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The Christological Remnants within Eucharistic Prayers

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A Paper Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Theology Seminary of
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for the Degree of Master of Arts in Theology

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY SEMINARY
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March 28, 2014

The Christological Remnants within Eucharistic Prayers

Description:

This paper explores the development of Christology in the early Church concluding with a look at Angel Christology in the Roman Canon and Logos Christology in The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis. A lack of Christological precision in early Christian praying has anachronistically led modern scholars to question the orthodoxy of early prayers. This paper argues that just as liturgical scholars have long realized that the development of liturgy moved from diversity to uniformity, so too this is the case with theology. The movement to tighten the borders of orthodoxy has led to liturgical standardization. Just as the dating of liturgical sources can be based on philological methods, their dating can also be approximated through an analysis of the theological ideas present within their text. It is the Christological and pneumatological remnants present within a prayer's epiclesis that provides crucial insights to a prayer's provenance, dating, theology, and orthodoxy. This paper seeks to contextualize two Eucharistic prayers amid now obscure Christologies which were prominent in the first few centuries of the early Church.

This paper may not be duplicated.

March 28, 2014

The Christological Remnants within Eucharistic Prayers

Introduction

In keeping with the too oft quoted phrase *lex orandi lex credendi*, early Christological thought permeates Christian prayer. At times, a lack of Christological precision in early Christian praying has anachronistically led modern scholars to question the orthodoxy of early prayers. The clarity of the 4th century conciliar decrees should not be used as litmus tests for the orthodoxy of particular liturgical formulations and Christologies that enjoyed broad support before these conciliar decrees had been promulgated. While this should seem obvious, scholarship and ecclesial judgment have often neglected this important principle. In reviewing early Christian sources, we must realize that positions once thought orthodox were only subsequently realized to be unorthodox at the major councils of the mid to late 4th century. Thus, the orthodoxy of any particular theology from before these paradigmatic councils must be established from within the context of the time in which they were put forward. This leads one to realize the diversity of teachings present before the mid-4th century. Just as liturgical scholars have long realized that the development of liturgy moved from diversity to uniformity, so too this is the case with theology. The movement to tighten the borders of orthodoxy has led to liturgical standardization. Just as the dating of liturgical sources can be based on philological methods, their dating can also be approximated through an analysis of the theological ideas present within their text. The epiclesis of a Eucharistic prayer is one of the units one can use to situate a Eucharistic prayer within the history of anaphoral development. It is the Christological and pneumatological remnants present within this prayer unit that provides crucial insights to a prayer's provenance, dating, theology, and orthodoxy. This paper will begin with the shift from binitarian to Trinitarian worship, followed by the shift from Jewish angelology to the Greek

understanding of Logos, and end with a treatment of the Roman Canon and the Eucharistic Prayer of Sarapion of Thmuis as exemplars of each of these periods. In doing so, it will not engage a discussion of the almost universal termination of the epiclesis's development in a Spirit epiclesis, or Gabrielle Winkler's claims that a Spirit epiclesis has always been known in Syria. Rather this paper seeks to contextualize two Eucharistic prayers amid now obscure Christologies which were prominent in the first few centuries of the early Church.

Binitarian to Trinitarian Worship

The ambiguity of many early Church writings and prayers does not allow for a clear theological understanding of many texts. Yet, in pouring over early theological and liturgical sources, Larry Hurtado has come to see what can generally be termed a shift from binitarian to Trinitarian worship. In his seminal article on this topic, Hurtado is careful to clarify what he means by "binitarian." He defines binitarian as the "accommodation of Christ as an additional figure along with God ('the Father') within a strong concern to maintain a monotheistic religious commitment."¹ For Hurtado, the inclusion of Christ in the devotional and cultic practices of the Jewish community is unthinkable amid the Jewish concern for maintaining an exclusive monotheism. As he points out, the charges of "di-theism" leveled against Christ and presumably the early Christian community (e.g. John 5:18; 10:33) point to the binitarian pattern of early Christian praying. While early Christians would not have seen themselves as "di-theists," it appears upon further reflection that they would have implicitly understood themselves as following binitarian ritual practices.

¹ Larry Hurtado, "The Binitarian Shape of Early Christian Worship," in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus*, eds. Carey Newman, James Davila, Gladys Lewis (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 191. Henceforth cited as "The Binitarian Shape of Early Christian Worship."

In his book *One God, One Lord*, Hurtado wrestles with the way in which the early Christian cult was derived from its Jewish, and thus monotheistic context. Hurtado shows that early Judaism had three forms of divine agency: divine attributes and powers, exalted patriarchs, and principle angels. Each reflects the “fundamental idea that God might have a chief agent prominent over all the other servants of God and associated with him particularly closely.”² It is Hurtado’s contention that Christianity developed out of an identification of Christ with the Jewish understanding of divine agency. Yet, the Christian understanding of divine agency marked a radical departure from the Jewish understanding by giving Christ worship proper to God alone. Thus, according to Hurtado, primeval Christianity was inspired more by its Jewish milieu than Greek philosophy. At the same time, the incipient Church radically reshaped its received Jewish tradition. Hurtado is careful to point out that “the concept of the exalted Christ is not simply derived from the Greco-Roman idea of the apotheosis of heroes...it is more likely that the concept of his exaltation is dependent on the Jewish divine agency category.”³ He notes that the exaltation of Christ would not have been easily accepted amid the Jewish people who were opposed to the deification of humans. Furthermore, it would have been unfamiliar to the Greeks with their pagan sensibilities since Christ does not become one of many cultic personas, but rather becomes *the* cultic persona. Elaborating on this, Hurtado asserts that

[T]he following specifics make the probable connection with Jewish divine agency tradition apparent: (1) Jesus is exalted to a particular position, second only to the one God. (2) In this position, he acts by divinely granted authority and as God’s principal agent in the execution of God’s will. (3) He is directly associated with the one God and likened to him in certain ways.⁴

² Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 17. Henceforth cited as *One God, One Lord*.

³ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 98.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

It is for this reason that Hurtado speaks of Christian devotion as a “mutation.” By this he means that early Christian devotion flows out of Judaism’s monotheistic tradition, while exhibiting a much different character.

Hurtado gives four significant qualities to this Christian character. The first is the role of the risen and exalted Jesus in Christian piety. Noting the similarities between Christ’s titles and the titles of other divine agents in Judaism, Hurtado contends that “it is the religious practice of early Christianity that more clearly and significantly indicates an innovation—a mutation.”⁵ The second characteristic is the fact that early Christian communities made Christ “an object of the devotional attention characteristically reserved for God.”⁶ Flowing from this second characteristic, Hurtado points to a third. He asserts that granting Christ the same devotional attention as God would have been seen by the Jewish tradition of the time as a form of blasphemy and a departure from the monotheistic tradition. Yet, the early Christians felt strongly that they were not departing from the monotheistic tradition of their Jewish forefathers, though they perhaps were not initially able to articulate why this was the case. The last characteristic Hurtado notes is that this reshaping of the received Jewish tradition was not a later stage of Christian development, but was foundational to the Christian cult from its inception.

Hurtado’s work has not been without its critics. Some critique whether Christian worship of Christ was such a radical departure from the Judaic religious tenor at the time. But amid the criticisms against his work, Hurtado still contends that when taken as a whole, early Christian worship “constitute[s] a distinctive pattern of binitarian devotion in which Christ is included with God as a recipient of devotion that can properly be understood as worship.”⁷ He cites early

⁵ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 99.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁷ Hurtado, “The Binitarian Shape of Early Christian Worship,” 193.

Christian prayer, invocation and confession, baptism, Eucharist, hymns and prophecy as supporting this position. Hurtado's work has shown that "the early Christian devotional pattern does not express itself as involving two deities, although there are certainly two figures named as recipients of the devotion."⁸ For this reason, Hurtado is right, it seems, to maintain that early Christian devotion was binitarian.

In this binitarian worship pattern, someone is conspicuously absent from the list of figures to whom *latría* is given. As Arthur Wainwright points out, nowhere in the New Testament is the Holy Spirit worshiped or given prayer, in fact, very rarely in the first five centuries does this occur, and some claim that there is no evidence before the 10th century of the Holy Spirit being addressed in hymns or prayers.⁹ Yet, as Wainwright notes "there is, however, clear evidence that the Spirit was worshipped in conjunction with Father and Son."¹⁰ Yet, Hurtado's premise that early Christian worship was primarily binitarian still, I think, stands. Wainwright also points to the earliest two invocations to the Holy Spirit in the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Acts of Thomas*. The first according to him dates to the end of the 2nd century at the latest, while the later dates to the 3rd century.¹¹ However, Wainwright qualifies their impact by noting that "since the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Acts of Thomas* do not belong to the main stream of Christian literature, they cannot be used as proof of the generally accepted character of prayer and worship."¹² He even acknowledges that the only passage in the New Testament which supports the divinity of the Holy Spirit is 2 Cor. 3:17-18.¹³

⁸ Hurtado, "The Binitarian Shape of Early Christian Worship," 211.

⁹ Arthur William Wainwright, *The Trinity in the New Testament* (London: S.P.C.K., 1966), 228.

¹⁰ Wainwright, 228.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 229-230.

¹² *Ibid.*, 230.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 234.

In mainstream theology, the personhood of the Holy Spirit did not become a concern until the fourth century. As Maurice Wiles notes, “the paucity of scriptural evidence was something of an embarrassment to the Church’s theologians when they sought to demonstrate the Spirit’s full divinity in the closing years of the fourth century. Gregory of Nazianzus was forced to develop a special doctrine of development to meet the point.”¹⁴ Wiles asserts that when the concern for the Holy Spirit came to the forefront in the fourth century, the divinity of the Holy Spirit was largely defended through baptismal practice which was performed in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Wiles notes that for the second century writers,

As long as their thought about the second person was primarily in terms of the Logos, there was little incentive, as far as the requirements of their own theological thinking were concerned, to develop any detailed doctrine of the Holy Spirit...the nature and the working of the Holy Spirit were for them most naturally understood in relation to the Logos.¹⁵

This would only change, according to Wiles when the second person of the Trinity began to be understood in the third century primarily as the Son rather than the Logos.¹⁶ The discussion of the Holy Spirit reached a boiling point in the fourth century around the time of the first ecumenical councils of Nicaea and Constantinople.

R.P.C. Hanson affirms Wiles assertion. He writes about the growing concern for the Holy Spirit in the fourth century: “the surprising thing is, not that more attention was not paid to the Spirit, but that the theologians continued to include the Spirit in the framework of their theology. Contemporary Middle Platonist philosophy...did not require acknowledgment of the existence of three ultimate realities.”¹⁷ He notes that in the Apologists, especially Irenaeus and

¹⁴ Maurice Wiles, *The Making of Christian Doctrine: A Study in the Principles of Early Doctrinal Development* (London: Cambridge U.P., 1967), 78.

¹⁵ Wiles, 79-80.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁷ R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 739.

Tertullian, the Holy Spirit was given a separate existence from the Son, but that many third century authors, including Origen, subordinated the Spirit to the Son.¹⁸ In many texts the relationship between the Logos and the Spirit was ambiguous at best, while some even lack a separation between the two.

