C.G.RÖDER G.M.B.H. LEIPZIG

OFFSETDRUCK

BUCHDRUCK

STEINDRUCK

TIEFDRUCK

LICHTDRUCK

NOTENDRUCK
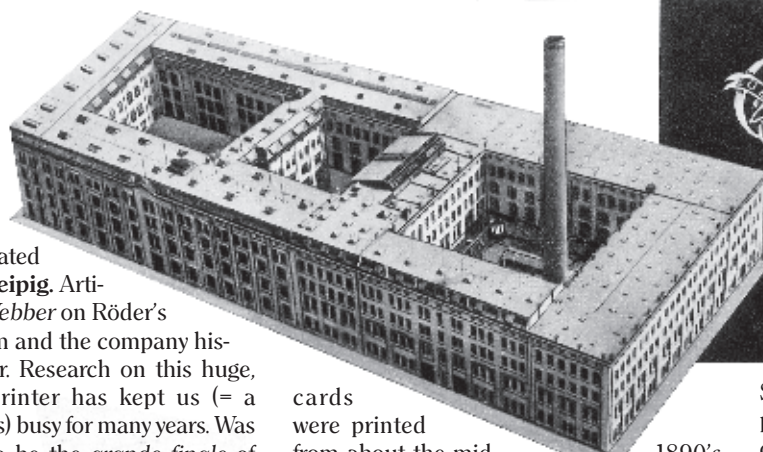
TPA issue 20 was quite dominated by **C.G. Röder, Leipig.** Articles by *George Webber* on Röder's numbering system and the company history by the editor. Research on this huge, long-time ppc printer has kept us (= a number of readers) busy for many years. Was TPA 20 meant to be the *grande finale* of Röder research? Well, not in my opinion. I agree with George who said that there are many other puzzles around in the ppc world which need research. But why drop Röder? Although involved in a number of researches on long-gone ppc producers, I continue to collect Röder cards and anything else of interest. Encouring also the interest in Röder company history / the card numbering system(s) from reader's side.

I would like to point out that this article is not meant to put G. Webber's article of 2003 *"under attack"*. George did a good job but it was his point of view, his theories and calculations. I believe it is legitimate to analyze some aspects re the Röder card numbering, show some new finds and deal with aspects which seem to have been ignored somehow in the past due to unknown reasons.

Röder's pre-1901 ppc printing activities

Röder might have started to number cards with "J" prefix in/around 1901. George is correct to describe the time before as (quote) "difficult territory still under research". According the privately issued company history of "Offizin Andersen Nexö" (OAN), successor to C.G. Röder works, picture postcards were printed from about the mid-1890's on. First by (chromo) lithography before Röder decided to concentrate on collotype process (combined with machine colouring by litho process). Röder had taken over the collotype printer *C. Hesse* already in 1890. But production by hand presses did not pay off. By 1896, it was Röder's 50th year in business, the collotype printing dept. had already 5 flatbed presses and two hand presses for production. Surely these were not used entirely for ppc production, but for facsimile and general illustration jobs (portraits of musicians for example).

People at the Röder works also needed some time to perfect collotype and the important pre-press work. Soon they realized that coloured cards were in demand and meant more profit. To arrange the colour printing formes is not that easy. We have even found Röder cards that were hand/stencil-coloured. But I strongly believe that Röder printed ppc's on order already in bigger numbers by c. 1898. The late 1890's were the boom years for collotype process (and ppc's in general) due to technical innovations resulting in faster, bigger format presses, better process cameras and other machinery/chemicals needed for preparing the printing plates.

So, please show me such a pre-1901 Röder printed card you might say. I fear I had such cards already in my hands, BUT did not recognize done by Röder. Because these cards did not look *"Röder-like"*, not as the more uniform designed post-1902 card production. I think it was a **major mistake** to look out for the *typical* Röder design **only,** address side printed in green ink with batch number to be found at the lower right corner position *only.*

The interest in this – at that time unknown printer – was initialized by the research of Jack Foley/Alan Leonard on the British publisher F.G.O. Stuart from Southampton (started in the late 1970's). Anthony Byatt deals detailed in his book ("Picture Postcards and their Publishers") with this printer and the high quality coloured cards (done for several publishers) that all show a printer's number at the same position. And it was Jack Foley again who found printing sample cards, the missing link, and identified C.G. Röder, Leipzig as printer of these cards (article published on Röder in PPM 1991).

