

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 74 (2008)  
**Heft:** [10]

**Artikel:** Angels  
**Autor:** Netzley, P.D.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943707>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 12.08.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**



## Angels

Diverse cultures share the belief that angels are spiritual beings who act as intermediaries between humans and a deity. Some scholars argue that whenever the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, mentions that an angel spoke to a human being, that angel was really God himself. These scholars believe that the people who copied the Old Testament over the years were uncomfortable with the idea of God talking directly to people, and so they inserted an angelic intermediary.

announces the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

Ever since people first began to speak of angels, writers and artists have attempted to identify what angels look like. The angels of the Old Testament are most commonly said to look like people with no unusual attributes. In medieval Christian art angels are usually clothed in a long, white garment, symbolizing light, or the clouds, or purity. The angels mentioned in the Bible are male, but during the Renaissance, artists began to show angels as fe-

was made because artists believed that females were more beautiful than males. Other scholars suggested that Gabriel's gender was changed because Renaissance people were uncomfortable with the idea that a male angel would have appeared in Mary's bedroom.

Wings are not a recent addition to angel images. The earliest winged angel in Christian art appears in a fifth-century mosaic in a Roman church. From this point on, wings gradually became a standard feature in portrayals of New Testament angels. In addition to wings, another common feature of Renaissance angels is the halo. This circle of gold and/or white, which sometimes has rays emanating from it, was first associated with angels during the fourth century.

*from P. D. Netzley: Angels*



The Annunciation by Fra Angelico, c. 1432

The New Testament includes many references to angels, and the angels have more prominent roles than in the Old Testament: An angel named Gabriel brings the news to Mary that she is to be the mother of Jesus, and an angel

males, and by the end of this epoch angels had become predominantly female. Even angels like Gabriel, with his masculine name, were sometimes shown as female. Some scholars have suggested that this change in gender

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Editorial/Äs Wort vom Präsident	2
Carolyn Lane	3
Club News	4-7
Christmas	8
Children's Page	9
Winter in Switzerland	10
New models help revive popularity of sledging	11
Old Swiss powder hound is still in the frame	12
From Liberia, with Mercy	13
The Rheinfell - and a Reinfell	14
Poems/Recipe	15
Christmas - a celebration of light	16