

Long time TPA readers are well familiar with the name **C.G. Röder** from Leipzig, Saxony. Research on this picture postcard contract printer and their 'consecutive' numbering system has been a regular feature in this publication (since issue 6) for many years.

What has kept the research on Röder alive over such a long period? In first place of course the serious collectors devoting their time (and funds) in finding out more on Röder cards, like George Webber who is really good in *playing around with figures* (his own words) and who concentrated on dating the card numbers/yearly production (see his article with updated information this issue). Chris Ratcliffe, Henk Voskuilen, Chris McGregor, Maggie Toms to name only a few supplied cards and shared valuable information; plus a number of other collectors worldwide, some of which have sadly passed away already.

I said *worldwide* and this is another aspect that encouraged collectors to take part in research. C.G. Röder produced huge numbers of cards for customers around the globe, especially in pre-1914 years. So, it is very likely that most postcard collectors hold at least a few Röder printed cards in their collections. The worldwide coverage, the easy availability of cards to see yourself what this research is



all about, together with George Webber's work that helps to date not postally used Röder cards, makes this research interesting. We are talking about a company that has produced picture postcards, usually of good quality, mostly common views for buyers with a perhaps common taste – and not about a little known firm that issued only a few card series, that were perhaps of high quality but are very hard to find for high sums nowadays; something for specialists only.

But research on an old ppc printer should be more than only card numbers, check-lists (in case of Röder an impossible task!!), how long in business etc. in my opinion. Illustrations

of the factory, interior, the people; as much information as possible on the company history. However, I must admit that it is difficult to locate such information. Most records are lost, much was destroyed during WW2 of course, but also in later years. Local archives and museums do have some material on Röder. The problem however, Röder was not a ppc contract printer in first place, despite the huge amounts of postcards printed. Their major business was music-note and book printing. So, it is not surprising that almost all available information does not deal with their ppc printing activities.

My search for 'the good' Röder material took about 10 years. Then I bought a book by chance (privately issued in 1995) that contains the "complete" Röder history, based on what is still around, found in local archives, official registers, company records and private collections.

I would like to share my find(s) with readers. An entire reprint would need some 50 extra pages, this is a "compact" version, general information with as much on Röder printed postcards as available. Together with George Webber's work this issue you receive a comprehensive summary on an important German picture postcard printer. And what has kept us *Röder fans* busy over all the years.

## \*\*\* History of C.G. Röder Works - Leipzig \*\*\*

- 1812** June 22: **Carl Gottlieb Röder** was born at Leipzig-Stötteritz. His father did run a small bakery.
- 1838** After C.G. Röder had completed army days, tried out several other (fruitless) jobs to earn his living, he begun (aged 26!) a music note engraving apprenticeship in the well-known company of *Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig*.
- 1846** October 21: talented Röder started his own small music-note engraving/printing business with a single hand press and apprentice *Julius Rietzschel*.
- 1853** Business was prospering. Carl Gottlieb took over the music-note printer "*Paez'sche Offizin*", moved into their larger premises, employed 36 people.
- 1860** Röder had 24 hand presses running, but they were very slow. Since 1851 he had made experiments to rebuild a *Sigl* litho flatbed press for much faster music-note printing. Finally he succeeded. First press running in 1861.
- 1863** Technical improvements led to better quality that convinced his customers of the new faster music-note printing method. Printing speed 100 sheets instead 30 per hour (manual driven!).

Transmission drive increased printing speed up to 300 sheets per hour. New bookbinding dept. was added too.

March 1: C.G. Röder's son-in-law *Leberecht Hugo Wolff* (born Sept. 8, 1835) joined the company.

**1865** 3 rebuilt presses running. Röder's business was booming. 100 workers.

**1866** New built larger Röder factory at Dörrienstr., 10 hp steam engine, room for 10 rebuilt flatbed presses.

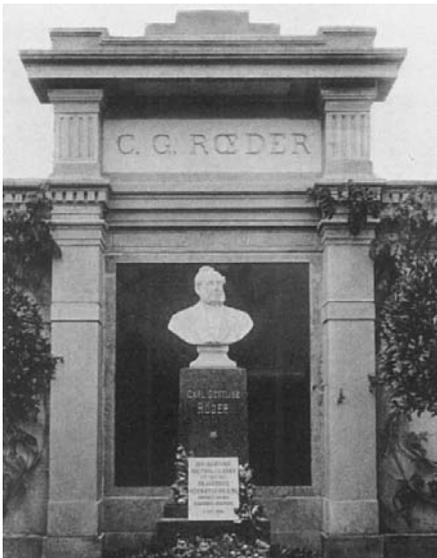
**1867** November 9: the work of composers who had died before No. 9, 1837, can now be reproduced without limitations (*Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Carl Maria von Weber* for example). This regulation led to the "Edition Peters" classical music series available at lower price, printed by Röder and made the company big and C.G. a really wealthy man.

**1871** Silver Jubilee. Röder's business had grown a great deal: 252 workers, 15 litho flatbed presses, 24 music-note and 16 litho hand presses. Yearly production: 80 million pages music-note sheets by litho process and 5 million

sheets from engraved plates. C.G. Röder donated an considerable sum for an internal company disability insurance. Röder's second son-in-law *Christian Erdmann Max Rentsch* (born Dec. 7, 1836) joined the company. Both became joint-proprietors in Dec. 1872.

