PROJECTING A NATION IN RUINS

Lantern Lectures and the Spectacle of War-Struck Belgium in the Neutral Netherlands (1914-1918)

- Klaas de Zwaan[1] -

According to Dutch war correspondent Lambertus Mokveld (1890-1968), who arrived several weeks after the first German troops had invaded Belgium, war-struck Leuven was a devastating sight[2]. During the initial months of the First World War the Dutch press published many similar eyewitness reports of the ongoing ruination of Belgian cities. Photographic accounts of these testimonies - often representing shattered cultural and religious heritage - gradually entered the Dutch media landscape as well, catering to a desire to witness the range of destruction with one's own eyes. Belgian intellectuals who had fled their home country were well aware of the propagandistic potential of these photographs. Embedding their evidence value and emotional appeal in a didactic discourse, some of them strategically appropriated these images within the context of public lectures on Belgian architectural history. Making clever use of the attraction of the optical lantern, still images of monuments and ruins were used to incite moral outrage and strengthen patriotism among different audience groups in an alleged neutral country.

I. Introduction

While the illustrated press and the cinema undoubtedly were key loci in the circulation of war imagery in the low countries during the First World War, we cannot underestimate the role of other visual media in making sense of the ongoing battle[3]. This article elucidates the lantern lecture as a specific form of showcasing war-struck Belgium in the neutral Netherlands and focusses on the ways Belgian refugee intellectuals used imagery of monumental heritage and ruins to create sympathy for and solidarity with their home country[4]. Despite the ever-growing number of studies on the iconography and public impact of First World War spectacle, the projection lantern and the lantern lecture have been a blind spot in media studies for decades. I will argue, however, that the projection lantern played a prominent role in Dutch-orientated anti-German propaganda and the mobilization of Belgian audiences in the Netherlands.

Belgian governmental institutions and officials were active in the neutral countries[5], although very little is known about their workings in the Netherlands. This holds true for the specific role played by the *Office Belge Patrie et Liberté* (OBPL) which was stationed in The Hague from November 1914 and functioned as a local branch of the *Bureau Documentaire Belge* (BDB) in Le Havre.[6] Led by socialist city councilor of Antwerp Modeste Terwagne (1864-1945) who was assisted by, amongst others, refugee intellectuals Leo van Puyvelde (1882-1965) and Frans van Cauwelaert (1880-1961), the mission of the OBPL was double-edged[7]. Firstly, it was charged with the systematic collection of information and documentation in order to fully inform the exiled Belgian government in Le Havre about the state of affairs and public opinion in the neutral Netherlands. Secondly the OBPL aimed to rally the Dutch around the Belgian Cause through the dissemination of press releases, pamphlets, and other publications. Terwagne, for example, was appointed head of the daily newspaper *Belgisch Dagblad* which was first published on 15 September 1915 in The Hague. He also played a pivotal role in the publication, translation, and distribution of propagandistic brochures[8]. As polemic writers, his fellow propagandists Van Puyvelde and Van Cauwelaert were highly active in the international debate among intellectuals about the righteousness of

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2. *De Tijd,* 2 September 1914, p. 1.
3. For recent studies on the spectacle of the First World War in the Netherlands, see for example : Klaas de Zwaan, *Projecties van een wereldbrand : de receptie van de Eerste Wereldoorlog in de Nederlandse bioscopen (1914-1918),* PhD thesis, Utrecht University, 2018 ; Paul Moeyes, *De Zwaardjaren. De verbeelding van het Westelijk front 1914-1918,* Amsterdam/Antwerpen ; Tamar Cachet, "Motieven om oorlogsdoden te tonen in de pers", in *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis,* no. 19, 2016 (1), p. 35-59 ; 2017 and Conny Kristel, *De oorlog van anderen. Nederlanders en het oorlogsgeweld,* Amsterdam/Antwerpen, 2016.
4. Other contributions in this issue of *Journal of Belgian History* address different aspects of lantern culture during the First World War. See : Evelien Jonckheere, "Wartime lantern lectures at the Vlaamsche Kring in Mortsel : activism, avant-garde and commerce in occupied Flanders" and Margo Buelens-Terryn, "The Practices of Lantern Lectures, They Are a-Changin'. Cultural policies and changing lanternscapes in German-occupied Antwerp and Brussels during the Great War".
5. Michaël Amara has quite extensively described and analyzed Belgian the Belgian propaganda efforts in the United States. See : Michaël Amara "La propagande belge et l'image de la Belgique aux États-Unis pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale", in *Revue Belge de l'Histoire Contemporaine,* no. 1-2, 2000, p. 173-226.
6. The BDB was replaced by a new, more "offensive" propaganda agency in 1916, the *Office de la Propagande Belge* (OPB). See : Michaël Pector, "Het front gefotografeerd : officiële fotografie in België en Groot-Brittannië tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog en het gebruik ervan in de naoorlogse tijd," Master's thesis, Ghent University, 2005, p. 35-37.
7. B. Symoens and P.A. Taillier, *Inventaris van de documentatie (uittreksels van de internationale pers) van het Office Belge 'Patrie et Liberté' te Den Haag,* 1914-1920, Brussels, 2008.
8. See, for instance : De Belgische arbeiders aan de Nederlandse arbeiders (From the Belgian workers to the Dutch workers), The Hague : Office de la Patrie Belge, 1915 ; Het Belgische episcopaat aan het Duitsche episcopaat (From the Belgian episcopate to the German episcopate), The Hague : Office de la Patrie Belge, 1916 ; Joseph Bédier, Duitsche Misdaden in het licht van Duitsche getuigenissen (German Crimes in the Light of German Testimonies, with a foreword by Terwagne), The Hague, April 1915.

war. However, along with their suasive writings it is important to realize that these and other Belgian propagandists who were active in the Netherlands also used visuals, performance, and speech to get their message across. Lantern lectures offered them an opportunity to disseminate propagandistic imagery, without having to rely on the press and unwanted accompanying discourses.

Other researchers have already shown that photography and film were important aspects of Belgian propaganda, yet the use of the projection lantern is largely left unmentioned[9]. It is, however, highly plausible that the OBPL and BDB also stimulated propagandistic lantern lectures on war-struck Belgium. Given the sheer number of these lectures, as well as the many parallels in iconography and accompanying narratives, lantern lectures might be considered part of a coordinated effort to propagate the Belgian Cause in the Netherlands. However, while the concept of propaganda often relies on notions of state control and top-down organization it is somewhat problematic to treat these lantern lectures exclusively as strategically orchestrated phenomena. My object of study is the rather shady area between official propaganda and the private initiatives of those who felt the need to defend the Belgian Cause. This article is therefore less concerned with a detailed mapping of the organization behind these lantern lectures, instead focusing on propaganda as an audiovisual discourse that targeted Dutch public opinion.

The topic of Belgian architectural history was a central aspect of pro-Belgian lantern propaganda in the Netherlands during the First World War. The image of destroyed cultural heritage – a common visual trope in the propaganda of both the Entente and Germany – could conveniently be used to accuse or incite. In addition, the didactical context in which these lectures took place allowed for a 'truthful' audiovisual discourse that was well-suited to target specific audiences while strategically sidestepping censorship or control. Following that rationale, prominent Belgian intellectuals like the already mentioned Leo van Puyvelde and Frans van Cauwelaert, as well as Brussels' lawyer Albéric Deswarte (1875-1928), Flemish architects Huib Hoste (1881-1957) and Louis van der Swaelmen (1883-1929), and Brussels theater owner Maurice Siron (unknown) held lantern lectures on monuments and ruins throughout the Netherlands, fostering anti-German sentiments *and* contributing to the process of self-mobilization in Belgian war patriotism.

Using a broader scope of 'Belgium' in studies on the history of the First World War and taking into account the networks of hundreds of thousands of Belgian *emigrés* that fled their home country, Michaël Amara discovered that nationalism was vibrant among Belgian refugees[10]. My article foregrounds a historical example of numerous possibilities that Belgian refugees had to maintain that nationalism. Next to their contributions to Belgian propaganda in the neutral Netherlands, I would argue that lantern lectures on Belgian architectural history were part of the self-mobilization process of within the Belgian refugee community. This concept of cultural mobilization, in the words of cultural historian John Horne, points at "the engagement of the different belligerent nations in their war efforts, both imaginatively, through collective representations and the belief and value systems given rise to these, and organizationally, through the state and civil society"[11]. As Thomás Irish explains further, mobilization was not simply "a top-down process instigated by states; it was frequently bottom-up, led by individuals and collectives independent of the state apparatus. This was especially pronounced in the case of intellectuals, who took it upon themselves to publicly discuss, explain, and promote their respective national cause and stake

9. Bénédicte Rochet, "A State Cinematic Practice in Wartime. The Belgian Army Film Unit 1916-1922," in *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis,* no. 19, 2016 (1), p. 25. On Belgian official photography during the First World War, see: Michaël Pector, *Het front gefotografeerd…,* p. 37-45.

10. Michaël Amara, *Des Belges à l'épreuve de l'Exil. Les Refugies de la Première Guerre mondiale. France, Grande-Bretagne, Pays-Bas,* Brussel, 2008.

11. John Horne, "Introduction, Mobilizing for 'Total War', 1914-1918", in *State, Society and Mobilization,* edited by John Horne, Cambridge, 1997, p. 1.

in the war"[12]. My study demonstrates how some of these intellectuals voluntarily took their part in the mobilization of their diasporic community, using "collective representations" to address issues of identity, kinship, and solidarity within the context of the war effort. From this point of view, mobilization is not restricted exclusively to the fostering of nationalism in belligerent states.

Overseeing extensive archival holdings related to the First World War in Belgian archives[13], we cannot neglect the presence of the projection lantern in what Jean Beurier has labelled the "matrix of media" that represented the global conflict[14]. It is notoriously difficult to connect this lantern heritage to specific lecturing practices in-and outside Belgium during the First World War, (let alone how and by whom), and we lack information on the multiple ways they were narrativized. Yet the historical meanings and impact of these projected images cannot be understood without an in-depth knowledge of the ways they were 'performed' in front of live audiences. As media historian Alain Boillat rightly pointed out, the lantern spectacle did not solely imply a visual dimension : its ontology usually resided in the interaction between the projected image and oral accompaniment[15]. This multimodal (including the possible addition of music, the architecture and entourage of the lecture hall, gesticulations, audience reactions, et cetera) and inherently ephemeral nature of the lantern performance might be a major reason why little scholarly attention has been paid to the role of the projection lantern as a tool for mediating the First World War. Nevertheless, by addressing historically concrete examples I hope to share my insights into possible ways in which lantern slides were performed within the context of war propaganda. Unfortunately, limited information is available about the strategies, meanings, and uses of these *lichtbeelden* that were shown in – or outside occupied Belgium during wartime. However, analyzing the practices of Belgian lantern lecturers that were active in the neutral Netherlands, it becomes clear that images of ruins and monuments were often appropriated within a political or patriotic discourse, under the guise of popular education, by means of self-mobilization.

