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**Crescentia Höß of Kaufbeuren
and her Vision of the Spirit as a Young Man¹**

Crescentia Höß's vision of a youthful anthropomorphic Holy Spirit certainly need not be redeemed from oblivion; in the context of South German 18th century studies it has even turned into an item of popular cultural lore. The ground has been well covered in the biographical literature on Crescentia (of which there is a considerable amount);² more specifically, François Boespflug has treated 'l'affaire Crescence de Kaufbeuren' in a substantial monograph, erudite and at the same time highly enjoyable thanks to the author's Gallic wit and poised detachment;³ there are also two lengthy essays quoting abundant evidence of the traces Crescentia's vision left in South German art.⁴ The following pages thus do not aspire beyond supplying a concise narrative starting with the vision itself (and its probable sources of inspiration) and then going on to follow the sometimes convoluted and contradictory paths of its reception.

Anna Höß, who later assumed the monastic name of Maria Crescentia, was born in 1682 in Kaufbeuren, today in the Swabian district of the federal state of Bavaria, back then a so-called free imperial town, i.e., a town within the confederation of the Holy Roman Empire which was subordinate only to the emperor. Her father was a weaver, a respected citizen, but far from affluent, which was the reason why Anna at first was barred from joining, as she desired, the Maierhof Monastery of Franciscan nuns in her home town: Matthias Höß had already bought for another one of his daughters a place in a monastery, and could not afford to provide for Anna in a similar way. Paradoxically, it was the burgomaster of Kaufbeuren, a Lutheran, as was the majority of the town's population, who eventually smoothed Anna's way into the Maierhof Monastery by making the nuns forgo the dowry that was

¹ This paper is in English because it started life as a brief piece of background information for the presence of Crescentia's Holy Spirit in colonial art (see annot. 95), something for which German would not have been suited. Although the paper developed beyond this initial purpose, I decided to stay with English.

² The most recent biography, lavishly illustrated, is Karl Pörnbacher's *Die heilige Crescentia Höß von Kaufbeuren* (Lindenberg 2002, 2nd ed.), which is my principal source for all general biographic information. Pörnbacher brings the invaluable authority of a Vice Postulator on Crescentia's behalf to his task, which understandably entails a strong bias in favour of Crescentia. A more critical, though not hostile, stance is taken by Manfred Weitlauff in his essay 'Die selige Crescentia Höß von Kaufbeuren' (in: Georg Schwaiger, ed.: *Bavaria Sancta : Zeugen christlichen Glaubens in Bayern*, vol. 2, Regensburg 1971, pp. 242-282).

³ François Boespflug: *Dieu dans l'art : 'Sollicitudini nostrae' de Benoît XIV (1745) et l'affaire Crescence de Kaufbeuren*, Paris 1984. There is also a brief chapter on Crescentia in Boespflug's more recent *Dieu et ses images : Une histoire de l'Éternel dans l'art* (Montrouge 2008; pp. 360-362). It does not, though, contain any new insights.

⁴ Karl Kosel: 'Crescentia Höß von Kaufbeuren (1682-1744) : Zur Ikonographie ihrer Visionen.', in: *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Augsburger Bistumsgeschichte e.V.* 28 (1994), pp. 277-300 (= part 1); 32 (1998), pp. 219-241 (= part 2). Hans Albrecht Oehler: 'Der Heilige Geist als Jüngling : Die Visionen der seligen Crescentia von Kaufbeuren im süddeutschen Barock', in: *Das Münster* 15 (1998), pp. 316-326.

usually due in such a case. She began her novitiate in 1703, and what followed were years of trials, tribulations and humiliations inflicted on her by the nuns for sheer malice or out of a desire to test her obedience, among them purportedly tasks such as frying snowballs or carrying water in a sieve. Soon after Johanna Altwöger, though, had taken office as Mother Superior (1707), the tide turned: Not only was Crescentia now assigned important tasks such as janitor (1710) and later novice mistress (1714 or 1717); thanks to her exemplary piety and mystic gifts, she also gradually became the spiritual hub of the Meierhof Monastery and attracted large numbers of admirers from all ranks of society. Her advice was even sought by Maria Amalia, wife to the Bavarian Elector Karl Albrecht, and by the latter's flamboyant brother Clemens August, Prince Bishop and Elector of Cologne. In 1741, she succeeded Johanna Altwöger as Mother Superior and held this office until her death in 1744.

As this is not the place to sift through all the early documentary evidence relating to Crescentia's vision of the Holy Spirit (not all of which is available in modern editions), I will rely for the present purpose mainly on the 1780 biography of Crescentia written by the Jesuit Dominikus Ott (1710-1787).⁵ Ott, confessor to the Kaufbeuren Franciscan nuns since 1770, had joined the Kaufbeuren Jesuit convent too late (1744) to meet Crescentia in person, but recent scholarship has it that he used his sources with discretion and pruned away the more extravagant flights of legendary fancy;⁶ though, of course, none of the early biographers favourably disposed towards Crescentia could possibly stand the test of latter-day enlightened scepticism. This is how Ott describes the vision:

Even during the first six years of her childhood, the Holy Spirit appeared to Crescentia several times ... The Holy Spirit appeared to her in the guise of a youth clad in a gown and a cloak as white as snow, with bare head and curly hair and with seven flames or fiery tongues hovering around his head ... After Crescentia had entered the monastery, the divine spirit appeared to her much more frequently and his grace exerted even greater influence on her ... One Pentecost, the Holy Spirit appeared to Crescentia and imbued her with his seven gifts in a way that is beyond all words.⁷ [see appendix (1)]

Ott then goes on to relate how Crescentia's vision eventually found its way upon canvas:

At last, these miraculous graces and apparitions of the Holy Spirit made her superiors much desirous to having his image painted. As they well knew that Crescentia was not at all versed in the art of painting, the thought occurred to them that she should describe as well as she could to a painter the guise in which the Holy Spirit usually appeared to her and that she should thus guide the painter's brush by means of her words. They de-

⁵ The manuscript has been preserved in the archive of the Crescentia Monastery in Kaufbeuren (Crescentia-kloster; official name since 1922) and was edited in 1971 by the Franciscan Johannes Gatz, the then Vice Postulator: *Crescentia Höß v. Kaufbeuren in der Sicht ihrer Zeit: Eine wertvolle Quellenschrift von 1780 nach der Handschrift v. P. Dominikus Ott SJ*, Landshut 1971.

⁶ See Rupert Gläser's remarks on Ott in his doctoral thesis *Die selige Crescentia von Kaufbeuren : Leben, Worte, Schriften und Lehre*, St. Ottilien 1984, pp. 1f.

⁷ Ott, ed. Gatz (see annot. 5), pp. 224 f. All translations into English by the author. The appendix contains the original wording of some of the texts which are quoted in translation.

creed to do so and summoned a painter called Rufin from Munich. After they had told him what they had in mind, he was willing to offer his services, but at the same time assured them that he deemed it entirely impossible to create an image resembling its model by merely relying on tales, especially on tales told by a person who knew nothing whatsoever about painting. The superiors, though, were not dissuaded by these objections and demanded that the painter Rufin should apply his utmost industry and art ... Appeal was made to Crescentia's holy vow of obedience, and she was commanded to describe the image to the painter and to take the utmost care that the guise of the Spirit should be well expressed and depicted exactly as she had seen it in the apparitions. Although this command fell hard upon Crescentia's sense of humility, she at once did as she had been told and within a few days the picture was finished in such a way that it actually depicted to perfection, as she herself confirmed, the Holy Spirit as it usually appeared to her. It is almost impossible to convey in words the joy and delight of the superiors and especially of Herr Rufin, as he hoped that a copy of this picture would gain him the particular favour of [Maria] Amalia, ... Electress of Bavaria, who held Crescentia's sanctity in very high esteem. With the Mother Superior's permission, he indeed painted a copy of his first picture, but did not succeed in making this second picture a perfect likeness of the first one, although he applied the same industry and had the first picture as a model before his eyes. He himself admitted to this and almost wept when he said that it must have been the Holy Spirit himself who had painted the first picture. This happened either in 1727 or 1728.⁸ [see appendix (1)]

It would be difficult to dispel the impression that several topoi have been enlisted here, either by Ott himself or by his sources, to charge the origin of the picture with legendary overtones and turn it into an artful story; topoi such as the artist's initial shirking away from what he considers an impossible task, the surprising and almost miraculous ease with which the task is subsequently fulfilled, and not least the artist's eventual conviction that the painting owes its existence to inspiration from above, which in turn accounts for his otherwise inexplicable failure to produce a satisfactory replica.

There is no reason, though, to doubt the core of the story, i.e., that Joseph Ruffini⁹ supplied a painting of the Holy Spirit in accordance with Crescentia's vision, a painting which was lost early in the 20th century and has only survived in copies (ill. 1; for details on this issue, see below). However, art historians are likely to wonder why it was Ruffini who was chosen for this purpose. At first sight, it might sound impressive that a painter was summoned 'from Munich', the capital of the neighbouring Electorate of Bavaria, and it is true that Ruffini did receive commissions from notable monasteries in Upper Austria such as St Florian or Lambach, and did contribute in the years 1712-1719 to the decoration of what for its size and splendour is sometimes termed the 'Swabian Escorial', the Benedictine ab-

⁸ Ott, ed. Gatz (see annot. 5), pp. 226 f.

⁹ According to Thieme-Becker (*Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* 29, 1935, p. 176), Ruffini was born in Meran (Merano, South Tyrolia; year of birth unknown) and died on 7th February 1749 in Augsburg. More recently, Gabriele Dischinger added a question mark to Meran and gives just 1749 as year of death without mentioning Augsburg. (*Ottobeuren : Bau- und Ausstattungsgeschichte der Klosteranlage; 1672 – 1802*, vol. 1, St. Ottilien 2011, p. 269)

bey of Ottobeuren (Kreis Unterallgäu);¹⁰ but still, for all we know, Ruffini did not rank very high among contemporary South German painters, of whom there was truly no scarcity. His connection with Ottobeuren deserves some note for the fact that the place is just some 16 miles distant from Kaufbeuren and that its abbots counted among the admirers of Crescentia, but it is far from obvious why the Benedictines should have recommended this particular mediocre painter, on whose services they had last drawn some ten years previously. (For another explanation how Ruffini found his way to Kaufbeuren, see below.)

In the wake of the Ruffini painting, there followed further works of art depicting the Crescentine Spirit youth, among them several engravings, a medium particularly well suited to secure an image wide circulation and publicity. This is not the place to aim at a complete survey of these artefacts; some representative examples must suffice. Probably in the 1730s, Joseph Sebastian Klauber (1710-1768), one of the two brothers whose publishing house (founded in 1740) was to play such an eminent role in 18th century Augsburg print production,¹¹ made an engraving which adheres fairly closely to Ruffini (ill. 2); Simon Thaddäus Sondermayr (d. 1754) supplied engravings which repeat the Ruffini Spirit in mirror inversion and on a lower artistic level by rendering clothing and clouds in a simplified and schematic way (ill. 3-4). Especially the Sondermayr engravings, modest achievements though they are, look as if they had been perfectly suited for being produced in large quantities and subsequently being handed out by the nuns to visitors whom Crescentia's fame had drawn to the monastery.¹² (Indeed, the backsides of both copies available to me bear the handwritten name 'Maria Crescentia', probably written by Anna Neth, monastery scribe and confidante of Crescentia. The addition of the name enhanced the value of the engravings as a keepsake; some people who received them probably thought that Crescentia herself had signed them.)

Another engraving by Sondermayr (ill. 6), who here makes himself known as court engraver to Crescentia's admirer Clemens August of Cologne, and a very similar, but technically more accomplished engraving (ill. 5) by Johann Heinrich Störcklin (1686-1737) after a drawing by Gottfried Bernhard Göz (1708-1774), one of the most prominent Augsburg artists of his days, at first sight may come as surprise because of their divergence from the Ruffini model; as a surprise, that is, because after reading Ott's account, one would assume that the purported authenticity of Ruffini's painting, based as it was on Crescentia's own words, and the aura of divine assistance attaching to it would more or less automatically grant it the status of a 'vera icon', whose replicas should deviate from its model as little as possible.

This, though, was obviously not the case. The two engravings last mentioned, e.g., replace Ruffini's gracefully hovering Spirit with a more sedate, statuesque figure, posing stiffly and verging on the plump because of the triangular outline of the frock. The latter feature

¹⁰ Dischinger (see annot. 9), p. 269.

¹¹ An inscription on the engraving says that it was published by the heirs of Stephan Meistetter, who had died in 1728.

¹² Whereas the inscription on the engraving in ill. 3 says that it was executed by Sondermayr (*sc[ulpsit]*), the engraving in ill. 4 only names him as publisher (*exc[udit]*). These engravings were brought to my notice by Prof. Pörnbacher.

possibly facilitated the misinterpretation of the Spirit youth, somewhat androgynous even in the Ruffini version, as a female; something occurring again and again, also with regard to other images based on Crescentia's vision.¹³ Not least because the cloth textures on the engravings suggest silk or taffeta, the overall impression is that these images depict a small statue which has been sumptuously dressed, as it occurred quite frequently at the time with such objects of devotion. (In the course of an investigation, which will be dealt with presently, Johann Erasmus Oxenreiter, parish priest in the village of Obergermaringen near Kaufbeuren, in September 1744 gave to protocol that Crescentia had made for him a clothed statue of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴) Alternately, one might speculate that these images took their cue from the silver statue of the Crescentine Spirit which the Bavarian Electress Maria Amalia had commissioned in 1735 and donated to the Kaufbeuren monastery (lost today).¹⁵ Anyway, this image of the Crescentine Spirit seems to be based on a model whose authority was possibly considered equal or at least not much inferior to that of Ruffini's pioneering work, as it also recurs again and again, e.g. in a painting from 1742 by Franz Anton Germiller (1682-1750) in the refectory of the Franciscan nuns in Mindelheim (Kreis Unterallgäu, ill. 7). Germiller adds a dove floating in front of the youth's upper body¹⁶ and surrounds the dove as well as the youth's head with a veritable riot of flames, which is quite pleasing from a decorative point of view, but somewhat obliterates the significance of the seven flames forming an inner circle around the Spirit's head, symbols of his seven gifts.¹⁷

¹³ Elfriede Grabner erroneously assumed that the Germiller painting shows the Virgin in her role as 'Bride of the Holy Spirit' (*Mater Gratiarum : Marianische Kultbilder in der Volksfrömmigkeit des Ostalpenraumes*, Wien [et al.], 2002, p. 23).

