

## EuroMagic

A Million Pictures:  
Magic Lantern Slide  
Heritage as Artefacts  
in the Common  
European History of  
Learning



### Project Summary

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. This project addresses the sustainable preservation of this massive, untapped heritage resource and will provide guidelines for the (digital) documentation of lantern slides.

EUROMAGIC promotes sustainable use and management of lantern slides by:

- Creating Knowledge about lantern slides through researching the contexts in which they were used.
- Exploring the needs of stakeholders for access and re-use.
- Providing innovative examples for creative re-use.
- Examining ways for people to enhance their knowledge about lantern slides and so connect to their shared European history of learning.
- Develop and implement standard working procedures on a European level for documentation, preservation and digitization.

This projects caters to the SRA themes "Creating Knowledge" and "Connecting people with heritage."

The interdisciplinary, transnational research team will therefore generate and disseminate knowledge concerning lantern slides as a pan-European aspect of cultural heritage. Across four case studies, the project investigates the use of lantern slides in disseminating knowledge about European countries; in the practices of learned societies and educational institutions; in popular venues (theatres, opera houses, museums and observatories); and will also investigate methods for classifying the repertoire of these shows.

### Application and impact

Lantern slide collections spread across Europe represent a massive but largely inaccessible resource of tangible heritage artefacts, whose historical significance and heritage value is now only beginning to be discovered. Stored in museums, libraries, public and private archives, the bulk of this material is unknown to the public, and on many occasions it is inaccessible even to researchers. EUROMAGIC proposes to deliver research-based knowledge and expertise directly to a selection of these heritage stakeholders, enabling them to better understand these resources and to make best use of them on behalf of their users. It will do so by investigating both the tangible nature of these collections and intangible aspects of lantern slide heritage, such as the original contexts of manufacture and exhibition, and by generating digital artefacts in order to improve access and to generate innovative examples of re-use. It is therefore directly relevant to the Call for Proposals.

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Lanterns slide of a series of Mesopotamia (nowadays Iraq) taken by local Exeter photographer A.O. Rowden who was stationed there in the army in 1919.

The Project will immediately narrow the gap between cultural heritage research currently being conducted concerning magic lantern materials and practices for the assessment, management, and protection of these remarkable artefacts across the European heritage sector. In the case of project APs, it will achieve this by intervening directly in their engagement with these materials, providing high quality digitized copies of samples of these slides alongside relevant metadata, and developing re-use projects intended to engage directly with their users. In relation to other heritage stakeholders not directly involved in the Project, these activities are designed to demonstrate the potential heritage value of all lantern slide collections which, we contend, have the potential to connect national and regional mu-

seums, libraries, and archives to new and international audiences. Moreover, in developing a European standard for description and cataloguing of lantern slide artefacts, the Project will develop a template for collection management that will be widely applicable to other collections and will serve as a foundation for future projects within them.

The project caters especially to the SRA-themes "Connecting people with heritage" and "Creating Knowledge". The interdisciplinary, transnational research team will create knowledge about the relevance of lantern slides as tangible European heritage. They will disseminate this to multiple stakeholders by means of the methods outlined above, creating both online and event-based uses for lantern slide materials.

## Coordinator

Utrecht University, (NETHERLANDS).

## Participants

- University of Exeter (UK).
- University of Antwerp (BELGIUM).
- Universitat de Girona (SPAIN).
- University of Salamanca (SPAIN).

## Dates

01/06/2015 - 31/05/2018

## Budget

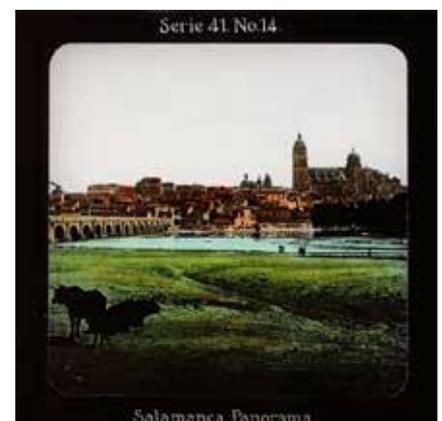
Total project funding: € 609,540,20  
Funding awarded: € 249,911,20

## Subject area(s)

Magic lantern, digital humanities, history of media, history of science, European visual culture

## Project website

<http://a-million-pictures.wp.hum.uu.nl/>



xSlide from the mass-produced lecture set *Das sonnige Spanien* ("Sunny Spain").