

[An early Teut. adoption from L., (or, in Goth., from Gr.), afterwards influenced in Eng. by OFr. and L. With OE. *ǣngel*:—*angil*, cf. OS. *engil*, OFris. *angel*, *engel*, ON. *engill*, OHG. *angil*, *engil*, Goth. *aggilus* for *angilus*; a. L. *angel-us*, or Gr. ἄγγελος a messenger, used by the LXX to translate Heb. *mal'āk*, in full *mal'āk-yḥwḥ* 'messenger of Jehovah'; whence the name and doctrine of angels passed into L. and the modern langs. All other uses of the word are either extensions of this, or taken from the Gr. in the primary sense of 'messenger.' The OE. form *engel*, with *g* hard, remained to 13th c., but eventually, under influence of OFr. *angele*, *angle* (with *g* soft), and L. *angelus*, initial *a* prevailed; the forms in *au-* in 14-15th c. show Fr. influence.]

**I. 1. a.** A ministering spirit or divine messenger; one of an order of spiritual beings superior to man in power and intelligence, who, according to the Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and other theologies, are the attendants and messengers of the Deity.

**c950** *Lindisf. Gosp. Matt. xxii. 30* Sint suelce englas godes in heofnum [**c1000** *Ags. G.*, Godes englas. **c1160** *Hatton G.*, Godes engles]. *Ibid.* John v. 4 Engel uutudliche Drihtnes..of-dune asta<sup>z</sup>. **c1175** *Cott. Hom. 227* þa sende he his ængel to áne mede. **c1200** *Trin. Coll. Hom. 31* þo cam on angel of heuene to hem. **c1200** *Moral Ode 94* Hwat sulle we seggen o<sup>er</sup> don þar ængles be<sup>o</sup> of dradde. **c1200** *ORMIN 3914* Godess enngless wærenn þa Well swiþe glade wurrþenn. **c1230** *Ancr. R. 92* Ure Lefdi mid hire meidenes, & al þe englene uerd. **c1260** *Signs bef. Judg. 153* in *E.E.P.* (1862) 11 þat þan sal quake seraphin and cherubin, þat be þ angles two. þer nis in heuen angil iwis þat to oþer sal hab spech. **1388** *WYCLIF Ps. viii. 6* Thou hast maad hym a litil lesse than aungels. [*Coverd.* lower then the angels.] **1393** *LANGL. P. Pl. C. XXII. 150* Aungeles & archaungeles..Comen kneolyng. **1485** *CAXTON Chas. Gt. 239*, I saw the aungellys mounte into heuen on hye. **1526** *TINDALE Matt. xxvi. 53* Moo then xii legions of angelles. **1605** *SHAKES. Macb. IV. iii. 22* Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell. **1607** *HIERON Wks. I. 392* 'Mahanaim'; because there the angles met him. **1712** *POPE Spect. No. 408* ¶4 Man seems to be placed as the middle Link between Angels and Brutes. **1742** *BLAIR Grave 589* Its visits, Like those of angels, Short and far between. **a1842** *TENNYSON May Queen III. 25* All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call. **1858** *TRENCH Parables xxiii. (1877) 389* The tears of penitents are the wine of angels. **1865** *R. W. DALE Jew. Temple ii. (1877) 24* An angel strengthened Christ in Gethsemane.

**b.** One of the fallen or rebellious spirits, said to have been formerly angels of God.

**c950** *Lindisf. Gosp. Matt. xxv. 41* Fýr écce se<sup>e</sup> fore<sup>te</sup>~<sup>te</sup>earuud is diwle & englum his. **c1160** *Hatton G. ibid.*, Deofle and hys englen ðegarewa<sup>c</sup>. **1382** *WYCLIF Rev. ix. 11* The aungel of depnesse. **c1400** *Destr. Troy x. 4354* þere onswaret opunly the aungell of helle. **1611** *BIBLE Matt. xxv. 41* Euerlasting fire, prepared for the deuill and his angels. — *Rev. IX. 11* The Angel of the bottomelesse pit. **1667** *MILTON P.L. I. 125* So spake th' Apostate Angel.

c. A guardian or attendant spirit: *lit.* in sense 1; but also *rhet.* without implying any belief in their reality, as ‘her good angel,’ ‘my evil angel triumphed,’ ‘angel of innocence, repentance.’

