The Son of God and the Angelomorphic Holy Spirit:
A Rereading of the *Shepherd's* Christology*

by Bogdan G. Bucur

(Marquette University, Dept. of Theology, P.O. Box 1881 · Milwaukee, Wis. 53201-1881, USA)

1. Introduction

The *Shepherd of Hermas*[1] is "one of the most enigmatic writings to have come down to us from Christian antiquity"; it "bristles with problems, both literary and theological."[2] From a doctrinal point of view, it is puzzling that this text never scandalized its contemporaries or later Orthodoxy.[3] Indeed, if the Christology of this writing "is what most interpreters say it is … it is strange that this immensely popular document of the early church was never condemned for Christological heresy."[4]

New insights into the theology of the *Shepherd* may be gained by taking a new look at this text's use of the term πνεῦμα. I am here indebted to John R. Levison, whose seminal study on "The Angelic Spirit in Early Judaism" documented the widespread use of "spirit" to designate an angelic presence in post-

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* This essay owes much to the lively discussions about the *Shepherd of Hermas* held in and out of classroom with Dr. Michel René Barnes, Dr. Silviu Bunta, and Dr. Andrei Orlov.

[1] I will be using the latest critical edition of the *Shepherd*: M. Leutzsch, Papiasfragmente. Hirt des Hermas, Darmstadt 1998. For a detailed presentation of its merits in comparison to the older editions of Joly and Whittaker, see G. Lusini, Nouvelles recherches sur le texte du Pasteur d'Hermas, Apocrypha 12 (2001) 79–97. The English translation is taken from C. Osiek, Shepherd of Hermas (Hermeneia) Minneapolis, Minn. 1999, References to the text of the *Shepherd* follow the old three-number system of citation, which allows the reader to know whether the quoted passage belongs to the visions, mandates or similitudes.

[2] L.W. Barnard, The Shepherd of Hermas in Recent Study, HeyJ 9 (1968) 29–36, here 29; W. Coleborne, A Linguistic Approach to the Problem of Structure and Composition of the Shepherd of Hermas, Colloquium 3 (1969) 133–142, here 133.

[3] For a list of mostly positive references to the *Shepherd*, ranging from the second century to the late middle ages, see A. v. Harnack, Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius I/1, Leipzig 1958 (1893), 51–58, and N. Brox, Der Hirt des Hermas (KAV 7) Göttingen 1991, 55–71.

[4] Osiek, Shepherd (see n. 1), 180a. Similarly, Brox (Hirt [see n. 3], 328): "Wie H. solche Äusserungen in Rom publizieren konnte …, bleibt ein Geheimnis."

exilic Judaism.[5] In the conclusion of his article, Levison challenged the scholarly community to revisit the Fourth Gospel, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and apply his findings to these and similar texts of the early common era. The following pages attempt to take up the challenge. I argue that, within a theological framework of pronounced binitarian character,[6] the *Shepherd of Hermas* illustrates a complex interaction between the phenomenon discussed by Levison ("spirit" designating angelic/demonic beings), Spirit Christology,[7] and an "angelomorphic" representation of the Holy Spirit.

In submitting to the current scholarly consensus, I assume that the *Shepherd of Hermas* is a unitary text from the early decades of the second century.[8]

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[5] J.R. Levison, The Angelic Spirit in Early Judaism, SBL.SP 34 (1995) 464–493. See also his The Prophetic Spirit as an Angel According to Philo, HThR 88 (1995) 189–207, and The Spirit in First Century Judaism (AGJU 29) Leiden et alii 1997. For a brief survey of various Jewish and early Christian materials, including the Shepherd, which display a phenomenon that the author calls "angelomorphic pneumatology", see C. Gieschen, Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence (AGJU 42) Leiden/Boston 1998, 114–119,

[6] The term "binitarian" points to a bifurcation of the divinity (as opposed to "unitarian"), while preserving a monotheistic worldview ("binitarian monotheism", as opposed to "dualism"). The Jewish traditions investigated by A. Segal (Two Powers In Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism, Leiden 1977) are examples of binitarianism; one may find such "binitarian" elements echoed in the religious philosophies of Philo and Numenius.

[7] For the purpose of this essay, the term "Spirit Christology" refers to the use of "spirit" language to designate Christ – whether in reference to his divinity as opposed to his humanity, or as a personal title. This distinction is drawn, for instance, by M. Simonetti (Note di cristologia pneumatica, Aug. 12 [1972] 201–232, esp. 202–203). I find it unnecessary for the present investigation, especially since the problems involved in the procedure are quite evident to Simonetti himself: the distinction did not present itself as such to patristic authors, so that even in cases that appear certain to the modern scholar, there remains a doubt with respect to the precise meaning that patristic authors ascribe to the term πνεῦμα (Note, 209).

[8] R. Joly seems to have provided the decisive refutation of the most compelling thesis of multiple authorship. See S. Giet, Hermas et les Pasteurs: les trois auteurs du Pasteur d'Hermas, Paris, 1963, and, in response, R. Joly, Hermas et le Pasteur, VigChr 21 (1967) 201–218; Le milieu complexe du Pasteur d'Hermas, ANRW 2/27/1 (1993) 524–551. The thesis of multiple authorship, epitomized in W. Coleborne's proposal to distinguish seven sections of the work, and six authors, all written before the end of the first century (The Shepherd of Hermas: A Case for Multiple Authorship and Some Implications, StPatr 10 = TU 107 [1970] 65–70) has been discarded today in favor of more attentive consideration of the *Shepherd's* stylistic particuliarities. See the firm conclusion of Brox, Hirt (see n. 3), 32–33. Osiek has argued convincingly that the *Shepherd's* "loose structure" is the result of the constant reshaping of the text in the course of oral proclamation (Shepherd [see n. 1], 13a.15b). This new approach to the text has immediate implications for the problem of dating. While the scholarly consensus seems to have settled around the year

In the pages to follow I will first discuss the *Shepherd*'s use of πνεῦμα for angelic entities, then the use of πνεῦμα for the Son of God, and finally propose a rereading of the Fifth Similitude, the ultimate test-case for any theory on the *Shepherd*'s views on angels and spirits.

2. *Πνεῦμα as an Angelic Being*

The use of πνεῦμα to designate angelic beings occurs in several passages of the *Shepherd*.

a) Mand. 11 discusses at length the action of the inspiring agent upon the Christian prophet, the complex relationship between the prophet and his audience, and the distinction between true and false prophets. Up to Mand. 11,9, the text uses only "spirit" language, giving advice about how to discriminate between the divine spirit and the earthly spirit, and describing their respective activities in the authentic and, respectively, the false prophet. Then, in Mand. 11,9, the text uses "angel" for the very same reality that it had described as an indwelling "spirit."[9] The interchangeability of "spirit" and "angel" should not surprise us, since the phenomenon was present in the Hebrew Bible, the LXX and various authors of the Alexandrian diaspora, in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament.[10] Reading the *Shepherd of Hermas*

140, with a tendency towards the earlier part of the second century (Osiek, Shepherd [see n. 1], 2 n. 13; for a survey of opinions, see Brox, Hirt [see n. 3], 22–25), Osiek concludes on "an expanded duration of time beginning perhaps from the very last years of the first century, but stretching through most of the first half of the second century" (Shepherd, 20b). Leutzsch (Einleitung [see n. 1], 137) proposes the interval 90–130. A late first-century date of 80–100 is hypothesized by J.C. Wilson, Toward a Reassessment of the Shepherd of Hermas: Its Date and Pneumatology, Lewiston, N.Y. 1993, 60. However, this proposal stands on shaky ground, since the considerations on which it is based are themselves debated issues: the early development of monarchic episcopate in Rome, the *Shepherd*'s relationship to Hebrews (and implicitly, the dating of Hebrews), and the existence of certain echoes of persecutions in the text.

[9] "So when the person who has the spirit of God enter the assembly of just men … then the angel of the prophetic spirit that rests upon that person (ὁ κείμενος ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ) fills the person, who, being filled with the holy spirit speaks to the whole crowd as the Lord wishes" (Mand. 11,9). The phrase ὁ κείμενος ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ has been translated in various other ways: "qui est près de lui" (Joly); "in charge of him" (Reiling, Gieschen); "der bei ihm ist" (Brox). See the very helpful survey and discussion in Wilson, Reassessment (see n. 8), 97.

