



org is an online platform, collecting, describing, presenting and generating documents of all sorts. It documents documents.

**Your path through the collection lead along** A peregrine falcon in the internal perimeter, Backpack, Mirror, Croûton d'Or, Raisins, Market, 12M m3 [7/8] A Fissure, 12M m3 [5/8] It's Freezing, 12M m3 [4/8] Dam, 12M m3 [2/8] Thaw, Marmara, N 47°12.346' E 18°10.400', Iguanodon, Flint, A Bibliographic Reference, Dust, A smoker's history of energy

## What constitutes a 'document' and how does it function?

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the etymological origin is the Latin 'documentum', meaning 'lesson, proof, instance, specimen'. As a verb, it is 'to prove or support (something) by documentary evidence', and 'to provide with documents'. The online version of the *OED* includes a draft addition, whereby a document (as a noun) is 'a collection of data in digital form that is considered a single item and typically has a unique filename by which it can be stored, retrieved, or transmitted (as a file, a spreadsheet, or a graphic)'. The current use of the noun 'document' is defined as '*something* written, inscribed, etc., which furnishes evidence or information upon any subject, as a manuscript, title-deed, tomb-stone, coin, picture, etc.' (emphasis added).

Both 'something' and that first 'etc.' leave ample room for discussion. A document doubts whether it functions as something unique, or as something reproducible. A passport is a document, but a flyer equally so. Moreover, there is a circular reasoning: to document is 'to provide with documents'. Defining (the functioning of) a document most likely involves ideas of communication, information, evidence, inscriptions, and implies notions of objectivity and neutrality – but the document is neither reducible to one of them, nor is it equal to their sum. It is hard to pinpoint it, as it disperses into and is affected by other fields: it is intrinsically tied to the history of media and to important currents in literature, photography and art; it is linked to epistemic and power structures. However ubiquitous it is, as an often tangible thing in our environment, and as a concept, a document *deranges*.

the-documents.org continuously gathers documents and provides them with a short textual description, explanation, or digression, written by multiple authors. In *Paper Knowledge*, Lisa Gitelman paraphrases ‘documentalist’ Suzanne Briet, stating that ‘an antelope running wild would not be a document, but an antelope taken into a zoo would be one, presumably because it would then be framed – or reframed – as an example, specimen, or instance’. The gathered files are all documents – if they weren’t before publication, they now are. That is what the-documents.org, irreversibly, *does*. It is a zoo turning an antelope into an ‘antelope’.

As you made your way through the collection, the-documents.org tracked the entries you viewed. It documented your path through the website. As such, the time spent on the-documents.org turned into this – a new document.

This document was compiled by \_\_\_\_\_ on 11.03.2022 11:24, printed on \_\_\_\_\_ and contains 17 documents on 36 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/11-03-2022-3905/>)

the-documents.org is a project created and edited by De Cleene De Cleene; design & development by atelier Haegeman Temmerman.

the-documents.org has been online since 23.05.2021.

#### Notes

- De Cleene De Cleene is Michiel De Cleene and Arnout De Cleene. Together they form a research group that focusses on novel ways of approaching the everyday, by artistic means and from a cultural and critical perspective.  
[www.decleenedecleene.be](http://www.decleenedecleene.be) / [info@decleenedecleene.be](mailto:info@decleenedecleene.be)
- This project was made possible with the support of the Flemish Government and KASK & Conservatorium, the school of arts of HOGENT and Howest. It is part of the research project *Documenting Objects*, financed by the HOGENT Arts Research Fund.

#### Sources

- Briet, S. *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* Paris: Edit, 1951.
- Gitelman, L. *Paper Knowledge. Toward a Media History of Documents*. Durham/ London: Duke University Press, 2014.
- *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Accessed on 13.05.2021.



Flanders  
State of the Art



At the nuclear waste processing facility. While the photographer and the head of the communication department are making their way from the processing building to the temporary storage building, they walk past the central chimney.

‘On the highest of the accessible levels of the chimney, operators were finding small steel rings. They gathered them, but soon noticed that new rings were added. At a certain point at a rate of one ring a day.

[...]

It took them some time to realize what they were, so they started collecting them by slipping them onto a piece of rope. By now the rings on the rope span about this distance [spreads his arms to indicate a distance of about 1.2m].