Using the online historical database Delpher as my main source, I aim to reconstruct the conditions under which the lantern slides of war-struck Belgium were performed within the context of lantern lectures on architectural history. I do not, however, propose a comprehensive, detailed account of all relevant lantern lectures on this subject that were held in the Netherlands during the war[16]. Further archival excavations could

12. Thomás Irish, "Petitioning the World : Intellectuals and Cultural Mobilization in the Great War", in *A World at War, 1911-1949. Explorations in the Cultural History of War,* (History of Warfare 124), edited by Catriona Pennell and Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, Leiden, 2019, p. 47.

13. I have researched the lantern collections of KADOC, IFFM, AMSAB and the Legermuseum. While all these collections contained lantern slides of the First World War and war-struck Belgium in particular, it is impossible to connect these images with the actual lantern lectures described in this article.

14. Jean Beurier, "La Grande Guerre, matrice des media modernes", in *Le Temps des Médias,* no. 4, 2005 (1), p. 162-175.

15. Alain Boillat, "Le spectacle de lantern magique considéré sous l'angle de la conférence : quelques traces écrites d'une performance orale", in *Performing New Media, 1890-1915,* edited by Kaveh Kaskari et al., New Barnet, p. 228-229.

16. It should be mentioned that Belgian intellectuals were not alone in lecturing on war-struck Belgium in the Netherlands during the First World War. Dutch war photographer and *De Telegraaf* correspondent 'Rido'-pseudonym for Philip Pinkhof (1882-1956) held several commercial lantern lectures about his personal experiences in Belgium's war zone, showing no less than 123 slides (charging 0.25-0.50 cents) that documented his "adventures" in war-time Belgium and Germany (see, for instance : *Provinciale Overijsselsche en Zwolsche Courant,* 26 November 1915, p. 8). His colleague Van Roijen (unknown), war correspondent for the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant,* held similar lectures. He used no more than 250 slides of his own photographs, shot at the front of Italy and the Balkans, charging 1,5-2 guilders admission. Van Roijen toured the main cities of the Netherlands, starting in The Hague from 10 April 1917 ; a lecture that was visited by "the highest civil and military authorities" (*Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (morning edition), 11 April 1917, p. 2). He was sarcastically accused for being "an honest and unbiased admirer of the Central Empires" (*Het Volk,* 14 April 1917, p. 3), to which *De Telegraaf* added that his lecture was downright "pro-German propaganda" (*De Telegraaf* (Sunday edition), 15 April 1917, p. 5). Indeed, the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* was considered *Deutschfreundlich,* as *De Telegraaf* was quite the opposite. Although Rido seems to have avoided an explicit political stance, his lantern lecture was more sympathetic to the Belgian Cause. He also performed at the local refugee society 'Fraternelle Belge' in Tilburg (*Tilburgsche Courant,* 22 December 1916, p. 9).

reveal more lantern lectures within our category, especially outside the three largest Dutch cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague). Although it is impossible to draw any final conclusions about the geographical patternization of these lectures, my findings make it clear that lantern lectures on Belgian architectural history were held throughout the entire Netherlands. What is also visible, is a distinctively temporal bias: most lantern lectures about architectural history were held within the first year after the start of the war[17].

In her excellent essay on the uses and meanings of French photography of ruins of the First World War, Nicole Hudgins notes that "the avalanche of ruin photography [...] challenges us to understand what functions such images fulfilled beyond their use as visual records"[18]. In response to this challenge, analyzing the ways lantern slides of war-struck Belgium were appropriated within the context of the lecture, I argue that the narrative of 'a nation in ruins' was well-suited (and widely used) for imaging and imagining the idea of Belgium in the neutral Netherlands. For reasons that will be clarified later, this narrative proved was commonly used in addressing both Belgian *emigrés* and allegedly neutral Dutch audiences.

II. Censorship in Dutch War-Time Lantern Culture

Before I move on to analyze the propagandistic specificities pro-Belgian lantern lectures in more detail, I want to address several factors that limited the agency in representing the Great War in Dutch lantern culture at the time.

Immediately after the beginning of the war, the Dutch government ordained that all the inhabitants of the country should adhere to its strict principles of neutrality. Balancing the tightrope of political diplomacy, it pragmatically strived for a peaceful coexistence between neighboring countries and its own citizens[19]. The presence of numerous Belgian refugees in the Netherlands did not facilitate this process. It is estimated that during the First World War, more than one million Belgians fled to the neutral Netherlands[20]. With a total Dutch population of 6.3 million in 1914, this was a staggeringly high number. Apart from the logistic and financial challenges the influx of Belgian refugees entailed, Dutch authorities also feared the political consequences of their ubiquitous presence[21]. In theory, their anti-German resentment and self-mobilization could destabilize the neutrality politics.

The circulation of war propaganda and its potentially instigative features did not go unnoticed**,** but it was difficult to control the dissemination and interpretation of non-neutral messages. In a government statement published by *De Telegraaf,* the Ministers of War and Internal Affairs wrote that "it is not sufficient to refrain from neutrality violations of criminal liability; one should also abstain from written or verbal manifestations of partisanship in public"[22]. From this point of view, projecting war-struck Belgium was a potentially subversive act. This concern did not result in a national censorship, but local surveillance and self-censorship did limit the possibilities of what was shown and spoken. This included lantern lectures addressing an audience.

Films were a case in point. As soon as the first newsreels about Belgium arrived in Dutch cin-

17. This corpus consists of 63 lantern lectures held between August 1914 and December 1918; 36 were held in 1915, 14 in 1916 and 13 in 1917/1918.
18. Nicole Hudgins, "Art and Death in French Photographs of Ruins, 1914-1918", in *Historial Reflections,* no. 42, 2016 (3), p. 52-53.
19. Maartje M. Abbenhuis, *The Art of Staying Neutral. The Netherlands in the First World War, 1914-1918,* Amsterdam, 2006, p. 17-19. Recent years saw a heightened academic interest in Dutch neutrality politics during The First World War. However, aspects of neutrality maintenance on a local level remain a blind spot in these studies.
20. Evelyn de Roodt, *Oorlogsgasten. Vluchtelingen en krijgsgevangen in Nederland tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog,* Zaltbommel, 2000, p. 173.
21. Michaël Amara, *Des Belges à l'épreuve de l'Exil...,* p. 284.
22. 'Daartoe is het niet voldoende dat men zich onthoude van inbreuken op de onzijdigheid, die strafrechtelijk vervolgbaar zijn; ook uitingen van partijdigheid in het openbaar, bij monde of geschrifte, behooren achterwege te blijven.' *De Telegraaf* (morning edition), 13 August 1914, p. 3.

emas Belgians flocked to see them. Their public protests against Germany led to a stricter local surveillance of local cinemas. In the diplomat's city of The Hague for example, it was forbidden to project the portraits of heads of state, use flags or play hymns or other nationalistic songs that could incite manifestations of partisan behavior. Disciplinal measures and local censorship decrees (at least in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague) were devised to lower the risk of public disturbances or diplomatic complaints. Despite local differences in strictness, these measures hampered the dissemination of 'black' or overtly patriotic propaganda[23]. Fiction films that explicitly demonized the enemy, like *The Kaiser, the Beast of Berlin* (USA, 1918) could therefore not be shown in the Netherlands, yet documentaries like *The Battle of the Somme* (Great-Britain, 1916)-with their aura of authenticity and truthfulness-*could,* providing that their screening did not lead to public disturbances. Cinema censorship in the Netherlands was essentially a matter of pragmatic measures, primarily the result of complaints[24].

The cinema was expected to be a neutral public space, but that did not mean it actually was. There is evidence that war films were deliberately used to heighten sympathy for (mainly) the Entente in movie theaters. Throughout the war, Amsterdam-based (and French-owned) Cinema Pathé showed films that celebrated French and Belgian nationalism. Despite the customary warning to the public to refrain from any signs of (dis)approval before the program started – a common practice in Dutch cinema culture during the war years – the screening of a "Belgian government film" ('Belgische regeeringsfilm', original title unknown) in 1917 was, at least according to the press, met with loud approval and enthusiasm by the audience; even the Brabançonne was played[25]. Some cinema owners deliberately targeted pro-Belgian audiences as part of both a propagandistic and commercial logic that can be described as a form of 'pragmatic partisanship'[26]. While all cinemas predominantly offered commercial entertainment, they were used as sites for political affiliation.

Cinemas were obviously not the only political spaces in the Netherlands during the First World War-and film surely wasn't the only visual medium that addressed the Belgian Cause. In October 1915, the German *Auslandhilfstelle* in The Hague reported on a series of pro-Belgian illustrated lectures given in the Netherlands. The addressee, the *Oberste Heeresleitung* in Berlin, received a catalogue of the Amsterdam-based lantern slide distributor Van Kreveld (unknown) that contained an endorsement by the prominent Dutch trade union leader and lantern lecturer Henri Polak (1863-1943): "Particularly interesting is the fact that the collection [Van Kreveld's, KdZ] contains a large number of statues of places, districts, buildings, etc., which have been damaged, destroyed, and irretrievably lost in the current war, such as: the Cloth Hall and surroundings in Ypres, the Cloth Hall in Nieuwpoort, and various places in old Flemish towns, including the beautiful market square with church in Veurne. The added value of this collection lies in numerous plates that show certain places and buildings as they were before the war and as they look today; this applies to Dinant, Liège, Leuven, etc.'[27].

Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* indeed mentions a lecture given by Polak on November 30, 1914,

23. For an elaborate treatment of neutral censorship in Dutch cinema culture during the First World War, see: Klaas de Zwaan, *Projecties van een wereldbrand* (Chapter 2: "Toezicht, censuur en de neutrale bioscoop")..., p. 80-117.
24. Klaas de Zwaan, *Projecties van een wereldbrand...*, p. 114.
25. "Belgische regeeringsfilm". *De Telegraaf* (evening edition), 23 June 1916, p. 8. NB: in Rotterdam and The Hague it was explicitly forbidden to play hymns in regular cinema screenings.
26. Klaas de Zwaan, *Projecties van een wereldbrand...*, p. 310.
27. "Bijzonder belangwekkend is de collectie ook hierom, dat zij een groot aantal beelden bevat van plaatsen, stadsgedeelten, gebouwen, enz., die in den huidigen oorlog beschadigd, verwoest en onherroepelijk verloren zijn gegaan, als bijvoorbeeld: de Lakenhal en omgeving te Ieperen, de lakenhal te Nieuwpoort, verschillende plekjes in oude Vlaamsche stadjes, o.a. het prachtige marktplein met kerk te Veurne. Bijzondere waarde bezit zij ook hierin, dat tal van platen bepaalde plaatsen en gebouwen laten zien, zooals zij waren voor den oorlog en zooals zij er nu uitzien; dit geldt o.a. Dinant, Luik, Leuven, enz." Belgische Propaganda in Holland (Bundesarchiv, *Auswärtiges Amt,* Niederlande 1918-1919, R901, no. 71961).

