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**Forgotten Source: Study M. Laszlo-Kutiuk  
«Romanian-Ukrainian Literary Relations in  
XIXth century the beginning of XXth  
century» (to the Problem of Digitizing  
Educational Resources)**

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**Abstract.** The study presents the observations and aesthetic assessment of the leader of the Ukrainian community in Romania in the 20th century, Magdalena Laszlo–Kutiuk (1928-2010), regarding Ukrainian-Romanian contacts in the 19th and early 20th centuries, which is contained in her course of lectures published on the basis of the Faculty of Slavic Languages of the University of Bucharest (1974). To this day, this work remains unknown to the general public and the Ukrainian reader, as the work was not translated, in particular into Ukrainian. The author analyzes the creativity of the main figures of Romanian culture of the 19th century (G. Asaki, B.P. Hashdeu and others), who touched on the topic of Ukraine in their works, as well as representatives of Ukrainian literature whose works reflected the image of Romania. Depending on the intensity of contacts with the neighboring country, the authors reveal the image of “Ukraine” or the image of the “Romanian people” and everything related to their culture in their work in different ways.

**Keywords:** Ukrainian-Romanian literary ties; reception; image

### **Introduction**

An important topic today is the issue of access to reliable information that would form correct knowledge on certain topics. Since important sources of the previous century are preserved, for the most part, in book versions (in books, printed articles, newspapers, magazines, etc.), these materials are increasingly digitized. Digitization is a transfer of information into digital form. This is done for reliable and safe storage of information, as well as for easy access to it. The literary sources that were used to write this article date back to the middle of the last century and

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are stored in digital format, as they were digitized, which made it possible to translate them faster and better.

The process of mutual influence of one culture on another depends on individuals, that is, representatives of one or another sphere, because artists themselves are creators of culture. The personality itself, its impressions, its perception and life ambitions play an important role here. Depending on many factors (type of unequal system, personal preferences, character, life and creative positions, etc.), the process of influence of cultures on representatives of another culture is different. The interpretation of the interaction of the mutual influence of cultures also differs. The difference between how Romania is reflected in the works of Ukrainian artists, and how the Ukrainian people and its culture are reproduced in Romanian art are emphasized in this article. Analysis of sources, namely the little-known articles of Magdalena Laszlo–Kutsiuk (1928-2010), which reflect the Ukrainian-Romanian ties of the 19th and early 20th centuries, and which are included in her course of lectures, published on the basis of the Faculty of Slavic Languages of the University of Bucharest (1974), will allow us to show what image Ukraine had in Romanian literature, and what impression Romania left on Ukrainian writers who reproduced it in their works.

In the translated article of Magdalena Laszlo–Kutsiuk “Mutual literary influences in the second half of the 19th century”, the author shows Ukrainian and Romanian literary figures, and how they reproduce the perception of another culture in their works, with which they interacted for a certain time. The first author is a Ukrainian romantic writer, a harbinger of the Ukrainian national revival of Bukovyna, Yuriy Fedkovich. Around 1849, when he was quite young, he left for Moldova to search for the “meaning of life”. In the capital of Moldova at that time, Jassy, Fedkovych spent little time. The analyzed poem is entitled “Night in Jassy”, written from the impressions of being in this city. The poem was written in 1862 and is a romantic work in which the Goliya Monastery and the Royal Palace are depicted, through which the entire atmosphere of ancient Jassy is reflected:

«Гостинці тихо, ринки не гомоня,  
При світлі луни сріблені побої,  
Би-сь думав: діти рідній неньці своїй,  
Святій Голії, низенько ся клоня.

А вона під злотом аж ся поколола, –  
Каміне ясне, світичі ярїї  
Перед іконов світяться Марїї,  
Черці читають день і ніч в престола».  
(The hotels are quiet, the markets are quiet,  
By the light of the moon silvered beatings,  
She would have thought: children to their own mother  
To Saint Gol, she bows low.

And she pricked herself under the gold, –  
The fireplace is clear, the lights are bright  
It shines before the icons of Mary,  
Monks read day and night at the throne).

