

Although I usually research several postcard printers/publishers at the same time, K+N still belongs to my favourite ones. Not because research has turned out to be easy; definitely not. I still have not managed to find reliable data on the years 1901-05, when K+N got involved in Rotograph Co. from New York, who their Paris business partners were, although I tend to believe that they worked both for LL and Neurdin. Especially mysterious is the role NPG (Neue Photographische Gesellschaft) from Berlin played. NPG appears always as partner in K+N's allied Paris, New York and Vienna businesses. Guess *Ludwig Knackstedt* and the head of NPG, *Arthur Schwarz*, knew each other very well for some time.

When K+N business closed down in May 1910, it took Ludwig Knackstedt only a couple of weeks to start a new business under the name of *Knackstedt & Co.*, again printing mainly postcards. This business was around until about the mid 1960's. I had hoped to find something on the old Knackstedt family and other families (Wernthal, Richert) involved. So far without success although I cannot believe that they have left no traces at all.

Researchers do need plenty of patience and a good portion of luck from time to time. I had searched for an illustration of the K+N factory building or at least a street view with K+N building on for years. The purchase of the 1906 volume of "Papier-Zeitung" proved to be a wise choice, as it contains several quarter-page adverts with view of the new (extended) K+N factory building. The address was Eppendorfer Landstraße 102-104, pre-1904 material lists the old address at house no. 190. Contact with the local Eppendorf History Society answered why I had been unable to find a street view of the building. The K+N factory was erected



KNACKSTEDT & NÄTHER HAMBURG

PART 4

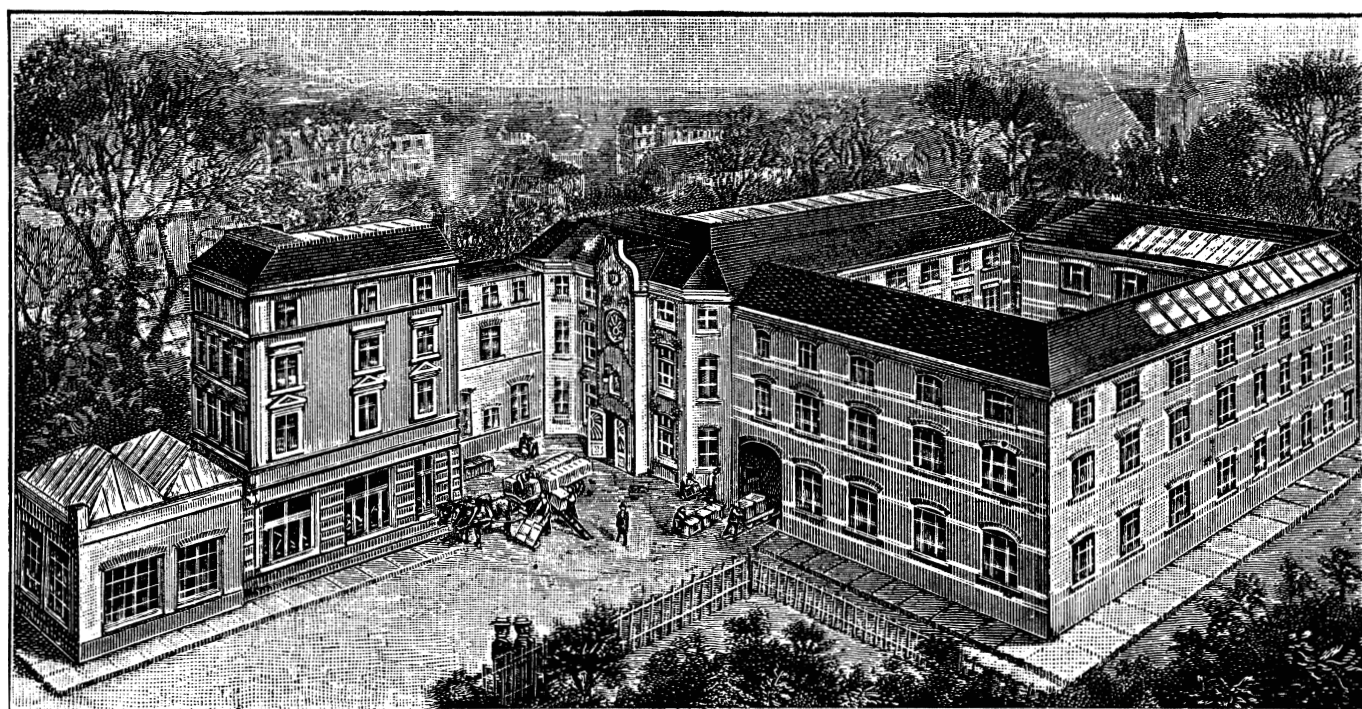
on a huge rear site, accessible through a archway. I also learned that after a printing trade related firm had taken over the former K+N etching/pre-press equipment in the building, before they soon moved into own new premises, the K+N factory was used by *Kluge & Winter*, Hamburg's only firm to produce (coloured) metal foils. Additional data the Eppendorf History Society supplied on K+N was a bit meagre and undated. K+N had employed some 240 people, produced c. 65 million postcards per year and was forced to close down because a larger order for abroad (= Rotograph) wasn't paid. Nothing really exciting.

