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Paul Süss, Mügeln ^{Bez. Dresden}

Aktiengesellschaft für Luxuspapierfabrikation



Mügeln, den 2. Mai 1916
Bez. Dresden.

This article on deluxe paper manufacturer/postcard publisher Paul Süss, first Dresden, then Mügeln/Heidenau, Saxony, is (once again) based on a letter to the editor of the German Postcard Collector publication 'AK Express'.

Responded to articles of Mr. P. Leuter ("Rendevous with Erika") and Mr. U. Hollendorf ("Erika"-Adventskalender) in issue 129 of above publication some time ago. The first dealing with the history of P. Süss company, the second concentrating on the production/history of the follow-up company "Mitteldeutsche Kunstanstalten Heidenau". Both firms used the well introduced 'ERIKA'-trademark on postcards.

Sent in were not only corrections, but additional information as I have done before with material on Stengel & Co., Dresden, re an article also written by Mr. P. Leuter. Back then the receipt of my material was acknowledged at least, being forwarded to the writer(?). This time however, I heard nothing at all, neither from the editor nor the writers.

A behavior like this is disappointing, or should I call it ignorant? I can understand that some writers do not like it much being informed of having presented incorrect/false data and conclusions. Editors and publishers should make sure that readers are presented serious information. With TPA I would be happy to receive such information, also corrections (!) – because nobody is perfect. Thank you. The Editor

COMPANY HISTORY

PAUL SÜSS, said to had not been a resident of Dresden, began his business career by taking over a paper/printing firm including 10 employees on Aug. 15, 1886. The business he concentrated on belonged to the "Luxuspapier" field, perhaps best translated as deluxe paper trade, which covered various products and articles mostly unknown nowadays.

Necessary were (chromo)litho presses as well as letterpress, but most of all machinery for embossing, moulding, cutting, gilt-edging, engraving, to glue together etc, and of course plenty of work to be done by hand.

The Süss business continued to prosper and they had to move several times, always into bigger (rented) premises. Finally it was high time for an own factory. Similar to a number of other firms of the same trade, and in order to raise the necessary capital, the joint-stock company (AG) **Paul Süss, Aktiengesellschaft für Luxuspapierfabrikation**, was set up on Jan. 1, 1897. At that time there might have been plans to move to Mügeln/Heidenau, and perhaps Süss AG bought a plot there already. Dresden was a booming city, with increasing prices for land. Nearby Mügeln offered lower prices to industrial investors, but the first Süss AG owned factory was definitely found in Dresden, Blasewitzer Str. 23 (Klimsch 1898). Very likely it was not a new erected building. The Paul Süss AG was here in good neighbourhood. Well-known **Römmel & Jonas** resided at Blasewitzerstr. 27. Another long-established ppc printer was **Wilh. Hoffmann AG**, their factory found at no. 25.

This first Süss owned factory must had been of some size, the worth of the property is listed in the 1905 business report still with 329,000 Marks. The plot in Mügeln costed mere 29,000 Marks. The new Mügeln factory is mentioned later with 609,000 Marks. Business capital of the Süss AG was 700,000 Marks.

Paul Süss AG, Mügeln/Heidenau

According the research of Mr. Hollendorf, the construction of the new factory was immediately begun in 1897. I wonder why Süss did not move the business to Mügeln in 1898 or early 1899? It took place as late as in April 1901. Mr. Hollendorf found out that even a bicycle works resided for a short time in the new Süss factory. This is all a bit unusual and might be a first sign of the general weak financial situation of the company (despite the high dividend paid first) and failures of the management. The old factory in Dresden was sold not before 1910. In the early years of the joint-stock company, dividends of 12% were common. After the move, and the business said to be still booming, dividends went down to 4-5%. Other AG's of the same trade paid more to share holders. In 1907 Süss AG paid 7% and in 1908 even 10% dividend. But at that time the AG appears to had been fully under control of banks. Then it went down to 3% in 1909 and nothing at all in 1910.

Protective tariffs hit Süss AG badly. Consider that the export rate of German firms of the German "Luxuspapier" trade was 50-70%. Paul Süss had an own branch in London quite early. The New York branch was opened as late as in 1909, produced plenty of debts and is not mentioned anymore just 2 years later.



< Paris Exposition Universelle 1900, German pavilion. Ill. on left signed Abeille '99. Chromolitho. "Editeur P.S. à. D. ERIKA 660. T." Sent from Paris to Germany in mid August 1900.



