Introduction
Angels, Daimones, and the Modern Thirst for Transformation

> The death of God has set the angels free. . . . God was at least the name of something which we thought was good. Now even the name has gone and the spiritual world is scattered. There is nothing any more to prevent the magnetism of many spirits.
>
> —Carel Fisher in *The Time of Angels*[1]

If film and literature are our cultural dream factories, then today there is a surplus of collective fantasy about human transformation, enhancement, and evolution into higher states.[2] Yet these dreams of enhancement have been bubbling in the cauldron of the Western imagination for thousands of years. If today we envision ourselves as becoming superheroes, cyborgs, and virtual-reality avatars, the ancients dreamed of becoming gods, heroes, and angels. This book is about people transforming into angels (angelification) and their spiritual cousins called daimones (daimonification).[3]

Angelomorphism

Angelification is not the same as what some scholars have called angelomorphism.[4] Angelomorphism suggests that human beings can share

[1] Iris Murdoch, *The Time of Angels* (London: Vintage, 2001), 171.

[2] See, e.g., Bruce Clark, *Posthuman Metamorphosis: Narrative and Systems* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008); Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Mutants and Mystics: Science Fiction, Superhero Comics, and the Paranormal* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011); Michael Hauskeller, Thomas Philbeck, and Curtis Carbonell, eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of Posthumanism in Film and Television* (London: Macmillan, 2015); Claudia Bucciferro, *The X-Men Films: A Cultural Analysis* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016); Anneke Smelik, "Film," in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman*, ed. Bruce Clark and Manuela Rossini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 109–20.

[3] Angelification and daimonification are modern terms, but correspond to ancient ideas and terminology (typically δαίμων plus a form of γίγνομαι). See, e.g., Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses* 25.3–9; Plutarch, *Daimonion* 593e; *Face in the Moon* 944c; Athenaeus, *Learned Banqueters* 7.296d; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 9.22.7; Plato, *Cratylus* 398b; Lucian, *Peregrinus* 27; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.63.4; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Physicists* 1.74; CH 10.21.

[4] Crispin Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology, and Soteriology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 109–215; Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden:

angelic qualities without actually becoming angels. There are a host of (para)biblical examples of humans assuming angelic traits, often with the description that the subject is "like" or "as" an angel.

For example, a wise woman addresses king David in the Hebrew Bible: "My lord the king is like an angel of God" – but only with respect to "his discernment of good and evil."[5] In the *Ascension of Isaiah*, an early second-century CE Christian text, the prophet sees righteous saints clothed in celestial garments "like the angels."[6] In the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Essenes hoped to "inherit the lot of the holy ones" – meaning angels – and take their stand with them in the service of the heavenly temple.[7]

But being *like* the angels in terms of form and function is not angelification. Angelification is not just sharing angelic powers or traits while remaining human. Angelification in this book designates real transformation into an angel – entering not just their fellowship, but their species.

Admittedly, there are cases where people become so much *like* angels that they effectively turn into them. My purpose here is not to exclude ambiguous cases, for ambiguity is embedded in language itself. For instance, when

Brill, 2002), 1–32; Peter R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels: Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 77–89; Charles Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), esp. 152–83; Kevin P. Sullivan, *Wrestling with Angels: A Study of the Relationship between Angels and Humans in Ancient Jewish Literature and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 85–144. See also James Charlesworth, "The Portrayal of the Righteous as an Angel," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms*, ed. G. W. E. Nickelsburg and J. J. Collins (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1988), 135–52.

[5] 2 Samuel 14:17 (LXX); cf. 1 Samuel 29:9; 2 Samuel 19:27; Zechariah 12:8; Additions to Esther 15:13 with the discussion of Gieschen, *Angelomorphic* 175–6.

[6] *Ascension of Isaiah* 9:9. Compare 2 Baruch 51:10 where the righteous "will be like the angels."

