

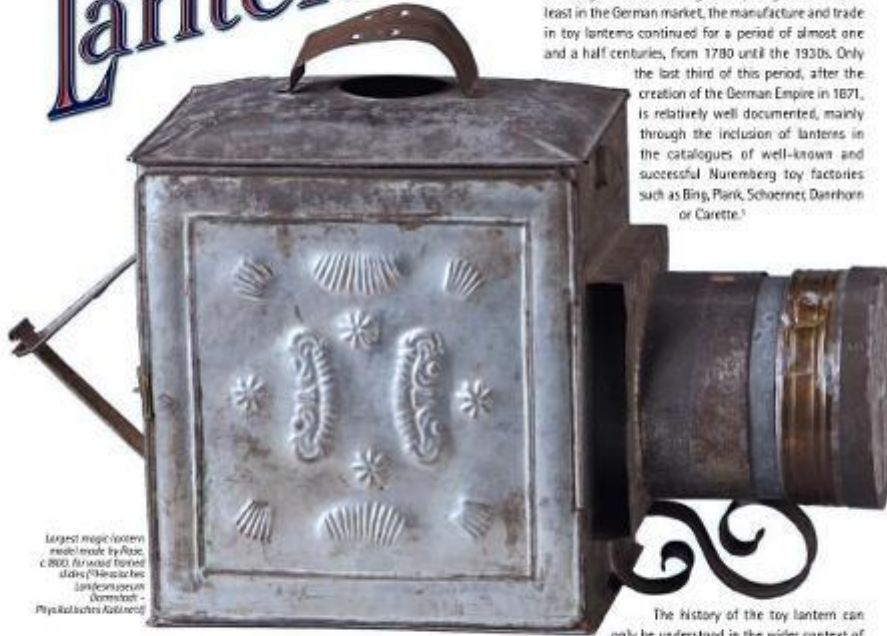
The Magic Lantern

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MODERN TOY INDUSTRY IN GERMANY: PETER FRIEDRICH CATEL AND THE FIRST TOY LANTERNS

Bernd Scholtze

INTRODUCTION

The important supporting role played by the toy lantern has been overlooked in most accounts of the history of the magic lantern. It is generally forgotten that, at least in the German market, the manufacture and trade in toy lanterns continued for a period of almost one and a half centuries, from 1780 until the 1930s. Only the last third of this period, after the creation of the German Empire in 1871, is relatively well documented, mainly through the inclusion of lanterns in the catalogues of well-known and successful Nuremberg toy factories such as Bing, Plenk, Schoenert, Darrhorn or Carotte.¹



Largest magic lantern made in 1800 for wood turned table (Historisches Lindenmuseum, Darmstadt - Physikalisches Kabinett)

The history of the toy lantern can only be understood in the wider context of

a market for 'philosophical' toys that was developed at the end of the eighteenth century. What, then, were philosophical toys? These were small-scale replicas of devices used in scientific and educational contexts: simplified working models, usually made by traditional instrument makers. For the toys, expensive metals or precious woods were replaced by cheaper materials such as softwoods or cardboard. Their production in anonymous Nuremberg workshops also helped to keep their prices low.

In the mid-eighteenth century travelling showmen with scientific experiments, in particular demonstrations of electricity and magnetism, created a widespread interest in and openness to natural science amongst urban populations.² Besides