First firm in the line,
about 500 Workpeople em-
ployed.

Export to all parts of the world.
Prizes awarded at Melbourne and
Leipsic.

Represented at the St. Louis Exhibition.
German Department. Liberal Arts.

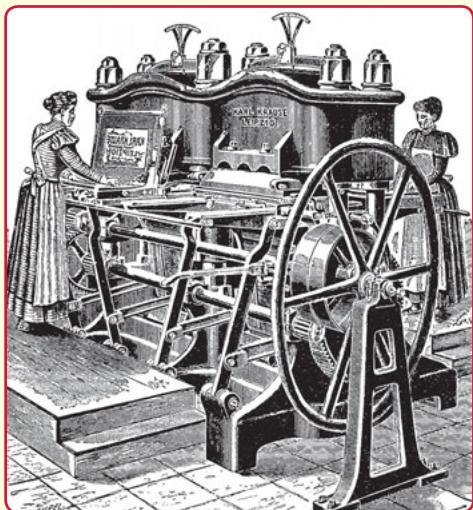
Advert from St. Louis 1904 World Exhibition catalogue.

Die beste Presse

für Prägungen in großen Partien
ist Krause's patentierte vollständig
automatisch arbeitende

Präge-Presse "Non plus ultra"

mit vier Tischen zum gleichzeitigen Arbeiten
von beiden Seiten und zur Bedienung durch
nur 2 Personen. Druckkraft 245000 kg.



Berlin: Wilh. Böhme.
Carl Ernst & Co., 2 Stück.
Carl Hellriegel
Heymann & Schmidt, 2 Stück.
Littauer & Boysen.
F. Priester & Eyck, 2 Stück.
Blois: Soc. anonyme du Chocolat Poulain.
Brandenburg: Berlin-Neuendorfer Kunst-
anstalt A.-G.
Broc près de Bulle: F. L. Cailler.
Buchholz i. S.: F. Oscar Brauer.
Buenos-Aires: Curt Berger y Cia.
Dresden: Paul Süss & Co., 2 Stück.
Frankfurt a. M.: B. Dondorf, 2 Stück.
Aug. Osterrieth.
Fürth i. B.: S. Bing, 4 Stück.
Gijon: More Hermanos y Cia.
Habana: Böning & Krause.
Rosendo Fernandez & Co.
Hannover: A. Molling & Co., Com.-Ges.
Kaufbeuren: Kunstanstalt und Druckereien.
Leipzig: Giesecke & Devrient.
Leipzig: Liebes & Teichtner.
Wezel & Naumann, 5 Stück.
Moritz Prescher Nchf. A.-G., 3 Stück.
Mailand: A. Bertarelli & Co., 2 Stück.
Nürnberg: E. Nister.
Wolfrum & Hauptmann.
Rheydt: Peter Bovenschen.
Paris: Leopold Verger & Cie.
Vevey: Klausfelder Frères.
Wien: Samuel Meisel.
Zürich: Polygraph. Institut A.-G.

Karl Krause, Leipzig, was Europe's biggest engineering works for paper & printing trade machinery. Their embossing press 'Non plus ultra' was indeed one of the biggest available then. Two women had to feed 2 tables each. You need a continuous flow of big orders for machines like this "monster", otherwise it does not pay off. The customer list shows all the (big) firms with 1 or more "Non plus ultra" presses in operation. Paul Süss had bought two of these. – Advert (detail) from DBSt., Feb. 1908 issue.

Furthermore the business report of 1905 lists various investments being necessary. Besides new machinery for production, they needed a complete new, more powerful steam engine for generation of electricity. It was a costly matter indeed, and the factory was only a few years old.

In 1911 Paul Süss AG celebrated 25 years in business. Employed were 600 workers and 125 "Beamte", which in this case could be best translated as clerks / 'white collar workers'. Mentioned are 14 litho flatbed presses only, but this cannot be fully correct. There were more hand-litho presses, a number of book-printing presses, plenty of other machinery.

Then came the Great War. The majority of ppc printers / publishers who had managed to stay in business during the first 1-2 years, benefited from the war. Not so the Süss AG who **declared insolvency on Jan. 16, 1915**; part of business continued for some time/ clearing sales. Their attempts to add new production lines (collapsible boxes for the food industry, higher envelope production etc.) did not help. Mr. Leuter's assumption that Süss folded because they did not produce patriotic WW1 cards is incorrect, however. – The title illustration shows a Süss letterhead that was used in late March 1916.

