming.

But the main point to note here is precisely the assumption that there are offenses in the eyes of God which, whether or not they are castigated manifestly by afflictions such as paralysis, can only be forgiven by God or his agent or alter ego, irrespective of whether they constitute misdeeds or felonies according to the law. The crucial distinction between temporal and religious offenses lies in where punishment and forgiveness reside. As opposed to crimes, sins are in a domain of their own, and although crimes and sins may overlap, in the sense that a given action might offend both against the law and God's dispensation, the two aspects remain separate and independent. Our question thus becomes: did the classical Greeks and Romans recognize a comparable bifurcation in their understanding of offenses against the gods?

Zeus's complaint at the beginning of the *Odyssey* would seem not to testify to such a split vision. Aegisthus committed murder, and the victim's son exacted vengeance in turn by slaying him. He deserved this retribution, and Zeus approves of it. But he does not suggest that he or any other god personally instigated Orestes' revenge, although Homer's audience may have known that Apollo ordered it, as Aeschylus represents the story in his *Oresteia*. Aegisthus did wrong, and Orestes exacts the penalty: there is no special sphere that can be identified as that of sin and divine compensation, not to mention forgiveness. In the *Oresteia*, it is true, Orestes' own act of murder requires pardon, but this is only

because he has killed not just Aegisthus, who was his uncle, but also his own mother, Clytemnestra. We may see here a distinction between human law and divine strictures, since the Furies pursue Orestes not for murder per se but for his violation of a blood bond. In a sense, Orestes' act may be regarded as sin as opposed to crime (it is not a matter of pollution, since Apollo purifies Orestes before his trial), but Aeschylus represents the issue as a conflict between two divine codes, one archaic, the other new. The Furies pursue in person offenders against a certain type of rule, namely the slaughter of blood kin, and their vengeance takes the form of inflicting a disability, in this case madness, that is perhaps analogous to the paralysis with which the man in the Gospel narrative is afflicted. In the end, Orestes will be acquitted by an Athenian jury (although it is a close call), and the Furies will be domesticated and accept the new order of judicial law, and with this, any tension between divine and human codes evanesces.

There is one drama, however, that famously insists on a distinction between obedience to human and divine law, articulated most clearly in the words that Antigone, in Sophocles' tragedy named for her, addresses to Creon concerning "the unwritten and secure laws of the gods" (ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῆ θεῶν νόμιμα, 454-55). The passage is worth quoting *in extenso*:

> It was not Zeus that published me that edict, and not of that kind are the laws which Justice who dwells with the gods below established among men. Nor did I think that your decrees were of such force, that a mortal could override the unwritten and unfailing statutes given us by the gods. For their life is not of today or yesterday, but for all time, and no man knows when they were first put forth. Not for fear of any man's pride was I about to owe a penalty to the gods for breaking these.... For me to meet this doom is a grief of no account. But if I had endured that my mother's son should in death lie an unburied corpse, that would have grieved me.... And if my present actions are foolish [μῶρα] in your sight, it may be that it is a fool who accuses me of folly" (450-60, 465-70, trans. Jebb, slightly modified).

To disobey Creon's edict prohibiting the burial of Antigone's brother Polynices might constitute a crime or infraction of the law, given that

Creon, as king, decides what is lawful. But since Antigone believes that the decree contradicts the divine injunction that relatives bury their dead, Antigone regards it as invalid, or at any event less binding than the unwritten and enduring prescription of the gods. Does the violation of the divine statutes here constitute a sin, as opposed to disobeying the king's decree? We may imagine that, in Antigone's mind, she might have been pursued by Furies (hence, perhaps, the reference to "the gods below," where the Furies were believed to dwell) or subjected to some other god-sent chastisement, independent of human justice, had she failed in her duty to her brother. Such an expectation would be analogous to the back-story of the crippled man in the Gospels, in which his condition is the penalty he has paid for prior errors in the sight of God, whatever their status in local law. But the emphasis in the Gospels is not on the sins themselves but rather on Jesus' power and authority to forgive them. And it is just here, I think, that the classical texts stand apart from the biblical attitude toward sin. For sin in the Bible is not merely a violation of a divine commandment, it is also a moment in a narrative in which God or his surrogates can choose to exonerate the offender. In this regard, the biblical concept of sin is defined not by the wrongful act or thought alone but by its aftermath as well, in which the offense is, or can be, cancelled uniquely by the deity.

