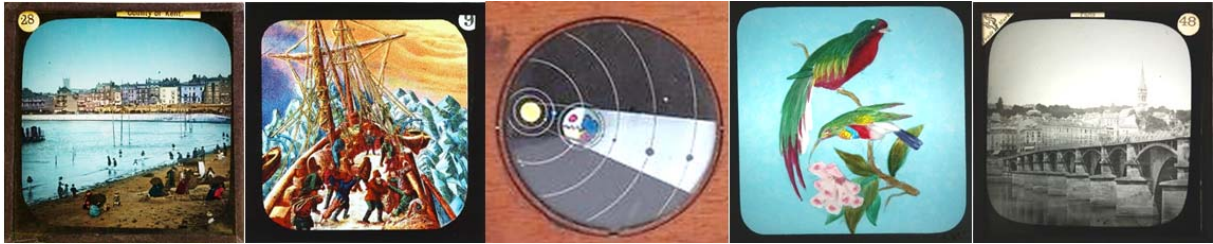


A Million Pictures



Magic Lantern Slide Heritage As Artefacts in the Common European History of Learning

Newsletter # 2 | Dec 2015

The first half year of *A Million Pictures* is over - we are looking forward to the two-and-a-half years to come! *A Million Pictures* officially started on 1 June 2015 and after some bureaucratic problems were solved, the project had its real kick-off during the first workshop held in Utrecht 3-5 September 2015. Since then we have taken a number of important steps:

- A working group on “best practices in digitization” has been set up, which has started to inventory existing digitization practices. The results of their work will feed into the guidelines that our project will make available to institutions wishing to digitize their collections of slides.

- A new working group “Scan_Cat” will be set up to work on the digitization of Magic Lantern Slides catalogues, which will be made available by the Digital Media History Library. This collection of catalogues will provide a precious tool for the identification and description of slides.

Also, there have been both scholarly and public events in which members of *A Million Pictures* have participated and on which you can read more in this newsletter.

As soon as news about our successful application began to spread, we received many mails from all over the world from people interested in our project.

As a result, we now have 22 associated partners and this newsletter goes out to 121 people. New subscribers are always welcome!

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From the Project Coordination

We are happy to announce that an initiative to digitize catalogues of lantern slide sellers, producers and retailers is underway. The Media History Digital Library (www.mediahistoryproject.org), a sub-collection of Internet Archive (www.archive.org) agreed to host digital copies of the catalogues. Catalogues are precious material for the identification of slides in commercial distribution. Until now, there is no central platform for storing this material. At the time that this newsletter is published, the details for the cooperation are being sorted out. Information on how to contribute a digital copy of the catalogue to this platform will follow in the next newsletter.

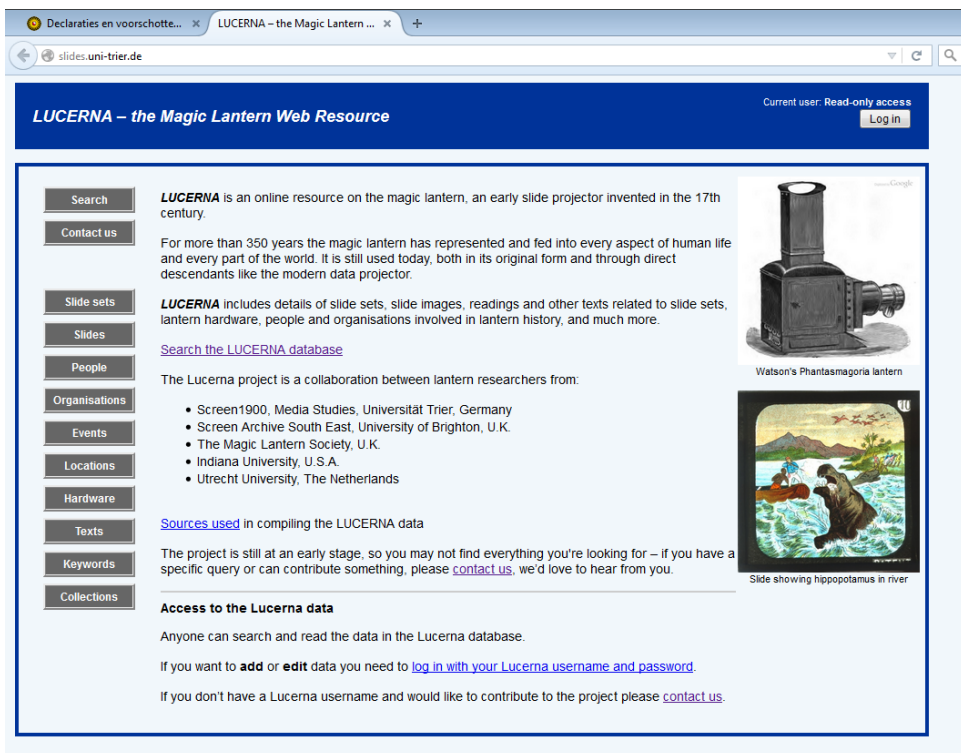
First tests in Lucerna with preparations for displaying data in languages other than English, and creating a standardized vocabulary in various languages look promising. We will write more about this in the next newsletter.