Süss 'ERIKA' CARDS

I don't know exactly when Paul Süss entered postcard business. The earliest mention I found is a D.R.G.M. 83682 registration for a "novelty" card that dates from Oct. 2, 1897. Described is a postcard for secret writing with punched hole code key attached.

The next finds were a bit surprising. Collotype printed cards with views from France. I did know that P. Süss was active with cards for the 1900 Paris exhibition (see ill on previous page), both chromo as well as monochrome collotype views from Paris. But additional

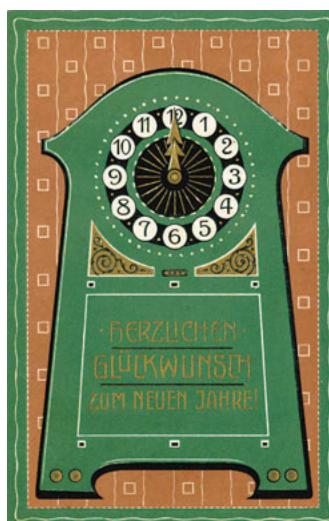
finds show a different picture. Big, established firms like Stengel & Co. and Römmler & Jonas, both from Dresden printed (and published) cards for the French market around 1900. Then I found several typical "moonlight" views (on light blue card) with imprint "Editeur P. S. à. D.". All show views from Paris, photos taken by (diff.) French photographers. Highest card number I have is 67. Did P. Süss not only publish but also print these cards? I don't think so. A second series with French views, also collotype printed, was found. Mostly views from Paris again, highest card no. is 283. This series was definitely printed by Stengel & Co., Dresden, because it shows the typical Stengel-type "negative" number inside illustrations.

It appears that Paul Süss was indeed a publisher of topo postcards that were printed (mostly) by collotype process, but not at his company.

A find on the internet (site of a smaller city archives in Saxony) shows another topo-like postcard with name Paul Süss, Dresden, on. Could be done by collotype, too, as far it could be judged by the poor resolution of the (internet) illustration.

Paul Süss company was surely big in "greeting cards", although you should keep in mind that many do not fit into a typical "postcard" collection. The traditional greeting card at that time was the fold-out type to be sent inside letter. Süss had an own envelope production dept.

The earliest greeting postcard I managed to find is a 1900 New Year card (no. 335 a) with large figures. Chromolitho printed but not embossed and identical designs are known for 1901 and 1902 (with identical card no.). P. Süss claims this design to be protected. I have seen similar large figure designs by other German printers, usually embossed, and especially the samples of Martin Schlesinger, Berlin, look more attractive to me.

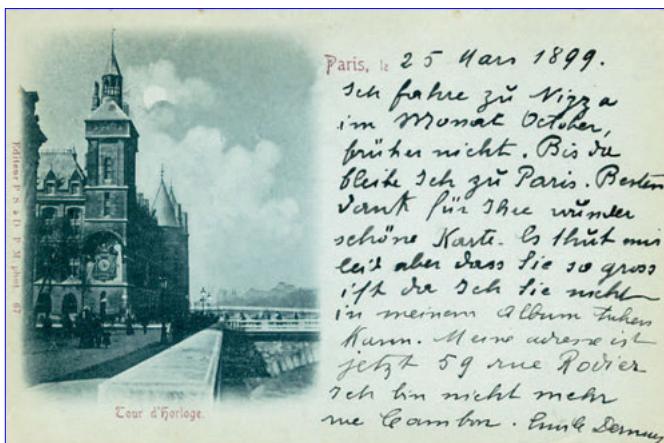


ERIKA card no. 680,
with name
only.
'Protected
by law'.
Chromo-
litho,
plate-sunk,
embossed
decorative
border. P/u
Sept. 1901.

ERIKA card no. 4079 (4 diff. dess.). Clock with New Year greeting. Message not dated. Shows both Erika name and logo. Divided back = post 1905 date. Nicely embossed chromolitho printed card with caption steel-engraved.



GESCHÄFTLICH GESCHÜTZT. NR. 680. ERIKA



Paris - Tour d'Horloge. P.S. à D. card no. 67. P.M. phot. Mailed from Paris to Vienna on March 26, 1899. On address side you find the usual 'Importé' imprint.

This specific "Postkarte" design on address side is also helpful to identify other cards printed by Paul Süss not showing his name or "ERIKA" imprint.

