



UC Louvain



Identities and Ideologies

The Greek Translator(s) of the Pentateuch and God's Arm

Overview

1. Introduction: God's arm
2. « With outstretched arm »
 1. Pluses and minuses
 2. Anti-anthropomorphism?
3. The uplifted arm in its context
 1. Images
 2. Egyptian influence?
4. Conclusion

Introduction

Introduction: God's arm

- God's body
 - Cf. Wagner "Körpergeschichte"
- God's arm
 - Anthropomorphism
 - LXX: anti-anthropomorphism?
 - Fritsch (1943): LXX-Pentateuch, sporadically, spiritualizes these anthropomorphic conceptions of God
 - Anti-anthropomorphism as part of LXX-theology?
- Translation as reflection of identity and ideology!



Albrecht Dürer, Christ among the Doctors, 1506

Introduction: God's Hands

- Goal: how is God's arm translated in LXX-Pentateuch?
 - Avoidance?
 - If avoidance, is this anti-anthropomorphism?
 - Influence of surroundings?
 - Egyptian influence?



Marc Chagall, Moïse recevant les tables de la loi, 1960



“With outstretched arm”

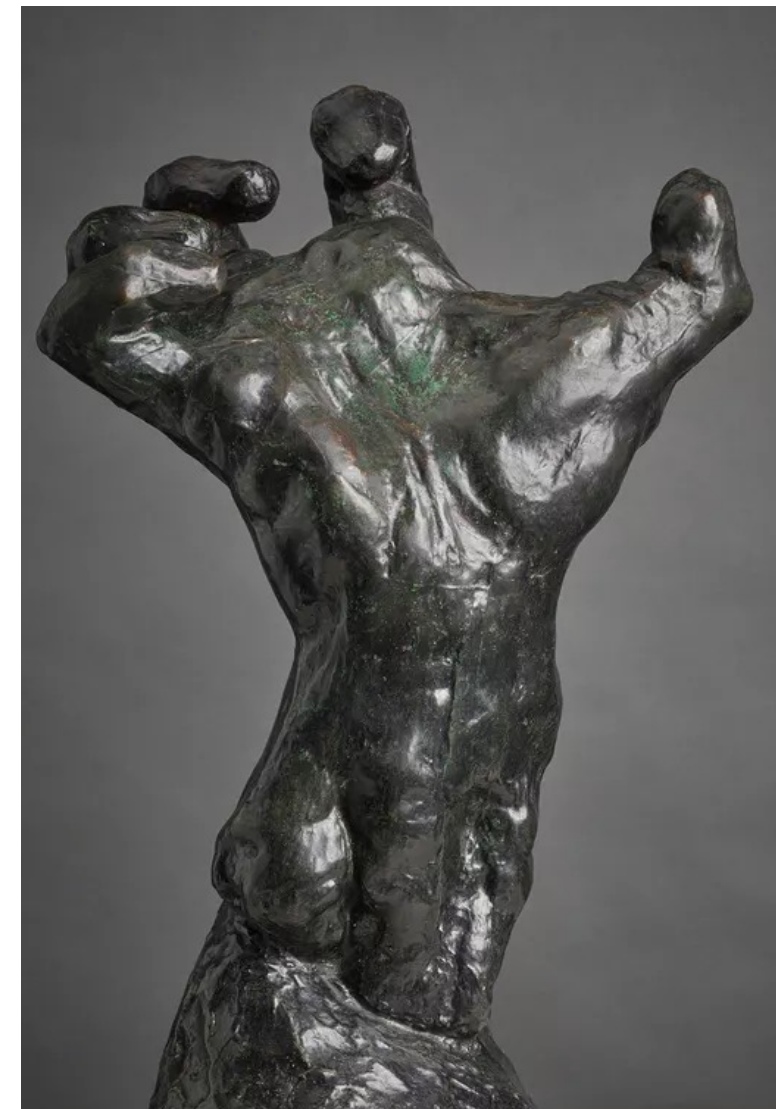
The « outstretched arm–formulae »

- “Mächtigkeitformel”
- Two forms:
 - 1) references containing only the mighty hand of God: / ביד הזקה / בהזק יד
 - 2) “expanded formula”: references joining the mighty hand to the outstretched arm motif : ביד הזקה ובזרוע נטויה:
- Deuteronom(ist)ic formula
- Translation in LXX?