¹⁴ Andreas Weilerder: 'Die Akten der Untersuchung über Crescentia Höß, verstorbene Oberin des Franziskanerinnenklosters zu Kaufbeuren, aus dem Jahr 1744', in: *Die heilige Crescentia von Kaufbeuren im Spiegel der ersten Befragung durch Eusebius Amort und Giovanni Battista Bassi im Jahr 1744*, Thalhofen 2001 (Kaufbeurer Schriftenreihe ; 3), pp. 6-123, at p. 109.

¹⁵ Ott, ed. Gatz (see annot. 5), p. 227. In a footnote, Gatz surmises that the statue was melted down during the secularization, i.e., early in the 19th century.

¹⁶ According to Pörnbacher, during the last years of her life, Crescentia preferred that the Spirit youth should be depicted with a dove in front of his chest, in order to dispel all doubts as to his identity. (*Gedenkstätte der heiligen Crescentia von Kaufbeuren*, Lindenberg 2005, p. 29)

¹⁷ In Reinhard Rampold's essay about a rather free interpretation of the Ruffini painting by an unknown painter (today located in Innsbruck, Tyrolia, Episcopal Residence), mention is made of an engraving whose interpretation poses some difficulties, which Rampold, though, does not spell out. ('Der Heilige Geist als Jüngling: Ein Beitrag zur Ikonographie der Heilig-Geist-Darstellungen', in: Michaela Frick [et al., ed.]: *Beachten und Bewahren : Caramellen zur Denkmalpflege, Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte Tirols; Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Franz Caramelle*, Innsbruck 2005, pp. 249-253, at p. 251). This engraving, which also names Göz as draughtsman and Störcklin as engraver, shows a young man very similar to the Göz-Störcklin engraving in ill. 5 and thus at first sight is most likely to be taken for another engraving of Crescentia's Spirit. But the aureole surrounding him (not including any flames) and the Trinity symbol placed in front of his upper body contribute nothing to identify him as the Holy Spirit; as a matter of fact, the Trinity symbol seems an odd item to accompany the Spirit as an individual figure. The inscription below, taken from Colossians 2, explains what this symbol is meant to convey: 'In quo inhabitat omnis plenitudo Trinitatis Corporaliter' ('For in him all the fullness of the Deity [Trinity] dwells bodily'). But if one looks up Colossians 2, one realizes that the person referred to here as housing 'the fullness of the Deity' is Christ, and it is Christ as well who utters the words from Matthew 11,28 printed at the top of the engraving: 'Venite ad me omnes' ('Come to me, all you [who labour and are heavily burdened]'). It is quite common that inscriptions from Scripture on 18th century engravings work only if they are considered in isolation and that once the context is taken into consideration, the connection to the picture becomes tenuous at best; still, it is difficult to imagine

In spite of different posture and different dress, these white-clad youths are easily recognizable as belonging basically to the same type as the Ruffini Spirit and thus as being meant to refer to Crescentia's vision. There are several instances of another type of anthropomorphic Spirit in South German art of the time; a type which in scholarly literature is sometimes treated in connection with Crescentia, and which, though its recurring appearance may be related in some way to her, still is quite distinct from the Crescentine youth and thus should probably be kept apart. These bearded, often (but not always) winged Spirits, whose age ranges from mature youth to old age, occur in the works of such important painters as Cosmas Damian Asam (1686-1739) and Christoph Thomas Scheffler (1699-1756). The latter used this type twice in fresco cartouches (1742) in St Mary's Chapel in Haunstetten (today a suburb of Augsburg): In the cartouche celebrating Mary as 'Bride of the Holy Spirit', an honorary title based on Luke 1,35 and given to her since medieval times,¹⁸ the Spirit is seen putting a ring on the finger of the Virgin kneeling in front of him (ill. 8); in another one, the Spirit hovering above the Virgin forms part of the Trinity, the context in which this type is found most frequently.¹⁹ (And perhaps this is a convenient place to emphasize that the Trinity as a whole never appeared in Crescentia's visions.)²⁰

In order to stay as tightly focussed as possible, I will mostly exclude this variety of Spirit from further discussion and concentrate on the Crescentine type; and the next question likely to arise is how this type fits into the pictorial tradition of representing the Holy Spirit. We are, of course, mainly accustomed to meeting this entity in the guise of a dove, but there is a steady trickle of Spirits in human shape through the centuries; and Dominikus Ott even gives a useful, if at first sight mildly puzzling hint where to search for the immediate ancestry of Crescentia's young man, who, as was just mentioned, is quite distinct from other types of anthropomorphic Spirits. Ott says that the Spirit appeared to Crescentia in a shape, 'which, at least in all its essentials, was almost identical to the shape in which he had a long time ago appeared to St Teresa, who had also pictures made of him and who kept these pictures in her prayer book. I myself hold two of these pictures in my hands, which in my estimate must be much more than 100 years old.'²¹

Anyone but moderately familiar with the life and iconography of the great Carmelite mystic Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) will of course know about Teresa's vision of the dove on

that someone should have been as daring as to transfer biblical quotations relating to Christ to the Holy Spirit. In a scrapbook in the Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg (2 Kst 224), mainly containing prints from the Klauber workshop, this engraving and the Göz-Störcklin engraving undoubtedly depicting the Crescentine Spirit (ill. 5) are pasted next to each other (fol 19r).

¹⁸ Konrad Algermissen (et al., ed.): *Lexikon der Marienkunde*, vol. 1, Regensburg 1967, col. 908 ff.

¹⁹ See, e.g., Cosmas Damian Asam, choir fresco in the pilgrimage church of Herrgottsruh in Friedberg (Bavaria, Kreis Aichach-Friedberg, 1738); Christoph Thomas Scheffler, high altar painting in the parish church of Aulzhausen (Bavaria, Kreis Aichach-Friedberg, 1739); idem, nave fresco in St Paulinus in Trier (Rhineland-Palatinate, 1743); all these examples in Kosel (see annot. 4).

²⁰ There is a charming small 18th century watercolour in the Crescentia Monastery in Kaufbeuren which shows the betrothal of the infant Anna Höß to the Christ child and adds the figures of God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Both latter persons of the Trinity, though, do not figure in the betrothal story as it is told in contemporary hagiography; it was the unknown painter who conflated different incidents.

²¹ Ott, ed. Gatz (see annot. 5), p. 224.

the eve of Pentecost, an event which she relates in chapter 38 of her autobiography and which accounts for the dove as one of her standard attributes in art; but even those who are highly knowledgeable in this area might be forgiven for being somewhat bemused by Ott's reference to a quite differently shaped Spirit appearing to Teresa. The allusion goes back to an incident which can be read up in an early biography of Teresa, *Vida Virtudes y Milagros, de la bien Aventurada Virgen Teresa de Jesus*, written by Diego de Yepes (1530-1613), Bishop of Tarazona and Teresa's confessor in the years 1575/76. This book, first published in Zaragoza in 1606 and thus the second-oldest biography of Teresa after Francisco de Ribera's *Vida de la Madre Teresa de Jesús* (1590), has a chapter entitled 'De las visiones marauillosas y hablas particulares, y de otras mercedes que el señor comunico a esta Santa Virgen', which among other things deals with the vision of the dove and goes on to add an encounter with a Spirit very similar to the one who visited Crescentia:

The divine spirit also appeared to her in the shape of a very handsome young man, entirely surrounded by brightly burning flames, and she had a small picture of him painted, which she usually kept in her breviary and which later came into the possession of Don Fernando de Toledo, Duke of Alba, who always carried it close to his bosom for his comfort. So deeply was this vision imprinted on the saint's mind that it was always present to her until her death, whatever else kept her occupied. She only sometimes felt as if there were a thin veil before her, but she was always certain that the Spirit was behind it, and often the veil was drawn back and she could perceive him.²²

[see appendix (2)]

Admittedly, the impact of this incident on art history was on the whole rather scant. Still, it comes as a disappointment that even Laura Gutiérrez Rueda failed to mention it when she devoted a substantial study to Teresan iconography,²³ for some 17th and 18th print series did include it. It is not yet there in the 'Life of Teresa of Avila', engraved by Adriaen Collaert und Cornelis I Galle after Pieter I de Jode (Antwerp 1613),²⁴ but can be found in two illustrated books published in the same year 1670 in two European printing capitals: in *Vita*

²² Diego de Yepes: *Vida Virtudes y Milagros, de la bien Aventurada Virgen Teresa de Jesus, Madre y Fundadora de la nueva Reformation de la Orden de los Descalços, y Descalços de Nuestra Senora del Carmen*, Saragossa 1606; book 1, ch. 18, p. 133.

It was Boespflug 1984 (see annot. 3) who led me on the track of de Yepes. Boespflug himself, though, quotes (p. 149 ff.) this incident from *Vie da la Sainte Mère Thérèse de Jésus* (Paris 1643). He is aware that this is the translation of a Spanish book first published in 1606 and even gives the part of the French book's title alluding to the Spanish author (*composée par l'évêque de Tarassone*), but he never exactly identifies de Yepes as source. He does not do so either in his more recent *Dieu et ses images* (see annot. 3) when briefly commenting on Teresa's Spirit vision. I did not succeed in tracking down a German or a Latin translation of de Yepes's biography in WorldCat (<http://www.worldcat.org>); there is, however, an Italian translation (*Vita della serafica vergine e gloriosa madre Santa Teresa di Giesù[...]*), first published, as it seems, 1708 in Venice.

²³ Laura Gutiérrez Rueda: *Ensayo de iconografía Teresiana = Revista de espiritualidad : Publicacion Carmelitana de Ciencia y vida spiritual* 33 (1964), March = No. 90 [Número monográfico]. The author only mentions Teresa's vision of the Spirit in the shape of a dove (pp. 83 f., pp. 154 f.). The same author's *Gracia y Hermosura : Ensayo de iconografía teresiana*, Madrid 2012, is a reprint, to which a preface including some bibliographic references to recent scholarship has been added.

²⁴ There is only a plate (no. 23) showing Teresa in her study inspired by the Spirit in the shape of a dove. Ann Diels [et al.]: *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings : Engravings and Woodcuts 1450-1700; The Collaert Dynasty, Part IV*, Ouderkerk aan den IJssel 2005; pp. 246-63.

effigiata et Essercizi affettivi di S. Teresa di Giesù (Rome 1670; ill. 9),²⁵ on some of whose engravings the inscription ,Valet sc[ulpsit]‘ indicates that they were executed by Guillaume Vallet (1632-1704),²⁶ who was born and died in Paris, but spent some years in Rome (1655/62); and in *La Vie de la seraphique Mere Sainte Terese de Iesvs* (Lyon 1670),²⁷ whose engravings, according to the introductory matter, were executed by Claudine Brunnand (1630-1674[?]) after ‘drawings which had been made in Rome by an excellent painter.’²⁸ (ill. 10)

We will leave aside questions such as who this ‘excellent painter’ was, which of the series was engraved first and which share exactly should be allocated to which nation in this Franco-Italian venture.²⁹ For the present purpose, it is sufficient to note that whichever of these two series came first, the second one either copies the designs of the first or repeats them in mirror reversion. In the engraving we are concerned with here, no inversion has taken place in the process of migrating the design from one book to the other: Both show St Teresa on the left, seated at her writing desk and turning round in amazement towards the visionary youth, who is approaching in a fiery blaze from right, accompanied by a profusion of flames, some of which seem to be woven into the fabric of his gown.

There is something slightly odd about the wording (near-identical in both series) of the subscriptions on the engravings specifying their subject, as they do not refer to the Holy Spirit and instead apostrophize the youth as a personification of divine love: ‘Divine love, in the guise of a most beautiful flame-bearing youth, ravishes his spouse Teresa’ (‘Diuius Amor, sub imagine Speciosissimi ac flammigeri pueri Teresiae Sponsae blanditur’; the *Vita effigiata* inserts ‘quám saepius’ after ‘pueri’). In the typographical text accompanying the engraving in the 1670 books, the Spirit also plays but a subordinate role at best: Whereas the brief Italian description of the content of the engraving in the *Vita effigiata* does identify it as an encounter between Teresa and the Holy Spirit (‘Per più due Anni si vede da preßo lo Spirito Santo, come un bellissimo Giouine acceso di foco’, p. 275), the ensuing sonnet makes no more direct mention of him when it enlarges on the love theme by enlisting the metaphorical assistance of Amor, Psyche and Love’s arrows; and the text of the French book stubbornly refuses to make any allusion at all to the Holy Spirit and does not go beyond explaining ‘this infant’ as ‘sacred love’:

Ce petit Enfant que vous voyez couronné de flammes & de feux, n’est autre que
l’Amour sacré, & cet Amour, tout petit qu’il est, represente nôtre Dieu ... les étincelles
& les éclats de feu qui rejallissent de la personne de ce petit amour, s’insinuent dans le

²⁵ *Vita effigiata et Essercizi affettivi di S. Teresa di Giesù ... per il giorno della sacra Comunione ... con rime del Signor' Abbate Oratio Quaranta, da un Religioso della Riforma, autore dell'altra più diffusa. (Atti interni di virtù praticati dalla Santa Madre Teresa, e scritti da uno de suoi Confessori.)*, Roma 1607, p. 274.

²⁶ Thieme-Becker (see annot. 9) 34 (1940), p. 81.

²⁷ *La Vie de la seraphique Mere Sainte Terese de Iesvs, fondatrice des Carmes Déchaussez & Carmelites Déchaussées, en Figures, & en Vers François & Latins : Avec un Abbregé de l'Histoire, une Reflexion Morale, & une Resolution Chrétienne sur chaque Figure*. Lyon 1670, p. 110. This book is also mentioned by Boespflug 1984 (see annot. 3) p. 150.

²⁸ ‘desseins qui en ont été faite à Rome par un excellent peintre’

²⁹ Fernando Moreno Cuadro: ‘En torno a las fuentes iconográficas de Tiepolo para la “Visión teresiana” del Museo de Bellas Artes de Budapest’, in: *Archivo Español de Arte* 82, no 327 (2009), pp. 243-258, at p. 246.

cœur de cette sainte Amante, & l’embrasent des mêmes ardeurs dont les Seraphins sont brûlez dans le Ciel. (p.113)

Here it is indeed difficult to forgo the conclusion that the author of the French text did not really know what the engraving was supposed to depict, and to infer that the incident in general was so little known that even someone who had set about writing devotional texts on Teresa could not be relied on recognizing it. If this sounds too improbable (Diego de Yepes’s biography was, after all, available in French),³⁰ one might speculate that the French author was not happy about Teresa meeting the Spirit in this particular guise (for reasons why this might indeed have been the case, see below) and thus decided to stick with the interpretation supplied by the subscription on the engraving, which, too, is strangely reticent concerning the Spirit issue.

