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Local Films from Trier, Luxembourg and Metz: A Successful Business Venture of the Marzen Family, Cinema Owners

Brigitte Braun and Uli Jung

Before the First World War, local films were usually produced or commissioned by cinema owners for their own local or regional audiences; they were not geared at national exhibition.¹ Only one print was made from the negative which was exhibited for one season (if the producer ran a travelling theatre) or even for only one or two weeks if the producer had settled in a permanent location. This is why so few local films have survived. Still, they can be traced in advertisements and reports in local newspapers while the trade press would hardly ever cover this topic.² In light of all this, it is a stroke of luck if a sizeable number of local films has survived, as is the case with Trier and Luxembourg. All these films were produced by the Marzen family who exhibited them in their travelling film theatre and later on in their permanent-site cinemas.³

The Marzen family and their business strategies

Wendel Marzen, who came from a butcher's family, tried his luck in the travelling fairground business: by 1895, at the latest, he was the owner of a phonograph which he exhibited to local people in the vicinity. A phonograph – like the later cinematograph – facilitated the presentation of pre-recorded, commercially-produced material, but also for locally recorded sound customised by the showmen to suit their specific requirements. In order to entice his audiences, Wendel Marzen utilised his phonograph

in the context of local sound recording. In 1895, for example, in Grevenmacher, a small Luxembourgian border town, he recorded a lecture he was giving to his audience 'which the phonograph immediately repeated with the grandest accuracy to the utter astonishment and exhilaration of the audience'.⁴ On New Year's Eve, 1896, he recorded the chimes of Trier Cathedral and the neighbouring church, St. Gangolf, as well as a few church songs, and presented them over the following days with his phonograph in a local pub which lay between the two churches.⁵

Between 1896 and 1898, Wendel Marzen decided to become the proprietor of a cinematograph. He bought the equipment and the films in Paris and started displaying his merchandise in the Rhineland, on the rivers of the Mosel, the Saar and the Nahe, in Alsace-Lorraine, Luxembourg and Belgium.⁶ By this time, the entire family Marzen had become involved in the business. Wendel Marzen functioned as the director, his son Hubert operated the projector and

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Fig. 1. Wendel Marzen (undated).



the camera, and his other son, Peter, stood next to the screen as he explained and commented on the films. Wendel's wife, Pauline, watched over the cash register.⁷ Marzen was well suited to this venture: his name was already known in the region, he had developed a network of projection rooms in restaurants and pubs, and he was in good standing with the authorities. Moreover, he was well informed about the peculiarities of the cities and towns on his tour. As was his custom as an exhibitor of phonograph programmes, Wendel Marzen (Fig. 1) organised his cinematographic shows in the backrooms of local pubs and social clubs rather than travelling around with a show booth or a tent.⁸

Wendel Marzen's coverage of local issues by means of a phonograph had made him aware to what extent local material would entice the public to his shows. It is not surprising, therefore, that once he entered the film business he relied on local views to secure full houses. By 1902, he enthused audiences with local films shot in Trier and Luxembourg and continued to do so on a regular basis. He also held on to his phonograph which he continued to exhibit partly as an attraction in its own right as a medium for presenting his local sound recordings, and partly to underscore his film programme with musical extracts so as to make the magic of the 'living pictures' even more credible.⁹

The shows of the Marzens' travelling film theatre were to some extent exclusive due to the fact that

the films they exhibited were local and due to the fact that the Marzens employed background music with sound effects. They did good business: 'The owners of the halls were all excited about having us. The mayors would exempt us from the leisure tax [...] The inn-keepers would pick us up from the station or from the neighbouring town where we had our previous engagement, and they would give us a ride to our next stop – all free of charge.'¹⁰

The local films were attractive for audiences because of their reality effect as well as the charm of the familiar: movie-going Trierers could watch the city and its inhabitants – and above all themselves, with fascination, smiling as they scrutinized the image. A journalist from Trier in 1909 reported:

By far the most interesting, however, is when pictures of Trier are shown to the excited audience. In these cases we can see well-known faces of Trierers leaving church, participating in fire drills, witnessing the procession of a men's choir, or cycling in the Viehmarkt. [...] Everybody is happy to see the face of somebody they know on the screen; they are even happier if their own faces are laughing at them from the screen. Yet they are annoyed if their own faces look sullen, unfriendly, unpleasant. It is then that the Kinematograph loses its character as a virtual theatre. The audience feels at ease and feels free, frankly, to criticise friends and foes. The Kinematograph has become a mirror for Trier, not in the sense of the 'official gazette' that covers the magisterial events in Trier, but, rather, in the sense of an inexpensive fashion magazine for the ladies.

