



Letter from Castle Dracula

- the News Bulletin of The Transylvanian Society of Dracula

CONFERENCE SPECIAL

PLUS AN ESSAY ON "CAPTAIN VAMPIRE"



AUTUMN ISSUE, OCTOBER 2015

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WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW CONTRIBUTORS!

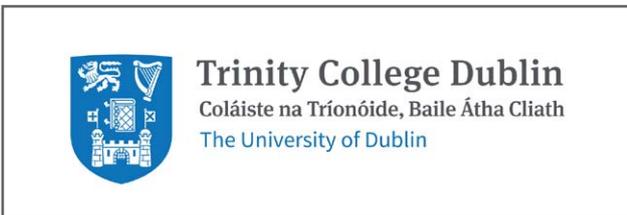
A GREETING WORD FROM OUR VICE-PRESIDENT

Bucharest, 28 October 2015

Dear TSD members all around,

As you may be aware, next year it will be **25 years** ago that the Transylvanian Society of Dracula was founded by Nicolae Paduraru and other scholars from Romania and abroad. Much has been accomplished over this period of time; especially, we have much more clarity now about the relationship – or rather “non-relationship” – between the fictitious Count Dracula and the historical Dracula family that ruled Wallachia in medieval times. Even over the last five years, new insights have been developed, that allow for a more radical analysis of Bram Stoker’s intentions and the way he played “hide-and-seeK” with Romanian history: he did not want to point to an identifiable historical person at all! We therefore intend to celebrate our anniversary with an **international conference in Dublin, focusing on innovations in Dracula research.**

For **21 & 22 October 2016**, we have a tentative booking now for rooms at **Trinity College** – where Bram Stoker studied – and are waiting for final confirmation from the side of Trinity’s administration; this may take some weeks.



The initiative for this conference was taken by Hans de Roos from Munich, the Acting Editor of our newsletter. The organising committee further consists of Magdalena Grabias, Assistant Professor at the Department of Cultural Studies at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland, and Kristin Bone, MA, author of Gothic Fiction, who studied English Literature at the University of Hertfordshire and at Trinity College, Dublin. Last but I hope not least, I have accepted to play my role in this organising council, as the “Mother” of the “Mother Organisation.”

As you will see on our conference website, www.tsdcon25.com, we are planning eight workshops with a wide range of topics, so that many members will have an opportunity to make a presentation themselves. An official Call for Papers will be sent out soon.

In this issue of our newsletter, we welcome Kaja Franck of Hertfordshire University as a guest writer, giving her impressions of the **BBEC Conference in Timișoara**, organised by our TSD member Marius Crișan. On the last page, Magdalena Grabias from Poland reports on her sunny bus tour through Transylvania.

As bonus material for our loyal readers, this newsletter features an essay by Hans C. de Roos about the **book by Marie Nizet, *Le Capitaine Vampire***, that was rumoured to have influenced Stoker’s *Dracula* in some of its central plot ideas. Although Hans actually discovered a striking and hitherto undiscussed parallel, he comes to the conclusion that a little bit *more* influence on *Dracula* would not have harmed Stoker’s famous novel...

Happy Halloween!!

Daniela Diaconescu
Co-Founder and Vice-President of the TSD



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THE BBEC CONFERENCE IN TIMIȘOARA: IMPRESSIONS & AFTERTHOUGHTS

How Romanian souvenir producers have re-appropriated the image of the vampire

By Kaja Franck, Hertfordshire University, UK



Conference group photo in front of the West University, Timișoara. All photos by Hans de Roos. Photo post-production: Andreea & Teo Vechiu.

In June 2015 I attended the International Conference on Beliefs and Behaviours in Education and Culture (BBEC) at the West University of Timișoara, Romania. As part of the conference I took part in the workshop ‘Where’s the Place of Dracula: (De)Constructing Stereotypes in the Study of the Mythical Space in Literature and Space’ which was led by Dr. Marius-Mircea Crișan. The aim of the workshop was to explore how Stoker’s novel had built upon representations of Romania in Western, and specifically English language texts, and what effect the figure of Count Dracula has had on the mythologizing of Romanian culture.

