

# FROM THE FORMULA “TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER” (PHIL 2:11) TO THE FORGOTTEN THEOLOGY OF PHIL 2:6-11 AS PAULINE FORMULA FOR MONOTHEISM

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Résumé de l'article

Les discussions concernant la structure de Ph 2,5/6-11 ont conduit à négliger la théologie de Ph 2,6-11 et à une lecture quasi exclusivement christologique de ce passage. Le titre *Carmen Christi* (« Hymne au Christ ») donné par Ralph P. Martin il y a plus d'un demi-siècle à son ouvrage classique apparaît comme un reflet caractéristique de cette approche centrée sur la structure de Ph 2,6-11. Il m'apparaît que ce titre est trompeur, si l'on considère que la mention de Dieu y revient à quatre reprises et celle de Jésus deux fois seulement. Dans la seconde partie de cet article, je m'emploierai à démontrer que ce point de vue théologique au sens strict est celui qui domine dans l'ensemble de la lettre aux Philippiens.

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## FROM THE FORMULA “TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER” (PHIL 2:11) TO THE FORGOTTEN THEOLOGY OF PHIL 2:6-11 AS PAULINE FORMULA FOR MONOTHEISM

AYODELE AYENI

### Introduction: Identity Research vis-à-vis the State of the Question

The “Hymn/Song of Christ” (*Carmen Christi*)<sup>1</sup> and the formulaic structure of Phil 2:6-11<sup>2</sup> are at semantic variance. To call Phil 2:6-11 *Carmen Christi* is to neglect the functional role of God in that pericope;<sup>3</sup> and, to argue either that Phil 2:11b (“to the glory of God the Father”)<sup>4</sup> fits or does not fit in the structural/rhetorical formula of Phil 2:6-11<sup>5</sup> denies the place of God in the same

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1. Since the publication of his book with the title *Carmen Christi*, many exegetes took up Martin’s optic for reading Phil 2:6-11 as a Christological hymn, with no consideration for the four times “God” is mentioned in the hymn. See, Ralph P. MARTIN, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii.5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series, 4), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967.

2. Even today, some scholars are influenced by Jeremias’ original contention against Ernst Lohmeyer’s structural disposition of Phil 2:6-11. See, Joachim JEREMIAS, “Zur Gedankenführung in den paulinischen Briefen: Der Christushymnus,” in Jan N. SEVENSTER and Willem C. van UNNIK (eds.), *Studia Paulina in honorem Johannis de Zwaan*, Haarlem, F. Bohn, 1953, p. 154.

3. Cerfaux suggested the title “L’hymne au Christ – Serviteur de Dieu” [“The hymn of Christ – Servant of God”] as a way of mitigating this problem, but it was not followed by most exegetes commenting on Phil 2:6-11, especially Ralph P. Martin, who has no place for “God” in the title of his *Carmen Christi*. I admit that even Cerfaux’s desire to add “Servant of God” to the title of the “hymn” does not go far enough, because his addition only suggests that Phil 2:6-11 depends, for its origins, on the “Servant Hymn” of deuterio-Isaiah, which is debatable, because most scholars only see the connection limited to Phil 2:6-8. See, Lucien CERFAUX, *Miscellanea historica Alberti de Meyer*, I, Louvain, Bibliothèque de l’Université, 1946, pp. 117-130; See the summary of Cerfaux’s position in Ralph P. MARTIN, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii. 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, p. 32.

4. All biblical citations are from the *New Revised Standard Version*, 1989, *Bibleworks* 9 edition; all Greek citations are from *BGT BibleWorks Greek LXX/BNT*.

5. Michel GOURGUES, Séminaire doctoral: “Entre Jésus et Paul: les premières formulations de la foi chrétienne,” École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem, octobre 2019-janvier 2020, “Essai de synthèse sur Ph 2,6-11 (4 novembre 2019), pp. 4-5. Here, it is pertinent to point out that Gourgues follows the arguments of Jeremias that “death on the cross,” “to the glory of God the Father,” etc. do not fit because they are Pauline additions. See, Ralph P. MARTIN, *Carmen Christi*, pp. 32-35, especially at p. 34 footnote 1.

pericope.<sup>6</sup> In both arguments (*Carmen Christi* and structural/rhetorical formula) the pericope has two dispositive or cola: descending (humanity) and ascending (divinity), and both are united by the explicit mention of God.<sup>7</sup> Of hermeneutical necessity, therefore, the notion of God undergirds the semantics of Phil 2:6-11 that makes the discursive divinity of Jesus Christ possible. Without a doubt, it is God's divinity that serves as a pretext<sup>8</sup> for reading the divinity of Jesus Christ. By rehabilitating God in Philippians 2:6 (2x), 9, 11, the semantics of "Jesus Christ is Lord" or the divinity of Jesus becomes subservient to Theology. This rehabilitation of God and the semantics it provides for reading Phil 2:6-11 is my aim.

It is my major contention that the knowledge of God that makes possible and comprehensible the discursive text of Jesus' divinity (Phil 2:6-11) is pregnant in the formula "to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11) already incorporated in the pericope and in the dual structural cola of the text ("in the form of God/equality with God" with "Therefore God also highly exalted him" and "to the glory of God the Father"). It is the ascending *colum* (Phil 2:6-8) that manifests the indispensability of God and his role in the discursive text of Phil 2:9-11. But to make clear this necessity, the function of a formula as a theological historiography, that is, a bearer of the history of God's knowledge (the fatherhood of God) from the Old Testament via Second Temple Judaism,<sup>9</sup> bears out how to construe "to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11) as a semantic anchor for reading Phil 2:6-11 theologically and monotheistically.

