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[Order of the Holy Spirit]. *Petit Office du Saint-Esprit*  
In Latin and French, illustrated manuscript on parchment  
France, Paris?, dated 1828

27 ff., preceded and followed by 5 parchment flyleaves, complete (collation i° [8+1]; ii-iv<sup>8</sup>), written in a very fine calligraphic slanted print in black ink, text framed in a double frame traced in liquid gold and red ink fillets (all leaves with such frame), title-page in black, red and liquid gold, headings and some titles in liquid gold and red ink, titles in liquid gold and blue ink, numerous capitals in gold or red throughout, numerous 2-line high initials in blue or green highlighted in liquid gold, decorated bandeaux in brown ink highlighted by liquid gold in imitation of Renaissance motifs (rincaux, foliate and floral motifs, vases), some leaves with repeated fleurs-de-lys in liquid gold, two doves traced in brown ink, with spread wings, rays of light and tongues of fire (fol. 1v and smaller one next to opening initial on fol. 3), signed by the calligrapher (and decorator?) with initials "V.B." on fol. 27v. Beautifully bound in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century red morocco over pasteboard, red morocco doublure decorated with frame composed of a single gilt fillet, first and second front and back flyleaves lined in silk and marbled paper, back sewn on 5 raised bands, gilt title in second compartment and single black fillets in all compartments, double gilt fillet on board edges, gilt edges (signed binding: Ed[mond] Klein, binder established in Paris in the 1820s, recorded in J. Flety, *Dictionnaire des relieurs français ayant exercé de 1800 à nos jours*, 1988, p. 99) (Pristine condition). Dimensions 103 x 70 mm (leaves 98 x 65 mm).

Portable, beautifully executed and bound calligraphic manuscript of the office of the Order of the Saint-Esprit, the most important of the French royal chivalric orders. This manuscript was most likely made for one of the last knights of the order before it was definitively suppressed in 1830. Knights were required to recite the office daily.

## PROVENANCE

1. Copied and decorated in Paris, 1828, signed by the calligrapher and decorator with his initials V.B. (f. 27v). This appears to be Victor Boutin, but further research is required to confirm this attribution.
2. Coella Lindsay Ricketts (1859-1941). This manuscript must have belonged to Coella Lindsay Ricketts, before it was given as a Christmas gift to his daughter Julia (see below). C. L. Ricketts was a calligrapher and illuminator of Chicago and founder of The Scriptorium, a firm specializing in calligraphy and illuminations. Ricketts assembled an important collection of medieval and historical documents and manuscripts now housed in the Lilly Library, Indiana University. Granted the date

of the gift, it appears that Coella Lindsay Ricketts had the work bound for his daughter, or at least the binding is near contemporary with the date of the gift.

3. Julia Ricketts King. A small envelope reads in brown ink: "Merry Christmas to Julia! [signed] Father [date] 1928." The card that was inserted in the envelope is now missing. It is quite understandable that such an example of fine 19<sup>th</sup> century craftsmanship should have appealed to members of a family so entirely devoted to the calligraphic arts.

## TEXT

f. 1, [Half-title], *Petit office du St.-Esprit*;

f. 1v, Dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit [see exact same model engraved in *Office des chevaliers de l'ordre du Saint-Esprit ...*, 1703, p. 97];

f. 2, [Title-page, with date], *Petit office du Saint-Esprit*, Paris, 1828 [published *in extenso* in *Office des chevaliers de l'ordre du Saint-Esprit*, 1703, pp. 3-45];

f. 2v, blank;

ff. 3-20, *Office du Saint-Esprit* (matins, ff. 3-5v); A prime (ff. 6-7v); A tierce (ff. 8-9v); A sexte (ff. 10-11v); A none (ff. 12-13v); A vespres (ff. 14-15v); A complies (ff. 16-18);

ff. 18v-20, Hymne au St-Esprit;

ff. 20v-22, Hymne de la Croix;

ff. 22v-23, Prière à Saint Michel;

ff. 23v-24v, Prière pour le Roy;

ff. 25-25v, Prière pour les Chevaliers

ff. 26-27, Prière pour les Défunts qui ont été de l'Ordre;

f. 27v, blank.

This small portable "Office for the Holy Spirit" was delicately hand copied and decorated for a member of the Order of the Holy Spirit, to wit the prayers added after the Office: Prayer to saint Michael (Patron Saint of the Order); Prayer to the King (the Order was a royal creation); Prayer for the knights; Prayer for the deceased members of the Order. Also noteworthy are the symbols of the Pentecostal dove and the three fleur-de-lys, all associated with the Order.

The "Ordre du St-Esprit" was created by Henri III in 1578, who placed the new chivalric order under the influence of the Holy Spirit to commemorate two important events that occurred on the

day of the Pentecost, firstly his election to the throne of Poland in 1573 and secondly his accession to the throne of France in 1574.

As with any chivalric order, a number of conditions and duties were required of the knights of the "Ordre du Saint-Esprit" who admitted up to 100 French members at a time, all noblemen, as well as some foreign knights. Amongst the "duties" to be fulfilled by the knights, there was the obligation to recite the Office of the Holy Spirit daily: "Tous ceux qui sont de l'Ordre du S. Esprit, sont obligez de reciter tous les jours, l'Office qui est dans ce livre... suivant l'article .lxxxviii. des Statuts..." (*Office des chevaliers de l'ordre du Saint-Esprit*, 1703, p. 1).

The Order was abolished during the French Revolution, reestablished during the Restoration and finally definitively abolished in 1830, with the last ceremony held in June 1830 in the Chapelle Saint-Louis des Tuileries. Thus the present *Petit office du Saint-Esprit* was copied and likely destined for a knight in 1828, just before the suppression of the Order, a last witness to what once was the most prestigious of the chivalric orders in France. Interestingly, in 1828, there were only two knights sworn in: Christophe, comte de Chabrol de Crouzol, minister of the Navy and the Duc de Villa-Hermosa, former ambassador of Antoine I<sup>er</sup>, king of Saxony (Colleville, 2001, p. 54). Could this small deluxe portable "Office" have been copied on that occasion, for one of the two newly sworn in knights?

## LITERATURE

Colleville, Ludovic de. *Les ordres du roi: répertoire general contenant les noms et qualités de tous les chevaliers des ordres royaux, militaires et chevaleresques ayant existé en France de 1099 à 1830...*, Mémoires et documents, 2001.

[Ordre du Saint-Esprit]. *Office des chevaliers de l'ordre du Saint-Esprit*, Paris, Imprimerie royale, 1703.

Pinoteau, H. *Etat de l'Ordre du Saint-Esprit en 1830, et la survivance des Ordres du roi*, Paris, Nouvelles éditions latines, 1983.

Pinoteau, H. *Etudes sur les ordres de chevalerie du roi de France, et tout spécialement sur les ordres de Saint-Michel et du Saint-Esprit*, Paris, 1995.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

The Ricketts Collection at Lilly Library

<http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/lilly/mss/html/rickett3.html>

On the Order of the Holy Spirit

<http://www.blason-armoiries.org/feodalite-noblesse/o/ordre-du-saint-esprit.htm>