

## Swiss transit parcel cards - secret revealed?

Some time ago, I corresponded with Matthias Vogt about anonymized Swiss transit parcel cards. The facts: With a few exceptions (e.g. letters are documents and not goods, therefore duty-free and also exempt from import VAT), goods are subject to customs duty (e.g. stamps valid for postage) if they cross national borders in a parcel. There are customs tariff numbers for all goods (e.g. letters ZT no. 9704.0000), which the customs administration uses to carry out customs clearance, i.e. to clear the parcel in accordance with the goods or customs declaration according to the declared value.

In his publication, Matthias Vogt presents various transit parcel cards that have been anonymized. This means that a parcel that was destined for transit was forwarded with a new parcel label. What many of these parcel cards have in common is that they are marked with a Swiss cross in red or green; the original sender is concealed.

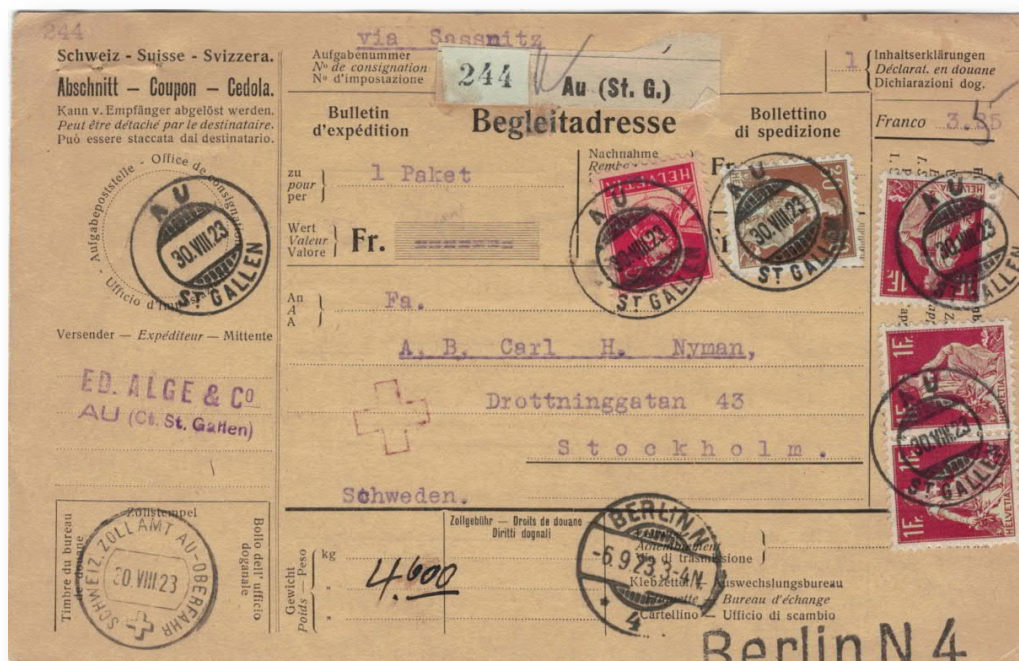


Fig. 1: The original sender [probably from Austria] is no longer visible here. The parcel weighing 4.6 kilograms was sent by the Swiss forwarding company Ed. Alge & Co in Au (SG) on 30.VIII.1923 via the Au-Oberfahr customs office via Berlin (6.9.1923) and Sassnitz to Stockholm to A.B. [Aktiebolag = public limited company] Carl H. Nyman.

I managed to find a map dating from the late 1960s (Fig. 2 a,b). The ALA forwarding company in Chiasso still exists and I was able to find out the following: Buongiorno, molto probabilmente si tratta di merce in giacenza presso magazzini doganali, Punto Franco, dove la merce si trovava in regime di transito, quindi presumibilmente veniva apposto come mittente, il nome dello spedizioniere, per identificazione, [Most likely, the goods were stored in a bonded warehouse, Free Point, where the goods were in transit, so presumably the shipper's name was given as the sender for identification purposes; Rossano Meneghetti].



We cannot be completely satisfied with the answer, because this procedure ultimately means unnecessary extra work for the forwarding agents. Surely bureaucrats could have invented a better form that would have shown the complete transit route or named the bonded warehouse as such. Nevertheless, the above explanation is most probably correct...



Fig. 2a: Similarly, we see a freight forwarder as the sender [ALA Trasporti S.A. Chiasso 28.11.1969]. The 300 gram parcel crosses the border at the Basel customs office (1.12.1969) and reaches Freiburg im Breisgau on the same day. Customs clearance takes place at the Velbert customs office.

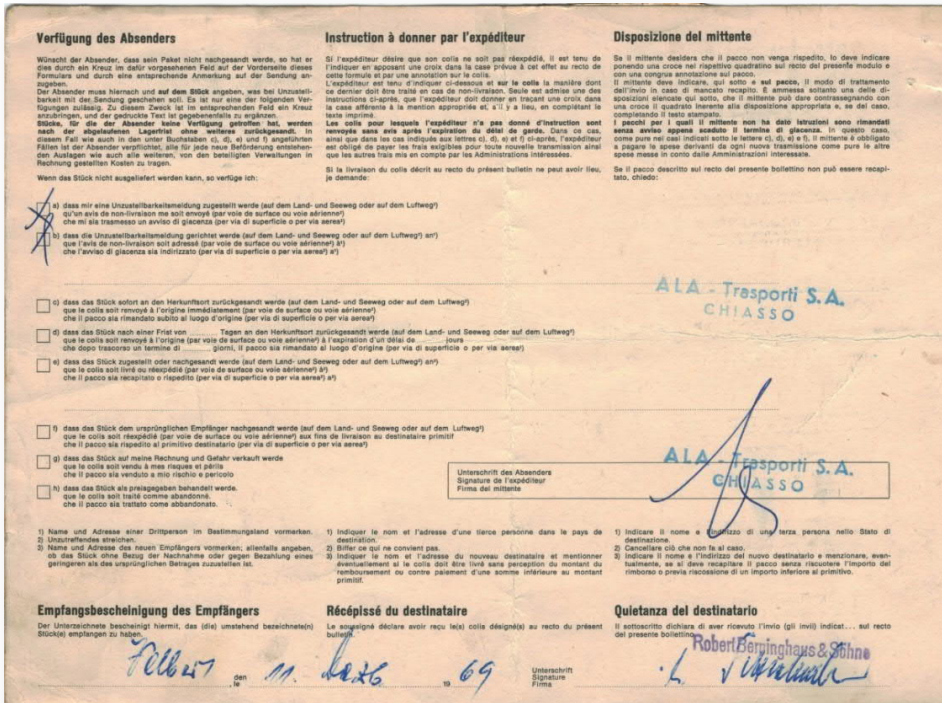


Fig. 2b: The parcel is accepted by the recipient [Robert Berninghaus & Söhne] in Velbert on 11.12.1969.

**Further reading:** Matthias Vogt in Schweizer Briefmarkenzeitung No. 1-2/2023: The philatelist as detective. The strange re-addressing of postal packets in the transit strand