So, cards that did not show "typical" Röder layout were often ignored, which was surely a mistake as I feel today. Look at old TPA issues with articles on Röder cards, and you will understand what I mean. Worst of all there were cards found which definitely
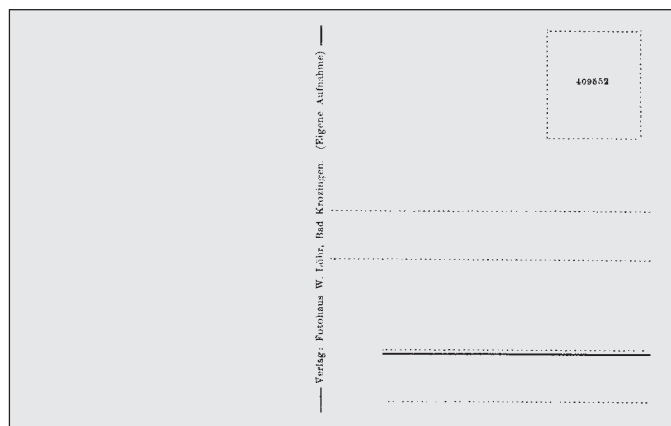
Picture side shows a panorama view of **Bad Krozingen,** publ. by local firm Fotohaus W. Löhr and printed by Röder using gravure process. Deckle-edged. Card no. reads 409552 (c. late 1920's).
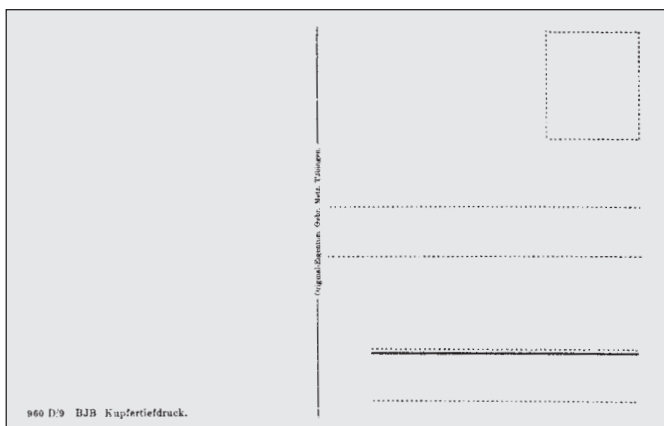
Picture side: **Pommersfelden, Schloß Weissenkirchen.** Publ. Gebr. Metz, Tübingen. Gravure printed, deckle-edged, address side absolutely identical, but no. Röder number and only Gebr. Metz code.

Title illustration shows a letterhead used by C.G. Röder in the late 1920's. Golden and black printed, combined litho and gravure process.

looked like Röder but had no batch number. No number at the usual position on address side = not Röder. By the way, the batch number later moved to the inside stamp box position. But there are cards (printed by Röder for another German ppc printer) of pre-1905 date which show the Röder number inside stamp box already. This was done because the customer wanted it. So, pre-1901 cards printed by Röder do not need to show a number at typical position(s) or any (printer) number at all. Guess in case they have a typical 4-digit number, it is most likely to be found on picture side, which was standard at that time for such imprints.

