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Research Article

Deuteronomic Redaction and the Evolution of the Decalogues in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5

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This paper examines the development and evolution of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) based on a comparison of the Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 versions. It reviews past scholarly theories about the original form and composition of the Decalogue. The paper then analyzes the unique features in each biblical version to hypothesize about later Priestly and Deuteronomic editions. After removing these proposed additions, an attempt is made to reconstruct a more original core version. The analysis suggests the Decalogue went through multiple stages of evolution and redaction by various tradents. While Exodus 20 appears older overall, both versions contain editing that shapes them for their literary contexts. The study supports Blum's theory of an early Deuteronomic edition of Tetrateuch texts, but with recognition that further development occurred before the final forms of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. The paper illustrates the complex traditio-historical process in the formation of biblical texts.

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In what appears to be a new emerging paradigm for understanding the development of the Pentateuch, scholars have increasingly concurred with Erhard Blum's model of two successive editions of the Tetrateuch of Genesis through Numbers, a Deuteronomic Edition (KD) and a Priestly edition (KP). KD essentially drew together fragmentary old epics materials (Yahwist and Elohist) to craft a composition which might be best described as KD's literary creation. Blum sees an extensive number of Deuteronomic texts in the Tetrateuch. KP then redacted this literary work by making specific additions. Blum views these additions as somewhat less extensive than what other scholars usually have attributed to Priestly activity.[1]

The strength of this model is to posit the presence of a consistent Deuteronomic editing in the first four books of the Bible. Whereas the previous paradigm of Wellhausen and others, which reigned supreme from 1880 until 1980, avoided the attribution of Deuteronomic editing to the first four books (or Tetrateuch), nevertheless in their analysis of individual passages, scholars too often felt compelled to posit the presence of some "D" material in the redaction history of that text, especially when they focused their concentrated attention on particular passages. Blum's model addressed this anomaly by boldly suggesting a Deuteronomic edition of the Tetrateuchal books before their reception by the final Priestly Editor(s). I must admit I find his argument compelling.

One can use Blum's model nicely to describe the traditio-historical emergence of the two versions of the Decalogue. In the old model it was suggested that Deuteronomy 5 was of Deuteronomic provenance while Exodus 20 was of Priestly origin. Though this view was pedagogically workable on an elementary level; nonetheless, it failed to explain the presence of

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Deuteronomic editing in Exodus 20 and in the chapters surrounding it. Thus, Blum's theory provided a better explanation by suggesting Deuteronomic revision of both Decalogues followed by a Priestly revision of Exodus 20. Blum suggested that Exodus 20 is the older version and that Deuteronomy 5 is a development from the Exodus 20 tradition. Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 were both sources adapted by KD, though Exodus 20 does not fit into its context as smoothly as Deuteronomy 5. KP provides some editorial additions to Exodus 20, such as the reference to creation in the Sabbath command (Exod 20:11).[2] Thus, the presence of D elements in Deuteronomy 5 and both D and P elements in Exodus 20 is explicable by Blum's theory, whereas the old Documentary Hypothesis did not explain this. But the question I would raise is whether the model fully explains in a satisfactory way the appearance of our two texts in their present form. I also suspect that Blum may underestimate the presence of P elements in Exodus 20. To that end I wish to undertake a hypothetical reconstruction of the emergence of the two decalogues to see whether the differences between Deuteronomy 5 and Exodus 20 may be explained by a Priestly redaction of the latter passage that was more extensive that Blum concedes.

II

Several significant attempts have been undertaken by past scholars to explain the evolution of the Decalogue into its present form in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, and several of these are sufficiently interesting to merit our brief attention and have provided insight for this present evaluation. Generally, the theories fall into two types. One model hypothesizes great antiquity for an original form of the Decalogue, extending its origins back even as far as the Mosaic era and suggesting its evolution through several stages of growth. Thomas Dozeman nicely summarized the arguments for this viewpoint by observing that the expansion of several of the commandments and the presence of two versions of the Decalogue in Exodus and Deuteronomy with distinct differences between them strongly suggests an evolution.[3] The other model suggests a later origin for the Decalogue, suggesting that 8th or 7th century BCE prophets inspired its origin, and any development that occurred did so under Deuteronomic or Priestly tradents. In the latter category are to be located the scholarly contributions of Frank Lothar Hossfeld,[4] who suggested that the social prohibitions of the Decalogue were inspired by Hos 4:2 and Jer 7:9, and Christoph Levin,[5] who sought the origin and inspiration of the Decalogue in Jer 7:9. A. D. H. Mayes spoke generally about the entire Decalogue when he argued that individual commandments might have an evolutionary history, such as the images and the sabbath commandments, but the Decalogue as a unity was brought together as a whole at a late date, and both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 were edited by the Deuteronomistic Historian.[6]

This essay will work with the former assumption of a longer evolutionary process and pay attention to the contributions of scholars who have hypothesized a developmental theory. In an initial response to Mayes, I would say that the texts of both decalogues seem to imply a significant evolutionary development that individual commands would not experience in isolation. Above all, however, it must be admitted that all theories are tenuous. We observe a final form text and try to recreate its development from that. The critical method and tradition historical analysis, in particular, is not a science, but an art, sometimes a creative art depending tremendously upon the intuitive sense of the scholar.[7] In regard to the evolution of the Ten Commandments, it was aptly said by Raymond Collins,

"The complex process of development was related to the institutional life of Israel, its sense of identity, its social structures, its teaching, and its worship. Given the complexity of the process, it is virtually impossible to reconstruct any original form of the decalogue.[8]

