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





Synopsis

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 are interested in vampires, Dracula in particular and Romania. Everything is 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>

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Catalin Gruia is a veteran journalist who has written and reported for the Romanian edition of National Geographic for over 10 years. He is currently Editor in Chief of National Geographic Traveler and Deputy Editor in Chief of National Geographic Romania. International awards First prize (Geographica category) at the International Seminar of National Geographic International Editions, Washington, 2004 Johann Strauss Golden Medal, Vienna, 2010

<http://b2b.wien.info/de/reisebranche/wtk-2010-strauss-medaille> Kinarri Trophy, Friends of Thailand Awards, Bangkok, 2013

<http://www.thaistory.ro/romania-premiata-la-friends-of-thailand-awards-2013/>

For a book that often clearly reminds the reader (intentionally or otherwise) that much of the text is a translation from an entirely different language, Searching For Dracula in Romania by Catalin Gruia

is a surprisingly accessible read. By far, the best thing about the author's intensely interesting overview of the pop cultural cult of Dracula that has persisted around the world for more than a century now, is that it is written by a native Romanian, whose sole purpose is to provide non-Romanians with a more accurate understanding of the real historical character that has come (much to the chagrin of his present day countrymen who still revere the actual man's memory) to be so readily identified with the fictional vampire Count of Bram Stoker's immortal novel of the same name. This is a fun book, because it not only allows the reader to revel in the dark Gothic world of popular Dracula legend, but also provides a fair and mostly unbiased view of the real Vlad Tepes, national hero of Romania.

The book is very interesting in that I have been researching my Transylvanian Saxon ancestors for the last ten years and have been traveling in Transylvania off and on for the last four years. Interestingly, while I had read lots of books about the Saxons (Siebenbuerger Sachsen) I had only recently read Dracula by Bram Stoker before my first trip to the village of my birth BISTRIZ. This is a great introductory book for both Dracula and Vlad. But having read this author's book on the Saxons I found that book to be a lot more interesting and more directly in line with my research on Genealogy and Genetic Migration.

This is a short book, but then it is not expensive. I found it interesting and entertaining. This is the first place that I have found the story of the building of the hotel 'Dracula's Castle' at the top of the pass between Transylvania and Bucovina. I have passed this establishment a number of times while driving to my holiday home near Suceava, Bucovina, and often wondered how it got built in the Communist days. The schizophrenic Romanian attitude to the Dracula stories is very well described. I think this only appeals to a niche market, but it is excellent for that market.

A very interesting book and a quick read. It could have used another editing pass, but the information it contains is great and to the point. I'm going on a trip to Romania in the fall and will see how the information holds up...

Very enjoyable and informative little book. I think it makes for a great guide to Transylvania as well

What a goofy little book. This "author" just put together some things he could read in the Encyclopedia Britannica with reminiscences about some tourists he met and call it a book.

If what you're looking for is an easy reading or a horror book, look somewhere else. This is a non-fiction book telling the story of the 2 Dracula - the historical Prince and literary Count - while explaining Romania's schizophrenic dilemma: to transform Dracula into a tourism agent to cash in Western money, and at the same time being afraid not to barter away their true history. I was amazed to learn how Transylvania became the land of vampires and that the fusion between the fictional Count and the historic figure of the Prince Vlad Dracula began recently, in 1972, with the publishing of "In Search of Dracula" by Radu Florescu and Raymond McNally who argued that Bram Stoker based his vampire on Prince Vlad. Personally I cannot agree more with the words of the former chair of The Dracula Society Quincey P. Morris of the US: "For us, Westerners, Dracula is fiction, a mere game. Actually, we are not very interested in your Vlad Tepes. It is not us who make the connection between the historical character and the vampire Count; it is you who keep telling us about Tepes when we come to visit the places mentioned in Bram Stoker's novel". I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn more about vampires, Dracula and Romania!

Catalin Gruia's witty style strikes again! Once you start reading, things just get so interesting you simply can't stop. The book presents a complex story, introducing many points of view from people with key roles in creating or debunking the Dracula myth. The author chose a subject that, as he admits, Romanians find annoying and disturbing, but he also shamelessly presents how Romanians have helped in building real life Dracula castles/hotels and creating frightening shows and guided tours. Combining real life stories and local legends, the book partly resembles a touristic booklet, but with information that a visitor would not find anywhere else. Probably one of the best things about the series of short books by the same author is that they are accessible to everyone, even to those who don't have any knowledge of the subject. And even if you are an expert in vampires, Dracula and/or Vlad Tepes you are likely to find new information and new research themes in this book. I find that Catalin Gruia's books are all linked together, touching on subjects of great interest that have put a mark on how outsiders view Romania, so I advise you to have a look at his other writings.

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