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Nathan Fleeson Date

The Fall of Angelomorphic Pneumatology: A Theological History of Alexandria

By

Nathan Fleeson

Master of Theological Studies

Candler School of Theology

Dr. Susan Hylen

Thesis Advisor

Dr. David Pacini

Director, Master of Theological Studies Program

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By

Nathan Fleeson

B. A., University of Georgia, 2016

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Abstract

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By Nathan Fleeson

Before the rise of Arianism and the Pneumatomachians in Alexandria, a long theological history developed, opening gaps in Trinitarian theology that Arius and others built upon as they developed their own theologies. This history included well known theologians and groups, such as Origen, the Monarchians, and the Two-Stage *Logos* Theologians; however, another theology, largely unstudied, also played a key role in this development: Angelomorphic Pneumatology—the belief that the Holy Spirit, while divine, took the shape of an angel while interacting with humanity. This theology, along with all the others, however, disappeared as it became caught up in the Ecumenical debates of the third through fifth centuries. This paper examines the theological history of Alexandria including Angelomorphic Pneumatology in the story. I explore how Origen and Angelomorphic Pneumatology are both responses to Monarchianism, addressing the problem in similar ways. However, later theologians—notably Arius and the Pneumatomachians—utilize the gaps in these theologies to claim that either the Son or the Holy Spirit are merely creatures, rather than divine beings. Thus, Angelomorphic Pneumatology falls out of favor—like Origen—as the Church Councils associate it with the "heresies" associated with the Son and Spirit. Additionally, Angelomorphic Pneumatology becomes less common as the Ecumenical Councils define the role of the Spirit more so that it is no longer necessary to describe the Spirit solely by its activity as messenger.

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Introduction

For the early Christians the universe was more than just the terrestrial beings and the God they served. Instead, they received messages from angels, interacted with spirits, and fought against demons. A variety of beings populated their spiritual world, who acted as intermediaries between us and God or the devil and affected how we ourselves acted.

At the same time, the early Church was a time of formation for Christian doctrine. Much of Christian thought at this time was spent determining what actually happened through Jesus: whether he was fully God, fully human, or a combination of the two, how he saves humanity, and how we should interpret his teachings. All this thought centered on reconciling the Jewish background of Christianity, the teachings of Jesus, and the culture of the Greco-Roman world. Among these questions are thoughts about the Holy Spirit, particularly who/what the Holy Spirit is and how it relates to the rest of the spiritual world.[1]

As with the theology about Christ, theology on the Holy Spirit has no short supply. Many theories as to the Holy Spirit's identity develop during this time, including one known now as Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Angelomorphic Pneumatology is a relatively early doctrine of the Holy Spirit, with examples coming within Christian circles as early as Revelation and seen in a wide variety of authors, including Clement of Alexandria. Additionally, Angelomorphic Pneumatology has Jewish roots, which could imply an even earlier existence of this theology (this Jewish version does not mention the

[1] Throughout this paper, the pronoun "it" will be used in reference to the Holy Spirit.

"Holy Spirit" of the later Christians but mentions a powerful Spirit similar in nature to what the Christians will call the Holy Spirit).

Angelomorphic Pneumatology's name is semi self-explanatory, although we will later see it is slightly more complicated. In short, however, Angelomorphic Pneumatology is the belief that the Holy Spirit—from "Pneumatology," the study of the Holy Spirit—takes the form—"morphic"—of an angel or multiple angels—"angelo". Central to this idea is that the Holy Spirit only takes the form of an angel, not the nature of an angel. Therefore, the Holy Spirit itself is not an angel, but merely looks like an angel at times from the human perspective.

Current scholarship on Angelomorphic Pneumatology looks at answering questions about where it is found in early Christianity and examining its roots in Jewish culture. Bogdan Bucur and Christian Oeyen have done much of the work examining the presence of Angelomorphic Pneumatology, with much of this work focusing on Clement of Alexandria. Additionally, they build upon the work of John Levison's *The Spirit in First Century Judaism* to describe the Jewish background for Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Despite their work on this topic, they have not explicitly described the disappearance of Angelomorphic Pneumatology, which this paper addresses. Instead, they link Angelomorphic Pneumatology's disappearance with the Ecumenical Councils in passing without fully examining the relation to the long history of theology in Alexandria, going back to Monarchianism.

Despite Angelomorphic Pneumatology's historic past and widespread tradition among theologians in the first several centuries of the Church, it disappears. Additionally,

it disappears early—before Augustine even becomes bishop in North Africa. As such, Angelomorphic Pneumatology's disappearance does not relate to the move away from belief in a spiritual world. Christian belief at this time is still heavily ingrained in belief about the spiritual beings, as evidenced by Pseudo-Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy* written in the sixth century. Therefore, some other factor affects Angelomorphic Pneumatology's prominence in the early Church.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology has a following through Origen before it suddenly disappears. This time frame matches the emergence of the Arian Controversy and the first Ecumenical Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople. Additionally, the best example of Angelomorphic Pneumatology is Clement of Alexandria, with other good examples seen in surrounding cities of North Africa—the same geographical area as Arius' early following. As such, Angelomorphic Pneumatology shares a theological history with Arianism that may lead to its eventual downfall in the aftermath of the Ecumenical Councils.

In this thesis, I will show the various developments in North Africa in the early Church, tracing how they affect Arianism and Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Through this history, we will see how Angelomorphic Pneumatology develops as a response to Monarchianism and continues to develop with the work of Origen. Then, as part of the Arian movement, Angelomorphic Pneumatology changes into what we know today as Pneumatomachianism—the belief that the Holy Spirit is a creature/angel and not God. As Angelomorphic Pneumatology takes on this new identity, it becomes the target of the Church Councils and disappears as it becomes more associated with Arianism and the Pneumatomachians.

In the first chapter of this paper, I will focus on Angelomorphic Pneumatology. I will include an in-depth description of Angelomorphic Pneumatology, through a case study of Clement of Alexandria. This section will be necessary to see how Angelomorphic Pneumatology interacts and relates to other theologies at this time, including Arianism. Following this section, I will also explore in chapter one how widespread Angelomorphic Pneumatology is in the early Church by a surveying of major theologians including Irenaeus of Lyon, Justin Martyr, and Cyprian of Carthage.

In chapter two, I will explore Arianism and the Pneumatomachians. I will include outlining the basic theology of Arius—as seen through his own writings and the writings of his opponents—and how that transition into believing the Holy Spirit is not divine. Additionally, I will look at the historical development of Arianism, examining how different theologies—such as Monarchianism, Two-Stage *Logos* theology, and Origen—reacted to each other, opening the possibility for a theology like Arius' as they attempt to avoid what they believed to be errors about the Godhead. This chapter will serve as the point of comparison for Angelomorphic Pneumatology as we consider its own history and development in relation to these same theologies.

In the third chapter, I return the conversation to Angelomorphic Pneumatology as we consider its own development in association with these theologies. Through this comparison we will see how Angelomorphic Pneumatology interacts with these same theologies, changing slightly along the way as it incorporates different elements of each. The eventual product of Angelomorphic Pneumatology will leave an opening for people to claim that the Holy Spirit does not only take the form of an angel, but also is merely an angel instead of divine. This follows the same pattern as Origen and others who allow an

opening to say that the Son is only a spiritual being and not divine. I conclude this chapter will conclude by examining the few remnants of Angelomorphic Pneumatology that remain following the Ecumenical Councils, even though these have disappeared today.

Ultimately, we will see that Angelomorphic Pneumatology disappears, owing to the importance of showing the Holy Spirit's divinity. The Ecumenical Councils distance themselves from Angelomorphic Pneumatology due to its relation to Arianism and Pneumatomachianism, which undermine the Spirit's divinity. Additionally, the Ecumenical Councils demonstrate the wider role of the Spirit by emphasizing its divinity, overshadowing the function that Angelomorphic Pneumatology originally served—showing the separation of the Son and Spirit through the Spirit's activity as messenger.

Chapter 1: Angelomorphic Pneumatology

In this chapter, I explain the complex theological makeup of Angelomorphic Pneumatology, focusing on how various theologies interact to contribute to this larger belief. Ultimately, we will see that Angelomorphic Pneumatology is a highly developed understanding of the celestial hierarchy, that the theology often results from humans associating angels with archangels and the Holy Spirit with archangels (which causes confusion in identification in this hierarchy), and that belief in an Angelomorphic Pneumatology is widespread in the early Church especially among the Apologists.

Here, I will focus on explaining the various aspects of Angelomorphic Pneumatology. It will first go through a detailed explanation of what Angelomorphic Pneumatology is, drawing on Clement of Alexandria as a case study. I use Clement of Alexandria as a case study of Angelomorphic Pneumatology inasmuch as he has often been at the center of scholarship on the topic, as seen in Christian Oeyen and Bogdan G. Bucur.[2] This case study will move through Clement's theology, focusing on his understanding of divine multiplicity and unity, his celestial hierarchy, and his understanding of the *Logos*. From there, this chapter will explore how widespread Angelomorphic Pneumatology is in the Early Church, looking at other Patristic sources such as the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus, among others. It is important to first understand Angelomorphic Pneumatology as a whole, including its influences and whether it was even a factor in the early Church before exploring its

[2] This case study will draw upon Bucur's work in *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses.*

decline as its theological makeup in relation to other theology at this time affects its perception in the Church.

1. Clement of Alexandria: A Case Study[3]

This section will focus on the theology of Clement of Alexandria as it relates to his understanding of the Holy Spirit, angels, and their relationship. For Clement of Alexandria, Angelomorphic Pneumatology involves humans interpreting angels as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit (which has no formal description in the Bible other than as wind or a dove) as it interacts with the world. We will first explore Clement's understanding of divine multiplicity and unity. Following that, we will look at Clement's celestial hierarchy and how it incorporates the angels in relation to Christ and what their roles are in relation to each other (and our role in relation to them). This section will introduce the *protoctists*—the seven first-born princes of the angels—who we will then explore in more detail. Finally, this section will look at Clement's binitarian understanding of the *Logos* and its relation to the celestial hierarchy. Much of this section draws on Clement's *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, *Eclogae Propheticae*, and *Adumbrations*; however, it also draws upon the *Stromata* and *Paedgogus* at times.[4]

[3] As mentioned, this section utilizes the work of Bogdan Bucur, who often draws upon Christian Oeyen's own work: Bogdan Gabriel Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae ; v. 95. (Uri) Http://Id.Loc.Gov/Authorities/Names/N86735737 (Uri) Http://Viaf.Org/Viaf/SourceID/LC|n86735737 (Uri) /Resolver/Wikidata/Lc/N86735737 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2009).

[4] Many translations come out of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* Series. The *Excerpta ex Theodoto* comes from R. P. Casey. The section labeled *The Excerpta ex Theodoto* in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* Series, vol. 8, is mislabeled and in reality is the *Eclogae Propheticae*.

Divine Multiplicity and Unity

Clement of Alexandria outlines a belief in a united God made of multiple beings that interact with each other through immanent relationships. The prime example of the divine multiplicity and unity relationship in mainstream Christianity is the Trinity, in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all different beings, however, remain one God. Clement has a relationship like this, although slightly more complex.

Clement mentions the unity and multiplicity of the Father and the Son throughout his works. One such example claims that "Nor is the Father without the Son; for the Son is with the Father…we must know the Father, with whom also is the Son" (Clement, *Strom.* 5.1).[5] In this statement, Clement outlines a relationship between the Father and the Son like that described in the first chapter of John; one in which the Father and the Son are immanently related as part of the creator God.

Clement's understanding of multiplicity and unity differs insofar as it also incorporates the "powers of the Spirit" into this relationship. In *Stromata 4.25*, Clement claims "all the powers of the Spirit, becoming collectively one thing, terminate in the same point—that is, in the Son" (Clement, *Strom.* 4.25).[6] We will explore the phrase "powers of the Spirit" more in a later section, however, it is important to note that early Christians and Jews often associated "powers" with the angels and other holy beings, such as the Seraphim. Additionally, there is evidence that Clement himself associates "powers" with the angels as he explicitly states at one point that "powers mean the holy

[5] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 2 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 444.
[6] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:438.

angels" (Clement, *Adum.* Jude).[7] If Clement is picturing the angels and seraphim when referring to "powers" in this section, then Clement is incorporating the angels into the divine multiplicity and unity that mainstream Christians would often associate with only the three members of the Trinity. In doing so, Clement claims at least some of the angels ("the powers of the Spirit") as not only holy but divine and a part of the Godhead. This raises further questions about the relation of the Father and the Son with the angels and the celestial hierarchy in general.