Early Christologies

For our purposes, three significant early Christologies stand out among many. The first Christology was an angel Christology. This appears to be one of the earliest Christologies developed by the early Church. It mirrors the Jewish understanding of divine agency. The second two Christologies rose up together: Spirit Christology and Logos Christology. The former becomes largely marginalized, though the Cappadocians and others in the Antiochene school were strong supporters of it, while the later became the dominant way of talking about Christ and remains so even today. That these three Christologies were at one point all acceptable ways to talk about Christ can be gleaned from a study of the *Shepherd of Hermas*. This document is a witness to Christianity in Rome around the mid-second century, and it “reflects a Logos Christology, a Spirit Christology, and even an angel Christology.”¹⁹

A. Angel Christology

Angel Christology is perhaps the most interesting and understudied form of early Christology. This Christology stems directly out of the Jewish context from which Christianity originally arose. According to Hurtado common to many post-exilic Jewish texts

[I]s the idea that there is principal angel who has been placed by God in a position of unequalled power and honor, making the figure second only to God in rank. Indeed, in some texts this principal angel is described as participating in a unique way in the exercise of the authority and role of God (e.g., by bearing the divine name). We will show how ancient Jewish religion, with its characteristic monotheistic concern, was able

¹⁸ Hanson, 738.

¹⁹ Myk Habets, *The Anointed Son: A Trinitarian Spirit Christology* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 56.

to accommodate a second figure next to God, a chief angel, without any indication that this figure was necessarily a threat to the uniqueness of God.²⁰

Yet Hurtado notes that many scholars are unwilling to acknowledge that this Jewish understanding of angelology led early Christians to understand Christ as an angel. For this reason, “most scholars tended to conclude that Jewish angelology was not very important for understanding the origin and nature of earliest Christian views of the risen Christ.”²¹ According to Hurtado this led scholars such as Jean Daniélou to simply catalogue the usage of angelomorphic language in the second century to describe Christ without taking it seriously. In trying to take the historical data seriously, Hurtado writes that “we need to ask, not merely whether the New Testament presents Christ as an angel, but whether Jewish angelology may have assisted early Jewish Christians in coming to terms theologically with the exalted Christ.”²² In answering this question, Hurtado believes that his study of the “early Christian evidence indicat[es] that the exalted Jesus was understood along the lines of the Jewish divine agency tradition.”²³ This in turn supports his understanding of the binitarian expression of Christian worship articulated above.

Hurtado is right to call for a reevaluation of the angelic terms used to describe Christ. But the use of angelic terms are not used in relation to Christ alone. As Daniélou’s work points out, “one of the characteristics of theology which is genuinely archaic and Jewish Christian is the use of terms borrowed from the vocabulary of angelology to designate the Word and the Holy Spirit.”²⁴ Both the second and third persons of the Trinity are at times given angelomorphic qualities. But Daniélou notes that naming Christ as Angel was prominent up until the fourth

²⁰ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 75.

²¹ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 73.

²² *Ibid.*, 74.

²³ *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁴ Jean Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), 117.

century. After the fourth century Christ as Angel “tends to disappear because of the ambiguity of the expression and of the use made of it by the Arians.”²⁵

Daniélou commences his analysis of the angelomorphic language used to address Christ and the Spirit by looking at the *Shepherd of Hermas*. He begins by pointing out that the author of the text “distinguishes very clearly the angel who visits him, who he calls variously ‘shepherd’ and ‘angel of repentance’ from the supreme being, whom he also calls an angel, but who is quite different from the other since it is he who sends that other.”²⁶ The understanding of the whole of the *Shepherd of Hermas* leads Daniélou to contend that this angel is none other than the Word himself. The *Shepherd of Hermas* also transforms the theme of the seven archangels in Tobit (e.g. Tb12:15) to imply six archangels surrounding the Word of God.²⁷ This image is duplicated according to Daniélou in many early Jewish Christian texts such as the pseudo-Cyprianic Treatise *De Centesima sexagesima tricesima*. In other places in the *Shepherd of Hermas*, “Christ is identified with the archangel Michael.”²⁸ This also appears in *II Enoch*, the *Testament of Dan*, and is alluded to in 1 Tim 2:5.

What is fascinating is that Daniélou points out that the identification of the Word with the archangel Michael finds a parallel with the Holy Spirit and Gabriel. Daniélou notes that “the crucial text is the *Ascension of Isaiah*. ‘The Angel of the Holy Spirit’ is frequently mentioned here, and he is identical with Gabriel.”²⁹ *II Enoch* also provides further proof of this connection. But the Word is also at times identified with the angel Gabriel, the chief example being the scene of the Annunciation in which the angel Gabriel is thought to represent not the Holy Spirit, but the

²⁵ Daniélou, 117.

²⁶ Ibid., 119.

²⁷ Ibid., 121-122.

²⁸ Ibid., 123.

²⁹ Ibid., 127.

second person of the Trinity.³⁰ This is affirmed in the *Epistle of the Apostles* and the *Sibyline Oracles*. Perhaps this also shows that in early angel Christology, the Holy Spirit and Christ were often confused since the second person of the Trinity is being identified with the angel Gabriel in the Annunciation scene.

Another key angelic metaphor for the Son and Holy Spirit is the symbolism of the two seraphim. Yet in the case of the symbolism of the two seraphim, Christ and the Holy Spirit are not confused, but rather are closely identified. This tradition can be found in

[A]nother scheme, according to which the Son and Spirit were considered as the two Angels of the Presence transcending all others—as, for example, in the *Ascension of Isaiah*. In this text and *II Enoch* they appear as an adaptation of the figures of Michael and Gabriel, and it frequently happens that these two archangels are separated from the rest and treated on a common higher level.³¹

This tradition further complicates any explanation as to why the second person of the Trinity would at times be identified with Gabriel. It also shows the close relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit. But Daniélou also points out that this scheme is present in Origen without reference to Michael or Gabriel. It is clear from Origen's writing that he sees the seraphim of Is 6 as the Son and Holy Spirit.³² This would be used by the Arians and Pneumatomachi in support of the view that Christ and the Holy Spirit were mere creatures.³³

Christ is also identified with the Angel of Israel by authors such as Justin Martyr. And according to Daniélou, Justin's theology "sees the Logos in the angelic appearances in the Old Testament."³⁴ Daniélou even posits the influence of Philo on Justin at this point. Because of this, similarities between angel Christology and Logos Christology should not be underestimated.

³⁰ Daniélou, 131.

³¹ Ibid., 134.