[10] Cf. the works by J.R. Levison, referred to above (see n. 5); A.E. Sekki, The Meaning of Ruach at Qumran (SBLDS 110), Atlanta, GA 1989, 145–171. Aside from the designation of evil angels as (impure) "spirits", the equivalence of "spirit" and "angel" is implicit in Heb 1,14 (angels are "ministering spirits"), Heb 12,9 ("Father of spirits"), and Acts 8,26.29,39, where the text seems to alternate between "angel of the Lord", "spirit", and, "spirit of the Lord."

in light of Jewish traditions about the "angelic spirit" makes good sense of the text, and eliminates the need for interpretative acrobatics.[11]

As for the "angel of the prophetic spirit", a fruitful comparison can be made with "the angel of the Holy Spirit" in Mart.Ascen.Isa. and, by analogy with the "angel of penitence" in Vis. 5,7, with "the angel presiding over genuine visions" in 2 Bar and 3 Bar.[12] Interestingly, all these texts refer to an angelic being. Mart.Ascen.Isa. (9,36; 11,4) identifies the angel of the Holy Spirit with the "angel of the Lord" of Matth 1,20.24; 2Bar refers to Ramiel; 3Bar to Phamael. This expression may, therefore, be included in Levison's category "angelic spirit."[13]

b) There exists a structural similarity between Mand. 5 and 6: both make certain statements of spiritual and psychological dualism, continue with a rather detailed symptomatology and prognosis for each alternative, and conclude with an exhortation to choose the good. At the level of vocabulary, however, Mand. 5 uses "spirit", while Mand. 6 has "angel."[14] The parallelism is particularly notable between "the spirit of righteousness" in 5,2,7, and "the

[11] H. Opitz (Ursprünge frühkatholischer Pneumatologie [Berlin 1960] 113), followed by Brox (Hirt [see n. 3], 257, n. 10), proposes the following interpretation: the "abstract fact of prophecy" is personified as "prophetic spirit"; when the phenomenon of prophecy occurs (described as coming of the prophetic spirit), the angel "fills" the prophet. Wilson (Reassessment [see n. 8], 98–101) discards the possibility of an appositional genitive ("the angel who is the prophetic spirit") and interprets "angel" and "spirit" as two real and separate beings: "there is one prophetic spirit, but many angels under his charge … The function of the angel of the prophetic spirit … is to fill the man who has the divine spirit with the Holy Spirit so that he many [sic] prophesy" (98–99). This reading leads Wilson to a discussion about the possibility that the *Shepherd* may be fusing the concepts of "momentary possession" and "constant possession", etc.

[12] Mart.Ascen.Isa. 7,23; 8,12; 9,36.39.40; 11,4; 2 Bar. 55,3; 3 Bar 11,7. Note the expression to "the angel of the holy spirit who is upon you" in Mart.Ascen.Isa. 9,36 and the use of μετά in Mand. 6,2,1, ἐν in 6,2,5, and ἐπί in 11.9, to designate the action of the angelic spirit. J. Reiling (Hermas and Christian Prophecy: A Study of the Eleventh Mandate [NT.S 37] Leiden 1973, 106) rejects this equation arguing that the *Shepherd* does not mention an angel "of prophecy", but rather "of the prophetic spirit."

[13] C. Gieschen is right in affirming that "this angel is much more than another angel with a specific function", and that he is "closely linked with 'the Spirit'" (Angelomorphic Christology [see n. 5], 218). His solution, however (the "angel of the prophetic spirit" as an angelomorphic manifestation of the Spirit), does not take into account the *Shepherd of Hermas'* use of "spirit" for both angels and the supreme angel, Christ. I will return to this problem later in the paper.

[14] Each person is attended by two spirits (Mand. 5,1,4) or angels (6,2,1). The criterion for distinguishing the influence of the good angel or spirit from that of the evil one is the experience and subsequent conduct of the indwelled person (Mand. 5,2,1–3; 6,2,3–4). One is to trust the good spirit (Mand. 11,17, 21) or angel (Mand. 6,2,3), and depart from the evil spirit or angel (Mand. 6,2,7; 5,2; 11,17).

angel of righteousness" in several verses of Mand. 6,2. Moreover, "delicate" (τρυφερός), "meek"/ "meekness" (πραός/ πραότης), and "tranquil"/ "tranquility" (ἡσύχιος/ ἡσυχία) are used of both the angel (6,2,3) and the "spirit" (5,2,6).[15]

Wilson discusses this case is some detail, and concludes that, despite the noted similarities, "[a]ngels are different from spirits."[16] In support of this assertion, he mentions that angels have bodies, are visible (at least to Hermas), and have names, while spirits are bodiless, do not have names, and remain invisible to Hermas. I find this argumentation unconvincing. The passage invoked as proof of the alleged visibility of angels, namely Sim. 9,1,2, cannot be questioned on the visibility or invisibility of angels, because the issue there is rather Hermas' spiritual evolution, by which he obtains the ability to perceive celestial realities. As for the alleged "physical description" that Hermas would be able to give of angels in Sim. 8,1,2, the fact that angelic beings are said to be "tall" is not a physical description, but an indication of their celestial status. It is evident, for instance, that the preeminence of Christ over the angels is expressed symbolically by his extreme height (Sim. 9,6,1), as in GPet 10,39–40.[17] On the other hand, when Hermas spends a night in the joyous company of the virgins (Sim. 9,11), who are "holy spirits" (Sim. 9,13,2), he "sees" them, and even describes their "splendidly girded" linen garments and uncovered shoulders (Sim. 9,2,4)! It should be noted, however, that the concepts of "bodily" versus "bodiless", and "visible" versus "invisible" have an entirely different meaning for pre-Origenian authors than they do for us.[18]

So far, it appears that the "spirits" have undeniable angelic traits. It is just as true, however, that the angel of righteousness in Mand. 6 conveys a pneumatological content. In this respect, I have already mentioned the "delicacy" of the Holy Spirit. Another crucial indicator are the terms ἡσύχιος and

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[15] The theme of the Spirit's "delicacy" seems to have been taken over by none other than Tertullian, otherwise a harsh critic of the *Shepherd*. See J.E. Morgan-Wynne, The "Delicacy" of the Spirit in the Shepherd of Hermas and in Tertullian, SP 21 (1989) 154–157. Opitz (Ursprünge [see n. 11], 140–141) traces the "delicacy of the Spirit" to Jewish-Christian exegesis of 1 Sam 16,14–15 (LXX). The fact that the *Shepherd of Hermas* is aware of an old tradition of dualist pneumatology rooted in the exegesis of 1 Sam 16,14 has been proven by recourse to similar passages in Aphrahat. See Nadia Ibrahim Fredrikson, L'Esprit Saint et les esprits mauvais dans le pasteur d'Hermas: Sources et prolongements, VigChr 55 (2001) 262–280, esp 273–275.

[16] Wilson, Reassessment (see n. 8), 79,

[17] See A. Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, Atlanta, Ga. ²1975, 50.

[18] According to M.R. Barnes (The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400, MoTh 19 [2003] 329–355, here 341), not even Christ, much less the angels, were thought of as absolutely "invisible." See, in this respect, the relative visibility and corporality of the entire spiritual universe in Clement's of Alexandria Excerpta ex Theodoto 10.

ἡσυχία, whose quasi-technical status in describing the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit has been demonstrated by Gabriele Winkler.[19]

The question, then, is whether the *Shepherd of Hermas* uses "holy spirit" as a designation for the angelic beings, or whether it uses angelic imagery to speak of the Holy Spirit. It is important, first of all, to caution against an anachronistic understanding of the terms "angel" or "spirit." According to Jean Daniélou, "the use of such terms in no way implies that Christ was by nature an angel. … The word angel … connotes a supernatural being manifesting itself. The nature of this supernatural being is not determined by the expression but by the context. 'Angel' is the old-fashioned equivalent of 'person'."[20] In dealing with the *Shepherd* (as well as with other early Christian texts and writers, such as Revelation, the Ascension of Isaiah, or Justin Martyr), it is helpful to consider the category of "angelomorphic" Christology or Pneumatology, following a definition proposed by Crispin Fletcher-Louis:

> "Though it has been used in different ways by various scholars, without clear definition, we propose its use *wherever there are signs that an individual or community possesses specifically angelic characteristics or status, though for whom identity cannot be reduced to that of an angel.*"[21]

In conclusion, the term "angel/ spirit", as well as angelic imagery, need not imply a reference to angels *stricto sensu*. The *Shepherd* often expresses pneumatological ideas by means of angelic *imagery*.

3. *Πνεῦμα as the Son of God*

In a number of other passages, πνεῦμα takes on a different meaning. Before proceeding to the discussion of those passages, however, it is necessary to draw a distinction between real and symbolic identity, and a second distinction between revealing agent and object of revelation. For instance, in Sim. 9,1,1 (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ λαλῆσαν … ἐν μορφῇ τῆς ἐκκλησίας), the real entity is τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, while the symbolic identity, the "form", is that of the church (ἐν μορφῇ τῆς ἐκκλησίας). On the other hand, "the church" can be spoken of as a revealing agent ("you were shown the building

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[19] For ample documentation and a very detailed analysis, see G. Winkler, Ein bedeutsamer Zusammenhang zwischen der Erkenntnis und Ruhe in Mt 11,27–29 und dem Ruhen des Geistes auf Jesus am Jordan. Eine Analyse zur Geist-Christologie in Syrischen und Armenischen Quellen, Muséon 96 (1983) 267–326.