It is not hard to find how the image of the vampire has dominated Western concepts of Romania. The reaction to my trip from friends and family was invariably the same and the most popular questions included: “Are you going hunting for vampires?”, “Don’t forget your garlic”, and, inevitably, “Will you meet Count Dracula?” Despite my attempts to counter these suggestions by explaining that a) vampires are a relatively modern, Western invention; b) garlic does not work on all vampires; and, c) Bram Stoker never visited Romania and found the name Dracula in William Wilkinson’s *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* (1820) whilst researching in the Whitby library. Arguably, then, Count Dracula has more roots in

Yorkshire than in Romania. Though most of these facts are familiar to scholars of Stoker’s seminal novel (and are, of course, open to debate), the idea of Romania as a home for vampires and Vlad Țepeș connection with the fictional Count continues to dominate popular culture. In Stephenie Meyer’s *Breaking Dawn* (2008), the final novel in the *Twilight* series, the oldest vampires come from Romania and have been usurped by the Italian Volturi for whom they hold a burning hatred. The figure of the Romanian vampire continues to stalk the new-breed of vampires.



Taking photos during our city walk in Timișoara.



Marius Crișan, the organiser of the BBEC Conference.



Time for questions during the plenary sessions.



Bill Hughes, Bath Spa University.



Lunch in Hunedora (Bill Hughes, Sam George, Kaja Franck, Kristin Bone).



On the way to Hunedora Castle.



Group photo at Hunedora Castle.

In his paper, Dr Crişan elucidated that the image of Count Dracula as a Romanian is problematic, since Stoker's villain neither reflects (pun intended) the Romanian folklore nor the historical figure of Vlad Țepeş. Count Dracula is rather a palimpsest of Anglo-Irish appropriation and misinterpretation of Romanian folklore, mythology, landscape, and, perhaps most harmfully, the people themselves. The vampire, as conceived by Stoker, is not a Romanian monster but a British monster masquerading as foreign 'other'. By exploring the portrayal of Romania and Count Dracula in Gothic texts, the papers showed the power of Gothic imagology in creating a mythical version of Romania. Stoker's novel can be read as conservative Gothic in that it re-inscribes the idea that Britain is a rational and empirical force in opposition to the superstitions of Eastern Europe. With the opening of borders in modern Europe to tourism, travellers, and immigration, it is important to consider how we engage with these old attitudes.

During the conference I took some time to walk around Timișoara and picked up some souvenirs. The souvenir shops contained hundreds of fridge magnets, postcards, tea towels, and so forth adorned with the image of Vlad Țepeş. Notably, however, very few of these souvenirs alluded to his fantastical, shadow 'other', Count Dracula. Rather they tended to feature the Ambras Castle portrait (c. 1560) of Vlad III and seemed to be part of a concerted effort to exorcise the spirit of Stoker's Dracula. My fridge magnet cum bottle opener (which is in the best possible taste) features the aforementioned portrait with the word 'Dracula' and 'Romania' on it. I think there is something subtle taking place here in a reaction to the previous Gothicisation of Romania and the name 'Dracula' is being re-appropriated in modern Romania.

Stoker had the image of his vampire in place and then applied the name of an historical character to this image thereby connecting the real Vlad Țepeş to the fictional Count Dracula. The name Dracula and the figure of the vampire was re-affirmed by the portrayal of the Count by Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee so that the two became synonymous. Understandably, Romanians were perturbed to find that one of their historical figures had been subsumed by a Gothic monster. Whilst some aspects of Romanian tourism have used Stoker's Dracula to bring in travellers (and Gothic tourism is certainly a growing field), I think my fridge magnet is an example of re-telling the story of Dracula and re-affirming the connection between the word 'Dracula' and the historical figure of Vlad Țepeş. This souvenir removes 'Dracula' from my Western fantasy of the vampire and replaces it with the portrait of the man. By dissociating Count



Our workshop *Where is the Place of Dracula?*

Dracula from his namesake, the figure of the vampire becomes nebulous once more. As many academics have argued, the vampire is successful because it is an ever-changing creature. If we keep searching for our vampires in the history books we run the risk of preventing them from evolving and returning refreshed and ready to embody our contemporary concerns. Though I returned from Romania without finding any vampires, it was with the hope that they would re-appear closer to home and more threatening than ever.

Editor's afterword: Almost needless to say, Kaja indeed soon saw such creatures closer at home, this time disguised as wolves, at the conference [Company of Wolves](#) she helped organise at Hertfordshire University.



The Deva Fortress, spotted during our bus tour.



A wedding photo session taking place at Hunedora Castle.



Duncan Light (Bournemouth) & Kristin Bone (California).



Kaja Franck (Hertfordshire) and Magdalena Grabias (Lublin).



