



V A N W E Y E N B E R G H

What is a watermark ?

Watermarks are designs or patterns put into paper during its production, by making thinner or thicker the layer of pulp when it is still wet.

Paper watermarks can be seen holding the paper against the light or, in some cases, over a black surface. Usually, they show the manufacturer's name, and geometric designs, or images of animals, etc.

The object of watermarks in paper is, essentially, identifying the paper, as a signature of the manufacturer, or as a security measure to avoid forgery of important documents as bank notes, passports, entry tickets.

Today, good quality writing paper, as well as art drawing paper or paper for bibliophile publishing, usually carry an identifying watermark. Nevertheless, it is easier to find watermarks in old papers from envelopes, letters, books...

Indeed, watermarks are a good help in the study of old documents, as they can suggest their origin or date.

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