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# THE BIBLICAL METAPHORS OF SIN: A COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE ENGLISH VERSION OF THE BIBLE*

The present paper aims at analyzing the conceptual metaphors for sin identified in the English version of the Bible. The experience of moral evil belongs to basic human experiences and in theological interpretation, its existence is the reason for the salvation brought to people by Christ. However, from the semantic point of view, the concept of sin itself is highly abstract and difficult to define. In order to conceptualize that notion, people frequently employ conceptual metaphors which enable them to refer to the abstract through the use of the concrete. This study is based on the English translation of Scripture published as the *New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition* (2007[1989]). That version of Scripture is a revised edition of the famous *King James Bible* (1611) and it is widely used among Christians representing various denominations. The identified sin metaphors are based on either sensorimotor or cultural experience. There are conceptualizations of sin that are motivated by preconceptual image schemas, ontological metaphors, and metaphors that combine cultural scripts and image schemas.

Keywords: *sin*, *conceptual metaphor*, *Bible*, *conceptualization*, *preconceptual image schemas*, *ontological metaphor*, *cultural scripts*

## 1. Introduction

The aim of the paper is to analyze the metaphors for sin in the English version of the Bible from the perspective of cognitive semantics. Sin belongs to essential truths of the Christian faith. For instance, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1993: point 385) states that "no one can escape the experience

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of suffering or the evils in nature which seem to be linked to the limitations proper to creatures: and above all to the question of moral evil". However, as an abstract concept, sin is difficult to define and describe. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (2003[1980]: 40) state that "the conceptual systems of cultures and religions are metaphorical in nature." In the theory of conceptual metaphor it is claimed that metaphorical mappings are rooted in people's bodily, that is sensorimotor experiences, which give rise to the so-called preconceptual image schemas. Those schemas are mapped onto the more abstract conceptual domains in the metaphorical process (Johnson 1987: 126). However, also cultural experiences may sometimes play a role in creating metaphorical mappings, often providing *scripts* or *scenarios* of particular events, which in turn may structure the metaphorical conceptualization of abstract reality (Lakoff 1987: 284-286).

The above observations give rise to a number of research questions that will be answered in this paper: (1) What preconceptual image schemas are used to conceptualize sin in the English translation of the Bible? (2) What cultural scripts are used in the sin metaphors found in the English version of Scripture? (3) What kinds of conceptual metaphors for sin can be identified in the analyzed version of the Bible? The analysis will have a qualitative character, and it will be based on the *New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition* (2007[1989]). This Bible constitutes a modernized edition of the famous *King James Version* (1611), but despite that fact it has preserved the rather formal and traditional language of the original translation. The *New Revised Standard Version* is a widely accepted translation of the Bible, popular with Christians belonging to various denominations: Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox, so it can be perceived as a truly ecumenical English edition of the Bible. Moreover, this translation of Scripture is the officially used version of the Bible in the Catholic Church in a number of English-speaking countries. The Catholic Edition of the *New Revised Standard Version* contains the so-called *deuterocanonical books*[1], which are studied in our research along the other books included in the Biblical canon.

The article opens with a brief presentation of the concept of SIN. Next, a special attention is given to the application of cognitive semantics to the studies into religious concepts. After that, in the subsequent sections, the various mechanisms of conceptualization of sin are presented: preconceptual image schemas, ontological metaphors, and cultural scripts that give rise to highly elaborated compound metaphors of sin.

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[1]  The so-called *deuterocanonical books* include seven books from The Old Testament, which have been translated into English from the Greek version of the Bible, called *The Septuagint*: *Tobit, Judith, Sirach, Wisdom, Baruch, 1 Maccabees*, *2 Maccabees*, as well as fragments of *Esther* and *Daniel*. The rest of The Old Testament has been translated from the original Hebrew books. The deuterocanonical books are absent from the Jewish Bible, and from most Protestant translations of the Bible, although they sometimes add them to the edition of the Bible as Apocrypha. However, they are always included in the canon of the Catholic version of Scripture (Kuczok 2013: 66-69).

## 2. The concept of SIN

In the *Oxford Dictionaries* (2017), sin is defined either as "an immoral act considered to be a transgression against divine law", which can be seen in the sentence *We have repented for the unbelief and our sins are blotted out*, or as "an act regarded as a serious or regrettable fault, offence, or omission", which can be illustrated by the sentence: *He committed the unforgivable sin of refusing to give interviews*. Similarly to the distinction between the two senses of sin identified in linguistic usage, in the Christian religion, sin is defined as a "disruption of what is religiously sanctioned or required", but also as "an evil human act", which is "out of conformity with its proper norm, or standard" (Bolle 2002: 148; McGuiness 2002: 149).