As early as 1846 E. Meier suggested a reconstructed version of the Decalogue in its original form. He supposed that the prohibition against coveting was merely an expansion of the theft command, thus he turned the coveting command into a theft command and eliminated theft from the position it now has. The statement "I am Yahweh" and the command against images then restored the number of commandments to ten. He also positioned killing after adultery, following the tradition found in the writings of Judaeus Philo in the 1st century C.E. His Decalogue read as follows (using the translation found in Nielsen): 1) "I, Yahweh, am thy God." 2) "Thou shalt have no other god besides me." 3) "Thou shalt not make any image of a god." 4) "Thou shalt not utter the name of Yahweh thy God in falsehood." 5) "Remember the Sabbath day that thou mayest sanctify it." 6) "Honour thy father and thy mother." 7) "Thou shalt not commit adultery." 8) "Thou shalt not kill." 9) "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." 10) "Thou shalt not steal."[9]

In 1923 Hans Schmidt suggested the original Decalogue read as follows (my translation): 1) "There will be no

other gods for you." 2) "You will not bow down to them." 3) "You will not serve them (which also means to have them in your possession)." 4) "You will not make for yourself a graven image." 5) "You will not take the name of the Lord in vain." 6) "You will not murder." 7) "You will not adulterate." 8) "You will not steal." 9) "You will not bring a false testimony against your neighbor." 10) "You will not covet anything of your neighbor's." This listing clearly divides the Decalogue into five religious commands and five social commands, thus evenly dividing the two tablets of the law. Schmidt believed that the positive formulation of the commands about the Sabbath and parents implied that they were added during the exile or later. Prior to the exile the festival of the New Moon was observed, not the Sabbath. The parents command reflects the pain of exile when families must be protected. Schmidt argues for a post-Mosaic date for the Decalogue, for the following reasons: 1) There are references to property with the theft and coveting commands., which implies the existence of property in a later age. 2) Moses had a serpent in the wilderness that contradicts the command against images, a phenomenon which would occur only after settlement. 3) Blood revenge existed at least until the United Monarchy in contradiction to the murder command. And 4) among the prophets only Jeremiah appears to know the commandments (and Hosea who knows the social commands), and an appeal to a Decalogue would have been a natural thing for all the prophets to undertake.[10]

In an Erlangen dissertation (placed in Leipzig and later moved to Marburg) Karlheinz Rabast reconstructed a Decalogue of twelve commands working on the assumption that originally the commands were articulated in a rhythmic poetic fashion. He suggested that in order to obtain twelve commands we should count "I am the Lord your God" and "You shall not bow down to them (graven images)" in Exod 20:5/Deut 5:9. He suggested also that there was one coveting command and the imperative against making graven images was a separate command, which is obvious in the light of the aforementioned command not to worship graven images. Finally, he interpreted theft to mean kidnapping, as other commentators have done in the past. His metrical theory led him to a particular wording for each of the commands, but in general he had a short version of each. His version read (my translation): 1. "I am Yahweh your God." 2. "There will not be for you another God before me." 3. "You will not make a graven image for yourself." 4. "You will not bow down to them." 5. "You will not take my name in vain." 6. "You will not do work on the Sabbath." 7. "You will not curse your father or your mother." 8. "You will not kill a human being, a nephesh." 9. "You will not have adultery with the wife of your neighbor." 10. "You will not steal a man or a woman." 11. "You will not raise up a lying testimony against your neighbor." 12. "You will not covet the house of your neighbor."[11]

In 1962 Eduard Nielsen suggested that originally there were ten commandments, all stated in the negative. He combined the commands not to have any other gods and not to bow down before them into the first command. He reformulated the Sabbath and parents command into the form of a negative prohibition. He also reversed the commands on adultery and murder, following the testimony of Philo in De Decalogo, one of the Septuagintal translations, and the Nash Papyrus. Finally, by assuming that the theft command really refers to kidnapping, he viewed the coveting command as covering all activity of theft. Thus, his version read (following the English translated in his book): 1. "Thou shalt not bow down before any other god." 2. "Thou shalt not make to thyself any idol." 3. "Thou shalt not take the name of Yahweh in vain." 4. "Thou shalt not do any work on the Sabbath day." 5. "Thou shalt not despise thy father or thy mother." 6. "Thou shalt not commit adultery with thy neighbor's wife." 7. "Thou shalt not pour out the blood of thy neighbour." 8. "Thou shalt not steal any man from thy neighbour." 9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." 10. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house."[12]

In 1969 Henri Cazelles constructed the commandments out of the imperatives, which are found in the text, but he assumed that the imperative against other gods was not original. He also eliminated the command to honor parents. Hence, his list is as follows: 1) prohibition of images set up to assure the presence of the god in the sanctuary, 2) prohibition of worshiping idols that represent other gods, 3) prohibition of serving them, 4) prohibition of taking unnecessary oaths in the name of Yahweh, 5) prohibition of working on the Sabbath, 6) prohibition of committing murder under conditions that do not confer the right of asylum, 7) prohibition of sexual violence, 8) prohibition of stealing, 9) prohibition of accusing a neighbor falsely, and 10) prohibition of seizing a neighbor's house.[13]

In 1980 Walter Harrelson built upon the work of Nielsen but was more cautious in emending the text. His rendition chose to retain the present textual wording for the command not to have other gods, and he saw no reason to switch the adultery and killing commandments. His version read: 1) "Thou shalt not have other gods." 2) "Thou shalt not make for thyself an

