THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

The corporate history of companies is often established by insistently repeating over the years a succession of events seen from a given point of view. It can become a personal adaptation as each author who tackles this task adds a new nuance or omits another that they consider irrelevant, finally configuring a story in which the original sources are difficult to pinpoint. This perpetuation assumes certain facts on which it is possible to shed new enlightening perspectives or confer new insights. Such is the case of creating the mascot Bibendum.

1. Becoming a legend

In April 1, 1898 the illustrator O’Galop created a poster portraying the mascot Bibendum for the first time, a figure that has marked Michelin’s advertising operational guidelines to this day.¹ The idea of anthropomorphizing a pile of tires and endowing it with a series of characteristics was attributed from the very beginning to the Michelin brothers, which contrasted to the view held by O’Galop, who considered himself its sole author. However, this confrontation did not prevent the artist from becoming Michelin’s head illustrator for more than a decade.

No one challenges the ingenuity and audacity of André Michelin as the businessman in charge of advertising for the family firm, with memorable promotional initiatives and incisive campaigns—opting for popular illustrators and poster artists—that contributed to the growth and consolidation of the family firm. However, one should not underestimate the role of illustrator and caricaturist O’Galop in the creation of Bibendum.

Marius Rossillon (1867-1946), aka “O’Galop,” was already a consecrated professional illustrator—he was then 31 years old—in 1898, even before beginning to work for Michelin (figs. 1-3). Although the bulk of his production was realized at the turn of the century and the first two decades of 1900, his contributions in the popular press were already numerous. His work included illustrations, caricatures and cartoons in newspapers and magazines such as L’Éclipse (1891), Le Courrier Français (1893), La Vie Drôle (1893-94), Le Triboulet (1894), and Soleil du Dimanche (1895-99). Among others were the satiri-
cal Le Chat Noir (1892 and 1894), Le Rire (1895-1928), La Caricature (1892-1901), L’Image pour Rire (1897), La Petite Caricature (1898) or Le Pêle-Mêle (1898-1917). We can also find his drawings in books such as Paris Gomorrhe (1894) and illustrations of landscapes and architecture in Montmartre (1895), as well as humorous drawings in different product advertisements, such as Comiot bicycles (L’Illustration, September 19, 1896) or Gladiator (1898).²

How did André Michelin and O’Galop find each other? It was not difficult for André to come across the work of the artist as he was an interested reader of specialized bicycle journals, in which the Michelin company was featured on the front page, as a news item and often as an advertiser.³ Cycling was a booming sport in France at the turn of the century, of which O’Galop was an ardent enthusiast and constituted a theme that the artist constantly utilized in his illustrations. O’Galop also published his illustrations and cartoons before 1898 in sports magazines such as La Byciclette (1894), Le Cycle (1895-97), and the humorous weekly magazine L’Auto-Vélo (figs. 9-10).

It is more than likely that André had seen himself portrayed in the image d’Épinal entitled Souvenir du Salon du Cycle (fig. 4), in which O’Galop graphically and ironically described the strange artifact installed by Michelin et Cie in the 3ème Salon du Cycle, which took place December 12-26, 1895 at the Palais de l’Industrie on Champs-Elysées in Paris.⁴ It was a contraption with two seats situated opposite each other, each one supported by completely different wheels: one with an uncovered iron rim, the other with a Michelin tire. A person was placed in each seat and they went around in a circle. The wheels rolled on a circular track full of obstacles which, in the case of the Michelin tire, were absorbed and cushioned by the air-filled rubber. On the other side however, these obstacles transmitted all sorts of rattling and uncomfortable vibrations to the passenger. The demonstration became a very popular attraction, and in O’Galop’s drawing, André Michelin is portrayed observing with satisfaction the effectiveness of this promotional event. It was intended to make the population aware of the advantages of fitting horse-drawn carriages [fiacres] with pneumatic tires instead of metal rimmed-wheels (figs. 4-8).

They could also have coincided by frequenting similar environments. O’Galop moved to Paris in 1889 from Aix-les-Bains, where he had resided for a year. In the capital, he set up his studio on Rue du Croissant, in the bohemian and historically subversive district of Montmartre. Between 1890 and 1939 he changed his residence several times but remained in the same zone.⁵ It was the ideal place to be connected with the artistic and cultural atmosphere characteristic of Paris at the turn of the century, in its cafes and cabarets, in popular performances such as the theater, shadow plays or the linterne magique, meeting point of Belle Époque artists and intellectuals. This was the setting frequented by wealthy bourgeoisie who were consumers of this period’s leisure options and who mingled with the humbler classes, all contributing to daily life as portrayed by popular humoristic magazines.

The Michelin children, André, Marie and Édouard, were raised in the Latin Quarter of Paris. André, the elder brother, was trained as an engineer—graduating from the Ecole Centrale de Paris in 1877—and also studied at the national school of Beaux-Arts in the Department of Architecture. In 1886 at the age of 33 he had to leave his life and his own business in the capital to run the family-owned company Barbier et Daubrée—which became Michelin et Cie.—in Clermont-Ferrand, which was in a tenuous financial situation. In 1888 his younger brother Édouard had already completed his studies at the national school of Beaux-Arts and, at the age of 29, continued his artistic training under the tutelage of academic painter William Bouguereau and as a pupil of the prestigious Académie Julian, also located in the district of Montmartre.
André convinced Édouard to assume the management of the new Michelin et Cie. in 1889, which entailed his moving to and living in Clermont-Ferrand and putting his aspirations as a painter on hold. This two-headed company would be led by Édouard—an aspiring painter now involved in technical and managerial tasks—controlling the production of the factory in Clermont-Ferrand, and by André—an engineer dealing with artists and handling the media—in charge of communication, public relations and commercialization of the product from their offices in Paris.

It is therefore probable that both Michelin brothers frequented the Montmartre district—especially André after his definitive return to the capital—and met some graphic artists who collaborated with popular satirical magazines, some of which the brothers were likely to read. Many of these illustrators ended up working, at one time or another, for Michelin publicity, such as Walter Thor, Henry Chenet, Ernest Montaut, Henri Genevrier “Grand’Aigle,” Raymond Tournon, Georges Hautot, Francisque Poulbot, H. Delaspre, René Vincent, Édouard Louis Cousyn and Jules Coup de Fréjac “Fabien Fabiano” in contemporary and post-O’Galop generations. Or they could have met individuals such as writer Ulysse Rossillon “Rosnil”—the older brother of Marius Rossillon “O’Galop”—employed as a staff writer for the magazine _Le Rire_, which included advertisements for Michelin tires employing O’Galop’s illustrations.⁶

A graphic document raises new questions about the relationship between Michelin and O’Galop. The cover of the weekly magazine _L’Auto-Velo_ on January 16, 1898, shows an illustration signed by the artist, in which a car fitted with tires appears as a symbol of modernity, and beside it an outdated horse carriage with wood and iron wheels (fig. 10). Without any apparent need for it, a tire was labeled with the brand Michelin. Was this dealing with front cover advertising? This is unlikely, as it would have been the first time to serve as this function since the publication appeared in May 1897. Perhaps O’Galop was already working for Michelin since the beginning of that year, and he exercised his license to subtly advertise the brand. Or he hadn’t started working for the company yet, and with this cover he attracted the attention and won the sympathy of André Michelin, marking the starting point of their commercial and artistic relationship.

Finally, according to Harp (2001, p. 41), without citing sources, “André Michelin contacted Pellerin in 1898 (…) to have an image created for the company. Pellerin in turn put Michelin in contact with artist O’Galop.” Since the late eighteenth century the Imagerie Pellerin, originally located in the town of Épinal, was the most important publishing house for French postcards, game cards, prints and posters. Initially oriented to prints of pious, historical and folk scenes, the boom in print advertising that took place around 1890 made the company incorporate commercial advertisements into its specialty catalog. One of the most characteristic print formats was large chromolithographed sheets that narrated a story through the succession of prints or vignettes, each accompanied by a legend, following the style of Spanish _aleluyas_ or Catalan _auques_ (a genre of a story in pictures).

At that time, the company—run by three partners including Georges Pellerin, descendant of the founder—“multiplied the contacts and work commissioned to Parisian artists, both with regard to children’s prints and advertising creations.” One of these _images d’Épinal_ in vignette format is that titled _Le Supplice de la Roue_, illustrated by O’Galop in 1898 to advertise Michelin tires for carts and carriages, and in which the pneumatic mascot does not appear (fig. 11). Thus, according to Harp, O’Galop illustrated this first advertising poster for Michelin—presumably prior to the creation of Bibendum—and this was when his professional collaboration began with the firm. However, it is also likely that this was not the
case and that O’Galop and Andre Michelin had already known each before, choosing the creditworthi-
ness of Imageller Pellerin to reproduce the company’s illustrations in an adequate manner.7

Whether they knew each other or not, the fact is that O’Galop regularly illustrated Michelin’s publicity as early as 1898. In addition to the aforementioned works there are other examples dated in that year, such as a postcard depicting the brothers Andre and Edouard in the first carriage bearing the company’s tires. As a result of this collaboration—in April of that year according to Darmon (1997)—the artist created on commission the graphic image of Bibendum, the future perennial mascot of Michelin.

2. The controversy

As Michelin’s own corporate texts explain, forming part of the storytelling utilized in promotional communications, press notes and dossiers, advertisements and various publications,8 the history of Bibendum’s conception is chronologically explained as follows:

I. André Michelin concluded the lecture on the technical qualities of the tire he gave in Feb-


ary, 1893, in the Société des Ingénieurs Civils, with the phrase “le pneu boit l’obstacle” [the tire drinks up obstacles]. The phrase captivated the public and became a slogan for the firm.

II. In 1894 the Michelin brothers visited the stand of their products at the Exposition Universelle, Internationale et Coloniale de Lyon. Flanking the access to its space, two enormous columns had been raised by stacking up tires of different models and measures. When he saw its uneven construction Edouard commented to André: “If he had arms, he’d look like a man!”

III. “Coincidentally, some time after the fair, a commercial artist visited André at his office. Marius Rossillon, who signed his works with the whimsical pseudonym of O’Galop, had come to show him his advertising sketches and caricatures. One was an intriguing picture of King Gambrinus, who, according to legend, had invented the brewer’s art. Covering most of the picture was the disproportionate silhouette of a man seated at a table, brandishing a glass of beer and exclaiming, “Nunc est bibendum!” (Now is the time to drink.) The drawing had previously been refused by a Munich brewery, but the potbellied drinker suddenly reminded André of the armless tire figure his brother had remarked upon at their stand in Lyons.”

IV. “André liked the reference [the Latin phrase] and thought some element of it should be kept. He remembered a metaphor he himself had once used to conclude a speech at the Society of Civil Engineers [“The tire drinks up obstacles”] (…) Making a connection between O’Galop’s king lifting a stein of beer, his own words, and his brother’s perception of an imaginary “tire man,” André sensed the idea.”

V. “All those images were swirling in his mind. How could he turn them into a powerful state-


ment? He enlisted the aid of Marius ’O’Galop’ Rossillon to make sketches; King Gambrinus became a tire man. The beer stein was transformed into a mug full of nails and bottle shards (…) In April 1898, the company issued a series of posters which were to become as famous as the character himself, soon to be christened Bibendum.”

Following the trail on the authorship of Bibendum’s conception and referring to authors before Darmon (1997)—first Miquel (1962) and later Jemain (1982)—, it is pointed out that there was a dispute
between the Michelin brothers and O’Galop about this topic. This was neither a minor issue nor anec-
dotal—it affected the mythification of the firm’s founders, and even legal aspects such as the brand’s patent—, as evidenced by the stubborn insistence of repeatedly relating throughout the years the unequivocal corporate version of the history of the *affaire*.

Miquel (1962), in the chapter “Celebrité et fortune,” explains:

“The two brothers disputed the paternity all throughout their lives: ‘It was a pile of tires that gave me the idea,’ stated Édouard, ‘I said to myself: attaching glasses, a cigar and arms, he would turn into a man.’ For his part André always claimed that the vision had originated when he saw a poster project for a brewery in Munich, portraying an enormous Bavarian man grabbing a mug of frothy beer: ‘I suggested to the author that he put a drinker made of tires in his place and I decided that we would keep the Latin phrase *Nunc est Bibendum* … translated loosely into *le pneu Michelin boit l’Obstacle.* But the author of the project, the illustrator O’Galop, who denied these two, affirmed until his death that he alone was the sole father of Bibendum.”

On the other hand, Jemain (1982), reconstructing the scene in his own way and placing quotation marks with literary license to emphasize the discussion, contributes the following:

“I am the father,” says Édouard, who claims to have had the revelation on seeing a pile of tires while strolling with his brother through an exhibition in Lyon. ‘Absolutely not,’ André answers who claims to have imagined it from a project portraying a hefty beer drinker happily raising his mug. ‘No way, it is mine and mine alone,’ protests O’Galop the illustrator—one of the most celebrated caricaturists of the time—to whom the Michelin brothers had entrusted the realization of one of the first posters for the company.”

If we go back to 1914, in a chapter from his book Arren (1914) compiles the quoted declarations of André Michelin explaining his own version:

“Some time ago the illustrator O’Galop, still unknown, came to offer me his services. Among the drawings he showed me by way of example to prove his professional worth, was a large fat man, pot-bellied, who toasted with an enormous mug in hand. A sentence stated: *Nunc est Bibendum* … The sketch had been made for a large German brewery, which did not give him their approval. ‘Take this,’ I said, ‘there’s something that has to be done with this man. It should be built entirely out of pneumatic tires and instead of the mug to toast with, put a cup full of nails and other things that are enemies to tires in his hand. Here we have a perfect illustration of our famous phrase: le pneu Michelin boit l’obstacle. O’Galop understood my idea and executed it.”

This claim is the same as the one André had maintained in an interview conducted by the French magazine *La Publicité Moderne* a few years earlier, in the October-November 1906 issue. But his statements elicited a response from O’Galop, and the same magazine published in the following issue a letter dated December 14, 1906, in which O’Galop publicly expressed:

“I am doubly sorry not to be a regular reader of *La Publicité Moderne*: firstly because in the number that I just came across last November, I found extremely interesting things;
secondly, because within the same number I have detected a small inaccuracy that affects me. It is not that it is of enormous importance in and of itself, but I appeal to your courtesy to kindly rectify it, and I explain why: It is on the subject of Michelin’s Bibendum, in which a mistake is made regarding a German brewery. I know perfectly well that the author of this error is Mr. Michelin himself—or rather one of his new employees—but I must point it out. The first time I made Bibendum was exactly in the drawing that is reproduced at the top of page 16 [fig. 14]; my intention was not at all to create a character, but rather an advertising illustration to be used only once, as I have done with many others; I must also tell you that I have never made illustrations for German breweries. Le Journal [a Parisian newspaper] has been propagating the same error and I had not given it any importance; but your magazine is another matter—I won’t insist any further. I only kindly ask you, with a note of rectification, to repair the involuntary injustice that it has caused me and ask you to accept my gratefulness and my cordial greetings.”

In later years O’Galop continued to insist on his arguments, trying to counteract or qualify the contents of the unchanging corporate story that the company persistently emitted and conveyed regarding the creation of the mascot. This is evidenced in two personal letters addressed and reproduced in French magazines specializing in advertising in 1924 and 1936, as a response to previous publications in their pages about the well-known corporate story of the Michelin company regarding the paternity of Bibendum. The declarations of O’Galop—some ideas were repeated in both letters—can be combined so as to compose the issue from his point of view. Thus:

“By 1891, I was already realizing commissioned advertising illustrations for Michelin; on the other hand, I collaborated, among others, with a sports and humorous magazine in Munich, Radfahr Humor. One day I sent them a picture of a cyclist who, having reached the top of a hill, drank a pitcher of beer, accompanied by the caption: ‘Nunc est bibendum.’”

“An association of ideas (habitual in humor) formed in my mind between this caption and the recently appearing [statement by Mr. Michelin]: ‘Le pneu M. boit l’obstacle’. Bibendum … boit …”

“This is how I presented to Michelin the first of the Bibs [Bibendums], along with other [proposals]. He saw it once or twice—like the rest of the drawings—and he thought no more of them. But two or three years later, finding himself in need of personifying the business, he had the happy idea of reviving that character and the art of popularizing it, something that has my recognition.”