The cinematographic apparatus does not lie. It shows everyone and everything as it is, as it seems to be and as it ought to be. It tells us who attended Sunday mass at the Cathedral, who was strolling around during the prom, and, finally, it 'controls' who attended religious processions.¹¹

A local film was certain to guarantee a constant flow of audiences to the Marzens' travelling kinematograph. It is not surprising that the Marzens held on to the practice of exhibiting local films even after they had taken over a permanent-site venue in Trier in 1909 (Fig. 2).¹² In order to promote their new movie theatre they produced, between April and June, 1909 alone, seven local views of Trier: *Dom-*

ausgang am Ostersonntag (Exit from the Cathedral on Easter Sunday), Promenadenkonzert an der Porta Nigra (A Prom Concert at the Porta Nigra), Die alte Römerstadt Trier und ihre Sehenswürdigkeiten (Trier, the Old Roman City and its Sights), Frühjahrsspritzenprobe unserer Freiwilligen Feuerwehr am 3. Mai am Stadttheater (The Spring Season Test of the Fire Hose on 3 May at the Municipal Theatre), Leben und Treiben auf dem Viehmarkt am 5. Mai (Life and Trade in Viehmarkt on 5 May), Fronleichnamsp procession in Trier 1909 (The 1909 Corpus Christi Procession in Trier) and Festlichkeiten aus Anlass des 35jährigen Stiftungsfestes des Männergesangsvereins »Eintracht« am Pfingstsonntag (Festivities Commemorating the 35th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Men's Choir 'Eintracht' at Whitsun).¹³ These local views were advertised and shown as special issues along with the other items of the programme (Fig. 3).

Local films were not the only attractions that made Marzen's cinema a 'room of experience' (*Erlebnisort*); crucial for the profile of the shows was the presence of Peter Marzen as the films' lecturer who managed to 'stage' films especially geared to his local audience. Not only did he skilfully utilise a wide array of sound effects and music to accompany the films, but he also used the regional dialect in his commentary to make Trier audiences feel at ease in the local and foreign worlds of the films:

It is only the proprietor – in explaining the images – who makes the cinema 'truly Trier-ish'. The voice is sobbing, weeping, howling, wailing, laughing, cursing, whispering, rumbling – and this often within five minutes depending on the situation. Best standard German alternates with the most beautiful Trier dialect. In between, canons thunder, lightning zigzags, steampipes screech, a round of a rifle rattles. We have visited movie theatres of very different kinds in many different places, but never have we experienced one that presented such 'telling' performances. As much as we enjoyed finding our vernacular treated this way in our home town, we had much to wonder sometimes when one or other performer addressed us in a straight Trier idiom, although he was standing on the beach of the Mediterranean, in happy Nizza, in the arena of proud Spain or in the boulevards of Paris.¹⁴

Through the use of local views and commentary on the film programme in the local dialect, Peter



Fig. 2 (upper). Front of the Central-Theater, Trier, 1909.

Telegramm!
Marzens Edison Theater,
 Brodstr. 36.
 Unsere eigenen Aufnahmen
 I.
Frühjahrsspritzenprobe
unserer freiwilligen Feuerwehr
am 3. Mai am Stadttheater.
 II.
Leben und Treiben auf dem
Viehmarkt am 5. Mai. Be-
kannte Trierer Handels-Typen
im Wirken.
 Die Aufnahmen sind großartig ge-
 lungen und werden in jeder Vorstel-
 lung vorgeführt. Diese Woche keine
 10 sondern 12 Nummern.
 Ohne Konkurrenz am Platz.
 Keine alten Vorstellungen
 Keine Wiederholungen.
 Nur erste Neuheiten.
Kommet! Sehet! Staunet!
Die Direktion Wandal Marzen
 Telefonruf 1902.

Fig. 3 (lower). Advertisement in *Trierischer Volksfreund*, 15 May 1909.



Fig. 4. Peter Marzen, 1909.

Marzen (Fig. 4) established a familiar atmosphere in the auditorium. This was enhanced by the fact that the cinema owner and film lecturer himself was to be seen in most of his local films. Thus his local films distinguished themselves all the more by the double presence of Peter Marzen on and next to the screen. In his films he tried to call the people to order, tried to funnel them in a certain direction, gave signs to the camera operator, or posed outright in front of the camera. In his commentary on the films, Marzen as lecturer could refer to his appearance on screen (Fig. 5); he could parody himself and react to responses

Fig. 5. Peter Marzen in *Domausgang am Ostersonntag*, 1909.



from the audience.¹⁵ Thus there was a three-way local reference: through the subjects of the local views themselves, through the commentary in Trier dialect, and through the presence of the lecturer in the films.

