



Searching For Dracula In Romania: What About Dracula? Romania's Schizophrenic Dilemma (Romania Explained To My Friends Abroad) (Volume 4)

Catalin Gruia

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Vlad and the Vampire : The Double Life of Dracula Romania is best known to the world as Dracula's country. But go there and ask about Dracula and you'll be puzzled. The Count remained until very recently unknown in his own homeland. Romanian communists banned all vampire fiction until 1990. Even nowadays Romanians have a schizophrenic attitude towards Dracula. They are tempted to transform Dracula into a tourism agent to cash in Western money, but at the same time they're afraid they may be bartering away their history. Romania's problem is that Dracula lived for real. He was neither a vampire, nor a count and never reigned in Transylvania. The stories about Vlad III Dracula, a 15th century warlord prince of Wallachia, a small Romanian principality, were horror best sellers long before Bram Stoker's famous novel. According to a 1499 pamphlet published by Ambrosius Hubler at Nuremberg, "Dracula the voivode was a bloodthirsty man who impaled people and roasted them... and chopped them like cabbages." To Romanians he is still a national hero. The Romanian national poet Mihai Eminescu called upon Vlad to bring down his wrath upon the guilty. Romania's schizophrenic dilemma The fact that Bram Stoker chose Transylvania as place of origin for his vampire frustrates many Romanian nationalists, some of whom even bet on Vasile Barsan's historical theory about a conspiracy against Vlad Tepes – led by king Matthias Corvinus in the 15th century, refined with a vampirical touch in the 19th century by Arminius Vambery, a Hungarian scholar and spy, allegedly Stoker's informant, and immortalized on the silver screen in the 20 century by Hungarian-born actor Bela Lugosi. "The complete fusion between the fictional Count and the historic figure of the Prince began in 1972, with the publishing of In Search of Dracula by Radu Florescu and Raymond McNally, two historians who argued that Bram Stoker based his vampire on Vlad", says writer Elisabeth Miller. Bram Stoker's Dracula directed by Francis Ford Coppola is the most famous Dracula film in history. About the time Coppola's movie appeared in 1992, Romanians were discovering they could market the fictional Dracula. The government planned to build a Dracula Park hoping to attract a million visitors per year. The project met a huge opposition and its supporters were forced to step back. Dracula Park: the essence of Romanian's mixed feelings (opportunism and resentment) towards Dracula This book also explores other interesting issues for any Dracula fan: • Where is Transylvania and how did it become the land of vampires? • Why Romanian communists banned Dracula as representative of the "decadent" West? • How was Vlad Tepes myth built after 19th century • Behind the scenes of the Dracula Park odyssey • Dracula's three castles in Romania • What are the links between Stoker's Dracula and the Eastern European roots of the vampire myths? • What are the must-see places if you visit Romania in search of Dracula? Searching for Dracula in Romania This travelogue is a very informative, brilliantly written work which will definitely be liked by those who're interested in vampires, Dracula in particular and Romania. Everything's described exactly, very knowledgeably and thoroughly – says Ekaterina Buley, President of the Russian Chapter of the Transylvanian Society of Dracula. For behind the scenes information about Gruia's books: --><http://www.catalingruia.com/> --><https://www.facebook.com/ByCatalinGruia>

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