An Angelic Community: The Significance of Beliefs about Angels in the First Four Centuries of Christianity

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This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Ancient History, Division of Humanities
Macquarie University, Sydney

April 2002

I, Norman Ricklefs, certify that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university of institution

Date: 2/4/02

ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.
Gospel of Matthew 6:33

Synopsis

There was no intrinsic reason for angels to survive in early Christian thought: Their mediatorial role was played by Christ; they were also not needed as opponents of demons and demonic magic, as Christ filled that role too. They were, thus, peripheral to mainstream Christian thought in the ante-Nicene period. We do not, therefore, find much discussion of their nature in early Christian writings, and no genuine angelologies before the fourth century. The descriptions of angels which we find are generally couched in the symbolic language of clothing imagery, which was derived from Jewish sources. Yet Christians were interested in lesser heavenly beings, and they survived in popular devotion, until in the fourth century (after Arianism and Nicaea) they became a recognized part of Christian philosophic discourse.

Why then did a belief in angels survive at all in Christian thought?

Christians remained interested in angels, not primarily as mediators or as demon-fighters, but as models for emulation. This emulation of angels was primarily expressed in Christian ascetic celibacy, in imitation of the angels mentioned by Christ in the synoptic Gospels (Mt 20:30, Mk 12:25, Lk 20:35-6). Angels were models of perfection, they were beings who personified the state of being that many early Christians aspired to. Implicit in this emulation of angelic behaviour is the notion that acting in a particular manner (i.e. imitating heavenly beings) meant something — that it had a result — thus it gave ordinary people some agency, some control over their spiritual state.

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Preface

Translation and Transliteration of non-English languages

All texts quoted, except in the rare case of a quotation taken from a secondary author who has quoted an ancient text, are presented with both the original language and English translation. All Greek and Hebrew Bible translations are from the Revised Standard Version, except where noted otherwise. Syriac Bible passages are my own translations. All non-biblical translations are my own, unless otherwise acknowledged.[1] Direct quotations are in the original scripts, when terms from ancient languages are discussed, but without a direct quotation, they are transliterated. I have tried, wherever possible, to transliterate uniliterally and accurately. Thus although the Greek word ἄγγελος would have been pronounced "*angelos*" I transliterate it as "*aggelos*" in order to make clear the difference between literary texts which spell it correctly (with a double γ) and inscriptions which spell it phonetically (as ανγελος). Since no standard system of Semitic transliteration exists I have transliterated Semitic languages phonetically. Semitic roots are represented with capital letters. Most of the research for this thesis has been conducted on texts in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic/Syriac and Coptic and is presented herein in both the original language and translation. If standard translations are available (particularly in the case of Greek) they have also been presented, otherwise (and if no reference to a published translation is given) the translations are my own. I have also used a few texts which are preserved in languages of which I have no knowledge, such as Armenian and the various Slavonic dialects. These texts have been used in their standard English translation (such as the Loeb edition or the *OTP*).

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[1] In the case of the literature of the early Church Fathers so many different translations have been made into modern European languages that it would have been wasteful to ignore them, in particular the collection of early Church writings translated in A. Roberts & J. Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (10 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); my translations of early Christian writings are thus often indebted to this collection, and this is noted when appropriate.

Methodology

This thesis covers a large amount of ground in the attempt to be as comprehensive as possible. This has been the result of the approach taken to the research for this topic. I originally planned to conduct postgraduate research in Mediaeval history, on the cult of the archangel Michael in the Mediaeval West. My future honours supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Alanna Nobbs, suggested that I read some of the Egyptian-Greek magical papyri and thus sparked an interest in Near Eastern cultural and religious history of which this thesis represents the culmination. My honours thesis on the cult of the archangel Michael in early Egyptian Christianity brought to my attention the absence of a comprehensive history of early Christian beliefs about angels.[2] I thus decided to pursue such a history in my PhD research. The topic thus guided the choice of source material. At the time that I wrote my honours thesis three other authors were beginning to deal with early Christian angelology in a comprehensive fashion, although through the filter of Christology; these were Jarl Fossum, Larry Hurtado and Loren T. Stuckenbruck.[3] Since then the field has grown, with research coming to focus upon the chief angelic figure.[4] All have used to some extent the techniques of what is now termed the 'new history of religions school'.[5] This approach takes into account the deficiencies of the 'old' *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, such as the sometimes careless attitude to dates in the search for parallels in literary themes,[6] and argues that a religio-historical method can be employed, which,

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[2] N.M. Ricklefs, "The Cult of St. Michael and Religious Change: Magic, Angels and Ancient Religion in Early Egyptian Christianity" (Unpbl. Honours Dissertation; Macquarie University: Sydney, 1995).

[3] Jarl Fossum, *The Name of God And The Angel of The Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origins of Gnosticism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985); Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord, Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1988); Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: a Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995).

[4] Darrell Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael traditions and angel christology in Early Christianity* (Tübingen : Mohr Siebeck, 1999); Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: antecedents and early evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); Nathaniel Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate: Angelic Vice Regency in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

[5] See Jarl Fossum, "The New *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*: The Quest for Jewish Christology", *The Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (1991) 638-646; Fossum is one of the leading lights of this school, his teacher Gilles Quispel one of the early champions of this more cautious approach to comparative religious history; the leading scholar of the younger generation is Fossum's student April De Conick, for instance see her *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in The Gospel of Thomas* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

[6] See the now classic article by S. Sandmel, "Parallelomania", *JBL* 81 (1962) 1-13. Whilst he is cognizant of the dangers of looseness in dating Fossum's work could be criticised for the same looseness in his use of Samaritan sources (cf. *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord*) some of which are quite late, to

although it does not suppose direct literary connections between various texts, argues that the authors of different texts were operating in a similar thought-world and using ideas in a similar way.

This thesis has adopted a religio-historical approach which aims to build a picture of the development of beliefs about angels in the first four centuries. Along with a religio-historical approach the thesis is organised both thematically and chronologically. The material has necessitated such a method and the summaries at the end of each chapter should serve to help guide the reader to the final conclusion. The argument is cumulative. At each stage the central theme of the translation of the human being to a heavenly state will arise. The tracing of themes across a wide range of literature will be justified in the conclusion, which aims to demonstrate the consistent development of Christian beliefs about angels and to place those beliefs in the correct philosophical background.

A Note on Terminology

The extreme scepticism regarding questions of epistemology which, in the form of postmodernism, attacked western academia in the second half of the 20th century has latterly had a major impact upon ancient history and comparative religious history, in particular in the field of terminology. It is therefore necessary to make a brief statement regarding the terms used in this thesis. The idea of 'Gnosticism' as an institution of any kind has almost always been suspect, regardless of the work of the Christian heresiologists, and has recently come under renewed attack.[7] To indicate this I spell 'gnosticism' with a lower case "g". This term is used to indicate those who held to a negative view of creation and the body and also normally to a dualistic view of creation and the belief in a demiurge. Some Nag Hammadi texts do not, therefore, fit into this

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illustrate early developments in Christology; yet he argues that these sources contain early traditions, which, based upon comparative evidence, seems reasonable; I have used some of these sources myself, such as the *Memar Marqah* and the *Samaritan Liturgy*, for regardless of the dating problems which exist it seems wasteful not to use such obviously important texts when they are available, although due to the dating problems they cannot be used in isolation.

[7] See Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism". An Argument For Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1996).

loose working definition of 'gnosticism'.[8] Paganism is likewise spelt 'paganism' as it does not represent a movement or institution of a nature similar to the Christian movement, although it certainly attempted on occasion to emulate Christianity in order to share in its success. The 'Christian Church' is capitalised when referring to the fourth century Nicene institution which was developing at least from the time of Paul onwards, although it was by no means the only expression of Christianity in the first four centuries; 'Christianity' is thus used as an all-encompassing term to refer to both post- and ante-Nicene Christian belief in all its various hues and shades, including groups which could also be linked to 'gnosticism' and Judaism. The term 'Judaism' is used with the qualification 'rabbinic' to recognise the fact that a similar process of institutionalisation was going on in both Christianity and Judaism at the same time, whilst recognising that in Judaism there was also a multiplicity of expressions of Jewish faith, some of which merged with Christianity, in the first four centuries CE. 'Pseudepigrapha', used to describe the Second Temple Jewish literature which was not made part of the canon, is an ugly, prejudicial term; but due to the composite nature of the material and often impossibly complex questions of textual transmission and provenance, it has been retained in recognition that much of this literature does indeed seem to be immersed in a common symbolic world even though the possibility of uncovering the exact provenance of many of these texts is remote. 'Asceticism' (with the qualification 'Christian') and 'Monasticism' are regarded as different. Monasticism is regarded as being an institution intimately connected with the Nicene Church as a designated branch of Christian practice conforming (at least in theory)[9] to Nicene doctrinal orthodoxy.[10] 'Asceticism' in antiquity had both pagan and Jewish expressions whilst 'Monasticism' was part of the mainstream expression of Christian faith.

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[8] See Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*.
[9] See Rousseau's recent discussion of the state of the question regarding the possible links between the Nag Hammadi texts and the nearby Pachomian monastery in *Pachomius. The Making of a Community in Fourth Century Egypt* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1985) xix-xxv.
[10] Cf. also §5.2 n20.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations not listed

All Biblical manuscripts	———	the system of abbreviation in Nestle-Aland (1998) is used.
Biblical books	———	abbreviated according to the system in the RSV.
Pseudepigrapha	———	extra-canonical literature is abbreviated according to the abbreviations in *OTP*, although herein they are italicised.
Dead Sea Scrolls and related material	———	abbreviated according to the system in Emmanuel Tov (ed.) *The Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Reference Library* 2 (non-biblical texts; CD ROM; Provo: Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts, Brigham Young University & Leiden: Brill, 1999).
Nag Hammadi Texts	———	abbreviated according to the standard system; see, for instance, J.A. Robinson (ed.) *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990).
Journals	———	those used continually in this thesis are abbreviated according to the following list of abbreviations; infrequently consulted journals are normally included in the footnotes with their full title; some very well-known journals which are, however, cited infrequently, are cited according to the standard abbreviations as found in L'aneé Philologique (now to be found at: http://callimac.vjf.cnrs.fr:8080/TableRevues.html).
Papyri & Inscriptions	———	papyri which have been published by Preisendanz (*PGM*) are cited according to his system; all other papyri are cited according to the checklist of papyri by Oates, *et al.* (cf. bibliography); inscriptions cited according to the standard abbreviations in *LSJ*.

All other abbreviations are listed below.

Agr.	Philo Judaeus, *De agricultura.*
Ancient Christian Magic	Meyer, Marvin. & Smith, Richard. (eds.) *Ancient Christian Magic, Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco, 1994).
ANF	A. Roberts & J. Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (10 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der romischen Welt.*
Antiq.	Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*
AOT	H.F.D. Sparks (ed.), *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984).
APat.	*Apophthegmata Patrum.*
Apoc. Mos.	*Apocalypse of Moses.*
APOT	R.H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of The Old Testament* (2 Vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1969).
Ascetic Behaviour	Vincent L. Wimbush (ed.) *Ascetic Behaviour in Greco-Roman Antiquity. A Sourcebook* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 1990).
Asceticism	Vincent L. Wimbush & Richard Valantasis (eds.) *Asceticism* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
b.	*Babylonian Talmud*, followed by the abbreviation for the particular tractate.
Bell.	Flavius Josephus, *De bello Judaico*
Ber.	*Berakhot.*
BDB	Francis Brown, S.R. Driver & Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, with an appendix containing the biblical Aramaic. Based upon the Lexicon of William Gesenius* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955).

CC	Origen, *Contra Celsum.*
CCL	*Corpus christianorum, series latina* (Turnhout: Brepols).
CD	*The Damascus Document.*
CESG	George Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels* (4 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1993).
CFM	*Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum.*
CH	A.D. Nock and A.J. Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum* (4 vols; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1972-3).
CIMRM	*Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumetorum Religionis Mithriacae.*
CMC	*Cologne Mani Codex.*
Coptic Texts	E.A.W. Budge (ed. & trans.) *Coptic Texts* (5 Vols.; New York: AMS, 1977).
CPC	B.F. Harris, E.A. Judge, A.M. (Emmett) Nobbs & S.R. Pickering (eds.) *Corpus Papyorum Christianarum* (CUP; forthcoming).
CRAI	*Comptes-rendus de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.*
CSCO	*Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium.*
CUP	Cambridge University Press.
DDD	*Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking and Pieter W. van der Horst (eds.)* Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible *(Leiden: Brill, 1995). The 1999 edition has some added articles and has been used on occasion, it is referred to as* DDD *(1999).*
De gig.	Philo Judaeus, *De gigantibus.*
Def. Or.	Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum.*
Dem.	*Aphrahat, Demonstrations.*
DJD	*Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* (Oxford: OUP, 1955 onwards).

DMWA	Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (ed. J. Milton Cowan; 1st published Wiesbaden, 1961; Libraire du Liban & Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden, 1980).
dub.	Attribution of authorship is dubious or doubtful.
En	The books of Enoch, individual tractates identified by number, e.g *1 En.*
Ep.	Plato, *Epinomis* (probably pseudo-Platonic; the author was probably Philipp of Opus).
Excerpta	Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpta ex Theodoto.*
Fug.	Philo Judaeus, *De fuga et inventione.*
GCS	*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte* (Berlin:Akademie Verlag).
GenR	*Genesis* (= *Bereshith*) *Rabbah.*
GMP	H.D. Betz (ed.) *The Greek Magical Papyri In Translation* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986).
GELNT	William F. Arndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (trans. & adaptation of Walter Bauer's *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*; 2nd ed. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958).
H.E.	Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica.*
Holy Women	S.P. Brock & Susan Ashbrook Harvey (intro. & trans.) *Holy Women of The Syrian Orient* (Univ. of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1987).
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review.*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual.*
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum.*
Jacoby	Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Leiden: Brill, 1950-63).

JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature.*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies.*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies.*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies.*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism.*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies.*
LAB	Pseudo-Philo, *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum.*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library.
LG	Michael Komsko (ed. & trans.) ܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܣܩܬܐ *Liber graduum,* (PS III; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1926).
LSJ	H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (rev. ed. H.S. Jones (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1925-40; suppl. 1968).
LXX	Septuagint (= Old Greek) version of the Old Testament.
MT	Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Old Testament.
MidrR.	*Midrash Rabbah.*
Mut.	Philo Judaeus, *De mutatione nominum.*
Nestle-Aland	Eberhard & Erwin Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (rev. ed. Barbara Aland et al.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1998). The individual manuscript traditions behind readings of Nestle-Aland will only be mentioned if it is divergent from the text presented.
New Docs	*New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (vols. 1-8; 1981-1998).
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codex, followed by number.

Nöldeke	Theodor Nöldeke, *Kurzgefasste Syrische Grammatik* (1st pbl. 1898; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966).
NovT	*Novum Testamentum.*
NTA	Wilhelm Schneemelcher (ed.) & R. McL. Wilson (trans.) *New Testament Apocrypha* (2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).
NTS	*New Testament Studies.*
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica.*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary.*
Opf. Mund.	Philo Judaeus, *De opificio Mundi.*
OUP	Oxford University Press.
OS	*The Odes of Solomon.*
OTP	Charlesworth, James H. (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983-1985).
P	Peshitta, the Syriac version of the Bible (United Bible Societies 1979).
Paed.	Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus.*
PdO	*Parole de l'Orient.*
PG	J.P. Migne (ed.) *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca* (162 vols.; Paris: J.P. Migne, 1857-1887).
PGL	G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (1st publ.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968).
PGM	Preisendanz, Karl *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (2 vols., Teubner: Stuttgart, 1973-4).
Phaedr.	Plato, *Phaedrus.*
PL	*Patrologia Latina.*

PO	*Patrologia Orientalis.*
Post.	Philo Judaeus, *De posteritate Caini.*
Praep.	Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica.*
PRE	*Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer.*
Prophet.	Clement of Alexandria, *Eclogae propheticae.*
PS	R. Graffin, *et al.* (eds.) *Patrologia Syriaca: complectens opera omnia ss. Patrum, doctorum, scriptorumque Catholicorum* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1894-1926; repr. Turnhout: Brepols, 1993).
Ps. Jon.	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.
PW	Georg Wissowa (hrsg.) *Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (24 v.; Stuttgart : J.B. Metzler, 1894-1963).
Quaest. Ex.	Philo Judaeus, *Quaestiones et solutions in Exodum.*
Quaest. Gen.	Philo Judaeus, *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin.*
RAC	*Reallexikon fur Antike und Christentum: Sachworterbuch zurAuseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der antiken Welt* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950 -).
REG	*Revue des études grecques.*
Rep.	Plato, *Republic.*
RSV	*The Revised Standard Bible* (British and Foreign Bible Society: Britain, 1971).
Sac.	Philo Judaeus, *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini.*
SC	*Source chrétiennes.*
SEG	*Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum.*
SeptGott	*Septuaginta Gottingensis.*
Soph.	Plato, *Sophista.*

Spur.	Attribution of authorship is spurious.
Stern	Menachem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jewish and Judaism* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1974).
Strom.	Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata.*
TAM	*Tituli Asiae Minoris* (Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften).
TDNT	Gerhard Kittel & Gerhard Friedrich (eds.) *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. & ed. G. W. Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1969-77) (see *TWNT*).
Tg. Ps.-J.	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.
Tht.	Plato, *Theaetetus.*
Tim.	Plato, *Timaeus.*
TMMM	*Textes et monuments figures relatifs aux mystères de Mithra.*
TWNT	Gerhard Friedrich (hrsg.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament. Begründet von Gerhard Kittel* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933-54), translated into English as *TDNT.*
VigChr	*Vigiliae Christianae.*
Vita	Flavius Josephus, *Josephi vita.*
Vita Mos.	Philo Judaeus, *De vita Mosis.*
Wright, *Acts*	William Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of The Apostles* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1968; 1st publ. 1871).
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche.*

Introduction

Why angels? What significance did beliefs about angels hold for the first Christians?

This thesis aims to elucidate why angels held importance for ancient Near Eastern Christianity. Thus we shall discuss those groups that arose from the Jesus-movements of the first century and their spiritual heirs up until the fourth century when the Church as a reasonably centralised institution was established. The subjects include those now termed Jewish-Christians, 'gnostics',[1] Manichaeans, as well as those groups and writers who later came to be accepted both as precursors to and early adherents to the Catholic Church recognised at the Council of Nicaea. The thesis is mainly restricted to Christianity in the Roman East, specifically Palestine, Syria and Egypt, but evidence from the West and Asia Minor is also used when necessary. The *Corpus Hermeticum*, *Asclepius* and magical[2] literature from late antiquity will also be used when they provide useful comparative evidence, for they were an integral part of the cultural scene in which early Christians would have moved. The thought world of Antiquity was also infused with the Platonic view of the cosmos and the literary heritage of ancient Greece, in particular Homer; Greek philosophy and literature thus stand behind much of the human thought and practice described herein. Although rabbinic Judaism also owed much to similar groups, both in what it took from them and in what it

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[1] This is a highly problematic term, as has been recognized for some time. Valentinian and, to a slightly lesser extent, Sethian gnosticism are identifiable movements, but most of the other texts identified as 'gnostic' have less in common with each other than might be expected if they did indeed represent a particular spiritual tradition. Our definition of 'gnosticism' as a movement derives from the Church heresiological literature, hardly an objective source, and the term itself from the 18th century of this era, see *OED* IV 248; it does not seem to have been used by 'gnostics' as a term describing a particular religion, group of sects or spiritual outlook. On the question of the definition of gnosticism see Edwin Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism. A Survey of the Proposed Evidences* (London: Tyndale Press, 1973) 13-19; K. Koschorke, *Hippolyts Ketzerbekämpfung und die Polemik gegen die Gnostiker* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975); Bentley Layton's review of G.A.G. Stroumsa's *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology*, in *Revue Biblique* 94 (1987) 608-13; K. Rudolf, *Die Gnosis: Wesen und Geschichte einer spätantiken Religion* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) 64-65; and most recently the thoughtful treatment of the subject by Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism". An Argument For Dismantling a Dubious Category*. Scholem stretched the definition so far as to identify Merkavah mysticism as "Jewish and rabbinic Gnosticism", G. Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: Penguin, 1978) 12-13. In recognition of the difficulties involved I shall refer to lower case 'gnosticism' rather than 'Gnosticism'.

2 As with the term 'gnosticism' as noted above I am aware of the problems involved in the use of this term, not least its pejorative nature; it is, however, simply the best term for a certain type of literature and its practical application. For further reading on the question of terminology in relation to magical, incantation or 'ritual' texts see C.R. Phillips, "The Sociology of Religious Knowledge in the Roman Empire", *ANRW* II.16.3 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986) 2677-2773; M. Meyer & R. Smith (eds.) *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994) 1-5; C.A. Faraone & D. Obbink, *Magica Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York & Oxford: OUP, 1997) *passim*; It is worth noting that all categories can be subject to criticism; at some stage we have to decide that something is more one thing than another and thus define it and categorise it; the process necessarily involves simplification and artificiality. Categorisation is, however, essential for the investigation of reality, and the nihilistic impulse to deconstruct every term needs to be kept somewhat in check.

found necessary to reject, it is beyond the scope of this thesis and indeed its angelology has already been the subject of detailed scholarly examination.[3] Likewise New Testament angelology has received detailed treatment in recent times,[4] and is thus not the central focus of this dissertation, but neither is it ignored as it, of course, forms the essential backdrop to all Christian thought and expression.

The present work intends to be a general history of the early development of Christian angelological beliefs in the Roman East, but this task has also led to it being necessary to focus upon the one tradition that acted as the dominant aspect of Christian interest in angels. This was the approach to beliefs about angels that served to define Christian angelology as opposed to Jewish or pagan. The motif of the transformation into or emulation by the Christian of an angelic being is at the heart of the Christian belief in angels. This will therefore be the focus of the thesis. The motif will be treated as a thread that we can use to unravel the larger history of Christian angelology in this period, such as the relationship between official and popular beliefs about angels and the dynamics of the conflict between angels and the church. Both the larger picture and the particular story that we will follow will remain in view.

This thesis is thus mainly about the motif of transformation and the attainment of perfection, be it metaphorical, symbolic or actual.

In the modern scholarly world, perhaps too often fascinated with the idea of dualism and opposition, it has become fashionable to see angels as the necessary counterparts of demons or fallen angels.[5] Concepts of binary opposition have perhaps coloured our view of the ancient world, and although the excesses of the past have to some extent been recognised, for instance the fascination with Iranian dualism, the view remains that angels are needed because of the existence of demons. This is incorrect, angels and demons are not linked to each other except in a very secondary fashion. This will be discussed in Chapter 2 along with the development of scholarly

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[3] See comments in chap. 2.

[4] For a full discussion of the scholarly literature relating to New Testament angelology see Chap. 2.

[5] The received opinion; as an example see Jean Daniélou's comment that the Alexandrian Fathers held a morally dualistic view of spiritual beings, which he claims is derived from the Pseudepigrapha: *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964) 142. It has been consistently argued that in Jewish circles angels and demons are dependent upon each other, see A. Lods "La chute des anges" *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* (1927) 295-315; Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (H. Gressmann, ed.; 3rd edn.; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1926) 331ff. I would argue that regardless of whether this is true for

interest in angelology. Belief in angels, however, emerged from a dualistic environment of another sort, a dualism of heaven and earth. Rather than an ethical division of the universe the interest in angelic beings derives from a view that is as old as the Orphics and Plato, the view that there exists an ideal world, from which comes the soul and timeless truth, and a less-ideal world, the world of everyday reality, change, decay and sense-perception.

This thesis will demonstrate that demons and angels, although often linked, are not necessarily dependent upon each other. Let us begin by noting that angels and demons are not easily divorced from each other. As chapter 3, "The Nature of Angels", will show it is not true to see one as good and the other as evil. This is a modern imposition upon the past, coloured by the two millennia of Christian Church history; the second to fourth centuries was a period in which angels were not clearly delineated from demons (*daimones*). In the literature used in this period we find stories of angels who attempt to hinder the passage of the Lord to earth in his mission of salvation (*The Ascension of Isaiah*); or stories in which angels could fall, yet their fall could be interpreted in either a wholly negative (the Enochic *Book of the Watchers*), or a partly positive light (the *Book of Jubilees*). It is demonstrably true that this period was one of obsession with the possible influences of spiritual beings upon the human body, history and the cosmos, but the idea of a spiritual war being conducted between angels and demons was not at the heart of the rise of interest in angels. It was subordinate to the core reason for the interest in angels in early Christianity. The early Christian interest in angels is not derived from an interest in the spirit war between angels and demons.

Once one looks closely at early Christian beliefs about angelic beings certain literary genres, motifs, themes and institutions stand out. These are: The Jewish Apocalyptic literature dealing with ascent or views of the heavenly court, thus from Daniel and Enoch in the third and second centuries BCE through to documents dating from the first couple of centuries of the Common Era;[6] inquiries into the early chapters of Genesis; the belief in a paradisiacal state conceived of in angelic

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Jewish literature or not, it is not the case that the early Christian interest in angels was derived from a dualistic approach to the spirit world.

[6] These texts are: The biblical book of Daniel (LXX & MT); *The Book of the Watchers* (*1 Enoch* 1-36); the *Similtudes of Enoch* (*1 Enoch* 37-71); *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*; the *Testament of Levi* (in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*) the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*; the *Apocalypse of Abraham*; the *Ascension of Isaiah*. All these works (except Daniel) are found in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1983) = *OTP*. All these books are Jewish compositions, but many were also subject to heavy Christian editing and interpolation; this will be discussed in the thesis as these textual issues arise. These are the major apocalyptic works dealt with in this thesis,

terms and often seen as a return to a primeval state; and, connected to this, the belief in a principal angelic being who acted for God in the world, one central and enduring legend suggesting that this being was a transformed human – Enoch. Christians in the first centuries were interested in angels for many reasons, but primary among them were traditions influenced by Jewish Apocalyptic of the Second Temple period and the motif of the translation of the human from an earthly to an angelic state of being, whether it be an actual, metaphorical or symbolic transformation. Indeed the continuity with Jewish tradition is striking, however multifarious the expressions of Christianity and porous the boundaries between religious traditions in this period. It is impossible to understand early Christian angelology without an appreciation of its Jewish heritage.

The immediate background to early Christian angelology lies in the Jewish Apocalyptic literature. Recently scholars such as Christopher Rowland have challenged some of the assumptions made by earlier generations about Apocalyptic as a genre. In particular Rowland points out that the connection made between Apocalyptic and Eschatology has distorted the study of these texts, leading to emphasis upon Eschatology and a neglect of other areas.[7] Eschatology is thus no longer seen as defining Apocalyptic, as it came to do for some, although it is still recognized to be close to the heart of much of the literature. This reassessment has been followed by others, most notably that of Martha Himmelfarb, who has suggested that the central importance of the ascent apocalypses is found in the motif of the transformation of the ascending seer into an angelic being.[8] The story of the development of Jewish beliefs about angels is played out in the Apocalyptic literature, and Himmelfarb's claim thus places the notion of transformation into angels at the heart of the whole Jewish notion of angelology in the intertestamental period. Chapter 4 traces the development of the motif of angelic transformation from the Pentateuch through to early Christian literature.

Considering the weighty debt owed by early Christianity to Jewish Apocalyptic it would be surprising if the Apocalyptic view of angels was not translated into early Christianity. This is

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but not the only ones; others that discuss the state of being of the righteous, in this world or in the afterlife, or the nature of angels, will also feature. See the bibliography for the full list of scripture and primary sources.

[7] C.C. Rowland, *The Open Heaven. A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1985) 1-3 & *passim*.

[8] "If I read them [the ascent apocalypses] correctly, their most important accomplishment was to suggest an understanding of human possibility, of the status of the righteous in the universe, . . . In the midst of an often unsatisfactory daily life, they taught their readers to imagine themselves like Enoch, like the glorious ones, with no apparent difference." M. Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York & Oxford: OUP, 1993) 114.

indeed what happened; Christian angelology would have been completely different without the Second Temple Apocalyptic literature. As this thesis will serve to demonstrate, Christianity became interested in angels because of the traditions of the transformation of righteous human beings into angelic beings upon death, in particular the exaltation of Enoch to angelic office.

Thus the notion that was at the heart of the Jewish ascent apocalypses, the possibility of transformation of humans into angels, was also at the heart of the early Christian interest in angels. The links between Jewish Apocalyptic and the Gospels, apostolic literature and the Church Fathers in regard to the notion of the transformation of human beings into angels are clear when one looks at the symbolism used and the direct literary dependence of early Christian literature upon this Jewish material. It is in the Christian ascetic tradition, in particular, that we find the strongest influence of Jewish Apocalyptic and the idea that humans can be transformed into angels. Chapters 5 and 6 will deal with this aspect of Christian interaction with the idea. Christians were the direct literary and ideological heirs of this tradition, a tradition that begins with the earliest biblical apocalypse, Daniel, and continued on into the first centuries of the Common Era. At the same time it is notable that this tradition also continues to play a role of considerable importance in those mystical streams of thought rabbinic Judaism produced, Merkavah mysticism and Hekhalot. We must thus accept that these two religions, often so concerned to build walls between each other, continued to draw on the same traditions and also to put those traditions to similar uses. There are of course differences, which will be examined as the thesis progresses, but the common elements speak out strongly in favour of the existence, on one level at least, of a religious *koine* in which both Christians and Jews operated.

This is not to say that Judaism was the only influence upon early Christian angelology; this would have been impossible. Judaism had by the first centuries of the Common Era been engaged in a long and fruitful interchange of ideas with Hellenism and Greco-Roman philosophy and spirituality.[9] Any persons living near the Mediterranean in this time would have found themselves operating in an environment infused with the flavour of Greek philosophy – the writings of Plato, Homer and Hesiod, and a middle- and Neoplatonic view of the universe. Some of the symbols that indicate an angel or transformed human being in early Christian and Second Temple Jewish literature derive from or share some relationship with Graeco-Roman philosophical imagery and categories. This will be noted as the thesis progresses. But the ideas discussed in this thesis

developed in a Semitic milieu, and accordingly the Greek ideas are largely filtered through this Semitic cultural and philosophical lens.

However, as might be expected, the Christian interest in and view of angels derives ultimately from the first chapters of the book of Genesis. The eternal themes of creation, fall and salvation can all be found in the opening chapters of this text. Apocalyptic took its lead from Genesis in its speculations concerning the origins of evil and the possibility of salvation.[10] Students of gnosticism have alerted us to the importance of the early chapters of Genesis for gnostic speculation concerning the origin of evil in the cosmos.[11] Sin, the origin of evil and death were themes that were tied together in Genesis, providing fertile material for later exegesis. Non-gnostic Christians were also, like many others in this time, concerned with questions of the origin of death, sin, evil and the secrets of creation – for resolution of such issues the book of Genesis was the place to start.

Over and over again in Christian discussion of angels we find the legends of the fall of Adam and Eve (Gen 3 & 4) and the fall of the sinful sons of God (Gen 6:1-4 בני אלוהים; LXX [some MSS] ἄγγελοι; the Enochic 'Watchers')[12] cropping up. These two episodes spawned traditions that although connected enjoyed separate existences.[13] It is clearly the case that certain religious streams within or connected to Christianity were more interested in one than the other tradition. But at the same time neither tradition was ignored, and I would argue that they were often in a symbiotic relationship to each other that assisted transmission and survival. Both traditions linked sin and death, and thus (though not only because of this) they formed the basis for speculations by Judeo-

[9] See G. Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: Penguin, 1978) 12-13.
[10] Charlesworth, *OTP* I, xxx.
[11] For instance see G.A.G Stroumsa, *Another Seed* 17-34, esp. 18, with the important caveat on p.34 that it was not only the early chapters of Genesis in Greek that formed the basis for such speculations.
[12] On the identification of the בני אלוהים first as angels and later as sons of Seth see Arie van der Kooij, "Peshitta Genesis 6: 'Sons of God' – Angels or Judges?" *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 23/1 (1997) 43-51; G.A.G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Leiden: Brill, 1984) 17-34, 125-34; L.R. Wickham, "The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Genesis VI.2 in Early Christian Exegesis", *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 19 (1974) 135-47; Philip Alexander, "The Targumim and Early Exegesis of 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6", *JJS* 23 (1972) 60-71.
[13] Received wisdom would place Gen 6:1-4 before 1 Enoch 6-16:4, but Milik claimed the reverse, that the Enochic Watcher legend was taken and Hebraised in Gen 6:1-4; J.T. Milik (ed.) *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: OUP, 1976) 31; on the relative importance of the two different explanations for the origin of evil, sin and thus death see D.S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic 200 B.C.-A.D. 100* (London: SCM Press, 1971) 249-252; and p.253 the alternative rabbinic explanation, that the evil inclination is implanted in humans at birth by God himself and it is up to us to use our free will to control it.

Christian religious traditions in the centuries around the turn of the era, this in a time when Graeco-Roman spirituality was also increasingly focused upon the afterlife.[14]

The interest in the transformation of humans into angelic beings, however, is primarily derived from speculations concerning the first legend, that surrounding the fall of Adam and Eve, ironic though this may be since angels are not mentioned here. This is because from the second century BCE on into the early Christian era it was increasingly the case that the original state of Adam and Eve was conceived of in angelic terms; salvation was also increasingly seen as a return to this state; hence the afterlife was angelic.

The focus upon the Genesis 6 episode has been fuelled largely by the discovery amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls of parts of and references to the Enochic *Book of Watchers*, and the closely related *Book of the Giants*, so prominent in Manichaean literature.[15] Previously known in Late Antique Greek fragments and several complete late Medieval and early Modern Ethiopic MSS, the discovery of the Aramaic Enochic texts underlined their importance for Judaism and the general religious culture of pre- and early-Christian period Palestine.[16] Its demonological aspect has, however, in combination with our increasing knowledge of the role and ideology of magical practices, caused undue emphasis to be placed upon demonology in connection with the study of angelology.[17]

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[14] See the comments of H.D. Betz in, *idem* (ed.) *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago & London: Chicago Univ. Press, 1986) xlvi. Of course not all were so interested in the afterlife, the Sadducees of Acts 23:8 being a case in point.

[15] J.T. Milik claimed that in the original Aramaic Enoch pentateuchal corpus the second book was a '*Book of Giants*' that acted as a sequel to the *Book of Watchers*. Thus the *Similitudes*, which stands in the second place in the Ethiopic is a post-third century Christian composition intended to replace the *Book of Giants*. The *Book of Giants* survives most prominently in the Manichaean tradition. Black suggests, *contra* Milik, that the *Book of Giants* was part of the *Book of Watchers*, rather than a separate book. There is no positive evidence for Milik's argument about the existence of a second '*Book of Giants*', but there is a strong thematic connection between the *Book of Giants* found at Qumran and in the Manichaean literature; see M. Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch. A New English Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1985). On the Manichaean texts see J.T. Milik, "Turfan et Qumran, Livre des Géants juif et manichéen", in G. Jeremias, H.-W. Kuhn, & H. Stegemann (eds.) *Tradition und Glaube. Das frühe Christentum in seiner Umwelt. Festgabe für Karl Georg Kuhn zum 65. Geburtstag*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971); J. C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony. Studies in the Book of Giant Traditions* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992); W. Sundermann, "Mani's '*Book of Giants*' and the Jewish Books of Enoch. A case of terminological difference and what it implies", *Irano-Judaica* III (1994) 40-48.

[16] See Charlesworth "1 Enoch", *OTP* I, 6-7.

[17] According to Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity. AD 150-750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993): "Men . . . found the problem of evil, also, to be more intimate, more drastic. To 'look at the sum total of things', to treat human miseries with detachment – as so many regrettable traffic-accidents on the well-regulated road system of the universe – was plainly insufficient. It made no sense of the vigour of conflicting emotions within oneself. Hence the most crucial development of these centuries: the definitive splitting-off of the 'demons' as active forces of evil against whom men had to pit themselves. The sharp smell of an invisible battle hung over the religious and intellectual life of Late Antique man. To sin was no longer merely to err: it was to allow oneself to be overcome by unseen forces. To err was not to be

Once one looks closely at the ideologies found in the *Book of Enoch*[18] the differences between the two angelological traditions become plain. The fall of Adam and Eve story emphasises the sinful action of mankind, the fall of the Watchers puts the emphasis upon the Watchers and their sin.

Scholars have taken notice of the implications for theories about the origins of evil in the cosmos, and the discoveries of the Enochic *Book of Watchers* and the *Book of the Giants* have led to a distortion of the significance to be attributed to the fall of the Watchers legend.[19] It needs to be stressed that apart from preserving the texts themselves the Dead Sea Scrolls do not show much interest at all in the Enochic account of the fall of the angels. Indeed the explanation of the origin of evil in the Dead Sea Scrolls has more to do with human inclination (*yeṣer*) than the sin of the angels,[20]even taking into account the doctrine of the Two Spirits. Why then was the Enochic tradition preserved at Qumran if its theme of the origin of evil was ignored? Perhaps for the same reason that the tradition was preserved in Early Christianity, because of the story of Enoch's vision

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mistaken: it was to be unconsciously manipulated by some invisible malign power . . . Christians believed that traditional paganism, far from being the work of men, was an 'opium of the masses', pumped into the human race by the non-human demons" (53-54). The last sentence holds the key, the Christian equation of the pagan gods with evil spirits, spirits which are given the name previously assigned in Graeco-Roman thought to morally neutral lesser divine beings (*daimōn*), created, over a period of centuries, the dualistic view of the spirit world. It was not a view held by non-Christians and certainly not by Graeco-Roman pagans. It was a later development of dualistic ideas which, although found in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Pseudepigrapha, were not the only ideas to emerge from these texts and could no longer be said to characterise Late Second Temple Judaism as a whole. This is the classic approach normally legitimised by reference to the *Book of Watchers*: "The Christian Church had inherited, through late Judaism, that most fateful legacy of Zoroastrian Persia to the Western World – a belief in the absolute division of the spiritual world between good and evil powers, between angels and demons. To men increasingly preoccupied with the problem of evil, the Christian attitude to the demons offered an answer to relieve nameless anxiety: they focused this anxiety on the demons and at the same time offered a remedy for it." (54-55). Whilst I do not wish to deny the importance of demonology to early Christians I wish to suggest that this focus upon demonology has created an incorrect impression of the role of angels in early Christianity, for to Christians it was primarily Christ, not the angels, who was the opponent of demonic influences. The dominant Christian message was that Christ stood above and apart from the whole spiritual hierarchy; in effect his coming removed the importance of the dualistic opposition of angels and demons found in some Pseudepigraphic texts and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

[18] I use this term to refer only to *1 Enoch*, known chiefly in the Ethiopic; *2 (Slavonic) Enoch* and *3 (Hebrew) Enoch* are always referred to by their full titles. It needs to be remembered that they are closely related, but entirely separate, texts.

[19] For a summary of this approach to assessing the importance of the fall of the sons of God/ Watchers story to ideas about sin, death and evil see James Charlesworth, *OTP* I xxx-xxxi.

[20] John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in The Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997) talks of some mention of the fallen angels in *CD* 2: 15-16, but this functions as an exhortation to humans to moral behaviour; this opposes the very premise of the Watchers tradition – that sin (and thus evil in the world) resulted from the action of the fallen angels. 4Q180 (which is very fragmentary and almost reads like a Enochic work itself) also mentions the legend. On the importance of the role of human free will in the question of the origin of evil see Russell, *Method and Message* 253. Obviously there was some continuity between the thought preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the rabbinic theology of evil; see Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: The world and wisdom of the rabbis of the Talmud* (trans. I. Abrahams; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987) I, 472.

of the heavenly angels, his worship alongside them and the promise of an angelic afterlife held out to the righteous. Early Christians also put the tradition to other uses; the demonological aspect of the *Book of the Watchers* was a useful referent for Christians during times of persecution, and it is clear from magical texts that demons and other spiritual beings were central to the theory behind the magical world-view. Nonetheless the primary Christian interest in the *Book of Enoch* revolves around the translation of Enoch into the angelic realm and his joining of the angels in the worship of God, interpreted as an angelic transformation (as we will see in Chap. 4), and along with that the hope of the righteous to achieve angelic status at death. As at Qumran, when early Christians discussed the fall of the angels in Genesis 6, they almost invariably did so in order to cite the episode as an exhortation to righteous behaviour, rather than as an explanation for the origin of evil in the cosmos: sin, evil and death was seen as the result of human action, not that of the angels. This emphasis upon human action came in the end to influence the fallen angels legend. For from the early second century CE at least rabbinic commentators, followed slightly later by Christians, took the legend of the fallen sons of God and interpreted it as a reference to fallen sons of Seth, that is: human beings, rather than angelic beings.[21]

The most popular Christian interpretation for the origin of sin, evil and death in the cosmos revolved around exegesis of the fall of Adam and Eve, rather than the fall of the Sons of God; however, in the circles Christians would have moved in, some did hold the Watchers/Sons of God story to be more important than the fall of Adam and Eve. The Greek magical papyri from Egypt show scant interest in the transformation of human beings into heavenly beings. The one exception, the misnamed "Mithras Liturgy" provides us with important evidence for the practice of heavenly ascent and transformation, but is notable by its orphan status amongst the *PGM* documents. The theoretical superstructure of the Greek magical papyri was held together with a mortar of spirits, demons and angels; misanthropic and capricious they hovered in the air waiting for the order to launch attack upon the vulnerable human being. The legend of the fallen angels as found in the *Book of Enoch* is behind much of the demonology in this literature. It serves as part of the scriptural justification for the vision of the cosmos and the human body as constantly belaboured by a spiritual war being waged between good and evil powers. Gnosticism, too, found the Genesis 6 and the *Book of the Watchers* tradition and its explanation for the origins of evil more interesting than the idea of an angelic afterlife. Thus gnostic and magical angelology places more emphasis upon the spirit-war theory informed by Gen 6:1-4 and the *Book of Watchers* tradition than did non-

[21] See n12.

gnostic Christian angelology. Perhaps gnosticism deliberately distanced itself from notions that were so Jewish. For Gnosticism in its radical rejection of its origins is characterised by such behaviour.[22] Whatever its exact origins gnosticism took much from Jewish Apocalyptic and it would be surprising if it was not aware of the importance of the transformation motif in these texts. Indeed it is noteworthy that gnostic texts placed almost no importance upon the transfiguration of Christ in the Synoptics. This seems surprising given the gnostic interest in spiritual transformation, but it can be explained if we assume it was seen as an angelic transformation connected to the transformations of Patriarchs in the Apocalyptic literature; such a connection to gnosticism's disowned parentage in Jewish Apocalyptic would have been too much for the average gnostic thinker or writer to stomach. Yet examination of the gnostic texts with a Semitic (i.e. Aramaic/Syriac) origin shows that they also seem to be informed by the tradition of Adam's fall and a return to an original angelic, paradisiacal state. Gnostic anxiety about its parentage means that the motif is buried somewhat; moreover this motif is only found in the texts with Semitic roots, but it is clearly there. This is further evidence to support the theory of an ultimately Jewish and Semitic origin for the central motif in Christian angelology.

In the fourth century the great process of synthesis that brought the Church together also brought philosophical synthesis. As Chapter 5 will demonstrate, Christian asceticism managed to combine the emulation of angels with the spirit war, yet also demonstrates the primary importance of the idea of transformation into angels or the emulation of angelic behaviour. Thus the two streams of interest in angels were combined. In Chapter 5 we will see how the fourth century transformation of Christian asceticism into Church monasticism was the final part of the development of the early Christian belief in angels.

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[22] See, for instance: Birger A. Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990) 133-4; Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord* 20.

State of the Research

There have been several episodes of scholarly interest in angels. Each has lasted for some time and then died down. Generally the discussion of angels has arisen in the context of theological debates of a broader nature. Angels have arisen in the context of Christological and Trinitarian debates, debates concerning knowledge and faith, and amongst the whole gamut of issues raised by the collision of Judaeo-Christian ideas with Platonism and, later, Aristotelianism. The importance of the issues associated with angelology has been a two-edged sword, for it has meant that although these issues have arisen in numerous debates over the centuries, angels were rarely the central focus. The birth of academic interest in angels can be traced to the High Middle Ages with the advent of the first European universities. The latest outburst of scholarly interest in angels began in the mid-ninteenth century, and although the contribution to our understanding of (in particular) Jewish and Christian angelology has been enormous the field is so large that there remains the need for general studies tying the research together. Modern scholarship on angels has also found itself often dealing with angels in the context of other more general debates, such as those concerning gnosticism, early Christian and Jewish monotheism, the study of early Christian Christology, apocalyptic literature, and magic. It is hoped that this work, focused as it is on Christian beliefs about angels in the first four centuries, will give a new perspective not only to the study of beliefs about angels, but will also offer a new approach to, and hopefully a new view of, wider debates concerning cosmology, theology, anthropology and soteriology.

By studying angels we can go a long way towards understanding how human beings occupying the Near East in the first centuries of the Christian era, at the meeting point of the Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Mesopotamian worlds, saw themselves and the cosmos around them. The history of the scholarship on angelology has been dominated by the approach that uses angelological beliefs as a means to understand other issues. This thesis will attempt to redress this imbalance by focusing on angelology first, and using cosmology and other related issues to illuminate angelology. Reversing the approach does not mean ignoring issues such as cosmology or Christology; indeed it would be impossible to do so. Rather I hope to point out explicitly what several hundred years of scholarship has implied but not often explicitly stated: that beliefs about angels in the early Christian period were essential to the understanding human beings had of their position in the cosmos, and thus also the

understanding they had of themselves and their nature both in this world and the afterlife. Existential issues are at the heart of the early Christian belief in angels.

The three main flowerings of belief in angels in the pre-modern period amongst Christians were: the period up to the fourth century, mainly in the East, dealt with in this thesis; the late fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh century in the East and West (still awaiting comprehensive scholarly investigation);[1]and the western Mediaeval interest in angels centred around the Catholic Scholastic philosophers.[2]

2.1 The Mediaeval Period: the Aristotelian reawakening of the mystical impulse to gain knowledge through investigation of the heavenly world, its inhabitants and their duties

It is with the third flowering of popular belief in angels, that of the High Middle Ages, that the scholarly investigation of angelology ~~beings~~ begins, as opposed to interest for the purpose of devotion, first arose. It should be noted, however, that this scholarly interest in angels cannot be entirely divorced from the popular devotion that it in part engendered and which continued to grow right up to the 17th century. Those who decry the decline of Classics departments in Australian universities on the grounds that the study of Classics is intrinsic to the idea of a university might recall that Angelology was also, for a long period, a central part of the original university curriculum. [3] The scene was set a couple of centuries before, with the work of John Scotus.[4] His translation of Pseudo-Dionysius, his almost Pelagian belief in free-will,[5] and his major published work, *On the Division of Nature*[6] (which argued for a division of the cosmos into four categories based upon the creative status of different beings), helped to transmit important angelological and cosmological debates from Late Antiquity to the thinkers of the High Middle Ages. John was, however, ahead of his time,

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[1] But see, for instance, Pauline Allen, "Severus of Antioch and the homily: the end of the beginning?", in P.Allen and E.M. Jeffreys (eds) *The Sixth Century — End or Beginning?* (Byzantina Australiensia 10; Brisbane: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1996) 165-177.

[2] Now dealt with comprehensively by David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (New York: OUP, 1998).

[3] See Keck, *Angels and Angelology* 87-92.

[4] 815?-877?, also known as John Scotus Erigena, Ierugena or Eriugena.

[5] See his *De divina praedestinatione liber* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978), condemned at the councils of Valence (855), Langres (859) and Vercelli (1050).

[6] *Periphyseon: The division of nature* (Montreal: Bellarmin, 1987). Condemned at the Council of Sens (1225).

and once the protection of the court of Charles the Bald was removed by the king's death in 877 we hear no more of him. It was in the 11th and 12th centuries, as the European cathedral schools and universities first came into being, that John's ideas re-emerged in the writings of others. But the academic study of angelology, the popular approach to which had always been based upon Platonism, took place in an Aristotelian environment. John Scotus had been a Neoplatonist, and this marks him out from the academic Aristotelians who followed him in the 12th and 13th centuries. Indeed at least part of the reason the Catholic Scholastics were interested in angelology was to refute some of the ideas that the translation of Pseudo-Dionysius had engendered. These were ideas such as the identification of the Platonic intelligences with the angels, which he had first put forward.[7] The Catholic Scholastics were at the centre of a theological ferment, in which angels and the investigation of them featured prominently. Yet this interest in angels was informed by the Aristotelian approach that at this time, fuelled by the translations undertaken especially in Toledo from Arabic texts but also in Palermo and Constantinople, was coming to the fore.[8] This is essentially different from the Platonism that had hitherto been the basis for the Christian belief in angels, and helps to mark the change from religious to academic angelology. This intellectual change occurred amidst broader social changes, the growth of cities and their importance at this time encouraged the move of education from the rural monastic schools to the urban cathedral schools.[9] Likewise it built upon the Gregorian reforms and the impetus they gave to the creation of a systematised Christian doctrine based upon reason.[10] The Aristotelian approach was characterised by the *quaestio*, the philosophic discourse framed in a question and answer format.[11] It is perhaps best exemplified by the *Commentary on the Sentences* of Bonaventure, the 'Seraphic Doctor', eighty *quaestiones* of which were devoted to angels. As David Keck says:

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[7] David Keck mentions Aquinas' *Summa contra gentiles*, Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, and the 12th century commentaries on Plato's *Timaeus* were all motivated by the desire to disprove any link between intelligences and angels. The Condemnations of 1277 argued against certain facets of speculation concerning 'separated substances', *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* 86.

[8] All of Aristotle's writings were available in the West in Latin translation by 1270; cf. Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: La Maison des Sciences de l'Homme & CUP, 1985) 12 & 141; see also, S. de Beaurecueil, "Ghazzālī et saint Thomas d'Aquin", *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire* (1947) 229-237.

[9] See Pauline Maas, *The Liber Sententiarum magistri A. Its place amidst the sentences collections of the first half of the 12th century* (Nijmegen: Centrum voor Middeleeuwse studies, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 1995) 15-16, 20-22 (esp. comments on the early cathedral school at Laon).

[10] *Ibid*, iii, 2.

[11] On the change from collections of sayings (*glossa*) to the *quaestio* see *ibid*, 20.

> . . . by virtue of encouraging rational argumentation, the *quaestio* established a new place in the field of angelology for philosophy, logic, and reason. The development of this particular form of theological inquiry is one of the primary historical reasons for the great expansion of the field of angelology in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[12]

The basic 'textbook' for the new university was Peter Lombard's *Four Books of Sentences* (ca. 1155-58).[13] It was an attempt to standardize the approach made to scriptural interpretation. *Distinctiones* 3 and 8 of Book II were concerned with angels. Both Bonaventure and Aquinas graduated from the University of Paris when it was under the influence of this textbook. Subsequently commentaries on the *Four Books of Sentences* were undertaken by Alexander Hales, Albertus Magnus (the teacher of Aquinas), Bonaventure, John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Jean Gerson and Martin Luther. It was an extremely important work for Mediaeval angelology.[14] Possibly the primary effect of the *Sentences* was that it led to the neglect of the study of the chief angel.[15] From antiquity right through the early Middle Ages the cult of the chief angel, Michael in the Christian tradition, assumed great importance in popular devotion. Lombard's work said little about Michael and its weighty influence upon the Scholastic theology of angels meant that this neglect continued right up until the late 19th century with the publication of Leuken's *Michael*.[16]

Indeed in an abrupt about-face[17] Christian mysticism found itself in conflict with those academics interested in speculating about angels. St Bernard of Clairvaux's angelology was doctrinal and credal; it rejected any philosophic inquiry into or speculation concerning the nature of these beings.[18] Bernard's natural anti-rationalism[19] found itself in serious conflict

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[12] Keck, *Angels and Angelology* 75, see also 76, 81, 86.
[13] See Marcia Colish's study, *Peter Lombard* (2 vols.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994).
[14] Keck, *Angels and Angelology* 89. Keck goes on to claim, overstating the point somewhat, that: "In a sense, therefore, the history of angelology in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and beyond is the history of the commentaries on the Sentences."
[15] Keck, *Angels and Angelology* 91, although he notes that Aquinas' *Sermons on Angels* (possibly because they were more popular in nature) did discuss Michael.
[16] Leuken's work is discussed below (§2.2); on the importance of the chief angel see §3.5.
[17] For instance consider the work of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.
[18] Keck, *Angels and Angelology* 77. No doubt Bernard encountered the same difficulty that Origen and many others had faced — that Scripture does not discuss the angelic nature in any depth; Origen thought that this justified the (limited and very careful) use of the intellect to uncover truths about angels, Bernard rejected speculation of this kind, cf. §3.2.3.
[19] Bertrand Russell described him as someone "whose saintliness did not suffice to make him intelligent": *History of Western Philosophy and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1947) 459.

with the notion of philosophical inquiry that was embodied in the *quaestio*;[20] this was made evident in his conflict with Peter Abelard. Perhaps the fear that monastic authorities had historically held concerning speculation about angels by monks[21] rose to the surface here in this abbot's rejection of the new learning of the cathedral school, and then, slightly later, the university. It led to the prosecution by Bernard of Abelard at the Council of Sens in 1140. The unanswered questions concerning the nature of angels (amongst other questions of Christian doctrine) were raised again in Abelard's *Sic et Non*, and resolved with rationalistic explanations, which was unacceptable to Bernard's orthodox mind.

Abelard moved in the world of the Paris schools, in particular the Cathedral School; after his death the tradition of philosophical inquiry that they championed was transferred to the new University of Paris, which hosted St Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, who were concerned with the nature of angels and their roles, although usually in the context of debates wider than just angelology. The controversies of the time revolved around philosophy; they were the vanguard actions fought to complete the integration of Graeco-Roman philosophy into triumphant Christendom.[22] Indeed these controversies are notable for their lack of innovation; for instance in the field of angelology they were simply rehashing the battles of the previous millennium of Patristic and Apostolic debate over angels and matters related to them.[23] The need to resolve such issues, however, created an outpouring of scholarly debate that reached beyond the boundaries of Christendom; the contact with the ideas of Avicenna (*ibn Sina*) shows the international flavour of the scholarly world of this period. Bonavanture and Giles of Rome found themselves opposing those who were influenced by Avicenna's theory of angels as uncreated beings.[24] Anthropology also featured, as the debates over the relative status of angels and humans raged amongst both Christian

[20] Keck, *Angels and Angelology* 76. He argues that the popularity of the *quaestio* was encouraged by the atmosphere of fierce competition between rival interest groups and the consequent need to establish oneself and one's arguments in a harsh academic environment, this explains "why theological questions such as the nature of the angels became more and more refined and detailed in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries" 80.

[21] See §5.6.1 of this thesis.

[22] For the early stages of the development of a specifically Christian approach to philosophy see Eric F. Osborn, *The Beginning of Christian Philosophy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981).

[23] Keck, *Angels and Angelology* 13-14.

[24] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, trans. James E. O'Mahony, *The Franciscan Vision: translation of St. Bonaventure's* Itinerarium Mentis in Deum (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1937); Giles of Rome in, Jacobus B. Ravennas (ed.) *Egidius Romanus De esse et essentia, De mensura angelorum, et De cognitione angelorum* (Venice: Simone da Luere, 1503), in Francesco del Punta & Gianfranco Fioravanti (eds.) *Aegidii Romani opera omnia* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1998).

Scholastic and Muslim scholars.[25] As pointed out by David Keck, the investigation of angelic issues was motivated by anthropological concerns, just as I argue it was in the early Christian period: angels were seen as the closest to man of all the creatures; thus with the same purpose with which scientists today study apes, theologians studied angels.[26] The debates were often rooted in Patristic thought, especially Augustine, whose writings concerning angels (esp. *City of God*, Books XI & XII) were largely concerned with issues of creation, fall and salvation. Moreover, there was little direct influence from the Greek East upon western Mediaeval thought about angels; what influence there was came transmitted through the writings of Augustine. It was essentially a Latin phenomenon.[27] This twelfth and thirteenth-century scholastic frenzy of interest in angels had died down by the fourteenth, partly because Bonaventure and Aquinas had been so comprehensive and partly because of Church suspicion of the Aristotelian methods used.[28]

At roughly the same time in Provence and then in Spain Jewish scholars set to the task of organising the heavenly worlds and their inhabitants. In the Kabbalah, in particular, we can see the final act in the codification of the boundaries between man, God and angel. These were boundaries that Christianity had (due to the ambiguous nature of Christ) had to deal with at an earlier date, in the Christological debates of the first four centuries.[29] The kabbalistic scholars were following on from the scholars of the Talmud and Midrash who had begun this task of codification, but they brought to Jews a new consensus about the questions concerning the nature and place of angels. The late 13th century Spanish work the

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[25] Keck, *Angels and Angelology* 93-99; this debate is important in the Qurʾan; for instance Iblis (the chief fallen angel in Islam) refuses to worship Adam and is thus expelled from heaven because Adam is made of clay, not fire like the angels; II.32; VII.10,11; XV.31; XVIII.48; XXXVIII.74, 77. Later Islamic scholars held either that the perfectibility of humans meant that they were inherently superior to angels (al-Nasafi and al-Taftazani), or that the angels' spiritual nature assured their superiority over humans (thus the Muʿtazalis, the 'philosophers' [*al-falasifa*] and some Ashʿaris); see D. B. MacDonald, "Malāʾika, 1. In the Kurʾan and Sunni Islam", in C.E. Bosworth, *et al.* (eds.) *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition* VI (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

[26] The metaphor is Keck's, see: *Angels and Angelology* 16.

[27] On this see Paule Maas, *The Liber Sententiarum Magistri A*, 2 & 141-142; although she notes the centrality of Augustine's thought to Mediaeval angelology, she does not note that Augustine was often drawing upon sources such as Porphyry for his angelological comments (see his comments about angelology and demonology in *Civ. Dei* IX).

[28] The Condemnations of 1277 (a large number of which concerned speculation on angels) made the use of Aristotle's methods difficult for theologians, Keck, *Angels and Angelology* 112.

[29] *Contra* W. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (H. Gressmann, ed.; 3rd edn.; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1926) 321; on the development of Kabbalistic doctrines of angels see Rebecca Lesses, "Speaking with Angels: Jewish and Greco-Egyptian Revelatory Adjurations", *HTR* 89 (1996) 1, 47; Daniel Abrams,"From Divine Shape to Angelic Being: The Career of Akatriel in Jewish Literature", *Journal of Religion* 76, no.1 (Jan. 1996) 45; Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: Penguin, 1978) 118. On the lack of a systematic angel dogma in late Second Temple Judaism see §3.1.2.

Zohar took cosmological issues to be of great importance; it went further than the rabbis of the Gaonic period in its speculations concerning God,[30] and at the same time proposed an elaborate scheme of classification for the angels. For various reasons, not least, according to Scholem, the aforementioned boldness in relation to discussion of God,[31] this work became one of the central works of Jewish mysticism and along with this its angelology came to also hold a central place in Jewish thought.[32]

However contacts between Judaism and the philosophic ferment in Christian society were limited. Certainly both shared in the influence of Islamic philosophy, but the Kabbalah seems to have been very much a reaction against rationalist philosophy. Indeed one of the dominant themes of Kabbalah was a revolt against the rationalism of the generation that came before, represented by the philosophy of Maimonides.[33] Whilst Maimonides and his contemporaries did indeed debate the role of mediator figures they did not define such creatures as angels, and when the Kabbalists did define such creatures (cf. n29) they did not do so in a philosophical or academic environment. Moreover Scholem's work has cautioned us not to place too much importance upon this debate with Jewish philosophy, but rather to see Kabbalah in terms of its religious framework, for it was above all a religious movement, and even its engagement with philosophy did not alter this essential religious element.[34] The contact with Christianity, and thus with the Christian interest in angels, probably did not extend much beyond the situational contact that early Kabbalah had with the Cathars (or Albigenses) in Languedoc. Although the level of contact with this gnostic Christian heresy is debated, it is unthinkable that the fierce debates between Catholics and Cathari made no impact at all upon the Kabbalists who inhabited the same towns and cities. What contact there was between Catholic philosophy and Kabbalah would have come about through Catholic opposition to Catharism.

[30] Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* 58.
[31] Scholem, *Kabbalah* 58.
[32] Scholem, *Kabbalah* 118.
[33] The generational aspect of this revolt is most clearly represented in the defection of Maimonides' son Abraham to mysticism, see Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985) 205; although p.249 she makes the point that the early kabbalistic circles did, at times, approach close to philosophy in their speculations upon theology.
[34] Gershom Scholem *Origins of the Kabbalah* (ed. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, trans. Allan Arkush; Philadelphia: Princeton Univ. Press, 1990) 11.

One could suggest ideas about creation as a possible point of contact between Judaism and Christianity in this period. Indeed Catholic philosophy came into contact with Catharism most vigorously over the question of creation, for instance the gnostic demiurge of the Cathars was condemned at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. The Scholastic philosophers also dabbled in issues related to creation; they looked, however, at the role of angels not the demiurge; still the two are related, and the Condemnations of 1277 confirmed the Catholic Church's opposition to any speculation concerning the role of any beings other than God in creation.[35] It was especially that speculation upon the role of angels in creation that had been carried out since the relatively recent move of Catholic philosophic inquiry from the monasteries to the cathedral schools and universities that was the focus here. The accusation of doctrinally dangerous views on creation provides the only possible link between Catharism and Scholastic philosophy. The investigation of the creation of and nature of the soul and the role of putrefaction in the creation of maggots in Oxford created intellectual waves that spread across western Christendom and raised the question of the role of angels in these processes.[36] Thus the Catholic Church found itself acting both to oversee and regulate philosophic speculation on such matters as creation, and also to eliminate heresies that also proposed unacceptable theories of creation. The Kabbalah also tried to answer questions about creation, questions that arose in the context of the collision of Neoplatonic and Jewish modes of thought, but the issues were different. Although earlier rabbinic writers had had to combat the belief that angels were creators not creatures, for the Kabbalists there was no doubt but that God was the sole creator; the question instead depended on how God created – how was creation *ex nihilo* to be reconciled with the Neoplatonic mindset of the Kabbalists? And how was the unmoved mover to have any role in the creation of the profane cosmos at all? The issues were thus entirely different from those faced in Christianity, for Kabbalists necessarily found themselves positing intermediary beings, the *Sephiroth*, to act as steps on the metaphysical ladder. Jewish mystical thought of the High Middle Ages, therefore, shows little contact with the philosophical investigation of angelology undertaken by the Catholic Scholastics. This was although popular contact existed with Catharism and thus no doubt Scholastic philosophy must have been at least known to the Kabbalists. Islamic philosophy also provided both with material with which to work. The Kabbalists, nevertheless, acted upon their own agenda. It was an agenda that was

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[35] Keck, *Angels and Angelology* 22.
[36] *Ibid.*

essentially mystical, spiritual and religious, rather than scholarly in the sense that we can use the word to describe the intellectual activity being undertaken in the new universities of Christian Europe.

Yet the Jewish scholarly interest in angels that was manifest in this period was related to an issue not taken up by Christian scholars until the late nineteenth century, that of the question of the immanence or transcendence of God — did God need intermediary figures (not necessarily angels) in order to communicate with humanity?[37] It seems that there was little contact with the angelological questions that contemporary Christians were debating.

2.2 Mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century: the question of immanence, mediation and the transition to Christianity

Whilst angels continued as objects of devotion amongst the non-academic community through the later Mediaeval period, the Renaissance and into the early modern period, scholarly interest was not reawakened to a similar extent until the 19th century, and the debates amongst academic theologians and historians over the transition from Judaism to Christianity. It is especially the debates connected with the work of Bousset that stand out here. His student Wilhelm Lueken's study *Michael. Eine Darstellung und Vergleichung der jüdischen und der morgenländisch-christlichen Tradition vom Erzengel Michael*[38] began the modern scholarly interest in angels, an interest that has continued, with only short breaks, over the last century. Leuken's study was made during a period, much like the present, of intense popular interest in angelology. Ferdinand Weber and Alfred Edersheim both brought out works dealing with lesser divine beings, the former in 1886, the latter in 1890. They were following on from the work of A. Kohut in the mid-nineteenth century, who argued for a foreign origin for the growth of angelology in Judaism, and A.F. Gfrörer who argued that God's increasing distance from mankind in the period after the Exile required lesser divine beings with whom ordinary Jews could interact.[39] Attention had thus been attracted to divine or semi-divine figures other than God in late Judaism. Leuken was the first to focus upon angels. Leuken's study focused upon the figure of the chief angel, in this case Michael. It was a weakness in his work that it did not take into account the variety in the nature, names

[37] See Judah Goldin, "Not by Means of an Angel and Not by Means of a Messenger", in Jacob Neusner (ed.) *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (Leiden: Brill, 1968).
[38] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1898).

and functions of this chief angelic ideal-type. But Leuken's work seems also to have been in touch with or an influence upon the ideas expressed by Bousset in his discussion of intermediation and divine transcendence in the transition from Judaism to Christianity.[40] Bousset's *religionsgeschichtliche* approach has remained until recently the governing paradigm for investigation of angelology and related topics in early Christianity.[41] His interest in angelology was only as a window into the Christology of the early Christians. Bousset's Protestantism manifested itself in his attitude towards the perceived increase in interest in mediator figures in late Judaism, an interest that formed the crucible from which came early Christian Christology; this was to him a period of decline, a decline from the older purer monotheism of the prophets. The question of monotheism and its relation to Christology and angelology has henceforth been central to much of the work done on beliefs about angels, both in Judaism and early Christianity. Bousset's argument was that the debased Judaism of the pre- and early Christian period with its intermediary figures was the milieu in which the early Christian veneration of Christ came into being. His view of a Judaism that had lost some kind of original purity due to pagan influences is clearly fallacious,[42] but his work did much to alert scholars to the points of crossover between Judaism and Christianity. Joshua Abelson criticised those Christian scholars who attempted to contrast a debased Judaism with a transcendent God with the immanent theology of Christianity, for as he pointed out, God in the Judaism of the first centuries CE was both immanent and transcendent.[43] God could play a role in the world through such manifestations of himself as the Shekinah and the *Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh*. The question, however, of whether such a being was regarded in rabbinic circles as truly a manifestation of God, or a separate being — a 'hypostatic manifestation', is unclear.[44] Other faults in Bousset's approach include an unnecessarily strict division of Palestinian Judaism from the Hellenism of the Jewish diaspora, and his argument that late second-temple period Jews held a more

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[39] See G.F. Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism", *HTR* 14 (1921) 227.
[40] Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: a Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995) 6 n5.
[41] Continued today in a revised form through the work of Gilles Quispel, his student Jarl Fossum and Fossum's student April de Conick; see the discussion of their work below and in the methodological statement in the introduction.
[42] For a discussion of polytheistic influences in early Israelite religion see Saul Olyan, *Ashera and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1998). Larry Hurtado discusses the debate over Bousset's views in "New Testament Christology: A Critique of Bousset's Influence", *Theological Studies* 40 (1979) 306-317.
[43] Joshua Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Judaism* (London, 1912); although his position was criticised by Ephraim Urbach for being exaggerated, *The Sages: The World and Wisdom of the Rabbis of the Talmud* (trans. I. Abrahams; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987) 41.

remote and transcendent view of God than those of earlier periods. The questions raised to prominence by Bousset, such as that of the transcendence versus the immanence of God, the Judaic influences upon early Christian cult and the role of foreign influences, have come to occupy pride of place in the academic investigation of angelology over the course of the 20th century. Bousset's claim of foreign influence upon late second-temple Judaism (echoing Kohut's claim made half a century earlier) has deeply influenced the 20th century study of the origins of Jewish angelology. The rabbinic claim that angels' names came from Babylon has been taken virtually at face value as scholars have resolutely continued to argue for a Persian origin for Jewish angelology.[45] The argument that God's increasing transcendence and consequent inaccessibility caused the Jews to look to these (ultimately) foreign angelic and/or hypostatic beings for intercession has also, due perhaps to its common sense reasoning,[46] remained the standard mode of explanation for the growth of angelology in Judaism.[47]

Roughly half a century later others began looking at the figure of Christ as a way of explaining the transition from Judaism to Christianity, in particular the question of the possible existence of an angelic Christology. In 1941 Martin Werner, in *Die Entstehung des Christlichen Dogmas*[48]made the rather bold claim that the first Christology was an angelic Christology. Thus the first Christians saw Christ as an exalted angelic figure. This angelic understanding of Christ was derived from the Jewish apocalyptic literature and it was only with the progress of Christianity out of its Jewish milieu into the broader community that a process of de-eschatologization and hellenism occurred and Christ came to be seen as a

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[44] See Nathaniel Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate: Angelic Vice Regency in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 7-8.

[45] Since Bousset others have taken up the cause of foreign influence: G. Hölscher, *Geschichte der israelitischen und jüdischen Religion* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1922); G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (3 vols.; Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1927); H.B. Kuhn, "The Angelology of the Non-Canonical Jewish Apocalypses", *JBL* 67 (1948) 217-24; H. Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963); D.S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic 200 B.C.-A.D. 100* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964); Wesley Carr, *Angels and Principalities: The Background, Meaning and Development of The Pauline Phrase, hai archai kai hai exousiai* (Cambridge: CUP, 1981), 35-6. Cf. Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians, Power and Magic* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 29; and foreign influence has been suggested upon the origins of Merkavah speculation about angels: L.H. Schiffman "Merkavah Speculation at Qumran: The 4Q Serekh Shirot ʿOlat ha-Shabbat", in J. Reinharz & D. Swetschinski (eds.) *Mystics, Philosophers, and Politicians. Essays in Jewish Intellectual History in Honor of Alexander Altmann* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1982).

[46] A type of reasoning counselled against by Marc Bloch in his *The Historian's Craft* (trans. Peter Putnam; Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1954) 80-81.

[47] See E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums* (3 vols.; Stuttgart & Berlin: J.G. Cottasche, 1921) 111; E. Sellin, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1933) 47.

partner in the Trinity. Werner especially saw an angelological understanding of Christ reflected in passages like Matthew 13:41-2, Mark 8:38 and Luke 22:43 which associate Christ with angels.[49] Others took issue with Werner's argument. Barbel and Michaelis[50] stand out as the first and firmest of Werner's opponents. Yet it is the work of Georg Kretschmar and Jean Daniélou which provided the strongest evidential challenge to Werner's contention. They argued that the application of angelic titles to Christ was simply a terminological issue, an archaism, not connected with his nature.[51] In the last two decades this debate has resurfaced. The approach has become more subtle. Martin Hengel has recently come to accept, with great caution, the importance of Jewish mediatory and angelological traditions to the development of early Christology.[52] Jonathan Knight in an examination of the *Ascension of Isaiah* has suggested that elements of an angelic Christology may have been present behind such passages as John 8:58 and 12:41.[53] Bühner and Alan Segal have also both argued for some kind of angelic Christology in the Gospel of John.[54] Most recently Jarl Fossum has made the claim for an angel Christology behind Jude 5-7.[55] Likewise Martin Karrer claims an angelic Christology in the book of Revelation 1:5 and 14:14.[56]

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[48] (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1941).

[49] *The Formation of Christian Doctrine* (trans. S.G.F. Brandon; London: A. & C. Black, 1957) 120-4.

[50] Joseph Barbel, *Christos Angelos: Die Anschauung von Christus als Bote und Engel in der gelehrten und volkstümlichen Literatur des christlichen Altertums* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1941); Wilhelm Michaelis, *Zur Engelchristologie im Urchristentum: Abbau der Konstruktion Martin Werners* (Basel: Heinrich Majer, 1942).

[51] Georg Kretschmar, *Studien zur frühchristlichen Trinitätstheologie* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1956); Jean Daniélou, *Histoire des doctrines chrétiennes avant Nicée: Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme* (Tournai: Desclée, 1958). Their approach laid the groundwork for those scholars such as Rowland who argued for an 'angelo-morphic' Christology, see discussion below.

[52] Martin Hengel, *The Son of God: The Origin of Christology and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1983); see also his *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995).

[53] J. Knight, *Disciples of the Beloved One: The Christology, Social Setting and Theological Context of the Ascension of Isaiah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), based upon his 1991 Cambridge University PhD thesis.

[54] Alan Segal, "Ruler of this World: Attitudes about Mediator Figures and the Importance of Sociology for Self-Definition", in E.P. Sanders, A. Baumgarten & A. Mendelson (eds.) *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* II (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981); Jan-Adolf Bühner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg im vierten Evangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1977). See also John Ashton, *Studying John: Approaches to the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: OUP, 1994) 71-89.

[55] J. Fossum, "Kyrios Jesus as the Angel of the Lord in Jude 5-7", *NTS* 33 (1987) 226-43; see the reply by Bauckham in *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1990) 310-312.

[56] *Die Johannesoffenbarung als Brief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986) cf. 148; see also Adela Yarbro Collins, "The 'Son of Man' Tradition and the Book of Revelation", in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Messiah: Developments in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

The debate over the possible existence of an angelic Christology amongst the earliest Christian communities remains unresolved, partly because of a fundamental semantic problem: to what extent does the existence of angelic language presuppose an angelic Christology? If angelic language is used to describe Christ, and it clearly is, then does this suggest that Christ was seen as an angel, or does it suggest that some were simply using the only language available to them to describe a divine being who is not God?

2.3 The last half-century: Angelomorphic Christology and *angelikos bios*

In recent years a new approach has become popular as an attempt to resolve this semantic difficulty. Scholars have begun talking about the existence of an 'angelomorphic Christology'.[57] The idea here is that Christ was described in terms reminiscent of angelic beings but at the same time he was seen as an entirely unique being, above and beyond the angels. The chief proponent of this school of thought has been Christopher Rowland. Rowland has argued that in the late Second Temple and early Christian period there was some kind of 'bifurcation' in the understanding of God amongst Jews. Thus, without necessarily breaching monotheism, Jews had come, by this time, to see the divine in terms of God and his chief angel. Rowland bases his argument upon such texts as Ezekiel 1:26-8 and 8:2-4; as well as Daniel 10:5-6 (in particular the LXX version), the figure of the angel Yahoel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 10-11 and Revelation 1:13-16.[58] In these texts Rowland sees a division of the anthropomorphic form of God from the Throne-Chariot (the *Merkavah* which lent its name to the later Jewish mystical movement). This anthropomorphic figure also bears resemblance to the 'one like a son of man' in Daniel 7:13.[59] The bifurcation helped the first Christians to understand and describe Christ, but at the same time they saw Christ as something new, not an angel at all. Although Rowland has been the major proponent of this view Daniélou and Longenecker have also taken this line and argued for an 'angelomorphic Christology'.[60] Closely connected to this approach is the

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[57] See also §3.5.

[58] See C. Rowland, "The vision of the Risen Christ in Rev 1.13f: The Debt of an early Christology to an Aspect of Jewish Angelology", *JTS* 31 (1980) 2; *idem*, *The Open Heaven. A study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982) 97-8; and on the relationship between Rev 1:13-16 and Daniel 7:13 (especially LXX) see *Open Heaven* 103.

[59] See C. Rowland, *Open Heaven* 178-190.

[60] R.N. Longnecker, *The Christology of Jewish Early Jewish Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1970), 26-32, *idem*, "Some Distinctive Early Christological Motifs", *NTS* 14 (1967-68) 529-45; J. Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (trans. John A. Baker; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964) 117-46.

work of Alan Segal and Jarl Fossum. Both utilise the potentially dangerous method of using later materials to paint a picture of Judeo-Christian religious trends in the early Christian era. Segal supports the notion of a bifurcation of the understanding of God amongst Jews, but suggests that this was a post-first century development. Furthermore he claims that rabbinic reports about this belief in 'two powers in heaven' may well have been sparked by knowledge of Christianity and the various gnostic movements.[61] Fossum, mainly working from Samaritan sources, quite boldly asserts that a relationship existed between the gnostic demiurge and the development in pre-Christian Judaism of the named 'angel of the Lord' alongside God.[62] It is worth noting here the strong trend in recent scholarship towards seeing some kind of connection between Jewish ideas about the chief angel or hypostatic manifestation of God and the development of early Christology and gnostic ideas about the demiurge.

The final stage of this debate over the relationship of angels to Christology has mainly been focused around the work of Larry Hurtado. Hurtado, in an attempt to cut the Gordian knot, has fixed upon the idea of worship as the test by which to measure this supposed division of the Godhead. If this chief angel or hypostatic manifestation was offered worship then there was a bifurcation in the understanding of God, if not, then there was no bifurcation. Hurtado argues the latter. According to him the application of the test of worship to the texts used to support the argument in favour of this bifurcation demonstrates that there was no division of the Godhead and Jewish monotheism thus remained intact. Although the Jewish ~~figure~~ notion of the chief angelic figure did contribute to the early understanding of Christ it was only after that tradition had 'mutated' in order to allow the worship of this figure, an aspect not there in the Jewish sources. Hurtado's argument is not without its difficulties. Once again we run into semantic problems. For instance he argues that the figure Yahoel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* is not evidence for anything beyond the practice of attributing to a messenger-figure part of the glory of the one that sent the message. This argument, however, suggests some lack of distinction between the messenger and the one who sent the message. Apart from the angel of the Lord in the Hebrew Bible, which may have originally referred to God himself (the passages mentioning this figure

[61] A.F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977).

[62] J. Fossum, *The Name of God And The Angel of The Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origins of Gnosticism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985).

probably only later being modified by the insertion of the word *malʾākh*) it is clear that the messengers in the Hebrew Bible and also Yahoel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* were not identified with God; they were separate figures, and thus the question is raised as to why they could still (potentially) carry with them aspects of the glorious nature of God if they were clearly not Him.[63] Others have also questioned aspects of Hurtado's approach. In particular Paul Rainbow in a long article[64] discusses a separate category of figures in the Hebrew Bible, that of eschatological figures such as Enoch. As Rainbow points out it would be strange for Jews to have worshipped an eschatological figure such as Enoch if he was expected in the future. If, however, the figure (in this case Christ) was present, and had arrived upon earth to fulfil his eschatological role, then worship would follow naturally without any necessary 'mutation' in the nature of the tradition that led to his identification as a divine eschatological figure. Thus Rainbow cuts out the heart of Hurtado's argument by suggesting that worship is not necessarily a good test to distinguish Christian devotion to Christ from Jewish veneration of certain secondary divine figures such as Enoch, who, as we shall see, is intimately connected to the chief angelic figure.

Related to the scholarship on the question of Christology is the investigation of the figure of the chief angel. Jarl Fossum, the student of Gilles Quispel and part of the new 'history of religions school', has argued that Jewish and, in particular, Samaritan ideas about the chief angel and the hypostatic word (*memra*) were behind the early development of gnostic ideas about the demiurge.[65] Margaret Barker has also emphasised the importance of the chief angel to early Christology, although her approach is very problematic since it is in fact a type of conspiracy theory which suggests a continuity of belief from the period of the Deuteronomists through to the early Christian period.[65a.]

In recent years publications on the figure of the chief angel and the relationship between that figure and Christology have been appearing at a rapid rate. In 1998 Charles Gieschen argued that the simplistic ontological debate which had hitherto characterised the study of

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[63] On the role of the messenger in the ancient Near East and an exposition of the argument that the messenger was not identified with the one who sent the message see S. Meier, *The Messenger in the Ancient Semitic World* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), and *Speaking of Speaking. Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992) 277-291.

[64] Paul A. Rainbow, "Jewish Monotheism as the Matrix for New Testament Christology: A Review Article", *Novum Testamentum* 33 (1991) 78-91.

[65] *The Name of God and The Angel of The Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origins of Gnosticism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985).

65a. See Margaret Barker's works: *The Lost Prophet: The Book of Enoch and its Influence on Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1988); *The Older Testament: The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1987); *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God* (London: SPCK, 1992).

angel-Christology has broadened. Building upon the work of Rowland and others discussed above he has argued that early Christians used Jewish traditions concerning the presence of a representative of God upon earth, such as the figure of the angel of the Lord, in order to come to an understanding of the nature of Christ.[66] Darrell Hannah's work, *Michael and Christ: Michael traditions and angel christology in Early Christianity*,[67] covers much of the same material and likewise argues that various different types of understanding of Christ, some influenced by traditions such as those associated with the archangel Michael, informed the early Christians. Finally Nathaniel Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate: Angelic Vice Regency in Late Antiquity*,[68] has examined various late antique traditions regarding the chief angelic being, in particular in Mandaeism, offering valuable comparative evidence for the examination of this figure.

The question of the ascetic practice of the angelic life has also appeared as a familiar theme in the scholarly literature of the last half-century. More often than not it has been used as a throwaway line;[69] sometimes parts of it have been dealt with in detail;[70] but scholars routinely refer to K. Suso Frank's book[71] and leave the matter at that. Frank's book is an examination of the sources dealing with this notion of the angelic life in Church monasticism and its roots in Alexandrian Greek philosophy, Syriac asceticism, pre-Monastic

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[66] C.A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: antecedents and early evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998) esp. 3-4, 349-51.

[67] (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999). Hannah's work is a deliberate attempt to improve upon the study of Michael by Leuken (see discussion above).

[68] (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

[69] See for instance the article by David E. Linge, "Leading the Life of Angels: Ascetic Practice and Reflection in the Writings of Evagrius of Pontus", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 68 no.3 (2000) 537-568, which deals in detail with Evagrian spirituality, but not at all with the notion of the angelic life; Robin Lane Fox examined the practice of the Christian life in the early communities in his magisterial *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (Penguin: London, New York, Ringwood, Toronto, Auckland, 1986), in a chapter entitled "Living Like Angels". He does not, however, tie the early Christian attempt to live a perfect life on earth with the later monastic practice of the angelic life except by way of stating that (p.355): "Among Christians, as Jesus had stated, there was to be 'neither marrying nor giving in marriage' in the time of the Resurrection. Some Christians claimed that that time had already dawned, and others thought it good to anticipate it"; the explicit theme of the 'angelic life' is not developed further in this chapter.

[70] See Peter Nagel, *Die Motivierung der Askese in der alten Kirche und der Ursprung des Mönchtums* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1966) 34-48; Peter Brown, chapter 16 "These are our Angels" in *The Body and Society, Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (Columbia Univ. Press: New York, 1988); Jean Leclerque's response, "Monasticism and Angelism" in *The Downside Review* 85 (1967) 127-137, seems to have missed the point of Nagel and Franks' (see below) studies, focusing instead on simplistic ontological questions.

[71] *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ. Begriffsanalytische und begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum "engelgleichen Leben" im frühen Mönchtum* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964). Frank was building upon the work of other scholars such as K. Nachtberger, A. Lamy, J. Leclerq, L. Bouyer, U. Ranke-Heinemann, E. Peterson, B. Steidle, G. Colombás, and E. von Severus; see 12-13 & n84, and also XI-XV for bibliographic details.

Greek and Latin asceticism, martyrological literature and also in the Dead Sea Scrolls and early rabbinic literature. Frank's work is a singularly important contribution to the study of angelological beliefs in general, but, due to its focus upon asceticism, its conclusions have not had an impact upon the wider study of early Christian beliefs about angels. His conclusion that the angelic life was based upon an understanding of the Christian life as one lived in anticipation of the coming angelic state mentioned by Christ in the Synoptic Gospels (Mt 22:30, Mk 12:25, Lk 20:35-6), which was a celibate state, is borne out in this thesis. I disagree, however, with his suggestion that it originated in Aramaic areas, for an examination of the concept of ascetic singleness (cf. §5.2.4 - 5.3 *passim*, 5.4.1 & esp. Summary to chap. 5), which seems intimately related to the attempt to achieve a celibate, heavenly (and thus angelic) state, suggests rougly simultaneous development in both Egypt and Syriac-speaking areas. Indeed Clement of Alexandria and Origen used the imagery of the angelic life long before Ephrem or Aphrahat.[72] Yet, whilst Frank noted the centrality of the notion of angelic imitation to asceticism he did not recognise the importance of angelic imitation to the Christian concept of the angel. By concentrating upon asceticism he neglected to ask questions such as what exactly an angel was. If he had asked such basic questions of angelology before examining the importance of angelology to asceticism he would have become aware that beliefs about ascetic practices were probably influencing beliefs about angels just as much as angelology was influencing asceticism. The two traditions, angelology and asceticism, grew up at the same time and were intimately connected. Since that time scholars studying angelological beliefs have likewise not seen the significance of Frank's book. The ascetic *angelikos bios* should not be treated as separate from angelology in general. It was the central element preserving, transmitting and elaborating beliefs about angels in the early Christian period. Heavenly angels and earthly angels were two sides of the same coin and relegating them to separate categories has meant that the significance of the relationship between ascetic angelic practices and more general beliefs about angels has been left unnoticed. Whilst Frank did not notice the wider ramifications of his findings about ascetic 'angelism' his book provides an important, underutilised, starting point for wider studies of angelology.

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[72] Although the language of the P version of Lk 20:34-36 does suggest that the angelic existence was enjoyed in this world by the Christian, as pointed out by Sebastian Brock, see §5.7.1.

Several scholars of Judaism have also looked at the Jewish interest in angels. Their work on issues such as the early growth of Israelite angelology,[73] the development of the rabbinic view of angels[74] and its relationship to anthropological notions,[75] the role of angels in the Hekhalot literature[76] and the development of the names of angels[77] has, over the last couple of decades, given us an increasingly clear picture of the growth of angelological notions in Judaism.[78] Jewish notions about angels will not thus be dealt with in any detail in this thesis except when they provide relevant comparative evidence for Christian angelology.

Thus, as stated at the opening of this chapter, angelological debates have normally occurred in the context of debates of a broader nature. Debates over the role of angels and beings other than God in creation, debates over the transition from Judaism to Christianity, in particular debates concerning the question of the immanence or transcendence of God and the question of whether monotheism was breached have assumed central importance. Above all other issues, questions related to Christology have recently engaged scholars in debates that have involved the investigation of angelic beings.

This thesis will only deal tangentially with such issues. The thesis aims to investigate what the main role of angelic beings was for early Christians, and why these beings survived in Christianity when Christianity was a religion so focused upon Christ as mediator (cf. 1 Tim 2:5). The answer is that although angels did indeed continue to perform mediatorial functions it was their role as images of perfection which caused them to survive in the new Christian pantheon.

The most important issue to arise from the study of angelology in the twentieth century is a semiotic issue. If angelic language is used of Christ then is Christ an angel? Although this is mainly a textual (rather than iconographical) study of angelological beliefs the symbols

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[73] Alexander Rofé, האמונה במלאכים במקרא (*The Belief in Angels in the Bible and Early Israel*; Jerusalem: Makor, 1979).
[74] Michael Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992).
[75] Peter Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen* (Berlin & New York: de Gruyter, 1975).
[76] Peter Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1981).
[77] Saul Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands served Him: Exegesis and the Naming of Angels* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1993).
[78] *Contra* Saul Olyan who commented in 1993 that "Any comprehensive presentation of the angelic beliefs of ancient Jewish circles would be premature at this juncture, even though scholars have noted the lack of such a study for many decades", *A Thousand Thousands served Him* 1, cf. n1.

used for angels will be of great importance to this thesis. It is the investigation of the meaning of angelic symbolism which has occurred since the time of Martin Werner which will have the greatest influence upon the approach taken herein. For the examination of the question of angelic Christology has floundered upon the problem of defining what angels were; which is surely important to resolve if one is to determine if Christ was understood to be such a being. In the next chapter we will look at this question of the ontological status of angelic beings, and will see that it was unclear, angels normally being described with certain types of symbolic language, symbols which often tell us but little about their true nature.

A Functional Nature: The Ancient Christian Understanding of The Nature of Angelic Beings

The task of this chapter will be twofold: Firstly to define "angel" for the purpose of this thesis. This definition will have to be based upon the early Christian definition of "angel"; which leads to the second part, to determine how people in the early Christian period viewed angels. Thus what was the ancient Christian understanding of the nature of angelic beings? That there was such an understanding is problematic, for as in the modern scholarship on angels, angels in antiquity were more often written about in the context of other debates, rather than being treated as a subject in their own right. Contrary opinions were held, and there was no systematic angelology.[1] We lack official statements or handbooks about the nature of angels. Nonetheless this thesis is predicated upon the assertion that 'angel' meant something for early Christians, and regardless of the existence of a number of different 'angelologies' there was an underlying cosmology that was shared by Christians, and also their pagan and Jewish neighbours, which led to a widely shared understanding of the basic nature of angelic beings.

This is a task that is difficult but achievable; it is a task, however, that has been left aside by modern scholars, and also by their ancient predecessors. It is generally the case that modern scholars have glossed over the need for a definition and implicitly adopted the approach that 'I know an angel when I see one'. Indeed in his comprehensive *RAC* article on angels Michl never attempted such a definition.[2] Two quotations will serve to illustrate the avoidance of the issue in modern scholarship. Firstly, Morton Smith:

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[1] *Contra* W. Bousset's claim for the existence of "*eine Engeldogmatik*": a systematic doctrine of angels in late Second Temple Judaism, see his *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (H. Gressmann, ed.; 3rd ed.; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1926) 321; on this see P. Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen. Untersuchungen zur rabbininschen Engelvorstellung* (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1975) 9; L. Hurtado *One Lord, One God: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988] 24 also mentions S.F. Noll's description of Qumran angelology as a "not a carefully worked out system . . . but . . . impressionistic portrayal of the heavenly world", "Angelology in the Qumran Texts" (Unpubl. diss.; Manchester, 1979). See also §3.1.2 n110 on the development of systematic doctrines of angels in the Mediaeval Jewish Kabbalah.

[2] J. Michl, "Engel", *RAC* V, 53-258, although he does list various ontological statements made regarding angels.

> Whether the angels were at first exclusively Jewish, or were aborigines of most of the Syro-Palestinian coast, is a question complicated by the ambiguity of the Greek and the Semitic terms used to refer to them. As everyone knows, *angelos* means simply 'messenger'; its common Semitic equivalent, *mal'ak*, means 'envoy' or 'agent', and both words were regularly used for any men or minor deities who ran errands for their superiors. So things were in the beginning. However, when we now speak of 'the angels' we mean a special class of beings, commonly conceived as a sort of racial group distinct from gods, fairies and demons, etc.[3]

and secondly, Sheppard in his discussion of the Asia Minor cults of pagan angels:

> My purpose in this paper is to examine a group of cults in western Asia Minor where the term 'angel' (*angelos*) is used in a pagan cult to designate a particular type of supernatural being, rather than a simple messenger of the gods.[4]

Both have taken the rather bold step of asserting that these beings were more than mere messengers,[5] but they do not examine the question of what, exactly, they were, in an ontological sense. Of course this criticism is a little unfair since neither was attempting to write a comprehensive history of ancient Christian beliefs about angels, but it is indicative of the lack of a generally acceptable definition of angels in the scholarly literature. There is an implicit consensus that everyone knows what an angel is, so the precise definition is left aside. But how can we mark angels off from other heavenly beings – such as the pagan gods, *daimones*, heroes, the diverse figures of Manichaean or 'gnostic' heavenly cosmology, or indeed Christ or the prophets? It is necessary to demonstrate that Near Eastern Christians in the first four centuries held to the belief in a particular type of heavenly being which we can identify, for the purpose of this dissertation, as an 'angel'. The conclusion will be that we can indeed define such a 'type' of being, but that the definition may not be that which people today would naturally associate with angels, for the definition will be that an 'angel' is less a particular 'race' or 'genus' than a statement about the position of a being in the cosmological hierarchy.

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[3] Morton Smith, "Pagan Dealings with Jewish Angels: P. Berlin 5025b, P. Louvre 2391", *Studii Clasice* XXIV (1986) 175.

[4] A.R.R. Sheppard, "Pagan Cults of Angels in Asia Minor", *Talanta* 12-13 (1980-81) 77.

[5] In the case of Sheppard *contra* the received opinion of Robert that these were simply messengers, see Louis Robert's description of a Lydian text which mentions ᾿Ανγέλῳ ῾Οσίῳ [Δικ]αίῳ (*Anatolia* III [1958] 120 = Peter Herrmann (ed.) *Tituli Asiae Minoris* [*TAM*] [Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981] V, fasc. 1 no.185); see also A.R.R. Sheppard, "Pagan Cult of Angels" 90ff; R.A. Kearsley, "Angels in Asia Minor: The Cult of Hosios and Dikaios", *New Docs* 6 (1992) 207.

3.1 Problems of Definition

The modern vagueness in definition is derived from a long tradition, beginning in the early Christian period. For as we shall see below, although Philo had no difficulty in defining the nature of angels,[6] Origen, born roughly a century and a half later (185-253), and possibly hampered by a growing Christian disapproval of speculation concerning angels due to the lack of comment on their nature in Scripture, shied away from a public declaration of what he thought angels were: "but when these were created, indeed their type, or in what way they exist, is not clearly specified".[7]

One of the very few clear statements we have about the nature of angels written by a Christian ~~that we have~~ comes from Clement. As usual it is in the context of another debate, that of the role of Christ as *logos*, as the teacher of all creation. Clement is determined to reduce the possibility that people might believe that the angels actually facilitated communication between God and his creatures.

> ἀνάγω δέ σε καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν πρώτην γένεσιν ἀνθρώπων, κἀκεῖθεν ἄρχομαι ζητεῖν, τίς ὁ διδάσκαλος; ἀνθρώπων μὲν οὐδείς, οὐδέπω γὰρ μεμαθήκεσαν, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἀγγέλων τις, οὔτε γάρ, ὡς μηνύουσιν οἱ ἄγγελοι καθ' ἄγγελοι, οὕτως ἀκούουσιν ἄνθρωποι, οὔθ', ὡς ἡμῖν τὰ ὦτα, οὕτως ἐκείνοις ἡ γλῶττα. οὐδ' ἂν ὄργανά τις δῴη φωνῆς ἀγγέλοις, χείλη λέγω καὶ τὰ τούτοις παρακείμενα καὶ φάρυγγα καὶ ἀρτηρίαν καὶ σπλάγχνα καὶ πνεῦμα καὶ πλησσόμενον ἀέρα. πολλοῦ γε δεῖ τὸν θεὸν ἐμβοᾶν, ἀπροσίτῳ ἁγιότητι καὶ ἀρχαγγέλων αὐτῶν κεχωρισμένον. (*Strom*. VI.7.57)
>
> And I lead you up to the first generation of men; and from that point I begin to investigate who is their teacher. No one of men; for they had not yet learned. Nor yet any of the angels: for in the way that angels, in virtue of being angels, speak, men do not hear; nor, as we have ears, have they a tongue to correspond; nor would any one attribute to the angels organs of speech, lips I mean, and the parts contiguous, throat, and windpipe, and chest, breath and air to vibrate. And God is far from calling aloud in the unapproachable sanctity, separated as he is from even the archangels. (trans. *ANF* [modified])

This is at the heart of the early Christian dilemma over angels – for the role of Christ as a messenger, both in the New Testament and in the Old (as the figure of the angel of the Lord[8]) leaves little room for other messenger figures such as angels (cf. 1 Tim 2:5). Thus

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[6] See below, §§3.2.1, 3.1.2 & 3.2.3.

[7] Sed quando isti creati sint, uel quales, aut quomodo sint, non satis in manifesto distinguitur, *De principiis*, preface, 10, in H. Crouzel & M. Simonetti (ed. & trans.) *Origène. Traité des Principes* I (*SC* 252; Paris: Cerf, 1978); cf. *De princ.* Preface, 6.

[8] See section on angelic Christology, below §3.5.

Clement, by defining angels negatively,[9] by what they cannot do, was determined to show that angels could not have performed the duty traditionally assigned to them in the Near East for centuries, delivering messages. He did not, however, deal with their actual nature, beyond detailing what they are unable to do.

Judaeo-Christian religious authorities in the first four centuries (rabbinic Judaism or the Christian Church) never attempted a definition of angelic beings. For Christians the problems concerning the nature of Christ assumed priority. We shall deal with this below. For Jews the main division was between creature and creator, and thus the debates that involved angels were concerned only to make clear the crevasse that separated God from all his creations.[10] Christians also touched upon this issue: we can see it most clearly in the polemical writings of Athanasius against his opponents, the so-called Arians.[11] Thus the exact nature of angelic beings was normally left aside in discussion of them.

Yet there was an understanding of the nature of angelic beings held by all Christians, and largely shared with their pagan and Jewish neighbours. There was a clear and widespread consensus that a *genus* of lesser divine beings did indeed exist.

Angelology was not an exclusive Jewish or Christian interest. The fact of centuries of cultural exchange in the Mediterranean region means that not just Jewish, but also pagan Graeco-Roman thought had an impact upon the early Christian belief in angels. The distant roots of some Christian angelology can be traced to Hesiod. Plutarch names Hesiod as the first to establish a hierarchy for beings.[12] According to Hesiod there are four classes: gods, *daimones*,[13] heroes and men. ~~Demons~~ daimones and heroes are exalted souls of the human dead.[14]

[9] Clement was of course using a quite normal philosophical tool, the *via negativa*, normally reserved by him and others for ontological questions concerning God; cf. Raoul Mortley, *From Word to Silence* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1986); also Daniel C. Matt, "Ayin: the concept of nothingness in Jewish Mysticism", in R.K.C. Forman (ed.) *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy* (New York: OUP, 1990) 122-123.

[10] See, in particular, Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (E.J. Brill: Leiden, 1977).

[11] See Athanasius, *Oratio I Contra Arianos*, 40.40-41 (*PG* 26) 96; 42.60 (*PG* 26) 100; 53.71 (*PG* 26) 122; 55.92 (*PG* 26) 125; 55.6 (*PG* 26) 128.

[12] Whilst noting that Homer uses θεοί and δαίμονες interchangeably, Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* [*Moralia* 414a- 415b].

[13] The terms *daimōn* and *daimonion* are used in this thesis to refer to the lesser deities in Greek pagan thought, deities that could be good or evil; the English word "demon" is reserved for specific reference to Christian evil spirits, even though when writing in Greek they will almost always have used the word *daimōn*.

Plato took this idea one step further and argued that any soul could aspire to the status of a hero or *daimōn*.[15] Moreover Hesiod claimed that, like Adam and Eve in the Garden, the *daimones* were originally men who lived in a blissful golden age in which there was no toil or hardship.[16] By the mid-Imperial period, at the very latest, the pagan philosophic traditions of the Mediterranean region had mostly come to hold a monotheistic or henotheistic conception of the universe. The gods of Classical Antiquity were necessarily reduced in status and identified as *daimones*.[17] The Near Eastern Greeks[18] Porphyry of Tyre and his pupil Iamblichus (?250-?330) were at the forefront of the pagan systematisation of the heavenly worlds and their inhabitants. Their ideas show the same basic cosmological conceptions as those underlying Christian beliefs about angels; thus, in the same vein as Hesiod and the Christians the hierarchy of being is divided into three ranks below God;[19] the air is the abode of the demons and the ether is the home of the angels;[20] the angels are innumerable and divided into sections under the command of archangels.[21] This Middle- and Neoplatonic conception of the heavenly hierarchy marks a new stage in the development of Graeco-Roman paganism. It was probably both the case that pagans were imitating Christianity because of its organizational success, and that Christianity's success was often the result of the correspondences between it and the Platonic worldview.[22] It is in this period that we can perhaps begin to speak of 'paganism' as an 'ism', a unified approach to the divine

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[14] Hesiod, *Works and Days* 110-139; cf. Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* [*Moralia* 431b]; *De genio Socratis* [*Moralia* 593d]. This idea had wide currency, see for instance Euripides, *Alcestis* 1003; Sophocles, Fragment 173; Apuleius, *De deo Socratis* XV.

[15] *Cratylus* 397D-398C; cf. *Symposium* 195.

[16] *Works and Days* 110-120.

[17] Frederick E. Brenk SJ, "In the Light of the Moon: Demonology in the Early Imperial Period", *ANRW* II.16.3 (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986) 2068.

[18] The Near Eastern origin of these two should be noted, for it was from the Near East that much of Greek and Roman thought about lesser divine beings had originally come; see Brenk, "Demonology", 2069 & 2071, and it was in this region that a rebirth of Platonic philosophy was occurring from the second century onwards, with the work of Antiochus of Ascalon, Albinus, Numenius, Ammonius Saccas, Iamblichus and Porphyry amongst others; see the discussion in the conclusion to the thesis (chap. 6).

[19] Iamblichus *apud* Joannes Stobaeus, 1.49 in C. Wachsmuth and O. Hense (eds.) *Ioannis Stobaei, Anthologium* (5 vols.; Berlin: Weidmann, 1958). See also Celsus *apud* Origen, *CC* VII.68.70.

[20] Porphyry, *apud* Augustine, *Civ. Dei* X.9.

[21] Porphyry: τοὺς μὲν ἱερέας ἀναλογεῖν τοῖς ἐν οὐρανῷ ἀρχαγγέλοις τετραμμένοις πρὸς θεούς, ὧν εἰσιν ἄγγελοι, τοὺς δὲ μαχίμους τοῖς εἰς τὰ σώματα κατιοῦσι δαίμοσι, τοὺς δὲ αὖ νομέας τοῖς ἐπὶ ταῖς τῶν ζῴων, *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria* I.xvii.5-7, in A.R. Sodano (ed.) *Porphyrii in Platonis Timaeum commentariorum fragmenta* (Naples, 1964).

[22] The extent of, indeed the very existence of, a debate between Christianity and Neoplatonism is, however, hypothetical and based upon circumstantial evidence. Recently Gillian Clark has argued that the developments in Neoplatonism which seem to be mirroring those in Christianity are actually the result of processes internal to Neoplatonism and do not reflect any interaction with Christianity; see "Philosophic Lives and the Philosophic Life: Porphyry and Iamblichus", in T. Hägg and P. Rousseau (eds.) *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2000).

and almost on a par with Christianity in terms of organization and ideology.[23] The exponents of this new pagan philosophy held a view of much of the accoutrements of pagan devotion to the gods which agreed with that held by Christians. Like the Christians (see below §3.2.1 on pagan gods as angels) many pagans felt that past pagan practices such as sacrifice were ignoble and must have been introduced by lesser divine beings.

> τὸ γὰρ ψεῦδος τούτοις οἰκεῖον· βούλονται γὰρ εἶναι Θεοὶ καὶ ἡ προεστῶσα αὐτῶν δύναμις δοκεῖν Θεὸς εἶναι ὁ μέγιστος. οὗτοι οἱ χαίροντες λοιβῇ τε κνίσῃ τε . . .(Porphyry, *De abstinentia* II.42)[24]
>
> For falsehood is allied to these malevolent beings; they wish to be considered as gods, and the power which rules over them is ambitious to appear to be the greatest god. These are they that rejoice in libations, and the smell of burnt sacrifices . . .

Moreover those pagans who wrote about heavenly powers also wrote about issues that we also see coming up in the Christian literature concerned with angels, such as in the Egyptian monastic literature; for instance issues such as the conflict between human reasoning and heavenly Truth, or the need for ascetic purity before one can have contact with the divine.[25] Other Greek writers contemporary with early Christianity also approached the issues associated with 'daimonology' as Christians approached angelology. Lucian of Samosata's mocking second-century tale of the Cynic Peregrinus (who had dabbled with Christianity), committing suicide by self-immolation at the Olympic games of 165, included the information that Peregrinus believed he would be transformed into a *daimōn*.[26] There was thus a long-held traditional Greek understanding of lesser divine beings as somehow being connected with the souls of the dead, and also with an original golden age without toil or hardship. So, too, the Christian guardian angel had antecedents in Greek philosophical speculation. The Greek tendency to objectify and personalize what we see as abstract ideas like the conscience gave us Socrates' *daimonion*, his conscience, which acted to restrain him from acting incorrectly. Plato built the idea of the personal guardian *daimōn* onto this superstructure. The belief that this *daimōn* was responsible for bringing the dead person's

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[23] See Fergus Millar, "The Jews of the Graeco-Roman Diaspora between Paganism and Christianity, AD 312-438", in Judith Lieu, John North & Tessa Rajak (eds.) *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (Routledge: London, 1994) 105.
[24] A. Nauck (ed.) *Porphyrii philosophi Platonici opuscula* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1963).
[25] *Epistula ad Anebonem*, in A.R. Sodano (ed.) *Porfirio. Lettera ad Anebo* (Naples: L'Arte Tipografica, 1958) 1, 9,16; *De mysteriis*,in E. des Places (ed.) *Jamblique. Les mystères d'Egypte* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1966) 21-22; chap. 2, 23; chap. 3, 24 -5.
[26] *Passing of Pergrinus* 27.

soul to the place of judgement appears amongst Greeks,[27] Iranians, Jews and Christians in this period. Plutarch also bears witness to this tradition.[28] Greek tradition came quickly to add the notion of guardianship to this tradition of the personal *daimōn*.[29] Plotinus went further and linked the imitation of the guardian spirit with the transformation of the imitator.

