The Influence of the Decalogue: Historical, Theological and Cultural Perspectives

Mon 16 to Tues 17 April 2012
Trinity College, Oxford

Sponsored by Heythrop College, London and the Faculty of Theology, Oxford.
Programme

Monday 16 April 2012

8:45 Registration

9:00 Welcome and Introduction

9:15-10:45 First Session, chaired by Christine Joynes

Dominik Markl, S.J. The Ten Words revealed and revised: The origin of law and legal hermeneutics in the Pentateuch

Innocent Himbaza The Reception History of the Decalogue through early translations. The case of Septuagint, Peshitta and Targum

Sarah Pearce Philo’s De Decalogo

10:45-11:15 Coffee Break

11:15-12:45 Second Session, chaired by Sue Gillingham

J. Cornelis de Vos The Decalogue and Early Jewish Wisdom Literature: ‘Unwritten Laws’ or Decalogue reception?

Hermut Löhr The Decalogue in the New Testament Apocrypha

Miguel Lluch Baixauli The Decalogue in Western Theology from the Church Fathers to the 13th Century

13:00 Lunch

14:30 Coffee

15:00-16:30 Third Session, chaired by Christopher Rowland

Randall Smith Thomas Aquinas and the Medieval Interpretation of the Decalogue in Terms of the Natural Law

Hans-Jürgen Fraas The Reception of the Decalogue in the Protestant Catechisms

Luis Resines The Decalogue in catechisms of America in the XVI century (read by Christine Joynes)

19:00 Conference Dinner: Pierre Victoire Bistro
Tuesday 17 April 2012

9:15-10:45 Fourth Session, chaired by Dominik Markl

Ian Green  Experiments in technique and varieties of lay response in the dissemination of the Decalogue in early modern Protestant England

Jonathan Willis  Repurposing the Decalogue in Reformation England

David Clines  The Decalogue in Scholarly Tradition

10:45-11:15 Coffee Break

11:15-12:45 Fifth Session, chaired by Christine Joynes

Christopher Rowland  ‘The law of ten commandments’: William Blake and the Decalogue

Luciane Beduschi  J. Haydn’s Die Heiligen Zehn Gebote als Canons and S. Neukomm’s Das Gesetz des alten Bundes, oder Die Gesetzgebung auf Sinai: a possible influence of Haydn’s canons on Neukomm’s oratorio?

Gerhard Lauer  The Law and the Artist in the age of extremes. On Thomas Mann’s “Das Gesetz”

13:00 Lunch

14:00-15:05 Sixth Session, chaired by Christine Joynes

Steven Wilf  The Ten Commandments and the Problem of Legal Transplants in Contemporary America


15:05-15:30 Coffee

15:30-16:15 Discussion, chaired by Dominik Markl: Evaluation and Perspectives

20:15 A brief evening concert in Jesus College Chapel

Musical Settings of the Ten Commandments
Works of Tallis, Bach, Haydn, von Neukomm
The Heythrop College Consort
Joey Draycott (Conductor); Daniel Chambers (Organ)

Sponsored by Heythrop College, London and the Faculty of Theology, Oxford.
Speakers in Alphabetic Order

Lloyd Baugh, S.J., Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Rome


Lloyd Baugh is a Canadian Jesuit priest living and teaching in Rome, where he holds the rank of Full Professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University. After basic degree studies in Toronto, he completed a Licentiate and a Doctorate in Fundamental Theology and Film Studies at the Gregorian, with a dissertation on the Christian anthropology of Ermanno Olmi in his first eight films. His research interests: include the Jesus- and Christ-Figure films; the use of film texts for theological (fundamental, moral, spiritual) reflection, and for interreligious dialogue, prayer experience and spiritual exercises; and the films of Krzysztof Kieslowski. Full-time at the Gregorian, he has also taught in England, Europe, Canada, the USA, Madagascar and the Philippines, and is presently completing a book-length study of Kieslowski’s Decalogue films.

Selected publications:
Reinterpretazione e attualizzazione dei Comandamenti per il mondo postmoderno: I film del Decalogo di Kieslowski, in: Consacrazione e Servizio, febbraio 2004, 54-68.

Luciane Beduschi, Sorbonne University, Paris

J. Haydn’s Die Heiligen Zehn Gebote als Canons and S. Neukomm’s Das Gesetz des alten Bundes, oder Die Gesetzgebung auf Sinaï: a possible influence of Haydn’s canons on Neukomm’s oratorio?

Luciane Beduschi obtained her PhD in 2008, with a dissertation on Sigismund Neukomm (Salzburg, 1778 – Paris, 1858). His Life, His Works, His Enigmatic Canons crowned by the Prix Richelieu of Chancellery of the Paris Universities. She taught at the Paris-Sorbonne University as Temporary Assistant from 2008 to 2010 and as Adjunct Professor at Paul Valéry University and Paris-Sorbonne University from 2010 to 2011. She is now teaching as Adjunct Professor at the Paris-Sorbonne University.

Selected publications:
David Clines, University of Sheffield

The Decalogue in Scholarly Tradition

Emeritus Professor David J A Clines, having studied classical languages in Sydney and Semitic Languages in Cambridge, now concentrates on Hebrew lexicography and contemporary literary approaches to the Hebrew Bible. Professor Clines was Head of Department 1994–2001, and he was a Publisher and Director of Sheffield Academic Press 1976–2001. He has been a Publisher and Director of Sheffield Phoenix Press since 2003. In 2001 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Amsterdam. In 2003 he was presented with a Festschrift entitled Reading from Right to Left: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of David J.A. Clines (ed. J. Cheryl Exum and H.G.M. Williamson). He was President of the Society for Old Testament Study in 1996, and President of the Society of Biblical Literature in 2009.

Selected publications:
- The Theme of the Pentateuch, Sheffield ²1997.

Edited works:

Hans-Jürgen Fraas, University of Munich

The Reception of the Decalogue in the Protestant Catechisms

Born in Dresden in 1934, Hans-Jürgen Fraas studied theology in Leipzig and Berlin from 1952 to 1957, and studied towards his doctorate at the Institute of Christian Archaeology and History of Christian Art in Halle/Saale from 1958 to 1960. After obtaining a doctorate in systematic theology (‘Theozentrische Theologie bei A. Schlatter und R. Seeberg’) at Berlin’s Humboldt University (then capital of the GDR) he escaped to the Federal Republic of Germany. In 1962 he was ordained by the Bavarian Lutheran Church. In 1968 he completed his habilitation at the University of Erlangen (professorial dissertation on the history of Luther’s Small Catechism). Since 1969 he held a post at the University of Augsburg for professor for religious education until 1980. He then was professor at the University of Munich until his retirement in 2000.