[20] J. Daniélou, The Theology of Jewish Christianity, London 1964, 118. Cf. P. Henne, La Christologie chez Clément de Rome et dans le Pasteur d'Hermas, Fribourg 1992, 225. For this distinction in early Christianity, see Tertullian, De carne Christi 14: "Dictus est quidem (Christus) magni consilii angelus, id est nuntius, oficii, non naturae vocabulo."

[21] Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology (WUNT 2/94) Tübingen 1997, 14–15. Cf. also Gieschen, Angelomorphic Christology (see n. 5), 27–28.

of the tower *through the church*"), or as the object of a vision (the tower-vision as a vision about the Church).

In this section I shall discuss the following themes: (a) the additional information provided by Sim. 9 about the mediator "church"; (b) the relation between "the preexistent holy spirit" and the Son of God; (c) the virgins as "holy spirits."

a) The introduction to Sim. 9 provides a reinterpretation of the previous visions. Referring back to the first tower-vision, Hermas' first instructor, the mediator "church", is now called "angel" and "spirit." The same tower-vision is said to occur διὰ τῆς πρεσβυτέρας (Vis. 3,1,2), διὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, or δι' ἀγγέλου (all three passages in Sim. 9,1,1–2). The "old woman"/"church" is only the symbolic manifestation of the revealing agent. Who, then, is this agent? The successive identification as "angel" and "spirit" can safely be united under Levison's category "angelic spirit." But the text adds more ambiguity. Hermas learns that the one who spoke to him was the Holy Spirit, and that this Spirit was the Son of God (ἐκεῖνο γὰρ τὸ πνεῦμα ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστιν, Sim. 9,1,1). Indeed, given Hermas' request for revelation (Vis. 3,1,2: "when I had fasted a great deal and asked *the Lord* to show me the revelation he had promised to show me …"), one would expect the response to come from "the Lord" as well. The reader is to understand that the "angelic spirit" is not just any celestial entity: the angelic appearance conceals the Son, the Glory, the Name (Vis. 3,1,9 – 10,1), the Lord of the people.[22]

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[22] The titles "Son" and "Glory" can be derived from the following two solemn declarations, whose crucial importance is highlighted by the fact that they appear at the climax of the so-called heavenly letter, prepared by a fifteen-day long fast: ὤμοσεν γὰρ κύριος κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ" (Vis. 2,2,8); ὤμοσεν γὰρ ὁ δεσπότης κατὰ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (2,2,5). Given the parallelism of these declarations, with κύριος corresponding to δεσπότης, and κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ to κατὰ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, Osiek's translation, "the master has sworn upon his honor", does not convey the entire weight of the term δόξα; the Shepherd is here talking about the Son of God as the Glory. In Vis. 2,2,8, the full text of declaration is the following: ὤμοσεν γὰρ κύριος κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ τοὺς ἀρνησαμένους τὸν κύριον αὐτῶν ἀπεγνωρίσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς ζωῆς αὐτῶν. While the first κύριος refers to God, the second one obviously designates the Son. This is also the idea underlying several text witnesses (L1 and E have "filium", while S* reads χριστόν – see SC 53, p. 92.93, n. 5). The reference to "their Lord" is significant, as it parallels Sim. 5,5,3 and 5,6,4, where the Son of God is proclaimed as "Lord of the people." A theology of Jewish extraction advocating "two Lords" can be rightly termed "binitarian monotheism." As for "Name", the famous passage in Sim. 9,14,5 clearly implies a Christological sense. Cf. in this respect Daniélou, Jewish Christianity (see n. 20), 152; Grillmeier, Christ (see n. 17), 42. For a survey of "Name" Christology in the early Church, see C. Gieschen, The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology, VigChr 57 (2003) 115–158.

b) In Sim. 5 the *Shepherd* speaks about God sending τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ προόν, τὸ κτίσαν πᾶσαν τὴν κτίσιν (Sim. 5,6,5). And it is again Sim. 9 that offers a clarifying parallel: ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ πασῆς τῆς κτίσεως αὐτοῦ προγενέστερός ἐστιν, ὥστε συμβούλον αὐτὸν γενέσθαι τῷ πατρί (Sim. 9,12,1–2). Moreover, both expressions recall the description of the "church" as πάντων πρώτη ἐκτίσθη (Vis. 2,4,1). I submit that all these descriptions have only one referent: the Son of God. There are two elements that lead to this conclusion. First, the most likely background of the identification of the old rock with the Son of God (Sim. 9,12,1–2) is Christological: 1Cor 10,4 (Christ as the rock), and Col 1,15 (Christ as πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως).[23] Second, "Church" in Vis. 2,4,1 is only the μορφή, i.e., the symbolic identity of the Son.[24] The three elements ("church", Spirit, Son) are thus reduced to only two (the Son and the Spirit), whose identical descriptions are perfectly coherent with the statement in Sim. 9,1,1: the Spirit is the Son of God. I submit, against Wilson, that this statement does not posit two entities – God's "natural son" (the Holy Spirit), and his "adopted son" (the Son of God) – whose intimate relationship would only be "thought of" as identity.[25] There is only one subject, namely the highest "angelic spirit". And this one subject is not the polymorphic Holy Spirit, *pace* Gieschen and Barnes, but rather the Son of God.[26]

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[23] Ultimately, as noted by L. Pernveden (The Concept of The Church in the Shepherd Of Hermas [STL 27] Lund 1966, 65), the roots go back to Jewish speculation about Wisdom as πρότερα πάντων ἔκτισα (Sir 1,4). Pernveden and Brox (Hirt [see n. 3], 525) have in mind the pre-existence of the Church. But "church" in Vis. 2,4,1 is only the symbolic identity of the Son. It is noteworthy that Philo sees the rock as a symbol of Wisdom (Leg.All. 2,86), while Paul equates both rock and Wisdom with Christ (1Cor 1,24; 10,4). Although "Sophia" pneumatology is not unknown in some patristic authors, such as Theophilus of Antioch and Irenaeus, the most common application of Wisdom-speculation in early Christianity is Christological.

[24] Brox (Hirt [see n. 3], 525) hypothesizes that early Jewish Sophia-speculations might have been reworked in the *Shepherd* to construct a "Sophia-ecclesiology", an idea rejected earlier by Daniélou (Jewish Christianity [see n. 20], 312). As I have shown, however, "church" here is a symbolic designation of the supreme spirit, i.e., the Son, which is consonant with early Christian use of Sophia in the service of Christology and (more seldom), Pneumatology.

[25] "… the Son of God lived in such complete commonality with the Holy Spirit that they could now be thought of as one. They did not begin as one … But the perfect life of the son of God made them one" (Wilson, Reassessment [see n. 8], 138).

[26] According to Gieschen, all revelational characters (including the Son/ slave/ flesh) are "a manifestation of the Spirit", in the context of "a very fluid angelomorphic Pneumatology" (Angelomorphic Christology [see n. 5] 222.225). The idea of a second-century version of binitarian monotheism featuring not the Son, but the Spirit as God's vice-regent and sole polymorphic mediator has been pursued further by M.R. Barnes (Early Christian Binitarianism: The Father and the Holy Spirit, paper read at the 2001 Annual Meeting of NAPS; online at www.mu.edu/maqom).

Scholars have increasingly come to realize that the comparisons of the statement in Sim. 9,1,1 (ἐκεῖνο γὰρ τὸ πνεῦμα ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστιν) with 2Cor 3,17 (ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν), and with the phrase in Sim. 5,5,2 (*filius autem spiritus sanctus est*) are as convenient as they are deceiving.[27] The identification between Son and Spirit remains a puzzle. Among the astonishingly divergent interpretations proposed so far, it is sufficient to note three of the more recent ones. Henne thinks of πνεῦμα as the Trinitarian person of the Holy Spirit, and rejects any ontological identification with the Son of God; he blames the confusion on a certain "maladresse de l'expression" in the text.[28] For Brox the puzzling relation between some of the major characters in the *Shepherd* can only be resolved by positing their identity; one would be well advised, however, not to read any theology into such statements, and instead only take note of the "uncontrollable style" of the *Shepherd*.[29] On the opposite end of the interpretative spectrum, Wilson is adamant in noting that the author "knew exactly what he was doing when he wrote Sim. IX:1:1", and "had a definite theological point to make", albeit one whose explanation "is left to the reader."[30] According to Wilson, this theological message was the following: God, who had a "natural son", the Holy Spirit, later transformed a high celestial entity into a second, "adoptive", son. This celestial entity was "preexistent and served as counselor to God at the beginning of creation", but it "was not at that time related to God as son to father (as was the Holy Spirit)"; it became incarnate and after exemplary service in communion with the Spirit, was exalted to the status of "adopted son." The Christology of the *Shepherd* would, consequently, develop over the three stages of angelic preexistence, incarnation and indwelling, and adoption.[31]