> Εἰ δὲ ἕπεσθαι δύναιτο τῷ δαίμονι τῷ ἄνω αὐτοῦ, ἄνω γίνεται ἐκεῖνον ζῶν καὶ ἐφ' ὃ ἄγεται κρεῖττον μέρος αὐτοῦ ἐν προστασίᾳ θέμενος καὶ μετ' ἐκεῖνον ἄλλον ἕως ἄνω. (*Enneads* III.iv.3)[30]
>
> If a man is able to follow the spirit (*daimoni*) which is above him, he comes to be himself above, living that spirit's life, and giving the pre-eminence to that better part of himself to which he is being led; and after that spirit he rises to another, until he reaches the heights.[31]

According to Plotinus the earnest man (ὁ σπουδαῖος) was entrusted to God's guardianship; the full implications of this are realised in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* when he describes a divine being appearing to an Egyptian necromancer in the form of a god; he had been transformed upon death into the same form as his guardian.[32] The link between the notion of the guardian angel and transformation into a divine being upon death will be explored below; it is important to note here there were very similar currents of thought about lesser divine beings influencing both pagan Neoplatonists and Christians. There could be two sides of this belief in guardian spirits: The belief in one guardian spirit, generally seen as good and engaged in guiding the person towards good, and the belief in two guardian spirits, one good, the other evil. This debate also found expression in Greek philosophical circles, and it was possibly from there that it continued into early Christian literature.[33] Pythagorean and Neo-Pythagorean thought also saw *daimones* as intermediaries between men and gods.[34] Plato

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[27] Plato, *Phaedo*, 107D; 108B; 113D; *Epinomis* 984D-985B.
[28] Plutarch, *Divine Vengeance* 25 [*Moralia*, 564-5].
[29] Cf. Epictetus, in H. Schenkl (ed.) *Epicteti dissertationes ab Arriano digestae* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1916) I.14.12-14; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* VII.151; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* V.27.
[30] P. Henry & H.R. Schwyzer (ed.) *Plotini opera* (3 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1951-1973).
[31] A.H. Armstrong (ed. & trans.; *LCL* 442) 148-9.
[32] *Vita Plotini*, 10.
[33] See Plutarch, *On Tranquility of Mind*, 15 [*Moralia*, 474b]. The Dead Sea Scrolls also show evidence of the same belief, on this and the early Christian response see below, §3.2.4; see also G. Stroumsa, *Barbarian Philosophy: The Religious Revolution of Early Christianity* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1999) 282-93.
[34] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, VIII.32.

also held to this view.[35] It will become clear as this chapter progresses that these issues important to Greek philosophical speculation were similarly prominent in the Christian understanding of angels, their nature and functions.

In central and western Asia at this time angels also played a role in pagan popular piety. A large body of inscriptions from the second and third centuries testifies to a widespread belief in deities termed *aggeloi* in this area.[36] In places groups termed "friends of the angels"[37] are mentioned, suggesting a cult organised around the veneration of these beings, presupposing that they were more than just messengers.

These cults appear purely pagan, and the question of possible Jewish influence is unclear. Certainly hitherto in Graeco-Roman paganism the term 'angel' had rarely been used by itself to designate an independent god, rather *aggelos* was used as an adjective, as in *Hermes aggelos*.[38] This has led Sheppard to suggest Jewish influence, although not of a substantive kind, upon these angel cults.[39] Yet we have seen that pagan philosophers such as Porphyry and Iamblichus were also beginning in this period to use the term *aggelos* for lesser divine beings.

The question is dependent upon how much pagans really knew about Judaism at this time. Could they conceivably have known enough about Judaism to know of Jewish veneration of beings which they used the Greek word *aggelos* to describe? Firstly, if contact of this kind occurred it would quite probably be in a diaspora setting, where Jews would have used Greek even as a liturgical language. It could have been in Asia Minor, where Sheppard points out there were well established Jewish communities, and Jews were well integrated into society.[40] Or it could have been in the Syro-Mesopotamian region where although

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[35] *Symposium* 202E-203A; see also Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 26 [*Moralia*, 361c]; and Apuleius, *De deo Socratis*.
[36] Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* II (Oxford: OUP, 1993) 46-7.
[37] Φιλαγγέλων συμβίωσις: T. Drew-Bear, *Nouvelles inscriptions de Phrygie* (Zutphen: Terra, 1978); R.A. Kearsley, "Angels in Asia Minor: The Cult of Hosios and Dikaios", *New Docs* VI (1990) 206-9.
[38] Sheppard, "Pagan Cults of Angels", 80, n7.
[39] *Ibid., passim*, esp. 98-99.
[40] *Ibid.*, 82-3 nn22-29.

Aramaic may have been the common tongue Greek was also well known,[41] and philosophical discourse is likely to have often occurred in Greek.

Roman writers knew of Judaism from at least the second century BCE, with the establishment of relations between the Hasmoneans and the Romans. They knew about the Jewish avoidance of pork;[42] they respected Jewish moral behaviour;[43] they were aware of the Jewish concept of a supreme, non-anthropomorphic God,[44] and, from an early stage, they began to complain about Jewish proselytism.[45] Seneca, quoted in Augustine, even went so far as to say that "the customs of this accursed race have gained such influence that they are now received throughout all the world. The vanquished have given laws to their victors".[46] Sheppard also points to the existence of a number of apologetic works composed by Jews and attributed to Greek literary figures, such as Orpheus, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Menander.[47] Although early Christian literature did accuse the Jews of worshipping angels,[48] it is only Celsus, among the pagan authors, who discussed Jewish veneration of angelic beings.[49]

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[41] Although it was limited amongst the Syriac-speaking hermits outside the cities, cf. Brown, *The Body and Society* (1988) 323–4 (citing Theodoret, *Historia Religiosa* 8.2:PG 82: 136B, now trans. by R.M. Price, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: A History of the Monks of Syria*, 73). These monks mostly only knew how to speak Syriac: Theodoret *Hist. Relig.* 13.4 & 7:1401CD & 1404D; Price 101-2 & 103; Peter the Galatian was one of the rare Greek speakers in the mountains: *Hist. Relig.* 9.7:1384A: Price, 84). Theodoret's comments, however, suggest knowledge of Greek in the cities.

[42] See Tacitus, *Histories* 5.5, who connected it to avoidance of leprosy; and Petronius, who jumped to the wrong conclusion regarding this avoidance of pork, believing that the Jews worshipped the pig: Petronius frag. 37 = Stern no.195; cf. Juvenal, *Satires* 14.96-106 = Stern no.301.

[43] See Seneca, *Moral Letters* 108.22 = Stern no.189.

[44] Strabo of Amaseia, *Geographica*, frag. 20, 35 (Jacoby) = Stern no.115; Livy, *Historia Romana* frag. 102 *apud* scholiast on Lucan 2.593 = Stern no.133; Hecataeus of Abdera, *Aegyptiaca* frag. 6 (Jacoby), *apud* Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 40.3 = Stern no.11; Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* 37.17.2 = Stern no. 406.

[45] See E.A. Judge, "Judaism and the Rise of Christianity: A Roman Perspective", *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* 7 (1993) 82-3 (also published with minor changes in the *Tyndale Bulletin*, see bibliography) who cites Valerius Maximus 1.3.3, Stern 147 among others; *contra* M. Goodman, in J.D.G. Dunn (ed.) *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways AD 70-135* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992) 33; *idem*, "Proselytizing in Rabbinic Judaism", *JJS* 38 (1989) 175-85, who argues that it was only in the second century that Jewish proselytism came to be a focus of complaint.

[46] Seneca, *On Superstition*, *apud* Augustine *Civ. Dei* VI.11 = Stern no.186.

[47] Sheppard, "Pagan Cults of Angels", 98; citing A.M. Denis, *Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graeca* III (Leipzig, 1970).

[48] *Kerygma Petrou*, *apud* Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 6.5.41.2-3; Aristides, *Apologia* (Syriac version, see J. Armitage Robinson, *The Apology of Aristides* [Cambridge: CUP, 1891]); see Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: a Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995) 140-144.

[49] Celsus, *apud* Origen, *CC* I.26; VI.6.

The question will probably remain unresolved for the time being, but it would be disingenuous to deny that in the second and third centuries CE pagans were using the term *aggelos* to refer to an independent type of supernatural being. It is hard to pinpoint a particular source for this belief. It could have been Greek ideas;[50] it may have been Syrian pagan beliefs such as the Palmyrene cult of the *Malʾāk -Bel*;[51] it may have been Jewish. But more likely is a confluence of Near Eastern and Mediterranean ideas leading to a generally held conception in this period of a genus of lesser divine beings below God. That one of these beings was seen as the chief representative of God suggests (as in the Asia Minor angel cults) that the Jewish interest in the chief angel below God[52] may have been an important influence upon these cults. The terminological change, from *daimōn* to *aggelos*, in the writings of Porphyry and Iamblichus, both from the Near East, suggests the influence may have come from contacts between pagans and Jews in the second century in that part of the world.

3.1.1 The terms used for 'angel'

As the first step in coming to an understanding of the early Christian view of angels it is helpful to examine the terms used by Christians and Jews to describe heavenly beings. The terms seraphim and cherubim are not included here. This is because their inclusion in the angelic hierarchy was a fourth century innovation. It was part of the Christian categorisation of the heavens which was required by the Arian controversy; for it was then that Christians finally had to define the difference between Christ and the other heavenly beings. The solution was to reduce them all to the status of 'angel', thus emphasising the unique nature of Christ. It is in the context of Nicaea that the first real angelic hierarchies, those of Ambrose and Jerome should be understood.[53]

a. angel ἄγγελος

Philological evidence also demonstrates the developing Christian understanding of angels as a *genus* of lesser divine beings, a specific *type* of being, rather than just some kind of objectified message.

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[50] See F. Sokolowski, "Sur le culte d'Angelos dans le paganisme grec et romain", *HTR* 53 (1960) 225-29.
[51] So F. Cumont, "Les anges du paganisme", *Revue de l'histoire de religions* 72 (1915) 159-82.
[52] Not the Shekinah, as suggested by Sheppard, "Pagan Cults of Angels", 99.
[53] See Ambrose, *Apologia Prophetae David*, 5 for the first Christian angelic hierarchy.

In Greek the term *aggelos* continued to be used for both human and divine messengers into later antiquity,[54] for instance in Josephus,[55] or Clement of Alexandria.[56] An inscription from second-century CE Argos describes a sundial as: ἄγγελον ὡρῶν 'messenger of hours'.[57] The word *aggelos* was applied in particular to prophets in this period.[58] Whilst this double meaning (*aggelos* as a divine being or else as any type of messenger) was thus still held in the Common Era, the use of the term in a religious context seems to have developed in the late first century into a term applied mostly to supernatural creatures. This is notwithstanding the fact that its secondary meaning as a general term for messenger was deliberately used on occasion, which in the context of the debate over angelic Christology[59] still causes confusion. Whilst in the Gospels the word *aggelos* was used for both human and divine messengers,[60] Paul, who dealt with some very important angelological issues, never used the term in any way other than when referring to heavenly beings.[61] Note, however, that

[54] Various definitions of Late Antiquity (as a proper noun) exist. I follow that of Peter Brown, the major English language writer on the topic, who regards it as lasting from the mid-second century to the mid-eighth; cf. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150-750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971).
[55] *Ant.* 14. 451; *Vita* 89; or Plutarch, *Oracles at Delphi* 22 (of birds).
[56] *Protrepticus* 10.104; and for the adjectival form, *aggelikos*, used for a human messenger see *Strom.* 1.1.4.2. Later, post-Nicene western writers such as Hilary of Poitiers (*Trin.* 5.11) and Augustine (*Serm.* 7.3) continued to use the term 'angel' in its sense as a messenger rather than as a supernatural being.
[57] Guarducci, *EG* IV.210.
[58] John the Baptist: Epiphanius, *Panarion* 62.5; Malachi: John Chrysostom, *Hom.* 14.3 *in Heb.*; and Origen also used the term *aggelos* to refer to John, as a description of his nature, not his function – he was an angel come down to earth, see §4.3.
[59] See below, §3.5.
[60] For the use of *aggelos* to refer to a human messenger see Lk 7:24, 9:52; and James 2:25. In the non-Greek versions of the New Testament we see some confusion in the translation of the Greek *aggelos* used in these passages for humans. For Lk 7:27, which is citing Mal 3:1, the Syriac and the Coptic follow the sense of the use of this Old Testament passage by continuing to use their words for 'angel": ⲡⲁⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ and ܡܠܐܟܝ (although the Ḥ has ܡܠܐܟܐ ܕܝܠܝ), the Syriac follows the Greek once again in Lk 9:52 and uses ܡܠܐܟ̈ܐ but in the other passages both the Coptic and the Syriac use terms that unambiguously refer to human messengers; and James 2:25 is also found in the Greek with ἀγγέλους replaced with κατασκόπους, see Nestle-Aland, 592.
[61] Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 4:9; 6:3; 11:10; 13:1; 2 Cor 11:14; Gal 1:8; 4:4; 1 3:19; Col 2:18; 2 Thess 1:7. Unlike the spirit world mentioned in Daniel, Paul's spirit world did not extend into the earthly sphere – his 'powers' were never earthly powers, always heavenly: see Brenk, "Demonology" 2110 & 2121. This is not to say, however, that Paul's spiritual world is only populated by personal spirits; other types of spiritual beings also existed: see C. Forbes, "Paul's Principalities and Powers: Demythologising Apocalyptic?", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 82 (2001) 61-88; Forbes examines all the references to spiritual beings in the Pauline corpus and argues for substantive Greek influence, rather than Jewish influence. Furthermore he argues that Paul's conceptions are unique to him and are not shared with other early Christian literature. Forbes expands upon his argument for Greek philosophical influence in a subsequent article: "Pauline Demonology and/or Cosmology? Principalities, Powers and the Elements of the World in their Hellenistic Context", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 85 (forthcoming, 2002) 57-79.

he makes several references to things that appeared as angels or were treated as if they were angels (2 Cor 11:14; Gal 1:8; Gal 4:14). Although his attitude is mostly negative (2 Cor 11:14; Gal 1:8), he is showing himself to have been in contact with an important angelological concept: that what might appear to be an angel may not necessarily actually be an emissary from God.[62] There are also two other passages that describe beings that are clearly not emissaries from God as having angelic attributes; both involve the death of righteous human beings. In Acts 6:15, after a long introduction that expressly invokes the example of Moses (as we will see below[63] an important model for angelic transformation texts), we read that at his martyrdom Stephen's face shone like an angel's. In Acts 12:15 it is suggested that Peter might have an angel that could travel independently of him but which carried his form. Pagans had long used the term *aggelos* with certain messenger gods such as Hermes or Iris.[64] In Coptic, the new form of ancient Egyptian that began in the first century CE, and which was widely used by the third or fourth centuries,[65] the picture is much clearer. The traditional Egyptian words for "messenger" *refnhōb*, *faishine*, *rempnbōrp*, *rembhōb* and *fi ouō* / *faiouō* were used for human messengers, whilst the Greek word was taken into Coptic solely to refer to divine messengers.[66]

b. angel מלאך

The history of the word in Hebrew is more complicated due to the fact that whilst the root LʾK is attested in Semitic languages as having the meaning "send" it is not found in Hebrew as a verb. Possibly the word *malʾākh* is thus either a borrowing from another Semitic language, or is else a remnant of a root whose place was taken in Hebrew by the root ŠLḤ .[67]

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[62] On demonic imitation of angels and other heavenly beings see H.M. Jackson, "Echoes and Demons in the Pseudo-Philonic *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*" *JSJ* 27 (1996) 1-20, esp. p.5.
[63] §4.1.
[64] See the references collected in Sheppard, "Pagan Cults of Angels in Roman Asia Minor", 80 n7.
[65] See C.H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (Oxford: OUP, 1979) 65-70.
[66] See W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 475, 570, 652; B. Cotter, "An English to Coptic Vocabulary" (unpublished MS, held in Macquarie University Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1995); Sarah Clackson, Erica Hunter & Samuel N.C. Lieu, *Dictionary of Manichaean Texts I: Texts from the Roman Empire (Texts in Syriac, Greek, Coptic and Latin)* (Turnhout & Sydney: Brepols & Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1998) 59, 80, 81, 150; thus when the Manichaean texts found at Medinet Madi were translated from Syriac into Coptic by the early Manichaean missionaries they chose to use the Greek word ἄγγελος rather than one of the Coptic words meaning messenger.
[67] S.A. Meier, "Angel I" in *DDD* 81 (cf. p.90 for bibliography). On the use of *malʾakh* and *šlikha* for 'angel' and 'apostle' and the interchangeability of the two terms in early Judaism and Samaritanism see J. Fossum, *The*

Regardless of questions of derivation, the fact remains that anyone in Antiquity using the Hebrew *malʾākh* knew full well that the term referred only to divine beings, not human messengers.[68] This had not always been the case,[69] but *malʾākh* had become, by the early Christian period, a specific term, it was unrelated to any term used for human messengers. There was no ambiguity such as was found in contemporary Greek.

In Syriac, the form of Aramaic that developed around the same time as Christianity in Syria and Mesopotamia and that became its primary linguistic vehicle,[70] the term *malʾkhā* continued to hold the secondary meaning of messenger (cf. Job 1:14), but primarily carried the sense of "angel" or lesser divine being.[71] Another term, *ʿira* (watcher), ultimately derived from Daniel 4:10, 14, 20, achieved equal prominence in Syriac Christian writing, and serves to illustrate the importance of Daniel to Syriac Christianity, in particular the view of the heavenly court and the promise of an astral afterlife.

c. watcher עיר

The term *ʿir*/ *ʿira*, used most prominently in Syriac Christianity as a designation for 'angel' alongside *malʾk*/*malʾkhā*, can be traced to its use in the Aramaic section of the second century B.C.E. biblical book of Daniel (MT Dan 4:10; 14, 20), and the *Book of Enoch's* "Book of Watchers", a third century BCE composition.[72]

Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origins of Gnosticism (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985) 144ff, 263-64.

[68] Jan-Adolf Bühner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg im vierten Evangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1977) 317ff, 323f; and see also *Encyclopedia Judaica* II (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971) 957.

[69] For the word *malʾāk* used for a prophet see Is 42:19, 44:26, 2 Chron 36:15-16; Hag 1:13; for a priest: Mal 2:7 (and according to *BDB* possibly also MT Eccles 5:5 [RSV Eccles 5:6]); and for *malʾāk* as a human messenger see Gen 32:4; Deut 2:26; Judg 6:35; 1 Sam 6:21; 1 Chron 14:1; 19:2,16; 2 Chron 18:12; 35:21; Neh 6:3; Job 1:14; Prov 13:17; 17:11; Is 14:32; 18:2; 30:4; 37:9, 14; Jer 27:3; Ezek 17:15; 23:16,40; 30:9; Nahum 2:14.

[70] But it is not true to say that Syriac has only ever been a Christian language. There was clearly a pre-Christian pagan form of Syriac; see the pre-fourth century inscriptions in H.J.W Drijvers & J.F Healey, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene. Texts, translations and commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

[71] R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901) s.v. ܡܠܐܟ, ܡܠܐܟܐ , and C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1895) s.v. ܡܠܐܟܐ.

[72] = *1En* 1-36.

In the Old Greek version of the Septuagint the Aramaic word (עיר) is translated simply as ἄγγελος. Theodotion transliterated עיר as ιρ. Symmachus and Aquila, attempting to get closer to the meaning of the original text, translated עיר as ἐγρήγορος "wakeful one" or "watcher".[73]

The Semitic roots of the concept of heavenly "watchers" are not at all clear. Suggestions that they are the remnants of early Israelite or other polytheistic Near Eastern religious figures are attractive but not conclusive.[74] Clement of Alexandria uses the term *egrēgoros* in a passage on sleep. In this passage he quotes Luke 12:35-37 (the story of the watchful servants) and then mentions that those who imitate such wakefulness are made like those angels called watchers, and are raised up to angelic grace.[75] The Greek version of the *Acts of Thomas* (36) referred to heavenly beings with this word, in language evocative of Daniel; and Origen, also working from Daniel, used it as another word for angel.[76]

The Watchers were often, although by no means always, identified as the fallen angels ("sons of God") of Gen 6:1-8.[77] Indeed some Watchers were explicitly identified with the

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[73] See MT Dan 4:10, 14, 20; and LXX Dan 4:13, 17, 23 in Joseph Ziegler (ed.) *Susanna, Daniel, Bel et Draco* (*SeptGott* XVI.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954); and P Dan 4:13; 17:23.

[74] M. Dahood, *Psalms I* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966) 55 on עיר in Ps 9:7; Mic 5:13; Jer 2:28; 19:15, Dan 4. See also R. Murray, "The Origin of Aramaic *ʿîr*, angel", *Orientalia* 53.2 (1984) 303-317; *idem*, "Some Themes and Problems of Early Syriac Angelology" in René Lavenant SJ (ed.) *Symposium Syriacum* V (1988) (Rome: Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1990) 143-153; see also M. Black, *The Book of Enoch, or 1 Enoch* (Leiden: Brill, 1985) 106-7. Certainly the idea of God having certain beings which he sent out in order to watch over human beings was widespread; see Hesiod's *Works and Days* in which we are told that "Zeus has thrice ten thousand spirits, guards (φύλακες, not ἐγρήγοροι) of mortal men, and these keep watch on judgements and deeds of wrong and as they roam, clothed in mist, all over the earth" (252-55). Τρὶς γὰρ μύριοί εἰσιν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ ἀθάνατοι Ζηνὸς φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἵ ῥ α φυλάσσουσίν τε δίκας καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα ἠέρα ἑσσάμενοι, πάντῃ φοιτῶντες ἐπ' αἶαν, F. Solmsen (ed.) *Hesiodi opera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

[75] Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* II.9.79: μακάριοι γὰρ οἱ ἐγρηγορότες εἰς αὐτόν, σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἀπεικάζοντες ἀγγέλοις, οὓς ἐγρηγόρους καλοῦμεν; II.9.82: διόπερ ἀεὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐννοουμένη διὰ τῆς συνεχοῦς προσομιλήσεως ἐγκαταλέγουσα τῷ σώματι τὴν ἐγρήγορσιν ἀγγελικῇ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐξισάζει χάριτι, τῆς ζωῆς τὸ ἀίδιον ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἐγρηγορέναι μελέτης προσλαμβάνουσα: H.I. Marrou, M. Harl, C. Mondesert and C. Matray (ed.) *Clement d'Alexandrie. Le pedagogue* (SC 108; Paris: Cerf, 1965). On the ascetic imitation of the *ʿîre* see §5.2.2. In this section the connection between the wakeful servants of Mk 13:33-37 and the notion of watchfulness in imitation of the *ʿîre* in early Syriac Christianity is discussed.

[76] *Fragmenta* 109.3-4 *In Lamentationes*.

[77] Watchers identified as fallen angels: *1En* (Ethiopic: *teguhān* from the verb *tagha* "to watch over") 1:5; 10:7, 9, 15; 12:4; 13:10; 14:1, 3; 15:2, 9; 16:1, 2; (Greek: *egrēgoroi*) 1:5, 10:7, 9, 15; 12:2, 3, 4; 13:10; 14:1, 3; 15:9; 16:2; Aramaic: *ʿîrin*/*ʿîra*) 12:3; 13:10; 22:6; 33:3; 93:2; *2En* 18 (some fall, some do not); *Jubilees* 4:15; 22; 7:21; 8:3, cf. 5:1; *TRueb* 5:6-7; *TNaph* 3:5; CD 2:18; angels are also described as watching or not sleeping: *1En* 20:1 (not in G); *1En* 82:10; 39:12-13; 61:12; 71:7; or as 'many-eyed ones': *2En* 22:2; the Watchers are not regarded as fallen angels in: *1En* 12:2, 3; 91:15 (*bis*); cf. *2En* 18; *3En* 28 (4 great princes); 1QapGen 2.1, 16, 18; 4QMessAr 2:16, 18; see M. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108*

archangels.[78] In PGM III.214-216 we have a senior, heavenly vice-regal figure, possibly Michael, being described in a watching capacity, as the 'perfect eye' of Zeus:

> καὶ σε, μέγιστε, αἰθέριε, κλῄζω ἀ[ρ]ωγόν σου Μ[ιχαὴλ] καὶ σώζοντα βι. οσιδιω αιρ... ὄμμα τέλ[ειον] καὶ φύσιν δείξαντα καὶ ἐκ φύσεως φύσιν α[ὖθις].[79]
>
> And you O greatest one, heavenly one (*aitherie*), I call, and [you Michaēl], your helper[80], who saves [his people's lives], the perfect eye of Zeus, and who has both exalted nature and brought forth nature in its turn from nature.
> (trans. J. Dillon & E. O'Neil, *GMP*)[81]

Watcher was a very ancient term for an angelic being. It was probably originally a term used for senior angelic beings and thus became connected with the fall of certain of these chief angels. Over a long period of time *ʿīr/ʿīra* was used interchangeably with other terms such as *malʾakh* or *aggelos* for an angelic being.[82]

d. holy one ἅγιος קדיש

The term 'holy' in the Bible is a term which referred mostly to God and other divine beings.[83] In Isaiah the term קדוש ישראל "holy one of Israel" is particularly common.[84] The term קדוש 'holy' is also used of God in Hosea (11:9), Jeremiah (50:29; 51:5), Ezekiel (39:7),[85] Habakkuk (1:12; 3:3), Psalms (16:10; 71:22; 78:41; 89:18)[86] and Job (6:10). The application of the adjective *qdš* to El in Ugaritic texts parallels the title *qādôš* given to YHWH; the use

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and Sectarian Writings from Qumran (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 38-9, 330-331, 336; עירין are mentioned in Q201 (4QEn^a ar) 1.3 (=*1En* 1:2; here עירין is a restitution]); 4Q203 (4QenGiants^a ar) frag. 7, I.6; 4Q206 (4QEn^e ar) frag. 4, 19; 4Q212 (4QEn^g ar) III.21; 4QEnoch^e (4Q206 [4QEn^e ar]) 1.5 (=*1En* 22:6) talks of a עירא וקדישא (Watcher and Holy One). For the fallen angels as pagan gods or *daimones* see §3.2.1.

[78] I.e. *1En* 20:1-8.

[79] Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, I (Teubner: Stuttgart, 1973).

[80] *GMP* 24 n49 has this to say on the reconstruction: "The Papyrus reads ἀ[ρ]ωγόν Μ[ιχαὴλ], which is unmetrical. Heitsch would excise ἀρωγόν σου; Preisendanz would excise μέγιστε at the beginning of the line, and write Μιχαὴλ σοῦ ἀρωγόν, which would restore the meter. 'Michael' is a restoration, but a probable one, cf. PGM I.301".

[81] For textual variants see Preisendanz, *PGM* I p.41f, nn.

[82] Apart from the evidence above see also J. Barr, "Aramaic-Greek Notes on the Book of Enoch (I)", *JJS* 23 (1978) 189-90.

[83] It is also used for human beings, see §5.2.3.

[84] Is 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:17; 17:7; 29:19, 23 (קדוש יעקב), 30:11,12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 40:25; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14, 15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7 (*bis*); 54:5; 55:5; 60:9, 14; see also 5:16; 57:15.

[85] See also the references to the "(God's) holy name" שם קדשי: Ezek 20:39; 36:20, 21, 22; 39:7 (*bis*), 25; 43:7, 8.

[86] Also the references to the holy name: Ps 33:21; 103:1; 105:3; 106:47; 111:9; 145:21.

of the term for both gods probably comes from the identification of the two.[87] However it is rare to find the term 'holy one' used in Near Eastern texts other than the Bible.[88]

'Holy one' was also a term used for the angels. In Psalm 89:5-8 the council of the holy ones[89] is contrasted to YHWH. In Exodus 15:11 the Septuagint renders the Hebrew קדש (sanctuary) as ἁγίοις (holy ones, cf. the parallel θεοῖς of 15:11a). In Job 15:15, Sirach 42:17 the term is used of heavenly beings, here in a negative fashion. In the Enochic literature in particular (*1*, *2* and *3 Enoch*) 'holy one' can refer both to God and to a type of angel;[90] particularly in the *Book of Watchers* the term is used for angels.[91] In the *Damascus Document* קדושי עליון (holy ones of the Most High),[92] is found, referring to angels.[93] And numerous references to angelic beings being described as 'holy ones' occur in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[94] In the passages from Daniel which we looked at above Watchers and Holy Ones are linked, both are clearly angelic beings (Dan 4:10, 14, 20).

In the New Testament the term 'holy' refers both to God and the angels. In the Gospels, Acts and John's Revelation Christ is called 'Holy One' (ἅγιος).[95] Whilst the angels are

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[87] F. van Koppen & K. van der Toorn, "Holy One קדוש", *DDD* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 417; K. van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel* (Leiden, 1996) 326.
[88] S.B. Parker, "Saints קדישין", *DDD* 1356.
[89] MT Ps 89:6 בקהל קדשים; 89:8 בסוד-קדשים; LXX Ps 88:6 ἐκκλησίᾳ ἁγίων; 88:8 βουλῇ ἁγίων.
[90] See, for instance in *1En* God described as 'holy': (Holy Lord) 91.7; (Holy One) 1.2; 37.2; 93.11; (Great Holy One) 1.3; 10.1; 14.1; 25.3; 84.1; 92.2; 98.6; 104.9. Angels are described as holy in *1En*: (the holy) 20.1-8; 21.5, 9; 22.3; 24.6; 27.2; 32.6; 71.8; (holy ones) 1.2 (in Aramaic frag. (see Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 142); 12.2; 39.5; 45.1; 47.2; 60.4; 61.10; 65.12; 103.2; 106.19 (although only in the Aramaic of 4QEnoch^c (=4Q204), not the Greek or Ethiopic, cf. Milik, 209; (the holy ones above) 61.10; (the holy ones of heaven) 9.3; 57.2; 61.8 (holy ones in heaven who will be judged), cf. 10.12.
[91] E.J.C. Tigchelaar, "Eden and Paradise: The Garden Motif in Some Early Jewish Texts (1 Enoch and other texts found at Qumran)", in Gerard P. Luttikhuizen (ed.), *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1999) 42.
[92] *CD* 20:8.
[93] Maxwell J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 167.
[94] Davidson, *Angels at Qumran* 31, 33, 34, 120, 167, 272, 281.
[95] Mk 1:24 ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ; P = ܩܕܝܫܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ with only minor variations in the other two versions; Lk 4:34 ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεου; P = ܩܕܝܫܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ; Jn 6:69 ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεου; although P = ܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ (son of God); Acts 3:14 τὸν ἅγιον; P = ܩܕܝܫܐ; Rev 3:7 ὁ ἅγιος; P = ܩܕܝܫܐ; although Ms 2351 has ὁ ἄγγελος ἀληθής ; 1 Jn 2:20 τοῦ ἁγίου; P = ܩܕܝܫܐ; here the term could be referring to God or Christ. The Greek term ὅσιος is also used in Old and New Testament to mean 'holy'; it referred to holy (pious) human beings, God, and also Christ. It was generally the term used to translate the Hebrew חסיד (see "ὅσιος, ὁσίως", in *TWNT*.). In the second and third centuries CE in Anatolia a cult of *Hosios* and *Dikaios* (holiness and justice) existed. It may have taken its use of the word *hosios* from Jewish tradition, in which we have seen this was a

qualified with the adjective "holy"[96] they are not described in a substantive sense as 'holy one(s)'. In 1 Thessalonians 3:13 the heavenly host is referred to as πάντων τῶν ἁγίων. In 2 Thessalonians 1:10 and Colossians 1:12 'holy ones' are referred to, although the nature of these 'holy ones', human or heavenly is not indicated in the text.

The Semitic root QDŠ has a strong connotation of 'separation', in particular the notion of sexual abstinence. This connotation carried over into the scriptural use of the Greek term ἅγιος.[97] Thus if the *ʕīre* were characterised by their watchful nature and constant praise, the term קדוש / ἅγιος when applied to angelic beings (and humans)[98] must also have carried 'sexual abstinence' within its semantic range.

3.1.2 The relative silence of Scripture on the nature of angels

Holy writ has little to say about the nature of angelic beings. The creation of these beings is not described, nor do we get to know them as individuals. Angels are usually mere mouthpieces of God. We learn from Genesis 6:1-4 that certain 'sons of God' descended to earth, a myth elaborated in the extra-canonical 'watchers' tradition to include their rebellion, and in the early Christian period these beings were generally seen to have been angels.[99] Thus we can assume some free will among the natural attributes given to angels by ancient Christians. Some biblical passages elaborate upon the description of angels. In Ezekiel we learn that angels can be fiery creatures.[100] Daniel 10:2 also emphasises the bright, shining quality of the angel. Job 33:23- 28 we can see angels playing the role of intercessor. The Hebrew Bible does not therefore tell us much about angels; they appeared as men; they ascended in the sacrificial fire;[101] they carried out God's will upon earth; and they acted as intermediaries. The connection with fire and brightness is the most important of the traditions associated with angels in the Hebrew Bible and it will be demonstrated that this kernel of a description came to form the background to later speculation on their nature.

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traditional term for God (so Sheppard, "Pagan Cults of Angels", 91) but pagan Greek literature also long associated this word with God and the divine; see "ὅσιος", *GELNT* and "ὅσιος, ὁσίως", *TWNT* 488-89.

[96] Mt 25:31 (in MSS A, W, f^{13}, 𝔐, f, $sy^{p.h}$, bo^{pt}); Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; Acts 10:22; Rev 14:10.

[97] For instance cf. 1 Corinthians 7:14 & 34; see also §5.2.3.

[98] See §5.2.3.

[99] Although later tradition made them into men, see n136.

[100] Ezek 8:2; the LXX talks of a man whose nether parts are engulfed with fire and his upper body shines like ἤλέκτρου (translated by the RSV as 'bronze'). The MT talks of a being that is in the form of fire (אש).

[101] Judg 13:20.

Psalm 104:4 was also the focus of speculation upon angels.

עשה מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש להט

> He makes his angels (*mal'akhaiu*) winds, his servants a flame of fire.
> (Psalms 104:4, my trans.)

Philo took this to suggest that the substance angels were made out of was air (from the term רוחות);[102] but his was a minority opinion, connected to the Neoplatonic belief that the air was the home of angels and/or *daimones*.[103] Most rabbis took this passage as a reference to the fiery nature of angels.[104]

In Christian literature, as in the extra-canonical Jewish literature, angels function in a manner more independent of God than that found in the Hebrew Bible; they can (as in the Watchers tradition) rebel (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). Angels are also described as spiritual beings (λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα, Heb 1:14). What this means exactly is unclear; certainly it does not refer to anything as clear-cut as a philosophic division of Creation into material and spiritual spheres; indeed the phrase can probably tell us nothing about the 'nature' of angels, for here it is used to indicate their servile position, not their exalted, immaterial nature.

In the New Testament writings we do have a glimpse of the beginnings of Christian interest in angelic hierarchies. In Luke 1:19 the angel Gabriel announces himself as one of the angels who stand in God's presence (ὁ παρεστηκὼς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ); Jude 8-9 talks of 'glorious ones' (δόξας) and the archangel Michael (ὁ ... Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος); 1 Thessalonians also mentions an 'archangel's call' (φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου). In books such as Romans,[105] 1 Corinthians,[106] Ephesians[107] and Colossians[108] we can see mention of such beings as 'principalities', 'authorities', 'powers' and 'rulers' which seem to have been part of a widely understood heavenly hierarchy. The Pauline interest in this embryonic angelic hierarchy should be noted. This hierarchy is clearly at least partly dependent upon those

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[102] *De gig*. II.6-8.
[103] See above, §3.1 n20.
[104] *PRE* 22, Sanhedrin 88b.
[105] Rom 8:38 ἄγγελοι; ἀρχαὶ (Nestle-Aland text) or ἐξουσίαι (MSS C 81. 104, and among others Sy^{h**}, bo^{mss}).
[106] 1 Cor 2:6-8 ἀρχὴν; ἐξουσίαν; 15:24 ἀρχόντων, though it is not clear if this is a reference to political or spiritual powers.
[107] Eph 1:21: ἀρχῆς; ἐξουσίας; δυνάμεως; κυριότητος; παντὸς ὀνόματος ὀνομαζομένου; see also 3:10 & 6:12, possibly in this verse κοσμοκράτορας also refers to some kind of spiritual beings. Cf. also Tit 3:11.
[108] Col 1:16 θρόνοι; κυριότητες; ἀρχαι; ἐξουσίαι; Col 2:15 ἀρχας, ἐξουσίας.

found in the pseudepigrapha, but is not yet systematised.[109] Yet Christian interest in heavenly hierarchies did not move forward until the fourth and fifth century systems of Ambrose and Pseudo-Dionysius,[110] and beyond the recognition that some kind of hierarchy did exist this period saw little interest in a systematized angelic hierarchy. What the use of these terms does point to, however, is the fundamental mindset of this period, the belief in some kind of deep and abiding relationship between human and heavenly society. For these terms are terms shared with civil society. In the books of the New Testament these terms were simultaneously used for both earthly and heavenly rank.[111]

Scripture thus said little about angels. We are left with a suggestion of free-will and the hints of some understanding of a heavenly hierarchy in which angels figure along with other spiritual beings named 'principalities', 'powers', 'authorities' and 'rulers'. Likewise the appearance of angels is connected with fire and bright, shining light.

Possibly because of this scriptural silence Judaism wrestled little with defining the status of angels during the early Christian period. This is particularly notable in relation to the chief angelic figure. Rebecca Lesses in the *Harvard Theological Review* (1996) talks of a "profound blurring" of distinctions between God and the angels in the Hekhalot literature, especially between God and Metatron.[112] Furthermore, according to Daniel Abrams it was only "after the crystallization of classical medieval Kabbalah," that "the boundaries between

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109 The meaning of such terms as used by Paul is still the subject of debate: Caird, in the 1950s and 60s (*Principalities and Powers. A Study in Pauline Theology* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1967]) argued that the powers described by Paul are both heavenly and earthly, and are demonic; the Jewish law and the powers behind it are a demonic force acting in the world (16, 22-23, 43); Carr, however (*Angels and Principalities. The Background, meaning and development of the Pauline phrase* hai archai kai hai exousiai [Cambridge: CUP, 1981]) argues that the powers are not negative; rather the negative interpretation is a later development (122-3, 152, 176-77). See C. Forbes, referred to in n61 (and also other references therein), who argues that the Pauline spiritual hierarchy is made up of both personalised, individual spirits (*angeloi* etc.), and also other types of spirtual entities, some mere metaphor. He also minimises the contribution of Jewish Pseudepigrapha to Paul's thought. For angelic hierarchies (containing 3,4,6 or 7 archangels) in the Pseudepigrapha see Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* 320-31.

110 This systematisation is paralleled in Jewish sources such as the *Sepher ha-Razim* (although without the establishment of any kind of widespread orthodoxy); see the English translation of Michael A. Morgan (trans.) *Sepher Ha-Razim, The Book of Mysteries* (Scholars Press: Chico, 1983), based upon the Hebrew edition by Mordechai Margalioth, **ספר הרזים. הוא ספר כשפים מתקופת התלמוד** ([*Sepher ha-Razim, a magical book from the era of the Talmud*] (Tel Aviv: Yediot Achronot, 1966).

111 For political uses of these terms see Luke 12:11; Rom 13:1-3; Acts 13:27, and possibly also 1 Cor 15:24 ἀρχόντων, see n109. Irenaeus criticises those (gnostics) who claim that the powers and rulers of Rom 13:1-3 are either appointed by the devil or that this passage refers to angelic or invisible powers, *Adv. haer.* V.24.1.

112 Rebecca Lesses, "Speaking with Angels: Jewish and Graeco-Egyptian Revelatory Adjurations", *HTR* 89:1, 41-60.

God, angel and man were codified".[113] Some angels were good, and some were evil; likewise even some of the demons were good.[114] Yet there are also clear rabbinic statements from the early Christian period that angels were by nature good.[115] The use of the term 'angel' as a literary device complicates the problem, for much like the later Kabbalistic Sephirot, which Gershom Scholem says are: "sayings. . . names . . . lights . . . powers . . . crowns . . . qualities . . . stages . . . garments . . . mirrors . . . shoots . . . sources . . . primordial days . . . aspects . . . the inner faces of God . . . the limbs of the King",[116] angels could appear in both an actual sense and also in a metaphorical or symbolic sense. For indeed the angel of the Lord concept was, as we have already noted, originally merely a literary device to avoid anthropomorphisms in the Old Testament.[117]

Christians also put very little effort into defining angels; we shall see that of the Christian references to angels almost none deal with the actual nature of these beings; rather, Christians were interested in the emulation of angels. Christians did, however, take the clothing imagery associated with the appearance of divine figures in the Old Testament (and elaborated in the Pseudepigrapha), which were associated usually with the appearance of senior angelic figures, and apply it to angels. The description of the angels at the tomb will be briefly discussed below (§3.3.2), and the imagery associated with the appearance of senior angelic figures or patriarchal figures will be dealt with in chap. 4.

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[113] Daniel Abrams, "From Divine Shape to Angelic Being: The Career of Akatriel in Jewish Literature", *Journal of Religion* 76, no.1 (Jan. 1996) 45.
[114] Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel, A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135 - 425)* (trans. H. McKeating; Oxford Univ. Press: New York, 1986) 346; some demons were "on speaking terms with rabbis" (346 n.49 Cf. *b.Erub.*, 43a; *b.Pes.*, 110a, b.*Gittin*, 66a, b.*Yebam.*, 122a). Simon goes on to say about the attempt to develop firm definitions: "Firm logic and strict classification do not exist in such material, and I shall be in no hurry to introduce them."
[115] *b. Chagiga* 16a; *Midr. Gen. Rab.* 8 [6c]; *Pesiqtha Rabbathi* 43 [179b].
[116] Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: Meridian, 1978) 100.
[117] Alexander Rofé, **האמונה במלאכים במקרא** (*The Belief in Angels in the Bible and Early Israel*; Jerusalem: Makor, 1979) ו-ט, although he is careful to note that the traditional dichotomy between the angel of the Lord tradition and the 'polytheistic' council of God tradition is too crude. As an explanation for this somewhat enigmatic figure the מלאך יהוה it has been suggested that it was common practice for a messenger to take on the persona of the sender of the message, S.A. Meier, "Angel I מלאך", *DDD* 87-88, argues against this; according to him the passages in the Hebrew scriptures that involve the angel of the Lord stand alone in the history of Semitic messenger figures in the level of identification between the messenger and the sender; indeed the figure acts like a Near Eastern god, not like a messenger at all; see also S. Meier, *The Messenger in the Ancient Semitic World* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) & idem, *Speaking of Speaking. Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1992). See also Fossum's discussion of Moses in *Name of God* 144-5.

3.2 Various definitions of angels

Although there was no official Christian stance on the nature of angels in the pre-Nicene period, Christian speculations concerning angels fitted well into long established traditions of speculation concerning lesser divine beings, the stars and the soul.

3.2.1 Angels as pagan gods or *daimones*

The Christian identification of angels with the pagan gods was commonplace. This was in a context that saw them as being fallen angels or demons, and thus engaged in spiritual warfare[118] with Christ, and possibly also, depending upon your particular viewpoint, with the angels. This thesis will consistently argue that the role of angels as demon-fighters has been overstated and is not at the heart of the early Christian belief in angels, regardless of the importance of this role in the magical literature. The Christian Church Fathers were not interested in substituting the worship of one lesser divine being with another.

The process of identification was a natural outgrowth of the long dominant Graeco-Roman syncretic approach to religion. The process can be seen taking place very early, for instance in the Jewish Greek Septuagint. Polemics against non-worshippers of YHWH describe the pagan gods as δαίμονες[119], γλυπτοί[120], or ἄγγελοι.[121] We have seen above that the Platonic philosophers came to see the classical Greek gods as simply lesser divine beings, *aggeloi* or *daimones*. Philo, of great importance for Alexandrian Christian Fathers such as Origen and Clement, equated the angels with pagan *daimones*.[122] Christians took this one step further. The non-Judeo-Christian gods were not simply lesser gods,[123] or Christian spiritual beings under another name, but actually demonic beings, which exist simply to mislead human beings.[124] Judaism and paganism largely lacked the distinction in this period; indeed demons

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[118] Cf. P. Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1978) 53-4; R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the second century AD to the conversion of Constantine* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1986) 327-30. See also C.D.G. Müller "Geister (Dämonen), C. Christlich", *RAC* IX 688-797; Lampe, s.v. "δαίμων", *PGL*, for the change in the meaning of the word in Christian Patristic literature.

[119] LXX Ps 95:5; for the Heb. אלילים at 96:5.

[120] LXX Ps 96:7 "graven images" for the Heb. אלילים at Ps 97:7.

[121] Ps 96:7, for Heb. אלהים at 97:7.

[122] *De gig.* II.6.

[123] Cf. Ps 97:7.

[124] See P. Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London: Faber & Faber, 1972) 137; *idem*, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London: Faber & Faber, 1982) 307.

and angels were not seen as the natural representatives of evil and good respectively; rather an angel could be good or bad depending on the occasion and the circumstances.[125]

By the second century Christian authors were beginning to equate the pagan gods or the *daimones* with angels. Justin Martyr integrated the Jewish myth of the fall of the angels (Gen 6:1-4)[126] with Graeco-Roman paganism by declaring that:

> ὅθεν καὶ ποιηταὶ καὶ μυθολόγοι, ἀγνοοῦντες τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν γεννηθέντας δαίμονας ταῦτα πρᾶξαι εἰς ἄρρενας καὶ θηλείας καὶ πόλεις καὶ ἔθνη, ἅπερ συνέγραψαν, εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοὺς ὡς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ σπορᾷ γενομένους υἱοὺς καὶ <τοὺς> τῶν λεχθέντων ἐκείνου ἀδελφῶ [καὶ τέκνων ὁμοίως τῶν ἀπ' ἐκείνων] Ποσειδῶνος καὶ Πλούτωνος, ἀνήνεγκαν.᾿Ονόματι γὰρ ἕκαστον, ὅπερ ἕκαστος ἑαυτῷ τῶν ἀγγέλων καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις ἔθετο, προσηγόρευσαν. (*2 Apol.* 5.5)[127]
>
> On this account also the poets and mythologists, not knowing that it was the angels and those demons who had been begotten by them that did these things which they related to men, and women, and cities, and nations, ascribed them to God himself, and to those who were accounted to be his very offspring, and to the offspring of those who were called his brothers, Neptune and Pluto, and to the children again of these offspring. For they named them whatever name each of the angels had given to himself and his children.

These demonic pagan gods were responsible for more than just the millennia of paganism, but also served to distract Christians from their true beliefs. Of those who followed Marcion Justin said:

> ᾧ πολλοὶ πεισθέντες ὡς μόνῳ τἀληθῆ ἐπισταμένῳ ἡμῶν καταγελῶσιν, ἀπόδειξιν μηδεμίαν περὶ ὧν λέγουσιν ἔχοντες,

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[125] Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel* 346 n49.

[126] On developments in Jewish literature in the second and third centuries BCE which expanded upon Gen 6:1-4 and which began to hold to some link between the fallen angels, the giants and demons; see L.T. Stuckenbruck, "The 'Angels' and "Giants" of Genesis 6:1-4 in Second and Third Century BCE Jewish Interpretation: Reflections on the Posture of Early Apocalyptic Traditions", *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7 (2000) 354-377; although the evidence Stuckenbruck presents suggests only a movement towards associating the giants (and their progenitors the fallen angels) with evil spirits, not that there was a clear-cut Jewish understanding of a demonology held in the pre-Christian period; his suggestion regarding the spirits in wishing to enter human bodies in the Gospels is highly speculative. See also A.M. Reimer, "Rescuing the Fallen Angels: The Case of the Disappearing Angels at Qumran", *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7 (2000) 334-353; Reimer takes on P.S. Alexander's contention ("The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls", in P. Flint & J.C. VanderKam (eds.) *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years* II [Leiden: Brill, 1999].) that there was a clear distinction between angels and demons at Qumran, in particular Alexander's use of Enochic literature alongside literature actually written at Qumran. His article demonstrates the subtleties of the evidence and the non-systematic nature of the understandings of angels and demons in pre-Christian Judaism.

[127] In M. Marcovich (ed.) *Iustini Martyris. Apologiae pro Christianis* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994).

> ἀλλὰ ἀλόγως ὡς ὑπὸ λύκου ἄρνες συνηρπασμένοι βορὰ τῶν ἀθέων δογμάτων καὶ δαιμόνων γίνονται. Οὐ γὰρ ἄλλο τι ἀγωνίζονται οἱ λεγόμενοι δαίμονες, ἢ ἀπάγειν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀπὸ τοῦ <τὰ πάντα> ποιήσαντος θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ πρωτογόνου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ.
> (*1 Apol.* 58)[128]
>
> Many have believed this man, as though he were the sole possessor of truth; and they ridicule us, even though they do not prove their assertions, but are foolishly snatched away, like lambs by a wolf; they are victimized by the demons and their atheistic teachings. These spirits whom we call demons strive for nothing else than to alienate men from God their Creator, and from Christ, His first-begotten.

Origen identified *daimones* with the fallen angels.[129] But he was careful to point out that although (the good) angels were sometimes called gods (by the likes of Neoplatonists), they were not the same beings as the pagan gods or *daimones*.[130] Not all, however, agreed: Athenagoras, quoting Herodotus (2.144) amongst others, adopts the euhemeristic method when he declares that all the pagan gods were originally men.[131] Pagan philosophers, too, from the second century onwards identified angels with the gods of classical mythology.[132]

By the fourth century the equation of angels (in particular the fallen angels) with pagan gods or *daimones* had come to be widely accepted. The apostate emperor Julian also held that the fallen angels were pagan gods[133] . . . an exegesis of Genesis 6 which he probably learnt during his extensive Christian education. Moreover he emphasises the point that they could not have been men, which suggests that he came into contact with Christians who did

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[128] *Ibid.*
[129] *CC* 8.31.
[130] *CC* 5.4 & 4.29. Roughly contemporary with Origen Julius Africanus used the term *daimōn* both as a morally neutral term to refer to the pagan gods, and as a negative term to refer to evil spirits; see Francis C.R. Thee, *Julius Africanus and the Early Christian View of Magic* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1984) 294-5 and the references therein.
[131] *Legatio*, 28, 29, 30; but Herodotus was not so dogmatic: Τὸ δὲ πρότερον τῶν ἀνδρῶν τούτων θεοὺς εἶναι τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἄρχοντας οἰκέοντας ἅμα τοῖσι ἀνθρώποισι, καὶ τούτων αἰεὶ ἕνα τὸν κρατέοντα εἶναι, P. E. Legrand (ed.) *Herodote. Histoires* (9 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1:1960; 2:1963; 3:1967; 5:1968; 6:1963; 7:1963; 8:1964; 9:1968); "Nevertheless, before their time Egypt was, indeed, ruled by gods, who lived on earth amongst men, sometimes one of them, sometimes another being supreme above the rest" (II.144), Aubrey de Sélincourt (trans.) *Herodotus: The Histories* (rev. ed. A.R. Burn; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980) 187.
[132] Porphyry (?), (Frag. 76, 1-3 Harnack = Macar. Magn. 4, 21): Εἰ γὰρ ἀγγέλους φατὲ τῷ θεῷ παρεστάναι ἀπαθεῖς καὶ ἀθανάτους καὶ τὴν φύσιν ἀφθάρτους, οὓς ἡμεῖς θεοὺς λέγομεν διὰ τὸ πλησίον αὐτοὺς εἶναι τῆς θεότητος; Celsus *apud* Origen *CC*, V.4; Lactantius (*Inst.* 2, 16, 5) fought against this set of ideas. See also the discussion of Iamblichus and Porphyry in §3.1 nn18-21.
[133] Julian, *Contra Galilaeos* 290 B-D.

believe they were men (rather than angels).[134] Nonetheless it seems that both Christians and pagans, or at least lapsed Christians such as Julian, held that the fallen angels were pagan gods. Tertullian was clear about the category to which the pagan gods were assigned: "Recognize that there is one species, demons. Seek the gods, for certainly those you presumed to be gods, you know to be demons".[135]

The demonic model of the pagan gods, linked to the myth of the fallen angels, became the dominant Christian model.[136] The monastic moderate, Chariton, when dragged before the governor to answer for his Christianity, cited scripture: the gods he is asked to sacrifice to are not gods, but demons (Ps 95:5; 96:5) who created nothing (Jer 10:11), for they are the fallen angels of Jewish myth: "so the wretched beings endeavoured to divert God's own glory to themselves. Thus an everlasting punishment was meted out to them, and they lost the angelic status they held, as well as their place near God . . . they entice you by vain appearance so as to take them for gods and 'to worship creature rather than Creator" (Rom 1:25).[137] Eusebius also recognised in the pagan gods the fallen angels.[138] Augustine wrote against the viewpoint of Cornelius Labeo,[139] who claimed that pagan *daimones* were the same as angels, arguing that the new (Christian) meaning of the word *daimōn* precluded the

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[134] Thus the interpretation which took the tale as metaphor for fall of the sons of Seth (see n136 below). One early Christian martyr is reported to have not even granted the gods the honour of being regarded as humans: see *The Martyrdom of Saints Carpus, Papylus, and Agathonicê* in Herbert Musurillo (intro. & trans.) *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), dated by Eusebius *HE* iv.15.48 to the reign of Marcus Aurelius (Musurillo accepts this, p.xv) (A=Greek recension in Adolf Harnack, 'Die Akten des Karpus, des Papylus und der Agathonike', *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literature* 3. 3-4 [1888], 440-54; see also G. Rauschen, *Monumenta minora saeculi secundi* [Bonn, 1914] 105-12). On p.25 "Carpus said: 'Would you learn the truth? Why, these gods never lived born of men so that they could die. Would you learn that this is true? Take away the honour that you pretend to offer them, and you will discover that they are nothing: made of earth's substance, they are destroyed by time (ὕλη γῆς ὑπάρχοντα καὶ τῷ χρόνῳ φθειρόμενα). Whereas our God, who has created the ages, is timeless (ἄχρονος) and he abides eternal and immortal; ever the same, he cannot suffer increment or dimunition. But these gods are made by men, and as I said, are destroyed by time."

[135] . . . agnoscite unum genus esse, id est daemonas utrobique. Iam deos quaerite: quos enim praesumpseritis deos esse, iam daemonas esse cognoscitis, *Apologia* 23.10, in Jean-Pierre Waltzing (ed.) *Tertullien Apologétique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1961).

[136] It was linked to the angelological interpretation of Gen 6:1-4 rather than the interpretation of this myth as referring to the sons of Seth. On history of the development of the interpretation of Gen 6:1-4 as referring to humans see: G.A.G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Leiden: Brill, 1984) 125-34; S.P. Brock, "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources", *JJS* 30 (1979) 212-232; L. R. Wickham, "The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Gen vi 2 in early Christian exegesis", *Oudtestamentliche Studien* 19 (1974) 135-147; P.S. Alexander, "The Targumim and early exegesis of 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6", *JJS* (1972) 23 60-71; also see the recent treatment of the subject by Arie van der Kooij, "Peshitta Genesis 6: "Sons of God" – Angels or Judges?" *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 23/1 (1997) 43-51.

[137] Leah di Segni, "The Life of Chariton", in *Ascetic Behaviour* 399; cf. 394-5.

[138] *Praeparatio evangelica* 7.329C8-330A8.

[139] *Civ. Dei* II.11.

term being used for anything other than evil spiritual beings.[140] He went on to claim that the beings that Neoplatonists called 'gods' were identical with the good angels.[141]

Finally the Jewish-Christian *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* emphasised the singleness of the true God by demonstrating how easily the title 'god' was bandied about.

> ἴσμεν γὰρ καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν ἀγγέλους θεοὺς λεχθέντας, λέγω δὲ ὡς ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς βάτου λαλήσας καὶ τῷ Ἰακὼβ παλαίσας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν γεννώμενον Ἐμμανουὴλ [καὶ] τὸν λεγόμενον θεὸν ἰσχυρόν. ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ Μωυσῆς θεὸς Φαραὼ ἐγενήθη, τῷ δὲ ὄντι ἄνθρωπος ἦν. ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὰ εἴδωλα τῶν ἐθνῶν. ἡμῖν δὲ εἷς θεός, εἷς ὁ τὰς κτίσεις πεποιηκὼς καὶ διακοσμήσας τὰ πάντα, οὗ καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς υἱός, ᾧ πειθόμενοι ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν τὰ ψευδῆ ἐπιγινώσκομεν. ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἐκ πατέρων (*Homilies* XVI.14.1-3)[142]

> For we ourselves know that angels are called gods by the scriptures, - as, for instance, he who spoke at the bush, and wrestled with Jacob, - and the name is likewise applied to him who is called Emmanuel, and who is called the mighty God. Indeed even Moses became a god to Pharaoh, although in reality he was a man. The same is the case also with the idols of the Gentiles. But we have but one God, one who made creation and arranged the universe, whose Son is the Christ, obeying whom we learn to know what is false from the scriptures; and likewise from the Fathers.[143]

The transition to monotheistic or henotheistic views of the divine in the Roman Imperial period led to a natural diminution of the position of the Classical gods to that of lesser divine beings and the association of lesser divine beings with each other in the various traditions of the Mediterranean world. The purpose was universally, it seems, polemical, and those who claimed this identification never went to the trouble to ask what this said of the nature of these beings.[144] Indeed as the quotation from the Pseudo-Clementine literature above indicates, the titles assigned to various supernatural beings were loose and seem to reflect a looseness in the understanding of these beings, although not so clearly in the case of God

140 *Civ. Dei* IX.19.
141 *Civ. Dei* IX.23.
142 B. Rehm, J. Irmscher & F. Paschke (ed.) *Die Pseudoklementinen I. Homilien* (*GCS* 42; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1969).
143 The corpus of magical papyri is the best place to look for this casual attitude to divine titles: *daimōn*, god, and angel were all used interchangeably for the same being, see for example PGM I.42-195. On this phenomenon in magic in general see John G. Gager (ed.) *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: OUP, 1999) 12.
144 As the organised practice of paganism was eliminated the demonic categories came to be applied to Jews, Judaism and Jewish places of worship, see Guy G. Stroumsa, *Barbarian Philosophy: the religious revolution of early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1999) 153-56.

and the Son, whom many Christians, from a quite early period, came to understand as clearly separate from the rest of the heavenly host.[145]

3.2.2 Angels as stars

There is a long history of the identification of the stars as divine beings. Apart from the Epicureans all the major philosophic schools from the Hellenistic period onwards held to the notion that the stars were divinities, although their visibility caused problems for Platonists who thought that the divine should be unseen.[146] Indeed the development of the practice of astrology in Greek society (after the conquests of Alexander the Great) represented a process of "daimonising" the cosmos, the subterranean underworld becoming identified instead as a sublunar underworld;[147] seeing the stars as gods followed naturally from this. Plato's views on stars encouraged the view of them as intermediary beings between humanity and God.[148] This brought about an inevitable confusion in Greek philosophy of stars with the *daimones* and the angels,[149] with whom *daimones* were equated (see above §3.2.1) in the early Christian period. When Porphyry is quoted by Augustine as stating that the air is the realm of the demons and the ether the realm of the angels he is simply modifying Plato's comment in the *Epinomis* (that the air is the home of the *daimones* and the ethereal heavens the home of the stars) and equating the stars with the angels.[150]

Stars and angels seem to have been linked as a matter of course from a very early stage in the development of the Bible. The term צבא השמים "hosts of heaven" normally referred to the sun, moon and stars (Deut 4:19; Sir 43:8; cf. Gen 2:1).[151] The prophets regularly condemned Israel for offering veneration to the heavenly hosts (2 Kgs 17:16, 21:3, 5; Jer

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[145] See §3.5.
[146] Alan Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars: A History of an Idea* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991) 55-57, 59. This is in contrast to the basic position of philosophers from after the time of Alcmaeon of Croton (ca. 500 BCE, the last great Pythagorean philosopher to hold that the stars were divine beings) to Plato, which was that stars were not divine; as Scott points out, however, the popular belief in the divinity of stars would have survived this period of philosophic scepticism; *ibid.* 3-4.
[147] Giovanni Filoramo, *A History of Gnosticism* (trans. Anthony Alcock; Cambridge, Massachusetts, Oxford, 1991) 22.
[148] Scott, *Origen and the Life of Stars* 59, citing *Tim.* 42e6f; *Ep.* 2.312e1-3, *Laws* 904a6, *Rep.* 597e2, *Phaedr.* 246e6; other later Greek philosophers followed him: Achilles *Isagoga excerpta* 5; Plutarch *Def. Or.* 433e; Maximus of Tyre 2.10; Ps-Aristotle *De mundo* $398^{a}10$ff; Celsus, *apud CC* 8.35.
[149] See Scott, *Origen and the life of Stars* 59-60.
[150] *Ep.* 984e4f, *Civ. Dei* X.9; see above n20.
[151] Although 'morning star' (Job 38:7 Heb. כוכבי בקר) also refers to the king of Babylon, Is 14:12-13 (Heb. בן-שחר; Latin Vulgate: *Lucifer*), and in Rev 22:16 to Christ as ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός.

19:13; Zeph 1:5; cf. Acts 7:42).[152] These hosts seem to have played the same kind of roles as angels: they worship YHWH (Ps 89:6-9), bless Him (Ps 103:21), and sing to Him (Job 38:7). The comment in Job 25:5 that the stars cannot light up in the presence of God seems to have been a comment inserted deliberately in order to emphasise the angels' subordination to God. In Judges 5:20 the fall of the angels seems to be alluded to when it is declared that heaven fought the stars. In Daniel it is declared that, just as in the pseudepigrapha where the righteous dead become angels, the righteous will become stars (12:3; cf. *2 (Syriac) Bar* 51:10).[153]

Outside the Hebrew Bible angels and stars continued to be identified with each other. In Revelations 1:20 the seven stars are identified as the seven angels of the churches. This is an idea clearly derived from Judaism, in which the identity of the seven planets with the seven archangels took hold in the late Second Temple period.[154] Angelology and astrology came to be closely linked in the Jewish thought of the first centuries of the common era.[155] Indeed the prevailing legend in rabbinic circles was that named angels came originally from Babylon, where they were identified with stars.[156] In the Pseudepigrapha the association of stars with angels is even more explicit in the context of the angelic transformation of the seer. Martha Himmelfarb claims that part of the reason for the use of star terminology may lie with the widespread idea of astral immortality in the Graeco-Roman world.[157] Yet since the connection between stars and angels was clearly long held in the Old Testament, surely the astral terminology could just have easily come from this identification; once people came to assume angelic status for the righteous they also used the astral symbolism so normal to

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152 Hence the term "sabaoth" from צבאות as the name of a deity called upon in the *PGM* magical papyri from Egypt.

153 From Dan 8:10 (תגדל עד-צבא השמים ותפל ארצה מן-הצבא ומן-הכוכבים ותרמסם) it follows that the stars are angels. For similar ideas in Latin literature see Horace, *Odes* 3.3.

154 Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel. A study of the relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135 - 425)* (trans. H. McKeating; Oxford Univ. Press: New York, 1986) 346. It should be noted, however, that Simone Pétrement has pointed out the importance of the seven days of creation to Jews; she regards this as more important than astrological notions to the apocalyptic Jewish interest in the number seven, *Le Dieu séparé* (Paris: du Cerf, 1984) 100. See also the discussion of the importance of Iranian ideas to the development of the Jewish notion of seven archangels in M. Boyce & F. Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism, III: Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 1991) 404-05; see also John C. Reeves, *Heralds of that Good Realm. Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 189-191.

155 Simon, *Verus Israel*, 346; see also p.27 on the Pharisaic and Essene interest in angels and stars.

156 Wesley Carr, *Angels and Principalities, The Background, Meaning and Development of The Pauline Phrase,* hai archai kai hai exousiai (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney, 1981) 35-6; citing *GenR* 18.1.

157 Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York, Oxford: OUP, 1993) 50; see n153.

description of the heavenly hosts. Himmelfarb lists the *Epistle of Enoch*[158] (*1 Enoch* 104:2-6), the *Similitudes of Enoch*[159] 39:4-7 and *2 Baruch* 51:10 as pseudepigraphic passages which identify angels and stars;[160] *1 Enoch* 80:6 also does the same. In the *Sibylline Oracles* angels are also described as stars.[161]

The identification of angels with stars is thus clear. Does this tell us about the nature of angels? Aetius listed the various different conceptions held of the stars by the pre-Socratic philosophers; almost everyone regards the stars as made of fire or ether or a combination of fire and some other element.[162] In Greek philosophy the cosmos was traditionally divided up into four, or later five, elements. Parmenides had begun the process by dividing the cosmos into two elements, light and dark; Empedocles further subdivided these two basic elements into four roots (ῥιζώματα): earth, air, water and fire. Plato called these roots στοιχεῖα or "letters" (*Tht.* 201e; *Soph.* 252b; *Tim.* 48b, 54d). Aristotle took all this further, claiming that the four elements only acted in this world of change and chaos. In the world above the moon, where all was eternal and unchanging, the planets and the stars were made of ether, the fifth element.[163] This, however, may have been a misunderstanding of Aristotle by later writers, for Aristotle's conceptions are subtle and open to such misinterpretation.[164] Nonetheless the Stoics believed that the stars were made of ether (based at least in part upon

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[158] *1En* 91-105.
[159] *1En* 71:11.
[160] Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven* 50-51. I disagree, however, with the use of the Similitudes passage; it does not explicitly identify angels and stars, instead claims that the righteous are radiant in heaven; as will be evident from §4.1 being radiant and angelic is directly linked to the transformation of Moses at Sinai where Moses' face is described as being "radiant" (קרן) after his meeting with God; other passages that describe the righteous dead as 'radiant', 'shining' or 'wearing light': Dan 12:3; 4 Macc 17:5; *1 En* 39:7, 104:2; *2 En* 42:5, 65:10, 66:7 (J); *1 Bar* 4:30, 5:1-2; 2 *Bar* 51:3, *4 Ezra* 7:97; see also the *OS* 21:3. The description of the righteous dead as part of 'choirs' in the heavens in 3 Bar 10:5 is also an astral designation, for the stars are described as a 'choir' (χορός) in Euripides *Electra* 467; Plato, *Phaedr.* 247a7, *Tim.* 40c3, *Epin.* 982e4; Maximus of Tyre 16, 6d; *Sibylline Oracles* 8, 450; Philo, *Vita Mos.* 2.239; cf. I Clement 20:3; Ignatius *Ephesians* 19.2; and in Ignatius *Ephesians* 4.2 and *Romans* 2.2 the Church is compared to a choir.
[161] *SibOr* 5:155, in *OTP* 397 & n. m2. See also 5:512-53.
[162] Hermann Diels (ed.) *Doxographi Graeci* 341f, see Scott, *Origen and the Life of Stars* 5 n17.
[163] So Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy, and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Allen & Unwin 1947) 229-30; cf. John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977) 170-71; others have debated whether Aristotle did indeed regard ether as a fifth element. Whilst Werner Jaeger *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of his Development*, (trans. Richard Robinson; Oxford: Clarendon, 1934) 144 n.2 claimed Aristotle saw ether as fifth element, Paul Moraux "Quinta Essentia", *PW* 24 (1963) 1172 disagrees; see also David E. Hahm, "The Fifth Element in Aristotle's *De Philosophia*: A Critical Re-examination", John P. Anton & Anthony Preuss (eds.) *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1983) II, 404-28. Stars made of ether: Aristotle *De caelo* 270b 10-25, 289a 11-15, *Meteorologica* 339b 16-19, 340b 6-10; cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* I.39.
[164] See Scott's discussion of this: *Origen and the Life of Stars*, 26-34, esp. 32-3.

their [mis]understanding of Aristotle).[165] The Church Fathers were in contact with this stream of thought: Tertullian repeated the Stoic misconception of Aristotle's views,[166] and Origen used a Stoic etymology to explain the origin of the term *psyche* (soul).[167]

Perhaps the clearest statement we have comes from a pagan (yet monotheistic)[168] source. In a response to a late second or early third-century oracular request a god, one of the angels, is quoted on the walls of the city of Oenoanda[169] in Asia Minor as saying:

> [Α]υτοφυὴς, ἀδίδακτος, ἀμήτωρ, ἀστυφέλικτος,
> οὔνομα μὴ χωρῶν, πολυώνυμος, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων, τοῦτο θεός·
> μεικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερὶς ἄνγελοι ἡμεῖς. τοῦτο πευθομένοισι θεοῦ πέρ
> ι ὅστις ὑπάρχει, Ạἰ[θ]ẹ́[ρ]α πανδερ̣κ̣[ῆ θε]ὸν ἔννεπεν, εἰς ὅν ὁρῶντ
> ας εὔχεσθ' ἠῴους πρὸς ἀντολίην ἐσορῶ[ν]τα̣[ς].[170]
>
> Self-existent, untaught, without a mother, undisturbed, of many names although not spreading abroad his name, dwelling in fire: this is God, and we messengers are a small portion of God. To those enquiring about God, who he is, this is what it (i.e., the oracle) said: that Aither is the all-seeing God, looking to whom pray at dawn as you look towards the east.[171]

Not only are the angels hypostases of God, they are thus made from the same substance as God, ether. These lines were famous, known by Christians as well as pagans, and cited by the likes of Lactantius.[172]

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165 Scott, *Origen and the Life of Stars*, 39-40.
166 *De anima* 5.2.
167 J.H. Waszink, *Tertulliani de Anima* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1947) 330.
168 See Louis Robert's comments in "Un oracle gravé à Oinoanda", *CRAI* (1971) 610.
169 Oenoanda is notable also for its long Epicurean inscription which was put up by a certain Diogenes, whose identity is not certain; see the important new edition, translation and discussion of this text by Martin Ferguson Smith, *The Epicurean Inscription* (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1993).
170 Text is from A.S. Hall, "The Klarian Oracle at Oenoanda", *ZPE* 32 (1978) 263.
171 *SEG* 933. Translation is that of G.H.R. Horsley, "8. Answer from an oracle", *New Docs* II p.39. The text was republished and brought to the attention of historians by G.E. Bean, "Journeys in Northern Lycia 1965-1967", *Denkschr. Oesterr. Akad. der Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Kl.* 104 (1971) 20-2, no.37; A.S. Hall, *ZPE* 32, (1978) 263-268; L. Robert, *CRAI* (1971) 597-619; M. Guarducci, *Rendiconti dell' Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, 8.27 (1972) 335-347 & *idem*, *Epigrafia Greca* IV (1978) 109-12 and C. Gallavotti, *Philologus* 121 (1977) 263-369 with bibliography (although he misidentifies the *angeloi* as human cultists). See also E.R. Dodds, "New Light on the 'Chaldaean Oracles'", in Hans Lewy (ed.) *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1978) 694-7. The text and its background is also discussed in R. L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 169 (& 195-8).
172 Lactantius argued that (after minor alteration) the text supported Christianity; he quoted it at the beginning of his *Divine Institutes*; see the discussion in Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 170-71; Lactantius also held Hermes (i.e. Hermes Trismegistos) in some regard, claiming that his writings supported Christianity, cf. Brian P. Copenhaver, *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a new English translation with notes and introduction* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995) xliii.

When early Christians did concern themselves with the nature of angels astral symbolism was important. The *Epistle of Barnabas* talks of the "light-bringing angels of God",[173] and a long discourse by the Valentinian Theodotus is concerned with the angels who lived within and moved the heavenly bodies.[174] Ignatius in his *Epistle to the Trallians* 5 clearly links angels to the heavenly bodies, but cautions against ordinary Christians, spiritual infants (νηπίοις), becoming involved in such speculations.[175] Likewise Paul's warning, very similar in form to Ignatius', against speculation concerning heavenly bodies and angelic worship also implicitly links angels and the heavenly bodies (Col 2:18).

The main early Christian position on angels and heavenly bodies was, however, negative. Lactantius demonstrated the folly of worshipping the heavenly bodies or supposing that they were animated in any way (as was supported by Stoic conceptions of the nature of the stars), for if they were possessed of life then they would follow their own course, rather than the course set down by God.[176] Christian anti-Jewish polemic often linked the worship of angels and that of stars. The *Kerygma Petri* states that "The Jews ... thinking that they only know God, do not know Him, adoring as they do angels and archangels, the month and the moon".[177] Celsus levelled similar accusations against the Jews and linked the adoration of heavenly bodies and angels, although he is surprised that the Jews worship heaven without also worshipping the stars therein.[178]

Athenagoras perhaps takes the most pains to explain to his readers the nature of angelic beings as part of a discussion of the difference between God, the Son and the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and other types of spiritual beings on the other. In his attempt to justify Christian trinitarian monotheism Athenagoras argues that the lesser spiritual beings, such as Satan or the angels, are bound in matter just like us humans. Speaking of Satan he mentions the role of angels in the material world:

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[173] Φωταγωγοὶ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ, *Epistle of Barnabas* 18 (R.A. Kraft (ed.) *Barnabae epistula* [SC 172; Paris: Cerf, 1971]).

[174] Clement of Alexandria, *Eclog. Proph.* 51.

[175] See chap. 6 for a full discussion of this text.

[176] Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* II.5; *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 26.

[177] Λατρεύοντες ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἀρχαγγέλοις, μηνὶ καὶ σελήνῃ: *apud* Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* VI.5. See also (later and in the West) Jerome's comments which were obviously influenced by this linkage between worship of angels and worship of heavenly bodies: *angelis refugis et spiritibus immundis ....Militia autem caeli non tantum sol appelatur et luna et astra rutilantia, sed omnis angelica multitudo eorumque exercitus, qui Hebraice appellantur* Sabaoth, *id est virtutum sive exercituum* (*Ep.* 121 *ad Algasium*, 10).

[178] Origen *CC* V.6; cf. *CC* I.26.

> τὸ περὶ τὴν ὕλην ἔχον πνεῦμα, γενόμενον μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καθ' <καὶ> οἱ λοιποὶ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγόνασιν ἄγγελοι, καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ ὕλῃ καὶ τοῖς τῆς ὕλης εἴδεσι πεπιστευμένον διοίκησιν. τούτων γὰρ ἡ τῶν ἀγγέλων σύστασις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ προνοίᾳ γέγονε τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ διακεκοσμημένοις, ἵν' ἢ τὴν μὲν παντελικὴν καὶ γενικὴν ὁ θεὸς <ἔχων> τῶν ὅλων πρόνοιαν, τὴν δὲ ἐπὶ μέρους οἱ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ταχθέντες ἄγγελοι. (*Legatio sive supplicatio pro Christianis* 24.2-3)[179]
>
> Concerning the spirit which holds matter (*viz.* Satan), who was created by God, just as the other angels were created by him, and entrusted with the control of matter and the forms of matter. For this is the office of the angels, to exercise care for God over the things created and ordered by him; so that God may have the absolute and general care of the whole, while the parts are provided for by the angels appointed over them.

When asking himself questions about the nature of the heavenly beings, which, as we have seen in Jewish tradition (of which Origen was informed), normally referred to the angelic host, Origen asserts that although the stars are made of ether, they are nevertheless material.[180]

Considering the connection between stars, angels and astral immortality it should come as no surprise that Theodotus used the discussion of the angels who govern the sun, moon and stars to introduce his discussion of angelic transformation.

> Εἰσὶν οὖν κατὰ τὸν ἀπόστολον οἱ ἐν τῇ ἄκρᾳ ἀποκαταστάσει πρωτόκτιστοι «θρόνοι« δ' ἂν εἶεν, καίτοι δυνάμεις ὄντες, οἱ πρωτόκτιστοι διὰ τὸ ἀναπαύεσθαι ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸν θεόν, ὡς καὶ ἐν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. ἕκαστος γὰρ κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν προκοπὴν οἰκείαν ἔχει τὴν περὶ θεοῦ γνῶσιν, ἐφ' ᾗ γνώσει ἀναπαύεται ὁ θεός, ἀιδίων γενομένων διὰ τῆς γνώσεως τῶν ἐγνωκότων. καὶ μή τι τὸ «ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ ἔθετο τὸ σκήνωμα αὐτοῦ« οὕτως ἐξακούεται . . . καὶ τὸ «ὑπεράνω πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ παντὸς ὀνόματος ὀνομαζομένου« οἱ τελειωθέντες εἰσὶν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, ἀγγέλων, ἀρχαγγέλων εἰς τὴν πρωτόκτιστον τῶν ἀγγέλων φύσιν. οἱ γὰρ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἰς ἀγγέλους μεταστάντες χίλια ἔτη μαθητεύονται ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων, εἰς τελειότητα ἀποκαθιστάμενοι εἶτα οἱ μὲν διδάξαντες μετατίθενται εἰς ἀρχαγγελικὴν ἐξουσίαν, οἱ μαθόντες δὲ τοὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων αὖθις μεθισταμένους εἰς ἀγγέλους μαθητεύουσιν, ἔπειτα οὕτως περιόδοις ῥηταῖς

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179 W.R. Schoedel (ed.) *Athenagoras. Legatio and De resurrectione* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

180 *De princ.* 1.7.5.

ἀποκαθίστανται τῇ οἰκείᾳ τοῦ σώματος ἀγγελοθεσίᾳ. (Theodotus, *apud* Clement of Alexandria, *Eclog. Proph.* 57)

According to the apostle there are: those on the summit, the first-created, they are thrones, although (also) Powers (*dunameis*), being the first-created, inasmuch as God rests in them, as also (he rests) in the faithful. For each one, according to his stage of advancement, holds the knowledge of God in a way special to himself; and in this knowledge God rests, those who hold knowledge being made immortal by knowledge. And is not "he set his tabernacle in the sun" (LXX Psalm 18:5) to be understood thus? . . . And what is "above every rule, and authority, and power, and every name that is named" (Eph 1:21 & Phil 2:9)? It is the perfect of men who are angels, and archangels, rising to the first-created nature of the angels. For those who are transformed from men to angels are taught for a thousand years by the angels after they are brought to perfection. Then those who have taught are transformed to archangelic authority; and those who have learned instruct those again of men who are changed to angels. Thus afterwards, in the prescribed periods, they are brought to the proper angelic state of the body.

Manichaeans seem also to have held to some kind of belief that the stars were animated beings. T. Kellis 22 (mid to late fourth century)[181] proclaims the veneration both of the stars and the powers within them. It claims that the sun and the moon act as guides for souls, that they enlighten (φωτίζουσας, presumably referring to intellectual enlightenment rather than their role as bringers of physical light), judge, observe, and even, like God's angels in mainstream Christian tradition, imprison the opponents.[182]

In the magical papyri stars and angels are identified with each other. In PGM I.42-195, a spell to acquire a *daimōnic* assistant, the magician is told that as he performs the spell:

σημεῖον ἐν τάχει τοιοῦ[το ἀστὴρ αἴθω]ν κατελθὼν στήσεται εἰς μέσον τοῦ δώματος καὶ κατ' ὄμ[μα κατα]χυ[θ]ὲν τὸ ἄστρον, ἀθρήσεις, ὃν ἐκάλεσας ἄγγελον πεμφθ[έντα σ]οί, θεῶν δὲ βουλὰς συντόμως γνώσῃ. (*PGM* I.74-7)

At once there will be a sign for you like this: [A blazing star] will descend and come to a stop in the middle of the housetop, and when the star [has dissolved] before your eyes, you will behold an angel (ἄγγελος) whom you have summoned and who has been sent [to you], and you will quickly learn the decisions of the gods. (PGM I.42-195, *ll.*74-7; trans. E.N. O'Neil, *GMP*.)

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181 R.G. Jenkins, "The Prayer of the Emanations in Greek from Kellis", in *Le Muséon* 108 (1995) 245 & n12.
182 T. Kellis ("The Prayer of the Emanations") 22.59-65, in Jenkins, "The Prayer of the Emanations" 251.

Thus our period witnessed the development of an understanding of the nature of angels based upon their identification with stars in the Old Testament, the Hellenistic 'daimonisation' of the heavenly bodies and the Greek philosophical belief in fire or ether as the purest heavenly element. Furthermore the beliefs in an astral or an angelic afterlife seem to have been fused early, some time during the Second Temple period. Though Christians only very rarely discussed the nature of angels, they had to operate within the same biblical and Greek philosophical framework as did the writers of the Pseudepigrapha. As Lactantius demonstrates, they were clearly concerned about the possibility of astrology and the worship of the heavenly bodies that might result from too close an interest in stars and their possible relation to the, to Christians, relatively unimportant question of the nature of the angels.

3.2.3 The angel as 'soul'

Focusing upon some New Testament passages and Origen, wherein the issue of angels and souls arise together, this section will aim to demonstrate the association in the mind of Middle Eastern man or woman in the first centuries of the Christian Era between lesser spiritual beings, angels, and the spiritual component of the human being, the soul. In antiquity many different philosophical systems competed. Not only the well-known Graeco-Roman systems such as Pythagoreanism, Platonism, Aristotelianism or Stoicism, but also Jewish thought centred around the biblical tradition and Mesopotamian ideas, and the thought of those who in this period were attempting to graft old traditions with new and thus create new syntheses; all these collided with and interacted with each other. Regardless of the variety of approaches there were considerable commonalities; the connection between conceptions of the soul and conceptions about heavenly beings is one area that demonstrates commonality across religious boundaries.

The examination of beliefs about angels reveals an underlying cosmology that seems to have informed most commentators. This cosmology saw a hierarchy of beings that proceeded from the lowliest evil spirits through humans to angels and then to God. God, or the Godhead, stood above and outside this scheme. The other creatures, however, were united by the fact that they were creatures with souls. In imagery derived from the political and social sphere ancient commentators in the first four centuries after Christ thought that these beings were divided from each other by the body that they wore over their souls; men

wore human bodies over their souls, angels wore angelic bodies. When the meagre offerings of Scripture were exhausted writers were left with explaining the nature of a being which seems to have had some free will, and who was connected with fire/ether and brightness. It is apparent that the philosophic environment of the time forced them to come to the conclusion that angels were souls in a certain position in the heavenly hierarchy, a position attained due to the exercise of their free will.

We will begin our investigation of this notion of the angel as a soul unencumbered by a human body with the New Testament.

The question of Acts 23:8, where it is said that the Sadducees reject the belief in angels raises questions of what they actually meant by 'angel', it seems that they were talking of something like the soul. B.J. Bamberger has pointed out it would have been strange for the Sadducees to reject the existence of angelic messengers considering the vast number of them mentioned in the Old Testament.[183] This point is not conclusive, for there had been a long history of the suppression of mention of angels in the Hebrew Bible.[184] Yet the context also suggests that they meant something other than a simple messenger of God. Paul claims that he is on trial here with respect to his belief in resurrection (23:6) it is thus logical to suggest that the claim made of the Sadducees in relation to their persecution of him (23:8), that they do not believe in resurrection, angel or spirit, refers to this belief. Angels and spirits are thus linked to the resurrection. Indeed in 23:10 the Pharisees raise the possibility, in Paul's defence, that a "spirit or angel spoke to him". Although Bamberger is hesitant in making a conclusion about what the Sadducees actually meant, preferring to raise possibilities, he does suggest a possibility that fits very well with the ideas so far presented in this chapter: "The Sadducees deny that a divinely appointed soul will re-enter the body to animate it; they deny even that a divinely appointed spirit can enter a living man to endow him with prophetic insight"[185]. It is reasonable to suggest that the word 'angel' had connotations here extending beyond the mere description of a messenger of God, a meaning closer to 'soul' and connected with the belief in resurrection and eternal life.

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[183] B.J. Bamberger, "Critical Note: The Sadducees and The Belief in Angels", in *JBL* LXXXII (1963) 434-5.
[184] Rofé, האמונה במלאכים במקרא [*The Belief in Angels in the Bible and Early Israel*] I, 112-119.
[185] B.J. Bamberger, "Critical Note: The Sadducees and The Belief in Angels" 435.

Likewise the passage in Acts 12:15-16, in which the servant girl is accused of mistaking Peter's angel for the man himself, suggests that here was something akin to a spirit or soul or ghost; indeed as J.H. Moulton points out there is no reason to suggest that they thought that Peter was dead,[186] which suggests a spirit rather than a ghost.

Moulton concludes that we are dealing here with a view of angels that sees them as the representatives of humans in heaven, a kind of spiritual double that acts for us before God, in effect a kind of soul. He argues that this idea is tied into the Zoroastrian notion of the Fravashi. There were, I think, more proximate influences upon New Testament beliefs about angels, influences reflected in other early Christian literature. Cyril of Jerusalem recorded that the Jewish-Christians who wrote the *Gospel of the Hebrews* held to the heretical belief that Mary was a power named Michael in heaven who descended and was entrusted with the care of Jesus.[187] In the probably early second century anti-gnostic text the *Epistula Apostolorum* the story of the annunciation is interpreted as an appearance of Christ as the archangel Gabriel; he then enters Mary and is born as Jesus.[188] As we will see in the next chapter (§4.3) Origen suggested that John the Baptist was an angel and talked in a similar way of angels coming into the womb and being born as humans.[189] And we have already seen that Christ was on occasion described as an angel. Thus there existed a body of beliefs that held that a being could have a heavenly and an earthly existence, being in a form appropriate for each place. It is this change in form that is most important to understanding the nature of angels. An angel was a being in heaven; simply *being* in heaven necessitated a different state of being, an angelic state, a state we shall see that was characterised by its outward garb.

Origen took a slightly different tack. The legend of the fallen angels was interpreted by him allegorically, as the process of the descent of human souls into bodies. He was by no

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[186] James H. Moulton, "It is his angel", *JTS* III (1902) 516.
[187] This heresy is recorded in the Coptic, but not the Greek version, of a homily by Cyril of Jerusalem: "Discourse on Mary Theotokos by Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem", fol. 12a-13a, in E.A.W. Budge (trans. & ed.) *Coptic Texts* (5 vols; New York: AMS Press, 1977) 637-8; cf. E. Hennecke, *NTA* I, 137.
[188] *Epistula Apostolorum* 14; recorded in both the Coptic (Hennecke *NTA* I, 189-198) and the Ethiopic version (*ibid.*) of this interesting text, which was not discovered until 1895 and is nowhere mentioned in early Christian literature, cf. Carl Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinem Jüngern nach der Auferstehung* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1919); Hugo Duensing, *Epistula Apostolorum* (Bonn: A. Marcus & E. Weber, 1925). For other references see Hennecke, *op. cit.* 191.
[189] *Com. in Jo.* 2.31.

means alone in this construction of the story. Guy Stroumsa[190] lists several examples of this myth being interpreted allegorically. Thus Origen states (Stroumsa notes he is repeating the position of Philo):

> We shall convince those who are able to understand the meaning of the prophet that one of our predecessors referred these words to the doctrine about souls who were afflicted with a desire for life in a human body, which, he said, is figuratively called "daughters of men".[191]

Allegory was a reasonably common tool for the interpretation of this myth, and other philosophers, such as Alexander of Lycopolis, followed Philo and Origen's lead.[192]

Philo could, however, be more concrete. In *De gigantibus* he also states that: "It is Moses' custom to give the name of angels to those whom other philosophers call demons, souls that is which fly and hover in the air".[193]

Thus the fallen angels are regarded as something akin to souls, both in an actual and a metaphorical fashion. The question of whether angels are souls, or whether they have souls is thus raised by Origen, and addressed by him. Whilst admitting that there is no scriptural evidence that angels have souls or are souls he defines a soul as a substance *rationabiliter sensibilis et mobilis* "rationally sensible and moveable" and then says that we can apply the same definition to angels[194] — and, as is often the case with Origen, leaving us with a rather obvious, though unstated, conclusion. Angels are therefore seen by Origen as something like

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[190] *Another Seed, Studies In Gnostic Mythology* (Leiden: Brill, 1984) 27-9.
[191] Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 28, Origen, *CC* 152. The quotation is taken from Chadwick *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: CUP, 1965) 307. According to Stroumsa Origen here repeats Philo *De gig.* II.6.18.. In *Comm in Joh.* VI.42.217 -218 (& XIII) Origen states Philo's view again, but without such explicit support: "Some have supposed that this descent would indicate in a covered way that of the souls into the bodies - the earthly vase being metaphorically referred to by "the daughters of men", Stroumsa, *Another Seed* 28; see also L.R. Wickham, "The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: Genesis VI 2 in Early Christian Exegesis" 142-143. See also Jerome's comments on Origen's beliefs about the fall of the soul: Jerome, *Letter 124* (to Avitus).
[192] Stroumsa, *Another Seed* 28-9: the Middle Platonist Alexander of Lycopolis says in his *Contra Manichaeos* chapter XXV (quoted according to P.W. van der Horst and J. Mansfield, *An Alexandrian Platonist Against Dualism: Alexander of Lycopolis' Treatise "Critique of the Doctrines of Manicheus"* [Brill: Leiden, 1974], 95): "For example, when the history of the Jews speaks of the angels who consorted with the daughters of men in order to have sexual intercourse, this way of telling the story hints at the nurturing faculties of the soul which comes down hither from above".
[193] Οὓς ἄλλοι φιλόσοφοι δαίμονας, ἀγγέλους Μωυσῆς εἴωθεν ὀνομάζειν· ψυχαὶ δ' εἰσὶ κατὰ τὸν ἀέρα πετόμεναι. He goes on to state καὶ μηδεὶς ὑπολάβῃ μῦθον εἶναι το εἰρημένον· ("And let no one suppose what is here said is a myth," *De gig.* II.6-7, *LCL* Philo II).
[194] *De prin.* II.viii.2.70-75, in H. Crouzel & M. Simonetti (ed. & trans.) *Origène. Traité des Principes* I (*SC* 252; Paris: Cerf, 1978).

souls, and were connected both by him and by other writers, through an allegorical interpretation of scripture, with the descent of souls into human bodies.

Origen is nothing, however, if not contradictory, or so his position seems. For not only are angels actually souls, they also have souls. In book one of *de Principiis* in a discussion of whether souls are pre-existent or created with the body Origen seems to assert that angels do have souls. Of angels before they have 'bodies' (albeit ethereal bodies), he asserts (rather stretching the meaning of a passage of Scripture discussing vanity): "And let us look at what this vanity is, to which the creature is subject. In fact this vanity, I believe, is nothing other than the body; for although it is correct that the body of stars is ethereal, it is nonetheless material"[195] Thus angels have some kind of existence even before they obtain their ethereal bodies, an existence that is purely spiritual, indeed, as souls without bodies. Origen's notion of the nature of angels is therefore a bit hazy, although an angel seems to be something like a soul. He comes closest to a definition of angels when discussing the immortality of the soul and its progression through the heavens to join the ranks of the angels; here it becomes clear that he regards being an angel as simply the position of a soul in the hierarchy between man and God; it was a position that could be reached by any soul, in effect it was an office.[196] Origen even seemed to have included Christ's position as a mere office, granted by God, and this led to his condemnation by Epiphanius.[197] This led to the classic accusation against Origen, that he believed even the devil would be saved.[198] In *Contra Celsum* Origen tries to define this office. Celsus had asked what exactly these beings, that Christians call angels, actually are. Are they gods? No, says Celsus, most likely demons. In reply Origen outlines the roles of an angel: they minister to those who are the heirs of salvation: they ascend, bearing the supplications of humans to God, they then descend bearing to the righteous whatever God thinks they deserve. Origen then goes on to warn us that although the angels are divine, and are thus sometimes called 'gods', they should not be worshipped, for all

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[195] *De princ.* I.vii.5.154-57: Et primo ergo uidemus quae est uanitas, cui creatura subiecta est. Ego quidem arbitror non aliam esse uanitatem quam corpora; nam licet aetherium sit corpus astrorum, tamen materiale est.

[196] *De prin.* I.8; esp. I.8.1, I.8.2; cf. *De princ.* I.V.

[197] Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64, and in Photius (Biblioth. Cod. 118); Methodius, bishop and martyr (311), had written several works against Origen, amongst others a treatise "On the Resurrection", of which Epiphanius cites a long extract (*Pan.* 64, 12-52).

[198] Henri de Lubac (intro.) in G. Butterworth, *Origen, On First Principles* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973) xxxix-xli; see also Jerome, Letter XCII *The Synodical Letter of Theophilus to the Bishops of Palestine and of Cyprus.*

supplications that they deliver still have to go through the heavenly High Priest, the living Word.[199] Angels are therefore divine, although they are not gods, and they certainly are not demons.

What Origen's position demonstrates is the difficulty of fitting the Jewish idea of the angel into the developing Christian understanding of divine beings within a basically Graeco-Roman religious scheme, leaving the question of their exact nature largely undealt with.

Thus Origen sees angels as something like souls, souls that are likewise clothed in a 'material' (albeit 'ethereal') body. Likewise from his allegorical exegesis we can see that he saw the fallen angels as souls that were trapped in human bodies. Therefore angels are souls that are clothed in different natures according to their position in the cosmos, souls that are clothed in human flesh when on earth and are called 'humans', and souls which are clothed in angelic nature in the heavens and are thus called 'angels'. The image of the garment is a recurring motif that I will examine in more detail in a minute. That the place of this soul in the spiritual hierarchy is the result of its behaviour ties Origen's views into those of Plato, who argued that souls could go up or down the ladder of spiritual being.[200]

Likewise the identification of angels with stars leads to an identification of angels with souls, for both were believed to be made of the same substance. Stoics, in particular, associated the soul and stars with each other based upon an understanding that both were made of ether.[201]

The conclusion is clear: angels are less actual beings than simply souls in a certain position in the heavenly hierarchy, often marked by being dressed in a certain angelic garment.

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[199] *CC* V.4.

[200] Plato, *Cratylus* 397D-398C.

[201] This may have been based upon a Stoic misinterpretation of Aristotle in *De philosophia* frg. 27; cf. Scott, *Origen and the Life of Stars* 26-34, esp. 32-3; and on the Stoic link between stars, ether and the soul see Scott, 39-43. As Scott (38) comments: "Ironically, it was the way that he [Aristotle] was misunderstood which was the most important contribution to the way that the astral soul was discussed by the age of Philo and Origen." See also Tertullian, *De anima* 5.2.

3.2.4 Angels as Souls and/or Guardians

It is often unclear whether an angel invoked is a soul of a person or an independent divine guardian.

In the third century CE a certain Lycidas built a tomb for his two sisters at Haydan (4 miles S.E. of Eumenia, 40 miles north of Colossae) in Phrygia. On this tomb is mentioned the name of a certain Ῥουβῆς, obviously the name of a Jew or convert from Judaism.[202] The last few lines of the inscription are as follows . . . εἰ τις δὲ ἕτερον θήσει, ἔστε αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν θεον κὰι τὸν ἄνγελον τὸν Ῥουβῆδος. What, then, is this 'angel of Roubes'? Is it a guardian angel or his soul? J.H. Moulton, discussing the inscriptions of Thera, declares that a number of them (over forty) identify an angel as being the soul of the deceased.[203] Although Stuckenbruck argues, on the basis of the formal construction of the text, against interpreting the evidence of the Lycidas inscription in this manner, claiming that the inscription invokes an independent angel, I think the genitive form of Ῥουβῆδος leaves the question open.[204]

Indeed there is a strong link between angels as souls and angels as guardians. An angel could often be seen to be a kind of spiritual 'twin' of a human being, for instance Mani's *Syzygos*.[205] In the *Kitab al-Firhist* of al-Nadim the *Syzygos* is called both 'twin'[206] and 'angel'.[207] This twin could often appear as a larger image of their human ward, or else they

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[202] L. Robert, "Épitaphes d'Eumeneia de Phrygie", *Hellenica. Recueil d'Épigraphie de Numismatique et d'Antiquités Grecques* XI-XII (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1960) 429-35; republished by Sheppard in "Jews, Christians and Heretics in Acmonia and Eumeneia", *Anatolian Studies* 29 (1979) 175-6.

[203] See J.H. Moulton, "It is his angel", *JTS* 3 (1902) 514-22. See also *New Docs* IV 240 which discusses a tombstone from Melos (IV init.) in Guardicci, *EG* IV.368-70, the text ends with: 'I adjure you by the angel who stands over (the tomb) here, let not one ever dare to add any (body) here'.

[204] Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology* 188.

[205] See *CMC* 17, 24 on the *Syzygos* as a mirror image of Mani; see also 13, 18, 19, 22 (restitution), 23, 32, 35 (restitution), 38-41, 43, 73, 74, 101-106, 116 (inferred), 124, 125, 126-127, 130 (restitution), 139 (restitution), 153 (?). On the Syzygos see A. Henrichs & L. Koenen, "Ein Griechischer Mani-Codex (P. Colon. inv. nr. 4780)", *ZPE* 5 (1970) VI: "Manis himmlischer Zwilling"; W. Fauth, "Manis anderes Ich: Gestalthafte Metaphysik im Kölner Mani-Kodex", in R. Berlinger & W. Schrader (eds.) *Gnosis und Philosophie: Miscellanea* (Amsterdam & Atlanta: Rodopi B.V., 1994) & *idem*, "Syzygos und Eikon. Manis himmlischer Doppelgänger vor dem Hintergrund der platonischen Urbild-Abbild-Theorie", *Perspektiven der Philosophie, Neues Jahrbuch,* XII (1986) 41-68.

[206] *Al-Tawm*, probably related to the Arabic توأم / توءم (twin), in this passage it is described as a Nabataean word meaning 'companion' (here in Arabic as: قرين), see Bayard Dodge (ed. & trans.) *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm. A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture* II (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1970) 774 n.140.

[207] If we read the MS here as ملك (as a variant spelling for ملاك, "angel", cf. *DMWA* sv. ملك) rather than مليك ("King"). This seems a more likely translation than that of Gustav Flügel, *Mani: Seine Lehre und*

appear at death in order to lead the human being to reward or punishment. In the Nag Hammadi *Gospel of Philip* it is claimed that those united with their angel will be safe from attack from evil spirits.[208] Thus second and third century Syrian thought evidences an interest in the concept of spiritual twinship; perhaps (considering the derivation of the name Thomas from the Semitic terms used for 'twin') this is also part of the reason for the interest in the Thomas literature displayed in Syrian circles.

This view of the angel as some kind of soul or guardian was the result of a long-practised attempt to personalise the inner workings of the human psyche. Whilst there was a strong tendency to depersonalise the divine, reflected best, perhaps, in the negative theology of the second-century Middle-Platonist Basilides,[209] there was in the early Christian era an equally strong trend towards personalizing abstract concepts. Thus not only do we find abstract concepts personified on coins, we even find cities personified; for instance, the mosaic from the Hall of Hippolytus at Madaba, in which we find a city personified as Fortune, herself the personification of an abstract concept.[210] This idea was not new to Greek thought, for Plato (*Apology* 31D, 40A) claimed that Socrates had a personal *daimōn* who warned him before undertaking certain actions; here we can probably see the conscience being personalised. We should also remember the equivalence of *daimones* and angels in later Greek philosophic thought (discussed above §3.1); if Greek writers were coming to see *aggeloi* and *daimones* as essentially the same thing then the use of *daimōn* and *daimonion* or *genius* to mean something like a guardian-soul would also have influenced the developing Christian concept of the angel.[211] These examples remind us of the angels of the churches in the book of Revelation;[212] and the guardian-type angels of the *Shepherd of Hermas*: two angels for every person, one prompting evil, the other good.[213] In Late Antique Egypt (5th – 7th) it

seine Schriften. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Manichäismus (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1969) 139 who takes it as ملیك, thus he renders the phrase "der König der Paradiese des Lichts"; cf. Bayard Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm* II, 774 n139.

208 NHC II,3 65.24-5.

209 See Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* VII.21.1-4; VII.22.3-25.

210 Cf. Lucy Anne Hunt, "The Byzantine Mosaics of Jordan in Context: Remarks on Imagery, Donors and Mosaicists", *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 126 (1994) 106-126, p.110 Madaba is personified as a Fortune in a mid-sixth civic chamber floor, the Hall of Hippolytus.

211 See "δαιμόνιον", *GELNT*; "δαίμων", *GELNT*; R. Schilling, "Genius" *RAC* X, 52-83.

212 Rev 1:20; 2 *passim*, 3 *passim*; cf. I:11, 16.

213 *Man.* VI.2.1-10, see also *Man.* V.1.3 and V.2.5, Carolyn Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas: a commentary* (ed. Helmut Koester; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999) 124-5 she cites as a comparative example *T. Jud.* 20.1-2. Cf. also *Epistle of Barnabas* I.18.1-2. Certainly this is related to the 'two ways' doctrine at Qumran, see John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997) 38-51; idem, "The Origin of Evil

became common in letters to offer worship (προσκυνησις, ϯπροσκγνει) to the recipient's 'angel'; the angels of the Churches of Revelation 1, 2, 3, have here given rise to angels of individual people.[214] This is in line with the trend towards an almost animistic approach to angels as guardians/souls of almost everything.[215]

3.3 Angelic symbols

Angels were not normally clearly identified as such. Part of the point of many stories involving angels was the revelation that an angel was present amongst humans; often some clue was dropped, such as the absence of reliance upon earthly food, which gives away the presence of a heavenly being.[216] Apart from the titles dealt with above angels are also often simply described as 'men'.[217] However, two sets of symbols came to be attached to angels: one was wings, and the other was the notion of the angels wearing certain garments of light.

3.3.1 How the angel found his wings

The affixation of wings to angels in Christian art helps to support the contentions made so far in this chapter. In particular the symbolism of wings helps to demonstrate the

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in Apocalyptic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls, in *idem*, *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (1st publ. in J.A. Emerton (ed.) *Congress Volume, Paris,* 1992 [Leiden, 1995]; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 287-299.

214 See M. Choat, "Christian Laity and Leadership in Fourth-Century Egypt" (Unpbl. PhD thesis; Macquarie University, 1999) 74-5 who cites: (in Coptic) P. Mich. Copt. I.iv.10; Mon. Epiph.113.6 (& nn.); 203.9-10; 239.2-3; (probably also Mon. Epiph. 118); Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Egizo inv. 19901 *ll.*3-5 (ed. P.J. Sijpesteijn, "Two Coptic Letters", *Cd'E* 59 (1984) 371-3; *ST* 370.2-3; P. Morg. Copt. 6. In Greek see: SB X 10269.3-4; X 10522.10; P. Rain. Cent. 126; P. Köln IV.191.1 (& nn.).

215 Cf. *Discourse of Timothy*, fol. 72a in Budge, *Coptic Texts*, V; *GenR* 10; also Schäfer, *Rivaltät zwischen Engeln und Menschen* 58.

216 It was generally accepted that spiritual beings could not consume food. In the New Testament, in Luke 24:42-3 the risen Christ returns to visit the disciples; at first they are afraid and assume they are seeing a spirit; Christ reassures them by demonstrating that he can be touched, and then eats some fish. In the context of Middle Eastern beliefs about demons it seems reasonable to suggest that the eating of the fish is also intended to illustrate his truly bodily nature. On a Late Antique Aramaic bowl discussed by Naveh and Shaked there is a story related of three demons who come to a house, they are masked as humans but are revealed as demons when they cannot eat; this tale is reflected in a number of different bowl texts, demonstrating that it had a wide currency (see Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1985) 75-6 nn to *ll.* 16-22). In the Quran also the idea is reflected when it is implied that angels cannot eat food (Qurʾan 25:7); see also the Theodosius, Archbishop of Alexandria, *Encomium on St Michael the Archangel*, in Budge, *Coptic Texts* V, fol.25a-41b, the story of St Michael visiting a pious couple by the name of Dorotheus and Theopiste; cf. Tobit 5:4.

217 See Gen 18:2; 19:1; Deut 8:15. Beings which were described in the Bible as אנשים "men" were explicitly identified in later literature as angels. Thus Ezek 9:2 mentions six men carrying clubs with another clothed in linen carrying writing implements; *b. Šabb.* 55a claims the one clothed in linen is Gabriel; Targum Jonathan according to Codex Reuchlinianus describes the six אנשים as בדמות גברין מאלכיא מחבליא "angels of destruction in human form" (cited from Reeves, *Heralds of That Good Realm*, 189; text is P. de Lagarde, *Prophetae Chaldaice: Paulus de Lagarde e fide codicis reuchliniani edidit* [Leipzig: Teubner, 1872]).

connections in Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman thought between lesser divine beings, souls and the immortal state. As a basically late fourth century phenomenon the iconographical affixation of wings to angels lies on the boundary of the time period of this thesis. This phenomenon, however, supports the main contentions of this thesis, and is the culmination of ideas developing in Christian circles in the first four hundred years of Christianity.

It is well known that the winged angel was a late development.[218] It was not until the late fourth century that the classic winged angel first appears, interestingly, in this particular case, a winged St Matthew.[219] This type of depiction of Matthew is part of a tradition which links the four evangelists with the living Creatures of Ezekiel 1:1-14 and cherubim of Ezekiel 10:1-22.[220] In this interpretation of Ezekiel the creature with the face of a man is regarded as an angel. Clearly by the time of this fresco the connection between angels and the other heavenly beasts (cherubim, seraphim, Living Creatures) had already been made. Wings had thus already come to be assigned to angels, as the creatures depicted as winged in the Old Testament had come to be seen as angels. St Matthew's depiction as a winged angel does not, then, explain how wings came to be assigned to angels before they came to be connected with the cherubim and seraphim.[221] But the fourth century saw winged angels becoming increasingly popular; these were angels, not evangelists symbolically represented as angels,[222] and were thus not connected with the typological exegesis of Ezekiel. In the Old Testament angels could ascend or descend on ladders (Gen 28:12), or in the flames of the sacrificial fire (Judges 13:20); when wings are mentioned in the Bible or related literature they generally connote protection, as in a mother bird sheltering her young beneath her wings. Thus the affixation of wings to angels was not a natural development of Old Testament ideas. We must look elsewhere for the origin of the winged angel. Birds, of course, were important for divination in the Graeco-Roman world; they were, like angels, messengers of heaven; so too, the Roman Emperor generally became a winged eagle upon death; likewise Zoroastrian fravashis (ancestral spirits of the dead that by this period were

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[218] For instance the depiction of the appearance of the three angels to Abraham under the oaks of Mamre in the third century via Latina catacomb in Rome portrays them without wings.
[219] S. Tsuji, "Angels 4. Iconography", *New Catholic Encyclopedia* I (San Francisco: Catholic University of America, 1967) 516.
[220] See Irenaeus of Lyon, *Adversus Haereses* 3.11.8; Augustine, *De consensu evangelistarum* 1.6.9; see also *De consensu evangelistarum* 4.10.11 and *Tractatus in Joannis evangelium* 36.5
[221] See n53 on the addition of seraphim and cherubim to the first Christian hierarchy.
[222] See the bas-reliefs from Carthage and an ivory diptych of St Michael from Ravenna in Fernand Cabrol, *Dictionàire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie* I (Paris, 1903-) s.v. "Ange".

worshipped as intercessor type figures) were regarded as winged; indeed in Near Eastern art, from Assyria to Egypt, it is apparent that many winged deities were worshipped or feared; we must also not forget the winged Nike, Eros or Hermes of Graeco-Roman religion. All these are possible antecedents, but are barren when it comes to explaining why exactly the angel became, all of a sudden, a winged being. To explain the advent of the winged angel it is necessary to look to Plato and Persian ideas, and their collision with each other in the cultural melting pot of the fourth century Mediterranean world. It then becomes apparent that angels gained their wings due to their mastery of time, their eternal immortal existence, of which wings were a symbol, a symbol that then came to represent all who had joined their ranks as immortal beings. The affixation of wings to angels was directly related to the ideas we have looked at in this thesis so far. Angels became winged beings because people were interested in them primarily as models of the perfect afterlife; as we will see, wings were a symbol of this perfect and immortal state of being.