Some 45 years later, in 1715 or 1716, Arnold van Westerhout (1651-1725) published (in Rome?) a series of engravings entitled *Vita effigiata della serafica vergine S. Teresa di Gesù*, which to some extent heavily relies on its 1670 predecessors and just copies its designs, in other cases, though, goes its own way.³¹ The Spirit vision takes over the subscription already known from the earlier series (‘Divinus amor [...]’, with the ‘quám saepius’ insertion of the Rome series), but the image itself, quite surprisingly, is altogether independent from its predecessors (ill. 11): Teresa is shown here kneeling in an empty room in front of a very child-like slender Spirit gracefully hovering in upright posture in a circle of flames; the latter one a definite aesthetic improvement over the lumpy flames scattered through the 1670 engravings, and thus much more expressive of Teresa’s vision as it is told by de Yepes (‘surrounded by brightly burning flames’). It is in particular Westerhout’s Spirit, very close in type to the figure painted by Ruffini, which is likely to make one wonder if there is evidence that images of Teresa’s vision were known not only to Ott, but also to the Kaufbeuren nuns during the lifetime of Crescentia. Indeed one may assume that this was the case (and that it was thanks to the monastery that Ott knew about these images at all); but it is rather the Lyon-Rome type of Spirit than the Westerhout type whose presence in 18th century Kaufbeuren can be firmly established, as will be seen presently.

In 1733, Johanna Altwögger, the then Mother Superior of the Kaufbeuren nuns, wrote a letter to the Munich Carmelite nunnery in which she mentions that some years ago, the Munich monastery had been as kind as to send ‘small prayers’ (‘gebetlein’) concerning the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit to Kaufbeuren. These sheets, she says, had contained ‘a small engraving of the Spirit appearing to St Teresa in human shape’, and the letter goes on to request some more copies of these prints.³² A copy of what she most probably refers to here, possibly an item commissioned by the Munich Carmelites themselves, has been preserved in the Crescentia Monastery in Kaufbeuren to the present day: a folded sheet whose four pages contain a German prayer to the Holy Spirit asking for his seven gifts (‘Andäch-

³⁰ See annot. 22.

³¹ Moreno Cuadro (see annot. 29), p. 246.

³² Weitlauff 1971 (see annot. 2), p. 270: ‘Es seint vor einigen jahren unß auß ihren lieben gebettlein geschiekht worden von den 7 gaben deß H. Geists, waren ein kúpferlin, wie der Hl. Geist in menschlicher Gestalt der h. Theresia erschienen; wan ich einige könnte haben, wollte recht demietig darumb bitten.’

tige Anruffung deß H. Geistes, umb Erlangung seiner siblen Gaaben') and, on the front page, a small image of the Holy Spirit accompanied by inscriptions in German and Latin specifying that this is the shape in which the Spirit had appeared to the holy virgin Teresa ('Also Erschiene der Heilige Geist der hei[iligen] Jungfraw Teresa'; 'Haec forma sese Spiritus S. D[ivae] V[irgini] Teresae manifestavit'; ill. 12); neither artist nor printer is named on the sheet.³³ The image, together with the inscriptions running along its frames, was copied from an engraving signed 'Ioan: Sadeler fecit', which refers to Johann (Hans) II Sadeler (1588-1665[?]),³⁴ less important member of an extended artistic family, on record in Munich, Innsbruck and Constance (ill. 13). The Spirit on both prints is clearly recognizable as being very similar to the Spirit on the Lyon and Rome series mentioned above, even if he differs in several details, among them the rich ornaments on his clothing and the way he is identified as Holy Spirit: a dove has been added, and instead of the scattered flames on the earlier engravings, there is now an aureole encircling the right hand. One would have liked to conclude that Sadeler's engraving took his cue either from the Rome or from the Lyon series, both published in 1670; this, however, does not fit in with Sadeler's assumed year of death 1665. There is, of course, some latitude for speculation that Sadeler died sometime after 1670 (*NDB*, e.g., explicitly says '1665 or later [?]',³⁵ still, if he was dead by 1670, one should probably assume a common, as yet unknown ancestor for the two Rome/Lyon series and the two German prints: It is not very likely that the artists in Rome or Lyon made use of somewhat pedestrian prints which were, as the inscriptions prove, clearly intended for the German market.³⁶

³³ I owe the knowledge of this highly significant document to Prof. Pömbacher.

³⁴ Biographical information taken from Isabelle de Ramaix [et al.]: *The illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 71,3: Raphael Sadeler I, New York 2012, 'Author's note', p. VIII.

³⁵ *Neue deutsche Biographie* 22 (2005), p. 346.

³⁶ Tracking down the Sadeler engraving was no easy task. It is mentioned by Karl Braun (*Die Heilig-Geist-Verehrung der heiligen Crescentia Höß*, Lindenberg 2001, p. 20), who quotes from a letter written to him in December 1994 by Dr. h.c. Jakob Mois (Rottenbuch, Upper Bavaria), which refers to the Sadeler engraving. Hollstein's section on Johann II Sadeler does not mention this sheet, which means that it has not been preserved in any major German print collection (*Hollstein's German engravings, etchings and woodcuts* 37 [1995]); the archive of the Crescentia Monastery and the Kaufbeuren municipal museum do not own a copy either. (I am indebted to Katharina Hahn for combing through the museum collections.) When another reference in the letter by Mois made me contact the Benedictine abbey of Ottobeuren (Mois said that the Sadeler print had been used as model for a stucco figure in Ottobeuren), I eventually struck gold: Mois had sent a xerocopy of the Sadeler engraving to Ottobeuren, where it had been carefully filed away, and P. Rupert Prusinovsky OSB kindly supplied a further copy to me. The whereabouts of the original copy of the engraving (formerly, as it seems, in Mois's possession) is unknown. It is therefore impossible for me to decide if the sheet was meant to stand on its own, or if it was meant to be accompanied by a prayer for the seven gifts of the Spirit, as it is the case with the prayer sheet today preserved in the Crescentia Monastery. The Kaufbeuren sheet has the first line of the prayer at the bottom of the first page, below the image ('Komb, O Geist der Weißheit'), something which is lacking in the Sadeler engraving. If there was some text above the image in the Sadeler engraving, i.e. in a place where the Kaufbeuren sheet has a title ('Andächtige Anruffung'), cannot be judged either from the xerocopy available to me; here, the engraving is cut off at the top. If the Sadeler engraving originally came together with the prayer, there is some possibility that it is this item which the Kaufbeuren Mother Superior in her letter referred to. Still, it is the other sheet which has been preserved in the Crescentia Monastery; and this is an item which may well have been produced in the early 18th century, whereas the Sadeler engraving had been made several decades before the Kaufbeuren and Munich nuns exchanged letters.

The connection between the two nunneries in Munich and Kaufbeuren deserves some further exploration in the present context, as it was not just by supplying printed images of Teresa's vision that the Munich monastery was in all likelihood instrumental in transplanting the Spirit youth from 16th century Avila to 18th century Kaufbeuren. When in 1719 the Munich prioress for the first time addressed a letter to the Kaufbeuren Franciscan nuns and thus initiated a letter exchange which was to last for several decades, her main reason for doing so obviously was a desire to learn more about Crescentia, a curiosity which probably stemmed from the fact the Munich convent also was home to a mystically gifted woman, Maria Anna Lindmayr (1657-1726).³⁷ During the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), in which Bavaria fought on the side of France against Habsburg and Britain, Lindmayr had been visited with visions of impending doom and divine retribution; on 12th July, 1704, she announced that the Trinity had appeared to her and had predicted woe upon the country, but that Munich, the capital of the Electorate, would be spared if a church were erected in honour of the Trinity.³⁸ Lindmayr at this time was just a tertiary of the Carmelite order (several monasteries had for various reasons refused to take her in), but the Munich municipal authorities were sufficiently impressed and pledged themselves on 17th July to fulfil this stipulation. The church was eventually built in the years 1711 ff.; 1711 also saw the establishment of a Carmelite nunnery in Munich, whose convent Lindmayr joined and in whose midst she entered into her novitiate in the following year. (It may be claimed that her prophecy concerning the church proved accurate, as Munich indeed did not become a theatre of war in these years. Elector Max II Emanuel, on the other hand, suffered a crushing defeat in the Battle of Blenheim soon after the pledge just mentioned, and had to flee from his country, which fell under Habsburg rule for the decade to come.)

What is most interesting about this church in the present context is the high altar painting (ill. 14) by Johann Andreas Wolf(f) (1652-1716), one of the most distinguished Bavarian artists of his time; it was finished after his death (1717) by his pupil Johann Degler (1665-1729).³⁹ It is based on Lindmayr's visionary experiences, at least one of which (24th December, 1703) included, in her own words, the Spirit 'in the shape of a handsome youth, inflamed by love'⁴⁰ and thus was clearly indebted to Teresa, images of whose vision are

³⁷ Information on Lindmayr was taken from: Pörnbacher 2002 (see annot. 2), p. 57 ff.; Manfred Weitlauff: 'Lindmayr, Maria Anna Josepha a Jesu', in: *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 14 (1985), pp. 607 f.; Michael Volpert: 'München im Spanischen Erbfolgekrieg', in: *Die Stadt lag in dem Grund, wan dise Kirch nit stund ... : Maria Anna Lindmayr, die Dreifaltigkeitskirche und das Karmelitenkloster in München*, München 2004, pp. 22-32; Thomas Forstner: 'Zur Bau- und Kunstgeschichte der Münchner Dreifaltigkeitskirche', in: *Die Stadt lag in dem Grund [...]*, pp. 33-55.

³⁸ Volpert (see annot. 37), p. 26.

³⁹ For a detailed chronology relating to the altar painting see Kuno Schlichtenmaier: *Studien zum Münchner Hofmaler Johann Andreas Wolff (1652-1716) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Handzeichnungen*, doctoral thesis, Tübingen 1988, p. 101. Oddly, Schlichtenmaier argues that the painting belongs to a tradition initiated by Crescentia's vision, whereas the mere fact that the Munich prioress started only in 1719 to make enquiries concerning Crescentia suggests that it rather was the latter who was influenced by Lindmayr.

⁴⁰ Quoted after Franz Joseph Nock: *Leben und Wirken der gottseligen Mutter Maria Anna Josepha a Jesu Lindmayr unbeschuhte Carmelitin im Dreifaltigkeitskloster zu München*, Regensburg [et al.], 1882, pp. 257 f. It is odd that Forstner (see annot. 37, p. 54) and Katharina Herrmann (*De deo uno et trino : Bildprogramme barocker Dreifaltigkeitskirchen in Bayern und Österreich*, Regensburg 2010, p. 116) do not refer to this particular text quoted by Nock (adapted, however, to 19th century standard German). Forstner, though without

known to have been circulating in the Munich convent. Lindmayr's vision following the example set by Teresa accounts for the painting's youthful Holy Spirit, whose head is encircled by seven flames, a figure very much in the mould of the image painted by Ruffini in accordance with Crescentia's vision, apart from the dove hovering in front of the Munich Spirit's upper body. If we take into consideration that there was not only a lively letter exchange between the two nunneries (which included the forwarding of the sheets depicting the Teresa incident from Munich to Kaufbeuren), but that in April 1721 Crescentia herself had been given permission to travel to Munich in order to meet her fellow mystic Maria Anna Lindmayr, and thus surely must have seen the Wolf-Degler altar painting, the conclusion becomes all but unavoidable that Crescentia's Spirit visions owe their immediate inspiration to the Munich Carmelite nuns. Weitlauff even goes as far as to suggest that this is an instance of how Crescentia's spiritual progress was largely due to her being manipulated by her superiors. 'They kneaded the artless, impressionable nun into form', he says with reference to an earlier stage of her monastic life,⁴¹ and the letter exchange between the Kaufbeuren Mother Superior Johanna Altwögger and the Munich Carmelite monastery in his opinion reveals that there were forces at work in the Kaufbeuren monastery which 'aimed at patterning Maria Crescentia's spiritual development even in details after the model of Lindmayr', and that these forces 'were after the latter's death [1726] intent on transferring the mystical headquarters, which up to then had existed in Munich, to Kaufbeuren.'⁴²

Whatever one thinks of such speculations, once one has become aware of the Crescentine Spirit's indebtedness to the Munich altar painting and to Carmelite iconography, it is obvious that it must be taken with a grain of salt when Ott implies that Crescentia was even in early childhood visited by the Spirit as she later described him to Ruffini. Karl Braun, who at the beginning of the 21st century wrote about Crescentia's worship of the Holy Spirit, supports Ott's claim when he discusses the Munich altarpiece, and maintains that it was not this painting which in the first place inspired Crescentia to envision the Holy Spirit the way she did; for him, Crescentia 'stood in the centuries-old iconographic tradition that the human shape was a more appealing way to render the third divine person of the Trinity than the symbol of the dove'.⁴³ This, though, is a not entirely convincing latter-day attempt at bridging the gap between defending Crescentia as a true visionary on the one hand and acknowledging on the other hand incontrovertible evidence that there was nothing particularly original about her visions: For if Ott is right and a young child indeed was granted vi-

indicating his source, quotes from Lindmayr's description of the altar painting itself (see Nock, pp. 271 f.); in this text, however, the passage referring to the Spirit does not explicitly speak of him as anthropomorphic. Herrmann says that there are several descriptions of Trinity visions in Lindmayr's writings and that one of them corresponds fairly closely to the one on the Wolf painting. As a source for this she gives Forstner (see above), but also notes that Forstner fails to indicate which text by Lindmayr he exactly refers to. Herrmann points out that this is a text contained in Cod. Germ. 8491 in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich; but it seems that she herself did not look up this text. Going back to the Lindmayr writings themselves is something future scholarship might find worth doing.

⁴¹ Weitlauff 1971 (see annot. 2), p. 265.

⁴² Weitlauff 1971 (see annot. 2), p. 267.

⁴³ Braun (see annot. 36), p. 3.

sions of the Holy Spirit, it is difficult to imagine that such an existential experience should unwittingly have somehow adhered to the tenets of iconographic tradition.

There is also the remarkable circumstance that the artist of the painting on St Joseph's altar in the Munich Trinity Church is none other than Joseph Ruffini. This suggests that it might have been a recommendation from the Carmelite nuns rather than from Ottobeuren that made the Kaufbeuren Franciscan nuns call upon Ruffini's services (though it must again be noted that some 10 years separate the St Joseph for Munich, painted in 1718, from the Kaufbeuren painting). It also encourages the mundane assumption that Ruffini already had at least a basic blueprint in mind for the type of Spirit he was supposed to paint, something not entirely compatible with Ott's account, which has Ruffini at first shy away from the daunting demands made of him, and implies that it was divine intervention which finally made him succeed in transferring the Spirit vision to canvas. It is of course very tempting to speculate that Ruffini even knew the Westerhout engraving (ill. 11), whose Spirit comes very close to the one he painted for Kaufbeuren, but there is no particular evidence as yet from which such an inference may be drawn.