**1873** Laying of the foundation stone on the site between Dresdner Str. and Täubchenweg in Leipzig-Reudnitz. Bought for 45,081 Thalers. Here C.G. Röder's factory dream came true. Production started at this location in 1874 (and some parts of the factory building still stand here at the Gerichtsweg). The factory building was expanded and rebuilt in 1879, 1882, 1884, 1891, 1898 and later years until it reached the dimensions as seen in title illustration which dates from late 1920's. See also TPA #19, page 23 for more details/factory illustrations.

**1874** May: Carl Gottlieb Röder retired. His sons-in-law *Wolff* and *Rentsch* took over control but followed the policy of C.R.; an eye for new modern techniques, permanent growth and always to look for new potential markets.



← The tomb of *Carl Gottlieb Röder* (Leipziger Johannesfriedhof). Photo from 1896.

→ *Carl Leberecht Hugo Wolff-Röder*, son-in-law to C.G. Röder, co-owner, made the company big, in the age of 70 years. Newspaper ill. dated Sept. 16, 1905.

→→ *Carl Johannes Reichel*, son-in-law to L.H. Wolff, co-owner since 1889, head of Röder Co. during difficult times.



**1880** Röder bought the printer *Graichen & Riehl* and had now an own letterpress printing dept. with 5 presses which proved to be a good investment.

**1881** The old 40 hp steam engine was replaced by a 100 hp twin engine. A second 75 hp engine followed 5 years later to feed the power system of (3 Schuckert dynamos) about 1000 electric bulbs and lamps. By 1884 most Röder production dept's had already electric light available.

**1883** C.G. Röder died on October 29, 1883 in the age of 71 years. The company was now fully in the hands of sons-in-law Wolff and Rentsch. Both realized that the company should not concentrate on music-note printing alone.

*Carl Johannes Reichel* (born August 15, 1853), with qualifications in business and co-owner of the trading company of *Dietz & Richter*, married the oldest daughter of *Leberecht Hugo Wolff*. It took some time before his father-in-law managed to convince *Reichel* to enter the book/printing-trade and join C.G. Röder. Besides his office job, *Reichel* learnt all printing techniques/music-note engraving.

**1889** January 1: *Carl Johannes Reichel* became company secretary.

February 19: Co-owner *Christian Erdmann Max Rentsch* died of a heart attack. *Reichel* was now sales director of C.G. Röder.

July 1: C.J. *Reichel* became co-owner. The *Wolff-Reichel* period, which lasted roughly from 1890-1914, is described as the most productive and innovative time in company history. It were these two men who made Röder big in picture postcard printing.

*Röder* established a branch under the name of C.G. Röder Limited in London W., 139 Oxford Street.

**1890** C.G. Röder bought the entire equipment of the collytype printer *C. Hesse*. New, larger format presses were added in the following years but the collytype process was used for general illustration printing only. This proved not to be profitable however and C.G. Röder staff begun to experiment with combining collytype and chromolitho process which led to their later typical coloured postcard work. Many of Röder's early collytype cards were done monochrome only however.

**1896** So far all machinery in the Röder house was by powered by means of transmission belts. Not only this was dangerous for workers but produced lots of dust. Now all machinery was powered by electricity from the own

steam engine which meant not only less dust but worked more efficiently.

C.G. Röder celebrated 50 years in business: 783 people were employed; 56 fast litho flatbed presses and 32 handpresses; 15 fast flatbed letterpress and 2 handpresses; 5 flatbed collytype and 2 hand presses and 15 music-note printing presses were in use. C.G. Röder had won prizes/medals at following (international) exhibitions: Vienna 1873; Nürnberg 1877; Leipzig 1879; London and Antwerp 1885; Melbourne, Bologna, Barcelona and Munich 1888 and Chicago 1893.

**1900** April: C.G. Röder Ltd, London established an own printing factory. Not at Oxford St, exact location not known. Some 30 presses for music-note and chromolitho process were in use and up to 300 people were employed in the best days (180 people in 1908) – see photos next page please –

Spring: One of Röder's first bigger customers for ppc printing was *Gebr. Metz* from Tübingen. The business of *Gebr. Metz* was established in 1888, and until Dec. 1897 their cards and other products were printed by *Carl Garte*, Leipzig (see TPA #19, p7). Then *Metz Bros.* set up their own letterpress and collytype printing dept. Early 1900 competition among collytype printers was hard. *Gebr. Metz* closed their collytype printing dept. and or-

