

**PICTURE POSTCARDS IN ROMANIA
-A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE-**

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Picture postcards have been in circulation in our country since the 1870s¹. A separate collection of postcards has been established within the Special Collections of the “*Lucian Blaga*” Central University Library². They have been included in the Special Collections on account of their artistic value and because they are now regarded in many circles as historical documents.

The history of the picture postcard collection is linked to the foundation of the Special Collections as a separate section of our library. The first postcards which entered our collections came from the stocks of the Transylvanian Museum Library (they were donated to the University Library in 1872) and from the 1923 donation of the Moldavian boyar Gheorghe Sion.

The postcard collection continues to be enriched by acquisition, exchange (10% of the duplicates) and also by donation. Noteworthy is the I.I.Rusu, the Suciul Coriolan and the Adrian Marino donation: in addition to the different types of publications they also contain a great number of postcards which have not been separated in the Coriolan and the Marino donation from other types of publications. Therefore they can be found near the legal documents and correspondence.

¹ Spielmann, M, *Points of View in Organising Old Postcard Collections (Puncte de vedere în organizarea colecțiilor de ilustrate vechi)*, in: *Biblioteca și cercetarea*, XIII, Cluj, 1989, p.277

² Picture Postcards Collection, Special Collections, “*Lucian Blaga*” Central University Library

The approximate number of picture postcards is 53.000 and most of them come from Romania. They are varied as concerns their theme and the places they show. There are postcards with almost all towns, villages as well as the spas and health resorts in the country. This is the main criterion in classifying these postcards. According to their theme, postcards can be historical, social, artistic (the art of reproduction, the landscape, capturing movement or the image "in motion" is of great importance in this case), cultural (the architectonic style is rendered evident by reproducing churches, monasteries, theatres, libraries or works of art). Some postcards show clothes design. Picture postcards which "contain" historical data (historical images, the historical evolution of towns) and manuscript notes can also be deemed historical documents. Their status of historical document is also due to the correspondence or the notes on their verso. We used postcards as historical documents when we mounted an exhibition of the Romanian Royal Dynasty. Our aim was to present the Royal Dynasty as Romanian society perceived it in the interwar period. Postcards can also present the political changes in a country. Changing street names in towns and the disappearance or substitution of historical monuments in the urban landscape are also recorded by postcards.

The art of reproduction is also important in picture postcards. The type of reproduction (black and white, sepia, colour and photo) is another criterion of classification.

This picture postcard collection has proved rich source of documentation for historians and other library users as well.