**1382** WYCLIF *Acts* xii. 15 Forsoth thei seiden, It is his aungel. **1588** SHAKES. *L.L.L.* I. i. 78 There is no euill Angell but Loue. **1594** —*Rich. III*, IV. i. 93 Go thou to Richard, and good Angels tend thee. **1717** POPE *Eloisa* 340 Bright clouds descend, and Angels watch thee round. **1875** FARRAR *Sil. & Voices* ii. 43 Though the Angel of Innocence have long vanished, the Angel of Repentance takes him gently by the hand. **1879** TENNYSON *Lover's T.* 29 I to her became Her guardian and her angel.

d. *fig.* A person who resembles an angel either in attributes or actions; (a) a lovely, bright, innocent, or gracious being; (b) a minister of loving offices.

**1592** SHAKES. *Rom. & Jul.* II. ii. 26 O, speake againe, bright Angell, for thou art As glorious..As is a winged messenger of heauen. **1660** STANLEY *Hist. Philos.* (1701) 87/2 Looked upon as Angels for Wit and Eloquence. **1687** PETTY *Pol. Arith.* i. (1691) 10 Many..do so magnifie the Hollanders..making them Angels. **1808** SCOTT *Marm.* VI. xxx, When pain and anguish wring the brow, A ministering angel thou. **1819** S. ROGERS *Hum. Life*, A guardian angel o'er his life presiding, Doubling his pleasures, and his cares dividing. **1858** LONGFELLOW *M. Standish* II. 58 The angel whose name is Priscilla. *Mod.* Not quite such an angel as he looks.

II. from the literal sense of Gr. ἄγγελος.

2. Any messenger of God, as a prophet, or preacher. [A Hellenism of the Bible and theological writers; sometimes an affected literalism of translation.]

**1382** WYCLIF *Gal.* iv. 14 <sup>þe</sup> resceyueden me as an aungel of God. [So in all versions.] **c1400** *Apol. Loll.* 31 He [<sup>þe</sup> prest] is <sup>þe</sup> aungel of <sup>þe</sup> Lord of hostis. **c1560** *Prayer in Phenix* (1708) II. 232 Our Lord Jesus Christ, that Great Angel of Thy counsel. **1860** PUSEY *Min. Proph.* 606 The priest of God is called angel, i.e. messenger, because he..announces the things of God to the people. **1879** FARRAR *St. Paul* I. 148 The last utterance of the Angel Malachi.

3. Title of the pastor or minister of a church, in the apocalypse, Eccles. Hist., and in some modern sects, as the Catholic Apostolics.

**1382** WYCLIF *Rev.* ii. 8 To the aungel of the chirche of Smyrna, wrijte thou. **1526** TINDALE *ibid.*, The angell of the congregacion of Smyrna. **1611** *ibid.*, The Angel of the Church in Smyrna. **1660** STILLINGFLEET *Iren.* II. vi. (1662) 289 The publick Minister of the Synagogue, called the Angel of the Congregation. **1831** E. IRVING in Mrs. Oliphant *Life* II. iv. 204, I fulfil the part of the pastor or angel of the church. **1839** J. YEOWELL *Anc. Brit. Ch.* iv. (1847) 37 To act in the Presbyterial College..as President, Angel, or very soon by the exclusive title of Bishop.

4. *poet.* A messenger generally; *fig.* in *angel of death*, formerly used literally in sense 1.

1574 tr. *Marlorat's Apocalips* 30 An Angell (that is too say, a Messenger) is one that is sent of an errand. 1600 [CHAPMAN](#) *Iliad* XXIV. 189 An angel I have seen, Sent down from Jove. a1637 [B. JONSON](#) *Sad Sheph.* II. vi. (T.) The dear good angel of the spring, The nightingale. 1648 [J. BEAUMONT](#) *Psyche* XV. cxxxv, They should be The Angels of this News as well as He. 1815 [BYRON](#) *Destr. Sennacherib* 9 For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast. 1853 *Arab. Nts.* (Rtlg.) 455 My father..hath been summoned away by the angel of death.

