



THE TWO VERSIONS OF THE SABBATH-COMMANDMENT: STRUCTURAL SIMILARITIES

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Introduction

In Old Testament studies the Decalogue is usually considered to be the paradigm-example of a doublet.

No wonder. Indeed, it is quite strange that we can read such an important and in many ways highlighted text *twice* in the Torah – twice and *differently*. It is a well-known fact that the literarily most developed and thematically most important differences are to be found in the Sabbath-Commandment.

The questions of the mutual relationship between the two versions, their particular origin and the specific intentions of the variations have been discussed since ancient times.¹ The two different versions of the Sabbath-Commandment were profoundly studied in the past. In modern times the hypotheses were usually constructed in the paradigm of literary history or the history of traditions (Literaturgeschichte, Traditionsgeschichte);² this is documented in several surveys of the history of the Decalogue-research published in recent decades.³

I would like to look at the problem of the two versions from a different perspective – namely, to scrutinize the shape of the *texture* at surface level (the differ-

¹ Already Midrash ShemR 47 or e.g. Ibn Ezra in his commentary on the book of Exodus.

² On modern research cf. O. Kaiser, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament: eine Einführung in ihre Ergebnisse und Probleme*, Gütersloh 1984 (5. Aufl.), 73: "Hauptprobleme der Dekalogforschung sind heute: 1. Die Frage nach seiner Zugehörigkeit zu einer der Pentateuchschichten; 2. das Problem der Rekonstruktion seiner Urform; 3. die Frage nach der Ursprünglichkeit seiner Komposition und 4. nach seinem Sitz im Leben."

³ See J. J. Stamm, *Der Dekalog im Lichte der neueren Forschung*, Bern 1958; W. H. Schmidt, H. Delkurt u. A. Graupner, *Die zehn Gebote im Rahmen alttestamentlicher Ethik* (Erträge der Forschung 281), Darmstadt 1993, 86-96; and especially F.-L. Hossfeld, *Der Dekalog: Seine späten Fassungen, die Originale Komposition und seine Vorstufen* (OBO 45), Göttingen 1982, 33-56; F.-L. Hossfeld, "Zum synoptischen Vergleich der Dekalogfassungen: Eine Fortführung des begonnenen Gesprächs", in: F.-L. Hossfeld, (Hrsg.), *Vom Sinai zum Horeb*, Würzburg 1989, 73-117; short outline in the encyclopedias: F.-L. Hossfeld, "Dekalog: Altes Testament", in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* VIII., Berlin 1981, 408-413; "Dekalog", in: M. Görg a B. Lang (Hrsg.), *Neues Bibel-Lexikon* 1, Zürich 1991, 400-405; E. Otto, "Art. Dekalog I., Altes Testament", in: H. D. Betz (Hrsg.), *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Tübingen 1999 (4. Aufl.), 626-627.

ences between the two versions as well as the elements of correspondence), especially the formal features of the composition in each case.

Opting for this approach I have to confess that I do agree with the opinion (expressed e.g. also by H. Utschneider and S. A. Nitsche⁴) that in the case of the Decalogue we are faced with *two variations of a stabilized text shape*, not with two different formations generated by tradition development. As we shall see, the extent of similarities and literal agreements between the two versions extends so far and the character of the variations is in the given literal context so fitting, that using the texture as starting point (not the hypothetical oral traditions) is justified.

Questions like when and where these variant texts originated, who their authors are, and what the historical home-setting might be, cannot be appropriately handled (and certainly not answered!) in the framework of this lecture. Of course, they require a much wider perspective and a different methodological approach.⁵

Comparison of the Texture (Ex. 20:8-11 & Deut. 5:12-16)

Let's start with an overview highlighting the different and the correspondent elements of the two versions (see Tab 1; the variations having their analogy in the other version are highlighted *blue*, the unique and unparalleled parts *green*).

The most important differences are well-known (4 points):

1) The first word of the proclamation is already variant: זָכוֹר ("remember!"; Ex. 20:8) compared to שָׁמֹר ("observe!"; Deut. 5:12a).

2) Deut. supplements the main clause with a retrospective argument (V. 12b: כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוְּיָהּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ); the same subordinate clause appears also in the following commandment ("*Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you...*"; Deut. 5:16).

⁴ Cf. H. Utschneider u. S. A. Nitsche, *Arbeitsbuch literaturwissenschaftliche Bibelauslegung. Eine Methodenlehre zur Exegese des Alten Testaments*, Gütersloh 2001, 237: "Der Dekalog liegt bekanntlich in zwei weitgehend wortgleichen, aber doch auch signifikant unterschiedlichen Fassungen vor (vgl. besonders das jeweilige »Sabbatgebot« ...). Aus Vorgängen der mündlichen Textweitergabe ist Doppelüberlieferung kaum erklärbar. Sehr viel wahrscheinlicher ist, daß eine der beiden Fassungen bei der Abfassung der anderen schriftlich vorlag; dabei kann darüber »gestritten« werden, welcher der Fassungen die Priorität zukommt."

⁵ For short statement see note Nr. 30.