“Hence the drawing that cannot be forgotten by the cyclists of that time: in the center, the drinker enlarges his tires, happily pouring a glass of nails and splinters, flanked by two buddies who agonize after having tried to imitate him. Caption: ‘Nunc est Bibendum … c’est-à-dire (?!?) A votre santé, le pneu M. boit l’obstacle.’ (…) After this a colored poster was made and then a year later (in fact, a curious thing, the company did not calculate at that moment the advantage that the character could have, although they claimed to have originated the idea) having the need to personify their tires with regard to tires from D. (English) and C. (German) Michelin decides to revive the character and it was then shown as an advertisement in the magazine L’Auto.”
If we accept O’Galop’s version—publicly expressed and without receiving any response to reject it—, his statements debunk the story that had been so suggestive but uncertain and recreated hundreds of times over the years by Michelin’s communication services, by the press and by all the authors who have looked into the corporate and graphic history of the firm. There was no project for a German brewery that would inspire André’s ingenuity or serve as a template for the “modifications” to be made by the illustrator.

It is more credible that the illustration was entirely devised and realized by O’Galop. He was a keen and imaginative caricaturist, accustomed to dealing daily with types and stereotypes, capable of creating expressive characters and human figures and endowing them with identity, life and a personality of their own. He was an author who worked with traces of classical and popular culture to stage allegories and metaphors that would narrate and tell stories graphically translated to paper. The poster for Michelin is one more example among many others of his early production as well as those he would later create, of which the posters he made for other tire brands are highlighted (figs. 159 and 164-176).

The decisive statement in O’Galop’s reply also emphasized: “(…) I have never made illustrations for German breweries,” expressing the sentiment of what historians call Erbfeindschaft [hereditary enmity] that defines the tense historical relations between the two great European powers and their successive clashes of geopolitical interests. Although the artist reveals that he published a humorous illustration in the magazine Radfahr Humor of Munich around 1891, O’Galop’s patriotic and anti-German ascription is evident in his work (figs. 79-81). As an example, we can point out the full-page illustration published in Le Rire on August 14, 1897—one year before the conception of Bibendum—in response to the prohibition of selling the French weekly in Alsace by local authorities, which at that time was under German sovereignty (fig. 71). Or the realization of a long series of images d’Épinal and the Great War commissioned by the company Pellerin & Cie. and published throughout 1915 (figs. 79 and 81). Given these examples in which O’Galop clearly defines himself, coupled with the virulent comparative publicity advertisements he created for Michelin, it seems very risky to affirm that he accepted a commission from a German brewery.

As for André—advertising communication manager for the firm—he was in charge of constructing, through their own corporate literature, the filial link that was established with Bibendum. In a steady stream of weekly advertisements published on Mondays in press such as L’Auto, Le Journal or Le Chauffeur and known as Lundi—690 insertions over 13 years, between 1901 and 1914—Michelin employed newspaper articles to expose his point of view on different subjects, including the company’s technical perspective regarding the use of tires. The texts were signed as “Bibendum,” and in them he often referred to company management as “Papa Michelin” (figs. 64-68).

This approach was also utilized in different international adaptations of the campaign, such as The London Illustrated News in the British market—appearing on Saturdays during 1909 and therefore titled “Michelin Saturday.” In Italy, it appeared as “Dai Lunedi di Michelin,” a section of the corporate magazine Il Pneumatico Michelin whose name was later changed to Bibendum.

3. From advertisement to corporate mascot

It appears that O’Galop’s original drawing, realized in April 1898, was not reproduced or utilized as a poster immediately after its creation nor during the following months. The presentation of the advertising character took place in the framework of the Exposition Internationale d’Automobiles of 1898, held
from June 15 to July 3 at the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris. The event, the first major exhibition dedicated entirely to the world of motors and their components, was organized by the Automobile Club de France, housed 232 exhibitors and received around 140,000 visitors. According to Darmon (1997), the mascot was reproduced on a large piece of cardboard, although if we look at the photographic sources (figs. 18-19) it was actually an enormous volumetric figure. The presence of the strange and imposing character, drinker of nails and glasses, presiding over the Michelin stand generated great interest among the public attending the event.

Months later, André Michelin hired a comedian to dress up as the tire-man designed by O’Galop and to animate the firm’s presence at the Salon du Cycle et de l’Automobile that took place December 15-26 of that same year in Champs-de-Mars. Every afternoon, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., the actor took on his role—and his costume—, attracting large crowds and obstructing the stand’s entrance and that of its neighbors, who protested angrily. Precisely the most affected by the situation was the exhibitor of the adjacent stand, Oury, Schrader & Cie., manufacturers of Oury-Labrador tires and direct rival of Michelin. They demanded that Michelin put an end to the show, without much success. As Darmon (1997) describes:

“(…) As Michelin turned a deaf ear, Oury declared an all-out, open war. Day after day, their escalating hostilities stole the show. Whenever the Barker opened his mouth, Oury would rev a car engine. Still, the comedian’s powerful baritone voice rose above the roaring motor. Exasperated, Oury retaliated, setting up two phonographs and hiring a peddler to counter the Michelin Man’s lofty spiel. The noise became unbearable and other exhibitors joined the feud, most of them taking sides with Oury, the offended party. The matter was brought to the chairman of the organizing committee (…)”

Curiously enough, around 1900 O’Galop made a poster to advertise Oury-Labrador tires (fig. 159), which in that same year had won numerous victories with their tires fitting distinct vehicles in cycling and automobile competitions. They achieved the silver medal of the Exposition Universelle in Paris which dedicated a part—the so-called Class 30—of the Palais du Génie Civil et Moyens de Transport to exhibitors showing all types of vehicles, their components and spare parts. In those years the artist also worked for Michelin and many other clients, which indicates the independence that he enjoyed as a freelance illustrator.

The notoriety of Michelin’s promotional initiative at the Salon du Cycle in 1898 was also reflected in the pages of the specialist magazine *Le Chaffeur* in January 1899. Here, when taking stock of the exhibition held the previous month—and describing the participating firms and their products—the author referred to the Michelin stand with the following statement:

“Michelin et Cie, 7 Gounod Street, Paris: pneumatic tires for motorcycles, for ordinary vehicles, for automobiles, etc … and … the brother *Bibendum.*”

The O’Galop poster in which Bibendum made his debut appears to have been utilized for the first time as a press advertisement in the sports newspaper *L’Auto* in 1898—according to the artist himself as pointed out in a letter published in the magazine *L’Affiche* in 1934. It was also inserted as a ¼ page advertising module—printed in two colors with red text and black illustration—in the French monthly magazine *L’Estampe et l’Affiche* in each of their numbers published between September 1898 and December 1899. Notoriously, this monochrome poster was shown in the April 1899 issue of *Revue*
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Parisienne to announce Michelin’s contest for publicity illustrations that would advertise their tires (fig. 14). The call established amounts of the prizes awarded to ten finalists—500 francs for the winner and 100 francs each for the others who were selected—whose proposals would also be reproduced in the publication. The contest rules did not allude to the possibility of using the pneumatic man, and of the finalists only one represented him in his proposal … O’Galop, who participated in the contest once again utilizing his character.

The artist was selected as a finalist employing an approach very similar to the original drawing. Bibendum is situated in the center of the composition and the upper half of his body is portrayed. Instead of sitting statically at a table, this time he was driving a car, and his hand was not raised in a toast but rather clasping the handle that steered the vehicle. He wore, appropriately, a chauffeur’s cap, and was flanked by two rivals, “pneumatique X” and “Pneum. Y,” both of which he surpassed (fig. 41). Among the ten finalist illustrations, the first to appear in September 1899 was O’Galop, and the rest—signed by Paul Léonnec (also in September), V. Schusler (October), Michels (November), Stolz (December, the winner), Augé (January 1900), Louis Vallet (February), Bertrand (March) … —were published in subsequent months. According to contest rules, the submitted proposals became the property of Michelin, who subsequently utilized them in advertisements for the firm.

This recognition of O’Galop’s work and the character’s confirmation reaffirmed André Michelin’s determined commitment to a duo that had demonstrated its effectiveness. Despite the contradictions and disputes over the paternity of the mascot, it is curious to note that among the trademark designs registered by Michelin in 1908, one consists of a drawing portraying a full-size Bibendum raising a glass that includes, inextricably, the author’s signature. On the other hand, in a short four-line commentary without further data or explanations, Écutez-mois magazine in 1934 stated:

“The valiant O’Galop sold for 20 francs his sketch of Bibendum to a tire brand, which he helped to popularize through this simple image.”

4. A Latin name

In his first appearance, the pneumatic mascot was shown raising a glass full of sharp objects and toasting before engulfing them. Above him, next to his head, was the motto “Nunc est bibendum”[now is the time to drink], a Latin expression commonly used in turn-of-the-century France and employed when making a toast (figs. 12-13 and 17).

The phrase is transcribed from verses by the poet Quinto Horacio Flaco (65-8 BC), being part of the First Book of three that comprised Odes, written in 23 BC. The penultimate Ode, number 37, begins with the verse “Nunc est bibendum.” The expression is coined by the defeated Mark Anthony, in a bitter toast after the battle of Actium in 31 BC, when the ships of Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus—adopted son of Julius Caesar—directed by Agrippa defeated the allied fleet of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra.

In France, the persistence of this Latin expression and its invitation to drink for pleasure owes much to the consolidation of its own genre within the repertoire of traditional songs during the seventeenth century: compositions known as “chansons à boire,” “bachiques” [from Bacchus/Dionysius] or “de table.” From the middle to the end of the eighteenth century, the labor of encyclopedists, translators, philosophers and enlightened interpreters was added to this tradition, recovering and revising works of Greek classics, such as Horace’s Odes. In fact, Voltaire in his Dictionnaire philosophique (1764)
reproached the interpretation that the academic, translator and philologist André Dacier (1651-1722) had proposed for the verse “Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero ...” in the latter’s publication Remarques Critiques sur Les Oeuvres d’Horace, avec une nouvelle traduction (1681).³³

Horace’s phrase was also employed for the exaltation of republican values and the French Revolution during moments that they were being celebrated. On May 29, 1796, the multitudinous—citizens, revolutionary army and constituted Assembly—“Fête de la Reconnaissance et des Victoires” took place at Le Champ-de-Mars in Paris. This event ended with the singing of a choral hymn, composed for the occasion by Pierre-Antoine Lebrun (lyrics) and Charles Simon Catel (music). The printed official program that was distributed included the verses “Environ, mes amis, la coupe de la gloire, d’un nectar pétillant et frais. Buvons, buvons à la victoire, fidèle amante du français” [Let us get drunk, friends, with the cup of glory, a sparkling and fresh nectar. Let us drink, let us drink to victory, faithful lover of the French], and finalized with the epigraph “Nunc est bibendum ...”³⁴

We can find this expression quoted verbatim in texts and essays by authors such as Voltaire (1762), Alexandre Dumas (1868) or Lucien-Élie Lelion-Damiens (1883), while writers, poets and playwrights such as Eugène Scribe (1834), Félix Davin (1848), Amédée de Bast (1842), Gustave Flaubert (1860), Jean Baptiste Rousseau (1863), Henri de Latouche (1867), Claude Popelin (1889) and many others utilized it in their theatre play dialogues or incorporated it into their rhymes.³⁵

The members of the Société Lyrique & Littéraire du Caveau, or “société bachique et chantante” contributed substantially to the diffusion of the “chansons à boire.” They were a festive, musical and poetic association created in 1729, which was refounded in successive stages and very active during the nineteenth century. In 1872, the 38th collection of works from titular members published annually by the entity included the poem entitled Nunc est bibendum, by the writer Louis Piesse, in which the invocation was repeated as the ending for each of the eight stanzas.³⁶

Towards the end of the century, there was an onslaught of Parisian cabarets such as Le Chat Noir—a meeting place for bourgeois, restless intellectuals and artists: writers, poets, journalists, playwrights, actors, comedians, musicians, painters and illustrators such as Marius Rossillon O’Galop himself—, whose revue and variety shows incorporated the most humorous and popular traditions of the genre. Horacio’s famous quotation retained its validity twenty centuries after being written, recreated by bourgeois circles in their celebrations, by bohemian French intellectuals and artists at the turn of century in their creations and finally, transformed into a commercial motto and invoked by the advertising mascot of a technological commodity that was a product of its time: the tire.

5. Bibendum’s baptism

It is to be expected that the large-scale sculpture replicating O’Galop’s drawing, which was exhibited at the widely attended 1898 Exposition Internationale d’Automobiles, facilitated the baptism of the tireman. It appears that he received a number of nicknames and peculiar titles from visitors, such as “le poivrot de la route” [the drunkard of the road] because of his attitude towards drinking.³⁷ Two of the motto’s words “est bibendum” [literal translation “it is bibendum”] could be read in print on a large panel behind the figure, only being separated by the small space occupied by his head. This may have caused the association of ideas and the identification of that strange word—‘bibendum’—as the proper name of the peculiar character (figs. 18-19).
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

As Michelin’s corporate history recalls, the company’s own assumption and acceptance of the name Bibendum has its origin in an anecdote that occurred during an automobile competition. According to Darmon (1997), and which has also been explained in previous sources:

“(…) Then, a month later [July], the Latin phrase came back unexpectedly. At the Paris-Amsterdam motor race, when competitor Léon Théry saw André Michelin driving up to the starting line in his Panhard-Levassor, he yelled out, ‘Here comes Bibendum!’ The familiar name instantly appealed to the tire maker, who resolved to keep it.” 38

Over time, Théry became a pilot who was closely linked to the Michelin brand with which he achieved and shared most of his sporting success.39 However, I have not found direct reports from the period documenting the moment of the mascot’s public baptism as narrated. The Paris-Amsterdam-Paris race was held July 7-13, 1898, and Théry was not included in the list of the 25 official racing pilots who took part in the competition. Neither was he among the first 15 who finished nor amidst the ten drop outs produced over the course of the race. Of course, he could have been present as part of a team, as a mechanic, as a secondary driver or as a simple amateur spectator, considering that in 1898 he was only 19 years old. It seems strange, however, that such a young man, who at that age had not yet become a recognized figure in the motor world, addressed André Michelin in such a direct way. And what’s more, if this had truly happened, that it would have had such an impact. Andre himself declared in an interview in 1914, making no mention of Léon Théry:

The success of this initial poster [the original drawing by O’Galop] is known and how in professional sports, where knowledge of Latin is not common, bibendum became known as the tire-man.” 40

6. Laying the groundwork: the poster

The date of Michelin’s first lithographic poster that transformed O’Galop’s original drawing into color is imprecise. Until now it had been assumed that it was created in 1898, but considering what has been previously stated in the above texts, it gives rise to doubt. The illustration appears reproduced in color for the first time as one of 12 postcards comprising the series L’Exerciseur Michelin, published in 1902 (figs. 46-54). Is this format a version of the already printed poster? Or did the colored illustration precede the adaptation to a large format?

So far, the first reference to this poster found as such dates to 1905, when the magazine Je Sais Tout reproduced it to illustrate the first call for the publication’s contest on artistic advertisements, seeking to encourage the graphic quality of its publicity. It seems plausible that the first color poster (fig. 20) was made around 1900-1902. In subsequent versions modifications were made, incorporating elements—or eliminating them, depending on the case—such as the latest accessories that Michelin offered in its catalog: compressed air cylinders for inflating tires, distinct tools and levers for dismantling and assembly, a pot of mastic or glue for repairs, etc. (figs. 21-24).

O’Galop’s first drawing—be it as an advertising illustration in black-and-white or as a colored poster—was presented as an allegory laden with meanings. In a frontal view and positioned behind a banquet table, three humanized figures made of tires appear from the waist up. Standing in the center the imposing, rotund and healthy Bibendum—with his tires harmonically stacked and well inflated—has finished eating leaving his plate empty. He raises his arm brandishing a classic champagne glass con-
taining pieces of glass and large nails dislodged from horseshoes, obstacles which are usually found on roads and arch enemies of air-filled tires. He is about to make a toast, and opens his mouth to recite the “Nunc est bibendum” greeting that precedes the moment he engulfs the sharp objects, to which he seems invulnerable.

Seated at a lower level on both sides of Bibendum, two shapeless and grotesque pneumatic figures look up to admire the protagonist. We can see what they have consumed on their plates … two tubes of glue to repair the numerous punctures and blowouts that appear on the folds of their skin, depicted by deflated tires, flaccid and worn down. The corporate history has taken on the placement and identification of these secondary figures, baptized in later versions of the poster as “Pneu X” [Tire X] and “Pneu Y” [Tire Y] and being present in other advertisements by O’Galop for Michelin. They represent two of the largest European firms and rivals, Britain’s Dunlop and Germany’s Continental, both operating in French territory and also competing commercially with Michelin in other countries.