When it comes to the Bible, we notice that a number of different Hebrew and Greek words from the original Biblical texts have been rendered as *sin* in English translations. The most frequent Hebrew words, found in The Old Testament, include: *chata*, which literally means "to miss the mark", *avon*, whose basic sense is "crooked or perverse", and *ra*, meaning "evil or violence breaking out". The most common Greek expressions for sin, found in The New Testament, include: ἁμαρτία (hamartia), which can be interpreted as "to miss the mark, to err, to offend", παράβασις (parabasis), meaning "to trespass or to step across a line", ἀνομία (anomia), which means "lawlessness or wickedness," ἀδικία (adikia), that is "unrighteousness", ἀκαθαρσία (akatharsia), which can be understood as "uncleanliness or impurity", and ἀπιστία (apistia), which literally means "unbelief" (Willmington 1981: 718-726; Reno 2005: 749; Anderson 2010: 16-17). In fact, those words are usually metaphorical in nature and involve some imagery that is used in the descriptions and references to sin in Scripture. However, the problem is that in the translated versions of the Bible they can be replaced with other, non-metaphorical concepts or with totally different metaphors, unrelated to the original ones. As a result, the English versions of the Bible differ from the original texts of Scripture with regard to the conceptualization of sin, and what is more, they can also differ among each other in this respect.

Commenting on the theological understanding of sin, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1993: point 386) states that "to try to understand what sin is, one must first recognize the profound relation of man to God, for only in this relationship is the evil of sin unmasked in its true identity as humanity's rejection of God and opposition to him, even as it continues to weigh heavy on human life and history". The *Catechism* continues, saying that the reality of sin becomes clarified only in the light of divine Revelation: when we understand God's plan for man, we learn that "sin is an abuse of the freedom that God gives to created persons so that they are capable of loving him and loving one another" (ibid.: point 387). What is more, the reality of sin constitutes an important aspect of the Christian faith since the Good News found in the Christian teaching is that "all need salvation and that salvation is offered to all through Christ", which means

freeing them from sins (ibid.: point 389). Biblical scholars Merrill Unger and Roland Harrison (2006[1988]: 1618) say that "the recognition of the reality of sin, not only in the sense of actual disobedience, but also in the sense of innate sinfulness, is essential. For only thus can be seen the necessity for a special revelation, and only thus are men prepared to accept the gospel of salvation in Christ".

Additionally, it bears emphasizing that throughout ages the Catholic theology has developed the doctrine of sin gravity, distinguishing between the so-called *mortal sins* and *venial sins*. Generally speaking, the difference between them is that while mortal sins deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, as well as all the privileges and supernatural gifts of grace, venial sins are less serious and they do not make it impossible for a human being intent on God as one's ultimate end (McGuiness 2002: 155). The *Catechism* (1993: points 1857-1862) teaches that a sin is mortal when three conditions are met: (1) its object is grave matter, that is it violates any of the Ten Commandments; (2) the sinner has full knowledge of the immoral character of his or her acts, (3) but nevertheless commits the act with deliberate consent. Consequently, a sin is venial when at least one of the three conditions remains unfulfilled. However, the distinction between the two types of sin seems to be difficult to find in the Bible and due to that fact it will not influence our analysis. Although in a few places there are references to sins that exclude sinners from the kingdom of God (e.g. Ephesians 5: 5; Galatians 5: 19-21) and those that do not exclude them (e.g. James 3: 2; 1 John 1: 8; Ecclesiates 7: 20), it is hardly possible to classify the identified depictions of sin as belonging to either of the two categories.

## 3. A cognitive-linguistic perspective on the language of religion and morality

From the cognitive-semantic perspective, religious language seems to be an extension of everyday conventional language. It can be claimed that the conceptualization of religious experiences is based on the same mechanisms as the conceptualization of any other abstract reality, starting with such commonly used concepts as LIFE, LOVE, TIME, to the conceptualization of emotions, and such highly elaborated fields as art or science (Kuczok 2014: 254). As mentioned above, Lakoff and Johnson (2003[1980]: 40) claim that the nature of the conceptual systems of religions is metaphorical. In fact, similar observations have been made by philosophers and linguists who study the specific character of religious language and who have claimed that using metaphor, symbol, imagery, or analogy lies in the nature of religious discourse (Krzeszowski 1997: 261-262; Kołakowski 2001[1982]: 160-162).

In cognitive linguistics, *conceptual metaphor* is defined as a mapping from the source domain onto the target domain, used systematically to reason about the target domain. This mapping is not purely abstract or arbitrary, but it is

shaped and constrained by a person's bodily experiences in the world (Barcelona 2000: 3-4; Lakoff, Johnson 2003[1980]: 246). Conceptual metaphors are often conventionalized, which means that it is not necessary for people to be aware that a given expression is motivated by metaphor. Basically, they are used by speakers automatically and unconsciously (Lakoff, Johnson 2003[1980]: 211-213).

