

# THE HARPAGMOS ENIGMA: A PHILOLOGICAL SOLUTION

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## I

MODERN discussion of the enigmatic *οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἱερά θεῶ* of Phil. 2:6 received its most significant contribution from Werner Jaeger in a notable article published half a century ago.<sup>1</sup> Jaeger contended that this much-disputed phrase belongs to a cluster of idiomatic expressions in which literal notions of robbery or violent seizure are not present. These idiomatic expressions feature double accusative constructions in which *ἄρπαγμα* as well as *ἔρμαιον*, *εὖρημα*, and *εὐτύχημα* regularly appear with such verbs as *ἡγεῖσθαι*, *ποιεῖσθαι*, and *τίθεσθαι* with the meaning, "to regard something as a stroke of luck, a windfall, a piece of good fortune," etc.<sup>2</sup> When it occurs in such a construction *ἄρπαγμα* is to be understood as a synonym of the above-mentioned nouns ("Studie," pp. 548-49) — a judgment which Jaeger believed is most patently indicated in Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* VII.20, since there both *ἄρπαγμα* and *ἔρμαιον* occur in the same phrase: *οὐχ ἄρπαγμα οὐδὲ ἔρμαιον ποιεῖται τὸ πρᾶγμα*.<sup>3</sup>

An appropriate understanding of the *ἄρπαγμός* remark in Phil. 2:6 requires not only the recognition of its idiomatic character, in Jaeger's view, but also an awareness of the style-history of such

<sup>1</sup> WERNER WILHELM JAEGER, Eine stilgeschichtliche Studie zum Philipperbrief, *Hermes* 50 (1915), 537-53.

<sup>2</sup> Among the occurrences of these phrases referred to by JAEGER are those found in the following: THUCYDIDES III.33; LYSIAS, Fragment XIX (extant only as a citation in DIONYSIUS of Halicarnassus, *On the Ancient Orators*; see the edition of H. Usener and L. Radermacher, 104); JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities* II.41; LUCIAN, *Heremotimus* 52; GALEN, *De semine* IV, p. 561 (Kuehn); *De simpl. medicam.* XII, p. 314 (Kuehn); HELIODORUS, *Aethiopica* VII.7,20; VIII.7. JAEGER assumes that *ἄρπαγμα* and *ἄρπαγμός* were used synonymously in Koine Greek, as were many *-μος* and *-μα* nouns (Studie, 548, n. 1).

<sup>3</sup> In addition to these double accusative constructions JAEGER calls attention to numerous uses of *ἄρπαγμα* and its cognates which document their association with ideas of fortuity and good luck. Of particular interest is the use of *ἀρπάζειν* in HERONDAS, *Mimes* VI.30, and of *συναρπάζειν* in XENOPHON, *Memorabilia* I.4.8.



idiomatic expressions. The latter Jaeger regarded as his principal contribution to the interpretation of this NT text, since he was largely dependent on material collected by Wettstein (*Novum Testamentum Graecum* I, II, 1751/52) for documentation of the association of ἄρπαγμα with ἔρμαιον, εὖρημα and similar terms. Jaeger maintained that these idiomatic usages originated in the unsophisticated jargon of common people. This judgment is suggested by the idiomatic use of ἀρπάζειν in Herondas, *Mimes* VI.30, the use of συναρπάζειν in Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I.4.8, and by the comparative frequency with which such idiomatic expressions are used in romance literature, which like the mime reflects the speech of common folk. These unrefined phrases first entered literary usage as direct quotations and, when subsequently they were admitted to sophisticated expression, they acquired a more refined significance ("Studie," pp. 545, 550).

The occurrence of the idiomatic expression in Phil. 2:6, an elevated and solemn passage, is evidence that it was no longer regarded as a crude expression; it cannot, therefore, be translated, "he did not regard it as a godsend," which lacks literary taste, but requires a rendering more in keeping with the refined usage to which by this time it belonged ("Studie," p. 550). The close connection between ἄρπαγμα and τύχη disclosed in the texts he cited prepared the way for the expression to be employed in declamations concerning τύχη or ἀρετή which Hellenistic literature and rhetoric cultivated; and in Plutarch's *De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute* 8 (M. 330D) Jaeger found a passage which he believed parallels the Philippians text and unlocks its meaning:

οὐ γὰρ ληστρικῶς τὴν Ἀσίαν καταδραμὼν οἷδ' ὥσπερ ἄρπαγμα καὶ λάφυρον εὐτυχίας ἀνελπίστον σπαράξαι καὶ ἀνασύρασθαι διανοηθεῖς . . . ἀλλ' ἐνὸς ὑπήκοα λόγου τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ μίᾳς πολιτείας, ἕνα δῆμον ἀνθρώπων ἅπαντας ἀποφῆναι βουλόμενος, οὕτως ἑαυτὸν ἐσχημάτιζεν

(For he did not overrun Asia like a robber nor did he have it in mind to tear and ravage it as if it were the booty and spoil of unexpected good luck [as Hannibal and other conquerors had done] . . . but since he wished to make everything on earth obedient to one reason and one government, and all men one people, he conformed himself accordingly").

Jaeger maintained that the antithetical form of this statement corresponds to the Philippians sentence, and that the evidence he accumulated makes it clear that the use of ἄρπαγμα here represents a favorite literary τόπος from which the old catchword of popular jargon has disappeared. Plutarch did not say οὐχ ἄρπαγμα ἡγήσατο, Jaeger acknowledged, but οὐχ ὥσπερ ἄρπαγμα ἀνασύρασθαι διανοηθείς. This slightly divergent language is to be explained by the fact that Alexander had not yet achieved sovereignty either over Asia or the rest of the world, and for this reason a verb like διανοεῖσθαι and a ὥσπερ are required.<sup>4</sup>

With this dissimilarity accounted for, the Philippians passage could now be brought to clarity: it presents the same kind of antithesis as Plutarch fashioned at the very beginning of his treatise on Alexander (M. 326D, E):

It is necessary to answer . . . on behalf of Alexander, since he would be annoyed and angry if it were supposed that he obtained as a sheer gift, indeed from Fortune, the hegemony which he acquired at the price of much blood and of wounds which came one after the other,

" . . . Many sleepless nights he spent,  
and made his way through blood-stained days  
of fighting" . . .

These words of Plutarch, Jaeger avowed, could have been written about Christ. He too did not accept his sovereignty as a gratuity but earned that distinction through suffering. Christ did not wish to use the equality with God which was his by virtue of sonship for his own pleasure but emptied himself of this advantage in order to demonstrate his ἀρετή. Thus Jaeger translated the Philippians passage: "Let everyone be minded as Jesus Christ also was, who, although he was in the divine form of being, yet did not regard as something for his own advantage the fact that he was like God, but emptied himself (of the divine form) and assumed a servant's form." The hymn says that Christ possesses his dignity, even though it is innate, οὐχ ἄρπαγμα τύχης, ἀλλ' ἀρετῆς ἄθλον

<sup>4</sup>Since φηγεῖσθαι and similar verbs, when they are used in this idiomatic way, characterize someone's attitude toward a piece of good luck which is already in hand in every other text he consulted, JAEGER concluded that this was the way in which the τὰ εἶναι ἰσα θεῷ of Phil. 2:6 was to be understood also (Studie, 551).



