CALS CIRCUS ARTS LIFE & SCIENCES

Wallenda's Wonderful Performing Dogs: Challenges and Opportunities for a Transnational Circus and Funfair Historiography

NELE WYNANTS
University of Antwerp, Faculty of Arts
Antwerp Research Institute for the Arts (ARIA)

Circus and funfair studies are evolving fields of research. Especially regarding circus traditions, a growing scholarship has emerged since the early 2000s, with some foundational volumes that have paved the way. Historiographical approaches, however, are often limited to outlining the circus as an independent theatrical genre during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and due to limited and scattered source material, often have a national or regional focus. Given the particularly visual and performative qualities of circus and funfair shows, as well as the performers' nomadic way of life, circus and funfair communities have left few material traces. This presents a number of challenges for historiographers of these nomadic cultures.

Drawing from the example of the German Antonio Wallenda theatre, this contribution will chart some possible routes for a transnational approach to circus and funfair historiography. Self-proclaimed professor of cynology Antonio Wallenda travelled throughout Europe with his trained giant dogs, cats and other "smart" animals, delighting young and old audiences with spectacular shows. Using a wide range of available sources, this article will highlight some of the challenges we face when studying and writing funfair and circus history, and additionally address some of the opportunities for this young and dynamic area of research.

Keywords: circus historiography, funfair, popular culture

Contact: Nele Wynants <nele.wynants@uantwerpen.be>

https://doi.org/10.3998/circus.4273

Les études sur le cirque et les foires sont des domaines de recherche en évolution constante. Les traditions circassiennes font de plus en plus l'objet de travaux académiques depuis le début des années 2000, puisque des ouvrages fondateurs leur ont ouvert les portes du monde universitaire. Toutefois, les approches historiographiques se limitent bien souvent à dépeindre le cirque comme un genre théâtral indépendant pendant les dix-huitième, dix-neuvième et vingtième siècles. Et comme les documents originaux ne sont souvent ni centralisés ni très fournis, ces études restent focalisées sur un territoire régional ou national en particulier. Étant donné que les spectacles de cirque et de foire s'articulent surtout autour du visuel et de la performance, et si l'on tient également compte du mode de vie itinérant des compagnies, ces communautés artistiques n'ont laissé que peu de traces matérielles. Cet article présente les différents défis auxquels se confrontent les historiographes de ces cultures nomades.

En s'appuyant sur l'exemple du théâtre allemand d'Antonio Wallenda, cet article trace certaines trajectoires possibles pour élaborer une approche transnationale à l'historiographie du cirque et des foires. Professeur de cynologie autoproclamé, Antonio Wallenda a sillonné l'Europe accompagné de ses chiens géants, de chats et d'autres animaux dits « savants » pour émerveiller des publics de tous âges avec des spectacles grandioses. À l'aide de toute une palette de sources disponibles, cet article met en lumière certains des défis associés à l'étude et à la rédaction de l'histoire du cirque et des foires. De plus, il aborde les différentes opportunités qui s'offrent à ce domaine de recherche encore jeune et plein de dynamisme.

Mots-clés : historiographie du cirque, foires, culture populaire

Introduction

In the late nineteenth century, a remarkable ensemble of artists and animals embarked on a journey across Europe, providing wonder to awestruck audiences. The troupe, led by esteemed director Professor Antonio Wallenda (1850–1920) and comprised of performers hailing "from all nations," was said to be accompanied by no less than 100 trained animals. This vibrant company's performances unfolded within a magnificent fairground theatre accommodating up to 1,000 spectators. Facilitated by the extensive railway network of the era, their dazzling shows graced the grand cities of Paris, London, Vienna, Budapest, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Leipzig and Copenhagen (*Gazette de Lausanne*). The astounding feats of acrobats, jugglers, gymnasts and clowns were interwoven with spectacular animal acts. From agile cats gracefully leaping through fiery hoops to gallant geese and cockatoos assuming the roles of valiant firefighters to majestic Great Danes executing myriad tricks akin to well-disciplined soldiers, the trained animals from Wallenda's theatre flawlessly imitated their human counterparts.

Antonio Wallenda emerged as a scion of an Austro-Hungarian travelling artist family with a rich heritage dating back to the eighteenth century.[1] He proudly self-staged himself as a professor of cynology, a discipline dedicated to the study of canines or domestic dogs derived from the Greek term *kynos*, meaning "dog." A profile in the 8 July 1898 issue of Dutch newspaper *Schiedamsche Courant* reveals his lineage as the son of a theatre director whose itinerant endeavours encompassed a wide range of fairground attractions. Hence, Antonio was involved in the artist world since childhood. When he set out independently at the age of twenty-six, he embarked on a venture involving a cabinet showcasing electric and mechanical automats.[2] However, this endeavour was abruptly curtailed when Wallenda's theatre was destroyed by fire in Passau, Bavaria; a paraffin lamp exploded in his booth at the Maidult fair on 8 May 1881, causing a fire that ruined his museum. Wallenda suffered 30,000 marks of uninsured damage (*Echo der Gegenwart*; *Dagblad van Maastricht*).

Undeterred, Wallenda swiftly rebounded, as the Dutch newspaper reports, launching a new theatre that aligned with his lifelong passion. His profound interest in the study of dogs, nurtured since childhood, equipped him with an understanding of the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of canine existence. At the time, the training of dogs was predominantly limited to poodles. Wallenda introduced a new element to his dog theatre: his experiments with Ulmer dogs, renowned for their colossal size, proved immensely successful and captivated the public's imagination. The international press acclaimed his innovations, dedicating illustrated articles to his remarkable dog training experiments (Figure 5.1). As a result, the theatre rapidly expanded its repertoire to include an array of other clever animals—geese, cats, cockatoos and, at a certain point, even elephants.

Drawing from the example of the Antonio Wallenda theatre, this article explores the transnational features inherent to circus and funfair traditions, shedding light on their historical interplay and the methodological challenges involved in unravelling their interconnected pasts.[3] This research leverages a background in performance and media history, which combines archive-based theatre historiography with digital history approaches, to focus on the theatrical and performative dimensions of circus and funfair culture. Based on a typology of available sources, I will chart some possible routes for a transnational perspective on itinerant entertainment. Additionally, I will highlight some of the challenges and potential pitfalls in working with these sources; this includes more general methodological reflections on studying historical performances when faced with limited, diverse and internationally scattered source material. To that end, I will discuss European sources on the Wallenda theatre, from municipal archives in Belgium (Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels) to digitized newspapers from Belgium, France, Luxemburg, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Hungary, the UK and the Netherlands.[4] These are supplemented by posters and ephemera

Figure 5.1 "Wallenda's dressirte hunde", engraving H. Leutemann, 1890. Theatre collection University of Amsterdam

from online repositories on popular visual culture, circus culture and funfair culture.[5]

The past three decades have seen a proliferation of new resources due to the systematic digitization of national and local newspapers, journals, books, letters and printed ephemera. This rapid digitization of primary and secondary sources, as well as the advent of full-text web-based search capabilities, have significantly altered the way historians conduct research. The aforementioned transformation has reduced the need for location-specific archival research and expanded the availability of new materials across a broader geographical scope, facilitating a more comprehensive transnational study of the transient nature of circuses and funfairs. However, some historians rightly caution that currently accessible content is influenced by various cultural, archival and political factors, rendering it highly selective and biased (Zaagsma; Putnam). Consequently, certain themes, regions or marginalized groups may receive less visibility. Given that itinerant showpeople represent one such minority group, employing a diverse range of sources and methodologies is crucial. This article aims to demonstrate how to navigate fragmented historical records by integrating

close reading and digital methods, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the cultural significance of circus and funfair traditions across borders and time periods.

Circus and funfair as transnational popular entertainment histories

Today, circus and funfair seem like two distinct cultural practices featuring a diverse range of artists from different communities. However, their historical origins reveal a strong interrelationship rooted in the broader tradition of itinerant popular entertainment. Unlike stationary amusement parks, circuses and funfairs (or *carnivals* in the United States) traversed different towns, captivating local audiences with fleeting yet exhilarating experiences. These forms of mobile entertainment were typically erected in public spaces such as marketplaces or open fields and then relocated after a predetermined period. In Europe, the tradition of itinerant entertainment can be traced back to ancient harvest and religious festivals intertwined with significant trade fairs that emerged during the late Middle Ages (Jansen; Wynants, "La science au champ de foire"). Itinerant acrobats, jugglers, singers and animal tamers travelled in the slipstream of the annual fair circuit, crossing villages, cities and even countries. Through their vibrant performances, these artists bestowed joy, laughter and moments of excitement upon the communities they visited.

During the nineteenth century, itinerant funfair artists transitioned into large travelling companies, often touring with expansive wooden theatres erected temporarily in town and village squares (Figure 5.2).[6] Richly decorated with painted scenes and artistic sculptures, funfair theatres could accommodate up to 1,000 spectators in comfortably equipped booths complete with electric lighting and occasionally heating, reducing dependence on favourable weather conditions. These large rectangular booths were transported from one location to another by horses, steam traction or railway. Inside the booths, visitors mostly saw a combined programme of theatre acts, music, dance, acrobatics, farces and magic shows. While the content of these acts closely resembled those in capital cities, itinerant showpeople offered their own adapted versions to provincial towns and villages, which typically lacked their own playhouses. The fairground repertoire drew inspiration from popular melodramas, adaptations of *féeries*, operetta and opera, as well as sketches rooted in the medieval farce tradition with a notable *commedia dell'arte* influence. These performances were often condensed to accommodate the size of the acting troupe and shortened considerably to allow for a mixed bill featuring various popular acts.[7]

The emergence of large funfair theatre companies aligns with the period in which the origin of the modern circus is commonly situated, roughly 250 years

Figure 5.2 Picture postcard with funfair (generic depiction), postmarked from Kostheim to Mainz, 1902, depicting the Wallenda Theatre. Wikimedia Commons

ago in the United Kingdom when Philip Astley brought together highly skilled performers, clowns, acrobats and equestrians inside a circular ring in 1768. Astley's combination of entertainment genres within a ring of a set diameter quickly became a global phenomenon. By the early nineteenth century, circuses could be found in thirteen different countries, including the United States from 1793, Canada from 1797, Mexico from 1802 and Russia from 1816 (Speaight; Toulmin, "Celebrating 250 Years"). In Europe, travelling circus companies, which were often family-run businesses rooted in the funfair tradition, adapted their itineraries to the rhythm of medieval fairs, which still dictate fair calendars today. These yearly gatherings ensured a sizeable audience for travelling troupes. By the mid-nineteenth century, as trade activities shifted to stores and annual fairs became primarily entertainment venues, every major fair featured at least one circus tent erected in the market square or on the outskirts of town. It was only in the early twentieth century that circus and funfair circuits began to diverge, particularly when travelling theatres and circus tents abandoned the annual fair in favour of mechanized entertainment (Wynants, "La science au champ de foire").