[7] 1QS 11:7–9; cf. 1QH 11:21–3 and *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* with the comments of Michael Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabinisher Zeit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 209–40; Gieschen, *Angelomorphic* 173–5, 180–1; Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts* 184–97; Sullivan, *Wrestling* 145–78; D. Dimant, "Men as Angels: The Self-Image of the Qumran Community," in *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East*, ed. A. Berlin (Bethesda: University of Maryland, 1996), 93–103; Philip Alexander, *Mystical Texts* (London: T&T Clark, 2006); John J. Collins, "The Angelic Life," in *Metamorphoses: Resurrection, Body and Transformative Practices in Early Christianity*, ed. Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 291–310. In only two Qumran texts, it seems, are people made into angels, namely *Songs of the Sage* 4Q511, frag. 35 (first century BCE) and the *Self-glorification Hymn* 4Q491^{c}, frags. 20–2; 4Q471^{b} frags. 1–2; 4Q427, frag. 7 col. 1 and frag. 12; 1QH^{a}, col. XXVI (mid-first century BCE). On these texts, see Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory* 174–6, 199–216; Cecilia Wassen, "Angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings*, ed. F. V. Reiterer (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 499–523 at 515–19; Peter Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 146–51; Dylan M. Burns, *Apocalypse of an Alien God: Platonism and the Exile of Sethian Gnosticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 130–1; John J. Collins, "The Self-Glorification Hymn from Qumran," in *Crossing Boundaries in Early Judaism and Christianity: Ambiguities, Complexities, and Half-forgotten Adversaries*, ed. Kimberly Stratton and Andrea Lieber (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 25–40, esp. 40.

an ancient text depicts a person as "like" or "as" something (using the Hebrew particle *kᵉ* or the Greek *hōs*). These comparative particles, like the English "as," could in fact mean anything from "resembling" to "having the nature of." Different readers took the language in different ways.[8]

To give but one important example: according to the gospel of Mark, Jesus said that resurrected believers will be "like" (*hōs*) angels.[9] The author of Luke, who adapted Mark, strengthened the statement by having Jesus say that believers are "*equal* to angels (*isangeloi*)."[10] They are equal to angels for three reasons: because (1) they do not marry, (2) because they are or will be deathless, and (3) because they are God's children.[11] Given these shared traits, I take the Lukan Jesus to be hinting at angelification, and we shall have opportunity to return to this passage in Chapter 6.[12]

Defining Angels

For now, what were ancient angels? To call them "spirit beings" suggests that they are invisible and insubstantial, whereas many angels had ethereal or fiery bodies.[13] To think of them as otherworldly suggests that they dwell in some other dimension; yet they could interface with our cosmos and strike up conversations. To dismiss them as fantastical ignores their important social function in the imaginal space of ancient Mediterranean cultures.

The root meaning of "angel" is messenger, but ancient angels were messengers in the broader sense of agents, courtiers, and secretaries of a higher deity. Angels were typically mediating beings below gods, but superior to humans in both power and intelligence. They were depicted as higher hominids made with bodies of light that can travel on the wings of

[8] David Daube, "On Acts 23: Sadducees and Angels," *JBL* 109:3 (1990): 493–7 at 494. Nehemiah's brother "as a man of truth" (כאיש אמת) really was a man of truth (Neh 7:2).

[9] Mark 12:25. [10] Luke 20:36.

[11] See further Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts* 78–88; Outi Lehtipuu, *Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 133–6.

[12] Cf. Benedict T. Viviano, who reads Acts 23:8 as indicating that the Pharisees acknowledge angelic resurrection ("Sadducees, Angels, and Resurrection (Acts 23:8–9)," *JBL* 111:3 [1992]: 496–8).