In this semantic regard, it is important to evaluate the possible impact of Phil 2:6-11 on the Philippians, the original recipients of Paul's letter, by applying the Gunkelian presuppositions of Phil 2:6-11: "who is speaking? To

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6. In fact, Jeremias' structure, after excising parts of Phil 2:6-11, will reduce the formula to Phil 2:6-8. See how Jeremias arrives there: Ralph P. MARTIN, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii. 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, p. 34 footnote 1.

7. The debate continues on what part of Phil 2:6-11 should be considered pre-Pauline and which are Pauline additions. See, Michel GOURGUES, "*Plus tard tu comprendras*": *la formation du Nouveau Testament comme témoin de maturations croyantes* (Lire la Bible, 196), Montréal-Paris, Médiaspaul-Cerf, 2019, pp. 41-53; Camille FOCANT, *Les lettres aux Philippiens et à Philémon* (Commentaire de la Bible: Nouveau Testament, 11), Paris, Cerf, 2015, pp. 114-115.

8. "[O]ur understanding of a text, its realization as discourse, depends on the degree to which we can ratify the linguistic and contextual knowledge that its author presumes we share. This has to do with how far we can engage with the text at all. But there is a second condition that also comes into play: this has to do with what we are processing the text for, what we want to get out of it, the **pretextual** purpose which controls the nature of the engagement, and which regulates our focus of attention. These conditions naturally apply not only in the second-person interpretation of a text, but in their first person design as well. Thus a writer will make assumptions about shared knowledge of language and the world but also, crucially, will count on readers recognizing the **pretext** for writing, and adjusting their focus of attention accordingly." See, Henry G. WIDDOWSON, *Text, Context, Pretext: Critical Issues in Discourse Analysis*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2004 (Kindle version), loc 1203 of 2708. Emphases were added.

9. I construe "Second Temple Judaism" as the Old Testament texts that bear the redactions of the exilic and post-exilic agenda.

whom is he speaking? In what circumstances (cultural, historical, sociological) is he speaking? What does he expect from his auditors, and what are his aims through what he says?"<sup>10</sup> The circumstantial elements of "culture, history, society and expectation" make the creation of a Christian identity to be the "purpose" of Paul.<sup>11</sup> We notice this through some of the Philippians' identity markers Paul comes up with: "justified people" (Phil 1:11), "children of God" (Phil 3:15), "citizens of the gospel of Christ" (Phil 1:27) and "citizens of heaven" (Phil 3:20). As regards Jesus, his identity marker is "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil 2:11a).

An overview of the state of the question on Phil 2:6-11 supports our departure from its present preoccupation and consensus reading that does not do justice to the identity and role of God in that pericope.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, German,<sup>13</sup> French<sup>14</sup> and English<sup>15</sup> biblical scholarships, on Phil 2:6-11, underwent two major semantic changes/emphases: 1) the study of the hymnic and confessional nature of Phil 2:6-11,<sup>16</sup> and 2) the search for the meaning of the said pericope.<sup>17</sup> The original position of Lohmeyer that considered the hymn

10. "Qui parle? A qui s'adresse-t-il? Dans quelles circonstances (culturelles, historiques, sociologiques) parle-t-il? Que présuppose-t-il chez ses auditeurs, et quel but poursuit-il en disant ce qu'il dit?" See Albert DE PURY et Thomas RÖMER, "Le Pentateuque en question: position du problem et brève histoire de la recherches," in Albert DE PURY (ed.), *Le Pentateuque en question: les origines et la composition des cinq premiers livres de la Bible à la lumière des recherches récentes* (Le Monde de la Bible), Genève, Labor et Fides, 1989, p. 34.

11. Given the system of slavery at the time Paul wrote Philippians, and the reality of emperor cult/worship, many scholars read Philippians as addressing these situations by providing an alternative or subversive reading of the *status quo*. See, Richard J. CASSIDY, *A Roman Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, New York NY, Crossroad, 2020.

12. Élian Cuvillier presents a succinct summary of the state of the question on Phil 2:6-11, with the "imitation of Christ" (*imitatio Christi*) as the major lesson taken from it (an ethical consequence). See, "Place et fonction de l'hymne aux Philippiens: approches historique, théologique et anthropologique," in Daniel GERBER et Pierre KEITH (eds.), *Les hymnes du Nouveau Testament et leurs fonctions. XXII<sup>e</sup> congrès de l'Association catholique française pour l'étude de la Bible* (Strasbourg, 2007) (Lectio divina, 225), Paris, Cerf, 2009, pp. 137-157.

13. Lohmeyer was the first to suggest a pre-Pauline origin of Phil 2:6-11, developing Bousset's discussion on Kyrios. See, Ernst LOHMEYER, *Kyrios Jesus. Eine Untersuchung zu Phil 2,5-11*, Heidelberg, C. Winter, 21961, p. 1 footnote 1 and pp. 8-11; Wilhelm BOUSSET, *Kyrios Christos. Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 21921.

14. Lucien CERFAUX, *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux*, II, Gembloux, Duculot, 1954, pp. 147-149.

15. Ralph P. MARTIN, *Carmen Christi*, 1967.

16. Michael Wade MARTIN and Bryan A. NASH, "Philippians 2:6-11 as Subversive Hymnos: A Study in the Light of Ancient Rhetorical Theory," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 66 (2015), pp. 91-138; Daniel GERBER and Pierre KEITH (eds.), *Les hymnes du Nouveau Testament et leurs fonctions*; Michael PEPPARD, "Poetry, 'Hymn' and 'Traditional Material' in New Testament Epistles or How to Do Things with Indentations," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 30 (2008), pp. 319-342.