³² Ibid., 134-135.

³³ Ibid., 135.

³⁴ Ibid., 132.

The compatibility of the two can be found throughout Jewish and Christian writings at an early date. Within an early first century context, Philo tries to bring together Jewish Wisdom tradition with Platonic and Stoic philosophy. In doing so, he follows the Greek philosophical tradition which understood the Logos to be “an actual intermediary being, a lesser god, through whom God conducts his relationship with the world.”³⁵ This same tendency to view the Logos as a second and lesser god becomes a problem in the Christian adoption of the Greek philosophical Logos system. But the early compatibility of Greek philosophy and Jewish angelology can also be found in Philo. Hurtado notes that “Philo seems to identify the Logos with the ‘angel’ sent by God to lead Israel in the wilderness (referred to in Exod. 23:20-21), and here Philo also calls the Logos ‘mediator.’”³⁶ Furthermore, the terms given to the Logos also include “first-born,” “archangel,” “Name of God,” and a slew of terms relating to God’s “power.”

According to Margaret Barker, the understanding of Christ as high priest, or the new Melchizedek is perhaps an angelic reference as well. She writes that “the main theme of the Letter to the Hebrews is that Jesus is the Melchizedek high priest...the entire epistle is set in the temple, which was believed to be a microcosm of the creation, its liturgy and rituals mirroring those of heaven...the temple was believed to be heaven itself and its priests the angels.”³⁷ If this is the case, then Christ as high priest, or the new Melchizedek, could be a veiled reference to Christ as an angel. For Barker, this again circles back to the understanding that “the Logos was the High Priest, the King, the Firstborn, the Beginning, the Name, and the Man after God’s Image and his archangel.”³⁸

³⁵ Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 45.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

³⁷ Margaret Barker, “The High Priest and the Worship of Jesus,” in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus*, eds. Carey Newman, James Davila, Gladys Lewis (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 98-99.

³⁸ Barker, 99.

Lastly concerning angel Christology, Hurtado references Darrell Hannah, whose work on the *Ascension of Isaiah* has led him to view this text as primitive or proto-orthodox Trinitarian.

According to Hurtado, Hannah sees this text as

[A]ffirming the divinity of the Son (Beloved) and the Holy Spirit by distinguishing them from the angels, and yet also subordinating them to the Father to avoid tritheism. Interestingly, Hannah further proposes that [the *Ascension of Isaiah*] also reflects an early Christian exegetical tradition that is attested in other early Christian sources, in which the vision of the ‘Lord’ flanked by heavenly figures called seraphim in Isaiah 6:1-5 is interpreted as a vision of God flanked by the Son (Logos) and the Holy Spirit.³⁹

This Hurtado notes contrasts with John 12:41 and other early Christian texts which see “the Lord” as the Son. Because of this, he dates the *Ascension of Isaiah* to the latter part of the second century.⁴⁰ Regardless, this text along with Philo and the *Shepherd of Hermas* shows that Logos and Spirit Christology were at one point in time contemporary with angel Christology. However, these texts also suggest that angel Christology was more than likely the more primitive Christology. Yet by the second century angel Christology was already being discarded for a more Greek-centered Christology.

B. Logos Christology and Spirit Christology

Christology based on Greek philosophical thought quickly came to surpass angel Christology and was marked by two schools of thought that were in tension with one another. On the one hand was Spirit Christology and on the other Logos Christology. Myk Habets notes the tension between Spirit Christology and Logos Christology. He writes that “in the earliest witnesses outside of the New Testament, the church held to both paradigms of Logos and Spirit Christology. However, by the fourth century Logos Christology dominated the minds of the great theologians while Spirit Christology was relegated to the heterodox fringe of the

³⁹ Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2003), 600. Henceforth cited as *Lord Jesus Christ*.

⁴⁰ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 601.

tradition.”⁴¹ Yet the dominance of a Logos Christology over a Spirit Christology was not absolute. The neglect of Spirit Christology lies in the binitarian focus of the early apologists. Stuart Hall notes that while the creeds of apologists such as Justin distinguished between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, “when we look at the theology of the apologists, we find that generally their thought is ‘binitarian’ rather than ‘trinitarian’: it speaks of God and his Word, rather than of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”⁴² In other words, the apologists often make a distinction between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but in their theological thought the roles of the latter two are folded into the role of the Son. At the same time, Habets notes that the Christology of the Cappadocians, “acts as a conceptual bridge between East and West, and between a Logos and Spirit Christology.”⁴³ Habets bemoans the “uneasy alliance” between pneumatology and Christology. His work is an attempt to bring back together these two complementary Christologies.

The first apologist to construct a strong Logos Christology was Justin Martyr (c. 100-165). Justin imported into his theology Greek Logos philosophy which saw the Logos as a demiurge or buffer between God and the world. In the Greek philosophical system, the Logos bridges the ontological gap between God and humanity but cannot be solidly identified with one or the other. The Logos in this system is understood as a lesser god. Unfortunately, Justin’s attempts to bring Greek Logos philosophy into conversation with Christology did not do away with the airs of subordination present in the Greek system.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Justin begins a conversation on the relation of Christ to the Spirit which often confuses these two persons.

Habets notes that Justin

⁴¹ Habets, 54.

⁴² Stuart George Hall, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church* (London: SPCK, 2005), 52.