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idol." 3) "Thou shalt not lift up the name of Yahweh for mischief." 4) "Thou shalt not despise the Sabbath day." 5) "Thou shalt not curse thy father or thy mother." 6) "Thou shalt not kill thy neighbor." 7) "Thou shalt not commit adultery with the wife of thy neighbor." 8) "Thou shalt not steal anything that is thy neighbor's." 9) "Thou shalt not answer thy neighbor as a false witness." 10) "Thou shalt not covet the household of thy neighbor's." He dated the longer versions of the Decalogue to the exile or post-exilic eras, but suggested that the original short version could originate from the age of Moses or Joshua.[14]

In 1981 André Lemaire attempted to reconstruct the evolution of the Decalogue through four stages: 1) the Elohist, 2) the combined redaction of the Yahwist and the Elohist, 3) the Deuteronomistic Historians, and 4) the Priestly Editors. He believes that the original core Decalogue was ten commands stated in negative form: I am Yahweh. 1) You shall not worship a foreign god. 2) You shall not have a graven image of me (the "of me" was later dropped). 3) You shall not misuse my name (the "my" was later dropped). 4) You shall not dishonor my Sabbaths (the negative verb was later transformed into positive form and Sabbaths later rendered in the singular). 5) You shall not curse your father and your mother (the negative verb was later transformed into positive form). 6) You shall not murder your neighbor ("your neighbor" was later dropped). 7) You shall not have adultery with the wife of your neighbor ("with the wife of your neighbor" was later dropped). 8) You shall not steal your neighbor (kidnap) ("your neighbor" was later dropped). 9) You shall not speak falsely against your neighbor, 10) You shall not covet the house of your neighbor (my translation)[15]

Christoph Levin reconstructs the earlier form of the Decalogue in seven commands, including "I am Yahweh," as the first command. He reads them as follows: 1) I am Yahweh, your God, who has led you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 2) You shall have no gods beside me. Do not pray to them and do not revere them. 3) You shall not murder. 4) You shall not adulterate. 5) You shall not steal. 6) You shall not utter fake testimony against your neighbor. 7) You shall not covet your neighbor's house.[16]

Michael Goulder gave a summary of the Ten Commandments in conjunction with his study on the Psalms of Asaph. A Josianic edition of the commandments included the prohibitions against worshipping other gods, making images, dishonoring parents, murder, adultery, theft, and perjury. These came with Deuteronomic phrasing. The additional three commandments on dishonoring the name, observing the Sabbath, and coveting were added by the priestly Merarites during the exile.[17]

Bernhard Lang attempted to reconstruct the evolution of the Decalogue in detailed fashion. In the first stage of evolution there were five religious commands (no other gods, make no graven images, do not bow down to them or serve them, do not take the name in vain, and honor your father and your mother). The expression that "your days may be long in the land" was a conclusion to all five of these commands, not simply the parental command. This Pentalogue arose in the exile, for the "iniquity of the fathers" referred to the sins of the generation prior to the exile. In the second stage of evolution five civil commands were added (murder, adultery, theft, false witness, and coveting). In the third stage of evolution an editor added the Priestly law about Sabbath combined with Deuteronomic rhetoric. Since coveting was seen as two commands in this third stage, there were really twelve commandments. However, the references to ten commands or "words" (Exod 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4), which came from the second stage, has caused us to identify only ten by ignoring the command not to worship images and by combining two of the other commands in various ways.[18]

All of these scholars recognize the potential evolutionary process, which may have occurred with the emergence of the Decalogue. They all suspect that the original form was probably shorter than our present text. They all have to come to grips with the existence of additional imperatives, which either must be viewed as commands or later expansions of the Decalogue.

More recently other scholars have been prone to declare that it is impossible to recover the earliest form of the Decalogue.[19] Lothar Perlitt even declared that there is a complex evolution of the decalogues out of various other legal and prophetic texts, but that reconstructing the so-called original text of the Decalogue would be a worthless exercise.[20]

A number of scholars have declared that the Decalogue is very late, inspired by 8th century BCE prophets, especially prophetic texts like Hosea 4:2; 13:4, and especially Jer 7:9.[21] Hossfeld believes that Exod 20:13-15 and Deut 5:17-19 go back directly to Hos 4:2 and Jer 7:9.[22] Christoph Dohmen sees Exod 34:6-7, 12, 14, 18-26 especially as the inspiration.[23] Some scholars further suggest that the Decalogue is a creation of the Deuteronomic authors, who had not only prophetic texts but also the Exodus 34, the Book of the Covenant,

and Deuteronomic Laws at their avail.[24] This builds upon the observations of scholars that the Sinai traditions in Exodus seem to be permeated significantly by Deuteronomic rhetoric.[25] Ron Tappy distinctively suggests that the Decalogue originates in the secular setting of clan or familial law before being used as an "archaic preamble" in our biblical text.[26]

III

There is also a debate concerning the priority of Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5. Added to this is the discussion as to whether the older Decalogue influenced the formation of the later Decalogue.