If one cared to look beyond the Munich connection and Carmelite iconography and to search further afield for precedents of anthropomorphic Spirits who perhaps had no immediate bearing on Crescentia, but still belong to the context into which she is embedded, one might remember a series of small frescoes illustrating the articles of the Creed, part of a larger cycle, noteworthy mainly for its daringly expressionistic brushwork, and painted in the years 1704 ff. by Johann Rieger (1655-1730) upon the vaults of the Swabian Benedictine monastery church of Holzen (Kreis Augsburg; c 60 miles to the north of Kaufbeuren):⁴⁴ The fresco for the article 'I believe in the Holy Spirit' (ill. 15) features a white-clad beardless Spirit youth flanked by Christ and the Father. (There were links between Holzen and Ottobeuren, which abbey in turn may be linked to Crescentia; but this is for the time being just a very vague chain of associations.)

Doing even more genealogical research, one might also come across the sainted French Salesian nun Marguerite-Marie Alacoque (1647-1690). She is probably most famous for her vision of the Heart of Jesus, but in her autobiography she also recounts how the Trinity appeared to her in the shape of three white-clad similar-looking young men,⁴⁵ which means that her Spirit is a close relative of the one that appeared to Teresa (even if de Yepes's text does not specify him as white-clad) and Crescentia (even if the latter one disclosed himself outside the Trinitarian context as a separate entity). The fact that the three persons of Alacoque's Trinity, of which no image has come to my notice, are near-identical (something which is not the case in the Munich altar painting) links her vision to an exegetic tradition which can be traced back to Augustine and which says that the three angels visiting Abra-

⁴⁴ Rieger was later to become director of the Augsburg municipal art academy. His fame is usually overshadowed by that of later 18th century Augsburg painters, although in terms of sheer painterly verve he is possibly second to none of those coming after him.

⁴⁵ 'Ils me furent représentés sous la forme de trois jeunes hommes vetus de blanc tout resplendissants de lumière, de même age, grandeur et beauté.' *Vie et oeuvres de Sainte Marguerite-Marie Alacoque*, vol. 1, Paris-Fribourg 1990, p. 88.

ham (Genesis 18,1 ff) might be interpreted as a prefiguration of the Trinity.⁴⁶ Trinities consisting of human triplets may already be encountered in medieval times, and whereas it is utterly beyond the scope of these pages to explore this strand of tradition in detail, one might still note that there are examples in which the divine persons are white-clad young men, e.g., in Jean Fouquet's illuminations in the *Heures d'Étienne Chevalier* (bearded men, though, in these instances; ill. 16).⁴⁷ Thus, at least within a Trinitarian context, there are medieval ancestors to the Teresa-Crescentia Spirit; and one might well be tempted to try to track down more precisely those images stemming from this tradition which assisted in engendering Teresa's vision, which in turn, as has been shown, most probably influenced what Crescentia experienced.

This, though, is not the place to get immersed more deeply in the study of antecedents; rather, it is appropriate now to ask how the Spirit youth was taken up by Crescentia's contemporaries. Given that both Maria Anna Lindmayr and Crescentia Höß enjoyed considerable fame and that images of their vision of the Holy Spirit were in plain view (the altarpiece in the Munich Trinity Church should have been especially conspicuous) or circulated as engravings, it is surprising that quite some time elapsed before someone officially took exception. Surprising, that is, because this was still a time when church authorities did not leave it to individual mystics or artists how the Holy Spirit could be imagined, and thus should have been expected to keep a vigilant eye on anything that deviated from what had not unequivocally been approved of; and the Spirits discussed here quite obviously were instances of deviance. True, there were even high church dignitaries in Crescentia's days who took a relaxed and liberal stance in this respect; Rupert Neß, for one, abbot of the famous Benedictine abbey of Ottobeuren already mentioned and one of Crescentia's admirers, was, as it seems, quite fond of this type of Spirit;⁴⁸ still, it was likely to meet with censure sooner or later.

Whereas the Council of Trent had made no specific pronouncement on the depiction of the Holy Spirit or the other persons of the Trinity,⁴⁹ its aftermath saw the gradual emergence of a consensus shared by many theologians that it was acceptable to depict the Trinity or its individual members, but that this had to happen in strict accordance with the Scriptures; a tenet for which the *Catechismus Romanus*, first published 1566, already offered a solid foundation.⁵⁰ It was fairly evident that Christ, who was 'made human', as the Nicene Creed has it, and the story of whose human existence is told in the Gospels, could be represented in human shape; the vision recounted in Daniel 7,9 allowed for the depiction of God the

⁴⁶ Jan Hallebeek: 'Papal prohibitions midway between rigor and laxity : On the issue of depicting the Holy Trinity'; in: Willem J. van Asselt, ed.: *Iconoclasm and iconoclasm : Struggle for religious identity; Second Conference of Church Historians Utrecht*, Leiden [et al.] 2007, pp. 353-386, at p. 358.

⁴⁷ Adoration of the Trinity and coronation of the Virgin in the *Heures d'Étienne Chevalier*, Chantilly, Musée Condé, Boespflug 2008 (see annot. 3), p. 242, 271.

⁴⁸ Braun (see annot. 36), p. 20.

⁴⁹ This and the following paragraph are much indebted to Hallebeek (see annot. 46).

⁵⁰ *Catechismus, Ex Decreto Concilii Tridentini*, Romae 1566, p. 230: 'Nemo tamen propterea contra religionem, Deique legem, quidquam committi putet, cum sanctissimae Trinitatis aliqua persona quibusdam signis exprimitur, quae tam in ueteri, tam in nouo testamento apparuerunt.' In later editions with subdivisions, this is pars 3, caput 2,20.

Father as a venerable old man ('I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit'); and last, the baptism of Christ and what happened on the day of Pentecost supplied scriptural evidence for making the Holy Spirit visible either as a dove or as tongues of flame.⁵¹ In addition, some theologians approved of the 'triplet Trinity' harking back to the angels visiting Abraham.

This incident from Genesis, though, was not sufficient to justify single figures with three heads or single heads with three faces, as they occurred during the Middle Ages; at least from the 16th century onwards, such figures were usually rejected as monstrous, and in 1628 there even was a papal decree prohibiting these images.⁵² Abraham's angels were not necessarily suited either as an argument in favour of Crescentia's Holy Spirit in human guise (or Lindmayr's, for that matter), as her vision referred not to the Trinity as a whole, but only to one of its members; thus, images of the Spirit as Crescentia claimed to have seen him could easily be reproached for being incompatible with Scripture.

When eventually action was taken against Crescentia's Spirit (no similar incident is as yet known with regard to Lindmayr), the initiative came from an unexpected quarter.⁵³ In 1743, Joseph Vignoli, a member of the papal nunciature in Lucerne in Switzerland,⁵⁴ visited a nunnery near Constance (and thus close to the lake of this name in South West Germany) and was much displeased when he saw that several nuns kept engravings of Crescentia's Holy Spirit in their cells, as well as other images related to Crescentia of which he disapproved. He was all the more worried as Crescentia's fame as a rare paragon of piety and virtuousness had already spread through South Germany and Switzerland, and as several secular and ecclesiastic dignitaries held her in high esteem. If she indeed, as he feared, was a prey to her overwrought imagination or, even worse, was manipulated in matters spiritual by her superiors, her very popularity, or so he reasoned, might do serious damage to the church and offer Protestants a welcome opportunity to expose the true Roman faith to ridicule. Vignoli ordered the offensive images to be removed and wrote a letter to the Kaufbeuren Jesuits, whose superior claimed in his response that they had no jurisdiction over the Franciscan nuns and just officiated as their confessors. He also praised Crescentia's virtues, cautioned against rumour-mongering, and all in all prevaricated in a way which quite understandably did not satisfy Vignoli, who went on to address a letter to Pope Benedict XIV himself, dating from 2nd Mai 1744. In this letter, to which he added specimens of the engravings in question, Vignoli was careful not to cast doubt on the sincerity of Crescentia's piety and faith, but he insisted that the Holy Father should look into the matter and also made practical suggestions who should next be approached: either the

⁵¹ Hallebeek (see annot. 46) quotes Nicholas Sander(s) (p. 369; *De typica et honoraria sacrarum imaginum adoratione libri duo*, Louvain 1569, lib.1, cap. 4) and Johannes Molanus (p. 369; *De Picturis Et Imaginibus Sacris Liber Vnus: tractans de vitandis circa eas abusibus et de earundem significationibus*, Lovanii 1570).

⁵² According to Hallebeek (see annot. 46, p. 372) hardly anything is known about this decree issued by Urban VIII, which was handed down through several secondary sources dating from the 17th and 18th centuries.

⁵³ The following account is mainly based on Boespflug 1984 (see annot. 3), pp. 87 ff. He also gives the location of source material, as far as it has been preserved.

⁵⁴ An auditor was a cleric schooled in law and diplomacy, who advised the nuncio and stood in as his deputy. *Wetzer und Welte's Kirchenlexicon* 1 (1882), 2nd ed., col. 1576.

superior of the Franciscan Order, or the Vienna nunciature (within whose competence Kaufbeuren fell), or the Bishop of Augsburg (to whose diocese Kaufbeuren belonged).

From the wording of Vignoli's letter it is obvious that when he wrote it, news of Crescentia's death on 5th April 1744 had not yet reached him, and when Benedict XIV relegated the matter to the Augsburg episcopal see in a letter dating from 16th May 1744, he also wrote about Crescentia as if she were still alive. He declared the image of the Holy Spirit youth categorically as 'contrary to the spirit of the church' and asked for further elucidation on this issue; he also shared Vignoli's concern that 'heretics' might find a pretext here for gratuitous sneers at the expense of the true faith, and more generally admonished the Bishop that in the case of Crescentia's death no rash steps should be taken to gratify the populace's wish for a speedy beatification.

The man who received this letter was Joseph Ignaz Philipp von Hessen-Darmstadt, Prince Bishop of Augsburg since 1740, someone who had exchanged letters with Crescentia⁵⁵ and who cannot possibly have failed to take note of the Holy Spirit images associated with her name, but who had not seen fit as yet to intervene. It seems that he now did so in obeisance to the papal wish and placed a ban on the images; but considering that he must have been favourably prejudiced towards Crescentia, one would have expected him to otherwise let the matter rest and take the stance that no further measures need be taken, as Crescentia had died in the meantime. What Bishop Joseph did, though, was immediately initiate a full-fledged enquiry into the life and piety of the late Crescentia, into her alleged preternatural gifts, her visionary experiences and the ways she was revered by her admirers; and what is more and at first sight very strange, he entrusted this task to two close counsellors of his, Eusebius Amort and Giovanni Battista Bassi,⁵⁶ who, as he must have known, were likely to take a fairly dim view of the type of spirituality as it was embodied by Crescentia.

Eusebius Amort (1692-1775), Augustinian canon from Polling in Upper Bavaria (Kreis Weilheim-Schongau), was one of the figureheads of South German Roman-Catholic enlightenment and at the forefront of the fight against what he considered superstition, dubious miracles and theologically questionable forms of popular belief. The very year 1744, in which he got involved in the Crescentia affair, also saw the Augsburg publication of his book *De Revelationibus, Visionibus Et Apparitionibus Privatis Regulae Tutae*, with which he entered into the long-standing fray surrounding the revelations of the Spanish Franciscan mystic Maria de Jesus Agreda (1602-1665),⁵⁷ taking of course sides with the sceptics. He later was to become a founding member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences (1759), as was his friend Giovanni Battista Bassi (1713-1776), canon at the collegiate church of St Moritz's in Augsburg, sworn enemy of the Jesuits (whose Kaufbeuren establishment had to be counted among Crescentia's supporters), and exerting influence on the Bishop to a degree which raised suspicion and envy at the episcopal court. It has therefore been argued

⁵⁵ Weileder (see annot. 14), p. 7, annot. 4.

⁵⁶ For Amort and Bassi see also Karin Precht-Nußbaum: *Zwischen Augsburg und Rom : Der Pollinger Augustiner-Chorherr Eusebius Amort (1692-1775) : ein bedeutender Repräsentant katholischer Aufklärung in Bayern*, Paring 2007.

⁵⁷ *La Mística ciudad de Dios*, first published in 1670.

that it was Bassi, possibly in alliance with Amort, who prodded a presumably reluctant Bishop Joseph into action with the ultimate aim of quenching the incipient cult developing round the Franciscan nun.⁵⁸

Amort and Bassi called in P. Coelestin Agricola, prior of the Swabian Benedictine abbey of Irsee (Kreis Ostallgäu), as apostolic notary, and on 15th September 1744, just some four months after the Pope had written to the Bishop, made their appearance in Kaufbeuren. Here, in the days that followed, they questioned the Franciscan nuns as well as the Jesuit Johann Baptist Pamer, Crescentia's last confessor, and the Franciscan Bonifatius Schmid (Provincial from 1732-1735 and 1741-1744), who had been present at Crescentia's death-bed;⁵⁹ it is of course only the questions relating to the Holy Spirit issue that need concern us here. All this happened at rather short notice, so that those who were to be questioned had had little time to prepare and coordinate their statements, circumstances which the interrogators probably considered conducive to their aim of untangling legend and truth.

On the other hand, the nuns, as it seems, soon realized that they and their deceased fellow nun came under very sceptical, maybe even hostile scrutiny, which made them waver, revoke earlier statements or even clam up entirely. This is quite obvious, e.g., in the case of Sister Justina, who first gave to protocol that Crescentia had told her about early childhood encounters with the Holy Spirit in human shape, but who, when she was repeatedly urged to be very precise in this matter and to confirm that Crescentia had indeed referred to the Holy Spirit, suddenly changed tack and maintained that she could not testify to it.⁶⁰ When other nuns were asked similar questions about what Crescentia had said about the Holy Spirit, they also tended to become evasive and uncooperative. What could be established fairly clearly, though, is that pictures of the Holy Spirit as a young man had turned up in the monastery in the 1720s (one nun specified that engravings had been made at the behest of the then Mother Superior), and that some months previous to the interrogations, order from above had been given to remove these pictures, which must refer to measures Bishop Joseph had taken after receiving the papal missive.