As suggested by Zoltán Kövecses (2011: 353), a cognitive-linguistic analysis of religious discourse shows that we rely on the ordinary to make sense of our experience outside the ordinary with the hope to meet the divine. Hence, there is no need for an independent conceptual apparatus that would be "unique to the interpretation of the sacred" (ibid.: 327). It is worth noting that the findings of cognitive semantics provide specific tools for conducting research into religious discourse, identifying its conceptual intricacies and explaining the sense of its apparently uncommon character. For that reason, Lieven Boeve, who is a theologian interested in using cognitive linguistics in religious studies, paraphrases the traditional saying: "philosophia ancilla theologiae" (philosophy is a servant of theology), and instead he says: "linguistica ancilla theologiae" (linguistics is a servant of theology) (Boeve 2003: 16).

According to Lakoff (1996: 250), and Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 290-292), also the system of morality is structured metaphorically on the basis of bodily and cultural experiences, and it has its source in the promotion of the material well-being, whose dimensions, such as strength, health, wealth, happiness, freedom, safety, protection, nurturance or light, are used in the system of metaphors for morality. Tomasz Krzeszowski (1997: 261-262) presents three metaphors for morality which have permeated the Western thought and culture: ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IS A BUSINESS TRANSACTION, ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IS LAWFUL BEHAVIOR, and the MOUNTAIN metaphor, which is an instance of a more general metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY. All of those metaphors correspond to various types of ethics, and all of them include metaphors for sin. The first ethics assumes morality based on the BUSINESS TRANSACTION metaphor, where God is metaphorically conceptualized as A BOOKKEEPER, and sin is BECOMING INDEBTED or MAKING IMBALANCE IN THE BOOKS. Reciprocation is metaphorically perceived as PAYING THE DEBT or RESTORING THE BALANCE. In the views of Lakoff (1996: 252-255) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 292-296), the metaphor MORAL ACTION IS FINANCIAL TRANSACTION is prevalent in the conceptualization of morality, establishing the patterns of behavior in reciprocation, retribution, revenge, and altruism. The second ethics is based on the experience of the judiciary, which constitutes the structure of this metaphorical system, where GOD IS A JUDGE, GOD'S COMMANDMENTS ARE LAWS, and SIN IS BREAKING THE LAW or COMMITTING A CRIME (Krzeszowski 1997: 264-267). The last type of ethics assumes that GOD IS A GUIDE or LEADER in the journey of life, whose GOAL IS REACHING THE PEAK OF THE MOUNTAIN, and sin is metaphorically understood as IMPENDING THE PROGRESS UPWARDS, FALLING DOWN, DEVIATING FROM THE PATH, or GETTING LOST (ibid.: 267-268). In fact, all the three metaphors of ethics can be found in various degrees in the conceptualization of sin in the English translation of the Bible.

## 4. Preconceptual image schemas in the conceptualization of sin

*Preconceptual image schemas* can be defined as embodied experiential gestalts: "an image schema is a recurring dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programmes that gives coherence and structure to our experience" (Johnson 1987: xiv). The idea of preconceptual image schemas corresponds to Lakoff and Johnson's *embodied realism* (1999: 77), whose main assumption is that the human conceptual structure arises from people's sensorimotor experience, and that the motor schemas form the basic level of concepts. The basic inspiration for embodiment derives from an observation that there is directionality in metaphor: the body constitutes a source domain for experientially grounded metaphorical mappings (Geeraerts 2010: 207). The core list of image schemas includes the following (Johnson 1987: 126): OBJECT, CONTAINER, SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, LINK, CYCLE, PART-WHOLE, CENTER-PERIPHERY, BALANCE, UP-DOWN, FRONT-BACK, plus a number of schemas involving aspects of FORCE DYNAMICS, described by Leonard Talmy (2000: 409-470): COMPULSION, BLOCKAGE, COUNTERFORCE, DIVERSION, ENABLEMENT, RESTRAINT, REMOVAL OF RESTRAINT, and ATTRACTION. Moreover, in her commentary on the list of image schemas discussed by various cognitive linguists, Beate Hampe (2005: 2-3) adds also the following: CONTACT, SCALE, NEAR-FAR, SURFACE, FULL-EMPTY, PROCESS, ITERATION, MERGING, MATCHING, SPLITTING, COLLECTION, MASS-COUNT, SUPERIMPOSITION, INANIMATE MOTION, ANIMATE MOTION, SELF MOTION, CAUSED MOTION, LOCOMOTION, EXPANSION, STRAIGHT, RESISTANCE, and LEFT-RIGHT. Actually, it bears emphasizing that the provided set of image schemas was not meant to be closed, and in fact many other candidates have been suggested in recent years (Geeraerts 2010: 208).