⁴³ Habets, 54.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

[A]ppears to confuse the use of ‘Spirit’ to express the pre-existent nature of Christ with its use as the name of the third Person of the Godhead. However, unlike the Apostolic Fathers, the Word and not the Spirit now assumes the principle of incarnation for the Apologists... In accord with the prevailing philosophy of the time, namely Middle and Neo-Platonic emanationism, the Apologists thought of Jesus as S/spirit since they conceived of S/spirit as the vehicle of deity, God’s active presence. Justin called the Logos the first of God’s creatures that originated by the will of the Father.⁴⁵

Justin not only subordinates the Son to the Father, but he lacks any substantive distinction between the Son and the Spirit. This is perhaps due to the fact that the Son has taken on the role of the Spirit, a role more strongly affirmed by the less prominent Spirit Christology. The Spirit, with its role having been subsumed by the Logos, is practically subsumed in its personhood by the Logos as well. Or as Habets writes, “Justin and his kin tended to blur the distinction between Son and Spirit making the Spirit the impersonal nature of deity. Christology was understood to be the incarnation of the Logos who was the Spirit as much as the Father is Spirit.”⁴⁶ Habets notes that this would naturally lead to the marginalization of Spirit Christology. Tying Justin back to the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Henry Swete in his work on the history of the Holy Spirit notes that

[W]hile [Justin] usually distinguishes the Spirit of prophecy from the Logos, he fails to draw this distinction in reference to the Conception. But he has got beyond the position of Hermas, who seems scarcely to have recognized the existence of a Third Person in God. Justin’s difficulty lay in differentiating the functions of the Second and Third Persons; of their personal distinctiveness he was clearly cognizant.⁴⁷

While Swete is perhaps more generous in affirming the apologists’ understanding of the personal distinctiveness of the Son and Spirit than Habets and others, his comment should serve as a reminder that there were fundamentally two issues that had to be worked out by the early Church concerning the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit. First, whether they are distinct

⁴⁵ Habets, 60-61.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁷ Henry Barclay Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church: A Study of Christian Teaching in the Age of the Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), 38-39.

persons, and second, what each person's function is. While Logos Christology was able to maintain the ontological separation of the Son and Holy Spirit, it struggled with articulating their functional difference. Habets notes that Logos Christology "stresses incarnation over inspiration, ontology over function, and a methodology from above as opposed to one from below... What is neglected is the constitutive role of the Holy Spirit, especially when it comes to the relation between the Spirit and the Christ."⁴⁸

Theophilus of Antioch continues the subsumption of the role of the Spirit into the role of the Logos by asserting that the "Logos is the Spirit, wisdom, and power of the most high God."⁴⁹ He creates a triad of Father, Logos and Sophia. Because of the confusion this causes, Irenaeus, a supporter of Logos Christology, articulates the understanding of the Godhead as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Robert Grant notes that with this shift in terminology, "Irenaeus is trying to overcome Theophilus' confusion of the divine persons."⁵⁰ Furthermore, Irenaeus' work attempted to recover a pneumatological component for the Church.⁵¹ Yet, Paul of Samosata and Lactantius, in order to maintain the divine and human natures of Christ, unfortunately "identified Christ/Logos with S/spirit hence they can be classed as pre-Nicene binitarians."⁵² Like Justin, for Paul of Samosata the Spirit was relegated to the impersonal essence of God. Origen was also a strong supporter of Logos Christology. Habets notes that "Origen made explicit what was only an implicit subordinationism in Justin which tended to dominate Christology due to the monarchical nature of Jewish monotheism... Hence Christ was subordinated to the Father and the Spirit to both Father and Son."⁵³ While for Origen the Son and Spirit were distinguished from

⁴⁸ Habets, 80.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 62.

⁵⁰ Robert M. Grant, *Jesus After the Gospels: The Christ of the Second Century* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 100.

⁵¹ Habets, 65.

⁵² Ibid., 66.

⁵³ Ibid., 68.

one another, a hierarchy of being was created in which the Son and the Spirit were lesser than the Father.

Around the same time as these early Church fathers, other fathers were able to navigate a proper balance between the personhood and role of the Son and the Spirit. Habets notes that

Like Irenaeus, both Athanasius...and the Cappadocians were able to stand firmly within the received tradition and develop Logos Christology further, while still retaining a very real place for the Holy Spirit and indeed a very crucial counterbalance to the excesses of mediatorial Logos Christology, by using an implicit Spirit Christology.⁵⁴

Both Athanasius and the Cappadocians advocated for the divinity and full personhood of the Holy Spirit amid the protests of the Pneumatomachi. Habets writes that “they held in tension differing Christologies and articulated a way of speaking of the unity of God along with incorporating the place of the Holy Spirit in the redemptive economy of the eternal Son. That is, within their Logos Christology they managed to hold onto the biblical truths of the pneumatic dimensions integral to a complete Christology.”⁵⁵ In other words, they affirmed the role of the Spirit in the economy of salvation and the incarnation of Christ. Thus, they were able to maintain the presence of the Spirit in Jesus throughout his entire life. Here Habets quotes Boris Bobrinskoy as saying that “for the Cappadocian Fathers as well as for St John Chrysostom, to speak of the presence of the Spirit in Jesus at the various stages of his human life is above all to remember that the very name of ‘Christ’ is supremely a Trinitarian and ‘pneumatophoric’ name.”⁵⁶

From our brief historical sketch of the early Church, it becomes apparent that there were two major issues at stake. The first was the personhood of the Holy Spirit. The early fathers of the Church appear to be split about the unique personhood of the Holy Spirit. For some the Spirit

⁵⁴ Habets, 69-70.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 76.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 77.

was none other than the essence of the Father and Son, for others the Spirit was simply identified with the Son, for still others the Spirit was simply acknowledged as a person, and for those known as the Pneumatomachi, the personhood of the Holy Spirit was categorically denied. The second issue was the role or function of the Holy Spirit for those who acknowledged its personhood. For a significant number of the early fathers, the role of the Spirit was subsumed into the Logos, leaving the personhood of the Spirit without any real discernable role. For others, like the Cappadocians, the Holy Spirit's role in the life of Christ was given its proper place. The confusion of the early fathers amid the absence of any authoritative teaching concerning the relationship ontologically and functionally between Christ and the Holy Spirit allows for a much broader understanding of orthodoxy in teaching and in prayer in this pre-conciliar time period than after the major councils of the fourth century (specifically the First Council of Constantinople in 381 AD). In looking at the early liturgical sources, Paul Bradshaw makes a claim that is equally applicable to all the extant sources from the early Church available to us today. He writes:

The main reason why the Holy Spirit is less frequently mentioned in early sources seems to be because there was not then as completely clear a differentiation between what later orthodoxy would regard as the Second and Third persons of the Holy Trinity. The Spirit could be thought of as the Spirit of God or of Christ, and hence to speak of Christ was the same as to speak of his spirit, and vice versa.⁵⁷

The Roman Canon and Angel Christology

It is my contention that angel Christology, or perhaps pneumatology, is attested to in one mainstream Eucharistic prayer today, i.e. the Roman Canon. Amid the renewal of historical liturgical scholarship and the ecumenical movement, liturgical scholars began to look at the Roman Canon with critical eyes. The Roman Canon was, until the liturgical reforms after the

⁵⁷ Paul Bradshaw, "God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit in Early Christian Praying," in *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer: Trinity, Christology, and Liturgical Theology*, ed. Bryan Spinks (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 62.

Second Vatican Council, the only Eucharistic prayer in the corpus of the Roman Rite for over 1600 years. Its lack of an explicit Spirit epiclesis was not until modern times thought of as a deficiency. In an attempt to justify the lack of an epiclesis, scholars have long sought to locate an epicletic unit with this Eucharistic prayer. McKenna points this out: “some see this canon as containing a number of epiclesis type prayers, including the *Te igitur* and the *Hanc igitur*. Generally, however, the lion’s share of the attention goes to the prayers *Quam oblationem* and *Supplices te*.”⁵⁸ It is important to note that the Roman Canon, in light of modern historical scholarship, has been seen as following an Alexandrian structure in which there is a split epiclesis. Because of this, two sections of the Roman Canon, one before the Words of Institution and one after, must be identified as having epicletic features. Of all the units in the Roman Canon only the *Quam oblationem*, which calls for the transformation of the bread and wine, and the *Supplices te*, which calls for the gifts to be transferred by the angel of the Lord to the altar on high, stand out to me as viable epicletic units. Yet following the work of Mazza, it is clear that the *Quam oblationem* was not originally a consecratory epiclesis. In fact it still is not one. In turning to the Roman Canon as known by Ambrose and its ancient form in the Mozarabic Rite, it becomes clear that the received text of the Roman Canon has been adapted. Mazza notes that “these older prayers [of Ambrose and the Mozarabic Rite] do not ask for the consecration, but rather suppose it to have already come about by reason of the mimesis of the Last Supper.”⁵⁹ In other words, these texts already presuppose a change in the species. To substantiate this claim he cites his comparison of the Ambrosian and the received texts in which it is clear that “the older text [of Ambrose] became meaningless and was replaced by the present *Quam oblationem*.

⁵⁸ John H. McKenna, *The Eucharistic Epiclesis: A Detailed History from the Patristic to the Modern Era* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2009), 33.

⁵⁹ Enrico Mazza, *The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite* (New York: Pueblo Pub. Co, 1986), 70.

According to the latter, the offering has to be ‘blessed, accepted, approved, and made reasonable and acceptable’ to become (*ut fiat*) the Lord’s body and blood.”⁶⁰ In looking at the early form of the Roman Canon, the *Quam oblationem* does not appear to be epicletic. For this reason, it seems that the classification of the Roman Canon in the Alexandrian structure is a bit stretched and the result of more impressionable historical liturgical scholarship around the time of the Second Vatican Council. Thus, the only other possible epicletic unit, the *Supplices te*, becomes even more important.

While many scholars look at the *Supplices te* by itself, the more ancient usage as seen in Ambrose, has the *Supra quae* joined with the *Supplices te*.⁶¹ The importance of the connection of these two prayer units will become obvious in a moment. The *Supra quae* requests the acceptance of the sacrifice and makes a comparison to three Old Testament sacrifices: Abel, Abraham and Melchizedek. Each of these becomes tremendously important. Hurtado in his work on the divine agency in Judaism has affirmed the important role of the patriarchs within Jewish self-understanding and their understanding of divine agency. According to him, “when we turn to the descriptions of the exalted patriarchs, we are dealing with real figures distinct from God, who are pictured as having a glorious place of heavenly power and honor. These patriarchs were in this way real precursors of the exalted Jesus.”⁶² Furthermore, they were “described as God’s chief agent, as enthroned and/or in other terms given priority over all the rest of God’s creation.”⁶³ The reference to two patriarchs (Abel and definitely Abraham) in the *Supra quae* becomes tremendously more important when this prayer unit is analyzed in its original context, i.e. connected to the *Supplices te*. The inclusion of Melchizedek is also significant. As patriarchs,

⁶⁰ Mazza, 71.

⁶¹ Ibid., 81.

⁶² Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 51.

⁶³ Ibid., 65.

Abel and Abraham were seen as divine agents of Yahweh. The same holds true for Melchizedek who, as noted above, is depicted as an angel in early texts. Hurtado explains the connection between Melchizedek and his depiction as an angel in greater detail and with an eye to Christ's identification with Melchizedek. In analyzing Heb 5:6-10, 6:20, and 7:1-17, Hurtado notes that these passages draw on Gn 14:17-20 and Ps 110:4 to show that Christ is within the high priesthood of Melchizedek. Hurtado also notes the usage of Melchizedek in Qumran and other Jewish texts which depict "Melchizedek as a heavenly being, specifically identifying him as the *Elohim* of Psalm 82:1 (11QMelch 2.10); he is also probably the same figure known as the archangel Michael in other Jewish texts."⁶⁴ When all of this is taken together, it appears to me that the three figures in the *Supra quae* are creating a double allusion. The first to the actual figures of Abel, Abraham and Melchizedek, the second to Christ (or the Holy Spirit, or both) since these figures were often understood by the early Church to be depictions of Christ developed out of the Jewish understanding of divine agency.

