RÖDER NOTES

FEBRUARY 2001

BY GEORGE WEBBER

A number of topics have emerged since I last contributed something on C. G. Röder, Leipzig. Let me first tackle this **J Register** problem.

THE RÖDER "J" REGISTER

This J Register problem has rumbled on for some considerable time. I hope I can give here a solution that fits all the known facts.

First of all let us tackle the muddle created by the habit of using **"J"** and **"I"** interchangeable. Helmfried is certainly correct in saying that this was common practise. Practically the first card I picked afterwards had *"Infantar"* spelled as *"Jnfantar"*. Even the Norwegians were doing it with their "Fjords". I think any explanation must treat "J" as being interchangeable with "I".

I had a very interesting letter from *Henry Toms* on this topic. Henry lives in Germany. He had noticed, when researching some 1906 archives, that a restaurant had a correspondence number starting with a "J". When he asked what the "J" stood for, he was told that it stood for 'Journal'. This Journal was a record kept by the local police. Again at work, he noticed that his office computer had a "J" number also, but this time the "J" was an "I" and stood for 'Inventar' (Inventory). I do not rate *Inventar* highly as an explanation and prefer *Journal.* Whatever we call it, I think it was an indexed list of the details of past printings.

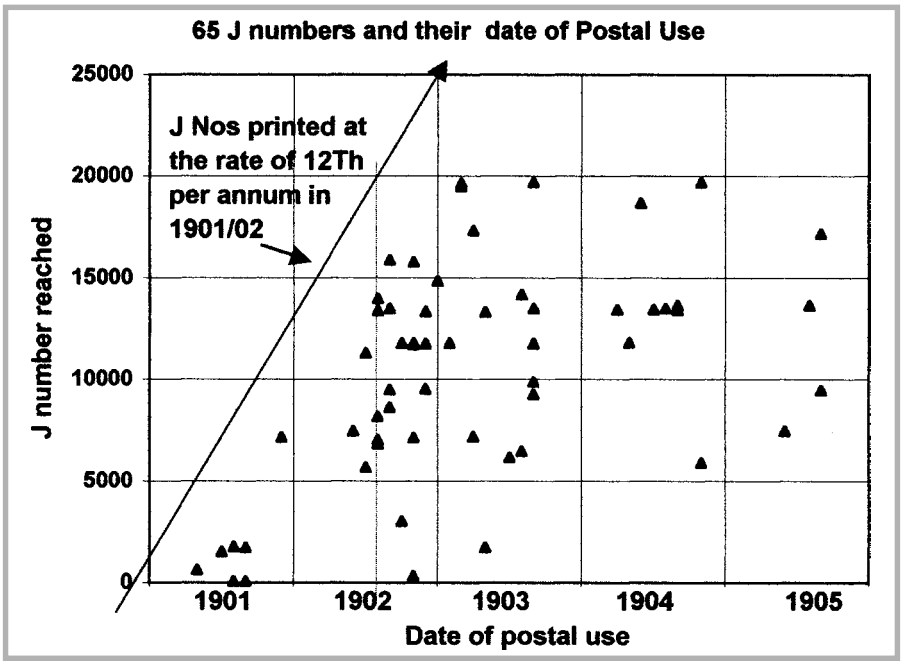
By looking closely at the numbers involved it is clear that in 1901 and part of 1902 Röder was keeping all the details of a printing in an indexed list. In this way a new repeat printing could be done at extremely low cost. A "J" index number was given to each image. This was useful **initially** also for tracing work in progress, but became confusing, for the workforce, towards the end of 1901 when they started on repeat printings. At this point they had to add a work in progress number, which accounts for the second number, seen on a card at this time. Röder continued with this system until the "J Number" had reached 20 Thousand or so (in mid 1902). They then dropped this idea as being too costly in terms of storage and time. They moved over to the straight work in progress number, which we are all used to.

Oddly enough, the English publisher *Wrench* adopted the same policy initially, but the cost of maintaining all details and materials tied up so much of his capital that it contributed to his failure. Whatever the benefits of ultra low cost repeats were, they were outweighed by the cost of maintaining and storing the materials. Of course Röder easily had the financial strength to survive this mistake, but Wrench did not, as his book *(Uphill: The First Stage in a Strenuous Life)* so painfully describes.