A number of scholars have suggested that the version of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5 is earlier than Exodus 20.[27] Advocates point to items such as the older age of the rationale for Sabbath observation in Deuteronomy 5 (the appeal to the exodus rather than Genesis 1), the Deuteronomic rhetoric of "long life" found in both decalogues, the word for "false witness" in Deuteronomy 5 seems to be older, and the prohibition against images seems to come from Deuteronomy 4.[28]

Other scholars, however, have responded to this viewpoint by reaffirming the priority of Exodus 20.[29] Axel Graupner, in particular, has directed his arguments to Hossfeld's observations. Graupner argues that: 1) Deuteronomy 5 refers back to Exodus 20 when it says, "as Yahweh commanded you," and this implies likewise that the Deuteronomy 5 version is dependent upon the Exodus 20 version. 2) The word for "false testimony" in Deuteronomy 5 is later than the word in Exodus 20. 3) The position of wife before house in the coveting command of Deuteronomy 5 is a later revision of the Exodus 20 sequence of house and wife. 4) The use of two different verbs for coveting in Deuteronomy 5 indicates it is later. And 5) because Deuteronomy 5 fits its literary context better, since it artificially was created for that context. Though Exodus 20 is older than Deuteronomy 5 and pre-Deuteronomic, it is impossible to reconstruct the earliest form of the Decalogue, and both decalogues have been placed secondarily into their literary contexts to symbolically unify the Tetrateuch and the Deuteronomistic History and to put the Book of the Covenant and the Deuteronomic Laws on the same level of importance.[30]

If a decision were to be made as to which version of the Decalogue appears to have older elements in it, or to appear to be older in its present form, I would give the nod to Exodus 20. The following reasons strike me as convincing in order of significance: 1) Deut 5:21 has moved the wife to a place of priority over house in the coveting command in order to give special attention to the rights of women. Logically, a "wife" would be considered part of the "house," if "house" is understood as family, so "wife" should follow "house." In this version, perhaps "house" means property, and if so, it would reflect later economic developments in Israel and Judah. In that case, one would move "wife" before "house" to indicate that she is not property. 2) Deut 5:21 adds "field" which is a sign of later economic development, in which physical property has become important and worth mentioning. 3) Deut 5:14 elaborates on the meaning of "livestock" by distinguishing "ox" and "ass" as animals not to be worked on the Sabbath. This might reflect later rationalization that sensed the word for "livestock" could be limited to simply cattle, so therefore other farm animals need to be specifically mentioned. 4) Deut 5:21 uses the word "desire" (AWH) in the coveting command, a word which refers more to mental activity and thus sounds like it would have been used in later stages of the Decalogue evolution to replace the more dramatic word HMD. 5) Deut 5:20 uses the word SHWA in the false witness command, whereas Exod 20:16 uses the more likely original verb SHKR. SHWA may have displaced SHKR in Deut 5:20 because it was used in the command not to misuse the name of God in Exod 20:7 and Deut 5:11. Thus, Exod 20:16 is the older version of the command.[31] These arguments are interesting, but they may not be too valuable. Perhaps, the Priestly Editors simply choose not to update their version of the Decalogue with the latest economic insights. More seriously, it perhaps would be better to view both versions of the Decalogue as coming into the hands of Priestly and Prophetic redactors, who then tailor the additions according to their theological agenda. Neither version can be said to be older, but rather one should talk about the form of the Decalogue which they received and speak of that as older. It would simply lack the distinctive differences found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.

In conclusion, any traditio-historical evaluation of the Decalogue must take these issues into account and respect the work of these previous scholars. Thus, we shall proceed with an evaluation of the possible evolution of the Decalogue, but also with an eye to observing how this evolutional process might relate to the Pentateuchal hypothesis of Erhard Blum.

IV

If we ask the question as to when the process of evolution began for the Decalogue, there are some

observations that I would make. Both Decalogues commend the observance of the Sabbath, and the Sabbath appears to be a weekly custom. It may be that the weekly observance of the Sabbath arose only during the Babylonian Exile (or perhaps in the late pre-exilic era), as a custom by which Jews affirmed their distinctive identity. Prior to the exile, the observation of the Sabbath may have only been a monthly custom. Amos 8:5 parodies what unrighteous people say, "When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale?" Hos 2:11 has God declare, "I will put an end to all her mirth, her festivals, her new moons, her sabbaths, and all her appointed festivals." Isa 1:13b states, "New moon and Sabbath and calling of convocation—I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity." In 2 Kgs 4:23, the husband of the rich woman of Shunem questions why his wife seeks Elisha by saying, "Why go to him today? It is neither new moon nor sabbath." Sabbath is paired with "new moon," which seems to imply that the Sabbath is the "full moon." Though not an absolute argument, it is significant that Sabbath is thus paired with "new moon" four times, implying that it is sometime quite comparable. The call to observe the Sabbath in the Decalogue with no mention of the "new moon" implies that the two have been disconnected from each other.

In both Decalogues the command not to make an image of God uses the Hebrew word PESEL for "image." This is a very fine piece of artwork; it is a carved wooden statue that has either gold or silver sheet metal meticulously pounded over it. It is a more sophisticated object of art than a poured image or a "cast image," which is condemned in Exod 34:17. Though this is subjective observation, it would seem that a PESEL would be made at a much later time in Israel's history than a poured or cast image.

Thus, one might observe that the more complete Decalogue began to take shape contemporary with the suggested date of the Deuteronomic Reform movement in 620 BCE and the beginnings of Priestly Reform in the Babylonian Exile.

V

At the first stage of our analysis, we should isolate what is unique to each of the decalogues in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. We could then assume that those unique portions were added to each of the decalogues by their respective editors at a late stage in the evolutionary process.

What appears to be distinctive for the Decalogues in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 are the following items:

First, the verb in Exodus 20 in the command regarding the Sabbath is "remember" or ZCR. The word has cultic or memorial festival connotations. Believers are to "remember" the great acts of God in saving people, or they are to "remember" the Passover, which means to celebrate it. Thus, this is a word which has cultic or priestly connotations. The word in Deuteronomy 5 by comparison is SHMR, which means "to keep" or "obey." That word has much more of the nuance of the commands found elsewhere in Deuteronomy, which are more civil in nature. It is possible that an older form of the Decalogue used neither verb.