During his life, Fedkovich wrote more in German, since he studied at a German school in Chernivtsi, before going to Jassy. Another poem that the author dedicates to the Romanian city is “Die Ruihe Neamz” (“Ruins of Neamz”), written from the impressions that the city of Tirgu-Neamz left for him. Similar to the poem “Night in Jassy”, it reveals the poet’s keen interest in Moldova’s past, but if he connects the historical sights of Jassy with dramatic moments of Romanian history, then the ruins of the Niamz fortress, built, according to legend, by the German knights who started the crusade, then the interest is connected with the fate of Germany, which he laments in the style of the poetry of ruins. The next example of poetry, in which Fedkovic records his impressions of the city, is a poem also written in German, “Sutsshawa” (“Suchava”). Some elements from the poem “Night in Jassy” are present here, but the idea that the past lives in ideals, and the struggle of the present unfolded there in just one stanza, are expressed here much more energetically:

«Rings Nacht und Stille. Nur des Windes Flüstern  
Umweht wie zagend die verlassenen Trümmer.  
Verödet liegt die Stadt im Mondes Schimmer  
Die Stadt, die Nacht und Weh und Tod umdüstern.

Und dorten liegt der heilige Johannes,  
Hebt hoch den Arm mit dem Marienbilde,  
Und segnet still die dazischen Gefilde.  
O könnte er's! ... Doch ja, er kann, er kann es!»  
(All around night and silence. Just the whisper of the wind  
The deserted rubble blows timidly around.  
The city lies desolate in the moonlight  
The city darkened by night and woe and death.

And there lies Saint John,  
Raise his arm with the image of Mary,  
And silently blesses the fields of Daz.  
O could it! ... Yes, he can, he can!)

Choosing these examples for analysis, Magdalena Laszlo–Kutsiuk emphasizes one special thing. Each of these poems has a geographical element in its title – the name of the city. Living in Moldova, Fedkovich remains inspired by cities and their architecture. It should be emphasized that the time spent by the poet outside his country actually influenced his work. Only someone who saw the monuments of the city of Jassy or Tirgu-Neamtsna with his own eyes and was impressed by them could write such poems with such precise details. It should also be emphasized that the poem “Night in Jassy” was written with an interval of 13 years after the author saw the city.

Another writer referred to by Magdalena Laszlo–Kutsiuk in her article “Mutual literary influences in the second half of the 19th century” is Izidor Vorobkevich (1836–1903). Vorobkevich is the only representative of Ukrainian culture who at the same time was an active participant in the cultural life of Romania. Left an orphan in early childhood, they were taken in by their grandfather together with their brother. Their grandfather, Kitzman protopope Mykhailo Vorobkevich, took his grandchildren to live in the town of Kitsman. Grandmother Paraskeva gave children the first knowledges in Kitzman. After graduating from the Theological

Institute in Chernivtsi, he worked as a priest in various communes, among others in Moldova (now Suchavskiy County), where he stayed between January 1866 and October 1867, after which he resigned and went to Vienna for music studies. From here he returns a year later with a music teacher's certificate. He worked in this field in the schools of Chernivtsi, in particular as a teacher of choral singing at the Greek Orthodox Theological Institute (*Laslo-Kuŭiuk*, 1974a). That is, we see Vorobkevich's direct contact with Romanian culture, serving as a priest in various communes.

In her article, Magdalena Laszlo-Kutsiuk underlines the special contribution of Vorobkevich to both Romanian and Ukrainian culture. It should be noted that he wrote in Ukrainian, Romanian and German. Since he still had a musical education, Vorobkevich, to meet didactic needs, compiled music textbooks in all the languages he knew. In 1869, with the assistance of the Society of Romanian Literature and Culture in Bucovina, he published the first treatise on musical harmony in the Romanian language, entitled "Guide to Musical Harmony". The collection of songs for folk schools in three editions, published in 1870, underwent numerous reprints until 1913. B.P. Hashdeu gave them a very favorable review (*Trajan's Column*, 1870).