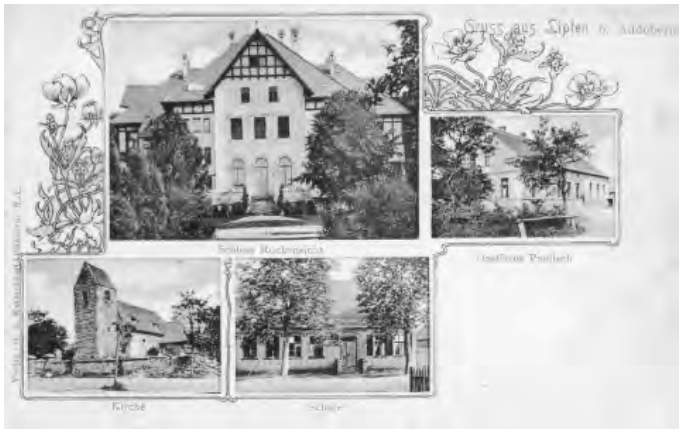
I doubt if we will ever know if "J" stood for *Journal* or *Inventar* or even *Index*. I do not think it matters, they all catch the spirit of what was happening, that Röder was storing all that was necessary for repeat printings.

I strongly feel that this "J" (or "I") did not stand for any one publisher. The publishers involved were too many and too varied. *Goetz, Guggenheim* in Switzerland; *Otto Leder* in Meissen and many other large publishers.

I give below a graph of the "J Number" plotted against the date of postal use. Roughly you can see that Röder was putting "J's" on all 1901 cards and some of the 1902 cards. The approximate production rate was 12 Thousand "J" cards per year. One point to note is that you cannot find a "J Number" above 20 Thousand. This "cut-off" point was reached in 1902 when Röder got tired of this impractical "J" system and dropped it.



Gruss aus Kallich – this "J 1793" card is postmarked 7.7.01, (although there is a manuscript dating of 25.07.01 !!). This is the earliest postmark that I know of for a "J" card. It fits in well enough with my guess that this "J" process started at the beginning of 1901. Details of earlier postmark datings, on "J" cards, much sought, as usual.



Gruss aus Lipten – this card was definey printed for *Otto Leder* of Meissen in 1902 (Platin OLM 1056:02) and the "J" number 19492 is the highest I know of. Again details of any higher "J" numbers much sought. It this clear that this cumbersome "J" process was dumped sometime in 1902.

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NOTE 1 *"EDELDRUCK" (TPA 16)*

Chris McGregor has found a Portugese card with ***"Edeldruck"*** printed on it. In addition it has a **very** crude handstamp "Printed in U.S.A.", superimposed on it. It seems to me that the "Edeldruck" was put on by Röder and that the drude overstamp was put on later by the Portugese publisher. Both Portugal and the USA were neutrals in the first years of WW2. I imagine the Portugese guy merely overstamped his Röder product with "Printed in USA" when the American fleet was in town!

NOTE 2 *Imp. C.G. Röder, Paris (TPA 16)*

Helmfried illustrated Röder numbered cards 22766 and 22770, both for Persia, with the Paris attribution. I have a similar card 22763 for Persia, with a PU date of 17 November 1902. Post card collotype printing is specialised and needs skilled staff and machines, who are used to the process. I cannot see that the Röder Paris printers would want to do this "one off" job.

It is clear to me that the Röder no 22763 is the usual Leipzig based "work in progress" number. It fits exactly into the known Leipzig schedule. If it really was printed in Paris, surely it is very strange that it has a Leipzig based number on it? Röder had a music and book publishing business in Paris and I guess the Paris outfit merely took the order and passed the printing over to Leipzig. They probably picked up the order through the close connections that the French had to the Arab world.

NOTE 3 *Post WW2 Röder (TPA 15)*

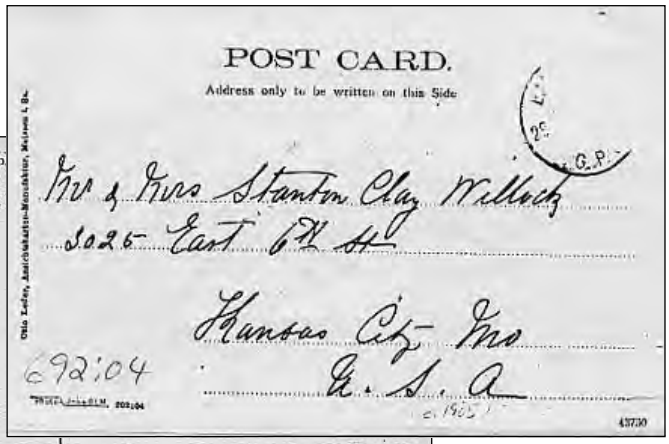
Many congratulations to *Henk Voskuilen* in finding these post WW2 Röder printings. A long time ago *Chris McGregor* listed, fo rme, a Canadian card with the number 774654 on it. Röder was well into the 600 Thousand region in WW2. The only possibility was that this was a post WW2 printing. From Chris's notes the card was Canada, Province of Quebec, Rimouski, Vue Prise du Fleuve, published by "Nova" in black and white collotype. I have not seen the card, but it might be interesting to look out for anything more in the 700 Thousand region?