	Mighty hand	Mighty hand and outstretched arm	Outstretched arm
LXX	Ex 6,1; 13,3.9.14.16	<u>Deut 3,24; 4,34; 5,15; 6,21; 7,8.19;</u> <u>9,26.29(B); 11,2; 26,8</u>	<u>Ex 6,1.6; 32,11;</u>
MT	Ex 6,1 (2x); 13,3.9.14.16; 32,11; Deut 3,24; 6,21; 7,8; 9,26.29	Deut 4,34; 5,15; 7,19; 11,2; 26,8	Ex 6,6

➤ Two major differences:

- 1) LXX-Ex 6,1 and 32,11 ~~God’s hand~~-(MT), but instead refer to God’s *arm*;
- 2) LXX-Deut 3,24; 6,21; 7,8; 9,26.29(LXX^B) God’s mighty hand *and arm*, (MT: only God’s mighty hand)



Auguste Rodin, *La main crispée*, 1885

1. Plusses and minuses

- LXX = MT
 - ✓ Translated literally : χείρ κραταιά
 - ✓ Most of the time
- LXX \neq MT
 - ✓ LXX + : “outstretched arm” (βραχίων ὑψηλός)
 - ✓ “expansion”
 - ✓ **ALL** verses in LXX-Deuteronomy have the long formula “with mighty hand and outstretched arm”
 - ✓ LXX-Deut 3,24; 6,21; 7,8; 9,26.29(LXX^B)
 - A case study: LXX Deut 3,24



Egon Schiele, *Raised Red Hand*, 1910

1. Plusses and minuses

LXX =/= MT: + “outstretched arm”: Deuteronomy 3,24

- ✓ Hand: translated literally : χεῖρ κραταιά
- ✓ Variants:
 - « mighty hand and outstretched arm »
 - « might and strength »
 - « your mighty hand »
- **Double translation:** 1 word -> 2 words as equivalent
- **Outstretched hand:** not double translation
 - ✓ « expansion »
 - ✓ Harmonisation -> Deut 4:34, 5:15, 7,19; 11,2; 26,8
- **Possessive suffix**
 - ✓ Avoidance?
 - ✓ Only present in LXX Deut 9:26

LXX	MT	SAMP	DSS: 4Q314
Κύριε κύριε, σὺ ἤρξω δεῖξαι τῷ σῷ θεράποντι τὴν ἰσχύν σου καὶ τὴν δύναμίν σου καὶ τὴν χεῖρα τὴν κραταιὰν καὶ τὸν βραχίονα τὸν ὑψηλόν	אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה, אֶתְּהַחֲלֹתְּ לְהַרְאוֹת אֶת-עַבְדְּךָ, אֶת-גְּדֻלְךָ, וְאֶת-יָדְךָ הַחֲזָקָה	אדני יהוה אתה החלת להראות את גדלך ואת ידך עבדך את גדלך ואת ידך החזקה	אדני יהוה אתה החלת להראות את גדלך ואת ידך החזקה

1. Plusses and minuses

LXX =/= MT: + “outstretched hand”

- The same process of expansion takes place in the other verses with *plusses*
- LXX: care for unity, also in (not) rendering personal pronouns
- LXX: attests growth of formula, stage in uniformisation
- Subtle distinction between God’s mighty hand and human hands in expansion:
 - LXX - Deut 34,12: “mighty hand” attributed to Moses -> MT & LXX: only “mighty hand”, only verse with no expansion in LXX-Deuteronomy!