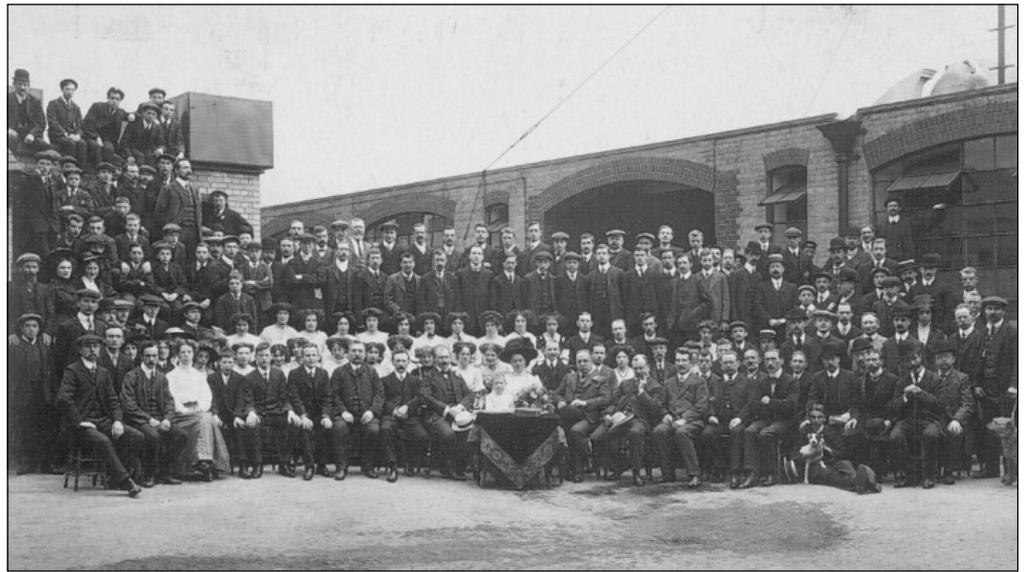
*Greetings from... Porta Westfalica* region. Fold-out panorama view, chromolitho printed by Röder for the publisher *Gustav Kaufmann*, Minden. A (Röder?) no. at upper right corner reads '3408'. The oldest of the very few cards found in the company archives dated c. 1895.





I discovered a (very small in size) view in the OAN book. Illustrated is the cover of a French Röder promotional brochure with small pictures of Leipzig factory and this one which appears to be the London factory/branch: caption reads *Usine à Londres*. Pre-1900 date.

→ The entire personnel of the London factory. Photo taken at the opening of the new factory building I guess. Date unclear. c. 1900?



dered cards from Röder. This was done also for quality reasons according the research of *Karin Walter* who had found access to old Gebr. Metz, Tübingen, correspondence and interviewed family members. Not clear to me if the Metz cards printed by Röder did already show the typical production numbers. Metz used also consecutive numbers on their cards for years. This matter needs more research (and additional Metz cards from that period).

**1901** French customers of Röder really did not like to have their orders printed abroad. The Röder managers avoided further problems (+ longer delivery/customs fees) and bought a complete French printing firm. Renamed into *Imprimerie Roeder, Société Anonyme, 51, Rue Le Peletier, Paris-Nanterre*. Business was booming and a new modern production site was erected in 1911. At Röder's Paris branch most printing processes were in use incl. collotype. Those Röder cards with "Printed/Lith. in France" imprint on could indeed origin from Paris factory.

Postcards: Röder works printed over 7 million picture postcards in 1901. This may sound much to us but even the, today little-known, collotype printer *Kumpf & Wiesbaden* from Frankfurt printed up to 50,000 cards per day already in 1898; c. 15 million per year. Most postcards were monochrome of course = less work than coloured cards. But also many of Röder's early cards were b/w only.

A Röder letterhead from Dec. 1901 lists 950 workers and 98 fast presses

**1905** C.G. Röder is converted into a 'GmbH' = Ltd. with a capital of 3 million Marks.

**1907** January 29: "Photo-Baryt" inside ink roller trademark was registered for C.G. Röder's postcard printing business in Germany (class 28). It was also registered in England under applica-



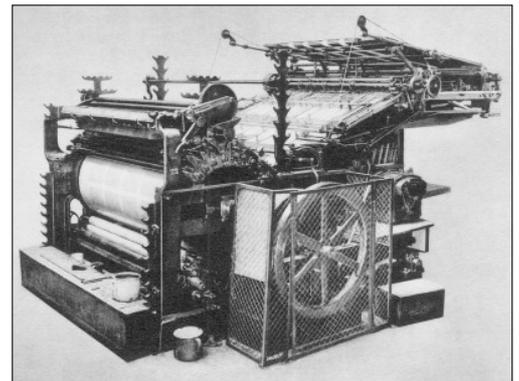
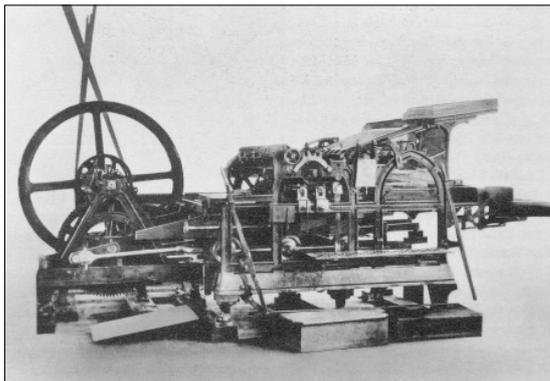
Klasse 28. Eingetragen für C. G. Röder G. m. b. G., Leipzig, Gerichtsweg 7, zufolge Anmeldung vom 13. November 1906 am 29. Januar 1907. Geschäftsbetrieb: Licht-, Stein- und Buchdruckerei. Waren: Post-, Ansicht-, Gratulationskarten, Albumbilder und Albumkarten, Reklamebilder, Ansichten von Landschaften und Städten.

tion no. 290610, class 39 (section 17) on June 12, 1907.