Clement's Celestial Hierarchy

Clement of Alexandria's theology utilizes a celestial hierarchy that moves with one operation, starting with God, flowing through the *Logos*, and going to the angels who communicate with the prophets, and thus with humans. We see evidence of this celestial hierarchy in Clement's *Adumbrationes*—his commentary on the Bible. Clement describes three orders of celestial beings, all being subject to the previous order; thus, he describes the first order of *Angelis*, the second order of *Potestatibus*, and the third order of *Virtutibus* (Clement, *Adum.* 1 Peter).[8] Additionally, Clement describes the hierarchy in this world as an imitation of the "economy" (hierarchy) of heaven (Clement, *Strom.* 6.13).[9] Thus, Clement seems to describe an unbroken hierarchy from God through the celestial ranks—which include the *Logos*, the *Angelis*, the *Potestatibus*, the *Virtutibus*,

[7] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:574.
[8] of Alexandria Clement, *Operum Clementis Alexandrini supplementum: exhibens ejusdem I. Librum quis dives salutem consequi possit? Graece & Latin. cum notis Franc Combesisii, II. Adumbrationes in epistolas aliquot catholicas, III. Fragmenta* (Lipsiae [i.e. Leipzig]: Impensis Friderici Lanckisii Haered, 1700), 133; Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:572.
[9] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:505.

and potentially others—down to humanity where the hierarchy continues with the prophets and bishops, presbyters, deacons, and laypeople.

Not only does this hierarchy exist, but God's messages and activity move through the hierarchy to reach us. This activity starts with the Father who puts the *Logos*/Christ in charge of an administration of angels (Clement, *Strom.* 7.2).[10] The Son then—through the Father's will—becomes "the first efficient cause of motion" when he acts upon the next rank in the hierarchy (Clement, *Strom.* 7.2).[11] The Son then moves the "first-created angels" (*protoctists*, which we will go into more depth later) to exercise their influence on the lesser angels (Clement, *Ecl.* 51).[12] At this point, Clement mentions that the angels next communicate with the prophets (Clement, *Ecl*. 51).[13] We may assume that he makes a jump for the sake of clarity and that in reality the *protoctists* instead move archangels, which move angels, which then move the personal angels of the prophets, which then move the prophets to communicate with us. As such, humans encounter a message from an archangel (or Christ) through the workings of a lesser angel. Even though we are meeting a lesser angel, however, we assign to them the name of the archangels we are aware of from scripture—like Michael or Gabriel—in an attempt to describe our experience. As such, humans often ascribe the workings of one class—such as Christ or the lesser angels—to another, since we cannot properly explain the experience.

Clement even addresses this mistake between personal angels and archangels in discussing how they communicate with us. In his *Adumbrationes*, Clement discusses a

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[10] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:524.
[11] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:525.
[12] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 8 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 49.
[13] Alexander Roberts et al., 8:49.

conversation that Moses believed happened between the devil and the archangel Michael. In this passage, Clement claims that Michael himself did not argue with the devil, but instead Michael debated with the devil "*per propinquum nobis angelum*" (through an angel close to us) (Clement, *Adum.* Jude).[14] This would imply that Michael acts through an angel that is closer to Moses moving through a hierarchy of other angels. Humans are not able to distinguish between the different classes of angels, as even Moses calls an angel of the lowest rank by the name of Michael (Clement, *Adum.* 1 John).[15] As such, humans would easily confuse the classes of angels, believing we are talking to the *protoctists* even if they only ever communicate with the lowest rank of angels. Most important, however, is the fact that these lesser angels act with the power of God after Christ first moves them and they are passing on a message from him.

Humans, however, attribute the names of the archangels to other celestial being as well. A key feature of Angelomorphic Pneumatology is that the Holy Spirit takes the form of an angel when interacting with humanity—often through the above-described hierarchy. The Holy Spirit does this so that humans can see and perceive it. Since the Holy Spirit becomes angelomorphic to aid our perception of it, however, we often describe our encounter as interacting with the angels or archangels, instead of with the Holy Spirit. As such, we may mistakenly refer to the Holy Spirit as an archangel due to the celestial hierarchy, just as we may refer to an angel as an archangel.

Clement also seems to view the hierarchy as an educational system and a system that moves us towards deification, although through angelification. In his *Excerpta*,

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[14] Clement, *Operum Clementis Alexandrini supplementum*, 137; Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:573.
[15] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:575.

Clement describes the archangels as the "high-priests of the angels" and the *protoctists* as the "high-priests of the archangels" (Clement, *Exc.* 27).[16] This implies a teaching or guiding role of the archangels with respect to the angels. Humans also take part in this process with the *telos* of becoming angels. Clement claims that angels teach humans for a thousand years, at which point, those humans take on an angelic authority (Clement, *Ecl.* 57).[17] Additionally, the angels who taught the humans "are translated to archangelic authority," at which point they would continue to teach the humans-made-angels how to become archangels (Clement, *Ecl.* 57).[18] Thus, Clement describes a process in which everyone slowly moves closer towards God by becoming angels and archangels. Upon reaching the "next level" in the celestial hierarchy, humans teach those directly below them to be as angels are, simultaneously learning to be like those above them.

Clement outlines an extensive and active hierarchy. Not only does God work through this celestial hierarchy, sending messages and affecting the world, but the members of the hierarchy also instruct and learn from the ranks below and above them, respectfully. This hierarchy has many members as it spans across both the celestial and earthly world, but the most notable of its members are the "first-created angels" or the *protoctists*. These special angels are important for Clement's understanding of the Holy Spirit; however, few twenty-first century Christians have heard of them. Accordingly, we will now look specifically at who the *protoctists* were in early Christianity and Judaism.

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[16] Theodotus, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, Studies and Documents (London, England) (London: Christophers, 1934), 61.
[17] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 8:50.
[18] Alexander Roberts et al., 8:50.

Who are the *Protoctists*

Clement's clearest description of the *protoctists* claims that they are the "first-born princes of the angels, who have the greatest power, [and] are seven" (Clement, *Strom.* 6.13).[19] In another text, Clement describes their function and creation. He claims that they are "numerically distinct...nevertheless, are shown by the similarity of their state to have unity, equality, and similarity (Clement, *Exc.* 10).[20] Along with this there is "neither inferiority nor superiority" among them (Clement, *Exc.* 10).[21] Clement appears to be describing a group of seven angels with the greatest power and who have multiplicity and unity. Due to their power, and the fact that God created them first, these angels appear to be special and separate from the other angels, and even seen as the "princes" of the remaining angels.

The number seven appears to be an important distinction for Clement in relation to the *protoctists*. In another moment, Clement relates the *protoctists* with the "seven spirits resting on the rod that springs from the root of Jesse" (Clement, *Strom*. 5.6; Isaiah 11.1)[22] Through this statement, Clement incorporates aspects of Jewish thought into his understanding of the *protoctists* in Christianity. The number seven, however, also appears to be important in Jewish tradition in relation to the angels. The Book of Enoch describes, and even names—Uriel, Raphael, Raguel, Michael, Saraâêl, Gabriel, and Remiel—seven angels "who watch" (an important trait of the *protoctists* in Clement as well, as we will

[19] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:513.
[20] Theodotus, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 49.
[21] Theodotus, 49.
[22] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:452.

see) in addition to other tasks and areas they rule over (1 Enoch 20).[23] Additionally, in the book of Tobit, the angel Raphael (one of the names mentioned by Enoch) appears to Tobias and claims that he [Raphael] is "one of the seven angels" who wait to enter the Lord's presence (Tobit 12.15). In Ezekiel, seven messengers come from God to judge the people of Jerusalem, one to mark the innocent and the other six to kill the guilty (Ezekiel 9.2-3).

These biblical accounts refer to tasks (such as talking to prophets or healing) that lesser angels would accomplish. The archangels and *protoctists*—according to Clement—only learn to be greater angels, pass messages to lesser angels, or contemplate God. Therefore, if Raphael is one of the *protoctists*, he should not be communicating directly with Tobias; a lesser angel should be carrying his message. However, since humans are those encountering the angels and receiving the messages, they may be mistaking a lesser angel for Michael, just like Moses. Therefore, Raphael may have been communicating with Tobias through a chain of lesser angels while describing himself as one of the seven angels. As such, we can look at these biblical accounts as describing seven unique angels, which utilize the lesser angels to carry their messages.

Interestingly enough, we see some of the angels named in Enoch present within Christian tradition as well. For example, the angel Gabriel carries the message of God telling Mary that she will give birth to Jesus (Luke 1.26). Additionally, Christian art often depicts the angel Michael as battling the devil, going back to a verse in Revelation when Michael leads an army of angels against the dragon (Revelation 12.7). Some Catholic

[23] R. H Charles (Robert Henry) and August Dillmann, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893), 46.

tradition also equates the angel who stirs the pool in John 5.4 with Raphael (whose name means "God heals"), although he is not mentioned by name.[24] Thus, we see the Christian scriptures carrying on the tradition of several of these angels, although the inclusion of seven seems to become less important.

Since, for Clement, the *protoctists* are not actually appearing to humans and instead pass a message along from the *Logos* to lesser angels, the questions remain what their actual role is in the hierarchy that separates them from others or if they are just another class of celestial beings. Within Clement's *Excerpta ex Theodoto* and the *Eclogae* we see the difference between the *protoctists* and the other angels. For one, the *protoctists* no longer advance to higher levels of the celestial hierarchy like the angels and archangels advance (Clement, *Exc.* 10).[25] This is because "they [the *protoctists*] have received perfection from the beginning, at the time of the first creation from God through the Son" (Clement, *Exc.* 10).[26] Therefore, we know that not only are the *protoctists* beyond advancement unlike the other angels but that God also creates them perfectly, unlike the other angels. Additionally, Clement tells us that the *protoctists* do not have a specific ministry (i.e. they do not teach the archangels), but rather, they are "devoted to the contemplation of God alone" (Clement, *Ecl.* 56).[27] Clement describes this in the *Excerpta* by stating that they "always behold the face of the Father and the face of the Father is the Son" (Clement, *Exc.* 10).[28] Therefore, the *protoctists* dedicate themselves entirely to contemplating and observing the Face of God. This associates the *protoctists*

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[24] John J. Delaney, *Dictionary of Saints*, 2nd edition, 1st Image Books edition.. (New York: Image/Doubleday, 2005), 522.
[25] Theodotus, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 49.
[26] Theodotus, 49.
[27] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 8:50.
[28] Theodotus, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 49.

with watching, which connects them to the seven angels mentioned above in Enoch. Clement describes a class of angels greater than any of the others that play a unique role in his celestial hierarchy: that of contemplating the Son.

The *Protoctists* and the Holy Spirit

While Clement has an extensive celestial hierarchy, the distinct absence of the Holy Spirit within his hierarchy scarcely escapes notice. Indeed, Clement seems to describe a hierarchy with the sequence of Father—Son (*Logos*)—*protoctists*.[29] This, then, raises the questions of whether Clement has a pneumatology at all, and if so, what relation the Holy Spirit has to the *protoctists*, the Son, and the Father.

The easiest explanation for the lack of the Holy Spirit within Clement's celestial hierarchy is that Clement did not believe in the activity of the Holy Spirit, or account it as important in preference for the *Logos*. This, however, seems unlikely as Clement often describes the Holy Spirit working through the prophets. For example, Clement claims that "The Holy Spirit, by Isaiah, denounces…" and that "the Holy Spirit, uttering his voice by Amos" (Clement, *Paed.* 2.1; 2.2).[30] In both instances, the prophets, according to Clement, use the voice of the Holy Spirit to make the words of God known. Strangely though, this is a similar role that we have seen assigned to the angels and *protoctists* after the *Logos* first moves them. An explanation for these similarities then could be that there is an overlap between the Holy Spirit and another rank within Clement's celestial hierarchy.

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[29] Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 32.
[30] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:239, 245.

The *protoctists* may provide the overlap necessarily within Clement's hierarchy, as demonstrated by the connection of the number seven with the Holy Spirit in many instances within Clement's thought. For example, when describing how God dispenses "treasures," Clement claims the "heptad of the spirit" as one of the ways (Clement, *Paed.* 3.12).[31] This text seems to suggest that a seven-fold spirit gives the treasures of God to humanity. While the scriptural text (Isaiah 11:1-3) Clement refers to here mentions seven gifts of the Spirit, Clement seems to associate these gifts as agents of the Spirit that deliver these gifts to humanity. Given Clement's celestial hierarchy, we can see how the Holy Spirit would not interact immediately with the world but would use agents. Due to the significance of the number seven and the special role of the *protoctists*, one can easily connect these angels with the "heptad of the Spirit."

Clement continues to associate the seven with the Holy Spirit at other points, as well. In one passage Clement describes the creation of the world by the Savior. In this passage, Clement describes the Savior as "the first universal creator" (Clement, *Exc.* 47).[32] This matches our understanding in Clement of the *Logos*/Christ as the first mover of divine activity, the Father having entrusted him with this power. This passage then describes Wisdom as "the second [universal creator]" (Clement, *Exc.* 47).[33] In this passage, Wisdom must refer to the Holy Spirit since Christ is the first creator. Additionally, in the previous passage, Clement describes the creation of Wisdom due to the appearance of the Savior, providing further evidence that Wisdom is not Christ, but

[31] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:292.
[32] Theodotus, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 71.
[33] Theodotus, 71.

the Holy Spirit in this context (Clement, *Exc.* 46).[34] Next Clement utilizes Proverbs to describe Wisdom as having "built a house for herself and hewed out seven pillars" (Clement, *Exc.* 47; Proverbs 9.1).[35] Thus Clement describes the figure of Wisdom—whom he takes to be a power, namely the Holy Spirit—as taking part in creation. Additionally, he associates her with seven pillars—which Clement associates with seven other powers who interact with Wisdom. Not only is she associated with the number seven, but also, since the house is for her and the seven pillars are part of the house, the passage would imply that she is intimately connected with these seven. This evidence contributes to the idea that there is a connection between the Holy Spirit and the seven *protoctists* in which the *protoctists* make up or act as agents for the Holy Spirit in its interaction with humanity.

