



'The Head of Titus' [?] – six images from a broken slide, probably made for the Hughes Celeroscope (Lester Smith Collection)

THE MAGIC LANTERN DANCER

The Choreutoscope and its Place in the History of the Moving Image

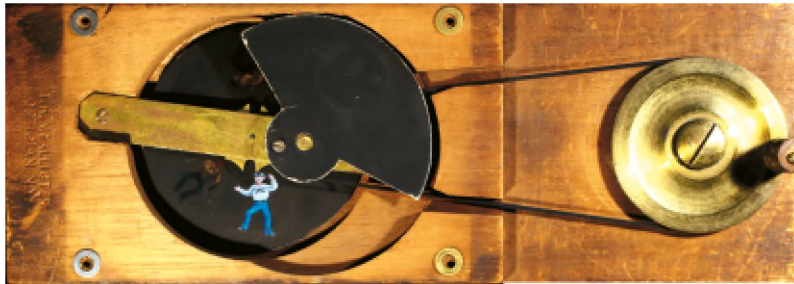
Jeremy Brooker, Richard Crangle and Martin Gilbert (eds)

The Magic Lantern Society, London, 2023

ISBN 978-0-9929628-1-4, £25 (£20 for MLS members) plus shipping

148 pages, 160 illustrations, paperback, 24 x 22cm

The Magic Lantern Society's new book about the choreutoscope has now been published and is available to members at a discount price via the website (www.magiclantern.org.uk/sales). The choreutoscope (the name is based on ancient



The Briggs rotary choreutoscope with cover plate removed to show the mechanism (Martin Gilbert Collection)



'Dancing skeleton' from the Briggs rotary choreutoscope (Martin Gilbert Collection)



Greek, meaning 'dancer viewer') was a complex mechanical device used in magic lanterns to change quickly between images, giving a projected illusion of basic movement and often used to portray dancing characters or skeletons. Devised in Britain in the late 1860s, it was used in several different forms throughout Europe and the United States for the rest of the 19th century.

Part 1 of the book gives a detailed account of the choreutoscope's history and development, including its true inventor, its uses in institutions like the Royal Polytechnic, the different variants of its design and its relationships to the origins of cinematography. Part 2 provides a richly illustrated survey of surviving choreutoscope mechanisms and slides now in the collections of MLS members and major international institutions. With over 160 illustrations and drawing on the latest research findings, this is the first book to reveal the true story of this ingenious device and its place in the history of visual culture.



'Clown dancing' a typical choreutoscope image sequence as used with the Beale/Baker linear choreutoscope (Cinémathèque française)

Some comments from early readers:

"A masterpiece of wide and deep research and presentation [...] probably the best ever account of a 'pre-cinema' changing screen image device, and adds hugely to our knowledge." – Stephen Herbert

"Beautifully written, researched, and laid out. Very clear, very informative. [...] A genuine contribution to the literature of the lantern [...] a really wonderful book." – Deac Rossell

"Excellent work and a very well edited book! I am sure it will be very useful to us and to all interested researchers. Congratulations for your excellent research work." – Jordi Pons, Museu del Cinema

"The book looks spectacular, with wonderful images and excellent commentary. I always enjoy the including of contemporaneous print material (posters, photographs, and text items)." – David Craig

"I had no idea that such slides existed and I suspect very rare." – Humphrey Hamlin

"The book [...] looks terrific both in terms of historical information and images." – Dick Moore

THE MAGIC LANTERN is edited, designed and produced by Mary Ann Auckland and Gwen Sebus, assisted by Richard Crangle and George Auckland.

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Printed by Stormpress, Exeter – www.stormpress.co.uk

Published by:

The Magic Lantern Society
17 Dean Street
Exeter EX2 4HH, UK

www.magiclantern.org.uk

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ISSN 2057-3723