It is also possible to find a simpler solution. At the risk of repeating myself, I invoke once again the Jewish and Jewish Christian practice of designat-

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[27] The latter appears only in the L1, the so-called Latin Vulgate, but virtually all commentators (including Brox and Osiek) consider it as original. See Wilson, Reassessment (see n. 8), 107–109; Osiek, Shepherd (see n. 1), 177b; Henne, Christologie [see n. 20], 189). Read in its proper context, which is a Pauline midrash on Exod 34,29–35, 2Cor 3,17 proclaims Christ as the content of, and full access to, the glory of divine presence. Moreover, Henne (ibid., 224) notes that "in 2 Cor 3,17 it is the Lord who is identified with the Spirit, whereas in Sim. 9,1,1 the reverse is true: the Spirit is identified with the Son of God." As for Sim. 5,5,2, this text operates a symbolic identification (one of the terms is an actor in a parable, namely the "son", the second one is its symbolized counterpart, the Holy Spirit); in Sim. 9,1,1, on the other hand, "that spirit" – i.e., the revealing entity – is the Son (not the "son" in a parable, but the Son of God). Same opinion in Osiek, Shepherd (see n. 1), 177–178, n. 18. For Brox also (Hirt [see n. 3], 492. Cf. 316), the identification in Sim. 5 means nothing more than that the son in the parable represents the Holy Spirit.

[28] Henne, Christologie (see n. 20), 225.

[29] Brox, Hirt (see n. 3), 531.

[30] Wilson, Reassessment (see n. 8), 137.

[31] Wilson, Reassessment (see n. 8), 132–134.

ing angelic beings by the term "spirit." In light of this tradition, the Son of God is, technically, a "holy spirit." To this supreme holy spirit are subordinated all other "(holy) spirits."

c) It is useful at this point to analyze the interaction of Christology, pneumatology and angelomorphism in the collective character of the virgins. The virgins are termed "holy spirits", ἅγια πνεύματα, and "powers of the Son of God", δυνάμεις τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ (Sim. 9,13,2). To be clothed with these "powers" means to bear the "power" of the Son of God (Sim. 9,13,2). It would seem that these "holy spirits" are an angelomorphic representation of the activity of the Son.[32]

At the same time, the deployment of clothing and baptismal language suggests that the virgins can be seen as a plural designation of the Holy Spirit. In describing the eschatological state of those who have the Spirit, the *Shepherd* uses the following expressions: "always clothed with the holy spirit of these young women" (Sim. 9,24,2); "you have received something of his [the Lord's] spirit" (9,24,4); "they received the Holy Spirit" (9,25,2). Earlier in Sim. 9, the believers are exhorted to "clothe themselves with these spirits" in order to enter the church and the Kingdom (9,13,2). As a result, they become "one body, *one spirit*, and one color of garment" (9,13,5). The white color of the garment finds symbolic counterpart in the white color of the tower: "So stones of many different colors were brought … And when the variegated stones were put into the building, all alike became white and changed their many colors" (9,4,5–6). The tower built on water, the white garment, and the transformation into "one spirit" obviously refer to Baptism and the reception of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the *Shepherd of Hermas* collapses the spirits and the Spirit in its exhortation to repentance and holiness: "give back the spirit (*reddite spiritum,* L1) as whole as you have received it! … what do you think the Lord will do to you, who gave you the spirit (*spiritum dedit*) whole, but you gave it back useless?" (9,32,2.4).[33] Being "clothed with these spirits" (9,13,2), which are the "powers" of the Son, means, then, to receive the white garment of Baptism.[34]

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[32] Cf. Levison (The Angelic Spirit [see n. 5], 469), who argues that the metaphor of clothing in Judg 6,34 "is consistent with the interpretation of the spirit as an angelic or demonic being."

[33] Leutzsch (see n. 1) prefers to include L2 in the text: *habebitis spiritum*, "you shall have the spirit." However, L1 makes better sense in connection with Sim. 9,32,4.

[34] Irenaeus equates the divine garment with the Holy Spirit (Haer. 3,23,5; 4,36,6). The *Shepherd*'s affirmation that "one cannot be found in the reign of God unless they [the virgins] clothe you with their garments" (Sim. 9,13,2) finds perfect counterpart in Irenaeus' theology of the paradisiac, baptismal, and eschatological garment, equated with the gift of the Holy Spirit. See Y. de Andia, Homo Vivens: Incorruptibilité et divinisation de l'homme chez Irénée de Lyon, Paris 1986, 97–99,

I conclude, in agreement with Wilson, that "the term [ἅγια πνεύματα] does signify a plural concept of the Holy Spirit."[35] The angelomorphic character of the virgins, and the fact, noted by Wilson, that the anarthrous noun should perhaps be rendered "spirits that are holy", only strengthens the case for angelomorphic pneumatology in the *Shepherd*. Research into connections with the expression "Lord of the powers", κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων (e.g. Ps 23[24],10; 45[46],8.12), or the expressions "Father of spirits" (Heb 12,9) and "Lord of the spirits" (throughout 1 En), may shed light on the *Shepherd*'s background.[36]

The preceding two sections have shown that the *Shepherd of Hermas* uses πνεῦμα to designate both angelic beings and the Son of God. Yet, what is the relation among the Son of God as "holy spirit", the angelic "spirits", and the believer, with respect to the divine indwelling? The *Shepherd* is somewhat ambiguous on this matter. His favorite ways of expressing the effect of the indwelling are "clothing" (Sim. 9,13,5: one has to be *clothed* with the holy spirits/powers/virtues of the Son of God in order to enter the Kingdom), "renewal" (Vis. 3,16,9), "purification" (3,16,11; 3,17,8), "rejuvenation" (3,21,2), and "strengthening" (3,20,3). These expressions mark a transition from past spiritual weakness to present strength (see the use "then" and "now" in Vis. 3,12,3 and Sim. 9,1,2), and correspond to the repeated exhortation to "be a man" that Hermas receives from the angel (ἀνδρίζομαι, used in Vis. 1,4,3; 3,16,4; 3,20,2). It is notable that the text ascribes this indwelling to "the angel", "the spirit", or "the Lord", without the slightest indication of perceiving any overlap or contradiction.[37] In fact, there is no contradiction in

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[35] Wilson, Reassessment (see n. 8), 154, n. 129,

[36] For a brief but very dense overview, see Gieschen, Angelomorphic Christology (see n. 5), 119–123 ("Power as designation for an Angel"). Among the relevant passages: Philo, Conf.Ling. 168–182; Rom 8,38; 1Cor 15,24; Eph 1,21; 1Pet 3,22.

[37] The theme of the spirit dwelling in the faithful recurs again and again in Sim. 5. But at one point, the angel offers the following ideal portrait of the believer: Ὃς ἂν δοῦλος ἦν, φησίν, τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἔχῃ τὸν κύριον αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ (Sim. 5,4,3). Mand. 3,28,1 speaks about the truth-loving spirit that God made to dwell in the believer (τὸ πνεῦμα ὃ ὁ θεὸς κατῴκισεν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ ταύτῃ); in a way, however, it is the Lord Himself who dwells in the believer (ὁ κύριος ὁ ἐν σοὶ κατοικῶν). Then, in Mand. 5,33,1, it is τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ κατοικοῦν ἐν σοί. I have already discussed the passage in Mand. 11,9, where the *Shepherd* switches from "spirit" to "angel" ("So when the person who has the spirit of God enter the assembly of just men … then the angel of the prophetic spirit that rests upon that person [ὁ κείμενος ἐπ᾽αὐτῷ] fills the person, who, being filled with the holy spirit speaks to the whole crowd as the Lord wishes"). In Sim. 9,1,2, Hermas' capacity to "bear" divine showings is explained as the result of his "being strengthened" by the "spirit", namely "that" particular spirit identified in the previous verse as the Son of God. In Vis. 3,22,3, the strengthening in faith and rejuvenation of the spirit come from the Lord. However, this "strengthening" seems to be carried out by the Lord through the agency of the angels: in Sim. 5,1,3 and 5,6,2, the angels are appointed by the Son of God for the purpose of preserving (συντηρεῖν) and strengthening (συκρατεῖν) each individual.

these affirmations if we consider the *Shepherd*'s view of the heavenly world: Father, Son and holy spirits/ angels. The Son is active in the believers, and available to them, through his angels/ spirits. He "strengthens" the believer either directly (Vis. 1,3,2; 3,12,3; Sim. 7,4), or through the angels (Sim. 6,1,2; Mand. 12,6,4). As Halvor Moxnes observed, "the function of the angel … is to such a degree identical with God's own that the process in Sim. V:4,3 f can be described without him." For instance, in Sim. 7, "Hermas' family has sinned against the angel, but it is God who can give forgiveness. The angel has handed Hermas over to be punished, but it is God who has decided to show him the reason for it … We seem to be nearer to the OT understanding of the 'malak Yahweh' more than to any specific angelic figure in later development of angelology."[38]

3. The Ultimate Test-Case: Πνεῦμα in the Fifth Similitude

The validity of the conclusions formulated above depends in large measure on whether or not the outlined understanding about the *Shepherd*'s use of "spirit" language can account for the complex problems of Sim. 5. More specifically, there are at least two major difficulties to be addressed: (a) Sim. 5 mentions "Son of God" and "Holy Spirit" as seemingly distinct entities, which would contradict my conclusions so far; (b) Sim. 5,6,4b–7 presents an adoptionistic Christology, impossible to reconcile with the high "Spirit" Christology discussed so far.

a) The second interpretation of the parable (Sim. 5,5,2–3) attempts to extract a Christological meaning from a parable that, essentially, is a parable about fasting.[39] This determines a number of changes. Not only does the text draw on certain characters of the parable, which had held only marginal importance in the first interpretation (the son of the master, the friends/ counselors); it also proposes a set of identifications that differ from those of the first interpretation.[40]

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[38] H. Moxnes, God and His Angel in the Shepherd of Hermas, StTh 28 (1974) 49–56, here 54 n. 41.55.