This connection strengthens when one considers the mistake in identity that occurs between the angels and the Holy Spirit at times. Clement in one passage describes the Spirit of God (a typical reference to the Holy Spirit) as the "Spirit of His [God's] glory and virtue"; Clement then claims that the "possessive 'His' signifies an angelic spirit" (Clement, *Adum.* 1 Peter).[36] This passage appears to describe the Spirit of God as having an angelic property, although Clement does not entirely clarify what he means by this. In another passage, Clement seems to associate the advocate of Christ (the Holy Spirit) with the first-created powers: "So also is there an advocate, whom, after His assumption, He vouchsafed to send. For these primitive and *first-created* virtues are

[34] Theodotus, 71.
[35] Theodotus, 71.
[36] Clement, *Operum Clementis Alexandrini supplementum*, 134; Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:572.

unchangeable as to substance, and along with angels and archangels…effect divine operations" (Clement, *Adum.* 1 John).[37] This passage connects the Holy Spirit, as an advocate, with "first-created" beings whose description matches that of the *protoctists* in defining them as "unchangeable" and "affect[ing] diving operations." Once again, Clement does not explain this connection, but instead freely associates the two classes of beings.

In light of this evidence, it seems appropriate to say that Clement believes that the Holy Spirit and the *protoctists* share the same role, as demonstrated by their mistake in identity, and that the *protoctists* may be parts of the whole Holy Spirit. The concept of "parts of the whole" makes sense when one considers Clement's previous ideas about divine multiplicity and unity. He even describes the *protoctists* as "numerically distinct and susceptible of separate distinction and definition" yet also "having unity, equality, and similarity" (Clement, *Exc.* 10).[38] Using this concept, the seven *protoctists* become the seven-fold Holy Spirit. Or rather, the Holy Spirit appears to humans as the seven *protoctists* when interacting with humanity (it is important to note that Clement thinks that the Holy Spirit *appears* to be an angel/takes the form of an angel, it is *not* itself an angel). As the prophets mistakenly refer to angels close to us as "Michael" or "Gabriel," they also mistakenly refer to the Holy Spirit as an angel when they see it in angelomorphic character in their attempts to explain their experience.

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[37] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:575.
[38] Theodotus, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 49.

The *Logos*: Binitarianism in Clement

While the previous sections fully explain Angelomorphic Pneumatology in Clement of Alexandria, encompassing a lot of the work of Christian Oeyen (as represented by Bogdan Bucur), Bogdan Bucur highlights another element related to Angelomorphic Pneumatology in Clement of Alexandria that is worth touching on inasmuch as it further establishes the divinity of the Holy Spirit in Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Bucur claims that in addition to Clement's Angelomorphic Pneumatology, Clement has a Spirit Christology and Binitarianism which incorporates the Holy Spirit—and by extension the *protoctists* as the immediate recognizable form of the Holy Spirit—into his understanding of Christ.

Clement follows a common theme within early Christian theology—especially among the second-century apologists—that does not clearly distinguish between the *Logos* and the Spirit, developing a binitarian logic that merges the functions of the Word and Spirit.[39] This is often due to Clement's all-encompassing idea of the *Logos*, in which the Word takes on roles usually ascribed to the Holy Spirit, such as prophecy and spiritual inspiration.[40] Additionally, Clement will occasionally use sentences—some of which we have already explored—where it is hard to determine if he is referring to angels, the Holy Spirit, or Christ. For example, Clement writes at one point about "the Lord Jesus, the Word of God, that is, the Spirit made flesh" (Clement, *Paed.* 1.6).[41] Due to Clement's wording in this sentence, the role of the Holy Spirit in Christ's incarnation is unclear since Clement uses the words *Logos* and Spirit to refer to the same thing.

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[39] Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 75.
[40] Bucur, 77.
[41] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:220.

Clement here either refers to the Holy Spirit as taking part in the Incarnation of Christ (indicating two beings), or Clement claims that the words "Spirit" and "*Logos*" refer to the same singular being (who is not the Holy Spirit). This theme continues throughout Clement's works making it hard to follow when he is referring to the Holy Spirit and when he is referring to the *Logos*.

Bucur offers an explanation for Clement's Binitarian thought—the condensing of the Holy Spirit and the Son together. He draws upon Clement's understanding of divine multiplicity and unity and the relation of the *protoctists* with the Holy Spirit. Bucur describes the *Logos* as an expression of unity, while describing the sevenfold-Holy Spirit (i.e. the *protoctists*) as an expression of multiplicity.[42] Since it is hard to distinguish between the Word and the Spirit, he claims that they merge in the mind of Clement and he uses the two terms at different moments to express either the unity or multiplicity of the Word-Spirit.

While this may appear to claim that the Holy Spirit is an angel, it is important to remember that the Holy Spirit only takes the form of the *protoctists*. In other words, when humans think about the archangel Michael, they are actually thinking about the Holy Spirit. However, the only way they have to describe the Holy Spirit is by describing it as they would Michael. It is possible for Clement to always consider the Holy Spirit as being in the form of an angel (and thus always an expression of the multiplicity of Christ) since he considers the primary function of the Holy Spirit as interacting with humanity as

[42] Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 80.

messenger. As such, the Holy Spirit would always appear in the form of an angel due to its work in the Godhead.

In Clement, we see an extensive Angelomorphic Pneumatology rooted in his celestial hierarchy that appears to leave no room for the Holy Spirit. In reality, however, Clement expresses the idea of a seven-fold Holy Spirit related to the seven first-created princes of the angels (the *protoctists*) that participate in the celestial hierarchy. These *protoctists*, which have roots deep in Jewish tradition, act as agents to the world—through a line of angels and archangels—and almost appear to be the signs of God's activity in the world. Additionally, they participate in a relationship of multiplicity and unity with the *Logos*, and thus—in a way—become part of the Godhead as an expression of the diversity of Christ and as the Holy Spirit. Additionally, Clement does this while incorporating many beliefs that early Christian theologians—particularly the apologists—share, such as Binitarianism and divine multiplicity and unity.

It is important to highlight Binitarianism in Angelomorphic Pneumatology because it highlights the divinity of the Holy Spirit along with describing the relationship between the Son and the Spirit. Angelomorphic Pneumatology describes a Son and Spirit that are not always distinguishable from each other, except through expressions of unity or divinity. As we will see, later theologians will want to separate their relationship more to show the Trinitarian nature of God, which will lead some to claim that the Holy Spirit is a creature. While Binitarianism in Angelomorphic Pneumatology is central to claiming the divinity of the Holy Spirit, it is also central to Angelomorphic Pneumatology's later decline as it becomes one of the chief problems theologians want to address.

2. Other Early Christian Theologians

At this point, since we have a basic understanding of Angelomorphic Pneumatology, it is worthwhile to look at other early Christian theologians and witnesses. This survey will provide an understanding of how widespread Angelomorphic Pneumatology was during this time, as well as what differs between those theologians with an Angelomorphic Pneumatology and those lacking one. This survey will cover a variety of theologians through the second and third centuries CE, including Irenaeus, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Justin Martyr, and Theophilus of Antioch. Through this survey, we will see that Angelomorphic Pneumatology was a wide-spread theology in the early Church that later generations would have to address.

Irenaeus[43]

Irenaeus is a rough contemporary of Clement of Alexandria, living at the same time although in a different part of the Roman Empire. As such, he offers a good reference in determining how widespread Angelomorphic Pneumatology may have been in second century Christianity.

Additionally, scholars have historically identified one passage with Angelomorphic Pneumatology within Irenaeus' writing.[44] This passage reads: "This God, then, is glorified by His Word…and by the Holy Spirit…And their Powers (those of the Word and of Wisdom), which are called Cherubim and Seraphim, with unfailing voice,

[43] This section draws upon the work of Anthony Briggman in response to D. E. Lanne's claim of Angelomorphic Pneumatology in Irenaeus: Anthony Briggman, "Re-Evaluating Angelomorphism in Irenaeus: The Case of Proof of the Apostolic Preaching 10," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 61, no. 2 (October 2010): 583–95, https://doi.org/10.1093/jts/flq116.
[44] Briggman, 585.

glorify God" (Irenaeus, *Prf* 10).[45] This reading seems to imply that the "Powers" of the Holy Spirit (and the Son) relate to the Cherubim and Seraphim. As such, one can claim that the Holy Spirit and the Son take angelomorphic form when worshiping the Father.

This text, however, differs significantly from Clement of Alexandria's understanding of the Holy Spirit. Clement, as we have seen, claims that the Holy Spirit's only functions related to communicating with the prophets and new believers and heavily relates to the created *protoctists*. Irenaeus has a higher pneumatology that associates the Holy Spirit with the divine and part of creation activity while still associating the Seraphim and Cherubim as created powers.[46] Thus, the Holy Spirit and the Seraphim and Cherubim are clearly different classes of beings.

Importantly Irenaeus never claims the Cherubim and Seraphim as uncreated powers, only as an image of Christ that relate to his economic activity.[47] Additionally, there is evidence in Irenaeus of the createdness of the Cherubim and Seraphim and the uncreatedness of the Holy Spirit, placing them in a dichotomous relationship where the Powers cannot be the Spirit, as they are in Clement. For example, in *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus claims that "Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, and powers…are the workmanship and creatures of this [Creator]" (Irenaeus, *AH* 2.30.3).[48] This passage of *Against Heresies* clearly states that God himself created all the celestial "powers." Irenaeus also designates the Holy Spirit as part of the act of creating, claiming that it is

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[45] Saint Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, Ancient Christian Writers ; No. 16 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1952), 54.
[46] Briggman, "Re-Evaluating Angelomorphism in Irenaeus," 587.
[47] Briggman, 589.
[48] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 1 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 404.

the Holy Spirit which "fashions everything" while the Son "produces everything" (Irenaeus, *Prf* 5).[49] Creating activity also excludes the angels. Irenaeus claims that "It was not angels, therefore, who made us…nor any Power remotely distant from the Father…For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit" (Irenaeus, *AH* 4.20.1).[50] These passages associate the Holy Spirit with the creating activity while excluding beyond-a-doubt the participation of the angels and powers in creation. As such, Irenaeus cannot have an Angelomorphic Pneumatology, as the Holy Spirit and angels have different activity and roles in creation, an act typically associated with deity. Thus, Irenaeus must have understood the Holy Spirit as divine and the angels only as holy. This is distinctly different from Clement's thought in which there was no clear separation between the Holy Spirit and the highest angels, where the angels are an expression of the Spirit.

Theophilus of Antioch

Theophilus of Antioch offers another example like that of Irenaeus. He lived at roughly the same time—just a few decades earlier—as Clement of Alexandria, just in a different part of the Roman Empire (and also different from Irenaeus). Despite a difference in location from Irenaeus, Theophilus seems to offer a similar argument about the Holy Spirit that excludes the possibility of Angelomorphic Pneumatology.

Theophilus describes the Holy Spirit and Son as equal beings that take part in the creation of the world, unlike the other celestial powers. Theophilus claims that the Father begets the Son and Holy Spirit in the same way: the Father "having within His bowels,

[49] Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, 50.
[50] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 1:487.

begat Him, emitting Him along with His own wisdom" (Theophilus, *Autol* 2.10).[51] As such, Theophilus also includes the Holy Spirit in creation activity claiming that "God by His own word and wisdom made all things" (Theophilus, *Autol* 1.7).[52] Accordingly, Theophilus designates the Holy Spirit (Wisdom) as divine just as Irenaeus will define it. Theophilus couples the Holy Spirit's participation in creation with the fact that no one else participates in creation aside from the Word and Wisdom (Theophilus, *Autol* 2.18).[53] Thus, like Irenaeus and unlike Clement, Theophilus has a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit and the angels based on the Holy Spirit's divinity and the angels lack of divinity. Additionally, the Holy Spirit is not connected with the angels—as it is in Clement—allowing for the possibility that the Holy Spirit is taking on angelic form.

Theophilus, however, has a distinction lacking in Irenaeus, one that demonstrates the Holy Spirit's divinity. Theophilus introduces, for the first time, the designation of "Trinity" to God, his Word, and His Wisdom (Theophilus, *Autol* 2.15).[54] Therefore, within Theophilus, we have to recognize a clear distinction between Holy Spirit and the angels based upon his clear distinction of the Holy Spirit as part of the Trinity and involved in creation and the angels exclusion from these roles.