The schema of CONTAINER can be seen in the analyzed metaphors where the preposition *in* is used with sin: people are said to be in sins: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and **you are still in your sins**[2]" (1 Corinthians 15: 17) and to die in sins: "for **you will die in your sins** unless you believe that I am he" (John 8: 24). Also, those who sin participate in the sins of others: "Do not ordain anyone hastily, and **do not participate in the sins of others**" (1 Timothy 5: 22), walk in their sins: "Nevertheless they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, which he caused Israel to sin, but **walked in them**" (2 Kings 13: 6), and can be detected in a sin: "My friends, if **anyone is detected in a transgression**, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6: 1).

Another image schema that is found in the descriptions of sin in the English translation of the Bible is SOURCE-PATH-GOAL. First of all, sin is often the goal, toward which people go: "for **they proceed from evil to evil**, and they do not know me, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 9: 3), or to which they run: "**Their feet**

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[2]  The bold font has been added by the Author of the paper in order to help identify the metaphorical fragments of the verses from the Bible.

**run to evil**, and they rush to shed innocent blood" (Isaiah 59: 7). Also, sins are depicted as agents preceding or following people: "The sins of some people are conspicuous and **precede them to judgment**, while **the sins of others follow them there**" (1 Timothy 5: 24).

In the conceptualization of sin in the Bible, there are also image schemas based on FORCE DYNAMICS: sin is a kind of evil FORCE that encompasses and overtakes a human being: "For **evils have encompassed me** without number; **my iniquities have overtaken me**, until I cannot see" (Psalms 40: 12), overwhelms people: "When **deeds of iniquity overwhelm us**, you forgive our transgressions" (Psalms 65: 3), and has power over them: "for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, **are under the power of sin**" (Romans 3: 9).

In a number of examples, sin is perceived through the image schemas based on pairs of oppositions: FRONT-BACK, UP-DOWN, and CENTER-PERIPHERY. The first of those schemas is found in the Biblical references to people turning back from righteousness to sin: "a man who **turns back from righteousness to sin** – the Lord will prepare him for the sword!" (Sirach 26: 28), and turning back to sins: "They have **turned back to the iniquities** of their ancestors of old, who refused to heed my words" (Jeremiah 11: 10). Moreover, sin also means turning back from God: "For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will confront you there, and you shall fall by the sword; because **you have turned back from following the Lord**, the Lord will not be with you" (Numbers 14: 43). The UP-DOWN schema is seen in the descriptions of sin being a fall: "I will save them from **all the apostasies into which they have fallen**, and will cleanse them" (Ezekiel 37: 23) or weighing people down: "Our transgressions and **our sins weigh upon us**, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?" (Ezekiel 33: 10). The last of the three oppositions can be illustrated with the examples, where people are said to be turned from sins: "He walked with me in integrity and uprightness, and **he turned many from iniquity**" (Malachi 2, 6), where sins are called transgressions: "For I know **my transgressions**, and my sin is ever before me" (Psalms 51: 3), or where people are said to depart from sins: "Nevertheless **they did not depart from the sins** of the house of Jeroboam, which he caused Israel to sin" (2 Kings 13: 6).

Finally, in a number of places in the Bible, it is possible to identify the preconceptual image schema of MANIPULATION. The schema is analyzed by Jäkel (2003: 205-206) in his study of metaphors used in the abstract domains of discourse. The author claims that a human hand constitutes the most versatile instrument for the physical contact with the environment: it allows people to catch, grasp, hold, feel, lift, form, weigh, put away, carry, drop, and turn various things. When it comes to the conceptualization of sinning in the Bible, it is described as dragging iniquity with cords: "Ah, **you who drag iniquity along with cords of falsehood**, who drag sin along as with cart ropes" (Isaiah 5: 18). Next, sin can be cast behind someone's back: "but you have held back my life from the pit of destruction, for **you have cast all my sins behind your back**" (Isaiah 38: 17), heaped: "for **her sins are heaped** high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities" (Revelation 18: 5), wedged between selling and

buying: "As a stake is driven firmly into a fissure between stones, so **sin is wedged in between selling and buying**" (Sirach 27: 2), brought somewhere: "for that would be abhorrent to the Lord, and **you shall not bring guilt on the land** that the Lord your God is giving you as a possession" (Deuteronomy 24: 4), taken away from someone: "**I have taken your guilt away from you**, and I will clothe you with festal apparel" (Zechariah 3: 4), and put away somewhere: "**If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away**, and do not let wickedness reside in your tents" (Job 11: 14).