Dorota Babilas and her husband (Warsaw).



Nancy Schumann and her partner (London).



Marius Crișan (Timișoara) and Donatella Badin (Turin).



Scholars getting younger and younger: Nuria & Maria Alcantud Diaz (Valencia).

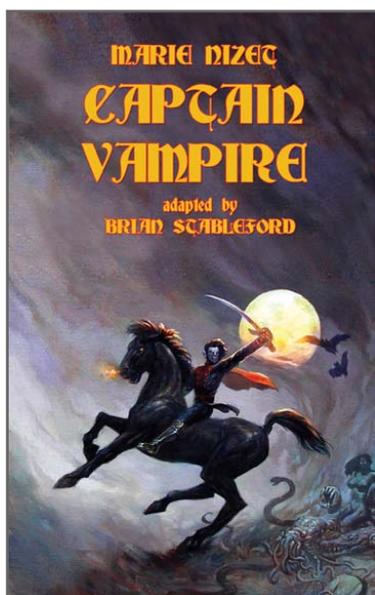


The Orthodox Cathedral at the Alba Iulia Fortification.



Admiring the architecture at the Alba Iulia Fortification.

ON LE CAPITAINE VAMPIRE – AND WHERE IT FAILED TO INFLUENCE BRAM STOKER



By Hans C. de Roos, Munich

On Sunday, June 8, 2014 at 7:56 PM, Dracula Travel Guide <info@dractravel.com> wrote:

Dear Daniela,

It is hot in Munich... too hot to walk in the sunshine... I spent some hours in the shadow of a beergarten... editing my essays [...]

I also finished reading "Captain Vampire" by Marie Nizet... and of course, I have a brand-new theory how this book influenced Bram Stoker... not his *Dracula*, but his *Lair of the White Worm*... so, some day, we must create a new issue of the *Letter from Castle Dracula*...

Wish you joyful summerly hours,

Hans

Among the many books that may have influenced Bram Stoker while writing *Dracula*, the novel *Le Capitaine Vampire* by Marie Nizet (1879) takes a special place, as the Romanian scholar Matei Cazacu has suggested that Stoker borrowed the core of his plot from this story: an elder, powerful man with vampiristic qualities intervening in the romantic lives of two young couples while invading their home country. In this article I will try to demonstrate that other sources may – also – have inspired Stoker's plot construction, but that a hitherto unnoticed parallel between Nizet's narrative and Stoker's writing seems to attest that the Irishman must have read – and used – her book. After reading both Nizet's and Stoker's works, however, I was more puzzled by the dissimilarities between the two writers than by the parallels: Although Stoker was twelve years older than Nizet and published his vampire novel eighteen years after hers, Nizet's style appears both more mature and more modern than that of the Irishman.

Marie Nizet was born in Bruxelles in January 1859. Her father worked at the Royal Library of Belgium and wrote patriotic poetry and works on history and bibliography. While studying at the Isabelle Gatti Institute in Paris, Marie became friends with Eufrosina and Virgilia, the daughters of Ion Heliade-Radulescu (1802-1872), a well-known Romanian poet, folklorist and philologist, the founder and the first President of the Romanian Academy; he played a key role in the 1848 Wallachian (anti-Russian) Revolution.