[...]

They turned out to be rings that came from pigeon’s legs.

[...]

On top of our chimney resides a peregrine falcon.

[...]

I was told pigeon fanciers have a tendency to give a peregrine falcon – or any other bird of prey in their area – a hand at disappearing, but this one took up residency in the internal perimeter, where – as you know – access is severely restricted.’

#### Notes

First published in: De Cleene, M. *Reference Guide*. Amsterdam: Roma Publications, 2019



type  
photograph

date  
02.03.2022

filename  
duivenringen\_001.jpg

size  
20,04 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
animal, collecting, food, Reference Guide, technology, waste

10:24:12

\_44A6588.dng

At 13:26:43 I took a photograph of a concrete building without windows in an industrial zone just south of Brussels.

\_44A6590.dng

At 16:46:15 I photographed a succession of office buildings in the same industrial zone.

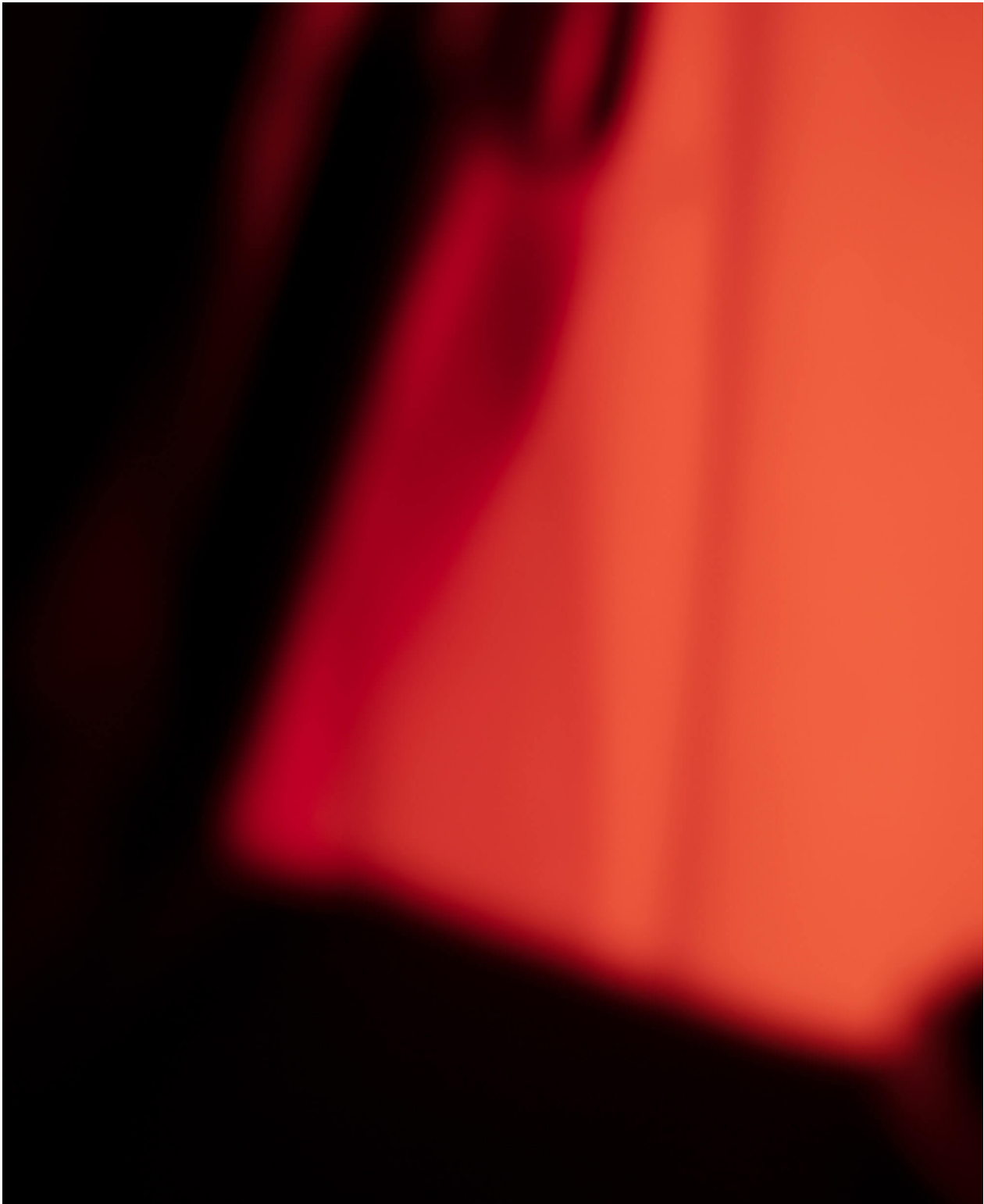
\_44A6589.dng

I must have walked about 1 kilometer between the concrete building without windows and the section of the industrial zone with the offices. At 13:43:49, the camera, safely stored in my backpack, recorded 0.4 seconds of the 20 minutes it took me to get there.

In *The Snows of Venice*, Alexander Kluge wonders whether he can take the liberty to conjure up what the sky looked like on 31 December 1799, as Schiller made his way to Goethe's house. He goes on by saying that, historically, there's a 'LACK OF SENSORY ATTENTION AT CRUCIAL MOMENTS'.<sup>1</sup> There are exceptions, though, like the cameraman that was sent out to document the fireworks on New Year's Day 2000. The camera was turned on prematurely. The batteries were used up by midnight, but 'certain gray tones, however, filtered through the cracks of its protective case, conveyed the motion of the walking cameraman, the transportation. The incompletely shut, low-information container was documented exactly [...] To this day it provides inexact testimony as to the qualities of the leather of a twenty-first century carrying case and the precise sensitivity to light and dark demonstrated by a twenty-first century recording medium.'<sup>2</sup>

#### Sources

- 1 Lerner, B., Kluge, A. *The Snows of Venice*. Leipzig: Spector Books, 2018, p. 53
- 2 Ibid.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	15.02.2022	_44A6589.dng	37,87 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category  
