

Francisco Javier Frutos Esteban. 2010. *Los Ecos de una Lámpara Maravillosa* (*The Echoes of a Marvelous Lamp*). Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain. 236 pages, illustrated, with multi-media DVD. ISBN 978-84-7800-163-7. € 30.00 (hardcover).

This book by a Professor at the University of Salamanca in Spain is a major new contribution to magic lantern scholarship. Based on the author's Ph.D. dissertation, it gives a comprehensive history of the magic lantern from the 17th century through the end of the 19th century. Although aimed at Spanish readers, the book does not limit its coverage to the magic lantern in Spain, but instead gives a broader perspective on the magic lantern as a cultural phenomenon, especially in Europe. The author attempts to place the magic lantern in the context of visual media in general and not just as a precursor to the cinema.

The book is divided into four chapters. The first, by far the longest at 80 pages, provides a historical narrative of the development of the magic lantern from the early days of itinerant Savoyards to the Phantasmagoria and the evolution of the magic lantern in the 19th century. Whenever possible, the author brings in references to magic lantern and phantasmagoria shows in Spain, using references in contemporary

newspapers, broadsides, and other documents. Limiting the book to the magic lantern in Spain would have made for a relatively slim volume, so developments in other European countries are discussed in some detail as well. Many of the graphic images, for example, are French. The discussion of the 19th century magic lantern slide industry refers mostly to British companies and relies heavily on the research published by the Magic Lantern Society in Britain. The author not only cites all of the books published by that society, but many articles from their journal as well. This represents one of the most detailed uses of work by magic lantern scholars in any book published to date. Developments in the United States are not covered in detail, and unfortunately, no reference is made to the Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada or our society's journal. The author seems to have visited the collections and archives of every major institution in Europe with significant magic lantern material, and he also consulted a number of private collectors in Europe and Great Britain. Again, he is less familiar with collections in the United States.

An important feature of the book is a rich assortment of illustrations, many reproduced in color. Some of these will be familiar to most serious magic lantern scholars and collectors, but others are new or infrequently published, and some have been published before as halftones, but not in color. The color illustrations are grouped together in several sections of plates, which makes it a bit difficult to relate the illustrations directly to the text, but there is much to look at and enjoy. Some of the most spectacular illustrations depict very early strip slides or phantasmagoria slides from private collections or from institutions such as the Museu del Cinema in Girona, the Museo del Precinema in Italy, and the Filmoteca Española. The color reproduction and clarity of the images are excellent throughout the book.

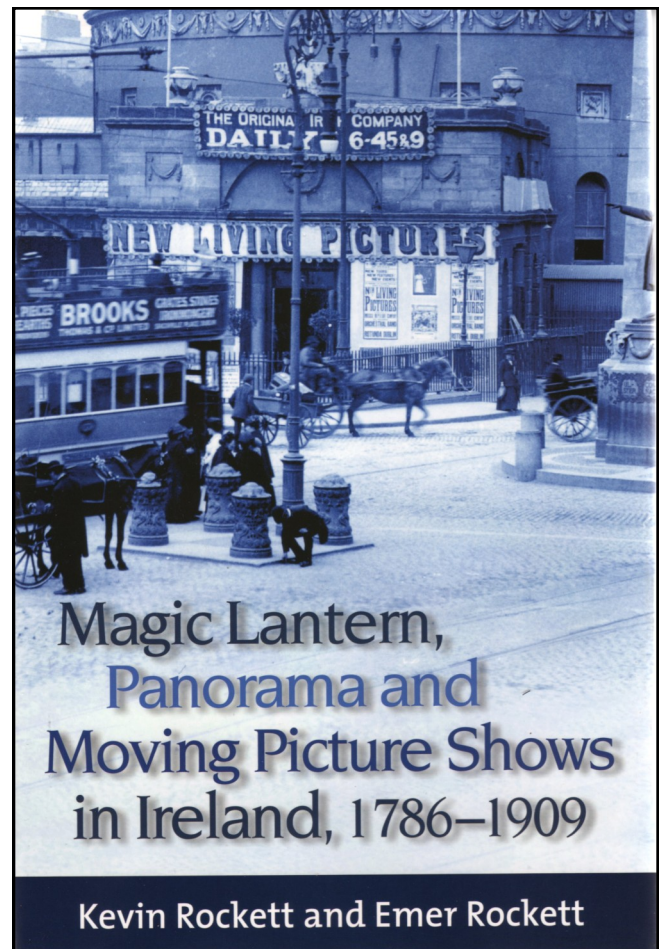
The second chapter of the book places the magic lantern in the context of other optical devices and attractions, with discussions of the camera obscura, panoramas, dioramas, peepshows, and stereoscopes. As in the first chapter, references to these types of visual media in Spain are given whenever possible, but the coverage encompasses much of Europe as well. Chapter 3 reveals the origins of the book as a Ph.D. dissertation and will be useful mainly as a guide to future scholars. It discusses cultural heritage as related to the magic lantern, especially in Spain, and provides a guide to collections in institutions and some of the larger ones in private hands. Some of the discussion of the importance of protecting cultural heritage becomes a bit academic and will be of less interest to general readers. Chapter 4 was previously published as a separate article and deals with the magic lantern as an object of scholarly research. The author provides a history of magic lantern scholarship and changing approaches to the study of magic lanterns, moving them from pre-cinema artifacts to important cultural objects in their own right. The history and publications of the Magic Lantern Society in Britain are described as well.