("not as the booty of fortune, but as the reward of virtue"), as Gregory of Nazianzus, in an apparent reference to the Philippians passage, said centuries ago.<sup>5</sup> This remark Jaeger found exactly expressive both of ancient style and sensibility: Christ assumed the place of the pagan savior-hero and protector ("Studie," pp. 550-52); and he hoped that this treatment of Phil. 2:6 would be so persuasive as to render alternate interpretations untenable ("Studie," p. 542).

## II

Rather than being utterly persuasive, Jaeger's effort reached a mixed result and, therefore, has had an ambivalent effect on subsequent scholarship. On the one hand, Jaeger argued cogently that the *ἀρπαγμός* remark in Phil. 2:6 is related both in form and in meaning to a cluster of idiomatic expressions in which there is frequently a reference to a stroke of luck or a piece of good fortune, but no connotation of literal robbery or violent seizure.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Jaeger posited a meaning for the *ἀρπαγμός* remark in Phil. 2:6 which differs from the meaning carried by the idiomatic expression with *ἀρπαγμα* in every other text he cited. This difference he attributed to a shift in meaning which allegedly took place as the idiomatic expression moved from its origin in the language of unlettered folk to usage in literate expression; but Jaeger could point to no other text in which *ἀρπαγμα* or *ἀρπαγμός* in this idiomatic, double accusative expression carries the significance which he asserted it has in Phil. 2:6. It is important to note that in the passage to which he pointed as that parallel to the

<sup>5</sup> Or. IV (in Julian I). GREGORY's remark was directed against Julian the Apostate, whose attainment to exalted station was, in his view, unmerited.

<sup>6</sup> Even this most persuasive portion of JAEGER's presentation includes an element of ambiguity which some later interpreters have not missed: while he has made it indisputable that *ἀρπαγμα* belongs to the idiomatic expression he identified, JAEGER did not demonstrate from usage that *ἀρπαγμα* and *ἀρπαγμός* functioned as synonyms in Hellenistic Greek. He only observed, as have numerous others, that since many *-μα* and *-μος* terms were used synonymously, it is reasonable to assume that *ἀρπαγμα* and *ἀρπαγμός* were used synonymously also (Studie, 548, n. 1). This argument from analogy, however, leaves the possibility open that a connotation for *ἀρπαγμός* different from that which JAEGER has demonstrated for *ἀρπαγμα* may exist, since not all *-μα* and *-μος* terms were used synonymously in Hellenistic Greek. Cf. S. H. HOOKE, *Alpha and Omega* (London, 1961), 258; and F. BLASS and A. DEBRUNNER, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (Chicago, 1961), 109.1, 2.

Philippians passage which unlocks its meaning, Plutarch's *Alex. Fort. Virt.* 8 (M. 330D), *ἀρπαγμα* does not occur in a double accusative construction — a feature which Jaeger argued is characteristic of the idiomatic expression to which he called attention. It thus appears that Jaeger's interpretation of Phil. 2:6 rests not so much on the philological evidence which he so carefully compiled as on a judgment about the *Gattung* to which the Pauline passage belongs — the suggestion that it is to be understood as a declamation on Christ's *ἀπεριή*. The result is that Jaeger's argument is most dubious just where the issue is most critical. What at its beginning is an argument based on the import of an idiomatic expression is at its conclusion an argument based on a judgment about literary form and on an inference from an alleged style-history. This judgment is moot, however, and this inference is unsupported by textual evidence.<sup>7</sup>

One of those who was influenced but not convinced by Jaeger's work is Werner Foerster, who attempted to unravel the *ἀρπαγμός* riddle by discerning the philological significance attributed to the phrase by the Greek Church Fathers.<sup>8</sup> His effort proved to be inconclusive, as he himself acknowledged, since the Fathers' interpretations were informed more by anti-Arian polemics than by philological arguments. In his *ThWNT* article on *ἀρπαγμός* Foerster, on the whole following Jaeger, leveled the meanings of the terms used in the idiomatic expressions by adopting the cover term "gain," and proposed as a translation of Phil. 2:6, "He did not regard it as a gain to be equal with God." By this remark, Foerster suggested, a contrast is drawn between what Christ did and what most people would regard as ordinary behavior. The difficulty with this proposal is that, strictly speaking, none of the terms which occur in the idiomatic expressions conveys this specific significance, whereas a term which is not used in Phil. 2:6 has exactly that meaning: *κέρδος*. Furthermore, translating *ἀρπαγμός*

<sup>7</sup> The contrast between acting for a noble motive rather than for personal advantage JAEGER derived from a comparison of Alexander's "Asian policy," as related by PLUTARCH, with what is said about Christ in Phil. 2 rather than from the import of the idiomatic expression itself.

<sup>8</sup> W. FOERSTER, *ὁ δὲ ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο* bei den griechischen Kirchenvätern, ZNW 29 (1930), 115-28. Cf. *idem*, *ἀρπάξω, ἀρπαγμός*, *ThWNT* I (1933), 471ff.; Eng. Transl. in: *ThDNT* I (1964), 472ff.



by a word as imprecise as "gain" only casts yet another shadow on the meaning of this tortured text.

Martin Dibelius was also influenced by Jaeger's article; yet he based his conclusion about the meaning of Phil. 2:6 more on its context in Philippians and on the import of a statement which Eusebius quoted from the letter of the churches of Vienne and Lyon (*Hist. Eccl.* V. 2. 2) than on the philological evidence which Jaeger accumulated. The ἀρπαγμός remark cannot be interpreted on a narrow terminological basis, but must be understood as a poetic-hymnic expression. Then it can be perceived that it means, "Christ did not use what was given to him (as reality or as possibility)." <sup>9</sup> In this treatment of the text "poetic sensitivity" was made to furnish what philological data had not provided.

Ernst Lohmeyer rejected Jaeger's proposal, alleging that the idiomatic expression which Jaeger identified and the ἀρπαγμός remark of Phil 2:6 are simply not in the same class: that remark cannot be a comment about everyday life in the divine realm, but intends to be a statement of fundamental theological importance. Furthermore, on the occasions Jaeger noted that which is regarded as ἔμφαιον, etc., is always seen as something which has come to the person from outside; being equal with God, however, cannot be an external fortuity but is a quality of which one is bearer. The phrase in Phil. 2:6 expresses the dialectical conflict of good and evil in terms of a temptation and an ethical decision. The mythology from which the hymn is derived includes a robbery of Godlikeness with which the decision of Christ is contrasted. Equality with God is both the ground and the aim of Christ's ethical decision, and it is this dialectical ethical profundity which the ἀρπαγμός expression conveys.<sup>10</sup>

\* MARTIN DIBELIUS, *An die Thessalonicher I, II. An die Philipper* (Band XI, *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Tübingen, 1937), 76. ERNST KÄSEMANN, in his incisive article on the Philippians Christ hymn (*Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2:5-11, Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen I* [Göttingen, 1960], 69-70) — originally published in *ZTK* 47 (1950), 313-60 — adopts JAEGER's understanding of the ἀρπαγμός remark, although he refers only to FOERSTER's *ThWNT* article. His familiarity with JAEGER's work is apparent, however, in his reference to the origin of the phrase and its use in refined literature. These are major concerns in JAEGER's presentation but are not mentioned by FOERSTER at all.