The winged angel is an enigma in the history of late antique art. The generally accepted view is that it arose in Christian circles in the fourth century (as Christianity began to lose its Old Testament fear of the representative arts[223]), and was somehow derived from the winged victories popular in this period, as coin evidence in particular so strongly suggests. There is, surely, a strong similarity, if not actual exact pictorial identity, between many of the depictions of angels and those of Nike, indeed the female winged victory image on coins came to be replaced by the male winged angel in the early fifth century.[224] However, although the tendency for depictions of angels with wings to develop in the direction of a pre-existing template, that of the Nike, is not at all surprising – in fact one would expect this development – it does nothing whatsoever to explain why the angel needed to be depicted as winged in the first place.

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[223] Cf. Irmgard Hutter, *The Herbert History of Art and Architecture: Early Christian & Byzantine* (trans. Alistair Laing; London: The Herbert Press, 1988) 8.

[224] See for example two gold solidi of Justin's and Justinian's reigns in P.D. Whitting, *Byzantine Coins* (Barrie & Jenkins: London, 1973) figs. 77 & 78-9 p.57; for the orthodox view of the winged angel as derived from the victory see Ernst Kitzinger, *Early Medieval Art* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1963) 14; this is however, an art-history perspective; it describes the iconographical image of the winged angel as derived from the winged victory, but does not explain the development of the belief that angels should be depicted as winged.

a. Wings as protection

Wings in the Old Testament generally symbolised protection, like a mother bird protecting its young. This motif is very common in the Book of Psalms. Psalm 17:8 declares: "Keep me as the apple of thy eye; hide me in the shadow of thy wings."[225] Other references of this sort are Ps 36:7; 57:1; 61:4, in which the wings are identified with the tent of God protecting his righteous (63:7; 91:4). On occasion God is compared to an eagle lifting up his people and thus putting them under his protection, here the wings symbolise both the care of a mother bird for its young, and also movement. This image can be seen in the art of other Near Eastern civilizations, for instance Egypt, where the wings of Horus, the falcon god, acted to protect the pharaoh, and a winged Nephthys, and sometimes also a winged Isis, are depicted protecting Osiris seated upon his throne.[226]

Certainly it seems clear that the angels of the Old Testament were not winged – apart from the winged cherubim and seraphim, who are demonstrably figures derived from the Near Eastern tradition of hybrid zoomorphic winged guardian figures, and in the Old Testament are not angels.[227] In fact in the Old Testament it is often the case that angels are not clearly distinguished at all; it is a mark of righteousness to be able to identify one of God's messengers (cf. Tobit 5:4). In the New Testament we find the use of images such as those first found in Ezekiel and Daniel to mark an angel off from an ordinary human, such as gleaming white robes, or a countenance like lightning (Ezek 9:2; Dan 10:6).[228]

The symbolism of wings as protective devices, found in the Old Testament, continues into the New Testament. Christ declares in Matthew 23:27 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the

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[225] שמרני כאישון בת עין בצל כנפיך תסתירני.

[226] See the illustrations collected in E.A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection* (2 vols. New York: Dover, 1971) I, 3 & 29 (Bas relief from Philae), 265 (Abydos), 291 (Gebel Barkal, Sudan), 344 (Meroë), II, 31 (Denderah), 51 (Denderah), 58 (Philae). The winged solar disc, winged birds and scarabs were also common motifs on Egyptian jewellery and art: fig. 110 (Dashur; catalogue no. JE 30875 = CG 52002, 52003) in Mohammed Saleh and Hourig Sourouzian, *Official Catalogue of the Egyptian Museum Cairo* (Mainz: Philip von Zabern); fig. 143 (Thebes; cat. no. JE 31409 = CG 34026); in *ibid*; fig. 150 (Abydos; cat. no. CG 48406), *ibid*; fig 151 (Abydos; cat. no. JE 88902), *ibid.*; fig. 181 (Thebes, tomb of Tutankhamon [no.62]; JE 62030), *ibid*; fig. 186 (Thebes, tomb of Tutankhamon [no.62]; JE 61467); fig. 203 (Tanis; Ramses II as a child protected by the Canaanite god Hurun; JE 64735), *ibid*; fig. 212 (Thebes; Victory stela of Merenptah [the "Israel stela"]; JE 31408 = CG 34025), *ibid*; fig. 237 (Thebes; JE 26200 = CG 61028), *ibid*; fig. 243 (Thebes; RT 25.12.24.20), *ibid*; fig. 249 (Saqqara; JE 35923 = CG 53668), *ibid*; fig. 265 (Armant; JE 54313), *ibid*; fig. 268 (unknown provenance; RT 18.11.24.46), *ibid*; see also numberous depictions of winged figures on coffins on display in the Egyptian Museum; for example: 9303 & 27540; 1319; 45459; 4278 (= ? 33113 & 60133 ?).

[227] See §3.1.1.

[228] See §3.3.2.

prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" This image derived from the mother bird was still important in fourth century monastic literature preserved in Sahidic.[229]

Of course what we are witnessing here is the continuing influence of the Old Testament upon the monks of the Egyptian desert, as the wings of the cherubim either acted to protect God whilst he sat on his throne or actually supported him on his throne; in these texts the cherub's protective wings are being generously lent to his earthly minions, the ascetics. Cherubim, however, were not angels. Although Christians were in this period, and Jews slightly later (during the Middle Ages), moving towards subsuming all heavenly beings under the title "angel" and dividing them up into elaborate hierarchies which included the seraphim and cherubim (I am talking here of the likes of SS Ambrose, Jerome and Pseudo-Dionysius, who were all late fourth to early fifth century); this was an innovation. Up until this time it is true to say that although cherubim and seraphim were members of the heavenly court around God, they were not angels, for they were not messengers between God and man, as angels were.[230] It is thus worthwhile to note that it is only cherubim who are described as winged in the literature of the desert fathers; I have read almost all of this literature and have yet to find a winged angel; although there may well be an example or two that I have not yet seen, it is certainly not a common motif; thus it is true to say that the desert fathers generally distinguished between angels and the other heavenly beings and also did not regard angels as winged beings.

Unlike birds, Biblical angels did not need wings to travel from heaven to earth and back again. Angels ascended on ladders, or else in the flames of the sacrificial fire.[231] And also at

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[229] F. Nau, *Histoire de Jean le Petit, Hegoumène de Scète, au IVe siècle* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1914) 56.3; trans. MacDermot, *The Cult of the Seer*, 467; see also E. Porcher, *Vie d'Isaac, Patriarche d'Alexandrie de 686 à 689* (*PO* XI; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1914) 323.5.

[230] Perhaps Origen was the origin of the notion that seraphim and cherubim were types of angels, for his type of 'angelic Christology' saw Christ as both an Angel of Great Counsel (Isa 9:6) and as one of the seraphs of Is 6. See discussion of angelic Christology below §3.5.

[231] Indeed the notion of angels ascending on ladders survived well into Late Antiquity. Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked discuss just such a reference in *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late* Antiquity (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), Amulet 21 Provenance unknown (Geoffrey Cope Collection, Herzlia); silver "Healing for Melekh son of Guzu", p.72 Middle Column: at the top of the column the word מכונם "their (=the angels') *makhon* (abode)", underneath this there are Greek letters and letters resembling the ancient Hebrew or Samaritan script, drawn around the Hebrew word is something that looks like a ladder. This word (*mkwnm*) is

Dura Europos there is a third century CE mural which depicts Jacob's dream with wingless angels wearing short cloaks ascending a ladder. The motif is also found in early Christian literature, for instance the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas*, a text strongly influenced by Montanism, if not actually derived from Montanist circles,[232] in which Perpetua has a vision of a ladder leading to heaven, upon which the righteous ascend.

The one example that we have of winged angels from pre-Late Antique Jewish literature, is from the Second Temple era Ethiopic *Book of Enoch*. This example, however, is the proverbial exception that proves the rule, for here the angels have to take up for themselves wings with which to fly, demonstrating that they did not have wings in the first place.[233]

b. Near Eastern winged deities, Judaism and Graeco-

Near Eastern winged deities, Judaism and Graeco-Roman paganism

Yet in the cultures of the Near East and Mediterranean basin in this period there was no shortage of winged deities. Indeed being winged was so common for divine figures that one almost wonders how the angel could have failed to have gained wings before the fourth century. Demons were conventionally thought of as winged. In Mesopotamia, as in Greece, the wind was seen as a winged demon named Pazuzu.[234] Likewise we have examples of

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acc. to the authors certainly related to *makhon* which is a term for one of the seven firmaments (cf. Bavli Ḥ9agiga 12b). The term is found often in the Dead Sea Scrolls (esp. the Thanksgiving Scroll) and in the Hekhalot texts (cf. P. Schäfer, *Konkordanz zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1988, p.408) "where it seems to be based quite explicitly in many cases on the Talmudic discussion." Some refs to *makhon* in Hekhalot also mention a ladder; P. Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1981) §§772-4; but see also Bowl 23 in which the word ladders can also be possibly read, and yet there is no reference to angels.

232 Herbert Musurillo (intro. & trans.) *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) xxvi.

233 *1En* 61:1. This is only in MSS B & C. Milik noted this passage and claimed that it was evidence for Christian influence upon the *Parables of Enoch* (*The Books of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976) 97), yet as we have seen the angels took up wings, they were not permanently attached as limbs.

234 Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (trans. T.J. Hallett; New York: Seabury Press, 1972) 79 & 82, fig. 93. See also the 7th century BCE statuette of Pazuzu from Dur-Katlimmu (Tell Sheikh Hamad), in the Deir ez-Zur Museum in Syria (guidebook. no. 120), see H. Kühne, "Tall Sheikh Hamad/Dur-Katlimmu 1988-90, *Archiv für Orientforschung* 40/41 (1993/94) 270-71 fig. 97 and N. Bunataz, H. Zuna & A. Alhamud, **دليل متحف دير الزور وما حولها. الآنهار والبوادي التراث الحظاري للجزة السورية** (*Guidebook to the Museum of Deir ez*-Zur; Ministry of Culture and Antiquities, 1999) رقم الدليل ١٢٠, ١٢٨.

Caananite demons from excavations at Beth Shean, Megiddo and Tell el-'Ajjul.[235] From Petra in southern Jordan we have numerous examples of winged deities from the excavation of the temple appropriately named "The Temple of the Winged Lions".[236] The iconography of kingship in the Near East included as a central feature the movable throne or throne/chariot of the king, supported by hybrid, winged zoomorphic beasts, which was the model for the cherubim throne of God in Jewish tradition.[237] The zoomorphic figures of the royal palace of Persepolis seem to be examples of the same; thus they are less guardians, although they are that as well, than a type of cherub constantly holding the king's throne hovering in heaven.

It has been accepted that Graeco-Roman iconography in its depiction of the likes of Nike/Victoria, Hermes/Mercury, and Psyche/Anima was also influenced by these Near Eastern deities. Received opinion is that the wings were first added to such figures on purely artistic grounds, in order to fill in the field, the identification of the wings as symbols of swiftness and divine strength was a later accretion.[238] Certainly the image of the winged victory crowning the charioteer came to symbolise immortality in Roman art from a very early (i.e. republican) period,[239] and was taken into Christian art to mean exactly the same thing, although the winged victories become angels.

Winged creatures, birds, were often taken to represent lesser divine beings or the human soul. In the cultural history of the Near East there is ample evidence to suggest a common cultural motif of the winged messenger of the gods. Bob Becking in the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*[240] discusses the role of the raven in the Bible and the related

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[235] Keel, *Symbolism* 82.
[236] See the exhibits in the Petra Museum, exhibit no. 3; see also Philip C. Hammond, *The Temple of the Winged Lions, Petra, Jordan, 1973 –1990* (Fountain Hills: Petra Publishing, 1996); Hammond, 'Petra, Temple of the Winged Lions', *American Journal of Archaeology* 96 (1992) 521-2; Hammond & D. Johnson, "Petra, Temple of the Winged Lions", *American Journal of Archaeology* 98 (1994) 542-3; Hammond & David J. Johnson, 'Petra, Temple of the Winged Lions', *American Journal of Archaeology* 97 (1993) 508-9; Hammond, "The Goddess of 'The Temple of The Winged Lions' At Petra (Jordan)", in Fawzi Zayadine (ed.) *Petra and the Caravan Cities: proceedings of the symposium organised at Petra in September 1985* (Amman: Dept. of Antiquities, 1992).
[237] H.P. L'Orange, *Studies On the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (H. Aschenhoug & Co: Oslo, 1953) 37-63 & esp. 50.
[238] See E.A. Gardner, "Wings (Greek and Roman)", James Hastings (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* XII (New York: T &T Clark; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926).
[239] *Cosmic Kingship* p.64 n.2 citing Cumont, *Le symbolisme funéraire des Romains* 458ff.
[240] Bob Becking, "Raven", *DDD* 1300-1301.

religious background. In Genesis (8:7) the raven is described as a messenger bird[241] (and Clement of Alexandria repeats this[242]). In Ugarit birds were regarded as divine messengers. The Ugaritic Legend of Keret explicitly identifies two heralds of El as ravens. Indeed it is interesting to note that in the Neo-Assyrian incantation cycle *Utukkū lemnūtu* the hawk and the raven both serve as opponents of demonic evil,[243] like the role played by angels in the magical papyri. Correspondingly in the *Paris Magical Papyrus* at the culmination of a spell that gives the magician the ability to command the gods (PGM IV.154-285) a sea falcon descends from the ruler of the universe and strikes the magician on his face with his wings as a sign that the spell has been effective, that he has been "attached to your holy form. I have been given power by your holy name"(PGM IV 210-218). Likewise the Romans saw some association between birds and the divine as is shown by their use of them for purposes of divination. And when a Roman Emperor died his soul was said to ascend to the heavens in the form of an eagle.[244] In the religions of the Near East birds were regarded as the symbol of the soul. Widengren cites the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Descent of Ishtar* as examples. He also claims that in the Syrian Church and in Islam it is a common-place metaphor that souls become winged beings upon death.[245]

The winged angel was not, then, the first spiritual figure or deity to be blessed with wings and there are numerous antecedents to examine if we are to determine why the angel gained his wings. What, then, was the origin of the winged angel? Is it possible to isolate the earliest examples of these figures and explain what their meaning was?

Late antique Jewish art would seem to be a good starting point, but we are hampered by rabbinic iconoclasm. This led to the general opinion amongst scholars that the winged angel was a Christian development that was borrowed by Jews in the late Middle Ages and early

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[241] Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* X, 104 2 [*SC.* II] mocks those who treat the raven and the jackdaw as the deliverers of God's voice, and the raven ὡς ἄγγελον Θεοῦ "as an angel of God".

[242] *Protrepticus* X [*SC* 2, 9.83.3].

[243] Becking, "Raven" 1300-1301.

[244] Cf. Morton Smith, "Ascent to The Heavens" 51who cites E. Bickermann, "Die römische Kaiserapotheose", in *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 27 (1929) 1-31as a complete collection of the evidence for this practice.

[245] Geo Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism (King and Saviour II)* [Studies in Manichaean, Mandean and Syrian-Gnostic Religion] (A.-B. Lundequistska Bokhandeln: Uppsala, Otto Harrassowitz: Leipzig, 1946) 151 n1, in regard to Syrian religion mentions passages by Narsai (in *ARW* XXI pp.364 ff.) and poems by Aphrem and Balai. The continuity of this idea is demonstrated by examples such as the images of birds used to represent the soul in the mosaic in the chapel of the Priest John, Khirbet el-Mukhayyat in modern Jordan; see Lucy Anne Hunt, "The Byzantine Mosaics of Jordan in Context: Remarks on Imagery, Donors and Mosaicists", *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 126 (1994) 119.

Renaissance. In a 1947 article, however, Franz Landsberger pointed out that there are indeed some examples of Jewish art from late antiquity that help to illuminate our quest. Landsberger discusses a mural from Dura Europos which depicts the high priest wearing a robe decorated with winged cherubs that look remarkably like Roman geniuses or Victories.[246] A Jewish sarcophagus from second century Rome shows an image just like that of the winged victory crowning the athlete, but here the winged victories hover around a menorah. Landsberger argues that here iconographical similarity does not mean identity, arguing that in a Jewish context these victories could only be interpreted as angels.[247] Likewise the winged seasons that appear on this sarcophagus must also be interpreted as angels.[248] Images similar to the winged victories hovering above the victorious athlete have also been found on at the entrances to some synagogues, but most were later chiselled off.[249] Landsberger demonstrates that Graeco-Roman iconography was invading Jewish art, but he does not draw a clear link between the images he catalogues and angels. Thus he does not demonstrate that the cherubs on the high priest's robe from Dura were actually angels, or that the winged victories were identified as angels (when they could have been identified as cherubs, or even victories). His article serves to tie developments in Jewish art into trends in the rest of the contemporary Graeco-Roman world, but does not answer the essential question of when and why the angel was first believed to be a winged creature.

In a late antique Jewish literary source which Landsberger does not mention there is also a reference to a winged angel. I refer to *3 (Hebrew) Enoch*, in this passage Rabbi Ishmael is carried to heaven by Metatron, the text reads "and he grasped me with his hand and carried me aloft with his wings".[250] This text, however, being almost certainly written in the fifth or sixth centuries, after the advent of the winged angel in Christian art, offers us little in the search for origins, except to bolster the argument of Landsberger that the winged angel had its origin in circles close to Judaism, for the other option, that Jews would have adopted a Christian religious image so soon after it first arose seems unlikely given the general tendency for both religions to try to accentuate the differences between each other, and the

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[246] Landsberger, "The Origin of the Winged Angel in Jewish Art", *HUCA* 20 (1947) 244.
[247] *Ibid.*
[248] *Ibid.*
[249] *Ibid*, 246.
[250] *3En* 42:2; Ms. Vat. 228 (ed. Schäfer, *Synopse* §59).

demonstrated Jewish tendency in late antiquity to reject that which had been tainted by Christian use, such as the Greek Septuagint.

If we are looking for an ultimate origin in Near Eastern art for wings as a religious symbol a very good place to start is in Egypt. We have already seen that in Egyptian art, as in the Bible, wings often symbolised protection. Thoth, the god of writing and communication, the Egyptian equivalent of Hermes/Mercury, was also depicted as winged.[251] The most important image, however, to have come from Egypt is the image of the winged disc, originally the symbol of the sun god Re. This symbol travelled from Egypt thoughout the lands of the Near East. As the *clipeus caelestis* or *aspis* it became a symbol of divine kingship.[252] Achaemenid art depicts Ahura Mazda within a winged disc, and the king himself within this disc.[253] Sassanian iconography demonstrates a symbolic relationship between wings and royalty. Here we have examples of the abbreviation of the image of the king in his heavenly chariot, to simply a bust of the king surrounded by wings.[254] Thus the king is seen as an earthly representation of the god. Wings are thus the symbol of divine cosmic mastery, and of divinity and divine sonship. Symbols, of course, do not have set, dictionary-type definitions; their meaning changes from individual to individual and from culture to culture, but what we have here is a remarkably stable and long-lasting leitmotif in which wings are symbolic of divine power.

To explain the wingedness of the late antique angel we need to look for other influences which could have combined with the already discussed Near Eastern ideas concerning the symbolism of wings.

In Graeco-Roman thought there are almost innumerable examples of winged spiritual or divine beings. The Nike, or winged Victory, of the Greeks and Romans is, as we have already seen, a suitable template for much of the iconography of winged angels, but does not help us to understand why the angel became winged in the first place. Her wings are generally seen as something derived from Near Eastern thought, and first applied to her by

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[252] H.P. L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (Oslo: H. Aschehoug & Co [W. Nygaard], 1953) 90-102.

[253] L'Orange, *Studies* 92-3; L'Orange, "Expressions of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World", in *idem* (ed.) *Likeness and Icon: Selected Studies in Classical and Mediaeval Art* (Odense: Odense Univ. Press, 1973).

[254] L'Orange, *Cosmic Kingship* 44-47; cf. 65 where the abbreviated form leaves just the wheels of the chariot rather than the wings of the creatures bearing it.

the sculptor Archermos of Chios (purely for their decorative value, although later she is often pictured in flight).[255] Indeed winged beings seem to have been connected with the east by Herodotus. He makes much of the existence of winged serpents who invade Egypt each year from Arabia (and are repelled by ibises, hence their position of respect in Egyptian thought) and in Arabia act to protect spices from humans attempting to gather them.[256] Likewise Hermes/Mercury was depicted winged, and he was a messenger god, like the angels of Christian and Jewish tradition.[257] But Hermes' wings were not on his back, rather on his sandals, so in terms of iconography the two do not really match; and I find it unlikely that those depicting angels would have adopted the idea of being winged from Hermes and then decided to use the iconography, i.e. the two wings on the back, usually associated with Nike. But there are other Greek examples of winged beings: originating in Mycenean and Cretan art but continuing right through the Hellenistic and Roman periods can find examples of winged centaurs and sphinxes;[258] in later times we have Pegasus the winged horse;[259] the

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[255] E.A. Gardner, "Wings (Greek and Roman)", in James Hastings (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* XII 741. For examples of winged Nikes or Victories see: ANUCM (=Australian National University Classics Museum) 66.43, a silver coin (CE 100) with winged Victory on rev.; ANUCM 66.61, Antoninianus of Traianus Decius (CE 249-251), rev. winged Victory running; UQAM (= University of Queensland: Antiquities Museum) 83.076, winged Victory on pot, cf. J.W. Hayes, *Late Roman Pottery* (Rome: British School at Rome, 1972) 80; MU 1884 (= Macquarie University Museum of Ancient Cultures), Sherd with winged Victory. For winged Nikes see: NMAC 56.09 (=University of Sydney, Nicholson Museum of Ancient Cultures); NMAC 62.874, partly preserved Nike on Attic red-figured lekythos; NMAC 79.03, terracotta relief plaque (1st BCE); NMAC98.27 = R756, Attic red-figured lebes gamikos (4th BCE); NMAC 98.69 = R795, Nike with Eros on a possibly Apulian red-figured lekanis lid (4th BCE).

[256] Herodotus, *Historiae* II.75, III.106-112.

[257] For an example of a winged Hermes see: NMAC 98.24a = R710, Attic Vase; cf. A. D. Trendall, "Attic Vases in Australia and New Zealand," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 71 (1951) 178-193, p. 181 no. 22. A. D. Trendall, *Handbook to the Nicholson Museum* (Sydney: Sydney Univ. Press, 1948) 277, 282, 351, 379. The wings of Mercury could often appear as a winged caduceus symbol, see ANUCM 73.23, a silver denarius of Titus (CE 74).

[258] See B.H. Fowler, "The Centaur's Smile: Pindar and the Archaic Aesthetic", in W.G. Moon (ed.) *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography* (Madison, Wis.: Univ. of Wisconson Press, 1983); Centaurs: Roman lamp decorated with a centaur, UQAM 83.043; fragment of relief plate from El Djem (Tunisia) UQAM 85.092, see also 85.095; a (Sicilian or Attic) fragment of a neck amphora, MU 3234. For representations of the sphinx see: UQAM 82.001, Black-figure sherd with a panther and part of a sphinx; UQAM 95.033, vase; MU1304, cup-rim sherd; MU 1373, sherd; MU 2987, terracotta relief plaque (ca. 470 BCE); MU 3303, Athenian Lip Cup (550-525 BCE); MU 935, Attic black-figure rim sherd; MU 936, body sherd; MU 940, body sherd; NMAC 47.08, Corinthian Aryballos (ca. 625-600 BCE), cf. A.D. Trendall (1948) 261 fig. 56a; NMAC 47.15, Chalcidian black-figured neck amphora; NMAC 51.05, Corinthian alabastron (ca. 640-525 BCE); NMAC 51.26, Attic black-figured lekanis (ca. 590-570 BCE); NMAC 56.04, 56.05, Attic black-figured lekanis (ca. 600 - 580 BCE); NMAC 56.17, sherd of Band Cup; NMAC 62.878, Corinthian amphoriskos. See also these examples of sphinxes from outside the Greek world: NMAC 59.04, Burnt ivory oliphant Sphinx (ca.730-720 BCE) from Nimrud (Fort Shalmaneser); NMAC 60.33, cylinder seal from Nineveh,; NMAC 84.82, faience amulet from Egypt.

[259] See: ANUCM 67.15, Corinthian silver stater coin (400-360 BCE); NMAC 92.03, silver stater of Anactorion, Akarnania (350-300 BCE); UQAM 83.045, Roman lamp; UQAM 85.098, fragment of relief plate (El Djem, Tunisia, see above n256; ANUCM 73.27, Corinthian hemi-drachma (400-338 BCE); ANUCM 67.15, Corinthian stater (400-360 BCE); also ANUCM 65.33.

zoomorphic hybrid creature the gryphons, the Gorgon,[260] Eros (depicted as a nude male figure with wings);[261] wind demons or gods who were also depicted as winged; the Boreads, sons of the north wind who chased these wind demons away; Boreas himself;[262] and Iris the messenger of the gods.[263] Two other types of winged being can be found, and in the context of this excursus they should assume some importance – the winged Harpy,[264] a kind of death demon originally depicted in human form with wings (although later becoming more zoomorphic) and the winged souls of the dead depicted on vases and elsewhere.[265] Also connected to these early depictions of winged souls of the dead is the later idea of the winged *psyche* who is generally related to Eros, and is sometimes even depicted as a butterfly.[266] So too Death and Sleep are found depicted as winged human figures.[267]

c. The symbolic meaning of wings

If such possible antecedents can be seen in ancient Greece and Egypt, what was happening during late antiquity in other religious scenes apart from those we have just discussed?

Mithraism provides further examples of winged figures; there is a certain type of Mithraic figure that has aroused interest amongst scholars because, like the winged angel, its symbolic

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260 See ANUCM 65.35, ceramic sherd from Italy, Apulia (399-300 BCE).

261 See: NMAC 51.38, sherd from Apulian red-figured hydria (ca. 380 BCE); NMAC 47.18, Apulian red-figured lekythos (4th BCE); NMAC 49.10, Paestan bell-Krater (ca. 360-320 BCE); NMAC 51.16, Attic (?) red-figured lekanis lid (ca. 400 BCE ?); NMAC 52.61; Campanian red-figured calyx-krater (325-310 BCE); ANUCM 79.06, Greek terracotta figure of Eros (199-1 BCE); ANUCM 76.13, Apulian red-figured pelike (350-300 BCE); ANUCM 65.27, Apulian lebes gamikos (399-300 BCE); also ANUCM 65.19; ANUCM 65.20; ANUCM 65.32.

262 See UQAM 71.003, Greek Albastron.

263 B. Jaeger *et al.* (eds.) *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* 5.2 (Zürich, Münich: Artemis, 1990) 485-500.

264 See UQAM 71.003.

265 For possible examples (i.e. these are depictions not clearly identifiable with figures of classical mythology), see: NMAC R597, clay lamp; NMAC 98.70 = R727, red-figured rhyton (4th CE); NMAC 51.49, Fragment from an Apulian bell-krater (375-350 BC); UQAM 76.001, Etruscan mirror plate; UQAM 82.022 Etruscan cauldron foot; MU 1544, Turkey (?) terracotta figurine; clearly winged figures played a large role in Etruscan religious imagery; see also NMAC 53.19; NMAC 56.06.

266 See Roger Beck, *Planetary Gods and Planetary Orders in the Mysteries of Mithras* (Leiden: Brill, 1988) 59 n145, also mentions C.C. Schlam *Cupid and Psyche: Apuleius and the Monuments* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1976) and R. Merkelbach, *Mithras* (Königstein/Ts. 1984) 235-236, who points out that there are three Mithraic monuments that represent Psyche with Cupid as symbols of the soul's ascent (Capua Mithraeum, *CIMRM* 186; frag. from Sa. Prisca Mithraeum, Vermaseren & Van Essen, *The Excavations in the Mithraeum of The Church of Santa Prisca in Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1965) 478, no. 275, Plate 128.1; reverse of the gem stone *CIMRM* 2356. M. Brizzolara "Due rilievi votivi della collezione Palagi," *Il Carrobbio: Rivista di Studi Bolognesi* 3 (1977) 99 (according to Beck correctly) identifies an allusion to the ascent of the soul in the Bologna relief, as the winged putto acts as charioteer instead of the usual scene of Mithras and Sol ascending in Sol's chariot.)

267 B. Jaeger *et al.* (eds.) *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, 5.1: 591-609, 7.2: 616-618.

meaning has not always been clear.[268] This is a figure with a human body, wings, a lion's head and a snake wrapped around it. Two examples, one unprovenanced and the other coming from Oxyrhynchus have been preserved in Egypt, proving that there was indeed Mithraism in Egypt in Late Antiquity[269] — something once thought to be missing from Egypt's remarkably diverse and tolerant pagan religious scene.[270] Other examples of this figure have been found in Mithraea in Sassoferrato and York.[271] This winged, snake encircled and lion-headed figure was once interpreted as Ahriman, the Zoroastrian evil deity, but now scholars follow the lead of Vermaseren in interpreting it as a time deity, Aion-Chronos, whose syncretic cult originated in Egypt and was derived in part from the worship directed to Re, the sun god and thus also god of time.[272] This deity was also taken from the Zoroastrian Zurvan, the time god, subject of the Zurvanite heresy in the fifth century BCE which attempted to submit both Ahura Mazda and Ahriman to omnipotent and thus monotheistic Zurvan.[273] Both in his nature and iconography there are strong connections between this Graeco-Roman Mithraic deity and Zurvan, representing one of the only two real borrowings from Persian religion by Roman Mithraism, the other being Mithra himself.[274]

In a paper delivered at the first international congress of Mithraic studies in 1971 M.J. Vermaseren discussed a lamella from Ciciliano in Latium;[275] in the context of this discussion he detailed several magical gems from Late Antiquity on which a type of magical time god

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[268] See M.J. Vermaseren's discussion in *Mithras: Geschichte eines Kultes* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1965) 94-104.
[269] Vermaseren, *Corpus inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis Mithriacae* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1956-1960) (=*CIMRM*) I, no. 102 & 103; see Raffaele Pettazzoni, "La Figura mostruosa del Tempo nella Religione Mitraica", *Antiquité Classique* 18 (1949) 265-77; Gary Lease, "Mithra in Egypt", James E. Goehring & Birger A. Pearson (eds.) *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 118.
[270] Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902) 534-35; see Lease, "Mithra in Egypt", 115.
[271] Sassoferrato (ancient Sentinum): see Doro Levi, "Aion", *Hesperia* 13 (1944) 287 & fig. 14; York: F. Cumont, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra* (Brussels: H. Lamertin, 1899) (=*TMMM*) II, 392, no.271 fig.310 = *CIMRM* no.833f; see also L. Hübner, "Denkmäler des Aeon", *Jahrbücher des Vereins von Alterthumsfreunden im Rheinlande* (= *Bonner Jahrbücher*) LVIII (1876) 147-54, pl.viii,1; see also the similar figure from Strasbourg which features a winged lion at its feet, *TMMM* II, 340 no.240 fig. 214 = *CIMRM* no.1326 fig. 350.
[272] Raffaele Pettazzoni, "Aion(-Chronos)", in H.J. Rose (ed.) *Essays on the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1967) 175-76.
[273] M.J. Vermaseren, "A Magical Time God", in John R. Hinnells (ed.) *Mithraic Studies: Proceedings of the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies* II (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1975).
[274] See Lease, "Mithra in Egypt", 118-9.
[275] See *CIMRM* I, 102, no.168 (incorrectly placed in Sicily) and *CIMRM* II, 22f no.168.

can be seen.[276] This figure is often named *Adonai* or else some other term related to this word used as a substitute for "YHWH" in the Old Testament, or else it is found in combination with a limited group of names, such as the palindrome *Ablanathanalba*, the part-palindrome *Akrammachamarei*, *Semesilamps*, and *Iaō*, also derived from the Hebrew word for God. The names *Semesilamps* or *Semesela* or *Semesilan* or on one occasion *Simelsam* (as on the lamella discussed by Vermaseren from Ciciliano in Latium) and the name *Iaō* are both linked to the time god Aion (*Semesilamps* indirectly through association with Chnoubis).[277] This magical god known as *Adonai* or some other name derived from *Adonai* is also found in connection with symbols such as the ouroboros (the snake devouring its tail and thus symbolising eternity), once with a mummy entwined with a snake (also symbolising eternal life), once with Sol and twice with the figure of a monstrous deity with wings which we discussed above.[278] We have here a god who was definitely a time god; we know this because of its associations with other deities seen as time gods, and also because of the attribution to it of symbols such as the ouroboros. This figure was also associated with the monstrous winged figure discussed above. Here is evidence, then, for another link between the monstrous winged figure and time.[279] There is one more figure popular in Late Antiquity that was winged, the four seasons. Once again this is a figure associated with time. We can see examples from a Jewish tomb and also on the Ottaviano Zeno monument.[280] Beck allows that there may be some relationship between the wings on the four seasons and cosmic time, but argues instead for a symbolic meaning related to the ascent of the soul, for as we have already noted the Greek soul was winged.[281] As we shall see in the conclusion the two are not incompatible, for in the angels' wings we can see the point at which Re, Zurvan and Plato meet in the philosophical melting pot which was the Late Antique religious scene.

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276 Vermaseren, "A Magical Time God", *passim*.
277 *Ibid.*, 449.
278 *Ibid.*, 448-49, see also Delatte's discussion of Ablanathanalba and its connection with sun gods such as Osiris, the sun itself, the lion-headed god and a nude male figure with wings (no.180): A. A. Delatte & P. Derchain, *Les Intailles magiques gréco-égyptiennes* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1964).
279 Vermaseren sums up his argument: ". . . the Hellenistic age in general, of which Egypt was a major component, formed a concrete representation of an abstract idea of Eternity": "A Magical Time God", 456.
280 Jewish tomb: Landsberger, "The origin"; Ottaviano Zeno monument: lost for some time and known only from drawings, now most of it has been recovered and published by Vermaseren in *Mithraica IV: Le monument d'Ottaviano Zeno et le culte de Mithra sur le Célius* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).
281 Roger Beck, *Planetary Gods and Planetary Orders in the Mysteries of Mithras* (Leiden: Brill, 1988) 58-9.

In Christian literature humans could also be depicted as winged. This is normally in the context of symbolism connected to the ascent to heaven of the righteous after death. The soul is stripped of the encumbrance of its body and, thus freed, ascends to heaven. In the evidence available two reasonably distinct themes can be discerned. Firstly in Manichaean texts the soul is presented with its wings once it has ascended, along with the other insignia symbolising an immortal, angelic state – the garments of light, crown and garland (although rarely all these elements – the robe and wings being the most constant).[282] Thus the wingedness of the soul in these texts represented the achievement of an immortal timeless state. And secondly in early Christian literature in which the wings are something gained due to righteousness. In these texts it sometimes seems to be suggested that the wings are needed for ascent, and other times they are, as in the Manichaean texts, a reward for righteousness. In ascetic literature the gaining of wings is connected to the angelic state and enables travel to heaven.[283] Methodius of Olympus connected wingedness to the celibate state.[284]

Both Mithraists and Christians were drawing on the same traditions regarding the soul, in particular Plato. Plato uses the idea as the centre of an explanation of the soul and its rise and fall (*Phaedrus* 246-257), souls are a chariot drawn by winged horses, one good, one unruly; if someone is successful in managing the team then they ascend to the level of the gods; if someone is unsuccessful then the steed's wings are lost or damaged and the wingless soul descends to earth to inhabit one of us — therefore we are all unwinged souls and our purpose is to grow wings again (love pangs are the itch of newly sprouting wings). In the *Phaedrus*

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[282] See §4.9, for a discussion of these texts.

[283] See, for instance, "On Hermits and Desert Dwellers ", Joseph P. Amar (intro. & trans.) *Ascetic Behaviour* 66. This text is a poem which although ascribed to Ephrem in title holds a different eschatology from that held by Ephrem. The asceticism also seems more radical than Ephrem's. It is clearly a representation of Syriac ascetic practices after the coming of Egyptian monasticism to Syriac areas (see Amar's comments 66-7). Text: Edmund Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones IV.* (Louvain: CSCO 334/Scr. Syr 148, 1973). (77, *l.*393) "And when they saw attractions in the world, they clung to pure fasting, so that through their fasting, they would acquire wings, and soar to heaven on them. (78, *l.*449) .. .. They have become companions of the angels above; indeed, they resemble them." See also MacDermot's, *The Cult of the Seer* 368-9 which collects together three different texts discussing a story of the inadequacies of the younger generation of monks in terms of their lacking wings of fire (M. Chaine, (ed) *Le Manuscrit de la version copte en dialecte sahidique des 'Apophthegmata Patrum' [Publication de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale. Bibliothèque d'Etudes Coptes* VI. (Le Caire: Impr. de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1960)] 43.11(180); E.A.W. Budge (ed.) *The Book of Paradise (Lady Meux Manuscript No.6): being the histories and sayings of the monks of the Egyptian Desert by Palladius, Hieronymus and others* (London, 1904) (Syriac 626.14); F. Nau, *Histoire de Jean le Petit, Hegoumène de Scète, au IV siècle* XXIV.11.

[284] Methodius, *Symposium* 8:2; 8:1.

246B-C the connection between wings and ascent and divine transformation is made more explicit: the soul...τελέα μεν οὖν οὖσα καὶ ἐπτερωμένη μετεωροπορεῖ τε καὶ πάντα τὸν κόσμον διοικεῖ ("when perfected and winged, travels the heavens and governs the cosmos").[285] Beck claims, and I would agree, based upon the evidence of later ascent visions, that this is not just a metaphor (though it is that as well), but a "literal voyage to the upper reaches of the cosmos in the company of the gods. This was what the Mithraic initiation and the passage of the grades also was."[286] The same Platonic imagery was also influencing early Christian views of the soul as winged.

In Manichaeism, however, the wings have become a *reward* for heavenly ascent, rather than a tool. They are seen as one of the symbols that mark the transformation of the righteous into an angel. They have thus become descriptive of the angelic state. These Manichaean texts from Medinet Madi seem to represent a very early phase of Manichaean literature, some may indeed even have been the work of Mani himself, who as we now know probably came from a Jewish-Christian baptist background.[287] The Manichaean literary description of an angel with wings thus approximately coincides with the earliest orthodox Christian iconographical representation of an angel as winged.[288]

At this point I think it is necessary to sum up the evidence so far, and to make some suggestions about the origins and meaning of the idea of the winged angel.

We have seen the general scholarly consensus amongst art historians that the winged angel was somehow derived from the winged victory; we have also seen the dissenting views of first Landsberger and more recently Bussagli who argue respectively that the winged angel derived from an increasingly anthropomorphised cherub or that he became winged due to his association with wind, and the idea of the wind being winged, and also the use of wings to symbolise swiftness. Our investigation of possible antecedents in ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman art and religion, and of what was happening in other religions at roughly the same time as the Christian angel became winged raises other possibilities. We

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285 Harold North Fowler, *Plato* I (*LCL*; Cambridge Mass. & London: Harvard Univ. Press, 1995).
286 Beck, *Planetary Gods* 58.
287 Cf. S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China: A Historical Survey* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1985) 28-32.
288 The third century bas-relief from Carthage, see n222.

can speculate not only about what the iconographical antecedents of the winged angel were (the origins), but also what it all meant. In Greek thought and art the soul was depicted as winged, this image having probably been borrowed from Near Eastern models and originally having more to do with its decorative value than any symbolic meaning. By late antiquity the soul had come to be seen as blessed with immortality — eternal timelessness — our material bodies preventing its realisation whilst we exist on earth. In Near Eastern thought wings had originally been closely connected to the sun and thus to time, and the supreme God, and thus mastery of time, and through the supreme God also with the king, who as the god's representative on earth came to be seen as sharing in his attribute of immortality. Wings are also connected to the iconography of the Near Eastern sacred chariot of God or the king, the chariot in which he traverses the heavens and which in Sassanian times was symbolically abbreviated to either a pair of wings, or else wheels. In late antique Mithraism and on magical gems and amulets wings had also come to be associated with deities of cosmic time, and thus also mastery of it.

The wings of the late antique angel, like those of Egyptian, Persian, Mithraic divine beings and magical iconography, and the wings of the Greek soul, represented mastery over cosmic time – the eternal timeless and thus immortal state achieved by the righteous soul upon exiting the body, a state already shared by the angels. We now know why the angel found his wings, but who originally put the two together? The fact that this idea is found most clearly expressed in Manichaean texts raises the possibility that these texts were transmitting an idea from the earliest strata of Jewish-Christianity, transmitting and preserving the idea until 4th century Christianity unharnessed itself from its original iconophobia and angelophobia.

3.3.2 Garments as signifiers of status

If, then, we accept that the weight of evidence favours seeing the early Christian angel simply as a soul in a certain position in the heavenly hierarchy, we should be minded then to ask what differentiates this particular soul from one stationed upon earth. It is apparent that this differentiation is accomplished by the outward appearance of the angel, viz., his clothes. The ideology of wearing, of putting on or taking off, clothing assumes primary importance in the attempt to understand how people conceived of angels. Humans have probably always

seen clothing as an indicator of status. The clothes of emperors, kings, courtiers, soldiers and slaves identified them and influenced their behaviour and the behaviour of others towards them. When we examine the cosmological system behind the early Christian understanding of angelic nature we see something that is populist rather than philosophical. The few literary studies of the angelic nature (such as Origen's) found themselves having to operate in populist terms rather than philosophic categories. Although we have seen that philosophic reasoning did have some place, for instance in the connection made between fire and ether and angels, this was a field of knowledge that was dominated by a less philosophically strict approach. Thus when we examine the nature of angelic beings we find ourselves looking through the eyes of the average 'man or woman on the street' in first or second century Antioch or Neapolis and seeing states of existence in terms of costume. An angel was a soul in a particular part of the heavenly hierarchy and recognizable as such by its wearing of a certain costume.

In the New Testament we have only a few descriptions of angels. The angels at the tomb are mentioned in all the Gospels. In Matthew 28:2-3 we have the most elaborate description, we are told of an angel of the Lord, whose appearance was like lightning and raiment white as snow. In Mark 16:5 we are told of a young man in a white robe. In Luke 24:4 two men in dazzling apparel are described. In John 20:12 two angels in white appear. In the book of Revelation we see the imagery of texts like Daniel 7:9 taken to refer to angels.[289]

In the following chapter "Symbolic Frontiers" we shall examine the clothing symbols used in the description of angelic beings, and we shall see that clothing not only marked individuals out as heavenly beings, but also played a role in effecting the transformation of humans to divine, angelic status.

3.4 Angelic Functions

We have seen that the Christian conception of the nature of angels was fluid in the first four centuries. Moreover, Christian writers expended little ink on questions of angelic ontology. The dearth of Scriptural material discussing angelic nature meant that Christian writers were limited in what they could say. They did not, thus, build upon the work of Jewish writers

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[289] The angel with a face like the sun, wrapped in a cloud with a rainbow over his head and legs like fire (Rev 10:1).

such as Philo, whose comments on the angelic nature must have informed the work of Origen and Clement and perhaps others. Therefore the legacy of philosophic speculation (Jewish, Middle- and Neoplatonic) upon the nature of angels was stillborn in early Christianity. Yet the very lack of early Christian interest in the question of the exact ontological status of angels meant that non-Christian philosophic speculation upon their nature remained the only source of information regarding angels and thus informed, even if only subconsciously, the early Christian perception of their nature. However, due to the lack of discussion in Scripture of the nature of angels and the ambiguous status of the Greek word *aggelos* used to describe these beings, their ontological status remained largely unclear.

When angels are discussed in early Christian literature it is often in the context of their functions, in particular that of worship. As we will see this is part of the reason an angelic Christology could exist, because the difference between the angelic function and nature was not clearly expressed or understood.

3.4.1 Creative angels

The question of the role of angels in creation played a minor part in Christian speculation on angels. It was only in gnostic circles that there came to be an increased focus upon lesser creative beings. Understandably more orthodox Christians steered away from such speculations. Interest in this subject was not revived until the twelfth century Catholic Scholastics mentioned in the second chapter.[290] Yet mainstream Christian literature was also a part inheritor of the traditions which in gnosticism developed into the theory of the demiurge and the other elaborate cosmogonical speculations of the various gnostic systems.

The fall of the angels tradition can be demonstrated to be connected to a myth of the coming of civilising figures who brought such things as the arts of cultivation and the Jewish Law. The idea that angels had some role in creation is connected to this myth-complex.

The cosmological and cosmogonic myths of the Near East and the Mediterranean world were full of civilising figures. Osiris was connected both by Egyptians and Greeks with a civilising myth. Diodorus said that Osiris abolished the institution of cannibalism, taught the

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290 See §2.1.

arts of agriculture and then roamed the world with an army sharing the arts of agriculture with mankind.[291] This must have been a combination of the Pharaonic Egyptian religious belief, which pictured Osiris as a bringer of agricultural bounty,[292] and Egyptian legends about great pharaohs such as Sesostris.[293] Alexander the Great was also seen in a similar fashion and he was equated with Dionysus, who performed a civilising mission.[294]

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[291] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* I.11.

[292] In Papyrus Chester Beatty Osiris declares, "It was I who made barley and emmer to nourish the gods, and the cattle after the gods, while no god or goddess was able to do it" (Papyrus Chester Beatty, 1, recto, in Miriam Lichtheim [ed.] *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, II [Berkeley, London, Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1975] 221); a bas-relief at Denderah indicates that Egyptians saw the wheat grain planted in the earth as the dead Osiris and the germinated wheat as the resurrected Osiris (Budge, *Osiris*, II 32, pl. 58). There is a similar bas relief at Philae, which depicts corn growing from the dead body of Osiris (*ibid*, I, 58). The connection of Osiris with grain is further illustrated by the practice of putting in tombs a figure of Osiris made out of grain (*ibid.*), one of which has been found in a Christian tomb (Philip David Scott-Moncrief, *Paganism and Christianity in Egypt* (Cambridge, 1913) 125). Thus in the papyrus, *The Making of The Spirit of Osiris* we read: "the Nile appeareth at thy (Osiris') utterance ... making all the lands to be green by thy coming, great source of all things which bloom, sap of crops and herbs" (Budge, *Osiris* I, 385). Osiris also functioned as the deity of the Nile. Plutarch wrote that the Egyptians actually equated the Nile with Osiris (Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 65). So, too, the *Book of The Dead* equates the Nile and Osiris (Diana Delia. "The Refreshing Waters of Osiris", *in Journal of The American Research Center in Egypt*, 29 (1992) 184); Delia notes that Egyptian religion tended to express abstract concepts concretely, like the Greeks, and equated a number of deities due to their being a personification of the same abstract concept. Thus 'regeneration' is equated to the Nile, which is equated to Osiris and H'apy (the god of the Nile, its personification) (*ibid*, p.182). Similarly Porphyry wrote, "He (Osiris) is also taken to be the river-power of the Nile...they bewail him also to propitiate the power when it abates and is consumed" (Porphyry, *De cultu simulacrorum*, frag. 10, in Pieter Willem Van Der Horst, *Chaeremon, Egyptian Priest and Stoic Philosopher* (Leiden: Brill, 1984) 29). Osiris was connected with not only the Nile but water in general. Water was directly connected with death in ancient Egypt. In the pyramid texts the dead pharaoh is offered water on several instances (Delia, p.182, mentions utterances 32, 619, & 436); utterance 436 talks of the waters of Osiris (R.O. Faulkner (ed. & trans.) *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969) 143). It was also believed that Osiris was revived after dismemberment by the water from H'apy's breasts and a jug of water held by him (Jack Lindsay, *Men and Gods on The Roman Nile* (London: Muller, 1968) fig. 45 p.40). Likewise Plutarch claimed that Osiris was often pictured as black because water tends to make things appear black (Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 33). Water was poured on the corn Osiris figures that were interred with the dead from the period of the New Kingdom onwards (Delia, 185). On the island of Delos, Osiris was so closely connected to the hydreion, the urn containing water (usually Nile water), that he was worshipped as the personification of it (*ibid*, 186; cf. Herodotus, II.172).

[293] In north-west Anatolia there was a myth of a figure named Memnon, based on the great warrior Agamemnon. This deity was treated as an Osirian-type deity of fertility. He was equated by Herodotus with the Egyptian Pharaoh Sesostris, the conquering hero who was supposed to have spread civilization throughout the Mediterranean world (Herodotus II.100-110; cf. Dierk Wortmann, "Kosmogonie und Nilflut. Studien zu einigen Typen magischer Gemmen griechisch-römischer Zeit aus Ägypten", in *Bonner Jarhbücher* 166 (1966) 106-7 for a discussion of Memnon in an Egyptian context). Lindsay has suggested that the legend of Sesostris may have resulted from the combination of three pharaohs with the name Senusret (Lindsay, *Men and Gods on The Roman Nile* 2).

[294] In a recent biography of Alexander the Great John Maxwell O'Brien has concentrated on the close connection between the careers of Alexander and Dionysus, and the important influence that the legend of Dionysus had over the life of Alexander (*Alexander The Great, The Invisible Enemy* [London & New York, 1994]); for instance Alexander spares one city after he is told that it was founded by Dionysus. Sparing this city was seen as appropriate as Alexander's campaign was largely regarded as an emulation of Dionysus' conquests, indeed he was determined even to surpass the achievements of the god (O'Brien, 151, although Alexander did not regard himself as the new Dionysus, 191). O'Brien observes that Dionysus was a constantly recurring reference throughout the life of Alexander.

The Judaeo-Christian tradition of the fall of the Watchers seems to have been interpreted in both a negative and a positive fashion; it is connected to the other Mediterranean traditions of civilising figures mentioned above. It has been suggested that at least one persistent myth-tradition in gnosticism originally thought of the coming of the angels to bring the arts of civilisation as a good thing (i.e. as in *Jubilees*); only later did it come to be interpreted in the light of the developing negative view of the cosmos in gnostic circles.[295] The archangel Michael was particularly involved in positive interpretations of the civilising myth.[296] Certainly it was increasingly the case that in the Second Temple period angels were seen as being involved in the act of creation. The Septuagint[297] pays witness to this, as does the *Book of Jubilees*.[298] In fact Jubilees suggests a positive interpretation of the coming of the angels; originally their mission was positive, only later did it become corrupted.[299]

In the New Testament Paul's generally disparaging view of angels is confirmed when he comments that they were responsible for the bringing of the Jewish Law (which the coming of Christ had now superseded) (Gal 3:19; cf. Heb 2:2; Acts 7:38). Yet although it was a Pauline viewpoint, the belief that angels brought the Law was later used as an accusation to

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[295] G.A.G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed* 20.
[296] The archangel Michael played an educative, civilizing mission in the pseudepigrapha. As discussed in the last chapter, Michael was responsible for teaching the primal figures in the Bible how to bury the dead and how to mourn, for instance Eve and Seth (*Vita Adae et Evae*, 48 & *Apocalypse of Moses*, 43:1-4). So, too, in the *Vita Adae et Evae*, Michael is responsible for bringing seeds to earth to give to Adam so that he may farm the land (*Vita Adae et Evae*, 22:2). In the later Coptic text, *The Mysteries of St John, Apostle and Holy Virgin* (CE 1006), the connection with the Osiris myth is even more explicit. Adam and Eve are starving after their expulsion from Eden. Christ feels compassion for them, but has to plead with God to show them some mercy. Eventually God relents, and God and Christ take a part of their body and send Michael to earth with it. This body of God is wheat, and Michael is responsible for teaching Adam how to sow it (*The Mysteries of St John, Apostle and Holy Virgin*, fol. 6a, in *Coptic Texts*, III). Just like in the legends of Osiris wheat is seen as a part of the body of God, although, necessarily, another god. Of course this idea of wheat being a divine substance could also be a corruption of the Christian Eucharist, where wheat temporarily becomes the body of God. In the Late Hebrew *Testament of Naphtali* (A 1st century addition to the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs) YHWH comes from heaven in the time of Abraham with Michael and seventy ministering angels to teach languages to the seventy families descended from Noah (8:4-6). In Jewish tradition Michael is thus intimately connected with the arts of civilisation. Indeed 3 Baruch contains the idea that Michael even built Eden, along with 200,003 angels (4:7). In the book of *Jubilees* (1:27), the 'angel of the presence', identified with Michael in *1En* 40, shares his knowledge with Moses on Mt Sinai. In the *Shepherd of Hermas* (Sim. viii) a story is told in which the Jewish law is described as a tree, the branches of which are given out by Michael. According to the heretic Apelles, quoted by Hippolytus, Michael is both the creator and the lawgiver of the Old Testament (VII.38.1).
[297] Which used the plural verb ποιήσωμεν to describe God's creative act in Gen 2:18.
[298] See Jubilees 2:14, 3:1, 4 & 10:22 (cf. Gen 11:6); also see previous note and Gen 1:26 (MT & LXX); Vulgate; MT, P, Samaritan Peshitta all have the singular at Gen 2:18; see J.T.A.G.M. Van Ruiten, "Eden and the Temple: The Rewriting of Genesis 2:4-3:24 in *The Book of Jubilees*", in Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, (ed.) *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity* 73 n13.
[299] *Jub* 4:15, 4:22, 5:1-11; See "Eden and the Temple", *op cit.* 74-5.

be hurled at heretics.[300] Thus in the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* Peter is reported to oppose those who believed that angels brought the Law.[301] The notion of angels having any role in the positive aspects of the civilisation process must have come to be seen in the light of the myth that the fallen angels brought the negative arts of civilisation.[302] Thus the myth of civilising figures was generally interpreted in a negative fashion in Christianity, although in Egyptian Christianity the archangel Michael's role as a civilising figure remained as a survival of ideas originally connected with Egyptian gods like Osiris.[303]

Jews in particular were accused of believing that angels created the world. Philo admitted the possibility of other creators, but suggested it was a mystery the truth of which was only

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[300] For instance Ps.-Tertullian, *Adversus omnes Haereses* 3 on Cerinthus and Epiphanius, *Panarion.* t.2, 28, 1, 1-3; was this possibly because it was becoming more accepted in Jewish circle that angels somehow mediated the Law? On this development in Jewish thought see H. Najman, "Angels at Sinai: Exegesis. Theology and Interpretive Authority", *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7 (2000) 313-333.

[301] Pseudo-Clemens Romanus, *Homiliae* XVIII.12.

[302] See Clement of Alexandria, *Eclog. prophet.* 53-55; Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women* I.2, 8; IV.10; see also I.1 & 3; St Cyprian *The Dress Of Virgins* 14 (who echoes the argument of Tertullian in *On the Apparel of Women* I.8.

[303] In Christian Egyptian traditions, Michael has the role of bringing the Nile flood. In the *Discourse of Timothy* Michael is prayed to so that he will convince God to allow the Nile to flood: "...O compassionate Archangel Michael, make entreaty to the Lord for us that he may bring water in the river Nile." (*Discourse of Timothy*, fol. 75a, in *Coptic Texts*, V). Michael and Ouriel are also mentioned with Chnoum, who was another deity responsible for overseeing the Nile and its flood (Erica Zwierlein-Diehl (ed.) *Magische Amulette und andere Gemmen des Institutes für Altertumskunde der Universität zu Köln* [Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992] 72) & in an inscription from the 18th year of Pharaoh Djoser (3rd dynasty) Chnoum is called the god of the Nile flood, D. Wildung, *Egyptian Saints* [New York: New York Univ. Press, 1977] 70). The second festival of St Michael in the Coptic Church, the twelfth of Paoni, was held at the time that the Nile was due to flood (the Nile flooded from August to November, Norman Russell, *The Lives of The Desert Fathers* [London & Oxford: Mowbrays, 1980) 19 n12). Indeed in the Coptic *Synaxarion*, or list of saints, Michael is said to govern the Nile flood (Aziz S. Atiya [ed.] *The Coptic Encyclopedia* [New York: Macmillan, 1991] V, 1618). Michael was responsible for more than just rain and flood: he was regarded as the archangel of the earth, the figure responsible for nature and the nourisher of humanity. This duty is found on several occasions in the magical papyri. In PGM LXXXIII.1-20, a spell with an obviously strong Christian influence, as it contains a version of the Lord's prayer (Matt 6:9-11) and a quotation from psalms (LXX Ps 90:1-2), it is written: "I conjure you Michael, archangel of the earth (PGM LXXXIII.1-20)." PGM III.187-262 says, "and [you, Michael], your helper, who saves [his people's lives], the perfect eye of Zeus, and who has both exalted nature and brought forth nature in its turn from nature (PGM III.187-262)." A second century amulet, most probably Judeo-Christian, mentions Michael in conjunction with two common magical names, AKPAMAXAMAPEIABΛANA ΘANAΛBMIXAHΛ. In PGM XII.183 AKPAMAXAMAPEI and ABΛANAΘANAΛBA are mentioned. The first is described as possessing righteousness, the second as being king of the gods. These two *voces magicae* are mentioned alongside another magical word, ΣANKANΘAPA, in a pattern that indicates that they were viewed as being part of a magical formula (PGM XII.183). Thus MIXAHΛ on the amulet seems to have taken the place usually assigned to ΣANKANΘAPA, who, in the aforementioned spell, is described as the ruler of nature. Michael is therefore seen in the same light as Sarapis (a Ptolemaic syncretist deity comprised of Osiris and the Apis Bull worshipped at Memphis), who is called, "greatest nourisher, apportioner" (PGM XIII.343-646). In Theodosius' encomium we are told that Michael nourished Seth when Eve's milk dried up on account of Adam's death (*Encomium of Theodosius* fol.17a, in *Coptic Texts* V).

known to God.[304] Perhaps the creation of man was the job of these lesser 'powers'.[305] Justin Martyr accused the Jews of his day of believing that in Genesis 1:26 God was talking to his angelic helpers in creation of the cosmos when he said: "Let *us* make man".[306] The Aramaic Targum *Pseudo-Jonathan* seems to have interpreted Gen 1:26 in just this manner.[307] Not surprisingly Jewish Christians were also tarred with the same accusation. Cerinthus in particular was often targeted with this accusation. It was reported *ad nauseam* in Christian anti-heretical literature.[308] The Jewish-Christian origins of Manichaeism are underlined by the Manichaean belief in creative angels.[309]

But it was mainly gnostics who took an interest in the creative role of lesser divine beings. In gnostic traditions the creation of the world by lesser powers was associated with the generally negative view of the creation held by these groups. It was an ideology of the fall without the involvement of mankind, rather of the angels and other lesser denizens of the heavenly worlds. In numerous gnostic texts Genesis 1:26 was interpreted as referring to a

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304 *Op. mund.*72; cf. *Fug.* 68. On the other hand Josephus rejected the possibility of angelic assistance in creation, see *Contra Apion* II.192 and *Antiquities* I.32.
305 Philo, *Op. mund.* 73-76, *Fug.* 68-70; cf. *conf.* 168-82. *Op. Mund.* 72-5 Philo mentions that the lower half of man was created by the angels, the upper half by God. This became a standard theme and it is repeated in the Church Fathers: Severus said that from the navel up, the top half of the human body was created by God and the bottom half by the Devil (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 45.2.2); Clement of Alexandria also mentions this belief, but does not name a source (*Strom.* 3.34.1). The 4th century Christian theologian Basil of Ancyra said that God created man like a centaur, upper half rational man, lower half beast; on this see Williams, *Rethinking Gnosticism* 122-3 & 289 n17, wherein he gives other references which have been collected by Henry Chadwick.
306 *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 62.2; whereas Justin argued that plurals indicated the presence of the Logos: *Dial.* 127 & cf. *Dial.* 56; and see also the late second century apologist Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum* 2.18.
307 See Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Genesis* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993).
308 For instance: Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, X, 21, 1-3; St Augustine, *De heresibus*, 8; Filaster, *Diversarum hereseon Liber* XXXVI; *Predestinatus*, I, 8; Theodoret of Cyrrhus in *Compendium haereticarum fabularum* II, 3; John Damascene *De haeresibus liber*, 28; Theodore Bar-Khonai, *Liber scholiorum*, 301; Dionysius Bar-Salibi, *In Apocalypsim, Actus et Epistulas Catholicas*, 4. Pseudo-Tertullian, in *Adversus omnes haereses* 3 attributes to Cerinthus the idea that angels were responsible for the giving of the law as well as assigning creation to angels, and further asserts that the God of Israel is not the Lord but an angel. According to Ps.Tertullian the Ebionites are Cerinthus' successors, they, however, believe that the world was created by God, although their particular brand of heresy saw the Law as supreme; these sources are collected in Klijn & Reinick, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects.* Likewise Epiphanius, *Panarion haer.* t.2, 28, 1, 1-3, says Cerinthus believed the world was created by angels; moreover the Law and the prophets were given by angels and one of these world-creating angels is the 'giver of the law' (τὸν δὲ δεδωκότα τὸν νόμον).
309 In the *Apocalypse of Adam* in the *Cologne Mani Codex* (50:1-4) it is said that: ὁ Ἀδὰμ καὶ γέγονεν ὑπέρτερος παρὰ πάσας τὰς δυνάμεις καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τῆς κτίσεως (Adam became above all the powers and the *angels of creation*); on the Jewish-Christian origins of Manichaeism see I.M.F. Gardner & S.N.C. Lieu, "From Narmouthis (Medinat Madi) to Kellis (Esmat el-Kharab): Manichaean Documents from Roman Egypt", *JRS* 86 (1996) 155-60; also P. Brown, "The Diffusion of Manichaeaism in the Roman Empire *JRS* 59 (1969) 92-103 (republ. in *idem*, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London: Faber & Faber, 1972). Of course this interest in lesser creative beings also shows Manichaeism's affinities with gnosticism, see below.

plurality of creating angels or archons.[310] Some gnostic systems built elaborate cosmogonies involving numerous different lesser divine beings.[311] The Valentinian creation story shows the clear influence of the legend of the fall of the angels.[312]

Other systems proposed creation by seven angels.[313] But overall the main gnostic interest in angelic creation was focused upon the creation by lesser divine beings of the human body. Justin is reported to have believed that the creation of humanity was undertaken by the twelve angels assigned to Eden.[314] In the *Apocryphon of John* angels create the human body and the demiurge (Ialdabaoth) breathes into it and animates it.[315] The Carpocratians are said by Irenaeus to have taken their belief in the creation of the world by lesser divine beings as a justification for excessive sexual behaviour.[316]

The connection of angels with creation was not of central importance to mainstream Christianity. It was a line of speculation that early Christianity inherited, but which was closely associated with angel traditions derived from the Book of Watchers tradition and Genesis 6:1-4. In gnosticism the radically negative view of the cosmos seized upon such traditions and combined the myth of the civilising figure with that of the fallen angels and their bringing of knowledge. The role of angels as creative beings thus had a role to play in gnosticism, but not in more mainstream Christian circles.

3.4.2 Guides for heavenly tourists

In the Jewish Pseudepigrapha angels had increasingly taken up the role of guides for those wishing to tour heaven. This, of course, stands to reason. As the heavenly realm came to occupy central attention for the type of seer found in the Jewish intertestamental literature it is natural that he should need guides from that realm in order to travel through it. This phenomenon is a feature of angelology which grew from the Jewish pseudepigrapha but which continued to function in Christian angelology. Consequently I will not deal with this

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310 Cf. *Hyp. Arch.* 87, 24ff.; *Orig. World.* 112, 30ff.; Irenaeus, *Adv haer.* 1.24.1 (on Satornil of Antioch); 1.30.6 (Orphites).
311 On the Audians see Theodore bar Konai, *Liber Scholiorum* [ed. Scher; CSCO 55] 320.2-3.
312 Cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1.1.1-8.5.
313 Irenaeus on the system of Satornil (one of the creative angels was YHWH) *Adv. haer.* 1.24.1.
314 Hippolytus, *Ref.* 5.24.2-3.
315 *Ap.John* 19, 13-33 (NHC II); cf. *Hyp. Arch.* 88, 3-9; *Orig. World* 115, 3-11.
316 Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1.25.1-4.

issue in any depth at all. It has been covered by all those mentioned in the "State of Research" chapter who have dealt with Jewish angelology in this period.[317] It has been dealt with in particular by Martha Himmelfarb.[318] It should be nevertheless noted that in most passages cited or quoted in this thesis which describe the heavenly journey of a seer an angelic guide is normally somewhere present.

3.4.3 Worship and legitimation

The central function performed by angels for the early Christians was their worship of God through the singing of angelic hymns. This function held greater importance than all the other functions, such as their role as intermediaries. Angels existed to give praise to God. The angelic worship of God performed two roles in early Christian ideology. It acted as the ideal of the worship that Christians offered to God upon earth; this will be dealt with below.[319] It furthermore acted as an indication of divinity. God's worship by the angels underlined his unique supremacy; Christ's worship by the angels in the Gospels was a statement that he also was God. The Pseudo-Ignatian *Epistle to the Philippians* (early 5th?) makes much of the Satan's ignorance of the angelic worship of Christ.[320] He was, of course, developing ideas found in the birth narratives in Matthew, where the wise men worship Jesus (2:2-11), and Luke, where the angelic message to the shepherds is identified as legitimate by the appearance of the angelic choir praising God (2:8-14).[321] In the non-Pauline epistle to the Hebrews the Septuagint Deuteronomy 32:43 was quoted to demonstrate Christ's status as a 'son of God';[322] here the angelic worship of Christ serves to demonstrate his status as God,

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[317] For instance Michael Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992) & Peter Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen*.
[318] See Martha Himmelfarb's major monograph on the subject, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: OUP, 1993) *passim*, but esp. chap. 4.
[319] §§ 5.2.1 & 5.6.1.
[320] Pseudo-Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philippians* VIII & IX.
[321] See also 1 Tim 3:16 & 5:21.
[322] Interestingly this quotation has been identified as having affinities with 4QDt. Certainly the attitude of Hebrews is much closer to the Dead Sea Scrolls than to gnostic thought, and an interest in the theme of angelic praise is an idea shared by both the early Christians and the Dead Sea Scrolls community. For the argument that Hebrews is a gnostic document see E. Käsemann, *Das wandernde Gottesvolk: Eine Untersuchung zum Hebräerbrief* (1952; republished as *The Wandering People of God: an Investigation of the Letter to the Hebrews* [trans. R.A. Harrisville & I.L. Sandberg Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984]). For the connections between the Dead Sea Scrolls and Hebrews see Y. Yadin, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Epistle to the Hebrews", *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 4 (1959) 36-55, who draws links between the figure of Melchizedek in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Christ; M. de Jonge and A.S. van der Woude, "11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament," *NTS* 12 (1965-66) 322 do likewise; and J. de Waard, *A Comparative Study of the Old Testament Text in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the New Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965) 81-2, who notes the link between Hebrews, LXX

above all the other divine beings, such as the angels.[323] The only other being whose worship is discussed is Adam in the Adamic literature that focuses upon Satan's refusal to worship him. The command to worship Adam emphasises his pre-fall semi-divine status in the eyes of God.[324]

Scripture pays witness to this function and its long history in Near Eastern religion. It seems that the roots of this idea go back to ancient Near Eastern literature,[325] but it was through the Old Testament that early Christians came across the notion of the heavenly council's praise of God.

מזמור לדוד הבו ליהוה בני אלים הבו ליהוה כבוד ועז
הבו ליהוה כבוד שמו השתחוו ליהוה בהדרת-קדש

> Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings (*bnei elim*), ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy array.
> (MT & RSV Ps 29:1-2; LXX 28:1-2)

In Psalm 103:20-22 this worship of God by the heavenly hosts is echoed by all of creation and also the soul of the singer. Likewise in Psalm 148 the praise of the heavenly hosts (1-2) is taken up by the rest of God's creation, in acknowledgement that he is the only being

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Deut 32:43 and 4QDt, as well as other textual correspondences, such as Heb 5:9 (quote from Is 45:17) and 1Q 15-16, or Hebrews 10:39 (pesher on Hab 2,4b) and 1Qp Hab.

[323] Justin Martyr (in a slightly circular manner) makes much of the status of Jesus as God due to the fact that he is worshipped; see *Dialogue with Trypho* 68. Athanasius, writing against the Arians, used the worship of the angels in Hebrews 1:6 as a support for his view of Christ as God, *Oratio I Contra Arianos* (*PG* 26, 96.40.20).

[324] Cf. Gary Anderson and Michael Stone, *The Life of Adam and Eve: The Biblical Story in Judaism and Christianity* (http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/anderson); also Michael E. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (Atlanta : Scholars Press, 1992); Gary A. Anderson & M.E. Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve* (Atlanta : Scholars Press, 1994); Anderson & Stone, *Literature on Adam and Eve: collected essays* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

[325] Ithamar Gruenwald, "Angelic Songs, the Qedushah and the Problem of the Origin of the Hekhalot Literature", in *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism: Studies in Apocalypticism, Merkavah Mysticism and Gnosticism* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988); originally published in Hebrew as ,שירת המלאכים 'ובעיית חיבורה של ספרות ההיכלות in Oppenheimer, U. Rappaport & M. Stern (eds.) **פרקים בתולדות ירושלמי בימי בית שני: ספר זיכרון לאברהם שאלית** (*Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period, A. Schalit Memorial Volume*; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi , Ministry of Defence, 1980) 146 n7; on the heavenly song in ancient near eastern literature see M. Weinfeld, " הספרות השומרית וספר תהלים. מבוא למהקר "השואתי ("The Watchers literature and the Book of Psalms. Introduction to the Comparative Research") (Part 2), *Beit Mikra* 57 (1974) 136-160; also see *idem*, עקבות של קדושה יוצר ופסוקי דזמרה במגילות קומראן ובספר בן סירא ("Traces of Kedushah in Yozer and Psukei DeZimrah in the Qumran Literature and in *Ben Sira*"), *Tarbiz*, 45 (1976) 15-26. Zoroastrian literature also shows evidence of this tradition; in the Zoroastrian *Vendidad* (no. 19, written in late Younger Avestan probably during the Parthian period, cf. Mary Boyce *Textual Sources for The Study of Zoroastrianism* [Manchester Univ. Press: Manchester & Dover, 1984] 2) the souls of the righteous are described in their ascent to the golden thrones of Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas in the 'House of Song': Boyce (1984) 80.

worthy of praise (13). Psalm 135, when it declares "give praise, O servants of the Lord, you that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God!", may well be referring to the angelic host. Certainly Psalm 138:1 (LXX 137) is talking of the angels as the singer declares that he gives thanks to the Lord, "with my whole heart; before the gods I sing thy praise".[326] In Job 38:7 the morning stars and the sons of God are said to have sung and shouted for joy at the Creation. An angelic hymn is described to us in Isaiah 6:1-3. Isaiah is given a vision of the heavenly throne and the seraphim praising the Lord: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory".[327] The first three words of this prayer (קדוש קדוש קדוש) give us its title, the *Qedusha*, known in Christian liturgy as the *Trisagion*.[328] This worship of God by the heavenly hosts continued to develop in Judaism, it was a theme taken up in the writings of the sages, in prayer and the Hekhalot.[329]

The Pseudepigrapha and early Christian literature placed increased importance upon this angelic praise. In *1 Enoch* the watchers sing "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Spirits". In the book of Tobit (G1 version only) 8:15 the angels and saints and all creation join with God's chosen people to praise him. Likewise, as in Isaiah, in Revelation 4:8 six-winged Living Creatures praise God with the sanctus: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, which was and is, and is to come". The Nag Hammadi *Apocryphon of James* (10:1-5) says of James and Peter that they got on their knees and sent their hearts to heaven; as a result they saw and heard: "hymns, angelic praises, and angelic rejoicing. Heavenly majesties were singing hymns, and we rejoiced too."[330] Likewise (6:11) the one who sees Jesus with God, whilst God is proclaimed amongst the angels and glorified among the saints, is given 'life' (immortality).[331]

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of hymns for early Christian practice. In Syriac texts, in particular, angelic hymn-singing and praise of God is notable for its prominence. It is probably the main connotation behind the title *ʿira* "watcher" used for

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326 לדוד אודך בכל-לבי נגד אלהים אזמרך .

327 קדוש קדוש קדוש יהוה צבאות מלא כל-הארץ כבודו (6:3). It has been suggested that Ezekiel also contains mention of the angelic worship of God, but this is not at all clear in the text, see I. Gruenwald, "Angelic Songs" 149 & nn.

328 From the Greek ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος for קדוש קדוש קדוש.

329 Cf. Ithamar Gruenwald, "Angelic Songs" 145-158 on the early development of this idea in scripture and practice.

330 Meyer (1984) 13-14 and *NTA* I (1973) 337.

331 Meyer (1984) 10, on the transformative aspect of heavenly hymns of praise see §5.2.1 & 5.6.1.

angels in Aramaic/Syriac, as it served to denote their function of ceaseless praise of God.[332] We shall see in §§5.2.1-5.2.2 how important the notion of worshipping God in imitation of the angels was to early Syriac Christianity.

Yet from the first there was concern over this interest in the angelic praise of God. Colossians 2:18 pays witness to this. Here an early writer, quite possibly Paul,[333] warns:

> Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἤ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἤ νεομηνίας ἤ σαββάτων · ἅ ἐστιν σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ. μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβευέτω θέλων ἐν ταπεί νοφροσύνῃ καὶ θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων, ἃ ἑόρακεν ἐμβατεύων, εἰκῇ φυσιούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλήν, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἁφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον αὔξει τὴν αὔξησιν τοῦ θεοῦ.
> (Nestle-Aland, Col 2:16-19)
>
> Therefore let no one pass judgement on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. (RSV Col 2:16-19)

What was this worship, and what exactly was the problem the writer had with it? The RSV translation 'worship of angels' is much less ambiguous than the Greek "θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων", which could conceivably be referring to either the worship of angels by others, or the worship by angels of God. The first interpretation was once the received opinion, but today it is accepted by most scholars working in the field that this passage is actually referring to the second.[334] Thus there was probably an early Church polemic against interest

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[332] Rather than any possible guardianship (i.e. over humans) cf. Robert Murray, "Some Themes and Problems of Early Syriac Angelology", René Lavenant, SJ (ed.) *Symposium Syriacum V, 1988* (Roma: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1990) a reassessment of the issues dealt with in his earlier article "The Origin of Aramaic, *ʿîr*, Angel", *Orientalia* 53.2 (1984) 303-317.

[333] For the question of authorship see "Colossians" in David N. Freedman, *et al.* (eds.) *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* I, A-C (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 1092-3.

[334] See Richard Bauckham, review of Roman Heiligenthal's, *Zwischen Henoch und Paulus. Studien zum theologiegeschichtlichen Ort des Judasbriefs* in *JTS*, ns 47/1 (April, 1996) 246 and Larry W. Hurtado *One God, One Lord, Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1988) 32; who cites F.O. Francis, "Humility and Angelic Worship in Col. 2:18", *ST* 16 (1962) 109-34, reprinted in F.O. Francis and W. Meeks (eds.) *Conflict at Colossae: A Problem in the Interpretation of Early Christianity Illustrated by Selected Modern Studies* (Scholars Press: Missoula, Mont., 1975); his interpretation is accepted by Wesley Carr, *Angels and Principalities* (1981) 69-71. Cf. also C.A. Evans, "The Colossian Mystics," *Biblica*

in the worship of God by the angels. Considering the importance of this theme in the other writings we have so far examined it is pertinent to ask why there would have been such opposition to this kind of speculation. The next phrase, ἃ ἑόρακεν ἐμβατεύων, contains the answer. This interest in the heavenly liturgy was connected to those who practised ascent visions. As we shall see in chapter 4 visionary ascents in the Pseudepigrapha normally ended with a vision of the heavenly angels worshipping God, followed by the visionary joining that choir. This interest in the angelic liturgy could clearly be taken too far. Ignatius also wrote against those who speculated concerning the heavenly orders. Yet his comments indicate clearly how problematic this question was to the Church. This issue will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6, but it needs to be noted at this point that Ignatius was not opposed to visions *per se*, simply to the practice of visions by ordinary Christians who were not spiritually mature enough.[335] Visionary practices connected with seeing the heavenly orders, in particular their worship of God, were part of the religious life of Christians, even proto-orthodox bishops like Ignatius, but also seem to have posed a threat. This tension over the role of visionary practices continued into Christian ascetical movements connected with the Church, and is reflected in the ascetic's imitation of the angelic behaviour that was seen by the seers who made the ascent into heaven.

3.5 Angelic Christologies and the chief angelic vice-regent

The debates over Christology in the first Christian centuries underscore the difficulties felt by Christians in defining the nature of Christ within the basically Platonic cosmological framework of the time. In the tripartite cosmology of the day[336] there existed earth and the

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63 (1982) 188-205, & R. Yates, " 'The Worship of Angels' (Col.2:18)", *Expository Times* 97 (1985) 12-15. Hurtado also mentions the Angelic Liturgy from Qumran, on which see Schiffman, "Merkavah Speculation at Qumran: The 4Q *Serekh Shirot Olat ha-Shabbat*," in J. Reinharz & D. Swetschiniski (eds.) *Mystics, Philosophers and Politicians: Essays in Jewish Intellectual History in Honor of Alexander Altmann* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1982) 17-47, who suggests that the proliferation of angelic names in esoteric speculation began no earlier than the 66-73 CE revolt. Cf. also C. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition*, HSS 27 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985). This is just like the later Rabbinic attacks on speculation concerning the court of God and its members; cf. Sheppard, 83 & n30, who mentions J. Talmud *Berachot* 13A69; I. Epstein, *Judaism* (Harmondsworth, 1959) 224-25 & cf. *Sifre Deut.* 148A fin. Recently C. E. Arnold has argued that this was worship of angels by humans: *The Colossian Syncretism* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995) 90-95.

335 Ignatius, *Epistle to the Trallians*, 5.1.1 – 5.2.5, in *SC* 10; cf. chap. 6.

336 Odd numbers, especially three, have always been regarded as being associated with divinity. Examples of this are found in Talmudic literature (Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition, A Study in Folk Religion* [New York, 1939] 118), Shakespeare, Virgil and in the Islamic tradition; therefore magic is performed an odd number of times, and names are repeated or knots tied three or seven times (Annemarie Schimmel *The Mystery of Numbers* [New York: OUP, 1993] 14). Trinities were long regarded as having a religious

creatures thereon, there existed heaven with the Godhead in residence, and there was the zone in between the two inhabited by creatures (angels/*daimones*) that could move between the two worlds and thus facilitate communication between God and humans. In this cosmological framework Christ seems most easily to fit into the position of angel rather than that of God. In the first four hundred years of Christianity some did indeed define Christ as an angel, whilst others, right down to the present day, have argued against the description of Christ as an angel, usually claiming that a mere title tells us little about actual nature. The non-Pauline Epistle to the Hebrews survived in the canon because it was needed. Its opening lines made clear the difference between Jesus Christ and the other *aggeloi* that brought messages from heaven. The Son was to be compared to the biblical prophets (1:1), but he was better (1:2), as he was God's son. For no angel had ever been named "Son" (1:5). It is clear that the warning against viewing Christ as an angel was necessary.[337]

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significance in Egypt. The Alexandrian Triad, of Isis, Sarapis and Harpocrates, was very popular in the later Roman empire. Indeed it is unusual in that, unlike the other gods, the veneration of these gods did not decline in this period (H. I. Bell *Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt* [Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1953] 66). A trinity of gods was particularly important in Egyptian thought. Indeed apart from Philo's explanation of Genesis 18 the trinity is a uniquely Egyptian pagan notion (Siegfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion* [trans. Anne E. Keep; Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1973] 255). Likewise creation and humans themselves were often seen as being made of three parts. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 divides the human into spirit, soul and body. Gregory of Nazianzen divides creation up into God, angels and man (*In sanctum baptisma* (*Oratio* 40) E) as does the Qur'an 2:161; 3:87. We can see, then, a natural tendency towards a tripartite vision of the cosmos, both on a macro and micro level.

[337] Scholars have focused upon whether this passage is arguing against practices which actually occurred, or whether it is just arguing that the identification of Christ as an angel could potentially occur (based upon practices known to be occurring in Judaism), or whether the angels were simply being used as a rhetorical device to demonstrate the superiority of Christ. Ockham's razor suggests that, although ingenious, the latter two positions are too clever by half. If a polemic against identifying Christ as an angel is found, then it follows that someone actually did identify Christ as an angel; otherwise why the warning? It is simply not logical to suggest that the writer envisaged a potential problem and decided on a pre-emptive strike against it, or else that the language used was mere rhetoric. As detailed in §3.5 the earliest writers on this topic supported the position that Hebrews was actually arguing against something real, see Martin Werner *Die Entstehung des Christlichen Dogmas* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1941) 330, 344-45; W. Bousset; *Die Religion des Judentums in späthellenistischen Zeitalter* 329-30; following on from them were such writers as Yigal Yadin, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Epistle to the Hebrews", in C. Rabin (ed.) *Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1965); A. Bakker, "Christ an Angel?", *ZNW* 32 (1933) 255-65; J. Rendel Harris, *Josephus and his Testimony* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1931) 18. For a comprehensive overview see John Reumann, "Martin Werner and 'Angel-Christology'", *The Lutheran Quarterly* 8 (1956) and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology. A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], Tubingen, 1995) 119-140. Others have viewed Hebrews as a warning against what could happen based upon Jewish practices: James Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1924) 9; John J. Gunther, *Saint Paul's Opponents and their Background* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 182-83; others have claimed that Hebrews was simply using the angels as a rhetorical device: Ernst Käsemann, *The Wandering People of God* (trans. R.A. Harrisville & I.L. Sandberg Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) 100; Hans-Freidrich Weiß, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) 158-160; Michael Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1992) 287 n22; also, for a comprehensive bibliography see Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 125 n201.

Sometime between the first and the third centuries CE the *Testament of Solomon* was written; its textual history is complex, but it appears that after the first, Jewish, version was written a Christian redactor added a passage that seemed to refer to Christ being announced as an angel.[338]

> I said to him: "By what angel are you thwarted?" He said, "By the one who is going to be born from a virgin and be crucified by the Jews".[339] (*TSol* 22:20)

How could this clear reference to the coming of Christ so obviously refer to him as an angel? To what extent is this evidence of an angelic Christology? As discussed in the introductory chapter the question of angelic Christology has often been at the forefront of scholarly debates concerning angels. The most recent contributors to the field seem content to accept the existence of an angelo-morphic Christology which might mean little for the actual nature of Christ.[340] But it seems from the evidence examined so far that all angelology was 'angelo-morphic'; angels were souls in a particular position in the spiritual hierarchy. It was the form (*morphe*) taken by these souls which defined their status as angels; that Christ temporarily took that form tells us little about his real nature; we need to examine the passages which describe him as such in more detail. Scholars have now turned to what has been described as a "broader understanding" of the category "angel" or "angelomorphic"; in other words traditions such as the Son of Man traditions or those of transformed patriarchs

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338 On the question of date, author and provenance see M. Whittaker, "The Testament of Solomon", *AOT* 733-6, esp. 735 where he suggests a Greek Christian author ca. 200-250 working in Galilee; for a more cautious approach to these questions see D.C. Duling, "Testament of Solomon. A New Translation and Introduction", *OTP* I, 940-944. There were certainly traditions circulating about books of Solomon at the turn of the era; for instance Josephus mentions such a text, see *Antiquities* 8.2.5.

339 Trans. *OTP* I, cf. 984 n.22 a.; also for var. MS P & Q. E.g. MSS HILPQ 22:20: καὶ εἶπον αὐτῷ «ποίῳ ἀγγέλῳ καταργεῖσαι;« ὁ δὲ λέγει «τῷ διὰ παρθένου μέλλοντι γεννηθῆναι ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸν προσκυνοῦσι ἄγγελοι, καὶ ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων μέλλοντι σταυρωθῆναι.« See C.C. McCown (ed.) *The Testament of Solomon* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1922) for the various readings.

340 Jean Daniélou first used the term (see *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* [trans. J. Baker; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964] 146; Charles A. Gieschen's recent monograph (*Angelomorphic Christology: antecedents and early evidence* [Leiden: Brill, 1998]), which is very much building upon the work of Rowland (see below), is the best treatment to date. See also the discussion in Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: a Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995) 209 n4. He discusses the difficulties in applying the title 'angel christology' to New Testament writings when the term 'angel' is not used of Christ, but he nevertheless seems associated with angelic categories; he cites in support of this Rowland ("Man clothed in Linen" 100; see below n367) and Brox (*Der Hirt des Hermas* 490-92 & n13) who uses the term 'angelomorphe' to describe the Christology in the Shepherd of Hermas. Stuckenbruck is suspicious of the existence of an 'angelophanic' Christology in the earliest period. The most comprehensive recent treatment is by Darrell Hannah, *Michael and Christ: Michael traditions and angel christology in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), it is a re-examination of the importance of Michael traditions and aims to update the work of Leuken (cf. §2.2).

are now seen as feeding into the understanding of the angelic 'nature'.[341] What this is recognising is that whilst Christ may have fitted into the model of a heavenly being, he may not have always been described specifically as an angel. Implicit in this is the recognition that the practice of referring to all the heavenly hosts as 'angels' was something which developed in Christianity over time; the earliest literature (e.g. Revelation) used language descriptive of the heavenly state, without needing to call it 'angelic'. There was a gradual movement in Christian theological thought away from a varied and multifarious heavenly world towards a categorisation of the heavenly beings as angels so that only Christ was not reduced to the status of an angel, but could traverse the angelic and the human world, and take up either nature. It was the battle against Arianism and the Council of Nicaea which completed the reduction of the heavenly beings to angels, a task as we saw above not completed in Judaism until the Middle Ages (§3.1.2). We shall see, particularly, in the next chapter that the imagery associated with angels is, in the late Second Temple and early Christian period, most often found in texts dealing with the transformation of human beings into senior angelic figures.

What is perhaps the most useful recent treatment of the question of angelic Christological conceptions, Joseph Trigg's article in the *Journal of Theological Studies*,[342] divides angelic Christology into four types. (1) 'Angel' as a title without any significance apparent to us; (2) 'angel' to signify Christ's role as a message-bearer of God, a functional role; (3) a 'dispensational' definition in which the Son's taking of the angelic nature is equivalent to his taking up of human nature; and (4) a 'natural' definition in which the Son is described as possessing an angelic nature.[343] It is not clear which definition the *Testament's* statement about Christ matches, and the problems of origin and dating render this passage an enigma. Although useful as heuristic categories the argument of this thesis so far suggests that Trigg's categories might be flawed if we try to use them to answer a question about Christ's or an angel's 'true nature'. For instance the first category of course tells us little. The second category also tells us little about Christ's fundamental nature and as a functional definition

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[341] Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology* 17.
[342] "The Angel of Great Counsel: Christ and the Angelic Hierarchy in Origen's Theology", *JTS* n.s. 42.1 (1991) 35-51.
[343] Trigg, "Angel of Great Counsel", 37. His categories bear some similarity to those used by Charlesworth in examining the tradition of the transformation of people (including Christ) into angels in the Pseudepigrapha, see "The Portrayal of the Righteous as an Angel", J.J. Collins & George W.E. Nickelsburg (eds.) *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism, Profiles and Paradigms* (Scholars Press: Chico, Calif., 1980) 137.

does not differentiate Christ from the angels who were, as we have seen, normally seen as souls in a particular position in the spiritual hierarchy and performing a particular task, thus an essentially functional definition. The third category tells us much about the view of the incarnation as a descent through various spiritual natures, but once again tells us little about the Son's true nature. But if it is correct that an angelic nature was dependent upon a soul's position in the spiritual hierarchy and any soul in the angelic realm must take on the angelic nature then an angelo-morphic Christology does not differentiate Christ from other souls which also occupy angelic forms. None of these categories explicitly indicate the true nature of Christ. Only the fourth category and those who explicitly argued against it really tell us much. Rather than focus upon the temporary state of Christ during his role in the bringing of his message it would be instructive to ask what place he occupied more permanently, for instance before he descended to earth and was incarnated as the man Jesus Christ and after his re-ascent to heaven.

An overview of the early Christian literature dealing with this topic demonstrates that there was a rapid progression in Christian thought. It will become clear that, although one of the defining features of early Christian thought was its rapid attempt to build a Christology independent of Christianity's Jewish roots, the early view of Christ was nevertheless unavoidably built upon the model of the chief angel in the Jewish pseudepigrapha. The chief angel, like Christ, was a polymorphous being who could take up different forms at different times and places.

In the period immediately preceding the rise of Christianity a chief angel alongside God became increasingly popular in Jewish literature. The figure of the chief angel must have grown out of the figure of the angel of the Lord in the Torah (Gen 16:7-14, 22:11-18; Exod 14:19-20, 23:20-21). In the later books of the Bible the same figure seems to appear in the description of the 'glory of the Lord' (Ezek 1:26-28, 8:2-4). Once again it is unclear exactly what this being was – was it God, or a form of God or an independent being?[344] Regardless of the status of this figure his description may have influenced the later text Daniel when it describes a similar type of figure (10:5-9). Once again the exact nature of this being is unclear, not surprising in a text as mystical as Daniel. Yet it is clear that these beings are in

[344] See Hurtado, *One God, One Lord* 76 & nn23 & 24.

some fashion acting to represent God in his communication with mankind. Moreover it is in Daniel that the canonically named angels, Gabriel (8:15-26; 9:21), and Michael (10:13-21, 12:1) first appear. We can thus assume that those interested in angels would have looked to Daniel (and Ezekiel with its vision of heaven) in order to learn about the nature and appearance of the heavenly beings. In the work of Philo the term *Logos* referred to a kind of vice-regent to God, an identity widely recognised in late Second Temple Judaism. Philo's angelic *Logos* was an administrator of the world and chief steward (κυβερνήτης καὶ οἰκονόμος).[345] In late Second Temple Judaism this being was variously called the angel of the Lord, *Logos*, Wisdom (*Sophia*), High Priest or Archangel (Michael, Metatron, Melchizedek).[346] Moreover Philo described the Logos as being 'firstborn' (πρωτόγονος).[347] In the New Testament the semantically identical term *prototokos* was used to refer to Christ (Hebrews 1:6, πρωτότοκον) the righteous dead in heaven (12:23: ἐκκλησίᾳ πρωτοτόκων), of Christ as the trailblazer for the righteous dead (ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν Rev 1:5), and of Christ (πρωτότοκος) in the primitive Christ-hymn in Colossians 1:15. This term (*bukrā*) was also used for Christ in Syriac literature.[348] In the Dead Sea Scrolls the Hebrew version of this term was used to refer to the chosen people Israel (בכורי)[349] and Jacob (בכור) and thus his descendants.[350] Likewise it was used for Joseph in *Joseph and Aseneth*,[351] a text in which Joseph is described very much like a chief angelic figure, as also is his father Jacob; and in Origen's quotation of the *Prayer of Joseph* Joseph is called πρωτόγονος (see §4.4.1). The mention in Hebrews 1:4 of the name that Christ received, which was "more excellent than theirs (the angels)", also helps to tie this passage into other texts that discussed the chief angelic figure, for this figure was normally characterized as possessing the name of God. In

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345 *Quest. Gen.* IV.110, reconstruction of the Greek from the Armenian, cf. *LCL* Philo Suppl. I, 393 n.*m*.
346 Philo linked the term 'Logos' to the terms 'Angel', 'Archangel' and 'Son of God': see *Conf. ling.* 146, *Agr.* 51 in which the λόγος is described as υἱὸς θεοῦ, ἀρχάγγελος, and ἄγγελος. On the development of such mediators from personalisations of divine attributes to something like independent beings see L. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord* 42-48; although whether these beings ever actually assumed a fully independent existence, even in the works of Philo, is unclear; see L. T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology. A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], Tubingen, 1995) 137-8.
347 *De Somniis* 1.215. The term used for Israel in LXX Ex 4:22 (πρωτότοκος), is the Hebrew equivalent in the MT is בכרי. The term is taken to refer either to the nation Israel (4 Ezra 6:58, Sir 36:12, *Jubilees* 2:20, *Psalms of Solomon* 18:4), or to the patriarch (*Jubilees* 19:29); cf. J.Z. Smith, "Prayer of Joseph", *OTP*, II 704. *Prōtogonos* is one of the terms used for the creator in the Orphic *Rhapsodic Theogony* known to Neoplatonists from a version dating to the 1st century BCE: Copenhaver, *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius* xxviii.
348 R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (Cambridge Univ. Press: Cambridge, 1975) table III, 356.
349 *The Words of the Luminaries*[a], 4Q504 [= 4QDibHam[a]] iii.6, in Baillet (ed.) *DJD* VII.
350 *The Book of Jubilees*, 4Q216 [4QJub[a] = Jubilees 2:20] vii.11-12, in Vanderkam & Milik (eds.) *DJD* XIII.
351 21:3, in Cook's (*AOT*) and Burchard's (*OTP*) translations, although the Slavonic version omits this.

the *Book of Enoch* the chief angel's power, in this case Michael's, over creation is derived from his ownership of the name of God.[352] This is the name of God possessed by the archangels and Michael earlier in *1 Enoch* (29:1) and by the angel of the Lord in Exodus (23:21). In the Greek magical papyri from Egypt the same archangelic figure appears in possession of the name; PGM I.195-222 (4th-5th CE) calls on an archangel and says, "I call upon your secret name...you...[who] possess the powerful name which has been consecrated by all the angels (*ll.*206f)".[353] PGM IV.1167-1226 (4th CE) has an almost identical passage in which it discusses an angelic mediator. The mediator mentioned is said to be in possession of the 'one hundred letter' name that extends from heaven to earth, a name that gives this mediator an autonomous power equal to that of God. "You are the holy and powerful name considered sacred by all the angels...and the lord witnessed to your Wisdom, which is Aion, IEOYĒŌĒ IAĒAIĒŌĒYOEI, and said that you are as strong as he is" (*ll.*1205-09).

In the Dead Sea Scrolls two names, Michael and Melchizedek, are given to this figure. The War Scroll (1QM + 1Q33) describes Michael coming to the aid of the people of God, who will be raised up. The Qumraners are regarded as being under the protection of Michael, their guardian (17:6-8).[354] A similar figure (probably also Michael) will also give succour to the saved in the last days (1QM 13:10). Melchizedek plays a similar role to Michael. Whether he is actually the same figure as Michael is unclear, and, as Hurtado points out, is of less importance than his role, status and symbolism.[355] Melchizedek acts as a defender of Israel (11Q Melchizedek = 11Q 13 2:4-25), and in at least one passage he seems almost identical with God (2:9-11, which refers to Ps 82's discussion of God [אלוהים] taking his place among the heavenly council). Thus the figure of the chief angel in the Dead Sea Scrolls is the protector of the chosen people and comes very close to being identified with God.

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352 *1En.* 69:14-16.

353 Trans. E.N. O'Neil, in H.D. Betz (ed.) *The Greek Magical Papyri In Translation* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986); all English translations of PGM material come from this book unless otherwise noted.

354 Cf. Deuteronomy 32:8.

355 Hurtado, *One God, One Lord* 78.

In the Pseudepigrapha[356] the figure of a chief angel, who possessed at least part of God's glory, became of great importance in the period leading up to the advent of Christianity.[357] Whilst the status of Joseph in *Joseph and Aseneth*, or the *Logos* in Philo's work, is still unclear, probably deliberately so, the chief angels in the Pseudepigrapha are clearly angelic and clearly vice-regents of God. There are three texts worth examining in this context. In the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* (dated between the first century BCE and the first CE), we meet the angel Eremiel. This angel has a glorious face which shines like sun; indeed so glorious is his appearance that the visionary mistakes him for God.[358] Eremiel is also described as having feet like molten bronze and wearing a girdle of gold (6:11-12). Eremiel is thus described in terms reminiscent of the figure clothed in linen in Daniel 10:6, whose face had the appearance of lightning, who was girded in gold, and whose feet were like polished brass. In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* we meet the angel Yahoel. This angel surely possesses the name of God, for his name is a combination of Yah (from YHWH) and El, terms normally used only for God.[359] Yahoel has authority over the cherubim around the throne (10:9), and he is a guardian of Israel (like Michael and Melchizedek) (10:13-17). As in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the *Shepherd of Hermas* (see below) Yahoel is not the only chief angel mentioned in this text, for Michael is also mentioned. It is not clear how the two stand in relation to each other; maybe both take on the role of chief angel at different times, or perhaps there is another explanation, for there can be no doubt that the two are different beings (see 10:17). The symbolism associated with this figure (11:1-4) is also related to that found in Daniel. His body is sapphire, his face chrysolite and his hair is like snow, as is the hair of the Ancient of Days in Dan 7:9. He also wears a headdress, which looks like a rainbow, purple garments, and has a staff in his right hand (see also the Glory of the Lord in Ezek 1:26-28). In *Joseph and Aseneth* we meet an unnamed figure;[360] according to Burchard this is Michaël.[361] This angel is like a man, but his face is like lightning and eyes like

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[356] Unless otherwise noted all references to Pseudepigraphic texts are taken from *OTP*, although other editions were consulted in each case.

[357] This figure grew in importance throughout the Late Antique period up to the rise of Islam; other figures who were described as the chief angelic vice-regent include Abathur, Akatriel and Metatron; they testify to developments which are outside the chronological framework of this thesis and are thus not dealt with herein (apart from Metatron because of his role in the Enoch tradition [*3 Enoch*]); for discussion of these figures see Nathaniel Deutsch *Guardians of the Gate: Angelic Vice Regency in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) *passim.*

[358] See also *4 Ezra* 4:36-39, *2 Bar* 75:1; discussed by R. Bauckham, "The Apocalypses in the New Testament Pseudepigrapha", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26 (1986) 100-103.

[359] He explicitly states that he possesses the name of God in 10:7, 8.

[360] Although his name can be discovered by reading the heavenly scriptures, see 15:12.

[361] *OTP* II, 225 n.*k*.

sunshine, his hair is like fire, his hands and feet shoot forth sparks and are like iron shining forth from fire (like the molten bronze in *ApocZeph*) (14:9-10). He also carries a staff like the angel Yahoel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (14:9). The unnamed angel is described as "chief of the house of the Lord and commander of the whole host of the Most High" (14:8).[362]

Clearly this figure, developed in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Pseudepigrapha out of the angel of the Lord tradition in Genesis and Exodus, combined with the imagery found in books such as Ezekiel and Daniel, could have, indeed should have, had an influence upon the early Christian view of Christ. When Christ is described in Ephesians being made by God to "sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come" (1:20-22), it is his investiture as a kind of vice-regent that is being described. It is possible, as Jarl Fossum has argued, that Jude 5-7 contains an early Christian identification of Christ as the angel of the Lord,[363] although the argument is largely dependent upon a particular reading of the text. Moreover the identification of Jesus Christ with the eschatological judge, the 'Son of Man', in Matthew 25:31-46 (see also Mk 13:26; 14:62) demonstrates that very early Christians modified passages such as Daniel 7:9-14 which described the 'Ancient of Days' and the 'Son of Man'. They conflated the two personages, and used these texts alongside other passages such as Psalm 110:1 (LXX 109:1), in order to link Christ to the angelic vice-regent figure.[364] It has also been suggested that the translation of Enoch to heaven and enthronement as the 'Son of Man' (*1 Enoch* 71) or Metatron (*3 Enoch*) is also related to the view of Christ as Son of Man.[365] Christ and Metatron are also

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[362] Burchard's translation in *OTP*.

[363] Jarl Fossum, "Kyrios Jesus as the Angel of the Lord in Jude 5-7", *NTS* 33 (1987) 226-43.

[364] On Christ in Matt 25:31-46 (and Mk 13:26; 14:62) see J.J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* 209f; A.F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven* 95, 205-210; Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord* 292f; F. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967) & *idem*, *The Christian and Gnostic Son of Man* (London: SCM Press, 1970); M. Black, "The Son of Man Problem in Recent Research and Debate", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 45 (1963) 305-317. On the importance of Ps. 110 (LXX 109) to Christology see the above references and also David Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Ps. 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973). The identification of the Ancient of Days and Christ is dealt with by Christopher Rowland, "The Visions of God in Apocalyptic Literature" *JSJ* 10 (1979) 154; *idem*, "The Vision of the Risen Christ in Rev. 1:13ff: The Debt of Early Christology to an Aspect of Jewish Angelology" *JTS* 31 (1980) 1-11. The 'Ancient of Days' was a model upon which many different versions of this vice-regent figure were built upon; see Nathaniel Deutsch, *Guardians of The Gate: angelic vice-regency in late antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 25f, 45f, 65, 94f, 129, 136ff, 152, 164f.

[365] Fossum, *Name of God*, 292. Hayman, "Monotheism — A Misused Word?" 14-15, cautions that the dating of Enoch is not secure enough to support this.

linked through the fact that both are essentially polymorphous beings; the process of descent and transformation of Christ (especially in the primitive Christ-hymn Phil 2:6-11) mirrors the ability of Metatron to take up numerous different forms.[366] Although the word *aggelos* is never used of Christ in the Apocalypse of John angelic symbols were applied to him.[367] In Revelation 1:13-16 the language used to describe Christ is drawn from Dan 7:9 (the Ancient of Days), Dan 10:5-6 (the angelic 'man clothed in linen') and Ezek 1:26-28; 9 (the Glory of God), thus a combination of both divine and angelological symbols.[368] As pointed out by Rowland the symbolism attached to Christ is the same as that of chief angelic figures as described in *Joseph and Aseneth* 14:8-9 and the angel Yahoel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 10:1-11:6[369] (see also Rev 15:6).[370] In Revelation 10:1-11 we meet an ἄγγελον ἰσχυρὸν "strong angel". Like Christ in Revelation 1:16 his face is like the sun (10:1).[371] Moreover Christ is also connected to the seven stars (an angelic description, see §3.2.2) of 1:11-12, who are the seven angels of the churches (1:20) in Revelation 2:1. He clearly stands amongst, but as a leader of, and thus slightly apart from, these seven angels, surely the archangels.[372] In Revelation 14:6-20 a figure called "one like a son of man" (14-16) appears amongst a description of six angels who are introduced with the phrase ἄλλος ἄγγελος ("another angel": 6,8,9,15,17,18). If we accept that Revelation 1 is talking of Christ when it describes 'one like a son of man' with angelic symbols then it would also be

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[366] Gedaliahu Stroumsa, "Polymorphie divine et transformations d'un mythologème: l'Apocryphon de Jean et ses sources", in *idem*, *Savoir et Salut: traditions juives et tentations dualistes dans le christianisme ancien* (first publ. *VigChr* 35 [1981]; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1992); *idem*, "Forms of God: Some Notes on Metatron and Christ" *HTR* 76 (1983); see also Fossum, *Name of God* 293. This interpretation is much preferred to the old *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* approach which saw the hymn in Phil 2:6-11 in terms of a gnostic myth of a descending and reascending saviour figure, see R. Reitzenstein, *Poimandres* (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1904) and W. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907; reprint Darmstadt, 1973) 194ff.

[367] See Christopher Rowland, "The vision of the Risen Christ in Rev i.13f: The Debt of early Christology to an Aspect of Jewish Angelology", *JTS* 31 (1980) 1-11; *idem*, *The Open Heaven. A study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982) 100-103; *idem*, "A Man Clothed in Linen", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 24 (1985) 99-110; A. Yarbro Collins, "The 'Son of Man' Tradition and the Book of Revelation", in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Messiah. Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) 548-51.

[368] Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 211-218, with a detailed discussion of the textual history and secondary literature.

[369] Rowland, *The Open Heaven* 101-03.

[370] Rev 15:6 discussed by Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration* 226-28.

[371] Although Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration* 230 & n.69 notes that ὄψις in Rev 1:16 is better translated as "appearance" rather than "face", πρόσωπον, which is used in Rev 10:1 of the strong angel.