The author of the article "Mutual literary influences in the second half of the 19th century" says that Vorobkevich paid great attention to liturgical songs, composed liturgies, many of them in the Romanian text, together with E. Mandichevsky fought for the introduction of polyphony in the church. Seeing this as a means of developing the musical culture of the people, he even made financial sacrifices to promote the development of church choirs created by the peasants. In his secular musical work, he widely used popular music, notated many hymns and songs, composed songs based on the poems of Ukrainian poets such as T. Shevchenko, I. Franko, as well as on the poems of M. Eminescu, V. Bumbak, I. Vulkan and others, for example: "Why don't you come", "Why are you swinging, forest", "Goodbye", "Farewell to Moldova", "Bears", "Sister and the thief", "Stars", "Putna Monastery", "Stefan-Vode and the forest", "Stefan-Vode and the Falcon", "When Belchescu was Dying", "Farewell to the Motherland", "Spring", "Doyna", "Pretty Girl", "Song of the World", "Guests of Spring", "Swallow", "Romynkutsa", "Archer" (*Laslo-Kuŭiuk*, 1974a).

That is, we see that the Bukovyna priest enriches both Romanian and Ukrainian culture with musical works, setting to music poems by both Ukrainian and Romanian writers. I. Vorobkevich also devoted pages inspired by the creation of

Romanian folk music as the author of the “Music” section in the volume “Oesterreich–Ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild, Bukowina” (Austro–Hungarian Monarchy in words and pictures, Bukowina), (Vienna, 1899) , showing that music is a way to contribute to brotherhood between peoples.

Isidor Vorobkevich also had an extraordinary activity as a poet, an activity that goes under the same sign of rapprochement of two cultures. He wrote prose, poems and drama in Ukrainian, as well as about fifty poems in Romanian, which, unfortunately, remained unpublished (*Romaneț*, 1966). He was a fruitful writer, promoting humanitarian and patriotic ideas in his works.

In the article, Magdalena Laszlo–Kutsiuk pays great attention to how Romanian authors influenced Vorobkevich’s work, especially his works in the Romanian language, and what common features can be found in the poems of Vorobkevich and famous Ukrainian poets. A large part of the article “Mutual literary influences in the second half of the 19th century” is devoted to this. We will provide several examples from the article itself. Vorobkevich’s favorite Romanian poets were Alexandri and Eminescu. It turned out that his poem “Now you’ve guessed” was written under the influence of Eminescu’s poems “Pe lângă plopul fără soț” (Beside the poplar without a man) and “De ce nu–mi vii” (Why don’t you come to me), also in the following verses, the influence of Eminescu’s lyrics “On a foreign land, That’s my Bukovyna” is felt.

Vorobkevich borrowed the form and theme of the poems from a famous Romanian poet who wrote special landscape poems, which in Romania were called “pastels”. Pastel is a lyrical poem in which a picture from nature is drawn. In the analyzed article, the author reveals similarities in similar poems by Vorobkevich and Aleksandra. For example, as in Aleksandra’s pastel “Noaptea” (Night), so in Vorobkevich’s poem “Evening Song” the night brings comfort to everyone. Although there are differences – in Vorobkevich, the stars shine brightly against the background of the midnight, and in Aleksandra, the sky is furrowed by lightning, the darkness is illuminated by a “sky lantern”, and a mysterious fire shining in the distance (*Laslo–Kuțiu*k, 1974a).

Despite the obvious similarity, the author of the article says that it is impossible to talk about the influence, because Vorobkevich’s poem, dated by Frank, written in 1865, and Oleksandri – in 1867, and the reverse influence is excluded, because Oleksandri did not know Vorobkevich’s poetry. Therefore, we must speak in this case about the typological similarity, due to both the spiritual harmony of both poets and the similarity of the literary conventions of the era.