<sup>10</sup> ERNST LOHMEYER, *Kyrios Jesus* (Heidelberg, 1928), 20-29; *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an Philemon* (MEYER'S *Krit.-ex. Komm.*, Göttingen, 1953<sup>2</sup>), 92.

Lohmeyer claimed that, since language similar to the idiomatic expressions to which Jaeger called attention could be found in philosophical literature, it was unnecessary and inappropriate to look for parallels to the remark among more casual usages. To support this view he cited a few uses of ἀρπάζειν (*Kyrios Jesus*, p. 21, n.3) but was not able to point to any such employments of ἀρπαγμα or ἀρπαγμός. This paucity of philological support did not impress Lohmeyer as much as what he believed the mythological background and the ethical intention of the text required. Thus informed, a profound theology prevailed over a "frivolous" philology.

In the most recently published history of interpretation of the Philippians Christ hymn <sup>11</sup> R. P. Martin advocates "a mediating position" (for which Jaeger furnished some philological occasion, although Lohmeyer was his principal mentor) by arguing that the ἀρπαγμός phrase in Phil. 2:6 includes both *res rapta* and *res rapienda* senses. If one assumes that "equality with God" refers to the exercise of an office (that of Lord, v. 11), then one may understand the text to mean that Christ possessed equality with God *de jure* by virtue of being ἐν μορφῇ θεῷ but rejected the temptation to seize the authority *vis-à-vis* the world (which belongs to that status) *de facto* by an act of self-assertion (*Carmen Christi*, pp. 148-49). Although it is an imaginative proposal, Martin's suggestion constitutes philological obfuscation. His "intermediate" interpretation of the ἀρπαγμός comment is based not on linguistic data (he cites no other text in which ἀρπαγμα or ἀρπαγμός carries both active and passive senses at the same time) but on an inference, which he regards as philologically admissible, drawn from his judgment about the Christology of the passage and from his understanding of the μορφῇ line.<sup>12</sup>

It is apparent from this brief survey that although the alter-

<sup>11</sup> R. P. MARTIN, *Carmen Christi. Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Cambridge, 1967), 143ff.

<sup>12</sup> Since it is actually the μορφῇ phrase on which he bases his *res rapta* conclusions, and since he believes that the ἀρπαγμός remark refers to what Christ in his pre-existence did not yet possess (τὸ εἶναι ἰσα θεῷ = the rank of κύριος), MARTIN actually achieves not an "intermediate" position but a restatement of the *res rapienda* view, adorned by what he takes to be that import of the idiomatic ἀρπαγμός expression which is most accordant with the context. See *Carmen Christi*, 145, 149.



native for interpreting the *ἀρπαγμός* remark in Phil. 2:6 opened up by Jaeger is grounded on the most impressive philological evidence ever brought to bear on this longstanding enigma, neither he nor those who have followed his lead have been able to demonstrate with any cogency an import of *οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο* which is both appropriate to the Philippians context and confirmed by comparable usage in other literature.<sup>13</sup>

### III

If Jaeger has not given us a convincing solution to the puzzlement of the *ἀρπαγμός* remark in Phil. 2:6, he has established the ground on which any subsequent attempt to determine the meaning of this language must begin. A text which clearly shows that when *ἀρπαγμα* occurs as a predicate accusative it is related to *ἔρμαιον* and similar terms is Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* VII.20, which includes the remark: *καὶ οὐχ ἀρπαγμα οὐδὲ ἔρμαιον ποιεῖται τὸ πρᾶγμα*. Both *ἀρπαγμα* and *ἔρμαιον* are governed by the same verb in this line, *ποιεῖται*, and have reference to the same object, *τὸ πρᾶγμα*. The form and the word order of this statement, furthermore, are exactly parallel to the *ἀρπαγμός* remark in Phil. 2:6 — a double accusative construction with a preceding negative in the order: negative, predicate accusative, verb, object. There are, in addition, two other occasions on which Heliodorus has used *ἀρπαγμα* with the same verb in the same double accusative form: VII.11 (*ἡ δὲ Κυβέλη τὴν ξυντυχίαν ἀρπαγμα . . . ποιησαμένη*) and VIII.7 (*ἀρπαγμα τὸ ῥῆθὲν ἐποίησατο ἡ Ἀρσάκη*).

The comment of Isidore, Bishop of Pelusium (IV–V century A. D.), supports the alleged connection of these phrases in Heliodorus with the *ἀρπαγμός* remark in Phil. 2:6. In the course of his exposition of that text Isidore says (Ep. IV.22, MPG 78, 1072):

Εἰ ἔρμαιον ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσον, οὐκ ἂν ἐαυτὸν ἐταπείνωσεν, ἵνα μὴ ἐπερισσεῖα πρόκριμα ποιῇ τῇ ἀξίᾳ. . . . Δούλος μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἐλευθερωθεὶς, καὶ νόθεσις τιμηθεὶς, ἅτε ἀρπαγμα ἢ εὖρεμα τὴν ἀξίαν ἡγησάμενος, οὐκ ἂν ὑποσταίῃ οἰκτικὸν ἔργον ἀνίσαι

<sup>13</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the interpretations of JAEGER and those whom he influenced as well as for summaries and critiques of alternative interpretations of the *ἀρπαγμός* remark, see my *The Term 'Ἀρπαγμός' in Philippians 2:6* (Harvard Th.D. Thesis, unpublished, 1968), 4–45.

("If he considered being equal a windfall, he would not have humbled himself, lest doing the work of a servant be made an inference about his status. . . . For once a servant has been set free and honored with sonship, he would not consent to menial work since he regards his status as booty or a windfall" [and therefore as something which he could lose; but he who is a son by birth has no such fears, Isidore goes on to say]).

Foerster has argued ("Kirchenväter," pp. 119–20) that this exposition cannot constitute evidence for the meaning of the *ἀρπαγμός* phrase in Phil. 2, since the basis on which Isidore uses these terms is not an assertion of their philological equivalence but the comparison of a slave and a son — i.e., the question of whether Christ's equality with God is inherent or acquired. Even though Foerster's point is well taken, the passage has a certain philological significance, nevertheless. Isidore has used *ἀρπαγμα*, *εὖρεμα*, and *ἔρμαιον* with *ἡγεῖσθαι* — the same verb with which *ἀρπαγμός* is linked in Phil. 2:6 — in reference to the same thing: Christ's equality with God. His comment, then, is evidence that *ἀρπαγμα* and *ἀρπαγμός* belong to such expressions even if his argument is not a philological one.

The several forms of this idiomatic expression, then, are related; but, as we have seen, several interpreters have perceived that these variant forms seem not to be strictly synonymous. None of these exegetes, however, has been able convincingly to account for this troublesome factor of similarity and dissimilarity in the uses of these formulations. As long as this ambiguity remains, the recognition of the idiomatic character of the *ἀρπαγμός* remark in Phil. 2:6 cannot furnish the precision necessary to discern the intention of that text.

