

POSTHUMAN TRANSFORMATION IN ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN THOUGHT

There is not just a desire but a profound human need for enhancement – the irrepressible yearning to become better than ourselves. Today, enhancement is often conceived of in terms of biotechnical intervention: genetic modification, prostheses, implants, drug therapy – even mind uploading. The theme of this book is an ancient form of enhancement: a physical upgrade that involves ethical practices of self-realization. It has been called ‘angelification’ – a transformation by which people become angels. The parallel process is ‘daimonification,’ or becoming daimones. Ranging in time from Hesiod and Empedocles through Plato and Origen to Plotinus and Christian Gnostics, this book explores not only how these two forms of posthuman transformation are related, but also how they connect and chasten modern visions of transhumanist enhancement, which generally lack a robust account of moral improvement.

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POSTHUMAN
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ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN
THOUGHT

Becoming Angels and Demons

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All things are full of gods.
—Thales in Aristotle, *On the Soul* 1.5, 411a7

All things are full of daimones.
—Thales in Aetius, *Placita* 1.7.11

All things are full of angels.
—Origen, *Homily on Ezekiel* 1.7.2

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For Andy Guffey
and all our rich conversations at SBL

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Abbreviations

<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</i>
BSGRT	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CH	Corpus Hermetica
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DDD	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> , ed. Karel van der Toorn
FH	Hermetic fragments in Litwa, <i>Hermetica II</i>
GCS	Griechisch christliche Schriftsteller
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codices
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts
OTP	<i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> , ed. James Charlesworth, 2 vols.
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
<i>PGM</i>	<i>Greek Magical Papyri</i>
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Refutation of All Heresies</i>
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SH	Stobaeon Hermetica in Litwa, <i>Hermetica II</i>
SVF	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> , ed. Arnim