17. Larry W. HURTADO, *Honoring the Son: Jesus in Earliest Christian Devotional Practice*, Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018; Id., *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, Grand Rapids MI – Cambridge UK, William B. Eerdmans, 2003; Id., *How on Earth Did Jesus Become A God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus*, Grand Rapids

in its integrity (Phil 2:6-11) was abandoned by many French and English scholars to follow the lead of Jeremias, who contested the integrity of the pre-Pauline origin of the whole hymn, and limits his analysis to Phil 2:6-8 as pre-Pauline.<sup>18</sup> At present, the English world is exploring the divinity and possible “worship” of Christ in earliest Christianity from the meaning of Phil 2:6-11.<sup>19</sup> I want to complement these two general approaches to the study of Phil 2:6-11.

When one considers late twentieth century’s multiple biblical studies on the role of identity formation in biblical exegesis, this new approach (identity approach) encourages a rereading of Pauline letters – what Christian identity or divine identity does Paul paint? In this connection, first, I will explore the debate on the making of Philippians 2:6-11, with the aid of second-Isaiah consensus reading of “identity formation” as a pretext to critique the absence of God’s role in current consensus; then, I will argue that “in-the-form-of-God” and “God-the-Father,” within Phil 2:6-11, are theologico-historiographical formulae that coalesce to provide the meaning of Phil 2:6-11, as anchored on the formula “to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:11). The inversion of the second *colum* (Phil 2:8-11), beginning with “to the glory of God the Father,” provides a pivot for Phil 2:6-11 and links it to Old Testament monotheism.

## PART I

### Tradition, Redaction and Christology in Phil 2:6-8

This article is in two parts and published as such, because of its length. This first part, will deal with the question of redaction, structure and theology. The points argued include the forgotten correlation between theology and Christology,

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MI – Cambridge UK, William B. Eerdmans, 2005; James D. G. DUNN, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence*, Louisville KY, Westminster John Knox Press, 2010; Richard BAUCKHAM, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity*, Grand Rapids MI – Cambridge UK, William B. Eerdmans, 2008; Gordon D. FEE, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study*, Peabody MA, Hendrickson, 2007, pp. 20-24.

18. Ralph P. Martin, Murphy O’Connor, Michel Gourgues, etc. are among those who adopted the position of Jeremias. See their works mentioned *passim* in this article. However, Aletti takes the position that the final form of Phil 2:6-11 is “de prose rythmée” (“a rhythmic prose”). See, Jean-Noël ALETTI, *Saint Paul. Épître aux Philippiens: Introduction, traduction et commentaire* (Études bibliques – Nouvelle série, 55), Paris, Gabalda, 2005, p. 143; ID. “Les passages néotestamentaires en prose rythmée: Proposition sur leurs fonctions multiple” in Daniel GERBER and Pierre KEITH (eds.), *Les hymnes du Nouveau Testament et leurs fonctions*, pp. 239-263 at 240-242.

19. To my mind, the most sustained and articulate critiques of Hurtado, the foremost proponent of this idea, are those of Yarbrow Collins and Dunn. See, James D. G. DUNN, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence*; Adela YARBROW COLLINS, “How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God?: A Reply,” in David B. CAPES *et al.* (eds.), *Israel’s God and Rebecca’s Children: Christology and Community in Early Judaism and Christianity, Essays in Honor of Larry W. Hurtado and Alan F. Segal*, Waco TX, Baylor University Press, 2007, pp. 55-66.

because of the preoccupation with structural and hymnic arguments. The second part to this article, to be published separately, complements this first part by providing arguments for the rehabilitation of God in Philippians and the semantic of the monotheistic formula crafted as “to the glory of God the Father.”

## 1. Pretext and Text of Phil 2:6-11: Ernst Lohmeyer versus Joachim Jeremias

Notwithstanding whether one follows Lohmeyer to consider Phil 2:6-11 in its entirety as preformed or limit oneself to Jeremias’ emphasis on Phil 2:6-8 as the only preformed part, on the basis of their structural analyses of Phil 2:6-11, the present form of Philippians combines the two halves Jeremias separates and Jeremias’ approach breaks with the criteria for detecting preformed materials in the context of Phil 2:6-11. What matters, for my purposes, is the semantics of the present form of the pericope, and I think that the identity question, in the Gunkelian indices I cited earlier, helps to unfurl a complementary meaning to earlier readings of Phil 2:6-11. When one pulls apart the microcosmic materials or the building blocks of Phil 2:6-11,<sup>20</sup> their different pretexts conjugate an insight into their present meaning and suggest some meaning that has not been underscored sufficiently – monotheism built upon God’s Fatherhood.

### 1.1 Formula/Structure and Exegetical Neglect in Phil 2:6-11

The application of the criteria for detecting a preformed or formulaic material in the New Testament is at the base of “naming” Phil 2:6-11 either as a hymn/poem or for determining its structural form. In order to determine the provenance of some New Testament *pericopai*, biblical scholars use all or some of these six criteria as measurement: 1) rupture from its environment, 2) unique beginning, 3) introductory formula, 4) distinctive style, 5) disparate vocabulary, and 6) multiple attestations.<sup>21</sup> To the best of my knowledge, I am unaware of any one piece of a preformed material that has satisfied all six criteria. For

20. Since Lohmeyer up until the present, most scholars studying Phil 2:6-11 still go back to the Old Testament in general and second Isaiah in particular to make sense of the constitutive vocabulary of the pericope. Yet, scholars leave God out of their interpretation of the text. Recently, however, there are timid attempts at incorporating God, like the case of Aletti who qualifies Phil 2:9-11 a theological-Christology; or Cassidy who calls Phil 2:6-11 a drama between God and Jesus Christ. See, Richard J. CASSIDY, *A Roman Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, New York NY, Crossroad, 2020, pp. 81-99; Jean-Noël ALETTI, *Saint Paul. Épître aux Philippiens*, p. 174.