Movie-goers in Trier held Marzen's entertainment skills in high esteem, and they flocked to his movie house although there were two other theatres in town which were bigger and better furnished.¹⁶ His main competitor, Peter Gitsels, who had outstripped two other movie theatres in 1907, believed, at first, that he could break Marzen's success by saturation advertising in the local press and by exhibiting ever longer programmes which, in addition to all this, were changed in ever more rapid succession. Other means he used included sound accompaniment and a live pianist and, moreover, he commissioned a local film and announced that he would only show films that were self-explanatory. In the long run, this came to no avail. Finally, Gitsels sued Marzen for unfair competition. Marzen, he maintained, should not be allowed to advertise his movie house as a 'theatre of living, singing, talking and music-making photographs', since Marzen was not in the possession of sound equipment (*Tonbild-Anlage*). Thus Gitsels accused Marzen of betraying his audience, but Gitsels failed. A group of expert reviewers, who had travelled to Trier, became so enchanted by Marzen's skilful use of the phonograph and other instruments that they could not see any betrayal of the public on this behalf.¹⁷ In advertisements, Marzen continued to emphasise his capacity as a dynamic lecturer and, thus, the unforgettable and incomparable character of the show he put on in his house.

This was something with which Peter Gitsels could not compete: in 1910, he closed down his cinema. Marzen, on the other hand, ran his cinema in Trier until 1927. Although the introduction of feature films in 1910/11 brought about a decline in the status of local views as unique climaxes of the programme, Marzen continued to produce one local view per year until 1914; later he would do so only on special occasions or as a friendly turn. He archived his local films and sometimes re-scheduled them when there was an occasion: in 1921 on the occasion of a fortieth benediction jubilee, Marzen presented the Bishop of Trier, Michael Felix Korum, with a compilation of films the Marzen family had produced of Trier church life since 1904. In 1927, Peter Marzen left Trier and settled in Saarbrücken where he opened a film distribution company.

Visual style and audience address in the Marzens' local views

By 1902 Wendel and his family ran a travelling film theatre called Marzen's Edison Elektrisches Theater, and filmed short scenes of the cities and towns on their tour and showed them to local audiences. Once or twice a year they returned to their home town, Trier, which in the early twentieth century had a population of approximately 50,000 inhabitants. There they made the earliest of their films that is currently known, *Pfingstprozession in Trier* (*Pentecost Procession in Trier*) which was shot on 18 May 1902.¹⁸

Although this film is considered lost and all we know is its title, the film gives us a sense of what Marzen's visual strategies looked like: in the traditionally Catholic city of Trier, which has been the seat of a bishopric for centuries, religious events such as the procession at Pentecost drew large numbers of church-goers. Moreover, processions had the advantage that they took place in public spaces so a camera operator did not have to apply for a licence to shoot the film. A procession was highly predictable; its course was established well ahead of time, attendants would not stray away from the procession, and they would not stop in front of the camera to look at it with curiosity since the flow of the procession would force them to move. If, therefore, the camera was placed in a good position, it was almost guaranteed that many people attending the procession or watching it from the curbside would be covered on film. This was what Marzen attempted to achieve: to include as many people as possible in his films since these people would likely want to watch themselves on the screen of his film theatre. The Pentecost procession thus provided a good opportunity to secure all these goals. The same goes for another view he shot in Luxembourg: *Echternacher Springprozession* (*Dancing Procession at Echternach*) which, produced also in 1902, probably followed the same principles. This topic had the advantage over the Trier subject since the event was of international renown and significance among religious people. Marzen was able, therefore, to market this film outside Echternach or the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. During their tenure as travelling exhibitors, their local views were not necessarily exclusively geared to local audiences: films they made in Trier could also be shown in Luxembourg; films made in Metz were offered to Trier audiences as well.