Although a text from that time period has not been identified—by the author or Michelin himself—that validates the information, the figure on the left seems to refer to the bearded John Boyd Dunlop’s portrait, used as a corporate symbol by Dunlop Pneumatic Tire Co. Ltd in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, and in all countries where it had delegations (figs. 27-30). Dunlop’s bust, turned into a popularly recognized and identifiable brand, was printed and stamped onto multiple promotional elements, press announcements and sign placards for mechanical workshops and stores.

On the other hand, the figure on the right has no recognizable traits, although some authors of texts listed in the bibliography associate it—I believe erroneously—with a portrait of Continental’s top representative. At that time, the German firm did not have a brand character who corporately identified it that was comparable to the figure of the British inventor or to Bibendum. In addition, the visible head of the Continental Caoutchouc und Guttapercha Compagnie of Hanover, founded on October 8, 1871, was not a single person, but rather a firm historically led by a group of managers and directors, the first of which included Jacob Frank, Konrad Köhsel, M. Magnus, Joseph Martiny, Ferdinand Meyer, Moritz G. Meyer and Paul O. Stockhardt. This makes it unlikely that the character in the poster, even if it represented Continental, was a personalized portrait. However, the rival German firm was subject to constant disqualifications made by Michelin through O’Galop’s provocative drawings, which were full of direct references (figs. 32-34).

Regarding the typographic messages, as previously explained above, it is possible that O’Galop based his drawing on the application of a phrase coined by André Michelin as an advertising slogan for the brand. The expression was used for the first time in the article “De la vélocipédie et des pogrès que le bandage pneumatique lui a permis de réaliser” published by Michelin in the bulletin of the Paris-based Société des Ingénieurs Civils in January-February 1893. In the middle of the article, in a paragraph where he referred to the resistance and elasticity to bumps and obstacles of tires filled with pressurized air, he concluded with the phrase—written as a quote in the original—“le pneumatique boit l’obstacle” [the tire drinks, the obstacle is swallowed].

On the upper part of the poster located above the character, one sees the Latin phrase Nunc est bibendum!! … , which preceded the toast. It’s accompanied by a corresponding text translation: “cest à dire” [that is to say … ] that is linked to a lower part of the composition, where we can read “A Votre Sante” [+ to your health]. Finally, at the bottom, in the front of a table with a draping tablecloth, the company’s personalized motto is added: “Le pneu Michelin boit l’obstacle.”
7. Irreverence and provocation

It is likely that the scene depicted in the first poster alludes to the classic iconography representing the Last Supper, in which the son of the Christian god, seated at the center and surrounded by his disciples, raises his chalice invoking the sacralization of wine as a symbol of Christ’s blood and spirituality. Honoré Daumier had already employed it for one of his mordant engravings in 1831 (fig. 35). In the case of O’Galop’s poster there was not only one Judas who was portrayed, but two. This interpretation, applicable to other later adaptations of the poster (fig. 37), can be understood within the context of bourgeois and secular France—when not anticlerical—during the late nineteenth century. In this period, it was portrayed and nourished by graphic humor magazines who were satirical and combative against the establishment, and where Marius Rossillon O’Galop had trained as an illustrator, who in his private life did not show any particular religious devotion.  

Bibendum was a faithful reflection of this irreverent and iconoclastic attitude, and in later Michelin announcements we find him supplanting other biblical figures. In Les Commandements de Bibendum he appears disguised as Moses with his tablet of the 10 commandments, a decalogue of precepts to be followed by the good motorist (figs. 40-42). And in Le Festin de Balthazar, an Old Testament passage, Bibendum appears as the prophet Daniel interpreting an inscription announcing the end of Balthasar’s reign, his court and his pagan excesses in Babylon, depicted as decadent pneumatic characters: “Pneu X,” “Pneu Y,” “Pneu Z” (figs. 38-39).

The aggressiveness of these campaigns is the fruit of a very specific time, which also had an expiration date. This also occurred with the once virulent humoristic press becoming mediocre and evolving as the new century advanced towards kinder and more widely accepted content. They then centered on inoffensive ironic portraits of bourgeois Parisian life, reflecting the freedom and permissiveness of the Belle Epoque. The end of this period of abundance and the arrival of World War I would lead to the resurgence of the combative power of French satirical press. As André Michelin explained in 1914:

“As for the rest, the publicity of that historical period was quite special. It was vigorously combative and also aggressive. We battled with the Dunlop company—which sought to take over the monopoly of tires, court litigation and epic arguments—through posters and newsletters. When another competing company [referring to Continental] who boasted of using only resistant fabrics [we mean by fabrics the diagonal textile weave that make up the tire interiors] was defeated in a race, we hastened to speak of it using direct allusions, making references to the “resistant-cloth suit” [but not the victory] they had just obtained [figs. 132-134]. Obviously, this is not the way to behave and is not at all in good form, especially now, when our company has become bourgeois. Advertising cannot help but preserve—and we do not always achieve this—two fundamental qualities: entertainment and education.”

8. The muses of O’Galop

Ever since Bibendum’s first appearance, the mascot’s physical aspect and attitude immediately established a strong and characteristic personality. Among the different authors who have described him, the analysis that Harp (2001) dedicates to Bibendum in his book Marketing Michelin stands out for its insightfulness. In one of the paragraphs he states:
“O’Galop’s poster itself tells us much about the marketing of tires in turn-of-the-century France (...). Bibendum represents upper social strata and upper-middle class men in particular, the only people wealthy enough to buy both abundant rich food and automobile tires.”

And this is because the imposing figure overflows with health when compared to his opponents. His clothing depicts a series of complements that reinforce his pertaining to a high social stratum. He wears spectacles—the lenses give him a cultured, intellectual air, as proven by his Latin invocation to toast—balanced on a barely discernible nose and fastened to the body by means of a thin chain. With the character’s graphic evolution, over the years, the spectacles will become two large circles, similar to protective glasses for drivers and racing pilots. He wears rings on both hands and the cuffs of his pneumatic shirt—insinuated in the first poster and clearly defined in the later versions—are fastened with cufflinks. A cigar is also added as a symbol of opulence, as well as an enormous champagne glass, an elitist drink reserved for celebrations in contrast to the typical and widely consumed table wine. The eminently masculine character is reinforced with all these attributes, and this dominant position was sustained and increased in subsequent advertisements in which gender, social class and racial stereotypes were a recurring theme (figs. 69-72).

The character of this lavish and corpulent drinker and bon vivant, repeatedly raising his glass to the sound of “nunc est bibendum!”, holds a clear parallel with a classic icon of French and universal literature from the sixteenth century: the giant Gargantua created by François Rabelais. The extreme gluttony of the literary character is already evidenced by the first words he utters when coming into the world:

“As soon as he was born, he did not shout like the other children: ‘Migas! Migas!’ [bread-crums], but exclaimed in a loud voice: ‘Drink! Drink! Drink!’, as though inviting everyone to drink.”

The great French engraver Gustave Doré (1832-1883) illustrated the work of Rabelais in 1854 and 1873 publications, providing his detailed and particular insight into the character and his excesses (fig. 75). Also a few years before, Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) had metaphorically utilized the idea of an insatiable devourer to portray King Louis Philippe d’Orleans in an illustration entitled Gargantua, initially thought to be published in number 61 of the satirical magazine La Caricature dated December 29, 1831 (fig. 85). The criticism depicted in the illustration showed the monarch turned into a giant and swallowing taxes taken from people wallowing in misery. This was the reason for confiscating the printed material and condemning the publisher and the artist himself to a heavy fine and six months in prison. The image’s subsequent diffusion, associated with the controversy that it unleashed, turned it into an emblem of freedom of the press and the abuse of powers.

Perhaps it is precisely in Daumier that we find the first recognizable reference for the graphic configuration of Marius Rossillon ‘O’Galop’s’ Bibendum, son of another generation but heir to the tradition established by great caricaturists and illustrators from humorous, satirical, caustic press which was also republican and anticlerical. In 1835 the French government decided to censor the use of political caricatures, which led to the closing of La Caricature and the launch of its younger spin-off Le Charivari. The latter was founded in 1832 by the same publisher under the premises of avoiding political content and focusing its incisive vision on the popular and daily aspects of social life. In this magazine Doré’s prints were also published, but it was Daumier who offered the greatest contribution of all the collabo-
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rating artists. He worked for the publisher for forty years—between 1833 and 1872—producing around 3,900 lithographs and hundreds of engravings.

Between 1868 and 1869 Daumier brought a curious character to life in several prints for the section “Actualités” in *Le Charivari*. It was the anthropomorphic recreation of the concept of “budget,” which he christened with the name in French, Budget, and whose body comprised several cloth bags used to store coins. The rotund character—as budgets are always excessive and uncontrollable—was featured in comic scenes where excessive government expenditure was criticized with irony (figs. 86-89). Faced with the prohibition of caricatures portraying recognizable personalities, the option was employed of generating symbolic language for complicity with the reader by using visual metaphor and allegory. In this case Daumier did not utilize the resource of portraying plants and animals in human attitudes as often proposed by J. J. Grandville, contemporary and colleague at *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari*. The humanization of inert objects—as is the case of Daumier’s Budget—was also the approach O’Galop applied in the configuration of Bibendum, constructed on the basis of stacking tires. The resulting graphic output is very similar in both cases.

Tracking through the muses that might have inspired O’Galop more directly for creating Bibendum in 1898, we find a variety of characters produced on dates close to his creation. The closest references to anthropomorphic beings consisting of pneumatic covers or tubes are the “Dunlopettes” (figs. 93-94) used by the French division of Dunlop in several advertisements published in the magazine *Le Vélo* between November and December 1897. But these damsels had an ephemeral life, without continuity, unlike Michelin’s Bibendum. However, as a result of my inquiries, it is in American press where what is perhaps the first complete pneumatic-man utilized in advertising has been identified. The tire-man of the Hartford Rubber Works in Connecticut, manufacturer of tires for bicycles and cars, was featured in an advertisement published November 1896 (fig. 96).

Prior to the appearance of this primordial pneumatic-man, it is worth noting the illustration that had been published on the back cover of the American humor magazine *Judge* in its December 1889 issue (fig. 102). The scene features a number of unique characters donning protective rubber suits, *Judge’s* patented non conductor rubber suits, that are reminiscent of Bibendum’s figure. Above them hangs a dangerous tangle of electrical cables threatening the safety of pedestrians and carriage drivers, who are at risk as they are in a higher position than ground level. It deals with a satirical vignette addressing the actual situation of Manhattan streets for that particular time period, in which accidents and death by electrocution were part of urban daily life (figs. 99-101). The *Judge* magazine was distributed in the United States by Brentano’s, a chain of bookstores with functional headquarters in Washington and with two establishments in Europe, one in London and one in Paris. As described in the editorial section of *Judge*, the magazine could be purchased at the Parisian Brentano’s bookstore which opened its doors in 1887 at number 17 on l’Avenue de l’Opera in the French capital. It is not unreasonable to think that the publishers of French satirical magazines as well as caricature illustrators who collaborated with them—such as O’Galop himself—were in the know about approaches employed by their American colleagues. These men dressed in white insulating rubber bodysuits may have also inspired the creator of Bibendum.

In the following years different characters created by rival companies accompanied Bibendum in the pantheon of publicity (fig. 144-155). This occurred in American territory as well as in European countries such as France, Germany and Great Britain.
The specific merit of this mascot as compared to the rest lies in his continuity, the constant utilization throughout the years in the company’s communication and corporate identity. He constantly appeared in different advertising campaigns, with a presence and appearance carved out by the genius of O’Galop and the long list of illustrators, graphic designers and designers who collaborated with their contributions to give shape to the character and his unique graphic universe.

9. The viscera of pneumatic tires
The anatomical conformation of Bibendum, comprising a structure based on stacked pneumatic rings and a vacant interior, filled only with air, was a visual metaphor for the very qualities of the product that the Michelin mascot embodied. It was not in vain that the character unhesitatingly dismembered himself by ripping out one of his body’s tires and becoming a donor to help upset motorists with their vehicle’s flat tire. This image was used persistently over the years in press advertisements and posters for the Clermont-Ferrand firm, reinterpreted by various artists who collaborated in its illustration, such as Roowy, René Vincent, Cousyn, Biscaretti or Hautot between 1912 and 1930 (figs. 106-111). In 1965, Raymond Savignac made a famous poster for the new Michelin XAS tire, featuring the iconic image of the deconstructed Bibendum (fig. 112). A century later the proposal was taken up again for the international advertising campaign launched in 2009 and disseminated in the press and as animation television spots. In these advertisements, a Bibendum who is perhaps more aggressive than usual, removes the tires from his rib cage both to combat an evil gas pump monster—the incarnation of excessive fuel consumption—and to replace the ineffective pneumatic tires of a stranded driver (fig. 113).49

This anatomical association between the tire—the result of combining resilient and elastic outer covers with the most delicate, soft and expandable inner tubes—and body parts was used repeatedly by different companies in their advertising pitches, and especially by Michelin (figs. 104-105). In an advertisement published in 1894 for an American magazine on cycling and the bicycle (fig. 103), an illustration portrayed a naked man with an open abdomen showing his intestines, accompanied by the following text:

“...The inner tubes of man are vital points, likewise the inner tubes of bicycle tires. Life would be uncertain should human inner tubes contain adulteration, and so made as to crack and burst along the edges. You have experienced much trouble of this kind with the inner tubes of many tires, but none from those made by the Eastern Rubber Mfg. Co.” 50

Another example of this discourse is found in the catalog published in 1917 by Société Française B.F. Goodrich, the French division of Akron’s powerful firm, with texts full of rhetorical figures and allegorical illustrations that, under the motto of “Le Maître de la Route” [The Master of the Road], presented the qualities of their inner tubes and the three models of pneumatic covers: smooth treads, anti-skid with metal studded treads and the anti-skid Safety model made with pure rubber treads:

“La Chambre Rouge Goodrich [Goodrich’s red inner tube] is the tire’s ideal lung, as I say, the intestine of that belly that goes around and is often exposed to peritonitis. We must never forget that for every good tire a good inner tube is required, just as for a good inner tube, a good tire is needed; that both must be intimately linked [in terms of good quality], unless we wish that the death of one provokes the death of the other or vice versa (...) Taking into account that air is the tire’s life, its breathing and, consequently, the life and breath of the driver, we must place the utmost importance on the choice of an inner tube.
The Goodrich Red inner tube is made of pure pará [natural rubber of greater purity and quality], is soft to the touch like the skin of a small child; it is like that of a red-skinned Indian, for it is red; and the satin body of a young Iroquois would be embarrassed by its softness and molecular tenderness. We have tried to make a material that is almost organic."51

10. Illustrators of the Kaleidoscopic Bibendum

The anatomical features of the pneumatic mascot defined by O’Galop were slightly modified in different interpretations made by successive illustrators hired from the beginning of the century until the end of the 1920s (figs. 177-178). Bibendum’s appearance was also subject to changes due to two fundamental aspects. One of them deals with time, since O’Galop himself introduced new features and polished others over the years. This was the result of the graphic evolution in his own style as well as the continuous revisions to which the mascot was subjected to in the nearly three hundred applications where he was utilized for Michelin between 1989 and the dawn of World War I.52 This was also the case of other illustrators who held a prolonged association with the character, such as Georges Haoutot in France—between 1911 and the mid 1920s—, Carlo Biscaretti di Ruffia in Italy—between 1909 and 1925—or Arthur N. Edrop in the United States—a decade, between 1916 and 1926. The other aspect is related to the setting, as the Bibendum that the French public knew was not the same as the one in Italy, the United Kingdom or the United States, where the various delegations enjoyed a certain degree of freedom and used characteristic images generated by local artists. Each individual case is detailed below.