Röder cards without batch number

Doing research on a old ppc printer only by looking at cards has never been my thing. You need mention in contemporary (trade) literature, best to have also some bills, adverts etc. In case of Röder this is indeed difficult, as they are rarely mentioned as ppc, but book and music printers. A lucky find in *Karin Walter's* book "Postkarte und Fotografie" which deals with the company history of the huge publishing firm "Gebr. Metz" from Tübingen, mentions Röder. Metz Bros. had given up their own collotype printing (due to quality reasons) and C.G. Röder took it over in 1900. At that time Röder must had been already in the position to handle larger ppc printing orders. Research on Gebr. Metz is under progress. Very interesting for Röder too, because Metz cards show NO Röder printing numbers but Metz numbers ONLY. Even later "typical" Röder printed cards for Metz, when Röder already used a consecutive numbering, show NO Röder numbers. So, there could be plenty of Röder printed cards without their typical number on. Röder printed also better quality cards for famous Tuck's. Most show also no Röder numbers. When I told George Webber of Röder cards with no numbers on, he replied that these must be rare as we haven't found

View of the new townhall, Leipzig, after an original etching of Walter Zeißting. Gravure printed, plate-sunk, A6 size, from the mid 1930's taking the heavy use of German fraktur type in account.

Being interested in Leipzig views, I had seen single cards from this series before. The way the writing lines are arranged is identical with other Röder A6 sized cards. But this alone is no proof.

Then I bought a map containing 5 diff. views of this series. With city crest on cover and imprint that this map was given away as small gift by the mayor of the city Leipzig. On back cover a small imprint that reads **"C.G. Röder, Leipzig".** Aha! Again Röder printed post cards without anything looking like a batch number on. Also no name imprint on cards. Any other Röder card variations around?
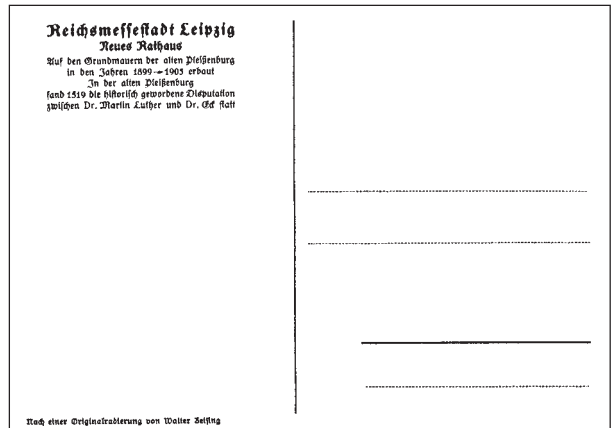
many in the past. Well, when you file Röder-like cards *automatically* as non-Röders because there is no number at the typical position(s), you really don't find many. The Gebr. Metz and Tuck's cards alone prove that there are indeed Röder printed cards WITHOUT batch number on around.

The J-Register matter/early card no's

The card numbers with a "J" prefix turn up on cards from 1901-02. George describes it as the start of Röder's mass-production of ppc's. See above, perhaps Röder entered mass-production already earlier(?). Nevertheless it is a card-coding system for internal use, for records, that helps to locate any negatives, details of colouring and whatever else of use for possible reprints and reference. This is something all printers did, and in case of collotype printers it was much easier and needed not much space. No costly,

heavy litho stones to stock in cellars, no made-to-order metal formes for embossing etc. Material of interest could be put into a *Journal cover* with a number on and stored.

The particular with Röder cards is, that they show (later) a consecutive numbering for a longer period, no matter which card quality or country. Reprints received a new number. This might encourage us to trust that the consecutive card numbering was used at the Röder works *all the time*. Why? Simply look at cards of other major German ppc printers. There are various card numbering systems found, suddenly replaced by new ones, used for a couple of years or less but nothing constant.

