



Lettre aux Américains



Liège, Dynamo, coll. "Brimborions", (July 31) 1959.
1 booklet (140 x 190 mm) of 7 p., [1] and 1 f. Paperback.

First edition.

One of the first 11 copies on vergé de Hollande paper, signed and numbered by the publisher (No. 7).

We apologize for the imperfect translation generated by DeepL for the purposes of the show.

A beautiful reflective text on the American commitment to liberate France, written by Saint-Exupéry on the night of May 29-30, 1944, in Sardinia: "... It may be that the feeling of your material power will lead you to take advantage today or tomorrow in ways that will seem to us to unjustly harm us. It may be that one day, more or less serious discussions will arise between you and us... Indeed, if one day I harbor in my heart some reproaches against the decisions of those people, these reproaches will never make me forget the nobility of the war aims of your people."

Saint-Exupéry promised this text to Life journalist and photographer John Phillips: "I will give you a text if you manage to get me reinstated in my group". He kept his word. On the eve of Phillips' departure, May 30, 1944, the two men spent the night together: Saint-Exupéry wrote the Letter to an American and, in the early morning, offered his manuscript to his journalist friend, so that he could have it published. Two months later, on July 31, 1944, the writer-pilot disappeared at sea.

The Life journalist, devastated, published neither the Letter to an American nor his report. "The disappearance was a terrible shock for John Phillips, who put all the images into hibernation. Forty years later, I put a lot of energy into persuading him to follow them up for a book and a traveling exhibition that even went back to the Alghero airfield, where it had all begun in the exultation of finally regaining control, and to the Bastia airfield, where the adventure came to a tragic end" (Favrod, Le Temps, May 11, 2001).

This text, the last one written by Saint-Exupéry, was not published until 1959, in this confidential edition published by Pierre Aeberts, with a print run of 51 copies. La Pléiade (OC, II, notes, p. 1394) mistakenly states that the first publication did not occur until 1973 in the magazine Air France (no. 1, first quarter of 1973), before being followed up in 1981 in no. 96 of the magazine Icare.

The first eleven copies on vergé de Hollande are extremely rare.

From the Pierre Puech library (Paris, Alde, II, 2010, no. 370).