Below you see the Knackstedt & Näther factory as it looked like early 1906. The local Typographic Society visited K+N on July 11, 1906, and a short report was published in PZ, August 2 issue. Most is of common nature but some details are interesting. K+N claimed to produce postcards only. 100 millions cards per year of which 60% were for customers abroad. Mentioned is a letterpress printing dept, and that K+N had 34 colotype presses running, including a couple of presses of the largest format so far built. I am not sure if the number of presses mentioned does include also K+N's litho presses, which they needed for colour overlay

printing (except true multi-colour collotype where all colours are printed by collotype). 40 to 50 lithographers were employed to prepare the negatives/colour formes for printing. The entire workforce at that time consisted of 290 persons. The employees (not the average workers of course) did receive 3 to 6 days of paid vacation and those not staying at home during their vacations got double week pay (?). The four specially designed buildings/wings of the K+N factory covered a total of 2148 qm² space. The visitors were told that K+N had set up common businesses in New York, Paris and Vienna together with other firms from the printing field. Well, some more details and/or names of the allied partners would have been **very much** welcome!

Okay, but I have some additional pieces for my K+N history puzzle. Although one has to interpret figures and facts from such articles with great care. Why had K+N 34 collotype presses and not a single litho-press, but litho process is mentioned at the end of the report? Data on the K+N production I have published in TPA #19, p 29, and is dated Sept. 1907 lists a total of 40 presses of which 19 were collotype. This is a bit mixed up. Nevertheless Knackstedt & Näther, Hamburg, were one of biggest postcard printers by 1906 in Germany.

Of special interest to the Typographic Society members were postcards of the recent burnt down *St. Michaeliskirche* (vernacular called 'Michel'), which had taken place on July 3, 1906. The destroyed church was of course really "perfect" for ppc publishers. K+N alone had printed (and published) a total of about 700,000 cards within 8 days with different views of the intact/burning/destroyed 'Michel', many in colour (collotype plus three overlay litho colours) ➔

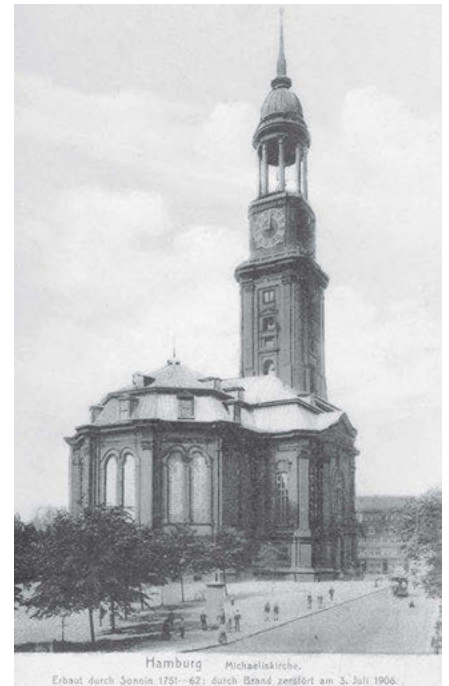




It was estimated that already during the first week after the fire about 900,000 cards were sold in Hamburg alone.

(left) Monochrome collotype, very dramatically arranged with extra note that the tower of the church crashed down at 5.10 pm. The St. Michaeliskirche was erected by 'Sonnin' during the years 1751-62. The card (without number but K+N plus year imprint) was sent from Hamburg Harbour to England on July 7, 1906 by a British sailor.

