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What intrigues me most about *Picture Postcards* is not collecting a town or subject (anymore) but collecting pieces of a giant puzzle.

I started collecting cards from Amsterdam (yes) and some places where I had been but rather soon began to sort them under their publishers and later assemble these under a printer . . . but that's not easy: What, if there is no imprint / information at all?

So, for example, I began to sort all these "LETTER CODES" under München, Ottmar Zieher, simply because I had many with his name on it, and really thought he was the printer.

Then, years ago I read an interview that our distinguished V.D.P. (Vereniging Documentatie Prentbriefkaarten) members *Simon van Blokland* and *Huib Havekate* had with *Mr. Zeegers* from "Sleding Publishers, Amsterdam", where Zeegers said that until 1940 most cards were printed in Leipzig by **Emil Pinkau**. Well, I possessed quite a few Sleding-cards, but none with "Pinkau" on it . . . and many with letter (LS, ETG, LTFT, SLUH etc.) Now I shifted them all to Leipzig. All these British cards with "Printed in Saxony" were an indication too . . . but still no proof.

A few years later, at an auction, I bought a box with cards from Italy (mainly there were quite some "Trenkler's" in it). I found a card "Monreale (Sicily)", with the letter SNNN inside stamp-box and at left hand position on address side there it was:

**Stampate nelle officine E. Pinkau & Co. di Lipsia Nr. 135.** Why couldn't they advertise a little more back then?? And why do I find things while looking for something else?

Now, cards from the big and famous printer/publisher Dr. Trenkler & Co., Leipzig as well as unnamed "Pinkau-cards" are quite common of course, many of them still around, so many, it is really impossible to collect them all (a house is not that big). For the V.D.P., *Harry Lem* from Arnhem and I are doing research work on Dr. Trenkler & Co., mostly in city-archives. The "Atlas", they say here. Twice

the two of us went to Leipzig and once I went there with *Frans Bokelmann* from Leiderdorp (who wrote a booklet on "Knackstedt & Näther's - Hamburg - , Dutch special border design card series).

While we were finding answers there in Leipzig, we automatically came across Pinkau. So, as not to make this article too lengthy, let me give just some facts in brief:

*Dr. Bruno Trenkler* died in 1926 at the age of 63 years. He had one son, *Dr. Fritz Trenkler*, bookdealer in Berlin who did not take over this famous printer/publishing firm in Leipzig-Stötteritz, but with his mother and sister decided to sell to *Johannes Pinkau*.

*Emil Pinkau* had died in 1922, just before the 50 year jubilee of his "Offizin". The Pinkau printing business started in 1873 in Brüderstr., later Friedrichstr., later Reudnitzerstr. – always larger – in 1898 the company had a new building erected in Wittenbergerstr. 15. Shortly after the Trenkler take-over the factory in Stötteritz, Eichstädtstr. was sold and under the name "Dr. Trenkler Postkarte" this daughter company had their own door in the same building around the corner in Dessauerstr. And here the rails (can't next page)



**Portrait of Emil Pinkau (? – 22.07. 1922)**  
Reproduced from a poor quality b/w photocopy. This painting somehow survived the heavy WW2 bomb damage.

**Title illustrations** shows the last remains of the former big Pinkau factory. Some parts look like being converted into private flats earlier. Still it gives some idea of the former size of this building. Photo taken in early 1990's before final demolition.