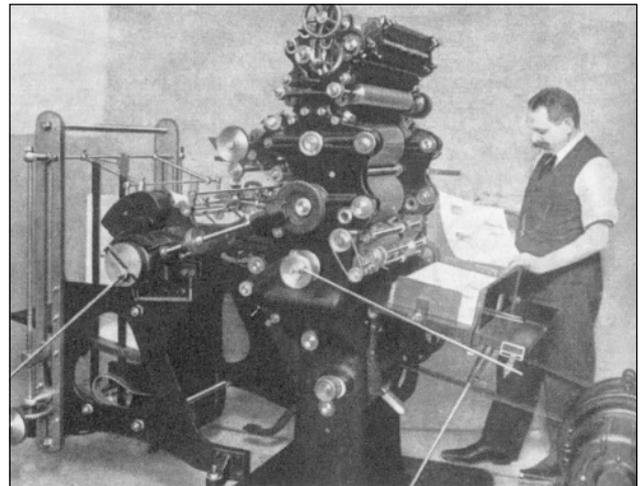
By end 1907 the Röder works Leipzig production area covered 25.100 qm<sup>2</sup>. Employed were about 1,100 people. 31 rotary presses for music-note printing, 34 flatbed presses for litho process (from stone as well as from zinc plates), 34 letterpress flatbed presses, 34 collotype presses plus a number of handpresses and lots of other machinery were in use.

**1910** According the quite general information of a Röder statistician from the late 1920's, over 50 million cards were printed at Leipzig this year for customers worldwide. During the last century before the Great War, Röder works had produced over 500 million cards. This information is a bit vague formulated. The *last century* prior to WW1 = 1900-10 in my opinion. Alternatively the statistician could have meant the last 10 years before the outbreak of WW1 = 1904-14. But I favour the 1900-10 version. It makes also sense/fits with G. Webber's "New register" numbering from 1910 on.

C.G. Röder's business success was based on music-note printing. Illustrated from left to right: music-note handpress; transmission belt driven Sigl flatbed (litho) press rebuilt by C.G. Röder for music-note printing in 1863; rotary press for music-note printing. A zinc printing plate was put on a cylinder instead on flatbed = rotary. Not to be mistaken with today's 'rotation' and indirect (offset) printing process.



German born *Caspar Hermann* (1871-1934) emigrated in the age of 18 years to the U.S.A. Worked as printer/pressman in various companies in Philadelphia, Baltimore Brooklyn/New York. Hermann had always experimented with presses for indirect (rotary) printing. So far all printing whether letterpress or litho was done direct from the printing forme/plate onto the paper with all its disadvantages. After a number of setbacks Hermann found in Jan. 1905 a partner in *Harris Automatic Press Co.* First presses worked with satisfying results at *Republic Banknote Co.*, Pittsburgh. 13 presses were exported to England and set up at *Blades East*, London. Bad economic situation forced C. Hermann to return to Germany in May, 1906. More problems, then Hermann found a new partner (*Leipziger Schnellpressenfabrik*) to built his own designed "Triumph" rotary litho press (see ill). After test phase of six months, a first press was set up in autumn 1907 at C.G. Röder. Hermann printed various test jobs for Röder incl. postcards in typical "Autochrom" style as well as postcards with 12 colour runs formerly chromolitho printed. After a number of additional improvements Röder used the "offset" process a great deal. The term "offset" became popular in Germany not before mid 1920's.



**1913** An entry in Klimsch directory dated April 1913 informs us that C.G. Röder GmbH had branches/offices in Berlin, London, Paris, Vienna, Budapest and Brussels. Managing directors: *L. Hugo Wolff-Röder* and *Carl Johannes Reichel*. Company secretaries were: *Martin Wolff-Röder* (son), *K. Bückert*, *M. Legler*, *Hans Reichel* (son), *Fritz Roth* and *Paul Bracht*. 35 letterpress and 34 collotype presses, 62 music-note rotary and (chromo) litho presses were in use, plus 53 handpresses for (copper) music note printing and litho process. The workforce: 1150 people. Another 100 workers were employed at the Berlin branch plus a total of about 500 people worked at Röder printing works in London and Paris.

**1914** The outbreak of WW1 ended the success story of (the export-orientated) Röder company. They lost their London and Paris branches, also bank accounts. The loss amounted to 3,3 million Marks of which 10% were later refunded by the German government. The Paris-Nanterre factory property (9,477 qm<sup>2</sup>) was officially dispossessed

on July 24, 1925. Also two other sites Röder had bought for possible expansion (total size 39,137 qm<sup>2</sup>) were definitely lost.

**1915** Leberecht Hugo Wolff-Röder died.

**1916** It was the worst business year for the Röder works during their 70 years in business. Workers were called to the fronts, others dismissed. Postcard printing alone wasn't enough to keep such a huge company going.

**1919** *Martin*, the son of Hugo Wolff-Röder, who had joined the management in 1914, died young.

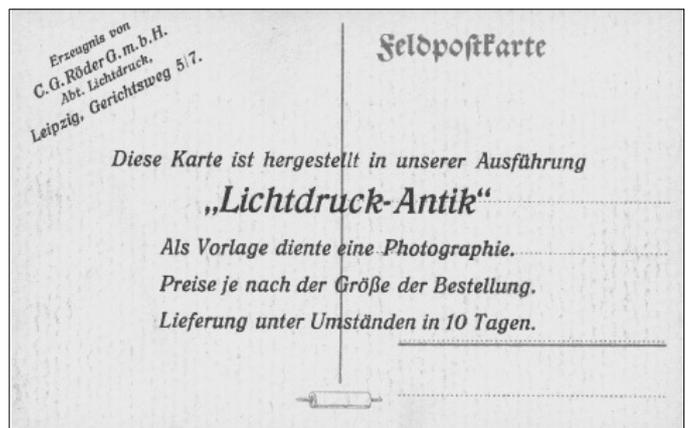
**1920** *Hans Wilhelm Leberecht Reichel*, son of Carl Johannes, who had already assisted his father during the difficult war years, became managing director officially on February 11. June: the *Röderhaus Aktiengesellschaft Berlin* was established. To combine their different (new/modernized) Berlin businesses under one roof and the first step to turn the entire Röder business into an AG (joint-stock company). The Leipzig property was owned by the Berlin AG now