In connection with the Kaufbeuren interrogations, the episcopal commission also took down statements from a few other persons who had known Crescentia, among them Johann Erasmus Oxenreiter, the parish priest already mentioned.⁶¹ What he had to say is some slight evidence for the fact that some contemporaries did have doubts about the theological credentials of Crescentia's Spirit before Vignoli set in motion the chain of events detailed above, for Oxenreiter remembers telling Crescentia that a silver statue of the Spirit based on her vision was 'not in accordance with the custom of the church'. Crescentia's answer, even if it is proof of her inability to engage with intricate theological concepts, reveals a refreshingly common-sense way of thinking and would probably even today be entirely satisfactory to most people confronted with the issue: 'Is not the Holy Spirit also a person

⁵⁸ Boespflug 1984 (see annot. 3), p. 110.

⁵⁹ The minutes of the interrogations have been preserved in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. lat. Monacensis 1409 and 1411. For a detailed account of the proceedings and a German translation of archival sources see Weileder (see annot. 14).

⁶⁰ Weileder (see annot. 14), p. 33.

⁶¹ Weileder (see annot. 14), pp. 106 ff.

within the Holy Trinity? If so, he surely may be represented in the shape of a person.’⁶² One would have liked to know how Oxenreiter took up this innocently thrown gauntlet, but his answer is not on record.

The report of the commission, which Bishop Joseph received at the end of September or early in October, refrained from aiming shots at Crescentia as a person and differentiated between herself and what was said or written about her, but was, as had to be expected, highly critical of anything smacking of mysticism or the miraculous. (‘It is quite certain that many visions attributed to Crescentia are absurd, ridiculous and wrong.’)⁶³ Considering how swift matters had progressed up to then, one might feel obliged to look for a reason why it was only late in May 1745 that Pope Benedict had the findings of the commission on his desk. The reason might be that Bishop Joseph was not entirely happy that his counsellors Amort and Bassi had cast such a cold critical eye on the nun he revered, and that he therefore needed some time to redress the balance in her favour by procuring documents which were less committed to Enlightenment tenets and which he thought should accompany the official report: a brief biography of Crescentia, commissioned by the Bishop on this occasion and written by the former Franciscan Provincial Bonifatius Schmid, as well as several papers originating with the Kaufbeuren Jesuit convent.⁶⁴

The Pope’s response to the report from Augsburg was *Sollicitudini nostrae*, a document dated 1st October 1745, written in the form of a letter to the Bishop of Augsburg and usually termed a brief; Benedict also included it into his personal bullarium.⁶⁵ In this disquisition he generally states that though Crescentia to all appearance had led a pious and god-fearing life, he could discern neither outstanding heroic virtues, nor any sign that God had wrought miracles at her intercession; he therefore once again encouraged Joseph, as he had done in his previous letter, to stand in the way of premature efforts aiming at Crescentia’s canonization (§§ 1 ff.). Among the individual issues he subsequently addresses, the Holy Spirit clearly takes some precedence. It is already explicitly mentioned in the summary introducing the brief,⁶⁶ and it is given even more prominence in the title of the bilingual Latin-German edition of *Sollicitudini nostrae*, published in Cologne in 1747.⁶⁷ In this respect, Benedict did, according to Hallebeek, something quite extraordinary: He ‘made a move which no Council and no Pope had ever made before him. He ruled explicitly, albeit in the form of a brief and not as a bull or Apostolic Constitution, that the Holy Trinity can be depicted in certain ways.’⁶⁸

⁶² Weileder (see annot. 14), p. 107.

⁶³ Weileder (see annot. 14), p. 118.

⁶⁴ Boespflug 1984 (see annot. 3), pp. 153 ff; Maximilian J. Heinrichsperger: *Die ältesten Quellen zum Leben der Schwester Crescentia Höß*, Landshut 1975, pp. 12 ff.

⁶⁵ Benedict XIV: *Bullarium Tomus Primus In Quo Continentur Constitutiones, Epistolae, Aliaque Editae Ab Initio Pontificatus Usque Ad Annum MDCCXLVI*, Romae 1754, pp. 342-348.

⁶⁶ ‘De prohibendis imaginibus Spiritus Sancti sub humana specie depicti’

⁶⁷ *Benedicti XIV, papae Epistola ad Josephum episcopum Augustanum, Landgravium Hassiae, etc. super canonisatione Crescentiae monialis Kaufburensis et imaginibus S.S. Trinitatis*, Coelln [Cologne] 1747.

⁶⁸ Hallebeek (see annot. 46), p. 380.

Benedict takes as his starting point the engravings of the Spirit, of which copies had been sent to him,⁶⁹ and first endorses the view shared, as has been pointed out above, by many Post-Tridentine theologians: Though it would be a sacrilege to suppose that God the Almighty could be painted ‘as he is’ (§ 11), it is acceptable to represent him in a guise ‘in which he deigned to reveal himself to mortals and about which we can read in Scripture’ (§ 12). With regard to the Holy Spirit, Benedict explains, this tenet allows for the dove (§ 16 ff.) and the tongues of flame (§ 21), whereas it clearly puts a ban on portraits of the Holy Spirit as a young man, simply because there is no place in Scripture which tells us that the Spirit appeared to mortals in this shape (§ 22). Apart from that, such images were not only highly unusual, but also apt to support the heretic belief that the Spirit had assumed human nature (§ 23).

Benedict then goes on to tackle an argument which, as Joseph obviously had told him by letter, had been advanced in favour of Crescentia’s spirit, namely, that there already was a tradition of representing the Trinity as three figures in human shape closely resembling each other (§ 24). He quotes the story of Abraham and the three angels as scriptural point of reference for these images and ponders on the controversial views of several theological authorities regarding this issue (§§ 29ff.); in the end, he does not really utter a clear verdict if the Genesis story may be applied in this way or not, but rather maintains, and quite logically for this matter, that such a verdict would make no difference in the case at hand: Even if it were legitimate from a canonical point of view to make use of Abraham’s angels as scriptural justification for a Trinity consisting of three persons in human shape closely resembling each other, it does not follow that it is permitted to represent the Holy Spirit as an individual entity, separated from Father and Son, in the guise of a young man, for the simple reasons that it was three angels that had appeared to Abraham (not one) and that there is no other place in Scripture which says that the Spirit on its own (without Father and Son) had appeared to mortals in the guise of a young man (§ 33 f.). If Marguerite-Marie Alacoque had been taken to court, so to speak, on the Trinity issue, the Genesis incident might have been pleaded on her behalf (Benedict, though, makes no mention of her); but this line of defence was not possible in Crescentia’s case. Nor would it have been in Teresa’s case, for that matter; but Benedict does not mention her either – an indication that both visions were so recondite as to lie even beyond the erudition of this quite learned Pope?

Benedict thus rules unequivocally that Crescentia’s Spirit is unacceptable, explicitly approves of Joseph’s taking action against the images in question, and admonishes him ‘to continue steadfastly and unwaveringly in this undertaking and not to permit on any account that more of these images should be made; and in case some should still be found somewhere, to remove them all.’ (§ 35 ff.) What Benedict refuses to be concerned with is if Crescentia herself is in any way responsible for this particular representation of the Holy Spirit, if she invented it, approved of it or disseminated it.

⁶⁹ As he quotes ‘Veni Sancte Spiritus’ as inscription, he had probably received copies of the Sondermayr engravings (see ill. 3 and 4; § 8: ‘de publicatis, lateque diffusis quibusdam Imaginibus Spiritum Sanctum sub speciosi Juvenis forma referentibus, subscriptis verbis: Veni Sancte Spiritus’).

As these papal words did not lack in clarity, one would have expected that this would also spell the end for the Ruffini painting or at least its open display; but in the long run the painting did not stay withdrawn from the public eye. In his biography of Crescentia from 1780, already quoted above, Dominicus Ott writes in the present tense about its exhibition and suggests that it had been on display at least from 1770, the year when he was appointed confessor: ‘It is shown to strangers and pilgrims, and all admire the painting and evince greatest appreciation of it. In the years I have been here, I have had the honour of showing it to persons of the highest and most noble ranks for at least thirty times.’⁷⁰

In other respects, too, the brief seems not to have carried sufficient weight to abolish once and for all appearances of the Holy Spirit as a young man. Indeed, as yet just one instance has come to light that action was taken against a work of art in the immediate wake of *Sollicitudini nostrae*, oddly enough a case in which, contrary to the laxity prevailing elsewhere, overanxious zeal to execute the papal will must have been at work: In Vienna, seat of a cardinal bishop and a papal nunciature, the altar of the potters’ guild, a splendid example of exuberant early 16th century carving, was removed from St Stephen’s Cathedral, although its Trinity consists of three very similar bearded figures in late youth or early maturity and thus might well have been justified as deriving from Abraham’s angels, a type of Trinity Benedict had at least not outrightly condemned. (Fortunately, the altar has been preserved in St Helen’s church in Baden near Wien.)

There may of course be cases in which offensive Spirit images were quietly done away with without this process leaving traces in archival records; but what is doubtlessly remarkable is that there is a sizable number of anthropomorphic Spirits in South German art history dating from the years after 1745. It must be admitted, though, that there are few instances of a Crescentine Spirit youth outside a Trinitarian context (i.e., on his own, as he appeared to Crescentia) which may be firmly dated after *Sollicitudini nostrae*, and for which no specific circumstances might be named why the papal injunctions were not heeded. When, e.g., Meinrad von Au in 1746 painted a small devotional image with various saints surrounding a crucifix and added a Holy Spirit exactly in the Ruffini mould in the top right corner (ill. 17), news of *Sollicitudini nostrae* (published late in 1745) may not yet have reached him or whoever decided about the programme of the image; and if this canvas was indeed originally intended for the Augustinian nuns of Inzigkofen (Baden-Württemberg, Kreis Sigmaringen), their enclosure might have offered a place where it would be safe from prying church authorities. (The painting, though, certainly does not go as far as flaunting established practice by introducing a female Spirit, as one critic has suggested; this quite obviously is one of the misreadings of the androgynous qualities of the Ruffini-type Spirit.⁷¹) And when the Spirit youth appears as the focal point of the high altar, painted entirely as fresco by Johann Adam Schöpf (ca. 1750), in the chapel of

⁷⁰ Ott, ed. Gatz (see annot. 5), p. 227.

⁷¹ Eugen Buri: ‘Erbsünde, Erlösung, Dreifaltigkeit : Der Hl. Geist in Gestalt einer Frau. Ein augustinisches Andachtsbild’, in: *Andreas Meinrad von Au*, Sigmaringen 1992 (exhibition catalogue), pp. 141-144. The picture is today located in Sigmaringen, Heimatmuseum.

Augustusburg Castle in Brühl near Cologne,⁷² this may be so because the owner of the castle, Prince Bishop and Elector Clemens August of Cologne, an ardent admirer of Crescentia, felt his rank gave him some leeway for indulging his personal likings in surroundings which after all were principally meant for his private devotion. It was certainly more daring on the part of the Cistercian nuns of Gutenzell (Baden-Württemberg, Kreis Biberach) when they had a Spirit youth painted on the ceiling of the Heart of Jesus Chapel adjoining the nave of their church (possibly by the little-known Jakob Herle),⁷³ especially if this indeed happened as late as 1769 (ill. 18); this seems to be the only known example of a fresco which shows a Spirit closely following the model of Ruffini entirely on his own. (An abbess of the monastery had counted among Crescentia's correspondents; there were also some interrogations held in Gutenzell in the wake of the Amort-Bassi enquiry.)⁷⁴

When it comes to engravings, it is also not that easy to point to examples which may unequivocally be interpreted as flying into the face of Benedict's brief. A memorial print for Crescentia, which was executed by Göz after a drawing of his own and features just the head of the Spirit surrounded by flames,⁷⁵ might have been published a very short time after Crescentia's death, before the brief could reasonably have been expected to be heeded; and though we seem to be on safer ground with the Augsburg engraver Josef Erasmus Belling, as according to recent scholarly literature he is on record only for the years 1750 through 1780, when he died),⁷⁶ such a statement does not categorically exclude that he was already active in the 1740s. Indeed, his engraving in which a half-length portrait of Crescentia is surrounded by small depictions of Crescentia in her coffin (below) and a Spirit in the mould of the Göz-Störcklin image (above),⁷⁷ belongs to a type of commemorative image one would expect to be published if not in the immediate wake of Crescentia's death, at least not all that much later.

Belling is also the author of two more engravings which make for a particularly interesting pair, as on the one hand they use exactly the same inscriptions, but on the other hand combine these quotations with different subtypes of the Crescentine Spirit: in one case, with

⁷² Christine Riedl: 'Johann Adam Schöpf (1702-1772): Maler in Bayern, Böhmen und Kurköln; Leben und Werk', in: *Jahresbericht des Historischen Vereins für Straubing und Umgebung* 93 (1991), pp. 123-372, at pp. 303-305. Riedl says that the figure represents Ecclesia and at the same time the Virgin as 'Temple and Bride of the Holy Spirit' (p. 305).

⁷³ According to Oehler (see annot. 4, p. 170), who refers to a church guide from 1992, the fresco was painted by an otherwise unknown painter named 'Jacob' from the village of Erolzheim (Kreis Biberach). Thieme-Becker (see annot. 9) 16 (1923), p. 480, lists a Jacob Herle from Erolzheim, known only from a portrait of a Swabian abbot dated 1782.

⁷⁴ Weileder 1971 (see annot. 14), pp. 112 f.

⁷⁵ The inscription 'Ven. Mater Maria Crescentia ... bonorum memoria digna' makes it clear that the engraving dates from after Crescentia's death. Rudolf Wildmoser: 'Gottfried Bernhard Göz als ausführender Kupferstecher: Untersuchung und Katalog der Werke. Teil II. Katalog', in: *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Augsburger Bistumsgeschichte e.V.* 19 (1985), p. 173, cat.-no. 1-070-326. For a reproduction, see Pörnbacher 2002 (see annot. 2), p. 70.

⁷⁶ *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon* 8 (1994), p. 481.

⁷⁷ For a reproduction Karl see Karl Pörnbacher: *Crescentia Höß von Kaufbeuren 1682-1744*, Weißenhorn 1993, p. 32.

the subtype created by Ruffini (ill. 19),⁷⁸ in the other case with the Spirit in frontal view (ill. 20) as he occurs on the Göz-Störcklin engraving (ill. 5). The Belling print might even be taken for a mirror-inverted paraphrase of the Göz-Störcklin print, but it was more likely derived from Simon Thaddäus Sondermayr's version (ill. 6), as Belling was Sondermayr's collaborator and later his heir.