architecture, data storage, mistake, packaging, technology

10:24:14



On the online thrift shop 2dehands.be the homepage generates a 'for you' section. On November 9th this section listed, among other things, a picture of the sky on a patch of concrete. On closer inspection, it became clear that it was the sky's reflection in a mirror with a red frame and four lightbulbs in it, the kind you might see at the hairdresser's or backstage in a television studio or theatre. The seller estimates the mirror's current value to be 45,00 EUR. The listing includes five photographs. In the fifth one, the object for sale reflects a bucolic landscape: a blue sky, white clouds, some trees and a fragment of a barn.



type	date	filename	size	author
screenshot	16.01.2022	Schermafbeelding 2021-11-09 om 20.54.40.png	2,92 MB	Michiel De Cleene
category				
economy, landscape, mirror				

10:24:14

The archive of O. Clemminck, architect, was preserved in a box of croutons – by him, the historian who gave it to my father, or someone else (it contains a letter written by Clemminck's widow asking a client to pay the bill her husband had sent). The croutons had a flavor of fine herbs and, a stamp on the box with the plans in it says, should have been consumed before April 1987.



type  
photograph

date  
14.01.2022

filename  
\_MG\_7420.JPG

size  
6MB

author  
Arnout De Cleene

category  
architecture, archive, data storage, food, O. Clemminck, packaging

10:24:14

When I grew up, my parents told me that the number of raisins in the local baker's raisin bread attested to the result of the most recent soccer match of KAA Gent. A victory was celebrated by throwing more raisins into the dough than usual, a loaf following a painful loss was hardly a raisin bread at all.

The baker retired long ago. Today my two-year-old son picked out all the raisins from his slice of bread. KAA Gent's last game was a tie against Union.



type  
photograph

date  
30.12.2021

filename  
IMG\_9810.HEIC

size  
1,2 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
family, food

10:24:15

K. says that the stall where he usually buys fruit has already been packed up. But he is not worried about the quality of the fruit the other vendor sells. He gestures encouragingly.

Five signs of type-1, eleven of type-2 and two of type-3 are visible. Four of type-2 (two visible, two deduced) and two of type-3 retain two vehicles.

