INTRODUCTION
In antiquity, there existed a people considered holy. These were the saints—people who were virtuous and upright. They were easily identified both in the scriptures and in art, by the crown of light called the halo. Often referred to as the nimbus in art, the halo was a gift from God and considered a symbol of the individual’s righteousness.

What was not understood until recently was that the halo was actually a spirit. These spirits, assuming their natural spherical shape were often depicted in art as disks, rings and sometimes more accurately defined as a cloud or mist about the head. These were the Holy Spirits.

In modern times, the saints and their spirits continue to be the subject of the photographic artist. With the advent of digital imaging and the internet, photographs of the saints abound. What were once paintings of the saints and their halos has been replaced by images of assumed ordinary people and their orbs.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
The earliest examples of saintly images were of the Pharaohs when depicted in frescos and reliefs. Many of these works depict all manner of headdresses, many with associated orbs and disks. Also present in much of this type of Egyptian art was that of the uraeus, a rearing cobra, which was symbolic of the spirit itself and pointed to the serpents (visual aura) viewed by the saintly migraineurs and epileptics.\(^1\)
As time progressed, the nimbus in art had not only begun its migration eastward toward Asia, but found itself in the paintings, frescos, mosaics and sculptures of both the Greek and Roman Empires.  

With time, the nimbus (see Image 1) began to appear in profane art—that depicting normal persons—in lieu of just the gods, and royalty. In Asia, depictions of The Buddha (see Image 2) and saints also included representations of the halo. The migration toward showing the nimbus being worn by living individuals was a far more accurate indication of reality because God and the supernaturals have no need of Holy Spirits and thus do not wear nimbuses.
In antiquity, and for much of human history, unless one was an artist, art was for and often commissioned by the wealthy; and, as such, art was somewhat limited in number. After the decline of the Roman Empire, humanity came to the end of an era of advancing knowledge, technology, and wealth. For a long time, humanity would not again regain the foothold it once had, especially in the arts. During the middle ages, with a change in painting toward realism, the halo in art began its decline.  

PHOTOGRAPHY  
During the 19th century, humanity once again began to make significant advances in knowledge and technology. In the early 1800s, the science of photography arrived. Later, with the invention of film, photography began to significantly displace the plastic arts (painting and sculpture) as the preferred and more accurate means of recording imagery. As with most technologies, time brings cost reductions, and eventual acquisition by the masses: Photography was no different—soon everyone was taking pictures. Now, with the rise of digital imaging, the cost per image taken has declined to near zero; hence, the number of images taken has significantly risen. The result of this is that digital imaging has now displaced film, as film once displaced the plastic arts, on a sheer volume scale.

There is belief that orbs in photography, which appear to be flourishing, were “rare” prior to the existence of digital imaging. This is most likely true for several reasons. First, conventional photography requires a negative, which is often
small and perhaps looked at briefly, if at all. This often means that if a print is made it might be quickly discarded due to aberrations like lens flare (see Image 3), improper development, or the presence of orbs which appear to be unwanted natural phenomena, none of which are easily corrected in an optical print.

Image 3. Orbs? No! This is an example of lens flare which is the result of reflection between numerous lens elements as well as exceedingly bright point sources of light. The lens was stopped down to f/8, which if one looks carefully gives most of the flares seven-sided polygonal shapes. Because the lens’ aperture was not round, as it would be if wide-open, the reflections took on a non-round shape—in this case, that made with a seven-bladed diaphragm. This image was supplied by the author.
It is, and would have been, highly unlikely that a negative would have been printed optically when any type of anomaly was present on the negative, except perhaps for an automated printing process, which generally only yield small prints, which might make orbs difficult to discern from lens flare.

To the contrary, with digital imaging, almost every image is reviewed, as a color-corrected positive, highly magnified, on a computer screen. This allows any anomalies to be critically analyzed, and if found to not be natural, may be labeled as supernatural.

Also, because today’s digital cameras tend to use lenses with focal lengths that are shorter than those used in film cameras, the depth-of-field (the area in front of the lens that is in focus, i.e. 1 meter - ∞) tends to be greater. As a result, if there is an object in the field of view, it is more likely to be in focus as opposed to being out of focus (see Image 4).