10.1. Michelin et Cie.

In France, the first illustrations of Bibendum in Michelin advertisements are those made by O’Galop. The same was true for other natural markets such as Belgium, Holland and Spain, but over the years a series of authors were incorporated, among which the following are worth mentioning for their significant contributions: Édouard Louis Cousyn (1881-1926) and Georges Henri Hautot (1887-1963). A variety of artists were also featured in press advertisements, including the French illustrators Chenet, Raymond Tournon (1870-1919) and Henri Genevrier “Grand’Aigle” (1881-1951), the Spanish Ortiz or the German Walter Thor (1870-1929). In addition, others contributed to giving form to Bibendum’s image in different vignettes and especially in poster format such as the French Ernest Montaut (1879-1909), René Vincent (1879-1936), Francisque Poulbot (1879-1946), Fabien Fabiano (1882-1962), Léon Hingre (1860-1929), André Renault and Henri Delaspre, and the Britain H. L. Roowy.

If O’Galop was the original artist who established the path to follow, the work of Hautot after the Great War, which was more definite, of constant proportions and homogeneous graphics, had its influence in terms of graphic consistency. His work led to the Michelin Studio finally adopting a line of uniformity which was systematically applied after the 1930s.

10.2. Agenzia Italiana Pneumatici Michelin.

In Italy, numerous artists received commissions from Michelin’s headquarters in Milan, such as the renowned poster artist Marcelo Dudovich (1878-1962). Several of them collaborated assiduously with the covers and interiors of the firm’s corporate magazine, which appeared in 1908 under the name Il Pneumatico Michelin and was renamed Bibendum after resuming its publication—interrupted during World War I—in September 1921.
The magazine combined illustration and photography from the start, but it was after 1928 when photographic images became more important. The illustrations of Bibendum were no longer original works, as before, but rather clichés (stereotypes, printing plates) coming from the French Michelin Studio as well as the reutilization of some vignettes which had been previously published and signed by Italian authors. Although I wasn’t able to identify some of these artists beyond their signatures in the illustrations, the most significant names are those of Carlo Biscaretti di Ruffia (1879-1959), who collaborated between 1909 and 1925; Ramponi, between 1921 and 1927 and George Guillermaz, between 1923 and 1926.

But there were many others such as Guido Baldassarre “Gib,” between 1908 and 1909; Patitucci, between 1909 and 1911; Nino Nanni (1888-1969), between 1921 and 1922; Giovanni Scolari (1882-1955), cover illustrator for Bibendum magazine during 1921 and 1922; Gino Baldo (1884-1961), between 1922 and 1925; Antonio Augusto Rubino (1880-1965), in 1922; Bonora, between 1922 and 1923; Renzo C. Ventura, with the pseudonym Lorenzo Contratti (1886-1940), in 1923; Silvio Talman (1879-1972), between 1923 and 1925; Marcello Nizzoli (1887-1969), in 1924; Prous and Carmelo Marotta (1900-?), between 1924 and 1926; Piero Bernardini (1891-1974) and Guglielmo “William” Rossi, in 1925; Enrico Colombo (1855-?), between 1926 and 1927; or Duccio, throughout the year 1930.

10.3. Michelin Tyre Company, Ltd.
In Great Britain, apart from the drawings of O’Galop and other French illustrators, a distinctive Bibendum was presented in 1909, with defined features derived from detailed, delineated and precise drawings, with parallel and interlaced manual lines in the style of classic Victorian engravings that appeared in the illustrated press. None of the drawings are signed by illustrators, thus the name of the lead artist in charge of British advertisements has yet to be discovered.

10.4. Michelin Tire Company.
In the initial period of the American subsidiary, established 1907 in Milltown, there was a poorly defined communication policy that was monitored to a large extent from Great Britain until 1916. That was the year in which the illustrator and art director Arthur Norman Edrop (1884-1973) took over advertising and inaugurated a line of coherence in content and graphic design that would last for more than ten years. Between 1926 and 1927 the illustrations were commissioned to another author, Gluyas Williams (1888-1982), who had a uniform, characteristic and differential style, consisting of clear lines and economy of means.

Towards the end of the twenties the company’s internal communication service decided to fully support the unification of criteria and, through the control exercised by the so-called Michelin Studio, the design and applications of different graphic elements were homogenized—such as the logotype and mascot—that comprised corporate identity. Thus, the personality that each artist had marked in the various incarnations of Bibendum was replaced by a single vision, in which the anonymity of graphic collaborators was established. The criterion was emphatically applied on a global scale, despite the idiosyncrasy of each of the distinct local markets.
11. Vivisection of Bibendum

The physical and psychological conformation of Bibendum was the object of analysis and intervention by many illustrators. Speculation has, for example, focused on the thickness and number of stacked pneumatic tires that would define the torso and limbs of the character.\(^ {53} \)

It is true that the mascot was created to advertise Michelin's innovative car tires, having a narrow tread and large diameter, similar to those utilized for bicycles and wagons of the period. According to this principle, the evolution of this technology over the years towards pieces with increasingly smaller diameters and progressively increasing tread width should be directly reflected in Bibendum's anatomy. In reality, each illustrator chose to use a certain number of body rings that also varied depending on the pose, the points of articulation needed in a given posture and the size of the format for the drawing. The latter followed the guidelines that, for reduced sizes, the artist had to simplify details and the number of strokes and lines required. It was at the beginning of the 1920s—with the commercialization of RU (Roulement Universal) tires and the early appearance of the model Cablé—when Hautot’s participation in the firm’s advertisements intensified. His vision of the character was emphasized, which would serve as a model for the Michelin Studio and its intention to homogenize the mascot’s graphics (figs. 175-179).

What follows is a topographic anatomical description of the figure of Bibendum and the graphic interpretation by illustrators who brought him to life in his advertising adventures.

11.1. Appearance and general aspect.

Bibendum as created by O’Galop was a thick giant, strong and powerful, an inveterate drinker overflowing with health (fig. 177).\(^ {54} \) In specific adaptations where the mascot was used to advertise L’Exerciceur gymnastic equipment, between 1901-1903, his physical build became more proportioned and acquired a muscular thorax, with wide shoulders and a narrow waist, and wearing a pair of leopard underwear and high boxing boots (figs. 44 and 54-61). While O’Galop was constantly juggling with limb disproportion as a function of expressive capacity and emphasizing the action represented, other authors such as E. L. Cousyn, René Vincent and Georges Hautot in France or Biscaretti in Italy sought more stylized and humanized proportions between the limbs and torso. In contrast, the Bibendum portrayed by Gluyas Williams is perhaps the most infantile and schematic of all (fig. 178).

11.2. The trunk.

In all the character’s representations the thorax and abdomen are fused into one single piece and the waist is eliminated. The spindle-shaped trunk is enhanced by the progressive decrease in tire diameter at either end. In his first appearance we can see that he is formed by a stack of more than fifteen pneumatic tires. However, O’Galop also represented him on other occasions with a variable number of rings—between eight and fifteen—depending on the size and the necessities of the illustration. Moreover, the British Bibendum had between eight and fifteen rings, whereas Biscaretti utilized between ten and fifteen, and René Vincent between ten and twelve. Of the illustrators who regularly employed eight or fewer tires, the following stand out: Frenchmen Cousyn and Hautot—between five and seven—, the Italians Ramponi and Guillerma, and Arthur Edrop for the American Bibendum. The most concise illustrator was, again, Gluyas Williams, who in 1926-1927 employed six rings to define the trunk.
11.3. The head and facial features.

O’Galop’s first illustrations depicted the head as a cylinder formed by the repetitive stacking of small-diameter tires—roughly six—, a design that was maintained in Italy by Biscaretti, although both continued its refinement until achieving a more spherical shape. The head was directly embedded into the upper part of the trunk, without a neck to mediate, and the difference in size of the rings from both parts was considerable. In the case of the Italian Ramponi, the head acquired a conical shape and was integrated into the rest of the body, following the decreasing curvature marked by the trunk.

As a general rule, the head began with one or two rings—in contact with the end of the trunk and also serving as the chin—and the large mouth was actually the opening that was outlined at the division between one ring and another, located above the chin. In the case of the first representation in O’Galop’s poster, the half-open mouth depicts a disturbing image of hollowness, a void, which shows that the rubber rings we see are not a mere disguise or a carnival costume that conceals a human being, but actually his epidermal carcass. The tire-man—just like the product he represents—is not of flesh and bone but instead is filled with air.

Curiously, Biscaretti often added teeth and lips to Bibendum’s mouth. The lips were enhanced by painting them crimson as seen in his illustrated front covers for Il Pneumatico Michelin magazine, as well as in lithographic posters for the company realized by illustrators such as Roowy and Fabiano. In Bibendum’s first appearance, the folds in the front of his head outlined a slight nose and two barely discernable slits that served as eyes, squinting behind spectacles or pince-nez. The nose consisted of a protruding element that took advantage of the protrusion of one of the tires comprising the face. Illustrators such as O’Galop, Cousyn, and particularly Vincent—who depicted it as though it were human—took Bibendum’s nose into account in their illustrations, which is evidenced by their drawings in profile, while others like Hautot, Biscaretti, Edrop or Williams barely insinuated it, if they did not leave it out altogether.

The spectacles and eyes of Bibendum are significant and differential elements that give us clues about the author of the illustration. O’Galop always maintained the small circular spectacles—often portrayed with the attaching chain—even showing they were crystal by lines of reflection drawn in some of his illustrations and posters. Fabiano and Vincent also clearly defined them—drawing frames and glasses—as a separate element of the character. The British Bibendum, on the other hand, wore large, elliptically-shaped, unmounted lenses, slightly slanted diagonally towards the horizontal axis. Curiously, Italian Biscaretti initially proposed a rectangular frame rather than a circular frame. Hautot, along with other authors, opted to remove the frames and had them coincide with the juncture between two of the facial tires. As such, they seemed more like eyeglasses or goggles for drivers and racing pilots—fastened with an elastic strap or strip—instead of corrective or magnifying spectacles.

A large number of illustrators also incorporated eyes showing through the spectacles, or at least the pupils, to enhance the expressiveness of the mascot’s face. But this was not the case of O’Galop’s original Bibendum, nor that of the British adaptation, nor of Edrop’s portrayal for the American market, who was always shown with blank lenses.
11.4. The arms and the legs.
The number of tires employed as Bibendum’s limbs changed according to the illustrator—and along with this, according to the year of production and the size of the drawing—although most, including O’Galop’s original designs, solved the issue of lower limbs by varying thicknesses and indicating the knee joint. Thus, for example, Cousyn customarily constructed the thigh with five tires, a narrower knee tire and four more tires for the leg (5 + 1 + 4). This was also done with the British Bibendum, although sometimes the order would be reversed (4 + 1 + 5). Other examples are those of Edrop (4 + 1 + 3), Hautot (3 + 1 + 3), Gluyas Williams (2 + 1 + 2), Guillermaz (3 + 1 + 5), Vincent (4 + 1 + 5) or Biscaretti (5 + 1 + 5).

The upper extremities were essentially tubular, with no marked differences between the tires shaping the forearm, elbow, and upper arm. Depending on the illustrator, these cylinders could range from Williams’ typical five to Hautot’s seven, reaching six/nine by Edrop and even up to ten/twelve in the British Bibendum, the version by O’Galop or in that by Biscaretti.

11.5. Hands and gloves.
The hands of the first Bibendum presented a shocking peculiarity with respect to the rest of the body: they were human. O’Galop probably preferred to utilize recognizable hands rather than to construct them with small pneumatic tires. The latter would imply graphic complexity entailed by so much detail—especially in the definition of fingers—and the added difficulty of being visually detectable in the profusion of lines when the mascot was utilized in reduced sizes. As such, O’Galop and other artists—Hingre, Roowy, Vincent, Fabiano, Renault, Poulbot—, portrayed hands in this way, especially in color posters where they are depicted in pink and orange flesh tones. With respect to the British Bibendum, it is worth highlighting the care with which the hands are profiled—as is also the case in their drawing of footwear—, based on shadows, patterns and details depicting nails or skin folds. This contrasts with the austerity and clean lines utilized in the graphic portrayal of the rest of the body (fig. 179).

Towards the beginning of the twenties, a tendency began to appear that would eventually turn into a standard. Two posters announcing the Michelin disc wheels—one in 1921 illustrated by Albert Philibert and the other in 1925 signed by Grand’Aigle—portrayed Bibendum in a uniformly white color, which implied that his hands were also covered by the same matter as the rest of his body. By the end of the 1920s his hands would definitively end up covered by white gloves, occasionally shown stitched with three seams that were typical of this garment (fig. 180).

A characteristic feature of the first Bibendum, which illustrators such as Cousyn maintained, were the shirt cuffs fastened by cufflinks that served to distinguish between the end of tires comprising the arm and the emergence of human hands. This vestige was eliminated by Hautot, as part of his approach to reduce accessory graphic details.

11.6. Feet and footwear.
The character’s footwear—as his bare feet were never shown—consisted of medium-length boots with laces that were often not shown or graphically resolved by simple interlaced or parallel strokes, in order not to complicate the drawing. They usually had a uniformly flat sole, except for the British Bibendum, where thick boots were drawn in detail and had a raised heel. Similar to spectacles and cufflinks, which were symbols of a wealthy and cultivated bourgeois class, on occasion the boots were half-covered by short gaiters, from the ankle to the instep of the foot.
The boots were leather, and brown as defined by most of the illustrators—in the posters signed by O’Galop, Roowy and Fabiano, for example—although, as with the gloves, they eventually ended up being white to match the rest of the mascot’s exterior appearance. Bibendum was also sporadically portrayed wearing other footwear such as sandals, shoes and ankle boots, as can be seen in elegant Italian front covers by Biscaretti. Certain posters also showed this, such as O’Galop’s illustration for Michelin bicycle tires with the motto “Le Meilleur, le moins cher” (the best, the cheapest) in which he wears the cyclist’s typical clothes, high socks and practical shoes (figs. 181-182).

The post-1930 Bibendum incorporated some of these changes into a depersonalized but uniform graphic synthesis, standardized and ready for the controlled and global application of all elements that constituted Michelin’s corporate image (figs. 184-188). The evolution that he underwent in the following decades, until becoming the current character that incorporates three-dimensionality as an inseparable attribute—in the virtual world and in tangible graphic applications—deserves a separate and in-depth analysis that exceeds the time frame of the present study.

Bibendum’s anatomical changes also responded to a change in sensitivity towards the functions, attributes and limits of advertising activity in a society with evolving values. The primordial character of the mascot reflected: the nemesis of his adversaries and competitors, combative to the point of aggressiveness; a defiant and irreverent attitude towards traditions, religion, entities, social classes and races … ; marked masculinity—if not machismo—; and his excesses with food, drink and tobacco. The passage of time has taken to eliminating much of these attributes to the point of his depersonalization. As Nibblet and Reynolds (2005) explain—Nibblet being the first historian of the company and previously head of the Heritage Department at Stoke-on-Trent in England—in the book commemorating the centenary of Michelin’s implementation in the British Isles, and referring to new social attitudes that influenced the Bibendum of the 1970s and onwards:

“Drinking, smoking and over-eating were no longer considered appropriate conduct for a motoring hero, and so Monsieur Bibendum has curtailed his epicurean pleasures and gone on a diet, in order to lose a few ‘spare tyres.’ Today, having bowed somewhat to the pressures of political correctness, he is a reformed character, energy-conscious, environmentally responsible and abstemious.”

12. From corporate mascot to popular icon.
It is evident that the Michelin company had the intention of bestowing its corporate mascot with a complex personality. In order to do so, they used the services of his creator, O’Galop, an expressive caricaturist capable of agglutinating the social feeling of the times and portraying him in characters and situations endowed with a critical spirit loaded with humor and irony. As a corporate spokesperson for Michelin, the mascot Bibendum acted as an endorser of the product he publicized in a world of advertising fiction. But he also intervened in real life issues by pontificating or taking sides in social, political or religious matters. His constant presence in the advertising media, his incisive character and the mixture of private commercial interests with the public sphere have converted the pneumatic man into a point of reference. The use of Bibendum by agents outside the sphere of the Michelin company’s interests precipitated its process of transmutation from a corporate and advertising mascot into a popular cultural icon.
The conceptual content underpinning the symbolic construction of the corporate mascot included the following: a metaphor of the product and its benefits; a representation of the company as well as the founding fathers’ son; and a portrait of white, bourgeois and wealthy male consumers. In addition, certain physical attributes also had symbolic meanings and were reinterpreted by the social environment. Bibendum was a well fed bon vivant, inflated and fat, his tires perfectly filled with air, and he was overflowing with health. New values allocated by the general public were added to the original values Michelin had bestowed upon their pneumatic mascot, made explicit through publicity actions. Popular culture, through expressive tools such as language and images in satirical press, usurped the figure of Bibendum to develop its own discourse. The keen illustrators and caricaturists of the active French satirical press contributed enormously to this process of popular assimilation. They considered Bibendum’s figure as an ideal resource to formalize situations that were difficult to illustrate, and used him to portray certain characters and personalities as well as to embody attitudes and abstract concepts.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Bibendum consolidated his public presence through publicity appearances in street posters, press advertisements and in all type of promotional postcards and prints. Being a protagonist with high visibility turned him into a recognizable reference that was employed when referring to the specific case of Michelin and, in a metonymic operation, to generic cases expressed through metaphorical images. The same figure of Bibendum could represent: the Michelin tire as well as all tire technology; the Michelin company and/or all industries in the sector; the Michelin brothers and/or the entire employer and management sector. In more inoffensive metaphors, the inflated or deflated appearance of the pneumatic character was used to express the proper functioning or good health of an institution, an ideal or certain public personalities.