(titled "Some notes on Belgium") at the invitation of the *Comité tot ontwikkeling en ontspanning voor werkloozen* in Amsterdam. Considering the general pro-Belgian (and anti-German) attitude of the working class and *De Telegraaf* itself, it is hardly surprising that this newspaper paid attention to the lecture and the reports response of its audience: "the applause at the end proved how good it was […] to ask Mr. Polak to speak about the country whose name is on everyone's lips at the moment"[28]. The endorsement ad also suggests that Polak showed images of ruins and destruction, thus 'spectacularizing' war-struck Belgium to an audience that apparently expressed their solidarity with fellow workers in the south. Although it remains unclear how these images were explained in Polak's lectures, the combination of both sources reveals a propagandistic narrative that became a dominant aspect of pro-Belgian lantern lectures during the First World War. While images of undamaged Belgian cities pictured pre-war prosperity, projections of ruined monuments connoted German barbarism. Moreover, lantern lectures could be used for addressing target groups directly. The networks in which lantern lecturers usually performed played a vital role in that strategy.

The dissemination of lantern slides that pictured Belgium in ruins was hardly driven by commercial logic. In contrast to regular cinema screenings, almost all lantern lectures in the Netherlands were organized as educational meetings by a broad range of associations. In most cases, lantern lecturers were invited for lectures, meaning that the subject of their talk should match the field of interest and expectations of those present in the lecture hall. Lantern propagandists had to take these conditions into account, thus prioritizing the didactic value of their lecture over political or moral mobilizations.

By the end of the 19th century, public performances using the projection lantern had become intertwined with the social life in most Western cultures[29]. This certainly was the case in the Netherlands where the culture of uplift played an important part in associational life[30]. By the turn of the twentieth century, numerous popular knowledge and art societies were active in the Netherlands and the projection lantern was increasingly used to 'educate the masses'[31]. The *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen* (Society for the General Benefit) and similar organizations like *Volksonderwijs* (People's Education) had local branches that organized lantern lectures for the sake of popular education. This network included the activities of workers' associations that used lantern lectures to entertain and educate. Henri Polak himself was the founder of the *Algemene Nederlandsche Diamantbewerkersbond* (Dutch Association for Diamond Workers) for which he performed his lecture on war-struck-Belgium. The more highbrow art societies functioned as 'cultural distribution channels' for the consumption of art or art history and catered, according to Ton van Kalm-

28. "Het applaus, dat aan het einde weerklonk, bewees, hoe goed gezien het was […] den heer Polak te verzoeken, over het land te spreken, welks naam momenteel op ieders lippen ligt." *De Telegraaf* (morning edition), 1 December 1914, p. 3. Polak was led by a socialist agenda, addressing those who were disproportionally affected by the harsh reality of war. Perhaps other pro-Belgian lecturers had a commercial motif. The unknown "mr. Spaanstra" held lantern lectures on Belgium in the northern, rural areas of the Netherlands and allegedly donated 20 percent of his box office to a Belgian relief committee (suggesting he kept the other 80% for himself). In the small Frisian town of Jorwerd for example, early January 1915, Spaanstra showed the destruction of Leuven in a lecture that was considered highly unneutral by some (*Leeuwarder Courant,* 6 January 1915, p. 3).

29. Richard Crangle and Ludwig Vogl-Bienek, "Introduction", in *Screen Culture and the Social Question, 1880-1914,* (KINtop 3), edited by Richard Crangle and Ludwig Vogl-Bienek, Bloomington, p. 2.

30. For an extensive treatment of the ideals and manifestations of this Dutch culture of uplift, see: Christianne Smit, *De volksverheffers : sociaal hervormers in Nederland en de wereld, 1870-1914,* Hilversum, 2015.

31. The research project *Projecting Knowledge – The Magic Lantern as a Tool for Mediated Science Communication in the Netherlands, 1880-1940* of Utrecht University studies the manifold ways in which the projection lantern was used to disseminate knowledge – in and outside academia. See: https://projectingknowledge.sites.uu.nl, consulted on 30 October 2020.

thout, to a need for sociability amongst bourgeois circles[32]. Although Van Kalmthout only sporadically mentions lantern lectures, they undoubtedly were an important instrument for society members to stay connected with the club. Although non-members were often welcomed (usually after paying a small entrance fee), these lectures were essentially private meeting places.

Another important network for lantern lectures on war-struck Belgium concerned Belgian unions and relief committees that spread throughout the Netherlands from September 1914 onwards. In March 1915, the secretary of the newly founded *Officieel Belgisch Comiteit* (Official Belgian Committee), Frans van Cauwelaert, called all committees, societies, and institutions of or for Belgian refugees to send their mission statements and activities to the central office in The Hague[33]. The aim of this official committee-led by professor Albéric Rolin (1843-1937)-was to coordinate these initiatives and serve the interests of all Belgians remaining in the Netherlands. Little is known about the ways these organizations gave way to sociability and political activism within the Belgian refugee community in the Netherlands. However, as we shall see, lantern lectures held by these committees were prominent instruments of self-mobilization.

It is uncertain how neutral censorship affected (pro-)Belgian lantern lectures in the Netherlands during the war years, as we lack detailed accounts of how supervision was locally organized. Apart from one case that will be addressed later, I have not come across evidence of lantern lectures being forbidden or censored[34]. In general, we can assume that their educational character made these lectures less suspicious in the eye of the beholder, but we should not rule out the disciplinal effects of self-censorship. Lantern lectures on Belgian architectural history were not *explicitly* anti-German in tone; although their accompanying narratives offered plenty of opportunities to condemn German *'Kultur'* and to celebrate the Belgian nation. Being one of the most active lantern-lecturers of the time, Leo Van Puyvelde knew that all too well. His lantern lectures perfectly fitted the general Belgian attitude towards propaganda that preferred "the normal means of intellectual persuasion (that is to say, historical and legal argument) to the mechanical methods [and] the formulae of advertising, and the tricks of political propaganda"[35].

III. Projecting Ruins in Dutch (Knowledge) Societies

Flemish art history professor Leo van Puyvelde was a typical exponent of what the Niall Ferguson has labelled a "war of words"[36]. Being an active propagandist on neutral soil, Van Puyvelde wrote countless press releases, pamphlets, and other publications that targeted public opinion in the Netherlands. But he and many of his fellow Belgian lantern-lecturers equally understood that the propaganda war was inherently visual: photographs captured the imagination and proposed 'facts', that is, if they were explained in the right way. For them, the lantern lecture proved an effective means to combine their authoritative intellectualism with propagandistic imagery. Throughout the war, especially during the first

32. Following the Dutch literary historian Willem van den Berg, Van Kalmthout defines sociability as "a need for societal life, a cultivation of contact between like-minded people and the subsequent tendency to organize common activities rather than to operate alone." See: Ton van Kalmthout, *Muzentempels. Multidisciplinaire kunstkringen in Nederland tussen 1880 en 1914.* Hilversum, 1998, p. 13.
33. *Het Vaderland,* 31 March 1915, p. 3.
34. There is evidence that similar lectures were forbidden in other neutral countries. The colonial (and notoriously anti-German) newspaper *Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlands-Indië* did mention the ban of a lantern lecture on Belgian architecture in the Swiss town of Bern. See: *Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlands-Indië,* 20 July 1915, p. 5.
35. Belgian propaganda official, quoted in Sophie de Schaepdrijver, "Occupation, propaganda and the idea of Belgium", in *European Culture in the Great War. The Arts, Entertainment and Propaganda, 1914-1918,* edited by Avial Roshwald and Richard Stites, New York, 2002, p. 268.
36. Niall Ferguson, *De erbarmelijke oorlog. De geschiedenis van 1914-1918,* translated by Robert Vernooy, Amsterdam: Olympus, 2012, 274.

two years, they toured the Dutch network of art and knowledge societies to lecture on Belgium's monumental architecture.

Leo van Puyvelde fled his hometown Ghent in August 1914 and remained in the Netherlands until the end of the war. During this period – together with Flemish compatriots and fellow intellectuals like Frans van Cauwelaert and Julius Hoste jr. (1884-1954) - Van Puyvelde played a central role in the cultural and academic life of the Belgian diaspora in the neutral Netherlands. He was a co-founder of the Belgian University in the Netherlands and toured the country lecturing on Flemish art history. Having already been active in the Flemish movement, Van Puyvelde manifested himself as a strong advocate for Belgian unity and solidarity during the war years. In his pamphlet *Keerpunt van de Vlaamsche Beweging* (*Turning point of the Flemish Movement,* Amsterdam, 1916) and *De Vlaamsche Beweging gedurende de oorlog* (*The Flemish Movement during the war,* Amsterdam, 1918), he passionately pleaded against German *Flamenpolitik* that propagated Flemish separatism.

Along with many other intellectuals in the Netherlands, Van Puyvelde felt the urge to participate in the (inter)national polemic about the righteousness of war[37]. His efforts to heighten sympathy for the Belgian Cause cannot however be defined as textbook war propaganda alone, although Van Puyvelde kept close contact with the official propaganda institution *Bureau Documentaire Belge* in Le Havre and particularly its Dutch branch, as well as the OBPL in The Hague, in order to stimulate Belgian sympathy and Belgian nationalism in the neutral Netherlands. Although the Belgian government praised him for his "never-unceasing propaganda" ('propaganda incessante'), their cooperation did not entail a detailed, fine-grained strategy which included Van Puyvelde[38]. Although state-sponsored, his lantern propaganda was first and foremost personal.

Both the Belgian National Archives in Brussels and the House of Literature *(Letterenhuis)* in Antwerp hold an abundance of Van Puyvelde's personal documents. The Brussels collection contains several notebooks with hundreds of articles – mostly taken from Dutch newspapers and the illustrated press – that were somehow related to the war[39]. Van Puyvelde meticulously classified these articles and carefully glued them into pocketsize archives. Given their breadth and classification, these notebooks represent Van Puyvelde's attempt to keep aligned with the facts and consequences of the war. From a personal perspective, being a refugee himself, this was not surprising. The selection and classification of newspaper articles also seem partly guided by a desire to closely monitor the public opinion of his host country. One of his small *cahiers,* called "Destructions in Belgium" ('Verwoestingen in België'), is a clear-cut example of Van Puyvelde's double-edged interest. It contains nearly forty newspaper articles, ranging from September 1914 to the beginning of 1915, which cover the ruination of Belgian cities by the German troops. The Dutch (illustrated) press reported extensively on the carnage of Visé, Leuven, Ypres, and other Belgian cities[40]. As an art historian, Van Puyvelde undoubtedly was devastated by the incessant attacks on cultural heritage in his home country. His collecting efforts seemed a desperate attempt to keep track of them, but he equally realized that these atrocities could be used for national consciousness-raising and anti-German propaganda. As Alan Kramer argues, the news of the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage (most notably the burning of the famous library in Leuven) had "an immediate, and deep, impact on neutral international opinion"[41]. Van Puyvelde was an important agent in that pro-

37. For an overview of Dutch intellectual debate of the war and neutrality politics in particular, see : Ismee Tames, *Oorlog voor onze gedachten,* Hilversum, 2006.
38. Letter Belgian Legation, The Hague, to Leo van Puyvelde, 13 May 1915 (Letterenhuis, *Leo van Puyvelde,* P978).
39. Verzamelde krantenartikels inzake specifieke onderwepen, 1914-1920 (Belgian National Archives, *Verzameling oorlogsdocumentatie van Leo van Puyvelde,* BE-A0510.0III.1605)
40. Conny Kristel, *De oorlog van anderen. Nederlanders en het oorlogsgeweld.* Amsterdam/Antwerpen, 2016, p. 65-79.
41. Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction : Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War,* Oxford, 2007, p. 14.

cess, but he wasn't the only one who fueled indignation by addressing Germany's destructiveness.