[372] Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 232-33. See Ezek 9:22f for the first mention of seven special angels; Seven archangels: *Tob* 12:15, Est 1:8, *1En* 20 (in MSS G^{a2}, G^{a1}); *Apocalypse of Enoch* in *CMC* 58-60; *Tg. J.* Gen. 11:17; and seven special angels: Rev. 8:2; 1:4 (spirits [πνευμάτων] before the throne), 20; 3:1, 5:6 (seven spirits [πνεύματα]). Astrological conceptions almost certainly informed this tradition of seven archangelic beings, see Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel, A study of the relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135 - 425)* (trans. H. McKeating; New York: OUP, 1986) 346.

possible that the positioning of the 'one like a son of man' in Revelation 14:14 amongst the 'other' angels suggests a more explicit identification of Christ as an angel. Perhaps the 'one like a son of man' (Christ) is here depicted as part of the angelic hierarchy, as the seventh archangel.[373] The linguistic argument is weak, as Stuckenbruck notes the first angel in this series is introduced as ἄλλος ἄγγελος, without any necessary reference to any being in the verse before.[374] It is the placement of the 'one like a son of man' in the midst of a hierarchy of angels that is more telling. The question of the exact status of Christ as the 'son of man' and an angelic figure in Revelation will remain unresolved, but it is clear that angelic categories were applied to him, and that these categories were derived from descriptions of supernatural, vice-regent-type creatures in Daniel and Ezekiel.[375]

Thus in the first century there existed a chief angelic figure below God who seems to have acted, at least in part, as a model for Christ. The figures of the Son of Man and Ancient of Days in Daniel acted as scriptural models for the symbolism associated with this figure. The evidence from this period is, however, difficult to interpret. There are clearly similarities between the chief angel and Christ, but it is unclear to what extent the early Christian conception of Christ was based upon this figure. Whilst angelological symbols were attached to Christ, he is not explicitly described as an angel. Yet he does seem to have been placed alongside the angels and was often viewed as their superior, much like the chief angel in pseudepigrahical Jewish texts.

From the second century onwards[376] there are several texts that demonstrate a form of angelic Christology.

The second-century *Shepherd of Hermas* functions as a missing link; it is a text which seems to stand between Jewish veneration of the chief angel and Christian veneration of Christ. In this work the chief angel is identified as 'Michael'. He acts as a lawgiver and guardian for Christians. This figure is described in gigantic terms, a common way to describe the chief angel (or his name, see PGM IV.1167-1226), or in 'Jewish-Christian' texts a way of

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[373] See Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration* 242, esp. n107.
[374] *Angel Veneration* 243.
[375] Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration* 265 argues that the author of Revelation was attempting to create a new Lamb-Christology to replace angelomorphic views of Christ, but may have used angelomorphic descriptions of Christ in order to get his point across to an audience that saw Christ in angelomorphic terms.
[376] The Slavonic version of Josephus also describes Christ as an angel, cf. C. Rowland, *Open Heaven* 501 n45.

describing Christ.[377] Christ is also mentioned; the two are clearly separate beings, but the Holy Spirit is also equated with both the Son and the work of creation (Sim.V.6:5; IX.1:1) and is also identified with Michael (Sim.VIII.1-3; IX.12:7).[378] It is unclear exactly what we should make of this identification of both Michael and the Son with the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we are looking at a very rough amalgamation of two different texts; but more likely the confusion between Michael and the Son is simply a reflection of the fact that, as we saw in the previous chapter, there were no clear lines of demarcation between the various different beings below God in the Judaism of this period, and this must have also been the case in early Christianity.

In other texts from the first four centuries the typological use of LXX Isaiah 9:5,[379] which forecasts the coming of a being described as the Μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος,[380] is extremely important to the identification of Christ as an angel. Theodotus is reported by Clement of Alexandria to have explicitly linked Isaiah 9:5 to the idea of Christ as head of the spiritual hierarchy under God.

> Καὶ δόντος πᾶσαν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ Πατρός, συναινέσαντος δὲ καὶ τοῦ Πληρώματος, ἐκπέμπεται «ὁ τῆς βουλῆς Ἄγγελος«. Καὶ γίνεται Κεφαλὴ τῶν ὅλων μετὰ τὸν Πατέρα «Πάντα γὰρ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, Θρόνοι, Κυριότητες, Βασιλεῖαι«, Θεότητες, Λειτουργίαι. (Clement, *Excerpta* 43)
>
> And when the Father has given all power, and the Pleroma was assented, 'the angel of counsel' was sent out and has become the 'head of all things' after the Father. Because 'everything has been made in him, both things visible and things invisible, thrones, dominions, kingdoms', divinities, worships.
> (trans. *ANF* [modified])[381]

It seems to put Christ in the position of being the chief angel. Valentinus describes Christ as a comrade (ἡλικιῶατι) of the angels.[382] Clearly there is no doubt whatsoever that the basic Valentinian gnostic conception of Christ was an angelic conception.

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377 See §5.3.1, n211.

378 See H. Moxnes, "God and His Angel in the Shepherd of Hermas", *Studia Theologica* 28 (1974) 49-56, and on the identification of the angel with the Son of God and with Michael see Barbel, *Christos Angelos* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1964) 47 n4.

379 MT 9:5; RSV 9:6.

380 A translation of the Hebrew פלא יועץ (MT 9:5).

381 This passage seems to be dealing with the same topic that Origen is combating in his *Commentary on John*, see discussion below.

Likewise magical texts seem to have easily equated Christ with the angels. The *Testament of Solomon*, mentioned above, developed out of a scene heavily influenced by the magical practices. Trigg mentions a 'gnostic' amulet discussed by Dölger that lists 'Emmanuel' with angelic names.[383] Indeed it seems that both Emmanuel and Jesus came to be used as words of power in the magical corpus.[384] This is in line with the common transformation of words associated with divinities in the Old Testament into magical names, *nomina barbara* or *voces magicae*. It helps to confirm the syncretic nature of magical texts, but tells us little of what Christians actually thought about the nature of Christ, the nature of these texts making it almost impossible to know who actually used them. But Christians may well have used such texts, and we would be well advised to listen to Deissmann when he claims that: "There are no such watertight compartments dividing the religions of late antiquity as we are apt to suppose."[385] Other magical texts that suggest some kind of equivalence between Christ and the chief angel based upon possession of the name of God have been discussed above (PGM I.195-222; IV.1167-1226). These magical materials suggest that those Christians who used magic may have come across texts that assumed an equivalence between Christ and the angels, in particular the chief angel.

The Ebionites and Elchasaites are accused of holding to an explicit angelic Christology. These sects are described as 'Jewish-Christian' by the heresiologists; we know that these sects came out of the Aramaic/Syriac-speaking areas of Syria and Mesopotamia and that one of the them, the Elchasaites, produced Mani, the founder of Manichaeism, a religion which was very interested in angels. These 'Jewish-Christians' were adoptionists; they held that Christ was a normal human being who was transformed into an angel.[386] Epiphanius asserted that the Ebionites believed Christ to be the figure who appeared in the Hebrew Scriptures as the angel of the Lord (as does Justin, see below); he goes on to allege that they also claimed

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382 Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* I.1.8, in W.W. Harvey (ed.) *Sancti Irenaei episcopi Lugdunensis libri quinque adversus haereses*, I (Cambridge: CUP, 1857).
383 Trigg, "Angel" 42; citing Franz Joseph Dölger *Ichthys.* I *Das Fisch-symbol in frühchristlicher Zeit* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchandlung, 1928) 287-8.
384 Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets, chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1950) 173.
385 Quoted by B.R. Rees, "Popular Religion in Graeco-Roman Egypt. ii The Transition To Christianity", in *JEA*, 35 (1950) 88. Augustine quoted a Christian as saying: "To be sure I visit the idols. I consult magicians and soothsayers, but I do not forsake the church of God. I am a Catholic." St Augustine, *Enarratio*, Ps 88, Sermo. ii,14, quoted in W.H.C. Frend, *Town and Country in The Early Christian Centuries* (London, 1980) 8.
386 Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.13.7-8; also 33.14.4-5.

him to be an archangel, and chief of the angels.[387] The Elchasaites were also accused by Epiphanius and Ambrosiaster of holding that Christ was a hugely tall 'power' (*dynamis*) or angel.[388] Moreover these groups use clothing symbolism similar to that which we have already seen being applied to angels when discussing Christ's descent to earth; they are accused of believing that Christ 'put on' Adam,[389] or indeed, that he was clothed in an angel.[390] Interestingly, and this will be raised again in §5.3.1, they saw Christ's transformation as a transformation that anyone was capable of; indeed they wished to achieve the same, for anyone, or at least any man, could also be transformed into a Christ (or angel) provided they imitated Christ in his virtuous conduct.[391] The Ebionites and Elchasaites thus did not hold that Christ was originally an angel, but they did believe that he was transformed into one. Even if we accept some embellishment of the story by the heresiologists it would be strange to imagine them coming up with such a story without some basis in fact.

Other Christian writers also seem to have been influenced by LXX Isaiah 9:5; among the earliest Church writers Justin Martyr stands out as holding onto an angelic conception of Christ based, at least in part, upon this passage. In the *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin quotes Isaiah 9:5, saying that this phrase signified Christ's role as teacher. Here the title 'angel' simply describes Christ's function, which tells us nothing about his true nature, but certainly does not argue against an angelic Christology. In his first *Apology* Justin describes Christ as taking on an angelic nature in the same way as he took on a human nature, or appeared as fire or as one of the bodiless ones (ἀσωμάτων = angels?).[392] This would seem to match Trigg's third category, a dispensational taking up of the angelic nature; likewise this does not

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[387] *Panarion*, 30.3.1-6; 30.16.3-4: οὐ φάσκουσι δὲ ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς αὐτὸν γεγεννῆσθαι, ἀλλὰ κεκτίσθαι ὡς ἕνα τῶν ἀρχαγγέλων . . . αὐτὸν δὲ κυριεύειν καὶ ἀγγέλων καὶ πάντων <τῶν> ὑπὸ τοῦ παντοκράτορος πεποιημένων. "They say that he was not begotten of God the Father, but created as one of the archangels . . . that he rules over the angels and all the creatures of the Almighty." Text & trans. in A.F.J. Klijn & G.J. Reinick, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects* (Leiden: Brill, 1973)182 & 183.

[388] Hippolytus, *Refutatio omn. haer.* IX.13.1-3; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 19.4.1-2; 30.17.6; 53.1.8-9.

[389] Epiphanius, *Panarion*, *anacephalaiosis* t.2.28-30 although the *anacephalaiosis* sections are probably added by a later editor; see F. Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis. Book I (Sects 1-46)* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) XVII; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 53.8-9; John Damascene, *De haer.* 30; Theodore bar-Khonai, *Liber scholiorum*, p.130; cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 30.3.1-6, which talks of "putting on body".

[390] Tertullian, *De carne Chr.*14.

[391] Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 51.10.4; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 30.18.5-6; cf. Timothy, Presbyter of Constantinople, *De recept. haer.* 28 B/C; Isidore of Seville, *Etym. lib.*VIII.6.37; John Damascene, *De haer.*28; all in Klijn & Reinick, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects*; see also Theodore bar-Khonai, *Liber scholiorum*, p.301 & p.336-7.

[392] *1 Apol.* 63.4 – 10.

argue against an angelic understanding of the nature of Christ. Yet in the same passage he claims Christ was the angel of the Lord who appeared in the Old Testament. Thus at roughly the same time as Jews were arguing against using these passages[393] in order to suggest that a second angelic power existed in the world, Christians like Justin were using these same passages to argue that a second power (i.e. Christ) did make appearances in the Old Testament, and that this figure was actually described as an 'angel'. Likewise in the *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin claims the appearances of the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament to be appearances of Christ and states that he is given the title 'angel' because he delivered messages to humanity.[394] Once again this is a functional definition. Without wishing to put words in Justin's mouth it would seem disingenuous to argue that he did not have an angelic conception of Christ, unless, of course, he explicitly stated that Christ did not have an angelic nature. This he did not do, and earlier in his first *Apology* he seems to state that Christ's nature was shared with the angels.

> ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνόν τε καὶ τὸν παρ' αὐτοῦ υἱὸν ἐλθόντα καὶ διδάξαντα ἡμᾶς ταῦτα, καὶ τὸν τῶν ἄλλων ἑπομένων καὶ ἐξομοιουμένων ἀγαθῶν ἀγγέλων στρατόν, πνεῦμά τε τὸ προφητικὸν σεβόμεθα καὶ προσκυνοῦμεν (I *Apol.* 6.2)
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> But both him, and the son who came forth from him and taught us these things, and the host of the other good angels who follow and are made like to him, and the prophetic spirit, we worship and adore.

This passage has engendered much debate, as it seems to be both supporting an angelic Christology and calling for the worship of angels.[395] Yet to deny what Justin is explicitly stating seems, once again, disingenuous. Justin states clearly that there exists a heavenly hierarchy which consists of God, the Son and his angels and then the Holy Spirit; in this hierarchy the angels are clearly closely linked to the Son and are of the same general nature. Although Justin's Christology is unclear and ambiguous, he seems to see Christ primarily as

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[393] Such as Gen 19:24; see Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 220-233, 263 (if we accept Segal's argument that the 'two powers' heresy discussed in rabbinic texts dates from the first and second centuries; cf. *ibid.* 264).

[394] *Dial.* 56.4.

[395] It has been argued that this may have been careless expression: Peter R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels: Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Cambridge, CUP, 1997) 99 cites William Trollope, *Justini* I (Cambridge, 1845) 28-29; Goodenough argued that this indicates a similarity between Jesus and the angels that goes beyond function; Goodenough, *The Theology of Justin Martyr* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1968) 156. This confusion is derived from the Philonic confusion over whether the Logos is distinct from the angels or one of them, *ibid*, 157. R.M. Grant says that this hierarchical list is because Christ is seen as head of the angelic hierarchy, i.e. the "chief general of the power of the Lord" of Josh 5:14, *Greek Apologists in the Second Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster 1988) 58-63.

performing an angelic role – that of a messenger; moreover he places the Son next to the angels in the heavenly hierarchy and states that his nature is like that of the angels, although he is clearly differentiated from them. He is thus very much like the chief angel. It is his place in the heavenly hierarchy that is most illuminating of Christ's actual nature; it is his 'natural' state before and after each visit to humanity.

Other texts show evidence of a belief that Christ took up several different forms during his descent to earth. Presumably at roughly the same time that Justin was writing, during the second century, the battle between Gnostics and the proto-orthodox produced the anti-gnostic *Epistula Apostolorum*.[396] This text shares with Justin the idea that Christ took on many forms during his descent to earth; thus it holds to a model like that of Trigg's dispensational conception of Christ as an angel, although with a twist, because Christ did not take on the angels' form in order to save them, but to deceive them. But it also claimed that Christ took the form of the angel Gabriel when he announced God's message to Mary, and then entered her womb. This is presented to the reader as an explanation for the statement that Christ 'became an angel among angels and I became all things in everything'.[397] But Christ clearly only took up the form of Gabriel; he was not Gabriel himself, for in the passage that immediately precedes this one Christ's descent by taking up the form of different beings is described, and it is made clear that he took up the form of an angel simply in order to deceive the great angels Michael, Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael.[398] This text shares similarities with two other texts. The descent through shape-changing and deception of the angels is like that found in the *Ascension of Isaiah*,[399] where Christ also deceives the angels.[400] Likewise the taking up of the form of a great angel in connection with the

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396 See E. Hennecke; W. Schneemelcher (ed.) *NTA* I, 190-191.
397 *Epistula Apostolorum* 14 (Ethiopic and Coptic) *NTA* I 198-9; cf. Eph 1:10.
398 *Epistula Apostolorum* 13 (Ethiopic and Coptic).
399 The date and origin of this text is disputed; the traditional explanation has been that it was composed originally by a Jew and then later redacted by a Christian editor (see Knibb's introduction in *OTP* II, 147-149; Barton in *AOT* 780); Enrico Norelli, an editor of the most recent and comprehensive comparative edition (P. Bettiolo, A. Kossova, C. Leonardi et al. *Ascensio Isaiae: Textus* [Turnhout: Brepols, 1995]), and the author of the latest commentary (*Ascensio Isaiae: Commentarius* [Turnhout: Brepols, 1995]), claims on p. 53-5 of the commentary that this text originated in Christian prophetic circles in the first centuries and was written in Greek, although by a group with close contact with Jewish mystics. Although Norelli's is definitely the minority position, his argument is well supported and may well become more widely accepted..
400 *Ascension of Isaiah* 10:20-31. On this theme see Norelli, *Ascensio Isaiae: Commentarius* 526-533. It is worth noting also the Christ-hymn in Phil 2:7, which in the Manichaean *Kephalia* is interpreted to mean that Christ took the form of an angel (not a δοῦλος 'servant'): *Kephalia* 61.23 ⲁϥⲧⲛⲧⲱⲛ̄ϥ ⲁⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ. On Phil 2:7 and the Christ- hymn therein see: Werner Georg Kümmel (trans. Howard Clark Kee) *Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 17th ed., 1st publ. as *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*) 334-5; Gerald

annunciation and birth of Christ is similar to a passage preserved in the Coptic version of a homily by Cyril of Jerusalem (but not recorded in the Greek version[401]). According to this homily there existed in the apocryphal *Gospel of the Hebrews* a belief that Mary was a "power" called Michael in heaven who was entrusted with the care of Jesus Christ.[402] The *Epistula Apostolorum* thus supports an understanding of Christ as a being who took up the angelic form without necessarily being an angel. Indeed considering the anti-gnostic position of this text it would be surprising if it had supported an angelic Christology such as that suggested by the Valentinians mentioned above. Perhaps the fact that Christ is described as taking up the form of the angel Gabriel without actually being the same being was intended as a statement against an angelic Christology.

Early Western Fathers do not seem to have engaged with the debate to the same extent. The anti-pope Hippolytus seems to use 'angel' simply as a title of Christ when he briefly mentions it in the *Apostolic Tradition*.[403] Irenaeus uses the Isaiah 9:5 passage as a prophecy of the coming of Christ, but without expanding upon any other possible interpretations.[404]

Clement of Alexandria also uses 'angel' for Christ. Like most of the others Clement uses the LXX Isaiah 9:5 as a prophecy referring to the coming of Christ.[405] He also describes Christ as μυστικὸς ἐκεῖνος ἄγγελος "that mystic angel".[406] Clement's use of *aggelos* to refer to human messengers as well as spiritual beings means that we cannot make a conclusion about his view of the angelic status of Christ based upon these passages. Once more we do

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F. Hawthorn, *Philippians* in *World Biblical Commentary* vol 43 (Word Books: Waco, Texas, 1983) 76ff: Hawthorn suggests that attempting to find the origin of the story in sources such as heterodox Judaism (Lohmeyer), the Iranian myth of heavenly redeemer (Beare), Hellenistic gnosticism (Käsemann), Jewish gnosticism (Sanders), Old Testament servant passages (Coppens), or in the Old Testament Adam story (Bonnard: Jesus was the second Adam), or "in speculation about Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom" (D. Georgi) is possibly futile and it may have been derived from an actual event in Jesus' life (cf. John 13:3-7) which was interpreted in terms of contemporary religious language. It seems at least that an angelic element was attached to the story by Manichaeans, if not others also, for we have seen that in the pseudepigraphic literature it would have made sense for Jesus to take up the form of an angel whilst descending through their realm. In *Psalm Book* 194, 2-3 the same passage is interpreted as referring to transformation into a human being; see S. Richter, "Christology in the Coptic Manichaean Sources", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 35 (1996) 125-28.

401 *NTA* I 137.

402 *Discourse on Mary Theotokos* By Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, fol.12a-13a, in *Coptic Texts*, V, 637-8.

403 *Apostolic Tradition* 4 (*bis*, SC II 48).

404 *Adv haer.* III.15.3; III.20.2; IV.33.11; see Trigg, "Angel" 43 where he also suggests a functional use of the title 'angel' for Christ in an Armenian version of Irenaeus' work.

405 *Paed.* I.5, cf. Trigg, "Angel" 43.

406 *Paed.* II.7. Trigg (43) relates it to the description of Christ in *Paed.* I.5 as the 'angel of Great Counsel' (LXX Is. 9:5) and states that it has little meaning for the actual nature of Christ, but notes that Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* 98, claims that it does indeed make a statement about Christ's nature.

not have a clear statement about the nature of Christ, just Isaiah 9:5 and a new phrase: μυστικὸς ἐκεῖνος ἄγγελος.

Tertullian (160-220) stands alone in explicitly declaring that Christ was not an angel. He mentions Isaiah 9:5's 'Angel of Great Counsel' and feels it is necessary to point out that this passage in no way refers to Christ's nature, but rather to his function, his office.

> Dictus est quidem magni consilii angelus id est nuntius; officii, non naturae vocabulo. Magnum enim cogitatum Patris, super hominis scilicet restitutione, annuntiaturus saeculo erat. Non ideo tamen sic angelus intelligendus ut aliqui Gabriel aut Michael. Nam et filius a domino vineae mittitur ad cultores, sicut et famuli, de fructibus petitum. Sed non propterea unus ex famulis deputabitur filius, quia famulorum successit officio. (*De carne Christi* 14.6-7)[407]
>
> He has been, it is true, called "the Angel of great counsel," that is, a messenger, by a term expressive of official function, not of nature. For he had to announce to the world the mighty purpose of the Father, even that which ordained the restoration of man. But he is not on this account to be regarded as an angel, as a Gabriel or a Michael. For the Lord of the Vineyard sends even his Son to the labourers in order to seek fruit, as well as his servants. Yet the Son will not therefore be counted as one of the servants because he undertook the office of a servant.

Indeed he seems also to challenge a dispensational view of Christ's taking of the angelic nature by stating that Christ did not come to save angels, only human beings.[408]

Origen was roughly contemporary with Tertullian. His comments on angelic Christology added some new elements to the picture. Origen seems to be dealing with the same theme as that found in the *Epistula Apostolorum* when he discusses Christ as being the first and the last. Perhaps this was a gnostic theme which called for some explanation.

> Ὁ τοίνυν σωτὴρ θειότερον πολλῷ ἢ Παῦλος γέγονε «τοῖς πᾶσι πάντα«, ἵνα «πάντα« ἢ «κερδήσῃ« ἢ τελειώσῃ, καὶ σαφῶς γέγονεν ἀνθρώποις ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἀγγέλοις ἄγγελος. Καὶ περὶ μὲν τοῦ ἄνθρωπον αὐτὸν γεγονέναι οὐδεὶς τῶν πεπιστευκότων διστάξει περὶ δὲ τοῦ ἄγγελον πειθώμεθα τηροῦντες τὰς τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐπιφανείας καὶ λόγους, ὅτε τῆς τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐξουσίας φαίνεται ἔν τισι τόποις τῆς γραφῆς ἀγγέλων λεγόντων, ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ «Ὤφθη ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐν πυρὶ φλογὸς βάτου. Καὶ

[407] *PL* II, 778.
[408] *De carne Christi* 14.

εἶπεν Ἐγὼ θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ«. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ Ἡσαΐας φησὶ «Καλεῖται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος«. Πρῶτος οὖν καὶ ἔσχατος ὁ σωτήρ, οὐχ ὅτι οὐ τὰ μεταξύ, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἄκρων, ἵνα δηλωθῇ, ὅτι **«τὰ πάντα« γέγονεν αὐτός.**[409]

The Saviour accordingly became, in a more divine way than Paul, all things to all, that he might either gain all or perfect them; it is clear that to men He became a man, and to the angels an angel. As for his becoming a man no believer has any doubt, but as to his becoming an angel, we shall find reason for believing it was so, if we observe carefully the appearances and the words of the angels, in some of which the powers of the angels seem to belong to him. In several passages angels speak in such a way as to suggest this, as when (Ex 3:2,6) "the angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire-bush". And he said, I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob". But Isaiah also says (Is 9:6): "his name is called the Angel of Great Counsel". The saviour, then, is the first and the last, not that He is not what lies between, but the extremities are named to show that **he became all things**. (trans. *ANF* [modified])

Thus Origen argued against the limiting of Christ's ability to be all things to simply one of those things. He thus makes a clear statement against an essential angelic nature for Christ.

Origen also identified the seraphim of Isaiah 6:2ff as the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Dicebat autem et Hebraeus magister quod duo illa Seraphin, quae in Esaia senis alis describuntur clamantia adinuicem et dicentia: Sanctus sanctus sanctus dominus Sabaoth, de unigenito filio dei et de spiritu sancto esset intellegendum. Nos uero putamus etiam illud, quod in cantico Ambacum dictum est: in medio duorum animalium (uel duarum uitarum) cognosceris, de Christo et de spiritu sancto sentiri debere.[410] (*De princ.* I.iii.4)

The Hebrew teacher would say that the two seraphim, which are described in Isaiah as having six wings and crying to one another saying 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth', are to be understood as the only-begotten Son of God and the Holy Spirit. We, indeed, also think that what is said in the song of Habakkuk, 'in the midst of the two living beings' 'thou shalt be known', is to be understood as Christ and the Holy Spirit. (trans. *ANF* [modified])

Trigg attempts to explain this passage as part of a functional definition of an angel.[411] He need not have bothered. He is wrong to assert, against Nautin, that seraphim were

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[409] C. Blanc (ed.) *Origène. Commentaire sur saint Jean* (*SC* 120; Paris: Cerf, 1966).
[410] H. Crouzel & M. Simonetti (eds.) *Origène. Traité des Principes* I (*SC* 252; Paris: Cerf, 1978).
[411] Trigg, "Angel", 40.

understood as angels in this period.[412] They were members of the court of God, but as described above (§3.1.1) they were not angels. Thus as Pierre Nautin suggested, this passage may even have been an attempt to argue against those who ascribed an angelic nature to the seraphim and the living creatures of Habakkuk.[413] There are two passages in which Origen did argue clearly against an angelic Christology. In his *Commentary on John*, after he made the statement cited above about the nature of Christ as all things, he affirmed that Christ or the Word could take up many natures in his various functions, the unstated conclusion being that he was not, essentially, made up of these natures.[414] Moreover, in refutation of Celsus Origen does explicitly state that the Son is not an angel.

> Ἑξῆς δέ, ἐπεὶ νομίζεται συγχωρητικῶς λέγειν περὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ὅτι δοκείτω τις ὡς ἀληθῶς ἄγγελος οὗτος εἶναι, φαμὲν ὅτι τοῦτ' οὐχ ὡς συγχωρούμενον ἀπὸ Κέλσου λαμβάνομεν, τῷ δ' ἔργῳ αὐτοῦ ἐνορῶντες ὅλῳ τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιδεδημηκότος κατὰ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ λόγον καὶ τὴν διδασκαλίαν, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐχώρει τῶν προσιεμένων αὐτόν. Ὅπερ ἔργον ἦν τοῦ, ὡς ὠνόμασεν ἡ περὶ αὐτοῦ προφητεία, οὐχ ἁπαξαπλῶς ἀγγέλου ἀλλὰ τοῦ τῆς «μεγάλης βουλῆς« ἀγγέλου ἤγγελλε γὰρ ἀνθρώποις τὴν μεγάλην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων περὶ αὐτῶν βουλήν, εἰκόντων μὲν τῷ βιοῦν ἐν καθαρᾷ θεοσεβείᾳ ὡς ἀναβαινόντων διὰ τῶν μεγάλων πράξεων πρὸς τὸν θεόν, μὴ προσιεμένων δὲ ὡς ἑαυτοὺς μακρυνόντων ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπώλειαν διὰ τῆς περὶ θεοῦ ἀπιστίας ὁδευόντων. Εἶθ' ἑξῆς φησιν Εἰ καὶ ἄγγελος οὗτος πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἦλθεν, ἆρα πρῶτος ἧκε καὶ μόνος, ἢ καὶ ἄλλοι πρότερον; Καὶ πρὸς ἑκάτερον δὲ διὰ πλειόνων οἴεται ἀπαντᾶν, οὐδενὸς δὴ τῶν ὡς ἀληθῶς Χριστιανῶν λέγοντος μόνον τὸν Χριστὸν ἐπιδεδημηκέναι τῷ <γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων > καὶ ἄλλους ὦφθαί φησιν ἀνθρώποις ὁ Κέλσος, εἰ μὲν δὴ φαῖεν ὅτι μόνος. (*Contra Celsum* V.53)[415]
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> And, in the next place, since he considers that he makes a concession in saying of the Saviour, "Let him appear to be really an angel," we reply that we do not accept such a concession from Celsus; but we look to the work of Him who came to visit the whole human race in His word and teaching, as each one of His adherents was capable of receiving Him. And this was the work of one who, as the prophecy regarding Him said, was not simply an angel, but the "Angel of the great counsel:" (Is 9:6). For He announced to men the great counsel of the God and Father of all things regarding them, (saying) of those who yield themselves up to a life of pure religion, that they ascend by means of their great deeds to God; but of those who do not adhere to

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[412] Trigg, "Angel" 38 n11.

[413] Pierre Nautin, *Origène: sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977) 133.

[414] *Comm. in Joh* I.277.

[415] M. Borret (ed.) *Origène. Contre Celse* (4 vols.; *SC* 132, 136, 147, 150. Paris: Cerf, 1967-1969).

> Him, that they place themselves at a distance from God, and journey on to destruction through their unbelief of Him. He then continues: "If even the angel came to men, is he the first and only one who came, or did others come on former occasions?" And he thinks he can meet either of these dilemmas at great length, although there is not a single real Christian who asserts that Christ was the only being that visited the human race. For, as Celsus says, "If they should say the only one," there are others who appeared to different individuals. (trans. *ANF* [modified])

There is nothing to support the contention that the description of Christ as an angel in Origen's work is related to an angelic understanding of Christ's nature. The same goes for Origen's pupil Gregory Thaumaturgus when he describes Christ as the guardian angel of Origen.[416] If Gregory (or whoever wrote the text; it is of slightly dubious origin) was following Origen in his use of the word angel for Christ, then he must have been using it in a purely functional manner.

Several points become clear from an examination of these texts which use the word angel as a title of Christ. Almost all of them seem in some way connected to the Septuagint Isaiah 9:5 passage which mentions the coming of a being described as the Μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος or 'angel of Great Counsel'. Clearly this passage exercised great influence upon the early conception of Christ and also was, above all other scriptural referents, linked to his description as an angel. It is very likely that the *Testament of Solomon*'s reference to the angel born of a virgin was based upon this passage in Isaiah. Valentinian gnostics, if not others also, held to an angelic conception of Christ, and magicians pay witness to a scene in which the difference between Christ and his titles, such as Emmanuel, and the angels is at the very least, confused. Justin Martyr likewise seems to hold to a conception of Christ as an angelic being, or at least as somehow part of the angelic hierarchy. However, Christ was not a 'mere' angel. The role of Christ and the symbols associated with him in texts such as Revelation and Hebrews, and his association with the Angel of Great Counsel, suggests he was seen in the light of the chief angelic figure. Thus he was a polymorphous being,[417] who was a part of the angelic hierarchy, but also stood above the other angels as their leader. It is with texts such as the *Epistula Apostolorum* that we start to see a backlash against this view of Christ. It is never denied that Christ took up the angelic nature; rather it is argued that this was just a moment in his descent to earth in order to save mankind. Slightly later Tertullian

[416] Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Panegyris* IV.42 (*SC* 148: 112).
[417] As noted by Stroumsa see n366.

and Origen felt it necessary to deny explicitly that Christ had an angelic nature. The concept of the angelic nature and that of Christ developed together in this period. Up until the time of Justin there was no explicit understanding of the nature of angels, except that they were beings which could bridge the gap between humanity and God, and that they were beings which were simply souls in a certain position in the spiritual hierarchy and as such were marked by their outward form as angels. Christ was clearly a being who performed exactly the same role.

Thus the claim that the first Christians held to an angelic Christology is meaningless.[418] They may have used symbolism which suggests to us a view of Christ as a being like the chief angelic vice-regent, but Christians themselves held no clear-cut conception of the nature of angelic beings. It was in the second century that debate over the nature of Christ came to be connected to the description of him as an angel, and it was only then, some time after the writings of Justin, that this description of Christ as an angel came to be seen as dangerous. It was at this time that Christians were coming to define the nature of Christ more precisely, and at the same time came to the conclusion that describing him as an angel was incorrect. As Christians defined Christ as part of God they placed all the lesser supernatural beings into the category of 'angel'; this included the chief angelic vice-regent. The Jewish cosmological hierarchy which Christians inherited had no need to differentiate between the different types of divine beings below God; Christians needed to because of the ambiguous nature of Christ.

The symbols used to describe Christ were thus drawn from the symbols used to describe the chief angelic vice-regent, who from the second century onwards came to be demoted to the position of mere 'angel', as Christ was promoted above his head to be a part of the Godhead. The use of the term 'angelic Christology' must be circumscribed by the understanding that it is connected to an understanding of Christ as the angelic vice-regent, and that this being was in some fashion an angel, but also stood above and outside of the angelic hierarchy as its leader.

[418] Martin Werner's 1941 study *Die Entstehung des christlichen Dogmas* claimed that the first Christians held to an angelic Christology as long as they believed the *parousia* was imminent; it was only after this event began to recede over the horizon that a process of hellenisation came to lead to the loss of an angelic conception of Christ.

Contemporary with, and slightly preceding, the birth of Christianity several human beings are described as ascending to heaven and being transformed into heavenly beings, generally into the chief angel. We shall examine these transformations in the next chapter to see how the symbols associated with the transformation are similar to those associated with the chief angel; and in the following chapter we shall see how those symbols came to be applied in Christian ascetic texts to the ideal ascetic.

Summary: The developing Christian understanding of the nature c angelic beings

The early Christian understanding of the nature of angels is defective. We have seen that there existed a type of being below God which was termed variously *aggelos*, *malʾākh/malʾkā*, *ʿīr/ʿīrā*, *hagios/qaddisha*; this being was often identified as the pagan gods or *daimones*, as stars or as the soul or closely related to it. The angelic nature was also associated with the higher spiritual elements, in paganism with ether, and in Judaism with fire and pneuma, although no systematic dogma existed. Christian thought did not expand upon the question of the nature of angels. The relative silence of scripture on their nature restricted Christian thinkers in their investigation of this topic. We find no explicit statements about the nature of angelic beings in the pre-Nicene Church Fathers.

This is part of the reason for the ease with which Christ could be identified with an angel: in early Christian thought the understanding of the nature of angels was confused. There was no clear delineation between the angelic *function*, *title*, *description* and *nature*. Yet even if the understanding was defective, there was still an understanding of a type of lesser divine being held alike by pagans, Jews and Christians. In this period Christians were moving towards defining angels, often in the context of the debates over the nature of Christ. But in the ante-Nicene period notions about angels were rapidly evolving and mutating.

The next chapter (4) will examine the traditions associated with the transformation of human beings into a heavenly form through ascent. These figures were often transformed into senior angelic figures. The symbols associated with the translation of these figures to an angelic state were shared with the depiction of angelic beings in the Bible.

In chapter 5 we shall see that in Christian ascetic behaviour the imitation of angels focused upon the symbols seen in the previous chapter (clothing, shining face etc.) and angelic attributes like sleeplessness, constant worship and celibacy. This understanding of angels was derived from Scripture and informed by traditions in the extra-canonical literature. Angels were defined primarily by symbols such as gleaming robes, or behaviours such as celibacy.

Symbolic Frontiers: Contact between the Angelic and the Human Realm

In the last chapter we looked at various understandings of the nature of angelic beings which informed the early Christian understanding of angels. We saw that the issue of the angelic nature was not often dealt with explicitly; rather certain roles and symbols helped to identify a figure as a heavenly being, a being which in the first centuries CE was increasingly coming to be described as an 'angel'. Our examination of the symbolism led us in particular to examine texts which discuss the chief angelic vice-regent figure and the connection between this figure and Christ. We saw that there were considerable similarities between Christ and the chief angel. The similarities manifested themselves both in a commonality of function and also in a common symbolism used to describe Christ and the chief angel. Some early Christians, particularly gnostics and 'Jewish-Christians', seem to have taken these commonalities as evidence that Christ was actually an angel; others, however, argued against this identification and in the process of doing so helped to establish the ideological groundwork which eventually led to the Christian understanding of Christ as a part of the divine Trinity: a creator, not a creature.

In this chapter we shall see that the same symbolism that served to identify the chief angel also functioned to identify human beings who had been transformed into divine or semi-divine beings. Shining robes and a shining face in particular serve to mark those who have had a divine encounter and have thus been transformed. The transformed seer thus shares many similarities with the chief angel, both in terms of symbolism, and in terms of function – for both are God's messengers (*aggeloi*) to humanity.

Certain human beings, in particular Old Testament patriarchs, were described as having been at some point heavenly or angelic beings.[1] In the case of the patriarchs four different human beings stand apart from the other characters in the Old Testament. These are Adam, the first human, whose fall doomed us all to a mortal existence; Moses, who met God and whose death seems mysterious (indeed perhaps it did not even occur)[2]; and Enoch and Elijah

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[1] Apart from those mentioned below Abraham was described by Philo as having attained an angelic state; see *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* (Loeb Philo II) 2.5: ἴσος ἀγγέλοις γεγονώς.

[2] See Deut 34:6 and discussion below.

who seem also to have escaped death. Adam's original state came to be increasingly seen as the prototype of the state of the righteous after death, and Adam's pre-fall state came to be compared to the salvation brought by Christ, particularly in Syriac thought.[3] Likewise the garments of Adam and Eve in the garden are related to the angelic garments which the righteous can gain through ascent in this life or after death. Moses' vision of God on Mt Sinai functioned to provide the symbolic markers of someone who had been in the presence of the divine. Enoch was a man transformed into an angelic being; the Enochic literature also provided symbolism which identified a human being who had entered heaven and thus gained the attributes of a divine being. Elijah also plays a role; for instance Christ is compared to him and he is believed to return at the end of time in the New Testament; but possibly because of his role as a herald of the coming of the Messiah he does not figure much in speculation concerning the symbols associated with the heavenly state.[4]

In this chapter the transformation of these human beings will be examined against the backdrop of the ideas already examined in chapter 3.

4.1 The importance of Moses for the early Christian understanding of angelic transformation

Moses' position of importance both in the Old and New Testaments is testified to by the number of times his name is mentioned.[5] In Samaritan belief, in which only the Torah is

[3] S.P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1992) 85-94. In Syriac thought it is made clear that although the state awaiting the righteous is like that enjoyed by Adam in the Garden it is actually more glorious *ibid*, 100.

[4] Although the notion of Elijah being taken up in a whirlwind did have an impact on the literature dealing with ascent; for instance see *1En* 52:1in which Enoch is described being taken up in an (Ethiopic) *nak^{w}ork^{w}āra nafās* or *mank^{w}ork^{w}or*; the first is the most common MSS reading and is translated by Charles as "whirlwind", the second is preferred by Isaac in *OTP* and is translated as "wind vehicle". The *CMC* 59.18-19 talks of a ἅ[ρ]ματος ἀνέμου "chariot of Wind" But, in 2 Kgs Elijah's ascent is described in terms of both a whirlwind and a chariot: 2 Kgs 2:11: "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire (רכב אש / ἅρμα πυρὸς), and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind (בסערה השמים/συσσεισμῷ) into heaven." Perhaps we have influence from Elijah's tradition of ascent; see John C. Reeves, *Heralds of that Good Realm. Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996) 192-3. Christ compared to Elijah: Mt 16:14; Mk 6:15, 8:28; Lk 9:8, 19; John is identified by Christ as the herald of the Messiah (and thus Elijah): Mt 11:14, 17:10-13; Lk 1:17; Elijah's appearance at the Transfiguration with Moses acted to legitimise Christ: Mt 17:1-13; Mk 9:2-13; Lk 9:28-36; see also Rev 11:3-12, 11:6 Elijah and Enoch also appear as a couple announcing the coming Messiah: *1En* 90:31; *4 Ezra* 6:26.

[5] In the Old Testament around 765 times, and in the New around 80 times, more than any other character from the Old Testament, according to C. Houtman, "Moses משה Μωυσῆς" *DDD* 1113.

recognised, Moses is regarded as the only prophet.[6] Apart from his role as lawgiver and leader he is distinguished by two things, that he saw God and that his death and burial are somewhat mysterious.

Moses' death is mentioned in the Torah (Deut 34:5), but it was not an ordinary death. Moses reached the biblically prescribed age of 120 years (cf. Gen 6:3).[7] Yet we are told that he had not experienced the aging process – his eyes were not dimmed and his vigour was unabated (Deut 34:7). Indeed his death was not the result of natural processes, but the actions of God, who commanded his death (Deut 34:50, cf. 32:50) because of his disobedience.[8] We are also told that יקבר אתו "he buried him" (Deut 34:6), but who "he" was is unclear, and although there are explicit directions given to his burial place, it is still claimed to be unknown (Deut 34:6).[9]

The ambiguities in the description of Moses' death gave rise to speculation in extra-canonical literature concerning his death – indeed whether it actually occurred in the normal human sense. Rabbinic literature stated that his death was unique because it was not an act of the angel of death, but an act of God.[10] Yet his burial is often asserted to have been the act of an angel; Michael's role is especially prominent.[11]

In the extra-canonical literature Moses' death is seen as a glorification. In the fourth-century Samaritan work the *Memar Marqah* a word based upon the Semitic root IQR (=

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[6] C. Houtman, *DDD* 1120.

[7] See also *Vita Claudii* in *Historia Augusta* 25.2.4-5, which mentions Moses' life span and compares it to Marcus Aurelius'. The text seems to show contact with ideas found in Philo and the Sibylline Oracles; it is translated and discussed in John G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972) 22 cf. n.19; although he admits that Ronald Syme, "Ipse ille patriarcha", in *Historia-Augusta-Colloqium: 1966/67* (1968) 127 (repr. in Syme, *Emperors and Biography: Studies in the Historia Augusta* [1971] 17-29) argued that the text here is the result of later editing.

[8] See Louis Ginzburg *The Legends of the Jews*, V, notes to Vols. I & II, *From the Creation to The Exodus* 77, & VI notes to volumes III and IV, *From Moses in the wilderness to Esther* ((trans. Henrietta Szold; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979) 46, 161; Abraham Meyer, *Légendes juives apocryphes sur la vie de Moïse; la chronique de Moïse, l'ascension de Moïse, la mort de Moïse* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1925).

[9] יקבר אתו בגי בארץ מואב מול בית-פעור ולא-ידע איש את-קברתו עד היום הזה "And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-pe or; but no man knows the place of his burial to this day" (Deut 34:6).

[10] *Tg. Ps.-J.*, *MidrR. Deut.* 11:10, *MidrR. Cant.* I.2:5.

[11] *Tg. Ps.-J.; MidrR. Deut* 11:10; Jude 9; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* VI.15, Fragments from Cassiodorus II (*Comments on the Epistle of Jude*); cf. S.E. Loewenstamm, "The Death of Moses", in G.W.E. Nickelsburg (ed.) *Studies on the Testament of Abraham* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1976). On the role of angels, in particular Michael in the burial of Patriarchs see also *T. Abr.* (A) 20:10; *T. Isaac* 14; *T. Jacob* 5:13; *Vita Adae et Evae* 41:1, 46:3, 48:3; *Apoc. Mos.* 37:5-6; 43:1.

glory) is used to indicate that Moses moved up to a more ethereal realm; he was made glorious.[12] Other Samaritan literature describes Moses garbed in clothes of glory and his face transformed so that it gave forth light.[13] In the first century CE Pseudo-Philonic *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* it is stated that:

> Et audiens Moyses, repletus est sensu, et mutata est effigies eius in gloria, et mortuus est in gloria secundum os Domini, et sepelivit eum iuxta quod promiserat ei.[14]
>
> And when Moses heard this, he was filled with understanding and his appearance became glorious (*in gloria*); and he died in glory (*gloria*) according to the word of the Lord, and he buried him as he had promised him. (*LAB* 19.16; trans. Harrington *OTP*)

Josephus records that Moses was taken up by a cloud.[15] He also states that Moses explicitly wrote that he had died because he did not want others to think that he had been taken up bodily to heaven. Yet Josephus' use of the term ἀφανισθήσεσθαι seems to indicate that in some manner he was taken up to heaven, for the same term is used of Elijah's assumption in *Antiquities* 9.28.[16] Likewise Philo seized on the mystery regarding Moses' burial place as a means of emphasising his special status (quoting Deut 34:6).[17]

Apart from all his other achievements Moses stands apart as having seen God himself. The symbolism of transformation that accompanied his vision of God informed the later traditions of heavenly ascents and visions. Whilst in exile in Sinai Moses requested to see the glory of God (כבדך Exod 33:18); God refused to show him his face, because such a vision would be fatal even for a man like Moses, but relented somewhat and said that he would be allowed to see his hand and back.

ויאמר יהוה הנה מקום אתי ונצבת על-הצור

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[12] *Memar Marqah* 5.3 (according to MacDonald's section division), in Ben Ḥayyim, Z. (ed. & trans.) **מרקה תיבת** *[Tibåt Mårqe]: A Collection of Samaritan Midrashim* (Jerusalem: Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1988) אוקרה / אוקרתה, i.e. 323.295, 301, 312; 325.329, 350.

[13] See A.E. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1909) I, 32.10, 40.28-41.4, 61.21, 62.6. On this see, J.E. Fossum, "Ascensio, Metamorphosis, the 'Transfiguration' of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels" in *idem*, *The Image of the Invisible God. Essays on the influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christianity* (Universtiätsverlag: Freiburg Schweiz & Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1995) esp. 83, who demonstrates the royal symbolism which was often behind the language of investiture in the Bible and Pseudepigrapha; he cites, in particular: Ezek 28.13, *TLevi* 8.

[14] D.J. Harrington (ed.) and J. Cazeux (trans.) *Pseudo-Philon,* Les Antiquités bibliques, I (*SC* 229; Paris: Cerf, 1976).

[15] Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* IV.326.

[16] Ηφανίσθη, from *aphanizō* see C. Houtman, "Moses" *DDD* 1118.

[17] *Sac.* 9; he also regarded Abraham as having been transformed into an angelic state, cf. n1.

> והיה בעבר כבדי ושמתיך בנקרת הצור ושכתי כפי עליך עד-עברי
> והסרתי את-כפי וראית את-אחרי ופני לא יראו
>
> And the Lord said: "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand upon the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen". (Exod 33:21-23)[18]

After staying with the Lord for forty days and nights and being instructed in the Law Moses returns to his people. Descending Mt Sinai it is reported that:

> ומשה לא-ידע כי קרן עור פניו בדברו אתו
> וירא אהרן וכל-בני ישראל את-משה והנה קרן עור פניו וייראו
> מגשת אליו . . . .
> ויכל משה מדבר אתם ויתן על-פניו מסוה
> ובבא משה לפני יהוה לדבר אתו יסיר את-המסוה עד-צאתו ויצא
> ודבר אל-בני ישראל את אשר יצוה
> וראו בני-ישראל את-פני משה כי קרן עור פני משה והשיב משה
> את-המסוה על-פניו עד-באו לדבר אתו
> (Exod 34:29-30, 33-35)
>
> Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking to God. And when Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. . . . And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses would put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him. (RSV Exod 34:29-30, 33-35)

We have already met the motif of the shining face in the preceding chapter in the description of the chief angelic figure in the Pseudepigrapha. It is a marker, derived from the tale of Moses' ascent of Sinai to meet with God, which becomes a standard symbol to indicate someone who has been admitted into the divine presence, or is about to, for instance Stephen immediately before his martyrdom (Acts 6:15).[19] Moses' divine state whilst in the presence

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[18] A later rabbinic tradition argued that this indicated that Moses had seen something that even the living creatures bearing the throne of God had not seen: *Exodus Rabbah* 23.15.

[19] According to 4Q377 2 ii, Moses was transformed, and made like an angel (כמלאך) when he received the Law from God; cited (as an, at that time, unpublished text, now publ. in *DJD* 28; Clarendon, 2000) in "Angels at Sinai: Exegesis, Theology and Interpretive Authority" *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7 (2000) 319. The reference is clearly, here, to Moses' authority as a prophet, a *messenger*, rather than to his ontological status, indicating the ambiguity inherent in the semantic range of words such as *mal'akh* and *aggelos* (see §3.1.1 a & b). The article by Najman is a very good discussion of the relationship between Moses and angelic beings in Jewish literature.

of God was also marked by his not needing food or drink for the forty days and nights that he spent with God (Exod 34:28; Deut 9:9,18). We shall see the same events recurring after the translation of Enoch in *2 Enoch* 23:3, when Enoch is instructed by the angel for thirty days and nights, and did not need to rest. Furthermore we are told in *2 Enoch* 56:2 that since the time of Enoch's transformation into an angel through being anointed with oil he had not been able to eat food. Philo said of the ascent of Moses: "What is the meaning of the words 'Come up to Me to the mountain and be there (Exod 24:12)'? This signifies that a holy soul is divinised by ascending not the air or to the ether or to heaven (which is) higher than all but to (a region) above the heavens. And beyond the world there is no place but God."[20]

In the later extra-canonical literature Moses takes up the role of the vice-regent of God.[21] In the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian, fragments of which are preserved in Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria and in Pseudo-Eustathius,[22] Moses serves as the principal character. The poetic drama is a retelling of the Exodus from Egypt (Ex 1-15). It was clearly written in Greek, and probably in Alexandria in the first half of the second century BCE.[23]

The important section is in lines 68 – 89 (Robertson *OTP* II & Jacobson[24]). In this passage a dream is related in which Moses is taken to heaven and invested with the symbols of royalty.

> ἔ<δο>ξ' ὄρους κατ' ἄκρα Σιν<αί>ου θρόνον μέγαν τιν' εἶναι μέχρι 'ς οὐρανοῦ πτύχας, ἐν τῷ καθῆσθαι φῶτα γενναῖόν τινα διάδημ' ἔχοντα καὶ μέγα σκῆπτρον χερὶ εὐωνύμῳ μάλιστα. δεξιᾷ δέ μοι ἔνευσε, κἀγὼ πρόσθεν ἐστάθην θρόνου. σκῆπτρον δέ μοι πάρδωκε καὶ εἰς θρόνον μέγαν εἶπεν καθῆσθαι. βασιλικὸν δ' ἔδωκέ μοι διάδημα καὶ αὐτὸς ἐκ θρόνων χωρίζεται. ἐγὼ δ' ἐσεῖδον γῆν ἅπασαν ἔγκυκλον καὶ ἔνερθε γαίας καὶ ἐξύπερθεν οὐρανοῦ, καί μοί τι πλῆθος ἀστέρων πρὸς γούνατα ἔπιπτ', ἐγὼ δὲ πάντας ἠριθμησάμην, κἀμοῦ παρῆγεν ὡς παρεμβολὴ βροτῶν. εἶτ' ἐμφοβηθεὶς ἐξανίσταμ' ἐξ ὕπνου.[25]

> On Sinai's peak I saw what seemed a throne so great in size it touched the clouds of heaven. Upon it sat a man of noble mien, becrowned,

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[20] *Quaest. Ex.* II.40 (from the Armenian; *LCL* Philo Suppl. II).
[21] For a comprehensive overview see Wayne A. Meeks, "Moses as God and King", in J. Neusner (ed.) *Religions in Antiquity. Essays in Memory of E.R. Goodenough* (Leiden: Brill, 1968).
[22] Eusebius, *Praep.* 9, 28.2-29.5-16 (quoting Alexander Polyhistor, *Peri Ioudaion*); Clement of Alexandria *Strom* I.23.155f; Pseudo-Eustathius, *Commentarius in Hexaemeron*, *PG* 18, 729.
[23] R. G. Robertson, "Ezekiel the Tragedian. A New Translation and Introduction", *OTP* II, 804.
[24] Howard Jacobson, *The Exagoge of Ezekiel* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983).
[25] B. Snell (ed.) *Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971).

> and with a sceptre in one hand while with the other he did beckon me. I made approach and stood before the throne. He handed over the sceptre and he bade me mount the throne, and gave to me the crown; then he himself withdrew from off the throne. I gazed upon the whole earth round about; things under it, and height above the skies. Then at my feet a number of stars fell down, and I their number reckoned up. They passed by me like armed ranks of men. Then I in terror wakened from the dream.
> (*Exagoge ll.*68-82; Robertson *OTP* II)

Clearly the imagery is related to that found in Daniel concerning the Ancient Of Days.[26] Moses' father-in-law Raguel interprets the dream as a reference to Moses becoming a leader of men, rather than a heavenly figure (83-86). What then are we to make of the heavenly imagery? Is Moses really being invested as God, or being deified,[27] or is this passage part of a tradition that argues against the belief in seers ascending to heaven and being deified?[28] As with the Pseudepigraphic passages in the previous chapter Moses is being invested as God's vice-regent.[29] There is no conflict between the heavenly imagery in 68-82 and the interpretation by Raguel (82-89), for the vice-regent was a figure appointed by God to rule over mankind; he may have been invested or crowned in heaven, but his role was upon earth. He was, as Nathaniel Deutsch has pointed out in the case of Metatron, a "janus like character".[30]

Philo also wrote on the transformation of Moses into a vice-regent figure. As in the *Exagoge* Moses is transformed into an angelic vice-regent. Moses is rewarded for refusing Pharaoh's earthly favour by being made a partner in God's realm.[31] Moses is described as a god, as the perfect model for humans to imitate.[32] He shares in the nature of God.[33] The

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[26] Dan 7, Robertson, *OTP* II, 812 n*b2.*
[27] So P.W. van der Horst, "Moses Throne Vision in Ezekiel the Dramatist" *JSS* 34 (1983) 25.
[28] As argued by H. Jacobson "Mysticism and Apocalyptic in Ezekiel's Exagoge", *Illinois Classical Studies* 6 (1981) 272-78. Although he shows some sympathy for this view Larry Hurtado, *One God, One Lord, Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1988) 58-9 points out that: "whether Ezekiel intended to affirm . . . or to modify . . . the tradition of a Mosaic heavenly ascent and exaltation, in either case the text is further evidence that there was such a tradition at the time Ezekiel wrote."
[29] W. A. Meeks, "Moses as God and King", in J. Neusner (ed.) *Religions in Antiquity. Essays in Memory of E.R. Goodenough* (Leiden, Brill, 1968) 354-371; *idem, The Prophet King* (Leiden: Brill, 1967) 148-149 talks of the traditions of Moses in Philo and rabbinic literature and Samaritan literature where he is invested as God's vice-regent; he sees the *Exagoge* as part of the same tradition. There is surely little doubt but that the essential background to this text is in traditions related to Judaism, not, as argued by C.R. Holladay, "The Portrait of Moses in Ezekiel the Tragedian", *Society of Biblical Literature 1976 Seminar Papers* (Missoula. Mont.: Scholars Press, 1976) in Greek traditions of the seer.
[30] (sic), Nathaniel Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate: Angelic Vice Regency in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 47.
[31] *Vita Mos.* (*LCL* Philo VI) I.155.
[32] *Vita Mos.* 1.158.

language seems more than metaphorical: Moses is explicitly described as an extra-terrestrial supernatural being; he was not like an earthly king, he was sent to the earth as a loan by God.[34] He was moreover the chief prophet and messenger (ἀρχιπροφήτης καὶ ἀρχάγγελος).[35] Whether Moses was actually regarded by Philo as divine is unclear.[36] Yet there is little doubt but that in the depiction of Moses by Philo the influence of Hellenistic ideas of the divine king can clearly be seen.[37]

In the later magical tradition Moses also has a prominent role to play. Although the role of Moses as lawgiver was well known in the gentile world,[38] his abilities as a magician seem to have been quite a minor part of his Graeco-Roman myth.[39] In the Graeco-Egyptian magical literature it seems that reflections in Jewish circles concerning Moses' knowledge of the divine name[40] had fused with the magical interest in names[41] to create a uniquely magical conception of Moses as an author of magical texts, a prophet and a revealer of the divine

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33 *Post.* (*LCL* Philo II) 28.
34 *Sac.* (*LCL* vol. II) 9.
35 *Quaest. Gen.* (*LCL* Philo Suppl. I) IV.8; on Abraham being transformed into an angelic state see *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 2.5.
36 Erwin R Goodnenough, *By Light, By Light: the mystic gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969) 223-34.
37 C.R. Holladay, "The Portrait of Moses in Ezekiel the Tragedian", *Society of Biblical Literature 1976 Seminar Papers* (Missoula. Mont.: Scholars Press, 1976) 154f; Meeks "Moses as King and God" 354-65 & "The Divine Agent and His Counterfeit in Philo and the Fourth Gospel", in E. Schüssler Fiorenza (ed.) *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1976) 48-54; Goodenough, *By Light* 181-87 & *idem* "The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship" in A.H. Harmon (ed.) *Yale Classical Studies* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1928) I, 55-102.
38 John G. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972) chaps. 1 & 2.
39 Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* 159-60.
40 See Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: a Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Atheneum, 1970) 78-103.
41 In ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Egyptian traditions it was normal for the magician to take the identity of a God; this was done by uttering the name of the deity (see i.e. Christian Jacq, *Egyptian Magic* (trans. Janet M. Davis; Wiltshire: Aris & Phillips 1985) 6-7; also Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973) 220-23 & idem, *Jesus the Magician* (London: Gollancz, 1978) 96-106; *The Praise of Michael The Archangel*, p. 2, *ll.* 29-30, in *Ancient Christian Magic* 327 & Louvre, E.14.250, *l.* 33, in *Ancient Christian Magic* 221); it was also necessary to know the names of various objects in order to pass into the judgement hall of Osiris after death (see E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of the Dead: an English translation of the chapters, hymns, etc., of the Theban recension, with introduction, notes, etc.* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1969) lxxxii-lxxxiii; cx; civ); although clearly important from an early period in the later Graeco-Egyptian magical tradition, perhaps as a response to the highly evolved late antique syncretism of different religious systems, divine names became important as *voces magicae* and the knowledge of the correct names of deities became important, cf. Brian P. Copenhaver in *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a new English translation with notes and introduction* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995) xxvi; see also Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (2 vols.; Teubner: Stuttgart, 1973-4); it should also be noted that interest in the name of God and angelic names is an ancient Jewish interest, connected to magical practices, Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel, A study of the relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135 - 425)* (Trans. H. McKeating; Oxford Univ. Press: New York, 1986) 343-5, 346.

name.[42] Moses is credited with at least seven and possibly eight books of esoteric knowledge.[43] Of these books three are worthy of mention: the *Archangelical Book* (mentioned in PGM XIII.971f); an 'archangelical hymn' which is mentioned on a 15th century phylactery, but behind which Reitzenstein posited a second-century Jewish text; and a reference to an 'archangelikē of Moses'.[44] None of these texts need be related, but all point to a connection between Moses and archangelic knowledge. Four other texts seem to be talking of Moses when they talk of a being granted knowledge of the name of God.[45] Once again an angelic category, but certainly not identification of Moses as an angel. Only in the pagan syncretist spell PGM V.115-6 is Moses described as ἄγγελος.[46] It seems that these later texts (mostly from late 3rd CE onwards) do not preserve much of an idea of Moses as an angelic vice-regent, although he is still connected with angelic categories.

Moses' meeting with God and the transformative experience that followed, in particular the symbol of the shining face, served to inform most later descriptions of holy men and women meeting God, or those who lived holy lives. Moreover it seems that in the late Second Temple and early Christian period (although dying out by the fourth century in, at least, the magical literature) Moses was accepted by many as some kind of angelic vice-regent figure.

4.2 The importance of Enoch for the early Christian understanding of angelic transformation

The passage "Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him" (RSV Gen 5:22-24) formed the kernel around which an elaborate myth had, by the early Christian period, been built. The figure of Enoch became intimately connected with angels and transformation. Genesis' enigmatic references to Enoch could suggest associations with angels. English and Greek translations have failed to capture the Hebrew references to angels:

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[42] Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* 160-61.
[43] *Ibid,* 146-152; cf. *ibid,* 150; none of these texts need be related, but all point to a connection between Moses and archangelic knowledge.
[44] *Ibid,* 150; Nag Hammadi Codex II.
[45] *Ibid,* 142-4; (although none of these texts mention him by name, it seems that this is who they are talking about, Gager 144 cites: Preidendanz, "Laminetta Magica Siciliana", *Acme* 1 (1948) 77, n2; Reitzenstein, *Poimandres* 293 n1.

ויתהלך חנוך את-**האלהים** אחרי הולידו את-מתושלח שלש מאות שנה ויולד
בנים ובנות: ויהי כל-ימי חנוך חמש וששים שנה ושלש מאות שנה:
ויתהלך חנוך את-**האלהים** ואיננו כי-לקח אתו **אלהים**:
(Gen 5:22-24)

> And Enoch walked with *ha-Elohim* after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with *ha-Elohim* and he was not because *Elohim* took him.

Any exegete looking at this passage in the late Second Temple or early Christian period could have seen several references to angels. Normally it was the case that the last *elohim*, without the definite article, would be interpreted as referring to God, the other two would be taken as referring to the angels.[47] Thus Enoch may be seen to have lived in angelic company upon earth.

The Enochic literature, much of which seems to have grown out of exegetical speculation on this passage, placed singular emphasis upon angels. In particular the myth of the Watchers, regarded by most as an expansion of the Genesis 6:1-4 myth of the fall of the sons of God (although Milik claimed that the Genesis passage was derived from the *Book of the Watchers*[48] in *1 Enoch* 1-36), forms one of the oldest strands of Jewish speculation about angels and their role. This book (of probably the third century BCE) opens with a call to the righteousness and a description of judgement ~~men~~ day when "light shall appear upon" the righteous (chapter 1); it then moves to what has been called the "nature homily" (chaps. 2-25); in which strong emphasis is placed upon the unique creative power of God (cf. chaps. 2-5); the central part of the book is then reached with the detailed rendition of the fall of the Watchers myth (chaps. 6-8), followed by what seems an expansion of the Genesis 5:24 passage in which Enoch's being taken up is explained as his being taken by God to admonish the Watchers; Enoch then takes two visionary journeys in which he sees all of creation, and in particular the fates of the righteous and the damned, although part of the *Book of Enoch* the *Book of Watchers* stands alone.

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[46] Here in this syncretist spell Moses is described ἄγγελος τοῦ Φραπω'Οσοροννωφρις.
[47] James C. VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man for all Generations* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1995)13, 15-16, 19; *idem, Enoch and the Growth of the Apocalyptic Tradition* (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984) 31f, 184-88.
[48] J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch. Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976) 31.

Taken as a whole the book is clearly an in-depth study of salvation. By focusing upon the Watchers legend scholars have generally fixed upon the explanation of sin therein, that sin came about because of the actions of the fallen Watchers.[49] Little attention has been devoted to attempting to understand what that legend meant to Jews and early Christians. What were the behavioural implications of this tale? Although on one level this legend acted to distance humans from the original sin and the bringing of evil onto the earth, the fact that the sin of the sons of God was sexual must have had some implications for the view held of sex. Thus the Watchers legend suggests that the fallen angels are negative models, and that their descent into carnality was likewise to be avoided. So, too, they present the example of the positive hero, the righteous man who is also a heavenly being.[50]

The Pseudepigraphic texts such as *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch*, *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*, *3 (Hebrew) Enoch*, and the *Apocalypse of Enoch* in the *Cologne Mani Codex*, expanded the biblical kernel into a full-blown myth of the transformation of Enoch.

In the *Similitudes (Parables) of Enoch* (*1 En* 37-71)[51] Enoch seems to be transformed into the Son of Man. The story of the *Similitudes* up to this point had revolved around Enoch's quest for knowledge of the Son of Man (Cf. 46:2).[52] Enoch sees a vision of the heavens, of the 'sons' of the holy angels clothed in white and with faces like snow. Michael reveals to him all the secrets of creation; he then sees visions of the heavens and the creatures therein: seraphim, cherubim, ophanim (the "sleepless ones" guarding the throne of glory), the angels Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, Phanuel and others, and a creature described in Ethiopic as the *rēʾša mawāʿēl*[53] who is described in terms derived from Daniel's description of the 'Ancient of Days': "His head is white and pure like wool and his

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[49] See for example James H. Charlesworth in *OTP* I, xxx.
[50] See also *Jubilees* 4:23 in which Enoch is taken up and made the heavenly scribe.
[51] Dated by Milik to around CE 270 and regarded by him as a Christian composition that replaced the *Book of Giants* in the Enochic corpus, J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976) 89-107; the received wisdom, however, is that the *Similitudes* were composed between the first century BCE and the very beginning of the second century CE: see J.C. VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man for All Generations* 132 and "Some Major Issues in the Contemporary Study of 1 Enoch: Reflections on J.T. Milik's *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4*", *Maʾarav* 3 (1982) 85-97.
[52] VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man for all Generations* 141.
[53] Matthew Black, *The Book of Enoch or 1 Enoch: A New English Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1985) 363. The figure of the "Head of Days" is of course reminiscent of the Ancient of Days in Dan 7; it is found also in *1En* 46:1, 2; 47:3; 55:1; 60:2; and in the passage discussed here: 71:10-14. This Ethiopic phrase is translated as "chief of Days" by Black, "Antecedent of Time" by E. Isaac in *OTP*, and "Head of Days" by VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man for all Generations* 138.

garment is indescribable".[54] An angel then declares Enoch to be the Son of Man and declares that the 'Head of Days' will always be with the righteous.[55]

In *2 (Slavonic) Enoch* 22 Enoch is brought by Michael before the face of the Lord; he is told to stand up in front of the Lord, and then told that he may continue to stand in front of the face of the Lord forever – indicating transformation into an angelic state.[56] Further indications of his angelic transformation follow: "And the Lord said to Michael, 'Go, and extract Enoch from [his] earthly clothing, And anoint him with my delightful oil, and put him into the clothes of my glory.'"[57]

In the Hebrew book of Enoch (*3 Enoch*) Enoch is transformed into the angel Metatron. Enoch is placed upon a throne like that of God. Indeed the chief angelic figure into which Enoch is transformed is so much like God that he is mistaken for God by the unfortunate second century rabbi Elisha ben Abuyah,[58] who assumes from Metatron's glorious appearance that there are two powers in heaven, for which both he and Metatron are punished.[59] In his transformation into an angel Enoch is described as being 'enlarged' (9:2), being covered in wings (9:3) and eyes (9:4), and being covered in brilliance and brightness like the luminaries of the world (9:5). He is then given a throne like the throne of glory (10:1). In 12:1-2 Metatron, the transformed Enoch, relates that:

> מתוך אהבה שאהב אותי הי׳ב׳ה׳ יותר מכל בני מרומים עשה לי לבוש של גאה שכל מענע מאורו(ת) קבועין בו והלבישני ועשה לי מעיל כבוד שכל מענע תאר זיו זוהר הדר קבועין בו והעטני ועשה לי כתר מלכות שקבועין בו ארבעים ותשע אבני תאר כאור גלגל החמה שזיוו הולך בארב(ע) רוחות ערבות רקיע ובשעה רקיעים ובארבע רוחות העולם וקשרו על ראשי וקראני יוי הקטן בפני כל פמיליאה שלו שבמרו׳ שנאמ׳ כי שמי בקרבו.[60]

> Out of the love which he had for me, more than for all the denizens of the heights, the Holy One, blessed be he, fashioned for me a majestic robe, in which all kinds of luminaries were set, and he clothed me in it. He fashioned for me a glorious cloak in which brightness, brilliance, splendour, and luster of every kind were fixed, and he

54 *1En* 71:10.
55 *1En* 71:14-17.
56 22:5-6; on 'standing' as an angelic designation see §5.2.5.
57 22:8 J, A is almost identical.
58 CE 110-135, the rabbi is known as *Aḥer* (other).
59 *3 Enoch* 16; b. Hagigah 15a; cf. Alan Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977) 60-67.
60 MS Vatican 228, in Peter Schäfer (hrsg.), *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Siebeck], 1981) §15.

> wrapped me in it. He fashioned for me a kingly crown in which refulgent stones were placed, each like the sun's orb, and its brilliance shone into the four quarters of the heaven of ᶜArabot, into the seven heavens, and into the four quarters of the world. He set it upon my head and he called me, "The lesser YHWH" in the presence of his whole household in the height, as it is written, "My name is in him" (cf. Ex 23:21). (*3En* 12:1-5; trans. P. Alexander, *OTP* I).

This tradition of Enoch's transformation loses its allure in later rabbinic Judaism. Beginning with the description of the punishment of Metatron / Enoch in *3 Enoch* his role becomes less and less important. In the Hekhalot material he is conspicuously absent, in *Bereshith Rabbah* 25 it is explicitly stated that he died a natural death; *Targum Onkelos* describes his removal in Gen 5:24 as due to a normal human death; the *Fragment Targum* and *Targum Neofiti* make no comment on his removal; only *Ps. Jonathan* continues the tradition of Enoch speculation found in 1, 2 and 3 Enoch.[61]

Perhaps this growing Jewish distaste for the Enoch story stemmed from Christian interest in the Enochic literature. For in the period before Nicaea Christian churchmen often treated the *Book of Enoch* as scripture, or at least as something very close to scripture.[62] Moreover the Samaritans regarded Enoch as a figure who had attained a special immortal status.[63]

Enoch is thus another representative of the human being transformed into the chief angel of God. Moreover the imagery of *2* and *3 Enoch* is worth noting: the command to stand before the Lord (*2 En*), the gaining of shining garments or a glorious robe (*2 & 3 En*), and the enlargement of Enoch (*3 En*) are all common angelological motifs.

4.3 John the Baptist as an angel

Origen reports that John the Baptist was held by some to be an angel.[64] To this day the standard iconographical representation of John in eastern Christianity is winged. Origen looks to the Jewish pseudepigraphon the *Prayer of Joseph* (probably 1st century CE,

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[61] See Christopher Rowland, "Enoch חנוך", *DDD* 579.
[62] See Jude 14, *Epistle of Barnabas* 4.16, Tertullian, *de cultu feminarum* 1.3, *Apostolic Constitutions* 6.16.
[63] *Memar Marqah* 4.9, in Z. Ben Ḥayyim (ed. & trans.) תיבת מרקה *[Tibåt Mårqe]: A Collection of Samaritan Midrashim* (Jerusalem: Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1988). Ben Ḥayyim's edition is to be preferred to MacDonald's 1963 edition (*Memar Marqah* [2 vols.; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann); see also Ben Ḥayyim, "review of MacDonald, *Memar Marqah*", *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 23 (1966) 185 — 191.
[64] *Com. in Jo.* 2.31.186ff.

maybe Alexandrian)[65] to illuminate the question of the angelic status of John. Here we will examine only the implications for John; the literary traditions about Jacob's angelic status and the angel Israel will be dealt with below.

Origen was uncomfortable using this text. He apologises for using it at all, describing it as a "digression" (παρεξέβημεν), from the 'apocrypha' (ἀποκρύφων), yet he suggests that it is a piece of writing that should not be used with contempt (οὐκ εὐκαταφρόνητον). It is the primary support for his claim for angelic status for John. Origen opines that John could have been from the "holy angels" (ἁγίων ἀγγέλων) in his role as a "messenger" (ἄγγελος) and "forerunner" (πρόδρομος) of Christ. It is not surprising that Origen felt uncomfortable using this text; it discusses a chief angelic figure and perhaps Origen was aware of gnostics who were interested in this angel who sees God,[66] but Origen subverts it and uses it as an argument for John's angelic status. He uses this text to support the contention that certain unique and special human beings are actually angels, created earlier and greater than other souls, but which have descended to earth in order to minister to human beings. John could well have been one of these beings. Origen clearly utilised Jewish material without fully understanding it. This is symptomatic of Origen's often superficial understanding of Jewish sources. Nonetheless his use of it suggests that Jewish material may have had some cachet in Christian circles in this time, just as in the magical corpus, Jewish themes were employed to add spice or to offer the support of antiquity to ideas that may well have been quite foreign to anything that Jews believed. But Origen's use of this text is puzzling. Why would he have used a text that had such problematic connotations? Surely the biblical quotations Origen presents (Mt 11:10, cf. Mk 1:2, Lk 7:27, all citing Mal 3:1; also Is 40:3) could have been used by themselves to support the contention that John was an angel. Perhaps he cited it in a deliberate attempt to subvert its use for other purposes; maybe some were interested in this text primarily because of its connection with beliefs about the chief angel and the possibility that at least some of the patriarchs could have been angels. Possibly Origen was trying to detach the tradition of Jacob as an angel from the legend of his transformation into a chief angelic being. On the other hand, perhaps Origen was unaware of the connections between the chief angelic figure, traditions of transformation, and the figure of Jacob,

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[65] See J.Z. Smith, "Prayer of Joseph" in *OTP*, II, 700. This pseudepigraphon is mentioned in several lists of apocryphal books; see Smith, "The Prayer of Joseph", in J. Neusner (ed.) *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (Supplements to *Numen* 14: Leiden, 1968) 251-294. The modern editions are noted below in §4.4.1.

although this would suppose a much more superficial acquaintance with Judaism than has hitherto been assumed for Origen.[67]

4.4 Jacob traditions

An examination of the traditions concerning Jacob's status as Israel demonstrates how out of touch Origen's use of the *Prayer of Joseph* was from the other main currents of thought concerning this figure, which saw him as a supreme angelic being, having either descended and become a man or else been a man who ascended and was transformed.

4.4.1 *The Prayer of Joseph*

Fragment A (*apud* Origen, *Commentary on John*)

Origen preserves this version of the *Prayer of Joseph.*

> Εἰ δέ τις προσίεται καὶ τῶν παρ' Ἑβραίοις φερομένων ἀποκρύφων τὴν ἐπιγραφομένην «Ἰωσὴφ προσευχήν«, ἄντικρυς τοῦτο τὸ δόγμα καὶ σαφῶς εἰρημένον ἐκεῖθεν λήψεται, ὡς ἄρα οἱ ἀρχῆθεν ἐξαίρετόν τι ἐσχηκότες παρὰ ἀνθρώπους, πολλῷ κρείττους τυγχάνοντες τῶν λοιπῶν ψυχῶν, ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶναι ἄγγελοι ἐπὶ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην καταβεβήκασι φύσιν. Φησὶ γοῦν ὁ Ἰακώβ. «Ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Ἰακὼβ καὶ Ἰσραὴλ ἄγγελος θεοῦ εἰμι ἐγὼ καὶ πνεῦμα ἀρχικόν, καὶ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ προεκτίσθησαν πρὸ παντὸς ἔργου. ἐγὼ δὲ Ἰακώβ, ὁ κληθεὶς ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων Ἰακώβ, τὸ δὲ ὄνομά μου Ἰσραήλ, ὁ κληθεὶς ὑπὸ θεοῦ Ἰσραήλ, ἀνὴρ ὁρῶν θεόν, ὅτι ἐγὼ πρωτόγονος παντὸς ζῴου ζωουμένου ὑπὸ θεοῦ«. Καὶ ἐπιφέρει «Ἐγὼ δὲ ὅτε ἠρχόμην ἀπὸ Μεσοποταμίας τῆς Συρίας, ἐξῆλθεν Οὐριὴλ ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ εἶπεν ὅτι κατέβην ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ κατεσκήνωσα ἐν ἀνθρώποις, καὶ ὅτι ἐκλήθην ὀνόματι Ἰακώβ. ἐζήλωσε καὶ ἐμαχέσατό μοι. Καὶ ἐπάλαιε πρός με, λέγων προτερήσειν ἐπάνω τοῦ ὀνόματός μου τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ πρὸ παντὸς ἀγγέλου. Καὶ εἶπα αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ πόσος ἐστὶν ἐν υἱοῖς θεοῦ . Οὐχὶ σὺ Οὐριὴλ ὄγδοος ἐμοῦ, κἀγὼ Ἰσραὴλ ἀρχάγγελος δυνάμεως κυρίου καὶ ἀρχιχιλίαρχός εἰμι ἐν υἱοῖς θεοῦ; οὐχὶ ἐγὼ Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ἐν προσώπῳ θεοῦ λειτουργὸς πρῶτος, καὶ ἐπεκαλεσάμην ἐν ὀνόματι ἀσβέστῳ τὸν θεόν μου;« (*Com. Joh.* 2:31.188-190)[68]

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[66] *On the Origin of the World*, NHC II.5 & XII.2, 105.23-25.

[67] See for instance Nicholas R.M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews* (Cambridge: CUP, 1976) 58, on Origen's reliance upon Aquila's translation of the Old Testament in his Hexapla.

> Should the piece entitled "The Prayer of Joseph", one of the apocryphal works current among the Hebrews, be thought worthy of credence, this dogma will be found clearly expressed. Those at the beginning, it is represented, having some marked distinction beyond men, and being much greater than other souls, because they were angels, they have come down to human nature. Thus Jacob says: "I, Jacob, who is speaking to you, am also Israel, an angel of God and a ruling spirit. Abraham and Isaac were created before any work. But, I, Jacob, whom men call Jacob but whose name is Israel am he whom God called Israel which means, a man seeing God, because I am the firstborn of every living thing to whom God gives life. And when I was coming up from Syrian Mesopotamia, Uriel, the angel of God, came forth and said that 'I, [Jacob-Israel] had descended to earth and I had tabernacled among men and that I had been called by the name of Jacob. He envied me and fought with me and wrestled with me saying that his name and the name that is before every angel was to be above mine, I told him his names and what rank he held among the sons of God. Are you not Uriel, the eighth after me? and I, Israel, the archangel of the power of the Lord and the chief captain among the sons of God? Am I not Israel, the first minister before the face of God? And I called upon my God by the inextinguishable name".

We should note that Origen quotes the text as saying that Jacob was an angel, a ruling spirit (πνεῦμα ἀρχικόν) called Israel, which means a man who is seeing God (ἀνὴρ ὁρῶν θεόν), and, like other chief angelic figures is the firstborn of creation;[69] moreover there is a discussion of the importance of names; it seems that the taking of the name Jacob was assumed by Uriel to have led to a lessening in the status of Israel. In actual fact it is revealed that Israel is the chief amongst the angels (like the archangel Michael), the chief minister (λειτουργὸς πρῶτος) before God. Thus the chief angel is revealed as also being a man, a patriarch; he can see God; he descends and engages in combat; he possesses a name of great power and he leads the worship of God. These themes are repeated in the other texts dealing with Jacob. As we have seen Origen presents the text without substantial commentary and only relates it to the possibility that John was an angel, suggesting at the same time that John may have been like one of those angels created at the beginning and only later sent down to earth. He also cryptically hints a little bit further on that the meaning of the story of the conflict of the twins Jacob and Esau might be found in the tale of the *Prayer of Joseph*, but does not develop the idea. It seems clear that he did

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[68] C. Blanc (ed.) *Origène. Commentaire sur saint Jean* (*SC* 120; Paris: Cerf, 1966).
[69] See §3.5.

not see it as relating to the idea of heavenly twinship, or else he would have done it more explicitly.[70]

Origen's excerpt has been designated Fragment A; two other fragments also exist.

Fragment B of the *Prayer of Joseph*

Fragment B is a single sentence preserved in a number of Patristic works: Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great's compilation of the work of Origen, the *Philocalia*; also Eusebius, the *Preparation of the Gospel*, and Procopius of Gaza's *Commentary on Genesis*.

> Ἀνέγνων γὰρ ἐν ταῖς πλαξὶ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὅσα συμβήσεται ὑμῖν καὶ τοῖς υἱοῖς ὑμῶν.[71]
>
> For I have read in the tablets of heaven all that shall befall you and your sons. (*OTP* II)

Here Jacob is once again identified as the chief angel; he has access to the "tablets of heaven" which reveal the future; this access to knowledge and books in heaven is a common theme, connected to the office of the chief angel.[72]

Fragment C of the *Prayer of Joseph*

Fragment C represents another, expanded version of Fragment B. It is also preserved in the *Philocalia*.

> ὁ Ἰακὼβ μείζων ἢ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἦν, πτερνίζων τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὁμολογῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ταύτῃ τῇ βίβλῳ ἀφ' ἧς παρεθέμεθα τό. Ἀνέγνων ἐν ταῖς πλαξὶ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. εἶναι ἀρχιχιλίαρχος δυνάμεως κυρίου, καὶ ὄνομα πάλαι κεκτημένος Ἰσραήλ. ὅπερ ἐν σώματι λειτουργῶν ἀναγνωρίζει, ὑπομιμνήσκοντος αὐτὸν τοῦ ἀρχαγγέλου Οὐριήλ.[73]
>
> [Origen writes] Jacob was greater than man, he who supplanted his brother and who declared in the same book from which we quoted "I read in the tablets of heaven" that he was a chief captain of the power of the Lord and had from of old the name of Israel; something which he recognises while doing service in the body, being reminded of it by the archangel Uriel. (trans. J.Z. Smith, *OTP* II)

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[70] More likely it was related to the idea of rivalry between the chief angels in heaven found in Jewish literature; see Smith, "Prayer of Joseph", *OTP*, II, 702-3.
[71] J.A. Robinson (ed.) *The Philocalia of Origen* (Cambridge: CUP, 1893) 23.15.33-34.
[72] In Rev 13:8 & 17:8 this is the book of the Lamb (= Christ), who takes the role of the chief angel; see also Dan 12:1, *Jubilees* 30:20-22; *1En* 47:3, 108:3.
[73] Robinson, *Philocalia* 23.19.16-21.

How much in this paraphrase is Origen's words or those of the *Prayer of Joseph* is unclear, but the addition of the comment that Jacob needed to be reminded of his heavenly origin is reminiscent of gnostic imagery such as that found in the *Hymn of the Pearl.*[74]

Thus the fragments of the work known to us as the *Prayer of Joseph* give us a picture of the figure of Jacob as an angel in the Jewish *Prayer of Joseph.* Fragments A and C agree that Jacob was the chief angel of God; likewise that he was actually named Israel, to which Frag. A adds that this name means a man who sees God, an etymology classically Alexandrian;[75] both also place importance upon names as an indicator of status; A and C also concur that Israel-Jacob was created at the beginning and that greatness in humans, such as that exhibited by the patriarchs, must indicate some kind of heavenly status. The mention in B and C of the prophetic tablets of heaven further emphasises the important status and prophetic and eschatological role of the figure here named Israel. Thus between Jewish and early Christian Alexandrian circles there was some interchange. The *Prayer of Joseph* was used by Origen to suggest that John the Baptist could have been an earthly manifestation of a heavenly being; whether he believed him to be the same figure as Jacob-Israel, or another archangel is unclear. It is the idea that earth-bound human beings could also be heavenly angels that is most important. That John the Baptist, who practised a rigorous ascetic existence, could have been seen as an angel in the type of Jewish-Christian circles from which the *Prayer* presumably came, needs to be remembered when we turn to the early Syriac ascetic tradition in chap. 5. Moreover the fact that one of Jacob-Israel's titles is chief minister, or leader of the praise of God, indicates the importance of this role in the Jewish pseudepigraphic literature being read by early Christians in Egypt. The emphasis upon the praise of God is shared both with Jewish mystical, Targumic and Midrashic literature,[76] and early Syriac ascetics who aimed to imitate angels in their praise.

Other traditions also attest to beliefs about Jacob and angelic transformation.

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[74] See Smith in *OTP* II, 714.

[75] Although there are almost no references in Hebrew literature, even though it is a Hebrew play on words; Philo, in particular, followed this etymology; see J.Z. Smith "Prayer of Joseph", *OTP* II, 703 & nn.

[76] In particular the notion of Israel as leading the praise; see Smith, "Prayer of Joseph", *OTP*, II, 702. See the references to angelic praise in §3.4.3 & §5.2.2.

4.4.2 *The Prayer of Jacob* (PGM XXIIb. 1-26)

The Prayer of Jacob is found in a fourth century papyrus in the Staatliche Museums in Berlin.[77] As with many of the texts with which it was included in Preisendanz's *PGM* collection this papyrus contains numerous references to Jewish themes, but to classify it as "Jewish" as Charlesworth has done seems overly bold; perhaps it is safer to suggest merely that the author appealed to Jewish themes to legitimise his prayer or incantation, and that his audience knew enough about Judaism for this appeal to make some sense.

> Προσευχὴ Ἰακώβ.
> 'πάτερ πατριά[ρχ]ων, πατὴρ ὅλω[ν, πατὴ]ρ δυνάμε[ων τοῦ
> κό]σμ[ου], κτ[ί]στ[α παν]τὸ[ς ...,] κτίστα τῶν ἀγγέλων καὶ
> ἀρχαγγ[έ]λ[ων], ὁ κ[τ]ίστης ὀνομ[άτων] σω[τηρικῶν,] καλῶ σε,
> πατέρα τῶν ὅλων δυνάμε[ω]ν, πατέρα τοῦ [ἅπα]ντος [κό]σ[μ]ου
> [καὶ τῆς] ὅλης γενέσεως καὶ οἰκουμένης καὶ ἀοικήτο[υ, ᾧ
> ὑπ]εστ[α]λ[μέν]ο[ι οἱ] χ[ερουβίν, ὃς] ἐχαρίσατο [Ἀβρ]αὰμ ἐν τῷ
> [δοῦναι τὴν] βασιλ[είαν αὐτῷ. ἐπάκου[σό]ν μοι, ὁ θεὸς τ[ῶν
> δ]υνάμεων, ὁ θ[εὸς ἀγγ]έλων κ[αὶ ἀ]ρ[χα]γγέλων, βα[σιλεὺς ...]
> λελεαχ' ....αρωαχ. του..αχ' αβολ[.]ω......[υρ]αμ' του....βοαχ
> καθ[.]ρ.α χαχ. μαριρο[κ...] υραμ' ιθθ σεσοικ.... ὁ κ[α]θ[ήμενος]
> ἐπὶ ὄρους ἱ[εροῦ Σ]ιναΐου ι[.]βο αθεμ [ὁ] καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῆς
> θα[λάσσ]ης [.]εα' ...βλ δ[.]κ ε[.]θης παραχθη[.]. ὁ καθήμενο[ς
> ἐπὶ] τῶν δ[ρα]Jοντ[είων] θεῶν, ὁ [θεὸς ὁ καθήμε]ν[ο]ς [ἐπὶ
> τοῦ] [Ἡ]λίου Ἰάω, ὁ καθήμε[νος ἐπὶ.....] τα[.]ω[.]ι...χ, ὁ
> [καθήμ]εν[ος ἐ]πὶ το[ῦ..]θε[....] ..μα..σι Ἀβριήλ. Λουήλ.
> [.....]μ[..τ]όν [κ]οιτῶνα χε[ρο]υ[β]ὶ[ν ....]χιρε...ος ι[.] ε[ἱ]ς
> τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώ[νω]ν θεὸς Ἀβαώθ, Ἀβραθιαώθ, [Σα]βα[ώθ,
> Ἀ]δωνάι, ἄστρα.....ε [κ]αὶ βριλεωναι [Ἀ]δονάι, χα...αώθ, ὁ
> κ[ύρ]ιος τῶν ὅλων. ἐπικαλοῦμαί σε, ἐ[πὶ χ]άσ[ματος δόντα]
> δύναμιν <τοῖς> ἄνω καὶ τοῖς κάτω καὶ τοῖς ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς.
> ἐπάκουσον τῷ [ἔχο]ντι [τὴν] εὐχήν, ὁ κύριος θεὸς τῶν Ἑβραίων,
> Ἐπα[γ]αήλ αλαμν, οὗ [ἡ] ἀέναος δύναμις, [Ἐλω]ήλ, Σουήλ.
> διόρθωσον τὸν ἔχοντα [τὴ]ν εὐχὴν [ἐ]κ τοῦ γένου[ς] Ἰσραὴλ
> [κ]αὶ τῶν χαριζομένων ὑπό σου, θεὲ θεῶν, ὁ ἔχων τὸ κρυπτὸν
> ὄνομα Σαβαώθ, [.]ι..χ. θεὸς θεῶν, ἀμήν, ἀμήν, [ὁ] χιόνα γεννῶν,
> ἐπὶ ἀστέρων ὑπ[έ]ρ αἰώνων κ(αὶ) ἀεὶ διοδεύ[ω]ν [κ(αὶ) ποιῶν]
> τοὺς ἀπλανεῖς καὶ πλανωμένους ἀ[στ]έρας διώκειν τὰ πάντα τῇ
> σῇ δημιουργίᾳ. πλήρωσόν με σοφίας, δυνάμωσ[ό]ν με, δέσποτα,
> μέστωσόν μου [τὴν] καρδίαν ἀγαθῶν, δέσποτα, ὡς ἄγγελον
> ἐπ[ίγ]ειον, ὡς ἀθάνατον [γε]νάμενον, ὡς τὸ δῶρον τὸ ἀπὸ [σο]ῦ
> δεξάμε[νον, ἀ]μήν, ἀμήν'. [λ]έγε ἑπτάκις πρὸς ἄρκ[τον] καὶ
> ἀ[πη]λιώτην [τὴν προ]σε[υ]χ[ὴ]ν τ[οῦ] Ἰακώβ.
> (PGM XXIIb.1-26)

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[77] P. Berol. inv. 13895.

> Prayer of Jacob: "O Father of the patriarchs, Father of the All, [Father] of the [cosmic] powers, [creator of all] . . . , Creator of angels and archangels, the Creator of the [saving] names. I summon you, Father of all powers, Father of the entire [cosmos] and of all | creation inhabited and uninhabited, to whom the [cherubim] are subjected, [who] favored Abraam by [giving the] kingdom [to him] . . . : hear me, O God of the powers, O [God] of angels [and] archangels, [King] . . . . LELEACH . . . ARŌACH TOU ACHABOL . . . Ō . . . YRAM TOU . . . BOACH KA . . . TH . . . RA . . . CHACH MARIROK . . . YRAM . . . ITHTH SESOIK, | he who sits upon [holy] Mount Sinai; . . . I . . . BO . . . ATHEM . . . he who sits upon the sea; . . . EA . . . BL . . . D . . . K . . . E . . . THĒS . . . PARACHTHĒ . . . , he who sits upon the serpentine gods; the [god who sits upon the] sun, IAŌ; he who sits [upon] . . . TA . . . Ō . . . I . . . CH; he [who sits] upon the . . . the . . . MA . . . SI, ABRIĒL LOUĒL . . . M . . . resting place of the [cherubim] . . . CHIRE . . . OZ . . . I . . . | to the ages of ages, God ABAŌTH ABRATHIAŌTH [SABAŌTH] ADŌNAI star . . . and BRILEŌNAI ADŌNAI CHA . . . AŌTH the Lord of the all. I call upon you who give power [over] the Abyss [to those] above, to those below, and to those under the earth; hear the one who has [this] prayer, O Lord God of the Hebrews, EPAGAĒL ALAMN, of whom is [the] eternal power, ELŌEL SOUĒL. Maintain the one who possesses his prayer, who is from the stock of Israel and from those | who have been favored by you, O god of gods, you who have the secret name, SABAŌTH . . . I . . . CH, O god of gods, amen, amen. You who produce the snow, over the stars, beyond the ages, [and] who constantly traverse [the cosmos], and who cause the fixed and movable stars to pursue all things by your creative activity, fill me with wisdom. Strengthen me, Master; fill my heart with good, Master, as a terrestrial angel (*hōs aggelon epigeion*), as one who has become immortal (*athanaton*), as one who has received this gift from you, Amen, amen!" Pronounce the [prayer of] Jacob seven times facing north and east. (trans. D. Aune, *GMP* 261)

The first section (*ll.* 1-19) contain a statement affirming monotheism, similar in its emphasis to many pronounced by Church fathers concerning the sole creative power of God.[78] The *voces magicae* and appeals to the 'secret' Name are also typical of the magical papyri. The exact status of this text is, however, unclear. Although it includes typical magical elements it does not seem to command obedience of the deity addressed as was usually the case in the magical papyri, and the inclusion of the statement of monotheistic faith at the beginning also seems a little too 'religious' to come from a text classed as 'magical'. Perhaps the magician took a text from some early Christian group's writings; certainly the statement of faith seems like something that would be penned by a member of a Christian group engaged in debate with demiurgical gnostic groups, or those who believed in creation by angels.

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[78] Such as the Nicene Creed.

What elements common to other Jacob traditions can we see here? There is the emphasis upon the power of the name. More important is the connection made between the transformation of the one who pronounces the prayer and his supposed descent from Israel and the connection with Jacob in the title. Perhaps this prayer is suggesting that Jacob was not always Israel, but received the name upon saying this prayer, or one like it. This last would seem to represent a transformation of the earlier Jewish tradition that held Jacob to have always been the angel Israel. This incantation text preserves the earlier Jewish tradition concerning the nature of Jacob as an angel, but as would be expected of a magical text from the Graeco-Egyptian tradition the story is not seen in terms of Jacob's pre-existence as the angel, but in terms of the transformation of the one who pronounces the prayer.[79]

In gnostic and Manichaean literature Jacob is also regarded as an angel. References to him as an angel are found in Manichaean texts from Turfan.[80] Although much later than our period it is clear that this tradition is derived from the developments in Jewish and early Christian discourse discussed above, and that it is also reflected in the passage in the Gospel of the Egyptians (NHC III & IV) which talks of a Jakobos (III) or Jacob (IV) as a *strategos*.[81]

4.5 Joseph in *Joseph and Aseneth*

The story of Joseph and Aseneth does not seem to be directly related to Origen's *Prayer of Joseph*. It is, like much of the extra-canonical literature, an explanation of an enigmatic

[79] This impersonation of or transformation into a deity typified Egyptian magico-ritual practices, see Christian Jacq, *Egyptian Magic* 7f. on the Metternich Stela; see also Heidelberg Kopt. 686, *The Praise of Michael The Archangel*, 2, *ll.* 29-30, in Marvin Meyer & Richard Smith (eds.) *Ancient Christian Magic, Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1994) 327 (1st published by Angelicus M. Kropp, *Der Lobpreis des Erzengels Michael (vormals P. Heidelberg Inv. Nr. 686)* [Brussels: Foundation égyptologique reine Élisabeth, 1966]), and Louvre, E.14.250, *l.*33, in Meyer, *Ancient Christian Magic*, 221.

[80] M 43 & M4b, and probably also in the very early Manichaean work τὰ τῶν μυστηρίων (*contra* Flügel, *Mani* [Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1969] n310) see A. Böhlig, "Jakob als Engel in Gnostizismus und Manichäismus", in G. Wiessner (ed.) *Erkenntnisse und Meinungen*, II (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1978); repr. in Böhlig, *Gnosis und Syncretismus. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Siebeck], 1989) 164-79; Eng. trans., "Jacob as an Angel in Gnosticism and Manichaeism", in R. McL. Wilson (ed.) *Nag Hammadi and Gnosis. Papers read at the First International Congress of Coptology (Cairo, December 1976)* (Leiden: Brill, 1978); also see T. Schneider, "Der Engel Jakob bei Mani", *ZNW* 33 (1934) 218-19.

biblical passage, *viz.* the story of the patriarch Joseph marrying a non-Jewish, Egyptian woman (Gen 41:45). The standard edition of the Greek by Philonenko[82] assumes that recension *d* of the text represents the most primitive version and was written in Greek by a diaspora Jew in Egypt using the Septuagint; recension *b* may have come from a Jewish mystic or a Christian gnostic, while recensions *a* and *c* were written by Christians. D. Cook's English translation[83] follows this edition. Burchard's 1985 translation, on the other hand, makes a claim for *b*'s priority, basing the translation around it. Both will be consulted herein, although the line numbering follows Burchard's translation . It is accepted by the vast majority of scholars that the text is a Jewish composition from the first couple of centuries of this era, most probably before the Jewish revolt under Hadrian in CE 115-117.[84] Regardless of its Jewish origins it was widely used by Christians, with a long history of use in many different Christian communities and in various languages.[85] It shows links to the Hellenistic tradition of the romance novel,[86] although perhaps the resemblance is only skin-deep. For behind the story of the love of Joseph and Aseneth is a description of the transformative conversion of a gentile to Judaism by an angel and a polemic against impurity, in particular sexual impurity.

Both Joseph and Aseneth are presented as being virgins. Joseph is hesitant to meet Aseneth until he is sure that she will not attempt to seduce him as other Egyptian women were wont to do. Aseneth's purity reassures Joseph, who declares that since both are virgins they are thus brother and sister (7:8, cf. 8:1); although he will not kiss her with the same mouth with which he blesses God, eats the bread of life and drinks from the cup of immortality (8:5). But Joseph feels pity for her, blesses her and announces he will return in eight days.

During the time Aseneth is separated from Joseph she repents of her idolatry, fasts and addresses long soliloquies to God asking to be accepted. In response an angel in the shape of a man descends from heaven. This angel is the chief of the house of the Lord and

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[81] See A. Böhlig, "Jakob als Engel in Gnostizismus und Manichäismus" *passim*.
[82] M. Philonenko, *Joseph et Aséneth: Introduction, Texte critique, Traduction, et Notes* (Leiden: Brill, 1968).
[83] *AOT*, 465-504.
[84] Burchard, "Joseph and Aseneth", *OTP* II, 187.
[85] The text was been preserved in Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Latin, Slavonic, and Ethiopic, see Burchard *OTP* II, 179.
[86] Philonenko first pointed this out; see Burchard's discussion 183-84 & n23.

commander of the whole host of God (14:8). Aseneth falls to the ground, and, in language we will see is characteristic of meetings between the divine and human beings,[87] is then told to arise (ἀνάστηθι) and stand on her feet (14:3-8 & 11). When she stands and looks she sees before her a man in the form of Joseph who is identified as a heavenly being by the fact that his face was like lightning, his eyes like sunshine, his hair like flames, and his hands and feet like molten iron shooting forth sparks (14:9). Aseneth is told to change into a linen robe and to girdle her waist with the twin girdle of virginity (14:12-13) before returning to hear what the angel has to say. Aseneth veils herself but is told by the angel to remove her veil, for her virginity has given her the status of a young man. She is then instructed in the facts concerning the bread of life, identified as the manna of the Bible, which the angel claims was actually honey, and told that the angels and the elect eat this together in heaven.[88] Aseneth's virginity is the central element of the story before her transformation/conversion experience; not only does it seem to combine with her repentance to lead to acceptance into the community of the saved who eat the bread of life with the angels (16:14), but it also seems to act as an explanation to a Jewish audience for her suitability as a wife for Joseph.

We have here a picture of how a Jewish writer of the first century or thereabouts imagined the process of the conversion of a gentile to Judaism. It may well have no relation to actual conversion ceremonies, which surely would have varied, and moreover it depicted the conversion of a very special individual, not your average proselyte. The tale, however, can be read on a number of levels.

Indeed the conversion of Aseneth has more to do with transformation than conversion; the imagery is shared with the other texts we have looked at so far in which the subject is transformed into a heavenly being.

Clothing imagery crops up constantly. We hear of Aseneth's clothes of earthly splendour (3:6; 4:1), of Joseph's earthly garb (5:5); of Aseneth taking off her earthly clothes during the process of conversion (10:10), and donning the clothing of repentance (10:14-15). After her conversion experience her garments of earthly splendour take on a

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[87] See §5.2.5.
[88] On manna see David Goodman's article "Do Angels Eat?", *JJS* 37 (1986) 160-61. Manna is described in Exod (16:31) as being like Coriander seed wafers made with honey, in Num (11:7) its appearance is described as being like bdellium (הבדלח) (a balsalm-bearing tree) and its taste like Coriander.

different significance as they mark the status of Aseneth as a bride of Joseph (18:5-6). The wedding robe that she wears is described as being "like lightning in appearance" (18:6). The transformation of Moses after meeting with God is also recalled in this text as we are told that after dressing in her wedding garments Aseneth's face appeared "like the sun" (18:9). In fact all of Aseneth, not just her face, shone like light (20:6).

It should be noted that the transformation was preceded by a period of isolation, fasting and repentance, and that Aseneth's virginity ranked high in Joseph's opinion. Yet sex is not entirely absent from the tale. After conversion Joseph and Aseneth are united in wedlock, although Joseph adds one last ethical lesson, cautioning that "it does not befit a man who worships God to sleep with his wife before the wedding" (21:1); after the marriage Aseneth produces Manasseh and Ephraim for Joseph.

For behind the simple tale of love and repentance there are other allegorical elements that seem to suggest that there is a spiritual, heavenly dimension to the story. The angel's resemblance to Joseph is no accident. We are told that Joseph is a son of God (6:3); not only that, but after the betrothal Pharaoh reveals to her that Joseph is the firstborn son of God (21:4), like Jacob in the *Prayer of Joseph*. Indeed there may be some literary connection here as Jacob, the father of Joseph, is also described in terms reminiscent of the description of angels.

> And Aseneth saw him and was amazed at his beauty, because Jacob was exceedingly beautiful to look at, and his old age (was) like the youth of a handsome (young) man, and his head was all white as snow, and the hairs of his head were all exceedingly close and thick like (those) of an Ethiopian, and his beard (was) white reaching down to his breast, and his eyes (were) flashing and darting (flashes of) lightning, and his sinews and his shoulders and his arms were like (those) of an angel, and his thighs and his calves and his feet like (those) of a giant. And Jacob was like a man who had wrestled with God. And Aseneth saw him and was amazed, and prostrated herself before him face down to the ground.
> (*JosAsen* 22:7-8; from Burchard's trans.; this passage is not found in Philonenko's edition, or in Cook's translation, of *d*).

As Burchard points out Joseph's beauty indicates his elect status, like that promised to Aseneth by the angel in 16:16 and realised at her transformation (18:9).[89] The language

[89] Burchard, *OTP* II, 238 ng; cf. 20:6 where her beauty is described as being like heavenly beauty; see also 21:4.

used to describe the wedding of Joseph and Aseneth also supports an esoteric, spiritual interpretation of this union. Aseneth is described as looking like a 'bride of God' (4:1); she declares that she is waiting to marry the first-born son of Pharaoh (4:11), although we know she ends up marrying the first-born son of God (21:4). Likewise the assertion that Aseneth will be Joseph's bride "for ever and ever", seems to suggest a heavenly marriage rather than a marriage on earth that will eventually be terminated by death (4:8; 15:6; 19:5). After Aseneth dresses in her wedding robe she takes on the appearance of light (20:6). Aseneth's wedding robe is described by the angel as "the ancient and first robe which is laid up in your chamber since eternity" (15:10). The purpose of the author is unclear; perhaps he deliberately meant the text to be read both for its surface meaning and also for its hidden, allegorical interpretation. Certainly he would not be the first Alexandrian Jew to have employed allegory. Yet the purpose is unclear and we can only point out here that there exist strong similarities between the depiction of the marriage of Aseneth to Joseph and the Christian notion of the righteous individual or the Church as a body being the bride of the heavenly bridegroom Jesus.[90] Likewise the heavenly couple of Joseph and Aseneth could be related to the heavenly couple of the chief angel and the (female) holy spirit found in Aramaic-influenced circles such as the Elchasites.[91]

Regardless of the exact religious ideology behind the story of Joseph and Aseneth the text itself draws upon symbolic themes normally connected to the heavenly transformation of the righteous. For instance the seven virgins who wait upon Aseneth are like stars (2:6). The righteous will enjoy fellowship with the angels in heaven and eat the bread of life (manna, honey).

In particular the same symbols of transformation from an earthly to a heavenly state come into play. The story of the encounter with the angel carries the usual motif of the prostration of the visionary and the command by the heavenly being to 'arise' (cf. §5.2.5). This motif is as fixed a part of ascent vision texts as the command *tachys tachys* "quickly, quickly" is in the magical texts of this period. It is noteworthy that when she meets Joseph, who has angelic qualities but is also clearly a human being and comes to her in the normal human way rather than through a vision, she also falls on her face, but Joseph does

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[90] Burchard argues that the allegorical interpretation is unsupported by the text; this is against Philonenko who argued for an allegorical interpretation, but not the interpretation that I have suggested: Burchard, *OTP* II, 189.

not use the command 'arise', rather calls her to him. After Aseneth meets the angel she undergoes a period of instruction like that of Enoch or Isaiah after their ascent visions (16). Moreover after her transformation Aseneth's face shines; her robes and those of the angel, of Joseph and of Jacob, mark them all out as being somehow creatures of heaven rather than earth.

It should be noted here that Aseneth's transformation was brought about by her behaviour, by her maintenance of virginity and by her sincere repentance. In particular her virginity gave her the status of a young man rather than that of a young woman.

4.6 Adam traditions

Although the material concerning Adam in the Bible was limited, the figure of the first human being, responsible for the fall from Grace, understandably attracted considerable interest. Numerous pseudepigrapha were attributed to Adam.[92] These Adam writings were particularly popular in eastern Christianity, and are preserved for us in languages such as Syriac, Arabic, Armenian and Georgian.[93]

In this period the belief that Adam (and thus all mankind) was created as an immortal angelic being was widespread amongst Jews and was found in the Pseudepigrapha. In the *Testament of Adam* it is said that Adam was destined to become a god (*TAdam* 3:2,4).[94] In *2 (Slavonic) Enoch* it is revealed to Enoch by God that: "On the sixth day I commanded my wisdom to create man out of the seven components ...And on the earth I assigned him to be a

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[91] See above, §3.2.4.

[92] See n93 for a listing of the Pseudepigraphic texts; Adam was also regarded by some as the author of Ps 92, and also Ps 139:16; see J. Reeves, *Heralds of That Good Realm: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 34-5.

[93] Michael Stone has divided the traditions up into two: 1) primary Adam books, probably of Jewish origin and preserved in Greek, Latin, Georgian, Armenian, Coptic and Slavonic; 2) secondary Adam books, probably all of Christian origin and preserved mainly in Syriac, Arabic, Armenian and Ethiopic; see M. Stone, *A History of the Literature of Adam and Eve* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992). The surviving Christian books of Adam and Eve are as follows: *The Testament of Adam* (*OTP* I, 989-95; in Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic & Georgian), *The Cave of Treasures* (Syriac, see §5.3.1), *The Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (Ethiopic), and many Armenian texts (see Stone, *ibid*); there are also numerous surviving texts of less orthodox background: Epiphanius (*Panarion* 26.8.1) tells us of the existence amongst gnostic heretics of ἀποκαλύψεις τοῦ Ἀδὰμ (apocalypses of Adam); there was also the gnostic *Apocalypse of Adam* (NHC V); the *CMC* also contains an Adam apocalypse (*CMC* 48.16 - 50.7); and there was a شهادة ادم على عيسى (testimony of Adam about Jesus) preserved in the Manichaean *Book of Mysteries*; see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, in G. Flügel, *Mani: seine Lehre und seine Schriften* (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1969) 73.1.