An early example of this use of Bibendum’s figure is seen on the cover of the humorous magazine Le Rire published in November 1906 (fig. 197). The scene created by the caricaturist Charles Lucien Léandre portrayed the then President of the Council of Ministers Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929), cup in hand and with a body shaped by pneumatic tires, in a similar fashion to the Bibendum represented in O’Galop’s original poster. The relationship between the mascot and this political caricature can be found in the famous phrase “Le pneu Michelin boit l’obstacle” coined by André Michelin and used as a slogan for the original poster. On Tuesday, October 23, 1906, politician Georges Clemenceau addressed the Parisian press, commenting on the progress made during the third day of negotiations aimed at forming a new Government of the Nation. After detailing the results of a dense schedule of morning meetings—not all of them fruitful—he concluded with a phrase expressing his confidence that the matter would soon be solved: “Je fais comme les pneus … je bois l’obstacle” [I do as the tires do … I swallow/overcome the obstacles]. Two days later the Government was constituted.

The Michelin company itself portrayed controversial topics and issues relevant to French politics at that time in its advertisements, depicting illustrious figures and high officials in allegories that linked the nationalistic idea of the French Republic to the tire brand. Even if Bibendum did not appear, the usual illustrators for Michelin advertisements resorted to representing patriotic characters, whether they were fictional such as Marianne or caricatures of real politicians from that time period (figs. 198-199).

On November 12, 1910, the caricaturist Gustave Henri Émile Blanchot “Gus Bofa” (1883-1968) created an allegorical illustration using the figure of Bibendum as a graphic and conceptual reference, employing the ability to inflate or deflate just like the inner tubes that comprised him. The composition entitled Les ‘Bibendum’ politiques is accompanied by a footnote which states: “The small ‘Bibendum’ parliamentarians deflate themselves but who will deflate the other CGTers?” The vignette, a full-page publication
in the humorous magazine Le Rire, was an allegory of the emergence and radicalization of the CGT-Confédération Générale du Travail union in defense of workers' rights and also confronting the French government previously constituted on November 4th. The composition shows several characters from the waist up, grouped in a circle, who represent the governing political class. They are dressed like Bibendum, with pneumatic bodies that in this case seem to lack air, deflated, depicting the downcast attitude of the characters.

From the center of this huddle emerges a high-pressure inflated figure representing a CGT union activist. The syndicalist, identified with a band on the chest containing the acronyms of the organization and wearing a Phrygian cap, hoists a bomb in one hand and an empty sock in the other. These attributes allow us to understand the revolutionary character of the CGT, which at that time was strongly influenced by anarchism and expressed itself in a radical way. The Phrygian cap was a symbol of revolution and republic. The bombs were an instrument used by anarchists since the last decade of the nineteenth century and the sock was the “bas de laine” (woolen sock colloquially known as 'nest egg') in which humble families stowed their savings (figs. 200-202).^59

After those early years—and continuing on to this day—Michelin’s pneumatic mascot was profusely utilized in caricatures with a political slant that were published in the press, in addition to graphically depicting distinct actions dealing with labor and union demands. Among the many examples that exist, four distinct magazine covers are highlighted, with the common nexus of portraying the satirical and combative spirit that impregnated each one of them (figs. 203-206).^60

The artistic inter-war avant-gardes were also attracted to the figure of Bibendum and utilized it to express themselves. As Carlos Pérez (2005) pointed out in an enlightening article entitled “Bibendum and the Avant-garde,” “… the pneumatic creature had surpassed its primitive advertising function and was recognized—at the beginning of the twentieth century—as a brilliant and representative figure of modern popular culture (…) Bibendum abandoned the world of repetitive propaganda, of absolute commercial purpose, to enter into that of modern advertising, which, like avant-garde art, sought to have a real and active presence in daily life.”^64 Amongst the graphic documentary sources addressing this relationship, Pérez discovered the little-known drawings portraying Bibendum by the Spaniard Ramón Gómez de la Serna (1926), by Adolf Hoffmeister (1930) and by the Belgian Jean Stiénon du Pré (1931) (figs. 207-209).

Patricia Molins (2005), in the same monograph published by Carlos Pérez, pointed out the attention that prominent Bauhaus members gave to the pneumatic mascot. According to Molins, the Triadisches Ballett (Triadic Ballet) from the theater workshop of Oskar Schlemmer—a sculptor who joined the Bauhaus in 1921—and its actors who displayed mechanical movements and a mechanomorphic aspect reflected this influence. Molins also showed us the work of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy Die Korsettstange, a 1927 photomontage depicting the portrait of a man in one of Bibendum’s disguises used in live promotional events (fig. 210).

To summarize, Bibendum early on, from the beginning of the twentieth century, transcended the boundaries of the advertising field on his own to become a culturally rooted icon in France and Europe. The original commercial symbolism attributed to him by his creator and the Michelin company was reinterpreted and enriched with new meanings proposed by makers and creators at any given time—intellectuals, artists, poets, caricaturists and graphic artists—, which were widely accepted and incorporated into the collective memory.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

Notes

1. According to Darmon (1997), p. 23, without providing sources or references on which to base this dating. This exact date is not quoted in any text from the extensive bibliography of previous authors consulted on the subject that the present study addresses. Perhaps Darmon had access to some internal Michelin document that contained the data.

2. As commented in a brief news item in the newspaper La Presse, March 1, 1898, p. 5.

3. To give an example, André Michelin himself was portrayed on the magazine cover for Le Cycle in numbers published on July 17, 1894 and September 1, 1895.

4. The satirical magazine Le Rire included a brief review of the installation: “(...) the most remarkable stands are Clément, Peugeot, Humber, Raleigh, La Métropole, Falcon, Whitworth, Gladiator, Premier, Dunlop (...). Let us not forget the ingenious idea of the Michelin company, who has installed a comparative ring, which allows us to realize the differences between the iron wheel and the pneumatic wheel: it is the Exhibition’s outburst of laughter. “Au Salon du Cycle;” Le Rire, December 21, 1895, p. 10.

5. Between 1889 and 1939 O’Galop resided in Paris, except in 1890 when he moved to neighboring England for a few months, living on King’s Road in London. His residence and workshop were always located within the boundaries of the Montmartre district. Between 1889 and 1890 he settled in at Rue du Croissant; from 1891 to 1895 he was living at Galerie Colbert; from 1895 to 1899 on Rue de Chabrol; from 1899 to 1900 on Rue Ganneron; from 1900 to 1939 on Rue Lamarck, 33 bis. Information provided directly by Marc Faye, O’Galop’s great-grandson and animation filmmaker —creator of the production O’Galop, a docufiction about the illustrator’s life—who is preparing a descriptive and illustrated catalogue of the artist’s work.

6. For example, and without a chronological and exhaustive search, in Le Rire number 234 from July 27, and number 245, October 12, 1907, we find a wide column advertising module, vertically occupying a third of a page, “Les conquêtes de Bibendum” with an illustration by O’Galop.

7. According to Andre Michelin: “(...) we have made several series of images d’Épinal, of which one, especially successful, has had a circulation of 400,000 copies.” Translated from the original French text: “(...) nous avons fait jusqu’à des séries d’images d’Épinal, dont l’une, plus particulièrement réussie, a été tirée à 400.000 exemplaires.” Arren (1914), p. 298.

8. In Michelin’s institutional and corporate publications such as Le joyeux Bibendum, edited in 1923 (a compilation of Bibendum drawings); the series of advertising spaces in L’Illustration between 1919 and 1922; Michelin’s “Lundis” in L’Auto and Le Journal (690 ad inserts in 13 years, between 1910 and 1914) and especially, due to its wide diffusion and proximity in time, the 1997 and 1998 editions of the book Le grand siècle de Bibendum/The Michelin Man’s First Hundred Years by Olivier Darmon, published in French, English, Spanish and Italian on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the character’s creation. The paragraphs numbered from I to V are based on information contained in that book, especially sections III to V, with quotation marks depicting verbatim reproductions of the original text.

9. The Michelin Man’s First Hundred Years, pp. 22-23.

10. Translated from the original French text: “Les deux frères s’en disputèrent la paternité leur vie durant: ‘C’est une pile de pneus qui m’en donna l’idée’, racontait Edouard. Je me dis: en ajoutant des lunettes, un cigare et des bras, ça ferait un bonhomme! Pour sa part André prétendait toujours qu’il en eut la vision devant un projet d’affiche destiné à une brasserie de Munich représentant un énorme Bavarois brandissant une chope de pierre moussue: ‘Je suggérai à l’auteur (expliquait André) de faire à sa place, un buveur tout en pneus et décidai que nous garderions la phrase latine: Nunc est Bibendum … traduite très librement par ’le pneu Michelin boit l’Obstacle.’ Mais l’auteur du projet,
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le dessinateur O’Galop, qui contestait également les deux thèses, devait affirmer jusqu’à sa mort au’il fut le seul et unique père de Bibendum…” Miquel (1962), p. 379.


12. Translated from the original French text: “A quelque temps de là, le dessinateur O’Galop, encore inconnu, vint me faire des offres de service. Parmi les dessins qu’il me soumit simplement à titre de référence, pour me prouver son savoir-faire professionnel, se trouvait un gros bonhomme ventru, pansu, qui portait un toast, une énorme chope à la main. Une légende déclarait: Nunc est bibendum. Le croquis avait été fait pour une grosse maison de bière allemande, qui n’avait pas donné suite à la demande d’études. Tiens, dis-je, il y aurait quelque chose à tirer de ce bonhomme. Il faudrait le faire tout entier en bandages pneumatiques et, au lieu d’un bock, lui mettre en main une coupe remplie de clous et autres choses désagréables aux pneus. Voilà qui illustrerait parfaitement notre fameuse phrase: Le pneu Michelin boit l’obstacle. O’Galop comprit mon idée et l’exécuta.” Arren (1914), p. 299.

13. Translated from the original French text: “Paris, le 14 Janvier 1907. “Monsieur l’administrateur. Lecteur encore trop peu assidu de La Publicité Moderne, je le regrette doublement : 1er Parce que, dans le numéro qui vient de me tomber sous la main, celui de novembre dernier, j’ai trouvé des choses extrêmement intéressantes; 2e Parce que, dans ce même numéro, j’ai relevé une petite inexactitude qui me concerne. Ce n’est pas qu’elle ait en elle-même une importance énorme, cependant je demanderai à votre courtoisie de vouloir bien la rectifier, je vais vous dire pourquoi: C’est au sujet du Bibendum de Michelin, dont vous faites un laissé pour compte d’une brasserie allemande. Je sais bien que l’auteur de cette erreur est M. Michelin lui-même—ou plutôt un de ses employés trop récents dans là maison—mais je le lui ai fait remarquer. La première fois que je lui fis Bibendum, c’était exactement le dessin que vous reproduisez en haut de la page 16: dans mon idée, bien entendu, je ne pensais pas le moins du monde créer un type, mais seulement faire un dessin réclame pour passer une fois, comme j’en ai fait beaucoup d’autres; mais je dois dire que jamais je n’ai fait de dessins pour les brasseries allemandes. Le Journal avait déjà propagé la même erreur et je n’y avais pas attaché d’importance; mais dans votre journal, c’est autre chose—je n’insiste pas—par égard pour votre modestie je vous demande seulement de vouloir bien la rectifier, je vous prétends parmi mes plus cordiales salutations. O’GALOP. 53 bis, rue Lawarck.” “A propos de Bibendum,” Letter by O’Galop in La Publicité Moderne number 12, December 1906, p. 5.

14. These are letters sent by O’Galop to the magazines Vendre (1924) and L’Affiche et les Arts de la Publicité (1934) and published—although not in their entire original extent, as indicated—in the Editorial correspondence sections: Vendre, number 14, December 1924, p. 1181 and L’Affiche, number 11, June-July 1934, p. 202.

15. A fragment of the letter published in L’Affiche, number 11, June-July 1934, p. 202. The following is the complete text reproduced in French accompanied by its translation into English:

“Rectification. A la suite d’un article inséré dans le numéro de mai de L’Affiche. Notre ami M. O’Galop, nous adresse une lettre de protestation dont nous publions ci-dessous quelques extraits : ‘Mon cher Ami, Voulez-vous me permettre de relever, dans le numéro de L’Affiche de mai, que je reçois seulement, une légère erreur commise par M. Mauduit, dans son livre, La Réclame, et à laquelle
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... your great review gives a publicity which is quite unpleasant? The way Mr. Mauduit tells the story of Bibendum is totally incorrect, and I absolutely deny it. The truth is much simpler, and perhaps of interest to those specialists among your many subscribers. By 1891, I was already illustrating advertisements under commission by Michelin; on the other hand, I collaborated among others, with a sports and humor magazine in Munich, the Radfahr Humor. One day, I sent them a picture of a cyclist who, having reached the top of a hill, drank a mug of beer. Caption: Nunc est bibendum. An association of ideas (habitual in humor) formed in my mind between this legend and the recently appeared (stated by Mr. Michelin): Le pneu M. boit l’obstacle. Bibendum ... boit ... Hence the drawing that cannot be forgotten by the cyclists of the time: in the center, the drinker enlarges his tires by happily pouring a glass of nails and splinters, flanked by two buddies who agonize after having tried to imitate him. Legend: Nunc est Bibendum ... c’est-à-dire (? !!!) A votre santé, le pneu M. boit l’obstacle. Not bad, then ... After this a color poster was made and then a year later (well, strange thing, the company did not calculate at that time that they could capitalize on the character, although they claimed to have had the idea) having the need to personify their tires in light of tires D. (English) and C. (German) Michelin decides to revive the character and it was then when it was shown in an advertisement in the magazine L’Auto.’ etc. We attest to this.”

"Rectification. On the occasion of an article inserted in the May issue of L’Affiche. Our friend O’Galop sends us a letter of protest from which we publish some excerpts: ‘My dear friend. Can you let me comment on the fact that in the May issue of L’Affiche that I have received, a slight error is reproduced by Mr. Maudit [Roger] in his book La Réclame, to which your magnificent magazine gives publicity that I find very unpleasant? The manner in which Mr. Mauduit narrates the birth of Bibendum is totally inaccurate, and I absolutely negate it. The truth is much simpler, and perhaps of interest to those specialists among your many subscribers. By 1891, I was already illustrating advertisements under commission by Michelin; on the other hand, I collaborated among others, with a sports and humor magazine in Munich, the Radfahr Humor. One day, I sent them a picture of a cyclist who, having reached the top of a hill, drank a mug of beer. Caption: Nunc est bibendum. An association of ideas (habitual in humor) formed in my mind between this legend and the recently appeared [stated by Mr. Michelin]: Le pneu M. boit l’obstacle. Bibendum ... boit ... Hence the drawing that cannot be forgotten by the cyclists of the time: in the center, the drinker enlarges his tires by happily pouring a glass of nails and splinters, flanked by two buddies who agonize after having tried to imitate him. Legend: Nunc est Bibendum ... c’est-à-dire (? !!!) A votre santé, le pneu M. boit l’obstacle. Not bad, then ... After this a color poster was made and then a year later (well, strange thing, the company did not calculate at that time that they could capitalize on the character, although they claimed to have had the idea) having the need to personify their tires in light of tires D. (English) and C. (German) Michelin decides to revive the character and it was then when it was shown in an advertisement in the magazine L’Auto.’ etc. We attest to this.”