A growing scholarship on circus traditions has emerged since the early 2000s, with some foundational volumes paving the way (Tait and Lavers; Arrighi and Davis; Toulmin, "Celebrating 250 Years"). Recent publications reflect a variety of

methodological approaches and thematic foci combining performance studies, cultural studies, anthropology and historiography—broadly speaking, a combination of humanities and social sciences methodologies. Due to the emphasis on the body and extraordinary physical attributes in circus, scholars notably focus on the role of women and gender dynamics (Childress; Tait), as well as the spectacular display of exotic and unconventional individuals in so-called "freak shows" and dime museums (Garland Thomson; Adams). However, historiographical approaches are limited to outlining the circus as an independent theatrical genre during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, mainly in the Anglo-Saxon world (e.g., the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia). Nevertheless, the narratives and histories revealed in this recent scholarship demonstrate the complex and global history of "the circus" while overlooking travelling funfair entertainment as a typically European phenomenon rooted in the medieval trade market.[8]

What circus and fairground traditions have in common is a particularly visual and physical quality of performance, in addition to the performers' nomadic way of life. Hence, circus and funfair communities have left few material traces, and sources are scarce and scattered across national borders. Moreover, circus historians have to work with different types of archives, such as public archives, museums and private collections, to construct narratives of the growth and context of circus in specific times and places. Existing studies remain mostly locally bound and are based primarily on Anglo-Saxon sources (Kwint; Wilmeth; Kanellos; Toulmin, "Fun without Vulgarity"). The same is true of important local contributions to funfair culture in continental Europe, which have received very little academic attention so far and are based mainly on local history societies.[9] And yet, recent scholarship on itinerant theatre, circus and visual culture has demonstrated that travelling entertainment moved not only from town to town but also across national and linguistic boundaries (Arrighi; Balme, *The Globalization of Theatre*; Kember, "The Lecture-Brokers"; Wynants, "The Travelling Lantern"). This transnational aspect of both circus and funfair cultures is particularly challenging to map and study.

The history of itinerant circus and funfair entertainment reflects a complex but vital relationship between local history and transnational networks. The challenge for researchers is to write a transnational history based on local records with attention to cultural, social, economic and political differences. A particular difficulty in this endeavour is the linguistic diversity of sources that are also geographically spread over a vast area, which may hinder individual scholars from studying the entire range of critical responses in the local press and accounting for all relevant research in different languages. That explains why, to this day, circus and funfair scholarship is highly fragmented and based on secondary or limited source material. However, this limitation can be transformed into an

advantage, as it can also encourage collaboration between researchers from different linguistic regions—a positive development reflected in a growing number of international research consortia on early popular culture.

Circus and fairground as performance histories

Due to the transient and temporary nature of circus, scholars have legitimately characterized and analyzed it as a form of theatre. According to Peta Tait and Katie Lavers, the true essence of circus lies in its qualities of "liveness" (6); unlike recorded or scripted drama performances, circus represents a unique live event. Regardless of age or social status, people come together to witness a spectacle of extraordinary acts, creating an exciting atmosphere that is the hallmark of circus performances. While circus may not align with conventional text-based theatre plays, it has a place within the broader French concept of *arts du spectacle vivant*.[10] This term encompasses a wide range of performing arts, such as music, dance, circus, illusionism and pantomime. A common definition of *spectacle vivant* in artistic and theatrical circles highlights the co-presence of actants (those who perform) and an audience (those who observe) within a specific time and space.

Since circus, funfair and carnival traditions align with the fundamental principles of theatre, the most apt lens for exploring their history is theatre historiography (Postlewait and McConachie; Canning and Postlewait; Davis and Marx). This approach not only analyses historical performances (Balme, *The Cambridge Introduction*; Fischer-Lichte, *The Routledge Introduction*) but also examines production processes and audience reception within specific historical and sociological contexts (McConachie). This includes the various competencies that showpeople combined—their artistic skills in relation to aesthetic traditions, their managerial and promotional abilities, and their modes of engaging with the audience. In Antonio Wallenda's case, a shrewd combination of theatrical and circus techniques, along with practical talents and knowledge, enabled him to strike a delicate balance. He not only trained and performed with animals but also assumed the role of theatre director and impresario, overseeing the entire production (Figure 5.3). He also undertook managerial responsibilities, organizing tours and coordinating promotional campaigns in the same vein as his famous American contemporary P. T. Barnum (1810–1891), who was known for his sensational showmanship and marketing prowess (Cook).

Consequently, it is essential not only to examine the show itself but also to analyse the entire undertaking "as performance," which embraces the manifold dimensions encompassed by this term. The historical analysis of circus and funfair entertainment "as performance" encompasses analysis of both the shows themselves and how showpeople framed and announced them. Like other circus

Figure 5.3 Poster "Grand Théatre Antonio Wallenda". Collection Musée de la vie wallonne, Liège

and funfair events, Wallenda's entertainment business was intricately scripted, starting with written and visual announcements in the local press accompanied by handbills, posters and reviews aimed at attracting customers. The content and visuals presented in performances were frequently echoed in leaflets, backed by favourable press and sometimes endorsed by experts or reputable journals and newspapers.

The sophisticated construction of one's artistic persona and the consistent repetition of self-crafted narratives in the press were significant factors in shaping an artist's reputation and powerful tools for engaging with audiences,

influencing their perceptions, and ultimately enhancing their overall experience. This leads us to the notion of performativity. Rooted in speech act theory and further conceptualized by scholars such as Judith Butler and Erika Fischer-Lichte, *performativity* introduces a perspective that regards performance as a form of social action with the transformative potential to effect change (Butler; Fischer-Lichte, *The transformative power*).[11] This comprehensive understanding of performance facilitates a nuanced exploration of the diverse aspects of circus and funfair experiences within a broader socio-cultural landscape.

Wallenda, for instance, strategically promoted himself as a professor of cynology, a move that undoubtedly elevated the prestige of his shows but was also a common strategy in show business at the time. His so-called affiliation with the Germanische Kennel-club and the publication of his booklet *Praktisches Handbuch für Hundeliebhaber* ("Practical Handbook for Dog Lovers") served as vehicles for endorsing his reputation as a man of science, drawing from personal experience and observations.[12] He spared no effort in showcasing his knowledge of and experiments with dogs; his promotional materials boasted no less than twenty-six diplomas and certificates, attesting to the alleged acclaim and recognition he had garnered throughout his career. This self-presentation (or performance) as a professor can be contextualized within a broader socio-cultural context marked by a burgeoning public fascination with science. The era witnessed a flourishing of popular science with a proliferation of science-popularizing publications, exhibitions and illustrated lectures (Fyfe and Lightman; Lightman; Vanhoutte and Wynants). The public's optimism about progress driven by scientific advancements was also reflected at the fairground (Wynants, "La science au champ de foire"). Showpeople like Wallenda cleverly leveraged their understanding of public interests and desires to capitalize on this cultural zeitgeist. Moreover, they were good at engaging with audiences and shaping their performances to resonate with prevailing cultural values and expectations.

The source is not the event

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the complex role itinerant circus and funfair entertainment played, we need to draw from various types of sources, including textual, visual and material remains. These sources encompass both direct and indirect forms of documentation.[13] Direct sources, which originate from artists and producers themselves, offer valuable insights into their lives and practices; however, such sources are scarce and challenging to access. With rare exceptions, most mobile theatres and show booths, renowned for their magnificent facades, have not endured over time. As they travelled, their mobile residences carried only the most essential items, resulting in sparse

survival of personal correspondence, photo albums and similar artifacts. Consequently, circus and funfair historians must rely primarily on indirect sources, including historical accounts, discussions, and representations of circus and funfair performances and companies in the local press, journals, playbills and iconographic materials. Despite their indirect nature, these sources can yield remarkable insights into the dynamic relationships between artists and audiences, as well as the broader cultural and social contexts in which these forms of entertainment emerged.

However, it is important to recognize that these sources do not directly present the events themselves. They are "mediated representations" shaped by historical actors and eyewitnesses seeking to capture the actions, events and thoughts we aim to understand (Canning and Postlewait 14). The difficulties inherent to historical research, and theatre historiography in particular, are magnified in the realm of circus and fairground entertainment. Due to their transient nature, the available sources only provide glimpses into production, distribution and reception contexts, never capturing the performance itself. Each attempt at revisiting these past events requires conceptual frameworks and evidence-based arguments through which we can access and comprehend the performance. Therefore, historians must reflect on the status of sources, preservation contexts and their own positionality. As historical events are contingent, researchers can only seek traces, piecing together fragments to construct an understanding of past moments and contexts. Historians studying circus and funfair traditions must also contemplate the extent to which these representations, with their inherent intentionality, selectivity and interpretative frameworks, shape our historical imagination and influence our engagement with history. Source criticism is crucial in navigating the complexities of this relationship. The remainder of this article will delve into the key source types valuable for circus and funfair historians, using the Wallenda theatre as a primary case.

Municipal archivalia

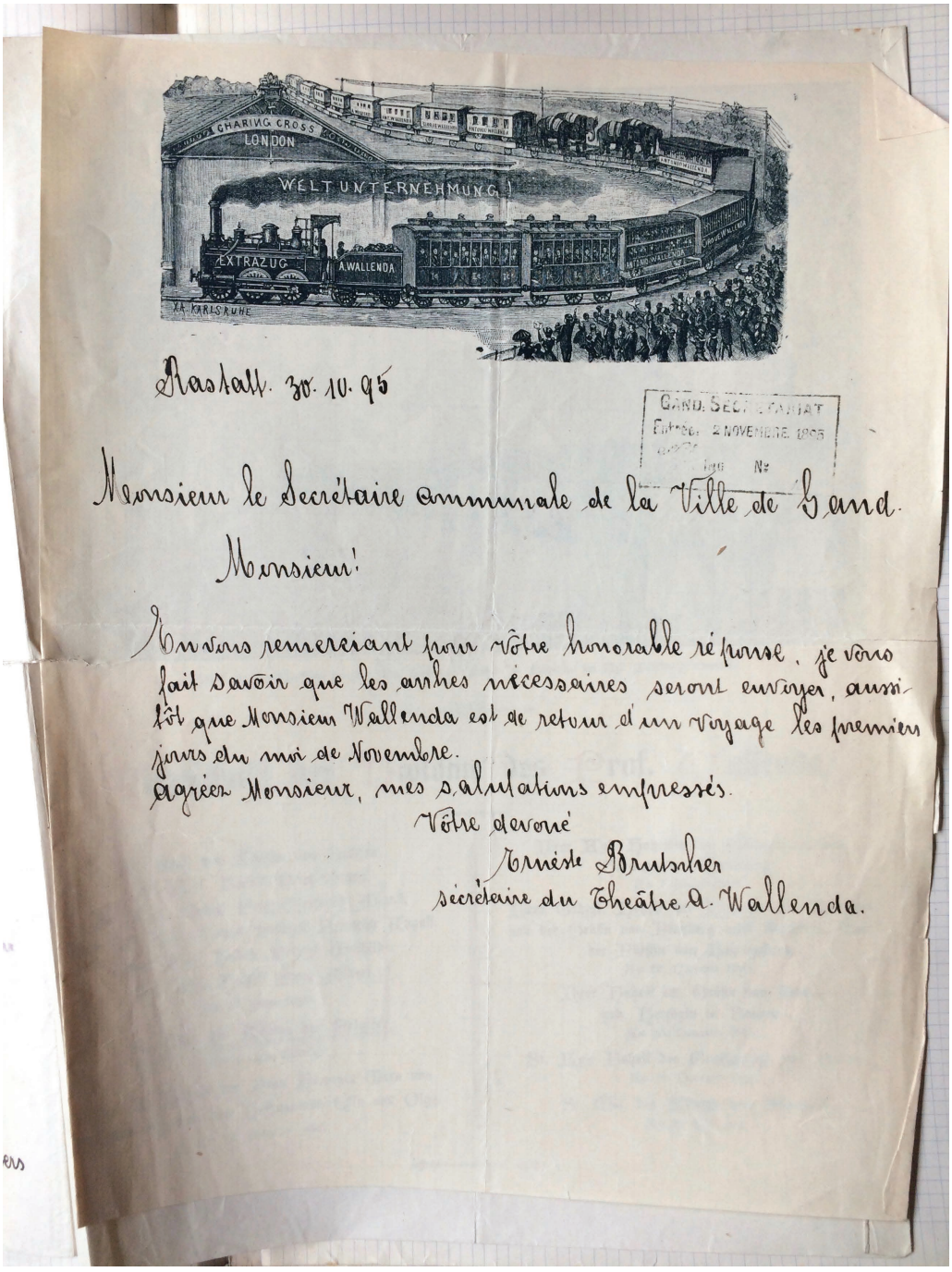
Since the organization of fairs predominantly fell under the purview of local authorities, municipal archives are a valuable resource for historians delving into the realm of travelling entertainment. Therefore, they are a good place to start. Within these archives, one may fortuitously come across letter correspondence by circus and funfair managers pertaining to the allocation of pitches for the annual fair. In some instances, archives house an extensive and diverse collection of handbills, posters, maps and even photographs. By examining surviving maps and lists of stand holders, we can glean insights into the popularity, evolution

and market share of specific itinerant theatres and circuses. For instance, a map from the Antwerp city archives in Belgium shows that the Wallenda theatre was positioned in a prime location stretching out over a long Boulevard at the 1899 Sinksenfoor, which reflected its elevated status and corresponding higher costs. The registration lists for the fairs in Ghent, Belgium (1896), along with those in Haarlem (1897) and Nijmegen (1898) in the Netherlands, also include details about the Wallenda theatre, providing information about its dimensions and costs. Classified as a *grand baraque*, Wallenda's theatre often emerged as the largest of its kind, with dimensions ranging from thirty-three to forty-eight metres in length and thirteen metres in width, as well as a reported capacity to accommodate up to 1,000 people.