Second, both Sabbath commands find it necessary to list explicitly the people who should not work on the Sabbath. One gets the impression that this list grew over the years to communicate clearly who should be given rest because everyone from simple farmers to large slave owning agriculturalists sought to get work out of someone on the Sabbath. One could envision a slave owner being told that his slave could not work, so then the slave owner would declare that the animal which pulled the plow did the work and not the slave who walked behind the animal and the plow. Lawgivers found it necessary to list even animals along with people as blessed by the Sabbath rest.

When we compare the two codes, we discover that Deut 5:14 found it necessary to specifically add "ox" and "donkey" along with the word for "livestock" found in both codes. Perhaps, because the word for "livestock" could also more narrowly mean "cattle," someone could declare that an ox or a donkey could pull the plow since they were not cattle. Hence, the author of Deuteronomy 5 felt obligated to specifically mention the "ox" and the "donkey" prior to the phrase "or any of your livestock." The editors of the Deuteronomy 5 text seem to have been more concerned with working out such logical details.

Deut 5:14 also adds specifically "your male and female slave should rest as you do." This is because Deuteronomy elsewhere provides special protection for slaves, and so an additional plea for slaves' rights is included here. Furthermore, this little phrase leads into a longer section which is unique to Deuteronomy. The editors of the Exodus 20 text may not have been concerned with such issues.

Third, at this point the texts in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 significantly part ways. Exod 20:11 connects the observation of the Sabbath to the creation of the world. In an obvious reference to Genesis 1, the

editor of Exodus 20 declares that because God rested on the seventh day of creation and blessed that day, so we must observe it. The priestly origin of Genesis 1 increases our suspicion that the final editor of Exodus 20 is of Priestly origin.[32] By way of contrast, the final editor of Deuteronomy 5 appeals to the exodus event and the liberation of slaves from Egypt as a rationale for Sabbath observations (Deut 5:15). Though the texts do not declare this clearly, one gets the impression that the Exodus 20 version primarily views the Sabbath as a holy day and perhaps a day of worship, whereas the stress in Deuteronomy 5 is on Sabbath as a day of rest for slaves and free people alike. The emphasis upon worship reflects priestly concerns and the emphasis upon physical rest may reflect prophetic concerns with justice for all people and especially rights for the poor and slaves. Though one might suggest emphasis upon the Exodus is an older theological concern in Israel, that does not tell us which rhetorical flourish was added to its respective Decalogue first.

Fourth, though they are minor details, Deuteronomy had added extra language to the commands on Sabbath and obedience to parents. After the initial command, Deut 5:12 and 5:16 both add, "as the Lord your God has commanded you." These phrases appear to be a reference to an earlier law, perhaps even the Decalogue in Exodus.[33] Why the reference would appear in these two commands and not at the beginning of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5, however, is puzzling. Furthermore, Deut 5:16 adds, "that it may go well with you" after the blessing of a long life and before the reference to how Yahweh is giving the land to the people. The author thus adds "prosperity" to "long life" as a blessing for obedience to this command. The idea of prosperity in the land resulting from obedience to God is a typical motif in Deuteronomy (Deut 4:40; 5:26; 6:3, 18; 12:25, 28; 22:27).[34]

Fifth, in the command against false witness Exod 20:16 uses SHKR for "false" and Deut 5:20 uses SHWA for "false." SHWA is also used in Exod 20:7 and Deut 5:11 in conjunction with the command on misuse of the Lord's name. Perhaps, SHKR was the original verb, and in Deuteronomy 5:20 SHWA displaces SHKR simply because it was used with the earlier command on the name. This might be attributed to Deuteronomic editors, but no good reason can be given for the change.

Sixth, the next truly significant difference occurs with the coveting commands. In Exodus the imperative not to covet the neighbor's house comes before the command not to covet the neighbor's wife, and Deuteronomy reverses them. Perhaps, the original form of the Decalogue placed house first, because the term also means "family," and wife is part of the family. In the early days of Israel's history when most people owned little property other than their essentials for life, the term for "house" would have been understood primarily as "family." In later years with the rise of wealth and an affluent class of people, the term "house" could refer to accumulated wealth in the minds of many. In such an age it would be necessary for the word "wife" to be placed before "house" in order to ensure that women not be perceived as part of the house or property of the men, or least that they not be seen as less important than physical property (if the two commands are to be seen as distinctly separate). It would occur to a reform oriented prophetic editor to transpose these two imperatives; hence, the switch is found in Deuteronomy, a book which elsewhere shows great concern for the rights of women. Such a transposition would not be of great concern for Priestly Editors, however, who may retain the sequence handed down to them in an older version of the Decalogue.

Seventh, Deut 5:21 adds "field" after the term "house" as something not to be desired. This, too, may indicate Deuteronomy's awareness of a more advanced economic situation in which land is a significant commodity owned by people. By pairing "field" with "house" the imperative makes "house" even more clearly refer to physical property, thus necessitating the placement of "wife" before "house."

Eighth, a small but interesting observation is the use of a different verb for one of the "covet" imperatives in Deut 5:21. Whereas Exodus 20 uses the verb HMD, which means to "seize, desire, or take plans to get," Deut 5:21 uses the verb AWH for "covet," and it has more of the meaning of psychological desire. The first verb, HMD, is more concrete and may denote human activity such as fraud or extortion, which punishable in a court of law, the second verb, AWH, denotes an inner mental activity not punishable by law. The second verb denotes the kind of mental activity that we have come to connect with this commandment. Those who believe that the Decalogue evolved from being a civil law code, in which the violation of the commands might have warranted the death penalty in some or all of instances, into a moral code, may point to this subtle transformation from a verb of physical activity (HMD) into a verb denoting an interior mental disposition (AWH). If correct, this perception would be a significant sign of the process of evolution connected with the Decalogue. Deuteronomy 5 here reflects some later developments in the interpretation of the Decalogue for everyday life.