16. Ibid.
17. A fragment of the letter published in Vendre, number 14, December 1924, p. 1181. The following is the complete text reproduced in French accompanied by its translation into English:

“Rectification. M. Michelin venait de lancer sa phrase : le Pneu Michelin boit, etc. De mon côté, je venais de donner, dans le Radfahr Humor, un dessin, qu’on peut retrouver, un cycliste en haut d’une côte buvant un bock, avec la légende ‘Nunc est Bibendum’. Entre bois et Bibendum, il se fit dans mon esprit un rapprochement tout naturel — et je portai à Michelin le 1er en date de tous les Bib — avec d’autres. Il passa une fois ou deux — comme les autres — puis on n’y pensa plus. Mais deux ou trois ans plus tard, M. Michelin ayant besoin de personifier sa maison, eut l’heureuse idée de reprendre ce bonhomme, et l’art de le populariser, que je lui reconnaissais volontiers. Et c’est tout.”
"Rectification. ‘Mr Michelin had just coined his phrase’ Le pneu Michelin boit [l’obstacle], etc. On my part, I had just sent a drawing to the [German] magazine Radfahr Humor—which can be found [published]—of a cyclist on top of a hill drinking a mug accompanied by the motto ‘Nunc est bibendum’. In my mind there was a natural association between ‘boit’ and ‘bibendum’ and this is how I presented the first of the Bibs [Bibendums] to Michelin, along with others [proposals]. He looked at it once or twice—like the rest of the drawings—and he thought no more of them. But two or three years later, finding himself in need of personifying his business, he had the bright idea of reviving that character and the art of popularizing it, something that has my recognition. And that’s all.”


19. In addition to Michelin, O’Galop worked on advertisements for different tire brands: Oury-Labrador, Pâris Cuirassé and Liberty Wolver bicycle tires and for Pneu France, Prowodnik, Dunlop, Samson, Sans-Peur and Vittu automobile tires. O’Galop also made illustrations for brands of products related to tires such as the Vinet tire rim, the Vélox Rubber Solution to repair punctures and air pumps of the brands Gonfo-Pneus KB compressed air tank and Gonfleur Delpeuch.

20. The Gallic illustrators of French satirical press at the end of century collaborated assiduously in German publications of the time. As an example, we should not be surprised by the permeability of the German humorous weekly Jugden with regard to foreign authors—especially the French—from the time it was created until the dawn of the Great War. Jugden magazine was founded in 1896 by the writer Georg Hirth, and had its publishing headquarters in Munich. It had a bourgeois character and an international vocation, focusing on culture and the arts.

Thus, in the first ten issues of this magazine during 1896 we can see illustrations, vignettes and cartoons illustrated by French Lucien Métivet (1863-1932), Maurice Radiguet (1866-1941), Gustave-Henri Jossot (1866-1951) Adolphe Léon Willette, (1857-1926), Frédéric-Auguste Gazals (1865-1941), George Delaw (1871-1938), Albert Guillaume (1873-1942) and French-Swiss Pierre-Georges Jeanniot (1848-1934), Théophile Alexandre Steinlen (1859-1923) or Félix Vallotton (1865-1925), among others. The magazine Jugden also reproduced vignettes extracted from foreign humorous publications such as the French Le Rire, the American Life or the British Puck.

Although this particular illustration cannot be located, we know that O’Galop published his illustrations in Radfahr-Humor on at least four occasions between 1896 and 1897. The references are as follows: 1896—June 17 (n. 152), July 15 (n. 168), August 19 (n. 188)—, and 1897—March 6 (n. 92). These were the references that were identified after reviewing the indexes of the illustrations that accompanied each of the magazine’s annual volumes between 1893 and 1898. It should be noted that not all published illustrations appeared in these lists. The volumes prior to 1893 still need to be reviewed. My sincere thanks to Andrea Maier-Sall and Marco Becker, librarians of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich for their assistance with this research.


22. The first “Michelin Saturday” published in The London Illustrated News appeared on December 19, 1908; the second and third on January 9 and January 23, 1909. It seems that at this point the series was interrupted and I was unable to confirm if it was canceled definitively or recovered months later. Tracking it through to July of that year, the series had not yet been resumed. Instead, other Michelin advertisements distinct from that campaign did indeed appear.

23. As Darmon describes (1997) p. 23, without citing references: "(…) the tire man made his first public appearance as a gigantic cardboard cutout (…) the towering Michelin Man astonished visitors.”

24. The company Oury, Schrader & Cie manufactured Oury-Labrador tires, “Les meilleurs pour Cycles, motocycles et voiturettes” according to their advertisements, at their factory in Levallois-Perret. To give an example of the existing rivalry between the two companies, in the voluminous publication Le Guide de l’Exposition de 1900, Flammarion: Paris, 1900—illustrated with numerous engravings.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

and dotted with advertising—only two advertisers from the tire sector appear: Michelin (p. 383) and Oury-Labrador (p. 384).


28. According to the Bulletin Officiel de la Propriété Industrielle et Commerciale, page 83, ref. 727-729. Trademarks representing rubber manufactures and accessories, deposited on January 4, 1908, at 5 am, at the Clermont-Ferrand Commercial Court Office, by Societe Michelin et Cie, North 15 Street, in Clermont-Ferrand. These trademarks are of variable color."


30. "Nunc est bibendum (c'est maintenant qu'il faut boire, se réjouir): Manière familière de dire qu’il faut célébrer un grand succès, un succès inespéré" [(It is now that we must drink, rejoice): Familiar way of saying that we must celebrate a great success, an unexpected success]. This is how Pierre Larousse defines the phrase in the appendix "Dictionnaire des locutions latines" of the Noveau dictionnaire de la langue française; Paris: Larousse et Boyer, 1856, p. 709. It is also included in his publication Grand Dictionnaire Universel du xixe. siècle in the 1874 edition, with the commentary "Les écrivains font souvent allusion" [Writers often refer to it].


36. Piesse, Louis. “Nunc est bibendum,” Le Caveau. Trente-huitième année; Paris: Chez P. Tralin, 1872, p. 415. The first two stanzas of the song are: “Au Caveau puisque l’on chante,/Parfois en latin,/Latiniste, je m’en vante,/Autant que Patin,/Je vais dire comme Horace,/Après Actium:/Plus de souci qui tracasse,/Nunc est bibendum!/C’est maintenant qu’il faut boire,/Fut souvent ma loi!/Et si j’ai bonne mémoire,/Je crois bien, ma foi,/Qu’écartant de ma nourrice/Chlamyde ou peplum,/Je bégayais tout novice:/Nunc est bibendum!”


38. Ibid.

39. Léon Thery (1879–1909) stood out in automobile competitions during the first decade of the 1900s. His debut in an important race was in Paris-Bordeaux on May 24, 1899, although he did not finish the race. On March 11, 1900, he obtained his first trophy winning the Coupe des Voiturettes and stood out for his two consecutive victories in the Gordon Benett Cup of 1904 and 1905, both with a Richard-Brasier car using Michelin tires.


41. “La vélocipédie et des progrès que le bandage pneumatique lui a permis de réaliser,” by André Michelin. 25 page article published in Mémoires et Compte Rendu des Travaux de la Société des Ingénieurs Civils de Paris, volume 1, 1893, pp. 197-221. In the middle of the article he quotes his famous phrase.

42. This biographical information is based on information provided directly by Marco Faye, great-grandson of the artist.


45. “Sitôt qu’il fut né, il ne cria pas comme les autres enfants: ‘Mie! mie!’, mais il s’écriait à haute voix: ‘A boire! à boire! à boire!’ comme s’il avait invité tout le monde à boire.” Extract from chapter VI “Comment Gargantua nasquit en façon bien estrange” of the book Gargantua o La Vie très horri-fique du Grand Gargantua. The publication, inspired by an anonymous romance, was first published in Lyon between 1534 and 1535, signed with the anagram of François Rabelais (Alcofrybas Nasier).

46. Concretely on the following dates: Sunday November 28, Thursday December 2 and Monday December 6, 1897, as explained in the publication De Bébé Cadum à Mamie Nova … A siècle de personnages publicitaires, p. 292. One hypothesis which I propose in connection with the appearance of Bibendum is based on the bitter trade dispute between Dunlop and Michelin regarding the French market for bicycle tires. Michelin’s response to the Dunlop damsels would be the creation of a pneumatic man of high social standing … staging the repeated themes of scenes from everyday life and stereotyped characters of cocottes and their wealthy “protectors,” omnipresent in popular artistic manifestations of the Belle Époque, of works of vaudeville and in the covers and illustrations of satirical magazines. The feminine Dunlopettes would thus be reduced to a secondary role, to occasional lovers of the protagonist of the function: the dominant and masculine Bibendum.

47. Judge, volume xvii, number 427, December 21, 1889. The illustration is signed by the renowned caricaturist Grant E. Hamilton (1862-1926), regular contributor to the publication.

48. The wires of these power lines, installed by different companies—some of which had already disappeared without dismantling them—were not sufficiently insulated or protected and were not adequately maintained. This situation was aggravated by the deterioration caused by atmospheric agents. On March 12, 1888, the city suffered the scourge of a storm bringing wind and torrential
rain followed by intense snowfall which caused numerous damage to electrical and telegraph lines and in the provision of services, besides constituting an actual potential threat in and of itself. The press initiated an intense editorial campaign to pressure authorities to establish strict regulations and force companies to relocate power lines to underground installations. They published numerous accidents that happened in the following months in their events pages. The humorous magazine *Judge* was sensitive to the problem, publishing certain newspapers’ chronicles of the occurrences. New York Mayor Hugh John Grant (head of the municipality between 1889 and 1892) renewed the burial program of the power lines that crossed the city that had been initiated in the mandate of his predecessor, but with unequal follow-up. One of the accidents that had major repercussion was that of John Feeks, maintenance operator for Western Union telegraph lines, who died electrocuted on October 11, 1889 in Manhattan, New York. The magazine *Judge* dedicated its cover to the accident in the October 26th edition and focused on the problem again, as seen on the back cover of its December 21 issue of that same year. See Sullivan (pp. 8-16), Mauri (p. 262) and Juma (pp. 165-167).

49. In June 2008 Michelin announced that the U.S. division of the advertising agency TBWA—TBWA/Chiat/Day of New York—was taking over the Michelin brand account in its business of spare tires for passenger cars and light trucks in the United States. This account was added to those that TBWA already managed in European and Asian markets. On October 7, 2009, a long-term campaign with global diffusion was launched known as “The Right Tire Changes Everything” in which Bibendum—thanks to the graphics developed by the production company Psyop—became a total protagonist, extracting from his body the tires needed to help the motorist facing a variety of adversities and in different climatic conditions. The message shows that using the right tires can reduce fuel consumption, increase road safety and extend the life of tire treads. The campaign began in the United States and then spread to 55 countries, to Europe and Asia in early 2010 and then to Africa, the Middle East, India and South America, preferably utilizing animated 3D television spot format, print media and the internet.


51. Translated from the original French text: “Qui? mais Elle parbleu, la Chambre Rouge Goodrich, le poumon idéal du pneu; que dis-je, l’intestin de ce ventre qui roule, et qui est si souvent sujet à la péritonite. N’oubliez jamais : qu’à bon pneu, il faut bonne chambre à air, comme bone chambre à air à bon pneu ; que tous deux doivent être intimement liés, sous peine de mourir l’un par l’autre, ou l’un de l’autre (…) Depuis que l’air est la vie du pneu, sa respiration, et par conséquent la vie et la respiration de l’automobiliste, on ne saurait trop attacher d’importance au choix d’une chambre à air. La chambre rouge Goodrich est en pur Para, elle est douce au toucher, comme l’épiderme d’un jeune enfant ; c’est une Peau-rouge, car elle est rouge ; et le satin du corps d’une jeune Iroquoise rougirait davantage peut-être, devant sa douceur et sa tendresse moléculaire. Nous nous sommes attachés à en faire un tissu presque organique.” In Le Maitre de la Route, Colombes: Société Française B. F. Goodrich, 1917, p. 19. Text by Xéna and illustrations by J. Basté and Charles Putois.


54. Let’s not forget that at that time a large part of spirits liquor—with alcoholic content—were sold under the label of tonics and medicinal drinks.


56. In Castilian Spanish, there is a term that exemplifies this popular appropriation. The Diccionario de la Real Academia defines it as "michelín. (De Michelin, marca comercial anunciada con una figura humana formada con neumáticos.) m. fam. Pliegue de gordura que se forma en alguna parte del cuerpo." [From Michelin, a commercial trademark advertised by a human figure shaped by tires.] masculine. colloquial. Skinfold of fat that appears in some part of the body] The term was incorporated in 1992, in the twenty-first edition of the Diccionario, although its colloquial use goes back to previous years.

57. The description of the scene represented and the role of its characters, presented in this chapter in later pages, together with the reproduction of the illustration, is based on information published by Margaret Potocki (2005) in her article that is listed in the bibliography.

58. As explained in the journalistic chronicle "La crisi," written by Eugène Destex and published in the Parisian newspaper Gil Blas on Tuesday, October 23, 1906.

59. I am grateful for the comments made by Guillaume Doizy, through our usual communication via email, for the correct understanding of the political allegory shown in Gus Bofa’s illustration. Doizy is a French specialist in the history of caricature and illustration in the press. He has published many books and a long list of articles on the subject. In 2007 he founded CaricaturesetCaricature (www.caricaturesetcaricature.com), a reference website that promotes research on this subject, as well as the iconographic agency Caricadoc, specializing in graphic imagery from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century.

60. I am grateful for the comments made by Éric Panthou, historian and librarian in Clermont-Ferrand, for the correct understanding of the political allegory shown in the cover illustration of Le Charivari, through our usual communication via email. For additional information about this front cover, the reader is also referred to the article by Pierre-Gabriel Gonzalez (2013), listed in the bibliography.

61. Translated from the original Spanish text: "(...) la criatura neumática había sobrepasado su primitiva función publicitaria y se le reconocía —apenas comenzado el siglo XX— como una figura rutilante y representativa de la cultura popular moderna. (...) Bibendum abandonaba el mundo de la propaganda reiterativa, de absoluta finalidad comercial, para entrar en el de la publicidad moderna que, como el arte de vanguardia, pretendía tener una presencia real y activa en la vida cotidiana." Pérez (2005), pp. 7-9.

Bibliography


2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM


Catalog book of the 2005 homonymous exhibition inaugurated at the Institut Valencià d’Art Modern in Valencia, which was shown at different Spanish museums and had its final exhibition at the Musée d’Art Roger-Quilliot in Clermont-Ferran, France in 2008. It contains five unpublished works by specialists in design and art.


—“L’histoire de Michelin vue au travers du prisme de l’humour 1900 …” published on October 4, 2013 in the online edition of the newspaper *La Montagne*, in its Auvernia regional edition. Website: http://www.lamontagne.fr/auvergne/actualite/departement/puy-de-dome/clermont-ferrand/2013/01/28/llhistoire-de-michelin-vue-au-travers-du-prisme-de-lhumour-1900_1648352.html


Catalog of the homonymous exhibition.


Rossillon, Kléber. *Marius Rossillon dit O’Galop. L’affichiste de Bibendum, 1867-1946.* Catalog with texts of several authors published under the direction of Kléber Rossillon, great-grandson of O’Galop, for the homonymous exhibition of the artist celebrated in Sarlat, Ancien Évêché, from June 28 to September 23, 1998.
Hildesheim, Germany: Comicplus+, December 2011.

Sullivan, Joseph P. “Fearing electricity: overhead wire panic in New York City,”


www.daumier-register.org. Website managed by Swiss Dieter and Lilian Noack, collectors
and experts on the works of French Honoré Daumier. It offers a commented digital catalog,
freely accessible, about all the known production of the artist, including an image
of each one of around 1,000 woodcuts and 4,000 lithographs.