[94] On the identification of the gods as angels, see §3.2.1.

second angel, honoured and great and glorious."[95] This heavenly status was lost in *2 En* through Adam's sin.[96] Likewise in *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* it is declared that men were created to be like angels, but they lost their immortality and their angelic status through the gaining of knowledge.[97] In Philo's work Adam was described as a viceroy (*hyparchōn*).[98] In *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* Adam is created as a being half divine and half profane – he has the option of immortality, but only if he leads a sin-free existence.[99] A similar idea is found in the *Gospel of Thomas*, Saying 85: that if Adam had been 'worthy' he would not have known death.

Belief in Adam's original immortal angelic status was also widespread in more explicitly Christian documents. *The Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, which is a Christian document dated by some to the fifth or sixth century, enumerates the angelic privileges that Adam and Eve lost due to their fall; for instance they lost the ability to see the angels (an angelic ability, as it was believed that only like could see like), and they found that they began to thirst for water.[100] Origen, too, repeats this theme in his *Homily I On Ezekiel*, preached in the church in Caesarea ca. 240 CE. This homily shows affinities with the Jewish *Shavu'ot* preaching in the synagogues, suggesting that Origen had contact with and borrowed from Jews.[101] Here Adam is described as an immortal being, a god and a prince, before he fell and became subject to death.[102] Indeed, in a variation on the theme, the anti-Origenist Methodius of Olympus attributes an angelic type of existence to mankind right down to the time of Noah. Humans apparently not only lived with angels but shared the angelic ability to see God with their own eyes.[103]

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[95] *2En* 10:8-11, trans. F.I. Andersen in *OTP* I.
[96] *2En* 30:15-18.
[97] *1En* 69:8-11.
[98] *Opf. Mund.* 148.
[99] Parashah Eight, Genesis 1:26-28 VIII.XI.3 D.
[100] James H. Charlesworth, "The Portrayal of the Righteous as an angel", in J.J. Collins & George W.E. Nickelsburg (eds.) *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism, Profiles and Paradigms* (Scholars Press: Chico, Calif., 1980) 138-9; *The Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (chaps 4,8,9, 10, 11,12) trans. by S. C. Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve also called The Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1882). Charlesworth (139) says that: "It certainly does seem to preserve a significant expansion of a much older Jewish tradition regarding Adam's primordial angelic nature".
[101] Joseph W. Trigg (intro. & trans.) "Origen, Homily I on Ezekiel", in *Ascetic Behaviour* 45 & 46, the way the subject matter of the homily is dealt with demonstrates that Origen was relying upon the *Shavu'ot* preaching about Ezekiel's chariot vision - probably heard in the Greek-speaking synagogues of Caesarea. The Greek text is fragmentary; this translation is based upon Latin of Jerome's in W.A. Baehrens' edition (*GCS* 30 *Origenes* 8:319-40).
[102] Trigg, "Origen" p.52 [3], pp.58-9 [9].
[103] *Symposium* 7 (Procilla): 5.

Themes connected with the passage in Gen 3:21 which discusses the clothing of Adam and Eve played a central role in the understanding of Adam and Eve's fall and the possibility of redemption.[104] It came to be the case, particularly in Syriac literature, that the clothing of Adam and Eve before the fall was seen as robes of glory which marked their status as heavenly beings, robes that were lost when they fell from grace. In the Syriac text of the *History of the Rechabites*, the blessed ones (who are "earthly angels") are naked to the human eye, but in actual fact are clothed in a covering of glory, the same covering of glory that Adam and Eve wore before their fall.[105] The Paradise of Ephrem was the original garden from which Adam and Eve were expelled and in which all those living humans who listened to Christ were resident, thus acting to reveal Paradise to others.[106] These saints are not naked, but clothed in glory, in the robe of Adam and Eve that was lost.[107] Ephrem explicitly linked the new baptismal robe of the Christian with the robe of glory worn by Adam before the

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[104] Cf. Origen *Contra Celsum* 4.40 (probably based according to Ginsburg (see below) upon Philo, *Quaestiones*, Gen 1.53; see Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64): they received garments of skin at the time of the fall, but before were spiritual beings. Irenaeus, III, 23,5 and Tertullian, *De Pudicitia* 9 & *De Resurrectione*, 7 talk of the celestial garments of Adam and Eve. See also Louis Ginzburg, *The Legends of the Jews*, V, notes to Vols. I & II, *From the Creation to The Exodus* (Jewish Publication Society of America: Philadelphia, 1979, 1st publ. 1925) 97, n69 & 103-4 n93: Ginzburg states that the older Haggadah takes עור "skin" as אור "light" and thus the passage (Gen 3:21) refers to the state before the fall. The later Haggadah takes this passage to be referring to "skin" and being after the fall. In the various versions of the *Vita Adae* the garments of light play a very important role. Ginzburg relates them to the celestial garments of the pious: cf. *1En* 62.16; *2 En* 22.8-10; *AscIs* 4.16. Brock concludes that later tradition came to decide that these garments of light were given after the fall and were made from the skin of the serpent: "Some Aspects of Greek Words in Syriac", in S.P. Brock, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (Variorum Reprints: London, 1984; 1st publ. in A. Dietrich (ed.) *Syncretismus im syrisch-persischen Kulturgebiet* [Symposion, Reinhausen bei Göttingen, 1971]. Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaft in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Dritte Folge, 96. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975) 104 n124 citing Midrash to Psalm 92:6. The question of Adam and Eve's garments is also related to the theme of being naked or stripped in heaven, see below, n105.

[105] *History of the Rechabites* 5.3 & 12.3. See J.H. Charlesworth, "The Portrayal of the Righteous as an Angel", in J.J. Collins & G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds.) *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980) 142-144. The theme of being naked is connected to the clothing/investiture language of descriptions of the heavenly state, see A. De Conick & Jarl Fossum, "Stripped before God: A New Interpretation of Logion 37 in the Gospel of Thomas", *VigChr* 45 (1991) 124, 131; Jarl Fossum "Partes Posteriores Dei: The 'Transfiguration' of Jesus in the *Acts of John*", in idem, *The Image of the Invisible God. Essays on the influence of Jewish Mysticism upon early Christology* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1995) discusses the description of Jesus in the *Acts of John* as being "not dressed in clothes at all, but stripped of those [which] we saw (usually upon him), and not at all like a man" (trans. Fossum, 96). He ties this description of nakedness to the stripping language in *2En* 22:10 (J), *AscenIs* 9:9, the *Gospel of Philip*, *The Second Apocalypse of James* (NHC V.4) and the clothing language of 1 Cor 15:44, 49, 51; 2 Cor 5:1-5 (103-104). Fossum skips over the subtleties, such as those mentioned in n104 (above) when discussing this varied body of material.

[106] Cf. Hymn VI, in S.P. Brock (intro. & trans.) *Saint Ephrem: Hymns on Paradise* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990).

[107] Hymn VI.9, *Hymns on Paradise*, 112.

fall.[108] Ephrem's favourites, the ascetics in the wilderness, grazing on the mountainsides, like the Rechabites, may have appeared naked to ordinary eyes, but in fact were clothed in a 'garment of glory'. [109]

In the *PGM* magical collection one text discusses the transformation of the magician into Adam. It seems to represent a reasonably rare example of the linkage of transformative Egyptian magical practices with transformative Jewish apocalyptic traditions. Egyptian magic has been characterised by its belief that the magician could be transformed into a God. It was an ancient and enduring belief amongst Egyptians and was a part of mainstream religion.[110] Such were the facts of geography, trade and immigration in the ancient Mediterranean world that it would be absurd to suppose that Jews and Christians would have been unaware of such beliefs. But whilst there is clear evidence of Jewish and Christian input into the magical texts which seem to represent the survival of Pharaonic religion[111] there is little clear evidence of the influence of native Egyptian beliefs in Jewish texts which mention transformative practices, nor in the writings of the likes of Clement of Alexandria or the Egyptian Christian ascetics. Instead Jewish and Graeco-Roman traditions are the

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[108] Cf. Brock, "Some Aspects of Greek Words in Syriac", in *idem*, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (Variorum Reprints: London, 1984) 100, numerous references are given here to Ephrem's works discussing this idea.

[109] *Ibid*; cf. T.J Lamy, *Sancti Ephraemi Syri Hymni et Sermones,* IV, 629. Cf. also Brock, 100-103.

[110] On transformative practices in Egyptian religion see §4.1 n41.

[111] On the strong connection between the Egyptian pagan temple and the magical literature: see B. Layton, *A Coptic Grammar with Chrestomathy and Glossary* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000) 4; see also David Frankfurter, "Native Egyptian Religion in its Roman Guise", review article on Françoise Perpillou-Thomas, *Fêtes d'Égypte ptolémaïque et romaine d'après la documentation papyrologique grecque* [Studia Hellenistica 31] Louvain: Studia Hellenistica, 1993) & Wolfgang Haase (ed.) *ANRW* II.18.5 (1995), in *Numen* 43 (1996) 311- 12; in this review he comments on articles by Robert Ritner, "Egyptian Magical Practice under the Roman Empire: The Demotic Spells and their Religious Context," 3333-339; William Brashear, "The Greek Magical Papyri: an Introduction and Survey," 3380-3684; Sergio Pernigotti, "La magia copta: i testi", 3685-3730. Frankfurter congratulates the editors of these particular articles for not classing the 'magical' papyri as occult or "selfish piety" or as a "timeless repository of magical practice as used throughout the Mediterranean world" - instead they are seen as representative of "Egyptian religion(s)" during the Roman era. Although he disagrees (312) with Ritner's argument about the transformation of the neutral force of magic into a negative and dangerous one under Roman rule he thinks that his characterisation of the religious texts as being a vital part of the native temple religion is important - they were not esoteric and occult but part of 'official' temple religion. His conclusion is especially based upon the language used in many of the surviving magical texts (Demotic) which was foreign to both ordinary Greek and native Egyptians. Frankfurter points out that many of these texts come from big libraries, such as the Anastasi collection, which came out of the priestly city of Thebes. Frankfurter also supports Garth Fowden's theory in *The Egyptian Hermes* which links Hermetic and magical literature as both being priestly writings. Thus the authors of magical spells can be seen to be Egyptian priests putting together collections of their religious knowledge at a time when the temples were falling into ruin (*contra* H.D. Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* xlvi who emphasises the possible status of the authors of the PGM as itinerant wandering priests; although he does note the role of the temple priesthood) – this, according to Frankfurter, was also the view of the Egyptian priests that contemporary Graeco-Roman authors held.

obvious literary background to Christian attitudes to angelic transformation.[112] As we have seen in the Jewish tradition that informed early Christian thoughts about being and transformation, there was a very loose understanding of different states of existence. Certain beings took one state upon earth and another in heaven; beings were transformed as they moved from heaven to heaven or from heaven to earth or back. The Jewish perceptions of corporate identity also suggested that someone could be both Jacob and Israel, that 'Adam' could refer both to an individual and to an abstract notion of 'man'; indeed the sin of Adam and the redemption of and in Christ was expressed, particularly in Syriac Christianity, in terms both individual and corporate.[113] Adam's fall and Christ's redemption were re-enacted in the transformation of the individual Christian at baptism signified by his baptismal robes. The chief difference lies in the transformation of the individuals; they are often transformed into angelic beings, but rarely into particular, named beings. There are exceptions, the transformation of Enoch into Metatron in *Slavonic Enoch* for example. But this particular tale is more one of the syncretism of two figures than of magical-type transformative practices applicable to all.

This is why the assumption of the identity of Adam in the Greek magical papyrus PGM III.1-164 is interesting. It raises the question of the knowledge of Judaism of the magician and whether he was tapping into Jewish or early Christian traditions that emphasised Adam.

> ἐγώ [ε]ἰμι ᾿Αδὰ[μ προγε]νής· ὄνομά μοι ᾿Αδά[μ].
> ποίησόν μοι τὸ δεῖνα [πρᾶγ]μα, ὅτι ἐνεύχομαί σοι κατὰ
> [θ]eοῦ ᾿Ιαω . . .
>
> "I am Adam the forefather; my name is Adam. Perform for me the NN deed, because I conjure you by the god IAŌ . . ." [*other gods follow, including four Jewish archangels*] (trans. J.M. Dillon, *GMP*, 22)

4.7 The Transfiguration of Christ in the New Testament

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain apart. And	Καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρας ἕξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰάκωβον καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ

[112] See Clement of Alexandria *Protrepticus* XII, 120,1-2 where Clement refers to Bacchic practices (see quotation in § 5.5.1).
[113] See S.P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye* 30-31, 125-6.

he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths (= tabernacles) here, one for you, and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with awe. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead." (Mt 17:1-9)

ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν. καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔλαμψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, τὰ δὲ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο λευκὰ ὡς τὸ φῶς. καὶ ἰδοὺ ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἠλίας συλλαλοῦντες μετ' αὐτοῦ. ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ, Κύριε, καλόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι. εἰ θέλεις, ποιήσω ὧδε τρεῖς σκηνάς, σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεῖ μίαν καὶ Ἠλίᾳ μίαν. ἔτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος ἰδοὺ νεφέλη φωτεινὴ ἐπεσκίασεν αὐτούς, καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα, Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα· ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.
καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ μαθηταὶ ἔπεσαν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτῶν καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα.
καὶ προσῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἁψάμενος αὐτῶν εἶπεν, Ἐγέρθητε καὶ μὴ φοβεῖσθε. ἐπάραντες δὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν οὐδένα εἶδον εἰ μὴ αὐτὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον. Καὶ καταβαινόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους ἐνετείλατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, Μηδενὶ εἴπητε τὸ ὅραμα ἕως οὗ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθῇ.

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them, and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, "master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." And suddenly looking around they no longer saw any one with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man should have risen

Καὶ μετὰ ἡμέρας ἓξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην, καὶ ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν κατ' ἰδίαν μόνους. καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο στίλβοντα λευκὰ λίαν οἷα γναφεὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐ δύναται οὕτως λευκᾶναι. καὶ ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Ἠλίας σὺν Μωϋσεῖ, καὶ ἦσαν συλλαλοῦντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ. καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει τῷ Ἰησοῦ, Ῥαββί, καλόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι, καὶ ποιήσωμεν τρεῖς σκηνάς, σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεῖ μίαν καὶ Ἠλίᾳ μίαν. οὐ γὰρ ᾔδει τί ἀποκριθῇ, ἔκφοβοι γὰρ ἐγένοντο. καὶ ἐγένετο νεφέλη ἐπισκιάζουσα αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης, Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἐξάπινα περιβλεψάμενοι

until the Son of man should have risen from the dead. (Mk 9:2-9)

οὐκέτι οὐδένα εἶδον ἀλλὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον μεθ' ἑαυτῶν. Καὶ καταβαινόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ ἃ εἶδον διηγήσωνται, εἰ μὴ ὅταν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῇ.

Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James, and he went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white. And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, and when they wakened they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah" - not knowing what he said. As he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silence and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen (Lk 9:28-36)

Ἐγένετο δὲ μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους ὡσεὶ ἡμέραι ὀκτὼ [καὶ] παραλαβὼν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην καὶ Ἰάκωβον ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι. καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ προσεύχεσθαι αὐτὸν τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἕτερον καὶ ὁ ἱματισμὸς αὐτοῦ λευκὸς ἐξαστράπτων. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνδρες δύο συνελάλουν αὐτῷ, οἵτινες ἦσαν Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἠλίας, οἳ ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ ἣν ἤμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ. ὁ δὲ Πέτρος καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ ἦσαν βεβαρημένοι ὕπνῳ. διαγρηγορήσαντες δὲ εἶδον τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς δύο ἄνδρας τοὺς συνεστῶτας αὐτῷ. καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ διαχωρίζεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ εἶπεν ὁ Πέτρος πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, Ἐπιστάτα, καλόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι, καὶ ποιήσωμεν σκηνὰς τρεῖς, μίαν σοὶ καὶ μίαν Μωϋσεῖ καὶ μίαν Ἠλίᾳ, μὴ εἰδὼς ὃ λέγει. ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ἐγένετο νεφέλη καὶ ἐπεσκίαζεν αὐτούς. ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἐν τῷ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν νεφέλην. καὶ φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα, Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος, αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε. καὶ ἐν τῷ γενέσθαι τὴν φωνὴν εὑρέθη Ἰησοῦς μόνος. καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐσίγησαν καὶ οὐδενὶ ἀπήγγειλαν ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις οὐδὲν ὧν ἑώρακαν.

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honour and glory from God the Father and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we heard this voice borne

Οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἐπόπται γενηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος. λαβὼν γὰρ παρὰ θεοῦ πατρὸς τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν φωνῆς ἐνεχθείσης αὐτῷ τοιᾶσδε ὑπὸ τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης, Ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός μου οὗτός ἐστιν, εἰς

from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word made more sure. (2 Pet 1:16-19)	ὃν ἐγὼ εὐδόκησα, καὶ ταύτην τὴν φωνὴν ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἐνεχθεῖσαν σὺν αὐτῷ ὄντες ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει. καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον

The Diatessaron (24:2-18) also preserves the story of the Transfiguration.[114] It follows Matthew's account most closely, calling the cloud "bright", claiming Jesus' face shone, adding the detail of the disciples falling on their faces, and the command to arise. Some elements are also added from Mark, such as the description of the garments as being so white that they could not be of earthly manufacture; and also from Luke is the comment that the disciples were heavy with sleep and the appearance of Christ is described as 'his glory'.

The Transfiguration story (Mt 17:1-9; Mk 9:2-10; Lk 9:28-36; 2 Pet 1:16-19) demonstrates how divine visitation can transform the participant's clothing into gleaming robes. The story of the transfiguration is in essence an ascent vision. Christ leads his disciples up to a mountain, perhaps the most ancient method of trying to gain contact with the divine;[115] they pray together, he is transformed into an angelic-type state and converses with angelic or divine figures and a voice confirms his divine status.[116] As Matthew Sim has

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[114] According to the English translation (by H.W. Hogg in *ANF* X) of the Arabic version of this lost Syriac text.
[115] Cf. Smith, "Ascent to the Heavens", in *idem*, *idem*, *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh* II (1st publ. *Eranos* 50 [1981] 403-29; ed. Cohen, Shaye J.D.; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 48-9; *idem*, "The Origin and History of the Transfiguration Story" *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 36 (1980) 39-44; J. Fossum, "Ascensio, Metamorphosis: The 'Transfiguration' of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels", in *idem*, *The Image of the Invisible God* 72-6.
[116] Smith, "The Origin and History of The Transfiguration Story" in Smith, *Studies* II 84 -5, claims that the voice was an element of the story that was pre-Markan, yet it was a Christian addition to a story that is essentially similar in many different types of literature, the magical spell that is broken when one of the participants says something untoward; as this type of literature does not usually include a voice from heaven Smith concludes that this voice is an interpolation by some theologian that enabled a statement to be made concerning Christ's supremacy over the Law and the Prophets. I would disagree. For in the version of the story in 2 Pet 1:16ff the voice from heaven seems to play an important role in confirming the status of Christ. Whilst Smith sees the key to understanding the episode as being the moment when Peter spoke and broke the spell – which therefore identifies the episode as being a re-enactment of a common magical literary motif – I think, instead, that the central element that defines the nature of the episode is the transformation of Jesus, which marks him out as someone who has achieved the goal of ascent vision, becoming angelic/divine/immortal. Moreover it seems that the voice is a literary motif associated with ascent visions. In the *Apocalypse of Sem* in the *Cologne Mani Codex*, as the climax of his ascent Sem recounts (in an episode with obvious similarities between the appearance of the angel and that of Christ during the Transfiguration):

> The doors were opened silently and the clouds were divided by the wind. I saw a glorious throne room coming down from the topmost height and a very great angel standing there. The appearance of his face's form was very beautiful and youthful, more than the shinning brightness [of the sun], and even than [lightning]. Like the light of the sun... (....2 lines....) (57) of many colours (like ?) a crown woven from spring flowers. And then my facial expression altered so that I fell to the ground; the bones of my back were shaken violently and my feet did not stay firm on their joints. *A voice inclined towards me, and calling from the throne room* and coming to me it took my right hand

noted it is the fact that Christ's garments are described as gleaming like the sun, or brighter than any fuller could reproduce, that indicates that he has entered some kind of angelic state.[117] Sim likewise connects the bright garments of Christ during the resurrection with the appearance of the angel at the tomb in Mt 28:2-3 (who is described as having the appearance of lightning and a garment of snow) and the fact that the righteous are also described in Matthew (13:43) as shining like the sun when in their resurrected state. Thus the righteous are clothed in the same garb as the angels.[118] Nonetheless it is clear that few, if any, early Christian commentators saw this passage as referring to an angelic transformation of Christ. As John McGuckin has pointed out, the Patristic discussion of this event is distinguished by its ignorance both of the apocalyptic background of its symbolism and also of the continuing use of such symbolism in rabbinic Judaism.[119] Yet the original symbolism of this story is clear.

It seems that the main literary and symbolic background to the transfiguration story is not Hellenistic magical practices (as claimed by Morton Smith),[120] nor as claimed in most of the Patristic literature is it to do with a theology of light and the spiritual transformation of the visionaries; rather the ascent of Mt Sinai by Moses (Exod 34:29-35) is the background to the Transfiguration.[121] Yet the imagery is not exactly the same as that found in Moses' ascent; it has been expanded, for instance with additon of the gleaming white garments (Mk & Lk).[122] Thus the Moses traditions dealt with above (§4.1) must have influenced the Gospels'

> and made me stand. It puffed the breath of life into my face and effected the increase of my power and glory. (my italics *CMC* 55-58 trans. Lieu & Lieu [forthcoming, see bibliography]).

Likewise Mani was given encouragement and support on different occasions by the disembodied voice of the Syzygos (*CMC* 13). The voice is thus probably an original part of the Transfiguration story, not an addition, and the literary background is in ascent visions, not magical practices.

117 Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in The Gospel of Matthew* (Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh: CUP, 1996) 142-4. In Job 25:5 it is denied that the stars, which Rofé (האמונה במלאכים במקרא [*The Belief in Angels in the Bible and Early Israel*; Jerusalem: Makor, 1979] 101-107) says are identified as angels, can light up in the presence of the Lord, indicating how central this idea was to notions of divinity and the religious tradition that underlies the O.T.

118 Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology* 142-4.

119 J.A. McGuckin, "The Patristic Exegesis of the Transfiguration", in *Studia Patristica* XVIII, 1 [Papers of the 1983 Oxford Patristics Conference] (1989) 336.

120 Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973) 238f, 243f; *idem*, *Jesus The Magician* (London: Gollancz, 1978) 120-22, 161-62; see also n115; see also E. Lohmeyer, "Die Verklärung Jesu nach dem Markusevangelium", *ZNW* 21 (1922) 203-08; although by 1937 his opinion had shifted to seeing a background in Jewish literature describing the transformation of the righteous at the eschaton: cf. *idem*, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937) 174.

121 Fossum, "Ascensio, Metamorphosis"; J. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992) 80-93 commenting upon Mk 9:2-8.

122 See Fossum, "Ascension, Metamorphosis" 77-8, 84-5.

descriptions of the transformation of Jesus. Indeed in this incident Jesus, like Moses, is, in some manner, being enthroned as a heavenly king.[123]

The Transfiguration is also found in the New Testament Apocrypha. For instance it is found in the *Acts of John*. This text seems to have been written around 200 CE, and it has been argued that it contains much older traditions, the Transfiguration episode in particular.[124] The *Acts* represents another, although related, exegetical approach to the relationship between Exodus 34 and the Transfiguration. In this text it seems that Moses' place is taken by John (who sees Moses' hindquarters), and God's place is taken by Jesus. Thus as Fossum points out Jesus seems to be identified here with the divine Glory.[125] The transfiguration is also found in the *Acts of Peter* and *Acts of Thomas*. Cartlidge has made the telling point that in all three of these versions of the Transfiguration (the *Acts of John*, *Peter* and *Thomas*) there is a focus upon the polymorphous nature of Christ, moreover in the Acts of Thomas this is linked to his spiritual 'twinship' with Judas Thomas.[126]

4.8 The Description of The Emperor Constantine by Eusebius

In Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* the emperor is described in heavenly or angelic language. When Constantine enters the council hall at Nicaea: "All rose at a signal, which announced the Emperor's entrance; and he finally walked along between them, like some heavenly angel of God, his bright mantle shedding lustre like beams of light, shining with the fiery radiance of a purple robe, and decorated with dazzling brilliance of gold and precious stones".[127] Eusebius is here clearly using the same type of language as that used of individuals transformed into angels, although here it is certain that the language is purely symbolic.

[123] H. Riesenfeld, *Jésus Transfiguré* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1947).
[124] Jarl Fossum, "Partes Posteriores Dei", 95.
[125] Fossum, "Partes Posteriores Dei" 104-107, although his attempt to connect the white feet of Christ in the *Acts of John* description of the Transfiguration with the Glory is weak; instead the fact that Christ's feet are white should be related to the description of the great angel's feet in *Joseph and Aseneth* 14:9 and the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* 6:12.
[126] See David R. Cartlidge, "Transfigurations of Metamorphosis Traditions in the Acts of John, Thomas and Peter", in Dennis R. MacDonald, *Semeia* 38, *The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (1986) 53-66.
[127] Trans. in Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall, *Eusebius, Life of Constantine* (Oxford: OUP, 1999); Πάντων δ' ἐξανας ἐπὶ συνθήματι, ὃ τὴν βασιλέως εἴσοδον ἐδήλου, αὐτὸς δὴ λοιπὸν διέβαινε μέσος οἷα θεοῦ τις οὐράνιος ἄγγελοι λαμπρὰν μὲν ὥσπερ φωτὸς μαρμαρυγαῖς ἐξαστράπτων περιβολήν, ἁλουργίδος δὲ πυρωποῖς καταλαμπόμενος ἀι χρυσοῦ τε καὶ λίθων πολυτελῶν διαυγέσι φέγγεσι κοσμούμενος, *Vita Constantini* III.10.3.

Moreover up to this point he has lost no opportunity to equate Constantine with Moses, with whom, as we have seen, much of the imagery of transformation began.[128]

This text represents a watershed. It is the point at which the language used to describe angels and those humans lucky enough to join their company moves out of the recesses of mystical or ascetic circles and becomes available for all to use as descriptive language to describe a noble person. Here the imagery that could be associated with any emperor, the purple robe, the jewels, is fused with the imagery of angelic transformation.[129] We do not find this use of angelic-transformation language in Lactantius' writings on Constantine, which is not surprising considering his focus upon political events rather than individuals. The writer of *Joseph and Aseneth* came close but the language in that text is too ambiguous; it seems deliberately to want to leave the impression that the conversion of Aseneth somehow effected an actual physical transformation, leaving her, an unclean Egyptian, suitable as a marriage partner for Joseph, who seems to be not only a clean-living Jew, but a heavenly, angelic figure of some kind also. Furthermore Eusebius combines the imagery derived from the angelic transformation texts (which as we shall see was also preserved in fourth-century Christian ascetic literature) with imagery more traditional to Graeco-Roman pagan literature. For in the next sentence he declares that the disposition of Constantine's soul was indicated at this moment by his physical attributes: "as for his soul, he was clearly adorned with fear and reverence for God: this was shown by his eyes, which were cast down, the blush on his face, his gait, and the rest of his appearance, his height, which surpassed all those around him".[130] This type of description was common to literature of a non-Christian origin and grew out of a widespread belief in Graeco-Roman antiquity that a person's physical appearance, their physiognomy, was a window of their inner qualities.[131]

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[128] See, e.g. *Vita Constantini* I.20; cf. the numerous references to Constantine being patterned on Moses in the Index to Cameron and Hall's translation and commentary (p.387); see also A. Cameron *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley & London: Univ. of California Press, 1991) 55.

[129] On the Augustus theology behind Eusebius' description of Constantine see the classic work of Erik Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem; ein Beiträg zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie im Imperium romanum* (Leipzig: Hegner, 1935).

[130] Τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν θεοῦ φόβῳ καὶ εὐλαβείᾳ δῆλος ἦν κεκαλλωπισμένος. ὑπέφαινον δὲ καὶ ταῦτ' ὀφθαλμοὶ κάτω νεύοντες, ἐρύθημα προσώπου, περιπάτου κίνησις, τό τ' ἄλλο εἶδος, τὸ μέγεθός τε ὑπερβάλλον μὲν τοὺς ἀμφ' αὐτὸν ἅπαντας, *Vita Constantini* III.10.4; cf. I.19.

[131] A. M. Armstrong, "The Methods of the Greek Physiognomists", *Greece and Rome*, 5 (1958) 52-6. See also the collection of primary sources dealing with this in R. Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomici Graeci et Latini*, I & II (Leipzig: Teubner, 1893).

Eusebius took the language used of the chief angelic figure, the viceroy, and described Constantine in symbolic terms derived from this Jewish tradition. Thus Constantine became the viceroy of God, charged to watch over the earthly Christian kingdom, which mirrored that above.

This was a natural part of Eusebius' picture of the Christian existence. Eusebius' Christianity was focused both upon heaven and earth and aimed to link the two. Symmetry between heaven and earth could be seen in the coming of the first Christian Roman emperor. Christian society was no longer an underground part of a wider pagan society; it had overwhelmed the Roman Empire and made it its own.[132] This sudden linkage of Roman political identity with Christian identity placed Christians outside the borders of the empire in a difficult situation.[133] The Emperor was thus also a bishop, and like the bishops[134] he would be compared to God's heavenly servants, the angels. Eusebius was not simply imposing his view of events; Constantine also seems to have seen his earthly reign as intimately connected with heaven and its approval. The clearest expression of this heavenly focus can be found on coins and statues from after 324 which depict Constantine gazing towards heaven; this heavenly orientation was used by Eusebius as further support for his idea of the Christian empire.

4.9 Manichaean traditions regarding the transformation of humans into angels

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[132] See Rafaelle Farina, *L'empero e l'imperatore cristiano in Eusebio di Cesarea* (Zürich: Pas Verlag, 1966).
[133] See S.P. Brock, "Christians in the Sassanian Empire: A case of divided loyalties", in Stuart Mews (ed.) *Religion and National Identity. Papers read at the Nineteenth Summer Meeting and the Twentieth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).
[134] Eusebius, *H.E.* 7.30.11; see also Pseudo-Dionysius, *De caelesti hierarchia* 12, 1ff. This identification is also linked to the tradition which saw the angels of the churches of Revelation as bishops, see Epiphanius, *Panarion* 25,3.

Angels played a prominent role in Manichaean spirituality. In fact it is only in Manichaean texts that we can find explicit calls to the worship of angels.[135] Moreover Mani was brought up under the protection of his special angel, his *syzygos*, and also other angels of holiness.[136]

Furthermore the transformation of righteous human beings into angels is a central, recurring theme throughout Manichaean literature. In the *Cologne Mani Codex* (*CMC*) the transformation of two ancient patriarchs into angels is described.[137] The choice of patriarchs such as Adam and Seth demonstrates well the marginal status which Manichaeaism occupied in relation to Judaism. These two are figures about whom little is said in the Bible and who are not claimed as prophets. Moreover the use of these two is in marked contrast to the more normal Manichaean avoidance of or clear hostility to the figures of the Bible. The character of Manichaeism as a religion which held the Biblical narrative in esteem but wished to interpret it differently from the way it had previously been interpreted by the Jews is evident in the way that it used the likes of Adam and Seth. Whilst the apocalypses in the *CMC* may not have had an origin in pseudepigraphical texts the use made of non-prophetic biblical patriarchs in this document betrays the commonality of approach of both the *CMC* and the non-Manichaean pseudepigrapha.[138]

In the Coptic Medinet Madi texts, especially the *Psalm Book*,[139] a process of ascent and transformation of the righteous after death into angels is described. The righteous receive

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[135] T. Kellis ("The Prayer of the Emanations") 15-17 (πάντας ἀγγὲλους), 23-25 (φωτ<ε>ινοὺς ἀγγέλους), 59-60 (μεγάλους φωστῆρας, the sun and the moon and the powers within them), 70-72 (μέγαλα πέντε φῶταδι, – "five great lights" who create the universe), 77-78 (πάντας ἀγγέλους), 85-86 (φωτ<ε>ινοὺς ἀγγέλους), in R.G. Jenkins, "The Prayer of the Emanations in Greek from Kellis", in *Le Muséon* 108 (1995) 251.

[136] *CMC* 3, 4, 11 (φωτεινών ἀγγέλων), 12 (ἁγνοτατων ἀγγελῶν); al-Nadim, *Fihrist* 9.1 (Bayard Dodge (ed. & trans.) *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm* II (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1970) 774; on the *Syzygos* as an angel cf §3.2.4, n207.

[137] *The Apocalypse of Adam* (*CMC* 50): ὁ ʼ Αδὰμ καὶ γέγονεν ὑπέρτερος παρὰ πάσας τὰς δυνάμεις καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τῆς κτίσεως; *The Apocalypse of Seth* (*CMC* 51): νίκα τούτων ἠκροασάμην, ἐχάρη μου ἡ καρδία καὶ μετετράπη ἡ φρόνησις καὶ ἐγενόμην ὡς εἷς τῶν μεγίστων ἀγγέλων.

[138] Recently John Reeves has mounted an attack upon the view that the *CMC* apocalypses were copied from Jewish peudepigrapha, arguing instead that they were independent Manichaean compositions. These texts do, however, stand apart from the rest of Manichaean literature, and Reeves' argument is not wholly convincing, in particular his claim for a "pronounced gnostic flavour"; see Reeves, *Heralds* 210, yet he does admit (210) that these apocalypses "exhibit in most cases remarkable affinities with the extant corpora of exegetical and legendary materials surrounding these figures in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim literature." Reeves' starting point is the article by Ithamar Gruenwald, "Manichaeism and Judaism in Light of the Cologne Mani Codex", *ZPE* 50 (1983) 29-45, which linked the *CMC* apocalypses with the Jewish Pseudepigrapha.

[139] Only the second part of which is currently in a published form (C.R.C. Allberry [ed.] *A Manichaean Psalm-Book* II [W. Kohlhammer: Stuttgart, 1938] [=*Psalm-Book*]); the first, extremely fragmentary, section is currently being edited by Gregor Wurst, see his article "A Dialogue between the Saviour and the Soul

angelic garments and other symbols of angelic status. At the moment of death the righteous amongst the Manichaeans could expect to ascend, like Mani, to the heavens. Their bodies would be 'clothed', the doors of the judgement hall would prove no obstacle,[140] and the judge would set upon them a garland of glory, give them a prize of glory and clothe them in a robe of light. They are then taken to the city of the gods and angels. Being clothed in light means that the old garment of change and decay has been left behind; immortality results from the wearing of the immortal robe. This garment theology is a combination of Judaeo-Christian ideas about garments and identity and Graeco-Roman pagan ideas. For whilst the Judaeo-Christian literature may have talked of gaining garments, pagan 'scripture', such as the Chaldaean Oracles, focused upon being stripped of the garment which weighed down the soul.[141] Thus in the Manichaean texts the worshipper not only gains an immortal garment, he also loses his earthly garment.

> ⲙⲡⲩⲗⲏ] ⲛ̄ⲙ̄ⲡⲏⲩⲉ ⲁⲩⲟⲩⲉⲛ ϩⲏⲧ ϩⲓⲧⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲕⲧⲓⲛ ⲙ̄
> ⲡⲁⲥ]ⲱⲧⲏⲣ ⲙⲛ̄ⲡⲉϥⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲁïⲛⲉ ⲉⲧⲟï ⲛ̄ⲉⲁⲩ
> ⲁⲓⲕⲱ] ⲛ̄ⲑⲃ̄ⲥⲱ ⲁϫⲛ̄ⲡⲕⲁϩ · ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧϩⲗ̄ⲗⲟ ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ϣⲱⲛⲉ ⲉ
> ⲧϣⲟ]ⲟⲡ ⲛⲉⲙⲏï · ⲧⲥⲧⲟⲗⲏ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲙⲟⲩ ⲁïⲧⲉⲉⲥ ⲁϫⲱï
>
> The gates] of the skies have opened before me through the rays of my]
> Saviour and his glorious likeness of Light.
> I have left] the garment (*^{e}nth^{e}bsō*) upon the earth, the senility of diseases that was with me; the immortal robe (*stolē*) I have put upon me.[142]
>
> ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲓⲥⲱⲧⲙ̄ ⲁⲡϩⲣⲁⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ ⲟⲩϭⲁⲙ ⲁⲥⲣ̄ⲫⲟ
> ⲣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲙ[ⲉ]ⲗⲟⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ · ⲛⲉⲩⲥⲃ̄ⲧⲉⲉⲩ ⲉⲧⲥⲁϣⲉ ⲁï
> ⲛⲁⲣⲥⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲩⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲁïⲟⲩⲁϭⲡⲟⲩ ⲁïⲡⲱⲧ ϣⲁⲡⲁⲕⲣⲓⲧⲏⲥ
> ⲡⲕⲗⲁⲙ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲁϥⲧⲉⲉϥ ⲁϫⲱï · ⲡⲃⲣⲁⲃⲉⲓⲟⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡϭⲣⲟ
> ⲁϥⲧⲉⲉϥ ⲁⲧⲟⲟⲧ · ⲁϥϭⲱⲗⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁï ⲛ̄ⲧⲥⲧⲟⲗⲏ
> ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲁïⲛⲉ ⲁϥϫⲓⲥⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁï ⲁϫⲛ̄ⲛⲁϫⲁϫⲉ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ
> ϯⲣⲉϣⲉ ⲉïⲧⲁïⲗⲉ ϣⲁⲡⲁïⲱⲧ ⲡⲉⲧⲁïϭⲣⲟ ⲛⲉⲙⲉϥ ϩⲛ̄
> ⲡⲕⲁϩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲉⲕⲉ ⲱ ⲡⲁⲛⲁϭ ⲛ̄ⲣ̄ⲣ̄ⲟ̄ ⲕïⲟⲟⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁï
> ⲁⲧⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ

(Manichaean Psalm Book, Part 1, no.36)", *Bulletin de la Sociéte d'Archéologie Copte* 35 (1996) 149-160. On the ascent texts, see S.G. Richter, *Die Aufstiegspsalmen des Herakleides: Untersuchungen zum Seelenaufstieg und zur Seelenmesse bei den Manichäern* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1997). Richter examines ten of the Heracleides pslams (97.14-110.16); he concludes that they were texts used during masses for the Manichaean dead; see also his *Exegetisch-literarkritische Untersuchungen von Herakleidespsalmen des koptisch-manichäischen Psalmenbuches* (Altenberg: Oros, 1994).

[140] In Egyptian texts discussing the afterlife it was necessary to know all the names of the various parts of the doors of the judgement hall of Osiris in order to enter and receive judgement, for instance in the *Book of the Dead* (or *Coming to Light by Day*) chapter lxxv; see E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of the Dead* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1969) lxxxii-lxxxiii. See also *Kephalia* 102.1.

[141] See John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977) 392-6; also Edouard Des Places (ed. & trans.) *Oracles Chaldaiques avec un choix de commentaires anciens* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1966).

[142] *Psalm-Book* 81.6-9; cf. 203.3-25.

When I heard the cry of the Saviour, a power clothed (*phorein*)
all my limbs; their bitter walls I
destroyed, their doors I broke down, I ran to my Judge.
The garland of glory he set upon my head, the prize (*brabeion*) of victory
he set in my hand, he clothed me in the robe (*stolē*) of light,
he exalted me over all my enemies.
I rejoice as I ascend to my Father with whom I have conquered in
the land of Darkness; O my great King, ferry me
to the city of the Gods, the angels.[143]

It is made explicit that the righteous ascend immediately to the heavens and enjoy fellowship with the angels through their being clothed in light. The traditional belief, derived ultimately from Augustine, that only the elect, not the lesser of the two grades of the Manichaean community, the hearers, will achieve immortality, seems to be denied here, where an emphasis is put upon the deeds of the individual, not his or her spiritual status upon earth.[144] Those that have done only good deeds need not fear the judge, for they will receive their just reward without the need to mount a defence.

ⲙⲯⲩⲭⲁⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲇⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲥ ϣⲁⲩϯⲕⲗⲁⲙ ⲁϫⲱⲟⲩ ϩⲛ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲁ
ⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲧⲁⲓ̈ⲗⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲉⲁⲩ ⲁⲡϫⲓⲥⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ
ⲉϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲱϥ ⲟⲩⲣⲉϥⲣ̄ⲛⲁⲃⲉ ⲡⲉ ϣⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̄ⲟⲩϩⲣ̄
ⲧ]ⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲛⲁϫϥ ⲥⲁϩⲏⲧϥ̄ ⲁⲩⲥⲉⲧⲉ ϩⲱⲥ ϭⲁⲩⲛ̄ ⲃⲱⲱⲛ
ⲉϥⲣ̄ϣⲉⲩ ⲉⲛ
ⲙⲁⲩⲱϩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲡⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓⲁ ⲁϯⲥⲃⲉ ⲟⲩⲱϣⲃⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲡⲓϩⲟⲟⲩⲉ
ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲡⲉⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲛ̄ⲧⲉϥ ϩⲱⲃ ⲉⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ ⲙⲁⲣⲉϥⲕⲁϩⲧⲏϥ
ⲁⲛⲉϥϩⲃⲏⲩⲉ

The souls of the righteous (*ᵉndikaios*) are garlanded in the
Light and ascend in glory on high with the angels
But if he is a sinner he goes forth in fear
and is cast (?) headlong (?) into the fire, as a wicked and
unprofitable servant. They wait not for a defence, to teach how to
answer, on this day, but he that has a good deed, let him put his trust
in his deeds.[145]

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143 *Psalm Book* 50.21-29, see also 84.14-20, 108.17-25, 136.13-53, 146.40-44, 213.17-22; and Hans Jakob Polotsky (hrsg.) *Manichäische Homilien* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934) (=*Homilies*) 6.20-21.
144 *Kephalaia* 29 & 51. It has long been received wisdom that Augustine actually knew what he was talking about when he discussed Manichaean beliefs (as Kevin Coyle assumes when he discusses Manichaean soteriology in "Mani, Manicheism", in A.D. Fitzgerald OSA [ed.] *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* [Grand Rapids & Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1999] 523. Yet Augustine was only a hearer, not a member of the elect, and was moreover engaged in strong debate with his erstwhile colleagues. A soon to be submitted PhD thesis at Macquarie University (by Kevin Kaatz [the thesis was outlined in a paper entitled "What Did Augustine Really Know About Manichaean Cosmogony?" at the fifth Congresso Internazionale di Studi sul Manicheismo September 3-6, 2001 in Naples) aims to overturn this paradigm by demonstrating that Augustine's knowledge of Manichaean cosmogonical doctrine was actually quite limited; perhaps this was also the case with his knowledge of Manichaean soteriological doctrine (cf. *contra Faustum* 5.10).
145 *Psalm-Book* 81.23-30.

Indeed the garment of the soul is not just stripped off, but (necessarily) destroyed by the demons; it then ascends without hindrance to be greeted and exalted.

> [ⲡⲁ]ⲗⲓⲛ ⲁⲛ ϩ̅ⲙ̅ ⲡⲥⲏⲩ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟⲩϭⲓⲛⲉⲓ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲁⲧⲉϣⲁⲣⲉ ⲧⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ
> ⲛⲟⲩⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲉⲓ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲏⲧⲟⲩ ⲛ̅ⲥ̅ⲥⲁⲣⲟⲩ ϫⲛ̅ ⲙ̅ⲡⲕⲉⲕⲉ ⲁⲡⲟⲩ
> ⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲛ . . . . . ϣⲁⲣⲉ ϯⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲛⲟⲩⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲧϩⲣⲕⲟ ⲡⲣⲱ
> ⲙⲉ ϩ̅ⲙ̅ ⲡⲁⲥⲡⲁⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲙⲛ ⲡⲉⲥϩⲣⲁⲕ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲛ̅[[ⲧ]ϩⲣⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲛ̅
> ⲇⲁⲓⲙⲱⲛ ⲉ[ⲧⲧ]ⲉⲕⲟ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉϥⲥⲱⲙⲁ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲉⲥⲉⲓ[ⲛ]ⲉ ϩⲛ ⲧⲉⲥϩⲓ
> ⲕⲱⲛ ϣⲁⲣ[ⲉ ⲡ]ϩⲏⲧ ⲙⲡⲉⲕⲗⲉⲕⲧⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲛⲏⲩ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲉϥⲥⲱ
> [ⲙ]ⲁ ϩⲣⲁⲕ ⲁⲣ[ⲁϥ] ⲙⲛⲛⲥⲱⲥ ⲡⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉⲙ[ⲁ]ϩⲧⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲃⲣⲁ
> ⲃⲓⲟⲛ ϣⲁϥⲥⲁⲩⲧⲛⲉ ⲛⲉϥ ⲛ̅ⲧⲟⲩⲛⲉⲙ ⲛ̅ϥ̅ⲥⲁⲕ[.]ⲉϥ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̅
> ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲛ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉϥⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲛϥϣⲁⲡϥ̅ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡ[ⲁ]ⲥⲡⲁⲥⲙⲟⲥ
> [ⲙ]ⲛ̅ ⲧⲁⲅⲁⲡⲏ ϣⲁⲣⲉ ⲧⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲉⲧⲙⲙⲉⲩ ⲟⲩⲱϣ[ⲧ] ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲥⲣⲉϥ
> ⲥⲱⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲉ ϯⲙⲟⲣⲫⲏ ⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ϩ̅ⲛ̅ ⲧⲟⲩⲛ[ⲟⲩ] ⲇⲉ ϩⲱϥ
> [ⲉⲧ]ⲉϣⲁ[. . . . . .] ϣⲁϥϫⲱⲕ ⲛ̅ϥ̅ⲁⲓ̈ⲉⲩⲧⲉ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲛⲁ . .
> [. .]ⲛⲧⲉ ⲡ . . ⲛϩ [. . . . .] ϩⲙ ⲡⲏⲓ̈ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲛⲉⲧⲁⲛϩ̅ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲛⲟⲩ
> [ⲧⲉ] ⲙⲛ̅ ⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗ[ⲟⲥ] ⲙⲛ ⲛⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲙⲛ ⲛ̅ⲥⲱⲧⲡ
> [ⲛ]ϥϫⲓ ⲡⲕⲗⲁⲙ [. .] . . ⲟⲩ . . ⲛⲡⲉⲁⲩ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲱⲛϩ ϣⲁⲁⲛⲏϩⲉ
>
> Once again: at the time of their coming forth, the Light Form shall come forth before them; and she redeems them from the darkness to the light [...] This Light Form calms the person, with the kiss and her quiet, from fear of the demons who destroy his body. By her aspect and her image [the] heart of the elect one, who is come forth from his body shall be calm for [him]. Afterwards, the angel who holds the victory prize extends to him the right hand. And it draws him out of the abyss of his body, and accepts him in with a kiss and love. That soul shall make obeisance to its redeemer, who is this Light Form. And also, at the instant when ... he shall be perfected and increased according to [......] in the household of the living ones, with the gods and the angels and all the apostles and the chosen. And he receives the crown [...] glory in the life for ever.[146]

The robe of light is also a robe of virginity. This serves to emphasise again the primacy of celibacy as the primary expression of asceticism in those groups (like Christians and Manichaeans) interested in the concept of the angelic afterlife.

> ϫⲉ ⲁⲛⲁⲕ ⲟⲩⲉⲥⲁⲩ ⲉⲓ̈ⲥⲱⲡⲙⲉ ⲙⲙ . ⲛⲁ . ⲛⲃⲟ . . . . . .
> . .]. . . . . ⲉⲕ ⲙ̅ⲡⲁⲥⲁⲓ̈ⲉ ⲉ . . . .
> . .]. ⲉ ⲛ̅ⲥⲧⲟⲗⲏ ⲛ̅ⲙ̅ⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ
> . . .]ⲙⲣⲱ ⲙ̅ⲡⲟⲩⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲁⲓ̈ⲙⲁⲛⲉ ⲁⲣⲁⲥ ⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲁ . . . . .
> ϣ]ⲱⲡ ϩⲣⲉⲓ̈ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ · ⲙⲁⲣⲉ ⲛⲉⲕⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ϯ . . . . .
> . .]. ϩⲧⲉ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲙ̅ⲡ . ⲉⲃⲉⲛ ⲙ̅ⲡⲕⲟ . . . . . ⲛ̅ⲧ̅ . . . . .
>
> for (?) I am a sheep wandering . . . . . .
> . . . . my beauty (?) . . . . . .
> . . . robe (*stolē*) of the maidens (*ᵉmparthenos*).

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[146] Carl Schmidt (hrsg.) mit einem Beitrag von Hugo Ibscher, *Kephalaia* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1940) 41.11- 25; trans. Iain Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher: the edited Coptic Manichaean texts in translation with commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

> . . . haven of Light, I have moored in it: let my (?) . . .
> welcome me in, let thy angels give . . . .
> for . . . . of the . . . of the world (*kosmos*?).[147]

The righteous one will be crowned[148] by an 'angelic of Christ'. What this means is unclear; possibly it is a reference to some kind of angelic representative of Christ, or it could be understood as an adjective used as a substantive. I am unsure about the translation as 'angel band'.[149] Although possible it is also speculative and unsupported by other examples.[150]

> ⲧⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲓⲕⲏ ⲙ̄ⲡⲭ̅ⲣ̅ⲥ̅ · ⲁⲟⲩⲉⲛ ⲛⲏⲓ̈ ⲥⲧⲉⲫⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲓ̈
> ⲧⲥⲁ[ⲩ]ϩⲥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲁⲉⲧⲟⲥ · ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲩ ⲉⲧⲥⲱⲕ ⲙ̄ⲡⲁϩⲏⲧʼ ⲁⲙⲡⲏⲩⲉ
> ϩⲱϥ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲁⲓ̈ⲥⲁⲩϩϥ̄ ⲁϩⲟⲩⲛ · ⲡⲉⲧϩⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧʼ ⲁⲓ̈ⲧⲁϭϥ ⲁⲧⲛⲟⲩⲛⲉ
> ⲉ]ϣ ⲧⲉ ⲧϩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲓⲕⲉ · ⲉⲣⲉ ⲧⲁⲕⲓⲑⲁⲣⲁ ⲣ̄ⲃⲣⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲏⲛ[ⲉ
> ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲉ ⲣⲉϣⲉ ⲛⲉⲙⲏⲓ̈ ϫⲉ ⲁⲓ̈ⲕⲧⲁⲓ̈ ⲁⲧⲁⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲁⲛ
> ⲁ]ϫⲓ ⲛⲁϩⲃ̄ⲥⲁⲩⲉ ⲉⲧⲣⲁϩⲉ · ⲛⲁ[ⲥⲧ]ⲟⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲙⲁⲩⲣ̄ⲡⲗ̄[ϭⲉ
> ⲁⲓ̈ⲣⲉϣⲉ ϩⲛ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲉϣⲉ · ⲁⲓ̈ⲟⲩⲣⲁⲧ ϩⲛ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲩⲣⲁⲧ
> ⲁⲓ̈ⲙⲧⲁⲛ] ϩⲛ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲙ̄ⲧⲁⲛ ϫⲛ̄ⲁⲛⲏϩⲉ ϣⲁⲛⲓⲁⲛⲏϩⲉ
> ⲟⲩ]ⲉⲁⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲧⲁⲓ̈[ⲟ] ⲛ[ⲓ̅ⲏ̅ⲥ̅ ⲡⲣⲣⲟ ⲛⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲉ
> ⲙⲙⲛⲉ]ϥⲥⲱⲧⲡ̄ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲉ [ⲙⲛⲧ]ⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲙⲁⲕⲁⲣⲓⲁ [ⲙ
> ⲙ]ⲁⲣⲓⲁ ⲑⲉⲟⲛⲁ

> O *aggelikē* of Christ, open to me, crown me. The assembly of eagles, - they that draw my heart to the skies. I have gathered everything in; that which is in my hand I have fastened to the root. Which is the way that I am to turn? My lute becomes new daily. O holy ones (*netouabe*), rejoice with me, for I have returned to my beginning again. I have received my washed clothes, my robes (*nastolē*) that grow not old. I have rejoiced in their joy, I have been glad in their gladness. I have rested] in their rest from everlasting to everlasting. Glory and honour to [Jesus, the King of the holy ones (*netouabe*), and] his holy (*etouabe*) Elect [and the] soul of the blessed Mary, Theona.[151]

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[147] Psalm CCLXXV, *Psalm Book* 95.5-10.

[148] On coronation as the reward for the righteous in the Dead Sea Scrolls see 1QS 4:7-8 (=4Q 257 2 I) which says that the righteous will receive כליל כבוד עם מדת הדר באור עולמים, "a crown of glory with a raiment of splendour in eternal light".

[149] See Jaroslave Černý, *A Coptic Etymological Dictionary* (Cambridge: CUP, 1976) s.v. *aggelos*.

[150] On the translation of ἀγγελικῄ in this passage see: Sarah Clackson, Erica Hunter, and Samuel N.C. Lieu, *Dictionary of Manichaean texts* (Turnhout : Brepols, 1998) s.v. ἀγγελικῄ, here ἀγγελικῄ is translated as "angel band (?)". There is no reference to the term in Crum, not to ἀγγελικῄ nor ἄγγελος. Cotter ("An English to Coptic Vocabulary" [unpublished MS, Port Macquarie, 1995]) contains no reference to the term. Prof. Samuel Lieu has suggested (personal communication, Aug. 1997) that it may have been translated from Syriac; that it may have been an attempt to represent the word *'izgadā* (derived from a Persian masculine noun: *an ambassador, envoy, messenger*). On the use of the Greek adjective in Greek see Lampe, *PGL* s.v. ἀγγελικός. There are no examples recorded there of the adjective being used in a substantive manner with the noun understood except in the case of the sect named οἱ ἀγγελικοί. They received this name based upon their theory of creation by angels, or the claim to live angelic lives, or because of their origin in a place called Angeline 'beyond Mesopotamia'; see Epiphanius, *Panarion* 60.1; they were also called the ἀγγελῖται (cf. Lampe, ἀγγελικός B. 10). See also the "archangelic of Moses", an archangelic hymn attributed to Moses, mentioned in §4.1.

[151] *Psalm Book* 155.5-15.

Indeed, like the angels the righteous dead look forward to a afterlife marked by the constant offering up of praise to God.

ⲟⲩⲛ̄[ⲟⲩ]ⲛ[ⲁϭ ⲛ]ϩⲟⲟⲩ · ⲛⲉⲉ ⲡⲉϥⲙⲉⲓ̈ⲛⲉ · ⲟⲩⲛⲁϭ ⲡⲉ ⲁⲛ
· · · ⲁ · [· · · ·] ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲉ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲏⲡ ⲁⲡⲟⲩⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲥⲉ
· · · · · · · · · ·] · ⲛϩⲛ̄ⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧϣⲓⲧⲟⲩ · ⲁⲛⲁⲛ ϩⲱⲱⲛ
ⲛⲉⲧⲏⲡ [ⲁⲧⲉ]ⲩⲣⲉⲓ̈ⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲙⲁⲣⲛ̄ϯ ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙ̄
ⲡⲛ · · ·[· · · ·]
ⲛ̄ϭⲁⲙ [ⲛ]ϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲟⲃⲟⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓ̈ⲱⲧ ⲙⲛ̄ⲛⲉϥⲟⲩⲁⲓ̈
ⲛⲉ ⲉⲧϩⲓⲡ[ϫⲓⲥⲉ] ⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ
ⲙⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲱⲙⲟⲫⲟⲣⲟⲥ · ⲛ̄ⲥⲧⲩⲗⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϫⲱⲣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲥⲧⲟⲓⲭⲉⲓⲱⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲉ
ⲥⲉϯⲉⲁⲩ ⲛⲉⲕ ϫⲉ ⲁⲕⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲁⲕϫⲱⲕ ⲁⲕϯⲙ̄ⲧⲁⲛⲛⲉⲩ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ
ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲕϭⲓⲛ[ⲉⲓ]

There is a great day: great is its sign, great also
. . . . all the saints that are counted to the Light
glorify him and give him] praises without measure. We too
that are counted to their race of Light, let us give our flowers to
our (?) . . . . .
The Powers, the sons, the emanations of the Father and his
Lights on high, all the angels and the Omophori,
the strong Pillars, the Elements of the Light,
glorify thee, for thou hast acted, thou hast finished, thou hast given
rest to them all by thy coming (?).[152]

In the same way as Christians looked to Christ Manichaeans saw Mani as the trailblazer for the transformation of the righteous dead.

ⲛ̄ⲧⲕ̄ ⲟⲩϫⲡⲟ ⲛ̄ⲁⲧⲙⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓⲙⲁϩϣⲁⲙⲧ̄ · ⲛ̄ⲧ̄ⲕ
ⲟⲩⲡⲣⲉⲥⲃⲉⲩⲧⲏⲥ ⲁⲕⲉⲟⲩⲉ ⲧⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲩⲕ ϣⲁⲣⲁⲛ ⲱ ⲡⲡⲁ
ϫⲁⲕⲙ̄ ϭⲉ ϯⲛⲟⲩ ϩⲛ̄ⲛ̄ⲧⲗϯⲗⲉ ⲛ̄ⲓ̈ⲱⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲟⲩⲛⲁϥ ⲉⲛ
ⲡⲁϣⲛⲉ ⲁⲡϣⲙ̄ϣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲃⲏⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲃⲉ ⲱ ⲡⲡⲁⲡⲉⲁⲩ
ⲉⲟⲩⲉⲛ ⲛⲉⲛ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲱⲧⲃⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ϩⲁⲫⲓⲥ ⲛ̄ⲙ̄ⲡⲏⲩⲉ ⲛ̄ⲕ[ⲙⲁϩⲉ
ϩⲏⲧⲛ̄ ⲁⲡⲟⲩⲣⲁⲧ ⲛ̄ⲧⲕ̄ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲣ̄ⲣ̄ⲟ ⲱ ⲡⲡⲁⲡⲉⲁⲩ
ⲧⲛ̄ⲧⲏⲡ ⲁⲟⲩⲱϣⲧ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲉⲓ̈ⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲧⲕⲕⲁⲑⲉⲇⲣⲁ ⲉⲕϣⲁⲛ
ⲡⲁⲣϣ̄ⲥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡϩⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲁϩⲁⲓ̈ⲡⲉ ⲉⲧϩⲏⲡ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲟⲩ
ⲱ ⲡⲡⲁⲡⲉⲁⲩ
ⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲛⲉⲕ ⲡⲙⲁⲛⲓⲭⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲡⲁⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲟⲩϭⲣⲟ ⲙ̄ⲡ[ⲉ]ⲕ
ⲃⲏⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲥⲙⲁⲙⲁⲁⲧ ⲱ ⲡ̄ⲡⲁⲡⲉⲁⲩ ⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲛ̄
ⲧⲙⲁⲕⲁⲣⲓⲁ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ

Thou art a creature immortal on the day of this third; thou art
an envoy (*presbeutēs*); another has sent thee to us, O glorious one.
Wash us now therefore in the dew-drops of thy joy, for we
are ordained to the service of the holy Bema, o glorious one.
Open to us the passage of the vaults of the skies and [walk
before us to the joy of thy kingdom, O glorious one.

[152] *Psalm Book* 12.18-27.

> We are wont to worship the sign of thy seat when thou
> spreadest it out on the day of the Filling of the Measure which is
> hidden today,
> O glorious one.
> Glory to thee, Mani, glorious one; victory to thy blessed
> Bema, O glorious one, and the soul of
> the blessed Mary.[153]

In the "Psalms of Heraclides" an important new addition is made to the gifts given to the righteous upon ascent – wings.

. . . . ⲛⲉⲕⲉⲛ]ⲧⲟⲗⲁⲩⲉ ⲙⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲕⲟⲩⲁϩⲥⲁ[ϩⲛⲉ
. . . .]. .
. . . .]. ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲁⲓ̈ϩⲁⲕⲥ̅ ⲛⲉⲕ ϩⲛ̅ . .[. .
. . . .]. ⲡⲁϩⲏⲧ ⲛ̅ⲛ̅ϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲡⲥ . .
. . . .]ⲥⲁⲡ ⲉⲓ̈ⲣ̅ⲡⲙⲉⲩⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲕⲥⲉϫⲉ
. . . .]. . ⲙ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲕⲥⲱⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲧⲁⲓ̈ⲁⲓ̈[ⲧ . .
. . . .]. . ⲛ̅ⲛⲓⲕⲗⲁⲙ ⲁⲓ̈ϫⲡⲁⲕ ⲛⲏⲓ̈ ⲙ[. .
. . . .]. . . ϩⲱⲱⲧ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲙⲁ ⲁⲓ̈ⲕⲁⲩⲉ [. .
. . . .]
. . . .]ϣⲡⲱⲡ ⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲕϩⲉⲗⲡⲓⲥ ⲉⲧⲟⲧ[. .
. . . .]. . ⲁⲓ̈ϩⲁϭⲙⲉ. ⲧϩⲣⲏⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ ⲧ . . [. .
. . . .]
. . . .]. . ⲛ̅ⲧϭⲓⲛⲉⲓ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ϩⲛ̅ⲡⲥⲱⲙⲁ . .[.
. . . .]. . . ⲙ̅ⲙⲏⲛⲉ . . ⲧⲉ ⲧⲟⲩϣⲏ . . .
. . . .]
. . . .]
. . . .]ⲛⲁⲧⲛ̅ϩ ⲉⲓ̈ϭⲁϣⲧ̅ ϫⲉ ϯⲛⲁ[.
. . . .]
. . . .]. . . . . ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲓ̈ϫⲓ ⲥⲃⲱ ⲟⲩⲁⲉⲉⲧ
. . . .] ⲡ ⲁϣⲱⲥ ⲙ̅ⲡⲥⲁⲓ̈ⲉ ⲉⲧⲧⲃ̅ⲧⲁⲃⲧ̅ ⲛ̅ⲛ̅
. . . .]. .
. . . .]. ⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲕ ⲣ̅ϩⲙⲁⲧ ⲛⲏⲓ̈ ϯⲛⲟⲩ ⲙ̅ⲡⲓϩ
. . . .]. . . ⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲓ ⲙ̅ⲡⲕⲁⲧ´ ⲛ̅ⲧⲥⲫⲁⲓⲣⲁ [. .
. . . .]
.]. . . ϫⲉ ⲁⲃⲁⲗ ⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲓ̈ ⲙ̅ⲡⲙⲏϣⲉ ⲉⲧⲥⲁϣⲉ ⲛ̅ⲛ̅ⲇⲁⲓⲙ[ⲱⲛ
ϫ]ⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲥⲁϣⲧ ⲧⲁϭⲓⲛⲡⲱⲧ ⲛ̅ⲥⲉϣⲧⲁⲣⲧⲣ̅ ⲡⲁⲛⲟⲩⲥ
ⲧϩⲉ ⲉⲧⲁϥϣⲡⲱⲡ ⲛⲏⲓ̈ ϫⲛ̅ⲛ̅ϣⲁⲣⲡ̅ ⲛ̅ϫⲓ ⲡⲉⲕⲁⲡⲟⲥ[ⲧⲟ
ⲗⲟⲥ ϫⲱⲣⲙ̅ ϩⲱⲕ ⲁⲣⲁⲓ̈ ϯ ⲛⲏⲓ̈ ⲡϣⲁⲙⲧ̅ ⲛ̅ϩⲙⲁⲧ ⲛ̅ⲧ[ⲉ
ⲡⲟⲩⲁⲓ̈ⲛⲉ
ⲡϭⲣⲟ ⲛⲉⲕ ⲡⲁⲣⲉϥⲥⲱⲧⲉ ⲡⲃⲟⲏⲑⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲙ̅ⲯⲩⲭⲁⲩⲉ ⲙⲁⲣⲓ
ⲣ̅ⲡⲙ̅ⲡϣⲁ [ⲛ̅ϫⲓ] ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲕϭⲣⲟ ⲁⲛⲁⲕ ⲧⲯⲩⲭⲏ ⲙ̅ⲡⲗⲟⲩⲥⲓ
ⲁⲛⲉ ⲧⲯ[ⲩⲭⲏ ⲙ]ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ

thy commandments and thy injunctions
. . . . .
. . . . angels, I armed thee in it (*fem.*) in

[153] *Psalm Book* 41.18-29; see also 50.15-29.

. . . . . . my (?) heart the sons of the
. . . ., as I remembered thy word (?).
. . . . thy honoured body (*peksōma*)
. . . . . . these garlands, I got thee for myself
. . . . myself from place to place, I set them
. . . . .
. . . . . promise and thy hope which
. . . . . . I caused it (?) to fade, the flower of . . .
. . . . .
. . . . the departing from the body (*p^e^sōma*)
. . . . daily . . . the night . . . .
. . . .
l. 17 *fragmentary*
. . . . . my (?) wings, as I see that I shall (?)
. . . . .
. . . . for I was learning of my own accord
. . . . . to despise the fabricated beauty of the
. . . . .
. . . . thee, give me now this . . .
. . . . me the wheel of the sphere (σφαῖρα)
. . . . .
. . . forth from me the bitter crowd of the demons,
that they hinder not my course and confuse not my mind (νοῦς).
as thy apostle promised me from the first,
do thou nod (?) to me, give me the three gifts of
Light.
Victory to thee, my Saviour, the helper (βοηθός) of souls. Let me
be counted worthy [to receive] thy victory. I, the soul of Plousiane,
the soul of Mary.[154]

Whilst the depiction of St Matthew in heaven may be the first iconographic depiction of a winged angel, here we have the first literary depiction of wings as a sign of the angelic status of the righteous dead, a reference which predates the representation of St Matthew by maybe as much as a century.[155]

Summary: The symbols of transformation

From the late Second Temple Period through to the early Christian period there clearly existed an ideology connected with the transformation of human beings into angels. This ideology had biblical origins, particularly in the figures of Adam, Moses and Enoch, and came to be connected with certain symbols and behaviours.

[154] *Psalm Book* 98.2-32; also 100.24-33; 222.9-17; cf. also 155.6.
[155] If we date the composition of the Psalm-Book to the late third century, Alberrry, *Manichean Psalm-Book* II, xx, dated the corpus as a whole to ± 340, suggesting that the composite elements must have been composed sometime before.

The symbols of angelic transformation were ultimately derived from the symbols associated with Moses' meeting with God on Sinai, but the biblical account was expanded upon. The symbols of transformation came to be fixed around such motifs as the shining face or robes of light. Moses' transformation was the origin of the motif of the shining face, and the story of Adam and Eve's fall from grace was the origin of the idea of robes of light being a marker of heavenly status. The motif of the robes of light is most clearly put to use in the Coptic Manichaean texts, where it assumes great importance as a marker of the transformation of the individual to an angelic existence.

Yet the symbols of transformation, interesting and necessary markers of the process as they are, are meaningless without the techniques for achieving the transformation; the texts we have looked at in this chapter have often been focused not just upon transformation, but also upon the methods for achieving that transformation. Sexual behaviour was central to the notion of angelic transformation. Adam and Eve's fall from grace was explained as the origin of sex and procreation; Enoch's legend was closely connected with the sexual misdemeanours of the fallen Watchers, who as heavenly beings made themselves impure through their dalliance with human women; the story of Joseph and Aseneth also focused upon sexual behaviour: in effect it provided a means to legitimise the sexual union of the two through the conversion of Aseneth, and thus demonstrated that their union was not analogous to the union of the Watchers and the human women. We shall see in the next chapter that sexual behaviour also played a central role in all Christian ascetic practices. This emphasis upon sex is essentially a Christian phenomenon, for although other non-Christian ascetic streams of thought also aimed for renunciation of various aspects of everyday life, they did not share the Christian focus upon sex as the primary part of human behaviour to be rejected. The Christian focus upon sex is based upon the understanding of the Christian life as one lived in anticipation of the afterlife state, or of actually enjoying that afterlife state here on earth, an afterlife state which was angelic.

Again the importance of the chief angelic figure must be noted. The literary examples available were examples of beings who were taken into a close relationship with God. Beings like Moses, Enoch, John the Baptist (as the incarnation of the returning archangelic figure), Adam, Jacob, Christ, and the patriarchs in the *CMC* were all major figures, not

ordinary people transformed into ordinary angels, but extraordinary people transformed into extraordinary heavenly beings. Thus when the transformation of all the righteous dead into angels came to be accepted as normal in the afterlife (as in Manichaeaism or the Gospel texts discussing the angelic afterlife), then the symbols used were largely drawn from the descriptions of the appearance or creation of chief angelic figures.

The Christian Ascetic Emulation of Angels

It is striking to anyone researching the field of angelology that in the first centuries of the common era, Christian ascetics were regarded as living an angelic life, a phenomenon normally described today as the *aggelikos bios*.[1] In this chapter, we will examine the *aggelikos bios* and show how it was more than a metaphor, that it was essential to the angelology of this period, and at the heart of the Christian ascetic life. It was an existence characterised by an emphasis upon the one aspect of angelic nature explicitly discussed in the Gospels – celibacy; and was based upon the assumption that the afterlife was angelic. It originated in a Semitic and Jewish-Christian environment and may well have also been at one time connected with an angelic interpretation of the nature of Christ.

5.1 The background to early Christian asceticism

Asceticism, the conscious denial of bodily needs in an attempt to reach a higher state of spiritual consciousness, is a feature common to many religious traditions – for instance Hinduism, Islam, or shamanic practices; indeed one could also mention Buddhism and Jainism, which are fundamentally ascetic religions. Greek and Roman writers were well aware of the existence of ascetic philosophical movements outside the Empire; the Indian 'gymnosophists' were particularly famous.[2]

5.1.1 Graeco-Roman asceticism

We can also see ascetic values in Graeco-Roman society. For instance Stoicism (which became popular during the early Imperial period among the Roman upper classes in

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[1] Although this term was only used (to my knowledge, based upon a search of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* E [Packard Humanities Institute; CDROM, 2000]) on four occasions in antiquity: Pseudo-Macarius, *Epistula Magna* (W. Jaeger [ed.] *Two rediscovered works of ancient Christian-literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macarius* [Leiden: Brill, 1954] 260.3 & John Chrysostom, *In ingressum sanctorum jejuniorum* (spurious) *PG* 62, 727.40; *Catecheses ad illluminandos 1-8* (A. Wenger [ed.] *Jean Chrysostome. Huit catecheses baptismales* [2nd edn. *SC* 50; Paris: Cerf, 1970]) 8.4.3. and in the *Vita* of Melania (D. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie: texte grec* [*SC* 90; Paris: Cerf, 1962]) prol. 5. See K. Suso Frank, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ*. *Begriffsanalytische und begriffsgeschichtliche untersuchung zum "engelgleichen leben" im frühen Mönchtum* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964) 13-14 for a listing of occurances of the terms suggestive of the angelic life – not including the reference to Pseudo-Macarius above nor the reference to Chrysostom, *In ingressum sanctorum jejuniorum*. Frank includes other references which seem to suggest an angelic or heavenly existence but which do not use the term ἀγγελικὸς βίος.

[2] See Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* VI.iv.38.2ff (γυμνοσοφιστάς); Philostratus' tale of the life of the miracle-worker Apollonius of Tyana underlines the importance of the time he spent with Indian holy men; see *Vita Apollonii* III.

particular)[3] emphasised moderation and the control of the emotions. This control of emotions has come to be regarded as a classic value of the governing classes of the Empire, both Greek and Roman.[4] Likewise in Greek thought a strong tradition of asceticism existed which was manifested mainly in the form of Pythagoreanism.[5]

Moreover, it seems to have been the case that in the second century of the Common Era ascetic practices were on the increase within pagan Graeco-Roman society.[6] Indeed although Romans showed a distinct distrust of asceticism when it was presumed to be for the purpose of self-promotion, ideal asceticism, the true denial of bodily weaknesses, was held in some esteem. There was a clear division in Roman thought, seen for instance in Celsus' criticism of Jesus, between the genuine philosophical ascetic and the *goes* or magician.[7]

5.1.2 Jewish asceticism

In Judaism, we can also see a mixed attitude to asceticism. On the one hand, it is true to say that mainstream rabbinic Judaism appears not very ascetic at all. Certainly, the term 'asceticism' was not a technical definition for a particular type of religious practice, although the *verb askein* and its noun is used in the Septuagint in reference to observance of the Sabbath and the Law.[8] However, the Judaism of the pre-rabbinic era, of the time of Christ,

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[3] Cf. J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1st pbl. 1979; 1996) esp. chaps. 3 & 4.

[4] Possibly the most famous example is that of Galen's father who used to deride those who lost their tempers and struck servants in the teeth in the heat of the moment – the point being that this lack of decorum was something very un-Roman; instead they should wait, reflect upon the incident and allow themselves to cool down and then go at the poor slave with a whip or stick; see Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the second century AD to the conversion of Constantine* (London, New York, Ringwood, Toronto, Auckland: Penguin, 1988) 65 & Peter R.L. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988) 12 (discussing *De cognoscendis animi morbis* 1.4) for two different approaches to this passage.

[5] See Iamblichus, *De vita Pythagorica liber* (ed. L.Deubner [1937]; rev. U. Klein; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1975), available also in the English translation of Gillian Clark, *Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Life* (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1989); cf. also Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (2 vols.; London: RKP, 1979); Garth Fowden, "The Pagan Holy Man in late antique society", *JHS* 102 (1982) 33-59.

[6] Lucian sneered at the popular religion of the day, for instance the exhibitionist suicide of Peregrinus the Cynic, which was an attempt to release his soul from the limiting bonds of the body. He did, however, seem to approve of some ascetic philosophers of his day, men such as Demonax and Nigrinus, on the grounds that they were not self-promoters like Peregrinus; cf. James A. Francis, *Subversive Virtue: Asceticism and Authority in the Second Century Roman World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995) 76.

[7] For Celsus' view of Christ as a *goes* see Francis, *Subversive Virtue* 138-9.

[8] Ἀσκεῖν in 4 Macc 13:22 LXX and ἄσκησις in 2 Macc 15:4 LXX. The word thus seems to have been used in its meaning 'to strive', without any more specific technical designation.

the Second Temple and the period immediately following its destruction, was not the normative rabbinic Judaism we know today. It encompassed many heterodox groups, such as the Essenes or the Therapeutae,[9] who were characterised by their ascetic practices. Indeed the growth of ascetic practices in Second Temple era Judaism was connected to this diversity. Most of the groups now described as sectarian seem to have been in revolt against the Temple authorities. Thus, they attempted to recreate a state of purity that they felt the temple priesthood had lost. The temple, where God was present, was compared to heaven. As the earthly temple became less accessible to these sectarian groups they came to focus more upon the heavenly temple. Often we can see in the Pseudepigrapha a view of the temple as heaven and the priests as angels. Priestly purity became seen as synonymous with angelic purity. These sectarian groups helped to democratise the notion of purity, wishing to extend it, like some of the prophets, to the whole of the nation of Israel. Of all these groups, it was the more moderate Pharisees who survived the destruction of the temple and flourished. The more radical notions held by groups such as the Essenes survived in part in the legacy they imparted to the early Christian idea of the angelic life, although Christianity added elements to it that made it distinctly Christian, as we shall see below. Nevertheless it is this notion that the good Jew should maintain priestly purity (synonymous with angelic purity) that was the origin both of the increase in the importance of ascetic practices in late Second Temple Judaism and the tendency to see asceticism in terms of emulation of angelic behaviour.

Certainly there had been some Jewish ascetic practices from the earliest period. In the early Christian era, the Jewish idea of the nazir – he who is consecrated to the Lord and adopts various ascetic practices – still held some importance. The rules for one wishing to "separate" (להזיר hence the noun נזיר) himself unto the Lord are set out in Numbers 6:1-22; they mandate that the nazir should abstain from wine and strong drink (indeed from any product derived from grapes), he shall not cut his hair, nor come near any dead body. From Scripture we have the examples of the nazirite figures Samson and Samuel (who was dedicated to God and not allowed to cut his hair (1 Sam 1:11), and in Ben Sira 46:13 is called a nazirite of the Lord); and also a group named the nazirites found in Amos 2,

[9] Josephus distils the different sects of Judaism into three main groups: Sadduccees, Pharisees and Essenes (cf. *Antiq.* 13.5.9; 18.1.2; *Vita* 2; *Bell.* 2.8.2), but this is clearly an attempt to categorise a large number of different

mentioned alongside the prophets (12:11-12). At the dawn of the Christian era John the Baptist seems to have been a nazirite-type figure;[10] and in Acts 21:23-26 Paul accompanies four young men who must have been nazirs to the Temple. Moreover the Talmud mentions the nazirite vows as a continuing phenomenon in Judaism.[11] James the Just, the brother of Christ, and the leader of the community after his death, is described by Eusebius in terms reminiscent of the nazirs – he did not drink alcohol, eat meat, nor cut his hair.[12] Christ is described as a nazir in the Syriac *Acts of Judas Thomas*.[13] Epiphanius (ca. 377) talks of a Syrian Christian group called the Saccophores who carried on the nazirite habit of allowing the beard and hair to grow.[14]

New types of Jewish asceticism also grew up in the early Christian centuries. Josephus mentions someone named Banus, with whom he spent three years. Banus does not seem to have been a nazirite; he is not described in classically nazirite terms, indeed he seems very much like one of the ascetics that we meet in later Christian texts. Josephus reports that he lived in the desert, only wore clothing made from that which grew upon trees, grew all his food, and bathed in cold water in order to help maintain his chastity.[15]

The Judaism of the early Christian period thus contained ascetic elements. The Temple remained the central focus of Jewish religion and it was issues related to the Temple that dominated this developing Jewish asceticism. The alienation that certain groups felt from the Temple and its authorities encouraged a new view of the Temple and its relationship to Jews. God became both more transcendent and more immanent: his temple and court was now located in heaven rather than in the impure earthly temple; but access to him was no

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groups, groups such as the Qumran sectarians who do not easily fit into any of these categories (see Jerusalem Talmud *Sanhedrin*, 10.6.29c for a listing of 24 sects).

10 See Lk 1:15.

11 Qiddushin 70a; *Ps. Jon.* Num 12.8; Ben Isaac in *The Near East under Roman rule* (Leiden: Brill, 1998) 132, n.63 also cites m.Nazir 6.3 and Horovitz's edition of Sifre on Numbers 25.

12 *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.23.

13 ܢܙܝܪܐ, although not in the Greek; cf. *Acts of Judas Thomas* 48, in A.F.J. Klijn (trans.) *The Acts of Thomas* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), who follows the paragraph numbering of the Greek edition of M. Bonnet (ed.) *Acta apostolorum apocrypha* vol. 2.2 (Leipzig: Mendelssohn, 1903; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1972); the Syriac text is found in Wright, *Acts* p. ܪܒ.

14 Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 80.6.

15 *Vita* 2.

longer the monopoly of the priestly caste, and maintaining purity in order to be able to stand in God's presence became a duty that all Jews could perform.

5.1.3 Asceticism in the New Testament and Apostolic writings

In the New Testament, ironically considering the later history of Christian monasticism, we find little that we would recognize as asceticism. Although the verb *askein* appears in Acts it was not a reference to asceticism as we understand it; rather it was used, as in the Septuagint, with the older meaning of striving after something.[16] Furthermore, as Peter Brown points out, although Christ was unmarried at his death this produces no comment in the New Testament itself, and it was not until much later, almost a century later, that we find anyone deliberately imitating him in his celibacy, this idea being found in Ignatius' letter to Polycarp (5:2).[17] There are only very few references in the New Testament to practices we might regard as ascetic, none of which are to be found in the Gospels. In the Revelation of John 14:4 the 144,000 who have the name of the Lord and the name of the Lamb written upon their foreheads are mentioned; these are the saved who stand before the throne singing hymns in the company of the four living creatures and the elders. These 144,000 are saved because they did not "defile themselves with women, for they are chaste (*parthenoi*)".[18] The other passage that discusses asceticism is 1 Corinthians 7. In this passage Paul goes to some length to convince the Corinthians that not all were able to follow his example of a chaste existence and not all should. Obviously some were arguing that a Christian existence was necessarily a celibate existence. As we proceed through this chapter we shall see that this emphasis on celibacy is of central importance and provides one of the clues to piecing together the early Christian attitude to asceticism and why it was so often seen as being a life lived in imitation of the angels.

5.2 Angelic Function and nature: Angelic attributes and behaviour in native Syriac Asceticism

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[16] Acts 24:16.

[17] Brown, *Body* 41.

[18] Οὗτοί εἰσιν οἳ μετὰ γυναικῶν οὐκ ἐμολύνθησαν, παρθένοι γάρ εἰσιν.

The discussion herein aims to do two things. Firstly it will discuss the evidence provided by the earliest witnesses that we have to native Syriac Christian asceticism,[19] and what they tell us about the meaning of the *aggelikos bios* for those who pursued it at this time. And secondly it will reflect on the origins of this idea in the prehistory of Syriac Christianity, in the period before the early fourth century. We are here discussing 'asceticism' rather than 'monasticism' and 'ascetics' rather than 'monks', because I wish to make clear the difference between the pure native Syriac asceticism found before the coming of Egyptian monasticism in the late fourth century and that which came after it.[20]

Most of the functions and attributes that defined Syriac ascetics also served to define angels.

5.2.1 Hymns of Praise

As we have seen, the praise of God by the heavenly angels was one of their essential functions. The use of the title *ʕr* in Aramaic texts is strongly tied up with the importance of the praise offered up by these angels.[21] The angelic praise of God was an important motif in early Christian thought, and served as a model for the praise offered up by humans.[22]

The offering up of hymns of praise to God played a central role in early Christian thought and practice. Hymns play an important part in the Christian life depicted in the Pauline epistles.[23] The evidence from the Egyptian papyri is incontrovertible: of the surviving Christian texts passages from the book of Psalms are particularly prominent; they were

[19] The *Acts of Thomas* and *Odes of Solomon*, pre-fourth century and Syriac, but otherwise difficult to arrive at a provenance (see discussion below); and the fourth century and pre-monastic works of the *Liber graduum*, Aphrahat and Ephrem. The post-monastic, Syriac version of the *Vita Antonii* will also be examined in the light of these works in an attempt to discover if there was a particular Syriac attitude to asceticism which informed it.

[20] Augustine (amongst others) makes a distinction between catholic 'monks' and schismatic 'ascetics' in North African asceticism (*Enarratio in Psalmum* CXXXII.iii; cf. A. Dearn, "The *Passio S. Typasii* as a Catholic Construction of the Past", *VigChr* LV no.1 [2001] 96-7). Syricists have also become aware of the difference, particularly as shown in the works attributed to Ephrem, between native Syriac asceticism and the synthesis that followed the arrival of Egyptian monastic influence; see Sidney Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism", in *Asceticism* 221-22; and S.P. Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism" in *idem* (ed.) *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (Variorum Reprints: London, 1984; repr. from *Numen* XX, 1973) 3.

[21] Cf. §3.1.1c & §3.4.3.

[22] Cf. Frank, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ* 83, citing (n129) Basil, *Hom. in ps. 1* (*PG* 29, 213a), see also pp.84-6.

[23] See Col 3:16, Eph 5:19.

especially favoured for use in phylacteries or amulets.[24] Of the Coptic Manichaean books discovered from Medinet Madi the *Psalm Book* is the longest and (on a more subjective level) seems the richest in terms of imagery, language and mythology. This book, at least parts of which were originally composed in Syriac,[25] dates from before the first catholic Christian papyri, and one wonders if it was Manichaeans from Syriac-speaking areas who encouraged the interest in psalms and hymns in this region.[26] Indeed it has long been argued that Syriac Christianity was the origin of the Christian practice of singing antiphonal hymns.[27] Ephrem popularised hymn-singing in early Christian circles,[28] and it seems that he may have learnt this practice from his heretical forebear Bardaiṣan, who was said to have composed 150 psalms or hymns after the example of King David.[29] Yet there was also an early tradition of the independent composition of psalms in Coptic.[30] Recent research has

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24 See E.A. Judge "The Magical Use of Scripture in the Papyri" in Edgar W. Conrad & Edward G. Newing (eds.) *Perspectives on Language and Text: Essays and Poems in Honor of Francis I. Andersen's Sixtieth Birthday* (Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake, IA, 1987) 343-349; E.A. Judge & S.R. Pickering, "Biblical Papyri Prior to Constantine: Some Cultural Implications of their Physical Form", *Prudentia* X no.1 (1978) 11; and Joseph van Haelst, *Catalogue des Papyrus Littéraires Juifs et Chrétiens* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976) 53-98. On the popularity of inscriptional citations of the book of Psalms on Churches, funerary monuments and private houses see A.L. Connolly, "Miscellaneous OT Quotations", in *New Docs* 4 (1987) 190.

25 Drijvers has argued for original composition of the *Psalm Book* in Syriac and then translation into Coptic through a Greek intermediary. He thus argues that the *Psalm Book* can tell us much about early Christian influence upon Manichaeaism and also Syriac Christianity: see H.J.W. Drijvers, "Odes of Solomon and Psalms of Mani. Christians and Manichaeans in Third-Century Syria", in *idem*, *East of Antioch: Studies in Early Syriac Christianity* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984; 1st publ. in R. van den Broek & M.J. Vermaseren, *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions presented to Gilles Quispel* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981] 118-119). His position has impressive backers (he cites 118 & n4, A. Baumstark; P. Nagel; n6, A. Böhlig), but it is worth considering that the Greek elements and the Syriac elements could also be accounted for by independent composition of different psalms; the discoveries at Kellis demonstrate that psalms were composed both in Syriac and Coptic; see Iain Gardner with contributions by S. Clackson, M. Franzmann and K.A. Worp, *Kellis Literary Texts* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1996). It seems secure to assert, however, that this practice of writing psalms was occurring in the earliest strata of Manichaean literature, when the sect was still Syriac in character.

26 Other Manichaean Coptic psalm-books have been discovered at Kellis; see Gardner, *Kellis literary texts.*

27 For instance Augustine assumed that the hymns which Ambrose had instituted in the church in Milan had been based upon exemplars found in eastern churches, *Confessions* IX.7.

28 J. Szövérffy, "Hymnology", *New Catholic Encyclopedia* VII (Washington: McGraw-Hill, 1967) 287.

29 See H.J.W. Drijvers, *Bardaiṣan of Edessa* (trans. G.E. van Baaren-Pape; Assen: VanGorcum, 1966) 165 & n., cites *CH*, LIII, 6 & commentary by Beck, also L.H. Dalmais, 'L'apport des églises syriennes à l'hymnographie chrétienne', *L'Orient Syrien* II (1957) 243-260 & J. Puyade, 'Compostition interne de l'office syrien', *L'Orient Syrien* II (1957) 92, who presents a gnostic hymn of Bardaiṣan preserved in Ephrem's work. This composition of hymns as a response to heresy was mirrored in the West, where it is assumed that hymns (such as those composed by Ambrose) were composed to help bolster the faithful against the temptation of Arianism; thus hymns (from this time on) traditionally contain a doxology as the finale; cf. J. Szövérffy, "Hymnology", *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 288.

30 For instance the Meletians seem to have composed psalms in Coptic see W. Reidel and W.E. Crum *The canons of Athanasius of Alexandria. The Arabic and Coptic versions* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1904) Canon 12 p. ١٨. The first Biblical commentary written in Coptic was written by Hieracas in the fourth century, who reportedly also studied magic. Interestingly he was born close to the areas visited by Basilides (see P.

begun to demonstrate that Christians were not unique in this respect. Although once believed to have been on the periphery of Jewish life in the Roman Imperial period it is now evident, not least due to the evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls, that hymnology played an important role in the Judaism of the turn of the era.[31] Hymns and music had long held importance for pagan religious festivals, and in some cities the gods were sung to every morning when their shrines were opened.[32] It is not to at all surprising that one of the characterising features that Pliny gave to the Christians he encountered was that they rose to sing hymns to their "quasi-god" every morning before dawn.[33] Jewish mysticism also took great interest in this heavenly worship. Drawing on the same pseudepigraphic literature as the early Christians, some of the Hekhalot incantations of the Merkavah mystics (second century CE on) were modelled upon the hymns of the angels.[34]

When the community of the Dead Sea Scrolls worshipped, and sang their hymns of praise, we know that they believed that the angels worshipped alongside them;[35] thus the humans were required to be ritually pure. The Rule of the Congregation declares:

> . . . אלה
> אנושי השם קיראי מועד הנועדים לעצת היחד בישראל
> לפני בני צדוק הכוהנים וכול איש מנוגע באחת מכול טמאו
> האדם אל יבוא בקהל אל[ה] וכול איש מנוגע באלה לבלתי
> החזיק מעמד בתוך העדה וכול מנוגע בבשרו נכאה רגלים או
> ידים פסח או עור או חרש או אלם או מום מנוגע בבשרו
> לראות עינים או איש זקן כושל לבלתי התחזק בתוך העדה
> אל יב[ואו]אלה להתיצב [ב]תוך עדת א[נ]ושי השם כיא מלאכי

Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth Century Egypt* [Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1999] & D.J. Kyrtatas, *The Social Structure of Early Christian Communities* (London: Verso, 1987) 171), he is accused of composing psalms by Epiphanius, *Panarion* 67.3.7 (cf. 67.1.6 on his impact upon Egyptian ascetics [ἀσκητῶν τῶν
Αἰγυπτίων]).

31 Strugnell, J. "The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran", *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, vii (1959) 318-45; James H. Charlesworth, *Critical Reflections on the Odes of Solomon* (Sheffield: Univ. of Sheffield Press, 1998) 27-54.

32 Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the second century AD to the conversion of Constantine* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1988) 66.

33 Pliny, *Ep. ad Traian.* 10.96.7.

34 Cf. Joseph Naveh & Shaul Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae, Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (The Magnes Press: Jerusalem, 1993) 18 quoting P.S. Alexander, "Incantations and books of magic", in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the age of Jesus Christ (175 BC - AD 135)* English trans. G. Vermes, F. Millar & M. Goodman (eds.) (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973) III, part I, 361.

35 See, recently, B. Frennesson, *"In a Common Rejoicing": Liturgical Communion with the Angels in Qumran* (Uppsala: Univ. of Uppsala Press: 1999); and the classic study of H.W. Kuhn, *Endwartung und gegenwärtiges Heil: Untersuchungen zu den Gemeindeliedern von Qumran mit einem Anhand über Eschatologie und Gegenwart in der Verkündigung Jesu* (Göttingen: Vandernhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966).

קודש [בעד]תם . . .

> . . . these are the famous men, those summoned to the assembly, those gathered for the community council in Israel under the authority of the sons of Zadok, the priests. No man, defiled by any of the impurities of a man, shall enter the assembly of these; and everyone who is defiled by them should not be established in his office amongst the congregation. And everyone who is defiled in his flesh, paralysed in his feet or in his hands, lame, blind, deaf, dumb or defiled in his flesh with a blemish visible to the eyes, or the tottering old man who cannot keep upright in the midst of the assembly, these shall not enter to take their place among the congregation of famous men, for the angels of holiness are among their congregation.
> (1Q28a [1Qsa] ii.1-9).[36]

These rules must surely be related to those of the priests in the Temple found in Leviticus 11:17-23, and are part of the process of the angelification of the priesthood and the relocation of the Temple from Jerusalem to heaven.

Early Christian practice was centred on the singing of hymns,[37] and by joining together to glorify God Christians banished the power of the devil.[38] The *Symposium* of Methodius of Olympus was modelled on Plato's work of the same name but offered up an alternative model, virginity instead of love. Methodius, who was probably bishop of Olympus in Lycia and martyred in 311, saw a natural connection between virginity and a praiseful angelic state. He linked the praise that humanity was supposed to offer God with that offered by the angels.

> Δεδημιούργητο γὰρ δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔξω φθορᾶς, ἵνα τὸν βασιλέα γεραίρῃ πάντων καὶ ποιητὴν ἀντίφθογγα μελῳδῶν ταῖς τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐξ οὐρανοῦ φερομέναις βοαῖς.[39]

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[36] Text: Barthélemy (ed.) *DJD* I; trans. in F. García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

[37] Pliny *Ep. ad Trajan.* 10.96.7. There may have also been some links to pagan practice as some pagan gods are reported to have received praise in the form of hymns sung at their shrines each morning; see Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 66. In Epiphanius' *Panarion* there is mention made of two pagan ("Greek") sects who were devoted to hymn-singing and prayer, like the Christian Messalians (*Pan.* 80) (see below §5.2.1a). Hymns were also, of course, a means of communication, see Malcolm Choat, "Christian Laity and Leadership in Fourth-Century Egypt" (Unpbl. Diss.; Macquarie University, 1999) 148-49 (and other references in n122), who mentions that Philostorgius reported Arius composing songs which beguiled listeners with their melodies, and thus exposed them to the dangers of the heretical lyrics (Philostorgius *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.2).

[38] Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians* 13.

[39] *Symposium decem virginum*, in H. Musurillo SJ & V.H. Debidour, *Méthode d'Olympe, Le Banquet* (*SC* 95; Paris: Cerf, 1963).

> for he too [*viz.* man] had been created in incorruptibility that he might celebrate the king and creator of all things in a song which would be an antiphon to the angelic voices wafted from heaven. (*Symposium*, 3 (Thalia) 6)[40]

Virginity was required for those wishing to join the angelic choir.

> Συγχορεύω βραβεύοντι τῷ Χριστῷ κατ' οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶ τὸν ἄναρχον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον βασιλέα· ἀδύτων γέγονα λαμπαδηφόρος φώτων καὶ ἐφυμνῶ τὸ καινότατον μετὰ τῆς ὁμηγύρεως ᾆσμα τῶν ἀρχαγγέλων τὴν καινὴν χάριν ἐξαγγέλουσα τῆς ἐκκλησίας. Ξυνέπεσθαι γὰρ ἀεὶ τὸν ὅμιλον τῶν παρθένων τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ συνθιασωτεύειν ἔνθα ἂν εἴη, λόγος ἔχει. (*Symposium*, 6 [Agathe] 5.7-13)[41]

> I am in the choral band in heaven with Christ my rewarder, around the king who always was and ever shall be. I am the lamp-bearer of unapproachable lights, and I sing the new song in the company of the archangels, announcing the Church's new grace. For the Scriptures proclaim that the band of virgins ever follows the Lord and forms His train wherever He may be. (*Symposium*, 6 (Agathe) 5)

The importance of virginity is evident again, and should be noted.

Christians also praised God alongside the angels. When the eucharist was performed in church angels were believed to be present. Thus it was regarded as necessary to veil the good Christian virgins who were present, in case they caused the angels to succumb to lust and (for a second time) leave their heavenly stations.[42]

But it was not just in strictly 'Judaeo-Christian' circles that the worship of God was described. Hermetic texts also pay witness to the importance of this practice. Particularly in the context of the ascent vision, the praise of God features as an important element. In the

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40 All English translations of Methodius of Olympus are from Herbert Musurillo (trans.) *The Symposium: a treatise on chastity* (Westminster, Md: Newman Press, 1958).

41 *SC* 95.

42 1 Cor 11:10. Tertullian recommended the veiling of virgins in church because of the presence of the angels around the altar, cf. *On the Veiling of Virgins* I.2. Cf. also A.D. Nock, "'Son of God' in Pauline and Hellenistic Thought" (Review of Schoeps, *Paulus*: *Gnomon* 33 (1961) 581-90), in Zeph Stewart (ed.) *Arthur Darby Nock, Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1972; 1st publ. in *Gnomon* 33 (1961) 581-90) II, 929, n17 and on 29 he says that he disagrees with Schoep's comment on 1 Cor 11:10 about the veiling of women because of the angels; he cites in particular H.J. Cadbury, *HTR* 51, 1958, 1f. & J. Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gen 1,26f. im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960) 304ff. Jason BeDuhn's revisionist argument in "'Because of the Angels': Unveiling Paul's anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11", *JBL* 118 no.2 (1999) 295-320, remains unconvincing. On the importance of the presence of angels at the eucharist for (mainly fourth century) Egyptian Christian ascetics, see §5.5.1.

probably second-century[43] *Corpus Hermeticum* I, the spirit arrives at the Ogdoad and joins with heavenly powers praising God and is then made equal to the powers and able to ascend to God.

> καὶ οὕτως ὁρμᾷ λοιπὸν ἄνω διὰ τῆς ἁρμονίας, καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν μειωτικήν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρᾳ τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ τὴν ἐπιθυμητικὴν ἀπάτην ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τετάρτῃ τὴν ἀρχοντικὴν προφανίαν ἀπλεονέκτητον, καὶ τῇ πέμπτῃ τὸ θράσος τὸ ἀνόσιον καὶ τῆς τόλμης τὴν προπέτειαν, καὶ τῇ ἕκτῃ τὰς ἀφορμὰς τὰς κακὰς τοῦ πλούτου ἀνενεργήτους, καὶ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ζώνῃ τὸ ἐνεδρεῦον ψεῦδος. καὶ τότε γυμνωθεὶς ἀπὸ τῶν τῆς ἁρμονίας ἐνεργημάτων γίνεται ἐπὶ τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν, τὴν ἰδίαν δύναμιν ἔχων, καὶ ὑμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὖσι τὸν πατέρα συγχαίρουσι δὲ οἱ παρόντες τῇ τούτου παρουσίᾳ, καὶ ὁμοιωθεὶς τοῖς συνοῦσιν ἀκούει καί τινων δυνάμεων ὑπὲρ τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν φωνῇ τινι ἡδείᾳ ὑμνουσῶν τὸν θεόν καὶ τότε τάξει ἀνέρχονται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰς δυνάμεις ἑαυτοὺς παραδιδόασι, καὶ δυνάμεις γενόμενοι ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος τοῖς γνῶσιν ἐσχηκόσι, θεωθῆναι. λοιπόν, τί μέλλεις; οὐχ ὡς πάντα παραλαβὼν καθοδηγὸς γίνῃ τοῖς ἀξίοις, ὅπως τὸ γένος τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος διὰ σοῦ ὑπὸ θεοῦ σωθῇ (*CH* I *Poimandres* 25-26)[44]

> Thence the human being rushes up through the cosmic framework, at the first zone surrendering the energy of increase and decrease; at the second evil machination, a device now inactive; at the third the illusion of longing, now inactive; at the fourth the ruler's arrogance, now freed of excess; at the fifth unholy presupposition and daring recklessness; at the sixth the evil impulses that come from wealth, now inactive; and at the seventh zone the deceit that lies in ambush. And then, stripped of the effects of the cosmic framework, the human enters the region of the ogdoad; he has his own proper power, and along with the blessed he hymns the Father. Those present there rejoice together in his presence, and, having become like his companions, he also hears certain powers that exist beyond the ogdoadic region and hymn God with sweet voice. They rise up to the Father in order and surrender themselves to the powers, and, having become powers, they enter into God. This is the final good for those who have received knowledge: to be made God. Why do you still delay? Having learned all this, should you not become guide to the worthy so that through you the human race might be saved by God.?' (*CH* I *Poimandres* 25-26).[45]

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[43] On the issue of dating the various texts see Brian P. Copenhaver in *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a new English translation with notes and introduction* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995) xliii-xliv.

[44] A.D. Nock & A.J. Festugière (ed.) *Corpus Hermeticum*, I (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1946).

[45] Trans. Copenhaver in *Hermetica* 6.

In *Corpus Hermeticum* XIII the secret hymn is revealed: "Let every nature in the cosmos attend the hearing of the hymn. . . . For I am about to sing a hymn to the one who created everything; who fixed the earth in place; who hung heaven above; . . . Together let us praise him, raised high above the heavens, creator of all nature. He is the mind's eye. May he accept praise from my powers. . . . In the intellectual cosmos, Father, I have the power; your hymn and your praise have fully illuminated my mind. I, too, wish to send praise to God from my own heart."[46]

The angelic worship was important to early Syriac ascetics for two reasons. On the one hand the worship of the angels acted to signify the divine status of the one receiving the worship (cf. §3.4.3 & 5.6.1). On the other hand there is the importance of worship in texts which discuss transformation of an ascending seer. As mentioned above in Revelation 14:3-4 a 'new song' is said to be sung by the 144,000 righteous who did not defile themselves with women whilst upon the earth.[47] In the Pseudepigrapha the ascent and transformation of the righteous was often conceptualised in terms of praising God, either the visionary alone or with the angelic hosts.

These angelic hymns could also function to protect the visionary upon his ascent to heaven. In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*[48] we have what seems like a description of an actual visionary technique used by mystics. Abraham becomes scared, believing himself to be on the point of death, so his angelic guide tells him to sing a song:

> And while he was speaking, behold a fire round about *and it was* coming towards us; and there was a voice in the fire like the sound of rushing waters, like the roaring of the sea. And the

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[46] *CH* XIII.17-22; trans. Copenhaver, *Hermetica* 53-4. See also *The Discourse of the Eighth and Ninth* (NHC VI.6) 59.19-22; cf. Jarl Fossum, "Partes posteriores Dei, The 'Transfiguration' of Jesus in the *Acts of John*" in *The Image of the Invisible God, Essays on the influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (Vandenhoek & Ruprecht: Göttingen, 1995) 97.

[47] The eschatological end-time song is also discussed in rabbinic texts; see Ithamar Gruenwald, "Angelic Songs, the Qedushah and the Problem of the Origin of the Hekhalot Literature", in *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism: Studies in Apocalypticism, Merkavah Mysticism and Gnosticism* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988); originally published in Hebrew as 'שירת המלאכים, ובעיית חיבורה של ספרות ההיכלות', in A. Oppenheimer, U. Rappaport & M. Stern (eds.) **פרקים בתולדות ירושלמי בימי בית שני: ספר זיכרון לאברהם שאלית** (*Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period, A. Schalit Memorial Volume*; Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi , Ministry of Defence, 1980) 150-51 n.

[48] Known only from Slavonic MSS, but thought to be a text composed by the mid-third century at the earliest, cf. Pennington, *AOT* 366-7.

> angel with me bowed *his head and* worshipped. And I would have fallen prostrate on the ground; but the place on the height, where we were standing, at one moment lifted itself up *and* at the next sank back *again*. And he said, Only worship, Abraham, and sing the song I have taught you (for there was no ground to fall on). And I worshipped only, and I sang the song he had taught me. And he said, Sing without stopping; and I sang, and he himself also sang the song,
> Eternal One, Mighty One, Holy One, El, God, Monarch, self-begotten, incorruptible, unsullied, unborn, immaculate, immortal, self-perfect, self-illumined, without mother, without father, without birth, the High One, the Fiery One, Lover of man, generous, bountiful, my defender, longsuffering, most merciful, Eli (that is my God), eternal, mighty, holy, Sabaoth, most glorious, El, El, El, El, Jaoil.
> (17:1-11; trans. A. Pennington, *AOT*, 380-81; italics are the translator' additions to the text to aid comprehension).

Apart from its use to focus the mind and thus shut out the awesome things the visionary sees during his ascent to heaven this song of praise is hoped ultimately to lead to the revelation of heavenly secrets (17:16-17). After singing this song Abraham sees a vision of the throne room and the Living Creatures praising God. These Living Creatures, however, are so fierce that they need to be prevented from attacking each other by singing the song of peace which Abraham's angelic guide teaches them (18:2-11). As Gruenwald points out, this song thus functions in a magical way to prevent violence and maintain heavenly equilibrium; this is a feature of the heavenly song that became more prominent in later Merkavah mysticism; in earlier Judaism (apart from the *Apocalypse of Abraham*) this song's function is purely praise. But in the pseudepigraphic and early Christian texts we can see a clear connection between the song and the transformation of the one ascending that was often marked by his singing of praise to God, like or with the angels. The song had come, for many early Christians, to act as a signifier of angelic status. In the *Testament of Job*, probably an early Christian document,[49] the singing of hymns in the speech of the heavenly powers indicates the transformed status of the visionary (48:3; 49:2; 50:1-2), and the prayers of glorification chanted by the visionary became revelatory devices in themselves (49:3; 50:3; 51:4).

> Οὕτως ἀναστᾶσα ἡ μία ἡ καλουμένη Ἡμέρα
> περιείληξεν τὴν ἑαυτῆς σπάρτην καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ πατήρ
> καὶ ἀνέλαβεν ἄλλην καρδίαν, μηκέτι τὰ τῆς γῆς φρονεῖν,
> ἀπεφθέγξατο δὲ τῇ ἀγγελικῇ διαλέκτῳ, ὕμνον ἀναπέμψασα τῷ
> θεῷ κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἀγγέλων ὑμνολογίαν καὶ τοὺς ὕμνους
> οὓς ἀπεφθέγξατο εἴασεν τὸ πνεῦμα ἐν στολῇ τῇ ἑαυτῆς

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[49] See comments in introduction to the translated text by R. Thornhill, *AOT*, 618-619.

