

# PROTOCOL OF THE FLOCK

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We have relatively little to go on in the reconstruction of this exercise — only the marginalia designating four phases presumably deployed in an experiment in plain-air collective attention. The italicized directions below represent an effort to interpolate missing details, and thereby to recover how “The Protocol of the Flock” might have been activated in specific Actions of sustained attention.

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## I. PEREGRINATION

*Wander without attachments.*

*Allow all things to be equally unfamiliar.*

## II. CIRCUMAMBULATION

*Curve your trajectory.*

*What lies at the center of your revolutions?*

## III. DIVAGATION

*Stray.*

## IV. ASSOCIATION

*Constellate.*

*Find an order for what is now familiar.*



## THE KITTIWAKE DOSSIER:

*INDICATIONS OF A SURREALIST VOLÉE OR  
A PRACTICE OF PLEIN-AIR ATTENTION*

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*Readers of the PROCEEDINGS OF ESTAR(SER) will already be aware of the considerable efforts made by various scholars, collectors, bibliophiles, and editors to sift the historicity of that peculiar body known as THE ORDER OF THE THIRD BIRD. Despite these labors, a great deal of uncertainty (and even some genuine confusion) persists concerning the nature and workings of this self-sequestering community — which would seem, at least in its modern incarnation, to function as a distributed association of initiates who convene to perform idiosyncratic rites of sustained attention to made things (often works of art). New documents bearing on the genesis, evolution, commitments, and practices of THE ORDER are continually coming to light, and we are pleased here to offer a sample from a new and interesting body of relevant materials. Details follow.*

## TEXT AND CONTEXT

The presence of a delegate of the Order of the Third Bird among the Parisian Surrealists has long been a matter of conjecture, in light of their highly suggestive affinities with the Order — among which we cite the Surrealists' rarefied practices of collective rumination and their noted veneration of the bird-form. Evidence recently submitted for examination by the editorial committee of ESTAR(SER) now appears to corroborate this supposition. These materials have come to be known as "The Kittiwake Dossier," after the pseudonymous penwoman behind its largely epistolary contents. A preliminary analysis of sundry documents in this dossier — signally, pages torn from the June 1934 issue of the Belgian Surrealists' organ *Documents*, pages in which André Breton recounts a now infamous encounter with a pair of objects in the St. Ouen flea market — suggests a residue of the Order's protocols in the canonical explication of the Surrealist "found object." Similarly illuminating are Kittiwake's letters sent from Paris to an address in Hampstead over the course of the 1930s, detailing her increasingly hapless efforts to establish a *volée* of the Order of the Third Bird in Paris in those years. Her private and confessional account of these trials sheds valuable light on the transmission of the practices of the Order in this period. Full publication of this striking series of texts in the *Proceedings* may be expected shortly. Worthy of immediate attention, however, is evidence in the Kittiwake Dossier of a hitherto unknown procedure for sustained attention: a "plein-air protocol," seemingly devised in an effort to merge the Order's general tendencies (toward sodalities constituted around objects of collective attention) with the specifically Surrealist praxis of urban *errance* (privileging dissociative conditions thought to facilitate spontaneous irruptions of trans-conscious possibility). At issue? A protocol in which the aggregation of participants around a specific object ("flocking") is itself, apparently, an emergent phenomenon — unplanned, aleatory, automatic. Unlike the conventions of the standard Bird "Action" (in which the focus of sustained aesthesis is nominated prior to the commencement of any protocol of attention), in this "Protocol of the Flock" it is the object that appears instead to choose, or perhaps even to order, its attendant community. More work is needed on this unexpected discovery, presented opposite and on the back of this card.

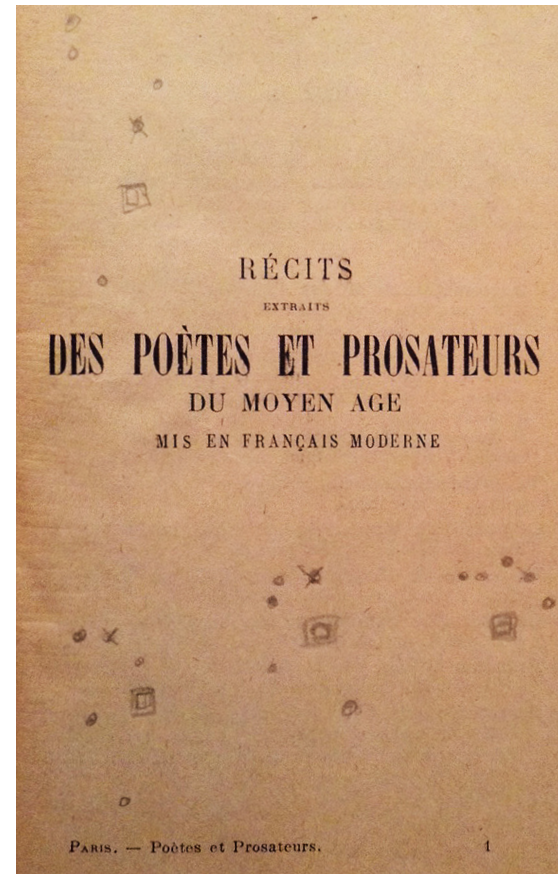


FIGURE: The title page of a copy of the 4th edition of *Récits Extraits des Poètes et Prosateurs du Moyen Age* (Paris: Gaston, 1903) found with the Kittiwake Dossier. The volume bears an interleaf dedication to "mon P.E., léger comme une plume." The small markings shown here appear to map an instance of the "Protocol of the Flock," which we have reconstructed overleaf on the basis of these images and the four phase names that appear in French on the inside front cover of this book (beside light pencil sketches of what seems to be the monument to Charles Fourier that once stood at the intersection of the boulevard de Clichy and rue de Caulaincourt in Paris).