[39] There can be no doubt that the fundamental theme of the parable is fasting. It is important to recall the very beginning of Sim. 5 (νηστεύοντός μου), the subsequent "Fastengespräch" (M. Dibelius, Die Apostolischen Väter. IV. Der Hirt des Hermas [HNT.E], Tübingen 1923, 565), and, especially the emphatic introduction of the parable as a "similitude … relative to fasting" (Sim. 5,2,1).

[40] While the slave and his actions earlier represented the ideal Christian engaged in true fasting and worship, the *Shepherd* now identifies the slave that is εὐάρεστος (Sim. 5,2,2) as the Son of God that is ἀγαπητός (5,2,6). The redistribution of the master's food is no longer an image of almsgiving, but of the Son imparting of God's law.

To determine the *Shepherd*'s theology at this point, it may be helpful to appeal once more to the distinction between real and symbolic identity (or rather "parabolic" identity, given that we are no longer dealing with visions, but with a parable). "Slave", "son", and "counselors" are such symbolic/parabolic identities; their corresponding realities are, according to the *Shepherd*, the Son of God, the Holy Spirit and, respectively, the first-created angels.

The difficulty consists in applying the technical use of "spirit", discussed above, to the affirmations at hand. If the Son of God is, technically, a "holy spirit", one is lead to the following equation in Sim. 5,2,2: "son" (in the parable) = "holy spirit" = Son of God. Yet, how can both the "slave" and the "son" in the parable represent the Son of God? The solution consists in assuming the coexistence of a "servant Christology" similar to that of Phil 2, and a "Spirit Christology." When the text speaks about the incarnate Christ and his work of redemption, it uses the character of the slave; when it speaks about Christ as God's eternal counselor, the chief of group of the first-created angels (cf. Sim. 9,12,2), the latter is identified as "holy spirit." The awkwardness consists in the use of two distinct characters of the parable to designate the two *aspects* of Christ. Henne explains it as the unfortunate result of squeezing a Christological meaning out of a parable that was initially about fasting. Wilson proposes a polemical background. Finding precedent in the appropriation and reinterpretation of Jesus' parables by the Gospel tradition, he argues that Sim. 5 has taken up a parable from oral tradition, has "reshaped that source into his own language" (which explains the linguistic consistency of the source and the redactional additions), and has provided an interpretation meant to substitute the starkly adoptionistic Christology of the original parable with the redactor's own pneumatic Christology.[41] In the exchange between Hermas and the angelic shepherd, the "correct" interpretation of the parable (hence, the "better" Christology) is ascribed to the angelic teacher and thereby made authoritative. These two explanations need not be seen as mutually exclusive: Wilson offers a hypothetical background to Sim. 5, while Henne discusses the literary means by which the *Shepherd* makes his theological point.

b) The main obstacle to the "preexistent Spirit" Christology discussed in this essay seems to be the text starting with Sim. 5,6,4b. Two problems require clarification at this point. The first one is whether or not 5,6,4b inaugurates a new section of Sim. 5; as will be seen, scholars tend to agree that the verse marks some sort of turning point. The second problem is whether this new section continues the Christological exposition, or shifts to non-Christological discourse.

In a series of studies on the Christology of the *Shepherd*, Henne has argued that the Christological reinterpretation of the parable stops at Sim.

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[41] Wilson, Reassessment (see n. 8), 131.

5,6,4a, and that the subsequent verses are not Christological, but rather concerned with the ascetic reshaping of the believer.[42] Before discussing the two questions just raised, it is important to introduce the following principles, which are fundamental for Henne's argumentation: "the internal coherence of interpretative levels", and the so-called allegorical polysemy. These terms designate a literary technique characteristic to the *Shepherd*, which consists in ascribing to the elements of a narration several levels of allegorical interpretation that are coherent in themselves, yet oftentimes incompatible among themselves. To exemplify: the age of the "church" can be successively explained with reference to the sins of the Christians, or to the Church's pre-eternal status; the mountains symbolize both the twelve tribes of Israel (Sim. 9,17,1–2) and various categories of believers; the dishes that the faithful slave imparts to his fellow-slaves are used first as symbols of almsgiving, then of the divine laws that Christ proclaimed to his people.[43] Consequently, each of the successive explanations of Sim. 5 ought to be read in its own right, by pursuing its particular logic, rather than clarifying its obscurities in light of affirmations that belong to another level of allegory.[44]

I now return to the two problems announced above. That Sim. 5,6,4b inaugurates a significant change in content can hardly be disputed.[45] Brox de-

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[42] I have already mentioned Henne's book on the Christology (see n. 20). See also his related studies: À propos de la christologie du Pasteur d'Hermas. La cohérence des niveaux d'explication dans la Cinquième Similitude, RSPhTh 72 (1988) 569–578; La polysémie allégorique dans le Pasteur d'Hermas, EThL 65 (1989) 131–35; La véritable christologie de la Cinquième Similitude du Pasteur d'Hermas, RSPhTh 74 (1990) 182–204. Henne's book was well received, at least if one judges from H.O. Maier's review in JThS 45 (1994) 717–719. In her commentary, Osiek partially integrates this "intriguing, but not watertight" proposal (Shepherd [see n. 1], 12b).

[43] It should be noted that this literary technique is not peculiar to the *Shepherd*. In the interpretation of the parable of the good shepherd, Jesus identifies himself successively with the door of the sheep (John 10,7) and with good shepherd (John 10,11). The same technique occurs in the Book of Revelation. Rev 1,12.13.16 portrays Jesus as "one like the Son of Man", in the midst of seven golden lampstands; these seven lamps, "which are the seven spirits of God", are burning before the throne (Rev 4,4). At the same time, however, Rev 5,6 depicts Jesus as the lamb on the throne "having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God."

[44] This insight has been incorporated by Osiek (Shepherd [see n. 1], 35b): "Only by letting each passage and each image stand on its own, without assuming that comparisons made in one are valid in another, can we come to some glimpse of the whole."

[45] The reinterpretation of the parable strays farther and farther from the initial data of the story: the order of the master to his faithful slave becomes a transfer of authority over creation; the relation between the slave and his fellow-slaves mutates into one between the Lord and his people; the planting of vine-props is interpreted as the Son of God using the angels; the relation between the master and his slave is reinterpreted as one between father and son; the rooting out of the weeds becomes an image of the Passion, and the imparting of food symbolizes the giving of Christ's new law his people. On the other hand,

scribes a shift from Christological to ethical, noting that the *Shepherd* shifts "suddenly", "surprisingly", "unexpectedly" from a precise focus on Christ, to general statements, applicable to all Christians.[46] Osiek affirms that "in fact these verses have moved into something different with not much by way of transition."[47] In fact, certain transition markers are not lacking: the use of ἀκούε, for instance, marks other (undisputed) articulations of Sim. 5.[48] If, then, 5,6,4b "begins a new explanation that has its own logic …",[49] how are we to read this explanation?

The angel takes up the several characters of the parable ("the Lord"/κύριος, "his son", "the glorious angels", and "the slave") and proceeds with his new interpretation.[50] We obtain the following scheme: the "master" is God; the "son" is the Holy Spirit; the "counselors" are the angels; the "slave" is the flesh (i.e., the self, the individual).[51] Scholarship usually proceeds by combining these data with the definitions provided by the previous section of Sim. 5 (the master = God, the son = the Holy Spirit, the slave = the Son of God). As a result, the *Shepherd* appears incoherent in its Christology. On the contrary, if 5,6,4b–7 is taken as a new level of explanation, internally coherent yet independent of and parallel to previous explanations, its theology makes perfect sense.

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important elements in the parable are eliminated: the theme of supererogation – which happens to be the central element of the parable understood as paraenesis on fasting! – and the theme of exchange between the generous rich and the poor who intercedes for him.