(right) Clever people at K+N, in order to feed the customers with many different views on this incident, took a previous published card (no. 250) with nice full colour view of the intact church, and added a new caption. Mentioned is the architect again and date of fire. This card is however not p/u, was probably not a good seller, or surplus stock. Imprinted are New Years greetings of a travelling salesman of a 'F. A. Seiler' company from Hamburg. The fire was in early July – this card to be used in late December



When Ludwig (Louis) Knackstedt and his partner Hermann Näther set up their business on Nov. 1, 1889 (other sources list Sept. 28) it was registered as *studio for industrial photography*. Soon collotype printing was added. At first I was fooled a little bit by "industrial photography". Meant is that K+N had a photo studio with camera(s), dark room and so on, plus (hand) collotype press to produce additional prints of a customer photo. Making photo prints from the original negative wasn't possible when some older photographic processes and papers were used. When this problem was solved and better developing processes introduced/better photopaper available, it still meant lots of time and material to make, let's say 20 or 50 prints of the same photo (or enlargements). Not to forget the problem that prints came out in different, changing qualities. That's why many photographers used the photographic collotype printing process, and so gained experience and technical knowledge which in some cases

K+N's pre-1900 production

(Römmeler & Jonas, Stengel & Markert, both from Dresden etc.) led to a collotype printer career. When you look at the old views from Römmeler & Jonas which were printed on regular better quality stock and then pasted onto card board, you think you have a real photo in your hands. Only with a magnifying glass you discover that it is a collotype print. Please keep in mind that we are talking of the early 1890's.

Why Hermann Näther soon left the firm again, and why Louis Knackstedt continued to use the company name Knackstedt & Näther is still unknown.

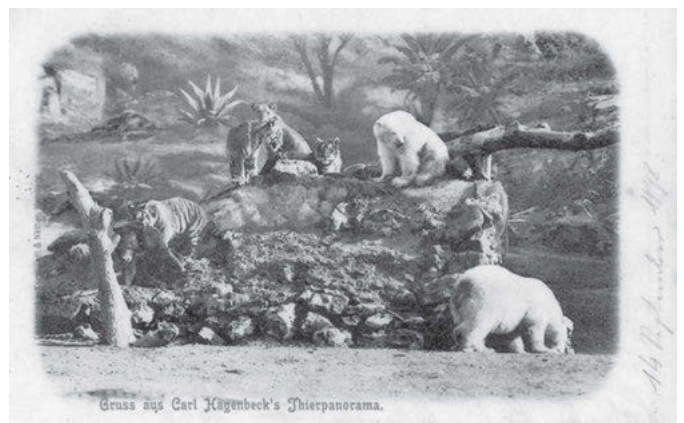
The K+N years before 1897 are still a mystery to me. Especially the mention of Christa Pieske in her book "Das ABC des Luxuspapiers" that K+N was a major supplier of stamp-like labels/stickers (Reklame-marken) done by letterpress process is most confusing. Mrs. Pieske states that this K+N

product was advertised in "The British Lithographer", 1894-95 issues, but I haven't found access to this publication yet. Of course there is a chance that Ludwig Knackstedt tried to find a specific product to make some money in the mid 1890's. Hopefully I find some reliable information on these years some day.

When did K+N begin to print postcards? Well, we have the earliest p/u card dated Sept. 5, 1897 (coll. Henry Toms), I have found a review on non-topo cards printed by K+N from about the same date. Unless we find older material, which is of course not that easy to discover, I would say early 1897 or even in (mid) 1896. The review in PZ leaves the impression that the Knackstedt & Näther printing business was already quite introduced then. Their early cards are far not as good as their later products. Also the type-setting, layout, the various fonts used, all this makes me believe that K+N were not really prepared at that time with their technical equipment for the ppc boom. ➔



30 beer drinking students, celebrating whatever, c. postcard size, blank reverse, not a photo but collotype printed. Guess each student wanted at least one print, so collotype was perfect/cheaper for reproduction.



Gruss aus Carl Hagenbeck's Tierpanorama - printed by K+N, p/u Sept 14, 1898. Photo was taken by Italian photographer Fratelli Alinari of Florence. (from the collection of John Edwards, London)



Then came 1898 and L. Knackstedt had decided to concentrate on picture postcard printing, as the entry in Klimsch 1898 directory (publ. mid 1898) confirms “Steindruck” (litho printing process) is not yet mentioned. When we look at the K+N cards found today from that year (postal use), there are mostly views from northern Germany and maritime topics. Not only for other publishers but also for K+N’s own publishing dept with mostly local Hamburg views.