ἐγκεχαραγμένους. (48:1-3)[50]

Accordingly, the one called Hemera got up and wound her rope about her, just as her father had said. And she assumed another heart, no longer minding earthly things. And she gave utterance in the speech of angels, sending up a hymn to God after the pattern of the angels' hymnody; and the Spirit let the hymns she uttered be recorded on her robe.
(trans. R. Thornhill, *AOT*, 48:1-3)

Καὶ τότε ἡ Κασία περιεζώσατο καὶ ἔσχεν τὴν καρδίαν ἀλλοιωθεῖσαν ὡς μηκέτι ἐνθυμεῖσθαι τὰ κοσμικά καὶ τὸ μὲν στόμα αὐτῆς ἀνέλαβεν τὴν διάλεκτον τῶν ἀρχῶν, ἐδοξολόγησεν δὲ τοῦ ὑψηλοῦ τόπου τὸ ποίημα. διότι εἴ τις βούλεται γνῶναι τὸ ποίημα τῶν οὐρανῶν, δυνήσεται εὑρεῖν ἐν τοῖς ὕμνοις Κασίας.
(49:1-3)

And then Casia girded herself, and she *too* experienced a change of heart, so that she no longer gave thought to worldly things. And her mouth took up the speech of the *heavenly* powers, and she lauded the worship of the heavenly sanctuary. So if anyone wants to know about the worship that goes on in heaven, he can find it in the hymns of Cassia.
(49:1-3; italics are the translator' additions to the text to aid comprehension)

Καὶ τότε περιεζώσατο καὶ ἡ ἄλλη ἡ καλουμένη Ἀμαλθείας κέρας καὶ ἔσχεν τὸ στόμα ἀποφθεγγόμενον ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τῶν ἐν ὕψει, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτῆς ἡ καρδία ἠλλοιοῦτο ἀφισταμένη ἀπὸ τῶν κοσμικῶν λελάληκεν γὰρ ἐν τῇ διαλέκτῳ τῶν Χερουβιμ δοξολογοῦσα τὸν δεσπότην τῶν ἀρετῶν ἐνδειξαμένη τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν· καὶ ὁ βουλόμενος λοιπὸν ἴχνος ἡμέρας καταλαβεῖν τῆς πατρικῆς δόξης εὑρήσει ἀναγεγραμμένα ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς τῆς Ἀμαλθείας κέρας.
(50:1-3)

And the remaining one, the one called Amaltheias-Keras, put on her girdle; and she *likewise* gave utterance with her mouth in the speech of those on high. Her heart too was changed and withdrawn from worldly things; and she spoke in the language of the cherubim, extolling the Lord of Virtues, and proclaiming their glory. Anyone who would puruse the Father's glory any further will find it set out in the prayers of Amaltheias-Keras.
(50:1-3)

According to these texts the act of praise leads to transformation. Philo also declared that:

ὅταν γὰρ ἐκβῇ ὁ νοῦς ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἀνενέγκῃ θεῷ,

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[50] S.P. Brock (ed.) *Testamentum Iobi* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), based upon MS P (Paris, B.N. gr. 2658), unlike the SBL edition (R.A. Kraft *et al. The Testament of Job: Greek Text and English Translation* [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974]) which attempts to be more inclusive of other texts.

> ὥσπερ ὁ γέλως Ἰσαάκ, τηνικαῦτα ὁμολογίαν τὴν πρὸς τὸν ὄνταποι εἶται· ἕως δὲ ἑαυτὸν ὑποτίθεται ὡς αἴτιόν τινος, μακρὰν ἀφέστηκε τοῦ παραχωρεῖν θεῷ καὶ ὁμολογεῖν αὐτῷ· καὶ αὐτὸ γὰρ τοῦτο τὸ ἐξομολογεῖσθαι νοητέον ὅτι ἔργον ἐστὶν οὐχὶ τῆςψυχῆς, ἀλλὰ τοῦ φαίνοντος αὐτῇ θεοῦ τὸ εὐχάριστον. ἄυλος μὲν δὴ ὁ ἐξομολογούμενος ....τῷ μὲν γὰρ ἐξομολογητικῷ οἰκεία χροιὰ ἡ τοῦ ἄνθρακος, πεπύρωται γὰρ ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ θεοῦ
>
> For whenever the mind goes out from itself and offers itself up to God, as Isaac or "laughter", does, then does it make confession of acknowledgement towards the Existent One. But so long as the mind supposes itself to be the author of anything, it is far away from making room for God and from confessing or making acknowlodgement to Him. For we must take note that the very confession of praise itself is the work not of the soul but of God who gives it thankfulness. Incorporeal assuredly is Judah with his confession of praise. . . . . To him who makes confession of praise the hue of the ruby belongs, for he is permeated by fire in giving thanks to God
> (Philo, *Leg. all.* I.82 & 84; *LCL Philo* I).

This idea still had currency in the Christian martyrological literature. For instance Carpus, in response to a question from the proconsul at his trial, said: "The true worshippers, according to the Lord's divine instruction, those who worship God in spirit and in truth (οἱ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθέιᾳ προσκυνοῦντες τῷ θεῷ) (Jn 4:23), take on the image of God's glory and become immortal with him, sharing in eternal life through the Word (ἀφομοιοῦνται τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εἰσὶν μετ' αὐτοῦ ἀθάνατοι, μεταλαβόντες τῆς αἰωίου ζωῆς διὰ τοῦ λόγ ου). So too those who worship these gods take on the image of the demons' folly and perish along with them in Gehenna."[51]

a. The ideal of constant worship and the Messalian debate

Early Syrian ascetics also saw one of their primary activities, like that of the angels, as the praise of God. In texts that predate the suppression of the Messalian practices (from *Mᵉsalle* "praying ones"[52]) by Patriarch Flavianus (ca. CE 380)[53] there is evident a strong emphasis on constant prayer, and thus praise of God by the ascetic.

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51 Herbert Musurillo (intro. & trans.) *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 23, *The Martyrdom of Saints Carpus, Papylus, and Agathonicê* (dated by Eusebius *H.E.* IV.xv.48 to the reign of Marcus Aurelius – Musurillo accepts this, p.xv) (A= Greek recension in Adolf Harnack, "Die Akten des Karpus, des Papylus und der Agathonike", *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 3. 3-4 [1888], 440-54).

52 The first reference to the Messalians comes from Ephrem's *Contra haereses* written some time before his death in 373; in Madraša 22 he briefly mentions the *mṣallyanē* (ܡܨܠܝܢܐ) as being heretics; *mṣallyanā* stems from the root ṢL', "to incline, lean towards", which in its paᶜel conjugation also means 'to pray'; cf. Payne-

The *Liber graduum* (*LG*) is a fine example of this tendency to emphasise the duty of prayer. For the lower grade of Christian, the Just (*Kenā*), prayer is required only three times a day, but for the higher grade, the Perfect (*Gemirā*), prayer is continual.[54] The *LG* has been identified as Messalian by some, although others, such as Murray, have chosen to take a more cautious path and have claimed that it is not fully Messalian, but also not fully orthodox, that there is a suggestion of heresy about it.[55] The debate partly reflects the terminological difficulties. For it is clear that, like 'Arianism' in Egypt, Messalianism is a term used for a general approach to spirituality rather than for a particular movement.[56]

Whether strictly 'Messalian' or not the *LG* shows the importance to early Syriac Christians of ideas about prayer that were later condemned. After condemnation as a heresy the term 'Messalian' came to be used as a way of categorising those who were seen to have deviated from the Church's teaching on certain matters. It was not, however, ever any kind of unitary movement, rather a particularly Syriac approach to Christian spirituality.[57] It was a spirituality based, among other things, upon unceasing prayer. Epiphanius' second account

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Smith *Thesaurus Syriacus* sv ܨܠܐ. Epiphanius mentions the Messalians (Μασσαλιανοί) briefly in the *Ancoratus* (ca. 374) and in the *Panarion* (ca. 377) in more detail. He claims that the term Messalian means the same as εὐχόμενοι "those who pray" (80.1.2); they apparently spent their time in prayer and hymn-singing (80.3.2). Later both Theodoret (mid-5th century) and Photius (9th century) deal with the Messalians. For a full discussion see Columba Stewart OSB, *'Working the Earth of the Heart': The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 15-32.

[53] After the mentions by Ephrem, Aphrahat and the heresiologists (cf. n52) several Church councils acted to suppress the Messalians. Synods at Antioch (Syrian) (where Flavianus condemned a certain Adelphius for 'Messalian' practices), and Side in the period between 380 – 400; the Messalians were then scattered, probably mainly to Asia Minor. A synod in Constantinople in 426, an Imperial law of 428 and the Council of Ephesus in 431 condemned Messalian practices; see also Arthur Vööbus, *Literary, Critical and Historical Studies in Ephrem the Syrian* (Stockholm: Etse, 1958) 74.

[54] Cf. *LG* 184.24-185.8.

[55] See R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (Cambridge Univ. Press: Cambridge, 1975) 34-6. Brian Colless, in a paper delivered at the Symposium Syriacum VII in Sydney, July 2000, presented a convincing case for the Messalian nature of the *LG*.

[56] See Stewart, *Messalian* 18-19 on Epiphanius' difficulty in tying the Messalians down, surely because the reports he had heard referred to a general attitude rather than a movement as such with clear origins and leaders; as Stewart says on p.43 "Epiphanius was frustrated by the Messalians' lack of a history: in this [*viz.* Stewart's book's] survey of sources, it is becoming apparent that the 'Messalians', as such, have no recoverable history". Monks in Egypt called Εὐχῖται were also later accused of Messalian practices, see Stewart, 50-51.

[57] Amongst the little we know about Messalian-type spirituality is the name (which is Syriac), and that Epiphanius stated they came from Mesopotamia (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 80.3.7). See also Stewart, *Messalian*, 69 wherein he briefly talks of the cultural issues involved in the condemnation of Messalianism: "Categorical denunciation of Messalian errors may be seen to rest largely on misunderstanding of unfamiliar terminology, and culture joins with (and perhaps supplants) doctrine as the basis of controversy".

of the Messalians adds a little to our knowledge of the beliefs behind this practice of constant prayer; for according to Epiphanius if questioned they would claim to be a prophet, Christ, a patriarch or an angel.[58] Perhaps, then, they did aim in their lifestyles to imitate certain exemplars, patriarchs and prophets, Christ, or the angels, and perhaps they believed this imitation to have enabled them to take on the identity of these ideal types. Epiphanius' throwaway remark may simply have referred to an evasiveness on behalf of Messalians when questioned, or it may refer to their practice of an angelic life upon earth.[59] Certainly it will become apparent that the imitation of angels and that of Christ went together in the Syriac understanding of the angelic life. So too the emphasis upon constant prayer would, it seems, on the basis of the evidence we have seen so far, be seen in the light of the praise the angels offered up in heaven.

Other groups shared the 'Messalian' stance on prayer. The *Akoimētoi* were condemned in fifth century Constantinople alongside the alleged followers of Adelphius of Mesopotamia (= Messalians).[60] In Egypt the εὐχῖται are discussed in several passages in the *Apophthegmata patrum*, and like the Messalians they are accused of failing in their attempt to achieve a state of constant prayer.[61] Were there actual links between these groups and Syriac ascetic groups? Philoxenus of Mabbug (ca. 500) wrote of the Messalians that their leader Adelphius had travelled to Egypt and there met the desert fathers, including Antony. He supposedly gained his Messalian convictions in Egypt, there learning, among other things, about the attempt to regain the pre-fall state and about living the heavenly life whilst on earth.[62] The claim for Egypt should, however, probably be regarded as spurious for Syriac Christianity after the coming of Egyptian monasticism regularly claimed an Egyptian origin for Syriac Christian ascetic practices.[63] Quite possibly the influence was in the other direction.

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58 *Panarion* 80.3.

59 Stewart believes that this is a reference to the angelic life rather than just evasiveness, *Messalian*, 20, n22.

60 Adelphius was identified as a Messalian leader as early as the Synod of Antioch; see the brief discussion of the *Akoimētoi* below.

61 John Kolobos 2 cc.204 C – 205 A; Lucius (of Enaton) c.253 B – C accused them of failing to pray constantly, Stewart, *Messalian* 51.

62 Stewart, *Messalian* 39.

Likewise the *Pseudo-Macarian Homilies* contain exhortations to the angelic life. These are texts that Church authorities explicitly linked to Messalianism, but which, although they clearly shared some features with such practices, are, once again, clearly not part of any kind of Messalian movement.[64] These homilies, written around 380 in Mesopotamia or Asia Minor,[65]seem to have been written in Greek, but are heavily influenced by Syriac imagery.[66] They exhibit a practical ideology close to that of the Syriac *Liber graduum*,[67]and like that identified as Messalian by the heresiologists and the Church councils that condemned these practices. Chief amongst these was a conception of the heart as possessed by evil, and that the Holy Spirit and the human will can work together to expel this evil, to then allow the soul to mingle freely with the heavenly bridegroom.[68] Like Syriac Christian literature Pseudo-Macarius saw the aim of the ascetic existence as a restoration of the pre-fall Adamic state, a state characterised by its passionlessness (*apatheia*[69]). This *apatheia* was understood in a particularly 'Syriac' way, not as a complete absence of sensation but as an absence of earthly passions,[70] in contrast to the more rigorous Evagrian understanding of *apatheia*.[71] Indeed Evagrius may have been arguing against Messalian-type ideas when he explicitly argued against those who aimed for 'the experience' of visions (τῇ αἰσθήσει) of angels, powers or Christ, for only demons created such visions.[72] Also, like Syriac literature, the *Pseudo-Macarian Homilies* emphasise that the

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63 As Stewart notes, *Messalian* 40-41; cf. also. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria" 221 on Mar Awgin as the mythical bringer of Egyptian monasticism to Syriac Christianity. Cf. n20.

64 See Kallistos Ware (preface) in George A. Maloney, SJ (trans. & ed.) *Pseudo-Macarius: The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1992) xii.

65 Stewart, *Messalian*, 70. The fourth century desert father Macarius the Egyptian is no longer regarded as the author, Ware, *Pseudo-Macarius*, xi-xii.

66 For the particularly Syriac attitude to perfection see Stewart, *Messalian* 161& 163.

67 See Stewart, *Messalian*, 90-92; see also 69 & 84-85 nn.

68 Stewart, *Messalian*, 74-75. The meeting with the heavenly bridegroom in the bridal chamber is a typically Syriac motif based upon gospel passages such as Mt 9:15 (& Mk 2:19; Lk 5:34); Jn 3:29 & Mt 25:1-13. For this aspect of Syriac spirituality see R. Murray, *Symbols* 131-135; 254-257; S.P. Brock "The Bridal Chamber of the Heart", *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1992) 115-30.

69 For the use of this word in Ps.-Macarius, Stewart, *Messalian*, 79 – 81 & esp. 79 n38.

70 Stewart, *Messalian* 129-137.

71 Stewart, *Messalian* 79; 108; Brown, *Body* 374-5. cf. Pseudo-Macarius *Collection III* 28.3.4 & 4.2.

72 Stewart, *Messalian*, 135 citing Evagrius, *De Oratione* 115 col. 1192 D & *De Oratione* 72 col. 1181 D. See also p.147 where on the question of the use of the word *peira* in the Ps.-Macarian Homiles Stewart notes the experiential quality of Ps.-Macarius' spirituality: "He [Ps.-Macarius] always uses Πεῖρα to describe the lived reality of divine knowledge and Grace, and he contrasts this experience, the Πεῖρα of grace and perfection, with mere words".

future state is not only a restoration of the original Adamic state, but is superior to that original state.[73] Moreover, the *Pseudo-Macarian Homilies* play a similar game of philosophical brinkmanship by seeming on the one hand to argue for the possibility of realising the future state upon earth,[74] whilst also clearly stating that perfection cannot be gained in this life.[75] They also link the concept of perfection with the wise virgins and the wedding garment, the symbol of the afterlife state.[76]

Yet, importantly perhaps, an examination of some of the central and distinctive spiritual terminology of the *Homilies* leads to the conclusion that these terms are not direct translations of Syriac words, although they do demonstrate substantial similarities with Syriac spiritual imagery and language, suggesting a Syriac milieu.[77] I wonder if we are seeing here evidence for the existence of a particular type of Syrian-Greek literary milieu, a milieu which shares much in common with the Syriac literature coming out of the same geographical area, but which was also developing separately in its own directions. The absence of direct linguistic links between Syriac literature and the *Homilies* implies that both were drawing on similar sources and then expressing them in their own languages. Perhaps they shared sources like the *Odes of Solomon*, which were clearly translated into Syriac at an early stage. Perhaps this Syrian-Greek literature, which would have included the *Odes of Solomon*, Ignatius of Antioch, the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* and *Recognitions*, the *Pseudo-Macarian Homilies*, the *Gospel of Philip*, some of the Manichaean literature such as the *CMC*, the *Ascension of Isaiah* and other such texts, provided the link between ideas coming out of Syriac/Aramaic speaking parts of Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia and Alexandrian Greek writers such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen. It is conspicuous that, whilst there seem to be no direct links between the spiritual vocabulary of Pseudo-Macarius and Syriac literature, there are links between his use of certain terms and their use

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[73] Stewart, *Messalian* 78 n33; see also 77 & cf. nn 28, 29, 31.

[74] See Stewart, *Messalian* 103-5, the future state of πληροφορία "assurance" can be gained upon the earth, see also 107, 109, 116, 147-152.

[75] Stewart, *Messalian* 83.

[76] Stewart, *Messalian* 107.

[77] Stewart, *Messalian* 168 on the use of *peira* & *aisthēsis*.

by Philo, Clement, and Origen, alone amongst Greek writers of this period.[78] Thus there may well have existed an independent literary milieu that enabled exchange first between Alexandrian Jews, then later Alexandrian Christians writing in Greek, with those also writing in Greek in Syriac areas. The so-called First Collection of the *Pseudo-Macarian Homilies* contains reference to the angelic life, as does the Great Letter included as Logos I.[79]

b. Identification of the worship of the ascetic and that of the angel

In its social and theological setting the ascetic's praise of God must have been compared, by those engaged in it, to the constant worship of God by the angels.[80] And indeed it was. Aphrahat describes his ascetics as acting in imitation of the worship of the *ʿire*.[81] In the *Liber graduum* the ascetic is exhorted, through his actions, to join with the watchers in heaven in their praise of God; more than simply imitation of heaven on earth is implied here; the ascetic aims to share in the likeness of the watchers;[82] his body will be upon the earth as a sojourner (ܐܟܣܢܝܐ) and his mind will be in heaven, resident with the angels.[83] In discussion of the state of the true Christian it is made clear that he should return to the duty

[78] Stewart, *Messalian* 143-145; on Philo's use of terms such as *apatheia* and the relationship to his ascetic and afterlife philosophy see Frank, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ* 136-139 on the use of *en peira* by Philo, Clement and Origen; see also §5.5.2.

[79] *Collection I* in H. Berthold (ed.) *Makarios Symeon Reden und Briefe* (2 vols.; *GCS*; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1973) 25.1.4; *Epistula Magna* 260.3 (cf. n1).

[80] Citing Cramer, *Die Engelvorstellungen bei Ephräm dem Syrer*, Brown suggests that the angelic life is based upon the angelic 'wakefulness' in their constant praise of God (*Body* 331). It is, however, the praise, not the wakefulness, that characterises the state of both the angels and the ascetics; the wakefulness is a secondary characteristic, for it enables the praise. This theme extends well beyond the references to it in the *Liber graduum*. The wakefulness could, however, be important in and of itself; we shall see below that it was ultimately based upon the description of the wise and foolish virgins and the vigilant servants of Mt 25:1-13 & Mk 13:33-37 respectively; in the earliest strata of Syriac Christian literature which discusses wakefulness it is not linked to emulation of angels, only in the fourth century does the wakefulness come to be seen as an angelic attribute. In Pachomian monasticism (like the earliest Syriac ascetic literature) the emphasis upon wakefulness was present, but without any clear relationship to the angelic life; see Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius* 142-143, where he notes that the aim of the watchfulness here is to gain the same goal as described in the Beatitudes ('purity of heart'); cf. also 78-9, 86n.

[81] *Dem.* VI (*PS* I.1, c.309 *ll.*22-4) & *Dem.* XVIII (*PS* I.1, c.841 *ll.*23-26). Murray points out that Nagel (*Die Motivierung der Askese in der alten Kirche und der Ursprung des Mönchtums* [Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1966]) 43 is incorrect in saying that only the term *malʾaka* is used in the context of the ascetic angelic life; he cites Cramer, *Engelvorstellungen* 49-50 as a better examination of the issue: Murray, "The Origin of Aramaic *ʿir*" n2.

[82] *LG* XXI.592.10-11.

assigned to Adam – constant worship of God.[84] So too in texts[85] slightly later than Ephrem and Aphrahat (but most probably fourth or early fifth century), ascetics, just like angels, seem to be hovering around the altar[86] whilst the sacrament is being performed:

ܐܝܟܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܒ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܡܫܬܘܬܦܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ
ܐܦ ܟܕ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܒܡܕܒܪܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܛܠ
ܪܚܝܩܝܢ ܒܦܓܪ ܠܗ ܗܕܡܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܐܠܐ
ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܩܪܝܒܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ

Everywhere, where the sacrifice is being offered, they participate, although they are in the desert; and not because they are far off in body (they are [sic]) members of the church, but through their belief they are near.[87]

ܘܐܝܡܡܐ ܘܠܠܝܐ ܟܠܗ ܥܒܕܗܘܢ ܟܠܗ ܨܠܘܬܐ
ܚܠܦ ܦܝܪܡܐ ܕܠܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܟܝܘܬܗܘܢ
ܗܝ ܬܪܥܘܬܐ ܘܚܠܦ ܒܢܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܗܘܘ
ܗܝܟܠܐ ܠܪܘܚ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܚܠܦ ܡܕܒܚܐ
ܪܢܝܢܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܡܬܩܪܒܝܢ
ܨܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܐܠܗܘܬܐ

All day and all night, all their work is prayer; instead of a censer which they do not have, their purity is their reconciliation; and instead of the buildings of the church they are temples for the

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83 *LG* XXI.592.8-11; cf. *LG* VI.144.5-11.

84 *LG* XXI 600.10-11; 20-25. This is also the duty of the righteous dead in the *Acts of Thomas* pp.151f, see §5.3.3.

85 Originally generally attributed to Ephrem (i.e. by Vööbus), but now seen to be the work of later authors writing after the coming of Egyptian monasticism, cf. nn20, 63.

86 See §5.6.1 on similar phenomena in Egyptian asceticism.

87 From the text identified by Vööbus as Ephrem's "Letter to the Mountaineers" (ܐܓܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܐܦܪܝܡ ܠܘܬ ܛܘܪܝܐ) but which is now regarded as being of a later date (cf. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria" 221-22). It represents, however, an attempt to return to a remembered type of native Syriac asceticism as it was before the coming of Egyptian monasticism. Its attribution to Ephrem illustrates that those who came later (probably early fifth century) regarded these types of ascetic practices as supported by Ephrem's thought (rather than the spurious bringer of Egyptian monasticism, Mar Awgin, cf. Griffith, 221), and thus they carried a kind of *imprimatur* as to their Syriac, as opposed to Egyptian, pedigree. It is, therefore, in essence, a secondary text, telling us what later writers thought was going on before the coming of Egyptian monasticism. The text comes from *Opera selecta* ed. Overbeck p.121 6-9, and the quote is translated by Vööbus, *Literary, Critical and Historical Studies in Ephrem the Syrian* (Stockholm: ETSE, 1958) 75. The text is also included in Beck's *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones IV.* (*CSCO* 334; Scr. Syri 148. Louvain, 1973).

> Holy Spirit; instead of the altars are their spirits; as sacrifices their prayers are being offered to the Godhead.[88]

There is an opposition to the institutional Church evident here, for these texts need to be seen in their temporal context; they were written soon after the coming of Egyptian monasticism to the Syriac Christian community, and thus must reflect either a revolt against the increasing dominance of the Church over the expression of Christian asceticism, or else an imitation of the traditional Egyptian monastic independence from the ecclesiastical hierarchy (which we will examine later in this chapter when we deal with the fourth century Egyptian asceticism).

As we have already seen in chapter 3,[89] the heavenly worship of God by the angels assumed great importance in the ascent vision texts in the Pseudepigrapha. Heavenly hymns play an important role in the ascent of the seer, and signal the transformation of the seer into an angel. The *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* (3:3-4)[90] describes the seer being clothed in angelic garb and then praying to God with the angels;[91] the *Similitudes of Enoch* (*1 En* 71:11) depicts Enoch being transformed and then praising God, an event which must be seen in relation to 39:10-14, where the righteous dead praise God; and the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (17-18) has Abraham singing angelic hymns in order to camouflage his ascent in case the angels take offence at the intrusion of a human into their realm. In each of these three texts transformation or ascent, or both, give the subject the chance to worship God. But only in the *Ascension of Isaiah* (7:18-20; 8:16-17) is it explicit that the transformed seer is joining

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[88] Arthur Vööbus, *Literary, Critical and Historical Studies* 72 "a *mēmrā* on the anchorets, hermits and mourners and the dwellers on the mountains, in the valleys, desolated places and in the hollows of the ground"; cf. 73-4; the text has been edited by Zingerle, Rahmani (as: *Hymni de virginitate* [Scharf, 1906] II, p.81ff.), and Beck (*CSCO* 334). Vööbus quotes first Zingerle's version and then (see below) Rahmani's. This particular quote is from P. Zingerle (ed.) *Monumenta syriaca* I (Oeniponti, 1869) p.12; Vööbus suggests an early CE 4th century date, although the manuscript tradition only goes back to the 10th century, cf. 72, n2 (& n3).

[89] §3.4.3.

[90] Or *Anonymous Apocalypse*, the textual tradition is variously interpreted for this work was found in the same collection of MSS as the *Apocalypse of Elijah*, and the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*; some regard the *Anonymous Apocalypse* as part of the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, others as separate; see *AOT* 753-755, 915-917 & *OTP* I 499-500. The line numbering used is that of the translation in the *AOT*, in the *OTP* this passage is at 8:1-4.

[91] See also the quotation preserved in Clement of Alexandria: αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ ἤδη τρέφει ἆρ' οὐχ ὅμοια ταῦτα τοῖς ὑπὸ Σοφονία λεχθεῖσι τοῦ προφήτου; «καὶ ἀνέλαβέν με πνεῦμα καὶ ἀνήνεγκέν με εἰς οὐρανὸν πέμπτον καὶ ἐθεώρουν ἀγγέλους καλουμένους κυρίους, καὶ τὸ διάδημα αὐτῶν ἐπικείμενον ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ ἦν ἑκάστου αὐτῶν ὁ θρόνος ἑπταπλασίων φωτὸς ἡλίου ἀνατέλλοντος, οἰκοῦντας ἐν ναοῖς σωτηρίας καὶ ὑμνοῦντας θεὸν ἄρρητον ὕψιστον.« αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ ἤδη τρέφει.« ἆρ' οὐχ ὅμοια ταῦτα τοῖς ὑπὸ Σοφονία λεχθεῖσι τοῦ προφήτου; «καὶ ἀνέλαβέν με πνεῦμα καὶ ἀνήνεγκέν με εἰς οὐρανὸν πέμπτον καὶ ἐθεώρουν ἀγγέλους καλουμένους κυρίους, καὶ τὸ διάδημα αὐτῶν ἐπικείμενον ἐν

the angelic choirs upon ascent. No doubt the other three texts suggested to their audience the angelic worship of God when they discussed the transformation of their heroes and their subsequent worship; but the clear statement in the *Ascension of Isaiah* is notable. It suggests connections with the milieu in which Aphrahat and the *Liber graduum* were working when they stated either that their ascetics would or should join with the angelic choir, however much the writers may have intended to suggest either real transformation into, emulation of, or simply a metaphorical exhortation to be like, the angels. This text is probably the ascension known to Jerome, Didymus, and Epiphanius,[92] and it is not impossible that it also circulated outside the Greek Christian world in the Semitic Syriac environment of the same period.

5.2.2 The sleepless worship of the *ʿire*

Angels did not need to sleep. This was because they were watchful, wakeful beings, gathered around God's throne constantly praising; hence, as discussed already, the Syriac term *ʿira*.

In the late fifth or early sixth century it is recorded that certain Syrian ascetics, called (in Greek) *akoimetoi*, emulated this by worshipping in shifts, so that constant praise could be offered up.[93] This particular group and the idea of worshipping in shifts may have been new in this period, but the idea of constant worship was not.

The ascetics found in the *Liber graduum*, in Aphrahat, and in Ephrem's genuine work all attempted to avoid sleep. Sleep was a human requirement. It was an ancient and enduring belief that celestial beings did not require sleep; the Vedic Adityas (Rig Veda II, 27.9), Mithra (Yasht 10.7), Ahura Mazda (Vivedat 19.20), Zeus (Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* 702) and the Jewish God (Ps 121:4) were all beings described as not requiring sleep.[94] When Christ descended to earth, declared Aphrahat, he gave up his ability to go without

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πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ ἦν ἑκάστου αὐτῶν ὁ θρόνος ἑπταπλασίων φωτὸς ἡλίου ἀνατέλλοντος, οἰκοῦντας ἐν ναοῖς σωτηρίας καὶ ὑμνοῦντας θεὸν ἄρρητον ὕψιστον.«, *Strom.* V.xi.77.

[92] J.M.T. Barton, "The Ascension of Isaiah", in *AOT* 781.

[93] See the recent introduction by S. AbouZayd to Elizabeth Theokritoff's translation of *The Life of Alexander*: "The Life of our Holy Father Alexander", *Aram* 3 (1991) 293-318; also the discussion in Frank, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ*, 79-82.

sleep, an ability he shared with the other *ᶜire*.[95] Jews, also, in this period believed sleep to be a human need that man imposed upon himself by his decision to sin, thus giving up his chance to live free from the demands of sleep, like an angel.[96] The ability to go without sleep characterised Enoch in *2 (Slavonic) Enoch* 23:3, when he stayed awake for thirty days and nights in order to be instructed by the angel Vrevoil.[97]

There is a strong polemic against sleep in early Syriac sources, but the earliest Syriac literature does not make the connection between angels and wakefulness. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Mt 25:1-13; and the wakeful servants Mk 13:33-37; Lk 12:35-40) supplies the scriptural background to the importance of the notion of wakefulness.[98] The *Acts of Thomas* metaphorically equates sleeping with something done by an old man, sick because of his sins.[99] Perhaps we should say here, *the* Old Man, as opposed to the New Man, the true Christian.[100] Those who sleep are the children of darkness, dead because of

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94 Cf. T. H. Gaster, "Watcher" in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (Nashville & New York: Abingdon Press, 1962) 805-6.

95 *Dem.* VI. 8-10, elaborating upon Phil 2:7.

96 Cf. 351.

97 This is reminiscent of Exod 34:28, for there is the implication that Moses also went without sleep during his forty days and nights of instruction by God, wherein he did not eat.

98 One also wonders if Psalm 130 (LXX 129) did not also have a role to play, for although it does not mention the word *ᶜira* it does emphasise the duty of the soul of the devout to wait and watch for the Lord.

99 *Acts of Thomas* 48 (= Wright, *Acts* ܪܢ), 58 (= Wright, *Acts* ܪܢܚ).

100 Cf. *Acts of Thomas* 48, 58, see also 10 (= Wright, *Acts* ܩܠܒ, although not in the Greek) in which Jesus (the new man) descends and puts on the first (old) man, Adam; see also Aphrahat, *Demonstration* XII. 252.17. The New Testament basis for the use of such terminology in Syriac is Eph 2:15 & 4:24 (καινὸν ἄνθρωπον; ܒܪ ܢܫܐ ܚܕܬܐ); Col 3:10 (putting on the 'new': ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον; ܘܠܒܫܘ ܚܕܬܐ); Titus 2:14 (new people: ܥܡܐ ܚܕܬܐ; although the Greek has instead: καὶ καθαρίσῃ ἑαυτῳ λαὸν περιούσιον); the idea is found in early Church literature such as Ignatius, *Ephesians* 20.1, cf. *Epistle to Diognetus* 2:1. See also M. Choat, "Papnouthious in SB I 2266: New Man or New Patron?", *ZPE* 133 (2000) 157-162 and also E.A. Judge, "The impact of Paul's gospel on ancient society", P.Bolt and M. Thomson (eds.) *The Gospel for the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission in Honour of P.J. O'Brian* (Apollos: Leicester, 2000). The idea of a 'new world' (*ᶜalmā ḥadtha*; is derived it seems from the use of the phrase ܥܠܡܐ ܚܕܬܐ to translate the Greek παλιγγενεσίᾳ in Mt 19:28). It also played an important role in Syriac Christian literature. Takeda discusses this idea and especially notes that in two passages in the *Life of Antony* the Syriac version has replaced the Greek version's mention of citizenship in heaven and the eternal life with reference to the 'new world'; see Fumihiko F. Takeda, "A Study of The Syriac Version of the *Life of Antony* – A Meeting point of Egyptian Monasticism with Syriac Native Asceticism" (unpbl. DPhil.; Univ. of Oxford, 1998) 461; Athanasius' interaction with this idea is dealt with by C. Mills Badger Jr, *The New Man Created in God: Christology, Congregation and Asceticism in Athanasius of Alexandria* (Unpbl. dissertation; Duke Univ., 1990).

their sins. To rise from sleep is to be resurrected.[101] The world of human existence is characterised as a time of sleep during which the Lord is watching over his chosen ones.[102]

To be wakeful is thus a positive and beneficial state to be in, though in the earliest Syriac literature not explicitly an angelic state. Indeed in the *Acts of Thomas* not to sleep is to act in imitation of him who does not sleep, Christ, rather than the angels, to which no reference is made.[103] The change from *imitatio Dei* in the tradition found in the Acts to *imitatio angelorum* in the later Syriac tradition should be noted at this point, for the move from emulation of Christ to emulation of angels holds part of the key to understanding the origins of the ascetic angelic life. No doubt in reference to the example in Mark 13:34-7 (cf. Lk 12:37; 1 Thess 4:15; Matt 24:46) of the doorkeeper commanded to watch for the return of his master, Christians are advised in the *Acts of Thomas* to be watchful for the return of their Lord.[104] This notion is reflected also in the *Odes of Solomon*, the *Didascalia* and in Aphrahat.[105] It needs to be noted, however, that although the watchfulness of the righteous is not linked in this text to the heavenly Watchers, the righteous are given angelic qualities elsewhere in this text.[106]

In early Christian writers outside the Syriac milieu and in the pseudepigrapha and the Septuagint the term Watcher was applied to angels, and watchfulness was seen as an angelic attribute; it was only a matter of time before the passages in the Gospels and the Pauline corpus would be connected with these heavenly ideal types, and thus it would be realised that the watchfulness of the good servants was indeed an angelic virtue, as all virtues were. As has already been discussed in §3.1.1c 'watcher' as a term to be applied to angels is first found in the Aramaic section of Daniel.[107] In the Septuagint this term is translated as *aggelos* but Aquila and Symmachus translate it perhaps more accurately as *egrēgoros* a

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[101] *Acts of Thomas* 153 (= Wright, *Acts* ܫܢܓ).

[102] *Acts of Thomas* 66 (= Wright, *Acts* ܪܠܗ).

[103] *Acts of Thomas* 66.

[104] *Acts of Thomas* 146 (= Wright, *Acts* ܫܝܗ), 147 (= Wright, *Acts* ܫܝܗ), cf. 169 (= Wright, *Acts* ܫܠܐ).

[105] Cf. §§5.2.1-5.2.2.

[106] *Acts of Thomas* 7 (= Wright, *Acts* ܦܙ).

'watchful, wakeful or vigilant' being. It was often used as a term for the fallen angels. The *Testament of Reuben* 5:6-7, the *Testament of Naphtali* 3:5, and the *Book of Enoch*, using both the Aramaic term (*1 En* 13:10) and the Ethiopic (12:4; 15:2), all use the term watcher to refer to the fallen angels. Although in much of the Pseudepigrapha the term had the negative connotation of a fallen angel this was by no means always the case. *1 Enoch* uses words denoting watchfulness in relation to the four archangels and also Raphael.[108] *2 (Slavonic) Enoch* claims that some of the watchers have fallen, and that others stay on in order to continue the praise of God.[109] Most importantly for this chapter Clement of Alexandria saw this watchfulness as necessary for all Christians; it was the state of being in constant anticipation of the life to come and also served to make the believer into an angel.[110] Moreover, Clement also tied the angelic watchfulness into the watchfulness of the good servants who await their Lord.[111] Clement's belief in transformation will be dealt with below, but it is worth noting that he ties together watchfulness, the true (and thus gnostic) Christian and emulation of angels.

It is in Aphrahat that we can first see this notion of wakefulness being linked to the angels, the watchers. Aphrahat seems to be working inside a milieu with which he is not entirely comfortable. He states clearly that his ascetics, the *iḥidaye* of the *bnai qyama*, should wait for the judgement day to be transformed, that until then they must abide in their own nature.[112] Likewise they should feel no shame at the hunger they feel in their bellies.[113] This suggests that there were some in his audience who did actually believe that ascetics could transform their nature, and thus release themselves from the needs of the body. Aphrahat's asceticism is a moderate asceticism; he rejects adornment and luxury, and most importantly sex, but also reminds his listeners that they are still ordinary human beings. This is not the asceticism of radical rejection of all human limitations that seems to have come

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[107] The Aramaic section is Dan 2:4 – 7:18; the angelic watchers are found at MT 4:10 (Theodotion [Θ] 13 ιρ), 14 (Θ 17 ιρ) & 20 (Θ 23 ιρ).

[108] Cf. *1 Enoch* 20:1; 22:6; 39:12; 71:7; 93:2.

[109] *2 En* 18.

[110] *Paedagogus* II.ix.79.3; ix.82.3.

[111] *Paed.* II, ix, 79, 3.1.

[112] VI.277.22.

[113] VI.276.3-4.

after the onset of monasticism[114], and was probably at least in part a reaction to it. Nonetheless Aphrahat uses the example of angelic behaviour to elucidate the features of the ascetic life. Whilst at the same time he makes clear the difference between his ascetics and the angels by always describing the *ʿire* as being "of heaven" (ܥܝܪܐ ܫܡܝܢܐ) when discussing heavenly angels rather than their emulators upon the earth. His care in the use of this adjective makes clear that the term was ambiguous and there was a possibility for confusion. Aphrahat uses the term watcher in its by then standard sense as a reference to the good servants of the Gospels. The ascetic should stand (ܢܩܘܡ) and be wakeful/watchful (ܢܥܝܪܘܗܝ) for the Lord, in case he should arrive.[115]

5.2.3 Ascetics as holy ones, ܩܕܝܫܐ

"Holy" also refers to human beings. In Daniel, as in 7:18 (holy ones of the Most High)[116] and 7:27 (the people of the saints of the most high) the holy ones are humans. In the *Similitudes of Enoch* (*1En* 37-71) the holy ones are described as being either 'heavenly' or 'earthly'.[117] In the Dead Sea Scrolls, although the majority of the references refer to heavenly beings, 'holy one' also referred on occasion to a member of the community, and serves to underline for us the sense of fellowship with the angels enjoyed by this community.[118] In 2 Thessalonians 1:10 and Colossians 1: 12 'holy ones' are referred to; whether these are human or angelic is unclear from the context.

The legacy of the term is seen most clearly in Syriac literature, wherein the term 'holy one' *qaddisha* refers to one of the three grades of ascetic. Specifically *qaddisha* refers to people

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[114] Embodied in the texts once attributed to Ephrem which gave us such a false picture of early Syriac ascetic practices; cf. Sidney Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism", 221-2.

[115] VI.244.5.

[116] This is the most satisfactory translation; see J.J. Collins, "Saints of the Most High קדישי עליונין", *DDD* 1359, *contra* J. Goldingay, "'Holy Ones on High' in Daniel 7:18", *JBL* 107 (1988) 497-99.

[117] For example: heavenly: *1 En* 47:2, 4; 57:2, earthly: 48:7, 9 (*bis*); 50:1 (*bis*); 51:2; 58:3.

[118] See Maxwell J. Davidson *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 31, 33, 34, 120, 165, 166, 272, 281.

who although married refrain from intercourse.[119] This term is argued to have come from the understanding of the Semitic root QDŠ used in Exodus 19:10, where Moses is told to 'sanctify' the people, and he instructs them (vs 15) to stay away from their wives.[120] This understanding of words derived from QDŠ is thus derived from the Old Testament, and is also reflected in passages such as 1 Corinthians 7:14 and 34 in which the Greek terms derived from *hagios* and QDŠ are used in the Greek and the Syriac respectively to refer to abstinence from sex.

5.2.4 *Iḥidaya*

The purpose of this section is to examine two terms of central importance to early Syriac asceticism, *iḥidaya* and *Bnai Qyama*, in order to illustrate their links to the concept of the angelic life of the ascetic.[121] In doing so the centrality of the concept of the angelic life to Syriac ascetic practice and its early place in the development of Syriac Christianity will be illuminated.

Two main models for emulation presented themselves to the Syriac ascetic. On the one hand Christ and the pattern of his life: his lack of possessions, homelessness, unmarried state and suffering provided the pattern upon which ascetics could model their own lives.[122] On the other hand, as we have seen, ascetics also attempted to emulate the angelic state.[123] Perhaps the most all-encompassing term used by these ascetics to describe their state of existence was the term *iḥidaya*, whilst the institution that they believed themselves to be a part of was that of the *Bnai/Bnat Qyama*. Both terms will be dealt with below, and their

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119 S.P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye* 133; *idem*, *St. Ephrem The Syrian: Hymns on Paradise* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990) 26.

120 Brock, *The Luminous Eye* 133-4; specifically on the relationship to Syriac ascetic thought on celibacy, see Brock, "Early Syrian Ascetism" 10-11; also see K.G. Kuhn & O.J. Procksch, "ΑΓΙΟΣ", in G. Kittell & G. Friedrich (eds.) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, I (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964) 100, on the expression of this Semitic notion of separation through the use of the Greek word *hagios*.

121 For two general overviews of the angelic life in early Christian monasticism see Peter Nagel, *Die Motivierung der Askese in der alten Kirche und der Ursprung des Mönchtums* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1966) 34-48; K. Suso Frank OFM, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ.* See also Dom Jean Leclercq's, "Monasticism and Angelism" in *The Downside Review* 85 (1967) 127-137 for a re-examination of the question, especially the issue of whether ascetics believed themselves to actually be transformed by their practices.

122 In particular his suffering; see S.P. Brock, "Early Syrian Ascetism" 18-19.

123 Other exemplars also presented themselves: the prophet and the pre-fall Adam in particular; the pre-fall Adam will be discussed in the context of the examination of the term *iḥidaya*.

translation will be left aside for the moment. Here the argument that both (particularly the term *Bnai Qyama*) are related to an angelic understanding of asceticism will be presented.

The term *iḥidaya* has assumed importance for scholars because of its central importance to the practice of early Syriac Christianity and because of the difficulty in rendering a complete translation of the term in a modern European language. It is a word with a variety of connotations, most of which are tied to ascetic practices, so no single English word adequately translates it. The translation of *iḥidaya* as 'single one' and the abstract noun *iḥidayutha* as 'singleness' is the closest we can come in English to a complete translation. [124]

This section of the thesis will deal with two things: the *concept* of singleness, and the *word iḥidaya*. Although the two do intersect they are not the same. The purpose of this section is to try to trace the relationship between the concept of 'singleness' found in the Bible, early Christian asceticism, and the Nag Hammadi library and the use of the word iḥidaya in fourth century Syriac Christianity. It is, I intend to argue, a term intimately connected with the ascetic Christian attempt to maintain a celibate existence based upon an understanding of the existence one needed to maintain in heaven: singleness is thus an angelic attribute.

The ideal of 'singleness' is found in the Hebrew scriptures, where there is emphasis placed upon being single-hearted in one's relationship to God, and being undivided, the inner and the outer man together.[125] This Jewish idea is also found in the *Wisdom of Solomon* (1:1), where 'singleness' of heart (ἁπλότητι καρδίας) is mandated for the righteous, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, in which double-mindedness is warned against.[126] The New Testament

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124 Robert Murray has listed the main senses of *iḥidaya*: having no spouse or family; being 'single minded' in heart and thus faith; and only begotten (*monogenēs*) and thus united to Christ; R. Murray, "Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows at Baptism in the Ancient Syriac Church", *NTS* 21 (1974-5) 67.

125 Ps 12:3 (= LXX 11:3); Ps 73:26 (=LXX 72:26); Ps 68:7 (=LXX 67:7; RSV 68:6); Ps 86:11 (LXX 85:11). Cf. Ps 119:113, although the Greek (LXX 118:113) has παρανόμους for the Hebrew סעפים; see also *1 En* 91:4. It should also be noted that in Islam the singleness of God (*tawh īd*) is a particularly important concept; it seems, however, that it is not related to the early Christian concept of singleness (which is related to celibacy and psychic unity) but to the campaign against polytheism - it is thus an statement of Islamic monotheism; see L. Gardet, "Allāh", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition* I (Leiden: Brill, 1986) 407b, and S.H. Nasr and O. Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy* II (London & New York: Routledge, 1996) 1146-47.

126 Διψυχία: *The Shepherd of Hermas, Mandates* 9.

letter of James supports the same notion from another tack, using the Greek *dipsychos* (double-souled or minded) to indicate one who is unstable in his faith and life (1:8) or somehow impure (4:8).[127]

How this Jewish idea ties into the Syriac notion of *iḥidayutha* ("singleness") is unclear. Ephrem emphasised the concept of singleness in his writings, for which he often used the term *iḥidaya*. In the *Hymns on Faith* the symbol of the pearl, the perfect sphere, inspires Ephrem to talk of other undivided things:[128] Truth is undivided (ܕܠܐ ܡܬܦܠܓ / ܒܠܐ ܦܘܠܓܗ̇),[129] the Lord was born 'singly' (ܝܚܝܕܐܝܬ),[130] and although he had siblings he was truly a single one (ܝܚܝܕܐ),[131] a model for the solitary ascetic (ܡܫܘܝܕܬܐ) to imitate.[132] Meanwhile the Greek of the early Christian period had taken the word *monachos* and redefined it to mean something very close to *iḥidaya* as it was used by Ephrem.[133] Although *monachos* is not found in the Septuagint it was used by both Symmachus and Aquila[134] in their Greek translations of the Old Testament. According to Eusebius Symmachus was an Ebionite, though modern scholars contest this.[135] If it is true, then this is the earliest use of the term by a Christian. In his commentary upon the Psalms Eusebius accepted Symmachus' translation of the Hebrew of Psalm 68:7 as *monachos*, going so far as to suggest that here the Psalm is referring to Christian monks. Moreover when Aquila and Symmachus translated Gen 2:18, which refers to Adam's single, celibate status in the Garden before the coming of Eve, they changed the μόνον of the Septuagint into μοναχός. Thus by the late second century the biblical Hebrew concept of 'singleness' of

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127 See also Brown, *Body* 36 (on the Jewish notion transmitted into early Christian circles of the single or undivided heart) & 69 (on Hermas).

128 E. Beck (hrsg.) *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide* (*CSCO* vol. 154; Scriptores Syri T.73; Louvain: Peeters, 1965); *De fide* 85.11 (= *De margarita* 5:11); 86.14 (=*De marg.* 6:14).

129 *De fide* 81:3 (= *De marg.* 1.3).

130 *De fide* 82.5 (= *De marg.* 2.5).

131 *De fide* 82.5 (= *De marg.* 2.5).

132 *De fide* 82.5 (= *De marg.* 2.5).

133 On the use of *monachos* before it came to be connected to asceticism see Judge, "The Earliest use of Monachos for >Monk< (P. Coll. Youtie 77) and the Origins of Monasticism", *JAC* 20 (1977) 86.

134 Symmachus used *monachos* at Gen 2:18 & Ps 68:6 (LXX 67:7); Aquila used *monachos* at Gen 2:18 & 22:2; Ps 22:21 (LXX 21:21); 25:16 (LXX 24:16); 35:17 (LXX 34:17).

135 Eusebius, *Demonstratio evangelica* VII.1. See A. Salveson, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (Manchester: Univ. of Manchester, 1991).

heart or faith had come to be connected to celibacy through the use of the Greek *monachos* to describe both concepts. Hence, the period from the second to the fourth century witnessed the development of a concept of 'singleness' that was expressed in very similar ways in both Syriac and Greek through the use of the words *iḥidaya* and *monachos*, and which was related to Christian asceticism.

What did the Syriac of Ephrem's time understand by the use of the word *iḥidaya*? *Iḥidaya* was originally a scriptural term that came to encompass a broad conceptual spread of ideas related to asceticism. By the fourth century it had come to suggest both the 'singleness' of heart and faith found in the Psalms and carried into the *Wisdom of Solomon* and letter of James, and also sexual abstinence. It seems that in its first Christian incarnation, in the Gospels, *iḥidaya* referred primarily to an only child.[136] It was the identification of Christ as the only son of God that led to the adjective *iḥidaya* (= *monogenēs*) becoming the noun *Iḥidaya*, the 'single one', i.e. the only son of God.[137] The Syriac ascetic imitation of Christ the *Iḥidaya* led to the need to define this ascetic state of *iḥidayutha* (singleness); it thus came to encompass several aspects. Importantly, as discussed above, *iḥidaya* came to encompass roughly the same semantic range as the Greek *monachos*.[138]

Yet the exact relationship between the words *iḥidaya* and *monachos* is intriguing and remains unclear. Both terms exercised central importance in Syriac and Egyptian monastic terminology respectively, but, it seems, later in Syriac thought (4th century). The earliest appearance of *monachos* in an Egyptian setting, in the ascetic Nag Hammadi *Gospel of Thomas*, may have been as a translation of *iḥidaya*, for the gospel has long been suspected to have had a Syrian, or at least Syro-Mesopotamian Greek original.[139] The notion of 'singleness' found in the gospel seems to mirror that found in the fourth-century Syriac ascetic writers: for it was not just sexual abstinence but seems to suggest a notion of return to

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136 Thus the term is used both for Christ (in his status as the only son of God, *monogenēs*) at Jn 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18 and also for other only-sons, such as at Lk 7:12; 8:42; 9:38.

137 T. K. Koonammakkal, "Ephrem's Ideas on Singleness", *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 2, no.1 (Jan 1999) [http://syrcom.cua.edu/Hugoye/Vol2No1/HV2N1Koonammakkal.html] 2f; S. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism" 225; see also R. Murray, *Symbols* 355.

138 See Murray, "Exhortation to Candidates", 67.

139 See §5.2.5 n188.

original unity.[140] Yet the Greek term *monachos* is not the only word used for singleness; the Coptic *oua ouōt* is also used. Moreover our earliest evidence for the use of *iḥidaya* comes from the fourth century Fathers Aphrahat and Ephrem. Indeed it would be unlikely that *iḥidaya* was widely used, if at all, in texts before the fourth-century for the concept of singleness. The evidence for this is that the two texts most likely to use it, the second century *Odes of Solomon* and the third-century *Acts of Judas Thomas* the term *iḥidaya* is not used, even though these texts deal with the *concept* of singleness (using other terms).[141]

The *Odes of Solomon*[142] give us a picture of the notion of 'singleness' as it was developing in Syriac sometime between the end of the first and the beginning of the fourth century. The *Odes* are essentially ascetical texts. The writer is arguing for an ascetic interpretation of Christianity. His Christians aim for transformation. They aim to make the world on earth the same as the heavenly world;[143] the transformed Christian will be like someone of another race,[144] a new person,[145] and a stranger (ܐܟܣܢܝܐ).[146] Ode 34 contains references to the concept later Syriac writers called *iḥidayutha*, claiming that:

ܠܝܬ ܐܘܪܚܐ ܡܥܣܩܬܐ ܐܝܟܐ ܕܠܒܐ ܦܫܝܛܐ:
ܐܦ ܠܐ ܡܚܘܬܐ ܒܡܚܫ̈ܒܬܐ ܬܪ̈ܝܨܬܐ. ܐܦ ܠܐ ܥܠܥܠܐ
ܒܥܘܡܩܗ̇ ܕܡܚܫܒܬܐ ܢܗܝܪܬܐ.

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140 See A. F. J. Klijn, "The >Single One< in the Gospel of Thomas", *JBL* 81 (1962) 271-78.

141 Although it does appear in the *Acts of Judas Thomas* as a title of Christ, cf. *AJT*, 7; see Murray, *Symbols* 355 for *iḥidaya* as a title for Christ in *AJT*, Aphrahat, Ephrem and elsewhere; see also Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria", 228f.

142 See the bibliography for the editions and translations (which are numerous) of this text. Lattke's recent series of volumes (*Die Oden Salomos in ihrer Bedeutung fur Neues Testament und Gnosis* [3 vols.; Fribourg: Editions universitaires, 1979-1986]) is the latest and most comprehensive edition, representing the state of knowledge so far.

143 Ode 34:4-5; Charlesworth (*The Odes of Solomon* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1973] 123 n6) cautions against reading "gnostic mythology back into these verses" and refers the reader to his article in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 31 (1969) 357-69.

144 Ode 41:5.

145 Ode 17:4, although Charlesworth and all other editors (except Lattke, who seems to make no comment on the issue), suggest without any textual evidence whatsoever that here this is Christ speaking. Majella Franzmann's argument that stanza 16's doxology identifies the person speaking in the first person in stanza 15 (and thus also stanza 4); is possible, but speculative, see her comments in *The Odes of Solomon: An Analysis of the Poetical Structure and Form* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991) 137-38, and also in "Strangers from Above: An Investigation of the Motif of Strangeness in the Odes of Solomon and Some Gnostic Texts", *Le Muséon* 103 (1990) 27-41. Ode 11:10 also talks of the Lord's garment renewing the devotee. On the idea of the 'new man' in early Christian literature, see the references and discussion at n100.

146 Ode 17:5.

ܐܝܟܐ ܕܒܪܝܟ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܐܬܪ ܫܦܝܪܐ: ܠܝܬ ܒܗ ܡܕܡ
ܕܦܠܝܓ.

(Ode 34.1-3)

> There is no difficult path for the simple heart (*levā pšiṭa*), nor is there affliction in upright thoughts, nor is there a whirlwind in the depth of enlightened thought. Where there is pleasant country all around there is nothing in him which is divided (*plig*).

Ode 36 describes the transformation of an individual into a heavenly being, indeed into one of the greatest heavenly beings, in Ode 36 into:

ܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܟܕ ܡܫܒܚ ܐܢܐ ܒܡܫܒܚ̈ܐ: ܘܪܒ ܐܢܐ
ܒܪܘܪܒܢܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܒܪܘܬܗ ܕܡܪܝܡܐ ܗܟܢܐ ܥܒܕܬܢܝ:

(Ode 36.3c – 5)

> the Son of God, when I praise with the praising ones, And I am the greatest among the great ones.[147] For according to the greatness of the Most High, so She made me.

Coptic, Greek and Syriac writings thus evince a similar understanding of singleness from the second century on, but before the fourth century there is no evidence that a particular word was used in these languages to refer to this concept.[148] It must have been slightly later that the scriptural term *iḥidaya*, used for the *monogenēs* (and also celibate) Christ, came to prominence as the term used to describe the ideal ascetic, and acquired the full semantic range that it was largely to share with *monachos*. Clearly in Egypt, also, the concept of

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[147] My translation differs from Charlesworth's here, who has: "Because I was the most glorified among the glorious ones, | And the greatest among the great ones. | For according to the greatness of the Most High, so She made me"; the variant ܒܡܫܒܚ̈ܢܐ in MS H supports my understanding, for in this text the noun used contains the *nomina agentis* (the suffix *ān*, cf. Nöldeke, §130), leading to the translation "ones who glorify", or, as I translate it, "ones who praise"; indeed the Paᶜel for this verb (ܫܒܚ) is used for the saying of the Gloria (cf. R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901) 4023-4024 & Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1895) 363). The notion of giving praise to God is central to the force of the first Paᶜel participle used here.

[148] Indeed if *monachos* were really a translation of *iḥidaya* then it is noteworthy that in the Manichaean *Psalm-Book* CCL.1 (p.59) (in Coptic, long believed to be based upon a Syriac original) the Greek loan word ⲠⲘⲞⲚⲞⲄⲈⲚⲎⲤ, rather than *monachos*, is used to describe Christ. Two possibilities are suggested by this: perhaps the *Psalm-Book* is not a translation from Syriac and was rather composed in Greek first or in Coptic; or the Syriac term *iḥidaya* still meant just 'only begotten' (*monogenēs*), and did not yet share the full semantic range that it later acquired and came to share with the Greek/Coptic *monachos*.

'singleness' was present, at least, by the third century, but in Coptic there was not a particular term used for it.[149]

The association between Christ the *Iḥidaya* and the ascetic Christian as an *iḥidaya* that is in evidence in the fourth-century writers such as Aphrahat and Ephrem combines the Old Testament idea of singleness of heart or faith with the imitation of Christ's lifestyle.

In practical terms, as an expression of lifestyle, the fourth-century understanding of *iḥidayutha* denoted a chaste existence. This interest in celibacy is not surprising. It was no doubt, at least in part, the development of ideas such as those found in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch (ca. CE 107), who assumed those who practised sexual renunciation were doing it in honour of the Lord.[150] Aphrahat explicitly tied *iḥidayutha* to those who lived celibate lives, the reward for which was heavenly citizenship.

ܐܝܠܝܢ ܓܝܪ ܕܠܐ ܢܣܒܝܢ ܢܫ̈ܐ: ܡܢ ܥܝܪ̈ܝ
ܫܡܝܐ ܡܫܬܡܫܝܢ. ܢܛܪ̈ܝ ܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ ܒܝܬ ܡܩܕܫܗ
ܕܪܘܡܐ ܡܬܬܢܝܚܝܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܡܚܕܐ ܠܗܘܢ
ܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܘܒܗ ܕܐܒܘܗܝ. ܠܝܬ ܬܡܢ ܕܟܪܐ ܘܠܐ
ܢܩܒܬܐ: ܘܠܐ ܥܒܕܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܪ ܚܐܪܐ: ܐܠܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ
ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܒܢܘܗܝ ܕܪܡܐ.

(*Dem*. VI.268-9.26ff)[151]

> For those that do not marry women are served by heaven's watchers (*ʿirei shmaia*). The keepers of holiness (*qadishutha* = continence)[152] will be rested in the place of the highest holy one. The *Iḥidaya* who is from the bosom (*ʿuveh*) of his father gladdens the *iḥidaye*. There is no male or female there, and no slave and no free-man, but all of them are sons of the highest.

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149 At this point it is worth mentioning that Jerome distinguished a type of wandering Christian ascetic he described as *remoboth*: Ep. 22.34. Perhaps the meaning of this word can be derived from the Coptic *remn out* ("single man"); for the latest on this see the forthcoming article by Choat "The Development and Usage of the Terms for Monk in Late Antique Egypt", *JAC* (forthcoming) 18-20; thus we have here another term alongside *monachos* and *oua ouōt* being used for the concept of singleness in Egyptian ascetic practice. Although we really do not know enough about these monks to suggest their understanding of 'singleness', it is noteworthy that Jerome places these ascetics in the villages and criticises them for their involvement in society; thus they show some similarity to the *Bnai/Bnat Qyama* of Syriac asceticism for which *iḥidayutha* played such a central role.

150 *Ignatius to Polycarp* 5; see also *1 Clem.* 38.

151 J. Parisot (ed.) *Aphraatis demonstrationes I-XXII* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1926).

152 On the triliteral root QDŠ see n120.

Likewise for Ephrem *iḥidayutha* equalled celibacy.

ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܚܡܪܐ ܦܪܫ ܗܘܐ ܒܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܠܗ
ܣܟܝܢ ܠܗ ܓܦ̈ܢܘܗܝ ܕܦܪܕܝܣܐ ܘܚܕܐ ܚܕܐ
ܡܘܫܛܐ ܠܗ ܣܓܘ̈ܠܝܗ ܕܬܬܠ ܠܗ ܘܐܢ ܕܝܢ
ܒܬܘܠܐ ܗܘ ܝܗܒ ܐܥܠܝܗ ܠܗܘ ܠܥܘܒܗܝܢ
ܕܟܝܐ ܕܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܠܐ ܢܦܠ ܒܥܘܒ ܥܘܒܐ
ܘܒܥܪܣܐ ܕܙܘܘܓܐ

(*Hymns on Paradise*, 7.18)[153]

> He that did abstain from wine in separation (*purshana*)[154], the Paradise's grapevines eagerly await him, and each one stretches out its grapes that it might give to him. And if he is a virgin also they bring him into their pure lap because the *iḥidaya* did not fall into the lap nor the bed of marriage.

It has been suggested that as late as the early fourth century celibacy was a requirement for baptism in the Syrian Church.[155] Indeed the term *iḥidaya* with its strong connotations of celibacy may well have referred not only to the ascetic, but to all baptised Christians.[156] Celibacy thus played an important role in the spirituality of Syriac Christians. Syriac asceticism in particular was characterised by the prominence of celibacy. The asceticism of the *Bnai Qyama* discussed below is primarily one of sexual renunciation. One of the defining characteristics of the so-called Messalians was their celibacy.[157] Sebastian Brock has noted that the most obvious source for this Syriac ascetic practice of celibacy was the angel afterlife passages in the Synoptic Gospels (Mt 20:30, Mk 12:25, Lk 20:35-6), especially Luke, which emphasised the present practice of celibacy by the righteous

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153 E. Beck (hrsg.) *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und contra Julianum* (*CSCO* 174; Louvain: Peeters, 1957) 29.

154 This word carries with it the connotation of a portion set aside for God, see R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901) 3305-06 & Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1895) 293; indeed it carries echoes of the Jewish Nazir; see also G.A. Kiraz, *A Computer-Generated Concordance to the Syriac New Testament*, III (Leiden: Brill, 1993) 2371-75, cf. 2375-79 for its use in the Syriac New Testament.

155 See in particular A. Vööbus, *Celibacy, a Requirement for Admission to Baptism in the Early Syrian Church* (Stockholm: Estonian Theological Society in Exile, 1951); R. Murray, "The Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows at Baptism in the Ancient Syriac Church", *NTS* 21 (1974-75) 59-80.

156 On this point Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria" cites E. Beck, *Dōrea and Charis, die Taufe* (*CSCO* 457; Louvain: Peeters, 1984) 162-3.

Christian.[158] Ascetic celibacy was thus probably an idea which was linked to the imitation of angels from a very early period. *Monachos* seems also to have shared this emphasis upon celibacy. As was mentioned above, the use by Aquila and Symmachus of the Greek *monachos* for both unity of purpose and heart and also for Adam's celibacy in Genesis 2:18 indicates that the notion of 'singleness' then crystallizing combined this Old Testament 'singleness' with sexual abstinence. The word *monachos* and the concept of 'singleness' was thus also associated with the pre-fall state of Adam. Possibly the same happened with *iḥidaya* around this time and is reflected in the Coptic version of the *Gospel of Thomas* which is available to us today. Yet *iḥidaya* was not used in the Syriac version of Genesis 2:18 to describe Adam's state.[159] Perhaps, then, the use of the term *iḥidaya* as a technical designation occurred after the second century, and may even have developed in response to the new use made of the Greek *monachos*, suggesting that *iḥidaya* was not the term behind the use of *monachos* in the *Gospel of Thomas*.[160] Certainly by the time Aphrahat and Ephrem were writing in the fourth century *iḥidaya* had come to mean, like *monachos*, an ascetic lifestyle defined by the recovery of an ideal state of unity lost in the Garden (thus the state of Adam in Gen 2:18). *Iḥidaya* did not refer to those who were solitary in relation to the rest of society; they were not physically separated from but a part of their communities.[161]

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157 Demonstrated at least in part by Epiphanius' clumsy attempts to characterise them as sexual libertines; see C. Stewart, *Messalian* 22.

158 S.P. Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism" 5-6; see below, §5.7.1 for a quotation of the passage in Greek and Syriac.

159 S. Brock, *St. Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise* 31.

160 There are two positions on this question. Van der Ploeg, Vööbus, and Beck believed *monachos* to be behind the Syriac understanding of *iḥidaya*; see J. Van der Ploeg, *Oud-Syrisch monniklseven* (Leiden: Brill, 1924); E. Beck, "Ein Beitrag zur Terminologie des ältesten syrischen Mönchtums", in B. Steidel (ed.) *Antonius Magnus Eremita 356-1956* (Studia Anselmiana 38; Rome, 1956) 254- 67; and A. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, I, (*CSCO* 184; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1960) 106-108. On the other hand Alfred Adam and Antoine Guillaumont argued that *iḥidaya* was not simply a translation of *monachos* but rather resulted from independent development; see Adam, "Grundbegriffe des Mönchtums in sprachlicher Sicht", *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 65 (1953-4) 222 & A. Guillaumont, "Le nom des 'Agapètes", *VigChr* 23 (1969) 35. In many ways Murray's article "Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows at Baptism in the Ancient Syriac Church", *New Testament Studies*, 21 (1974-5) represents an attempt to reconcile the two positions.

161 Indeed the physical separation of Egyptian monks, the archetypal representatives of this type of lifestyle, from society seems to have been much exaggerated; see J.E. Goehring, "The World Engaged: The Social and Economic World of Early Egyptian Monasticism" & "Withdrawing for the Desert: Literary Production and Ascetic Space in Early Christian Egypt" in J.E. Goehring, *Ascetics, Society and the Desert: Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism* (Harrisburg PA: Trinity Press, 1999); also M. Choat, "Christian Laity and Leadership in Fourth-Century Egypt" chap. 5; see also Judge, "*monachos*", esp. 88-89 for a discussion of the possibilities for

5.2.5 *Bnai Qyama* and 'standing' as an angelic attribute

The second major term in early Syriac asceticism which we shall briefly chart is *Bnai Qyama*. The asceticism of the *Bnai Qyama* was characterised both by its domestic quality and its concentration upon celibacy. The *Bnai Qyama* defined themselves by their celibate vows, but continued to live within the community. They were very much at the heart of Syriac Christianity.[162] They seem to have been divided into two categories: The first were presumably unmarried virgins of both sexes (*btulatha*) and the second married couples (*qaddishe*) who vowed a celibate existence together.[163]

Bnai Qyama has been traditionally translated (at least since the time of Nedungatt) as "sons of the covenant";[164] but this does not do it full justice. *Qyama* is from the triliteral root QWM and connotes rising up, standing up, from sleep or death, and to stand or stand

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the development of the term *monachos* in relation to the changes in Christian ascetic practice occurring at this time.

162 See Murray, *Symbols* 14-16.

163 Sometimes lapsing, as Aphrahat's comments in *Dem.* VI.260-262; XIII.129-143; XXIII.144 indicate.

164 Nedungatt argued in an influential article in 1973 that almost half the references to the word *qyama* in Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* were referring to religious covenants; thus the translation of *qyama* should be "covenant"; cf. G. Nedungatt, "The Covenanters of the Early Syriac-speaking Church", *OCP* 39 (1973) 191-215 & 419-444. Other major studies on the term *Bnai Qyama* are: R.H. Connolly, "Aphraates and Monasticism", *JTS* 6 (1905) 522-538; F.C. Burkitt, "Aphraates and Monasticism: A Reply", *JTS* 7 (1906) 10-15; M. Maude, "Who were the Bnai Qyama?", *JTS* 36 (1935) 13-21; S. Jargy, "Les «fils et filles du pacte» dans la littérature monastique syriaque", *OCP* 17 (1951) 304-320; A. Adam, "Grundbegriffe des Mönchtums", *Zeitschrift für Katholische Geschichte*, 65 (1953/54) 224-8; A. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, I (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1958) 97-103; 197-208; Vööbus, "The Institution of the Benai Qeiama and Benat Qeiama in the Ancient Syriac Church", *CH* 30 (1961) 19-27; P. Nagel, *Die Motivierung der Askese in der alten Kirche und der Ursprung des Mönchtums* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1966) 34-48; R. Grégoire, "Notes philologiques sur le vocabulaire de la vie religieuse", *Parole de l'Orient* 1 (1970) 301-326; M. Breydy, "Les Laics et les Bnay Qyomo dans l'ancienne tradition de l'église syrienne", *Kanon* 3 (1977) 51-75; S.P. Brock, *Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition* (Kerala: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1989) 52-54; S.P. Brock, "Early Syriac Asceticism"; L.W. Barnard, "Asceticism in Early Syriac Christianity", in J. Loades (ed.) *Monastic Studies: the Continuity of Tradition* II (Bangor : Headstart History, 1991) 13-21; S.H. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria", 229-234; Griffith, "Monks,<<Singles>>, and the <<Sons of the Covenant>>. Reflections on Syriac Ascetic Terminology", 145-153; S. AbouZayd, *Iḥidayutha: a study of the life of singleness in the Syrian Orient, from Ignatius of Antioch to Chalcedon 451 A.D.* (Oxford: Aram Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies, 1993) 97-8; S.A. Harvey, "Sacred Bonding: Mothers and Daughters in Early Syriac Hagiography", *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 4 (1996) 27-56. Murray, *Symbols*, 13-14 (esp. n5) opted to continue using the translation 'Sons of the Covenant' whilst noting the importance of the notion of 'standing' to the conceptual background of the term *qyama* and the contribution of Adam and Nagel to our understanding of this element of *qyama*. He notes that Beck says ("Ein Betrag zur Terminologie des ältesten syrischen Mönchtums" in *Antonius Magnus Eremita* [Rome 1958]) 261: "Die Bedeutung des *Qyama* schwankt . . . zwischen Bund, Satzung und Stand (Ordo)". Murray also notes an interesting link between the Hebrew verb *ʿmad* ("stand") and the Syriac verb *ʿmad* ("be baptized") and cites his article "The Exhortation to Candidates for Ascetical Vows at Baptism in the Ancient Syriac Church", *NTS* 21 (1974-1975) for this interesting correspondence, although the possibility of a link with Syriac thought is purely speculative.

erect.[165] Whilst Nedungatt was correct to point out that the majority of the references to the term *qyama* were in connection with the idea of a covenant or group, his argument that this suggests a meaning for the word is not without its problems. The members of the *qyama* may well have been united together as a group, but the fact of them being united under a particular title does not predetermine the actual, original meaning of that title. For instance the translation could be undermined by the particular construction of this term. *Qyama* by itself may well have connoted a group or covenant of some kind; indeed this meaning seems semantically related to the idea of standing up or rising up (i.e. standing together). Yet *bnai qyama* 'sons of the qyama' would have functioned differently. As a construct it would have meant something like the 'qyama ones'; i.e. it would have functioned as a collectivising construct, like Hebrew *bnei ʾdm* (people) or other collective terms in Syriac such as *bnai (ʾ)nasha* (human beings)[166], *bnai palḥute* (soldiers, servants)[167], or *bnai qushta* (lovers of truth).[168] Regardless of the use of *qyama* by itself to mean 'covenant', the use with *bnai* may well have lent an entirely different meaning to the word *qyama*, a meaning perhaps closer to its verbal root QWM. A rough analogy from English would be the difference between the use of the word 'stand' (from the verb 'to stand') to refer to a 'stand' of trees or taxis; thus the noun 'stand' is used in this context to mean a *group* of individual items. Precisely the same process could have led to *qyama* coming to mean 'covenant' without altering the meaning of other words or constructions derived from the same QWM root, such as *bnai qyama*. The translation as 'sons of the covenant' does not therefore tell the whole story. What is more there seems to be a strong connotation of resurrection. This has led Peter Nagel to suggest that the translation should instead be "sons of the resurrection".[169] Brock has rightly criticised this on the grounds that the word 'resurrection' in Syriac is *q̌a̭mtha*, a feminine noun and clearly different (though related) to *qyama*.[170] However, both Nagel and Alfred Adam also pointed out the connection between the 'standing' state of the angels and the root

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[165] From this basic meaning comes the secondary meanings: "to remain", "to exist", "to be established"; cf. R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901) 3522-3538 & Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1895) 315.

[166] *Thesaurus Syriacus*, I 581.

[167] *Ibid* 594.

[168] *Ibid* 595; see also *Lexicon Syriacum* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1895) 44-5.

[169] P. Nagel, *Die Motivierung der Askese in der alten Kirche und der Ursprung des Mönchtums* 43f.

[170] And, as Brock points out, it is highly unlikely that *Bnai Qyama* could represent a feminine absolute with a construct, see Brock, "Early Syriac Asceticism", 8; yet it should be noted that Aphrahat seems to be using

QWM. Perhaps this is the key to enable a retranslation of *qyama*. *Qyama* does not translate 'resurrection', with all the connotations that that theologically loaded word holds (and which was, moreover, rendered by *qamtha* in Syriac). *Qyama* refers to the standing status of the righteous ascetic Christian. A status shared with the angels.

What the word *qyama* is actually referring to is the immortal, angelic nature of the members of this group.[171] This capacity to stand before God is an angelic quality.[172] It is a mark of their status that they are allowed to stand (rather than have to prostrate themselves) before God, which is explicitly linked to the angelic role of offering constant praise. *1 (Ethiopic) Enoch* (39.12f; 40.1; 47.3; 68.2) talks of the angels standing before God, and makes it clear that this is a particularly angelic attribute:

> Those who do not sleep bless you, and they stand before your glory and bless and praise and exalt, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Spirits; he fills the earth with spirits." And there my eyes saw all those who do not sleep standing before him and blessing and saying: "Blessed are you, and blessed is the name of the Lord for ever and ever." (39.12-13)[173]

2 (Slavonic) Enoch echoes the ideas about angelic standing that we find in *Ethiopic Enoch*.

> And they did not leave by night, not depart by day, standing in front of the face of the Lord, and carrying out his will – cherubim and seraphim standing all around his throne, six-winged and many-eyed; and they cover his entire throne, singing with gentle voice in front of the face of the Lord. "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of his glory". (21.1)[174]

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qyama in this sense in *Dem.* 388.19 & 920.5, see G. Nedungatt, "The Covenanters of the Early Syriac-Speaking Church", *OCP* 39 (1973) 193.

[171] A connection first made by A. Adam in his landmark article on early Christian asceticism, "Grundbegriffe des Mönchtums" (1953/54), a theory which has not received enough attention from scholars except, however, in the field of gnostic and Nag Hammadi studies; see, for instance Michael Allen Williams in his 1985 book *The Immovable Race: a gnostic designation and the theme of stability in late antiquity* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985); who mentions this connection, in a footnote discussing gnostic ideas about stability and movement (89f, n37).

[172] On this see, in particular, April D. De Conick, "The *Dialogue of the Saviour* and the Mystical Sayings of Jesus", in *VigChr* 50 (1996) 178-199, esp. 187f.

[173] Trans. M.A. Knibb, "1 Enoch" in *AOT*.

[174] Trans. F.I. Andersen, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch: A New Translation and Introduction", *OTP* I.

The *Testament of Abraham* (7-8) repeats this, and the *Ascension of Isaiah* describes the righteous taking this role: that is, they join with the angels standing around the throne praising God.[175]

In visionary texts the visionary normally first fell upon the ground in awe and was then commanded to stand upon his feet. This became a standard part of the visionary experience. It came to mark the point in the vision where the visionary was accepted into the presence of God, and could thus stand in his presence, as the angels do. This motif is first found in the Jewish mystical *urtext* Ezekiel (2:1), and is repeated in such texts as Daniel 10:11 (עמד) when Daniel sees the vision of the angel; *Joseph and Asenath* (14:8, 11)[176] during the conversion of Asenath by the appearance of the angel; 4 Ezra when Ezra is instructed by his companion angel during his visionary ascent (4 Ezra 7:2); the transfiguration as found in Mt 17:1-9 (vs. 7) and Acts 9:6; 22:10; 26:16 during the conversion of Paul through Christ's epiphany. Thus the appearance of a divine being, be it Christ or an angel, caused the recipient to fall on his or her face, and the acceptance of this individual into the presence of the divine being, in effect the acknowledgement that the visionary had been granted the right to stand on sacred ground,[177] was indicated by the command to stand. This motif is also found in magical literature.[178]

Thus 'standing' before God was not just an angelic quality, but could be shared by the righteous when they were in the presence of God. In effect, by being allowed to enter heaven they, perforce, shared this privilege of 'standing' with the other residents of heaven, the angels. As mentioned above the passages in the Gospels that describe the angelic afterlife of the righteous use words derived from the verbal root QWM. Mark describes the

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175 *Asc.Is.* 9.9-10; see §5.6.1; the *Apocalypse of Abraham* also has (10:4-5) an angel taking Abraham by the hand and making him stand.

176 I have used Burchard's translation in *OTP* (largely based upon Ms *b*), which does not follow Philonenko's line division.

177 Epiphanies of God or angels ensured that the place became holy by association with the heavenly presence, in effect becoming an extension of heaven, see Ex 3:5 (again in Acts 7:33), Josh 5:15; 1 Sam 6:20 where the people of Beth Shemesh learn that it is impossible to stand in the presence of the Lord after a number of them are killed for looking into the ark; Ps 24:3 asks מי יקום במקום קדשו (who shall stand in his holy place?); we learn from Matt 24:15 that prophets can stand in the holy place.

178 Thus the Greek *sunhistemi* is used in magical texts when the seer enters the company of the deity; John Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: OUP, 1992) 52 n18 cites S. Eitrem, "Die *sustasis* und der Lichtzauber in der Magie", *Symbolae Osloenses* 8 (1929) 49-51.

righteous Christian as "he that rises (ܕܩܐܡ)[179] from the dead"; and Luke calls them those who are "worthy . . . for the resurrection (ܠܩܝܡܬܐ)".[180] The appearance of this verbal root in the two gospels illustrates its centrality to the notion of an afterlife in Christian literature, regardless of the actual form of the noun.

Maybe, then, a better translation of *Bnai Qyama* is the 'upstanding ones' or the 'standing ones', or even 'the Standing'.

Syriac Christianity did not, moreover, develop in a vacuum. In the first two hundred years of the Christian movement various different groups in the Syro-Mesopotamian area showed interest in this notion of 'standing' like the angels. This suggests that the Syriac *Bnai/Bnat Qyama* were conceptually related to these groups, for all were attempting to become 'standing ones', like the angels – a status also enjoyed by certain patriarchs and also by God. This interest in angelic 'standing' was not restricted to the Jewish Pseudepigrapha. Numenius of Apamea saw the primordial God as a being defined as standing (ἑστώς), this being in the context of a Platonic understanding of God and perfection as unmoving and unchanging, and the material world as a degeneration into change and decay.[181] Philo seems to have tapped into a similar tradition when he declares God to be ὁ ἑστώς and then argues that to approach him one also needed to attain this status, as Moses and Abraham did.[182] Clement of Alexandria may have been taking his lead from Philo, gnostics or Syriac philosophical currents, most likely all of them, when he links Luke's angelic afterlife with

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179 *CESG* Mk 12:25. The Ḥarklean is variant, reading ܐܡܬܝ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܡܝ̈ܬܐ ܢܩܘܡܘܢ (*CESG*, Mk Ḥ 12:25) but still using the same verb QWM.

180 *CESG* Lk 20:35; Sinaiticus and Curetonianus differ in omitting the lamedh, thus: ܘܠܗܝ ܩܝܡܬܐ.

181 Numenius, who may have been a native Aramaic speaker, Frag. 15, *apud* Eusebius, *Pr. ev.* XI.18, 20-21, in É. des Places, SJ *Numénius, Fragments* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1973) 56.

182 *De posteritate caini* 27 [IX] Αβραὰμ δὲ ὁ σοφὸς ἐπειδὴ ἕστηκε, συνεγγίζει τῷ ἑστῶτι θεῷ· λέγει γὰρ ὅτι "ἑστὼς ἦν ἔναντι κυρίου καὶ ἐγγίσας εἶπεν". ὄντως γὰρ ἀτρέπτῳ ψυχῇ πρὸς τὸν ἄτρεπτον θεὸν μόνῃ πρόσοδός ἐστι, καὶ ἡ τοῦτον διακειμένη τὸν τρόπον εγγὺς ὡς ἀληθῶς ἵσταται δυνάμεως θείας. "But Abraham the wise, being one who stands, draws near to God the standing One; for it says 'he was standing before the Lord and he drew near and said' (Gen 18:22f). For only a truly unchanging soul that is of such a disposition does in very deed stand near to the Divine power." (Loeb Philo) II p.342-3.

the righteous who will be as "a light, standing and persisting forever, completely unchanging".[183]

In the Jewish-Christian gnostic sect of the Dositheans and also amongst the followers of Simon Magus the term 'standing one' referred to both God and the angels and those humans who had the ability to attain a heavenly status. In the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* it is stated that Simon Magus claimed he was the Messiah when he took for himself the title 'the standing one' (ἑστῶτα).[184] This title is clearly a reference to immortality; the Nag Hammadi *Three Steles of Seth* illustrates this usage. This work claims to have originated with a revelation to Dositheus; at least it seems to hold a similar conception of 'standing'. In a hymn to Geradamas (the first Adam) by Seth it is said:

> ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲕ Δ(·)[ⲉ] ⲁⲕ[ⲛ]ⲁ(·)ⲩ ⲉⲛⲓⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲛⲟϭ ⲁⲕⲁ ϩⲉⲣⲁⲧⲕ [ⲉ]ⲕⲉ ⲛⲁⲧⲱϫⲛ· ϯ ⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ [ⲡⲓ]ⲱⲧ ⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟї ⲡⲓⲱⲧ.
>
> [but] you have seen the majesties. You have stood ceaselessly (*aka - ḥeratᵉk eke ᵉnatwjᵉn*). I bless you father. Bless me, father (119.3-6).

It then goes on to say:

> ⲟⲩⲛⲟϭ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲓⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲁⲩⲧⲟⲅⲉⲛ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲁ ϩⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̄ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲁϥⲣ̄ ϣⲟⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ⲁϩⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̄·
>
> Great is the good self-begotten who stood (*ḥeratᵉf*), the God who was first to stand (*ᵉnaḥeratᵉf*). (119.15-18).[185]

The *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* continue regarding Simon's standing:

> ταύτῃ δὲ τῇ προσηγορίᾳ κέχρηται, ὡς δὴ στησόμενος ἀεὶ καὶ αἰτίᾳ φθορᾶς τὸ σῶμα πεσεῖν οὐκ ἔχων.
>
> He employs this title to indicate that he shall always stand (*stēsomai*), and that there is no cause of corruption which can make his body fall. (*Hom.* 2.22.4)

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183 Φῶς εστὸς καὶ μένον ἀιδίως, πάντῃ πάντως ἄτρεπτον, *Stromata* VII.x.57.5, in O. Stählin & L. Fruechtel (hrsg.) *Stromata*, II (GCS; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1970). See also *Strom.* 1.24.163.6 & 7.12.78.7-8. But it is noteworthy that, for Clement, although this standing may have been an angelic quality, it does not, of itself, signify immortality; instead αἰδίως is used.

184 Bernhard Rehm (hrsg.) *Die Pseudo-Klementinen, I, Homilien* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1969) 2.22.3.

185 These quotations and translations are from J.M. Robinson (trans.) "*The Three Steles of Seth*", in B.A. Pearson (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codex VII* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

Samaritanism provides strong evidence for this understanding of 'standing' as referring to God, the angels and humans who shared their heavenly status. The *Samaritan Liturgy* declares that:

> קעים הו עד לעלעם. מורך לקלומה : קעימין ומאתין תחת שלטנותה
> (Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*, 27, fol.41)[186]
>
> He [= God] is standing (*qʿm*)[187] for ever; He exists unto eternity.
> Standing Ones (*qʿmin*) and mortals (*mʾtin*) are under His rule.

The *Memar Marqa* seems to have used the verb QWM in relation to Moses' ascent to join the angels:

> קדיש הוא נביה דאקדש בידה דאלה ואתגלה על אדה גונין יקירין עד
> מותר הך משה לא קעם ולא יקום לעלם נביה הסתקך על כל מינה
> דאדם ואמטה עד אזדמן במלאכיה
> (*Memar Marqa* IV.12, Ben-Ḥ͡ayyim p.297)
>
> Holy is is the prophet who was sanctified by God. Through him manifold great glories were revealed. No prophet like Moses has arisen (*qʿm*) or ever will arise (*yqwm*). He was exalted above the whole human race and progressed until he was gathered with the angels.
> (*Memar Marqa* IV.12, trans. MacDonald, 186)

Then, after listing the various achievements of Moses, the question is asked:

> אהן נביה כמשה צעם ארבעים יום וארבע, ליליה לא אכל ולא שתה
> אהן כמשה דאמר לה מרה ואת אכה קום עמי
> (*Memar Marqa* IV.12, Ben-Ḥ͡ayyim p.297)
>
> Where is there the like of Moses to whom his Lord said: "stand (*qwm*) by Me now"? (cf. Exod 33:21)
> Where is there a prophet like Moses, who fasted forty days and forty nights, he neither ate nor drank? (Exod 34:28)
> (*Memar Marqa* IV.12, trans. MacDonald, 186)

Moses is characterised in the *Samaritan Liturgy* as:

> הוא נביה רבה דלבש חמשה ספרין וקעם בין תרתין בנשאן בין קעיסין
> ובין מאתין וקעימון דקעימיה ממלל עם בהלון

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[186] A.E. Cowley (ed.) *The Samaritan Liturgy*, I (Oxford: Clarendon, 1909).

[187] This spelling, with ayin instead of waw is a Samaritan Aramaic orthographic variant of the root QWM found in Syriac, Hebrew and Arabic; see John MacDonald's list of orthographic variants in his translation of the *Memar Marqah*; *idem*, *Memar Marqah: The Teaching of Marqah*, I (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1963) 170 & also A. Tal, *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic* II (Leiden: Brill, 2000) 762 & Cowley, *Samaritan Liturgy*, I, lxviii col. b.

(Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*, 54, fol. 84.)

> He is the great prophet who clothed himself in the five books and is standing (*q ʿm*) amongst the two assemblies, amongst the standing (*q ʿimun*) and amongst the mortals.

The Nag Hammadi *Gospel of Thomas*, a work, it seems, originally composed in Syria,[188] also talks of 'standing ones'. This in reference to the ideal ascetic Christian, the single one, in Coptic either *monachos* or, as here, *oua ouōt*. In saying 23 Jesus says:

> ϯⲛⲁⲥⲉ[ⲧ]ⲡⲧⲏⲛⲉ ⲟⲩⲁ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̄ϣⲟ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲥⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̄ⲧⲃⲁ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲥⲉⲛⲁⲱϩⲉ ⲉⲣⲁⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲩⲟ ⲟⲩⲁ ⲟⲩⲱⲧ·
>
> I shall choose you, one out of a thousand, and two out of ten thousand, and they shall stand (*senaōḥe eratou*) as a single one (*oua ouōt*).[189]

Thus, in the pre-Nicene period, texts and religious groups with a Syro-Mesopotamian origin held that 'standing' was a term that could be used to refer to immortal status. It was a

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188 See Murray, *Symbols* 6; since the discovery of the DSS and Nag Hammadi texts there has been more work undertaken on the origins of early Syriac Christianity and Judaeo-Christianity and it has been hypothesised by many that Edessa was the early centre of Christianity in Syria and the place where the *Odes of Solomon* and the *Gospel of Thomas* were written (p. 6 n3); cf J. Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* 24; A Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* I, 6-10; G. Quispel, "The Discussion of Judaic Christianity", *VigChr* 22 (1968) 81-93; A.F.J. Klijn, *Edessa, die Stadt des Apostels Thomas* (Neukirchen, 1965; original Dutch, Baarn, 1962), see the bibliographical notes in articles cited above on H. Koester, J.C.L. Gibson, and L.W. Barnard. On the other hand Barbara Ehlers in "Kann das Thomasevangelium aus Edessa stammen?", *NovT* XII (1970) 284-317, has argued against any evidence that proves there was a well-defined Christian community in second century Edessa. H.J.W Drijvers is most balanced: "In the interplay of religious forces in a city on the boundaries of East and West, anything was possible" ("Edessa und das jüdische Christentum", *VigChr* 24 [1970] 4-33). See also (for a balanced argument for Edessan origins), A.F. J. Klijn *Aspects du Judéo-Christianisme* (Paris, 1965) esp. 167-70; and for Klijn's reply to Ehlers see "Christianity in Edessa and the Gospel of Thomas", *NovT* XIV (1972) 70-7. A strong case has also been mounted for Antioch as the origin of the *Gospel of Thomas*. The gospel could have been first composed in a Greek-speaking Jewish-Christian community in Syria, possibly Antioch; see G. Quispel "The Gospel of Thomas and the New Testament", in *VigChr* 11 (1957) 189-207; G. MacRae, "The Gospel of Thomas — *Logia Iesou?*", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 22 (1960) 56-70; H. Koester, "Introduction", in B. Layton, *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7 together with XIII, 2, Brit. Lib. Or. 4926(1) and P. Oxy. 1, 654, 655,* I (Leiden: Brill, 1989) 40; M. Desjardins, "Where was the Gospel of Thomas Written?", *Toronto Journal of Theology* 8 (1992) 121-33; Gilles Quispel has consistently argued for the gospel having risen out of a very early Aramaic Gospel tradition; see his articles in *VigChr* 11 (1957) 189-207, 12 (1958) 181-96, 13 (1959) 87-117, 14 (1960) 204-15, 16 (1962) 121-53, 18 (1964) 226-35; and in *NTS* 5 (1958) 276-90, 12 (1965) 371-82; on the semiticisms in the *Gospel of Thomas* see also A. Guillaumont, "Les sémitismes dans l'Évangile selon Thomas. Essai de classement", in R. Van den Broek & M.J. Vermaseren (eds.) *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions presented to Gilles Quispel on the Occasion of this 65th Birthday* (Leiden: Brill, 1981). See also Francis T. Fallon and Ron Cameron, "The Gospel of Thomas: A Forschungsbericht and Analysis", in *ANRW* II.25.6 4213-24.

189 There are two other uses of this verb *aḥe* in the *Gospel of Thomas* to describe standing, but the context suggests an entirely different meaning (*contra* April de Conick, "The Dialogue of the Saviour and the Mystical Sayings of Jesus", *VigChr* 50 (1996) 187); see also W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) 24.

status held by God and the angels, and also the righteous who attained an angelic status. Furthermore in the *Gospel of Thomas* this standing one is also *oua ouōt*, synonymous with *monachos*, the word normally held to translate the Syriac *concept* of 'singleness', later expressed in Syriac with the *word iḥidaya.*

5.2.6 Garment symbolism and its relationship to asceticism and angels

The ascetic *iḥidaya* 'put on' Christ when he was baptised. Ephrem makes this clear:

ܗܐ ܡܥܡܕܝܢ ܘܗܘܝܢ ܒܬܘܠܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܢܚܬܘ
ܥܡܕܘ ܘܠܒܫܘ ܠܗܘ ܚܕ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ....
ܐܝܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܥܡܕ ܘܠܒܫ ܠܗ
ܠܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܡܪܗܘܢ ܕܣܓܝܐܐ ܡܡܠܐ ܠܗ
ܘܕܘܟܬܐ ܕܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܗܘܝܘ ܠܗ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܣܝܡܐ
ܪܒܐ

(*Hymns on the Epiphany* 8.16-17)[190]

> Behold (them) baptising and becoming virgins and holy ones, for they have descended and been baptised and put on that single *iḥidaya* (*ḥad iḥidaya*)... For he that is baptised and puts on the *Iḥidaya*, the lord of the many, fills the place of the many, for him the Messiah is the great treasure.

The soteriological import of this is expounded in Ephrem's writings.[191] For Christ's incarnation was routinely seen in early Syriac writings in terms of clothing metaphors. In the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, the Syriac *Acts of John*, the *Doctrina Addae*, and the Syriac *Didascalia* Christ is described as 'clothing' himself in a human body.[192] Ephrem seems to connect the Pauline language of the Christian putting on Christ (Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27) with the Syriac tradition of Christ putting on a body. The quotation provided above demonstrates how he associated the baptism of the ascetic Christian with the incarnation and with the 'wearing' of Christ. Moreover, indeed, the righteous will wear the same robe as Christ:

ܚܬܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܐܬ ܒܗ, ܐܣܛܠܐ ܡܦܪܢ

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[190] E. Beck (hrsg.) *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)* (*CSCO* 186; Scriptores Syri T.82; Louvain: Peeters, 1959).

[191] But not, as Murray points out, in Aphrahat's writings, see *Symbols* 70.

[192] R. Murray, *Symbols* 69f & 311.

ܙ̈ܡܝܢܐ ܒܐܣܛܠܗܘܢ ܠܗ̇ ܐܣܛܠܗ ܢܕܡܘܢ
ܦܓܪܐ ܠܡܐܢ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܢܢܗܪܘܢ
(*Nisibene Hymns* 43.21)[193]

> The immortal Bridegroom will shine forth in his robe. The guests in their robe will be like that robe of his; [their] bodies, their garments will shine.

Ephrem's ascetics wore a shining robe; it was the same robe as that worn by Christ; indeed it was, in some sense, Christ himself. What ramifications does this robe hold for the question of the role of the emulation of angels for early Syriac ascetics?

This language of clothing is reminiscent of the imagery found in the Pseudepigrapha and the Manichaean *Psalm Book*. As we have seen in the last chapter it saw the angelic transformation of the visionary or the righteous dead in terms of clothing metaphors, the soul being clothed in the body or else the robes of light, the angelic clothes.[194] This metaphor was connected to Pythagorean and Orphic thought,[195] but had a long history of use in non-canonical Jewish religious texts. It must surely have been related to the importance of the clothing of the priests who served in the temple, who were required upon pain of death to wear particular garments whilst in the presence of God.[196] This is once again part of the process of the translation of the temple from earth to heaven. The use of this terminology of clothing in the Manichaean *Psalm Book* seems to have come from Syriac,[197] and is also prominent in the *Odes of Solomon*. The idea of the acquisition or loss of clothing indicating a change in the status, a transformation, of the individual involved has a long prehistory in Mesopotamian thought; it was an idea associated with Mesopotamian notions of kingship,

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[193] E. Beck (hrsg.) *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Carmina Nisibena* II (*CSCO* 240; Scriptores Syri T. 102; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1963).

[194] For some examples from the Pseudepigrapha see the *Ascension of Isaiah* 9:2-11; *2 (Slavonic) Enoch*, 22:8; and *3 (Hebrew) Enoch*, 12:1. For the Psalm Book see C.R.C. Allberry (ed.) *A Manichaean Psalm-Book. Part II* (W. Kohlhammer: Stuttgart, 1938), 50.21, 25; 81.9; 84.18, 95.7; 146.41-42; 155.10; cf. 213.20; see also H. J. Polotsky (Hrsg.) *Manichäische Homilien* (Verlag von W. Kohlhammer: Stuttgart, 1934) 6.20-21; these and other texts are dealt with in detail in §4.9.

[195] Briefly discussed by Brock, "Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition" M. Schmidt & C. F. Geyer, *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter. Internationales Kolloquium, Eichstätt 1981* (Regensburg: Freidrich Pustet, 1982) 17-18, and cites in n29 J. Bouffartigue & M. Patillon, *Porphyre: de l'abstinence I* (Paris, 1977) 37-41 "Les tuniques de l'âme" & F. Husner, *Leib und Seele in der Sprache Senecas* (Philologus Suppl. 17.3 (1924) 84-91 "Der Leib – ein Kleid der Seele".

[196] Exod 28.

[197] Brock, "Some Aspects of Greek Words in Syriac", in *idem*, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* 98-104.

found in ancient cosmological and cosmogonic myths concerning the primal man,[198] and also with the descent of Ishtar to the underworld.[199] In these important institutionalised myth structures the loss of either shining armour or robes of glory indicates that the subject has lost heavenly status.[200] It is worth asking if the notion found in the Manichaean *Psalm Book*, that the righteous upon receiving this robe joined the angelic company, also came from Syriac. The wearing of the robe of light or glory was a common way that angels were identified in the Pseudepigrapha, the Old Testament and also in the Gospels.[201] Thus the angel in the Peshitta version of Daniel 10:5 and 12:7 was clothed in glory (ܐܝܩܪ).[202] It would be unlikely that Ephrem and Aphrahat were completely ignorant of this symbolism associated with the robe of light, but they make no mention of it in connection with angels. Perhaps this was deliberate, linking Christ's robe (and thus the robe of the *iḥidaya* and Christ himself) with the angelic robes would have led too easily to an angelic conception of Christ. Yet Ephrem and Aphrahat were heirs to several centuries of Aramaic Christianity. Even if they did not explicitly claim that the robes of the baptised *iḥidaya* were also angelic robes we must ask ourselves how the tradition behind Ephrem and Aphrahat's writings developed. The evidence from other Aramaic/Syriac sources suggests that these robes must originally have been conceived as being like those worn by the angels. Indeed the *Odes of Solomon* makes use of clothing imagery much like that of the Coptic Manichaean *Psalm Book*. For instance

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198 See Geo Widengren, *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism (King and Saviour II): Studies in Manichaean, Mandaean and Syrian-Gnostic Religion* (Uppsala: Lundequistska Bokhandeln, 1946) 67f, who argues that these are echoes of the beliefs found in Mesopotamian texts concerning Tammuz and his garments. For Tammuz also falls and in doing so is stripped of his kingly vestments, in particular his "shining ornament". He also loses, along with his garments, his symbols of royal power, his crown, garment, sceptre and shoes. Such ideas are also found in the Zoroastrian Avesta; thus in the Avesta the righteous are clothed with wondrous garments: "And when I advanced they were in garments adorned with silver and gold, the most embellished of all garments. And it seemed to me very praiseworthy" (*Arda Viraz Namag* 12.2); "And I saw the souls of 'warriors', who were in the highest happiness and joyfullness of mind and in kingly garments ... And I saw the souls of 'herdsmen', in a brilliant place and glorious raiment"(*AVN* 14.1-2); M. Boyce (ed. & trans.) *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1984) 87.

199 S.P. Brock, "Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition" 14 n15 cites: D. Freedman, "Ṣubāt bašti: a Robe of Splendor", *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* 4 (1972) 91-95, although Brock is unsure of the sense that Freedman attributes to *bašti*.

200 See also A. Adam, *Die Psalmen des Thomas und das Perlenlied als Zeugnisse vorchristlicher Gnosis* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1959) 66.

201 See §3.3.2 & §4.6; and for the importance of this symbolism in the Old and New Testaments see also David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in The Gospel of Matthew* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996) 142-4.

202 See also §4.1. In the Hebrew Daniel this figure is clothed in בדים (linen); Michael Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament: An Introduction* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999) 233 notes that this indicates a "special regard for angels" in the Syriac Peshitta.

Ode 11 talks of stripping off folly, being renewed with the garment of the Lord (ܠܒܘܫܗ) and possessed by His light (ܡܩܢܝ ܒܢܘܗܪܗ) (*ll*.9-10).

These are also the robes, the garments of light, that Adam and Eve lost after their fall. We have already noted the Jewish traditions concerning the clothing of Adam and Eve, and the question of whether it was 'robes of light' (אור; as opposed to robes of skin: עור).[203] The natural affinity between this and Syro-Mesopotamian ideas concerning shining garments as indicators of heavenly status (which could perhaps have been the origin of the Jewish tradition) meant that this idea was easily taken up in Syriac thought. In the Palestinian Targum tradition and in the (Syriac) *Wisdom of Solomon* Adam is described as *iḥidaya* and also in the Syriac *Wisdom of Solomon*.[204] It would have been unlikely that these two texts did not have some influence upon the Syriac understanding of Adam and his relationship to Christ the *Iḥidaya*.

Thus the Syriac ascetic who wished to practise a life of *iḥidayutha* aimed to achieve a personal state of unity, a state most clearly defined by celibacy and based upon the state enjoyed by the pre-fall Adam and also Christ. This was a state that was also intimately connected with the angelic state through its celibacy (derived from an understanding of the angelic state as sexless, a belief reflected in the angel-afterlife texts: Mt 20:30 *et al.*) and the notion of gaining the shining (angelic) robes of glory.

5.3 Possible early Syriac developments in the idea of the angelic life

Other traditions from the same general region, some parallel to and some earlier in time, share elements with fourth-century Syriac asceticism and can aid us in coming to a clearer understanding of the thought world which informed the development of Syriac ascetic notions of the ideal, ascetic, heavenly state.

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203 §4.6 n104.

204 S.P. Brock (intro. & trans.) *Saint Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise* 31.

The imitation of angels seems to have had some relationship to both of what were perhaps the two most important terms in early Syriac asceticism, *iḥidaya* and *Bnai Qyama*. And thus the imitation of angels and the imitation of Christ and Adam are clearly closely linked in the belief system of Syriac ascetics, although without an angelic Christology.

What then were the origins of this imitation of angels and how does it all relate to understandings of Christ and Adam?

We have already seen in §4.6 that the belief that Adam was created as an angelic being was widely held in the early Christian period. We have also seen that there was a strong connection between the robes of glory worn by Adam and Eve, and the robes worn (metaphorically or spiritually) by baptised Christians and ascetics.[205] The widespread nature of this legend demonstrates that some kind of angelic status was clearly attributed to Adam by a wide range of different groups, all of whom seem to have been influenced by the second Temple Jewish pseudepigraphic literature, whence this tradition must have originated. Syriac Christians must have been aware of these traditions. In the *Cave of Treasures* Adam is described in terms reminiscent of the chief angelic figure. His heavenly beauty is such that the angels are greatly moved.[206] He is placed in a position of leadership over the angels, and when Satan refuses to worship him (because he is a human being and only in the form of the angels) he is thrown down and loses his heavenly garments.[207] Adam subsequently enters the garden of Eden/Paradise and his appearance is made even more glorious.[208] Moreover the sons of Seth are described as sons of God in this text. They replace the fallen angels in the heavenly choirs and join with the other angels in constantly praising God.[209] How then does this relate to imitation of Christ, the *Iḥidaya*?

Syriac Christians saw Christ as the second Adam. Could they then have, at some point, shared an angelic Christology? There is no evidence to suggest this, as far as I have seen, in the works of the earliest Syriac fathers, such as Ephrem or Aphrahat. Yet there is evidence

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205 §4.6.

206 *Cave of Treasures* (=Brit. Mus. MS. Add. 25875) fol. 5a 1 - 5b 1, in E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures: a history of the patriarchs and the kings, their successors, from the creation to the crucifixion of Christ* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1927).

207 *Cave of Treasures* fol. 5b 1 - 6a 1.

208 *Cave of Treasures* fol. 5b 2 - 6a 1.

that some groups (perhaps on the periphery of Syriac orthodoxy) did understand Christ in angelic terms, for Aphrahat is forced to argue against such beliefs. Furthermore the Jewish-Christian groups in this area in the late first and second centuries did share in an angelic Christology, at least according to the heresiologists. Epiphanius asserted that the Ebionites believed Christ to be the figure who appeared in the Hebrew Scriptures as the angel of the Lord; he goes on to claim that they also claimed him to be an archangel, and chief of the angels.[210] The Elchasaites were also accused by Epiphanius and Ambrosiaster of holding that Christ was a hugely tall 'power' (*dynamis*) or angel.[211]

There were other philosophical and ideological links between early Syriac Christianity and the Syro-Mesopotamian Jewish-Christian groups described by the heresiologists. These groups were described by the heresiologists as practising a religious life that was based upon the imitation of Christ's life,[212] of believing that Christ 'put on' Adam[213] or, indeed, that he was clothed in an angel[214]; and of altering the account of John the Baptist's life (as the Diatessaron did) to suggest that he was vegetarian (179).[215] One more point needs to be made in the context of the beliefs of the Jewish-Christians concerning Christ. This is that he was a man who, because of his virtue, was transformed into the Christ. Thus, according to the angelic Christology these groups held, Jesus began as a human and became an angel.

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209 *Cave of Treasures* fol. 9a 1 - 9b 2.

210 *Panarion*, 30.3.1-6; 30.16.3-4: οὐ φάσκουσι δὲ ἐκ θεοῦ πατρὸς αὐτὸν γεγενῆσθαι, ἀλλὰ κεκτίσθαι ὡς ἕνα τῶν ἀρχαγγέλων, αὐτὸν δὲ κυριεύειν καὶ ἀγγέλων καὶ πάντων <τῶν> ὑπὸ τοῦ παντοκράτορος πεποιημένων. "They say that he was not begotten of God the Father, but created as one of the archangels . . . that he rules over the angels and all the creatures of the Almighty." Text & trans. in A.F.J. Klijn & G.J. Reinick, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 182 & 183.

211 Hippolytus, *Refutatio omn. haer.* IX.13.1-3; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 19.4.1-2; 30.17.6; 53.1.8-9.

212 Hippolytus, *Refutatio omn. haer.* VII.34.1-2; see also Epiphanius, *Panarion* 19.5.4, although it seems that the μετὰ here has a temporal force.

213 Epiphanius, *Panarion*, *anacephalaiosis* t.2 28-30 although the *anacephalaiosis* sections are probably added by a later editor, see F. Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis. Book I (Sects 1-46)* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) XVII; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 53.8-9; John Damascene, *De haer.* 30; Theodore bar-Khonai, *Liber scholiorum*, p.130, in *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects*; cf. Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 30.3.1-6 which talks of "putting on body".

214 Tertullian, *De carne Chr.* 14.

215 Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 30.13.4-5. On the Syriac tendency to do the same see Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism" 5.

Moreover it seems that anyone, or at least any man, could also be transformed into a Christ, or angel, provided he imitated Christ in his virtuous conduct.[216]

Thus according to various groups in the Syro-Mesopotamian region: Christ was an angel, and was also the second Adam. Anyone who imitated him could also attain this angelic, Christ-like status. The emphasis upon Christ as the second Adam links Syriac Christianity and those Syro-Mesopotamian Jewish-Christian groups such as the Ebionites at a mythological level as well as the obvious geographical level. Those groups may well also have had links to Jewish groups such as the Essenes or the Qumran community.[217]

Much of the symbolic world and many of the activities of early Syriac ascetics can be explained with reference to the notion of imitation of angels – sleeplessness in imitation of the *ʿire*,[218] praise after the example of the angelic choirs, celibacy after the angels of Matthew 20:30 (& par.). The term *bnai qyama* can be explained by reference to the angelic quality of 'standing' in heaven around the throne of God, symbolising, for the ascetic, the immortal state he shares with the angels. Hence, the 'standing ones'.