[13] "The angels are bodies, for they are seen" (*Excerpts from Theodotus* 14.2). Occasionally ancient writers called angels or daimones "bodiless" (e.g., Philo, *Abraham* 118; Ignatius, *Smyrneans* 2; 3.2–3), but Origen pointed out that "bodiless" (*incorporeum*) often meant tenuous or ungraspable (like air), not incorporeal in the strict sense (*On First Principles* pref. 8). See further Travis W. Proctor, "Bodiless Docetists and the Daimonic Jesus: Daimonological Discourse and Anti-docetic Polemic in Ignatius' *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 14:1 (2013): 183–203.

the wind – protecting, providing, and sometimes punishing. The question of whether they were ever considered to be gods will be addressed below.

In Jewish tradition, angelification is best exemplified by the figure of Enoch. Enoch was said to walk with angels (Gen 5:24) and was eventually raptured to become one.[14] The *Parables of Enoch* (first century CE) depict the patriarch as becoming the angelic "Son of the Human," born for righteousness.[15] In *2 Enoch* (also first century CE), the patriarch's transformation into an angel is even more direct: "I looked at myself, and I had become like one of his glorious ones, and there was no observable difference."[16] In *3 Enoch* (fourth to sixth century CE), the hero becomes the angel Metatron, a being of fantastic dimensions, and God's grand vizier.[17]

Becoming Angels Today

Those who believe in angels today generally consider them to belong to a higher species. Although angels once bred with humans (Gen 6:1–6; *1 Enoch* 1–14), modern theologians generally resist the idea that humans could cross the "species gap" and become angels.[18] Mormons are the exception, since a prominent angel in their cultural encyclopedia – the trumpet-blowing Moroni – was once a human who hid the famous golden tablets. Mormon

[14] For Enoch walking with angels (based on Gen. 5:24: ויתהלך חנוך את־האלהים), see James C. VanderKam, *Enoch: A Man for All Generations* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 13.

[15] 1 Enoch 71:14–17. The Son of the Human is "like one of the angels" (46:1), and serves as chief angel. According to Alan Segal, in Enoch 71, Enoch is transformed "into the angelic vice-regent of God" (*Life After Death* [New York: Doubleday, 2004], 358). The righteous were always meant to be angels (69:11), and have an angelic destiny (*1 Enoch* 104:2, 4). For the dating of the *Parables* (*1 Enoch* 37–71), see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1981), 395–407; John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 3 ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 183–97.

[16] 2 Enoch 22:10. See the comments of Schäfer, *Origins* 82–3. In the shorter recension, it is said that Enoch sits closer to god than Gabriel (Andersen "2 Enoch" in *OTP* 1.143). Andrei A. Orlov concluded that Enoch is "supra-angelic" (*Enoch-Metatron Tradition* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005], 163). For the dating and context of 2 Enoch, see Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini, eds., *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 103–26.

[17] *3 Enoch* 15. See further Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien* 163–208; Philip S. Alexander, "From Son of Adam to Second God: Transformations of the Biblical Enoch," in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, ed. Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1998), 102–7; John Reeves and Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Enoch from Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Volume 1, Sources from Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 254–302.

[18] David Albert Jones writes that the "classical account of angels, as developed from Philo through Augustine and Dionysius to Ibn Sina, Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas, makes angels radically different from human beings" (*Angels: A Very Short Introduction* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011], 45). A recent study of angelomorphism (Sullivan, *Wresting* 228–30) emphasizes the ontological separation between humans and angels, though the figures of Sethel, Enoch, Jacob, and Isaiah (from *Ascension of Isaiah*) are mounting exceptions.

literature also affirms that the first human being, Adam, was the archangel Michael and that Noah, builder of the ark, became the angel Gabriel.[19]

Despite hesitancy about angelification in the larger culture, there is a persistent tendency of the bereaved to refer to their prematurely deceased as "angels."[20] The idea is reflected in the story called "Angel" by Hans Christian Andersen. In this tale, a deceased crippled boy becomes an angel strong enough to lift another boy to heaven where he too "received wings like the angel."[21] This idea of the deceased becoming angels – found even among secular folk – represents more than a suppressed desire or a desperate attempt to cope. It refracts ancient cultural memory that has serendipitously resurfaced above the fog of forgetting.[22]