The "key" card from Italy

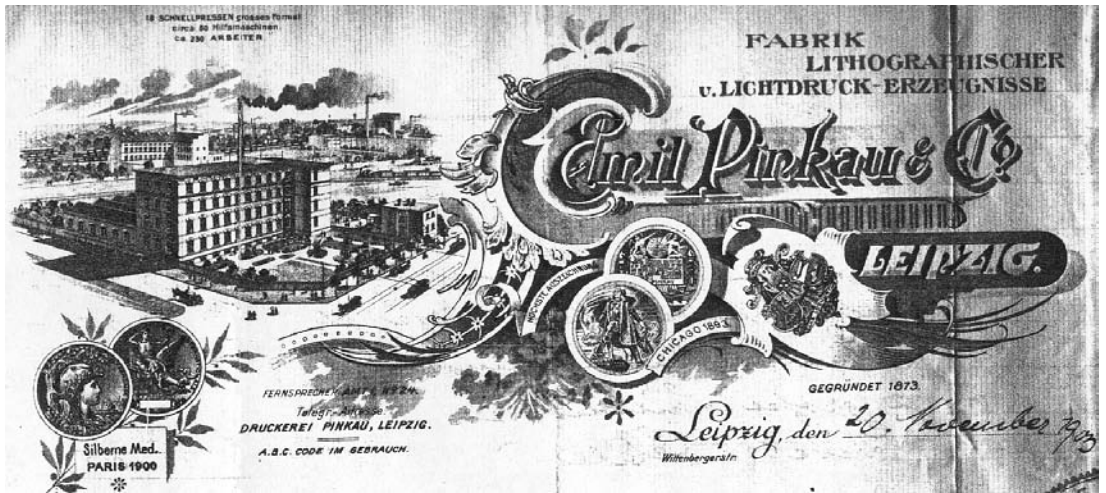
Stampate nelle officine E. Pinkau & Co. di Lipsia.

Illustrated letterhead dated 1903 with view of the factory building which still looks a bit tiny compared with the later dimensions.

Information found:

Factory of chromolitho and collotype products. 15 (18?) fast presses (large format), about 50 other machines and about 230 workers employed.

Medals awarded at Chicago 1893 exhibition and silver medal Paris 1900.



(continued from page 28)

crossed the street to the backyard, where trains were loaded with postcards to places all over the world.

Situated just behind Europe's largest train station. . .the ideal place – but not in times of war! Heavy bomb damage in 1943 and total destruction in April 1945. But Johannes Pinkau, who was technical director since 1902 (!) and general director since his father's death in 1922, never gave up. He rebuilt/restored again and again. In 1948 – at the 75 years jubilee – a short history was issued, in which it reads: *Er (Emil Pinkau) ist als der Begründer der Ansichtskartenindustrie anzusehen ... und in der er seiner Firma die führende Stellung in der Welt gab.* Emil Pinkau must be considered as founder of the postcard industry ... in which he gained his firma a leading role.



**Ed. note:** Emil Pinkau ist also mentioned in the list of "Firsts" - the tiresome try to find out who was the first to produce and mail a picture postcard. Gerhard Kaufmann mentions Emil Pinkau in his article "Die Postkarte im Spiegel der Kultur und Gesellschaft" (from "Viele Grüße", R. Lebeck/G. Kaufmann, Harenberg 1985, p 406). He had sent out a single card showing an small landscape picture c. 1870.

Johannes Pinkau died in 1958; he sure ruled for a long time. We know when the company - under their name - died: 31/12/1973. Pinkau and daughter company Dr. Trenkler Verlag were history. From 1/1/1973 the new name was VEB (Volkseigener Betrieb = nationally-owned company) **Bromsilberdruck**.