As it will be shown in the following sections of this article, in numerous metaphors found in the Bible, the preconceptual image schemas interact with ontological metaphors and with cultural scenarios in the conceptualization of sin.


## 5. Ontological metaphors for sin

The nature of *ontological metaphors* is to make a non-entity into an entity: such metaphors are ways of viewing events, activities, or ideas as physical beings and substances (Lakoff, Johnson 2003[1980]: 25-34). For example, the sentence *He's **coming out of** the coma* assumes the conceptualization of a coma as a kind of entity that exists in the physical reality. Ontological metaphors may involve *deifications*, *personifications*, *animalizations*, *vegetalizations*, and *reifications*, with (A) G(G)OD, A HUMAN BEING, AN ANIMAL, A PLANT, and AN OBJECT as the respective source domains of the mappings. That classification corresponds to the theory of the *Great Chain of Being*, which suggests a certain hierarchical order of the things experienced by human beings, with God on top, then human beings, next animals, then plants, and in the end, inorganic objects. It is believed that the described hierarchy exists as an unconscious cultural model inherent in people's understanding of themselves, as well as of the world and language (Lakoff, Turner 1989: 167).

In a number of examples found in the Bible, sin is personified. It is described as a being that, like humans, is born, grows, and then gives birth to death: "Then, when that desire has conceived, it **gives birth to sin**, and that sin, when **it is fully grown**, **gives birth to death**" (James 1: 15). In other places, sin functions as the subject of verbs that require a human agent. Thus, it is said to come into the world: "Therefore, just as **sin came into the world** through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned" (Romans 5: 12), to seize the opportunity to produce coveting in a human being: "But sin, **seizing an opportunity** in the commandment, **produced in me all kinds of covetousness**" (Romans 7: 8), to deprive people of good: "Your iniquities have turned these away, and **your sins have deprived you of good**" (Jeremiah 5: 25), and to be dead apart from the law: "Apart from the law **sin lies dead**" (Romans 7: 8).

Next, in some cases, we can talk about animalizations and vegetalizations of sin in the Bible. There are direct comparisons of sin to specific animals, such as snakes or lions: "**Flee from sin as from a snake**; for if you approach

sin, **it will bite you**. **Its teeth are lion's teeth**, and can destroy human lives"
(Sirach 21: 2). In another place, however, sin is described as crouching at
the door like an animal lurking for a prey: "And if you do not do well, **sin is
lurking at the door**; its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Genesis 4: 7).
Additionally, sin is said to dwell within a human being like a parasite: "But in
fact it is no longer I that do it, but **sin that dwells within me**" (Romans 7: 17).

Vegetalizations of sin can be found in those texts where it is referred to as
something that can be reaped: "For you write bitter things against me, and make
me **reap the iniquities of my youth**" (Job 13: 26).

When it comes to reifications of sin, we can identify metaphorical
conceptualizations, where sin has properties of inanimate objects. Thus, sin can
have specific dimensions, for instance, be high: "**our iniquities have risen higher
than our heads**, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens" (Ezra 9: 6), and it
can increase: "but **where sin increased**, grace abounded all the more" (Romans
5: 20). Sins, like some objects lying on the ground, can be trodden: "He will again
have compassion upon us; **he will tread our iniquities under foot**" (Micah 7: 19).
They can also be heaped: "for **her sins are heaped** high as heaven, and God has
remembered her iniquities" (Revelation 18: 5), and it is possible to seal them up in
a bag: "My transgression would be **sealed up in a bag**, and you would cover over
my iniquity" (Job 14: 17). Furthermore, it is necessary to mention that the image
schema of MANIPULATION, discussed in the previous section, is contingent on the
reification of sin: all the movements and actions made with a human hand assume
that sin is conceptualized as A PHYSICAL OBJECT.

Interestingly, sin is sometimes described as or compared to a specific
inanimate object, substance, or a weather phenomenon. Thus, it is "like **a break
in a high wall**, bulging out, and about to collapse, whose crash comes suddenly,
in an instant" (Isaiah 30: 13), a sting of death: "**The sting of death is sin**,
and the power of sin is the law" (1 Corinthians 15: 56), food eaten by wicked
people: "**They feed on the sin of my people**; they are greedy for their iniquity"
(Hosea 4: 8), mud, in which the good will not wallow: "Such conduct will be far
from the godly, and **they will not wallow in sins**" (Sirach 23: 12), ice that can
melt: "in the day of your distress it will be remembered in your favor; like frost
in fair weather, **your sins will melt away**" (Sirach 3: 15), money or earnings of
the wicked: "The wage of the righteous leads to life, **the gain of the wicked to
sin**" (Proverbs 10: 16), and the wind that sweeps people away: "We all fade like
a leaf, and **our iniquities**, **like the wind**, take us away" (Isaiah 64: 6).