21. 1) Rupture from its environment, 2) Unique beginning, 3) Introductory formula, 4) Distinctive style, 5) Disparate vocabulary, and 6) Multiple attestations. The translation and arrangements are mine. Cf. Michel GOURGUES, “Les formes pré-littéraires, ou l’Évangile avant l’écriture,” in Bernard POUDERON (ed.), *Histoire de la littérature grecque*, tome 2: *De Paul à Irénée de Lyon* (coll. “Initiations aux Pères de l’Église”), Paris, Cerf, 2013, pp. 266-268.

instance, besides Phil 2:6-11, there is no multiple attestation of that “hymn,” in that form, in any New Testament text. Consequently, the arguments made on the basis of these criteria must be cumulative<sup>22</sup>—the number of criteria found strengthens the plausibility of a preformed structure of a pericope.

The descriptive names given to Philippians 2:6-11, namely, “hymn” and “confession”<sup>23</sup>, draw largely from the realization that it does not sit well with the flow of its present context—prose. This reality is what is known as “rupture from its context or environment.” This is to say that Phil 2:6-11 is poetic,<sup>24</sup> and it is borrowed by Paul from the faith of the Church before his conversion.<sup>25</sup> As a result, speculations are made, in order to understand the pericope, from its provenance. In other words, the belief is that, should it (Phil 2:6-11) be from Paul, its meaning would be different from when it is a quotation (preformed material) Paul is citing; and, if it is a quotation, its origins will contribute significantly to its meaning.<sup>26</sup> However, my take is that both ideas – origins and Pauline additions – give Phil 2:6-11, in its final/present/canonical form the meaning of a “monotheistic formula,” from the semantics of the multiple pretexts that fuse into Phil 2:6-11, from their second-Isaiah pretext, made conspicuous by the addition of “to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:11b).

### 1.1.1 “Rupture from Its Environment” and the Delimitation of Phil 2:6-11

Since it is generally accepted that there is something that differentiates Phil 2:6-11 from the general style (prosaic) of its present context (Phil 2) – the criterion of “rupture” – one needs to explain how that conclusion is arrived at

22. *Contra*, Michael PEPPARD, “‘Poetry,’ ‘Hymns’ and ‘Traditional Material’ in New Testament Epistles or How to Do Things with Indentations,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 30 (2008), pp. 318-342.

23. Somewhere else, Martin calls Phil 2:6-11 a “Confession.” See, Ralph P. MARTIN, *An Early Christian Confession: Philippians ii: 5-11 in Recent Interpretation*, London, Tyndale Press, 1960.

24. Since poetry in antiquity follows certain rules of composition, scholars, including Lohmeyer and Jeremias, analyzed Phil 2:6-11 to see whether it measured up to the rules of poetic composition; their analyses resulted in the difference in conclusions between the two on the structure of Phil 2:6-11.

25. Lohmeyer suggests either a baptismal or Eucharistic context as the origin of the “hymn.” See, Élian CUVILLIER, “Place et fonction de l’hymne aux Philippiens: approches historique, théologique et anthropologique,” p. 140.

26. There are, at least, three opinions here: first, some scholars believe that the whole of Phil 2:6-11 is pre-Pauline and echoes Second Isaiah or the Old Testament. This group sides with Lohmeyer. Second, there is a group that sides with Jeremias believing that the core of what is pre-Pauline and goes back to Second-Isaiah is Phil 2:6-8. A third group believes that the whole of Phil 2:6-11 is Paul’s creation. The list of those in this third group is on the increase. The latest addition, I am aware of, is Cassidy: “The position adopted in this commentary is that Paul formulated these insights [Phil 2:6-11] as a chained Roman prisoner (...) Philippians 2:6-11 is not a work composed by some other author. (...) Only as a prisoner in chains, at the end of his long journey with Christ, is Paul able to formulate these profound insights.” See, Richard J. CASSIDY, *A Roman Commentary on St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, p. 83.



and how it impinges on the hermeneutical difference between Lohmeyer and Jeremias. Hence, the criterion of "unique beginning" of Phil 2:6 provides a fertile ground for formulaic scholarship to argue for the pre-Pauline origin of Phil 2:6-11. The relative pronoun, "*hos*"—"who," which enunciates the presentation of Phil 2:6-11, links it to Phil 2:5, suggesting that "Christ Jesus" is the grammatical subject of Phil 2:6, especially the comparison it makes between God and Christ. The comparison articulates the meaning of the phrase "in the form of God." "The form of God" presupposes an idea (pretext) of God, as a discursive approach to the understanding of "Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:5). Since the form of God is chronologically prior to the form of Jesus Christ, historical Jesus Christ, the fact that God is being used to identify Christ, God should figure in whatever "naming" Phil 2:6-11 will be given: this is not the case with Ralph P. Martin's naming of Phil 2:6-11 as *Carmen Christi*.<sup>27</sup>

The similarity between the beginning of Phil 2:6 and the *hos* which begins Col 1:15 and 1 Pet 2:22 lends support to the credibility of the criterion of special or unique beginning, as one of the ways to decipher a preformed material, because there are other preformed materials which begin with this special relative pronoun *hos*.<sup>28</sup> Although, the pericope under review does not have an "introductory formula" like the classic one in 1 Cor 15:3: "For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received," a clear proof that what follows will be a teaching that was prior to Paul's conversion, that notwithstanding, the relative pronoun *hos* that begins the preformed material coalesces with the statement "every tongue should confess (*exomologēsētai*) that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil 2:11), on the last verse of the pericope, as an unambiguous pointer to a belief or creed, designated by the aorist subjunctive third person middle verb *exomologēō*. Jeremias contests the inclusion of Phil 2:11 as part of the preformed material of the periscope, thereby raising the question of semantic congruity between the present state of Phil 2:6-11 and his own delimitation of the pericope to Phil 2:6-8.