The Shepherd of Hermas

The *Shepherd of Hermas* provides a good judge of beliefs during the time in which its author wrote it and the churches were circulating it. The *Shepherd* was written in the early to mid-second century (around the time of Theophilus) and offers a unique

[51] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:98.
[52] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:91.
[53] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:101.
[54] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:101.

perspective on beliefs at this time as the Church almost included it as part of Biblical Canon.[55] It is also interesting for this survey as the *Shepherd* demonstrates a form of Angelomorphic Pneumatology like that of Clement's own.

One of the primary overlaps between Clement and the *Shepherd* is the presence of the *protoctists* continuing the theme of seven. In Similitude 5, the *Shepherd* tells us that God took the council of the Holy Spirit and the first-created angels about the status of Christ (*Shepherd Sim.* 5.5).[56] So we see the *protoctists* in the *Shepherd* taking a primary role interacting with the Holy Spirit. Additionally, the *Shepherd* appears to believe that there are seven of them. In his Visions, Hermas encounters a vision of six young men, whom the Holy Spirit describes as "the holy angels of God, who were first created" (*Shepherd Vis.* 3.4).[57] While this text only mentions six young men, if one includes the old woman present with them—who represents the Holy Spirit—there are seven members present (*Shepherd Sim.* 9.1).[58] The Holy Spirit may be appearing here as the seventh *protoctist*, just unnamed as one of the first-created angels, which allows us to include the old women in the count. We see a similar relationship between the *protoctist* and the Son. In Similitude 9, the Shepherd tells Hermas that "the glorious man is the Son of God, and those six glorious angels are those who support Him" (*Shepherd Sim.* 9.12).[59] This description again only mentions six angels, but the glorious man may be the seventh *protoctists*, leading us to the seven angels found in Clement. Thus, the Holy Spirit and the Son are drawn into relationship with the *protoctists* in the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Their role

[55] Everett Ferguson, *Church History: The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context*, First edition.. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2013), 53, 117.
[56] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:35.
[57] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:14.
[58] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:43.
[59] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:48.

in relation to the *protoctists*, however, appears to be the same: leading them. Accordingly, it appears that the Son and Spirit may represent the same being, which directs the *protoctists*, or that the *protoctists* are extensions of their own activity. This resembles the Binitarianism that Bucur describes in Clement, since the Spirit and Son appear to be collapsed into the same being at times, which then direct the activity of the *protoctists*.

The *Shepherd* contains more evidence of the relationship between the *protoctists* and the Holy Spirit. In the Commandments, the Shepherd describes to Hermas the spirits that guide humans. In these passages, the Shepherd will often switch back and forth between describing the spirit present as an angel or as the Holy Spirit. For example, in Commandment 6 the Shepherd claims that "there are two *angels* with a man," while in Commandment 5 he claims that "[evil] spirits dwell in one vessel in which the Holy Spirit also dwells" (*Shepherd Man.* 6.2; 5.2).[60] These passages seem to describe the same practice of dueling agents in humans, but they differ insofar as one describes these agents as angels while the other describes one agent as the Holy Spirit. Consequently, we see the confusion of identity often associated with Angelomorphic Pneumatology where humans occasionally describe the Holy Spirit as an angel due to the Holy Spirit's manifestation in that form

Throughout the *Shepherd of Hermas*, even beyond the examples mentioned, there is overlap between the Holy Spirit and the angels, particularly the seven special first-born angels.[61] The presence of Angelomorphic Pneumatology in the *Shepherd* is important

[60] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:24, 23.
[61] For more examples see *Shepherd Sim* 5.2-6; *Man*. 11.1.

owing to the number of people in the early Church who were familiar with the text and who saw it as potentially canonical. It appears likely that many in the early Church may have believed a form of Angelomorphic Pneumatology or have been asking questions about it in relation to their own beliefs.

Justin Martyr

Justin provides another view of Angelomorphic Pneumatology during this time, which seems to be slightly less developed than Clement's own version. For instance, much of Justin's understanding about Christ overrides his understanding of the function of the Holy Spirit, displaying a deeper Binitarianism than Clement who seems to separate the roles of Spirit and Word more through his understanding of divine multiplicity and unity.

Despite this, we can see a form of angelomorphism within Justin's thought. Justin even includes the angels among those worthy of worship, besides the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Justin, *Apol*. 1.6).[62] In listing the angels among those worthy of worship, Justin either claims that the angels are divine as well, or he associates the angels (or some of the angels) with the person of Christ and the Holy Spirit. For example, if the Holy Spirit took angelic form, Justin may attribute that angel with God and as worthy of worship.

As I have stated, Justin's form of angelomorphism differs slightly from that of Clement due to how little he mentions the Holy Spirit. As such, his form of angelomorphism is much clearer by starting with the person of Christ instead of the Holy

[62] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 1:164.

Spirit. Justin often designates Christ as taking the form of an angel. For example, Justin claims that Christ is one of the three angels who appears to Abraham and that, in this instance, it is proper to call Christ an angel, to the extent that he acts as a messenger of God (Justin, *Dial*. 55-58).[63] Justin, in a later chapter, also enumerates titles of Christ in which he lists "Angel," "Wisdom," "Logos," and potentially even "Holy Spirit" (Justin, *Dial*. 61).[64] We see in these instances the mistake in identity and Binitarianism often associated with Angelomorphic Pneumatology. At this point, however, we only see an Angelomorphic Christology.

Justin makes a later statement that mirrors Clementine thought more, bringing the Holy Spirit into association with the angels and Christ in an Angelomorphic-Binitarianism mixture. Justin claims that Christ "is filled with the powers of the Holy Ghost, which the Scripture by Isaiah enumerates" (Justin, *Dial*. 87).[65] The powers in Isaiah to which Justin is referring to here are the same seven powers to which Clement refers to as the "heptad of the Spirit."[66] Thus, Justin claims that the Holy Spirit has seven different powers associated with himself and that Christ contains all these powers. Justin incorporates a multifaceted Holy Spirit into the unified Christ, in a manner similar to that which Clement pursues a generation later.

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[63] Alexander Roberts et al., 1:223–25.
[64] Alexander Roberts et al., 1:227.
[65] Alexander Roberts et al., 1:243.
[66] As stated previously, the passage referenced out of Isaiah is Isaiah 11.1 which refers to seven powers of the Spirit.

Cyprian of Carthage

Cyprian offers an interesting perspective inasmuch as he lives around the same time and in the same area as Clement of Alexandria. His theology, however, is semi-difficult to parse as much of his surviving writings deal with what to do with believers who abandon the faith during persecution. Despite the lack of writing, Cyprian does offer, in passing, a cursory view of his Christology and Pneumatology; from these sections, he appears to continue the cycle of meshing the persons of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and angels together often seen in Angelomorphic Pneumatology.

Like Justin Martyr, Cyprian often designates the person of Christ as an angel, which he may do to describe his experiences with Christ (Cyprian, *Treatise* 12.2.5).[67] In addition to this, Cyprian writes at one point that the Holy Spirit often appears in fire; however, as he elaborates on this idea, Cyprian cites instances of both the Spirit and angels appearing in fire such as at Pentecost and in the burning bush (Cyprian, *Treatise* 12.3.101).[68] There is often evidence within the Jewish and early Christian tradition that people considered the angels to be born out of fire.[69] Considering how the angels relate to fire and Cyprian's connection of the Holy Spirit to fire—in which he references occurrences of angels and the Holy Spirit under the title of Holy Spirit—it appears that Cyprian believes that the Holy Spirit often takes the form of an angel and of fire, just as Christ may take the form of an angel.

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[67] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 5 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 517.
[68] Alexander Roberts et al., 5:555.
[69] Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 40.

3. Conclusion

I have attempted to demonstrate and explain Angelomorphic Pneumatology, as was evident in Clement of Alexandria, and then I surveyed briefly the extent of this theology in early Christianity. Through this case study of Clement, we explored Angelomorphic Pneumatology's relation to the celestial hierarchy and the gap that Clement left by not mentioning the Holy Spirit. Instead, he associates the Holy Spirit with the seven first-created angels (*protoctists*) from Jewish and Christian tradition. These *protoctists* exist in a relationship of divine multiplicity and unity with the person of Christ in which Christ represents unity and the *protoctists* represent a multiplicious, seven-fold Holy Spirit who appears to humanity in the form of an angel. Upon exploring how widespread this phenomenon was in the early Church, we see that many theologians had some sort of Angelomorphic Pneumatology, including Justin Martyr, Cyprian of Carthage, and *The Shepherd of Hermas*. Despite how widespread this thought was, not every theologian of this time has an Angelomorphic Pneumatology, several—including Irenaeus and Theophilus—have a theology of the Holy Spirit, which refuses to associate it with angels, either in form or in nature.

Chapter 2: Arianism and Its Theological Background

I now propose to argue that Arianism plays an important role in the decline of Angelomorphic Pneumatology as early Christians adapted their beliefs about the Holy Spirit in response to a variety of theologies. Accordingly, I will explore not only the theology of Arius, but also how that theology relates to the Holy Spirit. The theological background associated with Arius includes Angelomorphic Pneumatology and will provide the necessary foundation for understanding how Arianism eventually led to the fall of Angelomorphic Pneumatology.

I will first explore the theology of Arius himself, both through the lens of his own writings—of which few survive to this day—and the writings of theologians opposed to him, including Alexander and Athanasius of Alexandria. This section will explore how Arius attempts to prove the oneness of God by distinguishing between the Father and the Son. Arius makes this distinction based upon the createdness/begottenness of the Son in relation to the Father. Following this section, I will examine how later theologians modify Arius' theology to speak about the divinity or creaturehood of the Holy Spirit. Like Arius, these theologians are attempting to distinguish between the Holy Spirit and the Son in an effort to demonstrate the simplicity of God. In both of these sections, I will focus on Arius' and the Pneumatomachians' (those who believe the Holy Spirit is a creature) attempts to solve logical problems in the developing theology of the Trinity.

Subsequent to summarizing these theologies, I will look at the theological background in Alexandria that affects the development of these theologies. I will give both a brief summary of several groups of theologians and of how Arius and the Pneumatomachians responded to those theologians when they posed their theology.

Among those whom I will review are the Monarchians, the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians, and Origen.

It is important to develop this theological background not only because it shapes the arguments that bring about Arius' theology, but also because it alters Angelomorphic Pneumatology as it develops—eventually leading to its decline. Angelomorphic Pneumatology has a large following in the same area in which Arianism develops, and as such relates to some of the same theologies that shape Arianism. Additionally, these theologies may shape Angelomorphic Pneumatology in the same way that they shape Arianism. Therefore, while this background demonstrates how the gaps in Origen's and the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians' arguments lead to Arianism, a similar background—which we will explore in the next chapter—shows how the gaps in Angelomorphic Pneumatology lead to Pneumatomachianism.

1. Arius and Arianism

I will now attempt to explain Arius' theology by examining what survives of his texts as well as those texts of his opponents who wrote to or about him. I will first examine Arius' own writings to examine what he says about the Son and his distinction from the Father. Following this, I will look further into how other theologians—such as Alexander and Athanasius—interpreted Arius' writings.

In this section, I must look at the writings of others for a variety of reasons. The primary reason for looking to other theologians for what Arius believed is that most of Arius' actual writings were destroyed. Arius' only surviving texts are his letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, his letter to Alexander of Alexandria, his letter to Constantine,

and sections of the *Thalia*—his hymnal book—preserved in the writings of Athanasius. Consequently, to have any inkling as to Arius' wider beliefs, we must turn to the works of others who may not accurately portray Arius' theology. Additionally, it is worth looking at other writers of this time to understand how Arius' writing was interpreted, which may help us understand how Angelomorphic Pneumatology could have been interpreted.

Owing to the paucity of Arius' surviving writings, describing his theology often attempts to pull together a web of information. To develop his theology, accordingly, we will look at a variety of topics before bringing them together. I will first examine Arius' understanding of the *hypostases*, examining how many there are and what it means to be a *hypostasis*. Following this, I will look at the explicit differences between the Father and the Son, focusing on how the Son has a beginning in his begottenness. Finally, I will examine how the Son differs from creatures like the angels and humans. I will then bring together this information to describe how, for Arius, the Son is a special creature that cannot be God due to his createdness.

Arius, like both Origen before him and Alexander, believes that there are three *hypostases*. This in itself claims something special about the Son (and the Holy Spirit). In his letter to Alexander, Arius claims that there are three *hypostases* because the Father gives to Christ (and by extension the Holy Spirit) everything that the Father has in Him (Arius, *Letter to Alexander*).[70] This letter also claims that God created everything else

[70] William G. Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy*, Sources of Early Christian Thought. (Uri) Http://Id.Loc.Gov/Authorities/Names/N42022942 (Uri) Http://Viaf.Org/Viaf/SourceID/LC|n42022942 (Uri) /Resolver/Wikidata/Lc/N42022942 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 25.

through Christ, mirroring passages in John 1 (Arius, *Letter to Alexander*).[71] Therefore, in claiming Christ as part of creation and claiming that he is a *hypostasis* like the Father, Arius is claiming that Christ has the character of God, doing what God does, having "life, being, and the glories of God" (Arius, *Letter to Alexander*).[72] In this way, Arius claims that Christ is similar to God.