What is particularly unusual about both Belling engravings is the abbreviation *C.P.S.* at the bottom, which probably cannot be simply explained away as a botched variant of the reference to the imperial printing privilege often placed in this corner of the sheet (*C[um] P[rivilegio] S[acrae] C[aesareae] M[ajestatis]*). What probably first comes to mind is a phrase frequently found in books of the time, *Cum permissione superiorum*; and given the potentially controversial subject matter, it might indeed have seemed desirable to point out that the superiors (i.e., the bishop and/or the provincial superior of the Franciscan Order) had approved of these images. This, though, would place the engravings firmly in pre-*Sollicitudini nostrae* times, as superiors neglecting in cavalier fashion to enforce the injunctions contained in a brief are one thing, superiors setting their stamp of approval on infringements of the brief something altogether different and something it is difficult to imagine. Alternatively, *C.P.S.* could be resolved as *curavit pecunia sua* or *curavit proprio sumptu*,⁷⁹ which might mean that Belling had not charged fees to whoever had commissioned these engravings or that he had made them at his own initiative. This would leave some leeway for dating them into the period after *Sollicitudini nostrae*; and if they indeed come that late, is the subscription *Spiritus ubi vult spirat* meant to convey the mildly mutinous message that whatever the Pope may write, the Spirit refuses to be bound by it? Probably not; the insertion of the Athanasius quotation on top, though, with its stress on 'persona', definitely has the smack of a half-baked attempt at justifying an anthropomorphic spirit.

As regards Crescentine Spirits embedded into the context of the Trinity, it is easier to enumerate images which postdate *Sollicitudini nostrae* and were on plain view in buildings such as parish churches; images which thus might indeed be taken for having been painted in defiance of the Pope. (A complete survey might be a rewarding undertaking, but is certainly beyond the scope of these pages.) One might speculate that these images (and the Trinities with more mature bearded spirits, which will be excluded from further discussion here)⁸⁰ rely on the assumption that they derive their legitimacy from the Abraham incident, and indeed, as we have seen, Benedict was willing to consider this story's evidentiary value for the Trinity issue. His broad-mindedness, though, obviously did not stray beyond Trinities consisting of three humans closely resembling each other, whereas the images we will be concerned with presently combine a very youthful Spirit, a somewhat more mature

⁷⁸ A German antiquarian recently offered this engraving as 'the Virgin, hovering on clouds'.

⁷⁹ I owe this suggestion to Prof. DDr Jörg Ernesti, University of Augsburg.

⁸⁰ Examples for such Trinities painted after Benedict's brief: Johann Georg Bergmüller: painting of the high altar of the Ursuline church in Landsberg am Lech (Bavaria, 1748); idem, ceiling fresco in the chapel of Haimhausen Castle (Bavaria, Kreis Dachau, 1750), Johann Baptist Enderle, choir fresco in the church of the Augustine hermits in Oberndorf am Neckar (Baden-Württemberg, Kreis Rottweil, 1776/78); for all these examples see Kosel and Oehler (see annot. 4).

Christ and an aged Father, a constellation already occurring back in medieval times⁸¹ and also to some extent present in the Munich altar painting (ill. 14), where, however, Christ and the Spirit, look fairly coeval. Despite this tradition, Benedict's insistence on resemblance whenever he broaches the subject of Genesis-based Trinities would make one suppose that commissioning and painting Trinities with youthful Spirits in the wake of *Sollicitudini nostrae* meant treading on thin ice; and it is difficult to share Raber-Zuest's opinion that such Trinities were fully in accordance with Benedict's rulings.⁸²

However that may be, the most famous example of a Crescentine reflex in South German Trinities is the fresco which Matthäus Günther, one of the most widely sought-after South German artists of his time, painted in 1748 upon the choir vault of the parish church of Altdorf (Bavaria, Kreis Ostallgäu; ill. 21). This is the work of art most likely to be quoted when reference is made to Crescentia's pictorial legacy; and such references are not infrequent: Post-1745 Spirit youths, more or less blatant infringements of a papal decree (which on these occasions is sometimes raised to the status of a papal bull), offer an excellent opportunity to add anecdotal piquancy to regional art history. Günther's fresco is also a work of art which should have been particularly grating on orthodox minds: Even someone inclined towards leniency in matters of church doctrine might have been expected to raise an eyebrow at this extravagantly clad Spirit who is about to receive Mary in heaven (and is thus embedded into a context far beyond Crescentia's original vision);⁸³ a youth who has discarded the modest white of the Crescentine Spirit, and who has instead donned a monarchical outfit consisting of a dark red gown, a brocaded cloak and an ermine mozzetta. He is also wearing the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece: a detail which alone should have rendered speechless those who insisted, as the Pope had recently done, that any depiction of the Holy Spirit should strictly adhere to scriptural evidence. This is all the more amazing as Altdorf was not just part of the diocese of Augsburg, but also of the ecclesiastical principality of Augsburg, i.e., the territory where Bishop Joseph held secular rule; and to cap it all, Altdorf was virtually next door to Marktoberdorf, whose castle was the Bishop's favourite summer resort. It seems that just a few years after he himself had dutifully instituted an investigation into the Crescentia affair, Bishop Joseph's conscientiousness in fulfilling the papal orders provoked by this investigation had already somewhat abated. Maybe he just could not help staying partisan to Crescentia.⁸⁴

There are other circumstances difficult to reconcile with the fact that this must have been a somewhat controversial way of rendering Mary's arrival in heaven: In the very same year 1748, Günther painted a similar fresco in the large parish church of the middle-sized Bavarian town of Schongau (the Spirit now wearing something slightly less ostentatious, a

⁸¹ Boespflug 1984 (see annot. 3), p. 291; Boespflug 2008 (see annot. 3), pp. 214 ff.

⁸² Edith Raeber-Züst: 'Die Fresken in Fischbach-Göslikon und ihre Vorbilder: Eine ikonographisch-ikonologische Studie', in: *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 33,2 (1976), pp. 119-157, at 155.

⁸³ As late as 2002 Grabner (see annot. 13, p. 19) wrongly asserted that Crescentia herself had had a vision of Mary as 'Bride of the Spirit'. ('In einer ihrer Visionen erschien ihr Maria als Braut des Hl. Geistes in der Szene einer Marienkrönung, wobei der Hl. Geist als höfisch gekleideter Jüngling auftritt.')

⁸⁴ Franz A. Hoeyneck: *Geschichte des Frauenklosters in Kaufbeuren mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Zeit der ehrwürdigen Crescentia*, Kaufbeuren 1881, p. 113.

white gown with ornaments embroidered in gold); then, there are two prints after the Altdorf/Schongau model which testify to the desire to spread this image (one of them an etching probably executed by Günther himself, who used this technique but very rarely);⁸⁵ there are also several thematically identical or related frescoes by other painters scattered through South Germany and Switzerland. Their Spirit youths receiving Mary in heaven in some cases follow the model of Günther (Franz Ferdinand Dent, Egesheim parish church, Baden-Württemberg, Kreis Tuttlingen, 1758; St Mary's Chapel, Ringingen, Baden-Württemberg, Zollernalbkreis, 1763); in other cases, they adhere more closely to the Ruffini type (Balthasar Riepp, Großaitingen parish church near Augsburg, 1754, ill. 22; Franz Anton Rebsamen, Göslikon parish church, Switzerland, Canton of Aargau, 1757).

Großaitingen, again part of the Augsburg diocese as well as of the Bishop's ecclesiastic principality, deserves special mention inasmuch as parish priest Dr. Johannes Ritter, who died the year before the fresco was painted, had exchanged letters with Crescentia Höß, and as Matthäus Günther also had applied for this commission, even submitted a sketch for the fresco in question, but eventually had to give way to Riepp.⁸⁶ The Göslikon Spirit is derived from an engraving illustrating the invocation 'Sancta Trinitas unus deus' from the Litany of Loreto (ill. 23), executed in the Augsburg Klauber workshop (possibly after a drawing by Göz). This engraving carried the image of Crescentia's spirit well into the 19th century, as the series to which it belongs and which individually treats all the invocations of the Litany was part of a devotional book which was first published in 1749 and reissued again and again through 1840.⁸⁷ (That Rebsamen took indeed his cue from the Klauber Litany is borne out by the fact that several other sheets were used for the Göslikon frescoes.)⁸⁸

⁸⁵ *Matthäus Günther 1705-1788 : Festliches Rokoko für Kirchen, Klöster, Residenzen*, München 1988 (exhibition catalogue Augsburg 1988), pp. 350 f.; copies of both etchings in the print collection of Kunstsammlungen und Museen Augsburg.

⁸⁶ Oehler (see annot. 4), p. 166; Kosel (see annot. 4), p. 298.

⁸⁷ The engravings are based on concepts supplied by the Jesuit Ulrich Propst, a member of an order which, as has been mentioned, was favourably disposed towards Crescentia. The name of Göz occurs nowhere on the engravings, but he signed some preparatory drawings for the series which have been preserved. A preparatory drawing for the invocation of the Trinity has not been located as yet, but the design of the engraving is stylistically well compatible with Göz. (Eduard Isphording: 'Die Zeichnungen des Gottfried Bernhard Göz (1708-1774) zur Lauretanischen Litanei', in: *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* 1993, pp. 274-299). Ill. 23 is taken from a French edition, published by the Klauber brothers themselves (*Paraphrase des litanies de Notre Dame de Lorette*, 1781). For a survey of the various editions, see Peter Stoll: *Zweites Augsburger Rokoko : Die Lauretanische Litanei der Brüder Klauber und ihre Rezeption in Frankreich*, Augsburg 2013 (<http://opus.bibliothek.uni-augsburg.de/opus4/frontdoor/index/index/year/2013/docId/2362>).

⁸⁸ For more details on how Rebsamen used the Klauber Litany, see Raeber-Züst (see annot. 82). – When discussing the Göslikon Assumption fresco and related images including a Trinity with an anthropomorphic Spirit, Raeber-Züst maintains that only those images should be considered as indebted to Crescentia where the Spirit expressly turns towards the Virgin in order to receive her in heaven as his bride; all other instances, in her opinion, simply belong to the tradition of the Trinitarian interpretation of the Abraham story. This is quite odd because she makes it appear as if the Virgin as 'Bride of the Spirit' had been part of Crescentia's vision, which of course had not been the case. Thus, the nuptial context is not suited as a criterion to decide if a Trinity has been influenced by Crescentia or not. As the Trinity as a whole never appeared in Crescentia's vision, the only valid criterion for such a decision can be if an anthropomorphic Spirit within a Trinity is related to the Crescentine type or not. The Göslikon Spirit and the engraving from which he was taken, e.g., are certainly very close to the Ruffini type; Günther's Altdorf Spirit is less reliant on images directly connected to Crescentia's vision, but still, he is young, and given his proximity to Kaufbeuren, cannot easily be dissoci-

With regard to some of the frescoes just mentioned, it is often said that the Virgin here is shown as the ‘Bride of the Holy Spirit’, and though this is something which at least some of those who devised the programmes might have had in mind, the frescoes are often somewhat lacking in expressing the nuptial metaphor directly. There are other works of art, not necessarily involving a complete Trinity, which more unequivocally refer to the Spirit Bride, among them the fresco in Haunstetten by Scheffler mentioned above (whose mature Spirit, however, owes hardly anything to Crescentia; ill. 8), or an engraving designed and executed by Gottfried Bernhard Göz (1758 [?]): Here the Spirit, much more Crescentine and ascending to a throne which symbolically represents the Virgin, is accompanied by a dove carrying a wedding ring; a quotation from the Book of Wisdom enforces the allusion to nuptial rites (ill. 24).⁸⁹

A Trinity with Spirit youth outside a Mariological context is something Göz intended to paint upon the choir vault of the church of the Salesian nuns in East Bavarian Amberg, as his preparatory drawing for the fresco shows (ill. 25).⁹⁰ Looking at this drawing, where the Spirit is placed slightly below Christ and the Father, one might find it difficult not to be reminded of Lindmayr’s 1703 Trinity vision, from which a brief passage has already been quoted. This is the context of the quotation:

In my imagination, I was led into the chapel of the Most Holy Trinity, which is in the churchyard near the [church of the] Holy Spirit⁹¹ ... I was made to look very closely at the altar painting in this chapel near the [church of the] Holy Spirit, which represents the Holy Trinity, and somewhat below the two first divine persons [i.e., the Father and Christ] the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, hands raised in folded in prayer, who is about to be crowned. While I was thus gazing, it suddenly came to pass that the Most Holy Trinity was alone on the altar, whereas the Most Blessed Virign ... had moved away from the altar, and now turned from the right towards the three most holy persons with indescribable humility and zeal. In the place between the heavenly Father and God the Son, however, which before had been taken by the Mother of God on her knees, there

ated from Crescentia. Other Spirits (see the examples given in annot. 19 and 80), bearded and more mature, deviate more significantly from the Crescentine type; their dependency on Crescentia’s vision may therefore be questioned.

⁸⁹ Inscriptions on the engraving: ‘Cor meum immaculatum. Ps. 118. v. 80 ... Quaesivi sponsam mihi eam assumere Sap 8 v.2’. Wildmoser (see annot. 75), p. 245, cat.-no. 1-540-027. Once again, the Spirit here is mistaken for a female.

⁹⁰ Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv.-no. 7267. Isphording first interpreted the Spirit on the drawing as the Virgin and thus repeated an often made mistake. (Eduard Isphording: *Gottfried Bernhard Göz 1708-1774 : Ölgemälde und Zeichnungen*, text volume, Weissenhorn 1982, pp. 221 f., cat.-no. A I 12) In his later book devoted to Göz as a fresco painter, though, he corrected this mistake and identified the figure as Spirit (*Gottfried Bernhard Göz 1708-1774 : Ein Augsburger Historienmaler des Rokoko und seine Fresken*, Weissenhorn 1997, p. 71, annot. 365).

One might recall in this context that Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, whose Trinity vision with anthropomorphic Spirit was mentioned earlier, was a Salesian nun, and one might go on to wonder if it was her who inspired the Spirit figure on the drawing. Alacoque specifies, though, that the three persons in her vision were near-identical, which is not the case on the drawing.

⁹¹ The Dreifaltigkeitsplatz (Trinity Place) in downtown Munich is where the churchyard used to be; the chapel also no longer exists.

now was the Holy Spirit in the shape of a handsome youth, inflamed by love.⁹² [see appendix (3)]

This remarkable passage, which might on a different level almost be taken for a description of the working of the artistic mind about to create a new iconographic pattern, is unlikely to have had a direct influence on Göz; still, it would be worth exploring if Lindmayr's vision is part of a pictorial tradition or if it inspired images, both things which in turn might have combined with Crescentine iconography to bring forth the Trinity envisaged for Amberg. (The Munich altar painting, surprisingly, is not in strict accordance with Lindmayr's vision, as the Spirit is hovering above the Father and Christ.)