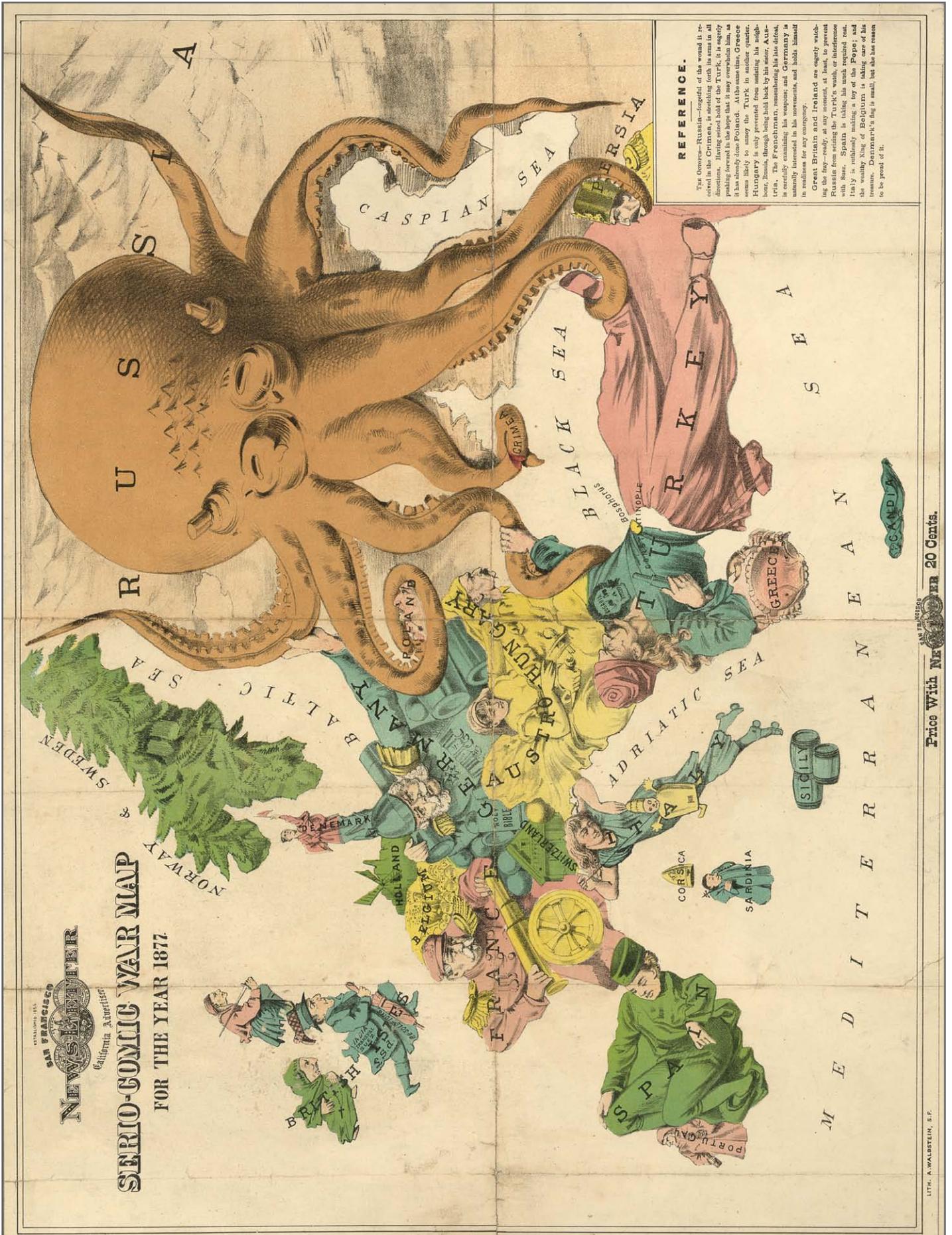
This friendship – cemented by meeting several refugés from Eastern Europe at her father's house – and her interest in the fate of the Romanians inspired Marie Marie to create a poetry volume entitled *România (chants de la Roumanie)*; it was published in Paris in 1878. Its preface is a burning accusation of the Great Powers of Europe, that agreed on restoring Bessarabia to Russia during the Congress of Berlin (13 June - 13 July 1878) after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. The poems are politically radical as well: with flaming words, Marie Nizet scourges the imperialist strategies of the Russian Czar, the Turkish Sultan, the Habsburg rulers, the German Emperor, the French Republic and the British Monarchy – not forgetting to mention the suppression of the Irish people:

Les larmes et le sang des enfants de l'Irlande
Ont souillé ton manteau royal.

The tears and the blood of Ireland's folk
Have soiled and stained your royal cloak.

She reminds the Czar's daughters of the price of their luxurious life and – barely eighteen years old – in *Appel aux peuples de l'Europe (March 1877)* fiercely appeals to Europe's nations to respect Romania's borders and end the bloodshedding. The pulsing metre of her rhyme and her footnotes demonstrate that she has studied classical verse and the political history of Eastern Europe. The word "vampire" appears four times – once to describe the "typical" Russian officer:

