



A “POSTER-TYPE” MOURNING COVER FROM HUNGARY TO BRAZIL IN 1941

HENRIQUE COSTA BRAGA

Mourning Notes has published several articles on these poster-type mourning covers, along with several updates. This type of cover, actually a death announcement printed on a large single sheet of paper, was originally intended to be posted on the notice boards of churches or other public buildings, informing passers-by of a death and/or funeral. This practice originated in Central Europe, among countries previously part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire or under its influence.

As these were large notices, they were folded twice before being mailed, and remained unsealed. Addresses were written on the unprinted side of the sheet. Post offices of these countries recognized them, and handled them accordingly. Most were posted locally or within Europe. Very few of these covers were mailed overseas, but recently more examples of overseas mailings (largely to the United States) have come to light.

The cover shown here is the first reported mailing of these poster type mourning covers to be sent to South America, and it is also a very late example of its usage. Editor.

On the first of January 1941, a mourning cover addressed to Rio de Janeiro in Brazil was posted from Cegléd, Hungary. Figure 1 shows this mourning cover from a perspective in which both the outside (address side and back) and inside (printed message) are seen simultaneously.

A single franking of the 6 fillér denomination from the 20th Governing Anniversary of Regent Miklós Horthy series [Mi HU 626] paid the postage rate for circulars and unsealed printed matter.

The historical context of the period is very relevant. Hungary at this time had become the fourth member of the Axis (Germany-Italy-Japan), having signed the Tripartite Pact on 20 November 1940. While Hungary was not yet an official belligerent in the Second World War, its troops would join Germany in its invasion of the USSR later in 1941. On the other hand, Brazil had a position of neutrality, and would only formally enter World War II in August of the following year (1942), alongside her allies, declaring war on Germany and Italy.

The cover bears no return address and there is no indication of the sender. The receipt of this cover in Brazil as

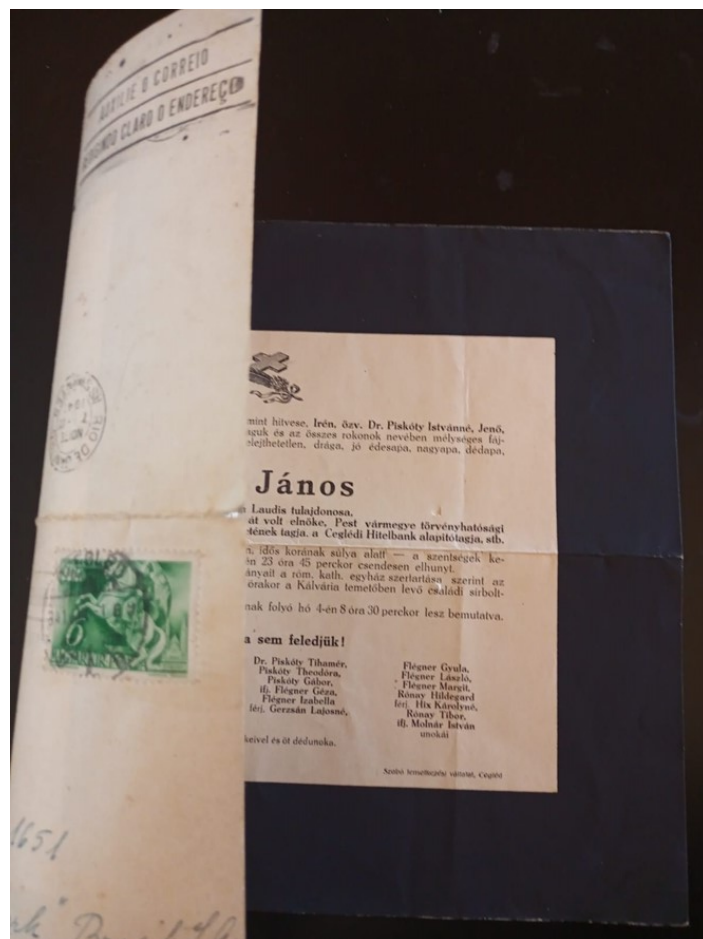


Figure 1
1 January 1941:
Cegléd, Hungary to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

well as its local internal movement within the Brazilian postal system were recorded by two slogan cancels used as receiving postmarks on the back of the cover (Figure 3) According to these postmarks, the cover was received in Rio de Janeiro, second section (2^a Seção) sector, on the morning (*manhã*) of April 7, 1941, where the mail was first sorted. As the cover was intended for the mailbox “Caixa Postal 1651”, the cover was transferred to the subscriber sector (*assinantes*) on the night (*noite*) of the same day of the initial sorting. Despite being a sector of its own, the subscriber sector was also located in this same second section.

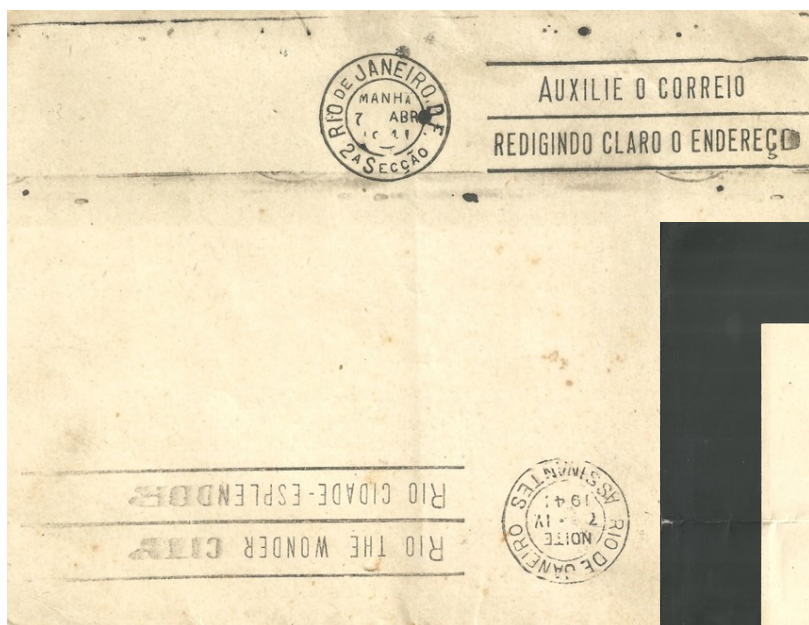
This period of almost 100 days of transit between posting the letter in Hungary to its receipt in Brazil was very high, making it clear that something happened with the correspondence. While it is not possible to specify the exact cause, it seems likely that transport from an Axis



A "POSTER-TYPE" MC FROM HUNGARY TO BRAZIL (CONT'D)

country to a neutral country, especially having to cross the Atlantic Ocean by ship during wartime may have caused the delay.

It should be noted that the cover was sent unsealed, and folded twice for mailing. As received, the front of the cover, bearing the recipient's address and the franking, is shown in Figure 2, while the back of the cover, upon which the two slogan cancels from Rio de Janeiro are found, is shown in Figure 3. When fully opened, the sheet on which the death announcement and funeral notice is



printed is approximately 300mm in width by 232mm in height. The black border which surrounds the message on all sides has a width of 39mm. This sheet is shown in Figure 4. All illustrations are reduced from their actual size.

Figure 2
Front of mourning cover
Figure 3
Rear of mourning cover
Figure 4
Mourning announcement and funeral notice