VI

Once we have eliminated the portions of the text, which are distinct in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, we can look at what remains and perhaps assume that there was a prior edition inherited by both the Priestly Editors of Exodus 20 and the prophetic editors of Deuteronomy 5.

Yet now a different perspective presents itself. As we survey both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, we find language in both texts which sounds very Deuteronomic. This material could be removed without affecting the basic message of the commands. What if it, too, were added to an even older version of the Decalogue?

The so-called prophetic editors of Deuteronomy 5 have used Deuteronomic language. What if we were to assume that either Deuteronomic-prophetic editors added common material to both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, or better said, an editor added this material to the Decalogue before it split into the two versions rendered to us in both chapters. We could envision one of two scenarios: 1) A Deuteronomic theologian edited the Decalogue, which is subsequently inherited by a later Priestly and later prophetic editors. 2) Deuteronomic Editors transformed the text in both Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Then, later Priestly Editors transformed Exodus 20 and changed the text back into a simpler form. By this I mean the Priestly Editors removed the reference to "ox and donkey" in v. 14, the reference to property in v. 16, placed house before wife in v. 21, and removed the verb form "desire" in v. 21. I doubt this is a likely scenario. Hence, I prefer the first option. I suggest that a prior Deuteronomic editor was a traditur in the transmission of the Decalogue before it was received by the Priestly Editors of Exodus 20 and the prophetic editors of Deuteronomy 5.

If such an editor existed, what textual materials did this person insert? The choice of such passage is somewhat selective, but they might include the following:

> Exod 20:2/Deut 5:6: "who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery"
>
> Exod 20:4/Deut 5:8: "whether in the form of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth"
>
> Exod 20:5-6/Deut 5:9-10: "You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments"
>
> Exod 20:7/Deut 5:11: "for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name"
>
> Exod 20:9-10/Deut 5:13-14: "Six days you may labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns"
>
> Exod 20:12/Deut 5:16: "so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving to you"
>
> Exod 20:17/Deut 5:21: "or your male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor"

Once these materials have been eliminated, what remains appears to be a basic Decalogue. It is very similar to the commandments we memorized as children.[35] But even at this point we could theoretically eliminate words that have the appearance of being added in the early years of oral transmission for the sake of clarification. To isolate such words, of course, is very subjective, but if we were to hypothetically do this, the following might be such possible words to be eliminated.

> v. 2: "your God" simply clarifies who the Lord is.
>
> v. 3: "besides me" is superfluous to the essential commandment.
>
> v. 4: "for yourselves" might be superfluous."
>
> v. 7: "of the Lord" need not be mentioned, since it is obvious from the first command that Lord is the name of the deity.
>
> v. 8: "to keep holy" need not be mentioned, since the verb "remember" (ZCR) or "observe" (SHMR) is sufficient.
>
> v. 12: perhaps, "and your mother" was added, or perhaps another word stood in the place of "father and mother," such as the word "old ones" or "elders" (ZCNM).

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v. 16: “against your neighbor” is superfluous to the command.

VI

At this point we could stop, for we have hypothetically reconstructed a short form of the commandments. This is a form that feasibly could have been carved into tablets of stone. Even if such carving never occurred, the commandments should have been in shortened form at some point in the transmission to give rise to the tradition that Moses did carve them on tablets of stone.

Subsequent reconstruction of the commandments is extremely hypothetical, and some scholars are very reluctant to change words in the text so drastically. Nevertheless, here are some of the suggestions:

First, perhaps all the commandments were originally stated in negative form. Since the verbs are different in Deuteronomy 5 and Exodus 20 versions of the Sabbath command, it does not seem too radical to suggest yet a different verb altogether may have originally been used. Perhaps, the original command was “do not dishonor the Sabbath.”[36] Once “dishonor” was removed, it is then understandable why two different verbs, “remember” and “observe,” arose to replace it. Likewise, the parental command might have original been, “do not dishonor your father,” or if we emend the text even more, we might read, “Do not dishonor your elders.” This would explain why the later meanings of the command would have evolved into respect for parents and respect for those in authority. “Elders” would contain the nuance of both parents and leaders of the community. There is also the issue of the two different words used in the false witness command: SHKR in Exod 20:16 and SHWA in Deut 5:20. As mentioned above, it may be that SHKR was the original word, but SHWA replaced in Deut 5:20 because the same word was used in the command not to misuse the divine name.