### III. *transf.*

5. A conventional representation of the celestial ministers, figured with wings.

1536 *Reg. Riches in Antiq. Sarisb.* (1771) 203 Another cope of green cloth of gold, with images and Angels of Jesse. 1855 [TENNYSON](#) *Maud* I. VIII An angel watching an urn Wept over her, carved in stone. 1877 *Athenæum* 3 Nov. 571/3 The heads of the countesses lie on cushions which have angels at the corners.

6. An old English gold coin, called more fully at first the [ANGEL-NOBLE](#), being originally a new issue of the Noble, having as its device the archangel Michael standing upon, and piercing the dragon.

The angel copied the device of the Fr. *angelot* or *ange*, a gold coin of France struck by Louis XI. It was first coined in 1465 by Edward IV when its value (like that of the earlier noble) was 6s. 8d. In 1 Henry VIII it was 7s. 6d., 34 Henry VIII 8s., and 6 Edw. VI 10s.; it was last coined by Chas. I. (This was the coin always presented to a patient 'touched' for the King's Evil. When it ceased to be coined, small medals having the same device were substituted for it, and were hence called *touch-pieces*.)

1488 *Inv. Jewels in Tytler Hist. Scot.* (1864) II. 390 Twa hundreth four score and v angellis. 1494 [FABYAN](#) VII. 655 He ordeyned the seconde coyne of golde, and namyd it the angell, whiche was and yet is in value of vis. viiid. 1526 [WRIOTHESLEY](#) *Chron.* (1875) I. 15 The Kinge enhaused his coyne, that is to saye, the riall at 11s. 3d., the angell 7s. 6d. a1593 [H. SMITH](#) 3 *Serm.* (1624) 6 To fill a coffer ful of Angels. 1598 [SHAKES.](#) *Merry W.* I. iii. 60 She has all the rule of her husbands Purse: he hath a legend of Angels. 1623 [MASSINGER](#) *Dk. Milan* III. ii, His stripes washed off With oil of angels. 1719 [D'URFEY](#) *Pills* (1872) III. 325 An angel of money you must me bring. 1808 [SCOTT](#) *Marm.* I. x, As Lord Marmion crossed the Court, He scattered angels round. 1883 *Leisure Ho.* 247 Chief Justice Hall, so long as he practised at the Bar, persisted in charging only the angel in ordinary matters.

7. *angels on horseback* (see quot. 1900).

1888 [MRS. BEETON](#) *Bk. Househ. Managem.* §2078 Angels on Horseback. (Fr. —Ange à Cheval). 1900 'SARAH GRAND' *Babs* (1901) xv Angels on Horseback, now—those delicious little morsels of oysters rolled in bacon, and served on crisp toast.

8. *slang*. A financial backer of an enterprise, esp. one who supports a theatrical production. orig. *U.S.*

1891 [J. MAITLAND](#) *Amer. Slang Dict.* 18 *Angel*..One who possesses the means and inclination to 'stand treat'. 1900 [G. ADE](#) *More Fables* 190 There was no more Capital coming from the Angels. 1921 [WODEHOUSE](#) *Jill the Reckless* xi. 161 Ike hasn't any of his own money in the thing... The angel is the long fellow you see jumping around. 1948 *Times Lit. Suppl.* 17 Apr. 218/5 In the United States there is more money, more paper..the magazines are fatter, the 'angels' are richer. 1953 *Economist* 28 Mar. 853/1 That increasingly rare being, the 'angel' who will risk his money in a theatrical venture.

9. *R.A.F slang*. Height; *spec.* a height of 1,000 feet. *Usu.* in *pl.*

1943 [P. BRENNAN](#) et al. *Spitfires over Malta* i. 18 'Gain your angels quickly...' We continued to climb. *Ibid.* iii. 71 We climbed into sun, Woody advising us to get as much angels as possible. 1943 [HUNT](#) & [PRINGLE](#) *Service Slang* 11 '20 M.E.s at Angels one owe' means '20 Messerschmitts at 10,000 ft.' 1946 [J. IRVING](#) *Royal Navalese* 23 *Angels*, a measurement of one thousand feet in height, used in the air combat code.