Tab 1: Comparison – Variations and Differences

Deuteronomy 5:12-15	Exodus 20:8-11
<p>12a שְׁמוֹרָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ</p> <p>b כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:</p> <p>13a שְׁשֶׁת יָמִים – תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתֶּיךָ:</p> <p>14a יוֹם הַשַּׁבְּעִי – שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-מְלָאכָה אֹתָהּ וּבִנְיָהּ וּבִתּוֹךָ [עֲבֹדֶיךָ וְאֹמְנֹתֶיךָ] וְשׂוֹרְךָ וְחֹמְרֶיךָ וְכָל-בְּהֵמֹתֶיךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ לְמַעַן יָנוּחַ עַבְדְּךָ וְאֹמְנֶיךָ כַּמִּוֶּה</p> <p>15a הַיְכָרְתָּ</p> <p>b כִּי-תַעֲבֹד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הַיִּצְאָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִשָּׁמַיִם</p> <p>c הַיְדֵּי תִזְקָה וּבִזְרָע מַטְוִיָּה / לְעֵשׂוֹת</p> <p>d אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת</p>	<p>8 זְכוֹרָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ:</p> <p>9a שְׁשֶׁת יָמִים – תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתֶּיךָ:</p> <p>b יוֹם הַשַּׁבְּעִי – שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-מְלָאכָה אֹתָהּ וּבִנְיָהּ וּבִתּוֹךָ עֲבֹדֶיךָ וְאֹמְנֹתֶיךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ</p> <p>11a כִּי שְׁשֶׁת-יָמִים – עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְהַיָּם וְהַיַּבֵּשׁ וְהָאֵת-הָאֵלֶּיךָ אֶת-הַיָּם וְהָאֵת-הָאֵשׁ-בָּם</p> <p>b הַיָּנוּחַ בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבְּעִי</p> <p>c עַל-כֵּן צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת</p> <p>d הַיְכָרְשֶׁהוּ:</p>

variations

differences

3) The enumeration of those addressed contains in the Deuteronomy-version two additional members in the appositional chain ("... *you and your son and your daughter* [etc.]... *and YOUR OX and YOUR DONKEY*..."; V. 14d).

4) Finally, the best known variation is the part which gives as the reason for the Sabbath two totally different arguments:

a) In Deut. the argument keeps the motif of "*the servant*" (עֶבֶד; V. 14c.f) and rationalizes the Sabbath-Commandment as a memory of the liberation from the Egyptian slavery. Your servant has to rest on the Sabbath-Day with you, because you were also "*a slave*" (עֶבֶד); but now you (and your house) are free for the Lord.

b) By contrast, Exodus (using here apparently the priestly tradition) utilizes the contrasting motif of the "*six days' labour*" and "*the rest on the seventh day*"; the argument makes an explicit reference to Gen. 1, where the priestly tradition tells how the whole of creation was made in the same rhythm. The Lord himself created the whole cosmos in six days and on the seventh day rested; therefore you should also rest on the seventh day and keep it holy.

Apart from these four differences and variations there are some smaller and less important ones.⁶

So far, biblical scholarship has paid much attention to these *differences* and *variations* and the critical study of the doublet-question of the Sabbath-Commandment is usually based exclusively on the analysis of these differences. Curiously, the reverse perspective, the extent and the character of *similarity* and literary *correspondences* has been discussed much less, if at all. Nevertheless, the corresponding elements are prevalent – in both versions they represent more than 50% of the word units (Deut. 53[+3]%, Ex. as much as 67[+4]%).

Comparison of the Outline (Sequences)

But the literary congruence of the two versions lies not in the quantity of identical words but rather in the same construction of these literary units and their particular sequences. The text of the Sabbath-Commandment can namely be divided into five sequences – in both versions corresponding (rather significantly!) in their content, their form and their function (see Tab 2).

⁶ E.g. a *waw* in the phrase "you ... AND your slave" (Deut. 5:14c); the word כָּל ("*all*") in the phrase "...and ALL your cattle" (Deut. 5:14d); the Ex.-version doubles the predicate in the last clause: "therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day AND MADE IT HOLY" (וַיְבָרֶךְ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ V. 11c-d).

Tab 2: Sequences

Deuteronomy 5:12-15	Sequences	Exodus 20:8-11
<p>12a שְׁמוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְשׁוֹ</p> <p>b / בְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:</p> <p>13a שְׁשַׁת יָמִים – תַּעֲבֹד</p> <p>b וַעֲשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלָאכֶתְךָ:</p> <p>14a יוֹם הַשַּׁבְעִי – שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ</p> <p>b לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלָאכָה</p> <p>c אַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ וּבָתֶּיךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמָּתְךָ</p> <p>d וְשׂוֹרְךָ וְחִמְרְךָ וְכָל-בְּהֵמָתְךָ</p> <p>e וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ</p> <p>f לָמַעַן יָנוּחַ עַבְדְּךָ וְאִמָּתְךָ כָּמוֹךָ</p>	<p>Introduction of the topic "the day of Sabbath" (retrospective exhortation)</p> <p>Definition of the main motif "Sabbath for YHWH" (six days ~ the seventh day)</p> <p>Core of the Commandment "you shall not do any work"</p> <p>Intention /</p> <p>Development / Substantiation of the Command (Exodus / Creation) ~ Exo. 14 / ~ Gen 2:2</p> <p>~ Exo. 20:2 /</p> <p>Retrospective explanation "YHWH commanded / / blessed the day of Sabbath"</p>	<p>8 זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְשׁוֹ:</p> <p>9a שְׁשַׁת יָמִים – תַּעֲבֹד</p> <p>b וַעֲשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלָאכֶתְךָ:</p> <p>10a יוֹם הַשַּׁבְעִי – שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ</p> <p>b לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלָאכָה</p> <p>c אַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ וּבָתֶּיךָ עַבְדְּךָ וְאִמָּתְךָ</p> <p>d וּבְהֵמָתְךָ</p> <p>e וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ</p>
<p>15a וְזָכַרְתָּ</p> <p>b כִּי-עָבַד תִּיִּיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם</p> <p>c וַיֹּצֵאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִמָּשָׁם</p> <p>d עַל-כֵּן צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת</p>		<p>11a כִּי יָשַׁת-יָמִים – עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ</p> <p>b וְאֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבְעִי</p> <p>c עַל-כֵּן בָּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת</p> <p>d וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ:</p>