Second, the other issue is the number of the commands. In addition to the expression, “I am the Lord” there are twelve commandments, if one wishes to count the imperative “do no bow down before them” in conjunction with the prohibition of images. Jews and Christians over the years, however, believe that particular imperative simply is an elaboration upon the imperative not to make idols. We, likewise, have treated it as a Deuteronomic addition. That, however, leaves us with “I am the Lord” and eleven imperatives. The expression “I am the Lord” appears in legal sequences in the book of Leviticus (Lev 18:5; 19:2) and must be counted as a command to give these sequences a numerical total or either ten or twelve imperatives. Therefore, many (including traditional Jews) count it as a command. If this is the case, then originally the Ten Commandments would have been the Twelve Commandments. There are several advantages to this enumeration theory. We no longer have to combine two of the commands: Roman Catholics and Lutherans combine “no other gods” and “no images,” following the opinion of Augustine around 400 C.E., Protestants in general combine the two coveting commands, and orthodox Jews combine both sets, since “I am the Lord” is the first command for them. The second advantage is that Exodus 20 corresponds more closely to the twelve commands in the Dodecalogue in Exodus 34 (if we are counting the commands correctly there). According to our Exodus narrative, Exodus 34 is the second giving of the Decalogue to Moses. Actually, these two separate codes may have been parallel codes, one civil (Exodus 20) and one ritual (Exodus 34) for Israelites in the early years. The narrative clearly presents both. It would make sense if both codes had 12 commands. The problem with this reconstruction is the Exod 34:28 refers to the commands in that chapter as the 10 words, which implies we should count them as 10 commands in Exodus 20. Perhaps that expression referred to something else which has been dropped from the narrative (an extremely hypothetical suggestion). We do not know. Thus, our hypothetical reconstruction of the “Twelve Commandments” must remain only an interesting hypothesis.

Conclusion

What then shall we say? It appears that the Exodus 20 text sans the Priestly editing is older than the Deuteronomy 5 text. If Blum’s theory is correct, the Exodus 20 text, thus reconstructed, should be comparable to the Deuteronomy 5 text. This is not so. We need not jettison Blum’s theory though. However, it does become necessary to suggest that the Deuteronomic material in Deuteronomy 5 received further editorial modification after the KD text of Exodus 20 was established. There is Deuteronomic material common to both texts and Deuteronomic material that is distinctive and unique to the text in Deuteronomy 5. This alone implies two stages of Deuteronomic redaction. How we can envision this and under what circumstances is difficult to imagine. However, the transmission of the biblical text is probably infinitely more complex than we can ever reconstruct. Thus, though I believe Blum’s paradigm is most adequate in explaining the overall development of the text, minor modifications must be suggested to

fully account for all the idiosyncrasies of the biblical text.[37]

Footnotes

[1] Erhard Blum, Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch, BZAW, vol. 189 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), pp. 9-218 discuss KD and pp. 239-360 discuss KP.

[2] Blum, Komposition, pp. 94, 98, 176-77, 230.

[3] Thomas Dozeman, Exodus, The Eerdmans Critical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), p. 469.

[4] Frank Lothar Hossfeld, Der Dekalog: Seine späten Fassungen, die originale Komposition und seine Vorstufen, OBO 45 (Fribourg und Göttingen, 1982.

[5] Christoph Levin, "Der Dekalog am Sinai," VT 35 (1985): 161-91.

[6] A. D. H. Mayes, Deuteronomy, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 162-65.

[7] Robert Gnuse, "Tradition History," Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999), p. 587.

[8] Raymond Collins, "Ten Commandments," ABD 6:383.

[9] E. Meier, Die ursprüngliche Form des Dekalogs hergestellt and erklärt, 1846, pp. 66ff, quoted in Nielsen, p. 78.

[10] Hans Schmidt, "Mose und der Dekalog," Eucharistion: Studien zur Religion and Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments (Festschrift für Hermann Gunkel), (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923), pp. 79-119.

[11] Karlheinz Rabast, Das apodiktische Recht im Deuteronomium und in Heiligkeitscgetsetz, Dissertation at Erlangen, 1948, pp. 54-57.

[12] Eduard Nielsen, The Ten Commandments in New Perspective: A traditio-historical approach, SBT, 2nd ser., vol. 7 (Naperville, Il: Allenson, 1968), pp. 42, 84-93.

[13] Henri Cazelles, "Les Origines du Decalogue," Eretz Israel (1969): 14-19, and "Ten Commandments," IDBS, ed. Keith Crim (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1976), pp. 875-77, which provides the list here quoted, p. 876.

[14] Walter Harrelson, The Ten Commandments and Human Rights, OBT 8 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1980), pp. 40-42. Also, "Ten Commandments," IDB 4:569-573, especially p. 572.

[15] André Lemaire, "Essai d'histoire de la redaction," Festscrift für Henri Cazelles, AOAT 212 (Neukirchen, 1981), pp. 259-95, summarized in Jean Vincent, "Neuere Aspekte der Dekalogforschung," BN 32 (1986): 85-86.

[16] Levin, "Der Dekalog am Sinai," pp. 188-89.

[17] Michael Goulder, The Psalms of Asaph and the Pentateuch: Studies in the Psalter, III, JSOTSup 123 (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 293-97.

[18] Bernhard Lang, "Twelve Commandments—Three Stages: A New Theory on the Formation of the Decalogue," Reading from Right to Left: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of David J. A. Clines, eds. Cheryl Exum and H. G. M. Williamson, JSOTSup 373 (London, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), pp. 290-300.

[19] William Johnstone, "The Decalogue and the Redaction of the Sinai Periciope in Exodus ZAW 100 (1988): 383; Reinhard Gregor Kratz, "Der Dekalog im Exodusbuch," VT 44 (1994): 205-38; Axel Graupner, "Die zehn Gebote im Rahmen alttestamentlicher Ethik: Anmerkungen zum gegenwärtigen Stand der Forschung," Weisheit, Ethos und Gebot: Wesisheits- und Dekalog-tradition in der Biblel und im frühen Judentum, ed. Henning Graf Reventlow, Biblisch-Theologische Studien, vol. 43 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2001.

[20] Lothar Perlitt, "Dekalog: I. Altes Testament," Theologische Realenzyklopädie 8 (New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), p. 410.