10. An 'unexplained' mark on a radar screen.

1947 W. B. GOULD in *Proc. Inst. Radio Engineers* XXXV. 1105/1 Radar equipment..has given fairly consistent unexplainable echoes at altitudes between approximately 300 and 3000 yards. For want of a better term, these echoes have been dubbed 'Angels' by Signal Corps personnel. 1958 *Listener* 30 Oct. 691/1 New radar sets of much higher power, on which the display was sometimes covered with small echoes, called 'angels' by the operators. *Ibid.*, A Swiss biologist, working with British radar equipment at Zurich airport, proved that 'angels' were the echoes from small birds on migration. 1962 *New Scientist* 12 Apr. 23/3 A substantial proportion of angel echoes are indeed attributable to birds.

11. = *hell's angel* s.v. [HELL](#) *n.* 12.

1969 *Listener* 1 May 624/1 His climactic sequence in church, in which an Angel's funeral degenerates into an orgy, is no more than a picturesque trifling with the perverse. 1970 [see [FRAIL](#) *n.*<sup>3</sup>]. 1976 *Southern Even. Echo* (Southampton) 18 Nov. 8/5 There is little dramatic tension in the book until the introduction of the scientist whom three Angels are sent to rescue/kidnap. 1977 *Rolling Stone* 16 June 11/3 Another 20 Angels and maybe twice that number of Dead friends freely wander around in the wings.

B. *Comb.* and *attrib.*

1. General relations (freq. in poetic use): a. appositive, as *angel-goddess*, *-guardian*, *-messenger*, *-mother*, *-power*, *-stranger*, *-vampire*, *-warder*, *-woman*. b. objective with pr. pple. or vbl. n., as *angel-worship*, *-worshipper*, *-ing*. c. instrumental with pa. pple., as *angel-borne*, *-builded*, *-guarded*, *-heralded*, *-infested*, *-loosened*, *-warned*. d.

similative, as *angel-bright, -fair, -seeming, -wise*. e. attrib. (of, or as of, or pertaining to, an angel or angels; = [ANGELIC](#)), as *angel appearance, choir, -evening, -event, face, form, grace, infancy, music, psalm, trumpet, visit, voice*.

1858 [SEARS](#) *Athan.* VI. 50 The \*angel-appearances were not the same to all the witnesses.

1742 [YOUNG](#) *Nt. Th.* (1751) 144 Talents \*angel-bright.

1839 [BAILEY](#) *Festus* xix. (1848) 226 The fragments of that \*angel-builded fane.

1929 [E. BLUNDEN](#) *Near & Far* 41 The tender amaranthine domes Of \*angel-evenings.

*Ibid.* 49 The bright \*Angel-event of sunset's fresh creation.

1833 [J. H. NEWMAN](#) *Bk. Praise* (1862) 432 And with the morn those \*angel faces smile.

1878 [GLADSTONE](#) *Prim. Homer* 74 Iris, the messenger or \*angel-goddess.

1611 [HEYWOOD](#) *Gold. Age* I. i, So full of \*Angell grace.

1917 [D. H. LAWRENCE](#) *Look! We have come Through!* 101 But we storm the \*angel-guarded Gates of the long-discarded Garden.

1940 [G. BARKER](#) *Lament & Triumph* 31 The Seven Seas with their \*angel-infested crests.

1938 [W. DE LA MARE](#) *Memory* 26 The noon sun's \*angel-loosened archery.

1830 [T. HAMILTON](#) *Cyr. Thornton* (1845) 121 You may yet see and embrace your \*angel-mother.

1711 [POPE](#) *Rape Lock* I. 33 Virgins visited by \*Angel-Powers.

1856 [R. VAUGHAN](#) *Ho. w. Mystics* (1860) II. 97 The floating tones of some distant \*angel-psalm.

1738 [WESLEY](#) *Ps. No. 47, v*, Shout the \*Angel-Quires aloud.

1748 [THOMSON](#) *Cast. Indol.* xlv. 402 These same guileful \*angel-seeming sprites.

c1630 [MILTON](#) *At a Solemn Music*, The bright seraphim..Their loud uplifted \*angel-trumpets blow.

1936 [W. H. AUDEN](#) *Look, Stranger!* 41 The white \*angel-vampires flit.

1799 [CAMPBELL](#) *Pleas. Hope* II. 386 \*Angel visits, few and far between.