Selected publications:
- Facetten gelebter Frömmigkeit, Stuttgart 2002.
Ian Green, University of Edinburgh

Experiments in technique and varieties of lay response in the dissemination of the Decalogue in early modern Protestant England

Ian Green taught history for over thirty years at The Queen’s University of Belfast (of which he is a Professor Emeritus of Early Modern History). He is currently attached to the School of History, Classics and Archaeology of the University of Edinburgh as an Honorary Professorial Research Fellow; and is working on the final volume of his trilogy on the mechanisms by which Protestantism was disseminated by the clergy and received by the laity in early modern Protestant England.

Selected Publications:
Humanism and Protestantism in Early Modern English Education (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009)

Innocent Himbaza, University of Fribourg

The Reception History of the Decalogue through early Translations. 
The case of Septuagint, Peshitta and Targum

Innocent Himbaza is Privat Docent and Lecturer of the Faculty of Theology, University of Fribourg, Switzerland. He is a specialist of Textual Criticism and Text History of the Hebrew Bible. His PhD was on the Text of the Decalogue. He is also the editor of the Book of Leviticus in the Biblia Hebraica Quinta Project. Currently, he is preparing a commentary on the book of Malachi.

Selected publications:

Edited works:
Gerhard Lauer, University of Göttingen

The Law and the Artist in the age of extremes. On Thomas Mann’s “Das Gesetz”

Gerhard Lauer is Chair for German literature at the Göttingen University. His major research interests include (German) literary history, digital humanities, and cognitive literary studies. He is co-editor of the “Journal of Literary Theory” and head of the Göttingen Centre for Digital Humanities.

Selected publications:

Miguel Lluch Baixauli, University of Navarra

The Decalogue in Western Theology from the Church Fathers to the 13th Century

Miguel Lluch Baixauli was born in Valencia (Spain) in 1959 and ordained priest in 1987. He earned a doctorate in Theology at the University of Navarra (1988) as well as a doctorate in History at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve (1994). He was director of the Institute of Anthropology and Ethics of the University of Navarra from 2001 to 2010. At present he is extraordinary Professor of the History of Theology and the Church at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Navarra.

Selected publications:
Hermut Löhr, University of Münster

The Decalogue in the New Testament Apocrypha

Born in 1963, Hermut Löhr studied Protestant Theology and History in Bonn, Tübingen, Heidelberg and Strasbourg. His parish ministry was in Bonn-Holzlar. In 1994 was Dr. theol. at the University of Bonn 1994 and he completed his habilitation in theology at the University of Bonn in 2001. He held the post as Professor of New Testament at the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena from 2004 to 2007, since then the post of Professor of New Testament and History and Literature of Earliest Christianity at the University of Münster. He is co-editor of “Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments” (Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht) and “Themen der Theologie” (Mohr Siebeck). He was on the editorial Board of “New Testament Studies” from 2010 to 2012.

Selected publications:


*Paulus und der Wille zur Tat,* in: *ZNW* 98 (2007) 165-188.


Dominik Markl, S.J., Heythrop College, University of London

The Ten Words revealed and revised: The basis of legal hermeneutics in the Pentateuch

Dominik Markl obtained his PhD with Georg Fischer SJ in Innsbruck / Austria from 2004 to 2006. From 2006 to 2008 he did youth work in Vienna. He worked as a Humboldt Research Fellow with Eckart Otto in Munich between 2008 and 2010. He is currently teaching Old Testament at Heythrop College since 2010; habilitation in Old Testament Studies at the University of Innsbruck in 2011. His main research interest is in the Pentateuch, especially the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, the Decalogue and textual pragmatics.

Selected publications:


Sarah Pearce, University of Southampton

*Philo’s De Decalogo*

Sarah Pearce received her B.D. in London (1988) and her DPhil in Oxford at the Faculty of Oriental Studies in 1995. Currently she holds a post as Ian Karten Professor of Ancient Jewish Studies at the Parkes Institute for the Study of Jewish/non-Jewish Relations at the University of Southampton. From 2001 to 2006, she was co-director of the AHRC Greek Bible in the Graeco-Roman World Project with Tessa Rajak. Since 2007 she has been co-chair of the Philo of Alexandria Group at the Society of Biblical Literature with Ellen Birnbaum. She was President of the British Association for Jewish Studies in 2010, reviews editor of the Journal of Jewish Studies from 2001 and 2005, and from 2011 Associate Editor of the StudiaPhilonica Annual. Her research interests focus on early Jewish Bible interpretation, with particular focus on the Greek Torah and the writings of Philo of Alexandria.

Selected publications:
*The words of Moses: studies in the reception of Deuteronomy in the Second Temple Period*, Tübingen, GE, Mohr Siebeck (Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum) (forthcoming)

Luis Resines, Estudio Teológico Agustiniano, Valladolid (attendance cancelled)

*The Decalogue in catechisms of America in the XVI century*

Luis Resines, born in Valladolid (Spain) in 1943, studied ecclesiastical disciplines in Valladolid and Salamanca, obtaining the Doctorate in Theology in the Pontificia University of Salamanca; he completed his studies with specialization in Catechesis in the High Pastoral Institute of Madrid. Ordained priest in 1967, he has served various ministries in his diocese. He teaches Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Catechesis in the Augustinian Theological Study of Valladolid. He has worked and published on the History of the Catechesis, particularly about Catechesis in America in XVTh century.

Selected publications:
*Las raíces cristianas de América (=Colección V Centenario: 42)*, CELAM, Santa Fe de Bogotá 1993.
*Catecismos Pictográficos de Pedro de Gante, incompleto y mucagua* (BHH 13), Madrid 2007.
Christopher Rowland, University of Oxford

‘The law of ten commandments’: William Blake and the Decalogue

Christopher Rowland has been Dean Ireland’s Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at the University of Oxford since 1991. He has written on the history of apocalypticism and its importance for the interpretation of the New Testament. He has continued to explore this theme in his most recent book on the biblical interpretation of the visionary, engraver, poet and artist William Blake (1757-1827).

Selected publications:

Lesley Smith, University of Oxford (attendance and paper cancelled)

The Medieval Decalogue: an overview

Lesley Smith is Fellow and Tutor in Politics, and Senior Tutor of Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford. Her work is focused on the medieval schools and the early university of Paris, especially on the history of biblical commentary. She has published on topics such as the Glossa Ordinaria, Nicholas of Lyra, and the Book of Ruth, and has a particular interest in the manuscript materials of the medieval schools.

Selected publications:
ed. with E. Ann Matter, “From Knowledge to Beatitude”: St Victor, Twelfth-Century Scholars and Beyond, Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, in press; including essay, “Robert Amiclas and the Glossed Bible”.
In progress: The Ten Commandments and the Foundations of Medieval Theology.
Randall Smith, University of Notre Dame; University of St Thomas

Thomas Aquinas and the Medieval Interpretation of the Decalogue in Terms of the Natural Law

Born and raised near Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, Dr. Randall Smith also lived in Philadelphia and Chicago before attending college in Mount Vernon, Iowa, graduating with a BA in Chemistry from Cornell College. There he converted to Catholicism and decided to undertake studies in theology. He earned his M.A. in theology from the University of Dallas, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame in Medieval Studies and Philosophy. Currently he is Associate Professor of Moral Theology at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas, and this year, the 2011-12 Myser Fellow at the University of Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture. There he is finishing a book titled “Divine Order, Human Justice: Themis and Dike in Homer.” This book is part of a larger project on “The Roots of the Natural Law Tradition from Homer to Cicero.”