Obviously, there are similar usages of the same verb (*exomologēō*) and contextual usages that corroborate the stance that *exomologēsētai* is a creedal formula; for example, "if you confess (*homologēsēs* [subjunctive aorist verb, second person singular]) with your lips that Jesus is Lord" (Rm 10:9) and "no

27. Even the original inspiration of Ralph P. Martin, that is, from Pliny's letter to emperor Trajan, does include "god" in the description of the hymn in question: "*Carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere invicem*." See, Ralph P. MARTIN, *Carmen Christi*, p. 1.

28. For the list of scholars who concur and for New Testament passages studied, see: Michel GOURGUES, *Prier les hymnes du Nouveau Testament, Cahiers Évangile 80*, Paris: Cerf, 1992, pp. 50-52; *Id.*, *Le Crucifié. Du scandale à l'exaltation* (coll. "Jésus et Jésus-Christ"), Paris-Montréal: Desclee-Bellarmin, 22010, 96-99; *Id.*, "La résurrection dans les credos et les hymnes des premières communautés chrétiennes," in O. MAINVILLE et D. MARGUERAT (eds.), *Résurrection. L'après-mort dans le monde ancien et le Nouveau Testament (Le Monde de la Bible/Sciences Bibliques)*, Genève: Labor et Fides/Montréal-Paris: Médiaspaul, 2001, pp. 161-174.



one can say (*legei*)<sup>29</sup> ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 12:3). These indicate a belief current in Paul’s time, and which predated Paul’s conversion. Consequently, *exomologēsētai* suggests that Phil 2:6-11 contains a pre-Pauline creed.

### 1.1.2 “Distinctive Style”: Problems with Martin’s “Naming” and Jeremias’ Structure of Phil 2:6-11

The criterion of “distinctive style” argues on the uniqueness or elements of difference between a preformed material and its environment or macro-context. Unlike the prosaic style prior to and immediately after Phil 2:6-11, we now have a poetic style of writing. To the *morphē* (form) of God is the corresponding *morphē* of a slave (A-C);<sup>30</sup> from the *isa* (equality) to God is sameness (*homoiōmati*) to and shape (*schēmati*) of human beings (B-D). Furthermore, if the previous pairs emphasize morphological relations, there are verbal or participial repetitions (assonances) also: to “being” (*hyparchōn*) corresponds “taking” (*labōn*), “becoming” (*genomenos*) and “being found” (*heuretheis*), providing a semantic link among A-C-D-E. The second segment of the hymn presents some consequential parallelism<sup>31</sup>: the self-emptying (*ekenōsen*) of Christ points to his exaltation (*hyperypsōsen*) by God (C-A’); the form of a slave (*morphē doulou*) receives a name (*to onoma to hyper pan onoma*) above all other names (C-B’); the human likeness (*en homoiōmati anthrōpōn*) finds “worship” (*pasa glōssa exomologēsētai*) or confession as Lord (D-E’); “Lord” *simpliciter* marks a distinction between himself and the Father. No pericope in Philippians follows this construction, and that makes it unique.

If this criterion of “distinctive style” leads to the consideration of Phil 2:6-11 as a poem or hymn, and scholars’ structural analyses of it confirm its uniqueness, somehow scholars have failed to connect the dialogue between Jesus and God in the poem to their interpretation of the poem, as it is the case with Martin’s title/naming of “*Carmen Christi*” for Phil 2:5-11. In other words, structural analysis has two short comings for exegesis, as regards Phil 2:6-11: it proves difficult for providing a name that takes into account the identities

29. These verbs are cognates: λέγειν, ὁμολογεῖν and ἐξομολογεῖν.

30. See the chiasmic schematization of Phil 2:6-11 below for the letter referents.

31. Instead of a “consequential parallelism,” Gourgues presents a contrasting parallelism, in two strophes, thus:

6a ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων	7c ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος
6b οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ	7d καὶ σχήματι εὗρεθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος
7a ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν	8a ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν
7b μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν	8b γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου [θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ].

Michel GOURGUES, “La foi chrétienne primitive face à la croix: le témoignage des formulaires pré-pauliniens,” *Science et Esprit*, 41 (1989), pp. 49-69 at 56, footnote 19.

of God and Jesus Christ, as well as prove complicated to agree on the length and vocabulary for exegesis, given different structural delimitations of the pericope.

### 1.1.3 “Disparate Vocabulary” and “Formulaic Historiography” to Rehabilitate God

Another criterion is “disparate or unique vocabulary.” Our pericope presents varied vocabulary, the meaning of which is still debated: *morphē*, *harpagmos*, *kenoō*, *schēma* and *hypēkoos*. These words are not common Pauline vocabulary, their inclusion suggest a borrowing from earlier sources other than Pauline. André Feuillet<sup>32</sup> contests their uniqueness by indicating their cognate forms in the Bible. For example:

- 1) *harpagmos*: Lev 6:4, 5:23; Ps 62:11; Is 42:22, 61:8; Sirach 16:13; Job 29:17; Ez 19:3, 22:25-27, 23:15;
- 2) *isa*:<sup>33</sup> Job 5:14; 10:10; 13:12,28; 15:16; 24:20; 27:16; 29:14; 30:19; 40:15;<sup>34</sup> Jn 5:18;
- 3) *morphē*: Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; Gal 4:19; Phil 3:10;<sup>35</sup>
- 4) *schēma*: Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 7:21; Phil 3:21; Rom 2:20 (*morphōsis*) and 2 Tim 3:5 (*morphōsis*).<sup>36</sup>

What Feuillet’s contestation overlooks is the contextual use and the rarity of these words in Pauline letters, not to talk of their concatenation and constellation in six verses. The fact that *harpagmos* is a *hapax legomenon*<sup>37</sup> in the New Testament provides a semantic link with Old Testament and earliest Christianity, a pointer to the past. Also, the criterion of “disparate or unique vocabulary” does not rest on words being *hapax legomena*, but their cluster in a bid to make a semantic point that could and have been made otherwise. For my purposes, however, the connection of Phil 2:6-11 through these words is what I call “formulaic historiography” or the pretext for reading Phil 2:6-11. Of particular note is how to account for the God at work in the Old Testament and how Paul appropriates him in Phil 2:6-11, through the vocabulary it contains, and the place of God in the rest of the letter to the Philippians. In the

32. André FEUILLET, *Christologie paulinienne et tradition biblique*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1973, p. 129.

