

JACQUES CALLOT AND THE PHANTASMAGORIA

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1. The Temptation of St Anthony by Jacques Callot

beings can be seen trying to seduce and tempt Saint Anthony the Abbot. There is also a great winged demon, evoking the image of an immense dragon, that presides over this engraving.

It is interesting to see how art, beliefs and scientific discoveries (like the magic lantern) come together. Artists and artisans who painted slides for phantasmagoria were inspired in many cases by the images that already existed in engravings and books at that time, such as Jacques Callot's *Temptation*.

The Cinema Museum in Girona counts a set of phantasmagoria slides among its collection. The painter was inspired by Callot's engraving when painting the head of the



2. An example of the engraving detail with the phantasmagoria slide conserved in the Cinema Museum in Girona (slide image courtesy of Girona Cinema Museum)



3. A further example of the engraving detail with the phantasmagoria slide (slide image courtesy of Girona Cinema Museum)

Where did the artists find the inspiration to draw slides for phantasmagoria shows? Many of them found it in the engravings of that time.

Jacques Callot (1592–1635) was a baroque draughtsman and engraver from the Duchy of Lorraine, an independent region at that time but eventually annexed to France. He was born and died in Nancy. Jacques Callot is an important figure in the history of engraving. In his engravings and drawings he represented soldiers, jugglers, musicians, gypsies, beggars, the daily life of the court, and religious and military scenes with landscapes in the background.

Some years ago, during a short stay in Luxembourg, I came across *The Temptation of St Anthony* by Jacques Callot (Fig.1) in an antique shop – a wonderful engraving in which I recognised some characters and others seemed familiar to me too. This engraving by Callot is one of the most outstanding prints by this artist and was made shortly before his death in March 1635. In this work countless demons and devilish

great demon that presides over the engraving (Fig.2) as well as other demons in the engraving (Fig.3). These were the source of inspiration for the painter of the Museum's slides, but it is far from the only example – in general, the engraving of Callot inspired the phantasmagoria slide painters of that time. Further examples are preserved in the Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris. Moreover, the Richard Balzer Collection includes a phantasmagoria slide with some characters also taken from Callot's engraving. It is fantastic to discover these coincidences in time and to trace where inspiration comes from.