1. The first sequence, in both versions *the introductory clause* (Ex. 20:8; Deut. 5:12a-b), has the same syntactic structure. The semantic difference שָׁמֹר ~ זָכֹר ("remember" ~ "observe") is a "motif-word" ("Stichwort" [Buber]⁷) variation without any influence on the syntactic construction. The governing function of the infinitive-absolute-form of the verb, the motif-word in the position of a direct object אֶת-יְוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת ("the Sabbath day") and the adverbial construction לְקַדְּשׁוֹ ("to keep it holy") build the core of both sentences and represent a strong correspondence of the two versions.

Actually, this formulation does not introduce the Sabbath-Commandment as a new institution (new commandment); it presents rather a *parenetic exhortation*. A strong demand is made here "to remember" or "to keep" the Sabbath-regime. This does not seem to be the core sentence of the Sabbath-Commandment, which should formally correspond with other statements of the Decalogue, as we would expect.

2. The second sequence is *a pragmatic definition of the Sabbath* (Ex. 20: 9a.b-10a; Deut. 5:13a.b-14a) using the contrast between "six days of labor" and "the seventh day" (which is the Sabbath for YHWH, your God). In both versions this part of the texture is verbatim, to the last "iota and tittle", completely identical.

3. The third sequence contains, as we will see, *the core utterance* of the Sabbath-commandment (Ex. 20:10b-e; Deut. 5:14b-f). The main clause has here the usual form of an apodictic law sentence (negative particle לֹא + *yiqtol*-form of the verb + direct object in the accusative); this clause expresses the pivotal demand of the whole utterance.⁸ Again, in both versions the basis of the main clause is *verbatim identical* (sic!). In addition, the Deuteronomy-version contains a subordinate clause expressing the intention of this demand ("[you shall not do any work, you ... or your servant ...] so that your servant may rest as well as you").⁹ Moreover, the motif-word עֶבֶד ("the servant") also represents a link with the following sequence.

4. The fourth sequence (Ex. 20:11a-b; Deut. 5:15a-c) is the only substantially variant part of the texture. Due to the different connection with the previous con-

⁷ M. Buber, "Das Leitwort und der Formtypus der Rede", in: M. Buber und F. Ropsenzweig, *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung*, Berlin 1936, 211-261.

⁸ Cf. Lev. 32:3.30.31; Jer. 17:24 e.a.

⁹ In evaluating the text-syntactical hierarchy I agree with E. Talstra and consider the relative value of the clause 15a to be higher than that of the clause 14f. This means that the clause 14f is an argumentative substantiation of the main clause 14b, but the clause 15a opens a new subsection of the text unit; see Eep Talstra, *Oude en nieuwe lezers. Een Inleiding in de Methoden van Uitleg van het Oude Testament*, Kampen 2002, 217ff (Chap. 5.2.1.3) and 252ff (Chap. 5.3.1.3). See also the analysis of the text and its representation on Talstra's web-page: <ftp.th.vu.nl/pub/eep/OTTEXTS/DTN/deuteronomy05.Hierarchy.ps>

text the variants have different functions: in Ex. 20:11 the whole sequence serves as *a direct argumentative substantiation* of the core commandment; quite differently Deut. 5:15a relates the main verb וְזָכַרְתָּ ("and you shall remember") back to the main clause (V. 14b) as *a continuation or a development* of the core commandment – that means, "remembering" the deliverance from the Egyptian slavery belongs to the content of the Sabbath, not to its substantiation; cf. also זָכוֹר in Ex. 20:8.

5. The fifth sequence: The utterance at the end of the commandment (Ex. 20:11c-d; Deut. 5:15d) expresses a retrospective explanation (cf. the strong conjunction עַל־כֵּן ["therefore"]). The two versions are partially variant on the semantic as well as the syntactic level. Nevertheless, they also contain several correspondent elements (conj. עַל־כֵּן, the clause-type *qatal-X* with the name of YHWH as the subject of the main verb and the motif-word "the day of Sabbath" as its direct object).

Summing up, we can state that both versions manifest some similarities in the outline of the literary unit. Both versions can be divided into five sequences; their order and their functions are comparable, in several parts even identical. Actually, only one of these five sequences contains major alteration (the fourth).

Comparison of the Text-Syntax

For our purpose not only the general outline but also the text-syntax should be discussed. Let's look at the clause-types and verb-forms used in the Deuteronomy-version and compare them with those used in Exodus (see Tab 3):

Deut. V. 12a: The main clause is a positive command using the *absolute infinitive* form; it is supplemented by an infinitive construction expressing purpose. – In the Exodus-version the form is *identical*.

The subordinate clause in Deut. 12b, a relative clause in conj.+*qatal* form, is an element unique to the Deuteronomy-version.

Deut. V. 13-14a: Two sentences with fronted noun phrases at the beginning of clauses (constituting together an antithetic parallelism¹⁰). The verbal part of the first sentence (V. 13a.b) is formed by two clauses using the usual conjunction *yiqtol* → *w-qatal* (וַעֲשֶׂה וְעָבַד). The second sentence of the parallelism contains only nominal elements. – The form of the Exodus-version is *entirely identical*.