An attempt to move beyond equivocal interpretations of this problematic language may well begin with an examination of the uses of the phrase in Heliodorus referred to above. At VIII.7 of the romance, Cybele and her mistress, Arsace, have reached utter desperation in their attempts to seduce Theagenes. Since every wile has failed, Cybele proposes to eliminate her mistress' rival for Theagenes' affection (Chariclea) by putting her to death:

*ἀρπαγμα τὸ ῥῆθὲν ἐποίησατο ἡ Ἀρσάκη, καὶ τὴν ἐκ πολλοῦ ζηλοτυπίαν*



ὀργῇ τῶν εἰρημένων ἐπιτείνασα, εὖ λέγεις, ἔφη, καὶ μελήσει μοι προστάξαι  
τὴν ἀλιτήριον ἀναιρεθῆναι.

("Arsace regarded what [Cybele] said as *harpagma* and her longstanding jealousy was heightened with anger because of what she related [concerning Theagenes' intransigence]. 'You have spoken well,' she said, 'I shall take care to command that the offending female be done away with'").

The use of the *ἄρπαγμα* phrase in this text suggests a significance for the expression which is distinguishable from, rather than synonymous with, similar expressions employing the terms *ἔρμαιον*, *εὖρημα*, etc. The only suggestion of fortuity or good luck in this passage is brought to it by the reader who knows that *ἄρπαγμα* is regarded by some as a synonym of *ἔρμαιον* in such expressions. The idea of "booty" or "prey" seems equally remote. The passage speaks about Arsace's mental appropriation of Cybele's advice — assistance which Arsace should be expected to regard from her longstanding counselor as customary rather than as a stroke of luck — and of her declared intention to act on it. It is consistent with this to suggest that *ἄρπαγμα* in this passage means that Arsace regarded Cybele's advice "as something to seize upon." Jaeger remarks that *ἄρπαγμα* τὸ ῥῆθ' ἐποίησατο here almost means *occasione uti* ("Studie," p. 549). His belief that *ἄρπαγμα* carries a sense synonymous with *ἔρμαιον* in such expressions inhibits him from seeing that this is not almost what the expression means here, but precisely what it means.<sup>14</sup>

Earlier in the romance Cybele happens to be at the temple just as Chariclea and Theagenes appear on the scene. Of this situation Heliodorus says (VII.11):

ἡ δὲ Κυβέλη τὴν ξυντυχίαν ἄρπαγμα καὶ ὥσπερ ἄγρως ἀρχὴν ποιησαμένη

("Cybele regarded the chance meeting as *harpagma* and as the beginning of a way of capturing [them]").

It is true, of course, that the meeting was a chance encounter and could well be regarded as a stroke of luck. But the question is whether or not that is what is said by the *ἄρπαγμα* remark. The

<sup>14</sup> Compare the translation of MOSES HADAS: "Arsace snatched at this suggestion. . . ." *Heliodorus. An Ethiopian Romance* (Ann Arbor, 1957), 201.

use of the *ἄρπαγμα* expression in VIII.7 suggests another alternative, namely, that the remark here speaks not about the fortuity of the meeting — *ξυντυχίαν* already expresses that — but about Cybele's seizure of the opportunity which the meeting presented. This is made more plausible by the link with *ὥσπερ ἄγρως ἀρχήν*. It seems appropriate in this instance, as in VIII.7, to suggest that the *ἄρπαγμα* remark here characterizes Cybele's mental appropriation of an opportunity, an appropriation which precedes and informs the overt action which is then immediately reported. The text, in that case, should be translated, "Cybele regarded the chance meeting as something to seize upon," or, more idiomatically, "as something to take advantage of."

At VII.20 of Heliodorus' story Cybele abandons all subtlety in suasion on her mistress' behalf and speaks to Theagenes with complete candor:

νῶς οὕτω καὶ καλὸς καὶ ἀκμαῖος γυναῖκα ὁμοίαν καὶ προστετηκνίαν ἀπωθείται,  
καὶ οὐχ ἄρπαγμα οὐδὲ ἔρμαιον ποιεῖται τὸ πρᾶγμα

("A young man so handsome and in his prime thrusts away a young woman of similar qualities who yearns for him, and does not regard the matter as *harpagma* nor even as a piece of good luck. . . .").

Jaeger regards this text as the clearest indication that *ἄρπαγμα* is an equivalent of *ἔρμαιον* in such expressions ("Studie," p. 549). But if this is the case, Heliodorus is being redundant; Cybele, according to this reading, says that Theagenes regards Arsace's overtures as neither a windfall nor a godsend. The *ἄρπαγμα* expressions in VII.11 and VIII.7, however, suggest another possibility: that the same opportunity is being referred to *both* from the perspective of the manner in which it has come to Theagenes — as *ἔρμαιον* (he has not solicited Arsace's attentions; they have been bestowed on him as an unanticipated piece of good luck); *and* from the perspective of the manner in which a virile young man might be expected to respond to such good fortune — as *ἄρπαγμα* (as something to seize upon, to take advantage of).

The import alleged for the term *ἄρπαγμα* in these passages is congruent with certain metaphorical uses of the verb *ἀρπάζειν*. When Syracuse lay prone and decimated by military conquest,



Plutarch remarks, οὐχ ἤρπασαν οἱ Κορίνθιοι τὴν πλεονεξίαν "the Corinthians did not seize the advantage/take advantage of the situation," *Timoleon* 23 (L. 247B). Plutarch also uses the expression ἀρπάζειν τὸν καιρὸν, "to seize the opportunity," *Philopoemen* 15.2 (L. 364E), and *Dion* 26.1 (L. 969C), as does Josephus (*Bell.* 4.2.4).<sup>15</sup> It is here proposed that when ἀρπαγμα occurs in a double accusative expression it carries a metaphorical and idiomatic sense similar to that of the verb in these metaphorical and idiomatic uses. In the phrase ἀρπαγμα τι ποιῆσθαι an estimate of a situation as exploitable is expressed; in such phrases as ἀρπάζειν τὸν καιρὸν an act of exploitation is reported. This suggests, furthermore, that the meaning conveyed by ἀρπαγμα τι ποιῆσθαι is related to the meanings conveyed by ἔρμαιον, εὖρημα, εὐτύχημα τι ποιῆσθαι, not because the nouns are synonyms, but because a stroke of luck is "something to seize upon." There is no connotation of fortuitousness in the term ἀρπαγμα, whereas that notion is inherent in the terms ἔρμαιον, εὖρημα, and εὐτύχημα. Obviously, a person can regard something other than a stroke of luck as something to seize upon.

Numerous interpreters have referred to the obvious point that if a person considers something as ἔρμαιον, etc., it may be assumed that he will make use of his good fortune; but what has not been realized is that the idea of taking advantage of an opportunity is not the unexpressed implication of the expression ἀρπαγμα τι ποιῆσθαι, but its precise significance. Just this nuance is what distinguishes its import from the senses conveyed by similar expressions formulated with ἔρμαιον, εὖρημα, and εὐτύχημα.<sup>16</sup>

#### IV

To bring these observations to bear on Phil. 2:6 it is necessary to demonstrate, first of all, that ἀρπαγμα and ἀρπαγμός are used synonymously and, secondly, that the usages of ἀρπαγμα/

<sup>15</sup> Compare ἀρπάζειν τὸ νίκημα, PLUTARCH, *Lucullus* 35.1 (L. 515D); τὸ τε καιρὸν τοῦ πολέμου ἤρπασε, DIO CASSIUS 41.44.2; τὴν ἀφορμὴν ἤρπακα, LUCIAN, *Amores* 31; δέδορκα σε πείραν τιν' ἐχθρῶν ἀρπάσαι θηρώμενον, SOPHOCLES, *Ajax* 1, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Compare the uses of ἀρπάζειν and εὖρημα in HERONDAS, *Mimes* VI.30, and of προαρπάζειν and ἔρμαιον in EUSEBIUS, *Life of Constantine* 52.