Arius, however, does not say that Christ has the same nature and substance as the Father. Arius' primary distinction between the Father and Son is that the Father alone is unbegotten, while the Son is begotten before time (Arius, *Letter to Eusebius*).[73] Since Christ is begotten, he cannot exist before his begottenness (Arius, *Letter to Eusebius*).[74] For Arius, begottenness is the same thing as createdness. Insomuch as the Son is begotten from nothing, similar to a creature, he must be creaturely (Arius, *Letter to Eusebius*).[75] In this sense, Christ differs from God in two ways: Christ is not everlasting or co-eternal with the Father and Christ only has the divine characteristics by participating in them with God (Arius, *Letter to Alexander*).[76] In other words, Christ is not divine in-and-of-himself, but only because God made him divine (just as we participate in his divinity). By claiming that Christ only participates in the divine, Arius can say that God the Father is a monad that the other two *hypostases* only participate in.

Arius still has to claim that Christ is different from humanity. In claiming that Christ participates within the divine and is created from nothing, Arius classifies Christ as

[71] Rusch, 25.
[72] Rusch, 25.
[73] Rusch, 23.
[74] Rusch, 23.
[75] Rusch, 24.
[76] Rusch, 25.

a creature since humans and angels are also created and participate in the divine. Arius does claim, however, that Christ is greater than other creatures (Arius, *Thalia* II.25a).[77] Arius can say that the Son is greater than all other creatures because the Father alone creates him, while the rest of creation is created by the Son and the Father (Arius, *Letter to Alexander*).[78] Additionally, Christ is greater than other creatures because God created him greater. Arius claims that Christ is an "unchangeable perfect creature of God…an offspring, but not as one of those born" (Arius, *Letter to Alexander*).[79] Therefore, despite being a creature, Christ is created above other creatures.

Arius develops a theology about Christ and the Father that allows him to claim that God is one, placing Christ in the role of a creature. Christ maintains his importance, however, due to his special creation by the Father and his participation in divine characteristics that God shares with him.

Both Alexander of Alexandria and Athanasius of Alexandria—the bishops of Alexandria at the time of Arius and in the wake of the Arian Controversy—write about the background in which Arius is writing and how his theology affects our understanding of Jesus. Alexander, in a letter to Alexander of Thessalonica, further explains some of the implications of Arius' beliefs about the Son, such as the mutability of the Son and humanity's relationship to the Son. Athanasius explains some of the reasons behind Arius' beliefs, primarily Arius' attempt to explain the difference between Originate

[77] James Stevenson, *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337*, Revised with additional documents / by W.H.C. Frend.. (London: SPCK, 1987), 331.
[78] Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy*, 25.
[79] Rusch, 25.

(begotten) and Unoriginated (unbegotten) along with a further explanation about the consequences of Arian beliefs.

Alexander claims that Arius' beliefs cause issues in understanding Jesus' saving activity since he is capable of sin. Alexander describes Arius' theology by stating that he believes there was a time when the Son of God was not and that when the Son of God was created, he was like all other creatures because God made everything—including the Son—from nothing (Alexander, *Letter to Alexander of Thessalonica*).[80] Due to Arius' belief that the Son is created, Alexander claims that he believes that the Son has a mutable nature, which is capable of good or evil (Alexander, *Letter to Alexander of Thessalonica*).[81] We know that Arius does not necessarily believe this; he describes Christ as a perfect *immutable* creature of God in one of his letters (Arius, *Letter to Alexander*).[82] Alexander, however, claims that Arius' beliefs lead to the belief that the Son is capable of evil and thus should be avoided. Alexander also interprets Arius' statement that the Son is like any other creature to mean that any human can become like the Son of God (Alexander, *Letter to Alexander of Thessalonica*).[83] Alexander makes this statement because he thinks that Arius does not define anything special about Christ to separate him from any other son (Alexander, *Letter to Alexander of Thessalonica*).[84] While these statements do not align exactly with the surviving writings of Arius, Alexander perceives a threat in the writings of Arius and condemns them based upon the potential implications of Arius' writing.

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[80] Rusch, 28.
[81] Rusch, 28.
[82] Rusch, 25.
[83] Rusch, 28.
[84] Rusch, 28.

Athanasius claims that Arius' develops this theology because he understands there to only be one Unoriginate God, but that Jesus cannot be that God since he is an Originate being. Athanasius claims that the Arians are questioning whether there are one or two Unoriginate beings (Athanaius, *Contra Arianos* I.IX.30).[85] In answer to this question, the Arians claim—as Athanasius also does—that there is only one Unoriginate being: God. As such, the Arians believe that the Son must be among the Originate beings, i.e. a created being.[86] According to Athanasius, the Arians are describing the Son's begotteness as creation. They believe that the Son must be created because there can only be one Unoriginate being, as God is one. The Arians see a logical contradiction in calling the Son divine because, for them, this means there are two Gods. Through this description of Arius' concerns for the singleness of God, Athanasius explains the reasons behind Arius' beliefs.

Through Arius' surviving writings and the writings of Alexander and Athanasius, we can see that Arius' understanding of the Son compared to the Father is concerned with the singleness of God. Arius is concerned about describing God as one, and as such, claims that the Son must be a creature. The Son, however, maintains divine characteristics by participating in the divinity of God and through the gifts of God. This separates the Son from the rest of creation, along with his creation before time. Alexander believes that Arius' beliefs lead to an inferior understanding of the Son where he has a mutable nature. Additionally, Alexander claims that in Arius' Christology, anyone can

[85] Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church.: Second Series*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh : Grand Rapids, Mich.: T & T Clark ; Eerdmans, 1988), 324.
[86] Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, 4:324.

attain the status of the Son of God since the Son only shares in the divinity of God, like all humans do through the Holy Spirit.

2. Arianism and the Holy Spirit

While Arius only writes concerning the relation of the Son to the Father and humanity, other theologians of this time, most notably Athanasius, claim that his beliefs generated thoughts in others on the Holy Spirit. These people—whom Athanasius terms the *Tropici* and others call the Pneumatomachians—believed that the Holy Spirit was a creature, just like an angel. In this section, I will examine what people believed about the Holy Spirit during this time and how those beliefs related to Arianism.

The Pneumatomachians write about the Holy Spirit due to a perceived issue about the relationship between the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. According to Athanasius, the *Tropici* claim that if the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, then the Holy Spirit is itself a son (Athanasius, *Epistle* I.15).[87] If this is the case, then Christ has a brother in the Holy Spirit and he cannot be the only-begotten (Athanasius, *Epistle* I.15).[88] On the other hand, if the Holy Spirit is from the Son, then the Father is rightfully called a grandfather (Athanasius, *Epistle* I.15).[89] This is an issue for the early Christians as it resembles the Greek, Roman, and Egyptian gods who have many family relationships. This would also resemble the beliefs of Valentinus, who had been criticized by the Alexandrian bishops in

[87] Saint Athanasius, *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 96.
[88] Athanasius, 97.
[89] Athanasius, 97–98.

previous decades. The Pneumatomachians understandably claimed that the Holy Spirit cannot be divine and part of the Godhead.

The Pneumatomachians instead claim that the Holy Spirit must be a creature. In the opening section of his letters on the Holy Spirit, Athanasius claims that the *Tropici* believe that the Spirit is "only a creature…and differs from the angels only in degree" (Athanasius, *Epistle* I.1).[90] This implies that the Holy Spirit is only a special creature or angel for the Pneumatomachians, although slightly more special due to honor accorded it by Christ. They do this while still considering Christ divine since their issue is relating the Holy Spirit to God, not Christ.

Athanasius also tells us how the Pneumatomachians utilize scripture to argue that the Holy Spirit is only a creature. The *Tropici* claim that in Amos when God says that he "establisheth thunder and createth spirit" that the passage refers to the creation of the Holy Spirit (Athanasius, *Epistle* I.3; Amos 4.13).[91] Since God created the Spirit in this passage, the Holy Spirit cannot be divine and must be a creature. Additionally, the *Tropici* use a passage in 1 Timothy to claim that the Holy Spirit is only an angel. The verse reads: "In the presence of God and of Jesus Christ and of the elect angels…" (NRSV 1 Timothy 5.21). Since this passage reads like a Trinitarian formula, replacing the Holy Spirit with the angels, Athanasius tells us that the Pneumatomachians believe that the Holy Spirit is included among the elect angels (Athanasius, *Epistle* I.10).[92] Thus, the

[90] Athanasius, 60.
[91] Athanasius, 66–67.
[92] Athanasius, 86.

Tropici argue that the Holy Spirit is a creature based on scripture texts that incorporate the angels into the Trinitarian formula and which describe the creation of the spirit.

It is important to make a distinction between the beliefs of the Pneumatomachians and Angelomorphic Pneumatology. As I outlined in the first chapter, Angelomorphic Pneumatology claims that the Holy Spirit appears to humans in the form of an angel—through its interactions with the terrestrial world—but still has a divine nature. In this sense the Holy Spirit is the *protoctists* because the *protoctists* are the Holy Spirit in an angelic shape and not themselves angels (i.e. Michael is not an angel, but an image of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus is an image of the invisible God). The Pneumatomachians differ in claiming that the Holy Spirit is an angel in form and nature. The primary difference is the description of the Holy Spirit's nature: is the Spirit divine or is it merely an angel. In both instances the Holy Spirit has the form of an angel.

Many theologians arguing against the Pneumatomachians claim that they are former followers of Arius. While Arius writes very little about the Holy Spirit in his surviving writings, the beliefs are similar enough that Athanasius and others connected the two. To understand this connection, it is beneficial to first look at what Arius writes about the Holy Spirit which demonstrates how little he is connected to the movement. After this, I will compare the beliefs of Arius to the beliefs about the Holy Spirit which I outlined above. I will conclude this section by examining how Athanasius and others characterize those who believe that the Holy Spirit is a creature.

Arius does not mention the Holy Spirit by name in his surviving writings except to mention it exists (see the *Letter to Constantine*); instead, he seems to focus primarily

on the Son's relationship to the Father. Arius does, however, mention that there are three *hypostases* (Arius, *Letter to Alexander; Letter to Constantine*).[93] The Holy Spirit cannot be a God for Arius, because the Father is a monad, and if the Holy Spirit is also God then there would be two Gods—the same issue that arises if Christ is God. At the same time, the Holy Spirit is still one of three *hypostases*, so we can assume that the Holy Spirit has a similar relationship to the Father as Christ's relationship to the Father (Arius, *Letter to Alexander*).[94] For Arius, presumably, the Holy Spirit would most likely be a special creature that shares in the Father's divinity through the Father's own will. The primary difference between the Son and the Holy Spirit in Arius' thoughts may be a matter of which one the Father created first and shares in God's divinity the most. Arius, however, does not answer this question and only tells us that the Holy Spirit and the Son are similar.

Even though Arius does not specifically comment on the Holy Spirit, there is some overlap between his beliefs and the beliefs of the Pneumatomachians. Both theologies are attempting to explain what appears to be a contradiction in the relationships within the Trinity. Additionally, both theologies answer this complication by claiming one or more members of the Godhead as a creature.

Arius and the Pneumatomachians attempt to explain a logical contradiction about the Trinity. Arius is attempting to explain how God can remain a monad if Christ is divine, while the Pneumatomachians are attempting to explain how the Holy Spirit can proceed from the Father or Son and not be a brother or son to Christ. Arius' question

[93] Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy*, 25, 53.
[94] Rusch, 25.

focuses on describing the relationship of the Son and he determines that the Son cannot be divine if God is a monad. As such, he describes Christ as a creature that God has shared divine characteristics with. The Pneumatomachians, on the other hand, are describing the relationship of the Holy Spirit and claim it must be a creature like the angels otherwise God would have an extensive family like the gods of the Romans.

Additionally, both groups struggle to explain why Christ and the Holy Spirit appear in the Bible as special. The Arians must answer why Christ has a saving role and why God considers him his son. The *Tropici* must answer why Christ focuses on sending the Holy Spirit and why it takes part in sanctifying individuals. Both theologies answer this question in the same way. Arius and the *Tropici* claim that while Christ or the Holy Spirit are creatures, they are very special creatures—through the will of the Father—that are slightly above all the others.

Due to the similarity of these beliefs, many theologians consider the *Tropici* as Arians that have gone a step further. Athanasius claims that the *Tropici* have forsaken Arianism since it blasphemies the Son, but use the same arguments in relation to the Holy Spirit (Athanasius, *Epistle* I.1).[95] For Athanasius, this is an insult to the Son insofar as it denies the Son's role in the creation of the Holy Spirit (Athanasius, *Epistle* I.1, 14).[96] Through this characterization by Athanasius, it appears that early theologians traced beliefs about the Holy Spirit's createdness to the Arian beliefs about the Son's createdness.

[95] Saint Athanasius, *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 59.
[96] Athanasius, 60, 94.