A very interesting phenomenon, almost unique in literature, is the existence of doublets: the author develops the same themes in parallel poems written in Romanian and Ukrainian languages. The most famous of these examples is the well-known romance “Să-mi cânti cobzar batrîn” (Sing the old cobzar), the Ukrainian version of which was created by Vorobkevich in 1870. It begins with the line “Play you, old gypsy”, which is contained in the only collection of poems published during the poet’s lifetime, “On the Prut” (1901). Here are the first couplets, the rhythm of which perfectly coincides with the Romanian romance:

“Заграй ти, цигане старий,

Такої, як гадаю,

І грошей дам, вина ти дам

І всього, що лиш маю;

Бо лютий біль от тут горить

І груди розпирає,

І бідне серце так болить,

Що гине, умирає.”

(Play, old gypsy,

As I think

I'll give you money, you'll give me wine

And all that I have;

Because fierce pain burns here

And the chest expands,

And the poor heart hurts so much

What dies, dies) (*Laslo-Kuŕiuk*, 1974a).

The above examples confirm Vorobkevich’s significant contribution to both Romanian and Ukrainian literature. Analyzing Magdalena Laszlo-Kuŕiuk’s article “Mutual literary influences in the second half of the 19th century”, it must be said

that the author resorts to revealing the biographical details of each of the poets, in order to show how direct contact with another culture and living for some time in another country affected both poets. We see how Fedkovich, living in the then capital of Moldova, in Jassy, and in other cities, wrote poems dedicated to those cities. Each of these poems has a geographical element in its title – the name of the city. Living in another country, Fedkovich remains inspired by cities and their architecture. Only someone who saw the monuments of the city of Jassy or Tirgu-Neamtz with his own eyes and was impressed by them could write such poems with such precise details. It should also be emphasized that the poem “Night in Jassy” was written with an interval of 13 years after the author saw the city. The theme of Fedkovich’s poems, which Laszlo-Kutsiuk mentions in the article, is mostly love, as for example in the short story “Stefan Slavych” (1863), which tells about the unhappy love of a Ukrainian recruit and a young peasant from a Romanian village near Turda, in the poem “Voloshyn” (1866), he tells the touching love story of a Romanian, the son of a widow, Manola, and the daughter of some rich Ukrainians, condemning the girl’s parents, who sacrificed the pure love of two young people for material reasons.

Vorobkevich, in turn, contributes something different to the development of both literatures. He also writes poems, and in his work there is such a phenomenon as doublets – the author develops the same themes in parallel poems written in Romanian and Ukrainian languages. But what the author especially emphasizes is his influence in music. Vorobkevich paid great attention to liturgical songs, composed liturgies, many of them in Romanian text, together with E. Mandichevsky fought for the introduction of polyphony in the church. Seeing this as a means of developing the musical culture of the people, he even made financial sacrifices to promote the development of church choirs created by the peasants. In his secular musical work, he widely used popular music, notated many hymns and songs, composed songs based on the poems of Ukrainian poets such as T. Shevchenko, I. Franko, as well as on the poems of M. Eminescu, V. Bumbak, I. Vulkan and others, for example: “Why don’t you come”, “Why are you swinging, forest”, “Goodbye”, “Farewell to Moldova”, “Bears”, “Sister and thief” and so on. So, taking into account what they did, what interests and talents they had, and the time they spent in the neighboring country, Fedkovich and Vorobkevich had their own personal contribution to the development of Romanian and Ukrainian literature, thereby creating contacts and points of contact between them.

In another translated article by Magdalena Laszlo-Kutsiuk, “Images of Ukraine in Romanian Literature in 1840-1877”, the author of the article focuses our attention



on how people from Romania who had contact with Ukrainian culture reflect Ukraine in their works. The first person she mentions is Filaret Scriban. He was sent in 1859 to Kyiv with a recommended letter, which was issued by Metropolitan Veniamin Kostake. In the letter that the young theologian had, the importance of Kyiv in Romanian culture was emphasized. The Scriban branch remained in Kyiv until 1842. From that period he dates his notes entitled “My Journey to Russia”, as well as the remaining poems, among which some have as their central theme the impression of the city: “Easter in Kyiv”, “Suburbs of Kyiv”.