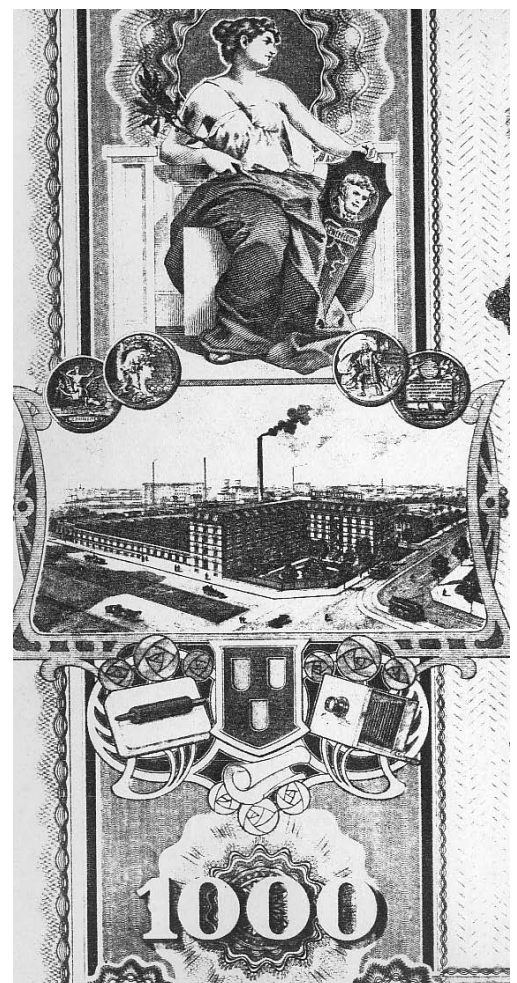
We don't know when this VEB closed down – I suppose even before "the Wende", the fall of the wall. When Harry Lem and I visited Leipzig in 1995 the old buildings were not there anymore and replaced by a large Peugeot car business /-showroom. At our second visit the next year the manager was so kind to lend us for one day some colour photos of the empty ex-Pinkau factory taken not long before/during demolition.

Now, coming back to the picture postcards and having read George Webber's article in TPA 12 (p 23) – **Ed. note: not to forget George Webber's articles in TPA 11, p41 + TPA 13, p12** – in which he named three possible "Capital Letter Code" firms: (con't)

Pinkau letterhead dated January 1907 listing following information. **Speciality since 1879: picture postcards in large quantities. Printing only - no publisher.** 28 presses (large printing format), about 100 other machines and about 350 workers. Another medal was added: a gold one from St. Louis 1904 exhibition.

> Detail from an 1000 Mark share of Emil Pinkau & Co Aktiengesellschaft issued on May 12, 1921. Pinkau & Co was converted into a joint-stock company in 1903. Not many (bigger) printing companies in Leipzig were able to form joint-stock companies which meant (normally) a lot of extra business capital needed for the hard competition on the (ppc) printing market. The firm of Bernhard Groß, Leipzig became a joint-stock company in 1899 (and closed in 1931). The very big printer/publ. Wezel & Naumann, Leipzig (WENAU / postcards) became an AG in 1900 (see TPA 11, p42) and almost went broke before a new management lead this firm to commercial success. So, it was a bit risky. The Pinkau family held the majority of the shares of their firm(s).

The illustrated share shows an updated picture of the Pinkau factory. Another wing was added, but it is still not the final factory size.



Cross off the first two, George! Such a complicated system can only be done by one – large – company! And yes, I count 10 letters also: **E F G H L N O S T U** (10 cyphers? - But in what order?)

Letter combinations of 2, 3, 4 even 5 (3 above 2)); of my 1000 odd cards the larger part is not postally used. Since my Pinkau article in V.D.P. No. 60 I receive additional information, lists and copies on codes found, firms, places, but I will ask for earliest postmarks in a further article and will have to do some more study on that. The same goes for the “Morse Code / Dot and Dash” since about 1930 (they mostly stand for four letter, I see). The Dutch Pinkau cards mostly differ from the German cards in lining and additional word “AAN” (found in two different type styles) – but that maybe for a later issue.

I have a few old litho’s with Pinkau’s name on it and many letter- / dot and dash codes and cards same style but with no codes. That leaves a gap of almost 15 years! And no cards in between? Or maybe I did not recognize them. So, back to Ottmar Zieher. I see cards - 1902, 1903 with these characteristic “slanting” letters, where for instance the second leg of the ‘n’ is longer. The same type of lettering on British cards. On some “Printed in Germany”, or others “Printed in Saxony”!