---

1879 G. M. HOPKINS *Poems* (1918) 44 Frowning and forefending \*angel-warder.

---

1871 C. PEARSON *Sarum Seq.* 29 \*Angel-warned, no word they bring Back to Herod.

---

1918 W. DE LA MARE *Motley* 54 The Shape who hoofs applause..Hoots—\*angel-wise—  
'the Cause!'

---

1863 J. C. JEAFFRESON *Sir Everard's Dau.* xiii. 235 Bernard thought of an \*angel-  
woman..his boyhood's love.

---

1577 tr. *Bullinger's Decades* (1592) 744 Augustine..naming them Angelici, \*angel-  
worshippers.

---

2. Special combinations: †**angel-beast**, an old game at cards; †**angel-bed**, 'a sort of open bed without bed-posts,' Phillips 1706; †**angel-bread**, a kind of purgative cake, made of oatmeal and flour, with ginger and spurge; **angel-cake** (orig. *U.S.*), a variety of sponge-cake; **angel-cornice**, one decorated with figures of angels; **angel dust** *slang* (orig. *U.S.*), = [PHENCYCLIDINE](#), used as a hallucinogen; **angels' eyes**, the plant, germander speedwell; **angel-face**, used, esp. as a term of address and freq. ironically, for a person with an 'angelic' or innocent face (cf. quot. 1833, sense B. 1; see also quot. 1925); †**angels'-food**, a term for strong ale; **angel('s)-food (-cake)**, (orig. *U.S.*), angel-cake; †**angel-gold**, standard or 'guinea' -gold; **angel-kind**, the race of angels (cf. *mankind*); †**angel-piece**, = [ANGEL](#) 6; †**angel-proof**, the gold standard of the angel; **angel skin** [tr. *F. peau d'ange*], a fabric with a smooth waxy face; **angel sleeve**, a long loose sleeve. Also [ANGEL-FISH](#), [-LIKE](#), [-NOBLE](#), [-SHOT](#), [-WATER](#), q.v.

1668 SEDLEY *Mulb. Gard.* IV. i, Offering to play at \*Angel-beast with them, tho' he scarce know the cards.

---

1886 *Good Housek.* (N.Y.) 10 July 127/2, I always use the pan sold as an '\*angel cake pan'. 1904 *N.Y. Times* 13 June 8 To have angel cake would be sacrilegious. 1905 *N.Y. Even. Post* 4 Aug. 7 Angel cake, sponge cake, and ice-cream cake have conspired to relegate the seed cake to practical oblivion. 1909 J. MASEFIELD *Tragedy of Nan* II. p. 28 None but angel-cakes 'd be fit eating for you, Miss Nan. 1956 'N. SHUTE' *Beyond Black Stump* vii. 201 He would usually take with him an enormous peach pie or an angel cake.

---

1862 RICKMAN *Goth. Archit.* 371 Another peculiar ornament is the \*angel cornice.

---

1969 *Rolling Stone* 28 June 4/1 Parsley can give a more powerful high on marijuana. The garden herb, says Olas Hendrickson, is the basic ingredient in a new psychedelic substance called '\*Angels' Dust'. 1973 [see [PHENCYCLIDINE](#)]. 1978 J. WAMBAUGH *Black Marble* ix. 189 My nephew was arrested because he was holding this angel dust for somebody else. 1985 *Sunday Times* 24 Mar. 12/2 PCP or 'angel dust', a strong

anaesthetic which came after LSD in 1960s drug fashions..has recently emerged anew. Now they call it 'rocket fuel' in Chicago and mix it with peanut butter.

---

**1863** [GOSSE](#) *Dartmoor* in *Intell. Obs.* 318 The sweet germander speedwell..here, most poetically, named by the peasantry, '\*angels' eyes.'

---

**1913** [WODEHOUSE](#) *Little Nugget* I. i. 14 'Ogden, darling..stay by me, \*angel-face.' 'Oh, shush!' muttered angel-face. **1925** [FRASER](#) & [GIBBONS](#) *Soldier & Sailor Words* 6 *Angel face*, Air Force slang for any young, or boyish looking, Probationary Flight Officer. **1932** E. WALLACE *When Gangs Came* xxi. 181 I've finished talking about it, angel-face.