#### Notes

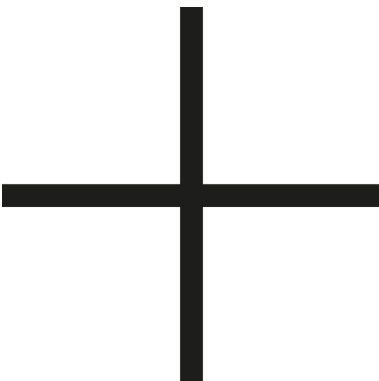
1.



2.



3.



- Márk Redele pursues projects that fundamentally relate to architecture and its practice but rarely look like architecture. [www.markredele.com](http://www.markredele.com)





type  
photograph

date  
26.12.2021

filename  
market\_.jpg

size  
3,82 MB

author  
Márk Redele

category  
automobile, economy, food, fruit, landscape, manual, parking, precipitation, sign

**10:24:15**



What they took for ice that slid down the dam's slope, appears to be the reason for draining the reservoir: a fissure in the watertight layer. The dam became unreliable.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	06.12.2021	IMG_0515b	5,42 MB	Michiel De Cleene
category				
fissure, landscape, mistake, repair				

10:24:16

On January 23, 2020 a young couple walks around  
the drained reservoir of Kruth-Wildenstein.

**the-documents.c**

It's freezing. They're expecting their first child  
within a month.



type  
photograph

date  
04.12.2021

filename  
IMG\_0509b.jpg

size  
3,31 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
family, landscape

10:24:18

Seven years after the devastating flood, in 1954, the building of the dam is decided upon. Between 1959 and 1963 the infrastructure is built, and the reservoir gets filled with water in 1964 to act as a buffer for sudden floods and to guarantee a flowing Thur through the highly industrialized area downstream.





type  
photograph

date  
02.12.2021

filename  
IMG\_0510b.jpg

size  
5,85 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
architecture, drought, economy, landscape, precipitation

10:24:18

It snows on December 19, but the situation changes on the 22nd with the arrival of an Atlantic low-pressure area, bringing masses of hot and humid air. Thaw follows.

And then, it snows again on December 26 and 27, before the arrival of a new warm front on the same day. A significant and brutal rise in temperature ensues: at Lac Noir, at 920 m, the temperature shoots up from 0,3 °C on December 27 at 7 AM to 7,4 ° C on the 28th at 9 PM.



type  
photograph

date  
30.11.2021

filename  
IMG\_0506b.jpg

size  
5,31 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
landscape, precipitation

10:24:19



Fairly detailed map of the two major marble quarries on the island of Tinos, Greece. The spontaneous route-advice was prepared by a local marble worker, P.D., in the Karia region of the island on a locally extracted, green marble slab. The waved lines represent roads traversing uphill, while the straight lines represent roads following a contour line of the topography.

‘Tell your friend that the wine is for girls; it’s very sweet,’ the marble worker alerted my travel companion K.S. after offering us local sweet wine. The workshop smelled like boiled meat and bones.

Notes on map from left to right, top to bottom:

1. Towards Vathi
2. Quarry
3. incomprehensible
4. Towards Vathi Bleu
5. Isternia
6. Pirgos

#### Notes

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type  
photograph

date  
19.11.2021

filename  
marmar\_.jpg

size  
3,47 MB

author  
Márk Redele

category  
book, map/plan, marble, sign

10:24:19

During the 1950s, as part of the communist reconstruction, a large coal/gas power plant was built close to the village of Inota, Hungary. This is the place where I grew up. It operated until about 1994. In the run-up to the final shutdown of the operation they gradually lowered its output. By this time the coal mines in the neighboring city had shut down as well due to the diminishing yield of the low-quality brown coal they had mined for the purpose of fueling the power plant. This resulted in mass unemployment and general decline in the area. The small lake in the photo is an artificial reservoir that collected all the water from the nearby streams. The substantial flow of one of those rivers powered about 11 water-driven flour mills; I know this on account of my grandmother, who would often pick up bags of flour for bread.