Due to dramatic cuts in the budget, the library of Birmingham is unable to collaborate in our project for the time being. We are glad to hear that Manchester Museum is now formally included as a new Associate Partner. Manchester Museum holds, among others, a very large collection of the Manchester Geographic Society. Chetham's Library in Manchester and the local museum of Ilfracombe will also collaborate with the Team in Exeter. Archival research in Manchester is likely to start at the beginning of 2016.

Lucerna hits the quarter million mark of slides!

More than a quarter million slides are known to Lucerna, the database that is at the core of *A Million Pictures*. Just at the end of November, the number of individually listed slides went over the 100,000 - more than 13,000 of them are illustrated by a digital image. *A Million Pictures* takes this mark as an occasion to look back on the development of this important webresource.

Altogether, almost 20 years of research and six years of development preceded the official launch of Lucerna, which took place at the symposium *Screen Culture and the Social Question: Poverty on Screen 1880-1914* in London in December 2011 and the Annual General Meeting of the Magic Lantern Society in January 2012.



Screenshot from the home page of Lucerna www.slides.uni-trier.de

The initiative for the Lucerna project came in 2005 from Ine van Dooren and Frank Gray (University of Brighton) and Ludwig Vogl-Bienek and Torsten Gärtner (Universität Trier) – both institutions are “Associated Partners” of *A Million Pictures*. In 2006, Ludwig Vogl-Bienek arranged a visiting scholarship for Mervyn Heard and Richard Crangle (both Magic Lantern Society) at Trier, in the course of which several thousand digitized lantern slides on social issues were

viewed and an outline database design relating slides to their historical context was developed.

The database was then created by Richard Crangle, incorporating some of his existing datasets on slide sets and 'lantern reading' texts, along with research data gathered at Trier on lantern lectures and other shows, mostly in Britain in the 1890s. Over the following years there have been regular meetings of the working group, supported by the Universities of Trier and Brighton.

With *A Million Pictures*, the database will be used on a greater scale. It proved not only to be a great tool for the documentation of slides for researchers but also for small and medium-sized museums. Our partners at Royal Albert Memorial Museum Exeter (UK), for example, use the “collection” option to document their lantern slides.

More detailed searches

The Lucerna database currently contains records for:

- **8,162** [slide sets](#) comprising over **226,200** slides...
- ... of which **100,438** individual [slides](#) have been listed – including **13,321** with images
- **4,311** [people](#) connected with the magic lantern
- **1,537** [organisations](#) (companies, institutions and other groups) connected with the magic lantern
- **6,217** lantern-related [events](#) (shows, exhibitions, historical events etc.)
- **7,723** [locations](#) (cities and towns, villages, individual addresses)
- **138** items of lantern [hardware](#) and other artefacts
- private and public [collections](#) of magic lantern material
- **9,789** [texts](#) connected with the magic lantern
- subject and other [keywords](#) to help with searching



Slide showing explosion at coal mine

Detail of a Screen shot from the Search page of Lucerna, 2 December 2015

If you like to learn more about cataloguing your collection in Lucerna, please contact Sarah Dellmann. All contributions are welcome!