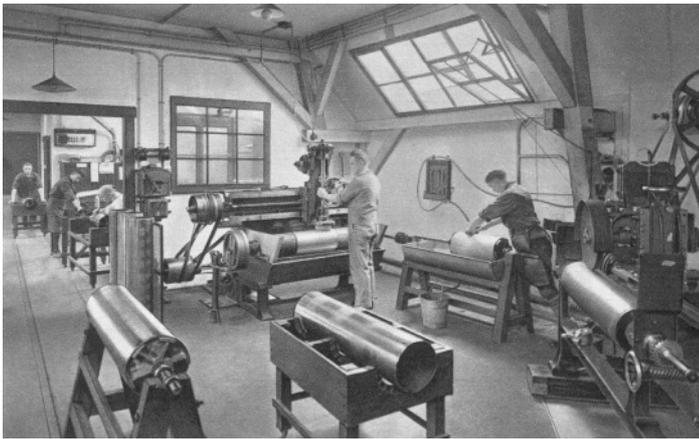
**1921** *Albert Kaltschmidt*, a former company secretary, joined the Reichel's as managing director. The technical equipment was modernized. Number of collotype presses reduced, new letterpress and offset presses installed. A new (roto)gravure department was set up (also used for ppc printing). General printing for industry as well as collapsible box production (famous ppc printer Stengel & Co., Dresden did it the same way!) replaced music-note printing a great deal during the next years. A special reprint process for books/music-notes was introduced and named "Rodar Druck".

**1923** High inflation time in Germany. Despite all the new machinery and (re)printing processes, C.G. Röder company was really in great financial difficulties. Workers dismissed, the rest had to work short time.

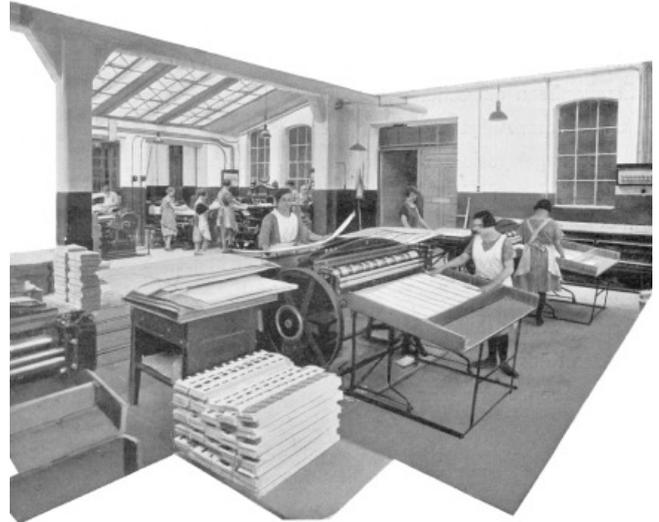
**1924** Röder bought the Mandruck AG in München/Munich and this company became Röder's branch in southern Germany (see also TPA #19 p 23). Business conditions were still bad.

Plain and illustrated (field)postcards were in great demand during WW1. Almost all German printers produced such cards. Röder had plenty of free capacity but many competitors. This (advertising) sample for "Collotype Antique" on special sepia card with rough surface had a delivery time of about 10 days only. Even their fine-coloured "Bromid-Chromo" style was available in 2-3 weeks only. Shown here are Russian P.O.W.'s on the eastern front. Note the ink roller logo below dividing line, usually with batch number inside, but in this case blank.





View of the Röder rotogravure dept. Image cylinders made ready for printing again. → Almost the entire staff of Röder's collapsible box/packaging dept. were female workers. Seen here is only a small part of dept.



**1925** According official sources a total of 1,187,000,000 (picture/greeting) post-cards had been sent through the post in Germany this year. The previously mentioned Röder statistician claimed in an article (c.1927-28) that C.G. Röder had reached the pre-1914 production figure of **50 million post-cards per year** again in the (mid?) 1920's. This is indeed surprising and I wonder how George Webber interprets this statement.

**1927** Sept. 9: Carl Johannes Reichel died. The company was led now by Hans Reichel and Albert Kaltschmidt.

Postcard printing alone wasn't enough to keep the factory alive. Exports dropped and so did the orders for advertising material for the trade/industry. Reichel and Kaltschmidt did not give up however and ordered 8 new Miehle (letter)presses and enlarged the collapsible box production.

**1928** The Röder business reached an annual turnover of 5,2 million Marks. This was quite good but the conditions turned bad and workers had to be dismissed. This led to worse working atmosphere and strikes at last.

**1929** 'Black Friday' (Oct. 25), marked the beginning of the international economic crisis/depression. It led to the collapse of a number of German banks in 1931. Röder works Leipzig became one of the many victims of this crisis. They made a loss of 437,420 Reichsmark this year. Exports were almost zero. This explains why there are rarely Röder printed cards found in Canada of post-1928 printing date, a market Röder had been around again from about 1922 on.