The ruin in the photograph once was a pumping facility that drove the water from the lake to the power plant about 3 kilometres away. In the years following the systemic change of Hungary and its celebrated evolution towards a western-type capitalism in '89-'90, the rules of ownership and the perception of public and private property were somewhat elusive. The lack of state control resulted in a transfer of public property to private hands on a monumental scale throughout the whole country, and – by extension – the Eastern Bloc. At the time some of the village dwellers of Inota, driven by the force of a major change and the prospect of a new, prosperous future of capitalist entrepreneurship, gathered to disassemble the water-pumping facility along the artificial lake. Slowly, day by day, under the mist of this elusive moment, they carried away

carriageful after carriageful of bricks, disassembled from the facade of the building. It was perhaps a way of taking revenge, but certainly also claiming the moment's opportunity. The bricks made their way into the walls of the new-built family homes of some of the villagers. The former water pumping facility became a sort of material reservoir for the construction of a new future. The transformation from a water reservoir to a material (and ideological) one and its subsequent exhaustion, left a ruin that has remained untouched for the last 30 years. The bricks that were difficult to reach were left in place, thus forming a curtain around the upper part of the building just above the pillars. Freed from all perimeter walls, the leftover structure appeared as a pavilion-like, open floor plan.

#### Notes

- The cliffs at the sides of the valley on the photo served as the location for the film *My Way Home* (Így Jöttem, 1965) by the iconic Hungarian filmmaker Miklós Jancsó, about a 17-year-old boy who falls prisoner to the Russian army and forms a friendship with one of the foes. The film is said to display all the main themes of the director: the psychological presence of landscape, the randomness of violence and the arbitrary nature of power.
- In the distance a formation of meadows can be seen in the photograph. Those meadows make up 16 acres of land that were given to my grandfather and subsequently inherited by my mother. It was a reparation for having been stripped of their wealth by the Soviet establishment in the 1950s. The worth of the land is a couple thousand euros as of today. It is part of the largest consistent nature reserve area of the EU.
- While standing on the cliffs and looking south-eastward, the power plant can be seen. The orientation of the photograph is approximately north facing.
- Turning southwards one can see the stone cellar, about a kilometre away, where my grandfather's adolescent sister had spent more than a year, while two German SS officers occupied their family home. During the advancement of the Red Army, a Russian soldier, entering the cellar, attempted to take advantage of her. The soldier's superior intervened and shot him in the head without hesitation. My parents store potatoes and apples in the cellar to keep them from rotting in the summer and freezing in the winter. It is easy to say when a potato or an apple comes from the cellar; it has an unmistakable, musty taste.
- Márk Redele pursues projects that fundamentally relate to architecture and its practice but rarely look like architecture. [www.markretele.com](http://www.markretele.com)





type  
photograph

date  
08.11.2021

filename  
pavilion\_.jpg

size  
5,66 MB

author  
Márk Redele

category  
architecture, brick, economy, family, government, house, landscape

10:24:20

I recognized it in a flash, the late Jurassic-early Cretaceous herbivore looming dangerously over the road I was cycling on. I thought of *Some Windy Trees*.<sup>1</sup>

A utility pole (425638, 07/99, 07/2002, COBRA), electrical wires, a hawthorn (*Crataegus*) and an old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*). A symbiosis.

#### Notes

1 Delbrouck, V. *Some Windy Trees*. Loupaigne: Wilderness, 2013.





type  
photograph

date  
17.10.2021

filename  
IMG\_2711.jpg

size  
4,66 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
angst, animal, book, botany, dusk, mistake, tree, trompe l'oeil, wind

**10:24:20**

A cigar box, standing at the back of a shelf next to the heating installation, with in it silex-like stones with what seem to be traces of prehistoric usage.

In the garage, there were papers (the archive of O. Clemminck) and objects (stones, tiles) left to us by a man who had worked at the city archive. He was an acclaimed expert on our village's history.<sup>1</sup>

#### Notes

- 1 A recent study by professor Philippe Crombé at Ghent University states that during the last Ice Age, in the region where I grew up, there was once a great lake, with, at the shores, proven presence of prehistoric man. As a kid, we dug up shells with a toothbrush, and set a perimeter with plastic tape. The former presence of a tavern where my parents now live, and the restaurant which still serves seafood at the other side of the road, prevented accurate dating.





type  
photograph

date  
11.10.2021

filename  
\_MG\_7417.JPG

size  
6,5MB

author  
Arnout De Cleene

category  
archaeology, animal, collecting, archive, family, house, landscape, mistake, waste

10:24:21



‘ORIGINAL. Rire de tout ce qui est original, le  
haïr, le bafouer, et l’exterminer si l’on peut.’  
[‘ORIGINAL. Laugh with everything that’s  
original, hate it, scold it, exterminate it if you can.’]