[46] Brox, Hirt (see n. 3), 323.

[47] Osiek, Shepherd (see n. 1), 180a–b.

[48] The beginning of each section in Sim. 5 is usually marked by a cluster of three elements: (i) profession of ignorance: οὐ … δύναμαι νοῆσαι (5,3,1); μὴ νοῶν (5,4,2); οὐ νοῶ (5,6,2); (ii) negotiation to obtain "clarifications": the word family of ἐπιλύω and δηλόω at used in 5,3,1–2; 5,2,4,1–3; 5,5,1; 5,7,1; (iii) angelic exhortation to receive a new explanation, oftentimes using the imperative ἀκούε (5,3,2; 5,5,2; 5,6,1; 5,6,4; 5,7,1). In 5,6,4b, the transition to a new section is marked by ἀκούε: "But listen to how the lord took his son and the noble angels as advisors about the inheritance of the slave!"

[49] Henne, Christologie (see n. 20), 181.

[50] As R. Joly notes (Le Pasteur [SC 53] 238 n. 2), the line between real and symbolic identities is blurred: the text uses κύριος instead of δεσπότης, "angels" instead of "counselors", but retains the "slave." Similarly, in Sim. 5,6,7 he says that God took as fellow-counselors "his son and the glorious angels", writing "son" (the son of the master) instead of "holy spirit" (the Son of God). Joly notes: "C'est le Saint-Esprit, symbolisé par le fils du maître" (ibid., 239, n. 4).

[51] The symbolic correspondent of the "holy spirit" is not stated explicitly, but can easily be deduced from the fact that God is said to reward the flesh by assuming it as partner with the "holy spirit": obviously, this would correspond to the master's decision to make the slave coheir with his son.

I now move to the second question: what is the theological content of this new section? Does Sim. 5,6,4b continue the Christological explanation, or does it mark the return to the earlier normative presentation of Christian ascetical and ethical life? The overwhelming majority of scholars has opted for the first possibility, which implicitly keeps one prisoner to the task of articulating the two divergent Christological views that seem to be thrown together in the fifth Similitude.[52] This reading of the text underlies most presentations of its theology in major histories of doctrine, and most secondary literature on the *Shepherd*.[53]

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[52] While Sim. 5,6,1–4a transforms the "slave" into the bearer of supreme divine authority, proclaimed "lord" over humans and presiding over the ministry of the angels, in Sim. 5,6,4b–5,6,7 the "slave" becomes the "flesh" (= individual, person) which is exalted in recompense for submissive service to the divine spirit.

[53] Joly (SC 53, 32) repeats the existing verdicts (adoptionist Christology, Spirit Christology, binitarianism), and refrains from any systematization. Leutzsch (Einleitung [see n. 1], 140) rehearses all "aspects" of the Shepherd's Christology (Adoptionschristologie, Geistchristologie, Engelschristologie), but points out that the relation between the spirit and the flesh in Christ is the model set for every Christian. Grillmeier (Christ [see n. 17], 56) ranges the author of the Shepherd with other writers (Ignatius, Melito, 2 Clem) in the category of "Pneuma-sarx Christology." He assumes the same two Christological "lines" in Sim. 5 and recognizes that "Hermas' incoherence of ideas remains", in part because in the *Shepherd* we find "a reflection of the theology of the church not clearly understood." J.N.D. Kelly (Early Christian Doctrines, New York 1978, 94) speaks of "an amalgam of binitarianism and adoptionism." Opitz (Ursprünge [see n. 11], 58–59.76) mentions adoptionism and pneumatic Christology. Dibelius (Hirt [see n. 39], 569.571) distinguishes between "Allegorie vom Werk Christi" and "Allegorie von Christi Person", and considers the Christology to be adoptionistic. Brox (Hirt [see n. 3], 494) opposes the adoptionist "Sklaven – und Bewährungschristologie" of Sim. 5 to the preexistence Christology of Sim. 9,12,1–3. L. Cirillo (La christologie pneumatique de la cinquième parabole du 'Pasteur' d'Hermas [Par. V, 6, 5], RHR 184 [1973] 25–48) argues that the "flesh" (i.e., the man Jesus), whose depiction as a slave relies on Deutero-Isaiah's "servant of God", is set apart from all of humankind as the unique dwelling place of the Spirit. Wilson (Reassessment [see n. 8], 165) believes it "most likely that Hermas himself originated the combination" of adoptionism and pneumatic Christology." Perhaps the only scholar to completely abandon the attempt to understand the *Shepherd* through the lens of Harnack's categories of "adoptionism" and "spirit Christology" was Pernveden, who noted "the difficulty of grasping Hermas' Christology and giving it an adequate expression by using the main current concepts of Christology" (Concept [see n. 23], 52 n. 1). I have already noted the new perspective proposed by Gieschen and Barnes. Similarly to these authors, Brox believes that the actual subject of the indwelling of the man Jesus is the Holy Spirit, while "Son of God" is only a designation of the Spirit, in virtue of the indwelling of the man Jesus: "Sohn Gottes ist der Name für den einwohnenden Geist" (Hirt [see n. 3], 493); "Sohn Gottes ist der Heilige Geist insofern er den 'Leib' bewohnen wird" (ibid., 494). Osiek (Shepherd [see n. 1], 36a) also argues that "Pneumatology is more prominent than Christology" and that "the prevailing, polymorphous presence" is that of the Holy Spirit, rather than the Son.

Henne, instead, argues that the entire section Sim. 5,6,4b–7 is not Christological. The "flesh in which the Holy Spirit dwelled" would not be the man Jesus, but rather the Christian believer. It must be noted, however, that when Henne refers ἣν ἠβούλετο back to Sim. 5,2,2 (ἐκλεξάμενος οὖν δοῦλόν τινα), he is revolutionary only in his conclusion, which is to deny any Christological bearing to 5,6,4b–7.[54] The connection itself is accepted by other scholars. Cirillo, for instance, draws the same connection between ἣν ἠβούλετο and ἐκλεξάμενος οὖν δοῦλόν τινα (5,2,2), albeit to the opposite end, namely to emphasize the theme of "election" in the case of the man Jesus.

The election refers to any individual (any "flesh") that has faithfully served the holy spirit and has not defiled it in any way. The parallelism between the supposedly Christological statement in Sim. 5,6,5, and the concluding verse in 5,6,7 is noticeable:

αὕτη οὖν ἡ σάρξ,	ἐν ᾗ κατῴκησε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον Sim. 5,6,5)
πᾶσα γὰρ σάρξ ἀπολήμψεται μισθὸν …	ἐν ᾗ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κατῴκησεν (Sim. 5,6,7)

Henne observes that the use of οὖν rather than γάρ in Sim. 5,6,7 supports the non-Christological reading of both Sim. 5,6,5 and 5,6,7: the reward of "all flesh" does not follows from the supposed divine indwelling of the man Jesus, but rather from the general principle of having cooperated with the Spirit.[55] A Christological reading would erase the distinction between Jesus' adoption as Son of God, and the exaltation available to any other "flesh."[56]

This interpretation places Sim. 5,6,4b–7 in line with the views expressed in Sim. 9,24–25: both texts have an ultimate eschatological bearing, both interpret the final reward as communion with the Spirit;[57] both make this reward dependent upon the cooperation with the Spirit during the earthly sojourn.

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[54] Henne, Christologie (see n. 20), 182.

[55] "Le γάρ prouve qu'il s'agit ici du principe à cause duquel 'cette chair ayant servi l'Esprit saint sans reproche … ne parut pas perdre le salaire de ces services' (Sim. V,6,7). Si 'cette chair' avait été celle du Fils de Dieu et que l'exaltation de la chair du Christ soit la cause du salut promis à toute chair soumise à l'esprit, le texte eût allors présenté la conjonction οὖν et non γάρ comme c'est réellement le cas" (Henne, Christologie [see n. 20], 182).

[56] See Osiek, Shepherd (see n. 1), 179b: "The preexistent Holy Spirit by coming to dwell in the historical, non-preexistent person of Jesus constituted him as holy (v. 5), and subsequently exalted him to heaven (v. 6), which is to say, in terms of the parable, that 'this flesh,' the human Christ, the slave of the parable, was rewarded for his faithful service, as all faithful servants will be."

[57] The expressions describing those who have the Spirit preserve the ambiguous relation between Christology, pneumatology, and angelology: "always clothed with the holy spirit of these young women", Sim. 9,24,2; "you have received something of his [the Lord's] spirit", 9,24,4; "they received the Holy Spirit", 9,25,2). See my discussion about the "virgins" on p. 124.