We are curious to see how many slides will be listed at the end of the A Million Pictures project!

To keep track, check the numbers at the “Search” page of Lucerna at <http://slides.uni-trier.de/options.php>

From the Working Groups

New working group: Scan_Cats

After the news of a possible collaboration from researchers of A Million Pictures and the Media History Digital Library (www.mediahistoryproject.org), a working group is installed in order to organize the procedure of digitizing catalogs according to the standards of the MHDL. Details of this cooperation still need to be settled – as soon as the procedure is clear, we will circulate a “call for catalogues” to be digitized via an upcoming newsletter. The Scan_Cats working group consists of Manuele Carmona (ES) Richard Crangle (UK), Sarah Dellmann (NL), Ine van Doren (UK) Sabine Lenk (BE), Liliane Melgar (NL) and Ludiwg Vogl-Bienek (DE). People who are interested in joining that group should send an e-mail to Sarah Dellmann.

Best practices in digitization

The working group “best practices in digitization” is busy inventorying the various manners in which lantern slides were digitized to date. The results will be presented and discussed at the Second Workshop in Girona in April 2016.



Whether you celebrate Christmas or another festivity, we wish you tasty holidays and a good start into the new year!

Christmas Slide, taken from the December Issue 2015 of the digital newsletter of the Magic Lantern Society of the US and Canada.

Series: Favorite Slides

In every newsletter, members of the research team share their fascination with lantern slides by pointing to their favorite source. In this newsletter, the word is to Francisco Javier Frutos and Carmen López San Segundo.



“I discovered the World of the Magic Lantern in 1991 thought the images that the collector and film director Basilio Martín Patino and the Spanish Film Library preserved. Among all of the images, I have always had a special predilection for one slide from the Spanish Film Library, which represents a phantasmagorical scene. In my opinion, the richness and beauty of the scene invite us to investigate and understand the legacy of the magic lantern which connects with popular entertainment, scientific recreations and emerging mass media.”

Francisco Javier Frutos is professor at the University of Salamanca, Spain.

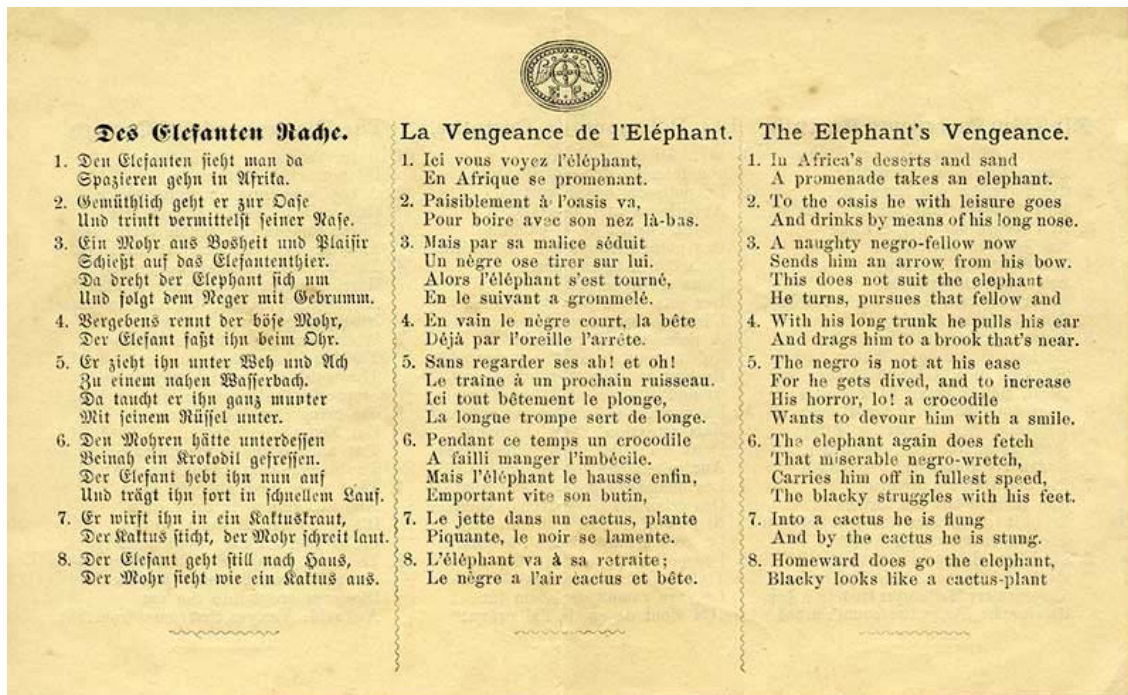
Series: Favorite Slides (continued)