In the fresco itself, though, painted in 1758, the anthropomorphic Spirit has been replaced by the more conventional dove, which may well indicate that the nuns had misgivings about the orthodoxy of the Spirit youth and thus insisted that the artist change his design. There is, though, another Göz Trinity with a Crescentine Spirit (unmistakably modelled on the Ruffini type) which must have circulated freely and which stylistically seems to belong to the second half of the 18th century: an engraving entitled 'Festum SS: Trinitatis' (ill. 26), part of a series devoted to the feast days of Christ and executed by Göz after his own drawing;⁹³ here, the more or less horizontal arrangement of the three divine persons next to each other is reminiscent of the fresco by Johann Rieger in Holzen mentioned above (ill. 15), which Göz might well have known. Not only was this engraving used by South German artists (e.g., by Johann Jakob Spieler for a fresco in the parish church of Eglofs, Kreis Ravensburg, 1766),⁹⁴ it even found its way to the New World, where it served as a model for several paintings of colonial baroque art (as did the 'Sancta Trinitas' from the Klauber Litany of Loreto, ill. 23).⁹⁵

⁹² Nock 1882 (see annot. 40), p. 257 f. At a later stage of the vision, Lindmayr is led by the Spirit into a house, 'where there were three steps raised above each other, and on every step there stood a white-clad person.' (p. 258) Nock later quotes two further utterances made by Lindmayr in 1707 and 1708 which clarify that the three persons on the steps indeed represent the Trinity (p. 260, 265). In the revised edition of his book published five years later, Nock resorted to a brief summary of the 1703 vision, which, quite interestingly, deletes the metamorphosis of the altar painting and forgoes any allusion to an anthropomorphic Spirit. The 1707 and 1708 utterances he once again quotes verbatim (or at least purports to do so); but all references to the three persons standing on the steps have been deleted. (*Leben und Wirken der Dienerin Gottes Maria Anna Josepha a Jesu Lindmayr, unbeschuhte Carmelitin im Dreifaltigkeitskloster zu München*, Regensburg [et al.], pp. 336 f., 339, 344). As Nock explains in the preface to the second edition, he intended his book as a plea to revive efforts towards a beatification of Lindmayr (p. XII). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that he feared that Lindmayr's unorthodox Spirit visions might not be conducive to such an end. (Neither his book nor other efforts, though, bore fruit.)

⁹³ Wildmoser (see annot. 75, cat.-no. 1-502-001 ff., pp. 206 ff.) finds it difficult to date this series precisely and suggests 1744- c1765 as a frame. The Spirit on the Trinity engraving (cat.-no. 1-502-017, p. 209) is once again mistaken for the Virgin. Isphording 1982 (see annot. 90, p. 297, cat.-no. A IIIb) dates the preparatory drawing for another engraving of the series ('Dies Caenae Domini' - Last supper; present location unknown) into the 1760s.

⁹⁴ Kosel, part 2 (see annot. 4), pp. 235 f.

⁹⁵ For examples, see *Project on the Engraved Sources of Spanish Colonial Art (PESSCA)*

(<http://colonialart.org/>). Almerindo Ojeda is preparing a paper on the Crescentine Spirit in colonial art, to appear in PESSCA later this year ('The Sources of the Crescentine Trinity in Spanish Colonial Art').

I will only make passing mention of a Klauber engraving for which Göz also might have supplied the drawing and on which the Spirit subtype from the Göz-Störcklin engraving has been reduced to head and upper part of the body; part of a series of three sheets, each of which is devoted to one person of the Trinity. This

What adds particular interest to the ‘Festum SS: Trinitatis’ design is the fact that there is explicit archival evidence that at one point it fell foul of church authorities; it is at least very likely that it is this Trinity with which the following incident is concerned. The stage is once again Vienna, and whereas in the case of the altar of the potters’ guild it had been odd that of all possibly offensive Spirit images it was this which had been singled out for reproof in the wake of *Sollicitudini nostrae*, it is now the point of time which makes one wonder: 1797, when the engraving could no longer be called exactly novel.⁹⁶

In this year, Christoph Anton Migazzi, Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna, complained to Minister Count Lazansky that a Vienna bookbinder was offering an engraving of the Trinity with the Holy Spirit in the shape of a young man, inscribed ‘with the approbation of the imperial-royal censorship authorities’ (‘mit Genehmigung der k. k. Censur’). Migazzi explained that depictions of the Holy Spirit had to be based on scriptural evidence, which only allowed for a dove or for tongues of flames; he also emphasized that this rule did not suffer the ‘slightest deviation’, as this might on the one hand impart wrong ideas to common people and on the other hand might serve those as a pretext for mockery who enjoyed sneering at divine matters. Lazansky was obviously puzzled: ‘This representation of the Holy Trinity is not a new product of local art industry, but only an engraving after an image which was made by the court painter and engraver Göz in Augsburg, and which is generally thought to have been circulating in public for many years; up to now, it has been sold without hindrance, either individually or bound into prayer books. As this image comes from a Roman-Catholic artist in Augsburg and as consequently one could assume that the episcopal authorities there, who demand strict observation of ecclesiastic prescriptions, had had nothing to object, local censorship did not hesitate either to license an engraving after this very old and well-known image.’ Lazansky admits, though, that the bookbinder should not have added the words ‘with the approbation of the imperial-royal censorship authorities’ to the engraving, as these words had not been on the drawing he had handed in for approval; orders had already been given to the bookbinder that these words must be removed.

It is quite understandable that Lazansky wondered why an image that had been around for decades all of a sudden should give offence, and he may be forgiven for being, as his reply reveals, hitherto entirely ignorant of the pitfalls inherent in unorthodox depictions of the Holy Spirit; it is odd, though, that he refused to tackle the issue Migazzi really is concerned with, i.e., that such images should not circulate at all. Migazzi must have thought him either annoyingly obtuse or provokingly uncooperative, but did not give in and expressed

Spirit print is intriguing not least for its sophisticated theological programme, which, to name just one element, confronts a quotation from Genesis 6,3 (‘Non permanebit spiritus meus in homine in aeternum quia caro est’ – ‘My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he [i.e., man] is flesh’; left) with its New Testament antithesis created by just deleting ‘non’ from the original Genesis quotation: ‘Permanebit spiritus meus in homine in aeternum quia caro est’ – ‘My Spirit shall abide in man forever, for he [i.e., Christ] is flesh’ (right); the latter words fittingly point towards a small Nativity scene. For a reproduction, see Heinrichsperger 1975 (see annot. 64), p. 7.

⁹⁶ The following paragraphs are based on: Theodor Wiedemann: ‘Die kirchliche Bücher-Censur in der Erzdiöcese Wien : Nach den Akten des fürsterzbischöflichen Consistorial-Archiv in Wien’, in: *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte* 50 (1873), pp. 353-520, at pp. 368-369.

himself more directly: ‘This is not about scratching the words “with the approbation of the imperial-royal censorship authorities” off the copperplate, this is about putting a ban on the engraving in question.’ He went on to mention the Bishop of Augsburg’s enquiry addressed to Benedict XIV and the subsequent ruling against the Spirit youth, expostulations which eventually bore fruit and caused the engraving to be confiscated.

On the whole, though, the very fact that the Göz Trinity obviously had gone unnoticed by the Vienna church authorities for such a long time confirms that iconoclastic impulses directed against Crescentia’s Spirit were erratic at best. Weitlauff briefly alludes to another instance of an engraving being frowned upon and says that the Göz engraving mentioned above which includes just the head of the Spirit provoked censure and could from then on be only disseminated in a version without the head.⁹⁷ But this would need further substantiation, as would the speculation that so few copies of the prints after Günther’s Altdorf/Schongau design (also mentioned above) have been preserved because authorities disapproved of them.⁹⁸ We also do not know for sure if engravings in which Crescentia is accompanied by the traditional dove instead of the Spirit youth⁹⁹ may be taken as circumstantial evidence that artists in some cases deliberately steered clear of the latter in order not to give offence.

Sollicitudini nostrae was not successful either in suppressing the veneration of Crescentia or quenching her followers’ efforts to see her given due recognition. In the years immediately succeeding her death, increasing numbers of pilgrims kept flocking to her tomb, not only from Germany, but also from Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Bohemia and Poland, which, among other things, meant that Crescentia posthumously bestowed a veritable boost on her home town’s economy. It seems to have been an appeal from Duke Ludwig Eugen of Württemberg, made after a visit to Kaufbeuren in 1773, which eventually stirred the then Augsburg Prince Bishop Clemens Wenceslaus of Saxonia into action with regard to Crescentia’s beatification; and the commission now set up for this purpose and inquiring once again into her life and merits of course could not ignore the Holy Spirit issue.

The strategy used to prevent this issue from doing further damage to Crescentia’s fame was to dissociate her to some extent from the Spirit youth.¹⁰⁰ First, it was said (quite accurately) that it had not been Crescentia who had invented this particular shape for the Holy Spirit (mention was made in this context of the engravings showing Teresa’s Spirit vision); secondly, that it had not been Crescentia who had desired that her vision should be painted and engraved, but the then Mother Superior of the monastery, Johanna Altwögger; and thirdly, that it had been Crescentia herself who had taken action against these images once she herself was Mother Superior by requesting her fellow nuns not to give away any more copies to visitors and even by confiscating all their own copies. (The latter assertion is dif-

⁹⁷ Weitlauff 1971 (see annot. 2), p. 271. He does not supply an illustration to endorse this claim.

⁹⁸ *Matthäus Günther* (see annot. 85), p. 350.

⁹⁹ For several instances, see the illustrations in Pörnbacher 2002 (see annot. 2) and Pörnbacher 1993 (see annot. 77).

¹⁰⁰ The following after Ignatius Jeiler O.F.M.: *Die selige Kreszentia Höß von Kaufbeuren : In ihrem Leben und ihren Tugenden gezeichnet*, 8th ed., Dülmen in Westfalen 1924, p. 187. Gläser (see annot. 6, p. 17) calls Jeiler’s book (first printed in 1874) the first ‘modern, scholarly biography’.

ficult to square with the findings of the Amort-Bassi commission, according to which the images had only been suppressed some months previous to their investigation, most likely on episcopal orders.)

This time all those in authority were favourably disposed towards Crescentia, and when the beatification process stalled at the beginning of the 19th century, this was due to the turmoils then afflicting South Germany and Europe: the Napoleonic Wars, the end of the Holy Roman Empire and not least the secularization of monasteries and ecclesiastic principalities, which for some time even was a threat to the very existence of the Kaufbeuren Franciscan convent. The monastery was dissolved in 1806 (the town, mainly for economic reasons, had pleaded in vain on its behalf); the nuns, however, were allowed to go on living in the building, and in 1831 were even permitted to take in novices again. In the 1880s, new exertions were made to see the beatification process through to the end; and on 7th October 1900, Pope Leo XIII eventually declared Crescentia Blessed.

The controversies surrounding Crescentia's Spirit youth were not yet laid to rest for good, though; and in the late 1920s it was the Ruffini painting which was targeted for suppression. (Up to then, it had been preserved in the Kaufbeuren monastery). Coincidentally, events were possibly once again set in motion in Switzerland. In the years 1925/26, the notable Italian painter Gino Severini (1883-1966), who in the course of his career embraced different stylistic trends such as futurism, cubism and neoclassicism, decorated the church of Semsales in the Canton of Fribourg with several wall paintings, among them a Trinity consisting of the three human figures closely resembling each other.¹⁰¹ This fresco might have been the reason why some two years later, on 14th March 1928, the question if it was acceptable to depict the Holy Spirit in this way appeared on the agenda of the Sacra Congregatio Sancti Officii, as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith was then called. The eminent Fribourg theologian Charles Journet (later to be appointed cardinal), who had already lavished high praise on Severini's Trinity ('un morceau magnifique: quelle simplicité, quelle grandeur et quelle vie!'),¹⁰² certainly thought so and suspected the Bishop of Chur of having reported the fresco to Rome in his crusade against what he considered the aberrations of modern art.

There is no proof that the Semsales fresco had indeed stirred up the new enquiry,¹⁰³ but when the Congregatio ruled quite categorically that the Holy Spirit may not be shown in human shape, neither within the context of the Trinity nor apart from this context,¹⁰⁴ and when Pope Pius XI confirmed this decision on the following day, Semsales did get into the crosshairs of Rome: In April 1928, Cardinal Merry del Val, secretary to the Congregatio, wrote to Marius Besson, Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg, and stipulated that the offending image be removed. Both Journet and Besson, though, offered resistance. Even

¹⁰¹ The account of the Semsales incident given in the following paragraphs is indebted to Boespflug 1984 (see annot. 3, pp. 319 f.) and even more to Jacques Rime: *Charles Journet : Vocation et jeunesse d'un théologien*, Fribourg 2010, pp. 329-336 ('Gino Severini et la Trinité de Semsales').

¹⁰² Rime (see annot. 101, p. 333).

¹⁰³ Rime (see annot. 101, p. 334). In Boespflug's account (1984, see annot. 3) it appears as if such a direct connection were beyond doubt.

¹⁰⁴ *Acta apostolicae sedes : Commentarium officiale* 20,4; 2nd April 1928.

before Rome voiced its disapproval, Journet, his enthusiastic support of Severini notwithstanding, must have felt that the Semsales trinity stood in need of some argumentative props, as in journal articles dealing with the fresco he had quoted the preface of Trinity Sunday ('et in personis proprietates, et in essentia unitas, et in maiestate adoretur aequalitas'), the vision of St Marguerite-Marie Alacoque and *Sollicitudini nostrae*, which he claimed left some leeway for an anthropomorphic spirit. After Merry del Val's letter, he supplied Besson with instances of such Spirits dating from previous centuries, thus hoping to justify Severini's trinity by anchoring it in an age-old tradition.

Besson himself also enlisted the help of *Sollicitudini nostrae* and did so in a quite canny way: He assured Merry del Val that he himself had originally had misgivings about Severini's Spirit, but then had been shown *Sollicitudini nostrae* and had felt obliged to bow to the authority of Pope Benedict XIV. ('Je me suis incliné devant l'autorité de Benoît XIV').¹⁰⁵ On a more pragmatic level, he argued that it would be almost impossible to remove the painting from the wall; and the papal nuncio in Paris offered support by intimating that the Congregatio might be moved to abstain from enforcing the decree retroactively. Although Merry del Val went on to suggest that the fresco should be brought in line with the decree by painting over the figures of Christ and the Spirit and by transforming the central figure of God the Father into Christ the King, the matter was eventually dropped and the fresco was allowed to remain as it was originally painted, in which form it has survived to the present day.