¹⁰ Conj. *waw* in v. 14a therefore expresses an *adversative* relation.

Tab 3: Text-Syntax

Deuteronomy 5:12-15	Exodus 20:8-11
<p>12a שְׁמוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְשׁוֹ</p> <p>b / בְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:</p>	<p>8 זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְשׁוֹ:</p>
<p>13a שְׁשַׁת יָמִים – תַּעֲבֹד</p> <p>b וַעֲשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתֶּיךָ:</p>	<p>9a שְׁשַׁת יָמִים – תַּעֲבֹד</p> <p>b וַעֲשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתֶּיךָ:</p>
<p>14a יוֹם הַשַּׁבְעִי – שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ</p> <p>b לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלַאכְתֶּךָ</p> <p>c אֹתָהּ וּבְנוֹ וּבִתֶּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתֶּךָ</p> <p>d וְגִרְךָ וְחִמְרֶךָ וְכָל-בְּהֵמֹתֶיךָ</p> <p>e וְגִרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ</p> <p>f לַמֶּזֶן יָנִיחַ עַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתֶּךָ כַּמֶּזֶן</p>	<p>10a יוֹם הַשַּׁבְעִי – שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ</p> <p>b לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלַאכְתֶּךָ</p> <p>c אֹתָהּ וּבְנוֹ וּבִתֶּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתֶּךָ</p> <p>d וְגִרְךָ וְחִמְרֶיךָ</p> <p>e וְגִרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ</p>
<p>15a וְזָכַרְתָּ</p> <p>b כִּי-עָבַד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם</p> <p>c וַיֹּצֵאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם / בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה</p> <p>d עַל-כֵּן צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת</p>	<p>11a כִּי שְׁשַׁת יָמִים – עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבְעִי</p> <p>b וַיָּנַח</p> <p>c עַל-כֵּן בְּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ:</p>
<p>inf. abs. /inf. cs. /conj.-qatal</p> <p>nom + yiqtol</p> <p>w-qatal</p> <p>w-nom + nom</p> <p>neg.-yiqtol</p> <p>conj.-yiqtol</p> <p>w-qatal</p> <p>conj. +nom+qatal</p> <p>wayyiqtol</p> <p>conj.-qatal /inf. cs.</p>	<p>inf. abs. /inf. cs.</p> <p>nom + yiqtol</p> <p>w-qatal</p> <p>w-nom + nom</p> <p>neg.-yiqtol</p> <p>conj. +nom+qatal</p> <p>wayyiqtol</p> <p>conj.-qatal</p> <p>wayyiqtol</p>

Deut. V. 14b: The form of the main clause uses a typical *formula* of an apodictic law sentence (as do the majority of the Decalogue utterances): negative-particle אֵל, *yiqtol*-form of the verb and direct object.¹¹ – The form of the Exodus-version is again *identical*.

Deut. 14c.d.e: A very developed appositional sequence introduced by the pronoun "you" and using nominal phrases with the suffix "your" enumerates the subjects submitted to this commandment. The last member of the series (גֵרְךָ; "your sojourner") is determined by an additional relative clause (אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֵיךָ; "who [stays] in your gates"). – The form of the Exodus-version (in spite of a variation among the members of the appositional sequence) is again *identical*.

Deut. V. 14f adds an expression of purpose to the main command using the usual clause type with conjunction לְמַעַן ("so that...") + *yiqtol*-form of the verb + subject. – This sentence has *no parallel* in the Exodus-version of the Decalogue (but see Ex. 23:12!).¹²

The fourth sequence is from our point of view quite interesting. In spite of the diversity in formulation, topic, and argument, several features of the text-syntax are to a certain degree comparable. In *Deut. v. 15a* relates its *w-qatal* verb (וְזָכַרְתָּ; "and you shall remember") back to the main command sentence. The addressee is again "you" (2nd person singular; cf. v. 14b.c). Two subordinate object-clauses follow it, introduced by the conjunction כִּי. The first clause uses a noun + *qatal* form, the second uses *wayyiqtol* (narrative). – In contrast, the Exodus-version does not need any additional clause to relate effectively back to the main command. *V. 11* can directly continue the speech of v. 10 and provide it with a supportive argument. כִּי *explicativum* opens a clause with a fronted nominal object followed by the *qatal*-form of the verb; the second clause is again introduced by a *wayyiqtol* (narrative). – That means: in spite of the completely different formulation of this sequence, the main formal elements of the text-syntax (i.e. the conjunction כִּי, the clause construction and the verb-forms) reveal *some similarity* in their occurrence (although not in their function).¹³

The elaborated *chiastic construction* in the Exodus-version should be highlighted. Interestingly enough, the chiasm does not occur in Gen. 2:2, where the argument comes from. If the Exodus-version in this part of the text is the dependent one, one could ask whether this stylistic feature does not relate to *Deut. v. 15b.c*, where this structure *in nuce* exists (כִּי-עֲבַד הָיִיתָ × וַיִּצְאֶךָ יְהוָה).

¹¹ Cf. Dt 5:8 (2nd Commandment): לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה-לְךָ פֶסֶל כָּל-תְּמוּנָה;
5,11 (3rd Commandment): לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת-שֵׁם-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוּא;
5,21 (10th Commandment): וְלֹא תַחְמוֹד אִשְׁתֵּי רֵעֶךָ וְלֹא תַתְּאוֹהַב בֵּית רֵעֶךָ.

¹² Cf. also Ex. 20:12, Lev. 23:42-43 etc.