The archivalia kept in the Ghent municipal archive offer a good picture of Wallenda's self-promotion. His personalized letterhead, which he used for planning international tours, not only reflected the grand scale of his company but also served as a persuasive tool when corresponding with local town councils to seek their support in securing a venue for his animal theatre at annual funfairs (Figure 5.4). These letters contained an array of promotional materials carefully curated to impress and entice prospective hosts. Wallenda skilfully leveraged favourable reviews from the international press and featured an impressive list of dignitaries who had witnessed the performances of his "wonderful performing dogs," which was a common promotional strategy within the entertainment business. In Wallenda's case, these accolades included credentials from notable figures such as the King of the Belgians, the Duke of Edinburgh and Duchess Wera von Württemberg, among others. Wallenda also took great pride in the esteemed ring he received from Albert of Saxony, highlighting it in his advertisements as one among numerous tokens of recognition.

Theatre programmes

Surviving programme booklets or leaflets are particularly valuable sources for circus and fairground historians, as they often contain descriptions or overviews of what the public got to see and experience. A programme from 1896 (Figure 5.5) gives a good impression of the Wallenda theatre's diverse acts. The evening opened with a pantomime: "a grand spectacle" in two parts entitled *La fête du jour de l'an à Peking* [*sic*]. Spectators could marvel at two *tableaux vivants* that, according to the programme, were characterized as "remarkable" and inspired by the painter Trianon's drawings. The first depicted "the high treason trial against a Chinese officer, his conviction and the death penalty." In the second tableau, Director Wallenda staged a spectacular Chinese New Year celebration in the presence of the Emperor of China, in which a



Rastatt. 30. 10. 95

GAND. SECRÉTARIAT
Entrée: 2 NOVEMBRE 1895
Liv. N°

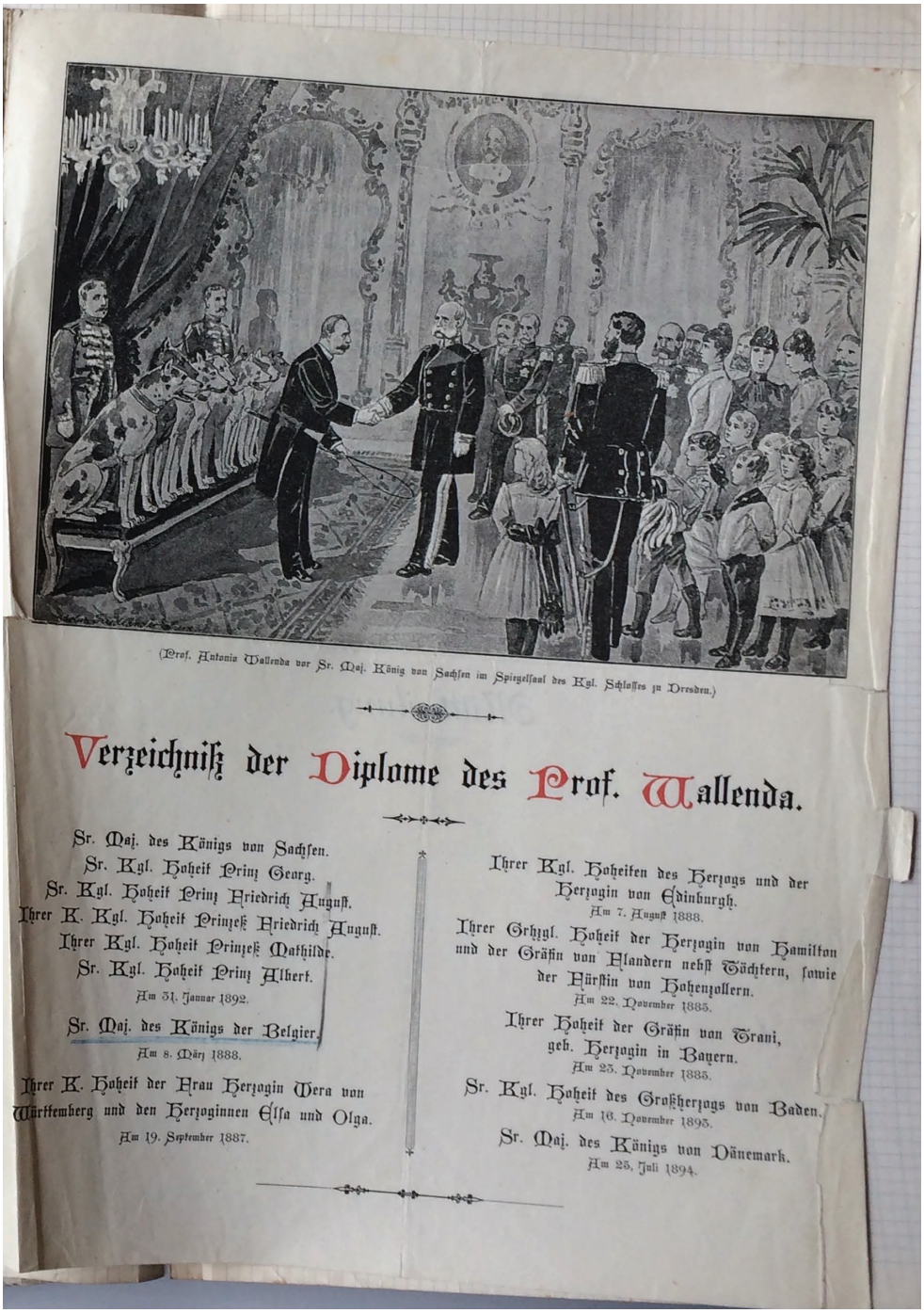
Monsieur le Secrétaire communale de la Ville de Gand.

Monsieur!

En vous remerciant pour Votre honorable réponse, je vous fait savoir que les arrhes nécessaires seront envoyer, aussitôt que Monsieur Wallenda est de retour d'un voyage les premiers jours du mois de Novembre.
Agréez Monsieur, mes salutations empressés.

Votre devoué
Ernste Brutscher
secrétaire du Theâtre A. Wallenda.

Figure 5.4 Letters from Wallenda Theatre addressed to the Ghent city council, dated 30 October 1895, including promotional material. Ghent city archives



(Prof. Antonio Wallenda vor Sr. Maj. König von Sachsen im Spiegelsaal des Kgl. Schlosses zu Dresden.)

Verzeichniß der Diplome des Prof. Wallenda.

Sr. Maj. des Königs von Sachsen.
Sr. Kgl. Hoheit Prinz Georg.
Sr. Kgl. Hoheit Prinz Friedrich August.
Ihrer K. Kgl. Hoheit Prinzeß Friedrich August.
Ihrer Kgl. Hoheit Prinzeß Mathilde.
Sr. Kgl. Hoheit Prinz Albert.
Am 31. Januar 1892.

Sr. Maj. des Königs der Belgier.
Am 8. März 1888.

Ihrer K. Hoheit der Frau Herzogin Vera von Württemberg und den Herzoginnen Elsa und Olga.
Am 19. September 1887.

Ihrer Kgl. Hoheiten des Herzogs und der Herzogin von Edinburgh.
Am 7. August 1888.

Ihrer Erhgl. Hoheit der Herzogin von Hamilton und der Gräfin von Flandern nebst Töchtern, sowie der Fürstin von Hohenzollern.
Am 22. November 1885.

Ihrer Hoheit der Gräfin von Trani, geb. Herzogin in Bayern.
Am 25. November 1885.

Sr. Kgl. Hoheit des Großherzogs von Baden.
Am 16. November 1895.

Sr. Maj. des Königs von Dänemark.
Am 25. Juli 1894.

Figure 5.4 (Continued)

CIRQUE LORCH
sur la
place Empereur-Guillaume, Metz
Nous avons l'honneur d'informer les habitants de Metz et des environs que nous venons d'arriver par train spécial avec notre
Grand Cirque en tente
et une société d'écuyers renommés, artistes de 1re ordre et un grand nombre de chevaux de selle et d'école de race, éléphants indiens, etc., et que nous donnerons
Samedi, le 29 avril, à 8 heures du soir
La première grande
Représentation d'ouverture de gala
Début des meilleurs artistes dans leurs pièces de bravoure. Présentation des meilleurs chevaux d'école et dressés en liberté, éléphants indiens, etc. Les entr'actes seront remplis le plus agréablement par de bons clowns et «Auguste le Niaud.»
Avant la représentation : CONCERT donné par l'orchestre du cirque.
Dimanche, le 30 avril
2 grandes représentations
à 4 heures de l'après-midi et 8 heures du soir.
Nouveau programme pour chaque représentation.
PRIX DES PLACES Stalles 2 M., premières 1,50 M. Secondes 1 M., Galerie 50 Pf.
Les enfants jusqu'à l'âge de 10 ans, payent moitié prix sur toutes les places.
Les militaires au-dessous du sergent-major payent pour les secondes 0,60 M., galerie 30 Pfg.
La caisse du cirque est ouverte pour la vente des billets à partir de 10 heures du matin sans interruption.
La tente des animaux contient l'écurie, ainsi que les plus petits chevaux du monde, éléphants indiens, etc., et peut être visitée à partir de 9 heures du matin, contre 20 Pfg. d'entrée, les enfants 10 Pfg.
Lorch frères, directeurs.
Le cirque est garanti contre toutes les intempéries.
2304

Münchener Kind'l
Coin des rues Chaplerue et de l'Evêché.
Bière de Munich
dite
LEISTBRÆU
tirée directement du tonneau.
Vins de Moselle en verre.
2374 ANDRÉ HIRSTER.