While Arius does not explicitly claim the Holy Spirit as a creature or an angel, his beliefs about the Son mirror the *Tropici*'s beliefs about the Holy Spirit. This connection and the *Tropici*'s presence in Alexandria leads Athanasius to trace these beliefs back to Arius. Arius' beliefs, however, are rooted in an older tradition and reflect the theological background that he learns. For the most part, Arius believes himself to be following in an established tradition rooted in Origen and the Apologists before him, like Clement of Alexandria (Arius, *Letter to Alexander*).[97]

3. The Theological Background of Arianism

Arius does not write in a vacuum; instead, he follows in a long tradition reflecting on Trinitarian theology in Alexandria. To understand fully why Arius' develops his understanding of the Son, it is important to examine the theological background in which Arius is writing. While this tradition primarily concerns Origen, it also reflects the writings of the Monarchians and the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians. It is also important to explore the theological background Arius is writing into as it relates to the connection between Angelomorphic Pneumatology and Arianism. Angelomorphic Pneumatology shares some beliefs with the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians and Origen, especially as it is reflected in Clement of Alexandria—a major figure in the theological background of Alexandria that Arius and Origen follow.

Monarchianism

Monarchianism is a central belief in the history of the Church that affects Arius' writing as he, like many theologians of this time, is concerned with limiting the influence

[97] Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy*, 25.

of Monarchianism. I want now to explore Monarchian beliefs and the reasons for those beliefs. Following that, I will examine how Arius' theology is a reply to this theology and how he writes to avoid the beliefs of the Monarchians.

Like Arius, there are few surviving works of the Monarchians as later traditions consider them a heretical group. Additionally, the term "Monarchian" is a later term that theologians created to define a belief system. The people who had Monarchian beliefs did not classify themselves as such and would instead consider themselves merely Christian. As such, there are many variations of Monarchianism with slight differences, it is difficult to define Monarchianism.

Despite this difficulty, Hippolytus of Rome offers a brief description of what later theologians call Monarchianism. While refuting a bishop named Callistus, Hippolytus describes his beliefs claiming that he alleges "that the Logos himself is Son, and that himself is Father; and that though denominated by a different title, He is one indivisible spirit" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.12).[98] Hippolytus goes on to say that Callistus believes "that the Father is not one person and the Son another, but that they are one and the same" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.12).[99] Callistus argues that the Father and the Son are united in the same spirit and are actually that same person, just using different titles.

This appears similar to what became considered the "orthodox Christian" understanding of the Trinity, however, it differs in a significant way. While later orthodox thought will consider the Godhead to be one substance, they claim that all three

[98] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 5 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 130.
[99] Alexander Roberts et al., 5:130.

persons are in that substance. Callistus' claims differ in claiming one substance and one person. Essentially, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all the same being and person that have different titles based on how or when they are acting. An analogy of this would be that a person could be called a husband by their wife, a father by their kids, or a boss by their employees. The person remains the same but has different titles in different environments. As such, the Monarchians might say that the God of the Hebrew Bible is called the Father, the human who suffered on the Cross is called the Son, and the Spirit residing in the disciples is called the Holy Spirit, even though they are the same being.

Arius was writing during a time when people still have Monarchian beliefs, but more importantly, when people were acutely concerned about those who held Monarchian beliefs. During this time there was considerable concern for developing and maintaining the unity of the Church. We can see examples of this in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch urging the cities to maintain unity in following their bishop.[100] Alexandria is no exception to this concern and had a stronger need for unity than other Christian communities. Arius is writing during and after the Diocletianic Persecution, a time when there was no strong bishop in Alexandria for several years.[101] As such, the presbyters were responsible for maintaining the unity of their communities with the rest of the Church.[102] Arius would have overseen his smaller community and was tasked with maintaining unity with the Church at large when preaching to his community. This would lead Arius to develop teachings that limit the power of the Monarchians as much as

[100] See Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*.
[101] Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, Revised edition.. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William BEerdmans, 2002), 32–33.
[102] Williams, 33.

possible. This, however, also leaves an opening for Arius to develop a theology that is separate from others in the Christian community, since there was no overseeing body monitoring his theology.

Arius addresses the concern about Monarchianism by clearly distinguishing between the Father and the Son. As I explored previously, Arius separates the Son and the Father from each other, claiming that the Son is a created being that only has status because the Father gave him a divine status. This theology answers the Monarchian challenge as it affirms the oneness of God—the primary concern of the Monarchians and a concern Arius has to answer. At the same time, this theology claims that the Father and the Son are not the same being acting under a different title. Instead, they are two different beings, one of which is divine in-and-of-itself, the other divine by sharing in the others divinity. Thus, Arius is increasing the diversity between the Father and the Son compared to the Monarchians.

The Monarchians develop a theology of the Trinity that focuses primarily on the oneness of God, so much so that they deny any distinction in the Godhead other than name. This causes issues for many early theologians, including Arius, who want to claim a greater distinction between the Father and the Son while still maintaining the oneness of God.

Two-Stage *Logos* Theologians

Arius, however, is not the first to claim a greater distinction between the Father and the Son in response to the Monarchians. The Two-Stage *Logos* theologians are the first to address this concern. This section will first explore their theology, both in-and-of-itself

and as a response to Monarchian theologians. This will focus on the distinction the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians created between the Father and the Son, especially the Son's role in relation to the Father. This section will also explore Arius' response to the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians in his theology as he attempts to answer their shortcomings, in addition to the shortcomings of the Monarchians.

The Two-Stage *Logos* theologians are like the Monarchians in that later theologians classify them into a group together but they did not have much relation to each other during their own lives. Additionally, there are slight differences between all the *Logos* theologians. I will primarily invoke Theophilus of Antioch as an example of *Logos* theology, due to the clarity of his beliefs; however other similar theologians include Hippolytus, Athenagoras, and Tatian.[103]

Theophilus draws on John 1 to describe the begetting of the Word from the Father in which the *Logos* exists in two stages: the stage before begetting and the stage after begetting. Before the Son is begotten, he exists within God as his counselor (Theophilus, *Autol* 2.22).[104] During this time, the Son/Word is not distinct from the Father, thus preserving the unity of God. Then at the creation of the world, God speaks and utters (*προφορικος*) his Word/*Logos* into existence, thereby begetting the Son (Theophilus, *Autol* 2.22).[105] The Son then exists separately from the Father, although he continues to interact with the Reason still in the Father. This second stage distinguishes the Father from the Son, insofar as it claims that the Son exists separately from the Father once he is

[103] See Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.12 and *Noet.* 15; Athenagoras, *Apol.* 10; Tatian, *Ora. Graec.* 5.
[104] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 2 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 103.
[105] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:103.

begotten, even though he remains the same substance, having come from the heart of God.

It should be evident that the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians are addressing concerns created in response to the Monarchians about how the Father and the Son are separate from each other. This had become a problem due to concerns about the Father suffering on the cross with Christ—which some deemed inappropriate (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.12).[106] The Two-Stage *Logos* theologians claim, naturally enough, that the Father separates the Son from himself at the start of the world's creation. They, however, also must continue to answer the question about God's unity that originally concerned the Monarchians. Therefore, the *Logos* theologians argued that God is one before the creation of the world, but he is also more than one after the creation of the world.

Arius' theology—along with others—believes that the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians do not go far enough to distinguish between the Father and the Son, and, as such, are guilty of having two Gods. While Arius believes that the Son does participate in the creation of the world, claiming that he is the Father's Reason and *Logos*, coming out of the Father's substance, would turn him into a second God. One could view the *Logos* theologians' beliefs to be similar to those of the Athenians concerning Athena coming from the head of Zeus and serving in the Pantheon as the goddess of wisdom, advising Zeus. Consequently, Arius claims that it is necessary to distinguish even more between the Father and Son to ensure the oneness of God; a problem he will answer by claiming the Son is only a creature. Therefore, Arius would not claim that the Son resided in the

[106] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:130.

Father and was spoken forth, but rather that God created the Son before he created the rest of the world.

Origen

Origen provided the necessary step-stone between the Monarchians and the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians, on one side, and Arius, on the other side. I will now explore Origen's Trinitarian theology and his Christology, especially focusing on the soul of Jesus and the Father's act of begetting the Son. Following his theology, I will examine how Arius utilizes Origen's theology to claim that the Son is a creature in response to the Monarchians and the *Logos* theologians.

Origen's Trinitarian theology is a response to the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians. Origen argues that the Father and Son have always been separate from each other. To do otherwise, he claims, would be to claim that the Father has not always been a Father, which would be denying an important truth about God (Origen, *PA* 1.2.3).[107] Therefore, the Father must have begotten the Son before any time that we can speak of or describe (Origen, *PA* 1.2.2).[108] From a human perspective, accordingly, the Son has always been a separate being from the Father. Origen stresses in other passages, as well, the distinction between the Father and the Son, claiming that the Son is a second God which acts as the model of deity to the world; he, however, receives his deity from the Father, having been

[107] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, vol. 4 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 246.
[108] Alexander Roberts et al., 4:246.

begotten by him (Origen, *Cel.* 5.39; *Com. On John* 2.2.10).[109] The Son comes from God, but is eternally separate and derives his power solely from the Father.

Origen, however, goes on to claim that the Son still has a relation to the Father, even though we do not understand when or how he was begotten. The Son exists as an image of the Father, similar to how a human son is the image of his father in sharing certain physical features (Origen, *PA* 1.2.7).[110] Origen interprets this understanding of the "image of God" to mean that the Son has the same nature and substance as the Father and does what the Father does (Origen, *PA* 1.2.7).[111] Despite being separated from the Father, the Son stays united to him through their shared nature. Through this description, Origen argues for the unity of the Godhead, while still maintaining the distinction between Father and Son that is necessary to argue against the Monarchians.

Origen's Christology focuses primarily on the understanding of Christ's soul. Christ's soul is important for both the human and divine natures to reside in Christ, according to Origen. The soul has to act as a medium between the two because God cannot mingle himself with flesh (Origen, *PA* 2.6.3).[112] The soul can bridge God and human though because it is not contrary to the body—as all humans have souls—and it is not opposed to the nature of God—since it has a rational existence (Origen, *PA* 2.6.3).[113] Origen's emphasis on the soul, however, also raises questions about the infallibility of Christ. According to Origen, souls are capable of both good and evil—a trait that causes

[109] Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy*, 10–11.
[110] Alexander Roberts et al., 4:247–48.
[111] Alexander Roberts et al., 4:248.
[112] Alexander Roberts et al., 4:282.
[113] Alexander Roberts et al., 4:282.

issues when Christ needs to be perfect (Origen, *PA* 2.6.5).[114] Origen answers this difficulty by claiming that while Christ's soul can commit evil, it clings to righteousness inseparably due to its love for goodness, thus destroying all susceptibility to evil (Origen, *PA* 2.6.5).[115] Even though Christ's soul appears to be especially good, Origen still ascribes a human soul to Christ which opens the possibility for his humanity to overtake his divinity.

Origen's Trinitarian theology and Christology provide several weaknesses that set up and inspire Arius' own thoughts about the Father and the Son. Origen does not set out to have lacunae in his theology or to enable beliefs like Arius' own. But, in arguing against the Monarchians and the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians, his theology makes concessions in terms of Christ's divinity and his unity with the Father.

Origen's Trinitarian theology focuses on distinguishing the Father and the Son from each other for eternity, preventing people from claiming that there was a time when the Father was not a father. This develops as a response to the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians who claimed that the Son does not exist separate from the Father until the start of creation. In distinguishing the Father from the Son so much, however, Origen does not completely secure the unity of the Godhead. Instead, Origen claims that the Father and the Son are united because they share the same nature and because the Son resembles the Father as his image. This, however, leaves an opening for Arius to claim that the Son is the image of the Father and shares his nature by grace, but is not divine like that Father. This claim takes on additional meaning when considering Origen's belief

[114] Alexander Roberts et al., 4:283.
[115] Alexander Roberts et al., 4:283.

that the Son only derives his power from God, and does not have it by nature. This idea resembles Arius' own belief that the Son is made divine through the Father's will, and as such has a lesser divinity than the Father. Essentially, Origen's theology fails to eliminate the possibility of claiming that the Son is a creature in an attempt to distinguish between the Father and the Son.

Origen's conception of the human and divine natures of Christ aids the understanding of the Son as creaturely. While Origen consistently ascribes divine characteristics to Christ, he also ascribes to him a human soul that plays an important part in his incarnation. Since this soul is human and Origen freely admits that it has the human characteristic of being able to choose good and evil, he opens the possibility to say that Christ is fully human, but has a special relationship with God, although lacking divinity. In this instance, Christ has been given special divine characteristics, such as his goodness and the miracles he performs, but they are only given by the Father's will, not through the Son's nature. As such, Christ would merely be another prophet or even an angel that has taken on flesh. This resembles Origen's description of the Son as deriving his power from the Father and Arius' description of the Son receiving divine traits from the Father.

Origen's theology attempts to distinguish between the Father and the Son throughout eternity in response to the Monarchians and the *Logos* theologians, but he opens the possibility to see the Son as a creature in his attempt to distinguish the Father from the Son. Arius will later inherit this theology—Origen may be the tradition Arius appeals to when claiming that he teaches only what he has been taught—and take it the next step by clearly claiming that the Son is a creature.