→ **Gruss aus Hamburg - Port.** Typical ‘By Moonlight’ type on bright blue card. Published by K+N as card no. 39. Mailed from Hamburg to Gronau on May 7, 1898. Card series of same make as the early 1897 cards found. The address side helps to date the card as the “Deutsche Reichspost. Postkarte” is imprinted. To my knowledge this was only used on private issued card during the first 6-7 months of 1898 before replaced by the standard “Postkarte” or UPU imprints. Printers copied the official imprint found on non-picture postcards, perhaps in order to avoid problems with authorities.

Deutsche Reichspost.
Postkarte.

1 898 was most likely also the year K+N started to publish and print stereo cards in postcard size, using the original DRGM patent registration no. 83769, first applied for on Sept. 30, 1897, registered on Nov. 22, 1897 for Alexander Platowitsch from Hann.-Münden. I show an advert which appeared a number of times in “Der Photograph” 1899-1900 issues, similar to one I illustrated in TPA #18. Besides offering collotype printing (all makes and colours), delivering time 20 days, K+N describes itself as **Stereoscop Publishing House**, with stereo postcards, polyscope (?), stereo viewers and stereo photographs on offer. According the information of Dr. Dieter Lorenz, K+N issued some 3000 stereo cards, based on the individual numbering, incl. some views reprinted, mostly topo with views from worldwide, but also subjects as fairy tales etc. Most were monochrome printed, some hand-coloured. Plus additional issues with captions in different languages for sale in other countries. K+N’s stereo cards are also the first links to the French firm LL, and it looks very much that Knackstedt printed some of LL’s postcard size stereo card se-



K+N

Lichtdruck

Postkarten in allen Ausführungen und Farben

Lieferzeit 20 Werkstage.

Stereoscop-Verlag

Stereoscop-Postkarten * Polyscope * Stereoscop-Apparate

Stereoscop-Photographien

Hamburg Knackstedt & Näther.

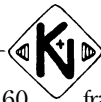
ries for the Swiss market. This co-operation was continued with the upcoming Souvernir Cards series.

But before that K+N became popular with postcards on the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II to Palestine in 1898. Stereo cards as well as regular post cards, and the huge sized ‘novelty’ **Kaiserkarte** I show below. Original size is 220 x 148 mm, on heavy card, monochrome collotype with captions imprinted by letterpress in red-brown ink. Illustrated sample (Ride to Bethlehem) was mailed from the city of Bremen to Holland on Nov. 25, 1898 under printed matter rate. →



Die Orientreise des Deutschen Kaiserpaars 1898.

Ritt nach Bethlehem. Im Hintergrunde
Sionsberg u. Davidsthor.



Everything with the Kaiser on required official permission, but on the other hand meant guaranteed sales. The K+N cards on the trip of the German emperor to the Orient gave K+N good reputation. However, they were not the only publishers with cards on this journey. Especially Berlin based firms had very good contacts to the court.

1899 saw the K+N business booming. An own (chromo)litho printing dept. was added. New collotype flatbed presses, technically much improved and faster were installed. According the cards still found today we learn that the number of customers in Germany and abroad increased by some degree. K+N began to print, and in many cases also publish, series of post cards with views from faraway places in Africa, Caribic and South-America. A number of them show the names of *Aust* or *Woermann*, both firms from Hamburg, as publishers. In most cases it were places on/not far off the coast, ports called by German shipping companies, for example HAPAG. The cards are often multiviews, typically arranged for that time with some floral (art nouveau) artwork.

K+N's new litho printing presses and the recruited staff of lithographers were not only around to give collotype printed cards an colourful look. This did not work out well at the early stage, and K+N folks had to make many tests until they finally perfected their "Chromolithdruck" process. No, Louis Knackstedt or one of his people in charge for 'novelties' had other plans first. "**SOUVENIR-KARTEN**" = souvenir cards, which were colourful litho printed frames with space reserved to insert the customers photo by monochrome collotype. The frames/art work were arranged by artists (H. Wimmer, Leipzig did many) and pre-printed in 11 colours. So, the customer received colourful looking cards with his view imprinted at a reasonable price. K+N did not insist on high numbers but offered to print even 250 copies only if required. This of course was clever marketing and resulted in many new customers normally not willing to place orders for 1000's of cards.

