NOTES AND COMMUNICATIONS

"DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY", "DO NOT MURDER"

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I

It has already been observed by scholars\(^1\) that in some texts of the Second Temple period the seventh commandment of the Decalogue precedes the sixth. Since, so far, the observation has been made only in passing, a more complete and precise survey of all the texts containing this *varia lectio* may be of help.

In the Massoretic and the Samaritan versions of the Pentateuch the order of the two commandments under review is: "do not murder", "do not commit adultery", whereas in the LXX and in other authorities, the order is: "do not commit adultery", "do not murder". The Massoretic order is supported by Josephus (*Ant. III*, 91–92), and, as I have learned recently in a private conversation with Professor Frank M. Cross, Jr., by a Herodian Hebrew text of Deuteronomy found at Qumran. The LXX order is supported by references to it in the writings of Philo.\(^2\) This suggests that Egyptian Jews knew only this order. Philo asserts\(^3\) that the second table of the Decalogue begins with the prohibition against adultery. He holds this to be the greatest of crimes. Philo would hardly have made this point if he and his compatriots also knew the order "do not murder", "do not commit adultery".

The Egyptian and Lucianic texts of the Greek Decalogue of Deut. 5:17–18 agree on Philo’s order, while the Hexaplaric and catena texts follow the Masoretic version. These latter texts are obviously corrections to the Masoretic tradition, while the Egyptian and Lucianic texts have preserved the Old Greek readings.

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2 *De decalogo* 121 ff.; *De specialibus legibus* III, 8; *Quis rerum divinarum haeres* 173.

3 *De decalogo* 121; *De specialibus legibus* III, 8. In a long list of sins in *De confusione linguarum* 117, Philo speaks *inter alia* about: "...violence with murder, seductions with adulteries... thefts with robbery, perjuries with falsehood..." Although the order is similar to that of the Massoretic Decalogue, it cannot be deduced that Philo knew the Massoretic order. His arrangement could have been caused by the very nature of the topic. But it is possible that in this case he was influenced by a list which depended on the Massoretic Decalogue.
In Ex. 20:13–15, the Hexaplaric readings, as one would suspect, concur with the Massoretic order; but the Lucianic text, which unfortunately is represented only by the minuscule n, here preserves the Old Greek order of the Deuteronomic Decalogue. Strangely though, Vaticanus and the MSS usually aligned with it, read: “Do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not murder”. However, here too the prohibition of adultery is the sixth commandment.

One may suppose that the deviating order of the prohibitions of theft and murder is an inner-Greek development. We must therefore assume that the Old Greek of both the Ex. and the Deut. version of the Decalogue had the sequence “do not commit adultery”, “do not murder”.4

This assumption is further strengthened by the text of Romans 13:9: “do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal... and if there is any other commandment...”; and of James 2:11: “He who said, Do not commit adultery, also said, Do not murder”. As is generally recognized, Paul and James5 used the Greek Bible.

Of special interest in this connection is the Book of Didache in its relation to the earlier Jewish book The Two Ways, if such was indeed the name of this document. As has been shown,6 the latter book is preserved in an old Latin translation made from the Greek version, while our Didache is the result of a Christian author’s expansion of The Two Ways through the incorporation of various quotations from the New Testament, and additional material of his own. The different order of the sixth and seventh commandments in the (Jewish) Latin The Two Ways, and in the Christian-Greek Didache furnish further proof of the distinction between the two books.

Two almost identical lists of sins appear in both documents (chapters II and V in Didache), and both begin with the sixth and seventh commandments of the Decalogue. In the first case the Didache has the order: “do not murder, do not commit adultery”, and in the second: “murderers, adulterers”. In both instances the sequence is that of the Massoretic tradition. In the Latin treatise the first list reads: “non moechaberis, non homicidium facies”, and the second: “moechationes, homicidia”. In both instances the order follows the tradition of the Old Greek.7

4 My thanks go to Prof. Cross for his help on this point.
7 A confirmation of our assumption that the Latin translation here reflects the original text of The Two Ways may be found in the sequence μοσχία, φόνος of the Epistle of Barnabas XX, 1. As has been shown, Barnabas knew not the Didache, but The Two Ways. Ch. XX of his letter is based upon the list found in ch. V of The Two Ways.
In chapter III (2, 3) the Didache reads: “wrath leads to murder... and concupiscence to adultery”, while the Latin manuscript, at this point, has only the phrase: “wrath leads to murder”. It is clear that here again the Didache follows the Massoretic order 8 while nothing concerning order can be gathered from the Latin text because of the lack of a parallel to the second phrase.

The difference between these two witnesses, and their agreement with the respective order of one of the ancient versions may be explained as follows: If The Two Ways was originally written in Greek or if the treatise is based upon the Hebrew tradition underlying the Old Greek, it can be taken for granted that it followed the original order of the Old Greek or its Vorlage. In this case the present order of the Latin text simply resulted from a faithful rendering of the Greek. As against this, the Christian author of the Didache may deliberately have adapted the order to the Massoretic tradition, perhaps at the same time as he expanded the older book. The author of the Didache could have obtained his knowledge of the Massoretic version either directly from the late Hebrew text, or — and this is more probable — indirectly by using MSS of the LXX which had been revised to concur with the Massoretic text.

It is also possible that the Christian Didache preserves the order of the two commandments as it was found in The Two Ways. In this case one could surmise that the older book was originally written in Hebrew or Greek, but reflected the same tradition as the one extant in the MT. The Latin treatise would then reflect changes introduced by the translator or by a copyist under the influence of the Old Greek tradition. It may be added that the extant MSS of the Old Latin version normally support the Old Greek in the Decalogues of Deuteronomy and Exodus.