¹³ Besides, both versions of this sequence contain the same number of word units – 14 (that is, symbolically, twice seven!).

The main clause of the last sequence (Deut. v. 15d) has again in both versions the same structure. Different verbs ("to command", "to bless") do not change the basic elements of the syntactic construction given by the conjunction *על-כן* ("therefore"), the *qatal*-form of the verb and the name of YHWH as the subject. Syntactic variations in the subsequent parts of the sentence are caused by the phrasal rules of both respective verbs. In Deut., the intention of the verb *צוה* is expressed by an infinitive construction ("The Lord commanded you to observe [to practice] the sabbath day"). By contrast, in the Exodus-version the verb *ברך* uses only a direct object construction ("the Lord blessed the Sabbath day") and the stylistic retardation must be performed by an additional sentence, continuing the retrospective aspect of the previous *qatal*-form with *wayyiqtol* (narrative; "...and made it holy").

Summing up, we can state that the similarities and correspondent features of the text-syntax relate not only to the verbatim identical parts of the two versions, but also, at least to some extent, to the sentences that are formulated differently.

The Palistrophic Structure and its Particular Shape

Yet another look at the composition of the Sabbath-Commandment and at the similarity of its two versions can be given. Both versions have namely some features of a *palistrophic framework*.

A palistrophic arrangement of a text or composition – sometimes also called simply "chiasm" or "concentric text structure" – uses some elements (words, phrases, motifs, sequences or some formal features) in such a way that the unit becomes a concentric network. Multiple layers of parallel items build together a structured frame around the center of the utterance, which becomes stylistically emphasized by it.¹⁴ Such an arrangement is quite often used in the Bible and can be found in smaller text units (e.g. Gen. 1;¹⁵ Gen. 6:9 – 9:29;¹⁶ Gen. 17;¹⁷ Deut. 5:28 – 6:3;¹⁸ Deut. 8:1-19;¹⁹ Ruth 1:16-17,19-22²⁰ or in several psalms²¹) as well

¹⁴ See S. E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* (AnBib 50), Rome 1971; N. Lohfink, *Das Hauptgebot. Eine Untersuchung literarischer Einleitungsfragen zu Dtn 5-11* (AnBib 20), Roma 1963, 181ff.

¹⁵ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis 1-11*, Jerusalem 1961, 42ff; cf. O. H. Steck, *Der Schöpfungsbericht der Priesterschrift*, Göttingen 1975, 211ff.

¹⁶ G. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Word Biblical Commentary 1), Waco 1987, 156f.

¹⁷ G. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50* (Word Biblical Commentary 2), Dallas 1998, 17 (with reference to McEvenue, see note 17.).

¹⁸ N. Lohfink, *Op. cit.*, 67-68; Lohfink names such structures "*rücklaufende Stichwortwiederholungen*" or "*konzentrische Struktur*" (cf. Lohfink, "Darstellungskunst und Theologie", in: *Biblica* 41 /1960/, 105-134, 122f.).

as in larger compositions (e.g. Gen. 18-19²²; the whole Abraham-cycle Gen. 11:27 – 25:11;²³ II Chron. 1:1 – 9:28;²⁴ Isa. 10:24 – 12:6;²⁵ Jer. 21:11 – 22:30²⁶). The form can be used as an effective stylistic tool or as part of the composition strategy in poetry or in the narratives.

a) *The Palistrophic Structure of the Exodus-Version*

So far as the Sabbath-Commandment is concerned, the palistrophic composition is quite obvious in the Exodus-version (see Tab 4a).²⁷

In the first and last sequences (v. 8+11c-d; marked as **C+C'**) the phrase אֶת-יְוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת ("the Sabbath-day") and the verb קִדְּשׁ ("to make / to keep holy") represent the outer thematic frame of the composition (*inclusio* formed by the motif-words). In simple terms, the first and the last sentence say what the commandment is about: to make holy the Sabbath-day.

Both the second and the fourth sequences (v. 9a-10a+11a-b; **B+B'**) use the antithetic polarity of "the six days" in contrast to the "seventh day" (יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי ~ שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים; verbatim in both sequences). In addition, the verbs used in these sequences also show some correlation. "To make" (עָשָׂה) is used in a similar sense in the first sentence of both parts. The motif-words of the second sentences are not identical, but both of them – the noun שַׁבָּת ("Sabbath") in v. 10a and the verb נָוַח ("to rest") in v. 11b belong here to the same semantic group; both are also related to the same subject, namely to the name of the Lord.

¹⁹ Lohfink, *Ibidem*, 189-199.

²⁰ F. W. Bush, *Ruth, Esther* (Word Biblical Commentary 9), Dallas 1996, 73f. and 90.

²¹ E.g. Ps 25; cf. H. Möller, "Strophenbau der Psalmen" in: *ZAW* 50 (1932) 240-56; L. Rupert, "Psalm 25 und die Grenze Kultorientierter Psalmenexegese", in: *ZAW* 84 (1972) 576-82.

²² Wenham, *Op. cit.* (see note 20), 41.

²³ K. A. Deurloo, *Genesis* (Verklaring van een bijbelgedeelte), Kampen 1998, 88ff; M. Kessler – K. Deurloo, *A Commentary on Genesis: The Book of Beginnings*, Paulist Press: New York 2004.

²⁴ R. B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles* (Word Biblical Commentary 15), Dallas 1987, 5f.

²⁵ J. D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (Word Biblical Commentary 24), Dallas 1985, 154f. (referred to as "arch structure").