[Aufnahme von den die Kathedrale verlassenden Behörden, Luxemburg 1902]¹⁹ (Public Officers

Leaving the Cathedral, Luxembourg 1902) presents another of Marzen's typical set-ups for shooting local films: people leaving church. Once again the end of Sunday mass provides a sure occasion for the camera operator to cover a large group of people. Compared with processions, their movements would not be as organised or as steady but, rather, casual and spontaneous. This posed specific problems, as can be seen from one of the earliest examples of this subject, *Sortie de la Cathédrale*, shot in Cologne, probably on 3 May 1896, by Charles Moisson for the Lumière company. There the operator had assistants at hand who urged the astonished passers-by (who were likely to stand in awe or surprise of the camera) to move on to make a lively picture.

All of Marzen's films that we have verified as having been shot in 1902 are considered lost today. Yet their titles indicate that at this early stage the Marzens had already adopted the major formal aspects which were to inform their output throughout the period when they were local film-makers. It is probably right to assume that professional film practices provided the models for shooting as well as for the visual style of their local views. This can be seen in a comparison between Lumière's *Sortie de la Cathédrale* (1896) and Marzen's *Domausgang in Trier* (1904) which in many ways are companion pieces. Both films refer in their respective titles to eminent and well-known German cathedrals, but neither film seems to care for the significant architecture of the buildings. Their sole interest lies in filming the activity of people leaving church (Fig. 7). The cathedrals themselves serve only as picturesque backdrops in front of which the 'action' takes place. If the audience was not familiar with the features of the facades of the churches, they would not stand a

Fig. 6. Peter Marzen in *Blumenkorso* 1914, veranstaltet vom Radfahrerverein Trier, Gegr. 1885, 1914.





Fig. 7.
Domausgang in Trier, 1904.

chance of recognising them. Martin Loiperdinger has pointed out how much the presence of the camera in Cologne had an impact on the reality in front of it: people approach the curious apparatus to have a closer look at this technical novelty. As mentioned earlier, Moisson's assistants urged people to move so as to avoid blocking the view of the camera.²⁰

The same goes for *Domausgang in Trier* which was shot eight years later. For the provincial town, a camera was still an attraction. The citizens even seem to be a little intimidated by it: they walk past the apparatus with curiosity and appear a little shy. One or two raise their hats as if politely acknowledging that they are the subject of attention, and some wave as they smile at the camera. Children

Fig. 8.
Domausgang am Ostersonntag, 1909.



stand in awe. When Marzen 'remade' this film five years later, *Domausgang am Ostersonntag (Exit from the Cathedral on Easter Sunday, 1909)*²¹ things had changed considerably. People appear to be much more easy-going. Many of them laugh and wave to the camera (Fig. 8). Some walk past it, then walk around the crowd so they can walk past the camera a second time.²² The people being filmed seem to be aware of what this situation entails.

By the late 1900s, Trier boasted a permanent film theatre, and going to the movies had become a normal form of entertainment. By this period, people knew that being filmed provided an opportunity of being screened at the local movie house. This was the major difference from *Sortie de la Cathédrale*: the Lumière film was advertised in their catalogue and was marketed potentially worldwide. Whoever felt like it could buy a print of the film and do business with it. The Marzen family only shot films for their own purposes. They probably had only one positive print which they exhibited exclusively on their premises. As long as they continued to tour with their travelling film theatre they shot predominantly local views which had large crowds in it: *La Première communion à Thionville 1903 (First Communion at Thionville 1903)*, *Die Kappenfahrt 1904 der vereinigten Karnevalsgesellschaften Trier's, 1904 (The 1904 Parade of the Fools' Caps of the Associated Carnival Societies of Trier, 1904)*, *Fronleichnamspzession in Trier (Corpus Christi Procession, 1904)*. Sometimes they offered actualities which they exhibited while the event was still going on: *St. Willibrordusfeier in Echternach 1906 (The St. Willibrordus Ceremonies, 1906)* and *Rosenfest in Luxemburg (The Festival of the Rose in Luxemburg, 1906 and 1907)* which, probably covering crowds attending the festivals, were processed and printed immediately so as to enable the Marzens to exploit the film a day or two after filming. This seems to have been a viable practice: the Marzens returned to the Luxemburg Festival of the Roses in 1907 and made another film of this event and also shot *Traben-Trabacher Rosenfest mit Blumencorso zu Rissbach 1907 (Festival of the Roses at Traben-Trabach and the Flower Parade at Rissbach, 1907)*.