[21] Frank Crüsemann, Bewahrung der Freiheit: Das Thema des Dekalogs in sozial-geschichtlicher Perspektive, Kaiser Traktate 78 (1983), and The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law, trans. Allan Mahnke (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996); Levin, Die Verheissung des neuen Bundes in ihrem theologiegeschichtlichem Zusammenhang ausgelegt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), pp. 83-95; E.-J. Waschke, "'Es ist dir gesagt, Mensch, was gut ist...' (Mi 6,8). Zur Frage nach dem Begründungszusammenhang einer biblischen Ethik am Beispiel des Dekalogs (Ex 20/Dtn 5)," TLZ 118 (1993): 379-88; and Kratz, "Der Dekalog, pp. 205-38, who believes the Book of the Covenant inspired its creation as well as Hosea.

[22] Hossfeld, Der Dekalog, pp. 96-99.

[23] Christoph Dohmen, "Der Dekaloganfang und sein Ursprung," Bib 74 (1993): 175-95.

[24] Lang, "Neues über den Dekalog," TQ 164 (1984): 58-65; and Eckart Otto, "Die Dekalog als Brennspiegel israelitische Rechtsgeschichte," Alttestamentliche

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Glaube und Biblische Theologie: Festschrift für Horst Dietrich Preuss zum 65. Geburtstag (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), pp. 59-68, who also sees the emergence of the Decalogue as reflective of the movement of the legal process from familial settings to courts and the evolution of Law into Ethos.

[25] Lothar Perlitt, Bundestheologie im Alten Testament, WMANT 36 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), pp. 156-238, and Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Deuteronomic Contribution to the Narrative in Genesis-Numbers: A Test Case," Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism, eds. Linda Schearing and Steven McKenzie, JSOTSup 268 (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 84-115.

[26] Ron Tappy, "Lineage and Law in Pre-Exilic Israel," RB 107 (2000): 175-204, 321-37.

[27] Hossfeld, Der Dekalog, and "Zum synoptischen Vergleich der Dekalogfassungen," Vom Sinai zum Horeb, ed., Hossfeld (Würzburg: Echter, 1989), pp. 73-117, believes that Deuteronomy 5 was edited by "D" then lightly by "P" to produce Exodus 20; Lang, "Dekalog," pp. 58-65; Johnstone, "Decalogue," pp. 361-85, suggests that a core of Deuteronomy 5 was used to generate Exodus 20, first by "D" and then by "P"; Otto, "Brennspiegel," pp. 59-68; Dohmen, "Dekaloganfang," pp. 175-95; and Lang, "Twelve Commandments—Three Stages: A New Theory on the Formation of the Decalogue," Reading from Right to Left: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of David J. A. Clines, eds. Cheryl Exum and H. G. M. Williamson, JSOTSup 373 (London, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), pp. 292-93.

[28] Hossfeld, "Zum synoptischen Vergleich" pp. 88-104.

[29] Levin, "Der Dekalog am Sinai," VT 35 (1985): 161-91; Erhard Blum, Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch, BZAW 189 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990), pp. 94-98, 176-77, who believes that both decalogues are edited and placed into their contexts by KD and that they existed prior to the work of KD; and Kratz, "Dekalog," pp. 205-38.

[30] Graupner, "Zum Verhältnis der beiden Dekalogfassungen Ex 20 and Dtr 5," ZAW 99 (1987): 308-29, "Vom Sinai zum Horeb order vom Horeb zum Sinai? Zur Intention der Deppelüberlieferung des Dekalogs," Verbindungslininen: Festschrift für Wener H. Schmidt zum 65. Geburtstag (Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000), pp. 185-210, and "Die zehn Gebote," pp. 61-95, especially 86-91.

[31] Some of these arguments are presented by Moshe Greenberg, "The Decalogue Tradition Critically Examined," The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition, eds. Ben-Zion Segal and Gershon Levi (Jerusalem, Israel: Magnes Press, 1990), p. 95, who adds other observations to defend the priority of Exodus 20. 1) Deut 5:16 adds "as the Lord your God commanded you" and "that it may go well with you." However, I would point out that those terms do not indicate a younger age, but simply are editorial references back to Exodus 20 in the final edition of the Pentateuch. Since they are Deuteronomic expressions, it implies that a Deuteronomic Editor must be aware of the placement of a written version of Exodus 20 prior to the written book of Deuteronomy. 2) Deut 5:15 appeals to the Exodus, which is a theme of Deuteronomy and is therefore secondary. However, I would point out that the appeal to exodus in Deut 5:15 and the appeal to creation in Exod 20:11 are both secondary and could have been added at any time.

[32] Most would assume that the editing of Exodus 20 was influenced by the narrative in Genesis 1; however, Nielsen, Ten Commandments, p. 97, maintains that Genesis 1 was influenced by the Exodus 20 Decalogue, and that this is especially evident in the language concerning images.

[33] Nielsen, Ten Commandments, pp. 37-38, who believed this indicated the priority of the Exodus 20 version.

[34] Nielsen, Ten Commandments, pp. 41-42.

[35] Moshe Weinfeld, "The Uniqueness of the Decalogue and Its Place in Jewish Tradition," The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition, pp. 6-7.

[36] Nielsen, Ten Commandments, p. 103, suggests that the command moved from the negative to the positive when the day was no longer perceived as a taboo day but rather a day of festival, perhaps during the Babylonian Exile.

[37] Wynn Williams, The State of the Pentateuch: A comparison of the approaches of M. Noth and E. Blum. BZAW 249 (New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), likewise critiques Blum for failure to give a method that really penetrates behind the literary text to discern the real complexity of the process.

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