Assuming that the numbering of the early P.S. cards was consecutively, they might have started to publish/print postcards with greetings' circa 1898.

Similar to other firms in the business, Paul Süss not only used designs created by own lithographers, but the work of little known/popular then illustrators. The latter usually signed. G. Caspari, Fritz Baumgarten and A. Malick for example. Their work is also found on cards by other publishers.

According to my actual knowledge a second postcard type turned up in the Süss programme about 1906/07: art reproductions, often signed, mostly landscapes, rural life etc. Interesting to see that they were printed by 3-4 colour halftone process. First I had thought that these cards were published by the successors to Süss AG. Then I found p/u samples from 1907-10 years. I have also several cards with sample imprints, i.e. *Muster (ERIKA) 3964, 6 Dess.* The typical 6 diff. cards in a series thing.



St. Germain-en-Laye. Chateau, façade d'entrée. P.S. à D. card no. 177. P.M. phot. Mailed from there to Germany on July 9, 1899. At the lower right corner of the photo a small "3594" is found.

COMPANY TRADEMARK

The ERIKA word trademark was used by Paul Süss on postcard already before 1900. The illustrated logo ('Erika' stood for heather) came in use later. My earliest logo find dates from c. 1904. Are there any earlier finds? Perhaps I can find the official registration entry some day.



Often the logo is printed in bright grey ink and easy to overlook, especially when covered under handwriting.

Another more detailed, larger logo version, is occasionally found inside the stamp box. I have logo mostly post-1906 as many are p/u, not to find.



found this on cards of date. But postcards always easy

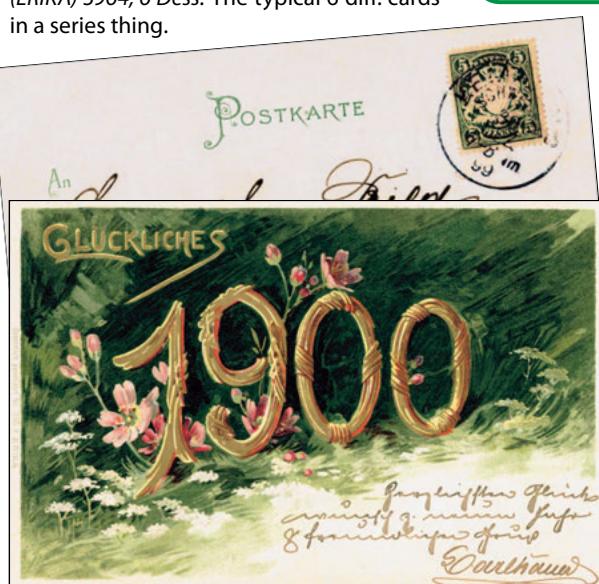
'ERIKA' card numbering

Similar to many other ppc publishers/printers, Paul Süss appeared to have used some sort of consecutive numbering on their cards. However, there are sometimes card numbers with suffixes, the same card in different makes/qualities I guess, and others that show the ERIKA trademark only. Some numbers appear to stand for a single design/card, but others must be seen as a series numbers, with 4 or as mentioned above 6 different views.

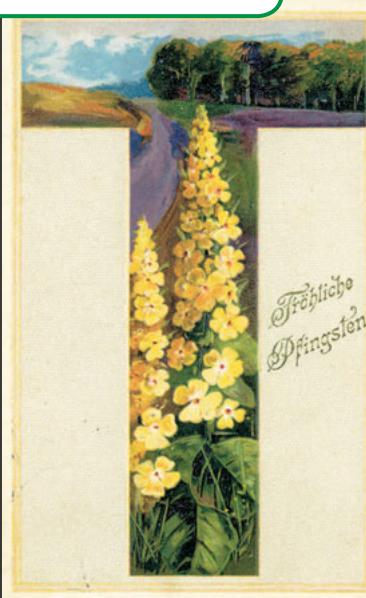
The highest card/series number I have in my small collection reads '5339' and shows a WW1 patriotic design. The Süss invoice dates from March 1916, after the company had become insolvent, lists card/article (?) numbers up to '7111'. But I think this is not that important.

Collectors of quality chromolitho printed/embossed cards will appreciate many P. Süss "ERIKA" designs. Others may prefer artist signed, but most of you will have some "ERIKA" cards in their collection sooner or later.

Name day greetings. ERIKA TM without any number, p/u 1908.