Typically, forgiveness is earned by indications of regret, repentance, and the desire to atone for the wrong.[4] It is worth noting that in the anecdote of the paralytic, nothing is said of his contrition. Perhaps we can take it for granted that his infirmity showed him the error of his ways and that he already felt remorse for his prior behavior. The man is brought to Jesus by friends of his, whose faith or trust (*pistis*) Jesus perceives, and it is reasonable to assume that the man himself was also prepared to entrust himself to Jesus. The word *pistis* is a controversial term. Teresa Morgan, in an enormously detailed study of its uses, has demonstrated that the occurrences in the Bible, and in particular in the New Testament, retain almost invariably the classical sense of trust, rather than faith in the sense of a conviction so deeply rooted that it is impervious to contra-

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[4] See Griswold 2007; Konstan 2010.

ry arguments and regarded as transcending reason, or belief in a specific set of propositions, for example, that God exists or that Christ died for our sins.[5] Morgan's thesis clearly pertains to our passage: the friends of the paralytic are confident that Jesus can cure him, and Jesus responds positively to this manifestation of their trust in him. It is not a question of their belief in his divinity or in any particular doctrinal points, of which they can have little or no knowledge. It may be simply that they have seen or heard of Jesus's miraculous accomplishments, and so have acquired credence in his abilities. As the story is recounted in Matthew, we cannot go beyond such an assumption.

In the New Testament, *pistis* is frequently associated with another term, *metanoia*, which in classical Greek means something like a change of mind or second thoughts (like the Latin *paenitentia*) but comes in Christian texts to mean "repentance." Thus, Paul says: "as I testified to both Jews and Greeks about *metanoia* toward God and *pistis* toward our Lord Jesus" (Acts 20:21; cf. Acts 13:38, Matthew 21:32). We are familiar with the rendition as "repentance" from traditional translations of the Bible. According to the Gospels of Mark (1:4) and Luke (3:3), John the Baptist "did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." We may compare Luther's version: "die Taufe der Buße zur Vergebung Sünden"; the Spanish Nueva Versión Internacional: "el bautismo de arrepentimiento"; the Italian Nuova Traduzione Riveduta 2006: "un battesimo di ravvedimento"; and the Swedish Bibeln eller den Heliga Skrift: "predikade bättringens." Yet several more recent translations of these same passages render *metanoia* rather as "conversion" or a "turn to God," thus hewing closer to the classical Greek sense. Thus, for example, the Spanish La Palabra version has "un bautismo como signo de conversión," the Conferenza Episcopale Italiana translation reads "un battesimo di conversione," and the Gute Nachricht Bibel has "Kehrt um und lasst euch taufen!" (cf. Nya Levande Bibeln: "han predikade att alla skulle vända sig till Gud"). There are good reasons, which I have discussed elsewhere, for preferring these latter versions, and regarding the sense of "repentance" as a

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[5] Morgan 2015.

later development in the Church.[6] The pairing of a change of heart with *pistis* thus suggests that trust in Jesus involves a change of disposition that looks forward to a better way of life. The *pistis* of the crippled man's friends, then, is associated with a new outlook on their part, and this is what warrants Jesus' forgiveness.

It is with this complex scenario of transgression, change of heart, and forgiveness, it seems to me, that the Judeo-Christian sense of sin departs from the classical examples of offenses against divine strictures. Seen this way, there emerge some unexpected consequences for the identification of sinful conduct, as opposed to wrongdoing or even insubordination to God or the gods. Two tales that purport to account for the toilsome life of mankind by way of a violation of a divine prohibition may serve to illustrate the issue: Prometheus' theft of fire from heaven, which he bestowed upon human beings, and the disobedience of Adam and Eve when they ate of the forbidden fruit. In his didactic manual, *Works and Days*, Hesiod affirms that

> the gods keep hidden from men the means of life. Else you would easily do work enough in a day to supply you for a full year even without working.... But Zeus in the anger of his heart hid it, because Prometheus the crafty deceived him; therefore he planned sorrow and mischief against men. He hid fire; but that the noble son of Iapetus [i.e., Prometheus] stole again for men from Zeus the counsellor in a hollow fennel-stalk, so that Zeus who delights in thunder did not see it (42-52).