VILLA PANORAMA
Tous les dimanches après-midi :
Grand concert militaire
par l'orchestre du régiment d'infanterie n° 145 sous la direction du chef de musique M. Rieck.
Entrée par personne, 20 Pfg. à la caisse. Entrée libre pour les enfants. Billets à l'avance chez MM. STÜRMER, rue de l'Esplanade ; SCHÖNHEIT, coin de la rue Serpenoise ; CASSELMANN, rue du Pontiffroy ; EBENAU, place d'Armes.
Billets pour famille : 4 personnes, 50 Pfg. ; 6 personnes, 75 Pfg. 2408
Abonnement pour tout l'été : par personne, 1,50 Mk. ; famille de 3 personnes, 3 Mk. ; chaque personne en plus, 1 Mk.
Ed. Gaulien. A. Rieck.

Ier dépôt lorrain de glaces naturelles
Ed. GAULIEN
Villa Panorama, Montigny.
Je recommande ma glace naturelle pure comme le cristal, fournit tous les jours à domicile. Prix par mois :
10 livres 6 Mark — 25 livres 12 Mark
12 » 8 » — 50 » 20 »
15 » 10 » — 100 » 30 »
Meilleur marché en prenant plus.
Mes voitures font le trajet tous les jours et les cochers acceptent des commandes ainsi que M. Lindemann, restaurateur, rue Fabert, n° 2, chez lequel on trouve aussi de la glace à tout temps.
Glacières aux prix de fabrique.
2406 Ed. GAULIEN.

CHAMP DE FOIRE.
AU GRAND SAINT-NICOLAS
M. RICHTER a l'honneur d'informer sa clientèle qu'il est venu comme les années précédentes s'installer à la foire de Metz, avec ses marchandises de première fraîcheur. Il recommande ses macottes de Paris, ses pains d'épices de la maison Lefebvre-Denise de Nancy et de Dijon, ses amis de Flavigny, ses bergamottes de Nancy, etc.
Les différents bonbons, les pralines sont fabriqués avec les soins et la propreté qu'exige cette partie si délicate de notre commerce ; toujours bien frais, bien parfumés, ils sont recherchés par les connaisseurs.
Le magasin se trouve le 2e à gauche, en venant de la rue Serpenoise.
J. RICHTER.
La maison fabricant elle-même ses produits, ne le cède en rien à ses concurrents comme prix et qualité.
Remarquer l'enseigne : 2367
AU GRAND SAINT-NICOLAS

Grand panorama à étages de Höpfner
sur la place Empereur-Guillaume.
PREMIÈRE SÉRIE
NOUVEAU! NOUVEAU!
L'Exposition universelle de Chicago en 1893. L'incendie d'une forêt dans l'Amérique du Sud. Incendie de bateaux et de greniers à Hambourg. Le terrible tremblement de terre à Congoyera en Espagne le 11 septembre 1892, dans lequel 2300 personnes ont péri.
Le coulement du bateau à vapeur postal Geyser.
L'attentat de dynamite au Café Véry à Paris. L'accident des mines à Anderlues en Belgique. La bataille de Gravelotte. L'Empereur Guillaume avec son état-major. Le débarquement de Christophe Colomb en Amérique. La chute du Rhin près Schaffhouse. Une chasse aux lions en Afrique.
DEUXIÈME SÉRIE.
Panorama de Paris avec l'Exposition universelle. Le lac de Zurich en Suisse. Lucerne en Suisse. La flotille de guerre allemande devant Zansibar. Les manœuvres de la flotte près Danzig. Panorama de Hambourg, représenté pendant l'épidémie de choléra. L'inondation du territoire de l'Elbe et la Vistule.
2372 F. Höpfner.

POUR LA PREMIERE FOIS EN ALLEMAGNE
Place Empereur-Guillaume
THEATRE DE LIONS
et MENAGERIE
de
Nouma Hawa
Dimanche, 30 avril, à 4 heures de l'après-midi:
GRANDE REPRESENTATION
D'OUVERTURE
Début du premier dompteur du monde NOUMA HAWA du cirque d'hiver à Paris.
BUCHER avec ses 6 lions dressés.
SMITZ, le premier dresseur d'ours blancs.
14 lions, tigres, ours blancs et éléphan's dressés.
A chaque représentation on donne à manger aux bêtes.
Représentations tous les jours à 4 heures de l'après-midi et à 8 heures du soir.
Prix des places : premières, 1,20 Mk. ; secondes, 0,80 Mk. ; troisième, 0,40 Mk.
Le détail par les affiches et les programmes. 2439

CONSTRUCTION ELEGANTE DE PLANCHES
Sur la place Empereur-Guillaume
Théâtre Wallenda
Construction de luxe élégante.
Ouverture dimanche, le 30 avril
à 4 heures de l'après-midi.
Théâtre d'artistes de magies et de pantomimes de premier rang.
20 artistes de toute branche, 50 animaux dressés, parmi lesquels présentation des dogues tigrés, d'une taille colossale, dans leurs productions surprenantes ainsi que des
MOPSES DRESSÉS
dressage qui n'a pas encore été atteint jusqu'à présent.
Représentations de pantomimes comiques avec apparitions de revenants et de spectres. Effets de lumière, d'eau et de feu.
PRIX DES PLACES :
Stalles numérotées Mk. 1,20. Ier rang 80 Pfg.
2e rang 50 Pfg. Galerie 30 Pfg. Enfants la moitié.
2450 LA DIRECTION.
PAS DE PEINE

HIPPODROME.

J'ai l'honneur d'aviser que je viens d'arriver au Champ de Foire.
Je mets à la disposition du public vingt excellents CHEVAUX de SELLE sous la conduite de bons écuyers.
Bonne Restauration.
2378 LASCH, propriétaire.

CHAMP DE FOIRE
Le Carrousel ECKERT se recommande à l'honorable public. 2380

Où se trouve Pierre Hess?
Sur l'Esplanade, dans l'allée des marroniers, le Restaurant du milieu sous les arbres, ayant des centaines de places.
Excellente BIERE de GARDE
VINS NATURELS, LIQUEURS, etc.
SPECIALITÉ :
GAUFRES HOLLANDAISES
2382 Pierre HESS.

VELOCIPEDISTES!

J'ai l'honneur d'appeler l'attention sur les
VELOCIPEDES
de la fabrique de MM. Winklhofer & Jænicke à Chemnitz (Saxe), connue universellement et primée à différentes reprises.
Seul dépôt chez
Georges NOÉ
rue Tête-d'Or, 33, et place St-Simplice, 12.
NB. — Il sera délivré un billet de garantie pour chaque machine.
PRIX RÉELS & MODÉRÉS. — FACILITÉ DE PAYEMENT. 1671
Leçons d'apprentissage gratuitement.
Atelier de réparations à la maison même.

Sur la place Empereur-Guillaume.
Nouveau! Pour la première fois ici! Nouveau!
L'Exposition d'art mécanique de Dôle
renommée universellement, est à voir à partir de Dimanche.

La première série est exposée. Elle contient le splendide voyage à travers l'Italie, la Savoie, l'enclade du Mont-Blanc, la Suisse, la France. Toutes les vues sont prises d'après nature et photographiées sur verre. Elles sont présentées au visiteur moyennant un appareil à rotation, de sorte que toute personne peut voir commodément l'exposition tout en restant assise et sans changer de place.
Prière de ne pas confondre cette exposition avec les panoramas ordinaires, parce qu'elle est seule en Allemagne dans sa construction.
Prix d'entrée pour les adultes : 30 Pf., enfants : 15 Pf. Cartes de familles pour 4 personnes : 1 Mk. Cartes d'abonnement pour 2 personnes : 50 Pfg. — Ouvert tous les jours à partir de 10 heures du matin jusqu'à 10 heures du soir.
2376 Le propriétaire : D. Dôlie.

Transfèrement de magasin.
L'Horlogerie de la rue du Faisan, 10, est transférée à la
RUE PIERRE-HARDIE, N° 2
à côté de la librairie Muller.
HENRI ZEIGER,
3060 HORLOGER.

A partir du 1er mai
Mon commerce de VINS, SPIRITUEUX et EPICERIE se trouvera dans ma maison
Rue des Jardins, 22
2393 M. WOLZ.

Rue de la Tête-d'Or, 28.
Demange
METZ

1952
Rue de la Tête-d'Or, 28.

Richon. S. Jules, succeur
RUE FOURNIRUE, 4, METZ
BIJOUTERIE, JOAILLERIE, ORFEVRERIE, HORLOGERIE
Grand choix de Brillants.
Liquidation générale
pour cause de cessation de commerce
avec rabais considérable sur toutes les marchandises. 1339

LOTERIE
au profit du foyer des institutrices d'Alsace-Lorraine. Tirage le 2 juin. Seulement dès lots en argent. Lot principal : Mk. 10 000. Billets à 1 Mk. chez Fr. KAPPLER, rue Serpenoise ; STÜRMER, marchand de tabacs, rue de l'Esplanade, et EVEN, libraire, rue de la Cathédrale. 591

1000
Des milliers doivent et trouvent du soulagement et guérison certaine contre les affections pulmonaires, toux, enrouement, asthme, bronchite, broncchorrhée, engorgement, toux quinteuse, exténuant, etc., par l'emploi de la préparation de malt, Maltosin (Extr. malti comp.), reconnue universellement, inventée par moi et fabriquée d'après une nouvelle méthode améliorée.
Maltosin n'est point d'arcane, mais est préparé de malt pur, est introduit dans tous les Etats et recommandé par des autorités médicales. Déjà après l'emploi pendant quelques jours il survient du soulagement, on obtient même, d'après les communications des malades, presque toujours le succès le plus favorable. Il est donc éprouvé comme le remède le meilleur et non-surpassé, ce que prouvent les attestations, ne pas le confondre avec de semblables préparations sans valeur. Seul véritable avec la marque M. S. Prix avec la caisse c. envoi préalable du montant ou c. rembours. à verser 4 Mk., 5 verre 6 Mk., 10 verres 10 Mk. De même la poudre de malt aagl. de Max Schütze (Extr. malti siccum) s'est éprouvée p. le soulagement, etc., des mmx ci-dessus mal essentiellement pour fortifier les personnes faibles et les convalescents et enfants faibles. Prix emball. compris : pet. boîte M. 2,50 ; double boîte 4 Mk. Des dépôts se trouvent aussi dans beaucoup de pharmacies et droguerias.
Labor. chim. de Max Schütze, Berlin N.W. 21 ou Stettin poste 9
Inventeur et fabricant de la véritable préparation de malt «Maltosin». 2409

CHOCOLAT SUCHARD NEUCHATEL SUISSE
4478

Docteur WAGNER
chirurgien, orthopédiste
Traitement orthopédique des maladies et difformités dorsales et articulaire, de la carie des os, de la coxalgie, du pied bot, paralysie d'enfants. 5030
Rue de la Grande-Fausse, 4.

MIEL
pur garanti, à Mk. 0,80 la livre.
MOUBAUX, Lndelange par Aumetz, Lorraine. 2452

LA
SULFATINE
est le meilleur anti-microbe connu pour la guérison des maladies de la vigne.
DÉPOT : chez les principaux épiciers. 2391
Demander le prospectus.

Des Dames qui attendent leur délivrance, trouveront accueil chez
Mme Huberty-Koch
sage-femme diplômée 4932
Grande rue 47, Luxembourg.
Discrétion absolue. Prix modérés.

F. J. CHRISTOPHE
mécanicien-dentiste
22, rue Sainte-Marie, 22
METZ
SOINS DE LA BOUCHE.
Ayant été pendant cinq ans premier mécanicien dans l'atelier de M. Urbalzek, je me recommande au public de Metz et des environs.
2386 F. J. CHRISTOPHE.