In current cultural memory captured on film, people occasionally become angels. The classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life* presents the guardian angel Clarence Oddbody, formerly a man of the seventeenth century, on his way to evolving into a first-class angel. He does so by helping a suicidal father and husband choose to live and experience the fruits of civic virtue. At the end of the blockbuster movie *Ghost* (1990), the male protagonist, played by Patrick Swayze, becomes an angelic being bathed in celestial light. He undergoes this transformation only after helping to catch and punish his killer as a comfort to his former lover. The same year, *Almost An Angel*, starring Paul Hogan, represented the hero (a former convict) as becoming an angel on earth, both physically and morally transformed. He learns to help troubled youth and awakens hope in a woman who forgot what it meant to love.

The Marvel character Warren Kenneth Worthington III, aka "Angel," was created by Stan Lee and drawn in crackling color by Jack Kirby in 1963. His story unfolds like the wings that unexpectedly pierce through the skin of his young shoulders. After coming to terms with his mutation, Angel became

[19] *Doctrine & Covenants* 13; 129:1; 27:11; 128:21; cf. 110.11–16. For Adam as Michael, see ibid., 27:11; 128:21 with Oscar W. McConkie, Jr., *Angels* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret, 1975), 11–23.

[20] Tony Walter, "The Dead Who Become Angels: Bereavement and Vernacular Religion," *OMEGA* 73:1 (2016): 3–28. Compare his "Angels Not Souls: Popular Religion in the Online Mourning for British Celebrity Jade Goody," *Religion* 41 (2011): 29–51. Nancy Gibbs ("Angels Among Us," *Time*, December 27 [1993]: 56–65 at 61) reports that 15 percent of people who believed in angels viewed them as "the spirits of people who have died."

[21] Andersen, *Stories and Tales*, trans. H. W. Dulcken, 2 ed. (London: Taylor & Francis, 2002), 395. I owe this reference to Dale Allison of Princeton Seminary.

[22] In Hellenistic grave inscriptions, it became regular "to describe the dead person as a daimon" (Walter Burkert, *Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche*, 2 ed. [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011], 279). Eusebius (about 260–340 CE) said that Helen (about 246–330 CE), mother of the emperor Constantine, was "reformulated element by element in her soul to attain an incorruptible and angelic essence" (ἀνεστοιχειοῦτο γοῦν αὐτῇ ψυχῇ ἐπὶ τὴν ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἀγγελικὴν οὐσίαν) (*Life of Constantine* 3.46.2).

a founding member of the X-Men. When his damaged wings were amputated by the scheming of his enemy, Angel underwent the ultimate biohacking operation, turning his skin blue and growing a pair of razor-sharp, steely pinions. In this guise, Angel briefly became demonic before recalling his true self. His story, heavily streamlined, illuminated the silver screen in the 2006 film *X-Men: The Last Stand*, and the 2016 *X-Men: Apocalypse*.

More recently, the Netflix series OA (second season released early 2019), presents a main character "Prairie" who after two near-death experiences (NDEs) and seven years trapped in an underground plastic prison, realizes her angelic identity.[23] She begins calling herself OA (the Original Angel), and starts a mission to lead other NDE survivors and troubled youth to realize their angelic identities through interdimensional travel and companionship.[24]

Other experiences of angelification are based on the promise of technology. Virtual-reality expert Nicole Stengers described her VR experience: "on the other side of our data gloves, we become creatures of colored light in motion, pulsing with golden particles. Forget about Andy Warhol's petty promise of fame for fifteen minutes. We will all become angels, and for eternity! Highly unstable hermaphrodite angels, unforgettable in terms of computer memory."[25]

Becoming an angel is also a step in New Age visions of spiritual evolution.[26] Emma Hardinge Britten's classic work *Art Magic*, for instance, has informed a variety of spiritualist groups including the Theosophical Society, Freemasonry, and the Church of Light. Britten wrote that the means by which one "becomes the perfected Angel of a celestial heaven, are: mortal birth, a pilgrimage through spheres of trial, discipline, and purification."[27]

The hope for angelification appears also in Swedenborgian Christianity. Andrea R. Garrison, an African American Swedenborgian, writes:

[23] OA was written and produced by Brit Marling and Zal Batmanglij.