²⁶ K. A. Deurloo, *Waar gebeurd. Over het onhistorisch karakter van bijbelse verhalen*, Baarn 1981, 69f.

²⁷ The framework composition in Ex. 20:8-11 has been discussed by researchers for a long time; presented in summary form and reviewed in Hossfeld, *Der Dekalog* (see note 2), 39, note 76.

Tab 4a: Palistrophic Elements

Deuteronomy 5:12-15	Exodus 20:8-11
<p>שְׁמוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ / כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:</p> <p>12a שְׁמוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת b לְקַדְּשׁוֹ</p> <p>13a שְׁשַׁת יָמִים - תַּעֲבֹד b וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתֶּיךָ:</p> <p>14a יוֹם הַשַּׁבְעִי - שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ b לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלַאכְתָּהּ c אֹתָהּ וּבְנֹד וּבְתוֹךְ וּבְבִדּוֹ וְאִמְתוֹךְ d וְשׂוֹרֶךְ וְחִמְרֶךְ וְכָל-בְּהֵמֹתֶיךָ e וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ f לַמֵּצֵן יָנִיחַ עֲבֹדְךָ וְאִמְתֶּךָ כַּמִּוֶּךָ</p> <p>15a וְזָבְרְךָ b כִּי-עָבַד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם c וַיֹּצֵאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם d / בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה e לַעֲלֹפֵן צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ f לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת</p>	<p>זָכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ:</p> <p>8 זָכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ:</p> <p>9a שְׁשַׁת יָמִים - תַּעֲבֹד b וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתֶּיךָ:</p> <p>10a יוֹם הַשַּׁבְעִי - שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ b לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלַאכְתָּהּ c אֹתָהּ וּבְנֹד וּבְתוֹךְ עֲבֹדְךָ וְאִמְתוֹךְ d וְשׂוֹרֶךְ וְחִמְרֶיךָ e וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ</p> <p>11a כִּי שְׁשַׁת יָמִים - עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם b וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ c וְאֶת-הַיָּם d וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם e וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבְעִי f אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ</p>
<p>12a</p> <p>b</p> <p>13a</p> <p>b</p> <p>14a</p> <p>b</p> <p>c</p> <p>d</p> <p>e</p> <p>f</p> <p>15a</p> <p>b</p> <p>c</p> <p>d</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9a</p> <p>b</p> <p>10a</p> <p>b</p> <p>c</p> <p>d</p> <p>e</p> <p>11a</p> <p>b</p> <p>c</p> <p>d</p>
<p>C</p> <p>B</p> <p>A</p> <p>B'</p> <p>C'</p>	<p>C</p> <p>B</p> <p>A</p> <p>B'</p> <p>C'</p>

The third sequence – a single, unparallelled sentence (v. 10b-e; **A**) – forms the center of the palistrophic composition. Because of this core position and because of the standard shape of the apodictic law formula, this utterance can be considered to be the core statement of the Sabbath-Commandment as a whole (cf. Lev. 23:3; Jer. 17:24 e.a.). This means, consequently, that the often discussed problem of the positive formulation of the Sabbath-Commandment²⁸ is dissolved – if the main sentence of this commandment is not the first, but *the central clause*, it corresponds perfectly with the other commandments of the Decalogue.

In sum: The palistrophic arrangement of the Exodus-version can be presented as a regular concentric structure, marked as a **C–B–A–B–C'** hierarchy. The main utterance in the center says: לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלָאכָה ("do not perform any work"; v. 10b); cf. Tab 4b. The central part (**A**) contains the chief theses (a single, unparallelled sentence). The parts **B+B'** (the inner frame) express the definition of the Sabbath-day and the reason why it should be kept. The part **C** introduces the topic of "keeping holy ... the Sabbath-day" and the parallel part **C'** closes the text unit with the same words (the outer frame). Moreover, in the **C+B** (and **A**) parts of the structure the addressed person is in focus ("you"); in the last two parts (**B'+C'**) the Lord himself.

b) The Palistrophic Structure of the Deuteronomy-version

The Deuteronomy-version can be described in a similar way.²⁹ However, the palistrophic features of its composition are not so obvious, especially in the **B+B'** part.

