The NEW
MAGIC
LANTERN
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Fig. 1


Fig. 2[1]


Fig. 3


Fig. 4[2]

GERMAN TOY MAGIC LANTERNS

CERAMIC MAGIC LANTERNS – Part 2

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In Part 1 I introduced the variants of the square ceramic lanterns. In Part 2, I will cover the other models of ceramic lanterns.

THE ROUND MODEL

I KNOW OF FIVE EXAMPLES of this model (Figs 1–4 and the one in Hrabalek Nr. 91). All these lanterns are the same size and have a guide frame for slides of 40mm. The metal parts of the known lanterns are executed in three different variants. **Variant 1** has a base and a chimney that are executed in Russian iron and additional brass parts (Fig. 2). The burner and the chimney of **Variant 2** are of red lacquered white metal with ornamental gold-coloured lines (Figs 1 and 3). **Variant 3** (Fig. 4) has a black lacquered burner and chimney with additional brass parts (like variant 1) and is different from the other two variants in regard to the design of the top ornament on the lens standard (Figs 5 and 6).


Fig. 5


Fig. 6

The known lanterns have a total height of 30.5cm and the wooden base measures c.10.5 x 18.7cm. The ceramic body is 9.5cm high and has a diameter of 10cm. An article in the American periodical *Playthings* from March 1904 shows also pictures of two different round models (Figs 7 and 8).[3]

Both lanterns are similar to the lantern in Figs 4 and 6 regarding the ornament on top of the lens standard. One picture shows a variant with lacquered metal parts. The ornamental gold (?) coloured lines on the base and chimney are clearly visible. The picture of the variant with the presentation box is remarkable in more than one way. First of all there are round slides with the lantern. The examples we already know have no facilities for using round lantern slides. It seems that a slide

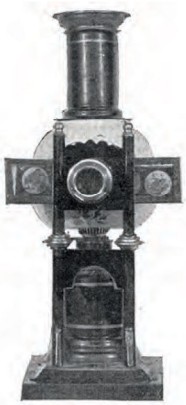
Fig. 7

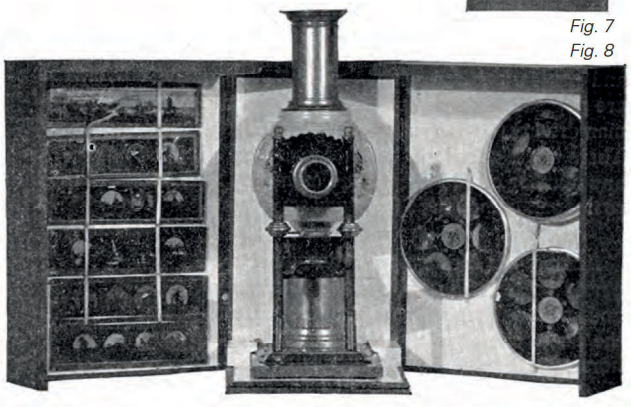
Fig. 8

holder was mounted between the posts below the arc of the lens standard for round slides. The top ornament of the lens standard is similar to that of variant 3 but it seems to be wider and there are more small arc-shaped ornaments than the five on the known example of variant 3. The burner and chimney seem to be entirely in brass sheet instead of Russian or lacquered metal parts. Obviously there were more variants of the round model as already known. The one in the ad is probably the top-model.

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

THE CERAMIC ORNAMENTS

All ceramic bodies are decorated with floral ornaments and there are three different ornaments known (Figs 9–11). Unfortunately the ornaments on the lanterns in Figs 7 and 8 are not visible.

Three of the five examples show cornflowers and spikes (as the lantern in Hrabalek Nr. 91). The process used for executing this design is different from that used on the other ceramic balls, with the decal printed only in outline and the colours added by hand before the final firing. When I examined the ceramic decorations of the square and the round models I recognised that one of the floral ornaments (pansies) is executed with the identical decal on both models (Figs 12 and 13). This proves that the ceramic parts for the round and the square ceramic magic lanterns were manufactured by the same ceramic firm.

Fig. 12

Fig. 13

Fig. 14

When I looked underneath the wooden base of the lantern I found a surprising and puzzling piece of information: a handwritten notice in pencil, in German:

„Porzellan Kugel
für Laternen
I II III
768 354 173"[4] (Fig. 14).