[24] Note also the film *Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* (2013), directed by Harald Zwart, and based on the book series by Cassandra Clare. Here the action revolves around half-human, half-angel "Shadowhunters" who oppose and kill demons on earth.

[25] Nicole Stengers, "Mind is a Leaking Rainbow," in *Cyberspace: First Steps*, ed. Michael Benedikt (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 49–58 at 52.

[26] Wouter J. Hanegraaff observes that in New Age literature, "No systematic distinction can be made … between genuinely angelic beings … and highly-evolved human beings … Human beings … climb up through the hierarchy in the course of spiritual evolution, and in this process they acquire progressively 'angelic' characteristics" (*New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998], 198).

[27] Emma Hardinge Britten, *Art Magic*, ed. Marc Demarest (Forest Grove, OR: Typhon Press, 2011), 74–5.

> In life there are many opportunities to be of service. We all have our individual calling. I believe that when we answer the call to reach out and help another soul we are actually doing angelic work here on earth. We are in essence angels in training preparing for a higher level of service. As angels in training, we are constantly placed in situations and given distinct opportunities in which we can serve the whole and the divine by doing good work and performing good deeds for ourselves and others.[28]

Geddes MacGregor, Christian philosopher and author, speculated that angels "represent a stage toward which at least some human beings might be moving, however slowly, in the course of a spiritual evolution."[29] He later inquired:

> Might not, then, the long tradition of angels that is writ so deep in the Bible and has so much influenced all the three great monotheistic religions, be made more intelligible by being understood as referring to a more *advanced* state of being than our own: a state already achieved in a realm presently beyond us . . . ?[30]

Matthew Fox (an episcopal priest) and Rupert Sheldrake (a biologist) asked a similar question in their book *The Physics of Angels*: "In an evolutionary and expanding universe, are new species of angels coming into being as new forms, structures, and fields arise?"[31]

A Broader Discourse

With the naturalization of angels in Christian lore, one might presume that angelification is solely a Christian notion. Yet this way of thinking constricts a wider and wilder tradition. Christian discourse, as all others, was and is a constant renegotiation of appropriated discourses used for alternative ends. Angelification became part of the Christian story, to be sure, but it had antecedents and analogues in ancient Semitic and Greek cultures.

Angels clearly preexist the birth of Christianity, often making appearances in Jewish scriptures.[32] Jewish angelic lore was in turn influenced by

[28] See Andrea R. Garrison, *In the Presence of Angels* (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation Publishers, 2013), 10. Garrison considered her grandfather, who died young, to be her guardian angel (ibid., 24). On p. 91, Garrison quotes Emanuel Swedenborg: "Once we have learned about the divine design, we can understand that we were created to become angels because the ultimate boundary of that design is found in us" (no citation given).
[29] Geddes MacGregor, *Angels: Ministers of Grace* (New York: Paragon House, 1988), 140.
[30] Ibid., 152, italics original.
[31] Matthew Fox and Rupert Sheldrake, *The Physics of Angels: Exploring the Realm Where Science and Spirit Meet* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 195.
[32] Saul M. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him: Exegesis and the Naming of Angels in Ancient Judaism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993).

Persian cultural traditions about immortal spirits of light.[33] As it turns out, ancient Syrians and Anatolians had their native lore about angels – now recoverable in several mysterious inscriptions.[34]

Angels also had their counterparts in native Greek religions. Here I refer to daimones.[35] When Christian theologians were at their most defensive in the face of Hellenic culture (between the second and fifth centuries CE), they did their best to depict daimones as what modern people call "demons." But this adaptation of earlier discourses (quite intentionally) distorted and simplified Greek conceptions.