Selected publications:
What the Old Law Reveals about the Natural Law According to St. Thomas Aquinas, in: The Thomist 75 (2011) 95-139.
How to Read a Sermon by Thomas Aquinas, in: Nova et Vêrëta (forthcoming)

J. Cornelis de Vos, University of Münster

The Decalogue and Early Jewish Wisdom Literature: ‘Unwritten Laws’ or Decalogue reception?


Selected publications:
„Die Bedeutung des Landes Israel in den jüdischen Schriften der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit“, Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie 23 (2008), 75–99
Heiliges Land und Nähe Gottes: Wandlungen alttestamentlicher Landvorstellungen in frühjüdischen und neustamentlichen Schriften (FRLANT), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (in print)
„Exodus 20,5 und Johannes 9. Vom direkt zum indirekt strafenden Gott“, Mitteilungen für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte (in print)
Der Dekalog als Verfassung der κοσμοποίησις bei Philo von Alexandrien, in: Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte (forthcoming 2012)
Steven Wilf, University of Connecticut

The Ten Commandments and the Problem of Legal Transplants in Contemporary America

Steven Wilf is the Joel Barlow Professor and Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development at the Law School of the University of Connecticut, where he founded the Intellectual Property Program. He received both his Ph.D. in History from Yale University and his law degree from Yale Law School in 1995. Prior to joining the Connecticut faculty, he served as a law clerk for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. A scholar whose research focuses upon intellectual property law, historical jurisprudence, and legal history, he seeks to address the fundamental ways that the origins of legal processes effect normative outcomes. Numerous essays and a recent book, The Law Before the Law, explore imaginative, often extra-official understandings of legalism. Professor Wilf teaches Criminal Law, Development of the Regulatory State, Intellectual Property Law, and a variety of seminars on the legal regulation of knowledge. He has been DAAD guest professor at the Freie Universität (Berlin), Fellow in Comparative Legal History at the University of Chicago, Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies (Jerusalem), and the Microsoft Fellow in Law, Property, and the Economic Organization of Society at Princeton University's Program in Law and Public Affairs.

Selected publications:

Jonathan Willis, University of Birmingham

Repurposing the Decalogue in Reformation England

Since September 2011, Jonathan Willis has been a Lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Birmingham. In 2010 he began a three-year Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship, initially at Durham University, to work on a personal research project entitled 'The Ten Commandments and the English Reformation'. He gained his PhD from the University of Warwick in 2009, following doctoral study on the relationship between religious music and Protestant identity during the Reformation in England.

Selected publications:
Church Music and Protestantism in Post-Reformation England: Discourses, Sites and Identities (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).
The Influence of the Decalogue: Historical, Theological and Cultural Perspectives
An International and Interdisciplinary Conference in Oxford

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The Ten Words revealed and revised:  
The basis of legal hermeneutics in the Pentateuch  
Dominik Markl, S.J. (Heythrop College, University of London)

The history of reception of the Decalogue begins within the literary contexts in which it originates – the Pentateuch. This regardless of the questions concerning the original literary setting of the Decalogue; within the final form of the Pentateuch the Ten Commandments are portrayed as being revealed by God on Mount Sinai (Ex 20:1–17) and retold by Moses in the wilderness of Moab (Deut 5:6–21). The enigmatic divine script on the stone tablets that God hands over to Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:12; 31:18; 32:15f), that Moses destroys enraged by the Golden Calf (Ex 32:19) and that are rewritten and restored as a symbol of reconciliation (Ex 34:1, 4, 28f) contain the “Ten Words” (Ex 34:28). Yet, only Moses’ accounts in Deut 4:13; 10:4 clarify that these words are in fact to be identified with the “Ten Commandments.” Stored within the Ark of the Covenant, the tablets form the centre of the Sanctuary (Ex 25:16, 21; 40:20; 1 Kings 8:9), which is the place of further revelation (Ex 25:22). The Decalogue, therefore symbolises the hermeneutical source of all divine revelation that is to be mediated through the priests.

In this way, the contexts of the Ten Commandments, within the Pentateuch, attribute to them highest authority. Therefore it is surprising that Moses is portrayed as making changes to the very wording of the Ten Commandments as they are told in Ex 20 by God himself and even written in stone. Besides a few other differences, Moses significantly changes the wording and especially the reason of the Sabbath commandment. Whereas the Sabbath is rooted in God’s work of creation during six days and his rest on the seventh day according to Ex 20:8–11, the Sabbath serves as a day of remembrance of the Exodus according to Moses’ rewording of the commandment (Deut 5:12–15). The two versions of the Decalogue together ground the Sabbath in both creation (Gen 1f) and redemption (Ex 1–15) as two crucial theological narratives of the Pentateuch, binding narrative and law of the Pentateuch as a whole together through wide-ranging intertextual links.

Moses’ rewording of the Sabbath Commandment is of the highest significance for the legal hermeneutics of the Pentateuch. As these most special words can be altered and actualised by a religious authority like Moses, actualisation is introduced as a hermeneutical principle at the very core of the divine law. This principle is enacted in the arrangement of the two legal corpora following the two versions of the Decalogue. The Book of the Covenant (Ex 20:22–23:33) is reworded and de facto replaced by Moses’ rewording within the Law Code of Deuteronomy (Deut 6–26; resp. in a narrower sense Deut 12–26).

Outside the Pentateuch, only a few allusions to the Decalogue may be seen in Jer 7:9; Hos 4:2, and there seems to be a literary connection between Hos 12:10; 13:4; Ps 81:11 and the preamble in Ex 20:2 // Deut 5:6. As the other books of the Hebrew Bible contain very few allusions to the Decalogue, it is only the prominence that the Pentateuch attributes to this text that lay the foundation for its vast history of reception: its perception as the centre of the divine law documented on tablets of stone that became iconic in the history of art.
The Reception History of the Decalogue through early translations. The Case of Septuagint, Peshitta and Targum

Innocent Himbaza, University of Fribourg, Switzerland

Early translations like Septuagint, Peshitta and Targum are considered as good witnesses of the biblical text. However, since « traduttore, traditore » (to translate is to betray), we need to know the extent of fidelity to which these textual witnesses render the Decalogue. Second, some textual differences between the hebrew massoretic text (MT) and translations raise the question of their Vorlage. Did the translators read the same text as the one we have in MT? Third, the two versions of the Decalogue (Exod 20 and Deut 5) contain some textual differences, and translations don’t always reflect these differences in the same way. Thus when one studies the reception history of the Decalogue through early translations, he has to keep in mind many aspects of this topic.