Café de Hambourg
fabrication) forte et de bon goût est envoyé à 60 et 80 Pf. la livre en colis postaux de 5 livres franco de douane. Ferd. Rahmstorf, Ottensen près Hambourg. 6956

Une dame veuve
bien au courant des travaux de ménage et de la couture, cherche de l'occupation pour chez elle ou pour le dehors, ou place chez une personne seule. S'adr. rue du Grand-Wad, 12, au 1er. 553

Le gérant responsable: H. FREYSE. — Imprimerie de la Gazette de Lorraine, rue St-Marcel, 27 et 29.

Figure 5.4 (Continued) Page with advertisement for Théâtre Wallenda from Gazette de Lorraine, April 30, 1893. Gallica Bibliothèque nationale de France

La Pantomime à grande spectacle.

La fête du jour de l'an à Peking

à deux tableaux.

Les costumes sont executés par **Landolf** à Paris après les dessins du célebre paintre **„Trianon."**

Premier tableau.

Le procès de la haute trahison
contre un officier chinois,
sa condemnation et l'exécution capitale.

Second tableau.

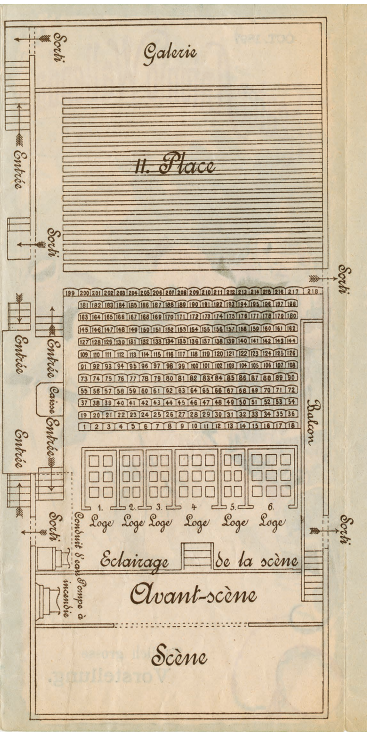
La fête du jour de l'an en présence de l'empereur de Chine.

Exécutions des differentes danses nationaux
par des **Japonais, Chinois et Nègros,**
arrangé et mis en scène par Mr. le directeur Wallenda.

Le grelots chinois
executées par les frères et soeurs Wallenda.
Grande potpourri artistique.

Les 18 jongleurs.
Apothéose.

L'apparition féérique
et la grande cavalcade chinoise
avec le garde de corps en cuirasses,
tous les arrangements d'un splendeur extraordinaire.



Programme principale.

1. **La fête du nouvel an à Peking,** pantomime à grande spectacle en deux parties avec le concours de plusieurs Japonais.
2. **L'armoire merveilleux.**
3. **Ouverture.**
4. **Mr. Martini,** l'homme crocodile.
5. **Mr. Richards** avec ses oies savants.
6. **La veritable fille du tribut des Zoulous** dans son exercise sur le boule.
7. **Le barbier américain.**
8. **Les 12 dongues géants,** présenté par Mr. Le Directeur Wallenda, à remarquer le travail splendide des chiens faisant le saltomortale.
9. **Entrée des clowns.**
10. **Orchestre.**
11. **La barre fixe,** executée par les deux soeurs Wallenda.
12. **Mr. Richards** comme dessinateur expres.
13. **Le fakir** avec ses deux élèves.
14. **Mlle Marguerite** avec ses 20 kakatoës savants.
15. **Tableaux vivants** après les maîtres célèbres.
16. **Professeur Mr. A. le baron de Kendlér,** Magie moderne.
17. **Mlles Lola et Therése,** les plongeuses americain.
18. **Vieillesse et jeunesse,** executé par Mlle Marguerite et Mlle Katharina.
19. **Danse clotoche,** executé avec le concours de Zoulous.
20. **Les veritables Zoulous** dans leur exercises inedites sur le trapez volant (pour la première foix en Europe).
21. **Les Américains.**
22. **Les jeunes acrobates executés** par Charles et le Zoulou Umpantini.
23. **Chats et chiens** dressés d'une nouvelle manière et presenté par Mr. le Prof. Ant. Wallenda (dernière création).
24. **Mdlls. Rose et Elisa** sur le globe tournant.
25. **Les soeurs Wallenda avec les Zoulous** sur le fil de fer.
26. **Fête des Chevaliers.**

Figure 5.5 Programme booklet "Theater Antonio Wallenda", 1896. Ghent University Library

series of "national dances" were performed. Next, the Wallenda siblings performed an "artistic potpourri" featuring no less than eighteen jugglers. The apotheosis of the opening act promised a fairy-like appearance and a grand Chinese procession with bodyguards in armour. Costumes were purportedly Parisian-made.

This grandiose opening act was said to be followed by a two-hour programme in which animals and humans alternated in physical arts, demonstrations, clowning acts and musical interludes. According to the press, one of the highlights was "*l'homme crocodile*," an improved version of the well-known snake man. The performer, Mr. Martini, turned out to be a young man whose "peculiar body composition" had reportedly been examined by a Viennese professor and called "an anatomical riddle," which earned him the nickname *crocodile man*. A newspaper article offers the following description:

> This gentleman shows you the trick of lying on his stomach and back on the ground at the same time. And when, after performing this and many other seemingly impossible movements, he gets a little warm and, by taking off his crocodile mask, uncovers his head, he looks around the room with a friendly smile, as if it is nothing out of the ordinary when his head with chin and neck is resting on a chair and the gentleman himself is sitting on the crown of that head with his feet on the ground. This anatomical riddle is loudly applauded and it will certainly surprise many people even less than it already does that he does not repeat his rounds when he hears that a large meal awaits him in his room, the first since last evening. For this is undoubtedly the darkest side of the crocodile man's job, that he must, for understandable reasons, refrain from solid food all day long and drink very little. (*Zutphensche courant*)

In short, the programme leaflet teaches us that the Wallenda theatre and its counterparts within the funfair circuit featured an amalgamation of diverse genres and performers showcased within a single evening programme. Animal tamers, acrobats, jugglers and equilibrists harmoniously shared the stage. However, to gain deeper insight into the content and reception of such shows, historians must turn to newspaper reviews. These critical appraisals can provide glimpses into the performances and shed light on the reactions and impressions of contemporaneous audiences.

Newspaper accounts

As seen earlier, the accelerating pace of digitization initiatives has significantly expanded access to newspaper archives, which is exemplified by the Wallenda

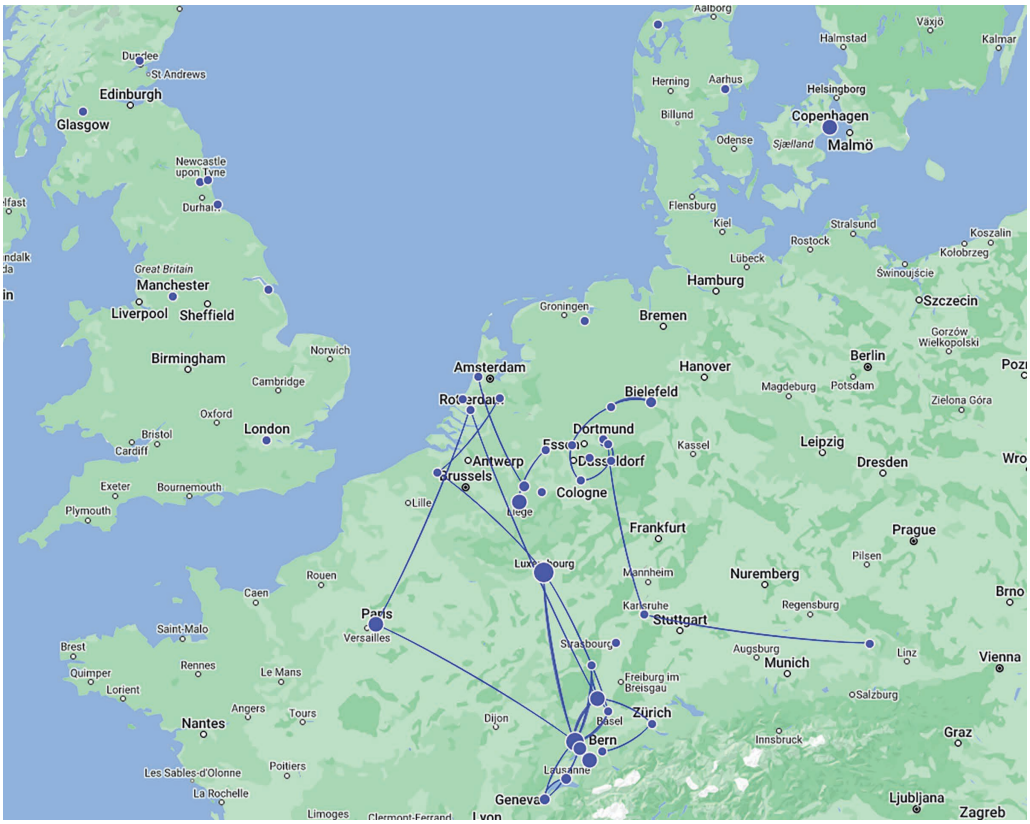


Figure 5.6 Wallenda's itinerary in central Europe, based on references in local newspapers

case. By replacing manual and on-site access to microfilm and paper archives with online portals that allow full-text search across millions of scanned and OCRed pages, digitization has made it much easier for both scholars and the general public to explore historical newspapers. Moreover, the proliferation of digital newspaper libraries presents a significant opportunity for a transnational approach, as it enables researchers to broaden their geographical scope considerably. Artificial Intelligence also facilitates access to foreign-language sources, allowing for a more comparative analysis and easier mapping of travelling artists' itineraries over large areas (for an example, see Figure 5.6, which traces Wallenda's itinerary based on announcements referenced in local newspapers).

This digital evolution affects how scholars access historical newspapers and, increasingly, how they study them (Ehrmann et al.; Bunout et al.). Historical newspapers contain information on the content of the shows, programme highlights and the reception they received from local audiences, as well as first-hand accounts provided by historical agents who were present at the events (see, for

instance, the review quoted above). Announcements and advertisements published in local newspapers can also be mined for crucial details on the featured acts, intended audience, pricing and venue locations. These sources still require a "close reading," which involves a detailed and critical analysis. In order to integrate "distant reading"[14] with close reading, a new cultural method called "scalable reading" is becoming imperative (Armaselu and Fickers; Bunout et al.). This approach allows for smooth transitions between different perspectives, akin to zooming in and out from a macroscopic overview to a microscopic examination.

For instance, digitized newspapers allow us to examine the international press coverage of the Wallenda theatre on a large geographical scale while also zooming in on regional variations in audience reception. The international press eagerly seized upon Wallenda's self-promotion, often emphasizing his remarkable skill with "his" dogs and highlighting his non-violent approach to training. In 1892, an announcement in Swiss newspaper *L'impartial* invited dog enthusiasts to seek his expert advice on dogs. By adopting an animal-friendly narrative, Wallenda effectively tapped into a growing public concern for animal welfare. However, in metropolitan Paris, the reception was markedly different. During the winter of 1888, Wallenda performed for approximately two months at the Folies-Bergère in Paris, albeit with a scaled-down troupe consisting solely of his *douze Danois* (*Le Matin*; *La Liberté*; *Le Temps*). Daily announcements in various newspapers sought to attract audiences and positioned Wallenda's dogs as a rival attraction to M. Roche's wolves, which were simultaneously showcased at the Cirque d'Hiver. And yet, critical opinions diverged; an article published in the 21 December 1888 issue of *L'Événement* harshly criticized Wallenda's spectacle of "muzzled dogs," portraying them as melancholic and emaciated. Despite this critique, the Parisian public remained fascinated, as is evidenced by Wallenda's return to Paris two years later and regular positive newspaper announcements. However, it was not uncommon then, as it is today, for descriptions to be copied from other newspapers—sometimes verbatim or in translation—and even for parts of the original announcement to be repurposed as a "review." Moreover, favourable reviews were sometimes composed and submitted to the local press by the showpeople themselves. Such reviews can be recognized when comparing international press coverage. Therefore, careful scrutiny of newspaper reviews is imperative to ensure a nuanced and accurate interpretation of the historical record.