This possible insight into the *Supra quae* can become important when attempting to understand the *Supplices te*. If in fact Jewish divine agency is being articulated in the *Supra quae*, then it is more than likely that it is also occurring in the *Supplices te* if in fact as the Ambrosian text suggests these were once one prayer unit. Mazza himself, says that "the mention of the three Old Testament sacrifices is connected there [in the Canon of Ambrose] with the angelic mediation which is now part of the *Supplices*."⁶⁵ Here Mazza is referring to the angelic mediation in the *Supplices te* in which we pray "bid these offering be carried by the hands of your holy angel to your altar on high."⁶⁶ Mazza notes that the interpretation of this

⁶⁴ Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 501.

⁶⁵ Mazza, 81.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

prayer is quite difficult. First, he writes that “at different stages in the text’s evolution the singular and the plural are used of the angelic ministry.”⁶⁷ The singular form in the received Canon, Mazza says, is reminiscent of Christ or the Holy Spirit in line with the study of Daniélou. However, in citing Botte, he comes to disagree with this interpretation while saying that the discussion remains open.

According to Mazza, there were three reasons why Botte would not identify the angel in the received text of the Roman Canon as being Christ or the Holy Spirit: 1) the oldest extant text of the Roman Canon, the *De sacramentis* of Ambrose, has angels in the plural, 2) the text in the *De sacramentis* is earlier than its parallel texts in the Egyptian liturgy, and 3) angels often intervene in Eucharistic celebrations. I contend that these three arguments by Botte should actually lead to the conclusion that the angel in the received text of the Roman Canon is either Christ or the Holy Spirit rather than discouraging such an interpretation as Botte suggests.

In regards to Botte’s first critique, I believe that Ambrose’s usage of angels in the plural in the *De sacramentis* does not prohibit an identification of the angels with Christ or the Holy Spirit. The text reads:

We offer you this spotless, this spiritual, this bloodless sacrifice, this holy bread and cup of eternal life, and we pray and beseech you to accept this offering, on your altar on high, from the hands of your angels, as you deigned to accept the gifts of your servant Abel the just, the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and that which the high priest Melchizedek offered to you.⁶⁸

Since the *Supra quae* and *Supplices te* are so tightly woven together, and since the references to Abel, Abraham and Melchizedek are so closely tied to Jewish divine agency and angelic mediation, it seems that the angels in *De sacramentis* must be as well. Perhaps this is an example

⁶⁷ Mazza, 81.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 306.

of the two archangels which Daniélou suggests could be viewed as Christ and the Holy Spirit when they (the angels) are set apart in a particular text or narrative.

This unit also appears to be much more anamnetic in its Ambrosian form. In the received Roman Canon, the text has been split. The “newly” inserted *Unde et memores* takes on an anamnetic function from which the newly composed *Supra quae* is an extension. This causes the *Supplices te* to be worded in a different way. It is the *Supplices te* which comes to mark the transition from an anamnetic to an epicletic unit, in that the intercessions are often understood as a continuation of the epicletic unit, thus giving the *Supplices te* a more epicletic quality.⁶⁹ Mazza also references a slightly different formulation of the *Supplices te* found in the Mozarabic Rite which he sees as being “more archaic in form and closer to the *De sacramentis*.”⁷⁰ The text reads “Let the sweet fragrance ascend in the sight of your divine majesty from your altar on high through the hands of your angel.”⁷¹ Yet, Mazza fails to reference the very next sentence: “And let your Holy Spirit be transferred in those ceremonies, so that he may sanctify both the offerings and likewise the prayers of the people both standing there and offering.”⁷² The mention of an angel followed by the Holy Spirit, not only shows that the *Supplices te* could be seen as an epiclesis, but that this angel could arguably be seen as Christ, the Holy Spirit, or both in the early tradition of the Roman Canon. This is further confirmed by a study by J.A. Robinson. In studying the *Post Secreta* and *Post Pridie*, the corresponding parts to the *Supplices te* in the Mozarabic liturgy, he discovers in 225 of the *Post Pridie* prayers that he has examined that 39

⁶⁹ McKenna, 142.

⁷⁰ Mazza, 81.

⁷¹ Marius Férotin, *Le liber mozarabicus sacramentorum et les manuscrits mozarabes* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1912), 262.

⁷² The Latin reads: “et deferatur in ista solemnia Spiritus tuus Sanctus, qui tam adstantis quam offerentis populi et oblata pariter et uota sanctificet.”

ask for sanctification through the Holy Spirit alone, 29 from Christ, 1 from the Trinity, and 6 by means of an angel.⁷³

Botte's second argument concerning the connection to the Egyptian liturgy is curious. I fail to see why dating the *De sacramentis* before parallel texts in the Egyptian liturgy necessarily precludes an interpretation of the angel(s) in the Roman Canon as Christ and the Holy Spirit. If anything it could strengthen the argument. Mazza draws our attention to two Eucharistic prayers. The first is the anaphora in the Prayers of Sarapion which ends by saying "Let angels be present with them for abolishing evil and for establishing the church."⁷⁴ Mazza also references the Preface of Mark and its reference to angels attending to the heavenly altar.

Receive on your spiritual altar in heaven the thank-offerings of those who offer the sacrifices, the oblations, the thank-offerings by the ministry of your archangels: much and little, secretly and openly, willing but unable; and of those who have offered the offerings today; as you accepted the gifts of righteous Abel, the sacrifice of our father Abraham, and the widow's two mites. Give them imperishable things for perishable, heavenly things for earthly, eternal things for temporal.⁷⁵

I contend that these references do not deny the possibility that the angel in the received text of the Roman Canon can be understood to be Christ or the Holy Spirit. In fact it seems likely that the reference to the angels, Abel, and Abraham in the Preface of Mark was taken from the Roman Canon itself. The unique role of the angels in the older form of the Roman Canon so closely tied to divine agency and acting in what is an anamnetic unit in its oldest form in *De sacramentis*, leads to the possibility that the angels refer Christ and the Holy Spirit. The reference to Egyptian liturgies only serves to show that the same angel Christology or pneumatology could have been prevalent in their anaphoras as well, specifically in their

⁷³ McKenna, 35.