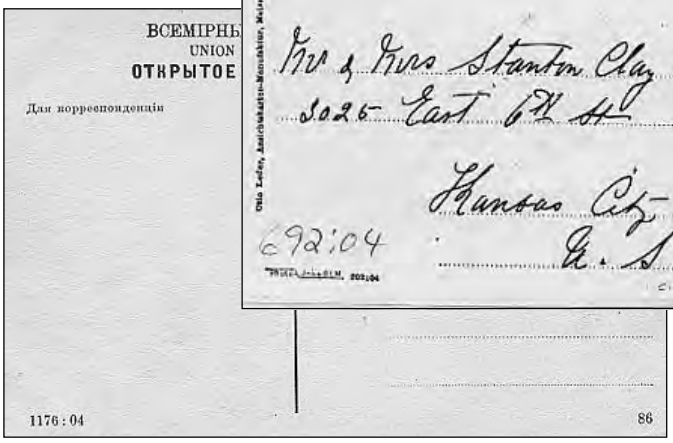
NOTE 4 *OLM – Kaffir-hut (TPA 15)*

Helmfried has pointed out that a Röder number of 17946 just does not fit with an OLM (Otto Leder, Meissen) designation of 75:04. I enclose a typical OLM card for 1904, printed for Barbados, OLM 692:04. This has a believable Röder number of 43730. I can but assume that this 17946 is an isolated mistake. It should be a number in the 30 or 40 Thousands region, to fit in with the known Röder schedule. It will be interesting to see if another anomaly turns up?

Actually there is something very odd about OLM activities in 1904. *Chris Ratcliffe* sent me a Chinese card published in Russia, 1176:04 (no specific OLM attribution), with a peculiar "86" in the lower right hand side. I assume that it was not printed by Röder with this unusual "86" designation?

→ ***Note 4:***
Barbados with full OLM name imprint, 692:04 printed by Röder



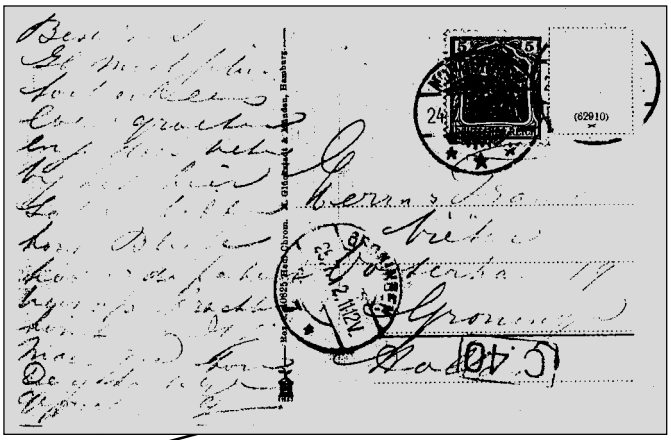


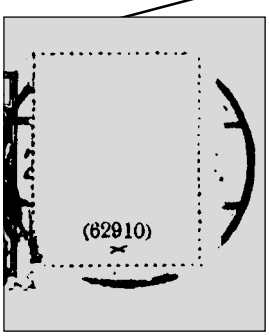
← ***Note 4:***
1176:04 and "86" on card with view of China, publ. in Russia

NOTE 5

Frans Bokelmann sent me examples of Röder's work for "Glückstadt & Münden". He pointed out that Röder was putting a cross on these cards. I think this was just a way of pulling together all the cards for one publisher. Helmfried has discovered who the prefic "R" referred to. There are many others. "AKL" for Alfred Krieger, Leipzig, the "155" for an Australian publisher etc etc. I am sure there are and will be other examples of these useful indicator marks.

← ***Note 5:***
Röder printed cards for *Glückstadt & Münden,* Hamburg, have a ⊞ beneath the Röder number. I have shown cards with a "155", used similarly for an Australian publisher.
I guess these marks were useful for assembling complete orders?

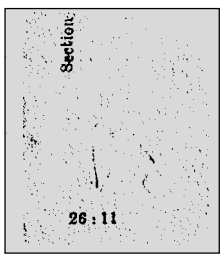




(Ed. note: Reproduced from poor quality photocopy; see enlarged stamp box area).