Reading Septuagint, Peshitta and Targum leads to the following question: Do these translations reflect an interpretation of the Decalogue? The answer would be positive, even all the differences should not be considered as reflecting an interpretation by translators.

In the Septuagint version of Exod 20:12, the land given by the Lord is qualified as « good ». This qualification is lacking in the whole hebrew tradition while it is also found in the syriac version (Peshitta) of Deut. Another single reading of the Septuagint is found in Exod 20:17 // Deut 5:21. Here we read « or any animal of his », a reading which is not found in any other textual witness. These cases may reflect an interpretation of the text in its reception history. However, we do not know whether these « pluses » were « added » by the translator, or « found » in the Vorlage the translator used.

The Peshitta contains a « plus » in Deut 5:21. Here we read « nor his vineyard ». This reading is found nowhere else. It may also reflect an interpretation raised in the reception history of the Decalogue in order to complete the list of important elements that one should not covet.

One of the interpretations of the Targum is found in Exod 20:7 // Deut 5:11 where « to take the name in vain » is rendered with « to swear ». This reading may have been influenced by Lev 19:12. Other long targumic expansions are well known in Targum Neophiti, Pseudo-Jonathan and Fragmentary Targum. Beside the textual content, targumic traditions seem to reflect a discussion on the numbering of the commandments. They especially focused on what must be considered as the « first » commandment. That is why many targumic texts add « first word » and sometimes « second word », while other commandments are not numbered.

Thus, Septuagint, Peshitta and Targum are examples of textual witnesses in which early interpretations of the Decalogue are found. These interpretations may reflect discussions on what contains the Decalogue, how it should be understood as one Decalogue in two versions and how commandments should be numbered.
**De Decalogo: Philo as Interpreter of the Ten Commandments**

Sarah Pearce, University of Southampton

In the history of Jewish thought, Philo’s *De Decalogo* has a very special place as the earliest sustained commentary on the Ten Commandments. Indeed, in the words of Yehoshua Amir, it deserves ‘a place of honor…[as] the earliest attempt, Jewish or non-Jewish, to make a special study of [the Ten Commandments]…’ As an ‘innovator’, Philo often gives what Amir called ‘the seminal formulation of questions about the revelation at Sinai and the contents of the Ten Commandments that have challenged the exeges of every generation since his day’.

There is no doubt that Philo’s *De Decalogo* deserves, alongside a place of honour, a much bigger place in scholarship than it currently occupies. Though well served by Cohn’s critical edition of 1902, and some fine translations into modern languages, this is a very neglected work. Of the most significant studies to date, Amir contributed a key article, ‘The Decalogue according to Philo’ (1983), focusing (primarily) on the series of questions with which Philo grapples as a prelude to his discussion of the Commandments, and on the relation of Philo’s work to rabbinic traditions. The most valuable resource for the study of *De Decalogo* as a whole remains Valentin Nikiprowetzky’s translation and commentary (based on his thesis of 1964), which underlines the fundamental importance of approaching Philo’s *De Decalogo* as a commentary on the Greek Pentateuch, and which prepared the ground for Nikiprowetzky’s path-breaking work in his *Le Commentaire de l’Ecriture chez Philon d’Alexandrie* (1977), which decisively influenced future scholarship in emphasizing that Philo’s starting point as a thinker is always the words of the Torah, embodied in the Greek Pentateuch. My purpose in this paper is to discuss some general points about *De Decalogo* as a commentary on Scripture, and then to give a detailed example of Philo’s treatment of one of the Commandments, focusing on what Philo is the first to call the Second Commandment on the worship of images.

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The Decalogue and Early Jewish Wisdom Literature

“Unwritten Laws” or Decalogue Reception?

J. Cornelis de Vos, Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics,” Münster

If language and themes in early Jewish wisdom literature resemble the Decalogue, it is often hard to decide if they are really allusions to the Ten Commandments. Some or even almost all of the issues the Decalogue deals with, also occur in the so-called unwritten laws (ὁγγράφοι νόμοι and/or ὄγγραφα νόμιμα). The judgement if some or all issues recur depends on the definition of unwritten laws. There is, however, no uniform concept of the unwritten laws in Antiquity. To mention two of them: (a) One concept seems to comprise all the basic and principle norms and rules that are considered reasonable and self-evident to whole mankind; (b) another concept is that some of those universal norms are singled out into a limited set of unwritten laws.

I will substantiate this methodological problem by two examples from the early Jewish wisdom literature: (1) the so-called summary of the Decalogue in the sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides (verses 3-8); and (2) some scattered echoes of the Decalogue in the sentences of the Syriac or Pseudo-Menander (verses 9-10, 13, 15, 20, etc.). Pseudo-Phocylides and probably also Pseudo-Menander were Jews, and they were writing for addressees - most likely non-Jews - who were educated in the Greek-Hellenistic culture. Pseudo-Phocylides and probably also Pseudo-Menander tried to disguise Jewish morality into Hellenistic language and thinking.

In trying to discern echoes of the Decalogue in those works, I will apply the criteria developed by Richard B. Hays. However, in instances where authors possibly mislead their readers, it is necessary to go further than Hays who only dealt with the Pauline writings. The judgement whether or not the Decalogue is rendered can only be made through “a circumstantial evidence lawsuit.” We have to play through the thoughts and methods of an author of Jewish wisdom whom we suspect to have used the Decalogue. If the circumstances speak more for non-dependence than for dependence on the Decalogue, the accused is discharged.

Which criteria beyond Hays can we use? First of all we have to consider the transformation point from prose to poetry: If we were those poets, would we transform the words of the Decalogue in a similar way, or is the wording too far removed from that of the Decalogue? Secondly, there is the degree of transculturation; in other words: Is the Greek still Jewish? Thirdly, we have to reckon with a possible conflation of traditions (Decalogue, Lev 19, 18-20, unwritten laws): Can there be allusions to multiple text traditions at the same time? Fourthly, cultural memory can also be a source of echoes. Has the Decalogue become part of universal unwritten laws which are reasonable to and known by mankind? In that case, the above-mentioned points not necessarily depict an echo of the Decalogue in its scriptural form.
The importance of the Decalogue for early Christian thought can be gathered already from the oldest extant textual witnesses, i.e. the letters of Paul the Apostle and the Synoptic tradition. The selective reference to the Ten Commandments in these documents testifies to both the continuity with the Jewish tradition and the developing socio-religious distance to non-Christian Jewish communities.

One may wonder how this process develops further in the 2nd and 3rd century C.E. In this regard, the New Testament (or: "Early Christian") Apocrypha are important, although neglected evidence. As a matter of fact, they do not form a coherent corpus or a canon of texts, and they originate from different contexts (both geographical and chronological) of early Christianity. According to the scholarly consensus, their value as a historical source for the origins of Christianity in the first century C.E. is minimal. Nevertheless the NT Apocrypha are important witness of Christian thinking of their time and of its imagination of Jesus and Christian origins; they transmit images of the beginnings ("Bilder des Anfangs").