ἀρπαγμός τι ἡγεῖσθαι, ποιῆσθαι, τίθεσθαι consistently convey the nuance alleged above.

To claim that ἀρπαγμα and ἀρπαγμός were used synonymously in the Hellenistic period is to assert nothing new, of course. That is implied in the writings of a number of the Greek Fathers who treat the ἀρπαγμός remark in Phil. 2:6 as if it read ἀρπαγμα, as Foerster's inquiry shows. It has been widely recognized in recent interpretation, furthermore, that the characteristic distinctions in Classical Greek between nouns terminating in -μος and -μα are not observed in the usage of many such nouns in the Hellenistic period.<sup>17</sup> The infrequency of ἀρπαγμός, however, makes it impossible to demonstrate from its usage that it was one of these nouns which was employed in both active and passive senses. Those who argue that this is the case are compelled to do so on the basis of analogy with other words which have a -μος terminus — an argument which is indeed suggestive but inherently inconclusive.<sup>18</sup>

Occurrences of ἀρπαγμα have usually been cited as evidence that ἀρπαγμός in Phil. 2:6 should be credited with a passive meaning.<sup>19</sup> It seems to have been overlooked, however, that in view of the rarity of ἀρπαγμός the strongest possible basis for asserting that it was used synonymously with ἀρπαγμα would be evidence that the latter was used in both active and passive senses. An investigation of the usage of ἀρπαγμα in the LXX and in Plutarch shows that that is indeed the case. Ἀρπαγμα occurs with active meaning (i.e., represents an act of seizure) in the LXX in ψ.61 (Ps. 62):10; Is. 61:8; Sir. 16:13; Ps. Sol. 2:28; and in *Marcus Cato* 13 (L. 343F) in Plutarch. It has a passive signifi-

<sup>17</sup> In Classical usage nouns with a -μος suffix express the action of the verb; those with a -μα suffix express the result of the action of the verb. One often finds in articles and commentaries a list of nouns with a -μος suffix which are used in both senses to document the claim that ἀρπαγμός should be regarded as an equivalent of ἀρπαγμα. See, e.g., the terms mentioned in LIGHTFOOT, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London, 1913), 111; LOHMEYER, *Kyrios Jesus*, 20, n. 3; R. P. MARTIN, *Carmen Christi*, 136, 137.

<sup>18</sup> This gap between the suggestive evidence of analogous usage and what would be conclusive evidence — the use of ἀρπαγμός itself — makes it possible for S. H. HOOKE, among recent interpreters, to reject the idea that ἀρπαγμα and ἀρπαγμός are equivalents. He insists on an active meaning for the latter, claiming that in the NT -μα and -μος terms are not generally equivalent. Cf. his *Alpha and Omega*, 258.

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., the discussion in MARTIN, *Carmen Christi*, 136ff.



cance (i.e., represents something seized) in the LXX in Lev. 6:4; Job 29:17; Is. 42:22; Ez. 19:3, 6; 22:25, 27; 33:15; Mal. 1:13; and in *Alex. Fort. Virt.* 8 (M.330D) in Plutarch.

The most striking evidence, however, is furnished by Eusebius of Caesarea:

ὁ Πέτρος δε ἀρπαγμὸν τὸν διὰ σταυροῦ  
θάνατον ἐποιεῖτο διὰ τὰς σωτηρίους  
ἐλπίδας τινες . . . τὸν θάνατον ἀρπαγμα  
θέμενοι τῆς τῶν δυσσεβῶν μοχθηρίας

("And Peter considered death by means of the cross *harpagmon* on account of the hope of salvation," *Comm. in Luc.* 6). ("Since some regarded death as *harpagma* in comparison with the depravity of ungodly men," *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.12.2).

Not only are ἀρπαγμα and ἀρπαγμός used synonymously in these two statements, but they are used synonymously by the same author in reference to the same object—death—and in expressions whose form precisely parallels that of the ἀρπαγμός remark in Phil. 2:6.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> GEORGE W. MACRAE, S. J. (Visiting Professor of NT at Harvard Divinity School, Spring, 1968), suggested in a private conversation that one should perhaps attribute these uses of ἀρπαγμα and ἀρπαγμός in EUSEBIUS to the direct influence of the ἀρπαγμός remark in Paul's letter rather than to assume that his language here reflects only idiomatic usage in general. In this regard it may be noted that both of these uses of these terms are set in the context of martyrdom, as is the quotation of Phil. 2:6 in *Hist. Eccl.* V.2.2. The latter passage may indicate how a specifically Christian use of the ἀρπαγμός expression was precipitated by the Pauline text. EUSEBIUS is here quoting the letter from the churches of Vienne and Lyons in which Christ is referred to as the true martyr and in which Phil. 2:6 is cited. The ἀρπαγμός expression, one might infer from this, may have become an appropriate thing to say, in Christian circles, in reference to persons who for their faith endured even death. The fact that EUSEBIUS has used ἀρπαγμα and ἀρπαγμός in double accusative constructions in the texts cited above, however, shows that he was familiar with the idiomatic expression apart from its use in the Pauline text, even if he has been influenced by the latter. This is evidenced by the fact that EUSEBIUS has not merely used the term ἀρπαγμός in a martyrdom context, but has used that term in the idiomatic expression (contrary to the letter of the churches of Vienne and Lyons)—and with two other verbs than the one which occurs in Phil. 2:6. This combination of factors suggests familiarity with the idiom as it was employed apart from the NT text.

The interchangeability of ἀρπαγμα and ἀρπαγμός in this idiomatic expression is evidenced further by the fact that on the third occasion of the expression's use by EUSEBIUS he employs ἀρπαγμα with ποιεῖσθαι (*Vit. Const.* II.31.2), whereas he utilizes ἀρπαγμός with that verb in the occurrence of the expression in *Comm. in Luc.* 6.

Other writers have been aware of these uses of the expression, of course. LIGHTFOOT, for example, quotes all three; but because he has not recognized the

The use of ἀρπαγμός in Eusebius' *Commentary*<sup>21</sup> presents an opportunity to test not only the specific nuance proposed for the term when it is used in the idiomatic expression, but also the meanings posited by advocates of the *res rapienda* and *res rapta* alternatives. This statement cannot mean that Peter considered death by crucifixion to be a robbery, or something seized or to be seized by a violent self-assertion, or a treasure to be held fast; nor can ἀρπαγμός be understood here as a synonym of ἔρμαιον, εὔρημα, and εὐτύχημα—i.e., that crucifixion was regarded as an unanticipated windfall, or a surprise bit of good luck. It seems unlikely that Eusebius conceived of the apostle's martyrdom in these terms. What he wants to say, rather, is that because of the hope of salvation crucifixion was not a horror to be shunned, but an advantage to be seized.