NOTE 6

TPA 14 we got up to a 1910 Otto Leder card with the Röder number of 215940 (circa 1910). This was for Leder in Dresden and not his previous Meissen. Frans has now gone one better and sent me a copy of a Leder card numbered 26:11 and Röder number (New Register) of 13652. This 1911 card is now the latest one I know of for this firm. The card is of the "Zibinsklamm Tunnel" in Hungary.

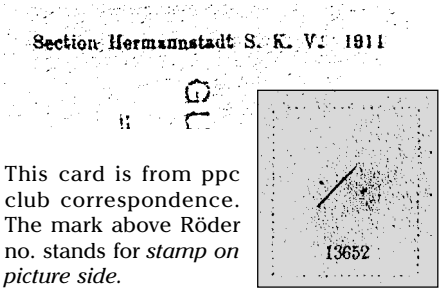


← ***Note 6:*** →

Although lacking the "OLM" wording, this is definitely a Leder card. Anybody got a 1912 or later?

See also the imprinted year date that corresponds with the OLM code. Röder number 13652 found in stamp box belongs to the "New Register".

(Reproduced from poor copy).



This card is from ppc club correspondence. The mark above Röder no. stands for *stamp on picture side.*

RÖDER NOTES

by the Editor

I don't wish to comment George Webber's *"Röder Notes"* on previous pages at this place. Please note the paragraph on page 2: *"… are not necessarily those of the editor."*
I had prepared a article with plenty of illustration on Röder sample cards/ printing process names/-qualities. However, it needs too much space and best would be to show it in colour. I give priority to research on "Knackstedt & Näther", Hamburg. This does not mean that I have dropped Röder research fully. I discovered something which has to do with the **"Double-Numbering"** appearing on some of the earlier Röder printed cards. It has also to do with George Webber's "J" register theories. In some early cases George has treated these double numbered cards as "J" register cards with prefix "J" being left out. Has he changed his mind in the meantime?
Röder double number cards show a regular number at the common down right hand position on address side. A second lower number is found at down left hand position. At first (amateurish?) sight the left lower number appears to be the first (original) job number, and the other, higher number that of the reprint. Always relying on the Röder numbering system to be strictly consecutive.

Photo-Lila. 13438 *Amsterdam - Prins Hendrikkade,* publ. by local "The International Trading Company" which was a good customer of Röder. On address side down left we find Röder process name "Photo-Lila" and no. 13438. At regular position a higher no. 20185. 20185

12006 In an card lot supplied by Jim Ward, I found 2 Dutch cards also published by "Int'l Trading Co.", Amsterdam. Both have a number on left hand corner ONLY. And both are ***definitely non-Röder*** because they were printed by ***Photochrome*** process, something Röder never did. Also the entire layout is different. Shown is *Amsterdam, Heerengracht* with no. 12006. Have another with 12061 on. The left number on Röder double numbered cards for "Int'l Trading Co." appears to be ***a publisher (card) number*** as my (earlier) Photochrome printed cards now prove!!

I am now the proud owner of a copy of the official "BUGRA 1914" exhibition catalog *(Internationale Austellung für Buchgewerbe und Graphik, Leipzig).* 1st edition contains about 670 pages, plenty of valuable information for research, and also the above illustrated full page advert of C.G. Röder, Leipzig. The design of this ad makes already clear where Röder's main focus was: sheet music printing. "World biggest sheet music printer". And book/magazine printing. But under the 'Collotype-Dept.' we find also picture postcards (Ansichtspostkarten) listed plus several other products done by this process. Workforce at the Leipzig factory in early 1914 was 1,200 people. Plus Röder branches at Berlin, London, Paris, Vienna, Budapest and Brussels. We already know that the British, French and also the Berlin branches were also factories, not just warehouses or offices. An impressive company size indeed.
An entry in a 1921 German printers addressbook lists some data on their printing machine equipment. Röder had in this difficult post-war times – seen from the economic view – 35 large format letterpress machines, 31 collotype presses, 73 sheet-music rotation presses (not newspaper rotation, meant are today used (cylinder) printing press models and not the earlier flatbed constructions) 65 (copper) gravure and chromolitho handpresses. 1130 workers were employed at the Leipzig factory. To my surprise all the above mentioned branches in Berlin as well as in the other countries are still listed. Postcard printing is also mentioned again. As we now know Röder started to export ppc's to Canada in the early 1920's again.