Van Puyvelde was well aware of the didactical surplus of the projection lantern, as were other art historians before him. One of the articles in the previously mentioned notebook "Destructions in Belgium", cut out from the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* of 20 October 1914, mentions an illustrated lecture by Dutch professor of art history Jan Kalf (1873-1954) at the Royal Archeological Society *(Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap)* in Amsterdam. In the first months of the war, prior to December 1914, Kalf gave several lectures entitled "The old buildings of Belgium" ('De oude gebouwen van België') in art and knowledge societies, using lantern slides to illustrate the specificities and splendor of medieval architecture in the southern Low Countries[42]. As far as we know, Kalf did not lecture on this particular subject before the war, nor did he use the projection lantern earlier, which raises the question if the context of war somehow propelled him to do so.

It is unknown how Kalf explicitly referred to the context of war in his illustrated lectures. For as far as can be extracted from newspapers or other reception documents, he did not show images of ruins. But Kalf was well aware that even lantern slides of undamaged monuments appealed to sentiments of indignation, grief, and partisanship. Covering his lecture in Amsterdam, *Het Centrum* wrote: "Such buildings, which in peacetime made Belgian cities into sites of pilgrimage for art lovers, in wartime plead the case for the independence of a liberty-loving people that created them", a claim that allegedly aroused "lively cheers by the numerous listeners"[43]. Kalf had used photographs to illustrate his point before. On 6 September 1914, left-wing intellectual magazine *De Amsterdammer* had published a lengthy article in which Kalf himself condemned "that precious *Kultur*" ('die kostelijke *Kultur*') that should be held responsible for the total destruction of Leuven[44]. "Even as an act of retaliation this is an outrage", he stated firmly, "because this does not only harm the inhabitants of Leuven or the Belgians, not only bereaves Germany's enemies, but violates what is the common and inalienable good of the entire world: beauty and civilization itself." The article – that could be interpreted as an immediate response to earlier German justifications that had appeared in the Dutch press – was illustrated by several photographic images that allowed readers to witness the undamaged beauty of Leuven's monuments as well as scenes of their ruination[45]. Alternating images of both sublime and shattered heritage, this visual rhetoric stressed the notion of the irretrievably lost. His explicit accusation was typical for the first months of the war, when public indignation was not yet fully disciplined by the neutrality of politics[46].

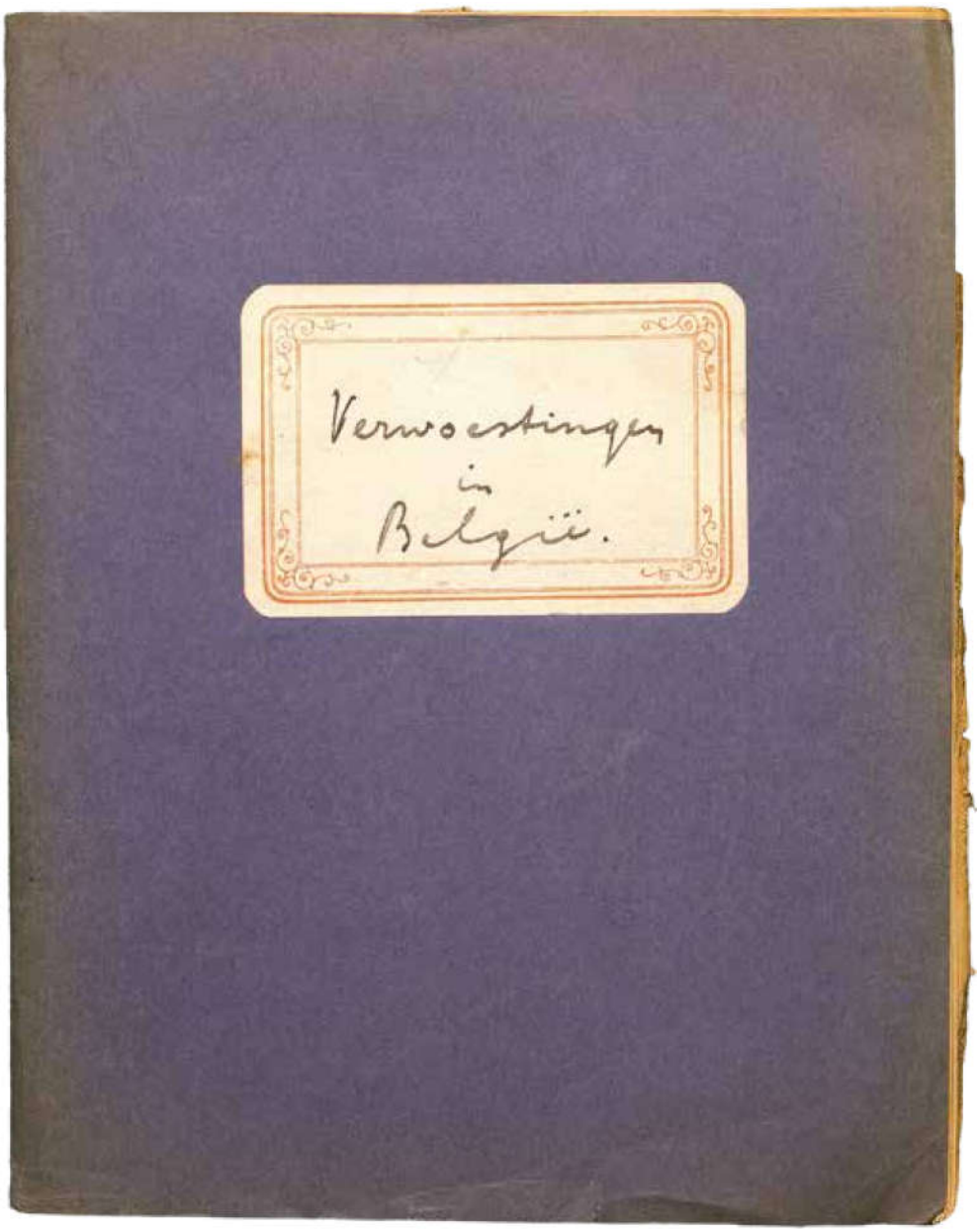
42. At least in: The Royal Archeological Society *(Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap),* Amsterdam, 19 October 1914 (*Het Centrum,* 22 October, p. 3), art society *Kunst voor allen,* Arnhem, 28 October 1914 (*Het Centrum,* 22 October, p. 4); art society *Kunstkring,* Rotterdam, 19 November 1914 (*Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad,* 20 November 1914, p. 5); Society of Befriended Manual Labourers *(Handwerkersvriendenkring),* Amsterdam, 2 December 1914 (*Algemeen Handelsblad* (evening edition), 21 November 1914, p. 2); unknown, Almelo, 12 December 1914 (*Twentsch Dagblad Tubantia,* 11 December 1914, p. 3).

43. 'Zulke bouwwerken, die in vredestijd de Belgische steden maken tot pelgrimsoorden voor de kunstzinnige, pleiten in deze oorlogsdagen voor de onafhankelijkheid van het volk, dat in vrijheidsdrang ze schiep *(Levendige toejuichingen van het talrijke gehoor)'* Het *Centrum,* 22 October 1914, p. 3.

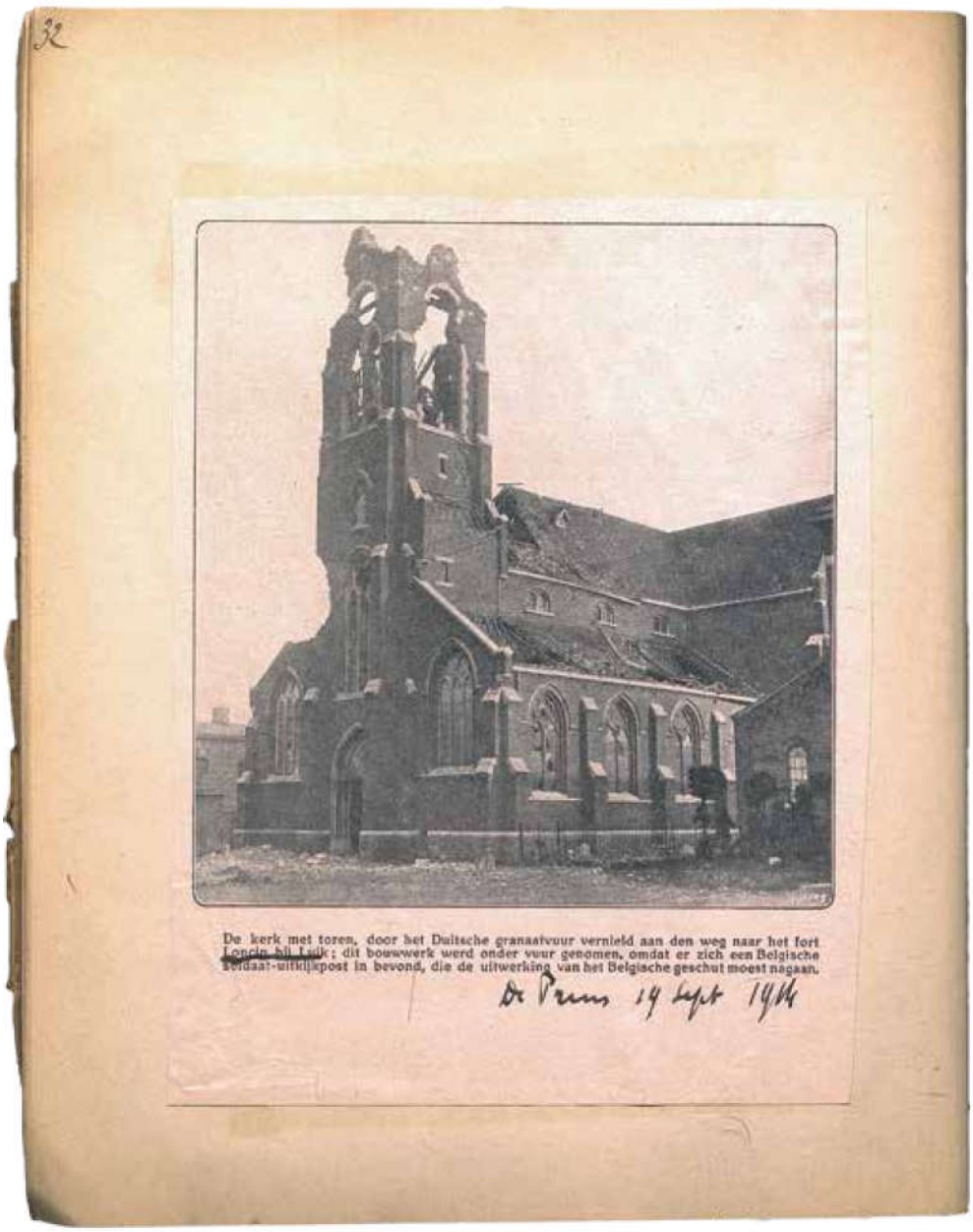
44. '[…] want zij gaat – zelfs als représaille-maatregel – te ver. Omdat zij niet alleen de Leuvenaars of de Belgen treft, niet uitsluitend Duitschlands vijanden berooft, maar het gemeenschappelijk en onvervreemdbaar goed van heel de wereld schendt: de schoonheid en de beschaving-zelve.' Jan Kalf, "Leuven Verwoest! ," *De Amsterdammer,* 6 September 1914, p. 3-4.