33. Ceslas SPICQ, “ἴσος, ἰσότης, ἰσότης,” in *Notes de lexicographie néo-testamentaire supplément*, Göttingen- Fribourg, Suisse, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht-Éditions universitaires, 1978, pp. 351-360.

34. André FEUILLET, *Christologie paulinienne et tradition biblique*, p. 125.

35. André FEUILLET, *Christologie paulinienne*, p. 102.

36. André FEUILLET, *Christologie paulinienne*, p. 102.

37. I. Howard MARSHALL (ed.), *Moulton and Geden: Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, New York, NY-London: T & T Clark, 62002, p. 111.

second part of my article, I will demonstrate the importance of God, in all of Philipians, for the interpretation of Phil 2:6-11.

#### *1.1.4 "Multiple Attestation" and Phil 2:6-11 as Composite Formula*

Finally, on our use of the criteria for detecting a preformed material, the criterion of "multiple attestation," which means that the same reality of a particular pericope is found elsewhere in the Bible, affords us the opportunity to explore the relationship between Phil 2:6-11 and the rest of the New Testament. It is a consensus idea that nowhere else in the Bible one finds the contents of Phil 2:6-11 arranged the same way. However, just as bits and pieces of it are found in the Old Testament, as Feuillet shows, parts of it are also found in the New Testament. It is not my interest to list them, but to show that "to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11b) finds echoes in the Old and New Testaments with the possible harmonic or synchronic semantic role in Phil 2:6-11.

As the first part of the title of my article implies – "To the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:6, 11) – there is the need to know the reason for the transition from "God" to "God the Father." This transition is made possible because the process of the "Lordship" of Christ, the "Fatherhood" of God, and the "confession" of Jesus Christ as "Lord," all provide cases of "multiple attestations" for parts of Phil 2:6-11: they are all present in bits and pieces in the Bible, outside of Phil 2:6-11. An instantiation, in relation to "the form of God," is Rm 1:3-4: "the gospel concerning his Son, who was **descended** from David according to the flesh and was declared to be **Son of God**<sup>38</sup> **with power according to the spirit of holiness**<sup>39</sup> **by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.**" Two points are in order here: 1) in Rm 1:2 Paul claims that the reality he is writing about is that "which he [God] promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures," hence, not a Pauline invention; 2) the fact of the human Christ being "declared to be Son of God" is at the origin of the Fatherhood of God: God as human is Son, and God as not-human is "Father" vis-à-vis the human God, Lord Jesus Christ.

I subscribe to Dunn's opinion that early Christians must have grappled with their understanding of Jesus, from the earthly Jesus they knew to the glorified Jesus they now "worship"/confess, on how to explain that change of mentality and attitude.<sup>40</sup> For instance, Paul never knew the physical or historical Jesus, but met the glorified Christ on his way to Damascus (Acts 9).

38. Emphases are added to underscore the origins of a triple terminology for God.

39. James Dunn sees in this expression an inchoate theological distinction between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Cf. James D. G. DUNN, "Jesus – Flesh and Spirit: An Exposition of Rom 1:3-4," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 24 (1973), pp. 40-68, at 66-68. We will see below that Dunn's approach to Rom 1:3-4 is completely different from that of Boismard.

40. Cf. James D. G. DUNN, "Jesus – Flesh and Spirit: An Exposition of Rom 1:3-4," pp. 66-67.

Given what he learned of the historical Jesus (Gal 1-2), a necessary adjustment was called for.

Let us explore more closely the preformedness of Phil 2:11, from the perspective of “pretextuality,”<sup>41</sup> by examining the relevance of “Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil 2:11) and the consequential addition of “to the glory of God the Father.” This is imperative in order to ground Phil 2:6-11 in theology or the centrality of God-the-Father, and not Christology.

*1.2 Pretext and Macro-Context: Explaining “Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil 2:11a) from “sit at my right hand” (Ps 110:1)*

Two facts are clear from 1.0 – 1.1.4 above: a) that the **pretext** of Phil 2:6-11 is dominantly from the Old Testament, when read from the hermeneutics of “promise-fulfillment” or “formulaic historiography”; and b) that the **macro-context** of Phil 2 is prosaic or a didactic-narrative. But in their attributions of some parts of Phil 2:6-11 to deuterio Isaiah (Is 40-55) as its provenance, scholars make allowance for construing Phil 2:6-11 as having disparate sources amenable to exegesis. I contend that notwithstanding the different sources of Phil 2:6-11, there is a coherent theological message it contains: it argues for the monotheism of the Christian faith, through the “Fatherhood” of God, where “Father” is an identity marker that differentiates “Jesus Christ is Lord” from “God the Father.” The culminating point of Phil 2:6-11, “to the glory of God the Father,” makes the monotheistic statement of the pericope evident through the separation between Christology and Theology. Consequently, I argue that “to the glory of God the Father” is a formula of monotheism that explains the theology of Philippians as a whole and Phil 2:6-11 in particular.