The best system in my opinion was that of Dr. Trenkler & Co., also from Leipzig. Year date, space, followed by card number. A standard still found in use in companies
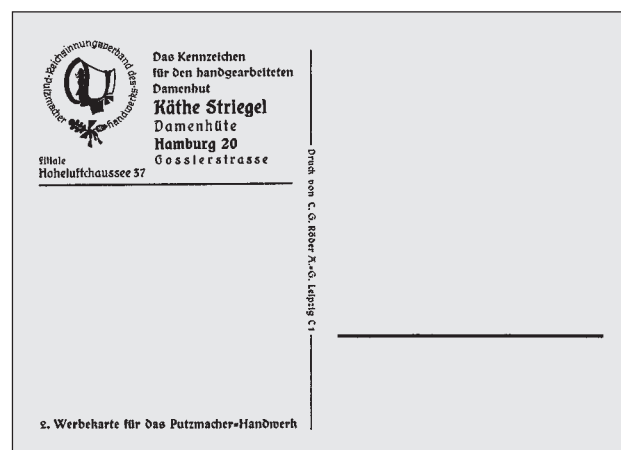
Hat maker 1770 - promo card (no. 2) for the hat maker trade with imprint of a Hamburg-based firm. Coloured offset printed, signed *"Bele"*. A6 sized, no batch number but full Röder AG name imprinted. Post-1930 origin. Although the motif is indeed not "typical" for Röder card production, why is there no batch number? Sponsored? No, I think. Röder was broke and needed every Mark.

today. Trenkler appears to have printed also more cards than Röder in pre-1914 years.

What about Röder? They had four-digit numbers on their chromolitho cards, no number but full name on other litho cards of pre-1900 date. And then? Suddenly we have these "J" numbers up to at least "J. 21115" as we know now (from late 1902 or early 1903?). If we stick to the consecutive card number idea, they should have continued with something in the 22th range, without prefix "J". *Wrong!* Cards for a Cologne based publisher, p/u August to Nov. 1902, show Röder number's in the 9,000 range! How can that be? Two systems? Sounds unusual, makes from today's point of view absolutely no sense. The "J" numbering was cancelled due to unknown reasons. Before this took place however, cards received a "low" number, began with 100(0) again. Consecutive numbering anyway? No matter how you turn it, there remains a "gap" of minimum 6, more likely 9 months to make above theory work.

Why not accept it as it appears to be? Two different card number systems used at the Röder house in 1902? Why not? Other firms had also mixed up systems, why not at Gerichtsweg, too? You cannot press everything into a logical nummerical order in my opinion. Surely you can try, but new card finds might ruin your theory again quickly.

Not to forget another Röder card species that shows two numbers, at down left and (regular) down right position. These double-numbered cards, too many found to ignore them, appeared already in late 1902. Some showing "J" numbers (at lower right position), and others not. Size of numbers does differ, the left often set in smaller type, then again set in same size. Number on the right often in the 20th range and left in 13th, but also others with number on the left in 13th and the "regular" no. in lower 11th range. The existence of these untypically numbered cards, at about the time with the mixed up "J" / "normal" numbers in c. late 1902, makes me believe that nothing was really in consecutive order at all then.

Swiss publisher Guggenheim was an early customer of Röder. This is Guggenheim no. 7793, *Loèche-Souste* and Röder "J. 21115" at typical position. Another card with J.-no. in 21th range is also known. The "J" numbering went indeed above the 20,000 mark.

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J. 21115

I should better not mention that there were also few cards found with a "B." prefix, or early Röder's with a number at lower left corner position only.

Röder card numbers were not customer order numbers. Although I do not have old bills of C.G. Röder yet, I own a number of bills by other ppc printers, and they NEVER listed the individual card numbers but an order number together with printing process used and quantity only.

The reason for using two numbering systems at the same time, which sounds unlikely to us now, might had been a simple one. Perhaps Röder had ordered new presses which were installed in, say, wing A, 1st floor. The other "old" presses were still working at another place (wing B, 3rd floor), but it was planned to concentrate the grown collotype printing all together in a new hall not yet ready to move in. The Röder works were already quite huge then. So, for the Röder folks back then it was quite clear that the "wing B, 3rd floor" presses printed cards with "J" numbers, the wing A, 1st floor started off with low numbers without "J" prefix. Then all the collotype presses were concentrated at one place (if this ever was), the card numbering went on. Sure, this is pure guesswork now, and I do not expect it to be correct, but it is a possibility. An alternative answer

from the practical point of view without sticking sklavishly to imprinted numbers.