⁷⁴ Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis: A Literary, Liturgical, and Theological Analysis* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995), 49.

⁷⁵ Geoffrey J. Cuming, *The Liturgy of St Mark* (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1990), 72.

references to the two Seraphim or the seven archangels of which one could have been viewed as Christ.

Botte's contention that angels often intervene in the Eucharistic celebration does not necessarily deny that the angel in the received text of the Roman Canon was once understood to be Christ or the Holy Spirit. Turning again to the Egyptian anaphoras Mazza cites, it is clear that Origen's reference to the two seraphim is prevalent in the Anaphora of Sarapion and possibly Mark. The reference to only archangels in the Anaphora of Mark in the place assumed to be parallel to the angels referenced in *De sacramentis* is also reminiscent of the two seraphim of Origen and the separation of the archangels in the *Ascension of Isaiah* and *II Enoch*. For this reason, the Egyptian sources do not necessarily rule out the possibility that the plural form of angels in *De sacramentis* supports an interpretation of the angel in the received text of the Roman Canon as being Christ or the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, they do not rule out the possibility that the angel(s) in the Roman Canon are more than a general reference to angelic mediation as Botte contends.

Mazza also cites Dn 7 and a commentary on this passage by G. Kittel who writes that angels "intercede with God, especially Michael. They convey prayers from all the synagogues to God, and set them like crowns upon his head."⁷⁶ This, however, further supports the view that in the Roman Canon the reference to an angel is a reference to Christ. Christ is often, as we have seen, depicted as the archangel Michael. Mazza also references Revelation 8:3-4 as showing angelic mediation. Yet, Revelation 8 is clearly utilizing the imagery of the seven angels which could in fact be a reference to Christ. If so then references to an angel or grouping of angels

⁷⁶ Mazza, 81.

around God's altar could in fact be a reference to Christ or the Holy Spirit and not just a sign of general angelic mediation.

The Logos Epiclesis in The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis

Having shown that the visages of an angel Christology more than likely lie behind the reference to the angel in the received text of the Roman Canon, we should look briefly at the anaphora of Sarapion of Thmuis. The anaphora of Sarapion of Thmuis is fascinating because it contains one of, if not the only, extant Logos epiclesis in an anaphora.

Prayer 1: The Anaphora⁷⁷

Ἐπιδημησάτω θεὸς τῆς ἀληθείας ὁ
ἅγιός σου **λόγος** ἐπὶ τὸν ἄρτον
τοῦτον, ἵνα γένηται ὁ ἄρτος
σῶμα τοῦ λόγου, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ
ποτήριον τοῦτο, ἵνα γένηται τὸ
ποτήριον αἷμα τῆς ἀληθείας.

God of truth, let your holy **Word** come
upon this bread in order that the bread
may become body of the Word, and
this cup in order that the cup may
become blood of truth.

This Logos epiclesis has been the source of much controversy. In later Eucharistic praying, this invocation to sanctify the gifts does not petition for the coming of the Word, but rather for the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit epiclesis, not the Logos epiclesis, which becomes nearly universal.

In understanding this prayer, one must note the context in which it was written. We know of at least three letters addressed from Athanasius to Sarapion in which “Serapion [sic] had reported a group who are ‘orthodox’ as far as the Son is concerned, but seem to regard the Spirit as a created and superior angel.”⁷⁸ In response, Athanasius defends the divinity of the Spirit by

⁷⁷ Prayer 1 is taken from *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis*, 233-234.

⁷⁸ Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 211.

“show[ing] that the Spirit is closely linked to the Son, either present in the Son’s activity or completing the Son’s activity.”⁷⁹ Here we see again the collapse of the Spirit functionally into the Son. As Lewis Ayres points out “in the first half of the fourth century we find the same basic sense of the Spirit’s work, the same uncertainty about the Spirit’s ontological status, but the beginnings of debate over the issue.”⁸⁰ In other words, the role and place of the Spirit in the Godhead is still up for discussion. The Son and Spirit were closely linked, especially in the functional understanding of the Logos coming out of Greek thought. Maxwell Johnson in his seminal work on the Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis quotes John Wordsworth as saying “that in various parts of Christendom, up to the fourth century, a Prayer for the advent of the Second Person of the Trinity upon the Eucharistic oblation took the place afterwards usually assigned to the invocation of the Third Person.”⁸¹ While Johnson notes that this thesis came under attack, it has regained its dominance thanks to his work and the work of Cuming who noted that “the first half of the fourth century did not make the sharp distinction between Logos and Pneuma which we take for granted.”⁸² Thus, the basic premise of Wordsworth’s statement has been maintained. The Anaphora of Sarapion of Thmuis is not a heretical invention. Rather, it is an example of a pre-Constantinopolitan Christology and pneumatology. The anaphora of Sarapion with its Logos epiclesis is simply a representative of an early Christology and pneumatology which failed to distinguish between the second and third persons of the Trinity.

Conclusion

Both the Roman Canon and the Anaphora of Sarapion of Thmuis point to the confusion in the pre-Constantinopolitan church concerning Christ and the Holy Spirit. The first is more

⁷⁹ Ayres, 212.

⁸⁰ Ayres, 212.

⁸¹ Johnson, 234.

⁸² Ibid., 236.

than likely an example of an angel Christology, while the second is an example of a Logos Christology in which the Spirit has largely been subsumed. It is important that in analyzing early liturgical and theological texts we do not take for granted the theological and dogmatic articulations of the early Christian councils, or worse still project them back onto the early Church. This paper has shown the diversity of Christologies used to describe Christ and the Holy Spirit. Each contributes a unique perspective on the mission and person of Christ, as well as the Holy Spirit. While a wholesale re-appropriation of any of these Christologies that ignore the formulations of the Christian Councils is not only unwarranted, but dangerous, a study of these Christologies could enable us to reimagine traditional Christology and serve to enrich our Christological symbolism.

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