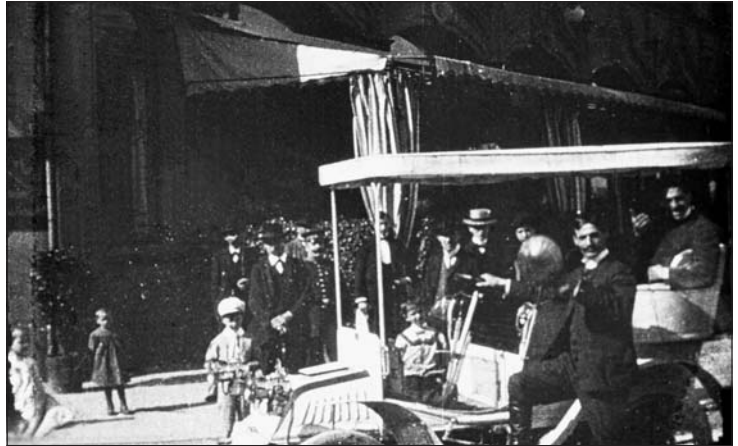
These festivals were organised as town fairs. It is likely that occasionally more than one travelling film theatre would compete for customers. In such cases being able to provide local views would have been a significant advantage over competitors, and it would seem that not only the Marzens relied on this

practice. The entrepreneur Leilich, who travelled across Southwest Germany and went as far afield as Northern Italy with no fewer than four exhibition tents, produced at least four local views between 1904 and 1907 which he exhibited on his tour of Lorraine.²³

It can be assumed that competition was the major factor behind the production of local films. While film exhibition remained itinerant, exhibitors had to anticipate encountering a competitor on a fairground whose programme of short films was likely to be no different from his own. In this case, a local film could be an asset which actually made the difference. By the time film theatres became permanent, a local competitor drew on the same commercial material offered by the industry at large. There were no monopolies to guarantee a cinema owner as the sole exhibitor of certain films. The only way they could retain control was to produce their own films or have them produced by professional film companies. This would be necessary when there was competition in the local market. In this case, a local view was a means of securing product differentiation.

Marzen's local films implied modernity. This shows notably in [Autofahrt durch Trier] (Automobile Ride through Trier, 1903) in which the camera is placed on the bonnet of a car driving down one of the major streets through the Roman Porta Nigra, Trier's most famous landmark, before heading towards the main station. Due to the cobblestones, the images are rather shaky, but this was not considered a flaw by contemporary viewers. In fact, it is the earliest phantom ride of Trier that we have been able to verify. At the end of the film, the car itself is presented as the means of locomotion. Peter Marzen and some of his friends sit in the car presenting themselves to the camera (Fig. 9). Their car is the only one seen in the film; it is likely that it was the only car in town at the time. The new medium of film combines with the new method of locomotion. The film-makers of [Autofahrt durch Trier] draw self-confidence from this representation. Their film attracts audiences because it presents their city in a new spatial and temporal relation which, on this occasion, is not an unexpected point of view but, rather, a new, never-before-experienced sense of speed. The cinematograph conveys to the audience an experience which, in most cases, they had never experienced in person.

Maybe Marzen's most curious film – at least from today's point of view – is *Internationaler Marian-*



ischer Kongress zu Trier vom 3.–6. August 1912 (International Marian Congress in Trier, 3–6 August 1912). This actuality film pushes the notion of a living portrait of moving people to its limit: the surviving print is 266 metres long and runs for more than fifteen minutes, although it consists of only two shots which comprise thousands of people. First it shows a large procession of people '[...] right honorable bishops, abbots, and prelates [...]', the intertitle informs us, and other religious dignitaries at the opening ceremony. Their procession is watched by numerous by-standers who wait until the parade has past before flocking into the space in front of the camera. While the clergy mainly pay no attention to the apparatus, the people of the town eagerly perform for the camera and wave towards the lens. Have they come to view the attraction of the international congress or for the opportunity it provides to appear in front of Marzen's camera?

The second shot (Fig. 10) was filmed on the following day, 4 August. Its topic is 'Men's Pilgrimage to the Sepulchre of the Apostle Matthew [...]' (Attendance: ca. 15–20.000 Men)', an intertitle states. What follows is a never-ending procession of delegates from regional parishes. Once again the procession has drawn by-standers in vast numbers who watch the procession. This shot is taken from a single set-up. The film does not serve the purpose of reporting the pilgrimage since its destination, the grave in St. Matthias basilica (the only grave of an apostle north of the Alps and, as such, a religious as well as a tourist relic of the highest order), is only mentioned in the intertitle and not shown in the film at all. It must be assumed, therefore, that it was the vast crowd which interested Marzen. Since the congress went on for another two days, it is likely that he planned to

Fig. 9.
[Autofahrt durch
Trier], 1902.