In his anger, Zeus created Pandora, the ancestress of all women (it would seem) and a plague for men. Hesiod explains that, "ere this the tribes of men lived on earth remote and free from ills and hard toil and heavy sickness which bring the Fates upon men; for in misery men grow old quickly" (90-93).[7] And he goes on to recount the myth of the ages of mankind. Why human beings should suffer as a result of Prometheus' thievery is not entirely clear, but the story manifestly associates the hardships under which human beings presently labor with an original

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[6] See Konstan 2015a; Konstan 2015b.
7 Trans. Evelyn-White 1914.

misdeed that enraged the chief god and caused him to take vengeance both on the rebel who sympathized with mankind and on mortals themselves. Ought one, then, to characterize Prometheus' purloining of fire as a sin? Certainly, he has contravened the will of Zeus, and he, along with those he sought to benefit, will be punished. There is missing, however, any suggestion of remorse on Prometheus' part or the possibility of forgiveness (Zeus will later relent, but in no version of the story is this the result of Prometheus' repentance). An essential element in the sin paradigm seems to be missing.

The disobedience of Adam and Eve is commonly taken as the paradigmatic instance of sin, the original sin which, according to the theology of the later Church Fathers, continues to mark all of Adam and Eve's descendants and again, as in the Prometheus myth, is the reason why human beings must earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.[8] And yet, in this story too, there is no talk of remorse in the sense of a change of character or a turn to a new way of life, nor is the way open to forgiveness: Adam and Eve have acted in defiance of God's expressed will, and must suffer the consequences. It is perhaps no accident that the word *hamartia* is not used in connection with their transgression.

By way of contrast, we may consider a text of uncertain date and authorship that today goes under the name of *The Life of Adam and Eve*. Scholars are undecided even as to whether this text is Jewish or Christian in origin, since the earliest version, at least, contains no evident references to Christian themes. It has been dated as early as the first century B.C. (which would exclude a Christian provenance) and as late as the seventh century A.D., and it survives in Greek, Syriac, Latin, Slavonic, Armenian, Georgian and, in fragmentary state, Coptic, and was immensely popular in the Middle Ages, although it is little known today.[9] The narrative relates how Eve, after the expulsion from Eden, gave birth to Cain and Abel, and after the murder of Abel, to Seth. As the basic tale runs, when Adam fell ill and was on the point of death (he was 930 years old), he gathered round him his thirty sons and thirty daughters. Seth offers to fetch him fruit from Paradise, but Adam ex-

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[8] For a thorough account of inherited punishment, see Gagné 2013.
[9] See Tromp 2005; de Jonge and Tromp 1997.

plains that he is under the curse of death, since, at Eve's instigation, he ate the forbidden fruit, and so "God became angry at us" (8). Eve then says: "Adam, my lord, give me half your illness, and let me endure it, because this has happened to you on account of me, on account of me you are in such illness and pain" (9). Adam instructs Eve to seek Paradise along with Seth, and to beg for God's pity. Eve exclaims: "Woe, woe, if I should come to the day of the resurrection, and all who have sinned will curse me, saying that Eve did not observe the commandment of God" (10). When Eve and Seth return, Eve recites, at Adam's behest, the story of the fall, and God's terrible judgment. On the point of expiring, Adam begs Eve to pray to God, upon which she falls to the ground and cries out:

> I have sinned [ἥμαρτον], God, I have sinned, Father of all, I have sinned against you, I have sinned against your chosen angels, I have sinned against the Cherubim, I have sinned against your unshakable throne, I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned greatly, I have sinned before you, and all sin in creation has arisen through me (32).

An angel approaches her and declares, "Arise, Eve, from your repentance [μετάνοια]" (32). He tells her that Adam has died, and reveals to her a vision of a chariot descending to Adam, and the angels begging the Lord to relent (33), since Adam is made in His image. God finally takes pity on his creation (37), and raises Adam to the third heaven, where he is to remain until the Day of Judgment, when God will resurrect Adam and all mankind. Eve begs the Lord to bury her next to Adam, even though she is unworthy and sinful (ἁμαρτωλόν, 42), and her wish is granted.