**1930** Röder GmbH (Ltd) was wound up, a joint-stock company established. C.G. Röder Aktiengesellschaft with a reduced business capital of 1,100,000 Reichsmark. Most of the shares were held by the Reichel family and the Wolff-Röder widows.

**1932** Dec. 7: Röder AG was insolvency. The debts amounted to almost 3 million Reichsmark. The meeting of creditors decided to keep Röder business running, find a settlement. The Röder branches in Berlin and Munich were sold. Quite a number of workers dismissed at Leipzig, the remaining had to wait to get payed in full.

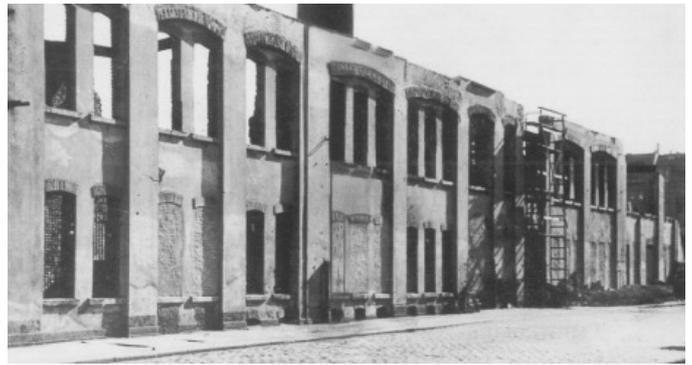
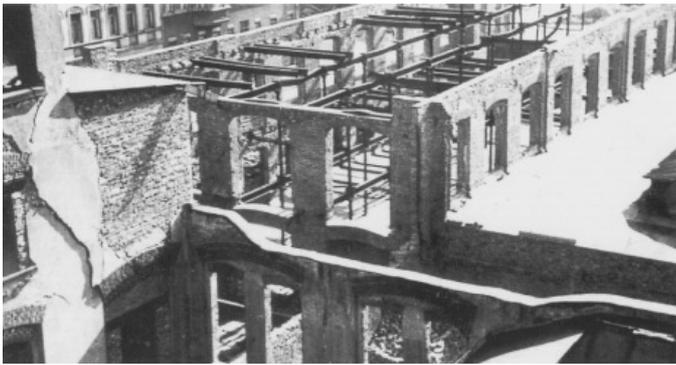
**1933** 2,2 million Marks meant the worst turnover for Röder since 1916. The management was fired and replaced by long-time employees. Chairman of the Röder AG became *Karl Süptitz*, the head book-keeper since 1921, soon to be assisted by *Walter Panse*, *Franz Naumann* and the head of the colotype printing dept. *Otto Nickel*. Number of colotype presses was reduced once again.

**1936** Karl Süptitz modernized Röder AG, had ordered new modern presses for the letterpress, (sheet-fed) gravure (good for postcard printing!) and off-set printing dept in the meantime. Finally Röder AG reached the profit zone again by late 1935.

**1937** Röder works were financially independent again. The joint-stock company was converted into a limited partnership (capital 1.250,000 Marks) on Dec. 30. Still family (women!) business, limited partners were: *Elisabeth Wolff-Röder*, *Hans Reichel*, *Elisabeth Roth*, *Margarete Scharf*, *Käthe Brückner*, *Ellinor Blohm*, *Elisabeth Neuhaus*, *Renate Doelle*, *Martina Wolff-Röder*, *Irmgard Auckenthaler*.

Left: sepia collotype printed view, Elstertal Bridge, Vogtland, Germany. Typical poor quality (aged) card board of the early 1920's. Röder no. 299 133 for ppc printer/publ. *Löffler & Co.*, Greiz (card no. 11970) Not p/u but message dated Aug. 5, 1923. Right: coloured "multi-view" for publ. *Franz Knollmüller*, Graz, Austria. Imprinted year date 1926; p/u May, 1927. Röder no. 369 293. All views were available separately.





Views of the Röder works (ruins) in 1944 – after the rubble had been removed. *Left:* seen from Perthestr; *right:* seen from Gerichtsweg

**1942** Despite war times business was booming at Röder works. 652 employees, 70 presses of which 20 were modern high-speed models. The raise of Röder KG in the late 1930's was partly based on their qualified staff but must have been somehow connected with the goodwill of the ruling NSDAP. Nearly all documents from the time of 1933-45 were (wilfully) destroyed however, but it is a fact that Röder was a classified ordnance factory. They printed huge quantities of maps etc. for the Wehrmacht.

Röder printed postcards from WW2 years do bear not only their usual production number but also a "M 1360" registration code. I do have also cards which show this "Material permit" number only (from late WW2 years or even post-1945 date probably). This permit number made it easy for authorities to identify the source of a printed matter. This system was later adopted by the GDR government.

**1943** Dec. 4: a heavy anglo-american air-raid hit Leipzig. 70% of the "book district" was destroyed or heavily damaged. All wings of the Röder building were damaged, four wings totally destroyed. From the formerly available production space of 25,000 qm<sup>2</sup> only

9,000 qm<sup>2</sup> were left for a temporary production. Machines were saved and repaired, ruins cleared. According to an official order in case of bomb damage, following local printing companies had to take over/complete Röder orders: music-note printing had to be done by *F.M. Geidel*; offset printing: *Wézel & Naumann* and *Meissner & Buch*; letterpress/gravure printing: *W. Vobach & Co.*; collotype printing jobs by *Emil Pinkau & Co.* and *Glass & Tuscher GmbH*. Pinkau was also hit by bombs, if any of the other firms printed any Röder jobs is not known.