Also there, Scriban collects material for his work “Church History of the Romanians”. The Romanian student notes with patriotic pride that many outstanding figures of Ukrainian culture, as well as Russian culture, such as Petru Movila, Pamvo Berinda, Dimitrie Kantemir, Nicolae Spatarul, Vartio, N. Bantysh, Geraskov, were Romanians by origin (*Laslo-Kuŭiuk*, 1974b). In his later works, Scriban describes in detail the churches and monasteries in Kyiv and other cities of Ukraine, in the mentioned notes we can also find a clear interest in the civilizational progress of his neighboring country.

The monk looks with great surprise at the “Spicola” sugar factory, where there is a car recently brought from Berlin and a “walking bridge” on the Bug, something similar he has not seen in Moldova or Muntenia (*Giuglea*, 1936, p.37). He also talks enthusiastically about Kyiv’s white brick buildings, about the “University” with its charming gardens, about the new gymnasium.

A large part of the text of the second translated article is dedicated to Gheorghe Asaki. G. Asaki’s interest in common moments between Romanian and Ukrainian history is determined by certain biographical circumstances. Born in Herka in Bukovina, the son of priest Lazar Asachevich, from a family from Transylvania, G. Asaki was forced to seek refuge with his parents in Lviv due to political troubles. Here his father became a priest in a military hospital, and Gheorghe Asaki entered college and began studying at the Faculty of Philosophy.

His studies, which are carried out in very different disciplines, continued in Vienna. Magdalena Laszlo-Kutsyuk emphasizes Gheorghe Asaki’s special attitude towards the Cossacks in his works. In his article “Cossacks”, published in the magazine “Icon of the World” from 1841, he writes about the courage of the Cossacks, about their bravery, about their language, which is “a mixture of Polish and Russian.” The author notes that Asaki often makes mistakes in his historical works that lead to confusion. For example, one or another character is mentioned

incorrectly chronologically. Ivan Mazepa appears in both the short story “Lady Ruxandra” and the short story “Mazepa in Moldova” as a friend of Timus, although he was actually 5 years old when Timus died. Not to mention the numerous inaccuracies in the description of the events, but the scenes often have an undeniable literary charm, such as the pine forest that represents the Cossacks, who approach Jassy, led by Thymus, who carried a branch in his hand, to win the hand of Ruxandra (*Laslo–Kuŕiuk*, 1974b).

The image of Ukraine was formed in Romanian literature from the middle of the 19th century, primarily due to the presence of some portraits and stories about the Cossacks, who appeared more than once on the scene of the turbulent history of Moldova. Chroniclers often mention the Cossacks, but they speak about them very vividly, without a shadow of idealization. However, their intervention often saved lives, proving to be a reliable ally in moments of balance when the Romanian people rose to fight against the Turks or the Poles.

Sometimes the authors reproduced the images of the Cossacks or Ukraine in general in their works, without having direct contact with the country, but only after being inspired by someone else’s work. The successful image of Ukraine by Nick Gane, who tries in the short story “Domnica Ruksandra” (1875) to transfer in a new form the material of G. Asaki’s short story “Lady Ruksanda”, having a more perfect literary technique, but not more accurate information. Even the figure of Bohdan Khmelnytsky disappears from him, the role of the Cossack leader is taken over by his son Timus.

Works whose authors were in direct contact with the Ukrainian people are more truthful from the point of view of dating some events. Like Asaki, B.P. Hashdeu had direct contact with the Ukrainian national environment. Like his father, he studied in Kharkiv. There were different opinions about the dating of these exercises. However, it seems that this did not last long. It is very likely that B.P. Hashdeu studied in Kharkiv for only one year, between 1856 and 1857, after his release from the Russian army. The information about Ukrainian culture obtained by B. P. Hashdeu at the university could not be too extensive or particularly accurate, the reactionary–chauvinistic spirit typical of the regime of Nicholas I reigned here (*История русской этнографии*, v. III, 1981, p. 425).