THE ELEPHANT'S REVENGE. Circular slide made by Ernst Plank of Nuremberg, Germany, after a story by Wilhelm Busch. This slide features a complete set of images. Size: 21 cm circular with 4.5 cm images.

“One of the aspects that struck me when I was being introduced in the magic lantern world was the wide variety of magic lantern models and the wide diversity of magic lantern slides formats. For me, the slide set entitled *The Elephant's revenge* is a clear example of how some of the first slides were registered and could tell a written story. In this case, it would be interesting to highlight how that aesthetic package from the past is updated and re-used in the present so that we still can enjoy its wonderful charm today.”

Carmen López San Segundo is researcher at the University of Salamanca, Spain.



The slides are accompanied by a text. The text is translated into three languages: German, French and English. Note from the researcher: the text contains offensive language and its presentation here does not indicate any support for such ideas and statements. It is reproduced here as a historical document to show the aesthetics of slides and illustrate how image and text were combined.

Images taken from <http://www.magiclantern.org.uk/busch/round-slides/busch-elephantsrevenge-round.html>

Upcoming Activities

16-18 March 2016 - Strasbourg (FR)

International Seminar “Plaques photographiques, fabrication et diffusion du Savoir”

The department for art history at the University of Strasbourg, France, hosts the International Seminar “Plaques photographiques, fabrication et diffusion du Savoir”. Researchers as well as curators of museums and university collections will give presentations on various aspects on the role of lantern slides in the creation and dissemination of knowledge. The full program can be obtained from Denise Borlée and Hervé Doucet, department of art history at Université de Strasbourg.

3 April 2016, Utrecht (NL)

***A Million Pictures* at Culturele Zondag**

This edition of the Utrecht “Cultural Sundays” will be dedicated to Utrecht University’s anniversary. In close cooperation with the University Museum, the Research Team Utrecht will present slides that have been produced by professors in various disciplines. Check our website for more information!

14-16 April 2016, Girona (ES)

Workshop 2 “Defining guidelines for description and cataloguing – discussing first results”

The second workshop of our series. Guest speakers from various Spanish heritage institutions will share their expertise on digitizing and cataloguing with the research team. The Research team Girona and Salamanca are busy with the organization of the program – please contact Daniel Pitarch Fernandez for practical matters: daniel.pitarch [at] gmail.com

The next newsletter will be sent at the beginning of February 2015. All items should be sent **by 29 January 2016** to Sarah Dellmann (s.dellmann [a] uu.nl)

Related News

Francisco Javier Frutos and Carmen López San Segundo have published their article “**Media Archeology in Spain: The audiovisual projections with magic lantern (1692–1899)**” in the online journal *Media History*. Read the abstract and the article here:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13688804.2015.1102631>

The **Museum Hofwijck in Voorburg** (NL) has re-opened on 26 November 2015. The Museum is home to a permanent exhibition dedicated to the brothers Constantijn and Christiaan Huygens, the latter being credited with the invention of the magic lantern. See <http://www.hofwijck.nl/>.