Ἀρπαγμα is used exactly in this way in *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.12.2. At this point Eusebius is recounting the sufferings of Christians in periods of persecution. Some believers, in order to escape torture, threw themselves down from rooftops. There can be no suggestion of robbery or of violent self-assertion in this remark, nor can a self-inflicted death under such circumstances be considered an unanticipated windfall. What is said is that, given the alternative, death seemed an advantage to be seized.

Eusebius has utilized this idiomatic language on one other occasion—in a proclamation allegedly made by Constantine (*Vita Constantini* 31.2) to those who had been exiled on an

precise import of the expression ἀρπαγμός τι ἡγεῖσθαι and seems not to be aware of the fact that ἀρπαγμα connotes an active sense on occasion, he has not been able to see the full significance of this evidence for interpreting the ἀρπαγμός expression in Phil. 2:6. He sees that ἀρπαγμὸν τι ἡγεῖσθαι is equivalent to ἀρπαγμός τι ἡγεῖσθαι in the three texts he knows of, but assumes only that in those instances ἀρπαγμός must be understood passively. Far from feeling that these Eusebian texts are of decisive significance for assessing the relation of ἀρπαγμα and ἀρπαγμός, he concludes that the question remains whether the latter term has an active or passive sense in Phil. 2:6 and that an answer can be determined only from the context. Cf. his *Philippians*, 111.

<sup>21</sup> EUSEBIUS' *Commentary on Luke* is no longer extant. The text published by MAI (from which the above quotation is taken) is a compilation of fragments drawn from *catenae* on Luke, which clearly designate the work. While we have only quotations, there seems to be no question that EUSEBIUS did author such a work. Cf. D. S. WALLACE-HADRILL, *Eusebius of Caesarea* (London, 1960), 51 and 99; and PHILIP SCHAFF and HENRY WACE (eds.), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (New York, 1886-1900), Second Series, I, 41.



island in which he offered the prisoners a pardon and the chance to return to the mainland. The imperial announcement reads in part:

οἱ πενιχρὰν ἐπὶ πολὺν χρόνον ζῶντες μετὰ τινος ἀποτραπείου μότου διῶγον, οἷον ἄρπαγμά τι τὴν ἐπάνοδον ποιησάμενοι, καὶ τῶν φροντίζοντες εἰς τὸ λοιπὸν ἀπηλλαγμένοι, μὴ μετὰ φόβου σὺν ἡμῖν βίβον

("Those who have lived destitute lives for a long time attended by sordidness which no one should have to endure, if they consider such a return *harpagma* and if from now on they lay aside their anxieties, may live among us without fear").

Since *ἄρπαγμα* refers to an opportunity for the exiles to return (τὴν ἐπάνοδον) to their homeland, it seems most congruous to posit a meaning for that term accordant with the phrase *ἀρπάξαι τὸν καιρὸν* and to translate it, "something to take advantage of." The proclamation could be described as a *ἔρμαιον* or a *εὖρημα*, of course; but the remark refers to what the exiles are to *do* in response to the imperial decree and thus accords with the nuance of action which I have attributed to the idiom. Furthermore, Eusebius wishes to commend the emperor for his generosity and compassion and is not likely to have intended to refer to this noble gesture as a bit of good luck.

There is only one other known use of *ἀρπαγμός* in a double accusative formulation outside of Phil. 2:6, and that is in Cyril of Alexandria's comment on Lot's persistent offer of hospitality to the two visiting angels as related in Gen. 19:1-4: ὁ δὲ καὶ συνεῖς ὁ δίκαιος, μειζόνως κατεβιάζετο, καὶ οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν τὴν παραίτησιν ὡς ἐξ ἀδρανούς καὶ ὑδαρεστέρας ἐποιεῖτο φρενός (*De ador.* 1.25). This statement characterizes Lot's response to the angels' initial polite refusal of his proffered hospitality. Rather than accepting their gesture as an opportunity to excuse himself from what he no doubt anticipated might be the perils of such hospitality, Lot renewed his invitation with even greater efforts at persuasion (*μειζόνως κατεβιάζετο*). The meaning previously posited for the idiomatic expression when formulated with *ἄρπαγμα* or *ἀρπαγμός* would fit this situation well: "He did not regard [their] polite refusal as something to take advantage of [because it would 'get him

off the hook'] as if [his invitation had come] from a listless and feeble heart."<sup>22</sup>

Because it serves as the crowning text in Jaeger's treatise, brief attention must be given to Plutarch's remark about Alexander in *Alex. Fort. Virt.* 8 (M 330D).<sup>23</sup> The essential thing to note is that *ἄρπαγμα* does not occur here in a double accusative construction. The passage would be understandable and its meaning unaltered if the term *ἄρπαγμα* were deleted. In those instances in which *ἄρπαγμα* occurs in a double accusative formulation, on the other hand, it is essential to the intelligibility of the text. Furthermore, in this text *ἄρπαγμα* refers to an object (τὴν Ἀσίαν) whereas when it occurs as a predicate accusative it refers, in the instances cited, to a situation or an opportunity. It should also be noted that *ἄρπαγμα* cannot be regarded as a synonym of *ἔρμαιον* or *εὖρημα* in this passage since it is qualified by *εὐτυχίας ἀνελπίστου*. Plutarch found it necessary to use these genitives in order to make the point that Alexander's triumphs were not the gifts of *τύχη* but the rewards of his own exertions. Clearly, however, Plutarch would not have written *ἔρμαιον* or *εὖρημα εὐτυχίας ἀνελπίστου*.<sup>24</sup>

Josephus, *Ant.* XI.5.6, offers a better parallel to this passage than does Phil. 2:6. Upon learning of the plight of the Jews who had recently returned to Jerusalem Nehemiah complains to God and asks how long He will remain mute and inert when His people have become the booty and spoil of the nations (*ἄρπαγμα πάντων καὶ λάφυρον γενόμενον*). The military character of the context here and in the Plutarch passage suggests that *ἄρπαγμα* should be translated "booty" in both instances.

That *ἄρπαγμα* (and *ἀρπαγμός*) carries a different meaning when it functions otherwise than as a predicate accusative with *ποιεῖσθαι* and similar verbs can be confirmed by examining a few other significant texts. Three of the four times he uses the term Heliodorus has placed *ἄρπαγμα* in a double accusative construction

<sup>22</sup> Cf. LIGHTFOOT's comment on CYRIL's remark: "... it is difficult to conceive that the phrase can mean anything else but 'did not eagerly close with, did not gladly welcome their refusal,'" *Philippians*, 137, n. 2.

<sup>23</sup> See p. 96 above for text and translation.

<sup>24</sup> I.e., it is the phrase *ἄρπαγμα εὐτυχίας ἀνελπίστου* which is roughly synonymous with the terms *ἔρμαιον* and *εὖρημα*.



with ποιείσθαι. On one occasion, however, ἄρπαγμα has a significance different from its other uses in the novel and similar to its meaning in the passage from Plutarch's treatise on Alexander. This singular usage comes at the point in the romance when Theagenes first learns that Chariclea returns his love. At this intelligence Theagenes eagerly proposes to rush to her at once, but is dissuaded by Calasiris (IV.6):

οὐ γὰρ ἄρπαγμα τὸ πρᾶγμα οἷός ἐστιν καὶ τὸν ἐν μέσῳ, τῷ βουλουμένῳ προκείμενον, ἀλλὰ πολλὴς μὲν βουλῆς, ὥστε πρὸς αὐτῷ ἀνασθεῖναι, πολλὰς δὲ διασκευῆς, ὥστε ἀσφαλῶς πραχθῆναι, δαίμενος

("The matter is not *harpagma* nor a bargain available to anyone who wants it, but requires much counsel in order to be effected properly and much preparation in order to be accomplished safely").