To begin with, the “glory of God” has a meaning deducible from the application of “sit at my right hand” to explain the Christ event. We need to read this meaning into the implication of “to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:11), if we want to see a different construance of the pericope, from identity perspective. The consequential meaning of Phil 2:6-8 makes the inversion of the order of Phil 2:9-11 imperative for its meaning to be apparent, against Jeremias’ separation of its rhetorical structure. But it is necessary to correlate the “confession” of Jesus as Lord (“every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”) with the meaning of “sit at my right” as a formula that brings out the meaning of “to the glory of God the Father.”

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41. See footnote 5 for my use of “pretext.”

Although Michel Gourgues<sup>42</sup> treats the 16<sup>43</sup> appearances and contextual uses of the formula “sit at my right hand” in the New Testament, I do not intend to exhaust the polysemy of these different contexts. However, an element of the redefinition of monotheism for Christians, from its Jewish religious identity marker, is based on the Christ event. In the gospel of Mark, in a polemical context, a new mentality and conception of Jesus as Divine is noticeable in one of the rare occasions of its type, when Jesus contests the Jewish conception of himself: “[w]hile Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, ‘[h]ow can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared,’ The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.’ David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?’ And the large crowd was listening to him with delight” (Mk 12:35-37). Jesus’ declaration is possible, only when the apostles and the gospel writer see Jesus Christ as “Lord” in fulfillment of Ps 110:1-2, the first biblical appearance of “sit on my right.” Here, Mk 12:35-37 presents a Christological reading of Ps 110:1.<sup>44</sup>

Gourgues’ general conclusion of his research is that the expression is pre-New Testament, but with a New Testament polysemous adaptations. This polysemy is contextual (Mk 12:36; 14:62; Acts 2:34; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:13) – each appearance of “sit at my right” has to be studied on its own merit. But “my Lord said to my Lord,” which precedes the imperative to “sit at my right,” presents the first problem for the lector of the statement and, second, the addressee. Added to these two, it is necessary to know what qualified the addressee to merit to “sit at my right,” since the concept of “right hand” denotes a place or position of honor and power, and identity. But this honor and power derive from the “glory” of the person (God) at whose right hand Jesus sits. This becomes imperative because Attridge<sup>45</sup> and Collins<sup>46</sup> show that the Psalms were given Christological readings both in the apostolic and sub-apostolic times – there is a traditional reading of it.

42. Michel GOURGUES, *À la droite de Dieu: résurrection de Jésus et actualisation du psaume 110:1 dans le Nouveau Testament* (Études Bibliques), Paris, Gabalda, 1978. See also: Emilio G. CHÁVEZ, “El Significado Holístico de ‘Sento a la Derecha del Padre,’” *Anamnesis*, 41 (2011), pp. 31-51.

43. David M. Hay claims that there are 33 allusions to Ps 110 in the New Testament. See, David M. HAY, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, 18), Nashville NY, Abingdon Press, 1973, p. 15. For Gourgues, see his table of contents: Michel GOURGUES, *À la droite de Dieu*, pp. 267-269.

44. Michel GOURGUES, *À la droite de Dieu*, pp. 127-161 at 135.

45. Harold W. ATTRIDGE, “Giving Voice to Jesus: Use of the Psalms in the New Testament,” in Harold W. ATTRIDGE, and Margot E. FASSLER (eds.), *Psalms in Community: Jewish and Christian Textual, Liturgical, and Artistic Traditions*, Atlanta GA, Society of Biblical Literature, 2003, pp. 101-112.

46. Adela YARBRO COLLINS, “The Psalms and the Origins of Christology,” in Harold W. ATTRIDGE, and Margot E. FASSLER (eds.), *Psalms in Community*, pp. 113-123.

One example suffices, in addition to Jesus' contestation of his exclusive identification as human in Mk 12:35-37, to situate the general understanding of “sit at my right hand.” First, the macro-context of its appearance in Acts (Acts 2:33-35) is that of Pentecost. Luke explains the accomplishment of the Ascension of Christ, the fact that Christ has reached the Father's right side, and that is the possibility for the fulfillment of Christ's promise to send the Holy Spirit upon his followers. The Holy Spirit comes from the Father and Jesus, who is at the right side of God: “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, **he has poured out** (*execheen*)<sup>47</sup> this that you both see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

Chronologically, the Ascension precedes Pentecost in order to emphasize the location of Christ, “at the right hand,” when the Holy Spirit came. Also, the sending of the Holy Spirit from the Father, with Jesus at the Father's right hand, leads to the following statement: “Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that **God has made him** (*epoiēsen ho Theos*) **both Lord and Messiah**, this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36). The simple conclusion deducible from this is that the resurrection, and ascension of Christ were in view of a place of honor before God—“**God has made him** (*epoiēsen ho Theos*) **both Lord and Messiah**.” Also, the addition of “this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36) emphasizes the role of the “cross” in Christ's exaltation as well as in the kerygma of earliest Christianity. Consequent upon the central role of the “cross” (Phil 2:8), the link between the “Lordship” of Jesus and “every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord,” is established: the Cross leads to the Lordship and conferment of honor (identity) upon Jesus Christ, designated by name-giving – “Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil 2:11a).