The development of the term *iḥidaya* can now be sketched. By the fourth century it had grown from a scriptural term, equivalent to *monogenēs*, into a term with a wide semantic range, roughly equivalent to that acquired by *monachos* and encompassing the notion of an existence characterised both by a unity of person/heart/faith derived from the Old Testament, and also celibacy. The celibacy was related to the celibacy of Christ, pre-fall Adam and that of the angels. The robe worn by the baptised Christian also seems to be related to the robe of the angels in other texts from the same area. Moreover, the parallels between the imitation of the *Iḥidaya* Christ by the Syriac ascetic, who then becomes an *iḥidaya*, and the imitation of Christ by those Syro-Mesopotamian groups described by the heresiologists, prompts us to ask if there was a connection.

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216 Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 51.10.4; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 30.18.5-6; cf. Timothy, Presbyter of Constantinople, *De recept. haer.* 28 B/C; Isidore of Seville, *Etym. lib.*VIII.6.37; John Damascene, *De haer.*28; Theodore bar-Khonai, *Liber scholiorum*, p.301; Theodore bar-Khonai, *Liber scholiorum*, p.336-7 all in *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects.*

217 John C. Reeves, *Heralds of That Good Realm:Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 42-48.

Possibly early Syriac asceticism took root in a milieu somehow connected to these Jewish-Christian groups active in the Syro-Mesopotamian region. It is also possible that this imitation of Christ, the *Iḥidaya*, by the Syriac ascetic, was conceptually related to the attempt to imitate an angelic transformation of Christ from man into heavenly being. This would have been preserved in early Syriac asceticism without the angelological elements, unpalatable to orthodox Churchmen such as Aphrahat and Ephrem.

5.3.1 *The Odes of Solomon*

The *Odes of Solomon* stands almost alone in the prehistory of early Syriac Christianity and is the only surviving second century text of its kind. The origins of the *Odes* are mysterious. Most scholars now accept a date of roughly the end of the first century or the beginning of the second, although some, most notably Hans Drijvers, have suggested a much later, third century, date.[219] Although the *Odes* does show strong similarity with the *Cologne Mani Codex*, I think that this has more to do with a shared spirituality than a contemporaneous time of composition; thus I shall follow the late first, early second century dating. The language of the original odes is less clear. They have come down to us preserved in Coptic, Greek and Syriac, the Syriac being the closest to being a complete collection (only Ode 1 is missing). There is evidence of Greek influence in the Syriac text, which makes original composition in Syriac unlikely; yet there is no reason some could not have been composed in Greek and some in Syriac, only later being brought together into the collection that is now preserved in Syriac. Our knowledge of bilingualism in the ancient Near East is inadequate, but recent research is beginning to give us a picture. The evidence of bilingual inscriptions in Asia Minor,[220] and of Manichaean texts from the Dakhleh oasis in Egypt,[221] suggests that communities could enjoy a high level of bilingualism, and indeed there could be parallel composition in Greek and another community language such as Syriac or Coptic.

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218 But also in imitation of the watchful servants of Mk 13:35 and the wise virgins in Mt 25:1-13, cf. n80.

219 See his article "Odes of Solomon and Psalms of Mani. Christians and Manichaeans in Third-Century Syria", in *idem* (ed.) *East of Antioch: studies in early Syriac Christianity* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984).

220 See Rosalinde A. Kearsley (ed.) *Greeks and Romans in imperial Asia: mixed language inscriptions and linguistic evidence for cultural interaction until the end of AD III* (with collaboration of Trevor V. Evans; Bonn: Habelt, 2001).

221 See, esp. the comments in the introduction to Iain Gardner (ed.) *Kellis Literary Texts* I (Oxford: Oxbow, 1996). Manichaeism's special qualities as a missionary religion which aimed to quickly disseminate its

As noted above (§5.2.4) the *Odes* is defined by its ascetic pose. It contains passages which describe the transformation awaiting those who adopt its ascetic interpretation of the Christian life; this transformation is a transformation into a heavenly state.[222] It is thus linked to a type of proto-'angelic life' asceticism, and also to the notion of undividedness expressed in later Syriac thought as *iḥidayutha*.[223] As in the other texts we have examined so far in this dissertation, the imagery of the shining face, derived from Moses' transformation on Mt Sinai (Exod 34:29-30; 33-35), is important also in the *Odes of Solomon* (41.6).

The *Odes* allows us a glimpse of an early stage in the development of the idea of the angelic life. Whilst (like the *Acts of Thomas*) it does not explicitly discuss imitation of angels or transformation into them,[224] it talks of the transfiguration of the righteous into a heavenly state using symbolism, such as standing, offering praise, watchfulness, and the acquisition of a new garment, that we have seen, in other closely related literature, referring to angelic states and behaviours.

The correspondences between the description of the transformation of the Odist in Ode 36 and those of the three biblical patriarchs, Sem, Seth and Adam in the *CMC* are striking. All four describe the transformation of an individual into a heavenly being, indeed into one of the greatest heavenly beings: In Ode 36:3c into a ܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ "Son of God".[225] In the *CMC* both Adam and Seth are transformed into great angelic beings;[226] in the *Apocalypse of Sem* his power and glory is "increased" (εἰργάσατο) after having the breath of life puffed into him. The correspondences are closest between Ode 36 and the *Apocalypse of Shem*. Both begin with the writer being taken up by a holy spirit to a high place (Ode 36:1 the female "Spirit of the Lord"; *ApShem.* 55:16 the Living Spirit); in both the odist next glorifies

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doctrines in the local languages should also be noted here, see S.N.C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China: A Historical Survey* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1985) 60-90.

[222] See §5.2.4 & nn143-145.

[223] Ode 34:1-3, §5.2.4.

[224] The word "angel" *malʾkhā*, is not even mentioned in the *Odes*, nor is *ʿira*, cf. Michael Lattke's concordance, vol. 3 of *Die Oden Salomos in ihrer Bedeutung für Neues Testament und Gnosis* (3 vols.; Fribourg: Editions universitaires, 1979-1986).

[225] See n147 (above) on this passage.

[226] Seth: "I became like one of the very great angels"; Adam: "And Adam became above all the powers and the angels of creation": *CMC* 51, 50.

the Lord (Ode 36:2) or a great angelic figure ("the greatest king of honour" *ApSem.* 56:1), and is then presented before him; both also talk of the writer 'standing' (Ode 36:2 ; *ApSem.* 57:16) as a part of his transformation into a heavenly angelic being. In Ode 36 it seems that the female Spirit of the Lord does the transforming (*l.*5), but in the *Apocalypse of Sem* the transformation of the writer is achieved by inhaling the breath of the Voice that emanates from the throne room (57:16-21). Ode 8 also exhorts the listener to praise the Lord, live a holy life (ܚܝܐ ܡܩܕܫܐ),[227] to walk with watchfulness (ܥܝܪܘܬܐ), to rise up (ܩܘܡܘ) and stand erect (ܐܬܩܝܡܘ[228]); the result is that he shall witness something that the fleshy garment cannot comprehend.[229] For the *Odes* seems to share a garment ideology close to that found in the other Manichaean texts, those preserved in Coptic from Medinet Madi, especially the *Psalm Book*. For instance Ode 11 combines Greek stripping imagery and Jewish clothing imagery in a manner also typical of the Medinet Madi texts, when it talks of stripping off (ܫܒܩܬ) folly and being renewed with the garment of the Lord (ܠܒܘܫܗ) and possessed by His light (ܩܢܝ ܒܢܘܗܪܗ) (*ll.*9-10).[230]

In particular the emphasis upon praise of God is central to the *Odes*. In Ode 16:1 the odist declares that:

> ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܥܒܕܗ ܕܐܟܪܐ ܦܕܢܐ ܗܝ܇ ܘܥܒܕܗ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܕܘܒܪܗ
> ܕܐܠܦܐ܇ ܗܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܥܒܕܝ ܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܒܬܫܒܘܚܬܗ
> (Ode 16:1)
>
> In like manner as the occupation of the ploughman is the plough, and the occupation of the shipmaster is the steering of the ship, thus also my occupation is the psalms of the Lord for his glory.

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[227] For an alternative translation: Barnes in *JTS* 11 (1910) 573; according to Charlesworth (p.43) he "neglected" the seyame of 'life' and 'holy' and changed ܒܥܝܪܘܬܐ to ܒܥܘܝܪܘܬܐ thus translating the passage "To bring fruit to the Lord the Living One, the Holy One; and to remove your blindness by His light."

[228] Charlesworth's translation of this Ethpaᶜal imperative; it must carry an intensifying force.

[229] Charlesworth argues in n11 p.42 that in Ode 25.8 'garment' symbolises 'skin'; this then argues against Harris-Mingana's emendation of this passage here to 'heart'.

[230] Charlesworth, 55 n19 suggests *1 Baruch* 5:1-9 for "numerous parallels", but we have seen that the imagery is much more widespread, in particular in Manichaean texts.

The culmination of the ascent vision-type hymn Ode 21 is marked by the odist being constantly near (ܩܪܝܒ ܐܢܐ ܠܗ) the Lord and praising (ܡܫܒܚ) Him and confessing (ܡܘܕܐ) Him (*ll.* 6-7).[231] Moreover the collection itself is testament again to the importance of such hymns of praise to early Syriac Christians.

5.3.3 The *Acts of Judas Thomas* and other third century literature

The *Acts of Judas Thomas* can claim to be the second oldest witness we have to early Syriac Christianity. It was probably written in early third century Edessa and focuses upon the missionary journeys of Thomas, the Lord's 'twin'. The *Acts* is preserved mainly in Greek and Syriac.[232] This very early source records the extremely ascetic character of at least some of the Syriac Christian communities. This is an asceticism concerned with the broad themes we have seen so far in the Syriac ascetic tradition: celibacy, a garment ideology, a focus upon angels as models for perfection, and the notion of transformation into angels as a reward for the righteous (here after death). In addition to the *Acts* Wright included several other similar early Syriac documents in his translation and edition; these will also be dealt with here.

The asceticism we see in the *Acts of Thomas* is classically early Syriac in its expression; it is focused upon celibacy above all else and rejects the radical ascetic practices such as those found in the Pseudo-Ephremic texts which until recently were cited as support for 'wild man' theory of native Syriac asceticism.[233] Thomas' mission through the Near East to India was characterised by his proclamation of a brand of Christianity defined by its celibacy. We are told of a youth killing his lascivious girlfriend after hearing the message of Thomas: "Whoever indulgeth in filthy intercourse, especially in that of adultery, hath not life with this God whom I preach."[234] Thomas brings God into the marriage bed when his incitement leads to Mygdonia (a leading character) responding to her husband's advances with a prayer

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[231] Charlesworth suggests (n2 p.68) that Ode 15 is probably like one of the psalms sung by Christians at dawn mentioned by Pliny (*Epist.* 10.96); p.77 n20 he says the same of Ode 17.

[232] M. Bonnet (ed.) *Acta apostolorum apocrypha* (vol. 2.2; Leipzig: Mendelssohn, 1903; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1972); there are also some other versions in Armenian, Latin and Ethiopic; see *NTA* II 453-57; the Syriac version used herein is from William Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of The Apostles* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1968; 1st publ. 1871); see also Klijn, A.F. J. (trans.) *The Acts of Thomas* (Leiden: Brill, 1962).

[233] Cf. n20.

for strength: "My Lord, and my God, and my Life-giver, the Messiah, do Thou give me strength to overcome the daring of Karīsh, and do Thou grant me that I may preserve the purity in which Thou takest delight, and by which I shall find eternal life".[235]

The key to unlocking this early Syriac understanding of asceticism is its concept of purity. As in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Second Temple Pseudepigrapha, gaining the afterlife was seen in terms of approaching the heavenly temple, and as such the righteous needed to attain a state of priestly (or angelic) purity. In the *Acts* Tertia, wife of King Mazdai, after talking to Mygdonia (the Christian wife of Karīsh the pagan), goes to hear Judas Thomas:

> ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܗܘܕܐ. ܓܙܗ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܫܡܝܢܐ ܦܬܝܚ. ܘܟܠ ܕܫܘܐ
> ܢܣܒ ܘܡܬܬܢܝܚ. ܘܡܐ ܕܐܬܬܢܝܚ ܡܡܠܟ. ܠܘܩܕܡ ܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܡܬܩܪܒ
> ܠܗ ܐܢܫ ܟܕ ܛܡܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܟܕ ܒܝܫܝܢ ܥܒܕܘܗܝ܂ ܝܕܥ ܓܝܪ
> ܕܒܠܒܐ ܗܘ ܘܒܪܢܝܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܡܛܥܐ ܠܗ. ܐܦ ܐܢܬܝ ܗܟܝܠ
> ܐܢ ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܗܝܡܢܬܝ ܒܗ. ܗܘ ܡܫܘܐ ܠܟܝ ܠܐܪ̈ܙܘܗܝ ܩ̈ܕܝܫܐ.
> ܘܗܘ ܡܪܘܡ ܠܟܝ ܘܡܥܬܪ ܠܟܝ ܘܡܚܕܬ ܪ̈ܥܝܢܝܟܝ܂ ܘܥܒܕ ܠܟܝ
> ܝܪܬܬܐ ܒܡܠܟܘܬܗ܀
>
> (*The Acts of Judas Thomas (or The Twin) The Apostle*, folio 40 a - b in Wright, *Acts* ܗܫ — ܕܫ)

> Judas saith to her: "The treasury of the heavenly King is open, and every one who is worthy taketh and findeth rest; and when he hath found rest, he becometh (271) a king. But at first a man cannot come near Him, when he is unclean and when his works are evil; for He knoweth what is in the heart and in the imagination, and no man can deceive Him. Thee too, therefore, if thou really believest in Him, He will make worthy of His holy mysteries; and He will exalt thee, and enrich thee, and renew thy mind, and make thee an heiress in His kingdom."
> (trans. Wright, *Acts* 270-71)

In another text published by Wright with the *Acts*, *The History of Thecla, The Disciple of Paul The Apostle*, we see the same emphasis upon purity and celibacy coming from St Paul's mouth.

> ܘܟܕ ܥܠ ܦܘܠܘܣ ܠܒܝܬܗ ܕܐܘܢܣܝܦܘܪܘܣ. ܗܘܬ ܬܡܢ ܚܕܘܬܐ

[234] *Acts of Thomas* 51 = Wright, *Acts* p.ܪܢܐ - ܪܢܒ, trans. p.191.

[235] *Acts of Thomas* 97 = Wright, *Acts* p.ܪܣܕ, trans. p.229.

ܪܒܬܐ. ܘܒܪܟܘ ܥܠ ܒܘܪܟܝܗܘܢ ܘܨܠܝܘ. ܘܩܨܘ ܠܚܡܐ.
ܘܡܩܪܒ ܗܘܐ ܦܘܠܘܣ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡ̈ܠܘܗܝ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܥܠ ܟܒܫ
ܦܓܪܐ ܘܥܠ ܩܝܡܬܐ. ܘܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ .... ܛܘܒܝܗܘܢ
ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܕܟܝܢ ܒܠܒܗܘܢ. ܕܗܢܘܢ ܢܚܙܘܢܝܗܝ ܠܐܠܗܐ܀
ܛܘܒܝܗܘܢ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܢܛܪܘ ܦܓܪܗܘܢ ܒܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ. ܕܗܢܘܢ
ܗܝܟܠܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܢܬܩܪܘܢ܀ ܛܘܒܝܗܘܢ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܟܒܫܝܢ
ܢܦܫܗܘܢ. ܕܥܡܗܘܢ ܢܡܠܠ ܐܠܗܐ .... ܛܘܒܝܗܘܢ
ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܫܛܘܗܝ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ. ܕܗܢܘܢ ܢܫܦܪܘܢ ܠܐܠܗܐ܀
ܛܘܒܝܗܘܢ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܢܫܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ.
ܕܗܢܘܢ ܢܐܪܬܘܢܗ ܠܐܪܥܐ܀ ܛܘܒܝܗܘܢ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܕܚܠܬܐ
ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܝܟ ܒܠܒܗܘܢ. ܕܗܢܘܢ ܡܠܐܟܐ ܢܬܩܪܘܢ܀

(*The History of Thecla, The Disciple of Paul The Apostle*, fol. 63a-b in Wright, *Acts* ܡܠܒ — ܡܠܐ)

And when Paul had entered into the house of Onesiphorus, there was great joy there, they kneeled down on their knees, and prayed, and brake bread. And Paul came nigh and and spake unto him the words of God concerning the controlling of the flesh and concerning the resurrection, and was saying: "Blessed are they who are pure in heart, for they shall see God (Mt 5:8). Blessed are they who have kept their flesh in purity, for they shall be called temples of God. Blessed are they who control themselves, for God shall speak with them. Blessed are they who have despised this world, for they shall be pleasing unto God. Blessed are they who have wives as though they had not , for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they in whose heart is the fear of God, for they shall be called angels" (*mal'khā*).
(trans. Wright, *Acts* 118)

The righteous dead were offered by the writer of this text the opportunity to be transformed into an angel upon death. Their celibate state upon earth seems to have been merely anticipation of the state in the afterlife rather than a true realised eschatology. The righteous were offered typically Jewish imagery to explain what would happen to them at death. They would be anointed, they would thus become kings, receive mysteries from God, eat the incorruptible food of the tree of life, and wear eternal garments.[236] The strong influence of pseudepigraphic imagery can be seen here. Like one of the Israelite kings or an ascending patriarch the righteous would be anointed and enter into heaven. Likewise the wearing of garments defined the status of a particular soul, as an angel or a human being. Christ is

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[236] *History of Thecla, The Disciple of Paul The Apostle*, in Wright, *Acts* pp. ܪܕ, ܫܟ, ܗܣ — ܣܕ; trans. pp. 177, 269, 270-72; Cf. *Acts of Judas Thomas*, 281.

described as the "Son of Light" clothed in the light of the Father;[237] who 'put on' the first man (Adam).[238] The righteous would gain fellowship with a select few: God, Christ, the angels, the watchers and the holy ones.[239] Moreover the Christian ideology that this text demonstrates shows an interest in the translation of biblical patriarchs to heaven. Thus we find in the *History of Philip, The Apostle and Evangelist* a kind of early Syriac Creed in which Enoch's translation to heaven "without tasting death" features.[240]

The imagery of angelic transformation comes through in the two other texts included with Wright in his edition of the Acts. In the *History of Thecla, The Disciple of Paul The Apostle*, Paul's physical appearance is described in very negative terms, but we are told that he also sometimes appeared like an angel.[241] In the history of Philip's missionary journey, when the angel of the Lord manages to convert a Jew to Christianity (by suspending him from his toes from the sail of a boat), the convert rushes straight to the synagogue to share the good news of his conversion. Appearing before the congregation to preach to them we are told that his face was like that of the angel of the Lord.[242] We have also seen above (§5.3.3) that there was also a polemic against sleep in the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, but that it was not explicitly connected to imitation of angels.

Thus the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, the *History of Thecla, The Disciple of Paul The Apostle* and the *History of Philip, The Apostle and Evangelist* can help us to unravel some of the streams that flowed together into the early fourth century native Syriac understanding of the ascetic angelic life. In this area of early Syriac literature we have seen the same influences we have seen elsewhere. Importantly we have seen a strong Jewish or Jewish-Christian input in the view of heaven as a temple, and purity as required to come near to it. This purity, as in most other early Christian literature, is seen in terms of celibacy. Likewise the

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[237] *The Acts of Judas Thomas (or The Twin) The Apostle*, in Wright, *Acts*, ܪܦ.

[238] *The Acts of Judas Thomas* ܩܡܛ.

[239] Wright, *Acts* ܪܗ, cf. ܩܒ.

[240] *The History of Philip, The Apostle and Evangelist*, in Wright, *Acts*, ܫܠ.

[241] *History of Thecla, The Disciple of Paul The Apostle*, in Wright, *Acts* ܩܠ.

[242] *The History of Philip, The Apostle and Evangelist*, in Wright, *Acts* ܫ.

righteous will be transformed into angels upon death after having lived their lives in celibate ascetic anticipation of this state.

5.3.4 The Syriac version of the Vita Antonii[243]

At this point it is worth examining the Syriac version of the *Life of Antony* (*VA*). This late fourth century text, although slightly out of our time-frame, can act as a case study; by examining what it shares in common with the Greek original, what it has discarded, and what it has added we are able to gauge with some degree of accuracy what Syriac Christians interested in asceticism thought about certain issues. When compared to the Latin or Greek versions the Syriac *VA* is distinguished by a particular interest in the transformation of the ascetic and his angelic role.

A passage which has attracted attention is 14.2, in which Antony is described as an 'angel of light' in the Syriac version but not in the Greek. In the Greek Antony is described as a μεμυσταγωγημένος, but in the Syriac as 'like a ܡܠܐܟ ܢܘܗܪܐ' (angel of light). Barnes' article "Angel of Light or Mystic Initiate? The Problem of the *Life of Antony*",[244] argued that the difference in translation came down to a survival of pagan literary forms in the use of the Greek term 'mystic initiate' as opposed to more purely Christian language in the Syriac text. He furthermore notes that the picture of Antony is very different in the two texts.[245] He claims the image of Antony is more pagan in the Greek version, more Christian in the Syriac. This ties in with the work of several scholars who have argued for pagan roots for

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[243] This examination of the Syriac *VA* is indebted to Fumihiko Takeda's, "A Study of The Syriac Version of the *Life of Antony* – A Meeting point of Egyptian Monasticism with Syriac Native Asceticism" (unpbl. Diss.; Univ. of Oxford, 1998), although we reach very different conclusions as to the meaning of the passages describing the angelic life or transformation of the ascetic. Takeda argues that the Syriac life emphasises the transformative aspects of Antony's career because it wishes to enhance his reputation as a demon fighter. His argument, however, is circular in that it never establishes that his reputation as a demon fighter was actually enlarged in the Syriac life; rather he assumes that the passages which emphasise Antony's transformation from an earthly to a heavenly state are connected to his demon-fighting abilities in the Greek text. Takeda does not seem to be aware that the two traditions, those of transformation and demon-fighting, are actually quite different traditions and did not have any necessary relationship to each other. For the text see R. Draguet, *La Vie primitive de S. Antoine conservée en syriaque* (*CSCO* 407; Scr.Syr. 183; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1980) and for the translation see *CSCO* 408, Scr.Syr. 184. On Antony's role as a prototype for the angelic type of life, focusing upon the Greek *VA* see also Frank, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ* 91-92.

[244] T.D. Barnes, *JTS* 37 (1986) 353-368; reprinted in *idem*, *From Eusebius to Augustine: Selected Papers 1982-1993* (Variorum Collected Studies 438; Aldershot, 1994; chapt. XX).

[245] Barnes, "Angel of Light', 361.

the *VA*.[246] However it is by no means clear that this term would only be used by a pagan.[247] Instead I think it is illustrative simply of a Syriac milieu versus a Greek milieu, regardless of whether pagan, Jewish or Christian.

The Syriac version of the *VA* calls Antony an angel of light because it is, like the other native Syriac literature we have seen already, heavily concerned with the transformation of the ascetic.[248] Thus in the Syriac *VA* 12.4 the Greek text which talks of the reptiles leaving the place once Antony arrives is amplified to point out that Antony has been transformed: he is no longer a member of the human race. The ascetic message in the Syriac is aimed at the attainment of perfection.[249]

On the other hand demonological passages are removed. For instance the beginning of 13.1-5, in which the attacks of demons upon the ascetic are described, is omitted by the Syriac *VA*; which takes up the story at vs. 6 with talk of the weakness of the demons, then also drops vs. 7 which again emphasises the danger posed by demons in the Greek.

The Syriac version of the *Life of Antony* is illustrative of a certain Syriac attitude towards the ascetic message. The Syriac attitude was more focused upon the transformation and perfection of the ascetic: he is also described as an angel. Regardless of the questions of priority and authenticity of textual tradition the Syriac attitude is clearly visible in a text which by its nature as a translated text is bound to reflect Syriac ascetic priorities.

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246 See Richard Reitzenstein, *Des Athanasius Werk über das Leben des des Antonius* (Heidelberg, 1914) 14ff; A.J. Festugière, "Sur une nouvelle edition du >>De vita Pythagorica<< de Jamblique", *REG* 50 (Paris, 1937) 489ff.

247 Cf. discussion by Takeda, "Syriac Version of the *Life of Antony*", 432.

248 *Contra* Takeda 433, who argues that this passage is suggestive of Antony's role as a fighter of demons; as will be adduced in the following paragraphs, however, the Syriac *VA* is much less concerned with evil spirits than the Greek, which follows from an interpretation of the ascetic's role as transformation for its own sake rather than for the purpose of fighting evil spirits.

249 See Hans Leitzmann, *Geschichte der alten Kirche*, IV (Berlin: 1975; translated as *A History of the Early Church* [London: Lutterworth Press, 1961]) 125-128; cf. D. Brakke, "The Greek and Syriac Version of the *Life of Antony*", *Le Muséon* 107 (1994) 42-44.

Summary: The place of the angelic life in early Syriac Christianity

Syriac Christian asceticism embraced, from an early stage, a transformative model of ascetic practice. The ascetic impulse was to transcend human nature and embrace a heavenly state. In the earliest literature, such as the *Odes of Solomon* or the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, celibacy or 'standing', or watchfulness, terms and concepts later associated with the angelic state, were used to describe the ideal state. It was a description based upon an ideal heavenly state, but not explicitly described in these texts as 'angelic'. Aphrahat, Ephrem and the *Liber graduum* associate the ideal ascetic state with an angelic state. This is because of broader developments in Christian theology; for the systematisation of the heavenly worlds which was occurring in Christianity due to the need to define the nature of Christ had led by the fourth century to all heavenly creatures being defined as 'angels' in the hierarchies of Jerome and Ambrose (cf. §3.1.2). The relationship between the alleged Jewish-Christian attempt to achieve transformation into an angelic Christ-like state and the Syriac ascetic emulation of Christ and the angels is not clear, but it seems that Manichaeaism at least was influenced by some of these ideas.

5.4 Commonalities between Second and Third Century Egyptian and Syriac ideas

How then did the ideas we have discussed above interact with the early Egyptian ascetic tradition in which imitation of angels played an important role? The *Odes of Solomon* suggests that the notion of the angelic life was present earlier in Syriac Christianity than in Egyptian, and the presence of this idea in the works of Syriac writers who were uninfluenced by Egyptian monasticism, such as Aphrahat and Ephrem, supports the contention that it was a Syriac/Aramaic idea. It seems that the notion of the angelic life was transmitted from Syriac-speaking Christianity early, by the late second century, in gnostic texts translated from Syriac into Coptic.

5.4.1 Celibacy and singleness in the Nag Hammadi library

In Nag Hammadi texts originating from a Syro-Mesopotamian background we can see a strong emphasis upon celibacy, a celibacy which leads back to a primeval, sexless and immortal state, a state characterised as one of being *monachos*. In the *Gospel of Thomas* we

can see several meanings attached to the Greek *monachos*. In particular Saying 22 strongly suggests a reconciliation of opposites, especially of gender.

> ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲓ̅ⲏ̅ⲥ̅ ⲛⲁⲩ ϫⲉ ϩⲟⲧⲁⲛ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲛ̅ϣⲁⲣ̅ⲡⲥⲛⲁⲩ ⲟⲩⲁ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲛ̅ϣⲁⲣ̅ⲡⲥⲁⲛϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲥⲁⲛⲃⲟⲗ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲥⲁⲛⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲥⲁⲛϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲡⲥⲁ ⲧⲡⲉ ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲥⲁⲙⲡⲓⲧⲛ̅ ⲁⲩⲱ ϣⲓⲛⲁ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲛⲁⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲙ̅ⲫⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲁ ⲟⲩⲱⲧ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲁⲥ ⲛⲉⲫⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲣ̅ϩⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲧⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲣ̅ⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ϩⲟⲧⲁⲛ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲛ̅ϣⲁⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲛ̅ϩⲛ̅ⲃⲁⲗ ⲉⲡⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲃⲁⲗ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩϭⲓϫ ⲉⲡⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ⲛⲟⲩϭⲓϫ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲉⲡⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲟⲩϩⲓⲕⲱⲛ ⲉⲡⲙⲁ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩϩⲓⲕⲱ ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲁⲃⲱⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲧⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲣⲟ
>
> Jesus said to them, "When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one (*monachos*), so that the male will not be male nor the female be female, when you make eyes in place of an eye, a hand in place of a hand, a foot in place of a foot, an image in place of an image, then you will enter [the kingdom]." (trans. Patterson & Meyer)[250]

The entire gospel is concerned with achieving a childlike, sexless, innocence in which one can be naked and not ashamed (4; 22; 37); indeed, procreation is seen in so negative a light that it is asserted that God could not be born of a woman (165). As is clearly stated in the first saying, the purpose of this text is to bring the reader to a state of salvation. What we see discussed here is a return to the Adamic state, a state which is not exactly angelic, but which is an intermediate state, between the angels and the beasts, and a state which Adam lost because of his own free choice (85).

In the *Gospel of Philip*[251] the same kind of ideas are expressed again. Of death and human potential for immortality it says:

> ⲛ̅ϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲣⲉ ⲉⲩϩⲁ [ϩ]ⲛ̅ ⲁ[Δ]ⲁⲙ ⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲙⲟⲩ ϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲣⲉⲥⲡⲫⲣϫ [ⲉⲣ]ⲟϥ ⲁⲡⲙⲟⲩ ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲗⲓⲛ ⲉϥϣⲁⲃⲫ[ⲕ ⲉϩ]ⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̅ϥϫⲓⲧϥ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲙⲛ̅ⲙⲟⲩ ⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ
>
> When Eve was still in Adam death did not exist. When she was separated from him death came into being. If he enters again and attains his former self, death will be no more. (68.22 - 26)[252]

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[250] In J.M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990).

[251] NHC II; preserved in a Coptic translation of the original Greek text possibly written in Syria, possibly as late as the second half of the third century, cf. Wesley W. Isenberg (intro. & trans.) "The Gospel of Philip (II,3)" in Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* 141.

[252] Edition and translation in Bentley Layton (ed.), Wesley W. Isenberg (trans.) "The Gospel according to Philip", in Layton (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7,* I (Leiden: Brill, 1989).

And:

> ⲛⲉ ⲙⲡⲉ ⲧⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲡⲱⲣϫ ⲉⲫⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲛⲉⲥⲛⲁⲙⲟⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲫⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲡⲉϥⲡⲱⲣϫ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲟⲩ ⲇⲓⲁ ⲧⲟⲩⲧⲟ ⲁⲡⲉⲭⲣ̄ⲥ̄ ⲉⲓ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲁⲥ ⲡⲡⲱⲣϫ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ ϫⲓⲛ ϣⲟⲣⲡ ⲉϥⲛⲁⲥⲉϩⲱϥ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ⲡⲁⲗⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ϥϩⲟⲧⲣⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲛⲁⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲛⲧⲁϩⲙⲟⲩ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲡⲱⲣϫ ⲉϥⲛⲁϯ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲛϩ ⲛ̄ϥϩⲟⲧⲣⲟⲩ ϣⲁⲣⲉ ⲧⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲇⲉ ϩⲱⲧⲣ̄ ⲁⲡⲉⲥϩⲁⲉⲓ ϩⲣⲁⲓ̈ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲡⲁⲥⲧⲟⲥ
>
> If the woman had not separated from the man, she would not die with the man. His separation became the beginning of death. Because of this Christ came to repair the separation which was from the beginning and again unite the two . . . (70.9-15)[253]

In the *Gospel of Thomas* it is clearly stated that Mary could only enter into heaven if she became male. We can see in these two Nag Hammadi texts a particular approach to the question of salvation. Both attempt to regain a state of primeval unity that has been lost, this unity is expressed in a return to a childlike innocence,[254] and we can assume that this included being in an asexual state, as is implied by the *Gospel of Thomas'* comment about putting aside clothes without shame; but, moreover, what is emphasised is a reconciliation of opposites, of a dualism[255] seen to have originated in the separation of Adam and Eve. Sexual differentiation is at the heart of the problem and sex must also have been.

Two other Nag Hammadi texts also pay witness to the use of angelological themes as an exhortation to celibacy; these, however, make use of the earlier, alternative tradition based upon the book of Watchers cycle. In the *Apocryphon of John*[256] and the *Testimony of Truth*[257] (which both retell the Genesis story) angelic behaviour is presented as a model of what not to do.

The *Apocryphon of John* represents a classic type of gnostic text, a conscious mythologization of a Jewish religious theme, in this case the Paradise story in the book of

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253 Edition and translation in Bentley Layton (ed.), Wesley W. Isenberg (trans.) "The Gospel according to Philip".

254 The Valentinians are also reported to have discussed the idea of wisdom being granted to 'infants' rather than the wise, cf. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1.13.2.

255 This term is not used here in the sense of the (hypothetical) Iranian-style dualism said to have infected and been at the heart of all gnostic systems. As will be made plain in this chapter a 'vulgar dualistic' approach to asceticism or the Nag Hammadi texts is too simplistic to help us understand the cosmology or anthropology of the period.

256 (NHC II, 1; III, 1; IV, 1; BG 8502, 2) dated to the early third century CE, and redacted and expanded in the late third; cf. Michael Waldstein & Frederik Wisse (eds.) *The Apocryphon of John* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

257 (NHC IX, 3); dated to Alexandria in the late second and or early third century, cf. Birger A. Pearson (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codices IX & X* (Brill: Leiden, 1981), Introduction, esp. 120.

Genesis.[258] This text seems to have been written originally in Greek, then preserved in Coptic. It was used as late as the eighth century by the Audians in Mesopotamia,[259] and shows similarities with beliefs described by heresiologists such as Epiphanius.[260] It opens with a narrative of the appearance of Christ to John, whereby he demonstrates his ability to transform himself into different forms (47.30ff).[261] It then presents a gnostic myth of creation, in which is described the demiurge Yaldabaoth, who shows strong similarities with the archangel Michael, the main vice-regal angelic figure in late Second Temple Jewish thought.[262] Philippians 2:9 and Hebrews 1:4 are paraphrased when it is claimed that Christ has been "called with a name raised high above every name. For that name will be told to those who are worthy of it" (55.28-30).[263] This is although the supreme Godhead is presented in very Greek philosophical terms, as the Monad, which was distant and unmoved (50.26-4.10). There is also a reference to a "book of Zoroaster".[264] Sexual desire is attributed to the actions of the Chief Archon, who implanted sexual desire in woman and animated the bodies created through intercourse (72.26-31). Like the texts discussed above (§5.2.5) 'standing' (ⲁϩⲉ) is mentioned as the goal of the true follower of Christ (74.14). The fate of the fallen angels is put forward as the model for what will happen to those who do not turn to Christ (75.22-30). The fall of the angels and their sexual sin is also discussed in the

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258 On gnosticism as "the last significant outburst of mythical thought in Antiquity", see G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (Leiden: Brill, 1984) 1-2; this mythical approach, however, was a self-conscious attempt to mythologise religious ideas; Stroumsa, 1-2.

259 On the Audians, who seem to have been a schismatic ascetic group (rather than heretics) see Epiphanius, *Panarion* XII; see also G. Stroumsa, "Jewish and Gnostic Traditions among the Audians", in A. Kofsky & Stroumsa, *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land. First to Fifteenth Centuries CE* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak ben Zvi, 1998), who suggests the possibility that the mystical and anthropomorphic Audian conception of the Godhead may have had some relation to similar beliefs held by the anthropomorphist monks of Egypt, 107-8. See also H.C. Puech, "Audianer", *RAC*, I, 910-915 & J. Jarry, "Une semi-hérésie syro-égyptienne: l'Audianisme", *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Archéologie Orientale*, 63 (1965) 169-195.

260 See Stroumsa, "Jewish and Gnostic Traditions among the Audians" *passim*.

261 Cited according to Søren Giversen, *Apocryphon Johannis. The Coptic Text of the Apocryphon Johannis in the Nag Hammadi Codex II with Translation, Introduction and Commentary* (Copenhagen: Prostant apud Munksgaard, 1963).

262 On Yaldabaoth see Jarl Fossum, *The Name of God And The Angel of The Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origins of Gnosticism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985) 12 & 218; although Michael (ⲙⲓ̈ⲭⲁ̄ⲏ̄ⲗ̄) is mentioned in another context at 65.30.

263 ⲡⲁ̈ⲓ ⲉⲛ ⲧⲁⲩⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲛ̄ⲟ[ⲩⲣⲁⲛ ⲉ]ϥϫⲟⲥⲉ ⲉ ⲣⲁⲛ ⲛⲓⲙ’ ⲡⲣⲁⲛ ⲅⲁⲣ [ⲡⲉ ⲉⲧ]ⲛⲁϫⲟⲟϥ’ ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲡϣⲁ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ, in Giversen, *Apocryphon Johannis*.

264 ⲛ̄ⲍⲱⲣⲟⲁⲥⲧⲣⲟⲥ, 67.10; I suppose a Greek pseudepigraphic work not necessarily connected to any actual Zoroastrian texts; on Zoroastrian pseudepigrapha see the chapter on this subject in Mary Boyce & Frantz Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism III Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman rule* (with a contribution by Roger Beck; Leiden: Brill, 1991).

context of the flood.[265] The clear message is that an ascetic life, characterised by sexual abstinence, is necessary to achieve salvation, which is seen as a return to the soul's original home. Yet here the importance of angelological beliefs is reversed: instead of the angels being a model for behaviour, they are a model for what not to do. Here celibacy is enjoined, and connected to beliefs about angels, but in an entirely negative, anti-angelological sense.

The *Testimony of Truth*[266] also makes a call for celibacy. This text is concerned with the notion of truth versus falsehood, and even contains (in its second section) polemics against gnostic opponents seen to be deviating from the correct path (56.2-9; 57.6-8; 58.2-4). Like the language used to describe the angelic transformation in the Manichaean *Psalm Book*, it sees the achievement of resurrection in Graeco-Roman terms, as receiving the 'crown' (ⲥⲧⲉⲫⲁⲛⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟϥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲕⲗⲟⲙ) of victory (45.5). The text is encratitic and staunchly anti-ecclesiastical (cf. 31.22ff). As in Paul's writings Judaism and the Law are connected to the sin of the angels (and also the demons and stars) (29.13-21). Moreover it is the Law that should be blamed for the introduction of procreation into the world (30.1f); this "error of the angels"[267] is put forward as something to avoid. Celibacy is enjoined as the ideal Christian existence based upon the birth of Christ from a virgin (39.26ff). Thus this text does not explicitly mention the fall of the angels, but it seems connected to the Pauline position that saw the Law as having been delivered by angels, and connects this demiurgic role to the coming of sexual intercourse. Once again in a negative fashion, angels were linked with sex and mankind's alienation from its heavenly home. This text also discusses other themes we have seen connected to the notion of the ideal angelic existence: doubleheartedness is to be avoided (ⲙⲛ̄ⲧϩ[ⲏ]ⲧ ⲥⲛ[ⲁⲩ] 37.9; cf. §5.2.4); in true apocalyptic style knowledge of God and thus salvation is predicated upon knowledge of the cosmos (41-42). Likewise 'standing' is discussed when it is stated of the Son of Man that ⲁϥⲱϩⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ̄ ⲉϥⲥⲟⲩⲧⲱⲛ ⲛ̄ϩⲣⲁϊ ⲛ̄ϩⲏⲧϥ̄ ⲟⲩⲁⲁϥ;[268] and it is also avowed that he who renounces sex (and Mammon), and makes the inner like the outer (67.10-68.20; i.e. is 'single'), resembles an angel (68.17-18).[269]

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265 77.17-20.

266 NHC IX,2; text and translation in Birger A. Pearson & Søren Giversen, "NHC IX,2 The Testimony of Truth" in Pearson (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X* (Leiden: Brill, 1981).

267 ⲡⲗⲁⲛⲏ ⲛ̄ⲛⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ 41.4; the *Testimony* also follows Paul in arguing against receiving revelations from angels (73.17f).

268 "He stood up, being upright within himself" (43.4-5).

269 Although largely reconstructed: ϥⲉι]ⲛⲉ ⲛ̄ⲟ[ⲩ] [ⲁ]ⲅⲅ[ⲉ]ⲗⲟⲥ.

Other texts from Nag Hammadi also bear upon the question of celibacy and its relation to angels, heaven and the afterlife. The *Exegesis on the Soul*[270] is an allegoric and mythological tale of the fall of the soul into prostitution. Central to this text is the notion of unity or singleness. The language is highly reminiscent of Syriac Christianity. The joining of husband and wife (Gen 2:24) is interpreted allegorically, as the union of the bride with the bridegroom in the heavenly bridal chamber.

> ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ϭⲉ ⲡⲣⲙ̄ϣⲉⲗⲉⲉⲧ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲁϥⲉⲓ ⲉⲡⲓⲧⲛ̄ ϣⲁⲣⲟⲥ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲙⲁ ⲛ̄ϣⲉⲗⲉⲉⲧ ⲉⲧⲥⲃ̄ⲧⲱⲧ ⲁϥⲕⲟⲥⲙⲉⲓ ⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲛⲩⲙⲫⲱⲛ· ⲉⲡⲅⲁⲙⲟⲥ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲉϥϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲁⲛ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲅⲁⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ⲥⲁⲣⲕⲓⲕⲟⲥ ⲛⲉⲧⲁⲣ ⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲉⲓ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ ϣⲁⲩⲥⲓ ⲛ̄ⲧⲕⲟⲓⲛⲱⲛⲓⲁ ⲉⲧⲙ̄ⲙⲁⲩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲛ̄ⲛⲓⲉⲧⲡⲱ ϣⲁⲩⲕⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲱⲟⲩ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲛⲱⲭⲗⲏⲥⲓⲥ[ⲛ̄]ⲧⲉⲡⲓⲑⲩⲙⲉⲓⲁ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲧⲕ[ⲧⲟ]ⲛ̄[ⲛⲟⲩϩⲟ ⲉⲃ]ⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ· ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲡⲉⲉⲓ[. . . . . .] . [.]ⲛⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲉⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲥ· ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲉⲩϣⲁⲛ[ⲡ]ϩⲛ̄ϩⲱⲧⲣ̄ ⲁⲛ[ⲟ]ⲩ[ⲉⲣⲏ]ⲭ ϣⲁⲩϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲁⲩⲱⲛϩ ⲟⲩⲱⲧ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲁⲉⲓ ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ⲛ̄ϭⲓ ⲡⲉⲡⲡⲣⲟⲫⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡϣⲟⲣⲡ ⲣ̄ⲣⲱⲙ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲧϣⲟⲣⲡ̄ ⲛ̄ⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ϫⲉ ¨ⲥⲉⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲁⲩⲥⲁⲣⲝ ⲟⲩⲱⲧ¨· ⲛⲉⲩϩⲟⲧⲣ̄ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲣⲡ ϩⲁϩⲧⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲙⲡⲁⲧⲉ ⲧⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲥⲱⲣⲙ ⲙ̄ⲫⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲥⲥⲟⲛ ⲡⲉ· ⲡⲁⲗⲓⲛ ⲟⲛ ⲁⲡⲉⲉⲓⲅⲁⲙⲟⲥ ⲥⲟⲟⲩϩⲟⲩ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲛⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲩ· ⲁⲩⲱ ⲁⲧⲯⲩⲭⲏ ϩⲱⲧⲣ̄ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲥⲙⲉⲣⲉⲓⲧ ⲛⲁⲙⲉ ⲡⲉⲥⲫⲩⲥⲓⲕⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲑⲉ ⲉⲧϥⲥⲏϩ ϫⲉ ¨ⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲥϩⲁï· (*Exeg. Soul* 132.23-133.3)
>
> For then the bridegroom, according to the father's will, came down to her into the bridal chamber, which was prepared. And he decorated the bridal chamber. For since that marriage is not like the carnal marriage, those who are to have intercourse with one another will be satisfied with that intercourse. And as if it were a burden they leave behind them the annoyance of physical desire and they [turn their faces from] each other. But this marriage [. . .]. But [once] they unite [with one another], they become a single life. Wherefore the prophet said (Gen 2:24) concerning the first man and the first woman: 'They will become a single flesh.' For they were originally joined to one another when they were with the father before the woman led astray the man, who is her brother. This marriage has brought them back together again and the soul has been joined to her true love, her real master, as it is written: "For the master of the woman is her husband". (cf. Gen 3:1; 1 Cor 11:1; Eph 5:23).
>
> (*Exeg. Soul* 132.23-133.3; cf. also 132:9-10)[271]

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[270] Analysis of the text suggests an Alexandrian origin, probably around the turn of the third century. It shows the influence of Jewish and Hellenistic romance literature in its discussion of the soul and its alienation from the heavenly bridegroom; so Maddalena Scopello (intro.) "The Exegesis of the Soul (II,6)" in Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*; but cf. William C. Robinson Jr's introduction to the text in Bentley Layton (ed.), & William C. Robinson Jr (trans.) "The Expository Treatise on the Soul", in Layton (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7,* II (Leiden: Brill, 1989) 136-141 who is much more cautious, preferring only to state that the date is probably around CE 200.

[271] Text and translation in Bentley Layton (ed.) & William C. Robinson Jr (trans.) "The Expository Treatise on the Soul", in Layton (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7,* II.

Likewise the emphasis upon mourning as an ascetic quality (citing the beatitude in Matt 5:4 & adapting 6 to refer to earthly hunger) is echoed in Ephrem's writings about the importance of mourning in repentance for one's sins.[272] Psalm 103:1-5 is cited to confirm that the true Christian becomes a youth again and will be crowned with God's mercy. Repentance and baptism are presented as the cure for the sins of the whoring soul. Once again, at the heart of this text is a concern with a celibate, sexless existence as the true state of the soul; sex represents a degeneration and its pollution must be removed if one is to ascend back to the soul's true heavenly home.

Finally the *Hypostasis of the Archons* presents an interpretation of Genesis 1-6. It seems to have been written in Greek, and possibly came out of Egypt during the third century.[273] The text opens with quotations from Colossians 1:13 and Ephesians 6:12 concerning the existence of spiritual Authorities, the history of whom this book claims to explain. It then rewrites the Genesis story in a gnostic mythological fashion which culminates in the reception of an angelic visitation by Norea, the virgin daughter of Adam and Eve. The 'Great Angel' (ⲡⲛⲟϭ ⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ) appears to Norea and reveals the secrets of the cosmos, concluding with a promise that in time the 'children of the light' (ⲛ̄ϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲛ) will attain the truth and come to be around the Father praising him and the Son with the *Trisagion/Qedushah* (97.13-21). The myth of the fallen angels plays a role here to. The Authorities lust after Eve and copulate with a shadowy image of her (89.19-30); then they try to seduce Norea (92:18-93.3), who resists and calls out to God, at which stage the Great Angel descends and grants her her revelation. The message is that virginity is necessary for the true Christian existence, and that it leads to revelation and immortality.

The mythology at the forefront of these Coptic texts from Nag Hammadi can act to distract the historian; these texts also have a practical point to make: that celibacy is the only path to realising eternal life.[274] Moreover these texts all show some relation to angelological

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[272] Cf. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria: The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism" 234-5.

[273] See Roger A. Bullard's introduction to the text in *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2-7,* I (Leiden: Brill, 1989) 220-225.

[274] This important point has been made by Elaine Pagels in her examination of exegesis of Gen 1-3 in the *Testimony of Truth*, *Apocryphon of John*, *Exegesis of the Soul* and the *Hypostasis of the Archons* ("Exegesis and Exposition of the Genesis Creation account in selected Texts from Nag Hammadi", in C.W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson, Jr [eds.] *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Early Christianity* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988] 257-58): "their authors concern themselves not only with 'cosmological speculation,' as scholars too

beliefs. In the case of the Nag Hammadi texts there are two aspects to the treatment of angelological themes. On the one hand there is a clear expression of anti-angelological polemics in the use of the *Book of Watchers*' story of the fall of the angels and their sexual sin; here the behaviour of angels is a behavioural model to avoid. On the other hand there is another tradition, similarly concerned with celibacy, that seeks to recover the original, celibate and innocent state of Adam in the garden of Eden. This tradition also emphasised celibacy. But was it angelological in origin? Possibly, if two suppositions are accepted; firstly that the idea of being *monachos* or *oua ouōt* was related to the Syriac idea of being *iḥidaya*, and then, secondly, that the notion of *iḥidaya* was related to angelological conceptions of Christ (and Adam), as suggested above (§5.3.1).

The Nag Hammadi texts demonstrate contact with ideas that in Syriac literature were giving birth to the notion of the angelic life, but they are not developed. The *Book of Watchers* cycle, although testifying to the importance of angels in the mythology of gnostic ideas, also downplays their importance as role models. It thus stands opposite that other great myth cycle, that of the vision of the transformed sage, which we have seen provided most of the symbolism used to describe angels, and which saw angels as positive models for human emulation. The angelic life is therefore not at all prominent in the Nag Hammadi library, although there was clearly some contact with ideas linked to it. As in the writings of Paul, it must be the case that use of the Watchers myth in these circles spoiled any possible interest in angels, whilst in Qumran, or in early Syriac Patristic literature, the transformative tradition took precedence over the Watchers myth in the field of angelology, especially as the Watchers myth came to be interpreted as a reference to human beings rather than angels.

One tradition, however, utilised both myths, and also played a very prominent role in both Syriac-speaking areas and in Egypt: Manichaeism. Importantly, in Manichaean texts we can see the notion of singleness and return to an original unity being expressed in angelological terms.

5.4.2 The Place of Manichaean Texts

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often have assumed, but equally with practical issues – specifically, issues concerning sexual behaviour: marriage, procreation, celibacy".

Manichaeaism was an aggressive and successful missionary religion. It seems to have been both consciously syncretistic and deliberately multilingual. Its heyday was the third century, when Christianity was gathering strength and the Nag Hammadi texts were presumably being written.

The discovery of the *Cologne Mani Codex* (*CMC*) has revealed to us salient facts about Mani's early life and his graduation to the status of a bringer of heavenly truth. The young Mani grew up in a Baptist community. His background was a mixture of Roman and Persian, Semitic and Graeco-Roman cultural influences.

In chapter 4 we examined the Manichaean texts which discuss the angelic transformation of the righteous (§4.9); it is clear that this Syriac notion is central to the Manichaean understanding of the afterlife. Likewise it is apparent that these ideas were translated into Coptic very early and then disseminated in Egypt as part of a missionary effort. The impact of non-catholic (i.e. gnostic or Manichaean) traditions upon early Egyptian Christianity is unclear. Certainly the old view that early Egyptian Christianity was 'heretical' is no longer accepted; indeed it suggests a dichotomy between orthodoxy and heresy which for this period is anachronistic and simplistic. Yet we do not yet have a clear picture of the religious situation in pre-Athanasian Egypt. This raises the question of the role of Manichaeism. Recent discoveries in Kellis have underlined the mainstream nature of Manichaeism in the fourth century, suggesting that it may have had some influence upon the populace at large. As a basically ascetic religion it may well have had an impact upon early Egyptian monasticism, and this has been suggested.[275]

Considering the importance of the notion of angelic transformation to Egyptian Christian asceticism (which we shall deal with below, §§5.6.1 & 5.6.2), and the fact that the idea seems to be found in Syriac texts and Coptic texts with a Syrian origin, Manichaeism was quite possibly the vehicle for transmission or this and related ideas.

5.5 Other early Christian writers and their view of the angelic life

5.5.1 Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215)

Clement, the 'Christian gnostic', showed a deep interest in the transformation of the human state that he believed Christianity could bring about. His philosophical outlook is informed by two traditions, the Syro-Mesopotamian Christian tradition we have so far examined, and Graeco-Roman Stoicism.[276]

The outcome of this is a kind of proleptic understanding of the angelic transformation of the Christian. Christians upon earth were occupied in perfecting their bodies until they reached a state wherein they would be transformed (at death it seems) into angelic beings; they then progressed through the hierarchy until they reached the state of archangels. I will present some quotations in order to demonstrate its importance as a witness to the attitudes of an educated Christian towards the afterlife state.

Clement used the imagery of the Graeco-Roman mystery cult as a call to the heathen to embrace the Christian faith.

> Ὢ τῶν ἁγίων ὡς ἀληθῶς μυστηρίων, ὢ φωτὸς ἀκηράτου. Δᾳδουχοῦμαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὸν Θεὸν ἐποπτεῦσαι, ἅγιος γίνομαι μυούμενος, ἱεροφαντεῖ δὲ ὁ κύριος καὶ τὸν μύστην σφραγίζεται φωταγωγῶν, καὶ παρατίθεται τῷ πατρὶ τὸν πεπιστευκότα αἰῶσι τηρούμενον. Ταῦτα τῶν ἐμῶν μυστηρίων τὰ βακχεύματα · εἰ βούλει, καὶ σὺ μυοῦ, καὶ χορεύσεις μετ' ἀγγέλων ἀμφὶ τὸν ἀγέννητον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον καὶ μόνον ὄντως Θεόν, σύνυμνοῦντος ἡμῖν τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου.
> (*Protrepticus* XII.cxx.1-2)[277]
>
> O truly sacred mysteries, O pure light. I am a torchbearer, I look at the heavens and God[278], being initiated I become holy and the Lord is the

[275] See G. Stroumsa, "The Manichaean Challenge to Egyptian Christianity", in James E. Goehring & B.A. Pearson (eds.) *Roots of Egyptian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

[276] See M. Spanneut, *Le Stoicisme des pères de l'église de Clément de Rome à Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969).

[277] All Greek quotations of Clement of Alexandria from H. I. Marrou, M. Harl, C. Mondesert & C. Matray (ed.) *Clément d'Alexandrie. Le pédagogue* (3 vols.; *SC* 70, 108, 158; Paris: Cerf, 1960-70).

[278] On the importance of the sight of God as part of a transformative mystical ascent experience and the use of the ἐποπτεῦσαι as a technical term connected with mystery cults and transformative experiences see: Cf. Alan Segal "Hellenistic Magic: Some Questions of Definition", in R. Van Den Broek & M.J. Vermaseren (eds.) *Studies in Gnosticism and Hellenistic Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1981) 353-4, on the transformative ascent vision in PGM IV.475-829; also 2 Cor 3:17-18: ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν οὗ δὲ τὸ πνεῦμα κυρίου, ἐλευθερία. ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι τὴν αὐτὴν

> hierophant, and seals the initiated one while illuminating (him), and sets him who was faithful before the Father to be always watched over. These are my Bacchic mysteries. If it is the wish, then you are initiated, and you will form the chorus with the angels around the unborn and indestructible and one (*monon*) real God, will be hymning together with the Word of God.

Clearly Clement's view of the angelic state of the resurrected Christian involved him or her joining the heavenly choirs. He could not have got that idea from the Gospels alone; he combined ideas found in the Pseudepigrapha with ideas found in the angel afterlife passages mentioned above (Mt 20:30 *et al.*). To join the heavenly choir should be the ultimate aim of the true gnostic Christian.[279] Moreover, as in other early Christian ascetic schemes, celibacy assumed primary importance in the translation of the Christian into the ranks of the angelic choirs. Clement quotes Matthew 24:30 to make his point about the importance of chastity:[280]

> Μὴ δὴ ἅμα χιτῶνι ἀποδυομένῳ ἀποδυσώμεθα καὶ τὴν αἰδῶ ποτε, ἐπεὶ οὐδέποτε τῷ δικαίῳ σωφροσύνην ἀποδύσασθαι θέμις. Ἰδοὺ γὰρ τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο ἐπενδύσεται ἀφθαρσίαν, ὁπηνίκα ἂν τὸ ἀκόρεστον τῆς ἐπιθυμίας, τὸ εἰς ἀσέλγειαν ῥέον, ἐγκρατείᾳ παιδαγωγούμενον, ἀνέραστον γενόμενον τῆς φθορᾶς, ἀιδίῳ σωφροσύνῃ παραχωρήσῃ τὸν ἄνθρωπον «Ἐν γὰρ τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ γαμοῦσι καὶ γαμίσκονται«, καταργήσαντες δὲ τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς ἔργα, αὐτῇ καθαρᾷ τῇ σαρκὶ ἐπενδυσάμενοι τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν τὸ πρὸς μέτρον τῶν ἀγγέλων διώκομεν. (*Paedagogus*, II.x.100.2-4)[281]
>
> Do not, I pray, put off modesty at the same time that you put off your clothes; because it is never right for the just man to divest himself of continence. For, lo, this mortal shall put on immortality; when the insatiableness of desire, which rushes into licentiousness, being trained to self-restraint, and made free from love of corruption, shall consign the man to everlasting chastity. "For in this world they marry and are given in marriage". (Mt 22:30) But having done with the works of the flesh, and having been clothed with immortality, the flesh itself being pure, we pursue after that which is according to the measure of the angels. (*ANF* modified.)

εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν, καθάπερ ἀπὸ κυρίου πνεύματος. When Origen discusses the progress of the human soul towards perfection, he sees the evidence of it in the increased ability of the practitioner to perceive things (*de Principiis* I.viii.4); see also G. Quispel, "Transformation through Vision in Jewish Gnosticism and The Cologne Mani Codex", *VigChr* 49 (1995) 189-191.

279 *Protrepticus*, *SC* 2: XII, 120, 2.

280 See also *Strom.* III.6.47-48.

281 *SC* 108 (Paris: Cerf, 1965).

Anticipating later Monastic literature Clement metaphorically equated the Word of God with the food of the angels, and those who partake of it are transformed into angels.

> . . . καὶ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ λόγου πεφανέρωται ὡς γάλα . . . οὐ γὰρ ὡς αἱ πηγαὶ πλήρεις εἰσὶν οἱ μαστοὶ ἐπεισρέοντος ἑτοίμου γάλακτος, ἀλλὰ μεταβάλλοντες τὴν τροφὴν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐργάζονται γάλα καὶ διαπνέουσιν. . . . οἷον τὸ μάννα οὐρανόθεν ἐπερρέετο τοῖς παλαιοῖς Ἑβραίοις, ἡ τῶν ἀγγέλων ἐπουράνιος τροφή. (*Paedagogus* I.vi.40.2- 41.3)[282]
>
> . . . the blood of the Word has been also revealed as milk ... For the breasts are not like fountains full of milk, flowing in ready for consumption, but, transforming the food into milk, express it. . . . as *manna* flowing, celestially, down upon the ancient Hebrews, the angels' heavenly food.

He then goes on to say: Τὰ μὲν γὰρ βρώματα καταργεῖται, ᾗ φησιν ὁ ἀπόστολος αὐτός, ἡ δὲ διὰ γάλακτος τροφὴ εἰς οὐρανοὺς καθηγεῖται, πολίτας οὐρανῶν καὶ συγχορευτὰς ἀγγέλων ἀναθρεψαμένη.[283]

Clement also makes the connection between wakefulness and the heavenly Watchers.

> «Ἔστωσαν«, γάρ φησιν, «ὑμῶν αἱ ὀσφύες περιεζωσμέναι καὶ οἱ λύχνοι καιόμενοι καὶ ὑμεῖς ὅμοιοι ἀνθρώποις προσδεχομένοις τὸν κύριον αὐτῶν, πότε ἀναλύσει ἐκ τῶν γάμων, ἵνα ἐλθόντος καὶ κρούσαντος ἀνοίξωσιν εὐθέως αὐτῷ. Μακάριοι οἱ δοῦλοι ἐκεῖνοι, οὓς ἐλθὼν ὁ κύριος ἐγρηγορότας εὕρῃ.« Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀνδρὸς ὄφελος καθεύδοντος ὥσπερ οὐδὲ τεθνεῶτος. Διὸ πολλάκις καὶ τῆς νυκτὸς ἀνεγερτέον τῆς κοίτης καὶ τὸν θεὸν εὐλογητέον μακάριοι γὰρ οἱ ἐγρηγορότες εἰς αὐτόν, σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ἀπεικάζοντες ἀγγέλοις, οὓς ἐγρηγόρους καλοῦμεν. «Καθεύδων δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐδεὶς οὐδενὸς ἄξιος, οὐδὲν μᾶλλον τοῦ μὴ ζῶντος « (*Paedagogus* II.ix.79.1-3)[284]
>
> For it is said, "Let your loins be girt about, and your lamps burning; and ye yourselves like to man that watch for their lord, that when he returns from the marriage and comes and knocks, they may straightway open to him. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching" (Luke 12:33-7). For there is no use of a sleeping man, as there is not of a dead man. Therefore we should often and in the night rise up from sleeping in the bed and praise God. For blessed are they who watch for Him, and so make themselves like

282 *SC* 158 (Paris: Cerf, 1970).

283 "For meats are done away with" (=? 1 Cor 6:13), as the apostle said. But this food of milk leads to the heavens, supporting citizens of heaven and angelic choristers": *Paedagogus* I.vi.45.2, *SC* 70 (Paris: Cerf, 1960).

284 *SC* 108.

> the angels (*aggeloi*), whom we call "watchers" (*egrēgorous*). "But a man asleep is worth nothing, any more than if he were not living". (*ANF* [modified])

Sleep is a weakness required by the body. By practising keeping the soul ever-focused upon God the ideal Christian brought himself up to an angelic status.

> Χρὴ δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ πᾶσιν εἰδέναι, ὡς οὐ ψυχῆς τὸ δεόμενον ὕπνου ἐστίν–ἀεικίνητος γὰρ αὕτη–, ἀλλὰ τὸ σῶμα ἀναπαύλαις διαβασταζόμενον παρίεται, μὴ ἐνεργούσης ἔτι σωματικῶς τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀλλὰ καθ' αὑτὴν ἐννοουμένης ... ψυχῆς δὲ ὄλεθρος τὸ ἀτρεμῆσαι αὐτήν διόπερ ἀεὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐννοουμένη διὰ τῆς συνεχοῦς προσομιλήσεως ἐγκαταλέγουσα τῷ σώματι τὴν ἐγρήγορσιν ἀγγελικῇ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐξισάζει χάριτι, τῆς ζωῆς τὸ αἰδιον ἐκ τῆς τοῦ ἐγρηγορέναι μελέτης προσλαμβάνουσα. (*Paedagogus* II.ix.82.1-3)[285]

> And in addition to all, we must know this, that the need of sleep is not in the soul. For it is ceaselessly active. But the body, by being supported in relaxing, is rested; the soul does not act in a bodily manner, but, is self-conscious. ... For the soul to cease from activity within itself, would destroy it. Therefore always contemplating God through constant conversation with Him leads the wakeful body into angelic grace, by practicing wakefulness the eternal life is grasped.

The true Christian kept company with the angels; thus in an echo of Jewish ideas concerning the angelic life (such as those found in the Dead Sea Scrolls), the true Christian is exhorted to maintain purity, whilst he prays alongside his heavenly brethren.

> Ταύτῃ καθαρὸς εἰς εὐχὴν πάντοτε. ὃ δὲ καὶ μετ' ἀγγέλων εὔχεται, ὡς ἂν ἤδη καὶ «ἰσάγγελος«, οὐδὲ ἔξω ποτὲ τῆς ἁγίας φρουρᾶς γίνεται κἂν μόνος εὔχηται, τὸν τῶν ἁγίων χορὸν συνιστάμενον ἔχει. (*Stromata* VII.xii.78.5-6)[286]

> So is he always pure for prayer. He also prays in the society of angels, as being already of angelic rank, and he is never out of their keeping; and though he prays alone, he has the choir of the saints standing with him. (*ANF* [modified])

Likewise Clement claims that the battle against the spiritual forces of physical temptation, a distinctive part of the later Egyptian monastic tradition and an angelic role, leads to an

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[285] *SC* 108.

[286] O. Stählin, L. Früchtel & U. Treu (ed.) *Clemens Alexandrinus* III (*GCS*, 17; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1970).

immortal state. Using language later taken over by the monastic tradition[287], Clement talks of the ideal Christian as an athlete.

> Οὗτός ἐστιν, οὗτος ὁ ἀθλητὴς ἀληθῶς ὁ ἐν τῷ μεγάλῳ σταδίῳ, τῷ καλῷ κόσμῳ, τὴν ἀληθινὴν νίκην κατὰ πάντων στεφανούμενος τῶν παθῶν. ὅ τε γὰρ ἀγωνοθέτης ὁ παντοκράτωρ θεός, ὅ τε βραβευτὴς ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, θεαταὶ δὲ ἄγγελοι καὶ θεοί, καὶ τὸ παγκράτιον τὸ πάμμαχον «οὐ πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα«, ἀλλὰ τὰς διὰ σαρκῶν ἐνεργούσας «πνευματικὰς ἐξουσίας« ἐμπαθῶν παθῶν τούτων περιγινόμενος τῶν μεγάλων ἀνταγωνισμάτων, καὶ οἷον ἄθλους τινὰς τοῦ πειράζοντος ἐπαρτῶντος καταγωνισάμενος, ἐκράτησε τῆς ἀθανασίας. (*Stromata* VII.iii.20.3-5)[288]

> This is the true athlete – he who in the great stadium, the fair world, is crowned for the true victory over all passions. For He who prescribes the contest is the Almighty God, and He who awards the prize is the only-begotten Son of God. Angels and gods are spectators; and the contest, embracing all the varied exercises, is "not against flesh and blood" (Eph 6:12), but against the spiritual powers of inordinate passions that work through the flesh. He who obtains the mastery in these struggles, and overthrows the tempter, menacing, as it were, with certain contests, wins immortality. (*ANF* [modified])

So far we have seen that Clement's thinking about the nature of the transformation that Christianity effected upon the human body was very much informed by the same kind of tradition that Syriac Christian writers used. The background to his approach is in the pseudepigraphic accounts of angelic transformation, the transformations of Patriarchs (in particular Moses) in the Bible, and the Gospel angelic afterlife passages. It would be strange to imagine that he did not have some knowledge of the attitudes concerning the angelic life that were arising in roughly this time in Syriac-speaking areas, but this was before the time of the great Syriac Patristic writers, and the heritage of Jewish literature that both shared in was able to provide all the material that Clement needed to work with. Yet Clement had an extensive education. He sat at the feet of the great Pantaenus, a Stoic Christian who is supposed to have travelled as far as India in his missionary journeys before taking over the Catechetical School in Alexandria; he may also have been taught by Tatian, the writer of the Diatessaron gospel harmony and the early exemplar, *par excellence*, of

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287 On the ascetic as an athlete in Greek and Syriac literature see Murray, *Symbols* 198 & nn.
288 *GCS* 17.

Syriac Christian spirituality.[289] Clement reports in the *Stromata* that he was taught by many different teachers: a Greek in Ionia who was originally from Coele-Syria; a teacher in Magna Graecia who was from Egypt; another from Assyria and another who was a Hebrew from Palestine. The first teacher has been identified with Tatian.[290] Clement goes on to claim that these men preserved "the tradition of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles, Peter, James, John and Paul, the sons receiving it from the father."[291] He therefore believed that he was transmitting doctrines that came out of the earliest apostolic circles, a teaching that was essentially oral.[292] Moreover much of this doctrine had been preserved by Semitic Christians. Possibly, then, he was not so removed from the thought of Syriac Christians in this period. Indeed, as Brown points out, there was considerable commercial contact between Alexandria and Palestine at this time.[293] Clement would not have been alone in having contact with Semitic Christian thought. Indeed, the impact of Semitic, Jewish-Christian ideas upon Clement's community caused him to write a tract (since lost) *Against Judaisers*.[294]

The key to his approach is its search for ideal models to imitate. For Clement, as for the Syriac ascetics, the patriarchs, angels and also Christ, were models for emulation. His emphasis upon imitation of the Lord is, as mentioned above, an idea first found in Ignatius, who wrote in Greek, but in a Syriac-speaking area.

> Ὡς ἂν οὖν ἐπ' ἄκρον γνώσεως ἥκειν βιαζόμενος, τῷ ἤθει κεκοσμημένος, τῷ σχήματι κατεσταλμένος, πάντα ἐκεῖνα ἔχων ὅσα πλεονεκτήματά ἐστιν τοῦ κατ' ἀλήθειαν γνωστικοῦ, εἰς τὰς εἰκόνας ἀφορῶν τὰς καλάς, πολλοὺς μὲν τοὺς κατωρθωκότας πρὸ αὐτοῦ πατριάρχας, παμπόλλους δὲ προφήτας, ἀπείρους δ' ὅσους ἡμῖν ἀριθμῷ λογιζόμενος ἀγγέλους καὶ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι κύριον τὸν διδάξαντα καὶ παραστήσαντα δυνατὸν εἶναι τὸν κορυφαῖον ἐκεῖνον κτήσασθαι βίον, διὰ τοῦτο τὰ πρόχειρα πάντα τοῦ κόσμου καλὰ οὐκ ἀγαπᾷ, ἵνα μὴ καταμείνῃ χαμαί,

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289 On Panataeus' travels and Stoicism see Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, V.10; Christians in India~~n~~ probably refers to the Syriac Christians on the Malabar coast now known as Mar Thomas Christians.

290 Cf. R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (London: OUP: 1971).

291 Ἀλλ' οἳ μὲν τὴν ἀληθῆ τῆς μακαρίας σῴζοντες διδασκαλίας παράδοσιν εὐθὺς ἀπὸ Πέτρου τε καὶ Ἰακώβου Ἰωάννου τε καὶ Παύλου τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων, παῖς παρὰ πατρὸς ἐκδεχόμενος: *Stromata* I.1; Eusebius repeats all this in his *Ecclesiastical History*, V.11.

292 Clement sees book-learning as a poor substitute for oral instruction, see *Strom.* I.

293 Brown, *Body* 124.

294 See F.L Cross, *The Early Christian Fathers* (London: Duckworth, 1960) 122.

> ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐλπιζόμενα, μᾶλλον δὲ τὰ ἐγνωσμένα ἤδη, εἰς κατάληψιν δὲ ἐλπιζόμενα. (*Stromata* VII.xi.63.1-2)[295]
>
> Striving, then, to attain to the summit of knowledge (*gnosis*); decorous in character; composed in mien; possessing all those advantages which belong to the true Gnostic; fixing his gaze on fair models, on the many patriarchs who have lived rightly, and on very many prophets and angels reckoned without number, and above all, on the Lord, who taught and showed it to be possible for him to attain that highest life of all – he therefore loves not all the good things of the world, which are within his grasp, that he may not remain on the ground, but the things hoped for, or rather already known, being hoped for so as to be apprehended. (*ANF* modified)[296]

Clement, however, was not informed only by Jewish ideas nor only by the Gospels. He also tapped into a strong vein of Stoic thought. This was a philosophy with a strong ascetical bent, and an appeal to the middle and upper classes, Clement's target audience. Peter Brown noted that Clement's asceticism was aimed at a complete transcendence of the passions (*apatheia*), rather than simply self-control.[297] This transcendent state was compared to that which Moses entered when he stood on Mt Sinai for forty days.[298]

Clement, like Philo before him, saw Graeco-Roman philosophical ideas embedded in biblical passages. Thus of Ephesians 4:13:

> Καὶ δὴ τῆς κατὰ τὸν γνωστικὸν ἡμῖν ὡς εἰπεῖν ἀπαθείας, καθ' ἣν ἡ τελείωσις τοῦ πιστοῦ δι' ἀγάπης «εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας« προβαίνουσα ἀφικνεῖται, ἐξομοιουμένη θεῷ, «ἰσάγγελος« ἀληθῶς γενομένη, πολλὰ μὲν καὶ ἄλλα ἐκ γραφῆς μαρτύρια ἔπεισι παρατίθεσθαι, ἄμεινον δὲ οἶμαι ὑπερθέσθαι τὴν τοιαύτην φιλοτιμίαν διὰ τὸ μῆκος τοῦ λόγου, τοῖς πονεῖν ἐθέλουσι καὶ προσεκπονεῖν τὰ δόγματα κατ' ἐκλογὴν τῶν γραφῶν ἐπιτρέψαντα. (*Stromata* VII.xiv.84.2-3)[299]
>
> Now, of what I may call the passionlessness (*apatheia*) which we attribute to the Gnostic (in which the perfection of the believer, "advancing by love, comes to a perfect man, to the measure of full stature" (Eph 4:13) by being assimilated to God, and by becoming truly angelic, many other testimonies from the Scripture occur to me to adduce. But I think it better, on account of the length of the discourse, that such an honour should be devolved on those who wish

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295 *GCS* 17.

296 For imitation of the Lord as the goal of Christians see also *Strom.* I.1.

297 Brown, *Body* 31 & 129f. Brown deals with the debt Clement owed to Stoicism, cf. *Body* 128-130.

298 Brown, *Body*, 31 commenting upon *Stromata* III.7.57.

299 *GCS* 17; see also *Strom.* VI.13.

> to take pains, and leave it to them to elaborate the dogmas by the selection of scriptures.

According to Clement, then, all true Christians are on a path towards angelic perfection. The journey begins upon earth and ends with the transformation of the believer into first an angel, then an archangel.[300] He uses the term *isaggelos* to refer to those who are transformed and made like angels. This term is originally found in Luke in the description given of the afterlife state of the righteous, it is not found in the other Gospel passages which contain this passage (cf. Mt 22:29-31; Mk 12:24-25; Lk 20:34-36). That Clement was using a term derived from Luke is significant, because Origen was doing the same (cf. n312) and it seems also that the 'this-wordly' orientation of this passage was important to the early development of Christian asceticism (see the discussion below, §5.7.1). For Clement knowledge (*gnosis*) brought transformation: "For if one knows himself, he will know God; and knowing God, he will be made like God, not by wearing gold or long robes, but by well-doing, and by requiring as few things as possible."[301]

How realized, then, was Clement's Christian existence? Were his perfect Christians really transformed here, on earth, into angels? Certainly he seemed to believe they could achieve a transcendent state upon earth, passionless and immune to the temptations of the flesh.

> Καί μοι δοκεῖ πρώτη τις εἶναι μεταβολὴ σωτήριος ἡ ἐξ ἐθνῶν εἰς πίστιν, ὡς προεῖπον, δευτέρα δὲ ἡ ἐκ πίστεως εἰς γνῶσιν ἣ δέ, εἰς ἀγάπην περαιουμένη, ἐνθένδε ἤδη φίλον φίλῳ τὸ γιγνῶσκον τῷ γιγνωσκομένῳ παρίστησιν. καὶ τάχα ὁ τοιοῦτος ἐνθένδε ἤδη προλαβὼν ἔχει τὸ «ἰσάγγελος« εἶναι. (*Stromata* VII.x.57.4-5)[302]
>
> And, in my view, the first saving change is that from heathenism to faith, as I said before; and the second, that from faith to knowledge. And the latter terminating in love, thereafter gives the loving to the loved, that which knows to that which is known. And, perchance, such a one has already attained the condition of "being equal to the angels" (Lk 20:36).

Clement's perfect Christians seem to have been transformed in some fashion (for unlike Aphrahat's ascetics they may indeed have been shamed by the thought of feeling hunger or

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300 *Prophet.* 57.

301 Ἑαυτὸν γάρ τις ἐὰν γνῷ, θεὸν εἴσεται, θεὸν δὲ εἰδὼς ἐξομοιωθήσεται θεῷ, οὐ χρυσοφορῶν οὐδὲ ποδηροφορῶν, ἀλλὰ ἀγαθοεργῶν καὶ ὅτι μάλιστα ὀλιγίστων δεόμενος, *Paedagogus* III.i.1.1. See also *Stromata* IV.25.

302 *GCS* 17.

other human weakness [cf. §5.2.2 n113]); they were somehow equal to angels whilst on earth. They were not, however, actually angelic beings, at least not yet. Not only is Clement's language informed by Stoicism. His entire approach to conversion is defined by what can only be termed a flirtation with gnosticism and gnostic language used in a highly metaphorical fashion. Whilst paying metaphorical and terminological lip-service to the idea of bodily transformation, he was actually no more enamoured of it than Aphrahat would be.

> Διὸ κἀκεῖνο ἐπήγαγεν «ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἔτι νῦν δύνασθε, ἔτι γὰρ σαρκικοί ἐστε«, τὰ τῆς σαρκὸς φρονοῦντες, ἐπιθυμοῦντες, ἐρῶντες, ζηλοῦντες, μηνιῶντες, φθονοῦντες οὐ γὰρ <ὅτι> ἔτι ἐν σαρκί ἐσμεν, ὡς ὑπειλήφασί τινες σὺν αὐτῇ γὰρ τὸ πρόσωπον ἰσάγγελον ἔχοντες πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν ὀψόμεθα. Πῶς δέ, εἰ ἐκείνη ὄντως ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία μετὰ τὴν ἐνθένδε ἀπαλλαγήν, «ἣν ὀφθαλμὸς οὐκ εἶδεν οὐδὲ ἐπὶ νοῦν ἀνθρώπου [οὐκ] ἀνέβη«, εἰδέναι φασὶν οὐ πνεύματι ἐννενοηκότες, ἀλλὰ ἐκ μαθήσεως παρειληφότες «ὃ οὖς οὐκ ἤκουσέν ποτε« ἢ μόνον ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἐν τρίτῳ ἁρπασθὲν οὐρανῷ: Ἀλλὰ κἀκεῖνο ἐχεμυθεῖν ἐκελεύετο τότε.
> (*Paedagogus* I.vi.36.6-37.2)[303]
>
> Wherefore also he [*viz*. Paul] has added, "neither yet are ye now able, for ye are still carnal," minding the things of the flesh, desiring, loving, feeling jealousy, wrath, envy. "For we are no more in the flesh" (Rom 8:9) as some suppose. For with it (they say), having the face which is like an angel we shall see the promise face to face. How then, if that is truly the promise after our departure hence, say they that know "what eye hath not know, nor hath entered into the mind of man", who have not perceived by the spirit, but received from instruction "what ear hath not heard", (1 Cor 2:9) or that ear alone which "was rapt up into the third heaven?" (2 Cor 12:2-4). But it even then was commanded to preserve it unspoken. (*ANF* [modified])

The angelic transformation is thus one that is anticipated upon earth but only truly realised after death. We can attain likeness unto the angels, but we are separated from them by the vesture of the body and time.[304] The true gnostic Christian is charged to carry out an angelic ministry whilst in the flesh.[305] Clement was working in an environment permeated with Syriac-derived Encratism and Valentinian gnosticism. He was opposed to both approaches, but instead of attacking them head-on, he adopted a more elliptical approach. In regard to Encratism we can see that he followed the Encratites in the prominence he gave chastity and continence. Yet Clement was above all a moderate man; celibacy was ideal, but

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303 *SC* 70.

304 *Strom.* IV.3.

sex, if performed in the correct manner (without passion), was entirely acceptable. He proposed a Christianity that could exist within contemporary society, rather than outside it. He seems to have seen his ideal Christian state as a state achieved over a lifetime; his Christian transformation was gradual rather than sudden; he subverted the Encratite ideal by accepting its ultimate premise whilst rejecting its timetable.

Clement's work thus demonstrates clearly the importance of the motif of angelic transformation to his thought. He was heir to the same traditions that the major texts in the early Syriac ascetic tradition used. Like the Syriac writers he also shied away from a belief that the angelic life, in particular in the realised form that it seems to have taken in Luke's gospel, meant that Christians upon earth were actually transformed. As we have seen any such belief presented a threat to Church authority. It supposed that an individual could achieve the afterlife state whilst upon earth and thus left little space for either Church hierarchy or sacraments. It was also predicated upon the notion that through the exercise of freewill an individual could achieve an angelic status. This could also act as a threat to the Church as an institution, as it also left little for the sacraments of the Church in the scheme of salvation. This second aspect, however, seems not to have worried Clement.[306] In Origen's writings we can see the role of freewill in the salvation scheme of Christians taken one step further, a step that later led to the Origenist school of asceticism and accusations of heresy. Origen's work was more immediate, more radical, his positive attitude towards continence well illustrated by his supposed self-castration. He built upon the writings of Clement, using some of the imagery and ideas that Clement seems to have mostly taken from Syriac Christian thought, but without all of the necessary caution that Clement seems to have employed. Most important to Origen's thought was the notion of the importance of freewill in the salvation scheme.

5.5.2 Origen (185-254)

Origen's view of the angels and the possibility of human translation to an angelic state was part and parcel of his anthropology and soteriology. As we saw in §3.2.3 his was the primary literary exposition of the view of angels as simply being souls in a particular

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[305] *Prophet.* 37.

[306] Clement makes much of the importance of free will as both the cause of humanity's present predicament and its correct exercise as the solution; see *Strom.* I.17; II.15.

position in the heavenly hierarchy. The discussion in chapter 3 is sufficient to demonstrate the relationship of Origen's ideas to the notion of the angelic life or angelic transformation; they will not be reexamined here. Here his ideas about the angelic afterlife will be related to the ascetic notion of the angelic life upon this earth. Although Origen did not specifically discuss this issue,[307] there is a necessary relationship between the belief in an angelic afterlife and an angelic life on earth. This means that his views are closely related to the complex of ideas which gave rise to the ascetic angelic life.[308] In fact, as we have seen, a connection between the angelic afterlife and the (ascetic) angelic life upon earth is the logical outcome of the various unsystematised beliefs that his contemporaries held about angels. If not stated clearly it is nonetheless the case that this was the underlying assumption behind the beliefs about the nature of angels held by Manichaeans (particularly in the *Psalm Book*); by Philo; by other Jews in the late Second Temple period (largely as a consequence of the development of ideas concerning evil, sin, salvation, the fall and the robe of glory); and also in early Syriac Christianity.

Origen's primary legacy has been his view of the nature of salvation. It was certainly the area that Patristic writers most took issue with. Origen's works struck a vein of popular interest and spread widely until the publication in 375 of Epiphanius of Salamis' anti-heretical tract *Panarion* in which Origen received harsh treatment, in particular for his view of salvation.[309] Origen, like Clement, was in many ways an apologist for Classicism; his views thus clashed on occasion with the prevailing viewpoint in circles of Christian intelligensia. For instance he held that God was bound by some external forces; he could not do anything that was against his divine nature: thus he denied the validity of Celsus' criticism of the use of divine omnipotence by Christians as the fall-back position whenever the tenets of Christianity seemed illogical, such as the doctrine of the resurrection of the body.[310] Origen was actually out of step with his colleagues. His attempt to systematise notions of

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[307] Although in *In Numeros* 11.9 he suggests that the praying Christian can sense the yearning of the angels that he join them in their heavenly worship of God.

[308] See the discussion by Frank, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ* 124-130; who states (p.124): "Die Suche nach dem Ursprung der monastischen Askese setz immer wieder bei Origenes ein."

[309] See Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, 1992) 86-104.

[310] Yet it is clear that other Christians were using divine omnipotence in this fashion. Henry Chadwick notes that Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and the *Apocalypse of Peter* all rely on the notion of God's absolute omnipotence as an explanation for the absurdities in the Christian doctrine of the

salvation was unwelcome in the early Christian scene. His logical, reason-based approach left Christianity open to attack in areas of its philosophy that it did not feel inclined to defend with the tools of reason. What Origen said explicitly, or reasonably explicitly, others implied or else perhaps subconsciously relied upon, but left unstated or at least unsystematised.

It was Origen's conception of the body that lay at the heart of his salvation theory. It was essentially an attempt to regularise popular notions of the body and afterlife. Origen believed the body to be in a constant process of change. In a Platonic manner he saw physical existence as but a dim reminder of the perfect unchanging Ideal-Types which had given rise to it.[311]

Origen was aiming, much like his gnostic contemporaries and various other ascetically-orientated groups, for a transformation of the human body.[312] Although focused upon the heavens and the afterlife his views on the importance of behaviour in the positioning of souls in the cosmic hierarchy, and his idea that this behaviour could lead to divinisation (after having progressed through the angelic ranks)[313] can only have had a positive impact upon the monks for whom Origen was clearly such an important, if controversial, figure.[314]

The thought of Origen also shows evidence of contact with the idea that human souls could ascend to become angels. This was one of the questions at the heart of the Origenist controversy. Origen believed that all rational creatures had free will and that their position

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fleshly resurrection, "Origen, Celsus and the Resurrection of the Body", *HTR* 41 (1948) 84; Origen criticises other Christians, *simpliciores*, for doing just this in *contra Celsum*, see *ibid*, 85.

311 Brown, *Body* 172; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 64.10; Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (on Epiphanius' views and his use of Methodius' opinions) 89-96, esp. 91, 95.

312 See Brown, *Body* chap. 8 *passim*; see also Frank, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ* 129-130 on the concept of the *isaggelos* in the writings of Origen. The use of this word is important because it is derived from Luke's version of the angelic afterlife passages (the only version which uses the term *isaggelos*, cf. Mt 22:29-31; Mk 12:24-25; Lk 20:34-36). This version (Luke's) has a 'this-wordly' orientation and seems a likely origin for the idea of the celibate angelic life in early Christian asceticism; see the discussion in §5.7.1.

313 See §3.2.3; also on human freewill and the self-determination of their spiritual status, see the preface to *De principiis* I, preface 5.

314 Philip Rousseau, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth Century Egypt* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1999; 1st publ. 1985) 124-5 n23, lamented the lack of studies in this area and suggested the work of J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975) as a starting point; since the original publication of Rousseau's book in 1985 Elizabeth Clark's *The Origenist Controversy* (1992) has provided a much needed comprehensive introduction to the debate; see also

in the cosmic scheme was the result of moral progress.[315] In *De principiis* I.viii.4 he describes the cosmic hierarchy as he sees it. The first order is made up of the angels, powers, seats, dominions, thrones etc, the second order is made up of demons, and the third order is humans. Of human souls Origen said:

> Tertius uero creaturae rationabilis ordo est eorum spirituum, qui ad humanum genus replendum apti iudicantur a deo, id est animae hominum, ex quibus per profectum etiam in illum angelorum ordinem quosdam uidemus assumi. (I.viii.4.144-148)[316]
>
> But the third order of rational creatures is that of those who are judged fit by God to replenish the human race, i.e. the souls of men, assumed in consequence of their moral progress into the order of angels.

Indeed the angels themselves have been placed in their stations in the heavens as a result of their behaviour. It seems, then, that Origen's radical belief in freewill led him to a position in support of the belief in transmigration of the soul. In *Contra Celsum* he is quite clear in stressing his belief that human beings can graduate through the spiritual ranks to become angels; he quotes Matthew 22:30 and Luke 20:36 in support of his position and goes on to say that we can even join the ranks of the uppermost heavenly beings such as thrones, dominions, powers and principalities,[317] although he seems to extend a cautionary note to those who think they can achieve union with God.

Origen was opposed by more 'orthodox' Christians on a couple of points. Epiphanius asked how a soul could be resurrected without the flesh when souls, by their very nature, never die. What, then, is there to resurrect?[318] As Elizabeth Clark points out in her study of the Origenist controversy, one of the most important arguments that Epiphanius used against the separation of body and soul in Origen's work was a moral argument: if a human being is not the body and soul together, but only the soul, then sins can be explained away as the acts of the body, as being somehow separate from the acts of the human soul.[319]

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her "The Place of Jerome's Commentary on Ephesians in the Origenist Controversy: the Apokatastasis and Ascetic Ideals", *VigChr* 41 (1987) 154-171.

315 *De Princ.* I, V, 3.

316 H. Crouzel & M. Simonetti (ed. & trans.) *Origène. Traité des Principes* I (*SC* 252; Paris: Cerf, 1978).

317 *CC* IV. XXIX.

318 Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 86, cf. Clark, *Origenist* 88-9.

319 Clark, *Origenist* 89.

The main divide, however, between Origen and Epiphanius was expressed in terms of a question of approach to scripture. In the great Alexandrian Hellenistic tradition, following in the footsteps of the likes of Philo, Origen interpreted the Old Testament allegorically; thus the tunic of skins in Genesis 3:21 was seen by him as the body, and the fall of the angels in Genesis 6 was seen as allegory for the descent of human souls into bodies. Epiphanius opposed anything but a literal interpretation of such passages.[320]

5.5.3 Methodius of Olympus (d.311)

Methodius of Olympus in his *Symposium* attempted, in reply to Origenist beliefs, to reconcile an immortal angelic state with the New Testament belief in a bodily resurrection. First the righteous will be resurrected in what Methodius calls the "Tabernacle of the Body", and then after the "Millennium of Rest" he says that: "the tabernacle of my body will not remain the same, but after the Millennium it will be changed from its human appearance and corruption to angelic grandeur and beauty."[321] Certainly Methodius is acquainted with the interpretation of the New Testament passages which mention the righteous being like angels (Mt 20:30, Mk 12:25, Lk 20:35-6) in terms of angelic immortality, for he is quite explicit in pointing out that these passages refer to chastity and the emulation of angels, rather than actual transformation into an angel. He says:

> Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ οὐδέπω συγκεχώρηκε παρθενίας τυχεῖν, τοὺς δὲ καὶ οὐκέται βούλεται χραίνεσθαι φοινισσομένους ἐρεθισμοῖς, ἀλλὰ μελετᾶν ἀπεντεῦθεν ἤδη καὶ φαντάζεσθαι τὴν ἰσάγγελον μεταστοι χείωσιν τῶν σωμάτων, ἔνθα ‹‹οὔτε γαμοῦσιν οὔτε γαμίσκονται›› (*Symposium*, 2 [Theophila] 7.32-36)
>
> To some it has never been given to attain virginity, while for others it is His wish that they no longer defile themselves by lustful provocations, but that henceforth they strive to preoccupy their minds with that angelic transformation of the body wherein 'they neither marry nor are married' (Mt 22:30) (*Symposium*, 2 [Theophila] 7).

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[320] Clark, *Origenist* 88 and 91; citing Epiphanius, *Anc.*58, 62; *Pan.* 64, 63.

[321] Methodius, *Symposium* 9:5.

Those who practised virginity even gained, according to Methodius, what he called 'wings of chastity' which, in metaphorical fashion enabled them to soar with the angels.[322]

Methodius' challenge to Origen illustrates the central importance of the imagery Origen was using. Although Methodius may have been opposed to the idea of an angelic afterlife it was necessary for him to integrate its imagery into his writing, even if he meant to take away the original significance of the imagery by suggesting it talked of emulation rather than actual transformation. That Methodius chose to reinterpret the angel afterlife passages, and to construe references to the angelic life in metaphorical terms, only serves to demonstrate the importance of streams of thought like that held by Origen which argued on the scriptural basis of the angel afterlife passages that the human body could be transformed, even according to some here on earth, through the imitation of angelic behaviour.

5.6 The Angelic Life in early Egyptian Monasticism

Like Syriac asceticism, Christian Egyptian monasticism emerges from its prehistory in the fourth century, at which time we begin to see texts which we can date and locate reliably. In the monasticism of the fourth century the angelic life assumed some importance. The origins are unclear but there is every possibility that the monks would have been familiar with Syrian and Mesopotamian currents of thought. This interchange could have been direct or indirect, through the thought of Origen or Clement or writings like those found in Nag Hammadi. As in our discussion of Syriac Christian asceticism, our examination of the phenomenon of the Egyptian monastic angelic life is focused upon fourth century texts, in which this attitude to asceticism is most clearly demonstrated. Before the fourth century, however, certain texts show ideas which seem to be precursors to the angelic life.

The documents of the Nag Hammadi library, especially the texts which seem to have come from Syria, but not only those, focused upon ascetic themes current in both Syrian and Egyptian thought in the second and third century. These were themes such as the idea of being 'single', for which concept the term *monachos* was often used and which was surely related to the later use of the same term to refer to Christian monks (see the *Gospel of Thomas*, and *Exegesis on the Soul*); the emphasis upon celibacy and return to a sexless

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[322] *Symp.* 8:2.

Adamic state (*Gospel of Thomas*, *Gospel of Philip*, *Testimony of Truth*, *Exegesis on the Soul*, *Hypostasis of the Archons*); the discussion of the possession of 'names' of authority connected in Jewish literature with the office of the chief angel (*Apocryphon of John*); the emphasis upon celibacy (*Apocryphon of John*); the mention of 'standing' (*Apocryphon of John*, *Testimony of Truth*); the linkage of the state of the fallen angels and their sin with the fate of sinners (*Apocryphon of John*, *Testimony of Truth*) and the discussion of the sin of the fallen angels in the context of discussion of the flood (*Apocryphon of John*). All the texts were primarily concerned with the perfect heavenly state. These texts indicate that there were precursors to the fourth century ascetic angelic life similar to those in contemporary Syria at work in the pre-monastic ascetic thought-world of the Egyptian Christian.[323]

The prodigious literary output of the two second and third century Church Fathers Clement of Alexandria and Origen could not have failed to have had an impact upon the monastic literature discussing the perfect ascetic existence. For Clement and Origen both focused upon the angelic state as the exemplar of the perfect state for all Christians, and the natural ascetic impulse was also to imitate that same state. Thus Clement's focus upon the true Christian joining the angelic choirs hymning God, upon the celibate state of the true Christian, upon watchfulness and its connection to the angelic state, upon imitation of exemplars like Christ, the patriarchs or the angels, and upon transformative motifs (for instance the war against evil spirits is internalised, *Strom.* VII.iii.20.3-5), must have fed into the general body of Christian literature, and particularly ascetic Christian literature. Origen's soteriological scheme (cf. §3.2.3) ensures an emphasis upon the angelic state as one to which the soul should aspire whilst on its climb towards God.

The notion of the angelic life came to prominence in the fourth century Egyptian Christian ascetic literature, just as it was doing in Syriac-speaking areas at the same time. The *Apophthegmata Patrum's* alphabetic collection opens with a tale of Abba Antony (the Great) under attack from sinful thoughts and ἀκηδία. An angel appears to him in his time of trouble and commands him to imitate him saying:οὕτως ποίει, καὶ σώζῃ "do this and you

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[323] Regardless of the actual origin of the Nag Hammadi library; for the most up to date discussion of the evidence, in particular the insightful and challenging theories of Michael Allen Williams, see P. Rousseau, *Pachomius* xix, xxxix, 26-28.

will be saved".[324] The angel was the ultimate exemplar in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, the monks were orientated towards heaven and aimed to be like its inhabitants. Just like the Syriac ascetics the monks of the Egyptian desert aimed to act like angels, to look like angels, indeed to live on earth as angels.[325] They demonstrated their angelic status in their sexlessness and their ability to go without food or the other normal requirements of the human body.

5.6.1 The Worship of ascetics and angels as legitimisers

The theme of monks praising God alongside the angels is often found in Egyptian texts. Thus some Coptic monks believed themselves to be members of the angelic choirs. The monks of Scetis[326] were described as "choirs of the holy angels of God".[327] In a tale from the *Apophthegmata Patrum* a man who resembled Apa Anthony is mentioned; he lived in the city, was a physician by trade, was generous with his money, and he was in the habit of spending " the whole day singing the Trisagion with the angels".[328] In a fourth century text, once again discussing the monks of Scetis, some monks go to visit an exceptionally holy fellow monk; they reach the door of his cell, and "from it there reached them a sweet smell, and they heard the voices of angels who were praising God. The holy man John was standing in their midst, praising God".[329] We have already seen the central importance of this image to literature discussing angels (§3.4.3), and the transformation of the Syriac ascetic into an angel (§5.2-5.2.2). These monks, then, drew upon literary traditions such as those in the *Ascension of Isaiah* (7:18-20; 8:16-17), the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* (in which

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[324] *APat.* α, in *PG* 76.9-22, quote is at *l*.20.

[325] See B. Ward in Norman Russell (trans.) *Lives of the Desert Fathers* (Oxford: Mowbray & Co. & Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1981) 36-7. The best treatments of the notion of the angelic life remain the two noted in n121: Peter Nagel, *Die Motivierung der Askese in der alten Kirche und der Ursprung des Mönchtums* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1966) 34-48 & K. Suso Frank, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ* (1964).

[326] Violet MacDermot, *The Cult of The Seer in the Ancient Middle East. A Contribution to Current Research on Hallucinations Drawn from Coptic and Other Texts* (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971) 24 & 239 n6; the earliest communities of monks were at Cellia and Nitria; the Desert of Scetis (the Greek form of Coptic 'Shiet') was until recently (1971) identified as the site of Nitria; there are still four monasteries there now.

[327] E. Porcher "*Vie d'Isaac.* Patriarche d'Alexandrie de 686 à 689", in *PO*, T. XI fasc.3 (Firmin-Didot: Paris, 1914) 312.6; English trans. in MacDermot, *The Cult of the Seer* 316.

[328] M. Chaine (ed) *Le Manuscrit de la version copte en dialecte sahidique des 'Apophthegmata Patrum'* (Le Caire: Publication de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale. Bibliothèque d'Etudes Coptes. Tome VI; 1960) 39.1(172); English trans. in MacDermot, *The Cult of the Seer* 360.

[329] F. Nau, *Histoire de Jean le Petit, Hegoumène de Scète, au IV siècle* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1914) XXII.1; trans. in MacDermot, *The Cult of the Seer* 354.

Zephaniah is transformed and then prays to God [3:3-4]); the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (in which Abraham sings angelic hymns during his ascent so as to disguise and protect himself from the angels), and the *Similitudes of Enoch* (in which Enoch is transformed and then praises God [*1En* 71:11]).[330] Nevertheless none of these other texts, although witnessing to the importance of the motif of angelic worship of God,[331] describe the seer being transformed and then joining the angels worshipping God in the explicit manner that can be seen in the Ascension of Isaiah. Possibly, then, these monks modelled their description of themselves as being part of the angelic choirs upon the transformation of Isaiah in the *Ascension* in particular, suggesting that this text may have been of more importance to the Christian ascetic tradition than has so far been assumed. Yet considering the general significance of the notion of angelic worship the influence may not have been so specific.

Thus on the model found in the second temple pseudepigraphic literature, the Egyptian monk was regarded in some sense, be it spiritual, metaphorical or actual, as having ascended to heaven and joined the angelic choirs praising God.

This worship of God raises a central issue, the conflict between ecclesiastical authority and individualistic asceticism. In both Egyptian and Syriac texts there is conflict apparent between ascetics and the Church. In the texts quoted from the great historian of eastern Christianity Arthur Vööbus above (§5.2.1 b) it is clear that the angelic worship of God by the ascetic actually rendered the Church obsolete. Indeed just like the angels, who were believed to hover around the altar whilst the Eucharist was being performed,[332] so too the ascetics were spiritually present in the church even though physically far away.[333] This is in direct contrast to the later use by the establishment of the same notion, earthly worship of God in imitation or sympathy with the heavenly worship of God, as a form of legitimation for the ecclesiastical power structure. Thus as the different orders of angels worship God in

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330 This must be seen in the context of 39:10-14 where the righteous dead are seen praising God.

331 For the importance of these hymns in the Hekhalot literature (to which the *Apoc. Abr.* seems to be related) cf. Martha Himmelfarb, "Heavenly Ascent and the Relationship of the Apocalypses and the *Hekhalot* Literature", *HUCA* 59 (1988) 73-100, esp. pp. 91-96.

332 See Tertullian's opinions regarding the presence of angels around the altar and the necessity of veiling virgins in their presence (cf. *On the Veiling of Virgins* I.ii), see n42 above.

333 The Pseudo-Ephremic "Letter to the Mountaineers" (ܐܦܪܝܡ ܠܘܬ ܛܘܪ̈ܝܐ ܐܓܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܝ,), (*Opera selecta* ed. Overbeck p.121 6-9), from Vööbus, *Literary, Critical and Historical Studies in Ephrem the Syrian* (Stockholm: ETSE, 1958) 75; quoted in §5.2.1 b.

heaven, so do deacons, priests, bishops etc. on earth.[334] When St Ephrem was threatened with ordination he escaped in a most remarkable fashion, by pretending to be mad, walking strangely, dragging his clothes behind himself, and eating in public.[335] He was, in fact, acting like a 'holy fool', a movement that post-dated him considerably.[336] Yet although his hagiographer, Sozomen, claimed that he was simply acting out of modesty, in the next passage he is described taking over the distribution of food during a famine.[337] He was thus not at all averse to leadership, only averse to a leadership position that was also a clerical position.

In Egyptian texts the conflict is not so explicit, but it is alluded to, often in a metaphorical fashion, in much of the fourth century monastic literature. Egyptian monasticism, which was largely a literary creation and a vehicle for Church propaganda, is unlikely to provide us with positive statements of support for anti-Church positions. The evidence which survives is a little opaque; yet that such evidence survives at all is testament to the importance of the debate concerning ecclesiastical authority over ascetics. The church tried to maintain a tight rein over the ascetics. Pachomius, the father of the cenobitic way of life and hardly an anti-Church radical,[338] was dragged before a synod in 345 in order to explain and justify his claim to be able to see the state of the soul in his fellow men.[339] When Athanasius came to meet the monks in 329 Pachomius hid from him, fearing that he might try to ordain him.[340] More than modesty was at play here; the pure brethren of the desert attached some stigma to clerical ordination. Although the monks were prepared, unlike some of their earlier Syrian brethren, to call upon the services of a priest when Eucharist was required, and to accept the clerical hierarchy, the clerical order was associated with the vanities of the world: "so the clerical dignity is the beginning of a temptation to love of power"; "if a monk from another

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[334] See Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7, 30, 11; Pseudo-Dionysius, *De caelesti hierarchia* 12, 1f; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 25.3.

[335] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 16.

[336] Cf. Derek Krueger, *Symeon The Holy Fool, Leontius's Life and the Late Antique City* (Univ. Calif. Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1996).

[337] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 16.

[338] See P. Rousseau, *Pachomius* 19.

[339] F. Halkin, *Sancti Pachomii vitae Graecae* [Subsidia Hagiographica 19] (Brussels, 1932) 112; trans. Armand Veilleux (trans.) *Pachomian Koinonia* (3 vols.; Kalamazoo, 1980-82) vol. 1, 375-77.

place is ordained a cleric, we must not – heaven forbid! – vilify him as someone who loves power, but rather consider him as someone who has been ordained unwillingly".[341] Monastic suspicion of clergy and clerical suspicion of monks is made manifest in the monastic literature. Both monks and clergy are portrayed, at times, as ungodly. In the *Life of Paul of Tamoueh* the devil appears as a monk.[342] In St Jerome's contribution to the *Book of Paradise* sayings about the desert fathers (preserved in Syriac) the suspicion of the institutional Church held by the ascetics is plainly revealed: "And one day the Devil stood in the likeness of a priest and urged him to receive communion with him: 'Away, thou art full of deceit and father of all falsehood and enemy of righteousness. Wilt thou never cease to lead astray the souls of Christians?' And dost thou dare to trample upon the Holy Mysteries?"[343] Although the sacraments are not actually directly attacked here, in fact their possible desecration is part of the point of the passage; implicit is an attack upon the ecclesiastical hierarchy, in the same way that St Paul's attitude towards angels and visionary techniques is made clear in his warning that even the devil could appear as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14). Indeed the strength of anti-clerical feeling amongst monks is indicated by the continuing attacks in the monastic literature upon the clergy, even quite late when it is clear that the official institutional church sacraments are obviously approved of, or at least accepted. Thus we hear tales of the misbehaviour of priests in Church, for instance one priest who is accused of spitting in the Sanctuary, in disregard of the presence therein of the angelic choirs.[344]

The church managed to use this ascetic focus upon the holy sacraments and the belief that angels were present at the Eucharist to pressure the ascetics to attend organised church services. Here we can see something interesting, perhaps a remnant of the Church mission to 'convert' the free ascetics into loyal promoters of the ecclesiastical hierarchy; for much of

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[340] See J.E. Goehring, "New Frontiers in Pachomian Studies", in *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity* 245. G. Gould, "Pachomios of Tabennesi", W.J. Sheils and D. Wood (eds.) *Voluntary Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986) disagrees that Pachomius' position is anti-clerical or anti-Athanasian.

[341] *Vitae graecae* 27, in *Pachomian Koinonia* 314.

[342] *Life of Paul of Tamoueh* (Sahidic) in E. Amélineau, *Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique Français du Caire Tome IV, 2nd Fasc. Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Egypte Chrétienne au IVe, VIe et VIIe siècles* (Paris: Leroux, 1895).

[343] E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of Paradise (Lady Meux Manuscript No. 6): being the histories and sayings of the monks and ascetics of the Egyptian Desert by Palladius, Hieronymus and others* (London: W. Drugulin, 1904) 398.4.

the imagery used to describe church services in this literature is borrowed from the imagery of ascent and transformation found in the Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic literature. This serves to demonstrate how important this literature still was to the ascetic sense of spirituality. Just as in heaven, angels were present around the altar when the sacraments were consecrated and given out; at times they even participated in it by giving out the sacrament.[345] One angel who is present in the sanctuary and blinds the ascetic with his great luminosity admonishes him: "Why dost thou not pray the brothers continually not to neglect the service at the hour of prayer?"[346] Apa John of Khamé was renowned for his visionary abilities; indeed it is recorded that he was able to see the angels singing the Trisagion to the Glory of the Lord at the time of the offering of the sacraments.[347]

It was imperative that monks not only appear in church, but that they pay attention, for according to the fourth century *History of Little John* the angel of the Lord hovered over the service watching for inattentive monks in order to spear them should their mind wander from the holy mysteries being performed![348] Alternatively those monks who offered up the sacrament would find their names inscribed in the Book of Life.[349] Indeed the earthly liturgy (in church) mirrored the heavenly liturgy of the angels; an ascetic did not need to engage in visionary ascent in order to join the angels worshipping God; all he needed to do

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344 E. Amélineau,*Un Évêque de Keft au VIIe siècle. Encomion par Abba Moise, Évêque de Keft, au sujet de Abba Pisentios, Évêque de cette mêmre ville de Keft*, (*Mémoires de l'Institut Egyptien*, T.II; Cairo, 1889) 369.5.