Trade union journals

Periodicals created by and for itinerant showpeople are a valuable but largely overlooked source on the social and professional lives of circus and funfair communities. These journals were mainly issued by the various trade unions

established by showpeople at the end of the nineteenth century.[15] The first of these trade unions in Europe was the French Chambre Syndicale Patronale des Voyageurs Forains (CSPVF), founded in 1882 in Paris (Andersen; Deslandes). The CSPVF issued *Le voyageur forain*, a periodical that was distributed among its members: "all those, rich or poor, who earn an honourable living by teaching, entertaining the public or selling products" (*Le voyageur forain*, no. 5). Other associations for itinerant showpeople were created across Europe in the late 1880s and 1890s.[16] The main goal of these unions was to solve practical problems affecting itinerant performers' professional lives by promoting collaboration and participation, while also countering society's often negative perception of their trade and social position.

While journals have gained ground in the history of the natural and medical sciences as a platform for communication and knowledge circulation, periodicals issued by showpeople unions are an untapped resource for circus and funfair historiography.[17] These sources offer unique glimpses into life behind the scenes, providing crucial information about showpeople's needs, grievances, networks and media use during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They enable researchers to take a closer look at showpeople's professional networks, how they organized themselves and how they dealt with practical and social issues, which may offer a better understanding of their role in our socio-cultural history (Andersen). These journals also include practical information such as local market and fair calendars, a section for buying and selling attractions, travel information for train networks, address changes of members, news items and solidarity activities—for instance, when booth owners had suffered damage due to fires or thunderstorms.

For example, according to the 15 November 1908 issue of *La Comète Belge*, Wallenda's theatre had suffered extensive damage during a fire at the funfair in Liège. It was perhaps no coincidence that his theatre had seven exits, as we can see from the map in the programme booklet (Figure 5). This allowed the crowd to "fly away quickly [. . .] in case of fire" (*Gazet van Antwerpen*). Fire safety proved no luxury; a large fire hose was available behind the stage. This was not the first time Wallenda's theatre fell victim to calamities or barely escaped them. In 1899, a fire broke out at Antwerp's Sinksenfoor funfair in the neighbouring Circus Guillaume. The fire originated in the steam engine for the electrical lighting, which had exploded due to overheating. Seven of Circus Guillaume's twenty-one horses lost their lives, and quite a few of the surrounding houses, as well as the Hippodrome Theunissen, were destroyed (their horses had fortunately already been taken away to a nearby site). Some of the affected showpeople's equipment was insured, while that of others was not. As was often the case, the union immediately organized a charity benefit for the afflicted, illustrating the prevalent sense of solidarity within the community (*Gazet van Antwerpen*).

Playbills

Searching for traces of the Wallenda theatre uncovers a variety of posters and announcements in newspapers, such as the 14 August 1891 issue of French newspaper *L'Express* or the 30 April 1893 issue of the *Gazette de Lorraine*. Often catalogued under the "ephemera" heading, playbills and other printed advertisements are a much-neglected category of sources in historical theatre archives. They vary in form and content, ranging from information on the time, place and cost of performances to extended accounts of programmes and information on the performers. Because the information provided is largely (but not exclusively) verbal, playbills do not appear to pose any interpretation-related problems; however, they can be read in a variety of ways. Most approaches to tracing the itineraries of artists attempt to mine the bills for information on a particular performance, set of acts or artist. Some playbills from the mid to late nineteenth century go a few steps further by reporting on the conditions and status of performers, sometimes even exposing the most intimate details of their bodies to the public gaze. Playbills can also be analysed to understand the role of the public and its horizon of expectations. The implied audience is often addressed ("Come and see!") but also informed about the booth's heating system or safety regulations (such as provisions in case of fire).

Although the available source material may not explicitly provide detailed information about historical audiences and their reactions, playbills offer valuable insights into audience positioning and engagement, as well as the prevailing public mindset. In the case of the Wallenda theatre, it becomes evident that the primary target audience was comprised of families and children. The announcements further reveal that there were two daily performances, with discounted admission for children under ten years of age. By examining the various price categories, we can infer the presence of a diverse social class composition among attendees. The more expensive boxes catered to the well-to-do, while the standing spots at the rear accommodated the working class. The lower middle class, who could afford seats, had the option of choosing between comfortable positions behind the boxes or on the balcony. The adjoining newspaper advertisements also provide valuable context about broader contemporary entertainment culture and the status of a particular show. Notably, the Wallenda theatre was advertised alongside circus performances, menageries, hippodromes and other fairground entertainment, including attractions such as the *Exposition d'art mécanique de Dölle* and the *Kaiserpanorama*, which promised a captivating stereoscopic photographic journey around the world (*L'Express*; *Gazette de Lorraine*). These advertisements serve as additional evidence of the vibrant and diverse entertainment options available to the public at the time, as well as the intense competition among showpeople for the public's attention.

However, as theatre historian Christopher B. Balme has rightly pointed out, the playbill is foreplay, not the theatrical act itself—it is clearly designed to "inform, attract, and provide [the prospective audience] with informational and aesthetic stimuli with the ultimate aim of attracting individual spectators who will form a collective audience" (Balme, "Playbills" 37). Therefore, promotional materials produced by showpeople must be studied with great care, as showpeople had a talent for exaggeration and an ability to convert small, even insignificant materials into highly attractive public spectacles. They often changed their names or gave new, promising titles to the same attractions. The name "Wallenda" appears in the sources under several noteworthy variations: *Menageri Wallenda* (in Denmark in 1893), *Cinématographe Antonia Wallenda* (in the 23 May 1907 issue of Swiss newspaper *Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne*) and *Wellando's theatrical hunde* (on a poster made by Adolph Friedländer in 1919). Whether these individuals were relatives or imitators remains uncertain. Both scenarios are plausible, and uncovering the precise relationships between them poses a significant challenge.

In short, discerning the diverse identities of itinerant showpeople is challenging. Illusion and spectacle were their defining features, and the narratives they disseminated about themselves were often conflicting. At the same time, it is vital to remember that audiences were not mere "victims" of showpeople's clever exploitation of novelties and spectacle. Circus and fairground spectators were well aware of the tricks and strategies of showmanship, and they customarily played along. Moreover, playbills formed a crucial link between the inside and outside of the theatre, between the social world of the public and the socio-aesthetic practices of showpeople (Balme, "Playbills" 41).

Iconographic sources

Circus and funfair historians can also make use of many other types of iconographic sources, such as photos, postcards, paintings and engravings in journals and newspapers. Despite their intrinsic ephemerality, hundreds of thousands of iconographic sources have survived and been archived in countless ways—in private collections, in hand-pasted theatrical scrapbooks and, most recently, in the form of digitally accessible images in online repositories of museum and university collections. It is tempting to treat iconographic sources as pictorial evidence of past events or visual "missing links" in the reconstruction of historical performances (or, more generally, of a theatrical reality or space). A postcard kept in the Circus collection of the University of Amsterdam, handed out as a souvenir, dates to the period when Wallenda became director of the Cirque Variétés in Liège around 1900 (Figure 5.7). It is one of the few surviving

Figure 5.7 Postcard: "Souvenir du Cirque Variétés Liège. Directeur A. Wallenda". Theatre collection University of Amsterdam

photographic portraits of Wallenda, and it gives a clear idea of how he presented himself as a distinguished personality in a neat suit. However, his bristling moustache and the floral ornaments framing his portrait also reveal a keen sense of theatricality.

It is tempting to interpret the accompanying image of the painted wooden stage curtain (known as *rideaux de scène*) as a glimpse into the Wallenda theatre or a window to the past. However, as highlighted by Balme, such pictures cause a "referential dilemma" on a theoretical or methodological level. The question is whether such images index a "theatrical reality" capturing an actual performance or are the outcome of "iconographical codes" divorced from theatrical practices (Balme, "Interpreting the Pictorial Record" 190–191). In simpler terms, what are the relationships between visual images and the past theatrical reality or practice they are meant to represent? Balme suggests that assessing pictorial evidence solely for its "documentariness"—e.g., its role in reconstructing the theatrical past—diminishes the discursive potential of these iconographical objects. Therefore, the goal of iconological analysis should be to "explore this referential multivocality" and demonstrate how theatre iconography interacts with a spectrum of aesthetic and social discourses (Balme, "Interpreting the Pictorial Record").

Indeed, the image on the souvenir postcard reveals little about Wallenda's performance itself (except perhaps that it may have involved a weightlifter and lions). More importantly, it provides a window into the aesthetic tradition in which Wallenda situated his theatre, which was by then a permanent winter circus in Liège. This tradition is rooted in the aesthetics of *féeries* and *tableaux vivants*, which draw inspiration from Romantic paintings depicting mythical scenes of humans and animals dwelling together harmoniously. Correlating this image with contemporary newspaper accounts underscores Wallenda's ambitious transformation of the Liège winter circus into a sophisticated theatre equipped with modern luxuries and comforts. Notably, he introduced innovations such as a steam engine for electricity, carpet flooring and seat renovations. The *beau monde* of Liège welcomed Wallenda's prestigious theatre, as was confirmed by the contemporary press:

> The decoration of the stage, entrusted to the greatest artists, will be of a richness and artistic taste not yet known; the brilliant new scenery has been completely renewed, and the fresh paintings will give the auditorium a sumptuous glow. Another welcome innovation is the ventilation system in the Cirque's dome, which has been raised and will keep the auditorium cooler than ever before. (Conradt)

A close look at the postcard, coupled with insights from other contemporary sources, reveals Wallenda's commitment to transforming his winter circus into a fashionable and prestigious cultural venue. This fusion of artistic refinement and modern convenience is indirectly depicted in the image of the stage curtain captured on the postcard.

Missing sources

The examination of the Wallenda case has provided an eclectic exploration of various sources relevant to the historical study of funfairs and circuses. However, tangible material sources such as Wallenda's mobile theatre, set pieces, theatrical machinery, projection devices or animal cages remain elusive. These material artifacts, though scarce, hold invaluable potential for historians when they surface in museums or private collections, as they can offer insights into production methods, the form and content of theatrical productions, and aesthetic traditions. Moreover, considering the potential of media archaeology in such investigations, material artifacts can offer additional perspectives on technological and cultural contexts, as well as the role of media in circus and funfair history.

One of the most daunting challenges is bringing to light the individuals who remain unseen or scarcely visible in the available sources (Wynants, "Invisible Hands"). This includes those who operated behind the scenes, such as the individuals responsible for animal care and the numerous performers who briefly joined the company, often known only by their stage names. Little is known about Mrs. Wallenda, whose presence occasionally flickers in the historical records. For instance, an account of a fire at the funfair in Passau, Bavaria briefly mentions her frantic search for her children amid the chaos, offering a poignant glimpse into her life (*Echo der Gegenwart*). It is also noted that she likely managed the bookkeeping, which was not uncommon within the fairground milieu, as is evidenced by similar practices documented elsewhere (Andersen and Wynants).