To explain daimones, ancient Jews and Christians devised sinister origin stories that borrowed elements from Ancient Near eastern and Greek lore. Daimones were said to be the ghosts of ancient giants. These giants were originally the offspring of angels who mated with mortal women (thus forging a genetic connection between angels and daimones).[36] Later, daimones were directly envisioned as fallen angels led by an originally angelic lord, Lucifer.[37] In time, daimones began to be depicted in the guise of Greek satyrs: shaggy-legged rogues with little horns and pointy beards. These daimones wielded pitchforks to prod naked sinners into the fiery

[33] John R. Hinnells, *Persian Mythology* (London: Hamlyn, 1973), 50–4; C. Colpe, "Geister, Iran," *RAC* 9.585–98.

[34] Documented by Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien* 287–99; Loren Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 181–99; Rangar Cline, *Ancient Angels: Conceptualizing Angeloi in the Roman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 47–76; G. W. Bowersock, "Les anges païens de l'antiquité tardive," *Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz* 24 (2013): 91–104; G. H. R. Horsley and Jean M. Luxford, "Pagan Angels in Roman Asia Minor: Revisiting the Epigraphic Evidence," *Anatolian Studies* 66 (2016): 141–83.

[35] The literature on daimones abounds. For relatively recent treatments, see Burkert, *Griechische Religion* 276–80; Lars Albinus, "Greek Daimon between Mythos and Logos," in *Die Dämonen: Die Dämonologie der israelitisch-jüdischen und frühchristlichen Literatur im Kontext ihrer Umwelt*, ed. Armin Lange et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 425–46; Andrei Timotin, *La démonologie platonicienne: histoire de la notion de daimon de Platon aux derniers néoplatoniciens* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, "Daimonic Power," in *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, ed. Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 413–27; Seamus O'Neill, "The Demonic Body: Demonic Ontology and the Domicile of the Demons in Apuleius and Augustine," in *Philosophical Approaches to Demonology*, ed. Benjamin W. McCraw and Robert Arp (London: Routledge, 2017), 39–58.

[36] *1 Enoch* 6–16.

[37] See further Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "Giant Mythology and Demonology: From the Ancient Near East to the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Die Dämonen* 318–38; Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits: The Reception of Genesis 6.1–4 in Early Jewish Literature*, 2 ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015), 11–168; Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Dale B. Martin, "When Did Angels Become Demons?," *JBL* 129:4 (2010): 657–77; M. David Litwa, *Desiring Divinity: Self-deification in Ancient Jewish and Christian Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 29–46.

chasms of hell.[38] Needless to say, Greek daimones originally had little to do with these fiends. Thus it will be helpful to bracket everything one has learned about later Christian demonology and start afresh.

The Nature of Daimones

The ancient Greek cultural memory about daimones is tangled. The tragedian Euripides oft commented through his characters: "the forms of the daimones are manifold!"[39] The scroll of inscribed memory runs long, ranging from the archaic age (beginning about 800 BCE) to Late Antiquity (ending about 640 CE). During this time, conceptions of daimones morphed considerably. Here I only sketch the broad contours, with a focus on Platonic daimonology.

In the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, a daimon could designate an unknown, inexplicable force or an Olympian god. If the latter, the god was usually acting in the human sphere.[40] Aphrodite, for instance, is called a daimon when dictating Helen of Troy's sex life.[41] Athena, dubbed a daimon, guides the homeward journeys of Odysseus.[42]

The Homeric bards probably tapped into earlier notions of daimones as personal spirits and guides for individuals. According to ancient Greek lore, each person has a personal daimon who determines one's lot and luck in life. The comic poet Menander (342–290 BCE) represented this tradition: "Immediately upon birth a daimon stands by each man, who guides us in the great initiation of life."[43] To be happy, in Greek, is to be

[38] The transformation is already under way in the *Apocalypse of Peter* 23, where angels in black raiment, called "tormentors," punish sinners. See J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 593–612. A similar scenario is depicted in the Coptic *Apocalypse of Paul* (NHC V,2) 20.5–21.20; 21.26–22.12. The angels of the fourth and fifth heavens whip souls and goad them on to judgment. For commentary see Jean-Marc Rosenstiehl and Michael Kaler, *L'Apocalypse de Paul (NH V,2)* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 62–6.