The paper investigates the importance of the Decalogue for early New Testament Apocrypha and compares the emerging picture to that gathered from earlier and contemporaneous evidence.
The Decalogue in Western Theology from the Church Fathers to 13th Century

Miguel Lluch-Baixauli

The literary work by Philo of Alexandria On the Decalogue is of great importance even though it belongs to the Jewish tradition. In patristic literature there is no specific treatise concerning the Decalogue. The precepts are named in the sermons and in other theological and moral treatises. One important exception, due to its later influence, is Origen’s sermon On the beginning of the Decalogue. We find an original approach in the writings of St Augustine, which inaugurated a new perspective and would leave its mark on the theological tradition of the Latin Church.

In the Sermons of St Caesarius of Arles we find an evident dependence on the Augustinian Decalogue, which also includes elements from the text by Origin. St Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede commented in their Biblical compilations on the Decalogue using St Augustine. Bede also helped to hand down the tradition of Origin. Alcuin of York wrote On the ten words of the law or brief exposition of the Decalogue. The contents were not original, but this was the first exposition of the Decalogue in the western Latin tradition. After this, there were Biblical commentaries, like those of Rabanus Maurus, or isolated references in other treatises such as that by Jonas of Orleans.

Biblical glosses were written from about the end of the 10th century to the 13th century, when the Glossa Ordinaria were written. The gloss of Exodus is attributed to Gilbert the Universal, and contains a sequence of quotations from Origen. In the 11th century St Peter Damian wrote a series of references to the Decalogue in his sermons and letters. At the beginning of the 12th century the Decalogue was used in St Bruno of Segni and in Rupert of Deutz in their Biblical commentaries. Later, it appeared in the commentaries of Honorius of Autun and Peter of Celle.

The School of Laon was where the first theological treatise on the Decalogue took shape. Doctrine was developed at the School of St Victor together with the treatise by Hugo and the Biblical commentaries by Andrew and Richard. The process continued with the Summa Sententiarum and the Ysagogé in Theologiam by one of the authors of the School of Abelard. The inclusion of the Decalogue in the Liber Sententiarum of Peter Lombard was decisive, because the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 would turn it into a basic text for Theology faculties. Their disciples, Peter Comestor and Peter of Poitiers discussed the Decalogue in Biblical commentaries and in the commentaries on the sentences.

In the 13th century theological literature on the Decalogue grew enormously within the Universities. In the first decades, the Summa Aurea of William of Auxerre contains the first treatise on the Decalogue inside a Summa Theologica, and the De decem mandatis by Robert Grosseteste is the first monographic treatise on the Decalogue in Latin Christian literature. After this, the doctrine on the Decalogue would continue to develop. One has to point to the Summa, treatises and diverse writings by William of Auvergne, Roland of Cremona, Thomas of Cobham, Alexander of Hales and his School, St Bonaventure, St Thomas Aquinas and Blessed John Duns Scotus.
Thomas Aquinas on the Ten Commandments and the Natural Law: Abstract

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In this paper, I argue that Thomas Aquinas’s famous discussion in Qq. 90-97 of the prima secundae of the Summa of Theology — what some have labeled the “Treatise on Law” — should be seen in terms of his larger theological project in the Summa, a project that involves incorporating the sort of Old Testament “law-based” ethics he inherited from the tradition with the new Aristotelian “virtue-ethics” approach that was becoming popular in the mid-Thirteenth Century.

If one were to look at other medieval summae of the period, one would find in them precisely what one finds in Thomas’s Summa of Theology: namely, a short introductory section laying out the various definitions of and distinctions among the different types of law serving as a preface to a much longer — indeed, in most cases, a very long — treatise on the Old Law. A broad study these summae contemporaneous with Thomas’s suggests that the really burning question on the minds of Thomas and his contemporaries was precisely the status of the literal meaning of the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament. Why this renewed interest in the Old Testament Mosaic Law? In brief, it had to do with a convergence of factors: renewed interest in the literal sense of the Old Testament, on the one hand, and the cultural challenges presented by the rediscovered and newly-translated Aristotelian corpus, on the other.

As Beryl Smalley has demonstrated, the Thirteenth Century saw a flowing of interest in the literal or plain meaning of the Old Testament. At roughly the same time, the newly-translated texts of Aristotle were flooding into the medieval Christian universities, opening up exciting new intellectual vistas for some, while seeming to present dangerous new threats to others. With Aristotle’s Ethics, scholars were uncovering a total science of ethics whose foundations and formulations were completely independent of biblical revelation. In this new cultural context, dominated as it was by reverence for logical categories and the arts of dialectic, the old modes of moral teaching through biblical moral allegory of the Moralia in Job-type that had characterized earlier generations were no longer considered adequate foundations for a serious ethical scientia. Another contributing factor, falling somewhere between the other two, was the influence of the work of the Jewish philosopher Maimonides, who had argued on good Aristotelian principles in the Guide for the Perplexed, that if laws are ordinances of reason, then God, certainly the most reasonable Lawgiver, will have given the Jewish people the most reasonable laws. Reading Maimonides inspired medieval Christian theologians to believe that they too could discover sensible “reasons” for each of the precepts of the Old Testament law, which they promptly set about to do.

It was within the context of these challenges that Christian theologians of the thirteenth century like Thomas Aquinas had to give a convincing account of how the Bible, with all its various odd and seemingly disconnected laws, could still be considered a reliable source of ethical knowledge. To illustrate the point, I show in the second half of the paper how Thomas reinterprets the Mosaic Law in terms of the natural law, something which allows him to preserve the moral force of the Decalogue by incorporating it into the sort of logical structure increasingly demanded by his university-trained peers.
The reception of the Decalogue in the Protestant Catechisms

Jürgen Fraas

The Protestant catechisms can be separated, according to their confessional development, into two main types; for the Lutheran Church Luther’s Small Catechism of 1529 is relevant, for the Reformed Church it is Calvin’s Genevan Catechism of 1542 and in the German-speaking territories it is the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563.

My remarks here will concentrate, apart from an occasional side glance on the reformist tradition, upon Luther’s Small Catechism, which, in the continuous modifications of its historical application and interpretation, reflects the history of theology as well as the history of the last 500 years.

When dealing with the reception of the Decalogue within the Protestant catechisms, two main themes can be identified: the relationship between Decalogue and natural justice and the relationship between law and Gospel.

The Decalogue is thought of as the positive law of the Israelites, but also as legal basis for all of creation. Whether the Decalogue is binding or not for Christians, or only insofar as it is in agreement with natural justice, has been a matter of controversy.

Law and Gospel – this concerns the central question of the Protestant doctrine. The Lutheran and the reformed model already differ in the intellectual localisation of the Decalogue within the catechism, according to their diverging evaluation of justification and sanctification. As for justification, the decisive criterion is the Pauline interpretation of a law in which man fails but which guides him to Christ and prepares him for Christ’s saving act. In the other case, sanctification is central. Here law is considered as guidance of Christian life in a positive sense.