The **Call for Papers for the XVII. UNIVERSEUM Network meeting** is open. UNIVERSEUM is concerned with academic heritage in its broadest sense, including university collections, museums, archives, libraries, botanical gardens, astronomical observatories, and university buildings of historical, artistic and scientific significance. The call for papers explicitly addresses lantern slides as a topic for presentations. The conference will be held at University of Amsterdam and Utrecht University, The Netherlands from 9-11 June 2016. For more information see www.universeum2016.nl/call-for-papers

We received the happy news that the project “**Heritage in the Limelight - The Magic Lantern in Australia and the World**”, submitted by Martyn Jolly from Australian National University in Canberra was elected for funding by the Australian Research Council. The three-year project will research the history of magic lantern performances in Australia and New Zealand based on slides held in public collections in those two countries. We congratulate the team and look forward to a close cooperation!

Report on Past Activities



Trick or treat: On the night of Halloween (30 October 2015), Richard Crangle presented at RAMM Exeter at “Museums at Night”, an event aimed at families with children. Scary night creatures suddenly appeared on screen!



On 27 October 2015, Richard Crangle presented *A Million Pictures* and the RAMM collection of slides at the museum’s lunch time lecture. The slide set on potato diseases was among the most popular items on show.

On 6 November 2015, Sabine Lenk and Frank Kessler presented a paper on the German firm of Ed. Liesegang and their offer of Magic Lantern Slides around 1900. This presentation was part of an international conference on image and sound collections in museums and archives at the beginning of



the 20th century. The brochure of the conference with abstracts of all the papers can be found at <http://www.unil.ch/getactu/wwwshc/1441025744923/> and then click on “Brochure du colloque”.

On 8 November 2015, Sabine Lenk and Sarah Dellmann gave an introduction to a lantern show by Elisabeth Waagmeester at the Dutch International Science Film Festival InScience, Nijmegen.



An expert meeting was held on 26-28 November 2015 at Trier University. Ludwig Vogl-Bienek and Martin Loiperdinger from the department of Media Studies invited experts to comment on the progress of the DFG financed research project project “The Fundamentals of Digitalisation of Works in the Historical Art of Projection”. Presentation of the Virtual Research Environment “Art of Projection” in its current state. The project is also based on the Lucerna



database and exports them into their specially designed Virtual Research Environment. First versions of digital tools on visualisation and image analysis and a directing tool – realised in cooperation with the Trier Center

Effect Slide, documenting all parts that belong to the object

for Digital Humanities were presented. Among the invited experts were also members of the *A Million Picture project*. We will stay in close contact for collaboration and use of the digital tools developed at Trier for outcomes of *A Million Pictures* projects.

See [http://kompetenzzentrum.uni-trier.de/en/projects/projects/media-historical-methodological-and-media-technological-principl/](http://kompetenzzentrum.uni-trier.de/en/projects/projects/media-historical-methodological-and-media-technological-princip/)

About & Editorial

This newsletter informs about the activities of the project *A Million Pictures: Magic Lantern Slide Heritage as Artefact in the Common European History of Learning*.

The magic lantern was the most important visual entertainment and means of instruction across nineteenth-century Europe. However, despite its pervasiveness across multiple scientific, educational and popular contexts, magic lantern slides remain under-researched. Although many libraries and museums across Europe hold tens of thousands of lantern slides in their collections, a lack of standards for documentation and preservation limits the impact of existing initiatives, hinders the recognition of the object's heritage value and potential exploitation. *A Million Pictures* addresses the sustainable preservation of this massive, untapped heritage resource.

A Million Pictures is a collaborative research project between researchers from Utrecht University (NL), University of Exeter (UK), University of Antwerp (BE), University of Girona (ES), University of Salamanca (ES) as well as twenty-two Associated Partners.

A Million Pictures runs from June 2015 until May 2018.

More information about past and present activities are available on our project website: www.uu.nl/a-million-pictures



A Million Pictures: Magic Lantern Slide Heritage as Artefacts in the Common European History of Learning is a Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage – Heritage Plus project which is funded by NWO, Belspo, AHRC and MINECO and Co-Funded by the European Commission.



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This newsletter is edited by Sarah Dellmann, additional contributions are written by Frank Kessler, Francisco Javier Frutos and Carmen López San Segundo.