Fig. 10.
Internationaler Marianischer Kongress zu Trier vom 3.–6. August 1912, 1912.

have a print ready for screening while the participants of the congress (or, at least, the majority of them) were still in town and could be tempted to his movie theatre as customers.

Five years earlier, the Marzens had produced a film which seemed to follow the same strategy: *XVIII. Internationaler Eucharistischer Kongress zu Metz vom 6.–11. August 1907* (*XVIII. International Eucharist Congress at Metz, 6–11 August 1907*), a film that today is considered lost. Still, it appears that both congresses provided images that were similar. Moreover, since we know that the Marzens screened this film not only in Metz but also in Trier,²⁴ we can be certain that they were not only interested in the local aspects of their films. If the topic was sufficiently important – and the two international congresses would seem to demonstrate this status – the Marzens would try to exploit it on their screening tour. Moreover, in the case of the Metz congress, they could boast of being the only ones to have covered the event on film. This was a significant part of their advertising strategy.

Fig. 11. Wilhelm II on his state visit to Trier from the coverage by *Pathé Journal*.



Besides local views, actuality films proper were also of concern to the Marzens as, for example, the state visit of Wilhelm II to Metz in 1903 which they covered in *L'Empereur Guillaume à Metz* (*Kaiser Wilhelm Visiting Metz*) or in 1906 when they filmed the Kaiser in Koblenz. This later film, *Kaisertage in Koblenz* (*Emperor's Days in Koblenz*), was still, apparently, a trustworthy event when it was accorded a second run in Trier in January 1908.²⁵ On the occasion of Wilhelm's visit to Trier on 14 October 1913, Peter Marzen was not the only film-maker to cover the event: *Pathé-Journal* also had an operator in Trier (Fig. 11).²⁶ Still, Marzen could boast of exclusive pictures: *Bilder vom Kaisertag, aka Der Besuch unseres Kaisers in Trier am 14. Oktober 1913* (*Pictures of the Emperor's Day, aka Our Emperor's Visit to Trier, 14 October 1913*) which, unfortunately, has not survived, had footage in it of the Kaiser's stop at the Roman amphitheatre, as Marzen proudly pointed out in the local paper.²⁷ This moment was missing from the Pathé newsreel. While the Pathé professionals probably had to catch a train in order to get the negative back to the lab in time, Marzen could cover Wilhelm's full schedule. At whatever time the positive print of this local actuality was ready, it was early enough to serve his purposes. Unfortunately, we do not know where he had his negatives processed and printed; maybe he did this himself. This information would give us a better insight into his working practices and would indicate how long it took Marzen to get hold of positive prints.

Wilhelm II was renowned for the numerous state visits he paid to cities in all corners of his empire. These visits were, in fact, so numerous that among his subjects he was nicknamed 'The Travelling Kaiser' (*Reise-Kaiser*). Only when his visits carried a particular significance did professional film companies cover them on film. The Marzens covered Wilhelm's visits to cities within their reach. Thus they could be sure that they had exclusive footage which they could exhibit during their tours of the region. Views of the Kaiser catered to the patriotic feelings of their customers; having exclusive living pictures of the head of state under their sole control meant good business wherever they were exhibited.

Among almost forty Marzen films we have to date verified, there is one exceptional industrial film: *Ein Besuch in der weltberühmten Champagnerfabrik E. Mercier & Co. in Luxemburg und in deren eigenen Weidenpflanzungen und Korbflechterei zu Kopttal* (*A Visit to the World-Famous Champagne Factory E.*

Mercier & Co. and to its Willow Plantations and Basket Makers at Kopftal) which they produced in 1907 or earlier.²⁸ The film shows the bottling of champagne. For the purpose of shooting the film, the company staged the entire process in the open air so as to avoid the complex (and probably costly) process of setting up artificial lighting indoors. Since the company's production was not driven by electricity or steam, the process could, apparently, be moved to a place more convenient for the camera.