---

**1577** [HARRISON](#) *Engl.* II. xviii. (1877) 295 There is such headie ale & beere in most of them [markets], as for the mightnesse thereof..is commonlie called huffecap, the mad dog..\*angels food, dragons milke.

---

**1881** MRS. OWENS *Cook Bk.* 161 \*Angel's food. In other words, White Sponge Cake. **1920** [S. LEWIS](#) *Main St.* vii. 88 They distributed..stuffed olives, potato salad, and angel's-food cake. **1951** *Good Housek. Home Encycl.* 335/1 *Angel Cake (Angel Food Cake)*, an extremely light, feathery cake of the sponge type.

---

**1583** [STUBBES](#) *Anat. Abus.* 53 Gilt..with good \*angell gold. **1676** [H. PHILLIPS](#) *Purch. Pattern* 223 Angel-Gold is worth somewhat more, and Sovereign Gold somewhat less.

---

**a1300** *Cursor M.* 362 First þan wroght he \*angel kind. **1874** [R. MORRIS](#) tr. *Blickling Homilies* vii. 92 All angel-kind shall look through the aperture on mankind.

---

**1688** *Lond. Gaz.* mmcccxliv/4 Suspected to have stolen an \*Angel piece.

---

**1607** [DEKKER](#) *Wh. Babylon* 270 Head all the speares With gold of \*Angell-proofe.

---

**1935** *Times* 13 Nov. 15/5 The short jacket is of white \*angel skin with blue sleeves. **1951** F. STARK *Beyond Euphrates* 186 A white evening gown of a satin they call angel-skin.

---

**1862** CHESNUT *Diary* (1905) 204 She saw them coming in \*angel sleeves, displaying all their white arms. **1887** E. CUSTER *Tenting on Plains* (1889) v. 174 The sting was inflicted..in the far back days of 'angel sleeves', which fell away from the arm to the shoulder. **1906** *Daily Chron.* 19 Sept. 5/6 Capes of fur with large 'angel' sleeves.

---

#### ADDITIONS SERIES 1993

**angel, n.**

Add: **[B.] [2.] angel-shark**, any shark of the family Squatinidae, characterized by wing-like pectoral fins; *spec.* = [MONK-FISH](#) n. 1.

**1842** *United Service Mag.* May 3 The *Squalus squatina*, or \*angel shark, *alias* monk-fish.  
**1883** [see [MONK-FISH](#) n. 1]. **1985** [BANISTER](#) & [CAMPBELL](#) *Encycl. Underwater Life* 136/2 The angelsharks are unusual, being very flat, and are considered to be more closely related to the skates and rays than to the more 'typical' sharks. They grow to more than 1.8m (6 ft) in length and there are about 10 species in the genus *Squatina*, found in all tropical to temperate seas.

---

#### ADDITIONS SERIES 1997

##### **angel, n.**

Add: **[B.] [2.] angel's trumpet(s)** (also **angels' trumpet(s)**), any of various plants of either the South American genus *Brugmansia* of tree-like shrubs or the genus *Datura* of herbaceous perennials, both of the family Solanaceae and characterized by large trumpet-shaped flowers; also, the flower(s) of any of these plants.

**1884** [W. MILLER](#) *Dict. Eng. Names Plants* 3/2 \**Angel's Trumpets*, the flowers of *Brugmansia suaveolens*. **1915** A. W. LUSHINGTON *Vernacular List Trees, Shrubs & Woody Climbers Madras Presidency* I. 323/1 (Index), Angel's Trumpet..*Datura suaveolens*. **1955** G. GRIGSON *Englishman's Flora* 294 In Somerset it [*sc. Datura stramonium*] has been called Angel's Trumpets, the name usually given now to the tall, shrubby Thorn-apples from Brazil., which are hung about with trumpet blossoms. **1961** *Amat. Gardening* 14 Oct. Suppl. 17/1 *Datura*..half-hardy plants..(also known as *Brugmansias* and *Angels' Trumpets*)..striking evergreen subjects for the cool greenhouse. **1987** *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane) 12 June 3/7 Police may seek to have the plant *datura*, or angel's trumpet, prohibited after the drugging of six young people on the Sunshine Coast.