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**News in press about the brand Plugine (fig. 89),**

successively published in the specialty cycling magazine *Cycling Life* throughout the year 1896:
“War on anti-leak mixtures” and “Twixt punctures and guarantees,” August 13;
“Denies tire maker’s claims,” August 20; “The Plugine Company of Clevelans,” September 3;
“Anti-leak mixtures,” September 10; “Tire makers take action,” September 24;
“Tire guarantee to be amended,” October 15;
and in the specialty cycling magazine *The Wheel*: “Have had enough,” October 29, 1897.
Marius Rossillon was born in Lyon in 1867. After studying Fine Arts, he moved to the Montmartre district in Paris and collaborated as an illustrator and caricaturist for more than fifty magazines, including *Le Chat Noir, Le Rire, Pêle-Mêle, L'Éclipse, La Vie Dédie, La Bicyclette, Le Soleil du Dimanche, La Caricature, Le Chauffeur, L'Auto-Vélo, Le Sourire* and *Le Charivari*. He worked intensively as a commercial illustrator for different brands—he was the creator of Bibendum and Michelin’s head illustrator until right before WWI—and his drawings were featured in advertisements, posters, postcards and various promotional material, as well as in different images d’Epinal. He also illustrated numerous children’s books, and designed wooden toys in the form of animals with interchangeable pieces. He was interested in shadow theater and created images to project in linterne magique sessions, and he is considered one of the pioneers of French animation cinema, with about forty short films realized between 1910 and 1927. He retired to Dordogne, in Périgord Noir, France where he died in 1946.

3. Portrait of O’Galop circa 1900, disguised as Tartarin of Tarascon—the fantasy explorer created by Alphonse Daudet in his novel of the same name in 1872—, whose adventures served as an inspiration for some of his stories.
WILD HORSE.

Here, a photograph of the "cheval du bois" (literally "wooden horse," similar to children’s cartoon rocking horses) installed by Michelin in the 3ème Salon du Cycle in 1895. The apparatus intended to compare, as the signs announce, the ease of circling around on pneumatic tires to jolts produced by metal wheels without rubber. The spectators who participated in the demonstration on the wrong chair were jolted about in such a way that their personal objects became dislodged and tossed around. As for women riders, the male spectators enjoyed viewing their flying skirts and jiggling corporeality caused by the rattling metal wheels. O’Galop’s illustration portrays some of these anecdotal details which occurred in the Michelin demonstrations.

5. Photograph of the Michelin stand at the Salon, with a startled André Michelin mounted on the apparatus and holding his hat, 1895.
6. Detail, portrait of André Michelin, 1895.
2. The Birth and Baptism of Bibendum

Centrifugal Attraction.

The installation of Michelin in the Salon du Cycle of 1895 attracted the attention of the public and the media, as demonstrated by this chronicle published in a magazine of the time:

“We almost forgot about the Michelin wheel-go-round, which delights both young and old. Climb quickly onto the movable chairs and try to choose well. One of these vehicles is equipped with an iron wheel and the other driven with a wheel covered by a pneumatic tire. At the count of three, it’s one, two ... and go! I pity the unhappy man who chose the iron wheel because, at the littlest obstacle of those found on the carousel track, he shakes and rocks as a peasant does in his cart. And what a noisy racket! On the contrary, the chair with the pneumatic wheel circulates around the track quietly, without jostling and in silence. A lesson that clearly shows how tires have made bicycle transport progress and how they will be useful to automobiles.”


8. Illustrated column about the Michelin stand, published in the humorous magazine Le Rire, December 28, 1895.
ROUND AND ROUND THE TOPIC.
The inventiveness of the illustrator O’Galop can be seen in the illustration shown here, the first commission as a cover illustrator for the humorous magazine of the cycling and motor world, L’Auto-Vélo. The artist presents an imaginary and ingenious toy that summarized—obviously favoring one side—the antagonistic relationship of two characters perfectly typified in urban bicycle adventures of the time: the cyclist who circulates pedaling freely or nonchalantly in the streets and the chubby municipal agent who zealously looks after traffic and pedestrian safety. As the bicycle went around the outer boundary of the toy’s circular base, a policeman stood in the center, with a raised arm wielding a sword. The player’s skill consisted of choosing the right moment to activate a spring that projected the agent forward, so that the sword was thrust through the spokes of the bicycle wheels, obstructing them and causing the cyclist to have an accident. Could O’Galop have been inspired by the Michelin device installed at the Salon du Cycle in 1895 in the creation of this ironic toy?

The organization of the Exposition Universelle of 1900 dedicated an area adjacent to the stands for showing the history of each product according to distinct categories (transport, food, etc.). With regard to the means of transportation, it was decided to unify it into a single exhibition of cars, bicycles and other forms of transport such as vehicles with animal traction, including manufactures of harnesses or saddlery for horses. The complaints and proclamations for separate spaces promoted by the sports press, automobile manufacturers or the Automobile Club de France itself fell onto deaf ears. Alongside millenarian means of transport would be the technologically advanced vehicles of the modern motor industry, classified as "Section 30." In the humorous illustration on this page, a modern car with electric lights, Michelin pneumatic wheels and topped off with a chauffeur cap, whispers to the obsolete metallic wheeled carriage bearing an antiquated top hat: "Neighbors but not comrades."

10. Cover for the magazine on cycling and automobile topics L’Auto-Vélo, January 16, 1898. Illustration by O’Galop.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

WHEEL OF FORTUNE.

O’Galop approached this Michelin poster by parodying the moralizing exemplary sagas common to this type of print media, based on the succession of vignettes accompanied by a text. In this example, the narrated story deals with the punishment, martyrdom and finally the redemption—through a pneumatic—of a young poet in love with the daughter of the Sultan of Turkey. Condemned to be thrown off the side of a mountain tied to the inside of a wheel—one of the versions of torture known as “le supplice de la roue” (the breaking on the wheel) also utilized in its time by the inquisition in France—his life is miraculously saved and he obtains forgiveness thanks to the fact that this is actually a Michelin tire. The Sultan, surprised, orders that all his carriages be fitted with this new wheel. O’Galop reinforced the idea of the advertised product by using several circular vignettes in the composition.

11. Lithographed poster Le Suplice de la Roue, printed by Pellerin & Cie. 30.5 x 50 cm, 1898. Illustrated by O’Galop.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

A CLASSIC PHRASE.

The habitual use in social acts of the Latin exhortation to toast "nunc est bibendum" (now is the time to drink) is reflected in the examples shown here. They depict two humorous cartoons published in the satirical magazine *Le Journal Amusant* but with more than forty years of difference between them. The first, from 1873 and thus prior to the appearance of the Michelin mascot, is the work of Maurice Bonvoisin "Mars" (1849-1912), a Belgian illustrator residing in Paris. The second, from 1927, is signed by Maurice Radiguet (1866-1941). Marius Rossillon "O'Galop" also frequently collaborated with this publication (the first references encountered are full-page sections realized in 1921).

12. Vignette of the composition "L'Anglaterre vue par le gros bout de la lorgnette" ["England seen in detail" using a magnifying glass or through the lens of the telescope]. Published in *Le Journal Amusant*, March 15, 1873.

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THE ORIGINAL DESIGN.
The composition of typography and illustration which later served as the basis for O’Galop’s famous color poster appeared in press in 1899 on the pages of the Revue Parisienne. As shown here, the advertisement illustrated the call for an advertising poster contest to promote Michelin tires which, as specified, could be “humorous or decorative” in nature.

Diners and Toasts.
The images of grotesque characters toasting in celebrations around a table are also reflected in the vast work of Daumier. Above, a vignette of the series “Actualités” from the magazine *Le Charivari*, which portrays strange hybrids of humans and railroad locomotives, shown with their wheels and hats that mimic steaming chimneys.

17. Commercial card in the form of a postcard showing a traveling salesman for the liquor Cassis de Dijon, one of the many distillates elaborated by the firm A. Pedrizet et Cie. with headquarters in Dijon since 1880, c. 1920. Both the attitude of the character and the motto “nunc est bibendum” appear to pay homage to the iconic image elaborated by O’Galop for Michelin.
DEBUT IN SOCIETY. The photographs shown here are the only ones known to portray the appearance of the Michelin et Cie. stand that was contracted for the Exposition Internationale d’Automobiles, which took place between June 15 and July 3, 1898 at the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris. As can be observed, an enormous half-body figure of the pneumatic mascot created by O’Galop was featured and dominated the allotted space in his first and striking public appearance.

THE FIRST POSTER. The adaptation to a full color poster format involved the exact reproduction of the monochrome drawing. Only a few existing copies are left of this poster, which have preserved to a greater or lesser extent the qualities of the original colors. The background tone of the poster—which in most reproductions appears almost black due to the degradation of the original color—is, in fact, a dark green color, as seen in the image shown here.

20. Lithographic poster, 47 x 35.5 cm, c. 1900-1902. Printed by L. Revon & Cie, Paris and illustrated by D’Galop.
EVOLUTION. The original poster underwent numerous revisions, all of which were realized by O’Galop. Distinct accessories and tools were incorporated for the changing and repairing of tires, which has permitted a more accurate means for dating the successive versions. In the second version, oddly enough, the “Pneu X” and “Pneu Y” secondary figures accompanying Bibendum disappear, but appear in the rest of the series.

BEFORE ... AND AFTER. The confrontation of elements to compare and evaluate the virtues of advertised products was a resource already employed in late nineteenth century advertising. The malnourished rivals flanking a healthy Bibendum are an example of this practice, as is the American case of the “medicinal” brew Parker’s Tonic, shown above. A pale and sick elderly man laments: “Oh! That I had your health and appetite.” A healthy, smiling man, sitting in front of a bountiful table, answers: “I was miserable as you until Parker’s tonic healed me. An occasional dose before eating keep me well.”


26. Detail of lithographic poster designed by O’Galop, 1904.
EMBLEMATIC FACE.
John Boyd Dunlop participated in founding the Dunlop Tire Company Ltd. in 1889, but a few years later he withdrew from the company. In return for financial compensation, he ceded the rights to use an illustrated portrait of himself and his signature, for utilization in advertising, promotional items and corporate stationery. International expansion of the company and its introduction in other markets always maintained the incorporation of the emblem, and it was present in advertising campaigns for France, Spain, Italy or Germany, among other countries. By 1915 Dunlop added a full-length version of the character, utilizing it as a mascot in their advertisements.

27. Photographic portrait of John Boyd Dunlop, c. 1900.
29. Emblem of Dunlop utilized by the Italian delegation of The Dunlop Pneumatic Tyre Co. Ltd. in Milan. Detail of an advertisement published in Gazzetta Ciclistica, June 17, 1896.
DUEL IN THE ARENA. The illustration shown on this page is a clear example of the bitter rivalry between Michelin and Dunlop for the control of the bicycle tire market in late-nineteenth-century France. The scene takes place in the 2ème Salon du Cycle in Paris, and the characters portrayed depict bicycle industry patrons: Comiot, Terront, Hurtu, Fournier, Charron, Clement, etc. Among them, we see a drenched Mr. Dunlop, who has fallen into an obstacle course’s moat, and Andre Michelin posing as the classic sculpture of Laoconte, the Trojan priest devoured along with his children by two snakes. In this case, the scene is less dramatic but is also allegorical: two cyclists are shown surrounded not by reptiles, but by a never-ending tire inner tube.

31. Double page advertisement and details of the illustration published in the magazine Le Rire, December 8, 1894, illustrated by the caricaturist Léon Lebègue (1863-1945).
The advertisements shown here, all illustrated by O’Galop, confirm the constant tension between Michelin and its rival Continental. As in the famous initial poster, Michelin’s competitor is represented as different characters which are properly identified, and standout as they are depicted wearing the pickelhaube, the characteristic Prussian spiked helmet adopted since the middle of the 19th century by the German army, firemen and police.

The image on the left shows two characters with a strange-looking aspect and suspicious language. They try to convince a cyclist—in vain as his bicycle has Michelin tires—of the benefits of their “truly French” tires.

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**THE GERMAN BROTHER.**

The advertisements shown here, all illustrated by O’Galop, confirm the constant tension between Michelin and its rival Continental. As in the famous initial poster, Michelin’s competitor is represented as different characters which are properly identified, and standout as they are depicted wearing the pickelhaube, the characteristic Prussian spiked helmet adopted since the middle of the 19th century by the German army, firemen and police.

The image on the left shows two characters with a strange-looking aspect and suspicious language. They try to convince a cyclist—in vain as his bicycle has Michelin tires—of the benefits of their “truly French” tires.

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**32-34.** Advertisements and detail of an advertisement printed on a series of promotional postcards, c. 1907. Illustrated by O’Galop.
THE LAST SUPPER'S TABLE TALK.
In the main image on the right, a little-known colored gravure work by Honoré Daumier printed in 1831, there is a tribute to the iconographic representation of the Christian faith’s Last Supper, at the time of the Eucharist. The artist utilized this image to portray a critical view of privileges enjoyed by French ecclesiastical hierarchy during the reign of Charles X, between 1824 and 1830. In the scene, the clergyman in the center begins a prayer to bless the table while the rest of those around him, without waiting, endeavor to finish off the food already served. By the turn of the century O’Galop utilized a similar composition in an advertising illustration for Touren beer, shown in the image above left, produced by the Jules Fabre brewery from the town of Millau, in the Aveyron district. The scene parodies the signing of international treaties between dignitaries from different countries, a recurrent theme in satirical magazines and in product advertising. This idea was also utilized repeatedly by other caricaturists such as Eugène Oge (1869-1936) and Bernard Collomb “Moloch” (1849-1909). Here, the irruption of a barrel of Touren—beer that radiates a heavenly glow—interrupts negotiations and important State affairs are pushed into the background. The image on the top right of the following page shows the same representation that refers to classic iconography of the Last Supper applied to Michelin advertising, with Bibendum as protagonist. In this specific case the illustration is not signed, although it is obvious that it deals with a variant of the first poster created by O’Galop for Michelin.

35. Décembre 1830. Aux petits des oiseaux il donne la pâture. Lithograph by Daumier, 1831. Image facilitated by Robert D. Farber University Archives and Special Collections Department, Brandeis University Libraries.
37. Lithographic card for Michelin, in a horizontal layout based on O’Galop’s 1905 poster. Unsigned.
Décembre 1830.

tits des oiseaux il donne la pâteure
The Prophet of the Pneumatic Tire. Employing the irreverent style characteristic of Michelin advertising, O’Galop paid homage to the master engraver Gustave Doré in parodying the biblical scene shown on this page. It depicts the famous engraving of Balthazar’s Feast, one of numerous illustrations based on Biblical passages realized by Doré between 1864 and 1865. King Balthazar of Babylon and his court—given to a sumptuous and complacent life, forgetting to honor their God—celebrated a banquet that was interrupted by the appearance of an enigmatic Hebrew inscription drawn with letters of fire in the air: “mane, thecel, phares.” Only the prophet Daniel could decipher the message, a warning that predicted the death of the king. In O’Galop’s drawing, Bibendum is the prophet, and the divine light emanating from the poster of Michelin tires shines directly on a group of decadent characters, the acolytes of tires X, Y and Z.

38. Le festin de Balthazar, engraving done for the work La Bible (The Bible) illustrated by Gustave Doré, 1866.
39. (opposite page) Le festin de Balthazar, Michelin promotional postcard, number 6 of the series Mots Historiques, c. 1906.

Mané-Thecel-Phares.  

(Daniel)
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

THOU SHALL NOT PUNCTURE.

In the image below, a light-weight air-filled Bibendum emulates the imposing marble sculpture of Michelangelo Buonarroti's Moses, pointing to the ten commandments tablet—of the tire. Throughout the various advertisements that individually disaggregated each of the Decalogue's precepts, the Michelin firm had a didactic tone—with humorous illustrations by O'Galop—on the rules and precautions that the motorist should take into account to care for tires and lengthen their lifespans.

40-42. Les Commandements de Bibendum, composition and detail of one vignette as well as of Bibendum depicting Moses, in a brochure for Michelin, c. 1906. Illustrated by O'Galop.
FROM TABLE TO CAR.

The advertisement on this page constituted the second appearance of the pneumatic character created by O’Galop for Michelin. The text that heads the composition reads: “If in the Paris-Bordeaux race, Flotte had worn the suit shown here, he would not have been seriously injured.” The 55 km Paris-Bordeaux race took place on May 24, 1899 covering two categories, automobiles and 2-wheel and 3-wheel motorcycles. In the first category, most of the 28 participants utilized Michelin tires, including the winner—Fernand Charron driving a Panhard—and the rest of the top 15 classifying pilots at the finish line. But during the qualifying race an accident occurred between two Peugeot participants, a collision that caused both vehicles to be disqualified from the race and in which the mechanic and copilot Flotte was seriously injured as he jumped out of the car driven by Albert Lemaître. Presumably the Peugeot was not equipped with Michelin tires, a fact that O’Galop took advantage of in his proposal. He ironically assured that if Flotte had worn Bibendum’s padded suit—if the wheels of his car had been fitted with Michelin tires—he would not have been hurt by the fall—the accident would have ended up being harmless. What seems shocking and inappropriate for today’s standards is taking advantage of a serious accident using humor as an advertising strategy.