Of the possibilities discussed, the first seems to be the more probable. Should the assumption be correct that the Didache represents a correction of an Old Greek order towards that of the MT, we would have here the oldest evidence for the influence of the MT on Greek texts of the Decalogue.

II

That the Old Greek order of the sixth and seventh commandments represents an early Hebrew textual tradition becomes clear from the Nash Papyrus, which gives the order, “do not commit adultery”, “do not murder”. With this order the ancient work, Antiquitates Biblicae, 9 which is a pseudo-Philonic

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treatise, also agrees. It appears that the book was originally written in Hebrew towards the end of the first century C.E., but survived only in a Latin translation which was made from an earlier Greek one. The book relates the Biblical history from the Creation to the reign of David. In the description of the Sinai episode, the author presents God as directly proclaiming the Ten Commandments to Israel, enlarging on each commandment as he goes along. In chapter XI, 10–11, we read: “Non moechaberis quia non moechati sunt in te inimici tui sed existi in manu excelsa. Non occides, eo quod non dominati sunt tibi inimici tui, sed vidisti mortem eorum.”

The Jewish humanist of the sixteenth century Azariah di Rossi noticed that the order of the Decalogue in Antiquitates Biblicae was the same as that in the writings of Philo, and drew the conclusion that the Antiquitates had been written by Philo. We can hardly agree with di Rossi’s conclusion, since it seems that the Antiquitates were originally written in Hebrew, whereas Philo wrote Greek. Thus the question must be asked how the Old Greek order came to be preserved in this book. It is possible, of course, that the Latin or Greek translator changed the sequence of the sixth and seventh commandments in conformity with the Old Greek tradition. But it is also feasible that the Hebrew author simply used a Hebrew manuscript of the Nash Papyrus type. The latter possibility appears to be more probable. It is difficult to imagine that the translators first changed the basic order, and then went on to reverse the expanded statements which surround the two commandments in this reference in the Antiquitates.

To summarize: both the positive and reverse orders of the sixth and seventh commandments of the Decalogue are borne out by important witnesses in ancient manuscripts. On the side of the Massoretic tradition are to be found the Samaritan version, Josephus, a Qumranic copy of Deuteronomy, and rabbinic literature. With the Old Greek tradition we find aligned the Nash Papyrus,

10 In ch. XLIV, 6–7 God refers twice to His Ten Commandments, but here the commandments 6–8 are in reversed order compared with ch. XI: “et constitui eis non furari... et iussi eis homicidium non facere... et precepit eis ne meeharent... et quod discri eis ut non furarentur... Et quod diseram ut non occiderent... Et cum praeceptum eis non moechari...” This reversed order is also found in Jer. 7:9: “Will you steal, murder and commit adultery...” Weiss (loc. cit., n. 1) maintains that Jeremiah quoted these three commandments in a deliberate chiastic order, and that accordingly his text of the Decalogue was identical with the Old Greek and with the Nash Papyrus. The fact that Pseudo-Philo in his verbal quotation of the Decalogue in ch. XI adheres to the order of the Old Greek, but in his free quotation in ch. XLIV lists commandments 6–8 in the reversed order of his own text, which is identical with that of Jer. 7:9, strengthens Weiss’ hypothesis.

11 נאטור יניב (ed. Warsaw 1899) 87, 91.
probably the Hebrew Vorlage of the Antiquitates, and possibly the Hebrew source (or sources) of The Two Ways. While it is not our task to decide which order is original, the fact must be underlined that both orders are richly attested in the Second Temple period.

It is clear that the New Testament presents Paul and the author of the Epistle of James as using the Old Greek tradition. However, in view of the conflicting testimony of the Gospels it becomes difficult to decide what tradition Jesus used. In Mt. 15:19 and in the parallel Mc. 7:21–22 we find the sequence “murders, adulteries”, i.e., the Massoretic order. In the triple tradition of the pericope of the Rich Young Ruler, Lk. 18:20 has the order of the Old Greek, Mt. 19:18 that of the MT, while the MSS of Mc. 10:19 are rather evenly divided between the two. It is interesting that Matthew in both cases concurs with the MT. However, both these passages are lists, and lists are, as we know, often exposed to external influences and therefore do not make the best witnesses. In addition to this limitation some scholars call into question the authenticity of Mt. 15:19 and Mc. 5; 7:21–22. Thus we are in need of a text, or texts, which contain more certain indications of the order adopted by Jesus. Such a text may be found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:21–30): “You have heard that it was said to the men of old: Do not murder... You have heard that it was said: Do not commit adultery...” I see no cause for doubting that Matthew here reflects the original sequel of Jesus’ exposition of the Law. Thus there are strong reasons for believing that Jesus did follow the Massoretic order: “do not murder”, “do not commit adultery”, and not the reverse sequence which is reflected inter alia in the Nash Papyrus and the Old Greek.

12 If Weiss’ analysis is correct, this order existed already in the time of Jeremiah.
13 Mc. 7:21–22 reads according to the Codex Bezae: πορνεία, κλέμματα, μοιχεία, πόνος, πλασματικα, δόλος, πονηρία. Thus “adulteries” precede “murder”, as in the Old Greek.
14 I hope to prove elsewhere that Mt. 15:19, even if not genuine, preserves an older form than Mc. 7:21–22.
16 In a separate paper I shall endeavour to show that there exists a literary affinity between Jesus’ words and the passage in The Two Ways 3, 1–6.