**1944** June: restoration of the remaining wings of the Röder building, Gerichtsweg 5-7 had made progress. At least some machinery of the offset, letterpress, collotype, music-note printing dept's as well as bookbinding worked again, interrupted by air-raid warnings. The (roto)gravure printing dept. however, had been totally destroyed. Only 254 of the former 600+ workforce were employed.

**1945** April 17: the city of Leipzig capitulated. US and Belgian troops entered the city the next day. Any kind of printing was forbidden; definitely from June 20 on. However, according to another source (PZ no. 18, 1948) military authorities

had allowed the printing of picture postcards, and many printers with some card-board still in stock took advantage of this.

July 2: After the Jalta Conference Soviet troops took over control in Saxony and any kind of printing/publishing was strictly forbidden again. Everything was catalogued, 4,700 companies in Saxony were put under control of German trustees. Many were soon converted into national property (like *Offizin Haag-Drugulin* from Leipzig establ. in 1829/1867/1928).

October: C.G. Röder was allowed to work again. Former managing director Karl Süptitz who had disappeared when the Red Army moved into Leipzig, died on Oct. 25. He had been interned and was most probably executed because of his membership in the NSDAP. His death became known as late as in spring 1946.

Dec. 22: according to order no. 197 by the Soviet occupying power, the entire production of Röder was subordinated to the Russian Military Publishing Co., Moscow. Röder printed schoolbooks for Russia, the orders so huge that it was necessary to work in shifts; workforce increased from 125 (Aug. 1945) to 391 in March 1946.

*Left:* rather unusual Röder printed cards are coloured etchings of paintings signed *Friedrich Iwan* with motifs from the Sudeten Mountains for publ. *Max Leipelt*, Warmbrunn. Printed by gravure process and bears the low no. 321 730. The majority of Röder's gravure printed cards starts in the 380th no's region. – *Right:* Castle near Zschopau, Saxony, b/w collotype printed with glossy finish, for well-known publisher *Brück & Sohn*, Meissen (card no. 26920), printed by Röder as no. 674 166 with M 1360 code, not p/u but dated note from Oct. 11, (19)43.





(from left to right) Small, decorated truck with music-note construction. "Röder (music-) notes are known worldwide". Photo not dated, most likely from 1947 on occasion of the first post-war Leipzig Trade Fair. – Offset printing became Röder's backbone in the 1930's and again after the war. A (music-note) proof-print and the printing plate is carefully checked for any defects. – Preparing litho-stones for printing, music-note engravers seen in the background. Working conditions in post-war years were cramped, everything was short in supply.

**1946** April 26: Soviet military authorities decided that the entire means of production of Röder had to be dismantled and sent to the Soviet Union. This was done by June 13, 1946. Well, not all machinery was removed, 2 or 3 collotype presses and some other machinery not in working condition remained.

July 19: meeting of the shareholders, which were all descendants of the company founders/directors. The business capital was reduced to 500,000 RM, More or less they owned the property only. New managing director became Hans Reichel. Once again C.G. Röder works had to built up their production from almost nothing. It took only about one year to get some machinery running again. Available war damaged presses/other machinery were repaired, others bought or lent. For example a hand press from *Breitkopf & Härtel*, plate-making apparatus from *Müller & Söhne* and 3 bookpresses from *Ph. Reclam junior*. However, Röder works had no permission for production.

**1947** Feb. 13: Soviet occupation powers allowed Röder to work again; but for the Moscow military publishing company only. A first order was 2 million copies of "The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" in German language. The Moscow people decided what Röder printed and what not. This guaranteed however regular supply with paper, electricity and coals. Many other printers in Leipzig had not so much luck. Some other firms not favoured by the Soviets were integrated into Röder works.

**1949** The German Democratic Republic was established.

**1951** Röder was on the top again (at least in Leipzig). 2 fast two-colour offset plus 7 single colour offset presses, 3 collotype presses, several copper- and litho handpresses, 12 bookprinting presses and a huge number of other machines for pre-press / book-binding. 403 people were employed.

**1953** *Heinz Nollau*, a former head employee became managing director. Two of the former directors had died, others

moved to West-Germany. Times for private-run enterprises became more and more difficult in the GDR.

**1954** June: VEB (nationally-owned enterprise since July 1948) *Offizin Haag-Drugulin* was renamed into *Offizin Andersön-Nexö*. (Martin Andersen Nexö, 1869 - 1954, Danish born writer, lived in Germany since 1923, had to emigrate to Sweden after the Nazi's had taken over power and his work banned, 1944 to the Soviet Union, after the war back to Denmark and moved to the GDR in 1951, where Nexö also died).

**1955** So far C.G. Röder had printed only monochrome picture postcards on their remaining collotype presses. New techniques allowed multi-colour printing again, especially used for high-quality facsimile reproductions.

**1958** The GDR became share-holder of Röder. The new business name was: *C.G. Röder mit staatlicher Beteiligung, Graphischer Betrieb*. Soon the government apparatus took over control although the name remained.