The Ruffini painting in Kaufbeuren fared less well. Maybe this had to do something with the fact that just the year before (1927) the Franciscans had resumed their efforts to see Crescentia canonized and had in this connection founded a small community of friars in Kaufbeuren: It might have been assumed that the very existence of a work of art linked to Crescentia and now in flagrant opposition to church doctrine might be a stumbling stone on her way to the honour of the altars.¹⁰⁶ Even if this line of reasoning is understandable to some extent, latter-day audiences are likely to be left with an unpleasant aftertaste once they learn that the mode of destruction chosen for the painting was incineration. The literature about Crescentia is somewhat reticent and even contradictory how it all exactly came to pass; when P. Johannes Gatz, who had been appointed Vice Postulator for Crescentia in autumn 1928, in 1971 edited Dominicus Ott's 1780 biography of Crescentia, he gave the following brief account in a footnote:

[In 1928] a bishop demanded that the picture be removed in accordance with Can. 1279 from 16th March 1928, as it was not permitted to represent the Holy Spirit as a young man. The Superior of the monastery [of the Franciscan friars in Kaufbeuren; P. Mariophilus Hockenmaier] had the picture burnt without telling the Vice Postulator [P. Johan-

¹⁰⁵ Rime (see annot. 101, p. 335).

¹⁰⁶ Weitlauff 1971 (see annot. 2), p. 271. Prof. Pörnbacher, in a letter addressed to me dating from December 2013, endorses this view.

nes Gatz, i.e., the author of the footnote]. The Vice Postulator was only told after the picture had been burnt.¹⁰⁷

Some 35 years later, the attitude towards images documenting Crescentia's vision fortunately had palpably relaxed: In its 1963/64 issue, the *Crescentia-Brief* (*Crescentia Letter*), a periodical published by the office of the vice postulator, reported that it had received a copy of the Ruffini painting which had been discovered in the attic of the Franciscan monastery in Bozen (Bolzano, South Tyrolia) and which, as it seems, Crescentia had given as a gift to Gabriel Weber, born in a village near Kaufbeuren and later Augustinian canon in Neustift (Novacella, South Tyrolia). Just to avoid misunderstandings, though, the author of the article emphasized that the Augsburg episcopal authorities had granted permission to reproduce the painting and that the painting was not to be considered as an object of veneration ('ein zu verehrendes Hl.-Geist-Bild'), but as the time-bound illustration of a private revelation ('eine zeitgeschichtliche Illustration einer Privatoffenbarung').¹⁰⁸ This painting (ill. 1) has been preserved in the Crescentia Monastery in Kaufbeuren to the present day; the times when Crescentia's unorthodox vision stood between her and posthumous fame definitely were a thing of the past.¹⁰⁹ On 25th November 2001, she was canonized by Pope John Paul II.

¹⁰⁷ Ott, ed. Gatz (see annot. 5), p. 227. At first sight, the identity of the Vice Postulator does not emerge clearly from this account: Was it Mariophilus Hockenmaier, appointed Vice Postulator in 1927, or Johannes Gatz, who took over in 1928? But then, Hockenmaier was superior ('Oberer') of the monastery during the years 1927-1933, which means that the Vice Postulator mentioned in the account must be Gatz. Apart from that, the rash action of burning the picture fits in better with what can be gleaned about Hockenmaier from the literature available: He was elderly, and the fact that the office of Vice Postulator was transferred after a very brief period to Gatz implies that he was overtaxed or at least burdened with too many other duties. (One might even speculate that it was the picture burning itself which alerted his fellow brothers to this fact.) The identity of the anonymous 'bishop' in Gatz's account remains a mystery; it is unlikely that Gatz would have referred to the then Bishop of Augsburg in such a vague manner. For information concerning the Kaufbeuren Franciscan friars see Max Heinrichsperger: *Franziskaner in Kaufbeuren : Eine historische Studie zum 70. Gedenktag der Seligsprechung der Schw. Crescentia Höß*, Landshut 1970. (There is no mention of the picture burning in this book.)

The 1963/64 issue of the *Crescentia-Brief* (*Crescentia Letter*), published by the office of the Vice Postulator, says on p. 18 that the destruction of the Ruffini painting had been an order given by a 'strict visitor' to the 'then spiritual', a term which in this context refers to someone taking care of the spiritual needs of nuns and thus would again point towards Hockenmaier. Arthur Maximilian Miller (*Crescentia von Kaufbeuren : Das Leben einer schwäbischen Mystikerin*, Augsburg 1968, p. 356) lays the blame on an anonymous 'French bishop', who was granted permission to have the picture burnt by the 'provincial authorities' (of the Franciscan Order?). There are several French names floating round in the Semsales affair, but the 'French bishop' nonetheless remains enigmatic.

¹⁰⁸ *Crescentia-Brief* 1963/64, pp. 16 ff.

¹⁰⁹ In the letter mentioned above (see annot. 106), Prof. Pörnbacher, Crescentia's Vice Postulator since 1995, affirms that during the years he spent in the service of Crescentia's canonization the Spirit vision was no longer on the agenda.

Appendix

(1)

Johannes Gatz: *Crescentia Höß v. Kaufbeuren in der Sicht ihrer Zeit : Eine wertvolle Quellenschrift von 1780 nach der Handschrift v. P. Dominikus Ott SJ*, Landshut 1971, pp 224-227

Der hl. Geist ist Crescenzia schon in den ersten sechs Jahren ihrer Kindheit öfters erschienen ... Es ist ihr aber der hl. Geist erschienen in der Gestalt eines Jünglings in einem schneeweißen Rock und Mantel mit bloßem Haupt und gekrauten Haaren und mit sieben um das Haupt schwebenden Flammen oder feurigen Zungen. ... Nachdem nun Crescenzia ins Kloster kam, ist ihr der göttliche Geist weit öfter und mit größerem Einfluß der Gnaden erschienen ... An einem Pfingstfest erschien Crescenzia der Hl. Geist und erfüllte sie mit seinen sieben Gaben auf eine ganz unaussprechliche Weise... Diese so wunderlichen Gnaden und Erscheinungen des Hl. Geistes erweckten in den Vorgesetzten endlich eine große Begierde dessen Bildnis zu haben. Weil ihnen aber bekannt war, daß Crescenzia der Malkunst gänzlich unerfahren sei, sind sie auf den Gedanken verfallen, sie sollte einem Maler die Gestalt, in der ihr der Hl. Geist gewöhnlich erschien, so gut sie konnte, angeben und so seinen Pinsel durch ihre Worte leiten. Der Schluß war gemacht und ein Maler mit Namen Rufin von München berufen. Da man nun diesem vortrug, was man gesinnt wäre, bot er zwar seine Dienste an, versicherte aber zugleich, daß es eine pure Unmöglichkeit sei durch bloßes Erzählen oder Angeben, besonders einer Person, die von der Malerei gar nichts verstünde, eine dem Vorbild ähnliche Abbildung zu machen. Doch man ließ sich durch diese Einwendung nicht hindern, sondern man verlangte, daß der Maler Rufin Fleiß und Kunst nach Möglichkeit verwenden sollte ... es war mithin Crescenzia in Kraft des hl. Gehorsams befohlen, dem Maler das Bild anzugeben und mit allem Fleiß besorgt zu sein, daß die Gestalt, so wie sie dies in der Erscheinung gesehen hat, wohl ausgedrückt und vorgestellt werde. Crescenzia, obwohl dieser Befehl ihrer Demut sehr schwer fiel, tat dennoch sogleich was ihr befohlen wurde und in wenigen Tagen war das Bildnis fertig und zwar so, daß nach ihrer Aussage der Hl. Geist gemäß der gewöhnlichen Erscheinung vollkommen abgebildet war. Mit was für Freude und Vergnügen der Vorgesetzten und besonders des Herrn Rufin ist nicht zu beschreiben, weil er hoffte, bei der römischen Kaiserin Amalia, dortmals Kurfürstin von Bayern, die eine ungemeine Schätzung von der Heiligkeit Crescenzias hatte, durch eine Kopie dieser Bildnisse eine besonders große Ehre einzulegen. Er malte auch mit Erlaubnis der Oberin wirklich ein anderes Bild nach dem ersten, war aber nicht so glücklich, daß, obgleich er den gleichen Fleiß anwandte und noch dazu das Bild vor Augen hatte, er das zweite diesem vollkommen gleichmachen konnte. Er bekannte dies selbst und sagte mit fast weinenden Augen, daß das erste Bild der Hl. Geist selbst gemalt haben müsse. Dieses geschah im Jahre 1727 oder 1728, genauer kann ich die Zeit nicht bestimmen.

(2)

Diego de Yepes: *Vida Virtudes y Milagros, de la bien Aventurada Virgen Teresa de Jesus* [...], Saragossa 1606; book 1, ch. 18, p. 133:

Assi mesmo se le aparecio este diuino espiritu, en figura de vn mancebo muy hermoso, rodeade todo de llamas muy encendidas, y assi le hizo pintar en una imagen pequena, la qual tenia ella de ordinario en su breuiario, y vino à parar despues enel Duque de Alua Don Fernando de Toledo, el qual la traia sie[m]pre enel pecho para consuelo suyo. Quedole a la Santa tan impressa esta vision, que desde entonces hasta q[ue] murio, la traia presente aunque estuiesse muy ocupada: saluo que algunas vezes era, como si tuuiesse vn velo delgado delante, pero con certidumbre que estaua detras: y muchas vezes se corria esta cortina y lo boluia à ver.

(3)

Franz Joseph Nock: *Leben und Wirken der gottseligen Mutter Maria Anna Josepha a Jesu Lindmayr* [...], Regensburg [et al.], 1882, pp 257 f.:

Ich bin ... im Geiste in die Kapelle der allerheiligsten Dreifaltigkeit beim hl. Geist geführt worden, welche auf dem Friedhof ist ... Ich mußte das Altarbild in dieser Kapelle beim hl. Geist sorgfältig betrachten, welches die heiligste Dreifaltigkeit darstellte, und etwas unter den beiden ersten göttlichen Personen, die allerseligste Jungfrau Maria mit erhobenen, zum Gebete gefalteten Händen, wie sie gecrönt wird. Unter diesem Betrachten ist auf einmal die heiligste Dreifaltigkeit allein auf dem Altar gewesen, die allerseligste Jungfrau Maria aber, welche sonst zwischen dem himmlischen Vater und dem göttlichen Sohne mit aufgehobenen Armen kniete, war vom Altar hinweg und wendete sich auf der rechten Seite mit unaussprechlicher Demuth und Inbrunst gegen die drei allerheiligsten Personen. An dem Platze aber zwischen dem himmlischen Vater und Gott-Sohn, an welchem sich zuvor die Mutter Gottes knieend aufgehalten hatte, war nun Gott der hl. Geist in Gestalt eines schönen Jünglings, von Liebe ganz entflammt.

Picture credits:

1: Pörnbacher 2002 (see ann. 2), p. 66; 2: Gläser (see ann. 6), p. 112; 3-4: author; 5: Pörnbacher 1993 (see ann. 77), p. 83; 6: Pörnbacher 1993 (see ann. 77), p. 85; 7: Pörnbacher 2002 (see ann. 2), p. 68; 8: author; 9: Google Books; 10: Boespflug 1984 (see ann. 2), p. 150; 11: Calcographica (Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica), <http://calcografica.ing.beniculturali.it/>; 12: Kaufbeuren, Crescentiakloster; 13: Ottobeuren, Benediktinerabtei; 14: Pörnbacher 2002 (see ann. 2), p. 67; 15: author; 16: Boespflug 2008 (see ann. 2), p. 242; 17: Meinrad von Au (see ann. 71), p. 142; 18-19: author; 20: Rampold (see ann. 17), p. 251; 21: Matthäus Günther (see ann. 85), p. 43; 22-24: author; 25: Isphording 1982 (see ann. 90), plates, ill. 103; 26: PESSCA (see annot. 95), 2204A.



1 copy after J. Ruffini; Kaufbeuren, Crescentia Monastery



2 J. S. Klauber



3 S. Th. Sondermayr



4 S. Th. Sondermayr



5 G. B. Göz, J. H. Störcklin



6 S. Th. Sondermayr



7 F. A. Germiller; Mindelheim, Franciscan monastery



8 Ch. Th. Scheffler, Haunstetten, St. Mary's Chapel



9 *Essercizi affettivi ...*, Rome 1670



10 *Vie de la seraphique Mere ...*, Lyon 1670



11 A. van Westerhout





15 J. Rieger; Holzen, Benedictine church



16 J. Fouquet, *Heures d'Étienne Chevalier*; Chantilly, Musée Condé



17 M. von Au; Sigmaringen, Heimatmuseum



18 J. Herle [?], Gutenzell, Cistercian church



19 J. E. Belling



20 J. E. Belling



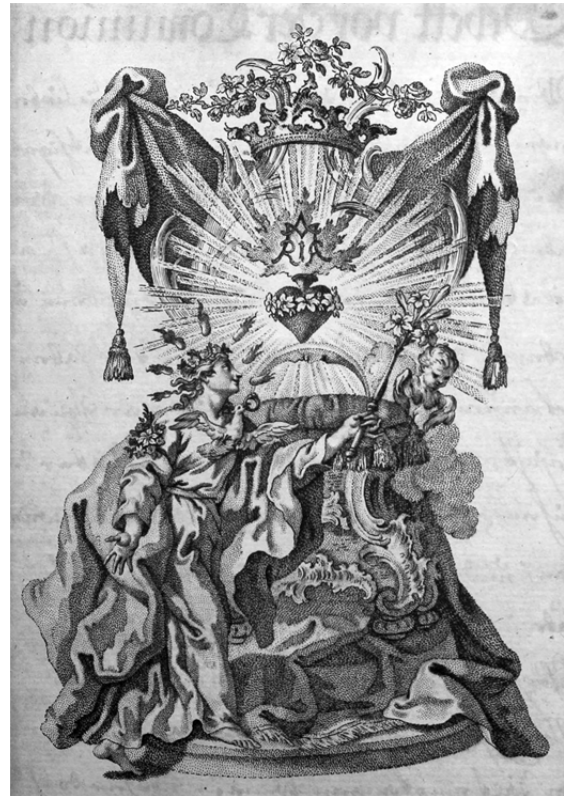
21 M. Günther; Altdorf,
parish church



22 B. Riepp; Großaitingen,
parish church



23 G. B. Göz [?], Klauber workshop



24 G. B. Göz



25 G. B. Göz, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett



26 G. B. Göz