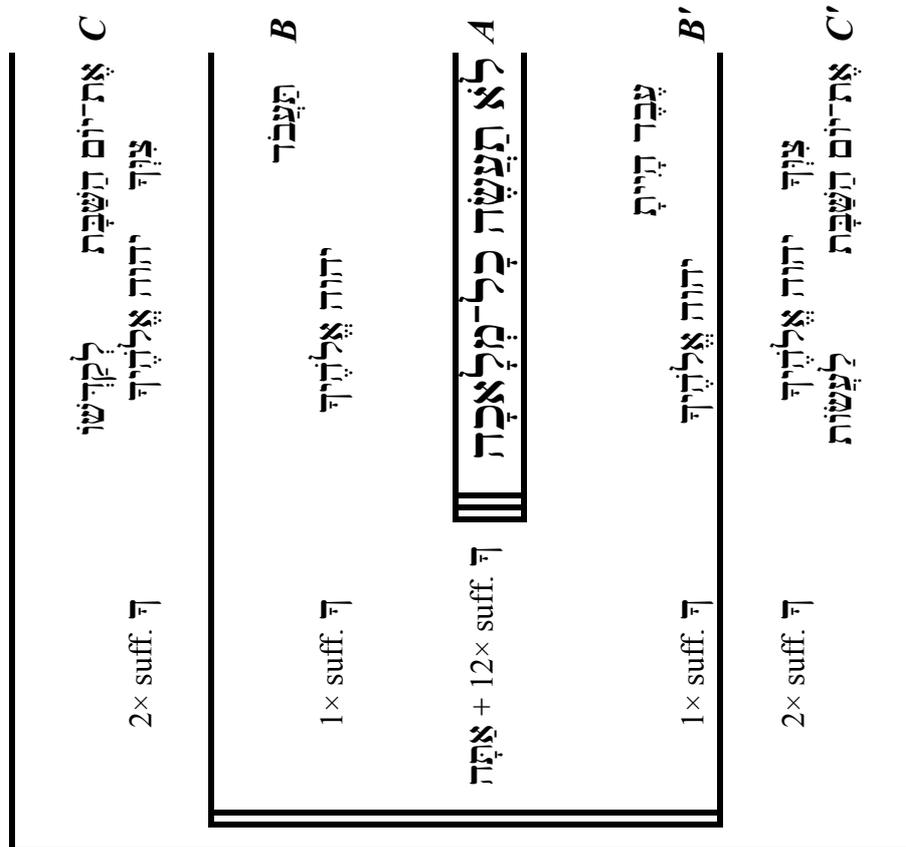
The outer frame (**C+C'**), which has the function to introduce and to end the subject matter, is also focused on the chief motif-word אֶת-יְיָם הַשַּׁבָּת ("the day of Sabbath"). Moreover, in both places this phrase is connected with an infinitive construction expressing the intention (לְקַדְּשׁוֹ "to make it holy", v. 12a / לַעֲשׂוֹת "to practise it", v. 15d). In addition, a typically deuteronomic phrase צִוְּךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ ("the Lord, your God, commanded you"; v. 12b.15d) is used, which serves as a retrospective argument and explanation of the command. This means that in these sequences the palistrophic correspondence is even stronger than in the Exodus-version.

²⁸ A. Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel I*, München 1953, 317f; J. J. Stamm, *Op. cit.*, 9f; W. H. Schmidt e.a., *Op. cit.*, 27.

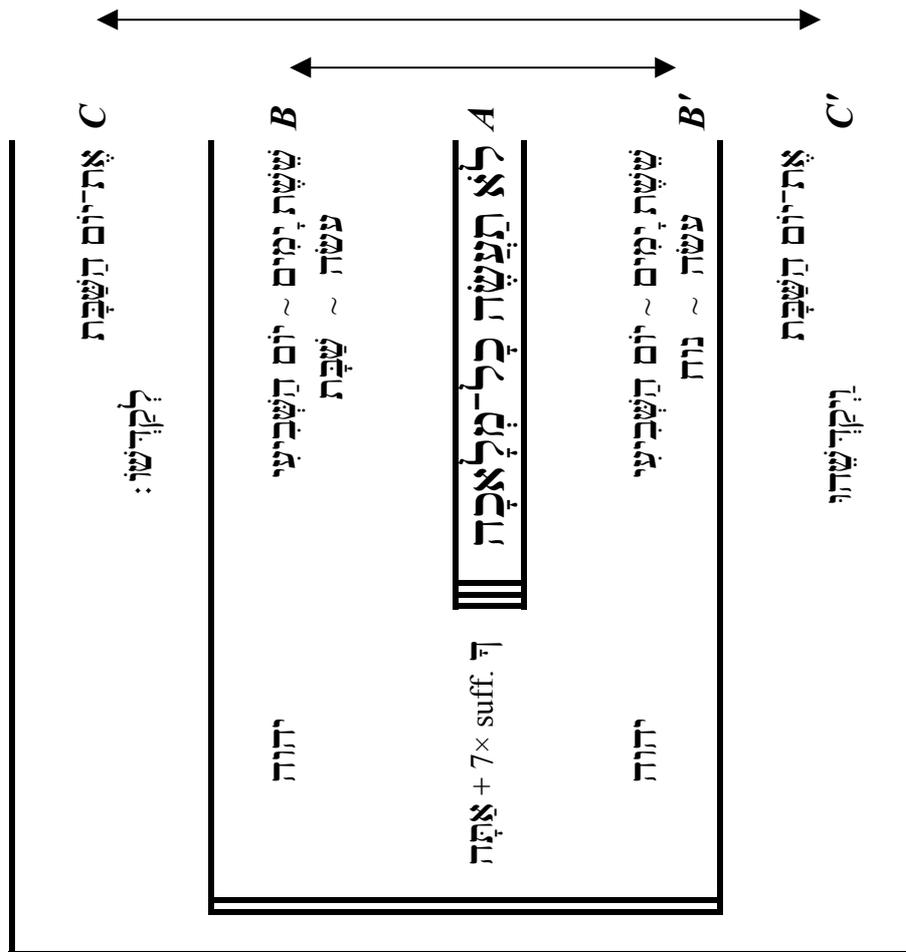
²⁹ Cf. Hossfeld, *Der Dekalog* (see note Nr. 3), 38; N. Lohfink, "Zur Dekalogfassung von Dtn 5", in: *BZ NF* 9 (1965), 17-32.