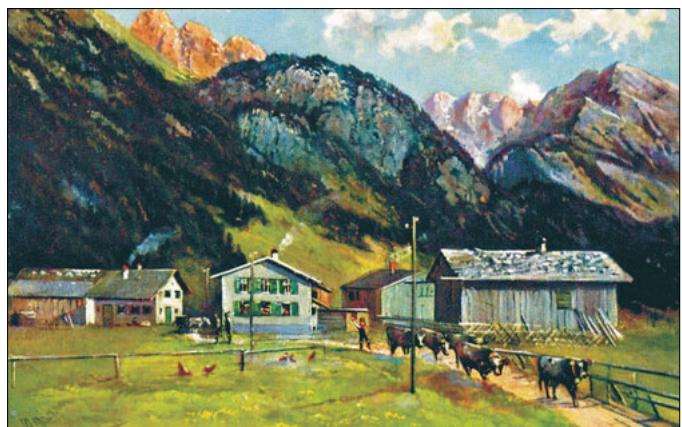
New Year 1900. ERIKA no. 335a, chromolitho printed, p/u Dec. 1899 within Germany.



Whitsun greetings. ERIKA TM no. 3501, p/u May 18, 1907.



WW1 patriotic. Chromolitho, embossed. Shows ERIKA trademark but without card/series number. P/u Feb. 1915 in Germany. One of many cards.



ERIKA no. 4045 (6 dessins). By halftone process printed. Signed M. Müller (München?). P/u in mid Sept. 1909

The ERIKA story continues with

MITTELDEUTSCHE VERLAGSANSTALT GMBH

The Paul Süss AG was out of business. On August 7, 1917 a new limited company was set up at the same place under the name of **"Mitteldeutsche Verlagsanstalt GmbH"**. The name suggests that it was a publishing firm (Verlag = Publisher) only. But they wanted to print their own post- and greetings cards, posters and any other typical articles incl. publishing books and youth publications using litho / letterpress process. Another company aim was to buy the former Süss factory. Business capital 20,000 Marks.

The driving force behind this company (and also the follow-up Mitteldeutsche Kunstanstalt AG) was Hermann Theodor Remert, a publisher from Dresden. A business notice in PZ no. 84 (Oct. 21, 1917) reveals the entire business dimension. The business capital of the limited company was suddenly risen by 1,280,000 Marks and was 1,300,000 Marks now. Mr. Rennert brought in his publishing and printing company with entire stock (worth 425,062 Marks and 50 Pf.) Further cash/and or property investments were provided by 'Treuhandbank für Sachsen AG' (450,000 Marks) and Mr. Hilmar Hauke of Deuben (160,000 Marks) and several minor investors.

A clever idea was to take over the original ERIKA trademark. Was well introduced to the

market, and allowed to use up any surplus stock of postcards and other articles they might had been around in some quantity.

It was not a small business indeed. Despite the difficult economic situation in the early 1920's, the Mitteldeutsche Verlagsanstalt employed some 350 persons according their entry in the Klinsch 1921 printing trade address book.

Production means were also modernized. Modern, faster working offset presses replaced soon some of the old litho presses.

Note: There was another firm with the same name "Mitteldeutsche Verlagsanstalt m.b.H." found in Leipzig. In business between late 1926 - 1931. Guess they had nothing to do with this firm(?).

MITTELDEUTSCHE KUNSTANSTALT AG

By late November 1923 the former "Mitteldeutsche Verlagsanstalt GmbH" was converted into a joint-stock company (AG), the new name: **'Mitteldeutsche Kunstanstalt AG'**. Their telegram address still read *Erika Heidenau-Nord*. Business must had been quite good. Klinsch 1925 - 1928 editions always lists some 400 workers. Although these figures should be interpreted with caution. That changed by 1930. It were difficult times all over Germany which hit this company, too. The workforce went down to 200 workers. Specialities then were greeting cards,

postcards, calendars, collapsible boxes. The production plant consisted of: 1 flatbed letterpress, 8 platen presses, 5 offset and 10 litho flatbed presses, 10 hand litho presses, 80 embossing presses and some 100 machines for various other (bookbinding) purposes.

Their economic situation seems to have improved a bit by the mid to late 1930's. Some 50 additional workers, more offset presses, also two-colour models, steel-engraving presses etc. The joint-stock capital amounted to 685,000 RM in 1939.