Luther himself understood the relationship as a dialectical one, according to his doctrine of man as simul peccator et justus. The word of God appears to the peccator as law, to the justus as Gospel. This dialectical view, however, is lost by the 20th century.

After Luther, the doctrine of the triplex usus legis predominates. The triplex usus legis distinguishes between the usus politicus, the usus spiritualis or elenchthicus and the usus moralis. In the case of the usus politicus, law is the basis of all human interaction (in the sense of natural justice), whereas in the case of usus spiritualis or elenchthicus it teaches, promises and threatens; it causes man to fail and shows him his limitations in sin. Finally, in the case of usus moralis law returns to its original base in, so to speak, artificially enhanced form and becomes the norm for the new obedience of the believer.

From the middle of the twentieth century the catechism loses its importance in religious education and becomes irrelevant. Education rather focuses on life’s problems than on ecclesial tradition. As a consequence the issues we are concerned with here lay dormant, or must even be considered extinct.
The Decalogue in the Catechisms of America in the sixteenth century
Luis Resines. Valladolid (Spain)

The discovery of the New World was an opportunity in order to convert and christianize the inhabitants of the new lands. The difficulty of the languages, in Caribbean islands and in Mexico was the prior and major difficult. Religious friars who went to America were formed with the key criteria in Spain; and, therefore, when they tried to teach the Christian faith, they did it from the European mentality. They knew the printing, but the first printing press was not installed in Mexico until the year 1542; then printed catechisms began to appear in many languages.

We must make three groups of catechisms written in America:
1st group. The catechisms that include only the formularies of Christian faith but without any explanation.
2nd group. The second group is composed of catechisms, including an explanation of faith, and too, of the Decalogue and of each of the commandments.
3rd group. A very small number of pictographic catechisms, using not the word, but the drawing and painting, to communicate the faith to the Indians.

The first group, without explanations, is out of our interest.

In the second group, we find explications on each commandment. In the first commandment, the great problem was that all American peoples and ethnic groups were polytheists. Consequently, there was a situation not easy to change with the arrival of the Christian faith. The practice of idolatry was without doubt, the greatest problem. United with it, was the question of the images. Mainly missionaries took care to remove the idols, and especially the images of them. But with the new religion, other images (paintings and sculptures), representing Christ, the Virgin or some Saints, were proposed to the Indians’ eyes. Indians showed their surprise with the new images. Another problem was that it still remained the lively and active figure of the ancient priests of pagan cults, who did not easily stand the disappearance of a religion of which they were propagators, and of which they were firmly convinced; these priests (sorcerers, clairvoyants, magicians) were the direct antagonists of the missionaries.

Other practices rejected by Decalogue: the obligation of attending Mass, as a way to define the fulfillment of the third commandment, but with some tolerance, to the existing Sunday markets particularly in Mexico City, named «tianguez» (3rd commandment). The parents must not be obeyed (being older and being attached to the ancient traditions) when they order their children to return to idolatry (4th commandment). In the fifth commandment, offering his blood to their ancient divinities, or ritual drunkenness (5th commandment). Also is rejected the sodomy (6th commandment), or economic abuses by authorities (7th commandment).

The 3rd group. The pictographic catechisms.
The Nahua people, in Mexico, had a series of works by means of drawings, pictograms in which they narrated their chronicles and important events; in principle, it was not useful to convey the Christian faith. Some missionaries see in them a model that the Indians understood; and the idea of doing something similar came up, with a content which was useful to make the new faith present in the cultural forms that the Nahuas were used to. It was a hard work, because it was not always easy to make a pictogram which included the concepts and ideas absolutely unknown to the Indians: Virgin, Holy Spirit, grace, Eucharist… These figures, drawings or pictograms are, indeed, sacred figures, since they are used to present the Christian faith, a sacred reality. So, the Greek term hieros - gliphos (hieroglyphics) also fits them. With these catechisms that people understood, was possible offering Christian faith.
Experiments in technique and varieties of lay response in the dissemination of the Decalogue in early modern English Protestantism

Ian Green (February 2012)

The Ten Commandments were well known to the clergy and the educated laity of late medieval England in the Latin version taken from De uteronomy 5 in the Vulgate, but how often the uneducated laity heard them, in Latin or English, is unclear. The rise of the ‘Lollard’ heresy in the late 14th century provoked the Church to ban the unlicensed reading of scripture texts in English, and while this ban lasted, from 1408 to 1536, most versions of the Decalogue in English were either heavily abbreviated, and often in metre to aid memorization*, or consisted of a paraphrase rather than a close translation*. [*examples illustrated]

After Henry VIII’s break with Rome, there was a transitional period from the mid 1530s to the early 1560s during which there was a campaign to ensure that the laity learnt the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostles’ Creed and the Ten Commandments ‘in their mother tongue’. This was strongly supported (for rather different reasons) by Erasmian humanists, Lutheran evangelicals and the king, and also by members of the nascent English print trade, who were anxious to adapt existing texts to suit new circumstances*, and to supply new niche markets.*

In the short term this led to a profusion of versions of the Lord’s Prayer and Creed and especially of the Commandments. But by the early 1540s consensus was emerging, and the version that finally became the norm for centuries to come was the one that was incorporated into the so-called ‘Prayer Book catechism’ of 1549, in the expanded version in the Prayer Book of 1552.* This version was a literal and complete translation of Exodus 20 (verses 1-17); it appeared in English alone, without the Latin chaperon preferred by conservatives; and it adopted the numbering used in William Tyndale’s translation of the Pentateuch in 1530 (second commandment against idolatry, and a single commandment against coveting) – a division accepted even by the Catholic Bishop Bonner in Mary’s reign.*

The techniques for the dissemination of the Commandments during this transitional period were a mixture of old and new: the use of modified primers for the literate minority; the introduction of question and answer catechizing for both literate and illiterate parishioners; and the deployment of the complete text in the Communion service of the 1552 Book of Common Prayer,* with ‘the people’ making an appropriate response after each commandment was declaimed. Also in some churches older pre-Reformation iconography was replaced by visual representations of the Law, painted on canvas or plaster.