When you realize the existence of a number of Röder printed cards without any "typical" batch no. on, it doesn't matter much at all.

The old/new register matter

Everything went on now smoothly "number-wise" for a couple of years. To be called soon the "Old Register" by G. Webber. According his research, and backed-up by cards found, Röder suddenly started to number their cards by 1 (or 100, or 1000) again, some time in 1910/11.

George speculated that due to the market situation and protective tariffs, C.G. Röder, Emil Pinkau & Co. and possibly others formed a ppc printing cartell. Well, Pinkau is really the worst potential partner for Röder or any other local firm to think of. Information from printing trade literature of that period makes one thing very clear: Pinkau & Co. make good profits all the time, did not care anything for competitors unless they could be bought or controlled, wasn't member of any of the regular printing proprietor societies or trusts. Pinkau invented new, faster technologies for plate-making, cut production costs wherever possible and was so in the position to offer ppc printing at a low price (and average quality).

Photocopy of address side that Chris McGregor had sent. Röder printed card for the US publisher G.W. Morris, a good customer for several years. Röder no. 3950 and p/u Aug. 27, 1908. Was the "New Register" already in use by early 1908? Or is it something separate?

Glückstadt & Münden, Hamburg were another good customer of Röder. Navy ship "Hannover" with Röder no. 168 783 (in brackets), mailed (postfree) in Dec. 1908 to man in service. Imprinted G&M year date reads "1908" too. Fits well into G. Webber's calculations.

What made Röder to start with number 1 = the "New Register" again? Well, I have no idea. Re-organisation? Röder continued to have to largest collotype printing plant of all, not to talk of their other numerous printing presses, and 1100+ workers.

I have a problem with the year date George Webber listed for the "New Register" in TPA #20. Not with cards from central Europe but for USA. Some card finds not fitting into the system were ignored in the past, treated as "isolated mistakes". Okay, this is what mathematicians/statisticians do when they work with figures. I am no academic and not in the position to criticize this. But sometimes I wonder how many "exceptions" can be ignored?

People make mistakes, and probably a busy composer at the Röder house had a bad day and mixed up some figures, a "2" instead a "5" at first position, and the person responsible for proof-reading had a bad day too, the printer did not care and so it happened that an incorrect number was imprinted.

How can we date a not p/u postcard? Only if it published on occasion of a dated event, an exhibition for example. Best however it was also p/u with readable postmark. Postally used cards mean that the cards were printed before that date. However, sometimes the cards were sold and mailed a few days after they had been delivered to the dealers, but others may had been mailed much later, sometimes many years later. What else is helpful for dating? Dated messages on not p/u cards can be helpful but should be treated with great care. Sometimes we find imprinted year dates, usually in the publisher line. Such mention is found in Germany often on post-1907 published cards and had to do with copyrights of the picture. But imprinted year dates could also be risky for serious research. It could list the original copyright year but was a later reprint. Or it had nothing to do with copyright but the publisher wanted it for own records but was used in old form for reprint. As said above mistakes happen.

But one detail of the address side layout is something you can rely on. The introduction of the divided back, allowing people to use half of the address side for message instead on picture side only. The date/year when the divided back was officially introduced differs from country to country. In Germany it took place in 1905, Great Britain was the first country to introduce the divided back already in 1902, and the USA joined quite late in (March) 1907.

From time to time single cards are found that seem not to fit into the old/new register numbering. Just recently I was told of another find, a card printed by Röder for the publisher G.W. Morris, Maine, USA, a good customer of Röder.

Our move made it necessary to look through all the paper stuff I had accumulated in my working room. I discovered a letter with a number of photocopies again, sent by *Chris*

Nové Benátky, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Nice done coloured Röder card with heavy lacque finish. Bears no. 251 993, the highest number I have that qualifies for the "Old Register". P/U May 1912. Local publisher and a year date imprint reads "1911".

The Alps, Königspitze 3857m and mountain hut. Good retouched, detailed view, duotone collotype process. Photographed and published by "Gebr. Bährendt", Meran. With Röder no. 16 364 inside stamp box. Not p/u but with imprinted year date "1911". Fits also well into actual register.