4. Conclusion

Arius, like many before him, was attempting to distinguish between the Father and the Son, while continuing to preserve the oneness of God. In doing so, he determines that the Father and the Son cannot both be God—otherwise there would be two gods—and instead believes that the Son is created as a creature and then gifted with divine characteristics. He, however, exists as a lesser divinity than God the Father. Arius' beliefs draw upon the work of Origen before him, although with slight modifications, to respond to a theological background in Alexandria affected by the Monarchians and the Two-Stage *Logos* theologians. Additionally, later theologians will utilize Arius' works about the Son to claim that the Holy Spirit is a creature, in an attempt to distinguish more between the Son and the Spirit. To put the matter in slogan-like summary, a long theological history—which consistently wavers between affirming God's unity and affirming God's divinity—informs the belief that both the Holy Spirit and the Son are creatures.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology shares much the same theological history as Arianism, with known evidence of Angelomorphic Pneumatology in the same city where Arianism developed. These same theologies—including Arianism—both developed around and affected the future development and the eventual decline of Angelomorphic Pneumatology.

Chapter 3: The Decline of These Early Christian Theologies[116]

Owing to Angelomorphic Pneumatology's interactions with, and similarities to, Arianism, as well with other theologies of its time—like Two-Stage *Logos* theology—it became, in the wake of the Arian crisis, the subject of debate within the early Church. Theologians adapt Angelomorphic Pneumatology, as they did Two-Stage *Logos* theology, in attempts to distinguish more between the Son and Holy Spirit, which lead to the belief that the Holy Spirit is a creature while the Son is divine. This mirrors Arius' thoughts about the Son as he attempts to distinguish between the Father and Son more. Consonant with this, Angelomorphic Pneumatology changed into beliefs similar to those of the Pneumatomachians, which post-Nicene theologians argue against, leading to the ultimate decline of Angelomorphic Pneumatology. Angelomorphic Pneumatology disappeared owing to its association and shared history with other potential "heretical" theologies, like Arianism. Additionally, as theology about the Holy Spirit developed and more roles were assigned to it, Angelomorphic Pneumatology became less necessary as the Spirit's activity was increasingly distinguished it from Christ.

I want now to explore the development of Angelomorphic Pneumatology in relation to the other theologies of this time, showing how it changes into the belief that the Holy Spirit is an angel, instead of the Holy Spirit taking the form of angels. I will proceed first by exploring Angelomorphic Pneumatology in comparison to Two-Stage

[116] This chapter does not utilize as many sources as previous chapters since it is primarily bringing together the information presented in previous chapters. Original sources are still cited when possible, but this chapter primarily consists of overlying arguments and themes presented in the first two chapters. Many section headlines overlap between the chapters so that it is easily possible to return to a previous chapter and see the overlying theme from a section before examining that section in greater depth in this chapter. For example, the section in chapter 2 labeled "Two-Stage *Logos* Theologians" will present the background argument for the section in chapter 3 labeled Two-"Stage *Logos* Theology and Monarchianism."

Logos theology. I want to focus on how both respond to Monarchianism by distinguishing the members of the Godhead based upon their activities and relationship to each other. Next, I will compare Angelomorphic Pneumatology with Origen, focusing on their understanding of God as always one and more than one in a divine multiplicity and unity. This comparison will set up the next part in which I will explore how Angelomorphic Pneumatology develops into Pneumatomachianism in the same way Two-Stage *Logos* theology and Origen developed into Arianism. I will then briefly examine the arguments against the Pneumatomachians and how those arguments also address Angelomorphic Pneumatology, before concluding with a discussion of the remnants of Angelomorphic Pneumatology in the post-Constantinopolitan/Chalcedon Church.

1. Two-Stage *Logos* Theology and Monarchianism

Angelomorphic Pneumatology is common around the same time that Two-Stage *Logos* theology emerges in the early Church. Several theologians in the mid-second century endorse one (and potentially both) of these theologies as a response to Monarchianism as they both separate members of the Trinity based on their relationships to each other and emphasize the unity of God, through a divine multiplicity-unity.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology addresses the problem of Monarchianism in a similar manner to Two-Stage *Logos* theology: by emphasizing the relationship between different members of the Trinity. By describing a relationship between members of the Trinity, these theologies claim that the *hypostases* are separate entities that have specific jobs and times when they are active, in connection with the other members of the Trinity.

For example, Two-Stage *Logos* theology emphasizes the relationship between the Father and the Son by describing the emergence of the Son from the Father in the act of creation (Theophilus, *Autol* 2.22).[117] The Son's emergence establishes him as a separate being who has his own function in the acts of Creation, although he continues to work with the Father (Theophilus, *Autol* 2.22).[118] Thus, they describe two *hypostases* working in the same moment excluding the possibility of Monarchianism. Angelomorphic Pneumatology mirrors this pattern in considering the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology argues against Monarchianism just as Two-Stage *Logos* theology does, by considering the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Son. Within Angelomorphic Pneumatology, the Holy Spirit acts as a messenger for the Son and the Father through a hierarchy of angels, during which the Holy Spirit takes the form of an angel (Clement, *Ecl.* 51).[119] The Son at the same times passes messages to the Holy Spirit and continues in his other functions as ruler and creator alongside the Father (Clement, *Strom.* 7.2).[120] Thus, both *hypostases* are active within the same context, although acting in different ways just as Two-Stage *Logos* theology describes the Father and Son. Through these descriptions both theologies establish a relationship between two members of the Trinity that enables the theologians to claim them as separate *hypostasis*.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology and Two-Stage *Logos* theology also rely on an understanding of divine multiplicity and simplicity to conserve the unity of the Godhead despite the *hypostases*' separate roles in interacting with the world. Two-Stage *Logos*

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[117] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:103.
[118] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:103.
[119] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 8:49.
[120] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:524.

theology explains this through a two-stage development of the Son in which he is part of the Father before time and separate from the Father once creation starts (Theophilus, *Autol* 2.22).[121] Angelomorphic Pneumatology has a slightly more complicated system in which the Son expresses the unity of the *Logos* while the Holy Spirit and the *protoctists* express the multiplicity of the *Logos* (Clement, *Strom.* 4.25).[122] This pattern resembles Origen's understanding of the Godhead more than Two-Stage *Logos* theology (and will be explored in greater depth in the next section); however, it is important to note at this point that both Two-Stage *Logos* theology and Angelomorphic Pneumatology utilize a form of divine multiplicity and unity to describe the Godhead as they argue against Monarchianism.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology and Two-Stage Logos theology emerged and became popular about the same time that theologians attempted to address the problem of Monarchianism. They both rely on describing the relationships and activities within the Godhead to demonstrate the multiplicity of God. Angelomorphic Pneumatology, however, differs in its understanding of unity within the Godhead, resembling Origen's understanding of God as always one and more than one. It is, however, possible that in an unknown/unstudied form of Angelomorphic Pneumatology divine multiplicity and unity resembles Two-Stage *Logos* theology before it developed further to be more like Origen. Either way, Angelomorphic Pneumatology addresses the issue of Monarchianism, and in its understanding of divine unity, may also address the issue of Two-Stage *Logos* Theology.

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[121] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:103.
[122] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:438; Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 80.

2. Origen

Angelomorphic Pneumatology and Origen both respond to Monarchian and Two-Stage *Logos* beliefs by attempting to further distinguish further between the members of the Trinity based upon their activity in the world, while maintaining their unity as one being throughout time. Although Origen and Angelomorphic Pneumatology focus on different members of the Trinity, the emphasis in both is on the fact that God is both one and more than one at the same time. Origen does this by describing Christ's relationship with the Father, while Angelomorphic Pneumatology describes a similar relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology separates the Son and the Holy Spirit throughout eternity, just as Origen separates the Father and the Son. Both theologies establish the *hypostases* as separate based upon their activity or characteristics. Origen separates the Father and Son by ascribing elements of humanity to Christ, which necessitate him as a different *hypostasis* from the Father. For instance, Christ has the possibility to choose between good and evil, although he will always choose good (Origen, *PA* 2.6.5).[123] Angelomorphic Pneumatology describes the Holy Spirit in a similar fashion, although it associates it with angels instead of humanity. We can see this trend in the Holy Spirit's role as a messenger to the world (similar to angels) and how the Holy Spirit will even take the form of certain angels during its interaction with the world (Clement, *Ecl*. 51).[124] The Holy Spirit's relationship with the angels—especially the *protoctists*—separates it from the person of Christ who is the perfect image of the Father and does not take angelic

[123] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 4:283.
[124] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 8:49.

form. Thus, both Origen and Angelomorphic Pneumatology distinguish between members of the Trinity by associating them with other beings, either humans or angels.

In both instances, however, neither Origen nor Angelomorphic Pneumatology claim that Christ is only human or that the Holy Spirit is an angel. Instead, both merely associate the activity of Christ and the Holy Spirit with creatures in order to separate them from the Father. Both Christ and the Holy Spirit remain divine in Origen and Angelomorphic Pneumatology. The primarily difference, which the theologians are using to distinguish them from the Father, is their activity in the world.

Despite associating the different *hypostases* with other beings to distinguish them from each other, both Origen and Angelomorphic Pneumatology ensure the divinity of the Godhead through their arguments for unity. Origen argues that the Son has the same nature as the Father and is divine through the Father's will (Origen, *PA* 1.2.7).[125] Since they share the same nature, they are both divine and they are one being. Angelomorphic Pneumatology makes a similar argument by associating the Son and the Holy Spirit with the *Logos* in a Binitarian formula. As I argued earlier, the *Logos* incorporates both the Holy Spirit and the Son in Clement of Alexandria (the best example of Angelomorphic Pneumatology) where the Holy Spirit expresses the multiplicity of the *Logos* (as the seven angels) and the Son expresses the unity of the *Logos*.[126] In consequence of this, both the Holy Spirit and the Son have the same nature in the *Logos* and thus are unified. This resembles Origen's own thoughts about how the Father and Son can be one since

[125] Alexander Roberts et al., 8:248.
[126] Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, 80.

both draw upon the idea of a shared substance or being to explain the unity of multiple persons.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology resembles both Two-Stage *Logos* theology and Origen in how it relates to the members of the Godhead and secures their unity. It does so because Angelomorphic Pneumatology shares the same theological history as Two-Stage *Logos* theology and Origen: a need to disprove Monarchianism. At the same time, however, Origen, Two-Stage *Logos* theology, and Angelomorphic Pneumatology share the same theological future. They all have weaknesses that are built upon by Arius, the Pneumatomachians, and others as they attempt to further distinguish between the members of the Godhead by claiming one or more of them as creatures themselves.

3. The Pneumatomachians

I now turn to explore Angelomorphic Pneumatology's final development into Pneumatomachianism, which became the target of several Ecumenical Councils, especially Constantinople I. To begin, I will first explore the weaknesses in Angelomorphic Pneumatology that opens the possibility for the Pneumatomachians. Following this, I will look at several writings against the Pneumatomachians and how they lead to the decline of Pneumatomachianism and by extension Angelomorphic Pneumatology.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology and Pneumatomachianism

Angelomorphic Pneumatology's association of the Holy Spirit with angelic beings—even the *protoctists*—allows for later generations to claim that the Holy Spirit is merely an angel or a group of angels. Angelomorphic Pneumatology avoids this through

two clear distinctions: the Holy Spirit takes the form of an angel and the Holy Spirit/*protoctists* are the *Logos*' expression of multiplicity and thus divine.[127] The Pneumatomachians, however, can easily set aside these two distinctions as they complicate our understanding of God more than simplify it. While it may make sense that humans cannot see the Holy Spirit except when it appears as an angel, this understanding would make more sense if the Holy Spirit is an angel. If the only way humans can describe the Spirit is by claiming it looks like an angel, then it is hard to ascribe divinity to it. Additionally, the understanding of the *Logos* as both the Son and the Spirit in united and multiple forms complicates our understanding of who the *Logos* is and how it relates to the person of Christ. It instead makes more sense to define the Son/*Logos* as one thing and the Spirit as another. Once you separate the Spirit and *Logos*, however, it is hard to claim the Spirit's divinity through association with the *Logos*.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology also allows for later theologians to describe the Holy Spirit as an angel through its description of the work and importance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's primary role described throughout Clement's understanding of Angelomorphic Pneumatology is that of messenger to the celestial hierarchy (Clement, *Paed*. 2.1; 2.2).[128] While the Holy Spirit/*protoctists* only deliver messages to the archangels—who then pass the message on to lower angels and humans—the Holy Spirit is still a messenger, which is often the role designated only to angels in the celestial hierarchy. Additionally, the Holy Spirit is described as lower than the Son in the celestial hierarchy. We can see this trend since the Son receives the message straight from God,

[127] See pp. 14-19
[128] Alexander Roberts et al., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 1994, 2:239, 245.

before passing it onto the Spirit and on to the angels (Clement, *Strom.* 7.2).[129] Additionally, the *protoctists*—an expression of the Spirit—constantly contemplate the Face of God (i.e. the Son), thus giving him worship implying that he is greater than themselves (Clement, *Exc*. 10).[130] This is a common theme among early theologians where theologians often describe the Father as the greatest of the Godhead, followed by the Son, and then the Holy Spirit.[131] Due to the other roles of the Holy Spirit in Angelomorphic Pneumatology, however, this hierarchy of the Trinity can cause people to describe the Holy Spirit as only an angel.