For those interested in familial or social networks within communities of showpeople, avenues for exploration extend beyond the sources highlighted earlier. Genealogy or prosopography studies, also known as collective biography studies, offer promising avenues for unravelling these connections. These studies often draw from a wide range of archival materials, including birth registers, population registers and commercial almanacs; such documents provide insights into the web of relationships within communities of showpeople over time. In addition, researchers can consult circus and fairground communities themselves by tapping into oral sources, private family archives and collections for further enrichment of historical narratives. Particularly, historians investigating the twentieth century and beyond can draw from personal testimonies and private sources, including family photos and correspondence, to provide important contextual additions to the historical discourse.

Moral dilemmas

Wallenda's theatre not only had a transnational itinerary but also featured a queue of international performers "from all nations." While it is difficult to ascertain to what extent this was an exaggeration to increase the level of spectacle, we do know for sure that two children from Cape Town (so-called "Zulus"), who "performed amazing feats, ballets and nice pantomimes [. . .] which drew a full tent every evening and, especially at afternoon shows, caused the cheers of children," were on the programme (*Algemeen Handelsblad*). The children's national origin was strongly played out in the promotion campaigns. At a time when the West's colonial expansion was at its peak, these children appealed to the audiences' curious thirst for exoticism.

There are hardly any traces of outspoken ethical concerns in public opinion about such practices. The press mostly emphasized the fact that the "pagan

children" had received Christian baptisms. In the Netherlands, Wallenda was even praised by the Utrecht press for having trained these children to become first-class trapeze artists. This was entirely in line with the civilizing discourse of the colonial project, in which the West justified colonization by emphasizing their religious and educational works. Only two years later, in Groningen, the 26 May 1898 issue of *Het nieuws van den dag* reported that the police had banned the performances of the children at the Wallenda theatre because they violated the Child Labour Act.[18] So far, few traces of similar objections have been found in other countries.

Historians studying circus and funfair cultures encounter an additional challenge when confronted with depictions of individuals showcased as curiosities in dime museums or "freak shows."[19] These spectacles exhibited individuals such as women with beards, people of short stature, conjoined twins and those of non-European descent, inadvertently reinforcing nineteenth-century cultural norms regarding what was deemed "normal" and "healthy." Present-day historians and the cultural heritage sector recognize the need to critically examine the language and representation surrounding these individuals who were exhibited derogatorily in the past. It is crucial to avoid pejorative terminology or words that have acquired negative connotations over time. As a guiding principle, it is advisable to eschew words that reduce individuals to their illnesses, disabilities or cultural backgrounds and instead utilize more objective and scientifically informed language. For instance, we can refer to individuals with achondroplasia as "people of short stature" rather than employing the term "dwarfs." Similarly, individuals with acromegaly may be referred to as "people with gigantism," and those with hypermobility syndrome as "people with increased joint mobility." "Siamese twins" could be more accurately referred to as "conjoined twins" or "people with cephalopagus." Likewise, individuals with hypertrichosis or hirsutism, characterized by extraordinary hair growth, can be described without stigmatizing language.

Ethical considerations regarding the use of photographic images featuring individuals from circus and funfair cultures further complicate the study of spectacle. This challenge is particularly prominent within the sphere of entertainment culture, which contains an extensive collection of images, including photographs and postcards often characterized by content that may be viewed as offensive due to its sensational nature. These visual materials sometimes feature erotic or obscene elements, and often bear troubling associations with a problematic colonial history. This raises pertinent questions: What criteria should guide the selection of images to illustrate historical research? How can researchers present and contextualize these sources in a responsible and ethical way to contribute to a deeper understanding of historical and contemporary intricacies? Moreover, how can this be accomplished without inadvertently perpetuating or

Figure 5.8 Postcard: "Gruss aus dem Antonio Wallenda Theater". Author's collection

amplifying sensationalism in the process? These ethical dilemmas underscore the need for a thoughtful and responsible approach when incorporating visual materials into historical discourse.

The two young children from Cape Town who performed at the Wallenda theatre exemplify these dilemmas. Their photographs housed in the archives of the Mucem museum in Marseille depict them with feathers in their hair; their fur-trimmed costumes and headdresses feature shell decorations, and their noses and ears are pierced with large rings. Whether these costumes correspond to Cape Town's traditional attire is doubtful—they likely primarily catered to the public's expectations of seeing "pagan" children. While considering whether to include these photographs as illustrations in this article, several crucial questions arose. Can we identify the individuals depicted? Did they consent to their portraits being taken? Will the inclusion of these images enhance or detract from the discourse? While I cannot definitively answer these questions affirmatively, I initially refrained from including the photographs. However, through an online auction (another resource for historians), I acquired a postcard featuring the entire Wallenda family that included the two children from Cape Town positioned similarly to Wallenda's daughters. As this is the only image of the entire family encountered, I ultimately decided to include it (Figure 5.8). Despite the potentially derogatory subtitle, I believe sufficient context has been provided to justify the publication.

Concluding remarks

The study of circus and funfair traditions as transnational performance cultures presents a fascinating and complex endeavour. To fully grasp the international breadth of these traditions and their cross-border impacts, it is imperative to delve into regional sources. However, the challenge lies in the scarcity and incompleteness of surviving primary sources related to itinerant circus and theatre communities, which often lacked reliable institutional centres and left behind few tangible remains. Consequently, relevant sources are dispersed among various archives. Navigating these sources requires skilled research techniques involving careful examination of archival materials and dislocated newspaper sources, all while simultaneously tracing the locally adapted narratives of the shows.

The growing digitization of historical sources has increased accessibility to a wealth of new materials on a wider geographical scale, facilitating transnational investigations into the transient nature of circus and fairground history. Drawing from the example of Antonio Wallenda's theatre, this contribution has explored a wide range of source categories, including archival documents, correspondence, handbills, posters, maps and photographs, to illustrate how historians can piece together fragments of the past to shed light on the multidimensional aspects of itinerant entertainment and its reception. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations and fragmentary nature of these sources, as they often present incomplete or biased representations of historical events.

Through careful analysis of these materials, researchers can navigate the complexities of studying past events while remaining attentive to interpretive possibilities and historical contexts. These sources can help clarify the relationships between artists and audiences, the social and cultural contexts in which performances unfolded, and the evolving popularity and dynamics of circus and fairground cultures. The combination of regional archive sources and digital research tools represents a significant step toward a more comprehensive understanding of circus and funfair histories, offering fresh insights into their historical significance and impacts across borders.

Acknowledgements

This research was conducted within the framework of Science at the Fair, an EU-funded project undertaken by a team of researchers with the objective of studying the role of travelling showpeople in the circulation of science, knowledge and visual culture. I extend my gratitude to my entire team for their

assistance in conducting newspaper research on Antonio Wallenda across various European countries. I would also like to express my appreciation to Professor Kornélia Deres for her support in tracing Wallenda's journey through Hungary based on digitized Hungarian newspapers, as well as the archive staff at the Musée de la Vie wallonne for their help in finding and accessing sources on Wallenda in their collection in Liège.

Notes

1. The Wallenda name is still famous for a daredevil circus troupe led by Nik Wallenda, whose great-grandfather founded the Flying Wallendas in 1921 and brought the group to America. The family legacy continues with the sixth and seventh generations performing high-flying stunts worldwide.
2. It was announced as "Wallenda's largest European automats and exhibition of award-winning machines and marvels" in many German newspapers, such as the 1 August 1880 issue of *Neue Mülhauser Zeitung*. All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.
3. This article is derived from a paper presented at the "Écrire l'histoire du cirque" conference in Montpellier, which took place on 7–8 October 2021. A shorter French version will appear in the conference proceedings edited by Karel Vanhaesebrouck and Pierre Philippe-Meden, which will be published by the Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée.
4. The following European digital libraries, often linked with national libraries and archives, were consulted for this research: the British Newspaper Archive, Belgicapress (the Royal Library of Belgium), Gallica (Bibliothèque nationale de France), Delpher (the Royal Library of the Netherlands), Deutsche Zeitungportal (Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek), E-Newspaper Archives (Swiss National Library) and Arcanum (the Eastern European Newspaper Archive), as well as more global digital libraries such as archive.org, E-Periodica, HathiTrust and others.
5. In Europe, large collections of circus and funfair ephemera are made available by academic and heritage institutions such as the University of Amsterdam (Allard Pierson Museum), the Ghent University Library (collection Vliegende Bladen), the Mucem Archive in Marseille, the Musée de la Vie wallonne in Liège and the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum in Leipzig.
6. The terms "fairground" and "funfair" are often used interchangeably, but they do have some subtle differences. A funfair is typically a temporary event, while a fairground is also used for more permanent year-round attractions designed for amusement.
7. John McCormick draws a distinction between nomadic funfair troupes and travelling troupes dispatched from the capitals touring with one or several productions. The latter typically visited several municipal theatres as part of a provincial circuit. Funfair troupes often operated on their own alternative circuit, performing in towns or villages lacking theatres. They were not strictly tied to fairs and frequently performed in *ville morte* towns during the periods between annual fairs (McCormick 69).

8. The history of travelling carnivals in the United States is more recent—it has been spurred on by P. T. Barnum's world-famous travelling circus (which went by many names) since 1870, as well as the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which showcased mechanized rides, games, sideshow attractions and food vendors. Subsequently, travelling shows and carnival companies proliferated across the country, often setting up in empty fields or alongside state and county fairs to provide entertainment to isolated farming communities.
9. Particularly in The Netherlands (Keyser; Jansen), France (Py and Ferenczi), Germany (Szabo) and Belgium (Van Genechten and Convents; Mardaga; Berghe). A few early film studies contain chapters on travelling exhibitors, essentially focusing on the fairground as a place where early film was introduced from 1896 onward in Belgium (Convents), France (Deslandes and Richard), the UK (Toulmin, "Telling the Tale"; Kember, *Marketing Modernity*) and Germany (Loiperdinger; Garncarz, *Medienwandel*).
10. In France, the concept of *l'art du spectacle* or *spectacle vivant* is regulated by a 1999 law providing a framework for various performance arts including circus. The law stipulates that at least one paid artist must be present in public performances, underscoring the circus's esteemed role in French culture.
11. The concept of performativity has since found applications in various disciplines including sociology, gender studies and performance studies. In theatre and performance studies, it suggests that performance affects both actors and audiences, broadening performance analysis to everyday social interactions.
12. This is mentioned in the 8 July 1898 edition of the *Schiedamsche Courant*, but the original has not been found yet.
13. For a typology of sources for theatre history, see Steinbeck's table, reproduced and discussed by Christopher B. Balme in *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*.
14. Distant reading, as conceptualized by Moretti in 2013, systematically analyses vast text collections to extract relevant data (albeit risking oversimplification or misinterpretation). It employs techniques like basic text mining using tools like Antconc, as well as custom-made software utilizing more advanced methods like topic modelling, natural language processing (NLP) and vector algorithms for tasks such as identifying locations and individuals, detecting trends and uncovering textual re-use (Andersen et al.; Wevers).
15. Many of these journals are currently being digitized as part of the EU-funded project Science at the Fair (www.scifair.eu) and will be made accessible for future research via Archive.org.
16. The Showmen's Guild, originally established in 1889 in the UK as the United Kingdom Showmen and Van Dwellers Protection Association, is one of the most prominent associations for travelling showpeople (Toulmin, "Fun without Vulgarity"). Similar unions were founded across Europe, such as the Deutscher Schaustellerbund (journal *Der Komet*); the Central-Organ zur Vermittlung des Verkehrs zwischen Directoren und Künstern (journal *Der Artist*); the Società internazionale tra proprietari di spettacoli viaggianti (journal *La Bussola*); the Syndicat suisse des commerçants et industriels forains (journal *Le Forain Suisse*); and the Société Mutuelle des Voyageurs (journal *Le Voyageur Forain Belge*). The last two were modelled on the French Chambre Syndicale Patronale des Voyageurs Forains, and showmen were often members of several international guilds (Andersen et al.; Andersen and Wynants).