## 6. Sin metaphors based on cultural scripts

Cultural experiences are often reflected in metaphorical cognitive models
through the so-called *cultural scripts* or *scenarios* of states and activities, and
usually provide a sequence of events presupposed by a given social activity
(Lakoff 1987: 284-286). For instance, the script of the event of "going

to a restaurant" involves a sequence of such typical actions as coming to a restaurant, sitting down at a table, reading the menu, ordering a meal, eating, paying and leaving the restaurant (Schank, Abelson 1977: 212-213). In the Bible, cultural scripts motivate the conceptualization of a number of sin metaphors, including CARRYING A BURDEN, STAIN or IMPURITY, IMPEDING PROGRESS DURING A JOURNEY, DEBT, SLAVERY, SLAVEMASTER or RULER, CRIME or BREAKING THE LAW, DISOBEDIENCE, and ENEMY.

The metaphor SIN IS CARRYING A BURDEN can be identified in such places in Scripture, where sins are described as being borne by someone: "yet **he bore the sin of many**, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53: 12). Sins are also described as burdening and wearing people: "But **you have burdened me** with your sins; **you have wearied me** with your iniquities" (Isaiah 43: 24), weighing upon them: "**Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us**, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?" (Ezekiel 33: 10), being bound into a yoke and hung on someone's neck: "My transgressions were bound into a yoke; by his hand they were fastened together; **they weigh on my neck**, sapping my strength" (Lamentations 1: 14), while people are "**overwhelmed by their sins** and **swayed by all kinds of desires**" (2 Timothy 3: 6). This metaphor is based on the scripts of CARRYING or TRANSPORTING SOMETHING. In fact, the cultural motivation interplays here with preconceptual image schemas, such as SOURCE-PATH-GOAL (bearing the sins), BALANCE (being swayed by evil desires), MANIPULATION (hanging the sins on someone's neck), and the UP-DOWN opposition (weighing people down). Anderson (2010: 16-17) claims that the BURDEN metaphor is the most productive sin metaphor in The Old Testament, and the Hebrew expression *nasa avon* that means 'to bear' or 'carry out sins' appears 108 times in the Jewish Bible.

A few sin metaphors present in Scripture seem to be motivated by the cultural script of A JOURNEY. If LIFE is conceptualized as A JOURNEY, then BEHAVING IN THE MORALLY CORRECT WAY is metaphorically depicted as MAKING PROGRESS ON THE WAY, while SIN, as immorality, is depicted by means of all those activities that impede the progress. Thus, sinning can be depicted as stumbling: "Israel's pride testifies against him; Ephraim **stumbles in his guilt**; Judah also **stumbles with them**" (Hosea 5: 5), and falling down: "I will save them from **all the apostasies into which they have fallen**, and will cleanse them" (Ezekiel 37: 23). It may be said that the understanding of sinning as stumbling and falling down during the journey implies that sins are conceptualized as objects lying on the path. Furthermore, it can be understood and presented as trespassing: "For if the many died through **the one man's trespass**, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many" (Romans 5: 15) and transgressing: "Happy are **those whose transgression is forgiven**, whose sin is covered" (Psalms 32: 1). Next, sin is viewed as turning back from God: "For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will confront you there, and you shall fall by the sword; because **you have turned back from following the Lord**, the Lord will not be with

you" (Numbers 14: 43) and following Satan instead: "For some **have already turned away to follow Satan**" (1 Timothy 5: 15). It is also possible to follow a sin itself, as if it were personified as A GUIDE: "He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and **followed the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat**, which he caused Israel to sin" (2 Kings 13: 2). Within the cultural script of A JOURNEY, sin may also be described as taking the false way: "Truly I direct my steps by all your precepts; **I hate every false way**" (Psalms 119: 128). Here, the cultural background of this metaphor is combined with such image schemas as SOURCE-PATH-GOAL (taking the wrong way, following Satan or sin), UP-DOWN (falling down), CENTER-PERIPHERY (transgressions, trespasses, turning away from God), FRONT-BACK (turning back from God), BLOCKAGE and BALANCE (stumbling).