San Francisco, Cal. The Stadium Golden Gate Park in mid winter. Publ. by "P.N.C" as card no. S.F. 232. Röder no. 192 458 and p/u Oct. 1909 (divided back). According old register it was printed by about early 1908. Nice card with photographer.

Wood End Life Saving Station, Provincetown, Mass. Publ. by local firm "The Advocate" as post card no. 948. Divided back = post-1907. Not p/u with Röder number 21 237 found in stamp box position. Now I am puzzled. According TPA 20 article this card should be in the "New Register" and

produced c. early 1911. At a time the US protective tariffs for ppc's were effective for some time already. With the G.W. Morris p/u 1908 finds in mind, this card with view from the East Coast again, could well date from late 1908/early 1909. Before August 1909 when the protective tariffs hit firms especially like the topo postcard printers C.G. Röder, Leipzig.
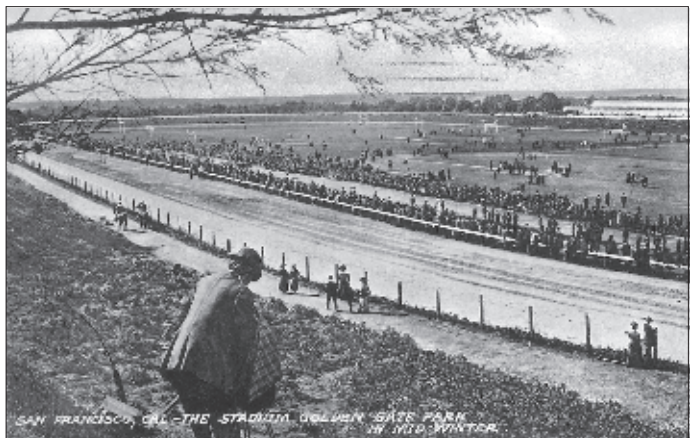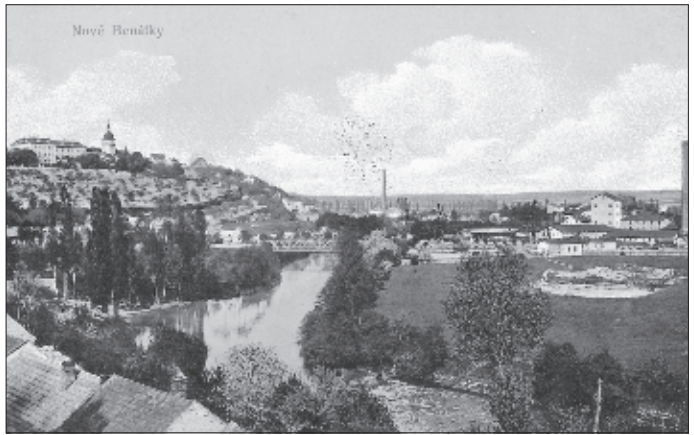
McGregor from Vancouver, Canada. It gathered some dust for a couple of years, being misplaced. Chris had then been very interested in Röder and ANC research. Think he is nowadays entirely involved in research of British "LL" cards.

Chris reported that he had cards of Morris with Röder number 70109 and p/u April 1906, but others bearing numbers from 3897 to 4225. These low numbers were found on cards with divided back, of post-1907 date, not belonging to the old register. Two of his cards with 4-digit numbers were postally used. *What a surprise!* Card with Röder no. 3950 was p/u on August 27, 1908 (see ill.), and card 4059 was postmarked June 6, 1908. These cards were printed/shipped at least a couple of months earlier, circa early 1908.

At that time George Webber still had worked with 1909 as year the new register started. In his article in TPA 20 he changed his mind and says 1910. The Morris cards (see ill.) however, could mean that Röder started with a new card numbering already earlier. Is there a chance that Chris McGregor made a mistake and that his Morris cards were not printed by Röder? No, I am very sure Chris was able to identify cards as done by Röder or not. He has a very good eye for details and, by the way, an excellent collection of Röder printing process sample cards. One of the major benefits of Röder batch number research was that it puts you in the position to date also none p/u cards.