Even you cannot read Spanish, there is a reason to add this book to your collection—tucked in the back of the book is a spectacular multi-media DVD in both Spanish and English that provides a comprehensive history of the magic lantern and related visual media, with more than 1000 images. This can be played on either PC or MAC computers. Many of the images are in the book, but others are not. Many are interactive—dissolving views that change from summer to winter scenes, all manner of animated motion slides, sets of story slides that become self-contained slide shows, etc. Some parts of the DVD include musical selections, such as music of the glass harmonica for the section on the phantasmagoria. One feature of the DVD is the ability to access additional information on a topic, in Spanish only; clicking on the button brings you to an electronic version of the book itself on the pages containing related material. I spent about two hours just browsing through the wonderful material on the DVD.

A couple of features of the book reduce its usefulness as a reference. Strangely for such a scholarly book, there is no index. Also, there are two sets of references, one headed “References” and the other “Bibliography,” but it is hard to discern the criteria used to place references in the two lists. The book seems to be frustratingly difficult to obtain. I first tried to order it from the publisher, but there seemed to be no mechanism for paying for it on their webpage (<http://www.eusal.es/978-84-7800-163-7>). I then tried two different book dealers listed through the Spanish version of Amazon, both of which declined to take orders originating in the United States, despite listing shipping charges to this country. This probably has something to do with their not accepting American credit cards. Eventually the author was kind enough to send me a review copy. If you can purchase a copy of the book, even if you cannot easily read the Spanish text, it will make a wonderful addition to your magic lantern library.—**The Editor.**

Kevin Rockett and Emer Rockett. 2011. *Magic Lantern, Panorama and Moving Picture Shows in Ireland, 1786-1909*. Four Courts Press, Dublin, Ireland and Portland, Oregon. 433 pages, illustrated. ISBN 978-1-84682-315-2. \$65.00 (hardcover) (about \$50.00 on Amazon).

A study of magic lantern shows, panoramas, and movies in Ireland may seem like a fairly narrow topic, given the relatively small size of the country, but in fact, this is a superb book that makes a major scholarly contribution to magic lantern history. The authors are a husband and wife team who previously have written extensively on Irish film history. A companion to this volume, which I have not read, takes the story up to the 21st century: *Film Exhibition and Distribution in Ireland, 1909-2010*. The current volume is incredibly well documented—fully a quarter of the book is



devoted to notes and references. The notes go way beyond just citing sources to provide interesting digressions on all sorts of topics that did not fit conveniently into the text. For example, there is note that goes on for two pages of small type on the exhibition of Irish giants at street fairs and other venues. All of this extra material may not be to every reader’s taste, but personally I love digging into the minute details of historical subjects. There is a detailed and accurate index that makes finding topics very easy. The book as a whole provides a very readable narrative history of visual entertainment in Ireland from the 18th to the 20th century. The book is refreshingly free of academic jargon and should be accessible to any reader interested in these subjects. In terms of narrative style and level of documentation, the book compares favorably with Richard Altick’s classic work, *The Shows of London* (Harvard University Press, 1978). So much of the action takes place in Dublin, which was one of the largest cities in the British Empire in the 19th century, that it almost could have been called *The Shows of Dublin*.

The first chapter of the book, about 68 pages, covers the history of the magic lantern in Ireland, from the first published illustration of a magic lantern in an English language