The result is a film which gives its audience a clear insight into the production process: how the sedimented deposit is forced out of the bottles, how the bottles are corked and the corks wired. The camera watches the workers in their monotonous routine and still conveys a sense of the care and concern with which the workers set about their work. Somewhat surprisingly, the film cuts to a rural area where willows are being harvested and then cuts to basket-makers who weave the willows into baskets. At the end of the film, the audience realises the purpose of these activities. The huge baskets are being used to pack the champagne bottles before transporting them to the railway station where they are shipped throughout Europe. While the preliminary processes of picking and pressing the grapes and fermenting the wine – first in caskets, then in bottle racks – are largely omitted (at least in the surviving print), the film's principal concern is with the last stages of processing the end-product, including its marketing and shipping.²⁹

We have no idea why this film was made. It may well be that Mercier & Co. had commissioned Marzen for promotional purposes, but since we do not know how this film was exhibited, we can only speculate on the reason for its production. Time-consuming research checking local newspapers and archival documents will help us become familiar with the cultural and social position this and other films made by the Marzens occupied at the time.

Recently, one further Peter Marzen film turned up: *675 jähriges Bestehen der Schifferbruderschaft Trier-St. Paulus (675th Anniversary of the Skippers' Brotherhood Trier-St. Paulus)*. This nitrate print was produced in 1927, roughly ten years later than the last of his surviving films. Thus we can see that the

aesthetics of the Marzens' local films did not change very much over the years. Images of the district where the skippers of Trier used to reside are followed by a long procession of a historical pageant which commemorates the anniversary. Once again, the camera covers as many participants and by-standers as possible. Trier's main landmark, the Porta Nigra, can be seen in the film but is not featured. There is, however, a major difference between this film and an earlier one which had been shot from more or less the same spot, *Blumenkorso 1914, veranstaltet vom Radfahrerverein Trier, Gegr. 1885 (Corso of Flowers 1914, Arranged by the Bicycle Club, Founded in 1885)*: the camera indulges in a number of deliberate pans signifying a more sophisticated application of Marzen's equipment. Moreover, the presence of the camera seems to be a common sight for the citizens of Trier: virtually nobody seems to take any notice of it. Only when the procession is over does the crowd of by-standers flock into the space in front of the camera to respond in an animated fashion to it. One proud father even holds his baby child up so making the baby a 'star'.

With approximately forty films verified to date, shot between 1902 and 1929, Marzen's oeuvre stands out as the best-documented achievement of a local film-maker during the silent era in Germany. The case study of the Marzens makes an inroad into a significant yet forgotten and neglected practice in early German (and international) film production and exhibition. In this essay it is not possible (nor even desirable, given the international readership of *Film History*) to chronicle or comment on all of the Marzen family's films that have survived.³⁰ Rather, we would like to make readers aware that there is a film history beyond the findings of the 'official' film historiography, a local or regional history that can only be traced in newspapers and in local and/or regional archives. The research of local film practices will provide us with knowledge about the programming strategies of movie theatres. It changes the point of view from the production-oriented supply side of the industry to the reception-oriented demands of large- and small-town exhibitors. But it also makes us aware that cinema owners before the First World War were more 'productive' than we have previously thought.

Notes

1. Uli Jung, 'Local Views: A Blind Spot in the Historiography of Early German Cinema', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 22 (2002): 253–273.
2. For the same reason, there is no mention of local films in Herbert Birett, *Das Filmangebot in Deutschland 1895–1911* (München, 1991) and in