As regards the divinity of Jesus Christ, two passages in Romans are important, in order to corroborate the assertion of Acts 2:36 and to emphasize the role of the Cross in it: 1) Rom 10:9 “because if you confess [*homologēsēs*] with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rm 10:9), and 2) “For, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rm 10:13).<sup>48</sup> On the one hand, Rm 10:9 claims that “Jesus is Lord” (*Kyrion Jēsoun*), just as Phil 2:11 (*Kyrios Jēsous*) states; on the other hand, Rm 10:13 asserts the salvific/soteriological significance of confessing Jesus as Lord. But one needs to go to Rm 14:9 to have the reason adduced for Jesus' “Lordship” or divinity: “For to this end Christ died

47. Emphasis added.

48. The following also corroborate the same idea: “Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved . . .” (Joel 3:5); “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **both their Lord and ours**” (1 Cor 1:2); “Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:21); “And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you” (Acts 3:16).

and lived again, so that he might be Lord (*kyrieusē*)<sup>49</sup> of both the dead and the living.” This citation implies that the transfer of the attributes and roles of God to Jesus Christ takes place after the resurrection. For instance, Rm 14:11 says: “For it is written, ‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.’” This is all the more interesting because Paul cites Is 45:23: “By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.’” The confession crafted into Phil 2:6-11 goes back to the realization that Jesus accomplished the prophecies of old, as Paul states in Rm 1:2: “which he [God] promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures” (Rm 1:2), and “Christ died for our sins **in accordance with the Scriptures**” (1 Cor 15:3).<sup>50</sup>

The multiple places where the “confession” of Jesus as Lord is attested in Pauline corpus lay emphasis on the post-resurrection understanding of Jesus’ Lordship, without an explicit denial of his pre-divinity. If we follow Paul’s use of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, on the basis of “sit at my right hand,” it is evident that God (the Father) is responsible for the exaltation of Jesus Christ and that Jesus Christ remains at the right side of God up until the final overthrow of death and the triumph of God the Father because Jesus will still remain “subjected” to God the Father: “When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all” (1 Cor 15:28).<sup>51</sup>

The location of the resurrected Christ, at the right hand of God, necessitates a new designation (identity) or signifier – “the name that is above every name” (Phil 2:9) – to represent the exalted position he occupies, that is, Jesus’ “Lordship.” The “glory of God” and the “Lordship” of Jesus Christ are mutually inclusive. This is the reason, it seems to me, that Paul emphasizes theological monotheism in Phil 2:6-11, with the last clause of “to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:11b). If we were to retain either Aletti’s suggestion of “Theological-Christology” or Cassidy’s “Christo-theological drama” as titles for Phil 2:6-11, the notion of Christian monotheism will still remain woolly: “God the Father” guarantees Paul’s monotheism, despite the Christ event, at least, from Phil 2:6-11.

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49. Boismard places a lot of emphasis on ἵνα κυριεύσῃ, the consequential nature of Christ’s “Lordship” from the resurrection event for the rest of creation (upon earth, under the earth, living or dead). Cf. Marie-Émile BOISMARD, “La divinité du Christ d’après saint Paul,” *Lumière et vie*, 9 (1953), pp. 75-100 at 88.

50. Emphasis added.

51. This echoes Paul’s statement of monotheism: “yet for us there is **one God, the Father**, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. (1 Cor 8:6). Here, monotheism is subsumed in “Fatherhood” and the *shema* “one God,” two Old Testament concepts.



## Provisionary Conclusion

Since there is a second part to this article, this is a provisional conclusion. This first part suggests the questioning of the structural debates on Phil 2:5/6-11, since Lohmeyer's 1928 formulation of it. I argue that the preoccupation with structural analyses, either in agreement with Lohmeyer's or Jeremias' conclusions offer a number of disservices to the exegesis of Phil 2:6-11. One of the disservices is the fact that it makes it difficult to concentrate on the synchronic and canonical form of Phil 2:6-11, because of suggestions of which parts to excise from it. I then provide the incongruences that exist with structural analyses, especially Jeremias', when one considers the six steps in discerning a preformed material. In other words, the science of structural analysis has evolved since Lohmeyer and Jeremias, and make the weaknesses of their approach to Phil 2:6-11 apparent.

The debates around the structure of Phil 2:5/6-11 led to the neglect of the theology of Phil 2:6-11, to a near exclusive Christological reading of it. Ralph P. Martin's title for Phil 2:6-11, "*Carmen Christi*" ("Christ's Hymn") puts a final stamp on the works of structuralists' reading of Phil 2:6-11. I contend that that title is misleading, when one considers that "God" is mentioned explicitly four times in Phil 2:6-11 and "Jesus" only twice. In part two of this article, I further demonstrate that Philippians is a theological letter, in the service of identity formation.

To conclude this first part of my article, I allude to the earliest and most used Christological formula of the New Testament – "sit at my right hand" – as a judicious formula that leads one's mind away from too much preoccupation with Christology to a monotheistic Christian/Pauline theology of Phil 2:6-11, because the formula "sit at my right" subsumes the title/naming of "Jesus Christ is Lord" in "to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11b). This is the first step in clarifying the semantics of "structure" and "naming" of Phil 2:6-11 that are at variance.

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(To be continued)

## SUMMARY

The debates around the structure of Phil 2:5/6-11 led to the neglect of the theology of Phil 2:6-11, to a near exclusive Christological reading of it. Ralph P. Martin's title for Phil 2:6-11, "*Carmen Christi*" ("Christ's Hymn") puts a final stamp on the works of structuralists' reading of Phil 2:6-11. I contend that that title is misleading, when one considers that "God" is mentioned explicitly four times in Phil 2:6-11 and "Jesus" only twice. In part two of this article, I further demonstrate that Philippians is a theological letter, in the service of identity formation.

## SOMMAIRE

Les discussions concernant la structure de Ph 2,5/6-11 ont conduit à négliger la théologie de Ph 2,6-11 et à une lecture quasi exclusivement christologique de ce passage. Le titre *Carmen Christi* («Hymne au Christ») donné par Ralph P. Martin il y a plus d'un demi-siècle à son ouvrage classique apparaît comme un reflet caractéristique de cette approche centrée sur la structure de Ph 2,6-11. Il m'apparaît que ce titre est trompeur, si l'on considère que la mention de Dieu y revient à quatre reprises et celle de Jésus deux fois seulement. Dans la seconde partie de cet article, je m'emploierai à démontrer que ce point de vue théologique au sens strict est celui qui domine dans l'ensemble de la lettre aux Philippiens.