#### Sources

Flaubert. *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (présenté par Raymond Queneau). Paris:  
Livres de poche, 1959 (with p. 232-233: dried leaf of a ginkgo tree, and p.  
324-325: dried leaf of a birch tree), p. 429 [2,00 EUR, Librairie Vic-sur-  
Cère, August 2021].



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	14.09.2021	_MG_7413.JPG	5,2MB	Arnout De Cleene
category	book, botany, tree, encyclopaedia, replica/copy, literature, collecting			

10:24:21

Ten years ago, in November, I drove up to Frisia – the northernmost province of The Netherlands. I was there to document the remains of air watchtowers: a network of 276 towers that were built in the fifties and sixties to warn the troops and population of possible aerial danger coming from the Soviet Union. It was very windy. The camera shook heavily. The poplars surrounding the concrete tower leaned heavily to one side.

I drove up to the seaside, a few kilometers farther. The wind was still strong when I reached the grassy dike that overlooked the kite-filled beach. I exposed the last piece of film left on the roll. Strong gusts of wind blew landwards.

Months later I didn't bother to blow off the dust that had settled on the film before scanning it. A photograph without use, with low resolution, made for the sake of the archive's completeness.

The dust on the film appears to be carried landwards, by the same gust of wind lifting the kites.



type  
photograph

date  
06.09.2021

filename  
LWT-Oudemirdum0002.tif

size  
28,17 MB

author  
Michiel De Cleene

category  
architecture, archive, data storage, landscape, sea, wind

10:24:22

A mostly empty book designed to collect cigar bands. The bands are glued to the paper at their left side, so the information on the backside, explaining the image and referring to the series it belongs to and the number of different labels the series contains, can be looked up. The book has complete and incomplete series on Christopher Columbus (complete), tanks (incomplete), the origins of civilization (complete), Ancient cultures (incomplete), fashion (complete), South-American sculptures (complete), Ancient columns (incomplete), Nobel Prize Winners (incomplete), an unclarified series of seven men, most of whom are ‘prof.’ or ‘dr.’ (complete / incomplete), design plates (incomplete), famous Belgians (complete / incomplete), statesmen (incomplete) and football players (incomplete). The first page in the book is used to present two series. The left column presents the Egyptian dynasty (incomplete). The middle and right column present a series of bands by the brand Jubilé on the history of energy in telling scenes and pieces of machinery.

Series: Energy

Middle column, top to bottom:

- The writing telegraph. Hughes
- Experiment with a sulphur globe. William Gilbert
- Primitive telephone. Philipp Reis
- Wireless telegraph.<sup>1</sup> Guglielo [sic] Marconi
- The arc of Volta. Sir Humphry Davy
- Fire in the wagon. Thomas Alva Edison
- Experiments with lightning. Benjamin Franklin
- Cathode for creating X-Rays. Wilhelm Röntgen
- Rotating magnetic field. Galileo Ferraris

Right column, top to bottom:

- Electric discharge. William Watt
- Magnetic telephone. Antonio Meucci
- Muscles reacting to electricity. Luigi Galvani
- Voltaic pile. Alessandro Volta
- Oscillating circuit. Guglielo [sic] Marconi
- Development of the telephone. Graham Bell