Henne's proposal was flatly rejected by Brox, whose arguments can be systematized as follows. First, Henne would fail to take into account the special use of "flesh and spirit" in this section.[58] Specifically, ἡ σάρξ can only be meant Christologically, as opposed to πᾶσα σάρξ in Sim. 5,6,7, which obviously points to all believers; and the indwelling "spirit" in 5,6,5 is "the trinitarian Holy Spirit", as opposed to the "holy spirit" present in the believer as an empowering charisma: "nicht der übliche, alltägliche in den Christen einwohnende 'heilige Geist'."[59] Secondly, the fact that 5,6,5 carries on the Christological exposition is made evident by its use of the same character of the slave.[60]

It must be noted, first of all, that Brox fails to criticize Henne on Henne's own terms. His arguments conveniently overlook the principles underlying the latter's interpretation (the principle of internal coherence, the allegorical polysemy). As already noted by Osiek, there is no reason to accept the assertion that the "trinitarian holy spirit" indwelling the "flesh" in Sim. 5,6,5 is different from the "holy spirit" dwelling in the believers. For Brox, however, the supposed distinction between "Heiliger Geist" and "heiliger Geist", and the Christological interpretation of Sim. 5,6,4b–7, reinforce each other in a somewhat circular reasoning. Osiek also points to the weakness of the "singular versus plural" argument by noting the use of collective singular in Ps 65,2; 145,21; Joel 2,28; Zech 2,13.[61]

It would seem that there is little left to oppose Henne's non-Christological interpretation of Sim. 5,6,4b–7. In her commentary, Osiek reiterates Brox' arguments against Henne; at the same time, however, she practically dismantles these arguments in her footnotes. She even concedes that "it is not tot-

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[58] "Henne macht den gravierenden Fehler, den redaktionellen Beitrag des H im Gebrauch seiner Stoffe (hier: 'Fleisch und Geist') nicht einzukalkulieren" (Brox, Hirt [see n. 3], 320).

[59] Brox, Hirt (see n. 3), 320. Cf. also 323–325.488. According to Osiek (Shepherd [see n. 1], 180–181, n. 43) there is no textual proof to support Brox's distinction between "Heiliger Geist" and "heiliger Geist." Scholars generally do not distinguish the spirit indwelling the slave/flesh from the spirit present in other human beings. They differ, however, in their assessments of the personal or impersonal nature of the Spirit. For Pernveden (Concept [see n. 23], 47 n. 1) "the Holy Spirit is … not thought of as a person in the Trinity but chiefly as a power emanating from God." Wilson's opinions on this question appear contradictory. After justifying his use of the neuter personal pronoun "it" for the Spirit on the grounds that "Hermas consistently understands the Holy Spirit not as a personal being but as an impersonal force" (Reassessment [see n. 8], 62, n. 3), he explicitly and emphatically affirms the personal nature and relationships of the Holy Spirit ("person" and "personal" for the Holy Spirit occur at least five time on pp. 131–132).

[60] Sim. 5,6,5 "[k]ündigt das folgende ausdrücklich als Erklärung einer Teilszene der vorangehenden Christologie-Parabel an und gebraucht deren Metapher ('der Sklave') für den Sohn Gottes" (Brox, Hirt [see n. 3], 320).

[61] Osiek, Shepherd (see n. 1), 180a.

ally clear that vv. 5–6 refer exclusively, or even primarily to Christ, as most commentators assume." Indeed, "the relationship between the spirit and the 'chosen flesh' (σὰρξ ἣν ἠβούλετο) could be about the relationship of humanity to the holy spirit."[62] Eventually, her solution is a mixture of Henne and Brox: the passage is "probably" speaking of Christ "as primary referent", but with a new, non-Christological intention, namely "for the sake of instruction and *paraenesis.*"[63] The net result "in a strictly Christological perspective", is the classic scholarly verdict on the *Shepherd*: adoptionism.[64] This exposes Osiek to her own critical observation: "If the Christology is what most interpreters say it is … it is strange that this immensely popular document of the early church was never condemned for Christological heresy."[65]

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

The analysis of the Fifth Similitude confirms several of the hypotheses advanced earlier in the paper. First of all, the use of "spirit" to designate Christ remains fundamental in Sim. 5. Since the section describing the adoption of the "flesh" to companionship with the holy spirit (5,6,4b–7) is not Christological, but rather pertains to the ascetic life of the believer, reflection on the Christology is no longer obliged to account for the divergent traits of a "high" and "low" Christology in Sim. 5. In fact, with the vanishing of any basis for adoptionism, the sources of Christological reflection on the *Shepherd* remain those texts that view the Son of God as the highest "spirit", the holy spirit, which have been examined in the second section of this essay.

Secondly, Sim. 5 clarified the relation between the supreme "holy spirit", Christ, and the spirits "first created." References to the Son and the first-created angels in the same breath (5,2,6, 11; 5,6,4.7) suggest that, even though they are clearly subordinated to the Son of God, and accompany him as a celestial escort (e.g., Sim. 9,12,7–8; cf. Vis. 3,4,1; Sim. 5,5,3) the six are his "friends" and fellow-counselors (Sim. 5,5,2–3).

Finally, the angel's successive explanations of the parable, amounting to a complex layering of moral *paraenesis*, Christology, and ascetic theory, indicate clearly the intimate connection between the belief in the supreme "holy spirit", Christ, and the ascetic reshaping of the believer through the indwelling spirit.

4. Further Clarifications on the Shepherd*'s Angelomorphic Pneumatology*

At this point, it appears that πνεῦμα language, although very frequent in the *Shepherd*, is used mainly Christologically or in reference to the angels. What about the distinct divine person designated in Christian tradition as the

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[62] Osiek, Shepherd (see n. 1), 180a.
[63] Osiek, Shepherd (see n. 1), 180b.181a.
[64] Osiek, Shepherd (see n. 1), 181a.
[65] Osiek, Shepherd (see n. 1), 180a.

Holy Spirit? I have noted earlier that the *Shepherd* displays a marked binitarian tendency, focusing mostly on God and his Son, as supreme "holy spirit." The *Shepherd* seems to think in terms of "Father, Son–πνεῦμα, and angelic πνεύματα", a theology similar to that of Lactantius, lacking, it seems, any Pneumatology.[66] Yet, this interpretation would not be entirely fair to our text.

First of all, as mentioned earlier in the paper, some of the angelic apparitions convey a pneumatological content (e.g, the angel of righteousness in Mand. 6, the virgins of Sim. 9 and the associated baptismal language). Secondly, much can be gleaned from the *Shepherd*'s πρῶτοι κτισθέντες, by considering this collective character in religio-historical perspective.

There can be no question that the πρῶτοι κτισθέντες echo angelological speculations common in Second Temple Judaism.[67] In the New Testament, Revelation knows of a group of seven spirits/angels before the divine throne (1,4; 3,1; 4,5; 5,6; 8,2). Clement of Alexandria knows from older tradition that "the first-born princes of the angels (πρωτόγονοι ἀγγέλων ἄρχοντες), who have the greatest power, are seven."[68] In fact, in his *Excerpta ex Theodoto*, Clement speaks in great detail about the multi-storied cosmos and the seven πρωτόκτιστοι who perform their "common and undivided liturgy" atop the cosmic ladder.[69]

It is equally true, however, that the traditions about the highest angelic company underwent considerable modifications under the influence of the early Christian kerygma. One example in this regard would be the subordination of the *protoctists* to the Son of God, a subordination that is quite obvious in the *Shepherd* and even more so in Revelation and Clement of Alexandria.

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[66] See J. Barbel, Christos Angelos: Die Anschauung von Christus als Bote und Engel in der gelehrten und volkstümlichen Literatur des christlichen Altertums: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Ursprungs des Arianismus (Fotomechanischer Nachdruck mit einem Anhang; Bonn 1964, 188–192; B. Studer, La Soteriologie de Lactance, in: Lactance et son temps: Recherches Actuelles. Actes du IVe Colloque d'Etudes Historiques et Patristiques, Chantilly 21–23 septembre 1976, ed. J. Fontaine/M. Perrin, Paris 1978, 252–271.

[67] Significant parallels are offered by Ezek 9,2–3 (seven angelic beings, of which the seventh is more important than the other six), Tob 12,15 (seven "holy angels" who have access before the Glory, where they present the prayers of "the saints"), and 1 Enoch (ch. 20: seven archangels; 90,21: "the seven first snow-white ones"). For the reworking of Eze 9,2–3 in Revelation and the Shepherd, see L. Stuckenbruck, Angel Veneration and Christology (WUNT 70), Tübingen 1994, 226–227. The notion of "first created angels of the presence" is important to the author of Jubilees (Jub 2,2; 15,27). In the Prayer of Joseph, the angel Israel ranks higher than the seven archangels, as chief captain and first minister before the face of God.

[68] Strom. 6,16,142–143.

[69] Clement of Alexandria, Excerpta ex Theodoto 10,3–4; 11,4. For more details presentation, see B.G. Bucur, The Other Clement of Alexandria: Cosmic Hierarchy and Interiorized Apocalypticism, VigChr 60 (2006) 251–268.