A first series of 60 frames shows that K+N's tried to please as many trades and likes as possible. We have 36 different frames suitable for single views, 2 frames especially designed to insert views of churches, 14 different designs to imprint 2 to 4 views (multiviews) and 8 matching frames especially for restaurants, bars, guesthouses and hotels.

Durch collector *Frans Bokelmann* has researched the K+N souvenir cards and the results were published in TPA #11. p 45-48. The frames have an individual number found on picture side together with small K+N logo. The highest number found is 664, although Frans believed that not all number were actually used. He was able to locate 278 different frames, and I know of nobody else who has seen more K+N souvenir cards. As I said before, K+N tried to please as many customers as possible. Besides the "standard" frames, soon cards featuring city coat of arms from places all over Europe and a huge series with hoisted flags design (country, states, royal standards, shipping companies etc) were produced. Another gimmick was the "Variations-Karte" (K+N 201-206). The customer photo was imprinted (same size and at same position of course) in five different frame designs. A good idea as card buyers always expected soon something new.

The name "*Souvenir-Karte*" came from a offer (valid only during the first time I guess) K+N made to customers. With printing order they supplied a number of wrappers to hold the cards, free of charge. The word "*Souvenir*" was printed on front. Not all cards were immediately mailed but many wished to take home cards as a "souvenir".

The design of this K+N series was never registered as DRGM which was probably also

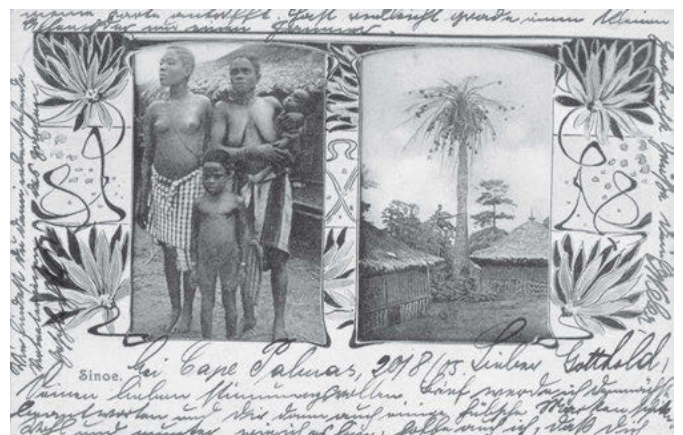


impossible. To put a customer view inside a specially designed border, frame or background is nothing outstanding and widely found. One of the earliest firms to use such designs in great variety was *A. Rosenblatt* from Frankfurt (see TPA #17, p 20-21). Here the view was aranged inside sea shells, leaves etc, but the entire card printed by chromolitho process. Many, many other firms created own frame designs and imprints were done in various processes. Only the printing company of *Heinr. & Aug. Brüning*, Hanau, came up with a very similar looking series and the photo imprint also done by monochrome collotype process at the same time K+N flooded the market with their souvenir cards, for customers all over Europe from France to Russia, as well as faraway places like Chili and Dutch West Indies.

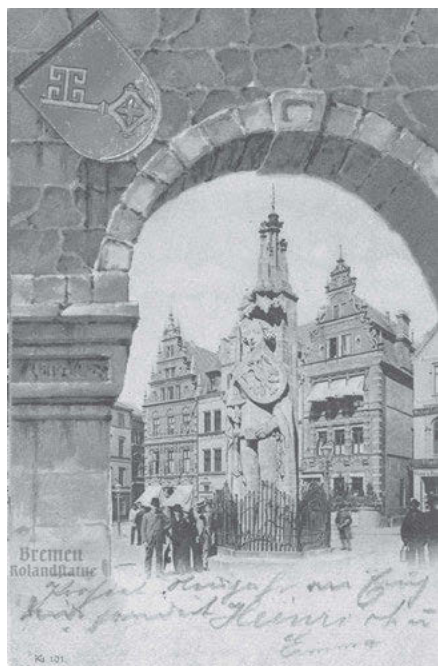
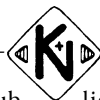
K+N started the frame series in 1899 and I think it faded away already by 1902, as everything in the ppc market was fast moving.