My suggestion is that it was written by a workman of the German firm where the lanterns were manufactured. Apparently someone has counted the ceramic balls. Obviously the writer has miscounted the balls and has overwritten at least two numbers. What do the Roman numerals mean? Do they mean three different variants of the round lantern or three different ceramic designs? The total of the Arabic numbers is 1295. Does this relate to the number of lanterns that were produced until the notice was written? Or is it only a check of the number of ceramic balls in stock? Does anybody have other ideas?

As Ernst Hrabalek said, the round model is rare because it is breakable. At every lantern show the ceramic body had to be removed from the burner twice (when the light was lit and when it was put out). A metal ring is cemented to the underside of the ceramic body to fix it on the burner. The ring could become loose after the lantern had been used several times, increasing the risk

Fig. 15

Fig. 16

of the ceramic body falling and breaking (Figs 15 and 16). In addition, when we take into account the hundred or more years some ceramic bodies have survived, it is likely that many more round ceramic magic lanterns were destroyed.

THE ORIGINAL PRICES

I found the following ads in American newspapers for the round model:

Newspaper	Date	Shop	regular price in $	selling price in $	remarks
The Washington Times	07.12.1904	S.Kann Sons & Co.	x	.98	red variant ?
The Washington Times	07.12.1904	S.Kann Sons & Co.	x	1.49	Russian iron ?
The Evening World (N.Y.)	09.12.1904	The 14th Street Store	1.14	1.00	Russian iron ?
The Philadelphia Inquirer	15.12.1904	Snellenburgs	1.75	1.25	red variant

I expected a much higher original selling price. Therefore I wasn't expecting the handwritten price of 85c on the wooden base of one of the existing lanterns (Fig. 17) to be the original price, but obviously it was.

Fig. 17

TRADE MARK AND PATENT

A look under the wooden base of a lantern revealed also a stamp in red ink with the following wording: 'D.R.G.M. No. 1921?? Patents U.S.A.' (Fig. 18).

Fig. 18

As one can see, the fourth number in the row (the assumed '1') is difficult to read. The same stamp is under the wooden base of two other lanterns but both stamps are less clear than the one in fig. 18. Even if the numbers of the D.R.G.M. are not completely visible, I assume that the round ceramic magic lantern was protected in Germany for the firm of David Benda by the same D.R.G.M. as the square model. According to the above-mentioned rubber stamp, the round lantern was equally patented

in the USA. It was a little bit tricky but at last I found patent no. 736,092 (in 'Google patents' search for 'hamburger 736092'). To my surprise this patent protects a tubular and not a round ceramic magic lantern (Fig. 19).

Fig. 19

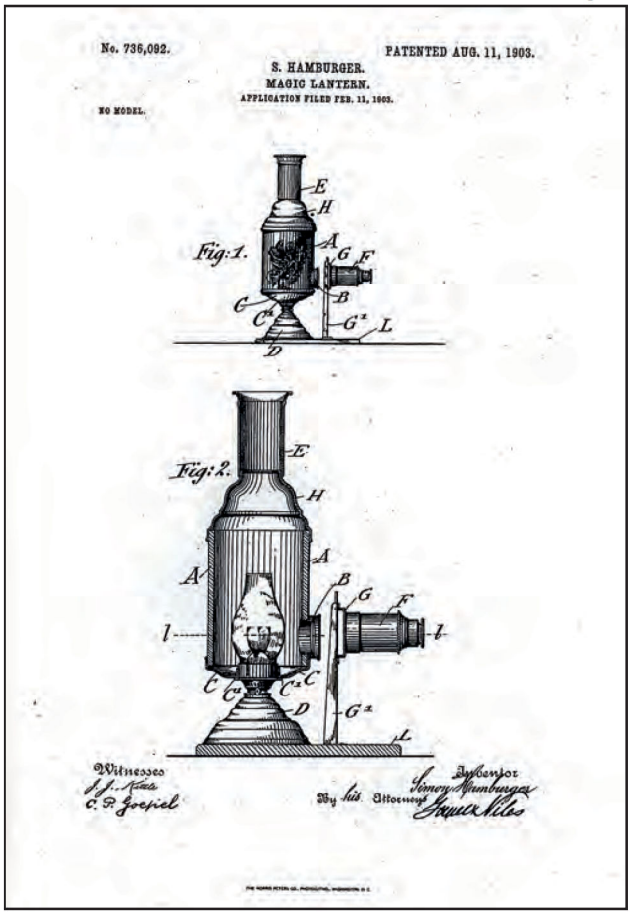
No. 736,092. PATENTED AUG. 11, 1903.
S. HAMBURGER.
MAGIC LANTERN.
APPLICATION FILED FEB. 11, 1903.
NO MODEL.
Fig. 1.
Fig. 2.
Witnesses
Inventor
By his Attorneys