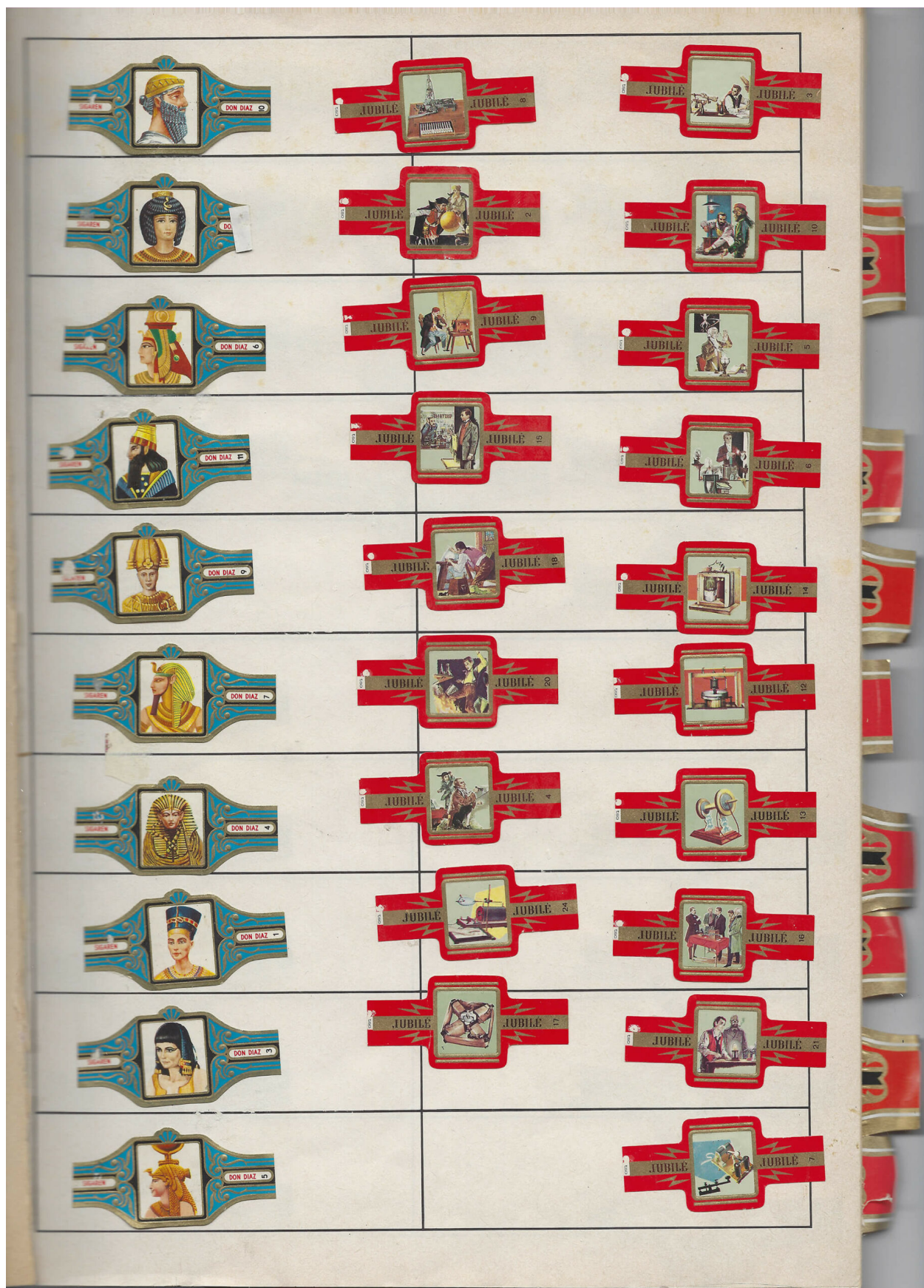
- Telephone, beginning of the 20th century
- Next to his wireless telegraph. Guglielo [sic] Marconi
- Invention of the incandescent light bulb. Thomas Alva Edison
- Morse’s telegraph. Samuel Morse

The series is incomplete.<sup>2</sup>

#### Notes

- 1 The scene shows a man standing at a desk, sticking out his hand to an officer in a window that reads, in mirror writing: Customs.
- 2 On eBay a complete series is advertised (15 EUR), with a lo-res picture of the whole collection, including the five bands missing in my grandfather’s collection. The information on the back, however, is not given. It leads to a highly speculative history of energy.
  - A man in a gown watching a T-shaped object.
  - A child in a cellar, sitting on a stool at a table with gray objects.
  - A soldier kneeling beside a child, in front of a train, and in front of a boat.
  - A low table with a giant cartwheel of sorts and a box.
  - A vertical object with what seems to be a bell on top.





type  
scan

date  
18.08.2021

filename  
Document\_2021-07-23\_160752.jpg

size  
10MB

author  
Arnout De Cleene

category  
collecting, physics, technology

10:24:23