Libreville, Gabon - published by C. Woermann, Hamburg. Not p/u with UPU address side. Captions of photos read: (native) Pahouin; Route à Glass; (below) St. Pierre. Not numbered. Have three more.



Sinoe (Greenville), Liberia - published by K+N (?). P/u in August 1905, UPU address side. Have seen earlier p/u samples. Natives and village with no individual caption. Popular "exotic" card type.



Louis Koch, publisher/photographer from the city of Bremen (not to be mistaken with ppc printer Louis Koch from Halberstadt), was an early customer of K+N. The earliest card dates from April 1898. Koch also ordered souvenir cards, both illustrated cards show the city crest of Bremen (old key on red ground). On the left K+N frame no. 101 with view of Roland statue (p/u 1901), right the Teichmann Fountain (K+N 106). Frame 101 has a unusual ornamented address side, found only on very few K+N cards, but from different places.



Deuben, Saxony, K+N frame no. 22. Published by local firm *Oscar Hähnel*, p/u Nov. 1901. This frame was very popular, I have 3 diff. samples, all from places in Saxony by the way. The (smoky) panorama view of Deuben in strong contrast to colourful flowers.

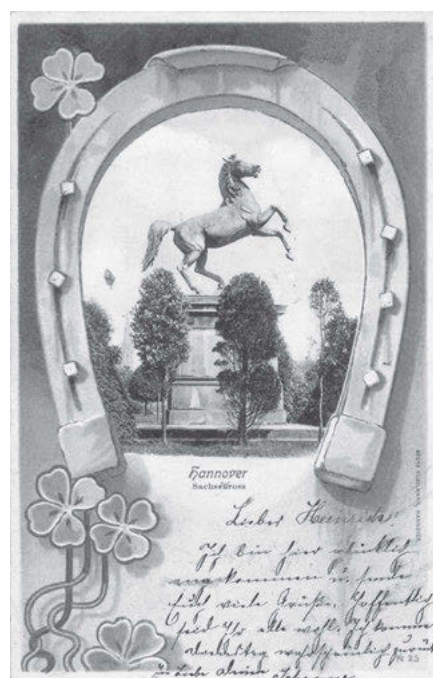


Leipzig, Augustusplatz (with new theater), Saxony, K+N frame 110. Published by local firm *G. Friedrichs*, p/u March 1901. Another city crest frame. Address side with ornament design as above. Friedrichs was a good customer of K+N, but placed also orders with C.G. Röder.

↓ **Paris, Le lac du Bois de Boulogne.** At lower right corner we see the K+N number 204, a winter motif. The well known initials "LL" are found behind caption. Quite late postal use in 1908 in this case. This is one of five cards from the K+N presses and LL mention so far discovered. All five show views from the Paris area. The cards don't tell if the complete printing incl. French address side was undertaken by Knackstedt & Näther, Hamburg, or if K+N only supplied their colourful frames and LL did the rest. I tend to believe that K+N did the entire work = the Paris link. LL was busy.



Hannover, Saxony horse monument ('Sachsenross'), still the state crest/flag of Lower Saxony today. This is K+N frame no. 23, another very popular one. Lucky charms like horse-shoes, four-leaf clover were often found on postcards and in this case the horseshoe fits well anyway. Published by local firm *Georg Kugelmann*, who was another good customer of K+N. Card p/u in March 1900, addressed to a place in my region, and with regular (not ornamented) address side.



K+N's post-1900 production

After the turn of the century K+N continued to advertise their stereo card program as well as souvenir cards. The latter were now offered in quantities of 500 or 1000 cards. This was probably the major advantage of the K+N offer compared with competitors. Low quantity order only but a huge variety of different frames available.

By 1901 additional collotype and litho presses (large format) were installed at Eppendorfer Landstr. 190. This was not only because of the well running contract printing business mostly for non-German customers. The K+N staff had finally managed to work out a high quality process they called "**Chromo-Lichtdruck**". The exact date when this process was introduced is not yet clear. Looking at the dates of postally used samples I would say c. mid 1901. The process itself was not a secret and a number of other printers in Germany used it. The picture was (pre-) printed by collotype process and then superimposed with a number of litho colours (overlay colours). The major problem was to arrange the individual printing formes and you needed presses with very good register. Not all printing inks were fully transparent, especially yellow. In case a picture required a good percentage of yellow, printed onto the collotype image it led to loss of details, or even entire portions of the photo were "covered", the entire card ruined. A solution was to print non-transparent colours first, then the collotype image plus the the rest of the needed overlay colours. Doing it this way you often ended up with printing/drying problems however. Especially with the sensible collotype printing.