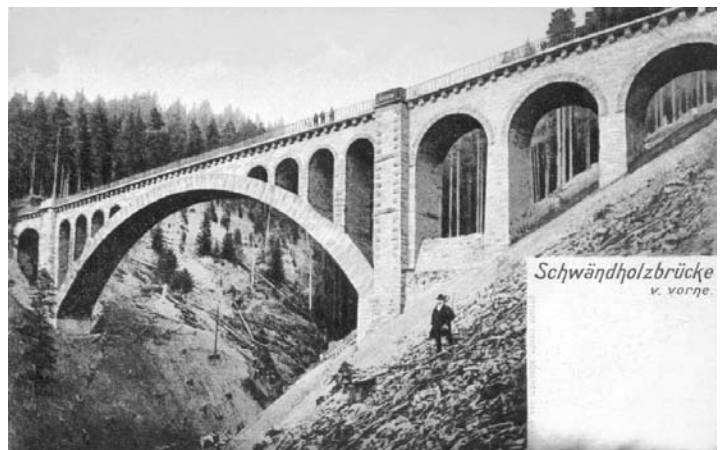
Am I jumping to conclusions? — I’ll go even further; the Zieher litho’s and the Pinkau ones - year 1897 - the same address side exactly alike! I believe now that almost the entire output of Zieher was printed by Pinkau in Leipzig. On a Pinkau letterhead from January 1907 I read: *Spezialität seit 1879 - Ansichtspostkarten in grossen Auflagen - kein Verlag, nur Fabrikation.*

And I think that’s exactly what happened many more times. Big customers had their name on the cards - they all knew where to have their cards printed at the lowest cost – and Emil Pinkau & Co. simply did not need advertising.

Typical “Gruss aus” litho printed by Emil Pinkau & Co. Here with extra greeting imprint. P/u 1897. The same card is also found with Pinkau sample imprint. A circle floated at down hand right corner position with “MUSTER aus der Collection von Emil Pinkau, Leipzig”. No “& Co.” mentioned. So, of quite early date.



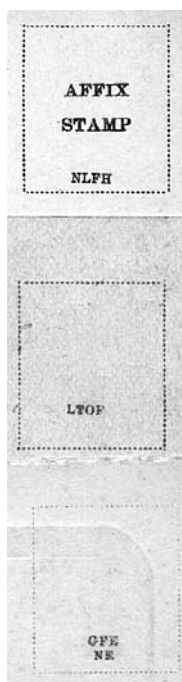
Here a sample of the “slanting” letters type used for captions, strongly believed to be printed by Emil Pinkau.



All samples with such type on are coloured and showing views from various countries.



Harderwijk - view of harbour. B/w collotype printing. Durch address side layout, lining and the pointed capital letters “A”. The “dot code” (no dashes here) can be found in the second address line. Not easy to see (ills reduced to 50% here).



Typical Pinkau “Letter Codes” here all in the stamp-box position. This code can also be found at bottom of the address side at left or hand hand corner or down center below the dividing line (>). The latter often seen on Ottmar Zieher “Helio-kolor” cards; in stamp-box you find then a (4-digit) number; often with letter “Z” in front.

Helio-kolorkarte von Ottmar Zieher, München. SLHN



New Tulip varieties, an coloured collotype/combination printing, this time with an flat top “A” type font (>). The dot + dash code (not illustrated) is down the right side of the stamp box corner (the “normal” position) See TPA 12, p24 for clear ills of this most unusual coding system.



CARTE POSTALE UNION POSTALE INTERNATIONALE POST CARD — WELTPOST-VEREIN

Nazareth - Virgin’s Fountain, with letter code ENOH in stamp box position. Above the “Postcard” imprint in a characteristic typestyle very often used by Pinkau composers. If you see this type on your cards, there is already (more than) 50% chance that it is a Pinkau printing. But there are also a number of different Pinkau typestyles found. Otherwise it would be much too easy. (?)



The day the demolition work began, some time in the early/mid 1990's. The last sign of the once big Pinkau factory is gone....



... and at this place this (modern design) car dealer branch / office building is found now.

Finally, a very special "Thank you" to all persons at the various Leipzig archives, museums and other institutions, as well as all other persons involved, who have helped me (and my friends) with the research work.

## Additional Comments by the Editor

After Henk has returned back home to Amsterdam I found the time to take a closer look at the photocopies from the Leipzig archives he kindly shared with me.