45. In his article on the ruination of Belgian monuments in August 1914, John P. Williams mentions the justifications of German commander Von Manteuffel who was interviewed by Dutch journalist Lambertus Mokveld for the newspaper *De Tijd.* See: John P. Williams, "The Flames of Louvain: Total War and the Destruction of European High Culture in Belgium by German Occupying Forces in August 1914", in *The Great War in Belgium and the Netherlands,* edited by F. Rash hand C. Declerq, London, 2018, p. 42.

46. In January 1915, the liberal magazine *Elsevier* published a lengthy article by Kalf, in which he did not refer explicitly to war destructions. He argued that the Belgian medieval architecture was more than the sum of Roman and Germanic influences: it had a unique quality and thus projected the nation's 'true' spirit. This argument is continuously stressed by Van Puyvelde and other Belgian lantern-lecturers as well. See: Jan Kalf, 'Het landseigene in de Belgische Bouwkunst' ("The national characteristic of Belgian architecture"), *Elsevier,* no. 25, 1915 (49), p. 1-20.



Van Puyvelde's notebook covering the destructions in Belgium. Source: Belgian National Archives, Verzameling oorlogsdocumentatie van Leo van Puyvelde, BE-A0510.0III.1605.



One of many articles that Van Puyvelde's glued in his notebook "Destructions in Belgium". The image of the ruined church gives us an impression of the lantern slides used in lectures on Belgian architectural history. Source : Belgian National Archives, Verzameling oorlogsdocumentatie van Leo van Puyvelde, BE-A0510.0III.1605.

Kalf's article and lantern lectures may have inspired Van Puyvelde directly to lecture on the history of Flemish and Belgian art and architecture for propaganda purposes. Van Puyvelde already was familiar with the use of the projection lantern for educational purposes, as many of his colleagues were. Before the start of the First World War, academic scholars used projection lanterns to disseminate their knowledge in and outside the university setting. Dutchman Willem Vogelsang (1875-1954) for instance, an Utrecht University professor who was well acquainted with Van Puyvelde, travelled public halls to lecture on different aspects of art history[47]. Van Puyvelde himself claimed that he had started collecting lantern slides from 1912 onwards, and these slides continued to play an important role in his academic teaching afterwards[48]. The popularity of the projection lantern as a tool for academic outreach was furthered by the networks of public knowledge associations and art societies. The outbreak of war actively functioned as a catalyst for illustrated lectures on Belgian architecture (and its ongoing ruination) in the Netherlands.

On 25 February 1915, Leo van Puyvelde gave his first illustrated lecture on medieval architecture in the Netherlands at the Catholic art society De Violier in Amsterdam, titled "Flanders' appearance, Flanders' soul" ('Vlaanderens aanschijn, Vlaanderens ziel'). Perhaps he was invited on the recommendation of Jan Kalf, who was one of the founders of De Violier in 1901 and remained a prominent figure in this society during the war. Given the dominant interest in architectural history and Flemish art of its members[49], the invitation of fellow Catholic Van Puyvelde was a safe bet. The basic outline of Van Puyvelde's lecture's narrative can be constructed from a report that appeared in the Catholic newspaper *De Maasbode*. He began by stating – in Dutch – that Belgium was a mere geographical concept that owed its unity to art, thus suggesting that Flanders was an inseparable part of Belgium. "Next to its art and because of that art", he continued, "Belgium possesses a tremendous power of solidarity" that had become manifest in these difficult times[50]. He then moved on to discuss Flemish history and architecture. Arguing that the great medieval monuments of Flanders had an aesthetic of their own, he showed typical Flemish halls and belfries that were built by mercenaries in disregard of Burgundian kings and bishops. Within this context, the monuments shown became proud symbols of Flanders' struggle against authoritarian rule, both in history and the present. This remark perhaps evoked connotations of Flanders' rise against Walloon dominance, but Van Puyvelde made no mistake in pinpointing Flanders' true enemy. While projecting the famous Cloth Hall of Ypres, Van Puyvelde allowed the audience some time to gaze at this manmade marvel before switching to a slide of the same yet destroyed hall while stating: "This is what that beautiful tower looks now, since that night of 22 November 1914, when hellish fires fueled by Hate celebrated their Sabbath"[51]. He moved on to project the age-old halls and belfries of many other Flemish cities – including Dendermonde, Nieuwpoort, and Leuven – and made clear most were lost forever. When Van Puyvelde arrived at the ancient university and library of Leuven, he supposedly commented (in the same fash-

47. Jamilla Notebaard, "The Art of the projected image: the optical lantern as a didactical instrument in the art history lectures of Willem Vogelsang (1875 – 1954)" in *Moderne Tijd,* no. 4, (1-2): 88-107.

48. In a letter to the rector of the University of Ghent, dated 6 December 1925, Van Puyvelde stubbornly refused to share his own meticulously collected lantern slides with one of his colleagues (Archive UGent, *Rectorial correspondance,* 219/220). Thanks to Hans Vandevoorde for sending me this wonderful source.

49. Ton van Kalmthout, *Muzentempels…,* p. 265-266.

50. "'[…] naast die kunst nu en ook door die kunst bezit België nog die geweldige saamhoorige kracht.' *De Maasbode,* 27 February 1915, p. 5.

51. 'Zoo vertoont zich die prachtige toren, sinds in den nacht van 22 November 1914, de vlammenslangen van den trotschen haat daar Sabbatvierden.' *De Maasbode,* 27 February 1915, p. 5. As Bénédicte Rochet has pointed out, "ruins monopolize screen time" in the films made by the propaganda film unit of the Belgian army, the *Section Cinématographique de l'Armée Française* (SCAB). The before – and-after rhetoric was common in these films as well. See: Bénédicte Rochet, *A State Cinematic Practice in Wartime…,* p. 28.

ion as Kalf): "You know what the Germans have made this into!" before ending his lecture with an expression of hope that all remaining monuments would be spared[52]. There seems no reason to suppose that Van Puyvelde fundamentally altered the general form, content, and tone of his lectures on monuments in his home country, although sometimes he referred to Belgium instead of Flanders[53].

Van Puyvelde's discourse of identity and loss was strengthened by his performance. Some documents convey bits of information about the performative and reception aspects of his illustrated lectures. According to the report of the Association of Dutch Literature of Leiden for example, Van Puyvelde was a talented and captivating public speaker. The secretary also noted that, although the audience was moved by the images shown, van Puyvelde spoke "with perfect self-restraint" ('met volmaakt zelfbedwang')[54]. This observation implies that the images of ruin struck an emotional chord, but strong emotions like grief or anger were not considered appropriate or useful within the educational setting in which Van Puyvelde performed. His alleged self-restraint also hints at the absence of any accusational tone. As far as we can tell from this and all other Dutch accounts, Van Puyvelde was careful not to accuse Germans too drastically for ruining his native country. Performing on neutral terrain would not allow for any verbal or visualizing act of war-mongering, and the societies where he performed were not too keen on importing political propaganda. His reported self-restraint probably was as much the result of self-censorship as 'reasonable' intellectual persuasion. Yet the image and concept of the ruin remained pivotal to his propagandistic performance. Showing the devastating consequences of Teutonic fury under the pretext of education proved an inventive and attractive way to get the propagandistic message across.

Throughout the war Van Puvelde was an active agent in disseminating and contextualizing photographic images of Belgian art and monuments. Although some accounts give clues of what cities and buildings Van Puyvelde projected, it seems impossible to track and trace the origins of the lantern slides he actually used. Pre-war lantern slides of Belgian monuments were surely available in the Netherlands. The 1913 catalogue of CAPI (named after the founder of the company, C.A.P. Ivens) for example, one of the leading retailers in photographic materials and equipment at the time, mentions several sets on Belgium by the British company *York and Son,* including "Belgium and monumental Flanders". The famous German manufacturer *Projektion für Alle* also produced a 24 slide-set on Belgium that mainly consisted of historic city views. Images of ruins were more difficult to obtain, and we can only speculate how Van Puyvelde and other lantern lecturers got them; perhaps he followed Polak's example and bought or hired images at Van Kreveld's in Amsterdam[55]. With the financial aid of the

52. "Wat de Duitschers daarvan gemaakt hebbem, dat weet u!" *De Maasbode,* 27 February 1915, p. 5.
53. At least at: art society *De Violier,* Amsterdam, 26 February 1915 (*De Maasbode* (evening edition), 27 February 1915, p. 6); Society of Dutch Literature *(Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde),* Leiden, 15 March 1915 (*De Telegraaf* (evening edition), 6 March 1915, p. 7); Association Haerlem *(Vereeniging Haerlem),* Haarlem, 27 April 1915 (*Het Bloemendaalsch Weekblad,* 24 April 1915, p. 2); Natural and Literary Society *(Natuur en Letterkundig Genootschap),* Roermond, 28 April 1915 (*Limburger Koerier,* 30 April 1915, p. 5); Society of Rotterdam *(Rotterdamsche Kring),* Rotterdam, 25 October 1915 (*De Telegraaf* (morning edition), 26 October 1915, p. 4); Provincial Society for Arts and Sciences *(Provinciaal Genootschap voor Kunsten en Wetenschappen),* Den Bosch 24 November 1915 (*Provinciale Noordbrabantsche en 's Hertogenbossche Courant,* 20 November 1915, p. 20); Historical and Literary Association *(Geschied- en Letterkundige Vereeniging),* Middelburg, 22 January 1916 (*Middelburgsche Courant,* 22 januari 1916, p. 6); art society *In Consten Een,* Nijmegen, 16 February 1916 (*Provinciale Geldershe en Nijmeegsche Courant,* p. 2); 15 February 1916, p.), The Hague, 22 February 1916 (*Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (morning edition), 17 February 1916, p. 2); School of Technology, Delft, 10 December 1916 (*Belgisch Dagblad,* 11 December 1916, p. 2); Arnhem Society of Archeology *(Arnhemsch Genootschap van Oudheidkunde)* Arnhem, 21 december 1917 (*Arnhemsche Courant,* 19 December 1917, p. 3).
54. *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde,* 1915, p. 71.
55. Van Kreveld could have made the slides himself, borrowing photos from Dutch war photographers who visited the Belgian front (some of them toured the Netherlands with illustrated lectures too) or images from the illustrated press: transferring published photos onto glass slides seems to have been a common 'transmedial' practice at the time.

Belgian government Van Puyvelde did manage to obtain similar, suitable images: "Please determine what amount is necessary in order for you to get the collection of photos of the Belgian monuments damaged by the Germans", a representative of the Ministry of Art and Sciences wrote him on 10 February 1915, equally referring to 'diapositives'[56]. It is also possible that Van Puyvelde (and his fellow Belgian lecturers), from May 1915 onwards at least, used glass negatives provided by the *Service Photographique de L'Armée Belge* (SPAB)[57]. Whatever the case, it seems plausible that he relied on different providers and constructed his own narrative from different sets and images.