Tab 4b: Palistrophic Elements – Short Outline

Deuteronomy 5:12-15



Exodus 20:8-11



The inner frame is constructed quite differently in both its parts (**B+B'**). Nevertheless, even here some phrasal and thematic correspondences can be located. The first can be seen in the relationship between the instruction **תִּעֲבֹד** ("you shall labor"; v. 13a) and the argument **עֲבָדְתִּיתָ** ("[remember that] you were a slave"; v. 15b). More apparent is the double occurrence of the phrase **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ** ("the Lord, your God"), which is used not only in this inner but also in the outer frame here; it connects the authority behind the given command (v. 12d+15d), its positive embedding in the liberation act of exodus (v. 15c) and the relational content of the Sabbath ("the seventh day is a Sabbath FOR YHWH", v. 14a). Another corresponding feature can also be seen in the adversative logic of the argument; in both sequences a speaking contrast is expressed between the human and the divine domain: "six days you shall labor ..., BUT the seventh day is a Sabbath for YHWH" (v. 13a-14a) and "you were a slave in the land of Egypt, BUT YHWH brought you out of there" (v. 15b.c).

About the central sequence (part **A**) the same could be said as in the case of Exodus. The only slight difference, the partially extended enumeration of the subjects addressed, does not change anything in the palistrophic structure.

Nevertheless, one – maybe slightly curious – note could be made on this little divergence. How should the difference between the two versions be understood? Why is it that the Deuteronomy-version indicates particularly also "your ox and your donkey" but the Exodus-version mentions only the general term **בְּהֵמָתֶיךָ** ("your cattle"). I don't think that this evidence can provide the basis for any hypothesis about differences in the realities of the life-setting behind the text, e.g. an assumption that the deuteronomic authors were better acquainted with oxen and donkeys and used these animals more extensively than the priestly writers. This is not the way that I prefer to read the texture. In analyzing the formal features of the text we should rather look at what effects or what interrelations – if any – this alteration could have in the respective versions of the text.

The difference concerns the part of the text which enumerates the addressed subjects of the commandment; not only "you" yourself, but all your house with all its members is involved (the whole of your *bajit*-community, i.e. people and the cattle, the family members, the slaves, both male and female, and the sojourners). The appositional chain describes the whole of a house community – in other words: the elementary unit of the Israel community, which is subject to the Law. Actually, this is the only command of the Decalogue which points directly not only to the addressed person in the singular but also to the related community. All members of the appositional sequence are provided with the suffix "your".

Interestingly enough, in this sequence the words suffixed (i.e. marked) with the pronoun "your" occur just *twelve times* in the Deuteronomy and *seven times* in

Exodus. Is it accidental? After all, these numbers have some figurative value in respect to biblical ecclesiology. For the Deuteronomists "*twelve*" stands for the complete identity of Israel, the perfect community of her tribes, the whole of the covenant people. – And for the priestly writers, on the other hand, the number "*seven*" represents the meaning of a holy perfection, faultless holiness, the specific structure of the divine domain; in the most immediate context the Sabbath is identified as "*the seventh day*" (of course!). Is this occurrence of symbolic numbers in such "speaking" contexts not remarkable? Especially when we consider the highly elaborated texture, composed to the finest details, of the two Decalogue versions?

Two Final Remarks

1) In my opinion, the palistrophic arrangement of both versions of the Sabbath-Commandment can be affirmed. The greatest advantage of this view is the double consequence of *declaring the central sentence to be the core and basic utterance of the whole commandment*: **(a)** There is no tension with other commandments in the Decalogue concerning the positive or negative formulation, because the main clause fits the genre. **(b)** The five sequences of the Sabbath-Commandment form in both versions a well functioning whole. The core of the utterance (the main clause of part *A*), the basic demand, is *identical*; given differences concern the accompanying arguments, the expression of purpose or retrospective hints – in simple words: the core is identical, the differences concern "the preaching of the command" providing plausible embedding in the particular (deuteronomic or priestly) contexts.

2) Evaluating the nature and character of these differences as well as the dimension of the similarities and the congruence of the two versions, I am not convinced that we are faced with two at least partially independent results of the course of tradition. The dimension of their congruence as well as the character and nature of their differences testifies that the two versions are rather two interdependent elaborations of literary constructed textures.³⁰

³⁰ The origin of these textures cannot be explained in the framework of the chosen approach, not to mention in the limits of the time allowed. Generally, I agree with L. Perlitt (*Bundestheologie im Alten Testament*, Neukirchen 1969, 90ff.), L. Hossfeld (*Der Dekalog* (see note Nr. 3), 57; or "Dekalog: Altes Testament", in: *TRE* (see note Nr. 3), 411f.) and others that *the literary formation* of the Decalogue originated in the deuteronomic workshop. The particular commandments, their parts and their formulas are partially much older traditions, of course (cf. Hos 4:2 e.a.).

Summary

From a literary point of view the Sabbath-Commandment is the most extensive and most elaborated part of the Decalogue. In modern times critical research has devoted much attention to the differences between the two text-versions (Ex. 20:8-11 and Deut. 5:12-15). These differences have usually been interpreted in the framework of historical-critical or literary-critical hypotheses. In contrast, this paper aims to highlight the corresponding elements in the two texts, especially in the overall construction logic of the Sabbath-Proclamation, in its text-syntax and palistropic structure. Because of the considerable degree of agreement on various levels, which is demonstrated in the overall intratextual ties as well as in the correspondence in detail, the two texts are evaluated to be two variant elaborations of a literary, textually defined entity. Therefore, the concept of the Decalogue as the result of two partially independent developments in tradition history should be reconsidered.

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³¹ See M. Prudký, "Die zwei Versionen des Sabbatgebotes: Strukturelle Übereinstimmungen und Variationen", in: E. Noort (Hrsg.), *Religion und Normativität. Interdisziplinäre Überlegungen zum Dekalog damals und jetzt*, (Vorträge der dritten Konferenz der Mittelsüdeuropäischen und Niederländischen Theologischen Fakultäten in Groningen) Groningen 2004, 57-68.