- Herbert Birett, *Verzeichnis in Deutschland gelaufener Filme: Entscheidungen der Filmzensur 1911–1920 – Berlin, Hamburg, München, Stuttgart* (Munich, New York, London, Paris, 1980).
3. Cf. Brigitte Braun, “Wir Trierer lieben den ‘Kintop’ über alles” – Die Kinostadt Trier vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg’, in *Kurtrierisches Jahrbuch*, 42 (2002), 239–273. Brigitte Braun, Karen Eifler, “Kommt all heirönn zum Marzens Pitt” – Kinoerlebnisse mit dem Filmerklärer Peter Marzen’, in *Neues Trierisches Jahrbuch*, 42 (2002), 173–186. Brigitte Braun, ‘Patriotisches Kino im Krieg. Beobachtungen in der Garnisonsstadt Trier’, *KINtop*, 11 (2002): 100–121. Karsten Hoppe, Martin Loiperdinger, Jörg Wollscheid, ‘Trierer Lokalaufnahmen der Filmpioniere Marzen’, *KINtop*, 9 (2000): 11–37. Cf. a filmography of the local films of Trier, updated in: www.uni-trier/~kintop. See also Jung, ‘Local Views’.
 4. News report from Grevenmacher, dated 18 June 1895, cited in Norbert Etringer, *Lebende Bilder: Aus Luxemburgs guter alter Kinozeit* (Luxembourg, 1983), 17.
 5. *Trierischer Volksfreund*, 4 January 1896.
 6. Peter Marzen, *Aus dem Leben eines rheinischen Filmpioniers. Eine Erinnerungsgabe zum fünfzigsten Geburtstag und seiner 35jährigen Zugehörigkeit zur Filmindustrie* (Saarbrücken, n.d. [1933]), 5.
 7. *Luxemburger Zeitung*, July 1906, cited in Etringer, *Lebende Bilder*, 33.
 8. For a categorization of travelling film theatres, see Deac Rossell, ‘Die soziale Konstruktion früher technischer Systeme der Filmprojektion’, *KINtop*, 8 (1999): 53–81, esp. 68–71.
 9. *Diedenhofener Stadtanzeiger* 1898, cited in Marzen, *Aus dem Leben eines rheinischen Filmpioniers*, 51.
 10. Marzen, *Aus dem Leben eines rheinischen Film-pioniers*, 7. *Luxemburger Zeitung*, 24 July 1902, cited in Etringer, *Lebende Bilder*, 31, note 4.
 11. ‘In einem »trierischen« Kinematographen. Plauderei von K. Sch.’, in *Trierische Zeitung*, 14 July 1909, reprinted in *KINtop*, 9 (2000): 11–13.
 12. While Peter Marzen took over the Centraltheater in Trier in 1909, his brother Hubert and his father Wendel opened the Cinema Parisiana in Luxembourg in 1911. Cf. Etringer, *Lebende Bilder*, 36–41.
 13. Cf. *Trierischer Volksfreund*, 17 April 1909, 15 May 1909, 16 June 1909, 2 July 1909. The punctuation of film titles in this essay accords with that given on the prints which does not necessarily conform to current usage.
 14. ‘In einem »trierischen« Kinematographen’, rpt. *KIN-top*, 9 (2000): 11–13.
 15. Cf. Hoppe, Loiperdinger, Wollscheid, ‘Trierer Lokalaufnahmen der Filmpioniere Marzen’, 33; Jung, ‘Local Views’, 268 ff.
 16. Cf. Braun, “Wir Trierer lieben den ‘Kintop’ über alles”, Braun, Eifler, “Kommt all heirönn zum Marzens Pitt”, Brigitte Braun, ‘Patriotisches Kino im Krieg’, Amelie Duckwitz, Martin Loiperdinger, Susanne Theisen, ‘Kampf dem Schundfilm! – Kinoreform und Jugendschutz in Trier’, *KINtop*, 9 (2000): 52–63.
 17. For this court finding, see *Trierischer Volksfreund*, 11 November 1911; *Der Kinematograph*, 10 November 1911.
 18. See *Trierischer Volksfreund*, 11 June 1902.
 19. Titles in square brackets indicate that the original titles of the films are not known and have been given an assumed title by archivists or historians.
 20. Cf. Martin Loiperdinger, *Film & Schokolade: Stollwercks Geschäfte mit lebenden Bildern*. (Frankfurt am Main and Basel: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1999), 208.
 21. This film is available from the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv under the title, [Kirchgänger in Trier an einem Festtag].
 22. It would seem that church exits in smaller cities are the equivalent of factory exits in industrial areas. This would not appear to be a German trait since, as Vanessa Toulmin pointed out, there are a number of church exits in the Mitchell & Kenyon Collection, ‘in particular [from] the areas where the sectarian split is quite strong such as Lancashire, Ireland and the North East’ (e-mail communication to Uli Jung).
 23. See Blaise Aurora, *Histoire du cinéma en Lorraine: Du Cinématographe au cinéma forain, 1896–1914* (Metz, 1996), 178f.
 24. The local paper, *Trierischer Volksfreund*, reported on the screening in Metz on 14 August 1907. The film was shown in Trier on 26 October 1907 according to *Trierischer Volksfreund* of the same date.
 25. Cf. *Trierischer Volksfreund*, 18 January 1908.
 26. This footage is now preserved in the compilation film, *Keizer Wilhelm II Neemt Parade Af* at the Filmmuseum, Amsterdam.
 27. See *Trierischer Volksfreund*, 21 October 1913.
 28. This film is mentioned in *Trierischer Volksfreund*, 26 October 1907; it is possible that the film was screened in Trier after considerable delay.
 29. The 12-minute film is available from the Centre national de l’audiovisuel, Dudelange, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.
 30. See Hoppe, Loiperdinger, Wollscheid, ‘Trierer Lokalaufnahmen der Filmpioniere Marzen’; Braun, Eifler “Kommt all heirönn zum Marzens Pitt”.