In April 1915, Van Puyvelde sent an overview of the first results of his illustrated propaganda to the OBPL in The Hague[58]. The letter mentions his lectures to art society De Violier in Amsterdam, the Association of Dutch Literature in Leiden, the Universities of Leiden, Utrecht, and the Catholic seminary of Warmond. Van Puyvelde paid special attention to the different opinions of the university professors that visited his lectures, concluding that the majority of them harbored prejudices towards the Belgians and could even be considered *Germanophile*. Van Puyvelde remarked that his Dutch colleague Vogelsang (whose father was German) did not visit the lecture because of its anti-German stance, but the pro-Belgian professor Kalf did. He also mentioned the predominantly anti-French attitude of the Catholics in Warmond. This report was characteristic for Van Puyvelde's personal and truly 'intellectual' approach towards propaganda, reaching out to higher circles with an intent to influence public debate via opinion leaders.

Others took a somewhat different direction, although Belgian monumental history remained the primary focus of their lantern lectures. Brussels lawyer Albéric Deswarte did not possess Van Puyvelde's art historical knowledge, yet from December 1914 until the beginning of 1916 he gave several lantern lectures on the rise, prosperity, and decline of historical cities in Flanders[59]. Perhaps because of his lack in professional exper-

56. 'Veuillez déterminer quelle somme vous serait nécessaire pour vous procurer la collection des photographies des monuments endammagés per les Allemands en Belgique.' Letter Ministery of Arts and Sciences, Le Havre, to Leo van Puyvelde, 10 February 1915 (Letterenhuis, *Leo van Puyvelde,* P978).

57. The SPAB, founded in Mai 1915, aimed for the systematic production, collection and storage of photographic imagery of the Belgian army and war-struck Belgium. While the documentary value of photography fueled the encyclopedic mission of the SPAB, its evidence quality proved useful as ammunition for the battle for hearts and minds during wartime – especially in neutral countries. The production of lantern slides was a central aspect of the SPAB's workings: "Every cliché that is due is initially edited in the workhouses. A few positive prints are taken from it, the best of which is used to produce a magnification, which can be used to produce projection slides" ('Elk cliché die toekomt, wordt aanvankelijk in de werkhuizen bewerkt. Men neemt er enkele positieve afdrukken van, waarvan de beste tot een vervaardiging van eene vegrooting dient, die tot het geven van lichtbeelden aangewend kan worden'). *De Legerbode,* 2 November 1916, p. 1. The many photographs of their ruined home town and surroundings, made by the brothers Maurice (1883-1963) and Robert Antony (1885-1966) from Ypres and their local colleague Véron De Deyne (1861-1920, were highly suitable for official visual propaganda. Press reports show that this series, generally described as "Ypres before and during the war" ('Ypres avant et durant la guerre'), was also shown to refugees in England - and probably in other countries too - during the First World War. See for instance: *La Métropole d'Anvers,* 24 February 1916, p. 1 and *L'Indépendance Belge,* 24 February 1916, p. 2. Thanks to Evelien Jonckheere for sharing the last two sources.

58. Letter Leo van Puyvelde to Belgian Legation, The Hague, 1 April 1915 (Letterenhuis, *Leo van Puyvelde,* P978).

59. At least at: Society for the General Benefit (Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen), dep. Amsterdam, 21 December 1914 (*Algemeen Handelsblad* (morning edition), 25 December 1914, p. 8); The General Dutch Association *(Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond),* dep. Eindhoven, 26 January 1915 (*Eindhovensch Dagblad,* 23 januari 1915, p. 2.); Commission for Lectures *(Commissie voor Voordrachten),* Enschede, 28 January 1915 (*Twentsch Dagblad Tubantia,* 29 January 1915, p. 4); The Industrial Society *(Maatschappij voor Nijverheid),* dep. Arnhem, 3 February 1915 (*Arnhemsche Courant,* 2 February 1915, p. 3); Society for the General Benefit *(Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen),* dep. Hilversum, 12 February 1915 (*De Gooi- en Eemlander,* 13 February 1915, p. 1); art society Diligentsia, The Hague, 27 February 1915 (*Haagsche Courant,* 26 February 1915, p. 7); People's Education *(Volksonderwijs),* dep. Hoorn, 30 February 1915 (*Hoornsche Courant,* 23 February 1915, p. 2); Society of Befriended Manual Labourers *(Handwerkersvriendenkring),* Amsterdam, 2 March 1915 (*De Tijd,* 1 March 1915, p. 6); Society for the General Benefit, dep. Groningen, 11 March 1915 (*Nieuwsblad van het Noorden,* 8 March 1915, p. 4); H.B.S. Bond, dep. Amsterdam, 7 April 1915 (*Algemeen Handelsblad* (morning edition), 7 April 1915, 3.); Society for the General Benefit, dep. Breda, 21 December 1915 (*Bredasche Courant,* 17 December 1915, p. 3); Belgian Art Exhibition, Dordrecht, 4 February 1916 (*Algemeen Handelsblad* (morning edition), 31 January 1916, p. 10).

tise, Deswarte mainly spoke for various people's education societies and workers' associations, thus addressing a more 'popular' audience than Professor Van Puyvelde did in his tour of mainly Dutch art societies and academic settings. Before the intermission Deswarte discussed the medieval monuments of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres, after he mentioned the devastating effects of modern warfare and projected several ruined monuments. As far as we can conclude from the newspaper accounts, Deswarte did not explicitly accuse the Germans in his lantern lectures. But as these accounts could have been based on press releases, and thereby the reassuring statement that his lantern lecture was "strictly neutral" ('beslist neutraal') should be taken with a grain of salt[60]. Even if Deswarte did not refer to German atrocities explicitly, the before-and-after narrative dramaturgy was (again) well-designed to connote Barbarism. In comparison to Van Puyvelde, Deswarte took a more explicit Flanders-oriented perspective towards his subject, stressing his firm belief in Flanders' resilience on several occasions[61]. In his lantern lecture for the local department of the General Dutch Society *(Algemeen Nederlandsch Verbond)*, an association that stimulated cultural coherence between Dutch-speaking communities of the Netherlands, Flanders, and South-Africa, Deswarte explicitly stressed the kinship between the Dutch and Flemish "brother nations" ('broedervolkeren')[62].

Flemish architect Huib Hoste turned to the theme of resurrection, lecturing on the old architecture of Flanders and the Yser region in particular. Hoste used lantern slides with self-made photos of medieval and early modern architecture[63]. From January 1915 onwards, throughout the war, Hoste was mostly invited by art societies, some of which had invited Van Puyvelde on earlier occasions[64]. In his lecture to the Royal Archeological Society *(Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap)* in Amsterdam in October 1916, Hoste reportedly impressed his audience with his thorough and detailed knowledge about brick architecture and issues of reconstruction and urban planning, while paying homage to Jan Kalf who had recently published another article about Belgian architecture in the Dutch press[65]. His referencing was illustrative of the rather tight personal networks of Belgian lantern-lecturers, just as the presence of Louis van der Swaelmen in the lecture hall (to whom I will return later).

Despite this professional stance, Hoste intentionally created an atmosphere of melancholia and mourning in his lantern lecture. On his performance for the Catholic art society De Violier

60. *Hoornsche Courant,* 27 February 1915, p. 2.
61. *De Gooi- en Eemlander,* 13 February 1915, p. 1. This lantern lecture at the department of the Society for the General Benefit in Hilversum was intended to raise money for the needy population of Brussels. Deswarte was one of the founders of *De Vlaamse Stem,* a 'Flemish-friendly' daily that propagated loyalty to the Belgian State and the need for Flemish 'ontvoogding' (emancipation) at the same time, before rapidly moving into a more radical direction that pleaded for Flemish self-government and even independence. This growing Flemish activism led Deswarte, followed by moderate Flemish intellectuals like Julius Hoste jr. and Frans van Cauwelaert, to leave this camp and cooperate with the weekly *Vrij België (Free Belgium)* that became the voice for Belgian unity and liberation.
62. *Onze Courant,* 9 March 1915, p. 2.
63. *De Tijd,* 21 October 1916, p. 7.
64. At least at: Society of Dutch Painters' Patrons *(Bond van Nederlandsche Schilderspatroons),* The Hague, 20 January 1915 (*Het Vaderland,* 21 May 1915, p.2); art society *Arte et Industriae* (I), The Hague, 30 January 1915 (*Haagsche Courant,* 2 February 1915, p. 2); Society of Technicians *(Bond van Technici),* Rotterdam, 8 February 1915 (*Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (evening edition), February 1915, p. 1); The Society for Conservation of Old Buildings *(Vereeniging tot Instandhouding van Oude Gebouwen),* Middelburg, 27 April 1915 (*Middelburgsche Courant,* 22 April 1915, p. 4); Frisian Architectural Society *(Friesche Bouwkring),* Leeuwarden, 7 February 1916 (*Leeuwarder Courant,* 14 February 1916, p. 7); art society De Violier, Amsterdam, 20 October 1916 (*De Tijd,* 13 October 1916, p. 6); Royal Archeological Society (I), Amsterdam, 30 October 1916 (*De Telegraaf* (evening edition), 31 October 1916, p. 2.); art society *Arte et Industriae* (II), The Hague, 28 October 1916 (*Het Vaderland,* 30 October 1916, p. 7); Society for Scientific Interests *(Vereniging voor Wetenschappelijke Belangen),* Goes, 22 December 1916 (*Middelburgsche Courant,* 23 December, 1916, p. 1); art society *Artibus Sacrum,* Arnhem, 13 March 1917 (*Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (evening edition), 12 March 1917, p. 9)**;** heritage society Bond Heemschut, Amsterdam, 27 May 1918 (*De Telegraaf* (morning edition), 18 May 1918, p. 6); Royal Archeological Society (II), Amsterdam, 28 October 1918 (*De Maasbode,* 29 October 1918, p. 3).
65. *De Telegraaf* (evening edition), 31 October 1916, p. 2.

in Amsterdam, newspaper *Het Centrum* wrote: "Mr. Hoste was given the floor and announced that it had been 15 years since he first visited the Yser and since then he had returned that region for many times. The speaker commemorated with melancholy the wonderful architecture on the Yser, which is now destroyed and in ruins, and then announced that, since the spoken word is not capable of painting all that beauty, he had resorted to projection slides"[66]. Hoste showed images of the ruins of Nieuwpoort, Sixmuide, Veurne, and Ypres, closing his lecture with an image of a Flemish trench and the hope for a prosperous future of Flanders. He thus explicitly linked the images of Flemish ruins to a fighting cause.

For now, we can conclude that illustrated lectures by Flemish intellectuals on architectural history – always featuring images of ruins – addressed Belgium patriotism and between-the-lines anti-German sentiment. Lantern slides that depicted Belgian monuments were embedded within a transmedial narrative of indictment that was strengthened by the circulation of similar 'spectacular' images in the illustrated press or the cinema. Images of ruins were meant to inform as much as to provoke emotional responses. In addition, these illustrated lectures catered to a heightened awareness of a Flemish-Dutch kinship and often were purposefully designed as such – but they never showed signs of an explicit activist agenda. Furthermore, as a whole, these lantern lectures addressed a broad spectrum of audiences and classes, ranging from the 'common man' unified in workers' associations to fellow academics at universities.