Postcard printing by (roto-) gravure had some advantages compared with collotype. Plate/cylinder making cost more, printing speed was higher however. Higher number of prints from plate, picture and caption done in a single run. Gravure prints are detailed, have a very wide tonal range, especially in deep areas. Left: *Altenahr*. Röder-No. 398 964. Right: *Berlin* view. Röder-No. 510 849, message date Nov. (19)35.



**1960's** Very few ppc's with Röder's imprint on are known from the (mid) 1950's. If there are any from the 1960's around is not known. Identification without name on is surely not easy.

The Offizin Andersen Nexö (OAN) group of printers/bookbinders grew. More and more formerly independent firms as well as other VEB's were integrated. Production sites were found all over the city with a total workforce of over 1000 people. Officials dreamed of a central book production combine at Leipzig, which did not come true in the end. A general problem of the planned economy concept. OAN as well as Röder did print great numbers of (quality) books for publishing houses in Scandinavia, Netherlands, France, Switzerland. Later also directly for customers in West-Germany.

**1973** January 1: Two major production sections of C.G. Röder were directed under the roof of OAN by official order. Others followed later this year. **The name C.G. Röder disappeared.** The OAN group consisted of about 23 separate firms/sections, large and small, spread all over Leipzig.

**1990** The fall of the wall in Nov. 1989 followed by the reunification on Oct. 3, 1990. Former GDR owned enterprises belonged now to German government, which tried to find investors to continue business. Many transactions failed, companies were closed, unemployment in the former GDR increased a great deal. Although East German printing firms had often supplied good quality work, their production means were outdated, employed too many workers and had lost many of their regular customers. They found themselves in competition with modern equipped printers from western Germany and other countries. Some firms were bought by German/European companies, many gave up.

**1992** Spring: The specially installed public German trust institution advertised 8 printing firms in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung". One is OAN Ltd. and the number of workers had dropped to mere 266.

Sept.-Dec.: Offizin Haag-Drugulin, Nonnenstr. (now a *working* museum-incl. collotype press - highly recommended!), was bought by *Eckehart SchumacherGebler*. The *Wartelstein* family, printers from Garching (near Munich), took over the remaining OAN business at the former C.G. Röder location (incl. the book-binding dept which was found in the Salomonstr.). However, the *Wartelstein* family had been unable to buy the property at *Gerichtsweg/Perthestr.* because descendants of the former proprietors claimed ownership. Nevertheless new machinery was installed and at the same time a new, modern factory building was erected at Zwenkau near Leipzig. A difficult, risky venture indeed. The new, ultra-modern OAN printing company in Zwenkau was completed in spring 1995. The book which I used mainly for this story was published on this occasion.

**1996** Well, something did not work out with the plans of the *Wartelstein*'s. According their own words, business was running fine, and the number of the employees had increased to a total of 270. Then OAN Zwenkau suddenly collapsed. The business was taken over by 'Interdruck', which had been the other huge printing combine at Leipzig during GDR years. The name OAN remained. The max. production capacity was 2 million books/brochures per month. This is indeed impressive, but you need a steady flow of orders to keep all the modern but expensive machinery running.

**2002** Some time late this year "Interdruck" became insolvent. OAN is today run by "Union Verwaltungsgesellschaft" which could origin from another former VEB combine originally from Dresden. Capacity was reduced to 1 million books/brochures per month and 190 workers. For more info on OAN and good photos please see: [www.oan.de](http://www.oan.de)

#### Sources:

Most information/illustrations which I used for this story in chronological order comes from the privately issued "Offizin Andersen Nexö - Die Firmengeschichte" (1995). This book covers the company stories of C.G. Röder, Offizin Haag-Drugulin and the *Wartelstein* business in Garching. Other data/ills were taken from several issues of "Das Röderhaus", a promotional publication published in the late 1920's. Additional info was taken from "Klimschs" Adressbuch der graphischen Industrie (1898 - 1933 volumes), *Polygraph Adressbuch 1950*, *Birkner Adressbuch der Papierindustrie Europas 1938*. The early years were also nicely described in "Deutsche Buchhändler - Deutsche Buchdrucker" by Rudolf Schmidt, 1902-08. Caspar Hermann and the first offset press installed at Röder was taken from "Geschichte der Druckverfahren" by Hans-Jürgen Wolf, 1992. Not to forget various issues (1888-1936) of "Die Papier-Zeitung" publ. by C. Hoffmann, Berlin and follow-up "Deutsche Papierzeitung" (1947-49 issues). The early Röder/Gebr. Metz connection was found in "Postkarte und Fotografie", by Karin Walter (1995). Plus Röder cards/promotional material from my own collection.

#### Final note:

The OAN book offers a wealth of information, although the compilers had only a limited number of old documents available. This might be the reason for a couple of mistakes/unclear matters I spotted. Most of the interesting (ppc) stuff got lost over the years. I wanted the Röder history as a whole, not just the meagre postcard printing information. Unfortunately space in TPA is limited, so I had to leave out a number of interesting ills. On the other hand, this has become already quite a long story. With George Webber's updated Röder numbers article in this issue, you are confronted with plenty of information on C.G. Röder. It represents over 10 years of (re)search, and is published in this form for the first time. I hope you enjoy it.

« View (of the remains) of the C.G. Röder works seen from Perthestr. into Gerichtsweg. Photo taken around 1995. A cloudy, wet day but that fits nicely with the dilapidated building, once much bigger and covering the entire block. The economic situation of the former GDR "preserved" these remains however. If Röder had been somewhere in the western zone, such a building would have disappeared already long ago, I fear.