In addressing God, Eve acknowledges her error and is filled with remorse. She was, as she says, deceived by the serpent, but this is not to excuse her disobedience but rather to show that she now realizes that she was wrong and has repented. It is because Adam and Eve recognize and confess their guilt that God finally submits to the prayers of the angels and pardons them. The full sin-script, as I have outlined it, is present here. Adam and Eve violate a divine commandment; they then recognize their fault, confess it, and experience a change of heart, or *metanoia*;

and finally, their earnest remorse earns them God's forgiveness, as God himself renounces his earlier severity in expelling the couple from Eden.

It may seem arbitrary, not to say perverse, to stipulate the preconditions for sin in so narrow or complex a way as to exclude from the category what we have come to think of as the primal and archetypal instance, Adam and Eve's tasting of the fruit of the tree of knowledge in violation of God's explicit prohibition. This is not only the paradigm case of sin, we might suppose, but also the act that has, according to later Church doctrine, contaminated every one of the descendants of Adam and Eve – which is to say, all of mankind – to live in a state of sin, irrespective of any crime we may have committed: we are guilty in our blood, inheritors of that original sin. Is not the sin of Adam and Eve the sin par excellence, irrespective of remorse and forgiveness, such as they are elaborated in that odd document, *The Life of Adam and Eve*? What is more, such a designation is entirely in conformity with English usage, which, as we have seen, applies the term to any "act regarded as a serious or regrettable fault, offense, or omission." Why seek further refinements in the definition?

We may be content to allow that there is no substantial difference between the biblical sense of sin and the classical concept of wrongdoing, and that Prometheus is as guilty or sinful as Adam. But I would suggest that the very fact that the Church Fathers could find in the Bible justification for the idea of original sin, which is foreign to the Jewish exegetical tradition and not evident in Jesus' own words in the Gospels, invites us to consider a richer notion of sin along the lines that I have been indicating – a notion that has roots, indeed, in the post-exilic books of the Hebrew Bible and that enables us to identify what is new and significant about the Judeo-Christian conception of sin.[10]

The idea that a concept like sin may involve a sequence of events and sentiments, or what is sometimes called a script, has precedents in the analysis of emotions and other moral and psychological phenomena. Robert Kaster has shown that the Latin *invidia*, commonly translated

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[10] The conflation of Jesus' body with the destruction and rebuilding of the temple was the bridge between the Babylonian exile and the Christian conception of guilt and redemption; see Fredriksen 2012, 10, 13.

as "envy," can signify being distressed at another person's good fortune, without consideration of whether it is deserved, but can also take account of desert, as when one resents the fact that other people have more than they are entitled to.[11] Kaster calls these versions of *invidia* "scripts" or "narrative processes"; you have to know the story to be sure which kind of *invidia* is at stake. Sin, I am arguing, also has its scripts: it may mean a fault or a crime, it may signify more particularly an offense against the gods or some rule stipulated by the gods, but it becomes the classical Christian concept only when it includes the possibility of remorse, conversion, and redemption. The idea of innate sinfulness, which is beyond human powers to erase, requires the further notion of divine grace, which is prefigured in the Bible, for example in the very story of the paralyzed man examined at the beginning of this article.

Classical Greek narratives of offenses against the gods envisage punishment: at the end of Sophocles' *Antigone*, for example, Creon's son and wife commit suicide, and there are many other such stories of divine vengeance. But these stories do not include the theme of remorse as a condition for divine forgiveness. In the *Odyssey*, Poseidon persecutes Odysseus for having blinded his son, the Cyclops, yet there is no indication in the poem that Odysseus ever expresses regret for his action or that Poseidon has pardoned him. One may appease an offended deity with sacrifices and other signs of due respect and reverence, but there is no mention in these cases of a change of heart or repentance, like that associated with the Greek word *metanoia* and the Latin *paenitentia*. One may ask the gods for pity, but pity, for the Greeks, presupposes that you have done nothing wrong, and so there is no sin to be forgiven. It is only when we ask God for forgiveness for an admitted wrong that He alone can forgive, that we see the complete script for sin as opposed to a mere fault or failing. It is this sequence that marks the emergence, I submit, of a new paradigm of wrongdoing and launches the Judeo-Christian conception of sin.

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[11] Kaster 2005, 84-103.

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