First let me make clear that his article should be understood as an introduction. The Pinkau/Trenkler story is much too extensive to be told in full within three pages. And the more you find the more questions come up.

Emil Pinkau started (very) early with printing postcards. Not long after the famous Miesler from Berlin entered the market with their chromolitho's. Ottmar Zieher also started early. Soon used the patented (his own?) printing process "Heliokolor" exclusively in his promo adverts. But this process belongs to Emil Pinkau; that's the way I found out who the mysterious "Capital Letter" card printer was. So, what kind of (business) relationship was between Zieher & Pinkau? Zieher's Leipzig address (a shop) was just around the corner of the Pinkau factory. Was Zieher the "& Co." which appears on post 1895 Pinkau related material? Or was it just another bank?

Then this gap which turns up after the turn of the century. The chromolitho boom for picture postcards was fading (-1905); simply too expensive. Collotype printers (C.G. Röder, Stengel, Dr. Trenkler & Co. etc) took over the market and ruined prices. What did Pinkau do in these years before the "Capital Letter Code" cards turn up? His printing plant was growing and growing. Pinkau had also a number of collotype presses as well as skilled workers. But I cannot remember to have many collotype printed Pinkau pc's from that time 1905-15 in my (small) stock. - I still don't know who all these brownish/sepia duotone collotype (as well as hand/machine coloured) cards produced for the British publ. F. Frith & Co., Reigate. Maybe Pinkau? Maybe Trenkler? There were, of course, a number of other ppc printers busy at that time in Saxony, but I think we have to look for a medium to bigger sized firm who were able to handle the (surely) big Frith orders in time.

I feel Henk is on the right track with these "slanting" letter type used for captions to fill the previously mentioned gap in Pinkau ppc production. In Britain for example such cards (good quality halftone coloured) turn up in the big series of "Wrench" and "Hartmann".

Not to forget Emil Pinkau is classified as "Luxuspapierfabrik". That means he did a lot of this "greeting cards" stuff (plus art prints for framing, cigar boxes etc). The quite high number of "other machinery" is a proof.

And, what surprised me somehow, his "real" photo card production line. Another surprise was the information that Emil Pinkau first controlled and later owned also the fine art printing firm "Moritz Prescher Nachf. AG" from Leipzig-Leutzsch. Not to forget the purchase of Dr. Trenkler & Co. (the Trenkler building was sold - what happened to all the machinery; this firm was once very big, printed *3 million cards*, 50% monochrome / 50% coloured, *per week!*)

Finally, I came across a business report for 1945, dated June 1950. Here it reads that the main factory as well as all daughter companies, with the exception of Prescher AG, were hit by bombs. One daughter company was Trenkler Verlag... were there even more? I think I can say this was not just a big printer, no, it looks more like a *printing imperium!*

Future research will surely unearth more surprises. Readers help appreciated.

Shown here is a mid/late 1920's (not p/u) view from Haarlem station I found in my collection. Good quality photo card produced by Emil Pinkau for the Dutch publisher J. Sleeding, Amsterdam. Henk mentioned this firm in his article.



## Some facts about E. Pinkau, Leipzig:

- 1873** start of "Lithographische Kunstanstalt Emil Pinkau", Leipzig, Brüderstr. 19
- 1877** move to Brüderstr. 26
- 1879** move to Friedrichstr.
- 1880** move to Reudnitzer Str. 19, growing business, own property now
- 1885** first flat-bed litho press, 13 presses to follow here in coming years
- 1892** business booms, additional rented premises at Kohlgartenstr.
- 1897** a new factory building at Wittenberger Str. (modern lithography, chromolitho, photolitho dept.)
- 1899** collotype printing dept. added
- 1906** extension and
- 1910** extension, for new letterpress dept. to house modern plant for colour illustration printing
- 1910** first offset press installed
- 1911** new dept for bromide (rotary) photo printing added
- 1913** new gravure (copper) printing dept.
- 1917** start of own photo paper production  
(*con't next issue*)

**PS:** up to 85% of the Pinkau production was exported pre WWI! Even between the wars most of Pinkau printing goods were sold abroad!