Even though Angelomorphic Pneumatology semi-resembles Pneumatomachianism—at times it is difficult to distinguish them due to how both associate the Holy Spirit with angels—the Pneumatomachians have a great interest in separating themselves from Angelomorphic Pneumatology: the continuous battle against Monarchianism. Angelomorphic Pneumatology does separate the members of the Godhead to a certain degree—the Father is clearly separate from the Son and the Holy Spirit and it is possible to distinguish between the Son and the Holy Spirit based on their relationship of unity and multiplicity. This, however, falls short of defining the persons of the Trinity as separate *hypostases*; instead, there are still Monarchian leanings in defining the Son and the Holy Spirit as different manifestations of the *Logos*. As such, the Pneumatomachians adapt Angelomorphic Pneumatology by attempting to separate the Son and the Spirit even more. They do this through the structure of Angelomorphic Pneumatology itself: they more closely associate the Holy Spirit with angels. The Holy

[129] Alexander Roberts et al., 2:524.
[130] Theodotus, *The Excerpta Ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria*, 49.
[131] See Origen, *PA* 1.3.5 or Justin Martyr, *Apol*. 1.13 for examples.

Spirit not only takes the form of an angel, but also has an angelic nature. This fully distinguishes between the Son and the Spirit since the Spirit is no longer considered divine, while the Son remains divine alongside the Father.

The Fight Against Pneumatomachianism

The Pneumatomachian Controversy becomes an important issue at the Council of Constantinople in 381, with the Cappadocian Fathers voicing concern about the belief that the Holy Spirit is an angel. These theologians outlined their arguments against the Pneumatomachians in several letters and theological treatises. Many of these theologians—particularly the Cappadocians and Nicetas—argue against the Pneumatomachians by appealing to the doctrine of inseparable operations.

Basil of Caesarea argues that the works of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are so intertwined and similar that they must have the same nature. He describes their unified act in creating, in which all are necessarily for creation to be perfect: the Father initiates creation, the Son creates, and the Holy Spirit perfects (Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 16.38).[132] During this description, Basil describes the creation of the angels themselves. Through this, he not only joins the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, but he also separates the Holy Spirit from the angels. In his description, he claims that angels are not holy through their own power (Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 16.38).[133] Instead, they receive their holiness from the Holy Spirit, who is holy in-and-of-itself. Consequently, the Holy

[132] Saint Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press "Popular Patristics" Series ; No. 42. (Uri) Http://Id.Loc.Gov/Authorities/Names/N2001106048 (Uri) Http://Viaf.Org/Viaf/SourceID/LC|n2001106048 (Uri) /Resolver/Wikidata/Lc/N2001106048 (Crestwood, N.Y.: StVladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 71.
[133] Basil, 71.

Spirit cannot be an angel, but rather a higher, more holy being. This argument resembles the arguments that we have already seen from Irenaeus and Theophilus of Antioch.

An interesting characteristic of the Pneumatomachians that Athanasius points out—and argues against—is their belief that the Holy Spirit is not divine, while affirming that the Son is divine. Athanasius appears to be confounded by their affirmation of the one and not the other (Athanasius, *Epistle* 1.2).[134] Angelomorphic Pneumatology, however, answers why the Pneumatomachians accept the one and not the other. The Pneumatomachians are working within the context of Angelomorphic Pneumatology in which—like Arius with Origen—they are attempting to further separate the members of the Trinity so that they are more distinguishable from each other due to the challenge of Monarchianism. With this goal in mind, it makes sense that the Pneumatomachians would maintain Christ's divinity—which was already the emerging practice following Nicaea in 325—while claiming the Holy Spirit is merely an angel. Thus, by maintaining Christ's divinity and claiming the Holy Spirit as a creature, they are able to distinguish between the two based upon their divinity. It is important to emphasize that Pneumatomachianism develops out of Angelomorphic Pneumatology as much as it develops out of Arianism.

The Fall of Angelomorphic Pneumatology

The fall of Angelomorphic Pneumatology has two stages. First, theologians move away from Angelomorphic Pneumatology as it fails to distinguish completely between the Son and the Spirit. Second, Pneumatomachianism develops to respond to this

[134] Saint Athanasius, *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 62.

weakness, which in turn becomes a larger problem within the Church. Since, Angelomorphic Pneumatology helps to set the groundwork for Pneumatomachianism, the Church leaves it behind in an attempt to distance itself from Pneumatomachian belief. However, while the Cappadocian argument of inseparable operations addresses the Pneumatomachians, it does not fully address Angelomorphic Pneumatology.

Since, in Angelomorphic Pneumatology, the Holy Spirit only takes the form of an angel when interacting with the world, and is still divine by nature, it is possible to affirm Angelomorphic Pneumatology and inseparable operations. Therefore, there must be another weakness in Angelomorphic Pneumatology that prevents the Church from embracing it while also rejecting the Pneumatomachians. This weakness lies in the activity of the Holy Spirit.

Angelomorphic Pneumatology primarily describes the activity of the Holy Spirit as interacting with the world by delivering messages. This role requires the Holy Spirit to be constantly in relation with humanity in a physical form. It makes sense that humans start to ascribe a physical form to the Holy Spirit: that of an angel. As the Pneumatology of the Church developed, however, theologians started to ascribe more roles to the Holy Spirit outside of carrying messages. For example, Basil emphasizes the Holy Spirits activity in sanctification, where the Holy Spirit works either outwardly or inwardly to help perfect people (Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 16.38).[135] This role does not require humans to see the Holy Spirit, and so it does not require a physical form. Additionally, Gregory of Nyssa—as had several before him, including Irenaeus—highlights the role of

[135] Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 71.

the Holy Spirit in creation (Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Holy Spirit*).[136] This is another activity in which the Holy Spirit does not need a physical form, as it would when communicating with humanity. Due to the increased activity of the Holy Spirit in the theology of the Cappadocians and others, it is no longer necessary always to consider the Holy Spirit as taking a form. As such, Angelomorphic Pneumatology became less popular, not because the Church was actively opposing it (which explains why there are no known documents condemning Angelomorphic Pneumatology), but because communicating with humans became such a small part of the Holy Spirit's activity.

4. The Remnants of Angelomorphic Pneumatology

Despite Angelomorphic Pneumatology's transformation into Pneumatomachianism and the arguments that lead to its decline in the early Church, elements of Angelomorphic Pneumatology remain in the aftermath of the Church Councils. These remnants appear in several important theologians, including some that participate in the argument against Pneumatomachianism.

The most notable of these remnants is the continued imagery associated with the seven angels or thinking of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, both inspired by Isaiah 11.1-3. One of the clearest examples of this comes from Augustine himself. During his commentary on the Psalms, Augustine claims that the Holy Spirit has a seven-fold operation and that this is spoken of in the imagery of seven spirits at times, even though there is only one Spirit (Augustine, *Comm. on the Psalms* 150). Ambrose, Augustine's teacher, even writes a letter about the importance of the number seven in relation to the

[136] Philip Schaff, Saint Augustine, and Saint John Chrysostom, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. First Series*, vol. 5 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 320.

Holy Spirit (Ambrose, *Letters* 50).[137] Other theologians also continue to cite the importance of the number seven with the Holy Spirit.

It seems odd that this tradition from Angelomorphic Pneumatology should survive in the early Church, especially since it becomes associated with a so-called "heresy", and odd that it does continue as a theme today. This theme may only continue in the early Church owing to the prevalence of scriptural evidence in support of the number seven in association with the Holy Spirit. For example, scripture connects the number seven with the Holy Spirit in both Isaiah and in Revelation (Isaiah 11.1-3; Revelation 1.4; 3.1; 4.5; 5.6). Additionally, the most common references to the Holy Spirit as being seven-fold come from commentaries on these verses.

The commentaries on Revelation offer the best perspective on Angelomorphic Pneumatology following the Ecumenical Councils since Revelation is the only instance of Angelomorphic Pneumatology that survives in popularity throughout history (aside from Isaiah, which is not as clear a reference to Angelomorphic Pneumatology as Revelation). The commentaries on Revelation also reveal different opinions about who the seven spirits are in the beginning of Revelation, with many opinions grouped by time period.

Victorinus of Petvium offers the earliest available commentary on Revelation. Writing during the late-third century, Victorinus' writings on Revelation are before the Ecumenical Councils. As such, it is appropriate that Victorinus does not clarify who the seven spirits are, often switching between referring to them as the seven archangels and

[137] Saint Ambrose, *Letters.*, Fathers of the Church ; v. 26 (New York]: Fathers of the Church, Inc, 1954), 264–72.

as the Holy Spirit—a move resembling Angelomorphic Pneumatology. For example, in his commentary on chapter one, Victorinus claims that the seven spirits are the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit (Victorinus, *Comm. on the Apocalypse* 1.6).[138] Later, in a similar reference, Victorinus refers to the number seven as representing seven archangels that Christ sends out (Victorinus, *Comm. on the Apocalypse* 8.1).[139] This section, however, is unclear as to the identity of the seven since in the following section Victorinus also refers to them as the seven-fold Holy Spirit (Victorinus, *Comm. on the Apocalypse* 8.2).[140] In the earliest commentary on Revelation we have there remains much confusion discerning between the activity of the Holy Spirit and angels.

A slightly later writer—Andrew of Caesarea who writes in the mid-sixth century—offers a less confused understanding of the seven spirits. Andrew claims in different spots that the seven spirits could either be seven archangels or the seven-fold Holy Spirit. He claims in his commentary on chapter one that "it is possible" to see the seven spirits as the seven angels with governance over the churches, but that the phrasing "may" refer to the Holy Spirit. He, however, does not take a position on which of the two offers the best interpretation (Andrew of Caesarea, *Comm. on the Apocalypse* 1.4).[141] Instead, he offers two explanations that may have been popular at this time,

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[138] William C. Weinrich, *Latin Commentaries on Revelation*, Ancient Christian Texts. (Uri) Http://Id.Loc.Gov/Authorities/Names/No2009076049 (Uri) Http://Viaf.Org/Viaf/SourceID/LC|no2009076049 (Uri) Https://Open-Na.Hosted.Exlibrisgroup.Com/Resolver/Wikidata/Lc/No2009076049 (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011), 3.

[139] Weinrich, 12.

[140] Weinrich, 12.

[141] William C Weinrich translator writer of introduction and Thomas C. Oden editor, *Greek commentaries on Revelation*, Ancient Christian texts. (uri) http://id.loc.gov/authorities/names/no2009076049 (uri) http://viaf.org/viaf/sourceID/LC|no2009076049 (uri) https://open-na.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/resolver/wikidata/lc/no2009076049 (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2011), 115.

demonstrating that people are distinguishing between the Holy Spirit and angels, although still semi-confused as to their roles.

Later authors, including the Venerable Bede, all explain the "seven spirits" language as a reference to the seven-fold Holy Spirit.[142] This makes sense as Angelomorphic Pneumatology becomes lost in history and no longer has as much influence on theologians. Today, even the number seven or the idea of a seven-fold Holy Spirit is not common. This number may have disappeared over time as other aspects of the Holy Spirit were emphasized, while remaining an important element in the early Church as they struggled to learn more about Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

While these may be the few surviving remnants of Angelomorphic Pneumatology in the official statements of the Church (Catholic or Protestant), Angelomorphic Pneumatology most likely remains as common today as it did at the time of Clement. This is a trend we see reflected today from all the ancient "heresies." For example, there are many people in the Church today who believe that Jesus was only human. In this same way, there are people who believe that the Holy Spirit (or Christ) appears to us as an angel. For example, many connect the angels that appear to Abraham before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as the Trinity in angelic form. As with the early Christians, it is one of their only ways to describe the Holy Spirit. While this is not as advanced as Clement's theological hierarchy and "heptad of the Spirit," it is clear that Angelomorphic Pneumatology will never fully fall, but instead remain as Christians attempt to explain their experiences and their inherited theology.

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[142] See the Venerable Bede, *Exposition on the Apocalypse*; Apringius of Beja, *Explanation of the Revelation*; Caesarius of Arles, *Expostion on the Apocalypse*.

5. Conclusion

Angelomorphic Pneumatology developed alongside Two-Stage *Logos* theology and Origen as a response to Monarchianism. These theologies attempted to separate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from one another to show how they are not the same being acting under a different name. Through this movement, however, a door was opened to say that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not God, but rather, only special creatures. The Pneumatomachians represented this change from Angelomorphic Pneumatology in the same way Arius represented this transition from Origen in conversation about the Son. As such, people associated Angelomorphic Pneumatology with the history of the Pneumatomachians and Arius and moved away from it to prevent the possibility of saying the Holy Spirit is an angel. Despite the Councils arguments against the Pneumatomachians, some aspects of Angelomorphic Pneumatology remained ingrained in the theology of the early Christians without the emphasis on the Holy Spirit as an angel.

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