Well, I believe that George, who is used to "play around with figures", worked seriously with the material he had at hand then. But perhaps the Röder people fooled him, and the change from old to new register wasn't everywhere actually *smooth?* Perhaps due to yet unknown reasons, the Röder works used two number systems on their cards at the same time for a certain period? I cannot think of any reason to do so, but when you drop the idea that the numbering **must** always be consecutive....

The editor wishes to thank *Chris Ratcliffe, Harald Siefert* and of course the "Dutch Connection" *Frans Bokelmann & Henk Voskuilen* for their support with Röder material and of course all others not mentioned here in person.

Hermann Löns monument /Lüneburger Heide. Röder printed no. **674383** for publ. *Rud. Reher,* Hamburg. With "war permit no." M 1360. Not p/u.


Lüneburger Heide. Another surely not incriminating view that passed the censors in WW2. For long time customer *Ch. Büsing,* Bremen. NO Röder no., but permit no. "M 1360" *only.*

Some Röder printed cards from WW2 show no batch no's. anymore, but control permit "M 1360" only. Found not only inside stamp box position, also below dividing line, even at lower right corner. I guess these cards came out after the batch number system was dropped. Above card was not printed by collotype but gravure process. During the bomb raid of early Dec. 1943, the gravure presses were completely destroyed = this card was printed before that date.
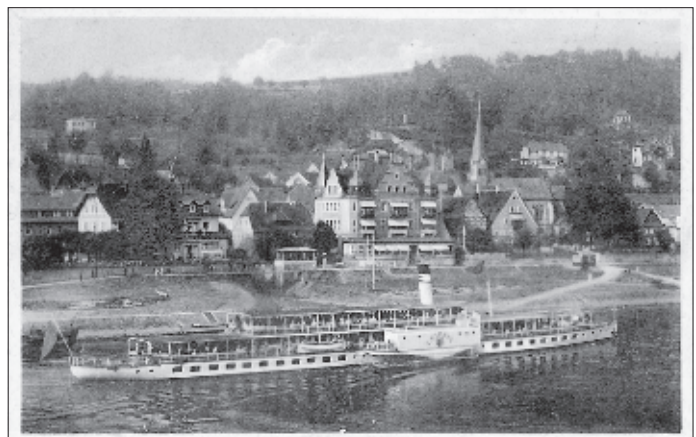
Greetings from Innsbruck Card. no 3864 by publ. *Peter Triem,* Munich. A 3rd version with sort of new batch no. system. Have also no's 1013, 1056, 2023. (By diff. publishers)
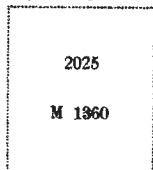
The small city of **Wehlen in Saxony,** on the River Elbe celebrated their 700th birthday in 1947. This view of the city accross the river with paddle-steamer "Leipzig" was published by Th. G. Ruprecht, Dresden. An imprinted "Nr. 5506" could be the card number. Collotype printed on thin, poor card in/around 1947 and bears the name "C.G. Röder" on address side. This is definitely a post-WW2 production (diff. address side layout). It shows also a "Z 4196" imprint at lower right corner position. "Z" = Zensur, still found on many early GDR cards. Everything needed to be under control.
The "M" no. listed with Röder name is a surprise, however. It is not "M 1360" which appeared on all Röder WW2 years issues, but "M 306" instead. A new number for C.G. Röder works? Or was this card printed by another firm with less bomb damage for Röder? Emil Pinkau & Co. for example was listed under "M 129". Research on Röder never becomes boring!

Above two Röder printed cards for diff. publ. from GB. One with and the other without typical Röder batch number. — **Below** two cards of special make. One from Germany with batch number and the other from Netherlands without. Platesunk and embossed, difficult to reproduce, but all details matching. All cards come from the collection of Chris Ratcliffe who sent me several other "pairs".