Next, the conceptualization of sin as a stain or impurity is based on the cultural scenario of GETTING DIRTY AND CLEANING THE DIRT. In the Bible, sins are described as red stains: "though **your sins are like scarlet**, they shall be like snow; though **they are red like crimson**, they shall become like wool" (Isaiah 1: 18). In order to get rid of sins, they can be wiped out like a kind of dirt or uncleanliness: "Repent therefore, and turn to God so that **your sins may be wiped out**" (Acts 3: 19), washed away and cleansed: "**Wash me** thoroughly from my iniquity, and **cleanse me from my sin**" (Psalms 51: 2), or blotted out: "Yet you, O Lord, know all their plotting to kill me. Do not forgive their iniquity, **do not blot out their sin** from your sight" (Jeremiah 18: 23). A person who is free from sin is someone pure and clean: "Who can say, "I **have made my heart clean**; **I am pure** from my sin?" (Proverbs 20: 9). In addition to the cultural motivation of that metaphor, we can observe that the metaphorical use of the verbs *wash*, *blot out*, *wipe out*, and *cleanse* assumes the image schema of MANIPULATION.

The sin metaphor of DEBT is rooted in the cultural script of ACCOUNTING or A FINANCIAL TRANSACTION: sinning means making debts, which must be repaid in order to restore the financial balance. In the Bible, especially in The Old Testament, God is said to "keep a strict account" of people's sins (Sirach 28: 1). Sinners are expected to "make amends for their iniquity" (Leviticus 26: 43), although God can be also merciful and does not pay us according to our sins: "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor **repay us according to our iniquities**" (Psalms 103: 10). Moreover, in The New Testament, Christ is said to be "the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 2: 2), and someone who erases the record that stood against us: "He forgave us all our trespasses, **erasing the record that stood against us** with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2: 13-14). The conceptualization of sin as a charge can be motivated by the image schema of BALANCE: being indebted means charging the moral account and thus causing imbalance. To Anderson (2010: 31-32), the DEBT metaphor is ubiquitous in the conceptualization of sin in The New Testament, including the original Greek text of the Lord's Prayer (Our Father), where the words translated into English as "forgive our trespasses" read "remit our debts". In fact, the metaphors of ACCOUNTING and A BUSINESS TRANSACTION,

with sin portrayed as DEBT, have strongly influenced Christian discourse as such, which is discussed in Kuczok (2015: 98-103), who emphasizes their dominant role in the 19th-century sermons analyzed in his study.

Sin in the Bible is also metaphorically portrayed as SLAVERY, in line with the cultural script of BECOMING A SLAVE: "**Because of your sins you were sold**, and for your transgressions your mother was put away" (Isaiah 50: 1). As a consequence of sinning, people are captive to sin: "but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, **making me captive to the law of sin** that dwells in my members" (Romans 7: 23), and "the **iniquities of the wicked ensnare them**, and they are **caught in the toils of their sin**" (Proverbs 5: 22). However, freedom to sinners is granted through Christ: "By this Jesus **everyone who believes is set free from all those sins** from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses" (Acts 13: 39). Apart from that, sin in Scripture is frequently personified as A SLAVEMASTER, KING, or RULER. Thus, sinners are described as being slaves to sin: "Very truly, I tell you, **everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin**" (John 8: 34), being in the chains of wickedness: "For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and **the chains of wickedness**" (Acts 8: 23), or enslaved to sin: "Wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul, or dwell in a body **enslaved to sin**" (Wisdom 1: 4). Sin itself is said to exercise dominion in the body: "Therefore, **do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies**, to make you obey their passions" (Romans 6: 12). What is more, sin is a ruler that has power over things and people: "But the scripture **has imprisoned all things under the power of sin**, so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe" (Galatians 3: 22). In those metaphors the cultural experiences of slavery and being subject to a ruler interplay with the image schemas of FORCE (being enslaved or imprisoned by sin; sin exercising dominion over people) and LINK (chains of wickedness).

The metaphor SIN IS A CRIME is motivated by the cultural scenario of BREAKING THE LAW AND BEING JUDGED AT COURT. Thus, sin in the Bible is described as breaking the law: "You that forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you rob temples? You that boast in the law, do **you dishonor God by breaking the law**?" (Romans 2: 22-23). Thus, sin means lawlessness: "Everyone who commits sin is **guilty of lawlessness**; **sin is lawlessness**" (1 John 3: 4) and violating God's covenant: "Israel has sinned; **they have transgressed my covenant** that I imposed on them" (Joshua 7: 11). It is called a crime: "For that would be a heinous crime; that would be **a criminal offense**" (Job 31: 11) and will be punished by God: "Now he will remember their iniquity, and **punish their sins**" (Hosea 8: 13). The image schema that interacts with cultural motivation in that metaphor is FORCE, which can be seen when talking about sinners violating the covenant or God's commandments.