Jaeger attempts to equate ἄρπαγμα with ἔρμαιον in this passage by remarking that it is paraphrased by εὔωνον, τὰ ἐν μέσῳ — what lies in the street, which one has only to pick up to possess ("Studie," p. 548). But this exposition is doubtful. It is not clear, for one thing, that τὰ ἐν μέσῳ means "what lies in the street," i.e., what one comes upon as a lucky find. That expression has a more general reference — "what is there," "what is present," or "available." Furthermore, Heliodorus himself shows us what he has in mind with this use of ἄρπαγμα in the immediately following line: τοὺς δὲ νόμους οὐκ ἐννοεῖς, οἱ θάνατον τοῖς τοιοῦτοις ἐπιβάλλουσιν ("Do you not know that there are laws which impose death for such things?"). This remark cannot possibly refer to a ἔρμαιον but clearly indicates that by ἄρπαγμα Heliodorus has in mind the actual seizure of Chariclea, an abduction. The metaphorical rendering "booty" is warranted by the use of εὔωνον, and in view of the reference to the laws which follows is best understood as a word play.

This interpretation gains credence from the two known uses of ἄρπαγμός in non-Christian Hellenistic literature, both of which occur in connection with a discussion of ἔρως. Under consideration in the passage in Plutarch, *De liberis educandis* 15 (M. 12A), in which the first of these uses of ἄρπαγμός occurs is the question of which forms of ἔρως among men and boys are acceptable and which are to be avoided:

καὶ τοὺς μὲν θήβησι καὶ τοὺς ἐν Ἡλίδι φευκτέον ἔρωτας καὶ τὸν ἐν Κρήτῃ καλούμενον ἄρπαγμόν, τοὺς δὲ Ἀθήνησι καὶ τοὺς ἐν Λακεδαιμόνι ζηλωτέον

("one ought to avoid the kinds of love which exist both in Thebes and in Elis as well as what is called *harpagmon* in Crete; one ought, on the other hand, to emulate those which exist both in Athens and in Lacedaemon").

That those who have surmised that ἄρπαγμός here refers to some form of abduction are correct is demonstrated not only by the fact that both ἀρπάζειν and ἀρπαγή, as well as ἀφαρπάζειν, are used by Plutarch in reference to amorous abduction — *Amatorius* 11 (M. 755B, C) — but conclusively by a remark about Cretan customs in Strabo's report on that island:

Ἴδιον δὲ αὐτοῖς τὸ περὶ τοὺς ἔρωτας νόμιμον · οὐ γὰρ πειθοῖ κατεργάζονται τοὺς ἐρωμένους, ἀλλ' ἀρπαγῇ

("The custom concerning love among them is peculiar; for they do not prevail upon those they love by persuasion but by abduction").<sup>25</sup>

The only other known non-Christian use of ἄρπαγμός is found in a second-century A. D. astrological work by Vettius Valens. The formulae for forecasting marriage for women includes the following (Kroll, p. 121, lines 36f.):

ἐὰν Ἄρης κληρώσῃται τὸν δαίμονα, Σελήνη δὲ τὸν γαμοστόλον, ἄρπαγμός ὁ γάμος ἔσται

("If Mars is appointed the destiny-determining power and the Moon the marriage-arranger, the wedding will be an abduction").

Compare this formula which occurs in the same passage:

ἐὰν δὲ Σελήνη τοῦ κλήρου κυριεύσῃ, τοῦ δὲ γαμοστόλου Ἄρης καὶ μαρτυρῶσιν ἀλλήλοις, βέβαιος ἔσται ὁ γάμος ἢ δι' ἀρπαγῆς ἢ πολέμου καὶ αἰχμαλωσίας

("And if the Moon is in the position of dominance over destiny and Mars of marriage-arranger and if they confirm each other, it is certain that the marriage will be accomplished either by means of an abduction or through war and captivity").

That ἀρπαγή here refers to abduction (and not, strictly speaking,

<sup>25</sup> *Geography* 10.4.21. I am indebted for this reference to L. L. HAMMERICH, *An Ancient Misunderstanding, Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser* 41.4 (1966), 17.



to rape) is suggested by ἡ πολέμου καὶ ἀλχηρυλασίας; and that ἀρπαγή and ἀρπαγμός are used as synonyms in these statements is indicated by the fact that the Moon and Mars are paired in this passage only in these two sentences. (The rest of the paragraph states the significances of other combinations, e.g., Aphrodite and the Sun, the Moon and Hermes, etc.)

It appears, then, that when ἀρπαγμα or ἀρπαγμός are used outside of a double accusative construction they convey meanings distinct from those which they connote when they occur as predicate accusatives. It follows from this that interpretations of ἀρπαγμός in Phil. 2:6 which are based on texts in which ἀρπαγμα and ἀρπαγμός occur outside of double accusative formulations fail to recognize the character and the import of the language they attempt to explain.<sup>26</sup>

## V

When the idiomatic expression is formulated with ἔρμαιον, εὖρημα, or ἐντύχημα, it always conveys a notion of fortunate fortuity, a nuance absent from the expression when it is formulated with ἀρπαγμα. In Lucian's *Hermotimus*, 52, for instance, Lycinus presses Hermotimus concerning the study of philosophy: there are many alleged paths to truth; but it is too time-consuming to try each one, and to evaluate them all. So what will he do?

ὅτῳ ἂν μρώτῳ ἐντύχῃς, τούτῳ ἔψη καὶ συμφιλοσοφῆσαι καὶ κείνους ἔρμαιον ποιῶμεταί σε;

("Will you follow the first person you happen to meet [who advocates a particular philosophy] and study philosophy with him and will he consider you a godsend?")

What is in view here is the fortuitous meeting of two students of philosophy. While it is to be expected that they will capitalize on their encounter, it is the chance character of their meeting that

<sup>26</sup> Although ἀρπαγή occurs as a predicate accusative in THUCYDIDES VIII.62 with ποιῶσθαι, that singular usage is a variant of the more frequent ἀρπαγὴν ποιῶσθαι rather than a parallel to ἀρπαγὰ τι ποιῶσθαι, as is indicated both by the context of the remark in THUCYDIDES and by the fact that ἀρπαγή appears not to have been used as a predicate accusative with the verbs ἡγείσθαι, τίθεσθαι, or νομίζειν.

Lucian emphasizes and not their intention to exploit such luck.<sup>27</sup>

There are occasions, however, when the idiomatic expression with ἔρμαιον clearly implies the idea of seizing and using a stroke of luck. Polybius (301) describes Marcus' response to an unanticipated change in the disposition of certain enemy troops:

ὁ δὲ Μάρκος θεωρῶν τὸ γινόμενον, καὶ νομίσας ἔρμαιον εἶναι, παραντίκα μὲν ἐξαπέστειλε τοὺς κελεύσας ἀγωνίζεσθαι καὶ διαμάχεσθαι περὶ τοῦ τόπου. . . .