Cup found at Douris (5th c. BCE): Athena with outstretched arm

1. Plusses and minuses

- LXX = MT
 - ✓ Translated literally : βραχίων ὑψηλός
 - ✓ LXX has *never* a minus, only expansion
 - ✓ Very often occurrence of double formula
- LXX ≠ MT
 - ✓ Minor variants attest the same formulaic growth in LXX
 - A case study: Deut 26:8 as further expansion
 - ✓ LXX : “outstretched arm” instead of “mighty hand”: Ex 6:1; 32:11
 - A case study: LXX-Ex 32,11



G. Klimt, *Study of Left Hand, Shawl and Shoe*, 1916

1. Plusses and minuses

LXX = MT : Deut 26,8 as case study

- ✓ Translated literally : βραχίων ὑψηλός
- ✓ Minor variants
 - Plus *αὐτός*
 - Plus *ἐν ἰσχύι μεγάλη*
- ✓ Harmonisational expansion
 - But with which verse?
 - Deut 4,23? (Dogniez & Harl) : καὶ ἐξήγαγέν σε *αὐτός ἐν τῇ ἰσχύι αὐτοῦ τῇ μεγάλῃ* ἐξ Αἰγύπτου
 - Deut 9,29? (Tov) : ἐξήγαγες ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου *ἐν τῇ ἰσχύι σου τῇ μεγάλῃ* καὶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ σου τῇ κραταιᾷ καὶ ἐν τῷ βραχίονί σου τῷ ὑψηλῷ
 - Also strong parallel with Ex 32,11: ἐξήγαγες ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου *ἐν ἰσχύι μεγάλη* καὶ ἐν τῷ βραχίονί σου τῷ ὑψηλῷ
 - Perhaps no strict link, rather sign of further expansion through link with “might and strength”

LXX	MT	SAMP
καὶ ἐξήγαγεν ἡμᾶς κύριος ἐξ Αἰγύπτου <i>αὐτός ἐν ἰσχύι μεγάλη</i> καὶ ἐν χειρὶ κραταιᾷ καὶ ἐν βραχίονι αὐτοῦ τῷ ὑψηλῷ καὶ ἐν ὄραμασιν μεγάλοις καὶ ἐν σημείοις καὶ ἐν τέρασιν	וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ יְהוָה, מִמִּצְרַיִם, בְּיַד וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה, וּבְמִרְאָה-גְדֹלָה- וּבְאַתּוֹת, וּבְמִפְתֵּיִם	וּיֹצִיאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בֵּיד חֻזְקָה וּבִזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְמִרְאָה גְדוֹלָה וּבְאַתּוֹת וּבְמִפְתֵּיִם

2. Anti-anthropomorphism?

- Plusses and minuses : anti-anthropomorphism?
 - No!
 - Extended formula mostly for God (esp. Deuteronomy)
 - “literal”, bodily translation of God’s arm
 - Harmonisation is stronger motivation than avoidance



**The uplifted arm in its
context**

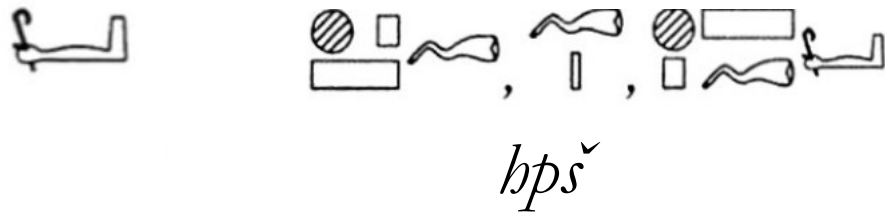
3. The image of the uplifted arm

Old Kingdom onwards: development of a specific iconography:

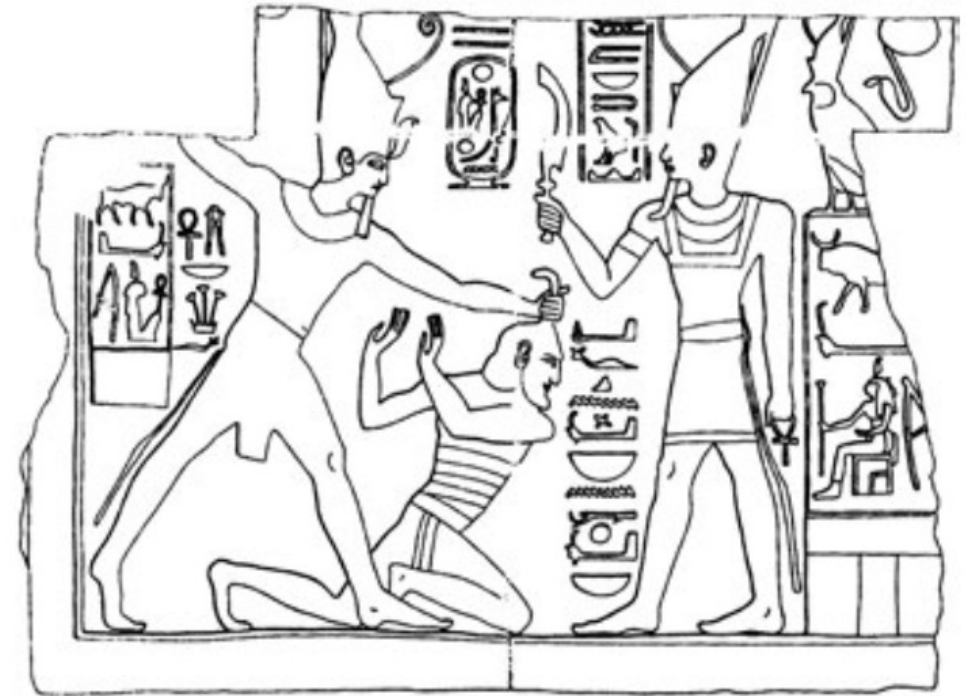
- In sacred texts
- In art

The outstretched (powerful) arm of Pharaoh

Middle Kingdom: conquering arm of the Pharaoh



! In the Amarna Letters too !
(EA 286:12; 287:27; 288:14, 34)



Relief from the temple at Tell el-Retaba, Ramesses II

3. The image of the uplifted arm

God's strong hand and outstretched arm belongs to Egyptian royal ideology
(Weinfeld: 1991; Straw: 2015)



New Kingdom development: deities with outstretched arms

Book of the Heavenly Cow

Influence on the MT!



Limestone relief, Amarna



4. Egyptian Influence on the LXX: Exodus

Verse	LXX	MT
Ex 6,1	ἐν βραχίονι ὑψηλῶ	בְּיַד חֲזָקָה
Ex 6,6	ἐν βραχίονι ὑψηλῶ	בְּזֵרַע נְטוּיָה
Ex 14,8	ἐν χειρὶ ὑψηλῆ	בְּיַד רָמָה
Ex 32,11	ἐν βραχίονι ὑψηλῶ	בְּיַד חֲזָקָה

Translation of the formula with τῷ with βραχίονι ὑψηλῶ in Ex 6,1 and Ex 32,11

- Deuteronom(ist)ic influence should not be disregarded: it is there !

But also:

- Egyptian influence!

4. Egyptian Influence on the LXX: Exodus

Under the Ptolemies:

revival of Ancient Egyptian iconography and mythology surrounding the act of lifting/stretching out the hand.

306 Ptolemy I Soter became Pharaoh

Ptolemaic reprisal of Pharaonic imaginary

- LXX-Exodus' predilection for the « arm formula » is done in conformity with the translator(s) context: Egypt

Special attention to the context of the passage:
particular theological relevance in Ex 6,1 (and Ex 6,6)

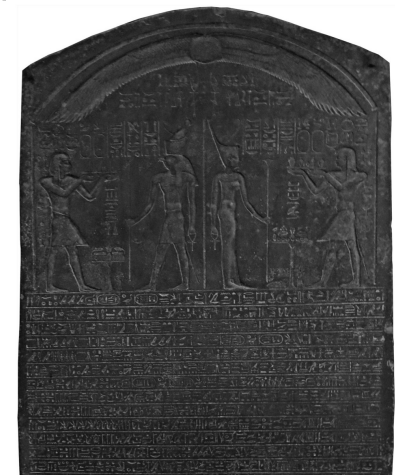
- Identity in translation?



Dendera Temple



Bust of Ptolemy II



The satrap stele, granite "satrap stela" of Ptolemy I

Conclusion

Conclusion

- How is God's arm translated in LXX-Pentateuch?
 - Avoidance?
 - No, rather expansion and harmonisation
 - If avoidance, is this anti-anthropomorphism?
 - No (strong) anti-anthropomorphism
- The Egyptian influence (already present in the MT) is enhanced by the translators in Exodus
- This speaks to their familiarity with Egyptian and Ptolemaic ideology and mythology

Identity and ideology in translation!!

Thank you!