I don't know how the K+N folks managed to solve all these problems, but their "Chromo-Lichtdruck" cards are really excellent, and only true multi-colour collotype printing (also done by K+N later) produced even better results. It appears that K+N improved this process later. Some 2 to 3 years after the first cards appeared, cards turn up that received a final matt-lacquer finish, often only on the picture leaving the writing space blank, then also accross the entire picture side, giving the entire colouring a really smooth look. I tried to make out how many overlay colours were used, but this seems to have differed from card to card. Sometimes I counted 6, some have 8 and others show even more overlay colours. In any way this (expensive) process became a top seller for K+N, and led to really long delivery times of 3 months and longer.

I run out of space this issue. More next time. In the meantime I hope to discover more on the K+N history between 1902-05.

I will take also another look at the (organized) collapse of K+N and immediate rebirth as Knackstedt & Co, their change from collotype to gravure printing, the war years and the new owner from 1925 on.

KNACKSTEDT & NÄTHER
Nachf.



CUXHAVEN
Deichstr. 17.

Photographisches
Atelier

Prämiirt
BERLIN
1900.

Knackstedt & Näther
Jnh: FRAU A. JENSEN
CUXHAVEN.

PORTRAITS
in allen Formaten
Kinder- u. Gruppen-
Aufnahmen.

Vergroesserungen
nach
allen Bildern auf
Bromsilber- u. Platinpapier.

PIGMENT
in verschiedenen Farben
auf
PORZELAN, SEIDE
etc.

Aufnahmen
von
Gemälden, Innenräumen,
Maschinen, Landschaften.
etc.



In TPA #19, p 30 I illustrated the entry of a "**Knackstedt & Näther Nachf.**" found under "Photographers" heading in the BUGRA 1914 catalog. Proprietor was a A. Hoffmann and the business found in the port of Cuxhaven. I thought that someone had taken the (legal) opportunity to use a well introduced name for his own business by adding "Nachf. = successor".

Well, now my Dutch friend *Frans Bokelmann* surprised me (once again). He sent me photocopies of a typical old photograph mounted on heavy board with photo studio advertising on reverse. K+N Nachf. (prop. Mrs. A. Jensen) with logo (see above) and mention of an award received at a Berlin 1900 exhibition.

How do these two K+N's fit together? I have no idea yet. Another challenge indeed. Thank you very much, Frans!

Die Platte bleibt für Nachbestellungen aufbewahrt.

GEOP. SOHLKE, BREMEN.



Japanese mendicant – this cards shows that The Rotograph Co., N.Y. City did not publish views from the USA and neighbouring countries only. Although I believe the series with Japan views was for sale in the US only. Card number reads "J. 30", p/u within the US but postmark/year date almost illegible and message not dated. Could be 1905 or 1906 (undivided back = 1901-07). At lower right corner and almost cut off we find a "Handcolored" imprint. This card (with quite rough surface) was definitely printed and handcoloured by Knackstedt & Näther, and not by Stengel & Co as some other ppc research sources say.

Constabel & Knackstedt

Kunstanstalt für Lichtdruck u. Photographie, Hamburg, Eppendorfer Landstraße 190. Prop. G. Constabel u. L. Knackstedt. – this business entry in "Offiz. Adressbuch des Deutschen Buchhandels" 1903 edition was a find by chance. The research of Dr. Dieter Lorenz in other editions of the above mentioned addressbook brought some results. This firm is first mentioned in 1891, although later editions list 1892. Filed under publisher. The 1894 entry lists not only Hamburg but also 'Hanerau', a place in Holstein. From 1896 on Constabel & Knackstedt, photographers & collotype printing is found under the Hamburg (= K+N) address only. Last entry Dr. Lorenz found was for 1904. It appears that the major project of C&K was to photograph/document the construction of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Kanal* (Nord-Ostsee-Kanal/Kiel Canal) opened on June 20, 1895. C&K published (& printed) a booklet with 16 views (from 1887-1895) of the canal construction. Nothing else found yet.