("Marcus saw what happened, and since he considered it to be a godsend, immediately dispatched the lightly armed troops with orders to engage [the enemy] and contest the ground. . . .")

The element of fortuity is present in this remark since the opportunity to attack came not as a result of Marcus' strategy but as a stroke of luck. While such a godsend is an opportunity to be seized, the idea of seizure is, strictly speaking, stated in the context and is only implied in the idiomatic expression itself.<sup>28</sup>

The import of the idiomatic expression when it is formulated with εὖρημα can be seen in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* VI.39, where we are told that Apollonius offered a man 20,000 drachmas for an estate which the man had purchased for 15,000 drachmas. He readily accepted the sage's offer, εὖρημα ποιησάμενον τὰς πεντακισχιλίας ("since he considered the 5,000 to be a windfall").

Compare the complaints of the lender found in Sirach's treasury of wisdom:

πόλλοι ὡς εὖρημα ἐνόμισαν δάνος καὶ παρέσχον κόπον τοῖς βοηθήσασιν αὐτοῖς

("Many people consider a loan a windfall, and create trouble for those who help them," 29:4).

ἐὰν ἰσχύσῃ μὲν κομίσεται τὸ ἥμισυ καὶ λογίεται αὐτὸ ὡς εὖρημα

("If he [the lender] uses force, he will scarcely get back half and will consider that a windfall," 29:6).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Similar uses of ἔρμαιον occur in PLATO, *Theages* 127B; and in GALEN, *De simpl. medicam. mixt.*, Kuehn, XII, 313-14.

<sup>28</sup> For similar uses of ἔρμαιον see POLYBIUS, 936; EPICTETUS IV.1.163; and DIO CASSIUS 8.2.7 (Zonaras). Cf. also DEMOSTHENES, *Against Nausimachus* 6; PLATO, *Gorg.* 489B; PHILO, *Leg. Gaj.* VI.193.5 (Cohn and Wendland); PHILOSTRATUS, *Vit. Ap.* III.28.

<sup>29</sup> Compare the uses of εὖρημα in the following: LYSIAS, *Frag.* XIX, as cited in DIONYSIUS of HALICARNASSUS, *On the Ancient Orators*, ed. H. Usener and L. Radermacher, p. 104; ISOCHRATES, *Against Lochites* 13; ISAEUS IX.26; XENOPHON, *An.* VII.3.13; PHILOSTRATUS, *Heroic.* 262.



that the uses of ἄρπαγμα in double accusative constructions, therefore, can be a basis for determining the meaning of the ἄρπαγμός remark in Phil. 2:6.

These considerations make it possible to offer a translation of the ἄρπαγμός line in Phil. 2:6 which is both appropriate to the Philippians context and confirmed by comparable usage in other literature: "he did not regard being equal with God as something to take advantage of," or, more idiomatically, "as something to use for his own advantage."<sup>34</sup>

One of the gains for the study of NT Christology which this translation contributes is that it makes it apparent that Ro. 15:3 is a parallel to Phil. 2:6, 7 (in addition to the widely cited remark in 2 Cor. 8:9). The οὐχ ἐαυτῷ ἤρεσεν ἀλλά, etc., of the Romans text is strikingly similar to the οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο . . . ἀλλά, etc., of the Philippians passage — in its meaning, it may now be said, as well as in its antithetical form.<sup>35</sup>

Because the question has dogged the interpretation of Phil. 2:6 since the time of the Christological controversies of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, it should be observed that this understanding of the ἄρπαγμός statement carries with it the assumption that τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ represents a status which belonged to the pre-existent Christ. While this can be persuasively argued from comparative uses of μορφή and ἴσος in Hellenistic religious literature,<sup>36</sup> it is bound up with the idiomatic character of the ἄρπαγμός remark itself: in every instance which I have examined this idiomatic expression refers to something already present and at one's disposal. The question in such instances is not whether or not one possesses something, but whether or not one chooses to exploit something. Likewise, the discernment of the idiomatic character of the ἄρπαγμός expression renders untenable the view that it intends to say that Christ did not regard equality with God as some-

<sup>34</sup> One might say, therefore, that JAEGER and some of those who were influenced by his work offered the right translation, but for the wrong reasons.

<sup>35</sup> EDVIN LARSSON in *Christus als Vorbild* (Uppsala, 1962), 234ff. and 242ff., has perceived the similarity of the two passages as well as the correspondence of the ἄρπαγμός statement with the οὐχ ἐαυτῷ ἤρεσεν of Ro. 15:3, even though his apprehension of the meaning of the ἄρπαγμός expression itself is awry.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. especially the work of JACOB JERVELL, *Imago Dei. Gen. 1:26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen, 1960); and of KÄSEMANN, *Kritische Analyse*.

thing to be held fast. Neither in this idiomatic phrase nor in any other usage does ἄρπαγμα, ἄρπαγμός, or ἀρπάζειν, or any of their compounds or cognates mean to *retain* something. That idea, it appears, has always been commended by theological interest rather than by philological evidence.

There remain important questions about the history of religions background and the Christology of the Christ hymn for which the ἄρπαγμός line as I have interpreted it carries certain implications; but these are questions which reach beyond the philological concerns of this article. It may be noted as possibly significant for these questions, however, that the idiomatic language to which the ἄρπαγμός remark of Phil. 2:6 belongs is, on the whole, foreign to LXX usage. The terms ἔρμαιον, εὐνύχημα, and κέρδος are found in the LXX not at all. Although both ἄρπαγμα and ἀρπάζειν occur in these scriptures with some frequency, the former never functions therein as a predicate accusative nor does the latter ever occur in the phrase ἀρπάζειν τὸν καιρόν. It is true that the expressions εὐρεμά τι νομίζειν/λογίζειν appear in Sir. 29:4, 6, respectively; but since Sirach is one of the later writings in the Old Testament, originating in the Hellenistic period, the fact that the phrase occurs only there in the LXX serves to emphasize the absence of such language from all other OT writings. There are three additional uses of the term εὐρεμα in Jeremiah,<sup>37</sup> but these are restricted to the translation of the same Hebrew idiom; and even that idiom is more aptly translated by the term σκόλα in one of the four instances in which the Hebrew expression appears in those prophecies. The virtual total absence from the LXX of the kind of language to which the ἄρπαγμός statement in Phil. 2:6 belongs, then, makes it evident that that remark owes nothing to scriptural antecedents.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Jer. 45:2 (Jer. 38:2); Jer. 46:18 (Jer. 39:18); Jer. 51:35 (Jer. 45:5); cf. also 21:9. The term לָמָּה is translated by σκόλα more than fifty times; it is rendered by εὐρεμα only in these instances.

<sup>38</sup> The most important indices or lexicons for sixty-eight Classical and Hellenistic authors, as listed in HARALD and BLENDIA RIESENFIELD, *Repertorium Lexicographicum Graecum* (Stockholm, 1954), were canvassed in connection with this study. Collections of papyri published 1898–1966 held by Widener Library at Harvard were also examined.