Fig. 20

I had never heard of a tubular ceramic magic lantern before. Because the description in the patent and the known round model are different only in the word 'tubular' and the shape of the ceramic body in the patent drawings, I came to the conclusion that the round model was probably made instead of the tubular model for unknown reasons. Then a little miracle happened. During my research for this article I was lucky to discover a tubular model.[5]

THE TUBULAR MODEL

This model (Fig. 20) shows nearly all details of the patent no.736.092. It is not clear if the cast ornament, the brass metal foot and the chimney are original. The lantern has a total height of 31cm and the wooden base measures 9.5 x 16cm. The ceramic body is 9.5cm high and has a diameter of 7.5cm. The lantern has no manufacturer's marks.

TRADE MARK AND PATENT

There is no stamp underneath the wooden base as on some of the round models. Because there is only one example to examine this is of course not representative.

Like the US-patent for the square model the application for the tubular ceramic lantern was filed 11 February 1903 and PATENTED 11 August 1903. It is also registered to Simon Hamburger.

THE CERAMIC ORNAMENTS

The decoration is manufactured using the same process as that used for the panels of the square model and the body of the round model, a transfer print under glaze. When I compared the ornaments of the tubular lantern with the ornaments on other ceramic lanterns I discovered that one decorative element is exactly the same (Figs 21 and 22).

Fig. 21

Fig. 22

This proves that the ceramic tube was made in the same factory as the tiles for the square model. It is likely that tubular ceramic magic lanterns were made as well, with other decorations we know from the square or round ceramic lanterns.

The reason for the unsurprising high loss of tubular ceramic lanterns – I have found only one example – was probably the same as that mentioned above for the round model.

WHO MADE THE CERAMIC TOY MAGIC LANTERNS?

As said in the introduction, the square model is usually attributed to Johann Falk and the round model to Max Dannhorn. I have found no evidence for this assumption. One way of identifying the manufacturer of the ceramic lanterns would be to take a comparative look at well-known toy magic lanterns which use similar parts, but I found no such lanterns to prove anything helpful.

The established facts that we have are D.R.G.M. for the firm David Benda, Fürth, and the US-patents for Simon Hamburger. D.R.G.M. includes all the square models and quite certainly the round lantern. The US-patents include variants 1 and 3 of the square model, the tubular model and probably the round model. The ceramic parts of different ceramic magic lantern models show identical floral decals. This proves that the ceramic parts of all ceramic lantern models are produced by the same ceramic manufacturer. It is likely that the firms David Benda and Hamburger & Co. had a business partnership relating to ceramic magic lanterns. As we know from the *Playthings* article from March 1903 (see Part 1 of my article), the ceramic lanterns were made by one maker and, further, that this maker was not Hamburger & Co.

Due to the fact that the ceramic lanterns were protected by the D.R.G.M. for the firm David Benda, in my opinion the firm David Benda should be considered the maker of the ceramic lanterns.

How the production of ceramic lanterns was organised remains (still) unknown. There are various possibilities for this, but until we have more facts these remain pure speculation.

Any information about ceramic toy magic lanterns would be very welcome.

NOTES

1. www.westlicht-auction.com and Museo Cinematografica Lissabon
2. Richard Balzer Collection; see also my remarks on this variant under 'The original prices'
3. Courtesy of the Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play™ at the Stron™, Rochester, New York
4. Translation: porcelain ball for lanterns I 768 II 354 III 173
5. My thanks go to Dick Balzer for his help in this case (who also was lucky to purchase another tubular ceramic body of a lantern a short time ago)