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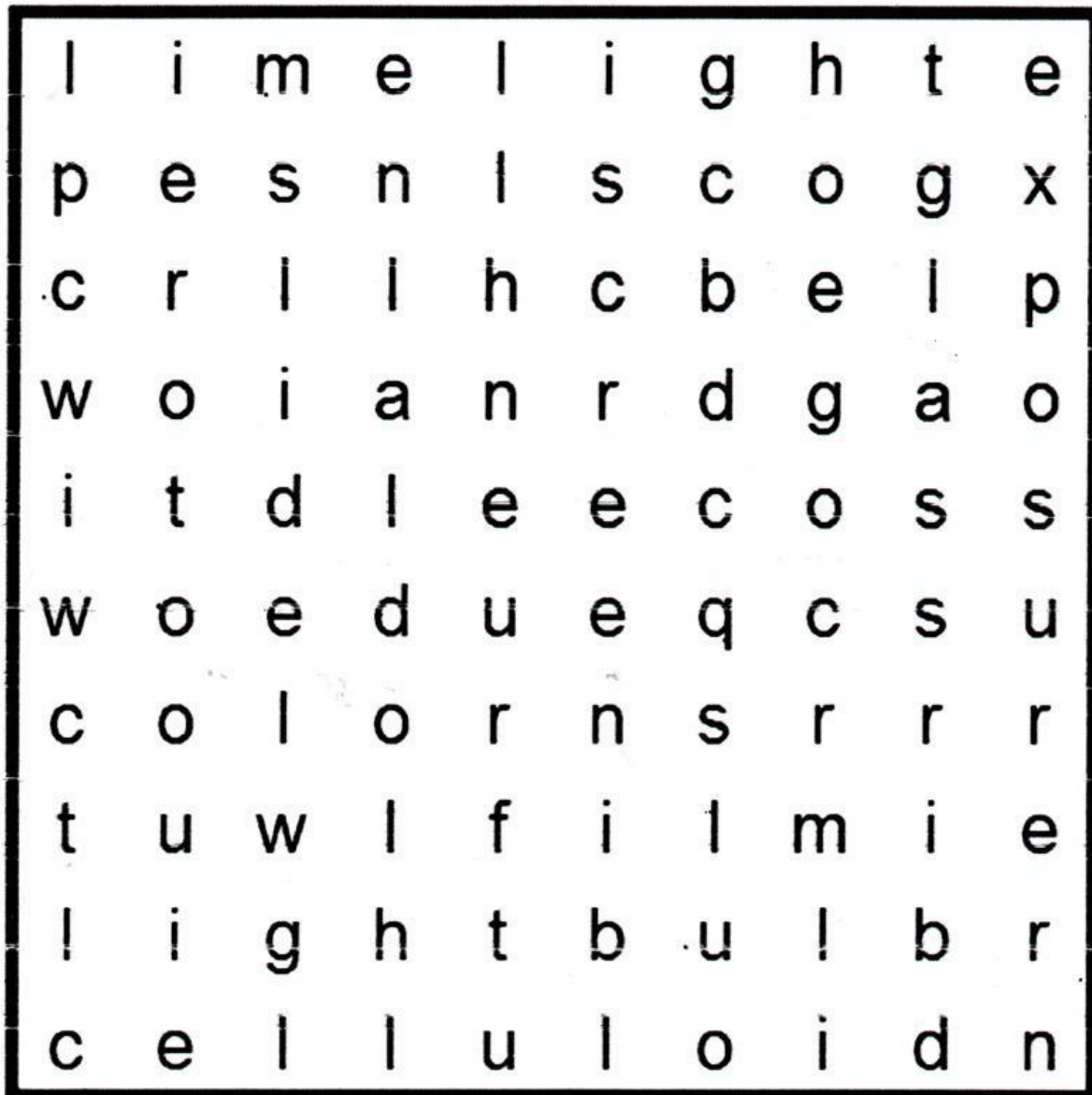
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NOTES

1. Hauke Lange-Fuchs: 'Nuremberg Magic lantern production' In: The New Magic lantern Journal, vol. 8, no. 3, December 1998
2. See Oliver Hochadel: Öffentliche Wissenschaft: Vortragskultur in der deutschen Aufklärung, Göttingen 2003

THE MAGIC LANTERN



Word List

Can you find these words?

CELLULOID

EXPOSURE

LIGHT

LIMELIGHT

GLASS

BULB

SLIDE