There is concern that many of today’s small digital cameras have “cheap” lenses that are prone to flare. This is not the case, as with most technologies, the quality of lenses has gone up while their prices have come down. Today, even the most humble lens has been designed using a computer, and is equipped with elements that have high refractive indices and low dispersion. Additionally, many elements have aspheric surfaces and use advanced coatings that minimize flare. Keep in mind that the humble cars of today tend to be better looking, more reliable, more fuel efficient, more powerful, and more comfortable than many luxury cars of yesterday. This is especially true of computers. Likewise, today’s humble lens is more highly corrected, has a higher resolving power, is more flare resistant, and costs less than the high-end lenses of yesterday.
Image 4. Orbs? No! This is an example of Bokeh (a Japanese term to describe the out-of-focus image produced by a camera lens). The lens in this example was set wide-open at f/2.8 (producing a round aperture) and defocused to soften point sources of light. Note how each dab of light that is at or near the center appears round. Then notice that as one moves away from center, the dabs of light become more elliptical, with rounded sides always toward the center. This is due to the fact that out of focus point sources of light, like lens flare, tend to take the shape of the aperture, and as the rays move off axis (away from the center), the aperture appears less round and more elliptical—producing ellipses. Had the lens been stopped down at all, these rounded highlights would have taken on polygonal shapes to match the shape of the lens’ aperture, as in image 3. This image was supplied by the author.

TIMING

There are additional reasons behind the apparent flourishing of orbs in digital images. First, time and technology have progressed enough to allow sufficiently powerful computers and the internet to exist. With these things, we can share digital images immediately with anyone that has a connection, much as this author is doing right now. The power of the internet allows people to see images that are claimed to be orbs (spirits), when perhaps an individual has never even heard of them, before.
Second, but more importantly, we are approaching a significant point in time, spiritually. As a result, this author expects both the number of orb images as well as experiences of a supernatural origin to increase.

**ORBS**

Orbs are neither out-of-focus dabs of light, lens flare, nor any other natural anomaly. Orbs are of supernatural origin and are spirits. As proof, orbs often display unmistakable countenances (faces)—see Images 5, 5a, b, & c. Many of these faces are not oriented according to our frame of reference. In their existence, there is no right-side-up, and the face may be up-side-down. They may also take on any shape they desire like those found in geometry or very complex biological parts like a skull. However, due to a force that is best described as surface tension, the natural shape of a spirit is that of a sphere. Hence, when viewed or imaged, they often appear round.

**SAINTS**

While once displayed only in the plastic arts the saints continue to appear in what is now called photography. An internet search for orbs will yield many images that not only include orbs but people as well—often only one person. These orbs, which often appear above, or superimposed over, the heads of individuals are the Holy Spirits spoken of in the scriptures. The halos of the saints and the orbs of today are one and the same. Images of the saints can be given even more life when the orb appears to be moving (see images 6 & 6a as well as 7 & 7a).

The plastic arts have often correctly displayed these spirits attached to the heads of the saints; this, due to the technicalities behind the resurrection. These are the resurrected bodies that God gives to the righteous (1 Corinthians 15). This is also what has colloquially been called the reincarnation.
Image 5. Orbs (spirits)? Yes! This image was taken wide-open at f/ 2.8 (round aperture). Note that the orbs are effectively round throughout the image, indicating that they are in focus, and not lens flare or bokeh. These are the halos of the saints. Note the apparent countenances in images 5a, b, & c. This image was supplied by the author.
Image 5a. An extreme contrast crop from near the bottom right of Image 5, which shows an unmistakable skull. They may take any shape they wish, including scary ones.

Image 5b. A crop from the near middle-right, showing a skull-type orb.

Image 5c. A crop from the near center of Image 5. Note the face point outs—there are others.
Image 6. A self-portrait of Erin and a moving orb. Erin wrote reference the orb, “…I felt her presence quite strongly when the photo was taken.” Image used with permission.

Image 6a. A crop of the original image. Note how she (the orb) appears to have been flickering during the exposure, and has what appears to be a face in many of the appearances.
Image 7. Russell with a moving orb. In an image taken moments before this one, the orb was just above the head and significantly fainter. Photograph taken by the author.

Image 7a. A tight crop on the moving orb. Note what appear to be two eyes facing in the direction of its apparent movement.
Due to the nature of telepathy, these spirits know that a photograph is being taken and are in effect posing. The reader should realize that it is not by chance that they make themselves visible—know that it is for a reason. When a spirit poses with a person, it is most likely that that individual is actually a saint. Just like the art depicting the saints and their halos, modern images sometimes show the saint and his or her orb.

It should also be known that there are individuals who often photograph orbs. Know that they will not pose for everyone. One should know that these types of images are also for a reason and are not by chance, and as a result, the photographer is most likely holy as well. Spirits are generally not involved with the unrighteous.

SUMMARY
History is replete with the imagery of individuals with halos—the saints. As time progressed, technology overtook the plastic arts and has allowed the masses to make even more accurate images. Today, the camera is the preferred method of recording a scene. With it, the saints, who exist, are often imaged with their orbs; for, the halos of yesterday are the orbs of today.
This document was originally written as an article for the Angels & Ghosts website: http://www.angelsghosts.com

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3 “Nimbus.”
5 George D. Stewart, HOW IT IS, Booksurge LLC, Charleston, SC, 2007, p. 89.
6 “Halo (religious iconography).”
9 Stewart, p. 19.
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14 Stewart, p. 82.