What we find in the second phase of development, from the 1570s to the early 18th century were an expansion and greater sophistication in the use of these techniques. To explain the Decalogue and show how it should be applied to daily life, there was a growth in the frequency of catechizing, and in the numbers of sermons or catechetical homilies given and treatises published; but also a constant search for new or improved techniques of instruction and a diversification of genres to meet the needs of all children and adults.* Other examples of innovations that were built on older foundations include the growing number of visual aids tolerated by the English authorities, including the engravings in various English Bibles of Moses holding the tablets of the Law.* Metrical versions of the Decalogue complete with the tunes to which they could be sung were also made widely available.* Meanwhile, more advanced pupils were offered growing numbers of scriptural ‘proof texts’ to be memorized alongside each Commandment,* and also given specialist catechetical lectures at university.*

Lay responses to these different stimuli are much harder to document. There are clear examples of the laity reading the primers and treatises just described, and the sales achieved by these and titles in cognate genres offer de facto evidence of demands for the ownership (or distribution to ‘worthy’ recipients) of such works. We can also see some men and women using the Commandments as a checklist to analyse their recent sins,* or even, as an act of piety, composing their own expositions or paraphrases of the Commandments, in prose or verse. Churchwardens often had the Commandments painted up in church not in the cheapest way possible, but in increasingly decorated frameworks.* There are also sufficient cases of part or all
of the Commandments being pasted or painted up on the walls of domestic* houses to suggest this may not have been uncommon in the late 16th or early 17th centuries.

On the basis of these and other clues, three provisional suggestions might be made about the impact of the Decalogue on the attitudes of the English laity in the early modern period. First, the English laity seems to have been prepared to accept the Ten Commandments as a basis for outward behaviour and introspection, and to abandon the 7 capital sins and virtues of pre-Reformation teaching which had probably been easier to memorize and apply. Secondly, many of the laity would seem to have been unwilling or unable to grasp the stern warnings given by Protestant clergy and teachers (as also by educated Catholic priests before and after the Reformation) that no matter how diligent or sincere were their efforts to keep the Law, they could not earn merit that way or improve their prospects of salvation. This lay obtuseness is evident both from the Protestant clergy’s horror at the semi-Pelagianism they found among the laity many decades after the Reformation, and in the laity’s expressions of hope, in their wills and family memorials, that God would recognize and reward the sterling efforts of the deceased to obey his commands. Thirdly, among the growing minority of the boys and youths exposed to the rite of passage that comprised a classical education, this moralistic tendency was probably reinforced by the reading of ancient pagan authors who idolized virtue as a mean between extremes, and equated the pursuit of virtue with honour and reward.

In short, the Ten Commandments were widely adopted by the laity in early modern England, but as an authorized, agreed source of moral teaching rather than of doctrinal insight. In the late modern period, there would be other yardsticks by which public and private morality could be judged; and for growing numbers of lay men and women these alternatives would either subsume or marginalize the Old Testament Decalogue, or eventually render it superfluous.

**Repurposing the Decalogue in Reformation England**

Jonathan Willis, University of Birmingham

For some time now historians have recognised that the Decalogue achieved a new prominence during the English Reformation. The point has often been made, and is now generally accepted, that the decision of the Reformed confessions to follow the Greek numbering of the Commandments at the very least reflected, and at most perhaps even contributed to, their strong anti-idolatrous and iconoclastic tendencies. The Decalogue also gained a significant role in catechesis and moral instruction, and so its increasing importance is often categorised as a primarily ethical phenomenon. In 1988, John Bossy famously equated the medieval ‘moral arithmetic’ of the Seven Deadly Sins with the early modern predominance of the Ten Commandments, suggesting a form of substitutionary moral equivalence between the two. Given preferment because of its impeccable scriptural credentials, the Decalogue entailed some significant shifts in emphases, but essentially ‘just’replaced the Seven Sins as the new moral compass of Christian Europe.

This paper will contend that the primary importance of the Ten Commandments in the Reformation was not their re-numbering, but their repurposing. It was not as an ethical document that the Decalogue achieved its most profound impact, but as a theological one. In fact, the Commandments came to define many of the key elements of Protestantism: from repentance to faith, and from justification to sanctification. This paper will explore the theological reconstruction of the Decalogue by English Reformers in the sixteenth century. It will aim to show that although evangelicals took it upon themselves to reform the Ten Commandments, they themselves, together with their faith, were in no small part shaped by their attitude to the Law: in other words, theirs was a Reformation of the Decalogue.
The Decalogue in Scholarly Tradition
David J.A. Clines

This paper will focus on how the scholarly tradition has treated three aspects of the Decalogue: (1) the claim that ‘God spoke all these words’; (2) how women are regarded in the Decalogue; (3) how the commandment against ‘killing’ is understood. The paper is not just a report of the scholarly tradition but a critique of it, attempting to expose the relatively uncritical, and thus unprofessional, reception of the Decalogue by biblical scholars.

In the first, the issue will be how and when the scholarly tradition registered the possibility that the Decalogue was, to some extent at least, a human creation. It is noticeable that even modern commentaries frequently do not refer to this statement at the head of the Ten Commandments, and the question must therefore arise whether the commentator accepts the claim of the text at face value.

In the second, the issue will be, following a gender analysis of the Decalogue, to what extent women are ignored by it, what the significance of that ignoring may be, and whether the relative absence of women from the Decalogue is noticed by scholars. This topic will further establish the male-identified character not only of the biblical text but also of the scholarly tradition in general.

In the third, the question will be how the commandment against killing has been understood, whether as a blanket condemnation of any killing, or of (intentional) murder, or of blood revenge. A critique will be offered of the apparent incapacity of scholars to evaluate the significance of a professedly general statement of moral principles that contains apparently irresolvable uncertainties.

‘The law of ten commandments’: William Blake and the Decalogue
Christopher Rowland

A feature of many London churches rebuilt after the Great Fire in 1666 is that many altarpieces include a reredos with the Decalogue. Such furnishings were part of William Blake’s (1757-1827) theology which was the high water point of two centuries of antinomian thought in England. The Decalogue, and its prominence in the Christian theology of his day, was a focus of his critique of a pattern of Christian religion. The Decalogue symbolized for him the religion of based on prescriptions and unquestioning subservience to divinely ordained prescriptions, ‘Memory’, in contrast to ‘Inspiration’, and ‘the Poetic Genius’. Blake considered Jesus as the supreme challenge to the ‘religion of commandments’ by ‘acting from impulse not from rules’ (The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, 23-4), preaching the ‘Eternal Gospel’ of ‘the forgiveness of sins’. What is probably Blake’s last image of the Decalogue is in many ways the most interesting. In his Illustrations of the Book of Job, completed in 1825, and in the closely related watercolour of twenty years earlier, we see the way in which Blake interprets Job’s night vision (Job 7:14) the Ten Commandments as a religion of what he called ‘Contraries’, which offered a promise as well as a threat.
The Decalogue was used in music at least since the 16th century. It was first associated with music composed for use in church liturgies. This was the case of compositions, for example, signed by John Hake, Barthélemy Le Bel, Michel Ferrier, John Brimley (16th century), John Ferrabosco, Matthew Locke, Henry Purcell (17th century), Samuel Sebastian Wesley (19th century). Their music consisted normally in responses to the Commandments. By the beginning of the 18th century, composers began to use the Decalogue as the argument for sacred pieces – pieces composed at this time were not exclusively for church use. Since the 18th century, we have Oratorios, Cantatas, Sacred Dramas on the Decalogue composed by Francesco Conti (Dio sul Sinai, 1719, an Oratorio); Johann Gottfried Schicht (Die Gesetzgebung oder Moses auf Sinai, 1790, a geistliches Drama); Félicien David (Moïse au Sinaï, after a prose sketch by B.-P. Enfantin, 1846, an Oratorio); Paul Gilson (Sinaï, 1889, a Cantata); Jules Massenet (La terre promise, after the Vulgate, 1897–9, an Oratorio). An Oratorio is “an extended musical setting of a sacred text made up of dramatic, narrative and contemplative elements. Except for a greater emphasis on the chorus throughout much of its history, the musical forms and styles of the oratorio tend to approximate to those of opera in any given period, and the normal manner of performance is that of a concert (without scenery, costumes or action).” We could say that between the 17th and the 18th century there is a big change in the use of the Decalogue in music: instead of being used for the church (during the service) it also is used in concert – thus frequently being performed outside the church. During the 20th century, this change is even more apparent. Composers worked on music for films based on the Decalogue: Zbigniew Preisner (for Krzysztof Kieślowski’s film Dekalog); Elmer Bernstein’s (score for Cecil B. DeMille’s The Ten Commandments). Also during the 20th century, Alfred Schnittke composed his opera The 11th Commandment. Élie Chouraqui and Pascal Obispo composed the musical Les Dix Commandements, first performed at the Palais des Sports de Paris in October 2000.