IV. Mobilizing the Belgian Diaspora

During the war at least one effort was made to organize a continuous series of lantern lectures for Belgian propaganda purposes, aiming at both Dutch and Belgian audiences. In the afternoon of 28 April 1915, in the central hall of a high school in The Hague, the first lecture of the newborn Committee for Dutch-Belgian Lectures *(Commissie voor Nederlandsch-Belgische Voordrachten)* was held before a considerable audience[67]. Among the visitors were several well-known Belgians and countrymen, including some local politicians-and the organization had received letters of approval from none other than Dutch Prime Minister Pieter Cort van der Linden (1864-1935) and the Belgian Minister of Arts and Sciences, Prosper Poullet (1868-1937). The meeting was hosted by Isidore Gunzburg, director of the Institute of Psychotheraphy in Antwerp and head of the Belgian School in The Hague. In his Dutch spoken opening speech Gunzburg (1875-1943 ?) reminded his audiences of the tragic month of October during which so many Belgian refugees were given a "warm, brotherly welcome" ('hartelijke, broederlijke ontvangst') by the "hospitable" ('gastvrije') Dutch. His words matched the mission of the CDBL: to tighten the bonds between both nations and to strengthen mutual sympathy, symbolically unified by the large portraits of Queen Wilhelmina (1880-1962) and King Albert I (1875-1934) which were displayed near the stage[68]. After this opening speech, Brussels lawyer, pacifist, and pioneer library scientist Paul Otlet (1868-1944) gave a lecture on "the great economic and social achievements of Belgium" ('les grands faits de la Belgique économique et sociale') that ended with the exclamation that "again and again small countries are pioneers of progress". After the applauded lecture several projection slides representing famous buildings and typical city areas were shown. It is unknown if these images depicted ruins, but they did seem to incite patriotism.

The CDBL was founded on instigation of the *Comité Belge de la Haye,* strongly endorsed by high

66. 'De heer Hoste kreeg het woord en deelde mede, dat het 15 jaar geleden was, dat hij voor 't eerst de IJser bezocht en sindsdien telke jare weer naar die streek terugkeerde. Spr. herdacht met weemoed de heerlijke architectuur aan den IJser, welke telkens verwoest en in puinen terneer ligt en deelde dan mede, dat, daar het woord niet in staat is, al die schoonheid te schilderen, hij zijn toevlucht tot lichtbeelden had genomen.' *Het Centrum,* 23 October 1916, p. 5.
67. *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (morning edition), 29 April 1915, p. 2.
68. *Idem,* p. 2.

profile propagandists as Poullet, Terwagne, and Belgian ambassador Albéric Fallon (1862-1925)[69]. Dutch and Belgian expert speakers would alternate, each highlighting a particular topic from their national point of view. If desired, these lectures would be illustrated with lantern slides. The first of a series of 14 lectures was held on 28 April (starting with Otlet) and lasted until 12 June; the topics ranged from industry and commerce, law, and art. The second series of 14 lectures lasted from February to May 1916[70]. There was no attendance fee for these lectures, but those interested had to register in advance[71]. Speakers addressed their audiences in Dutch and French, much to the chagrin of at least one attendee who complained that this did not facilitate mutual Belgo-Dutch sympathy[72]. In response to this apparent prosaic exasperation, another attendee unmasked the *flamingatist* intention of the writer. "Thank God these lectures are devoid of flamingantism", they wrote, adding that the lectures of the CDBL were mainly visited by French-speaking Belgians[73].

The narrative of 'a nation in ruins' returned in at least two performances of the lecture series, although in a rather different way. On 8 May 1915, landscape architect and urban planner Louis van der Swaelmen introduced the topic of reconstruction of Belgian cities ('la reconstitution des villes Belges'). In this context, the lantern slides shown did not only function as emblematic symbols of a Flemish past and a collective heritage, but were also addressed as archival documents that could be used postwar reconstruction. As an active agent of the soon to be founded *Comité Néerlando-Belge d'Art Civique,* he addressed the possibilities and practicalities of reconstruction and restoration of the ruined Belgian cities after the war[74]. He would continue to do so, mainly targeting French-speaking Belgian audiences[75]. Although it's difficult to reconstruct his exact words, it seems that he used a technical approach to the topic, using pre-war images as architectural documents rather than a shorthand for German barbarism.

On 22 February 1916, Leo van Puyvelde opened the second CDBL-series with a lecture that was titled "The art of the silent Yser region" ('De kunst in de stille Yzer-streek'), showing more than 50 slides of "art treasures […] that have been subjected the most disgraceful destruction, once belonged to the history of the world, speaker said, which makes this crime even bigger and more terrible"[76]. Naturally this press release did not fail to

69. *Dagblad van Zuid-Holland en 's-Gravenhage,* 8 May 1915, p. 2.
70. *De Telegraaf* (evening edition), 17 February 1916, p. 3.
71. *Het Vaderland,* 7 May 1915, p. 6.
72. *Het Vaderland,* 20 May 1915, p. 3.
73. 'De Nederlandsch-Belgische voordrachten zijn, goddank, geen flamingantsch vertoon.' *Het Vaderland,* 21 May 1915, p. 2. In similar fashion, an anonymous writer complained that poems of the Flemish activist René de Clercq (1877-1932) were recited by Dutch poetess Annie Salomons (1885-1980) in her lecture on Dutch-Flemish poetry: "For sure the organizing committee was taken by surprise" ('Voorzeker is het vertrouwen van de commissie van uitvoering hier verrast geweest'), the writer stated, hinting that the lectures were meant to propagate Belgium-not Flanders' independence. See: *Het Belgisch Dagblad,* 27 March 1916, p. 1.
74. Founded around October 1915 under the protection of ambassador Fallon, The *Comité Néerlando-Belge d'Art Civique* (CNBAC) was led by Louis van der Swaelmen, Paul Otlet and prominent Dutch architects Henri Evers (1855-1929), Joseph Cuypers (1861-1949) and Hendrik Petrus Berlage (1856-1934). Huib Hoste was one of their secretaries. The CNBAC's purpose was to collect data that could be useful for the future reconstruction of Belgian cities and villages. See: *De Tijd,* 1 October 1915, p. 2.
75. On 17 May 1915 for instance, Van der Swaelmen addressed the topic at the Belgian Union in Amsterdam. See; *Algemeen Handelsblad* (morning edition), 16 mei 1915, p. 9. Other lantern lectures by Van der Swaelmen about city reconstruction include: Belgian Art Exhibition, Dordrecht, 4 February 1916 (*Algemeen Handelsblad* (evening edition), 31 January 1916, p. 10); Association for Tourism *(Vereeniging tot Bevordering van Vreemdelingenverkeer)* Nijmegen, 28 March 1916 (*Provinciale Geldersche en Nijmeegsche Courant,* 25 March 1916, p. 4); Dutch Archeological Society *(Nederlandsche Oudheidkundige Bond),* Amsterdam, 9 November 1918 (*Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (morning edition), 10 November 1918, p. 9).
76. 'Die schatten, die nu ten prooi vallen van de schandelijkste vernieling, behoorden aan de geschiedenis van de wereld en de misdaad is er des te grooter en te vreeselijker om.' *Belgisch Dagblad,* 24 February 1916, p. 3

mention the strong approval of the attending audience[77]. Considering the fact that Van Puyvelde's accusatory tone matched the propagandistic mission of both the *Belgisch Dagblad* and the CDBL, it shouldn't come as a surprise that Van Puyvelde was not characterized as a neutral outsider.

Lantern lectures continued to be part of the self-mobilization of Belgian intellectuals. During the war, the exiled Belgian government in Le Havre tried to maintain and strengthen patriotism among its dispersed citizens. The *Officieel Belgisch Comiteit* (Official Belgian Committee), founded in 1915, functioned as a linchpin between Le Havre and the numerous local refugee associations that had sprung up in the Netherlands from 1914 onwards. Their primary goal was not to propagate anti-German sentiment to a neutral audience, but to tighten bonds between the occupied and the exiled communities. Belgian Ministers and peoples' representatives visited the Netherlands on a regular basis to boost morale and nurture hope for a rapid return[78]. These visits were often carefully choreographed gatherings that staged patriotic performers, poets, musicians, and eloquent speakers. One of them was Frans van Cauwelaert; a prominent Catholic politician, Flemish 'passivist' *and* Belgian propagandist who sometimes used projected images of cities and ruins to illustrate his point. On 3 July 1915 for example, when Belgian Minister of Arts and Sciences Poullet visited the Belgian community in the southern Dutch town of Den Bosch[79]. For this festive occasion, the local *Union Belge* organized a patriotic manifestation in the local society hall Casino. In the evening, Van Cauwelaert held a lengthy speech entitled "Belgium before and now" ('België voorheen en thans').[80] Before the break, he addressed the virtues of the Belgian people that he described as freedom-loving, hardworking, as well as honest and loyal. He continued to elaborate on the history of Belgium as a rich and densely populated country before the unfortunate events of early August 1914 when an "all too powerful neighbour" ('een overmachtige nabuur') – again, the Germans were not explicitly mentioned – demanded "the keys of our proud cities" ('de sleutels onze trotsche steden'). He praised the Belgian resistance to German aggression and carefully cultivated the well-known propaganda theme of 'Brave Little Belgium' in front of a united, pro-Belgian audience.

It seems that in the eyes of some, Van Cauwelaert's ardent patriotism was considered too offensive. Perhaps this was the reason why a similar lecture by Van Cauwelaert before the local Belgian committee of Roosendaal was forbidden by the military authorities in July 1915. As the southern region of the Netherlands was under martial law, public events had to be officially approved beforehand. The organization, according to newspaper *De Tijd,* had failed to do so[81]. In the Roosendaal local newspaper however, an anonymous writer suggested that this decision was prompted by "cowardice, vile" anti-Flemish voices[82]. It is unclear who exactly the writer held responsible, yet his protest does point at a Belgian divide that problematized a *national* self-mobilization. In general, however, the Flemish-Walloon antagonism did not seem to hamper the organization of pro-Belgian lantern lectures, nor did these lectures fuel hostility between these population groups.

From 1914 onwards, lantern projections of ruins continued to be shown within Belgian refugee networks to arouse indignation and patriotism. Brussels theatre-director Maurice Siron showed slides

77. *Idem,* p. 3; *Het Vaderland,* 26 February 1916, p. 10. The allegedly pro-German *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* on the other hand did not mention the accusatory tone, nor the public's approval: *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (morning edition), 27 February 1916, p. 2.

78. Michaël Amara, "Zo trokken zij. Het verhaal van een unieke volksverhuizing in België", translated by Barbara Costermans, in Michaël Amara, Piet Chielens, Hans Op de Beeck, Kristin Van Damme, *Vluchten voor de oorlog. Belgische vluchtelingen 1914-1918,* Leuven, 2004, p. 28.

79. *R.K. Dagblad het Huisgezin,* 5 July 1915, p. 3.

