

Martin Herzberg - An Ensemble of real photo postcard appearances

By Harold Hoff, May 2023

While Martin (1911 – 1972) may be best known for his appearances in silent and early sound films, this provides evidence that his career actually began as a real-photo postcard model.

From the earliest postmarks found, his modelling began in 1917 at the age of five or six. He was very often photographed with “Bubi”, a Bavarian boy about 2 or 3 years younger than Martin. Bubi was a prolific model of RPH series spanning at least from the 5400s to about 6700s, and RPH-Ross 3900s to 4500s.

While Martin was not commonly photographed by RPH, below are three examples of Martin with Ally Kolberg in RPH 6038 (cards numbered 1, 2 & 4).



Yet Martin appeared on photo postcards from a wide assortment of unrelated German publishers including: Amag, BNK, HB, KJunoB, NPG, Photochemie, R&KL and WSSB.

The following pages exhibit Martin’s appearances by these real-photo card publishers. Where early postmarks are observed, they are included with descriptions.

Author’s note: It is observed that out of the selection of postcards from a wide range of publishers illustrated below, Bubi appears with Martin in well over half of them. That seems somewhat too incredible to be pure coincidence. It is very likely (although nothing definitive has surfaced to prove this) that there was some pre-existing relationship between either their parents, or Bubi’s handlers, that introduced Martin to this industry. Bubi was already prolific as a preschooler with many examples found bearing 1917 postmarks. What is odd, however; is that we clearly know Martin’s identity yet Bubi’s real name, and what became of him, remains an unsolved mystery.

Amag 62121-2 (Albrecht & Meister, Berlin)
Martin Herzberg romancing a girl



Amag 62168-3 & 5
Martin Herzberg with chicken & Easter eggs



BNK 34893-4
(Berlin Neuroder Kunstanstalten)
Martin Herzberg Chicken Easter eggs



HB 7621 (Heliophot GmbH, Berlin), numbers 1 to 5
Martin Herzberg eating rye bread with Bubi, 1917PM



HB 7655, numbers 1, 2 & illegible. Martin Herzberg portrait 1917PM



HB 8141, numbers 3 & 4, Martin Herzberg with Bubi, chickens & Easter eggs



KJunoB 1145-2 (Kunstanstalt JUNO, Berlin)
Martin Herzberg & Bubi with guardian angel
at the river



KJunoB 1156-1
Martin Herzberg hugging Bubi on bench



NPG 634 (Neue Photographische Gesellschaft, Berlin), numbers 2 &4, Martin Herzberg in sailor shirt with flowers 1918PM



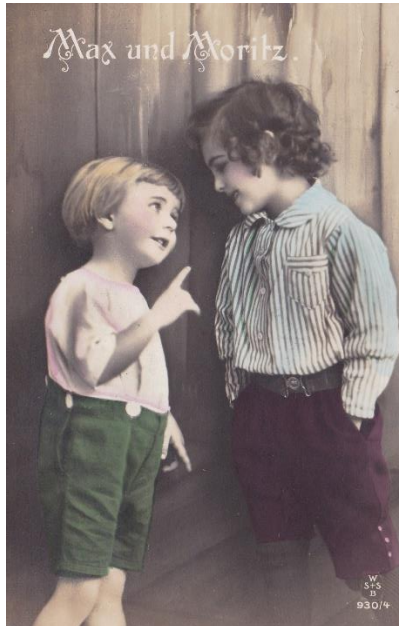
Photochemie (Berlin) 4433, numbers 1, 3 & 6 – See also WSSB 930 below as the same series
 Martin Herzberg playing with Bubi



WSSB 930 (Wilhelm S. Schroeder Nachfolger, Berlin), numbers 1, 4 & 6

Martin Herzberg playing with Bubi

While different photos, these appear to be from the same photo shoot as Photochemie 4433.



R&KL 6199-4 (Regel & Krug, Leipzig)
Martin Herzberg at Bubi's house with his mom and Easter eggs



LEFT: R&KL 6102
numbers 2 & 4
Martin Herzberg & Bubi with
large Easter Eggs

BELOW: R&KL 9011
numbers 3 & 4
Martin Herzberg & Bubi playing
by the fence



WSSB 937-2, Martin Herzberg at Bubi's house reading a book



Unknown 601-6
Martin Herzberg with Bubi at school desk



Unknown 1107-5
Martin Herzberg portrait



The list of examples ends here