The author Magdalena Laszlo–Kutsiuk emphasizes that Hashdeu’s interest in Ukraine was great, and confirms this by the fact that numerous books on the history of Ukraine can be found in Hashdeu’s library, which is kept in the Central State Archives. What is true, the literary works reflecting this period in his activity,

“Jurnalul intim”(Personal diary), “Duduca Mamuca” and others, do not contain any references to the facts of life or cultural moments that would have a purely Ukrainian specificity. Instead, his unfinished play, written in Russian, “Mrs. Ruksandra”, testifies to his knowledge of some Ukrainian historiographical and folklore sources.

Hashdeu’s interest in the Ukrainian people is confirmed by the fact that he used various chronicles to write his own historical works. Hashdeu uses the annals of the monk Leontius Bobolinsky from the Vidubice Monastery, one of the oldest Cossack annals, completed in 1699, published as a supplement to the Hrabianka annals in 1854. Hashdeu translates a chapter from this chronicle and publishes it under the title “Ivonea cel Viteaz” (Ivonya the Brave) in “Foița de istorie și literatură” (Page of History and Literature), Jassy, vol. I, no. I, March, 1860. Later he reproduces almost exactly the chapter translated in the text of the work “Ion Vodă cel Cumplit” (Ivan Voda the Cruel). Hashdeu is thus the first Romanian historian to use Ukrainian chronicles as sources for national history, as well as passages of interest to Romanian history (*Lazlo–Kuŭiuk*, 1974b).

In the philological works of B.P. Hashdeu, we also find evidence of his interest in Ukraine. There are many examples of this: in “Etimologium Magnum Romania” where Hashdeu the historian and Hashdeu the philologist first meet. Here we will find many names of Romanians who played a certain role in the history of Ukraine (sometimes this origin is claimed by Hasdeu on the basis of dubious evidence, as in the case of Balabansau Berinda), which he accompanies with a wide variety of cultural and historical considerations and philological ones, as in the case of Bantish– Kamenskyi, Simeon Balyka, and others.

So, we see again how Magdadena Laszlo–Kutsiuk once again draws our attention to the fact that authors who had direct contact with Ukraine, or with the Ukrainian people, glorify it in their works in a completely different way than those writers and poets who learned about Ukraine from other sources. In the second article translated by us, “Images of Ukraine in Romanian literature in 1840–1877”, several examples are given of what Romanian authors of that time said about the Ukrainian people, and especially about the Cossacks.

The author mentions Filaret Scriban, who studied in Kyiv. In his later works, Scriban describes in detail the churches and monasteries in Kyiv and other cities of Ukraine, in the mentioned notes we also find a clear interest in the civilization progress of his neighboring country. A large part of the text of the article “Images

of Ukraine in Romanian Literature in 1840–1877” is dedicated to George Asaki. Magdalena Laszlo–Kutsiuk emphasizes Georgy Asaki’s special relationship with the Cossacks in his works. In his article “Cossacks”, published in the magazine “Icon of the World” from 1841, he writes about the courage of the Cossacks, about their bravery, about their language, which is “a mixture of Polish and Russian”. Sometimes the authors reproduced the images of the Cossacks or Ukraine in general in their works, without having direct contact with the country, but only after being inspired by someone else’s work.

The successful image of Ukraine by Nick Gane, who tries in the short story “Domnica Ruksandra” (1875) to transfer in a new form the material of G. Asaki’s short story “Lady Ruksanda”, having a more perfect literary technique, but not more exact information. Even the figure of Bohdan Khmelnytsky disappears from him, the role of the Cossack leader is taken over by his son Timus. Another active Romanian literary figure who also resorted to the image of Ukraine in his works was B.P. Hashdeu. He also studied on the territory of Ukraine, in the city of Kharkiv. Hashdeu’s interest in Ukraine was great, and this is confirmed by the fact that numerous books on the history of Ukraine can be found in the Hashdeu library, which is kept in the Central State Archives.

Hashdeu also wrote many works based on historical data taken from Ukrainian chronicles. Hashdeu uses the annals of the monk Leontius Bobolinsky from the Vidubice Monastery, one of the oldest Cossack annals, completed in 1699, published as a supplement to the Hrabianka annals in 1854.

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