17. Not counting exceptions such as *Kermis: het spiegelpaleis van het volk* by Van Genechten et al. The CSPVF is discussed in more detail in Deslandes's *Histoire comparée du cinéma* (1966). See also: Garncarz, "Siegen Database of Itinerant Cinemas 1896–1926."
18. An 1874 Dutch law, as well as an 1889 Belgian law, stipulated that children under the age of twelve should not work in industry. Night work was also banned for girls between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. This probably had little impact on travelling showpeople. Working hours were reduced to a maximum of twelve hours per day for boys between the ages of twelve and sixteen, as well as girls between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. However, the law did not bring about radical change, as new rules often remain dead letter in practice, especially among itinerant artists.
19. There is a substantial body of literature on freak shows, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon context (Fiedler; Garland Thomson; Tromp; Bogdan; Durbach). For European perspectives, see Kérchy and Zittlau (note: the European case studies discussed adopt a broader perspective on "freaks," considering their significance within medical contexts and literary analyses from the early modern period to almost contemporary times).

References

Adams, Rachel. *Sideshow U.S.A.: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination*. University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Algemeen Handelsblad [Amsterdam], 19 April 1897.

Andersen, Eva. "Unfairness at the Funfair: The French Syndicate for Travelling Showpeople in the Long Nineteenth Century." *Cultural and Social History*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2024, pp. 65–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2023.2271197.

Andersen, Eva, et al. "How to read the 52.000 pages of the British Journal of Psychiatry? A collaborative approach to source exploration." *Journal of Data Mining and Digital Humanities*, HistoInformatics, 2020. https://doi.org/10.46298/JDMDH.6077.

Andersen, Eva, and Nele Wynants. "Women at the wheel: female management and workforce at the nineteenth-century funfair." *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 2024, pp. 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/17460654.2023.2298434.

Armaselu, Florentina, and Andreas Fickers, editors. *Zoomland: Exploring Scale in Digital History and Humanities*. De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023.

Arrighi, Gillian. "The circus and modernity: A commitment to 'the newer' and 'the newest.'" *Early Popular Visual Culture*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2012, pp. 169–185. https://doi.org/10.1080/17460654.2012.664747.

Arrighi, Gillian, and Jim Davis, editors. *The Cambridge Companion to the Circus*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Balme, Christopher B. "Playbills and the Theatrical Public Sphere." *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*, edited by Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait, University of Iowa Press, 2010, pp. 37–62. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt20mvg5m.5.

———. "Interpreting the Pictorial Record: Theatre Iconography and the Referential Dilemma." *Theatre Research International*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 190–201. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0307883300017004.

———. *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*. 1st ed., Cambridge University Press, 2008. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511817021.

———. *The Globalization of Theatre 1870–1930: The Theatrical Networks of Maurice E. Bandmann*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108768252.
Berghe, Patrick Vanden. *800 jaar meifoor Brugge*. Gevaert, 2003.
Bogdan, Robert. *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*. University of Chicago Press, 1990.
Bunout, Estelle, et al., editors. *Digitised Newspapers – A New Eldorado for Historians? Reflections on Tools, Methods and Epistemology*. De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110729214.
Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990.
Canning, Charlotte M., and Thomas Postlewait, editors. *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*. University of Iowa Press, 2010.
Childress, Micah. "LIFE BEYOND THE BIG TOP: AFRICAN AMERICAN AND FEMALE CIRCUSFOLK, 1860–1920." *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2016, pp. 176–196. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537781415000250.
Conradt, Marcel. *Histoire des Théâtres à Liège, 1850 à 1975: Tome 3*. Éditions du Céfal, 2008.
Convents, Guido. *Van kinetoscoop tot café-ciné: de eerste jaren van de film in België 1894–1908*. Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2000.
Cook, James W. *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum*. Harvard University Press, 2001.
Dagblad van Maastricht [Maastricht], 11 May 1897.
Davis, Tracy C., and Peter W. Marx, editors. *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance Historiography*. Routledge, 2022.
Deslandes, Jacques. *Histoire comparée du cinéma. Tome 1 : De la cinématique au cinématographe 1826–1896*. Casterman, 1966.
Durbach, Nadja. *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture*. University of California Press, 2009.
Echo der Gegenwart [Aachen], 16 May 1881.
Ehrmann, Maud, et al. "Digitised Historical Newspapers: A Changing Research Landscape." *Digitised Historical Newspapers: A Changing Research Landscape*, edited by Estelle Bunout, Maud Ehrmann, and Frédéric Clavert, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023, pp. 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110729214-001.
Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne [Lausanne], 23 May 1907.
Fiedler, Leslie A. *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self*. 1st ed., Anchor Books, 1993.
Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies*. Routledge, 2014.
———. *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. Routledge, 2008.
Fyfe, Aileen, and Bernard Lightman, editors. *Science in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century Sites and Experiences*. University of Chicago Press, 2007.
Garland Thomson, Rosemarie, editor. *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*. New York University Press, 1996.
Garncarz, Joseph. *Medienwandel*. UVK Verlag, 2016.
———. "Siegen Database of Itinerant Cinemas 1896–1926." *Siegen Database of Itinerant Cinemas*, https://fk615.221b.de/siegen/wk/show/index.php?language=en. Accessed 26 Oct. 2022.
Gazette de Lausanne [Lausanne], 29 July 1892.
Gazette de Lorraine [Metz], 30 Apr. 1893.
Gazet van Antwerpen [Antwerp], 19 May 1899.

Het nieuws van den dag [Groningen], 26 May 1898.
Jansen, G. H. *Een roes van vrijheid: Kermis in Nederland*. Boom, 1987.
Kanellos, Nicolás. "Notes on the Mexican-American Circus." *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*, edited by Peta Tait and Katie Lavers, 1st ed., Routledge, 2016, pp. 377–385. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003074670-33.
Kember, Joe. *Marketing Modernity: Victorian Popular Shows and Early Cinema*. 1st ed., University of Exeter Press, 2015.
———. "The lecture-brokers: the role of impresarios and agencies in the global Anglophone circuit for lantern lecturing, 1850–1920." *Early Popular Visual Culture*, vol. 17, no. 3–4, 2019, pp. 279–303. https://doi.org/10.1080/17460654.2019.1702180.
Kérchy, Anna, and Andrea Zittlau, editors. *Exploring the Cultural History of Continental European Freak Shows and 'Enfreakment.'* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012.
Keyser, Marja. *Komt dat zien!: de Amsterdamse kermis in de negentiende eeuw*. Israel [etc.], 1976.
Kwint, Marius. "The circus and nature in late Georgian England." *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*, edited by Peta Tait and Katie Lavers, 1st ed., Routledge, 2016, pp. 331–348. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003074670-30.
L'Événement [Paris], 21 Dec. 1888.
L'Express [Paris], 14 Aug. 1891.
L'impartial [La Chaux-de-Fonds], 1892.
La Comète Belge [Bruges], 15 Nov. 1908.
La Liberté [Paris], 1 Nov. 1888.
Le Matin [Paris], 20 Oct. 1888.
Le Temps [Paris], 25 Oct. 1888.
Le Voyageur forain [Paris], no. 5, 1884.
Lightman, Bernard. *Victorian Popularizers of Science: Designing Nature for New Audiences*. University of Chicago Press, 2007.
Loiperdinger, Martin, editor. *Travelling Cinema in Europe: Sources and Perspectives*. Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 2008.
Mardaga, Pierre, editor. *Foires et Forains en Wallonie: magie foraine d'autrefois*. Musée de la Vie wallonne, 1989.
McConachie, Bruce A. *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
McCormick, John. *Popular Theatres of Nineteenth Century France*. Routledge, 2011.
Neue Mülhauser Zeitung [Mulhouse], 1 Aug. 1880.
Postlewait, Thomas, and Bruce A. McConachie, editors. *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance*. 1st ed., University of Iowa Press, 1989.
Postlewait, Thomas, and Charlotte M. Canning. "Representing the Past: An Introduction on Five Themes." *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*, edited by Charlotte M. Canning and Thomas Postlewait, University of Iowa Press, 2010, pp. 1–34.
Putnam, Lara. "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 121, no. 2, 2016, pp. 377–402. https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/121.2.377.
Py, Christiane, and Cécile Ferenczi. *La fête foraine d'autrefois: les années 1900*. La Manufacture, 1987. https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb39773016c.
Schiedamsche Courant [Schiedam], 8 July 1898.
Speaight, George. *A History of the Circus*. Tantivy Press/A. S. Barnes, 1980.

Szabo, Sacha. *Kirmes, Jahrmarkt und Volksfest im Spiegel historischer Postkarten: Ein kulturgeschichtlicher Streifzug*. Olms Presse, 2007.

Tait, Peta. *Circus Bodies Cultural Identity in Aerial Performance*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2005.

Tait, Peta, and Katie Lavers, editors. *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2016. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003074670.

Toulmin, Vanessa. "Celebrating 250 years of circus." *Early Popular Visual Culture*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2018, pp. 231–234. https://doi.org/10.1080/17460654.2019.1569842.

———. *"Fun without Vulgarity": Community, Women and Language in Showland Society, from 1890 to the Present Day*. 1997. Department of English Language and Linguistics, University of Sheffield, PhD thesis. https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/29876/1/815098.pdf.

———. "Telling the Tale: The Story of the Fairground Bioscope Shows and the Showmen Who Operated Them." *Film History*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1994, pp. 219–237.

Tromp, Marlene. *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*. Ohio State University Press, 2008.

Van Genechten, Guido, et al. *Kermis: het spiegelpaleis van het volk*. Kritak, 1986.

Vanhoutte, Kurt, and Nele Wynants. "On the passage of a man of the theatre through a rather brief moment in time: Henri Robin, performing astronomy in nineteenth century Paris." *Early Popular Visual Culture*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2017, pp. 152–174. https://doi.org/10.1080/17460654.2017.1318520.

Wevers, Melvin. "Mining Historical Advertisements in Digitised Newspapers." *Digitised Newspapers – A New Eldorado for Historians? Reflections on Tools, Methods and Epistemology*, edited by Estelle Bunout, Maud Ehrmann, and Frédéric Clavert, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023, pp. 227–252. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110729214-011.

Wilmeth, Don B. "The American Circus." *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*, edited by Peta Tait and Katie Lavers, 1st ed., Routledge, 2016, pp. 349–358. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003074670-31.

Wynants, Nele. "Invisible hands in the history of the magic lantern: where theatre studies and media archaeology meet." *Early Popular Visual Culture*, vol. 18, no. 4, 2020, pp. 422–447. https://doi.org/10.1080/17460654.2021.2016213.

———. "La science au champ de foire. Diffusion de la technologie, du savoir et du spectacle dans les villes de province belge durant la fin-de-siècle." *1895, revue d'histoire du cinéma*, no. 96, 2022, pp. 68–101.

———. "The travelling lantern: the Courtois and Grandsart-Courtois family theatres as transcultural mediators at the nineteenth-century fair." *Early Popular Visual Culture*, vol. 17, no. 3–4, 2019, pp. 233–260. https://doi.org/10.1080/17460654.2019.1705649.

Zaagsma, Gerben. "Digital History and the Politics of Digitization." *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2023, pp. 830–851. https://doi.org/10.1093/llc/fqac050.

Zutphensche courant [Zutphen], 28 Apr. 1897.