The company / factory building suffered almost no war damage. After the war they were involved in printing books for the Soviet Union, sort of reparation deal many other printing firms in the Soviet sector had to do.

When the German Democratic Republic was installed in 1949, the firm was turned into a VEB (nationally-owned company). My Polygraph 1950 edition addressbook describes the Mitteldeutsche Kunstanstalt Heidenau als VVB, said to be the step before becoming a VEB. The trademark "ERIKA" was no longer used, but "Erika" was still the name of their telegram address. Director (in 1950) was a Robert Drechsel. Less machinery than



ERIKA no. 6029. Christmas, chromolitho, steel-engraved caption. P/u 1928 in Poland. >



ERIKA no. 2111. Easter, offset printed, with undated message.

in pre-WW2 days, but still employing 250 persons. According Mr. Holldorf's research the firm became later part of "Graphischer Grossbetrieb Völkerfreundschaft, Dresden". After the fall of the wall the company was renamed into "Mitteldeutsche Druckanstalt Heidenau". Taken over by an investor in 1992 and in business until the end of 2002.

If there were any postcards printed during GDR years is not known.

'ERIKA' postcards from Heidenau

After the end of WW1 well into the mid 1920's many manufacturers of greeting cards reprinted designs they had used before the outbreak of the war. Sometimes without any changes, some slightly modified. This was usually done to save costs, as it were hard times. But as the time of art nouveau was over and being replaced by art deco, the taste of the customers changed, too. Postcards in general were not that much in demand as before the Great War. But greetings (post) cards were always needed.

Now some writers/ppc researchers tend to tell the public that the post war production of ERIKA postcards is of less quality. Let's be fair and remember that times are always changing. The costly chromolitho printed designs were still around, although in lower number. Offset process was faster (less costs) but the colour impression, although usually also here 6-8 colours were needed, is "weaker", less contrast, the appearance matt. There is simply a thinner layer of ink transferred onto the card.

The designs/art-work also changed. You still find children motifs, beautiful women, fantasy, romance, artists etc. But as most collectors tend to concentrate of the "early"

Mügeln had become part of Heidenau (Nord) in 1920. The former Süss factory at Bismarckstr. 21 was not occupied by **Mitteldeutsche Verlagsanstalt** = **Mitteldeutsche Kunstanstalt AG** only.

The publishing house (with own letterpress dept.) **Rich. Herm. Dietrich**, establ. 1877 at Dresden, published various books of general interest and the illustrated **"Freya"** magazine. In March 1919 Mrs. Jenny Dietrich was owner, managing directors were Hans Weller and Otto Seidl. In Nov. 1922 the firm was renamed into "Verlagshaus Freya GmbH", managing director was Dr. jur. B. Langer, assisted by H. Weller and O. Seidl. I think at that time they had moved to Heidenau already. Published not only the Freya magazine, but several other periodicals and (odd) novels. Still around in 1941 under the name "Verlagshaus Freya Dr. Langer & Co. K.G.". Book-printing and -binding machinery, 57 workers employed in 1939.

chromolitho cards, the productions of the 1920-30's are often ignored, sometimes even treated as "2nd class", although there is still much of interest to discover.

Mitteldeutsche Kunstanstalten AG produced huge quantities of (greeting) postcards. Many might shows flowers, still life views and similar (boring?) stuff. But as many other publishers had similar cards on offer at that time, there must had been some demand by customer's side. Not that I like flower cards very much. I show some ERIKA children cards. If you have any other interesting cards (not necessarily from ERIKA) from the 1920-30's, please let me know.

Helmfried Luers



Thought this would make a nice contrast with the other 'standard' cards on this page:
'old' ERIKA no. 464. Mailed to a student living in Hamburg in August 1905. Undivided back = pre-1905 production. A typical chromolitho printing of the early years, carefully embossed, additional gold overprint. The background looks like a wooden(?) wall a painter has tested brushes. I might be wrong, however. The illustration of the woman is of course well done, when you like this style of the turn of the century. Paul Süss might have tried to create 'artistic views' in postcard format, but they did not consider that people had to write their message on the picture side until 1905. Below the UPU imprint which is however quite common.



ERIKA no. 5016. New Year greetings. Chromo.
Steel-engraved, odd colours. P/u 1933.



ERIKA no. 1292. No caption – looks like Birthday greetings. Offset printed. Not p/u.



ERIKA no. 1119. Name day greetings. Chromolitho-style. Mailed in July 1939 to Vienna.