

S W E D I S H
COLLEGIUM
for ADVANCED STUDY

The Annual Lecture in Memory of Lennart Rydén

DAVID KONSTAN

Fellow, SCAS.
Professor of Classics, New York University

Sin: The Prehistory

Friday, 14 October, 6:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala

The lecture will be followed by a reception. Prior registration is required.
Please contact Ingela.Nilsson@lingfil.uu.se no later than 7 October to sign up for the event.
In collaboration with *Bysantinska sällskapet*, Uppsala.



ABOUT DAVID KONSTAN

David Konstan earned his BA in Mathematics and his Ph.D. in Greek and Latin at Columbia University, New York. He taught for twenty years at Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, and twenty-three years at Brown University, Providence, RI (where he is Professor Emeritus of Classics and Comparative Literature) before joining New York University in 2010. He has been a visiting scholar at various universities and a Fellow at the National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, NC, and the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. Konstan's research focuses on Greek and Roman literature and philosophy, and more particularly on emotions and values in classical antiquity.

Among Konstan's publications are *Roman Comedy* (1983), *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (1994), *Greek Comedy and Ideology* (1995), *Friendship in the Classical World* (1997), *Pity Transformed* (2001), *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (2006), *A Life Worthy of the Gods: The Materialist Psychology of Epicurus* (2008), *Before Forgiveness: The Origins of a Moral Idea* (2010), and *Beauty: The Fortunes of an Ancient Greek Idea* (2014).

Konstan is a past president of the American Philological Association (now the Society for Classical Studies); he is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

At SCAS, Konstan will pursue research on gratitude, loyalty, and the question of reciprocity in the classical world.

ABSTRACT

Is there something about the Judeo-Christian idea of sin that differentiates it from an error, fault, or unjust action in general? The Biblical term for "sin" is the same as the classical Greek word for any kind of mistake or failure, and can be used of religious infractions. What, if anything, makes the Biblical idea of sin distinctive? In my talk, I will propose an answer to this question – an answer that, if correct, has some surprising consequences for our understanding of some key passages in the Bible.