In 1791, Joseph Haydn wrote for the Count of Brühl (of Martinskirche), Hans Moritz, a canon collection: The Ten Commandments (Hb. XXVIIa: 1–10), first published in 1809. It is about eighteen pages of printed music in the modern edition. His pupil Sigismund Neukomm (Salzburg, 1778 – Paris, 1858) composed for the King of Prussia in 1828 an Oratorio in two parts for three soloists, chorus, and orchestra Das Gesetz des alten Bundes, oder Die Gesetzgebung auf Sinaï (10 Gebote). A version for voices and piano was published in London in 1832 by J. B. Cramer, Addison and Beale: Mount Sinai, or The Ten Commandments An Oratorio, in two parts, taken from the Holy Scriptures, translated from the German. It was first performed at the Derby Festival (England) in September 1831, then in Berlin in September 1832 by the Sing-Akademie and the Royal Chapel employing more than 400 musicians for two hours of music.

Sigismund Neukomm is the composer of about 2000 works, 50 Masses, 5 Oratorios, almost 150 canons, 14 enigmatic canons. Nowadays, Neukomm is known principally because he composed in 1814 an enigmatic canon for the first tombstone of his master Joseph Haydn. During more than thirty years, several composers and musicians tried, without success, to find a solution to this enigma. Many papers were published about the enigma during Neukomm’s life. By this means, Neukomm succeeded to call the attention to his master, soon forgotten after his death. Almost 150 years later, when Neukomm was considered forgotten, his name reappeared in connection with his enigmatic canon.

Could there be a relation between Neukomm’s Oratorio and Haydn’s canons on the Ten Commandments? If so, what is it? How were the text sources for the Decalogue treated musically by the two composers? When Neukomm exposes each Commandment on his Oratorio, is he inspired by the canons composed by his master? This paper will put these questions and search for answers to.
The Law and the Artist in the age of extremes. On Thomas Mann's "Das Gesetz"
Gerhard Lauer

Laws are not narratives. Nevertheless legitimation of laws depends on stories of their origins. On the first view Thomas Mann novel "Das Gesetz" just tells another story of the Decalogue, by a closer look Thomas Mann tells not a story about origins but about the impossible possibility to legitimate laws by stories. There are two entangle reasons for the intricate situation around 1939/1944. One is the historical concurrence with the ideologies and their prolific production of 'last' stories. The other reason is the affinity between artist and dictator, portrayed in the character of Moses. Is the artist capable to narrate the origins of the Decalogue in a 'lebensfreundlich' human manner. And if so how should art do this in the age of extremes? Thomas Mann's novel is an answer which is at the same time a problem in itself.

The Ten Commandments and the Problem of Legal Transplants in Contemporary America
Steven Wilf, Law School, University of Connecticut

In spring 2012, the legislatures of Georgia and Tennessee both unanimously voted to enact legislation that would permit the display of the Decalogue in government buildings, including courthouses. What is the purpose of such public exhibition of the Ten Commandments? Why has this display become the cause of a social movement of legal conservatives? And what does it mean to consider this particular set of law, which, after all, is the legal code of an obscure ancient Near Eastern tribe, so salient for modern American law? Most considerations of Decalogue display state statutes and court cases place these within the traditional framework of separation of church and state. In contrast, this paper focuses on a fundamental irony. Legal conservatives, who generally reject the importation of foreign law, have embraced the idea of the Decalogue as a legal transplant. My paper will probe the imagined genealogies traced between the Ten Commandments and American law, identify the importance of visual legal culture—the very notion of display in a monumental fashion—for proponents of the Decalogue, and suggest broader questions about the relationship between cultural particularity and the function of law in a modern secular society.

Lloyd Baugh

The ten films of Krzysztof Kieslowski’s Decalogue series (1988) provide a unique case study of moral imperatives and moral action in the postmodern world. Kieslowski speaks directly of God and the Commandments with some scepticism, but the texts of his films suggest a different attitude. The films are not simple illustrations of obedience to, or violation of, the commandments, but rather subtle and complex studies of human beings deeply challenged by the urgency of moral choices. The God-question is posed directly in the first film, and indirectly in the others; God is active in all the films, God’s grace moving dramatically and subtly and surprisingly in the experience of the protagonists. Kieslowski enunciates four fundamental principles in moral experience: the primacy of love; the sacredness of the life of the child; the sacredness of human life in general; and the crucial importance of conjugal commitment.
Musical Settings of the Ten Commandments

A brief evening concert

The Heythrop College Consort
Joey Draycott (Conductor)
Daniel Chambers (Organ)
Jesus College Chapel, Oxford
Tues 17 April 2012, 8.15 pm

Programme

Johann Michael Bach (1648–1694)
_Dies sind die heilg’gen zehn Gebot_ (Chorale prelude)

Sigismond Neukomm (1778–1858)
_Ar and the Lord called unto Moses_ (Recitative)
_I carried you upon Eagle’s wings_ (Aria)
Bariton: Jack Holton

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)
_Canons on the Ten Commandments_ (V & VIII)

Sigismond Neukomm (1778–1858)
_Whoso honoureth his father_ (Recitative and Aria)
Soprano: Martina Jelinkova

Thomas Tallis (1505–1585)
_If you love me_
_The Ten Commandments and responses_
_A new commandment_

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
_Dies sind die heilg’gen zehn Gebot_ (Chorale prelude)

Celebrating the end of the conference
_The Influence of the Decalogue: Historical, Theological and Cultural Perspectives_
Sponsored by Heythrop College, London and the Faculty of Theology, Oxford.