A second change in the status of the seven angels consists in their overlap with the Holy Spirit. Exegetes are confronted with the problem raised by the blessing in Rev 1,4, descending from the Father, the seven spirits, and the Son, as well as the possible identification of the seven spirits with the seven angels mentioned later on.[70] A case has been made for the close association (bordering on identification) between the seven spirits and the Holy Spirit in the writings of Justin Martyr.[71] But the most significant witness is that of Clement of Alexandria – a devoted reader of the *Shepherd*! – who sees in the seven πρωτόκτιστοι not only "seven first-born princes of the angels", but also Isaiah's "seven spirits resting on the rod that springs from the root of Jesse" (Isa 11,1–3LXX) and "the heptad of the Spirit."[72]

There existed, in conclusion, an early Christian tradition that reworked the Second Temple tradition of the seven principal angels, using it in the service of Pneumatology. The *Shepherd* is part of this tradition. In fact, not even his description of the Son of God as a "primus inter pares" among the πρῶτοι κτισθέντες stands alone in early Christianity. An off-hand remark in the sermon *De centesima, sexagesima, tricesima*, states that God first created seven angelic princes out of fire (cf. Heb 1,7; 2 En 29,3), and later made one of the seven into his Son.[73] By comparison, the *Shepherd* seems to have been

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[70] Patristic exegesis as well as modern-day commentators have chosen either to identify the seven spirits with the seven spiritual gifts (Isa 11,2; Prov 8,12–16), or with the seven angels of the presence (Tob 12,15; 1 En 90,20–21). The first position is held by the vast majority of scholars, patristic and modern, the second is defended by J. Michl (Die Engelvorstellungen in der Apokalypse des hl. Johannes, Munich 1937) and, more recently, D.E. Aune (Revelation I [WBC 52], Dallas, TX 1997, 33–35). For relevant fragments from patristic commentaries, see H.B. Swete (The Apocalypse of St. John: The Greek Text With Introduction, Notes and Indices, Grand Rapids, MI 1909, 5–6) and Michl, Engelvorstellungen, 113–134.

[71] C. Oeyen, Die Lehre von den göttlichen Kräften bei Justin, StPatr 11 (= TU 108) (1972) 214–221.

[72] Strom. 5,6,35; Paed. 3,12,87. For details, see C. Oeyen, Eine frühchristliche Engelpneumatologie bei Klemens von Alexandrien, IKZ 55 (1965) 102–120; IKZ 56 (1966) 27–47; B.G.Bucur, Revisiting C. Oeyen, The Other Clement' on Father, Son, and the Angelomorphic Spirit, VigChr (forthcoming 2007).

[73] "Angelos enim dominus cum ex igne principum numero vii … crearet, ex his unum filium sibi constituere, quem Isaias dominum Sabaot [ut] praeconaret disposuit." For the text, see R. Reitzenstein, Eine frühchristliche Schrift von den dreierlei Früchten des christlichen Lebens, ZNW 15 (1914) 60–90, here 82 (a new critical edition with English translation by P. Sellew is to be published in the near future). The dating of this text is a matter of controversy, with verdicts ranging from late second to the fourth century. The following scholarly treatments are directly relevant the topic at hand: Barbel, Christos Angelos (see n. 66), 192–195; J. Daniélou, Le traité "De Centesima, Sexagesima, Tricesima" et le judéo-christianisme latin avant Tertullien, VigChr 25 (1971) 171–181, esp. 174–175; A.P. Orban, Die Frage der ersten Zeugnisse des Christenlateins, VigChr 30 (1976)

more careful to impress upon his readers the incontestable superiority of the "preexistent holy spirit" (Sim. 5,6,5), Christ, over against his angelic "fellow-counselors."

5. *Conclusions*

Why did a text such as the *Shepherd*, "bristl[ing] with problems, both literary and theological", fare so well in early Christianity? The oft-invoked solution, that early Christians were willing to overlook the problematic theology of the *Shepherd* because they were mainly interested in it as a moral exhortation, does not stand scrutiny. The only harsh critique of the text, coming from Tertullian, is concerned precisely with the *Shepherd's* moral stance.[74] Not only does the critic find no fault with the theology espoused by "the Shepherd of depraved people" – he even accepts much of the *Shepherd's* Pneumatology![75]

If the conclusions of this essay are correct, the *Shepherd* was very much part of mainstream Christian thought in the first three centuries. In keeping with the established, quasi-technical way of describing heavenly entities as "spirits", the *Shepherd* refers to the Son of God as the supreme "holy spirit", uniquely distinguished not only by his lordship over the Church, but also as leader over the highest angelic company of the πρῶτοι κτισθέντες.

Since the terms "Father", "Son", and "Holy Spirit" are used in the explanations to Sim. 5, it appears that the *Shepherd* is aware of Trinitarian formulae. Nevertheless, most of this writing's theology displays a marked binitarian orientation in the sense that it is concerned mostly with God and the supreme "holy spirit" – the Son of God. The coexistence of Trinitarian formulae with a binitarian orientation, and the identification of the Son as a "holy spirit" (or, in the case of more philosophically-inclined authors, the functional identity between "Logos" and "Spirit") are widespread phenomena in the first three centuries, among authors writing in Latin, Greek and Syriac.[76]

214–238; P. Sellew, The Hundredfold Reward for Martyrs and Ascetics: Ps.-Cyprian, *De centesima, sexagesima, tricesima*, StPatr 36 (2001) 94–98.

[74] In De Oratione 16, Tertullian acknowledges the *Shepherd's* authority, although he reacts against literal and superstitious interpretations of the work. Later, however, in De Pudicitia, he violently accuses the Shepherd of "favoring adulterers" (10,12), and even declares the "Shepherd of adulterers" to be "apocryphal" (20,2).

[75] K. Adam, Die Lehre von dem hg Geiste bei Hermas und Tertullian, ThQ 88 (1906) 36–61; Morgan-Wynne, "Delicacy" (see n. 15).

[76] See F. Loofs, Theophilus von Antiochien Adversus Marcionem und die anderen theologischen Quellen bei Irenaeus, Leipzig 1930, 114–205; Simonetti, Note (see n. 7), esp. 230–231; W.K.L. Macholz, Spuren binitarischer Denkweise im Abendland seit Tertullian, Jena 1902; C. Stead, Philosophy in Christian Antiquity, Cambridge/New York 1994, 155–156; W.H.C. Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus, Garden City, NY 1967, 264; E. Osborn, Justin Martyr, Tübingen 1973, 101–102. For Justin, see especially 1Apol. 6,1–2 (Justin

The Pneumatology of the *Shepherd* is especially present in descriptions of the divine action upon the Christian ascetic. The experience of divine presence – the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – is conveyed in angelomorphic terms, with a penchant for the metaphors of clothing, renewal, purification, rejuvenation, strengthening, and vision.[77] On the other hand, a comparison with Revelation and certain traditions echoed by Clement of Alexandria, suggests the possibility that the *Shepherd*'s πρῶτοι κτισθέντες represent a variant of the archaic Christian tradition that reworked the seven supreme angels into an angelomorphic representation of the Holy Spirit. In historical perspective, angelomorphic Pneumatology was a significant phase in Christian reflection on the Holy Spirit. Still an option in the fourth century,[78] it was bound to be discarded in the wake of the Arian and Pneumatomachian controversies.[79]

In the last part of section 3, I discussed the *Shepherd*'s views on divine indwelling, noting that the distinction is often blurred between the presence of the Son of God as supreme "holy spirit" and that of the angelic "spirits." Further investigation is necessary to determined the relationship between these views of the *Shepherd* and the New Testament traditions about the ascended Christ and the Holy Spirit.[80] My aim in this paper, however, was only to take up Levison's challenge and revisit the theology of the *Shepherd of Hermas* in light of Jewish traditions on the "angelomorphic Spirit." For the time being, I hope to have proposed a reading the *Shepherd* that sustains itself within the text, and does justice to this text's Second Temple roots and early Christian context, thereby providing a reasonable enough explanation of this writing's positive reception patristic literature.

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handing down the "tradition" of worshipping God, the Son, the army of the other good angels, and the prophetic Spirit).

[77] See B.G. Bucur, The Ascetic Doctrine of the Shepherd of Hermas, StMon (forthcoming).

[78] See the brief summary in R.P. Vaggione, Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution, Oxford 2000, 122–123 (discussion) and n. 270 (patristic references).

[79] For an illustration of the process, see B.G. Bucur, Mat 18:10 in Early Christology and Pneumatology: A Contribution to the Study of Matthean *Wirkungsgeschichte*, NT (forthcoming).

[80] I have in mind here the issue of "Spirit Christology" in the New Testament, which is hotly debated since Hermann Gunkel, and shows no signs of resolution. Scholarly verdicts run the gamut from positing a complete and unqualified identification between the ascended Christ and the Holy Spirit, to "functional" or "dynamic" identification, to complete rejection of any such identification.