80. *Provinciale Noordbrabantsche en 's-Hertogenbossche Courant,* 5 July 1915, p. 5.

81. *De Tijd,* 26 July 1916, p. 2.

82. 'laffe, laaghartige tegenwerking […] van anti-Vlaamsche zijde'. *De Grondwet,* 29 July 1915, p. 3.

of ruined monuments in several lectures on war-struck Belgium, visualizing German atrocities in front of (mainly) Belgian audiences in The Hague[83]. His speech, also titled "Belgium before and during the war" ('België voor en gedurende de oorlog') was part of a larger program that featured Belgian musicians and other speakers that held similar 'monologues'. The proceedings of this "grande fête artistique" (Siron delivered his speech in French) were dedicated to the needy population of Brussels. His use of projected images was strictly rhetorical. Siron did not hide his indignation in an art historical narrative, yet explicitly conveyed the misery of the Belgian people and those responsible for it while the audience-at least according to the *Haagsche Courant*-continuously cheered and applauded. To raise more funds for the Belgian population, Siron moved on to lecture in other Dutch cities, including Amsterdam and the southern city of Tilburg, where large communities of Belgian refugees resided[84].

Lecturing in front of interned soldiers or refugee camps was another way of reaching compatriots. When lecturing in front of the interned Belgian soldiers in camp Harderwijk on May 8, 1915, as Henri Picard (1883-1946) noted in his war diary, Leo van Puyvelde was explicitly warned not to mention Germans or show images of ruins[85]. A Dutch officer was present in the lecture hall to make sure Van Puyvelde did not violate the regulations[86]. Yet even in these camps, despite strict supervision, images of cities and ruins were used to strengthen nationalism. At the interned soldiers' camp of Zeist for example, May 1917, a certain I. Geysen lectured on the topic 'Belgium'. In a moving introduction, one of the attendees wrote, Geysen discussed the meaning of the Belgian flag, moving on to project images of "our beautiful cities" ('onze prachtige steden') and their destruction. After the Belgian army and the entire Royal family appeared on screen, the national hymn was played. These images, the patriotic symbolism that surrounded them, and the physical presence of a lecturer allowed audiences to feel 'connected' with their home country: "these appearances were touching, we felt something that was utterly intimate"[87].

This description leads us to another aspect that partially explains the popularity of the lantern lecture as a propaganda or mobilizing tool. Although we lack information about the size of the images that were projected, their appearance on screen-perhaps even in a darkened space-could have had an immersive quality that heightened the visual and emotional impact of what was shown. The order of these appearances was of course not randomly chosen. The inherent sequentiality of lantern slide projection allowed for a dramaturgy that thematized war-struck Belgium in different ways. In this case, as in many others, the 'shock effect' of the before and after, the alternation of beauty and ruin, was inherently rhetorical, as was the addition of images that praised their brothers in arms and fighting cause. Lantern slides could thus be used to construct a compelling narrative that was tailored for specific audiences, performed by those who were both experts and 'one of them'.

Of course, Belgian intellectuals did not only address architectural matters during the war, nor do I want to suggest that those that I mentioned were the only active lantern propagandists that visualized the Belgian cause. Van Puyvelde, for instance, also gave lantern lectures on Flemish painting, as did Van der Swaelmen, and these performances might

83. *Haagsche Courant,* 26 November 1914, p. 6.
84. *Algemeen Handelsblad* (evening edition), 19 December 1914, p. 3; *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant,* 29 December 1914, p. 3.
85. War Diary Henri Picard, "Er komt een school voor Belgische kinderen," Saturday 8 May 1915. https://www.letterenhuis.be/nl/pagina/er-komt-een-school-voor-belgische-kinderen, consulted on 1 August 2020.
86. War Diary Henri Picard, "Leo van Puyvelde lucht zijn hart," Monday 10 May 1915. https://www.letterenhuis.be/nl/pagina/leo-van-puyvelde-lucht-zijn-hart, consulted on 1 August 2020. On invitation of the General Commission of Education and Recreation of Internees in the Netherlands *(Algemeen Comité tot Ontwikkeling en Ontspanning van de Geïnterneerden in Nederland),* Van Puyvelde also lectured at camps Zeist and Oldebroek. Letter *Algemeen Comité tot Ontwikkeling en Ontspanning van de Geïnterneerden in Nederland* to Leo van Puyvelde, 4 May 1915 (Letterenhuis, *Leo van Puyvelde,* P978).
87. "'t Was een aandoenlijk verschijnen, we voelden iets buitengewoon innigs", *Belgisch Dagblad,* 30 May 1917, p. 2.

well have been designed as patriotic events as well. That said, Belgian monumental architecture and their ruins were undoubtedly a dominant motif in Belgian lantern propaganda in the Netherlands, as many other examples tend to show[88].

V. Conclusion

The photographic image of shattered Belgian monuments was a widespread, transmedial phenomenon in First World War visual culture. The destruction of the Ypres' cloth hall and the university library of Leuven, for example, was extensively visualized in memorial books, posters, postcards, pamphlets, exhibitions, the cinema, and the illustrated press. The dissemination of images of shattered monumental heritage became an important aspect of Entente propaganda in neutral countries that served as counterpropaganda to the German strategy of justification and the "Leitmotiv of Belgium's essential non-existence"[89]. Yet the lantern lectures on Belgian architecture that have been addressed in this article had other functions too. Despite their educational aura, these lantern lectures were primarily designed as a pretext to show images of ruins that symbolized Belgium's tragic fate. As such, they played a prominent role in both Dutch-orientated, anti-German propaganda and the self-mobilization of Belgian refugees residing in the Netherlands. While the precise subjects of these lantern lectures could differ, ranging from art history to architectural reconstruction, the underlying narrative of 'a nation in ruins' was always used to embed the images in the context of war.

The context of neutrality undoubtedly limited the range of possibilities for the use of the projection lantern as a propaganda instrument in the Netherlands. In general, lecturers who showed images of war-struck Belgium were careful not to blatantly propagate hostile sentiments, as both military and political authorities had a keen eye on non-neutral aspects of their lecture. In general, this meant that Belgian lecturers did not 'name and shame' the Germans explicitly, or at least rarely, nor did they employ imagery that demonized the enemy directly. This does not mean that these lantern lectures were non-political, let alone neutral. Semantically speaking, images of ruined monuments were 'flexible' enough to stress either their educational or their propagandistic potential. More importantly, their consumption in closed settings allowed for modest manifestations of partisanship.

I have shown that the narratives that accompanied the projected images on architectural history circled around two dominant themes. On the one hand, images of ruins and destruction were linked to a *lost forever* narrative that symbolized the victimization of Belgian (or, in some cases, Flemish) culture. In so doing, Van Puyvelde, Deswarte, Hoste and others stressed notions of identity, loss, and grief under the guise of architectural history. The before – and-after rhetoric and its intended 'shock effect' functioned as evidence for the ongoing ruination, yet their use was not-in Aristotelian terms-without pathos. This double-edged rhetoric carefully created a subtext that framed the Germans as 'ruiners of the nation', fueling moral outrage and thus adding to the international discourse of indignation. The other dominant theme was that of *resurrection*. The alternation of ruin imagery and undamaged monuments (in their prewar state) might have shocked the viewers, but the lecturer could also use them to foster feelings of hope and perseverance. This strategy seemed more commonly used for Belgian audiences within the network of relief committees and other refugee-related organizations.

88. For instance, a certain Father Keulers held a lantern lecture about Belgian medieval architecture "for all Belgians" in Tilburg on 13 February 1917 (*Tilburgsche Courant,* 12 Februari 1917, p. 4) ; Belgian architect Van Roey showed lantern slides in his lecture on the reconstruction of Belgium on 16 February 1918 in Tilburg (*Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant,* 16 February 1916, p. 9) and in Breda, the Belgian teacher Eugeen Mathijs showed what the cities of Antwerp and Brussels looked like before the war in front of a crowd that enthusiastically cheered the projected images of the Belgian King at the end (*Belgisch Dagblad,* 23 August 1918, p. 2).

89. Sophie de Schaepdrijver, *De Groote Oorlog. Het Koninkrijk België tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog, Antwerpen,* 2013, p. 269.

While lecturing on the same or closely related subjects, these lecturers nonetheless targeted different audiences and lantern networks. With his lectures on Flemish medieval architecture for example, Van Puyvelde mainly spoke in front of a higher-class, 'intellectual' (bourgeois), mainly Dutch audience that-hopefully-would engage in anti-German discourse. His colleague Deswarte-not an expert in the field-toured the networks of workers societies, as others performed for fellow refugees. The lantern lecture thus also proved its value in addressing non-elite audiences, meaning it cannot be understood as characteristic for an intellectualist approach to propaganda only. Furthermore, the physical presence of the lecturer and his audience was a pivotal aspect of the propagandistic lantern performance. On the one hand, this allowed for a personal connection between the lecturer and those present in the lecture hall. Being a mediator in meaning, the lecturer could switch between his status of expert or spokesperson for the Belgian refugee community in order to make his performance more convincing or compelling. Audiences on the other hand could use the lantern lecture to connect with each other. Because lantern lectures were meeting spaces (hosting members, or people with a common interest) they could function as a site for cultural and political affiliation.

While the organization of the lectures may not have been dictated in a propagandistic, top-down fashion, Belgian propaganda institutions and officials seemed actively involved. They provided Van Puyvelde with slides and there is reason to assume that at least some of his colleagues were sponsored too. The founding of the Committee for Dutch-Belgian Lectures was a coordinated effort to heighten mutual sympathy between the two nations. With regard to the 'individual' cases, it is tempting to conclude that Belgian lantern lecturers 'divided' the market between themselves. Images of ruins were used in different ways in front of different people, yet it is striking that their lecturing efforts did not overlap on any occasion. While I have not looked into personal relationships in thorough detail, it is highly plausible they were all in close contact regarding their lectures. Perhaps they even borrowed each other's lantern slides.

Finally, it's important to note that, despite the existence of Flemish political activism during this time, lantern lectures on Belgium in the Netherlands stayed clear of *Flamenpolitik* and the subsequent polemic of race and language[90]. Undoubtedly, especially considering the cases of Deswarte and Hoste, some lantern lectures on architectural history did have a Flanders-oriented perspective. They could very well have heightened sympathy for the Flemish Movement – because, for instance, they stated that Flanders was more victimized than any other region in Europe – and undoubtedly helped to 'imagine' a Flemish community. Appealing to notions of cultural kinship and occasionally using a rhetoric of family ties, these perspectives aimed to heighten Dutch sympathy for Flanders' cause through a strategy of cultural affiliation. All in all, the narrative of a nation in ruins proved a suitable subject for propagandistic lectures in the Netherlands. Moreover, the projection lantern offered Belgian intellectuals new possibilities to actively engage themselves in visual propaganda.

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90. For an excellent analysis of the discursive involvement of Dutch intellectuals in Flemish activism during the First World War, see: Tessa Lobbes, "The Cultural Mobilization of Language and Race During the First World War: The Interaction Between Dutch and Belgian Intellectuals in Response to the German *Flamenpolitik*," in *The Great War in Belgium and the Netherlands*, edited by F. Rash and C. Declerq, London, 2018, p. 65-93.