Furthermore, the cultural script of SERVING A MASTER or RULER gives rise to the metaphor SIN IS DISOBEDIENCE. Sinners are people who rebel against God: "We have **transgressed and rebelled**, and you have not forgiven" (Lamentations 3: 42). They act presumptuously, disobeying God's commands and ordinances:

"Yet **they acted presumptuously** and **did not obey your commandments**, but **sinned against your ordinances**, by the observance of which a person shall live" (Nehemiah 9: 29). In response, God chastises sinners: "**You chastise mortals** in punishment for sin" (Psalms 39: 11). Apart from the cultural motivation, that metaphor is also based on the preconceptual image schema of FORCE, which can be seen in the idea of sinners rebelling against God.

The last metaphor of sin found in the Bible is SIN IS AN ENEMY. That conceptualization of sin assumes the cultural script of WAR or BATTLE, in which there are enemies that fight against each other. Thus, in the Bible we read that people struggle against sin, resist, and even shed blood in the battle: "In **your struggle against sin** you have not yet **resisted to the point of shedding your blood**" (Hebrews 12: 4). Hostile sins can surround people like an army during war: "But they do not consider that I remember all their wickedness. Now **their deeds surround them**, they are before my face" (Hosea 7: 2) and snare them: "**In the transgression of the evil there is a snare**, but the righteous sing and rejoice" (Proverbs 29: 6). That means that people need to guard against sins: "One who is wise is cautious in everything; when **sin is all around, one guards against wrongdoing** (Sirach 18: 27). It can be noticed that the references to the military actions in the metaphor for sin assume the use of the image schema of FORCE, which interacts with the cultural script here.

## 7. Conclusions

Our analysis of the conceptual metaphors for sin, identified in the *New Revised Standard Version*, one of the most popular English translations of the Bible, has revealed that it is possible to distinguish various types of those metaphors. First of all, there are metaphorical conceptualizations of sin that rely on preconceptual image schemas. Those schemas include A CONTAINER, SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, FORCE, BALANCE, MANIPULATION, as well as some oppositions: CENTER-PERIPHERY, UP-DOWN, and FRONT-BACK.

The next group of sin metaphors in the Bible are the so-called ontological metaphors, in which the abstract reality of sin is conceptualized as an entity, substance, or weather phenomena. In the identified examples, sin is metaphorically perceived as A HUMAN BEING, AN ANIMAL, including such specific animals as SNAKES or LIONS. It is also described as A PLANT, as well as AN OBJECT, and sometimes it is pictured as a specific thing: A WALL, A STING, FOOD, and ICE. We can also find the metaphors SIN IS MONEY and SIN IS THE WIND.

Finally, in a number of sin metaphors, the motivation for the mapping comes from cultural experiences. Here, the cultural scripts often interact with preconceptual image schemas. Thus, the metaphor SIN IS CARRYING A BURDEN combines the cultural scenario of TRANSPORTING or CARRYING SOMETHING with the image schemas of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, BALANCE, MANIPULATION, and the UP-DOWN opposition. The metaphor of IMPURITY is based on the cultural script of GETTING

DIRTY AND CLEANING THE DIRT, and on the schema of MANIPULATION. Next, sin metaphors based on the scenario of A JOURNEY involve the schemas of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, BALANCE, BLOCKAGE, UP-DOWN, CENTER-PERIPHERY, and FRONT-BACK. The DEBT metaphor assumes the script of ACCOUNTING or A BUSINESS TRANSACTION, and the image schema of BALANCE. In the SLAVERY and SLAVEMASTER metaphors, the conceptualization of sin is motivated by the scenario of BEING TAKEN CAPTIVE in combination with the schemas of FORCE and LINK. Furthermore, the metaphor of CRIME is based on the cultural script of BREAKING THE LAW AND BEING JUDGED, as well as on the schema of FORCE. Then, the DISOBEDIENCE metaphor assumes the cultural experience of SERVING A MASTER OR RULER, and the preconceptual schema of FORCE. The SIN IS AN ENEMY metaphor is motivated by the script of WAR, but also on the schema of FORCE.

To sum up our analysis, it is worth noting that the English version of the Bible offers its readers a remarkable number of metaphors for sin. The richness of both the sensorimotor and cultural motivations behind the conceptual metaphor in this case has contributed to the ways people from the Judeo-Christian culture understand the notion of sin, interpret, and talk about it. Definitely, each of the sin metaphors identified in Scripture highlights different aspects of its complex reality, which, thanks to the variety of the sensorimotor and cultural experiences used in the metaphorical mappings, can, at least partially, be understood and described.

It would be useful to continue the research into the metaphorical conceptualization of sin in the Bible with the present study as the starting point in at least two directions: one of them could be comparing the English translations of the Bible produced by various religious denominations to investigate how the theological background of the translator influences the preferred sin metaphors in the target language; the other direction of research could be analyzing how the original Hebrew and Greek metaphors for sin have been translated into English in the different versions of the Bible.

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