43. O’Galop’s illustration that was awarded one of the ten prizes consisting of 100 francs in the poster contest organized by Michelin. Published in the French monthly magazine Revue Parisienne, August 1899.
FROM THE WAIST DOWN.

The full-bodied figure of Bibendum appears for the first time in 1901, as two advertisements signed by O’Galop. We discovered that the table in the original poster concealed his leopard print breeches and ankle length sports boots, attire that identified him with wrestlers and muscle men, those burly men performing in circus and theatrical attractions, an example of health and body cults. The athletic Bibendum was revived to promote Michelin’s new gymnastic apparatus—one of several existing in the French market with similar brands such as Sandow, Zofri or l’Idéal Parent—, a mechanism that took advantage of the elastic qualities of rubber. They were applied as stretchable cords with handles and pulleys, apt for carrying out exercises and strengthening muscles.


45. Advertisement of the Michelin Exerciseur in a magazine, 1901.
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GETTING IN SHAPE ... AT HOME.

The images depict four examples of gymnastic devices with elastic rubber cords, similar to the Exerciseur manufactured by Michelin. They exemplify the concern for physical fitness that prevailed on both sides of the Atlantic during the change from the 19th to the 20th century. Among the advertised products we can see those that were endorsed by two bodybuilding pioneers: the British Szalay Home Trainer created by the Hungarian professor Joseph Szalay who resided in England, and the Sandow Exerciser developed by the German Eugen Sandow, based in the United States.


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At the end of 1901, Michelin sponsored a poster contest to advertise the Exerciseur. The poster projects presented by different artists were exhibited to the public at Michelin’s stand during the 4ème Exposition Internationale Salon de l’Automobile, du Cycle et des Sports, which took place December 10-25, 1901 at the Grand Palais in Paris. The winning proposals were printed on a series of promotional postcards. At least two of the projects were also printed as lithographic posters. Bibendum is depicted full-length in nine postcards from a series of twelve in total in which the pneumatic mascot practices with the Exerciseur as he confronts his debilitated rivals. Only one postcard, which reproduces O’Galop’s original drawing, seems out of place.

50-61. (double page) Promotional postcards from the series L’Exerciseur Michelin, published by Michelin et Cie, 1902.
63. Advertisement published in the magazine Le Sport Universel Illustre, November 16, 1902.
Aux collectionneurs
Cartes Postales illustrées MICHELIN

VIENT DE PARAÎTRE

NOUVELLE SÉRIE en COULEURS

L’EXERCICEUR MICHELIN DÉVELOPPE LES MUSCLES

12 cartes postales
reproductions d’aquarelles artistiques exposées au dernier Salon
de l’Automobile

PRIX DE LA POCHETTE : 0 fr. 30 (franco recommandée 0 fr. 50)

MICHELIN & CIE, Clermont-Ferrand (P.-de-D.)
et Paris, 105, boul. Péretre (sud)
FATHERLY LOVE.

André Michelin is portrayed as being intimately identified with the corporate mascot. In the illustration above, Mich—an author who did not work for Michelin, presumably vetoed due to his close ties as the lead artist for Michelin rivals Continental and Hutchinson—defines him as "the father of Bibendum." Meanwhile, O'Galop depicts him more as a character in a caretaking role, providing care and service to Bibendum, such as taking measurements of his foot to fit it with the "Semelle" anti-skid Michelin treads.

64. "Le père de Bibendum." André Michelin as depicted by Michel Liebeaux "Mich" (1881-1923) for a publication in which he portrayed different personalities linked to the world of motoring, c. 1907.

65. "M. André Michelin monté sur roue de fortune increvable" in an illustration by Adrien Baneux Barrère (1874-1933) for an article published in the Fantasio magazine, July 1, 1923.

66. Vignette by O'Galop, c. 1908.
THE GENETICS OF THE TIRE.

The identification of the company and its founders with Bibendum was used by caricaturist illustrators to intermingle people and characters when it came time to portray them. In the above illustration, the Michelin brothers, parents of Bibendum and of tire technology with covers and inner tubes. On the left, two people—possibly two French Michelin dealers—disguised as Bibendum.

67. Édouard and André Michelin, portrayed in a caricature illustrated by Georges Villà (1883–1965) in 1921.
68. Vignette for Michelin, c. 1917. Illustrated by G. Hautot.
CLASS ISSUE.

In turn-of-the-century Europe, the automobile was a commodity that few could afford. The aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie demonstrated their social status by utilizing them for transport or in sporting challenges. In the above image, Bibendum supplies two types of customers with his tires: the wealthy bourgeois who owns a car driven by his chauffeur and the worker who transports himself on his humble bicycle. On the right, the image shows a scene typifying pedestrian/bourgeois drivers. Two workers comment between themselves as a car passes by with an elderly gentleman driver accompanied by a young woman:
—This car goes so fast!
—It’s always like that: the ones who work the least are the ones that go the fastest.


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FROM THE PERSON TO THE CHARACTER. An elderly man, often with a robust physical build—a symbol of health and being well fed—wearing a suit and tie, top hat or bowler hat, spectacles resting on his nose and enjoying a good cigar. These were some of the recurring attributes in the configuration of the archetypal portrait of the wealthy bourgeois. These same elements also comprised part of Bibendum as a reflection of the personality of the Michelin brothers and the type of customer they were targeting. The illustrators of the examples shown on this double page utilized these paradigms by incorporating them into their characters.

71. Bibendum illustrated by O’Galop, c. 1908.
73-74. Bibendum and his “father,” André Michelin, face to face. Illustration by Georges Hautot for Michelin publicity, c. 1920; and print photograph from an original photograph, c. 1925.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

DRINKING THE OBSTACLE.

References to Michelin’s slogan and their mascot are numerous in the humorous illustrations of popular magazines. This page shows two examples that are not advertisements paid by the company, but rather comical situations inspired by the pneumatic drinker. In the image above, Bibendum, *Après boire!* [after drinking!], utilizes a public urinal to relieve the accumulation of swallowed liquid, in which all kinds of nails and broken glass float. The drawing is by Georges Hautot, who was precisely the person in charge of creating most of Bibendum’s illustrations for Michelin campaigns after the O’Galop period.

In the illustration on the right, two racing drivers driving their vehicle and portrayed as Bibendum approach the finishing post at the finish line, where a table awaits covered with champagne glasses to celebrate the victory. Of course, Michelin tires run over the obstacle.

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TIME TO COOL OFF.

In the above image, a cyclist is distracted from his riding while taking a drink from a small bottle, which has a high cost—as the wheel runs into an obstacle—ending in a fall with an accompanying swim. The gag shown in two vignettes is illustrated by O’Galop and, significantly, its title is the already well-known motto "Nunc est bibendum" [now is the time to drink] that was employed to accompany Michelin’s pneumatic mascot. The text "The famous scientist Teuffelberg feels the need to cool off a bit" seen at the bottom of the drawing, is probably an anti-German mockery, personified in a cyclist whose attire and name seem to betray his German origin.

77. “Nunc est ... bibendum.”

Humorous vignettes published in the illustrated supplement of Le Petit Marseillais, October 22, 1899. Illustrated by O’Galop.

78. Cover of the same magazine, also signed by O’Galop.
AN ANTI-GERMAN AIR.

In the above image, the satirical sequence presented by O’Galop begins with the sentence in its title: "Germany says that it is and wants to be above all others." And thus the protagonist is portrayed in this way by the illustrator: as if it were a primate—wearing the recognizable Prussian helmet and holding the German flag—perched on top of a tree. On the right, O’Galop responds to the August 1897 news published in the press, which stated that the border region of Alsace—at that time annexed to the neighboring country and object of historical and successive sovereign disputes between France and Germany—was banned territory for the broadcast of the French satirical magazine Le Rire. Appearing as though it were the notification of a soldier’s death, an officer breaks into a house to inform the afflicted widow and her son: "Le Rire? ... he has left us … hardly twenty-six years old …"


80. "Le Rire vient d’être interdit en Alsace (Les Journaux)" Illustration published in the satirical magazine Le Rire, August 14, 1897.
BLOOD STAINED OFFERINGS. On this page, the O’Galop’s composition shows an allegory of the numerous losses suffered by Germany and its allies in the war against the Triple Entente (France, England, Russia). In the foreground is a stout Germania—the German patriotic personification—who carries a large package overflowing with skulls of soldiers killed in combat. This is her contribution to the festivities of the Emperor’s anniversary celebration—January 27, 1915. Portrayed in front of her are Kaiser Wilhelm II, German Emperor and King of Prussia, François-Joseph I, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, and Mehmet V, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, whose reactions to the offering range from surprise to terror.

LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF. Michelin’s advertising campaigns for Australia and New Zealand were run by the English delegation in London, which supplied the colonies with the same graphic material as that used in the British press. Although some local adaptations were made, the style was very different from the one used by the company in France itself or in Italy. The advertisement shown here comprises part of the corporate mascot’s introductory launch and it explains the whole story around the origin of his Latin name.

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THE ENCOUNTER.

The illustrated monthly magazine of Michelin’s Italian agency in Milan also made its contribution to the policy of establishing the official corporate history in different media and publications.

At the end of 1921 they published a fiction article, in which Bibendum receives an old motorsport-loving friend and his son in his mansion. In the conversation several issues arise, including the one of his creation. On the left is the illustration that accompanied the article, where one can see O’Galop—in his checked suit and bow tie—showing a canvas with a sketch, which André Michelin—his back facing the reader—touches up with a pencil in hand. Where there was a mug of beer, André now draws a wide cup, and he is able to outline a contour of tires over the clothes worn by the supposed Gambrinus.

In this Manichean perspective, it seems that the function of the artist O’Galop is to act as a mere easel, holding the canvas while André defines Bibendum.

B3. Opening page of the article “Il natale di Bibendum” and interior illustration, both illustrated by Ramponi, and front cover signed by Nanni for the Bibendum magazine, November-December, 1921.
THE GLUTTON GARGANTUA.

The unbridled nature of Rabelais’s character and his dedication to the pleasures of the table, portrayed in the image on the right, made him a character of reference for illustrators such as Doré or Daumier. Daumier used Gargantua metaphorically, embodying him as King Louis-Philippe in a harsh criticism of the monarch’s tax collection and personal enrichment, whose self-allocated salary was around 18 million francs while a large part of the population lived in extreme poverty. In the composition below, the townspeople deposit their taxes into sacks of coins held by servants. Once completely filled, they load them ascending from the ground by a steep ramp that ends up in the mouth of the gigantic and idle Louis-Philippe.

84. Engraving by Gustave Doré showing the giant Gargantua in one of his banquets, made for an 1873 publication of François Rabelais’s works.

85. Engraving by Daumier published on December 1831.
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THE BIG BUDGET.

Daumier’s prints published in *Le Charivari* about current affairs appeared in different series between 1850 and 1875, generally discontinued by the censorship applied to the press. After a decade of sporadic appearances, the “Actualités” resumed in 1865, responding to the popular demand for information on the indebtedness of France and the expenses incurred by the numerous military campaigns carried out by Napoleon III and the subsequent arms race undertaken in the name of preserving peace.

On the left, in the picture entitled “Comme Sisyphe” [like Sisyphus], Daumier presents the state budget as a yoke for the economy and welfare of the French people. The illustration recreates the Greek myth of the King of Corinth and his condemnation to eternally push in Hell a heavy spherical boulder [in this case a sack of money allocated for the budget] towards the top of a hill. But before reaching the summit, the boulder rolls down to the beginning of the slope, and the process is repeated for eternity. In the above image, a character tries to place a corset and contain the bulging budgetary expenditure, embodied as an anthropomorphic being formed by a set of sacks.

86. “Difficile à faire paraître svelte.” Lithographic print number 81, published in *Le Charivari* on April 6, 1869.
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QUESTION OF BALANCE.
Two more examples of how the character Budget created by Daumier was employed, in this case referring to prints published in 1868. The figure represented the inflated budgets of major European powers facing their unstable relationships and geopolitical interests, a situation that would end two years later in the Franco Prussian War.
On the left, the character tries to maintain a precarious balance, while in the scene below the scale that aims to balance budgets and military expenses is clearly decompensated by the weight of bombs.

88. Doucement! Lithographic print number 81, published in Le Charivari on April 21, 1868.
89. Expérience d’Équilibre. Lithographic print number 34, published in Le Charivari on February 20, 1868.
DISENGAGED BUDGET. Three years before taking on the Michelin commission and creating Bibendum, Marius Rossillon “O’Galop” offered his own version on the subject of the budget. In a full-page illustration published on the back cover of the satirical weekly *Le Rire*, in June 1895—his first collaborations with the magazine date from that same year—he showed a humorous scene accompanied by the text: “Mr. Ribot, Mr. Ribot! ... Who put the budget in this sorry state? ... To be forced to use henchmen to keep the balance!” The central character, bearing a disheveled shirt front with the caption “Budget de 1896” is Alexandre Ribot (1842-1923), a French politician who held different ministerial positions in several successive governments of the III French Republic, between 1892 and 1917. Specifically, in January of 1895, he assumed the position as President of the Council and Portfolio of the Ministry of Economy. Before the end of the year, a financial scandal forced his resignation.

LADIES FIRST. It is possible that O’Galop was inspired to create his tire-man by the Dunlopettes, female mascots who were protagonists of limited appearances in Dunlop’s advertisements published in the French press during 1897, which did not have continuity. They were women dressed in suits that were shaped by stacks of tires having different diameters. The image on the left also depicts them with their corresponding valves portrayed as trimmings on a hat, a broach and a shoe ornament. The traditional signs of guilds hanging on the facade of workshops and shops often incorporated an identifying element and, on occasion, a character carrying the business’s products or having an anthropomorphic figure formed by the accumulation and sum of these items. The solution applied to Bibendum or to the Dunlopettes does not differ from the image shown above left, a lady announcing millinery in the French town of Lyon.

91. Reproduction of a street sign, originally made with oil on canvas, identifying headgear on Saxe Avenue in the city of Lyon, France. Excerpt from the book by Grand-Carteret published in 1902 and listed in the bibliography.


93-94. The Dunlopettes, in two different vignettes appearing in Dunlop tire advertisements in the cycling magazine *Le Vélo*, December 6 and November 28, 1897.
BROKEN ARROWS. Pierre Mercier, head of the company Larue & Cie, invented and patented the technology of their inner tubes in France in 1893 (patent number 233,351). The *pneumatique increuvable* Larue was presented in Paris at the 2nd Salon du Cycle held at the Palais de l’Industrie in October 1894. Larue & Cie started manufacturing their pneumatic covers and inner tubes at the company’s production facilities located in Montaiguet (Ailler). In 1896, patents and manufacturing secrets were acquired by the newly formed British company The Larue Air-Tight Inner Tube Ltd., which would then exclusively manufacture Larue inner tubes. To achieve this, land was purchased in Coventry where the production plant would be built. In addition to marketing the product on the British market, they would also do so on the Continent. Thus, Pierre Mercier was appointed Continental Manager and was in charge of European business transactions (France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Russia) operating from the offices of rue Lemercier 81 in Paris. However, the company early on ceased their operations due to accumulated debts, as explained by a resolution of their board of directors on August 24, 1898 (and reported in the news published in *The London Gazette* on September 2, 1898). The poster shown above was made for the French market between 1896 and 1898. The scene shows how two explorers ride bicycles while being pursued and assailed—without suffering punctures because Larue inner tubes encase and protect them—by Native American Indians. It is possible that these characters were also based on Dunlop mascots or perhaps directly on O’Galop’s Bibendum. There is also the probability that the reverse could have occurred, and that the two tire-man cyclists served as the reference for creating the Michelin mascot.

The Hartford Rubber Works, founded by John W. Gray and with its own factory since 1881, was one of the largest American companies in the rubber sector during the late nineteenth century. Initially it produced various articles derived from rubber, but in 1885 it was acquired by Albert Pope, the tycoon of the cycling industry. He guided its manufacturing of tires—first solid rubber and in 1891, Dunlop-patented pneumatics—for his entire production of bicycles. Later it would produce tires for carts and, in 1895, the first American pneumatic tires for automobiles. The company was eventually absorbed by the United States Rubber Company. The protagonist of the advertisement shown here insists on the quality of Hartford tires compared to other cheaper imitation brands: “any tire man knows that Hartfords are the standard and original make.”