345 See Palladius' *Lausiac History*, in G.J.M. Bartelink (ed.) *Palladio. La storia Lausiaca* (Verona: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1974) 18.25; in Sahidic, see L.T. Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae. Sahidice Scriptae* (*CSCO*, Scr. Copt. 99, 100; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO 1952) 154a.32; 281b.20; 347b.10; see also the Boharic version of the Pachomian lives in L.T. Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae. Bohairice Scriptae* (*CSCO*, Scr. Copt. II.41; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1946) 93.25; in Boharic see also *Martyre des Saint Apa Ari* in H. Hyvernat, *Les Actes des Martyres de l'Egypte tirés des Manuscrits Coptes de la Bibliothéque Vaticane et du Musée Bogia* I, fasc. III (Paris: Leroux, 1886) 203.13; Amélineau, *Panégyrique de Macaire de Tkou par Dioscore d'Alexandrie* (*Mémoires* T. IV; Paris, 1888) 127.14; *Vie de Jean Kolobes* in E. Amélineau, *Histoire des Monastères de la Basse Egypte* (Paris: Leroux, 1894) 381.7; *Vie de Macaire de Scète* in Amélineau, *Histoire des Monastères de la Basse Egypte* 253.10; and the Bohairic life of Shenute in I. Leipoldt, *Sinuthi Archimandritae Vitae et Opera Omnia. Sinuthi Vita Bohairice* (*CSCO*, Scr. Copt. II.41; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1946) 46.2. See also the same stories preserved in the Syriac in E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of Paradise* (sayings of Palladius preserved in Syriac) 242.14; F. Nau (ed.) *Histoire de Jean le Petit, Hegoumène de Scète, au IV^esiècle* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1914) 56.9; and E. W. Brooks, *Spurious Life of James*, in *John of Ephesus. Lives of the Eastern Saints* (*PO* 19.2) 265.2.

346 Lefort, *S. Pachomii Vitae. Sahidice Scriptae* 281b.20; trans. in MacDermot, *Cult of the Seer* 453.

347 Margaret H. Davis, *The Life of Abba John Khamé. Coptic text edited and translated from the Cod. Vat. Copt. LX*, in *PO* 14.2 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1919; reprint Turhout: Brepols, 1973) (Bohairic) 343.12.

348 F. Nau (ed.) *Histoire de Jean le Petit, Hegoumène de Scète,* LVI.9.

349 E. W. Brooks, *Spurious Life of James,* in *John of Ephesus. Lives of the Eastern Saints* 265.

was to go to church. Just the act of entering church could make one glorious and luminous, a transformation obviously based ultimately upon the transformation of Moses at Sinai, and more particularly upon those of the ascent visions we have already looked at in earlier chapters. One monk who is described as being possessed by devils and "whose face was in sickness and affliction and whose whole body was in darkness" after church came out with "his face lighted and his body white and the devils were afar off and his holy angel was close to him and walked with him."[350]

Clearly not all Egyptian monks were regular attenders of church. Some held the Church in great suspicion, just like some Syriac ascetics. The Church used the powerful imagery associated with ascent and transformation found in the apocalyptic literature of the late second temple and early Christian period in order to convince monks that churchgoing was not only a legitimate activity but that it actually conferred great benefits, indeed transformed the church goer in the same way the seer in an ascent vision was transformed. These texts speak loudly for the continuing importance of the apocalyptic angelic ascent vision and transformation literature and its motifs for fourth century Egyptian ascetics, and also the significance of these motifs to the literature of the conflict between Church and individual ascetic in this period of Church consolidation.

5.6.2 Angelic abilities amongst early Egyptian monks

In both Egypt and Syria the angelic nature of ascetics was demonstrated in their angelic abilities. Abstinence from sex and physical sustenance in imitation of the angels was a goal to which many ascetics aspired.[351] Athanasius, whose *Vita Antonii* can be seen as the opening chapter in the saga of Church monasticism,[352] claimed that fasting and virginity

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[350] Budge, *The Book of Paradise* (Syriac) 298.8.

[351] On the heavenly state defined as an existence not requiring food or sex, see Luke 24: 39-43 (Christ eats fish in order to prove he is not just a spirit); *Bereshith Rabbah* Parashah Eight, Genesis 1:26-28, VIII.i.1, VIII.i.2, VIII.x.1, VIII.xi.2 & VIII.xi.3; Parashah Fourteen, Genesis 2:7 XIV.iii.2, VIII.xi.2, VIII.xi.2, XIV.iii.3, VIII.xi.3. Gregory of Nyssa in his *Catechetical Oration* (9) discussed the human birth of Christ, eating and drinking, & death and burial; he said that this is hard on the faith of the more ignorant; i.e. the religious paradigm of the day regarded such things as impossible for divine figures; cf. also Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls, Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1985).

[352] St. Athanasius, trans. in R.C. Gregg, *The Life of Antony and The Letter to Marcellinus* (London, Paulist Press, 1980); cf. E. A. Judge, "The Earliest Use of Monachos for >Monk< (P. Coll. Youtie 77) and the Origins of Monasticism", *JAC* 20 (1977) 72-89, esp 77 & 78 n20 on the *Life of Antony* as the beginning of monasticism.

elevates people to angelic status.[353] Clement of Alexandria believed that the transfiguration of Moses on Mt Sinai (the description of which, we have seen, lent much to tales of humans being transfigured into angels, especially the motif of the shining face) resulted in his bodily needs being suppressed.[354] The great Syrian ascetic Symeon the Stylite (b. ca.386 in northern Syria) was celebrated for his fasting ability. Jacob of Serug in his homily on Symeon[355] pronounced: "Righteous men fasted for generations for a known period of days, from thirty weeks to sixty, each according to his strength. But who would count the fasting of this angel in the body? For he is not comparable with men but with angels".[356] Like Enoch after his transformation into an angel (*2En*, J, 56:2), more than a few ascetics claimed not to eat at all, at least not human food. The reward for fasting in these stories is that the ascetic comes to enjoy the food of the angels, brought to him by these heavenly beings. A story by Palladius is preserved in both Greek and Syriac, in which an ascetic who is suffering greatly leaves his cave in search of food only to have an angel in the form of a soldier leave a basket of grapes and figs. Abba Nopi claimed that he had "never taken any earthly thing; for an angel has fed me daily with heavenly food".[357] Likewise Apa Bané was believed not to have eaten human food during his life.[358] The probably fictitious hermit Paul of whom Jerome wrote the "life", claimed, like the ancient Israelites, to receive half a loaf of bread every day brought by a raven, obviously a reference to some kind of divine food,[359] and modelled on the gifts of bread and meat brought to Elijah by the raven (1 Kings 17:6). Ephrem was opposed to sleep, stating that those who fear God sleep little; this was because the night was the correct time for communicating with God and the demons

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353 "᾿Αγγελικὴν τάξιν ἔχει" Athanasius, *de Virginitate* 7.

354 Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.7.57.

355 Susan Ashbrook Harvey (trans. & intro.) "Jacob of Serug. Homily on Simeon the Stylite" in *Ascetic Behaviour*; p.15 Jacob of Serug (ca. 449-521) composed a "Homily on Simeon the Stylite" (p.16) "some decades after his death".

356 *Ibid*, p.23, 659 - 660.

357 Budge, E.A.W. (ed.) *The Book of Paradise* (saying by Jerome) 418.10.

358 M. Chaine (ed.) *Le Manuscrit de la Version Copte en Dialecte Sahidique des 'Apophthegmata Patrum'* (Publication de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Bibliothèque d'Etudes Coptes. Tome VI; Le Caire, 1960) 75.32 (244).

359 Paul B. Harvey (intro. & trans.) "Jerome, Life of Paul the First Hermit", in *Ascetic Behaviour* p.366, 10; p.357: this is the first of three biographies written by Jerome about eastern holy men (ca. 377, just after his time in the Syrian desert); it is almost certainly spurious, (p.358) and was strongly influenced by Athanasius' *Vita Ant.* (ca. 357).

came to people in their sleep.[360] In the *2 Enoch* Enoch's angelic transformation gave him the ability to go without sleep.[361] At least one ascetic in the *Lausiac History* of Palladius seems to have tried to do the same, only occasionally being overcome for short moments in spite of his *ascesis*, for as he pointed out to his contemporaries and posterity: "If you persuade the angels to sleep, you will also persuade the earnest man."[362]

The angelic nature of ascetics was also indicated by the luminous nature of their bodies. As already discussed (§3.2.2 & 3.3.2), one of the most important indicators of either the presence of a divine being or the transformation of a human into a divine being is the claim that he or she 'shone' (i.e. cf. Mt 13:43), either the whole body or, more often (as mentioned in §4.1), following from the description in Exodus 34:29, 30, 35 of Moses' transformation) the face of the individual in question. For instance the great angel Eremiel appears in the *Apocalypse of Elijah* and his "face gave light like the rays of the sun in his glory",[363] and after Enoch was transformed into an angel a senior angel, an 'elder', had to chill his face, otherwise "no human being would be able to look at your face" (*2En* 37:1-3). Likewise the 6th century Syrian holy woman Shirin, who restricted her diet and sustained herself on a regimen of one small cake of pulse, boiled vegetables and a drink of water once every four days or once a week, was described as having a "radiant" face.[364] In death too the sanctity of Syrian holy men and women was indicated by their luminous faces.[365] Occasionally the whole body was described as luminous - for instance in the story of Febronia, supposedly martyred under Diocletian, and whose story is preserved in a 6th or early 7th century text. When a bishop comes to take a piece of her body for a relic he opens her coffin and one

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[360] Arthur Vööbus, *Literary Critical and Historical Studies in Ephrem the Syrian* (Etse: Stockholm, 1958) 99 n3 (*Ms Sin. syr.* 14 fol 171b) & 99 n4 (from *Hymni et sermones* ed. Lamy IV col 212, *De virginitate* ed Rahmani II, 42 cf. 40, *De virginitate* ed. Rahmani II, 42 cf. 40).

[361] Cf. F.I Andersen, "2 Enoch" in, *OTP* I, 140, 23:3 – Enoch needs no sleep when being instructed by angel Vrevoil for 30 days and nights.

[362] Ἐὰν πείσῃς τοὺς ἀγγέλους κοιμηθῆναι, πείσεις καὶ τὸν σπουδαῖον, *Historia Lausiaca* II.iii.9-11, G.J.M. Bartelink (ed.) *Palladio. La storia Lausiaca* (Verona: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1974). Cf. §5.2.2.

[363] *Apocalypse of Elijah* 9:11.

[364] "Shirin" in Sebastian P. Brock and Susan Ashbrook Harvey (intro. & trans.) *Holy Women of The Syrian Orient* (Univ. of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1987) 179-180 (73). Text trans. from A. de Haleux (ed.) *Martyrius (Sahdona), Oeuvres spirituelles I, Livre de Perfection,* I. iii. 64, 69-79 (*CSCO* 200, Scriptores Syri 86, 44-48). Cf. also E.A.W. Budge (ed.) *The Book of Paradise* [Palladius] (Syriac) 643.13.

[365] See also, for example, "Mary the Niece of Abraham of Qidun" in *Holy Women* p.36 §29; cf. also "The Story of Anastasia" in *ibid.* 147 (§6).

would expect that he was at least slightly surprised to notice that "Febronia's body was like a ray of the sun, and it was as though fire and lightning were flashing out from her."[366]

5.7 The origin of the Christian angelic life and its relationship to Christian angelology

Thus it is apparent that it was natural for early Christians to see the perfect state in angelic terms. Evidence for this attitude comes from a wide spectrum, from Clement of Alexandria to Aphrahat, from Ephrem to the *Odes of Solomon* and the Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri or the literature of the early desert fathers. Obsessed with the ideal of the practice of Christian perfection, many in the early Christian centuries turned their gaze to heaven and its denizens. Certain model figures provided guides to behaviour, Christ or Enoch or Elijah for instance, but more often the model was a generalised angelic state. This was for two reasons. Firstly, if the hypothesis above concerning the early genesis of Christian interest in angelic transformation is correct (that it was based upon an understanding of Jesus Christ as a transformed heavenly/angelic being) then the rapid development of a sophisticated Christology would have caused the *imitatio Christi* to be separated from the *imitatio angeli*; as indeed it was, for as it turns out it is only in Jewish-Christian groups that we have seen the two explicitly linked. Secondly, the state of exalted human beings such as Adam, Enoch or Elijah came also to be seen in terms of a generalised angelic state. The linguistic progress of the word 'angel'[367] was matched by a conceptual advance whereby monotheism combated polytheism by increasingly categorising any divine state below that of the Trinity as being angelic. There is evidence to demonstrate a possible family tree: from Palestinian and Syriac Jewish-Christian sects to Syriac Christianity and from there to Egyptian Christianity, but this is quite speculative. Scripture also provides a way in which to approach the question of origins. A linear approach to causation is not profitable here, the evidence is too scant to demonstrate clearly the geographical origins of these ideas, and the search for origins presupposes that we are dealing with a clearly defined tradition, when in fact we are dealing

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366 "Febronia", in *Holy Women* 175 (§613); trans. from P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* 5 (Paris & Leipzig, 1890-97; repr. Hilderseim, 1968) 573-615, based on Brit. Library Add. 14647 of 688 with some variants from Add. 14649 (9th CE). This is the earliest of several texts discussing this martyrdom - most West Syrian, but at least one East Syrian. Text also found in Greek and very popular in Latin. The martyrdom occured under Diocletian at Nisibis (284-305), but the present life is 6th or early 7th CE and was composed at Nisibis.

367 Represented by the equivalency of the words *mal'ākh* (Heb.); *mal'kā / 'īrā* (Syr.); *aggelos* (Grk.); see §3.1.1a-c.

with a broad theme (viz. the imitation of the heavenly state in order to achieve it in this or the next world), upon which there were numerous variations.

Several streams of ideas came together to stimulate and support early Christian interest in the angelic state; indeed the confluence of these different traditions in roughly the same area has a certain air of inevitability about it.

5.7.1 Scriptural and literary underpinnings

As mentioned already in the introduction to this chapter the Gospels do not deal with asceticism as we would understand it. The closest referents to recognizable ascetic forms of behavour or a call to asceticism lies in Christ's exhortation to abandon home and kin, and in the example of itinerant mendicity that he himself set. Importantly there is no link between celibacy and this call to discipleship (apart from the fact that eschewing family would normally mean some kind of abstinence from sexual relations), which we have seen was central to the theory and practice of early Christian asceticism. In the other writings of the New Testament (the Acts and Epistles), celibacy assumes greater importance as an expression of a perfectionist Christian lifestyle. Thus the transition from apostolic Christian ascetic practices to early Syriac ascetic practices is easier than that from the Gospels to the Acts and Epistles. Whence, then, did the focus upon celibacy as the main expression of Christian asceticism come?

Gillian Clark , in a recent article, has examined the call to voluntary poverty in Matthew: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Clark makes the point that the first part of the instruction is perfectly clear, but the second part ("come, follow me") is not so clear – how exactly would the later Christian ascetic have interpreted this? When St Antony felt the call after reading this passage he interpreted it to mean that the perfect Christian should spend his time in prayer and scriptural study.[368] As we have seen, from the time of Ignatius of Antioch onwards Christians attempted to imitate the celibacy of Christ. Perhaps they were motivated by Matt 19:21. The scriptural influences are not clear but it would be foolish to ignore this call to discipleship.

As already mentioned in the discussion of the notion of *iḥidaya* Sebastian Brock has suggested that this notion could have come from the passages in the synoptic Gospels that discuss the afterlife as being angelic (Mt 22:29-31; Mk 12:24-25; Lk 20:34-36).[369] In this incident Jesus responds to the Sadducees who ridicule the notion of an afterlife[370] by asking to whom a woman who has had several husbands will be married in the resurrection.

> ἀποκεπιθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰσοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πλανᾶσθε μὴ εἰδότες τὰς γραφὰς μηδὲ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ θεοῦ· ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἀναστάσει οὔτε γαμοῦσιν οὔτε γαμίζονται, ἀλλ' ὡς ἄγγελοι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ εἰσιν. (Nestle-Aland Mt 22:29-31)
>
> But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures not the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven." (RSV Mt 22:29-31)
>
> ἔφη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐ διὰ τοῦτο πλανᾶσθε μὴ εἰδότες τὰς γραφὰς μηδὲ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ θεοῦ; ὅταν γὰρ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῶσιν οὔτε γαμοῦσιν οὔτε γαμίζονται, ἀλλ' εἰσιν ὡς ἄγγελοι ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. (Nestle-Aland Mk 12:24-25)
>
> Jesus said to them, "Is not this why you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures not the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven." (RSV Mk 12:24-25)
>
> καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου γαμοῦσιν καὶ γαμίσκονται, οἱ δὲ καταξιωθέντες τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐκείνου τυχεῖν καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν οὔτε γαμοῦσιν οὔτε γαμίζονται· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀποθανεῖν ἔτι δύνανται, ἰσάγγελοι γαρ εἰσιν καὶ υἱοί εἰσιν θεοῦ τῆς ἀναστάσεως υἱοὶ ὄντες. (Nestle-Aland Lk 20:34-36)
>
> And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are accounted worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die any more, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." (RSV Lk 20:34-36)

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368 Gillian Clark, "Women and Asceticism in Late Antiquity: The Refusal of Status and Gender", in *Asceticism* 35.

369 "Early Syrian Asceticism" 5-6.

370 Cf. also §3.2.3 on Acts 23:8 and the accusation that the Sadducees did not believe in an afterlife.

It is to these passages that Christians must have turned to justify a celibate lifestyle, a lifestyle here connected explicitly with the angels, and thus associated with roughly contemporary Jewish ideas about living a pure life like that of the heavenly angelic priests.

But why did certain early Christians come to relate this future state to their current earthly existence? Why did they seek to become earthly angels, rather than just waiting for their future transformation? The answers are not simple, nor linear; there was a multiplicity of causes. Not least amongst these causes were the Jewish attitudes which we have already discussed regarding the transference of the requirements of priestly purity to the general population in such groups as the Essenes or the Pharisees; likewise the relocation of the Temple (first due to conflicts about priestly purity, then due to its destruction) from earth to heaven, where the heavenly priests, the angels, served around the throne. Likewise we have seen that there seems to be an inherent angelic Christology behind the most important terminology dealing with early Syriac asceticism; this angelic Christology was predicated upon the belief that all could gain the status that Jesus achieved, if only they acted in the same manner as he. But can we see scriptural support for such behaviour? Clearly the passages quoted above are the first place to look, and it seems that Luke offers us the clearest support to those who wished to live the angelic life here upon earth.

The eschatological system that Luke seems here to be supporting is clearly one of realized eschatology, and it is the logical place to look for those who wished to live the angelic afterlife upon earth. The phrase ἰσάγγελοι γαρ εἰσιν καὶ υἱοί εἰσιν θεοῦ τῆς ἀναστάσεως υἱοὶ ὄντες, provides a starting point, for here the present tense seems to suggest a realized eschatological existence for Christians in the present age.

In the Syriac, Luke also stands out from the other synoptic gospels. The Peshitta Luke reads:

> ܐܡܪ ܠܗܘܢ ܝܫܘܥ. ܒܢܝܗܘܢ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ. ܢܣܒܝܢ ܢܫ̈ܐ ܘܢܫ̈ܐ
> ܗܘ̈ܝܢ ܠܓܒܪ̈ܐ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܫܘܘ ܠܗܘ ܥܠܡܐ · ܘܠܩܝܡܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܒܝܬ
> ܡܝ̈ܬܐ. ܠܐ ܢܣܒܝܢ ܢܫ̈ܐ. ܘܐܦ ܠܐ ܢܫ̈ܐ ܗܘ̈ܝܢ ܠܓܒܪ̈ܐ. ܐܦܠܐ ܓܝܪ
> ܬܘܒ ܠܡܡܬ ܡܫܟܚܝܢ. ܐܝܟ ܡܠܐܟ̈ܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܓܝܪ. ܘܒܢ̈ܝܐ
> ܐܢܘܢ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܗܘܘ ܒܢ̈ܝܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ.
>
> (*CESG* Lk 20: 34-36)

> Jesus said to them, "the sons of this world are marrying women and the women marrying men. But they that are made equal to that world, and for the resurrection (*qyamthā*) from the house of the dead, do not marry women. And also the women do not marry men. For, moreover, nor are they able to die. For they are like angels (*malˀkhe*), and they are sons of God (*bnaya dˀlahā*). For they are sons of the resurrection (*bnaya dqyamthā*)."

The two MSS representing the Old Syriac version add ܝܠܕܝܢ ܘܡܘܠܕܝܢ[371], which only emphasises the stereotypical Syriac negativity towards the body and procreation. If this is compared to the Peshitta versions of the same episode in Matthew and Mark we can see how Luke stands out:

ܥܢܐ ܝܫܘܥ. ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗܘܢ·. ܛܥܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ·. ܕܠܐ ܝܕܥܝܢ
ܐܢܬܘܢ ܟܬܒܐ. ܘܠܐ ܚܝܠܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܒܩܝܡܬܐ ܓܝܪ
ܕܡܝܬܐ. ܠܐ ܢܣܒܝܢ ܢܫܐ. ܐܦܠܐ ܢܫܐ ܗܘܝܢ ܠܓܒܪܐ.
ܐܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܠܐܟܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ·.
(*CESG* Mt 22:29-31)

> Jesus answered and said to them: "You are wrong; you do not know the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection (*qyamthā*) of the dead they do not marry; nor do women marry men. But they are like the angels (*malˀkhe*) of God in heaven."

ܥܢܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܝܫܘܥ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܛܥܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ·.
ܕܠܐ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܟܬܒܐ·. ܘܠܐ ܚܝܠܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ·.
ܡܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܩܡܘ ܡܢ ܡܝ̈ܬܐ. ܠܐ ܢܣܒܝܢ ܢܫ̈ܐ. ܐܦ ܠܐ ܢܫ̈ܐ
ܗܘ̈ܝܢ ܠܓܒܪܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ·. ܐܝܟ
ܡܠܐ̈ܟܐ ܕܒܫܡܝܐ. (*CESG* Mk 12:24-25)

> Jesus said to them: "Is it not because of this that you are wrong?" For you do not know the scriptures, nor the power of God. For when they have arisen (*qmu*)[372] from death they do not marry women, nor do women marry men, but they are like the angels (*malˀkhe*) which are in heaven."

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[371] "Begetting and bringing forth"; the later versions, Peshitta and Ḥarklean, have removed this reference, presumably because of its possible use as a support for radical Encratite practices. The earliest Syriac MSS thus match the (later) D uncial MS of the NT and the Latin versions, Nestle-Aland, 228 n.

[372] ܩܡܘ, root ܩܘܡ (QWM), = Heb. קום; Samaritan Aramaic קום, participle = קעם.

Brock has noted the differences in orientation between Luke and the other two synoptics and suggested that this is part of the explanation for the this-wordly expression of the celibate ascetic life in Syriac Christianity.[373] But why would Antiochian Christianity have produced a gospel that changed, in such a way, the emphasis of the already existing narratives of Mark and Matthew? The answer could lie in a Mesopotamian approach to time, an approach that was derived from a mythological type of religiosity, a type of religiosity reasserting itself in this period as a challenge to the new doctrinal theologies of ecclesiastical Christianity and rabbinic Judaism.[374] In the next section we shall speculate upon the possible motivation for this attempt to live the angelic life upon earth.

5.7.2 Philosophical and ideological underpinnings

We have seen that from the earliest period it seems that the call to practise complete celibacy exercised strong influence over Christians, that some of the earliest forms of Christian asceticism emphasised a celibate life over all other forms of ascetic endeavour, and that in early Syriac Christianity it was widely believed that only the celibate were true Christians and thus deserving of salvation. Celibacy was valued because it was seen as the natural state of the immortal residents of heaven, the angels.

At the heart of this celebration of celibacy stood a rather obvious concept based upon observation of human existence, a concept given authority by its presence in the New Testament in the angel afterlife passages.

That there is a connection between reproduction and death is rather obvious: not only does the act of giving birth itself entail great danger to the woman, but it has always been clear that becoming a parent is an integral part of the life-cycle that ultimately leads to death - the cessation of life and its creation are obviously two sides of the same coin. Thus, to conceptualise immortality as being a state in which there is no reproduction, and therefore celibate, is entirely reasonable. Here we can see part of the underlying reason why the angel

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373 "Early Syrian Asceticism" 5-6.

374 See Stroumsa, *Another Seed* 1-2 who discusses the view of gnosticism as the last great outburst of mythological thought; he points out that it was not a real mythology in the traditional sense for it was affected by the fact that it was operating in a world in which a process of demythologisation of religious thought (Greek and Hebrew) had been going on for some time.

afterlife passages in the New Testament see the immortal angelic state as characterised by its celibacy.[375]

If one sees that death is intimately connected to reproduction and thus, conversely, that immortality is a celibate or sexless state, it is likewise a reasonable premise to hold that women are the embodiment of this reproductive ability, and thus responsible for our mortality, subject as they are to pregnancy and childbirth. Moreover, for those operating within a Jewish religious scene informed by the book of Genesis, in which Adam is created first and later Eve from Adam,[376] it is understandable that this androgynous state would be seen in terms of being male, as a reintegration of the female into the male. Thus the gnostic *Gospel of Philip* (preserved in a Coptic translation of the original Greek text written in Syria possibly as late as the second half of the third century)[377] says of death and human potential for immortality:

> ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲣⲉ ⲉⲩϩⲁ [ϩ]ⲛ̄ ⲁ[ⲇ]ⲁⲙ ⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲙⲟⲩ ϣⲟⲟⲡ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲣⲉⲥⲡⲫⲣϫ [ⲉⲣ]ⲟϥ ⲁⲡⲙⲟⲩ ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲡⲁⲗⲓⲛ ⲉϥϣⲁⲃⲫ[ⲕ ⲉϩ]ⲟⲩⲛ ⲛ̄ϥϫⲓⲧϥ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲙⲟⲩ ⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ
>
> When Eve was still in Adam death did not exist. When she was separated from him death came into being. If he enters again and attains his former self, death will be no more. (68.22 - 26)[378]

And:

> ⲛⲉ ⲙⲡⲉ ⲧⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲡⲱⲣϫ ⲉⲫⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲛⲉⲥⲛⲁⲙⲟⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ ⲙⲛ̄ ⲫⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲡⲉϥⲡⲱⲣϫ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϥ ϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲣⲭⲏ ⲙ̄ⲡⲙⲟⲩ ⲇⲓⲁ ⲧⲟⲩⲧⲟ ⲁⲡⲉⲭⲣ̄ⲥ̄ ⲉⲓ ϫⲉⲕⲁⲁⲥ ⲡⲡⲱⲣϫ ⲛ̄ⲧⲁϩϣⲱⲡⲉ ϫⲓⲛ ϣⲟⲣⲡ ⲉϥⲛⲁⲥⲉϩⲱϥ ⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ ⲡⲁⲗⲓⲛ ⲛ̄ϥϩⲟⲧⲣⲟⲩ ⲙ̄ⲡⲥⲛⲁⲩ . . .

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375 Mt 20:30, Mk 12:25, Lk 20:35-6; cf. also *Bereshit Rabbah* VIII.XI.2 on sexual relations as one of the features that demarcated man from the heavenly beings.

376 In one version of the story at least. It is extremely interesting to note here the attempt in the *Bereshit Rabbah* to link the two creation stories in the context of a belief in Adam's 'androgynous masculinity': Parashah Eight Genesis 1:26-28, VIII.I.2 "Said R. Jeremiah b. Eleazar, "When the Holy One, blessed be he, came to create the first man, he made him androgynous, as it is said, 'Male and female he created them and called their name man' (Gen 5:2)" in Jacob Neusner (trans.) *Genesis Rabbah. The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis. A New American Translation* Vol. 1 *Parashiyyot One though Thirty-Three on Genesis 1:1 to 8:14* (Scholars Press: Atlanta, Georgia, 1985) 73.

377 Wesley W. Isenberg (intro. & trans.), "The Gospel of Philip (II, 3) in Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library* 141: this text is believed to be a Coptic translation of a Greek text, possibly as late as second half of 3rd century CE: "Because of the interest in the meaning of certain Syriac words (63,21-23; 56,7-9), its affinities to Eastern sacramental practice and catecheses, and its ascetic ethics, an origin in Syria is probable."

378 Bentley Layton (ed.) & Wesley W. Isenberg (trans.), "The Gospel according to Philip", in Layton (ed.) *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7*, I (Brill: Leiden, 1989).

> If the woman had not separated from the man, she should not die with the man. His separation became the beginning of death. Because of this Christ came to repair the separation which was from the beginning and again unite the two . . . (70.9-15)[379]

Here it is not Adam's sin, as such, that produces mankind's fall, but instead the actions of the creator. A rather negative attitude can be seen here towards the creator, which is of course entirely in character with the gnostic flavour of this text. The Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*, originally written in Greek and probably in Syria, also demonstrates this attitude to the ascetic endeavour when it claims that the immortal state will be genderless and that women who become men will achieve this state. Thus femininity is the actual embodiment of sexuality, and maleness (without the presence of the opposite sex) is essentially a form of androgyny.[380] Obviously this point of view is heavily indebted to a particular exegesis of the Genesis story that sees immortality as the return of Eve into Adam. Yet due to the widespread belief that Adam was created as an angel (see §4.6), that he was male and that from him a female was made, and that angels were male beings, the connection between this male androgynous state and an immortal angelic state on earth must have played the major role in the early Christian attitude to asceticism, not only amongst gnostics. It is in the context of this belief that we can understand Jesus' claim in the Gospel that eternal life is available for any woman who made herself into a man.[381]

Towards the end of the period dealt with in this thesis, and in the next couple of centuries, these ideas gave birth to a particular ascetic phenomenon. In Syria (and also in one Syrian text that discusses Egyptian monasticism), some women interpreted Christ's commandment literally, and in emulation of the angels tried to become male, obviously in order to recover the immortal state originally lost in the Garden of Eden. These are the famous, and enigmatic, transvestite monks. As Peter Brown points out Syrian society was just as concerned as other Late Antique societies with the segregation of men and women, yet it was here we find women escaping their sexual identity through the wearing of male

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379 "Gospel of Philip" in *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7*, I.

380 Helmut Koester (intro.) & T.O. Lambdin (trans.) *The Gospel of Thomas* in Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, sayings 22 & 114.

381 *The Gospel of Thomas* in Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library* p.138, 51.114.

clothing, cutting their hair and fasting until their bodies lost their female shape,[382] a practice that would, no doubt, have also led to amenorrhea, the cessation of menstruation.[383] These women were generally regarded as being of the most holy stature. For instance Pelagia the prostitute who became 'Pelagios the eunuch monk' was famous throughout Jerusalem (probably in the late fourth century) for her miracle-working; it was only at her death, when she came to be anointed with oil, that it was revealed that she was a woman. She was, according to the narrator of the story, Jacob, the deacon of Bishop Nonnos (neither of whom can be identified) a "perfect vessel"[384] in spite of her gender. Similar is the sixth century story preserved in Syriac of Anastasia the eunuch monk from Wadi Natrun. He was an extremely holy monk, who although of Patrician rank came to live in the desert for 28 years until his death. It was only when he was being prepared for burial that the disciple of Abba Daniel of Scetis noticed, and remarked to his master, that the monk has breasts.[385] Abba Daniel (who like Bishop Nonnos in the above-mentioned story knew all along the true gender of the monk) replies to his disciple: "See, my son, now how many people have been brought up at court, yet have performed battle against the adversary, battering their bodies, and living like angels on earth."[386] Her asceticism and her 'maleness' gave her the status of an angel. The probably Syrian influenced Eustathian ascetics from Armenia, mentioned above, seemed to have regularly practised disguising female ascetics as men. Those women who wore male clothes and cut their hair, "which God gave her as a reminder of [her] subjection", like men, being "under the

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[382] See Evelyne Patlagean, "L'histoire de la femme déguisée en moine et l'évolution de la sainteté féminine à Byzance", *Studi medievali* 17.3 (1976) 597-623.

[383] On amenorrhoea see A. Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988) 176; see also 170-171 on the use of fasting by male ascetics to eliminate sexual desire.

[384] "Pelagia of Antioch" in Brock and Harvey, *Holy Women* p.62, 51. The text (Brit. Library Add. 14651 of 850) is found in J. Gildenmeister, *Acta sanctae Pelagiae syriace* (Bonn, 1879). Possibly the story is discussing the conversion of the unnamed woman mentioned by Chrysostom in *Homily 67 on Matthew* (*PG* 58 cols. 636-37), if this is true then Pelagia would have lived in the late 4th CE. The authorship is obscure (although Jacob, deacon of Bishop Nonnos is mentioned, neither can be identified for sure), hence the life should be regarded as a "literary embellishment of the story of the converted prostitute to whom St. John Chrysostom refers". The Syriac is a translation from the Greek, and is the earliest MS in either language.

[385] "The Story of Anastasia" in Brock and Harvey, *Holy Women* p.146, 6 – p.148, 8. The translation is from F. Nau's Syriac ed. in *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 5 (1900) 391-401, based upon Paris syr. 234 of the 13th century. This translation has also used Brit. Library Add. 14649 of the 9th century. The original Greek is published & ed. by L. Clugnet in *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 5 (1900) 51-59 & republished as a separate vol. *Vie et récits de l'abbé Daniel le Scétiote* (Paris, 1901). The same text contains a story about a holy fool and a (female) eunuch 'monk'; it concerns the late 6th century Abba Daniel of Sketis (Wadi Natrun).

[386] "The Story of Anastasia" in Brock and Harvey, *Holy Women* p. 148, 8.

impression that this annuls the ordinances of subjection", were anathematised by the Council of Gangra.[387]

If Syrian Christians, then, were taking their lead from the New Testament in their pursuit of a lifestyle that was 'angelic' and celibate, then they were in effect enacting a future state. In the stereotypical mythological approach to religion it was normal to re-enact past events, events from the myth-time period that immediately preceded the present age. This re-enactment served to maintain the cosmos, to keep the seasons regular and promote agricultural fertility.[388] Were early Christian ascetics in some way attempting to prefigure the future state of the righteous dead in heaven whilst here on earth, the immortal state of the dead as described in the New Testament? This would help to explain the importance placed upon celibacy above all else in early ascetic practice, especially the Syrian institution of the *bnai/bnat qyama.*

This reinvention of mythological religion could be explained with reference to deeply held Mesopotamian approaches to time. Essentially there were three time-periods: the myth-time that came before our period, the time that humans lived in, and the time that came after – a time that was a return to the previous myth-time period. The angelic afterlife discussed in the New Testament was a return to this mythical *Urzeit.* Whilst time progressed chronologically for humans on earth, the myth-time did not, for it could be recreated whenever humans ceremonially enacted it. It was thus constantly present; really it was not 'time' at all, it was an era that was essentially timeless, as was the afterlife, a period in which there was no time; it was timeless and changeless. In essence, then, the angel afterlife passages in the New Testament were not interpreted as stating that God would reward the righteous with angelic status, but that if one acted out this future state, then it would come to be, as it had already for those ascetics who lived like angels.

Early Syrian ascetics, whilst trying to enact a future myth-time state, were also trying to re-enact a past myth-time state, for as we have seen the state of the pre-fall Adam was generally seen as angelic (§4.6). As texts like the *Book of Enoch* and the other sectarian

[387] Canons 13 & 17, cf. trans. in O. Larry Yarbrough, "Canons from the Council of Gangra", in *Ascetic Behaviour.*

texts represented in the pseudepigrapha were popular amongst early Christians[389], it made sense that the celibate/sexless immortal angelic existence of the New Testament would be likened to Adam's pre-fall state as an angel. I would tentatively suggest that the interpretation of the angelic life in terms of celibacy came first, and was taken directly from the New Testament, and that the interpretation in terms of Adam's angelic status, which was coupled with a rejection of civilisation, was a later development which used ideas found in the second temple pseudepigraphic literature and in contemporary gnosticism. The two notions would have been easily linked to each other by this Mesopotamian idea of the three times, an idea present from the earliest period of Christian history, and from the mid-third century onwards it would have been widely spread by the aggressively proselytizing Manichaeans.

In gnostic texts with an origin in Syria the theme of Adam's pre-fall uncivilised existence is important alongside a conviction that innocence (i.e. ignorance of the arts of civilisation) is necessary for regaining mankind's immortal status. In the *Gospel of Philip*, the pre-fall existence of Adam is seen as completely lacking in the arts of civilisation.

> ϩⲁ ⲧⲉϩⲏ ⲉⲙⲡⲁⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲭ̅ⲥ̅ ⲉⲓ ⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲟⲉⲓⲕ ϩⲙ̅ ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲡⲁⲣⲁⲇⲓⲥⲟⲥⲡⲙⲁ ⲛⲉⲣⲉ ⲁⲇⲁⲙ ⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲩ ⲛⲉⲩⲛ̅ⲧⲁϥ ϩⲁϩ ⲛ̅ϣⲏⲛ ⲛ̅ⲛⲧⲣⲟⲫⲏ ⲛ̅ⲛⲑⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲁϥ ⲥⲟⲩⲟ ⲛ̅ⲧⲧⲣⲟⲫⲏ ⲙ̅ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲥⲟⲉⲓϣ ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲛ̅ⲛⲑⲏⲣⲓⲟⲛ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲛ̅ⲧⲁⲣⲉ ⲡⲉⲭⲥ̅ ⲉⲓ ⲡⲧⲉⲗⲓⲟⲥ ⲣ̅ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲁϥⲉⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲟⲉⲓⲕ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲛ̅ ⲧⲡⲉ ϣⲓⲛⲁ ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛⲁⲣ̅ⲧⲣⲉⲫⲉⲥⲑⲁⲓ ϩⲛ̅ ⲧⲧⲣⲟⲫⲏ ⲙ̅ⲡⲣⲱⲙⲉ
>
> Before Christ came there was no bread in the world, just as Paradise, the place where Adam was, had many trees to nourish the animals but no wheat to sustain man. Man used to feed like the animals, but when Christ came, the perfect man, he brought bread from heaven in order that man might be nourished with the food of man. (55.6 - 55.14)[390]

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388 Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (trans. William Trask; Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1954).

389 Enoch was recognised as revealed scripture among Jews in the last two centuries BCE; early Christians, too, held the book in high regard; it is mentioned by Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Zosimus of Panopolis. After the third century, however, it fell into disrepute. St Augustine in *The City of God* 15.23 condemned it. Magicians probably used this book. Gaster argues that the spell entitled 'The Hebrew Logos' in the Great Magical Papyrus of Paris has links to the *Book of Enoch*, and that its author must have been acquainted with it (M.H. Gaster, "The Logos Ebraicos in The Magical Papyrus of Paris and The Book of Enoch", *JRAS* 3rd series, 33 (1901) 109-17).

390 "Gospel of Philip" in *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7.* Cf. the later Coptic text, *The Mysteries of St John, Apostle and Holy Virgin* (A.D.1006), in E.A.W. Budge, *Coptic Texts* III (5 Vols. New York, 1977): Adam and Eve are starving after their expulsion from Eden; Christ feels compassion for them, but has to plead with God to show them some mercy. Eventually God relents, and God and Christ take a part of their body and send Michael to earth with it. This body of God is wheat, and Michael is responsible for teaching Adam how to sow it (fol.6a).

The originally Syrian *Gospel of Thomas* strongly emphasises the notion that returning to child-like innocence and rejecting the civilised world is the key to salvation:

> ⲁⲓ̅ⲥ̅ ⲛⲁⲩ ⲁϩⲛ̅ⲕⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲉⲩϫⲓ ⲉⲣⲱⲧⲉ ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ ⲛ̅ⲛⲉϥⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ϫⲉ ⲛⲉⲉⲓⲕⲟⲩⲉⲓ ⲉⲧϫⲓ ⲉⲣⲱⲧⲉ ⲉⲩⲧⲛ̅ⲧⲱⲛ ⲁⲛⲉⲧⲃⲏⲕ ⲉϩⲟⲩⲛ ⲁⲧⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲣⲟ (22)
>
> Jesus saw infants being suckled. He said to his disciples, "These infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom." (22)
>
> <ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲓ̅ⲥ̅ ϫⲉ> ⲉⲧⲉ<ⲧⲛ̅>ⲧⲙ̅ⲣ̅ⲛⲏⲥⲧⲉⲩⲉ ⲉⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲁϩⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲧⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲣⲟ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲛ̅ ⲧⲙ̅ⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲥⲁⲙⲃⲁⲧⲟⲛ (ⲥⲓⲑ) ⲛ̅ⲥⲁⲃⲃⲁⲧⲟⲛ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲁⲛⲁⲩ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ (27)
>
> <Jesus said,> "If you do not fast as regards the world, you will not find the kingdom. If you do not observe the Sabbath as a Sabbath, you will not see the father." (27)
>
> ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲓ̅ⲥ̅ ϫⲉ ϩⲟⲧⲁⲛ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲛ̅ϣⲁⲕⲉⲕ ⲧⲏⲩⲧⲛ̅ ⲉϩⲏⲩ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲧⲛ̅ϣⲓⲡⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲧⲛ̅ϥⲓ ⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲧⲛ̅ϣⲧⲏⲛ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲧⲛ̅ⲕⲁⲁⲩ ϩⲁ ⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ⲛ̅ⲛⲉⲧⲛ̅ⲟⲩⲉⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲛ̅ⲑⲉ ⲛ̅ⲛⲓⲕⲟⲩⲉ ⲛ̅ϣⲏⲣⲉ ϣⲏⲙ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲧⲛ̅ϫⲟⲡϫ̅ⲡ̅ ⲙ̅ⲙⲟⲩⲣ ⲧⲟⲧⲉ [ⲧⲉⲧ]ⲛⲁⲛⲁⲩ ⲉⲡϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲉⲧⲟⲛϩ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲁⲣ̅ ϩⲟⲧⲉ ⲁⲛ (37)
>
> ... ... Jesus said, "When you disrobe without being ashamed and take up your garments and place them under your feet like little children and tread on them, then [will you see] the son of the living one, and you will not be afraid." (37)
>
> ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲓ̅ⲥ̅ ϫⲉ ϫⲓⲛ ⲁⲇⲁⲙ ϣⲁ ⲓ̈ⲱϩⲁ(ⲛ)ⲛⲏⲥ ⲡⲃⲁⲡⲧⲓⲥⲧⲏⲥ ϩⲛ̅ ⲛ̅ϫⲡⲟ ⲛ̅ⲛⲓϩⲓⲟⲙⲉ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲡⲉⲧϫⲟⲥⲉ ⲁⲓ̈ⲱϩⲁⲛⲛⲏⲥ ⲡⲃⲁⲡⲧⲓⲥⲧⲏⲥ ϣⲓⲛⲁ ϫⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲱϭⲡ ⲛ̅ϭⲓ ⲛⲉϥⲃⲁⲗ ⲁⲉⲓϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲇⲉ ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁϣⲱⲡⲉ ϩⲛ̅ ⲧⲏⲩⲧⲛ̅ ⲉϥⲟ ⲛ̅ⲕⲟⲩⲉⲓ ϥⲛⲁ ⲥⲟⲩⲱⲛ ⲧⲙⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲣⲟ ⲁⲩⲱ ϥⲛⲁϫⲓⲥⲉ ⲁⲓ̈ⲱϩⲁⲛⲛⲏⲥ (46)
>
> Jesus said, "Among those born of women, from Adam until John the Baptist, there is no one so superior to John the Baptist that his eyes should not be lowered (before him). Yet I have said, whichever one of you comes to be a child will be acquainted with the kingdom and will become superior to John." (46)
>
> ⲡⲉϫⲉ ⲓ̅ⲥ̅ ϫⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁϩϭⲓⲛⲉ ⲙ̅ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ϥⲣ̅ ⲣⲙ̅ⲙⲁⲟ ⲙⲁⲣⲉϥⲁⲣⲛⲁ ⲙ̅ⲡⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ (110)
>
> Jesus said: "Whoever finds the world and becomes rich, let him renounce the world." (110)[391]

In Syriac-speaking areas the pursuit of separation was embraced by those following an ascetic interpretation of Christianity. As mentioned above the Syriac use of the root QDŠ

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[391] All texts and translations come from Bentley Layton (ed.) & Thomas O. Lambdin (trans.) "The Gospel according to Thomas", in *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7*, I.

was strongly tied to the notion of separation (§5.2.3).[392] If in the earliest forms of Syriac asceticism it seems that the notion of separation was expressed mainly through celibacy, in later Syriac asceticism (after the coming of Egyptian monasticism) the notion of separation came to include a complete separation from society and the artifices of civilisation in an attempt to return to an ideal heavenly state. The Syriac noble savage often lived untouched by the arts of civilisation, naked or just clothed in straw or leaves, grazing on plants and roots as an animal would. That this more extreme interpretation of asceticism seems to have arisen after the coming of Egyptian monastic influence could be explained through the impact of Patristic writings which had been influenced by expansions of the myth of the fall of the angels.

In completely rejecting the civilised world, in fact, by rejecting all that made him or her human, the ascetic attained the same spiritual state as the angels and became their comrade. And as comrades do, the angels watched over their earthly equals. In the words of one ascetic:

ܚܙܬܐ ܠܐ ܚܙܝ ܚ̈ܝܐ. ܠܚܡܐ ܕܒ̈ܢܝܢܫܐ ܠܐ ܐܟܠܬ. ܠܒܘܫܐ
ܕܥܠܡܐ ܠܐ ܠܒܫܬ. ܬܠܬܝܢ ܫ̈ܢܝܢ ܗܘܬ ܗܪܟܐ ܒܐܘܠܨܢܐ ܪܒܐ. ܡܢ
ܟܦܢܐ ܘܨܗܝܐ ܘܥܪܛܠܝܘܬܐ. ܘܩܪܒܐ ܕܕ̈ܝܘܐ. ܐܟܠܬ ܒܪܝ ܥܦܪܐ ܡܢ
ܟܦܢܐ. ܐܫܬܝܬ ܡ̈ܝܐ ܡܢ ܝܡܐ ܡܢ ܨܗܝܐ. . . . ܘܟܕ
ܣܚܦܬ ܒܡܫܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܬܠܬܝܢ ܫ̈ܢܝܢ ܒܟܦܢܐ ܘܒܨܗܝܐ
ܘܒܥܪܛܠܝܘܬܐ ܘܒܩܪܒܐ ܕܕ̈ܝܘܐ. ܗܟܢ ܐܬܚܝܠܬ ܒܠܝ ܡܪܚܡܢܘܬܗ
ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܚܡܕ ܠܗ ܠܓܒܪ، ܘܐܘܒܕ ܣܒܪܐ. ܒܕܡܐ ܕܐܝܣܪ ܠܗܘ
ܠܫ̈ܐܕܐ ܡܢ ܢܦܫܗ. ܘܡܠܐܟܘܬܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܬܐ ܒܟܠܝܘܡ ܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ
ܡܫܬܕܪܐ ܠܝ ܘܡܠܐܟ̈ܐ ܢܛܪܝܢ ܘܫܠܡܝܢ ܠܐܕܪ. ܚܙܝܬ ܐܬܘܪܬܐ
ܕܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܘܐܘܪܚܐ ܕܫܡܝܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ. ܚܙܝܬ ܦܬܘܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܝܢ
ܠܕܝܢܐ ܚܙܝܬ ܠܦܪܕܝܣܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܣܗܕ ܠܐܝܠܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܟܠ ܡܢܗ
ܐܕܡ ܘܚܘܐ. ܚܙܝܬ ܠܚܢܘܟ ܘܠܐܠܝܐ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܕܚܝܐ. ܠܝܬ ܡܕܡ
ܕܒܥܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܚܘܝܢܝ[393]

> My eyes have not seen a living thing, I have not eaten human bread. I have not worn clothing of (this) world. For thirty years I have been here in great distress from hunger, thirst, nakedness and conflict with devils, I even ate dust, my son, from hunger, I drank water from the sea

[392] The Greek word *hagios* also acquired this connotation; see n120.
[393] A.E. Look, *The History of Abba Marcus of Mount Tharmaka* (Oxford: OUP, 1929) 10-11.

> from thirst. .... And when I had endured patiently[394] for thirty years through the hunger, thirst, nakedness and conflicts with demons, then finally the mercy of God rested on me. He commanded my body and the hair grew until it weighted down my limbs with its weight. A continual supply of spiritual food from the Lord was sent to me. Angels descended and ascended in my presence. I saw the realms of the Kingdom and the habitations of the souls of the saints. I saw the blessedness which is promised to the righteous. I saw the paradise of God. He showed me that tree from which Adam and Eve ate. I saw Enoch and Elijah in the Land of the Living. There was nothing which I sought from God which he did not show me.[395]

A complete rejection of civilisation, and complete faith in his actions, brought the ascetic the reward of an angelic state; he could see the angels, he ate spiritual food, he saw the heavenly worlds and Paradise. Some late fourth and early fifth century Syriac ascetics reduced themselves to a completely beastlike existence: "behold they graze like animals for roots (plants) upon the mountains, and behold like birds they pick up dry vegetables from the heights".[396] Describing his 'mountaineers' Pseudo-Ephrem said that: "they mix themselves with the animals", "they mix themselves every moment with stags", "they leap with young roes".[397] The 'Holy Fools' of slightly later Syrian asceticism may also have been influenced by this attempt to avoid civilisation in all its forms; indeed it is interesting to note that the one rule that they followed was that of sexual abstinence; thus like the pre-fall Adam they were both completely free from the constraints of civilisation and also sexless.[398]

Often this ideal state was described as involving communion with and mastery over the animals. This is an outlook supported by very ancient Near Eastern views of animals and the place of humans in the natural world. It can be seen in the earlier books of the Old Testament, where animals (in particular the hybrid divine beasts such as the cherubim) have

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394 ܒܡܣܒܪܢܘܬܐ is the Syriac; perhaps, then, a better translation would be "in expectation", as the noun is from the root SBR ("to think, believe, suppose, hold to be true").

395 Trans. MacDermot, *Cult of the Seer*, 281.

396 Arthur Vööbus, *Literary,Critical and Historical Studies* 101, Ms Šarf. Patr. 302 fol 222b; from the text titled "A *mēmrā* of Mar Ephrem about the solitaries and mourners and those who dwell in wilderness on the desolated mountains"; it is an unedited text found in several MSS: Ms Šarf. Patr. 302 (fol 221a-224b); Ms Vat. syr. 566 (fol 209b-215a); Ms. Šarf. 19/1 (J. Armalet, *Catalogue des manuscrits de Charfet* (Jounieh 1936) p.278f. - fol. 73a-87a). p.83 n3 (Ms Šarf Patr. 302, fol 222b.

397 Vööbus, *op cit.*; cf. *de virginitate* ed. Rahmani II, p.38, 4 to describe the mountaineers.

398 Evelyne Patlagean, in a paper delivered at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Givat Ram on 20th March 1998 made the comment that the only rule they did not break was that of sexual abstinence.

an almost god-like status (although this status is gradually lost in the later books, such as Daniel).[399] The original world inhabited by Adam and Eve in Genesis was a world in which man and beast coexisted in their innocent nakedness. In Mesopotamian myth the wild man Enkidu originally lived in perfect communion with the animals.[400] Ephrem showed his contact with such ideas when he claimed that the creation of Adam in the image of God meant in the image of his authority; when Adam sinned he lost that authority and consequently he no longer ruled over the animals; rather he was threatened by them.[401]

5.7.3 Ascetics and clothing metaphors

The importance of clothing as a marker of status, cosmic or otherwise, has been central to this thesis. In chapters 3 & 4 in particular the centrality of clothing metaphors to the description of angels led to the conclusion that angels were seen as little more than souls clothed in a particular type of cosmic garment. The emphasis upon clothing metaphors in Syriac and Egyptian asceticism and the relationship between these metaphors and the notion of the angelic life demonstrates again the dependence of early Christian ascetics upon the literature discussed in those two chapters. A common motif in Syrian writing on asceticism concerned the clothing of the ascetic.[402] Tales such as that told above, of holy men whose bodies came to be protected from the elements by a coat of hair following years of asceticism, were widespread.[403] Jerome reported hearing of one such hermit, but, perhaps predictably, said of his informants: "because the lies of these people are outrageous, they require no formal refutation."[404] In two passages Ephrem praises those naked ascetics whose hair had grown so long that in one text it is said to resemble the 'wings of an

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399 Franz Landsberger, "The Origin of the Winged Angel in Jewish Art", *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 20 (1947): 227-254, pp.240-1.

400 *Epic of Gilgamesh* I.ii.80-89, in Danny P. Jackson, Robert D. Biggs and Thom Kapheim *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1993).

401 C.W. Mitchell (trans.) *S. Ephraim's Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion, and Bardaisan* I, *The Discourses Addressed to Hypatius* (Williams and Norgate: London & Oxford, 1912) "Fourth Discourse to Hypatius" lxxxvi, p.114.

402 For an overview of ascetic ideas about clothing see G. Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity: Pagan and Christian Lifestyles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 113-118.

403 A.E. Look, *The History of Abba Marcus of Mount Tharmaka* (Oxford, 1929) (Syriac) 9.11, 15.10, 16.6 – here hair seems to bring protection from evil spirits as well as from hunger and thirst and illness; *The Life of Apa Onnophorius the Anchorite*, 208.14, 206.14, 210.1 in E.A.W. Budge, *Coptic Texts* IV (New York: AMS, 1977); E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of Paradise* [Palladius] 107.19

404 Paul B. Harvey (intro. & trans.) "Jerome, Life of Paul the First Hermit", 360, 1.

eagle'.[405] Likewise, in accordance with the attempt to avoid civilisation and thus return to Adam's angelic state, the ascetic often wore extremely simple clothes, especially palm fibres.[406]

The tales of hairy ascetics are interesting because they represent an inversion of ancient Mesopotamian myth in the light of the new myth structures coming from Jewish sources in the form of the book of giants and the very negative attitude to civilisation. For the origin of the Mesopotamian hairy wild man must surely be Enkidu; at least the two would be compared. In the tale of Enkidu the hairy wild man is sent by the gods to be a rival to Gilgamesh; he runs with beasts and enjoys full communion with nature until he is corrupted by a temple prostitute who seduces him and thus makes him into a civilised human being, at which point he loses his hair coat; the significance of the story, however, is that civilisation brings great benefits alongside the loss of communion with nature; the late antique Syrian wild man was consciously reversing the effects of civilisation by returning to an Enkidu-like state of hairy naked communion with the beasts, and thus rejecting the claim made to the dying Enkidu by the sun god Shamash that he has gained more than he lost.[407] Also we can see strong resemblances to the figure of Elijah, also a 'hairy' figure (although what exactly the phrase בעל שער means is uncertain).[408] Did it mean a man wearing a hair coat or a man who possessed a long head of hair? The King James Version has "he was a hairy man"; the RSV has "he wore a garment of haircloth". Montgomery claims that the matter is settled by the reference to the hairy garments of false prophets denounced in Zech 13:4. Thus at least some Jewish prophets wore garments of hair. This is suggestive of the Nazir, who as we have seen above avoided cutting his hair,[409] and also of John the Baptist (discussed above).[410] In the Christian ascetic texts this Mesopotamian myth complex concerned with nature and civilisation was probably being combined with Old Testament Jewish ideas concerning prophets, who, like the ascetics of late antiquity, had the ability to make contact

405 Arthur Vööbus, *Literary Critical and Historical Studies* p.101, *Hymni et sermones* ed. Lamy, IV col 153.

406 *Histoire de Jean le Petit, Hegoumène de Scète, au IV siècle* XXX.18; E. Amélineau, "Vie de Jean Kolobes", in *Annales du Musée Guimet.* T. 25. *Monuments pour servir a l'histoire de l'Egypte Chrétienne. Histoire des Monastères de la Basse Egypte* (Leroux: Paris, 1894) 351.3.

407 *Epic of Gilgamesh,* (trans. Jackson *et al.*) VII.iii.52-79.

408 J.A. Montgomery, "Ascetic Strains in Early Judaism", *JBL* 51 (1932) 201 n40.

409 See §5.1.2.

410 See §5.1.3.

with sources of divine knowledge.[411] Thus the traditional hair garment of the Hebrew prophet could be compared with the depiction of Enkidu the wild man; and, unlike the Hebrew prophet, the Christian ascetic garment is not put on, but (reversing Enkidu's loss of his body hair after becoming civilised) grown after years of ascetic practice.

Nakedness (which did not always result in the ascetic being covered in hair) was common amongst these hermits,[412] and once again served to demonstrate their achievement of angelic status. For nakedness was often used to signify the immortal state of people who have ascended, having been stripped of their fleshy bodies.[413] For instance, as mentioned earlier (§4.6), the "earthly angels" described in the Syriac *History of the Rechabites* may appear to be naked to impure eyes, but were actually covered in Adam and Eve's pre-fall robes of glory.[414] Ephrem explicitly linked the new baptismal robe of the Christian with the robe of glory worn by Adam before the fall.[415] The late fourth century Syriac ascetics in the wilderness, grazing on the mountainsides, like the Rechabites may have appeared naked to ordinary eyes, but in fact were clothed in a 'garment of glory'.[416]

Clothing has always been an important signifier of status and identity in human society; in the religious literature of Antiquity it indicated the cosmic status of the soul that wore it.[417]

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411 On this motif in the Old Testament; see also Dan 4 discussed in Matthias Henz, *The Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar: the ancient Near Eastern origins and early history of interpretation of Daniel 4* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 1999); and also the *Tale of Ahiqa* in F.C. Conybeare, J. Rendel Harris, and Agnes Smith Lewis (eds.) *The story of Ahikar from the Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Greek and Slavonic versions* (London: C.J. Clay and Sons, 1898).

412 E. Amélineau, "Vie de Jean Kolobes", in *Annales du Musée Guimet* T. 25. *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Egypte Chrétienne. Histoire des Monastères de la Basse Egypte* (Leroux: Paris, 1894) 354.13; E. Amélineau, "Vie de Macaire d'Alexandrie", in *Annales du Musée Guimet* T. 25. 251.11; *The Lausiac History of Palladius* 127.XXXVII; Joseph P. Amar (intro. & trans.) "On Hermits and Desert Dwellers", in *Ascetic Behaviour* 70-1, *l.*109: a poem ascribed to Ephrem in title, but its eschatalogical theology is different from Ephrem's – i.e here the soul takes possession of the kingdom of heaven immediately upon death, rather than after the general resurrection as Ephrem believed (p.66-7). Amar says that this poem represents a transitional period between the moderate early Christian asceticism in Syria, characterised by celibacy, and the radical asceticism that was later imported from Egypt; text: Edmund Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones IV.* (*CSCO* 334/Scr. Syr 148. Louvain: Peeters, 1973).

413 Jarl Fossum, "Partes posteriores Dei, The 'Transfiguration' of Jesus in the *Acts of John*" 102-4.

414 *History of the Rechabites* 5.3 & 12.3, cf. Fossum "Partes posteriores Dei", 102-3.

415 Cf. Brock, "Some Aspects of Greek Words in Syriac", in *idem*, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* 100; numerous references are given here to Ephrem's works discussing this idea.

416 Brock, "Some Aspects of Greek Words in Syriac", 100.

417 Brock, "Some Aspects of Greek Words in Syriac", 99, talks of the late antique 'theology of clothing', and suggests (n112) H. Riesenfeld, *Jésus transfiguré* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1947) 115-130 and E. Peterson,

The material in Chapter 4 (Symbolic Frontiers) illustrates the importance of clothing symbolism in the context of translation from an earthly to a heavenly state. In particular we should note the Coptic Manichaean texts (§4.9), which combine Graeco-Roman philosophic notions about the stripping off of the body as the soul ascends with Jewish ideas about the heavenly garment. In the Manichaean texts the soul strips off its fleshy outer garment as it ascends to heaven, to replace it with the garment of glory worn by the angels.

It is in the context of this garment worn by the angels, and generally believed also to have been worn by Adam[418] before the fall, that we should understand Christian ascetic garments.[419] The robe of glory given to those righteous who had ascended was the same robe of glory worn by Adam before the fall. In common with other philosophical/religious groups in antiquity Pythagoreans, who were perhaps the closest to Christian ascetics in their practices, distinguished themselves by the wearing of garments of pure white linen.[420] In Judaism linen had long held a special place. It was an expensive cloth. From an early period it was used in the priestly garments[421] and for the hangings in the Tabernacle.[422] The greatness of leaders such as Samuel or David was symbolised in their garments of linen.[423] Likewise angels could be identified by their linen garments.[424] Christians also thought linen

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Pour une théologie du vêtement (Lyon, 1943), Brock notes that he has been unable to consult the last reference, and I have also been unable to find a copy.

418 Cf. §4.6 104.

419 Judge, "The Earliest Use of Monachos", emphasises the importance of the monastic garment to the identity of monks, and even offers the theory that the origin of the word *monachos* may have come from the word used for a single thickness of cloth. Whilst Judge places little value on this suggestion it is worth noting that in the Syriac *Life of Judas Thomas* the wearing by Thomas of a one-piece garment is especially noted; e.g. cf. William Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of The Apostles* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1968; 1st publ. 1871) 228.

420 Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Life*, 21.100, English trans. in G. Clark, *Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Life* (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1989) 45; Greek text in L. Deubner, *de vita Pythagorica liber* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1937; rev. ed. U. Klein, 1975). Cf. Leif E. Vaage, "Cynic Epistles (Selections)", in *Ascetic Behaviour* 120, (A) "Pseudo Crates" – discusses Diogenes and how he lived the Cynic life all the time and says: "Rather, cite Diogenes, who put on Cynic clothing not just once but his whole life." See also Gail Patterson Corrington, "Philo. On the Contemplative Life: Or, On the Suppliants (The Fourth Book on the Virtues)", in *ibid*, 149 VIII.66: "So when they assemble, clad in snow white raiment, joyous but with the height of solemnity".

421 Using the noun שש: Ex 28:5,39; 39:3,27,28; using the noun בד: Ex 28:42; 39: 28; Lev 6:3; 16:4,23, 32.

422 שש: Ex 25:4; 35:6,23,25,35; 38:23; cf. Ex 26:1, 31,36; 27:9,16,18; 36:8, 35,37; 38:9,16,18; בד, of the priests of Nob, 1 Sam 22:18.

423 בד: 1 Sam 2:18 (Samuel); 2 Sam 6:14, 1 Chron 15:27 (David).

424 Ezek 9:2,3,11; 10:2,6,7; Dan 10:5; 12:6,7. The connection between linen and the colour white as symbols of purity, however, was not automatic. In the earliest strata of the Bible the colour white is usually an indication of disease or impurity (See Lev 13:10, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 38, 39, 42, 43; Num 12:10; 2Kin

a fabric fit for a divine being. The seven angels of Rev 15:6 were clothed in it, so too the bride of the Lamb in 19:8; indeed Revelation uses linen as a symbol of sanctity on numerous occasions.[425] Also worth noting at this point is the strange passage in the Gospel of Mark in which a young man is described following Christ as he is led away from the garden of Gethsemane; he is wrapped only in a linen cloth and runs away naked after the servants of the high priest try to capture him. The 'secret Gospel of Mark' discovered by Morton Smith in the Mar Saba monastery outside Jerusalem seems to interpret this passage in light of a mystery cult initiation.[426]

Christians could be identified by their clothing. When, in the mid-fourth century a certain Martha, a 'daughter of the covenant' was questioned by the Persian government about her religious allegiance she declared that "I am a Christian, as my clothing shows".[427] Christian ascetics were defined by the habit that they wore; initiation as a monk was indicated by the novice being allowed to put on the habit. Thus: "seek the dwelling place of my father Teroti and become a monk with him and wear the habit of the angels."[428]

5:27); later, however (2Chron 5:12; Eccl 9:8; Is 1:18; Dan 7:9; 11:35; 12:10), it came to be associated with purity and linen garments.

425 Cf. Rev 18:12; 18:16; 19: 8 (the bride's linen is explained to be the good deeds of the saints); 19:14.

426 Although the authenticity of this text is doubted by many scholars. The literature on this topic is voluminous. The best place to begin is with *The Secret Gospel of Mark Homepage* (http://alf.zfn.uni-bremen.de/~wie/Secret/secmark_home.html); and also Morton Smith's translation published by the Gnostic Society at http://home.online.no/~noetic/secm.htm. See also Morton Smith's printed works on the subject: "*Clement of Alexandria and Secret Mark*: The Score at the End of the First Decade", *HTR* 75 (1982) 449 – 461; "A Rare Sense of *prokoptô* and the Authenticity of the Letter of Clement of Alexandria," in Jacob Jervell & Wayne A. Meeks (eds.) *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honor of Nils Alstrup Dahl* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977); "On the Authenticity of the Mar Saba Letter of Clement" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38 (1976) 196-199; "Merkel on the Longer Text of Mark" *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 72 (1975) 133-150; reply to Joseph Fitzmeyer in "Mark's 'Secret Gospel?'", *America* 129 (1973) 64-65; *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973); *The Secret Gospel: The Discovery and Interpretation of the Secret Gospel according to Mark* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973; reprnt. 1982). Smith's confidence in his find has rarely been matched in the broader scholarly community; see Richard Bauckham,"Salome the Sister of Jesus, Salome the Disciple of Jesus, and the Secret Gospel of Mark", *Novum Testamentum* 33 (1991) 245-275; Eric Osborn, "Clement of Alexandria: A Review of Research, 1958-1982", *The Second Century* 3 (1983) 219-244; Edwin M. Yamauchi, "A Secret Gospel of Jesus as 'Magus?' A Review of Recent Works of Morton Smith", *Christian Scholars Review* 4 (1975) 238-251.

427 "The Martyrdom of Martha, Daughter of Posi who was a daughter of the Covenant", in *Holy Women* p. 68, 234: Text from P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* II, 233-41; from a MS of 1869 copied from lost 11th-12th CE MS. The events are set in the mid-4th century. Mention of Martha (although she is not named) is also made in Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* II.xi in a section about her father.

428 *PO* XIV fasc. 2 (Paris, 1919) *The Life of Abba John Khamé* 334.1; trans. in MacDermot, *The Cult of The Seer* 286.

As we have seen, the changing of garments is an important theme in monastic literature, either in the context of the ascetic falling into error and losing his or her garment, or in the context of a sinner becoming a monk and gaining a new garment.[429] Moreover the garment of the ascetic is the same as the robe worn by the ascending soul of the righteous individual.[430] The terminology used to describe this robe is paralleled in the Manichaean *Psalm Book*, in the Syriac terms used by Ephrem to describe the garments worn by the righteous after their death and ascension, in the terms used in Syrian Christian literature to describe the baptismal robe (as mentioned in the previous paragraph) gained after the sacrament is granted (and thus salvation assured), and in the terms used to describe the clothing worn by Adam and Eve before the fall.[431] The same Greek loan-word term (*esṭal* / *esṭla*, from Greek *stolē̂*) is used in this and other literature to describe all these garments.[432] Isaac of Antioch addresses the solitary: "Your filth, which has been your clothing, has woven you a robe of light (*esṭal nuhra*);" and then, of the ascending soul in the context of a discussion of Genesis 3:21 and the garments of skin, he says that the righteous dead are clothed in a robe of light.[433]

Summary: the place of the emulation of angels in early Christian ascetic literature

This chapter opened with a discussion of the background. Pagans and Jews in the first centuries CE had their own types of asceticism; for example the biblical idea of the nazir was still a current ascetic philosophy and Jews were also probably influenced by Graeco-Roman ascetic thought, which emphasised moderation and restraint. In Jewish thought new ideas about the temple, heaven, priestly purity and the pure angelic state were also becoming important and were manifest in the beliefs of the Qumran sect and the Pharisees.

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429 "Pelagia of Antioch", in Brock and Harvey, *Holy Women* p.50, 23: [*After repentance in front of bishops*) "Stand up, I beg you my lord, and strip off from me the dirty clothing of prostitution; clothe me with pure garments, the beautiful dress for the novel banquet to which I have come" (p.40-41). Also, "Mary the Niece of Abraham of Qidun" in *idem*, p.31, 19: "So straightaway she got up and left for another town. She changed the precious monastic garb she had been wearing and established herself in a low tavern."

430 Which was an angelic transformation, as discussed in chap. 4.

431 Although see §4.6 104 for the question of whether the garments of light were granted before or after the fall.

432 Brock, "Some Aspects of Greek Words in Syriac" *passim*, esp. 99-100.

433 "Isaac of Antioch" (ed. Bedjan I, p.53, 14) in Brock, *op cit.*, 98-99.

Asceticism of a Christian type first becomes evident in the New Testament epistles (i.e. 1 Cor 7); it is centred upon celibacy. Celibacy is also important in the Christian soteriological scheme (Rev 14:4; Mt 22:30, Mk 12:25, Lk 20:35-6) and as a description of the state of the heavenly angels (Mt 20:30, Mk 12:25, Lk 20:35-6). Celibacy had come to assume such importance because many early Christians were heir to the same traditions found in the Pseudepigrapha as were Jews. These traditions focused upon the sexual purity required to be in contact with God, whether in a vision of heaven or in the Temple; it naturally followed that the angels were also sexually abstinent, and the myth of the fallen angels (Gen 6:1-4, *1En* 1-36; *Jub*) focused attention upon the sexual aspect of the angels' rebellion.

In Syriac asceticism the emulation of angelic behaviour by ascetics had become standard by the fourth century. In the *Odes of Solomon* the pursuit of heavenly status, transfiguration, is promoted using all the language of angelic transformation, but without explicitly describing it as angelic. The correspondences between the *Odes* and the Manichaean *Cologne Mani Codex* in their tales of transformation suggest that in the background of the community in which the *Odes* was written the belief was held that the ideal Christian state was a heavenly one, but one which had not yet come to be explicitly described as 'angelic'. This is further evidence of the *Odes*' antiquity, and also evidence of the early development of Syriac ascetic notions concerning the heavenly existence, which later came to focus specifically upon the angelic state as definitive of the heavenly state. This was following the general trend in Christian Church thought on this matter in the first three centuries CE. All heavenly beings came to be designated angels: Christ and the Holy Spirit were the only remaining non-angelic heavenly beings apart from God. A parallel and perhaps related stream of thought which the heresiologists seem to have lumped together into some kind of 'Jewish-Christian' category and designated 'Elchasaites', 'Ebionites' and 'Cerinthians', held to an angelic Christology which aimed for the transformation of the Christian into an angelic 'Christ'. The Syriac version of the *Vita Antonii* also suggests a particular Syriac focus upon a transformed, Christ-like type of ascetic, indeed the ascetic as an 'angel of light'.

At the heart of most Syriac ascetic thought lies the notion of celibacy. Texts such as the *Acts of Thomas* demonstrate it, and the centrality of the term *iḥidaya*, and the practices of the *Bnai* and *Bnat Qyama* do likewise. This celibacy is surely based upon an understanding of the ideal heavenly state as a celibate and sexless existence. This was based not only upon

the angel afterlife passages in the New Testament (Mt 22:30, Mk 12:25, Lk 20:35-6) but also upon more general trends in Jewish and early Christian thought. These trends were informed by the sexual aspect of the sin of the fallen angels in *1 Enoch*, and the notion of Adam's pre-fall existence as sexless and angelic, and came to see the angelic state of purity needed to be in the presence of God principally in terms of sexual purity. The fourth century angelic life in Syriac asceticism, as found in the *Liber graduum*, Aphrahat or Ephrem, appears to be a natural development of a transformative ideology present from a very early stage of Syriac ascetic thought. In the thought of 'heretical' groups in the same region this transformative ideology was connected to the transformation into an angelic Christ. The degree of influence the thought of Jewish-Christian 'heretics' such as the Ebionites or Simon Magus had upon the milieu from which sprang native Syriac asceticism is unclear, but Manichaeaism suggests itself as a strong candidate for consideration as a possible agent of cultural cross-pollination.

Considering the ancient background of the transformative mysticism at the heart of the native Syriac understanding of the angelic life, the question of whether the origin of the angelic life in Egyptian asceticism was Syria warrants consideration. Some of the Nag Hammadi texts suggest an ascetic and soteriological scheme of thought connected to Syrian ideas. Possibly Syrian gnostic circles helped to transmit the idea of the ascetic angelic life to Egypt. Yet an examination of the ascetic concept of singleness, connected to ideas about celibacy and thus the angelic life in Syriac thought, does not clearly point to a Syrian origin for these ideas; rather the evidence suggests that the development of a *concept* of ascetic 'singleness' was happening roughly simultaneously in Egypt and in Syria and that the standardising of the terms *iḥidaya* and *monachos* also happened at roughly the same time in both places.

The Christian ascetic emulation of angels shows itself to have developed out of some of the very earliest strata of Christian practice and belief. It was connected to the Christian attempt to build a heavenly society here on earth and the attempt to achieve individual perfection on the model of the heavenly beings. This imitation of a heavenly state was the unique aspect of Christian asceticism which marked it off from pagan or Jewish asceticism of this period. When Christianity finally reconciled itself with its ascetic branch in the fourth

century it is appropriate that the *aggelikos bios* came to function as a central symbolic element of the new monastic literature and practice.

Conclusion

The early Christian interest in angels was characterised by a focus upon the nature and roles of angels as models for human behaviour; it was predicated upon the belief that the community of Christians upon the earth should mirror that of the heavenly community. It is this which allowed angelology to survive in the early Church.

In the Near East the extension of the *Pax Romana* across most of the modern day Middle East with the acquisition of Syria and Arabia in the early second century, both coincided with and helped to effect a remarkable philosophical renaissance in that part of the ancient Near East.

Near Eastern society developed a new confidence in the early Christian period. The seeds sown by Hellenism and centuries of trade around the Mediterranean basin were reaped by the imperial subjects of the second through to the mid-third centuries. A cultural revival began at this time, the conditions for which were provided by the extension of Roman hegemony, but which then profited from the decline in Roman political and cultural dominance from the mid-third century onwards. Greek, Roman, and local, often Semitic speaking, communities all contributed to a new culture united under Imperial rule. Three religio-philosophic movements, Judaism, the 'new' Graeco-Roman paganism[1] and Christianity, are the main products of this period. Judaism was reinventing itself and indeed flourishing despite the loss of the Temple and the repercussions of the two revolts of the first half of the second century.[2] Likewise, despite some sporadic persecution, Christianity in this period established itself, spread quickly from its Near Eastern home and then went on to be seen as a direct threat to Roman power, before finally infiltrating those corridors of power. Philosophers like Albinus, Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus reinvented Platonism in a new land. A land rich in material wealth, in intellectual wealth through its position as a meeting place of East and West, and once again politically stable and united as part of an empire spawned its own form of Platonism. This Platonism was, as we saw in §3.1, concerned with intermediary beings, held a monotheistic view of the divine, and, regardless of the overly-defensive criticisms made of it by Plotinus, was in some form of dialogue with gnostic

[1] Mainly manifested in Middle and Neoplatonism.
[2] See Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)* III, parts 1-2 (rev. ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, & Martin Goodman; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986).

thought.[3] It assumed as its starting point the Platonic vision of the soul as separated from its heavenly home and aimed to return the soul to heaven in union with God. All this was contributing to a movement occurring across the empire, particularly in the East, whereby classical Graeco-Roman paganism and centuries of philosophic speculation were coming together to create a new type of Platonically-inspired paganism with the Chaldaean Oracles as its sacred texts.[4]

From Egypt through to northern Syria the Near East in the second and third centuries contributed in a disproportionately great manner to the religious and philosophical practices and beliefs of the time. The decline of the Egyptian temple priesthood (partly due to the deliberate policy of the Roman authorities)[5] seems to have opened up the field and helped to create a distinctive yet anarchic Graeco-Egyptian magical scene preserved for us in the Magical Papyri.[6] These texts are first hand evidence of the syncretism of Jewish/Hebrew material with Greek and native Egyptian.[7] Coptic, which mixed the Greek and native Egyptian languages, flourished from the mid-third onwards;[8] the story with Syriac is similar.[9] The Egyptian monastic movement was an expression of Christian piety shared by both native 'Copts' and 'Greeks'.[10] Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clement and Origen, arguably the greatest Christian writers of the second and third centuries, came from a Near Eastern

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[3] See Plotinus, *Enneads* 2.9.14. It is perhaps no surprise that an extract from Plato's *Republic* (588A-589B, NHC VI, 5) was found at Nag Hammadi.

[4] On the Chaldaean Oracles see Garth Fowden, "Pagan Versions of the Rain Miracle of AD 172", *Historia* 36 (1987) 90-94; also H. Lewy *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire* (1st published 1956; 2nd ed. M. Tardieu; Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1978).

[5] See for instance S. Davis, *Race Relations In Ancient Egypt: Greek, Egyptian, Hebrew, Roman* (London: Methuen, 1951) 62.

[6] See Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri* (2 vols., Teubner: Stuttgart, 1973-4); see also the series which continues the work of Preisendanz: Robert W. Daniel and Franco Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum* (2 vols.; *Papyrologica Coloniensia* XVI; Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990-1992).

[7] Cf. Betz's comments in his introduction to *The Greek Magical Papyri In Translation* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986); note also the presence of the corpus of Demotic spells in the same volume, testifying to the continuing strength of Demotic as an expression of the Egyptian language; see also Marvin Meyer's comments in Meyer & Richard Smith (eds.) *Ancient Christian Magic, Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco, 1994) 27-30.

[8] See Roger S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press) 238-9; the earliest dated Coptic text is *P. Vind. Worp* 24 (late third or very early fourth century CE), but Bagnall argues that the dating is insecure; 256 n142.

[9] For introductions to the history of Syriac literature see M. Albert, *Langue et littérature syriaque, in Christianismes orientaux: Introduction à l'étude des langues et des littératures* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1993); S.P. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Kottayam: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1997).

[10] The complexity of the issue of language and ethnicity and the close interrelationships between the communities is examined by Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* 230-260, for monasticism see esp. 244-5, 254, 257.

background. Gnosticism, encratism, Jewish-influenced Christianity and radical ascetic Christianity of all sorts flourished in the Near East and exported their Near Eastern contagion to the West until, due not least to the McCarthyist hysteria of the heresiologists, beginning with Irenaeus of Lyon, it was contained and rendered tame and acceptable within the institution of Church monasticism and the literary exploits of the monks of the desert.

Even after the political and social disasters of the mid-third century philosophic and religious thought continued to advance and to help reinvigorate society, although increasingly through the medium of Christianity.

In the same laneways and market places frequented by the Middle and Neoplatonic philosophers of Tyre, Apamea or Neapolis, Christians and Jews of various shades also plied their philosophic and spiritual wares. Justin Martyr's description of his intellectual milieu in his tale of philosophic coming of age is testament to the diverse and tolerant scene in the second century Roman Near East.[11] Christians, pagans and Jews were beginning to approach spiritual matters in a similar way; in particular they were all, at this time, organising and codifying their literature and building networks which in Jewish and Christian circles led to the establishment of rabbinic Judaism and the Nicene Catholic Church respectively, but which in paganism were stillborn (regardless of the brief traditionalist revival of the emperor Julian). The extent of the influence of Christianity and paganism upon each other is still a question for debate.[12] This thesis could not address this question, it is for others to examine; but in the case of angelology the evidence shows that the Christian angel found ready counterparts in the pagan *daimones* and *aggeloi*. Rather than looking at the situation in terms of two opposing monolithic blocks it may be more profitable to see the situation in terms of a market place in which a fertile intellectual scene was helping to support a rich exchange of information between and within groups.[13] Thus a *koine*, a common exchange of ideas between different groups, existed.

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[11] *Dialogue with Trypho*, text in E.J. Goodspeed (ed.) *Die ältesten Apologeten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915.

[12] See the comments of Gillian Clark in the introduction to her translation of Iamblichus' *Pythagorean Life: Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Life* (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1989) xx-xi; T. Hägg and P. Rousseau (eds.) *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2000).

[13] See J. Lieu, J. North & T. Rajak (eds.) *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1992), esp. the comments in the introduction.

This is not to exaggerate the extent of this *koine*, to argue that the differences between Christians and pagans or Jews were not real. The literature demonstrates that the writers of the time understood that Jews, Christians and pagans were members of different socio-religious sub-cultures within the overarching Romano-Greek society of the day.[14]

Indeed the aim of this thesis has been to trace the particularly Christian approach to angels and angelology. This approach has clear Jewish roots. Its literary forefathers were the writers and editors of the pseudepigraphic and visionary literature from the time of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. This literature was an essential part of the cultural background from which the first Christians sprang.[15] In Jewish literature of the Second Temple period changes had occurred which formed the seedbed from which Christianity sprouted. Although one needs to take care not to beg the question by reading back from Christian tenets to find their presumed antecedents in Jewish literature in an anachronistic fashion, it does seem that certain important aspects of Christian belief grew naturally from developments in Judaism in the last centuries BCE. Amongst the developments in pre-Christian Judaism which helped to lay the groundwork for Christianity was the interest in the coming Messiah and the growth of a belief in an afterlife and Paradise.[16]

Important for angelology was the interest taken in sin, evil and the fall of mankind and the visions of the heavenly temple in the later Jewish literature. Sin and the origin of evil were explained in the Pseudepigrapha with reference to the sin of Adam and Eve in the garden, the fall of the angels, or individual sin.[17]

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[14] Justin Martyr's description of the various philosophies and philosophers he encounters in his *Dialogue with Trypho* makes this plain; on the differences, from a Roman perspective, between Christians and Jews, see E.A. Judge's, "Judaism and the Rise of Christianity: A Roman Perspective", *Australian Journal of Jewish Studies* 7 (1993) 82-97; also published as "Judaism and the Rise of Christianity: A Roman Perspective", *Tyndale Bulletin* 45.2 (1994) 355-368.

[15] The question of the influence of Apocalyptic literature on Christ has assumed some importance since the turn of the 20th century - notably in the work of Johannes Weiss (*Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892]) and Albert Schweitzer (*The Quest for the Historical Jesus, a Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* [English trans., original title: *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*; London: London: A. & C. Black, 1910]); these, however, argued for an understanding of apocalyptic literature which straitjacketed it into a relationship with a chiliastic eschatology; Christopher Rowland argued against such a close linkage of apocalyptic literature with eschatology (cf. *The Open Heaven. A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* [London: SPCK, 1985] 1-3), and C.H. Dodd (*Parables of the Kingdom* [London : Nisbet & Co., 1935]) had earlier countered the arguments of Schweitzer *et al.* with his argument for a realized, earthly eschatology, a version of which must lie behind the realised nature of the angelic state enjoyed by some Christian monks in the fourth century.

[16] Cf. *OTP* I, xxix-xxx.

[17] *OTP* I, xxx.

These legends interacted with each other in the early Christian period and presented both a positive and a negative view of angelology and anthropology, the two sciences being intrinsically linked. There were two main streams of thought concerning angels expressed in the first Christian centuries.

On the one hand the negative view of humanity was expressed through the lack of *agency* given to human beings in the fall of the angels and the fall of Adam and Eve myths. In these tales Sin and Evil were imposed upon humanity from the outside; we have no power over our fates. The absence of responsibility for evil may have freed humanity from guilt, but it substituted for it a world in which forces outside the control of their victims preyed upon humans, often at the command of other humans. The amoral state of the spiritual world helped to engender a claustrophobic fear of the influence of evil powers upon the individual; it was an ancient state of mind, akin to the Homeric, in which the divine was both capricious and unpredictable, always around, but to be avoided unless defence against it was required. Connected to this was a natural suspicion of the motives of angels, a suspicion which was encouraged in Christianity by the desire to place Christ in a unique position as a mediator between man and God. It is clear from the letters of Paul that certain of his fellow Christians held beliefs about angels unpalatable to his view of Christianity. There were those who, in his opinion, placed undue weight upon the demiurgical role of angels in the giving of the Law (Gal 3:19-20); [18] and those who were overly interested in visions and angelic hierarchies (Col 2:18), for even the devil could appear as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14).[19] Christianity, from its earliest known period, was a religion actively engaged in conflict with evil powers. Yet this conflict was on Christianity's terms. New Testament texts such as the Letter to the Ephesians make it clear that it was not a case of Christian magic versus demonic: Christ's name by itself conquered all evil spirits.

Implicit in the early Christian message is a strong rejection of the magical worldview. Spiritual power was wielded through Christ, and through his name people could be liberated

[18] Cf. Acts 7:53 & Heb 2:2. Though there were those who opposed even this role being given to angels: for instance in the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, Peter opposes the view that an angel delivered the law to men (xviii.12).

[19] Μετασχηματίζεται εἰς ἄγγελον φωτός.

from the fearful influence of the spirit world upon their everyday lives.[20] There was thus a strong anti-angelological tone evident in early Christian literature[21] from the earliest New Testament literature onwards, and this could not help but to prejudice Church authorities against angels and interest in them. For in Christian circles, although angels did on occasion serve as demon-fighters, they were not needed as such; indeed when they were made to play that role they suggested that Christ's name alone was not enough to dispel demons.

On the other hand another stream of thought connected to the same legends of primal sin and evil placed angels and humans in a more positive light. In this stream of thought angels were objects for emulation; an angelic existence upon earth became a worthy goal for Christians; the legend of the fallen angels served only as another clue to the nature of un-angelic behaviour, a negative definition of good angels as celibate; moreover humans were given agency, the ability to influence their fate, to transform themselves in some fashion.

This more positive evaluation of the material in the pseudepigrapha was the basis for the preservation and development of the Pseudepigraphic notion of angelic beings in early Christianity.

This thesis began to trace the development of this particularly Christian approach in the Bible with the demotion therein of gods other than Yahweh and the notion of the *malʾākh yhwh*, the angel of the Lord. Alexander Rofé's observation, that even in the very early strata of beliefs about angels the two traditions, that of the angel of the Lord and that of a multitude of angels, were connected,[22] rings true also in the early Christian period, for the two traditions were intimately connected in later angelology.

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[20] See Clinton E. Arnold *Ephesians: Power and Magic, The Concept of Power in Ephesians in the Light of Its historical Setting* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989) 123-124; see also his comments (pp.47-8) on Wesley Carr's *Angels and Principalities, The Background, Meaning and Development of The Pauline Phrase*, hai archai kai hai exousiai (Cambridge: CUP, 1981); and (p.47) on Charlesworth's views on the spirit world in the Pseudepigrapha; also see his comments (p.36-7) on the nature of magical/spiritual power: he argues that there are two main Mediterranean notions of power, the 'substance' view, that magical power can be used like electricity, thus an amoral power available for the use of anyone with the skills to do so. On the other hand Clinton suggests that in the Old Testament and in Ephesians divine power is a subjective force used only through the will and with the direction of God.

[21] See esp. §3.5.

[22] Alexander Rofé, האמונה במלאכים במקרא (*The Belief in Angels in the Bible and Early Israel*; Jerusalem: Makor, 1979) 1-6.

The traditions traced in this thesis have shown that the pseudepigraphic literature which emphasised angels focused, not unsurprisingly, upon senior angelic figures. It was from the literature discussing these senior angelic figures, often clearly functioning as angelic vice-regents, and often also transformed human beings, that ancient Christians and Jews took their lead in designating symbols such as garments to indicate the angelic state. The chief expression of 'angelological' beliefs in the literature which informed Christianity was that concerning senior angelic figures and the symbolism associated with them, discussed in chapter 4.

Yet the legend of the fallen angels also had a role to play, for it emphasised the sexual nature of the angels' sin and thus the sexual purity of the angels in heaven. Apart from the symbolism discussed in chapter 4, received wisdom held that angels could also be described by their celibacy. The celibate state of angels was connected to the terms such as *hagios* and *qadish* which were applied to them; and thanks to Christ's reported comments in the Synoptics regarding the similarity between the angelic and the Christian afterlife state[23] became the dominant Christian interpretation of the angelic nature, for Christians were essentially limited in their investigation of the angelic nature by what was recorded in scripture.[24] The myth of the fall of Adam and Eve from grace also influenced the idea that the paradisiacal and heavenly states (coming to be seen as identical or similar in nature) were celibate; and in some of the literature associated with this myth it was also claimed that Adam had originally enjoyed angelic status.[25]

All these streams fed into an ascetic streak which ran through Christianity from the earliest period. This ascetic type of Christianity was aimed at emulating a heavenly state, characterised by celibacy.[26] This was because early Christianity was a religion firmly oriented towards heaven. The Christian did not bother to emulate his Middle- and Neoplatonist theurgist neighbours and call the divine down into the world; that had already been done voluntarily by Christ. Instead the Christian aimed for personal transformation in order to make him or her self ready for the heavenly existence coming after this life.

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[23] Mt 20:30, Mk 12:25, Lk 20:35-6; cf. §§5.2.4, 5.7.1.
[24] Cf. §3.1.2.
[25] Cf. §4.6.
[26] I.e. Rev 14:4, 1 Cor 7, cf. §5.1.3.

In the earliest strands of this ascetic practice which we can uncover celibacy does not seem to have been connected to an angelic state *per se*, rather a more generalised heavenly state.[27] Yet as Christian theology moved to distance Christ from any link with angelic beings such as the angelic vice-regent, all heavenly beings other than Christ and the Holy Spirit came to be identified as angels, and such a generalised heavenly state came to be angelic in the ascetic literature (both Syriac and Graeco-Egyptian) of the fourth century.

It is in the fourth and fifth century Syriac and Graeco-Egyptian ascetic literature that the final act of the first stage of the Christian interest in angelic beings was played out. The exact relationship between the Syriac and the Egyptian monastic understanding of the angelic life is not clear, although the evidence of texts such as the Syriac *Life of Antony* suggests that the angelic life was more important in Syriac Christian asceticism than in early Egyptian monastic circles; certainly the *Odes of Solomon* and the *Acts of Judas Thomas* demonstrate the very early nature of the emulation of the behaviour of heavenly beings in Syriac Christianity.

The fourth century monastic angelic life was the last surviving remnant of an attitude to Christian life which was evident from the earliest period, that is the practice of a life on earth which mirrored the heavenly existence. We saw in chapter 5 that monks constantly compared themselves to angels, acted like angels and even, on occasion, regarded certain of their number as having been transformed into angels.

It is clear that the position angels occupied in the philosophy of the institutional Church was at best precarious. The process of Christianity developing from a messianic sect of Judaism to a well-organised international institution almost guaranteed that interest in angels would need to be controlled.

Ancient Christianity was a revelatory religion focused upon the heavenly world. It was built upon the bedrock of Jewish prophecy in the Old Testament. Likewise Christ had brought with him a new revelation from heaven. The early Christians lived in a world

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[27] Thus in the pre-fourth century Syriac literature the connection between worship and watchfulness is based upon the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Mt 25:1-13), the wakeful servants Mk 13:33-37 and possibly also Psalm 130 (LXX 129). (cf. §§5.2.4, 5.3.1-2), rather than the heavenly *ʿire*, although by the fourth century

permeated by the tangible presence of the divine.[28] They were in constant contact with the other world through visions and epiphanies. In the book of Acts (2:17-18) the state of being prophesied in Joel:

> והיה אחרי-כן אשפוך את-רוחי על-כל-בשר ונבאו בניכם
> ובנותיכם זקנים חלמות יחלמון בחוריכם חזינות יראו:
> וגם על-העבדים ועל-השפחות בימים ההמה אשפוך
> את-רוחי:
>
> And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit (Heb. Joel 3:1-2; Engl. Joel 2:28-29).

was declared to have come about in the early Christian community.

In the New Testament the Transfiguration episode served to emphasise the special spiritual authority of Peter, James and John; likewise the appearance of Jesus to Mary after his death singled her out as especially holy; at one time Peter appeared at the door (Acts 12:15-16) and it was assumed that this was his spiritual double, his angel;[29] Paul's conversion occurred because of a dramatic vision on the road to Damascus, and he also related a tale of a man who was taken up to heaven (2 Cor 12:2-5). Although as we have seen Paul showed his characteristic wariness of such matters by attributing the ascent to someone else, some, for instance the Manichaeans, thought he was referring to an ascent he himself undertook.[30]

The importance of the heavenly world to ordinary Christians at the turn of the second century is demonstrated in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch. His *Epistle to the Trallians* was written in response to the meeting that he had with the bishop of Tralles whilst he was journeying through Smyrna.[31] One passage stands out - it is clear evidence of the type of spirit-filled Christian world that Ignatius dwelt in. His model of ecclesiastical authority was naturally opposed to this spiritual interpretation of Christianity, yet this passage illustrates the subtle tactics writers like Ignatius had to employ to combat excessive interest in the heavenly world. Indeed, as shall be seen below, in the fourth century the Theodosian State

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the writings of Ephrem and Aphrahat were explicitly connecting and angelic watchful, praiseful and celibate state with the angels, cf. §5.2.4.

[28] See Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean world. From the second century AD to the conversion of Constantine* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1986) esp. chapter 8.

[29] Cf. §3.2.3.

[30] *CMC* 60-62 citing 2 Cor 12:2-5; see also chap. 3 n400.

[31] Andrew Louth (ed. & rev. trans.) *Early Christian Writings* (trans. M. Stanforth; London: Penguin) 78.

Church found editors who were able to say what Ignatius could not two centuries earlier, and thus complete the task begun by Ignatius of imposing earthly ecclesiastical authority over the mystics of early Christendom. In chapter 5 of the *Epistle to the Trallians* (CE 117)[32] Ignatius discusses the subject of heavenly speculation.

> Μὴ οὐ δύναμαι [ὑμῖν] τὰ ἐπουράνια γράψαι; ᾿Αλλὰ φουβοῦμαι, μὴ νηπίοις οὖσιν ὑμιν βλάβην παραθῶ. Καὶ συγγνωμονεῖτέ μοι, μήποτε, οὐ δυνηθέντες χωρῆσαι, στραγγαλωθῆτε. Καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ, οὐ καθότι δέδεμαι, καὶ δύναμαι νοεῖν τὰ ἐπουράνια, καὶ τὰς τοποθεσιάς τὰς ἀγγελικὰς, καὶ τὰς συστάσεις τὰς ἀρχοντικάς, <<όρατά τε καὶ ἀόρατα<<. Παρα τοῦτο ἤδη καὶ μαθητής εἰμϊ· πολλὰ γὰρ ἡμῖν λείπει, ἵνα Θεοῦ μὴ λειπώμεθα.[33]
>
> Am I not able to write to you of heavenly things? But I fear lest, you being young, I lead you to danger. Pardon me then, lest ever you are unable to contain (them) and are strangled (by them). For even I, not bound in this manner,[34] and able to discern the heavenly things and the places of the angels and the meetings of the archons, things both seen and unseen, concerning these I am still a learner. For, of you, much is wanting, in order that we not fall short of God.

This passage seems to conclude that knowledge of heavenly things, including, importantly, knowledge of angels, is dangerous, but possible for one who is a more mature Christian, as Ignatius seems to believe he is. The letter implies that knowledge of the angels, by and of itself, was important for some Christians. Moreover it also suggests that this knowledge would be gained through ascent visions, which as we have seen, necessitated transformation into an angelic state. It seems, however, that in the later fourth century the letter of Ignatius was doctored; it was lengthened and edited.[35]

His text was re-edited thus (and unfortunately this is the version that was available to Christians and scholars up until the seventeenth century):

> Μὴ γὰρ οὐκ ἐβουλόμην ὑμῖν μυστικώτερα γράψαὶ; ἀλλὰ φοβοῦμαι, μὴ νηπινοις οὖσιν ὑμῖν βλάβην παραθῶμαι· καὶ σύγγνωτέ μοι· μὴ, οὐ δυνηθέντες κωρῆσαι τὴν ἐνέργιαν, στραγγαλωθῆτε. Καὶ γὰρ ἐγ ώ οὐ καθ᾽ ὅτι δέδεμαι, καὶ δύναμαι νοεῖν τὰ ἐπουράνια, καὶ τὰς ἀγ γελικὰς τάξεις, καὶ τὰς τῶν ἀγγέλων (ms. ἀρχαγγέλων) τά καὶ στρα τειῶν εξαλλαγᾶς, δυνάμεών τε καὶ κυριοτήτων διαφορὰς, θρόνων τ

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[32] P.T. Camelot (ed.) *Ignace d'Antioche. Polycarpe de Smyrne. Lettres. Martyre de Polycarpe* (SC 10; Paris: Cerf, 1969).
[33] 5.1.1 – 5.2.5, in *SC* 10.
[34] *Contra* Louth's translation of this phrase (Καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ, οὐ καθότι δέδεμαι) as "Even I myself, for all my chains"; see *Early Christian Writings* 80.
[35] *PG* VI 781 *ll.* 10-18 & 784 *ll.* 1-6.

> ε καὶ ἐξουσιῶν παραλλαγὰς, αἰώνων τε μεγαλότητας, τῶν τε κερου βεὶμ καὶ σεραφεὶμ τὰς ὑπεροκὰς, τοῦ τε Πνεύματος τὴν ὑψηλότητα, καὶ τοῦ Κυρίου τὴν βασιλείαν, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τὸ τοῦ παντοκπάτορος Θεοῦ ἀπαράθετον· ταῦτα γινώσκων ἐγὼ, οὐ πάντως ἤδη τετελείωμ αι, ἤ μαθητής εἰμι οἷος Παῦλος καὶ Πέτρος· πολλὰ γαρ μοι λείπει, ἵνα Θεοῦ μὴ ἀπολειφθῶ. (*PG* 6 781 c. 10-18 & 784 c. 1-6)
>
> Do I not wish to write to you of the greater mysteries? But I fear lest, being young, you are led to danger. Pardon me, lest not being able to contain the energy you are strangled. For even I, not bound in this manner, and able to discern heavenly things, the angelic orders, and the difference between angels and hosts, the distinction both between powers and dominions, the variation both between thrones and authorities, both the greatness of the Aeons, and the supremacy of the Cherubim and Seraphim, the sublimity (?) of the Spirit, and the kingdom of the Lord, and above all, the incomparable majesty of Almighty God. These things I know, but I have not accomplished all, nor am I a disciple of the likes of Paul or Peter. Many things are wanting, in order that I might not fall short of God.

The first thing one notices in the new, fourth century version of the epistle is the growing complexity of the heavenly order. In reflection, no doubt, of the growing complexity of the earthly Church, the heavens are no longer primarily the preserve of the angels, but are now inhabited also by powers and dominions, thrones and authorities, cherubim and seraphim; also mentioned is the sublimity of the spirit, and, to cap off the chapter, the incomparable majesty of God. 'Heavenly things' (τὰ ἐπουράνια) are explicitly identified as 'greater mysteries' (μυστιχώτερα). Likewise Ignatius' attitude towards such practices seems to change; the implication in the second passage is that he could discuss them if he wanted to, but that these mysteries are not so important. Indeed in the first (shorter) passage it seems that Ignatius is describing himself as coming short of God because (at least in part) of his lack of knowledge of heavenly things, "Παρα τοῦτο ἤδη καὶ μαθητής εἰμι" (concerning these I am still a learner); in the second it seems that he comes short of God in spite of his knowledge of heavenly things,"ταῦτα γινώσκων ἐγὼ, οὐ πάντως ἤδη τετελείωμαι, ἤ μαθητής εἰμι οἷος Παῦλος καὶ Πέτρος" (these things I know, but I have not accomplished all, nor am I a disciple of the likes of Paul or Peter).

The contemplation of heavenly mysteries, characterised as dangerous, but part of higher spiritual knowledge, in the first version, becomes a branch of knowledge that does not lead to a higher stage of the religious life in the second version; indeed in spite of his knowledge of such things Ignatius is still not to be counted alongside the likes of Peter and Paul. Here we can see, therefore, on the one hand, a great expansion in the size and complexity of the

heavenly host, mirroring the same process in the newly legitimate earthly church, and on the other hand an explicit rejection of the kind of speculation about angels implicit in the original letter of Ignatius, a speculation much too close to heretical practices to be tolerated by the triumphant 4th century Church.

The proximity of heaven to the material world inhabited by these early Christians followed directly upon the breaching of the firewall that had up until then separated the two domains by the incarnation of God in a human body. As we have seen, it was a world upon which the heavenly world and its inhabitants constantly imposed their presence.[36] That Ignatius felt compelled to discuss this subject implies that some were indeed practising ascent visions in order to gain knowledge of the heavenly worlds. That he adopts such a defensive stance, claiming knowledge himself of these practices but dismissing it as a type of knowledge far above and beyond the ordinary Christian, and thus unnecessary to him or her, suggests that he felt that such practices posed a real threat to the episcopal Christianity that he was promoting.

The spiritual, visionary scene of these early Christians and their charismatic leaders would necessarily have resisted integration and unification under a hierarchical organisation such as the episcopal Church.[37] Authority came from heaven and was manifested in individuals and their personal access to the true knowledge that could only be found there. As such it was an inherently unstable religious scene. Opposed to that was the growing institutional Church, where authority was based upon the bishop, whose legitimacy was guaranteed by his superiors in Rome, Antioch and Alexandria, who in turn were legitimated in their positions by the notion of apostolic succession,[38] and the approval of their peers based upon their doctrinal orthodoxy.

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[36] See, for instance, Peter Brown's comments in *The Cult of The Saints: its rise and function in Latin Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1981) 1-2 & 61.

[37] A term first used by Ignatius, *The Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* 8.

[38] This attempt to legitimise is a survival in early Christian circles of genealogical ideas inherited from the Old Testament, and also from Roman thought. For the earliest Christians suffered persecution for their novelty. In order to limit this novelty as much as possible they traced their roots back to leaders who could have played a role in the transition from Judaism to Christianity, leaders who were part of the direct apostolic tradition. This practice mirrors that of the Roman republic when great families created elaborate genealogies based upon the flimsiest of evidence in order to prove their nobility from the earliest period of Roman political history: see the comments of Cicero, *Brutus* 62 and Livy 8.40.3-5.

An institution like the Church could only tolerate so many people claiming authority based upon divine knowledge (such as Paul), and only so many texts of revelation such as the Apocalypse of Saint John or the *Shepherd of Hermas*: hence, the rapid development of a focus upon a canon of Scripture as the authoritative source for all revelatory truth.[39] This focus upon canonical Scripture left angels in a marginal position for three reasons. Firstly, they had historically held a role as deliverers of messages between heaven and earth. Christ's role as the ultimate intermediary and final messenger, and the preservation of his message in Scripture, which became the only source for knowledge about heaven and God's will, effectively left the angels with no role to play. Secondly, Scripture said little about angels, thus any popular devotion to them was unscriptural. Thirdly, whatever Scripture did say about angels was often negative or ambiguous, particularly in the New Testament epistles. What little the New Testament said about angels provided the seed for the angelic hierarchies of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Yet these hierarchies were no triumph for angelology. They effectively limited angels to mere ciphers in the text, bit-part players serving as a backdrop to enhance the splendour of the heavenly court. Only the figure of the angel of the Lord, through typological exegesis, continued to live on in some fashion as an indicator of the pre-existence of Christ.

Moreover, the developments in Christian cosmology and theology which defined the angels and in effect led to the first angelologies tended also to lessen the importance of lesser heavenly beings such as angels. The Arian debate acted to establish the status of Christ as part of the Godhead due to his role as a creator, not just a creature.[40] Thus the Jewish division of creation into creator and creatures was maintained, but a new being was added to the scheme. Athanasius also added the symbolism of the possession of the Name, mentioned in Hebrews 1:6, and derived especially from late Second Temple exegesis of Exodus 23:21, as an indicator of the status of Christ as God.[41] For through Christ's possession of the Name he was worthy of worship. In this way the traditional status of the chief of the angels was subverted by firmly separating Christ, in whom much of the

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[39] See, for instance, the fragmentary Muratorian Canon (late second century, originally Greek but preserved in Latin), which lists the canon of works accepted by the Roman Church, including the *Shepherd of Hermas*; see H.M. Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Christian Writers* (London: J. Clarke, 1911) 82-8; Alexander Souter, *Text and Canon of the New Testament* (London: Duckworth, 1913) 208-11.
[40] Athanasius, *Oratio I Contra Arianos*, 40.40-41 (*PG* 26) 96; 42.60 (*PG* 26) 100; 53.71 (*PG* 26) 122; 55.92 (*PG* 26) 125; 55.6 (*PG* 26) 128.
[41] *Oratio I Contra Arianos* 96.19-20 (*PG* 26): περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων γέγραπται· Καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ ("concerning the angels it is written, 'May all the angels of God worship him' " [Heb. 1:6]).

tradition of the chief angel was embodied, from the angelic hierarchy. It should be noted, however, that gnostic traditions, by Athanasius' time not a serious threat to the Church, also described the demiurge, who was the gnostic inversion of the chief angelic figure, as a creative being. Likewise the Enochic tradition connected possession of the Name with a creative role.[42]

It was natural that the early Christians should be interested in angels. Theirs was a society which was built in imitation of the perfect heavenly society. That early Christians looked to the angels as models for emulation was a direct outgrowth of the Christian movement's emphasis upon that other world. Coupled with this interest in angels was a very positive view of the human condition, or at least of the ability of ordinary people to transform this condition from a profane earthly state to a state of heavenly glory. The imagery of angelic transformation was so ubiquitous in early Christian literature that it could not be suppressed. In the first three centuries of Christian thought, however, there was a constant tension between interest in angels and the increasingly hierarchical Church which aimed to monopolise paths to salvation.

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[42] *1 En* 29:1; 69:14-21. See also Jarl Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985) 24.

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