[39] For instance, Euripides, *Alcestis* 1159 (Πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων).

[40] Homer, *Iliad* 1.222; cf. 6.115; 23.595. Anders Klostergaard Petersen, "Notion of Demon," in *Die Dämonen* 23–44 at 36.

[41] Homer, *Iliad* 3.420.

[42] Homer, *Odyssey* 14.386. Later poets continue to use daimones to speak of gods (e.g., Euripides, *Orestes* 667). See further Timotin, *Démonologie* 15–19.

[43] Menander quoted by Plutarch, *Tranquility of the Soul* 474b (ἅπαντι δαίωμν ἀνδρί συμπαρίσταται εὐθυς γενομένῳ μυσταγωγὸς τοῦ βίου). Cf. Pindar, *Isthmian Odes* 7.43; Aristotle in Clement, *Stromata* 6.6.53.2; Mt. 18:10; *Shepherd of Hermas* Mandates 6.2. See further Pierre Boyancé, "Les deux demons personnels dans l'antiquité grecque et latine," *Revue de Philologie* 61 (1935): 189–202; Jane Chance Nitzsche, *The Genius Figure in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 7–20; Karin Alt, "Der Daimon also Seelenführer. Zur Vorstellung des persönlich Schutzgeistes bei den Griechen," *Hyperboreus* 6 (2000): 219–52; Andrei A. Orlov, *The*

"eudaimonic" – which means something like "blessed with the guidance of a good daimon."

It was the philosopher Plato (427–347 BCE) who did the most to clarify the status of daimones. For Plato, daimones are beings of middling status – higher than humanity but not fully fledged gods. They are spiritual ferrymen, shuttling up the prayers of humans and conveying gifts from above. Daimones also control the apparatus of state and personal religion, which in Plato's day dealt with prophecies, sacrifices, initiations, and spells.[44]

The pseudo-Platonic *Epinomis* (late fourth century BCE) distinguished at least two classes of daimones, both translucent.[45] The first is made of air, the other of ether (the fiery, refined air of the upper atmosphere). The author described them as wondrously intelligent, heaven-dwellers, and quick learners who,

> fully understand the human disposition, wondrously welcoming those of us who are noble and good, but despising evil people as already affected by grief. . . . When the heaven became full of living beings, daimones began to serve as go-betweens amongst themselves and the highest gods on behalf of all people and with regard to all things, since these middling beings fly to earth and soar through the whole heaven with a nimble whoosh.[46]

The hybrid quality of daimones was aptly expressed by Apuleius, an African Platonist (about 125–170 CE):

> Daimones are types of living beings, rational by nature, emotive in disposition, aerial in body, eternal in time. Of these five qualities, the first three they share with humans, the fourth is peculiar to them, the last they share with the immortal gods, though they differ from these with respect to their emotive nature.[47]

Daimones, Apuleius said elsewhere, were capable, like humans, "of suffering by anger, being inclined to pity, allured by gifts, appeased by prayers, exasperated by offenses, soothed by honors, and changed by all other things in the same way that we are."[48]

Greatest Mirror: Heavenly Counterparts in Jewish Pseudepigrapha (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2018).

[44] Plato, *Symposium* 202e in Ioannes Burnet, ed., *Platonis Opera tomus II tetralogias III–IV continens* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1901), 193.

[45] Ancient tradition ascribed the *Epinomis* to Philip of Opus (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 3.37).

[46] Pseudo-Plato, *Epinomis* 984b–985b. See further Timotin, *Démonologie* 86–93.

[47] Apuleius, *God of Socrates* 148. Cf. Calcidius, *On Plato's Timaeus* 135.

[48] Apuleius, *God of Socrates* 147.