Serio-Comic War Map for the Year 1877. Artist: Frederick W. Rose. Source: US Library of Congress. Public Domain. Wikipedia description: Cartoon map showing the political situation in Europe in 1877. A vicious-looking Octopus - its eight lengthy tentacles extending into Northern and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Asia, encircling in tightening strangle-holds the territories of Finland, Poland, Bulgaria, the Crimea and Persia and even reaching as far as the Holy Land, Armenia and Khiva in Central Asia. The Turkish Empire, in the form of a prostrate turbaned figure lying across the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, pistol at the ready, protects his prize gold watch, Constantinople, which hangs around his waist. Greece, an irritating crab, pinches his right elbow. Hungary is held back from attacking Russia by his sister Austria. Germany, in the form of its uniformed Emperor, surrounds itself with arms and weaponry, ready for any emergency. France in the form of Marshal MacMahon, points a dangerous mitrailleuse at its German neighbour, eager to avenge its defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. Italy is a young girl enjoying her newly found liberty, the Papal crown located in Rome. Spain is the reclining figure of Alfonso, sleeping after his recent exertions. The King of Belgium surrounds himself with his treasure. Denmark waves her small flag proudly. The British Isles, England a kneeling gentleman umbrella at the ready, Scotland a kilted Highlander with claymore raised, and Ireland a hooded monk with Home Rule on his mind, stand on the sidelines determined at least to save the Turk's watch. Sweden stands aloof in the North as a fur-clad woodcutter.



REFERENCE.
 The Octopus—Russia—forgetful of the wound it received in the Crimea, is stretching forth its arms in all directions. Having seized hold of the Turk, it is eagerly devouring him. It has already done Poland. With its other arms, Greece seems likely to annoy the Turk in another quarter. Hungary is only prevented from making his neighbor, Russia, through being held back by his sister, Austria. The Frenchman, remembering his late defeat, is carefully examining his weapons, and Germany is naturally interested in his movements, and holds himself in readiness for any contingency.
 Great Britain and Ireland are eagerly watching the fray—ready at any moment, at least, to prevent the Turk from being devoured. The woodcutter, or indifference with Sweden. Spain is taking the watch, and Italy is undoubtedly making a toy of the Pope; and the wealthy King of Belgium is taking care of his treasure. Denmark's flag is small, but she has reason to be proud of it.

ESTABLISHED 1854
NEWS-KUTNER
 California Advertiser
SERIO-COMIC WAR MAP
 FOR THE YEAR 1877

Price With News 20 Cents.
 LITH. A. WALSTEIN, S.F.

Il descendait, dit-il, d'une illustre famille,
 Étant de ces boyards dont le pays fourmille,
 Vampires tout repus du sang des paysans,
 Tyrans cruels chez eux, et lâches courtisans,
 Courbés aux pieds du Tzar devant lequel ils tremblent,
 Sous les murs du Kremlin où parfois ils s'assemblent.
 Il portait un grand nom : Fratieff ou Vasilieff;
 Un de ces noms maudits au sinistre relief.

He was, as he said, from a well-renowned race,
 Referring to "nobles" that crowd the land's face,
 Vampires that feed on the blood of the peasant,
 Harsh tyrants at home, but cowardly pleasant
 When bowing and trembling before the Czar's feet,
 As guests of the Kremlin where sometimes they meet.
 Fratieff or Vasilieff, so sounds his grand name –
 A name that is cursed with the ring of ill fame.

[My translation]

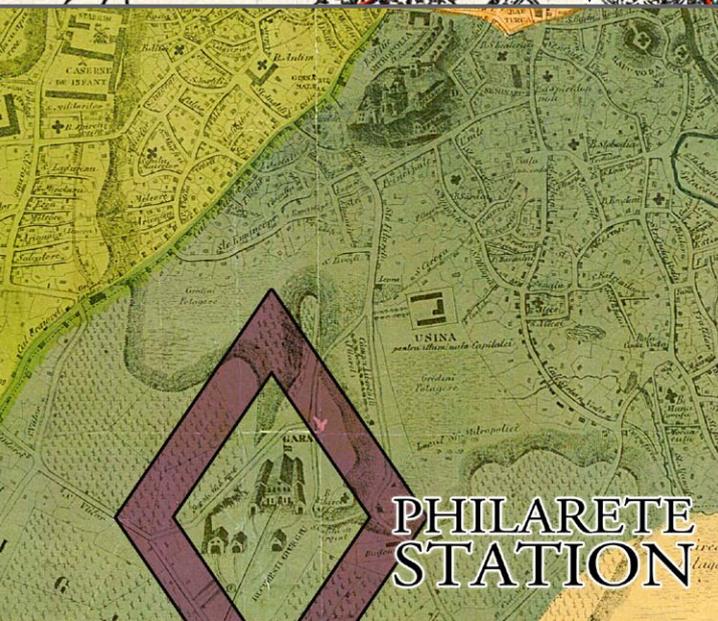
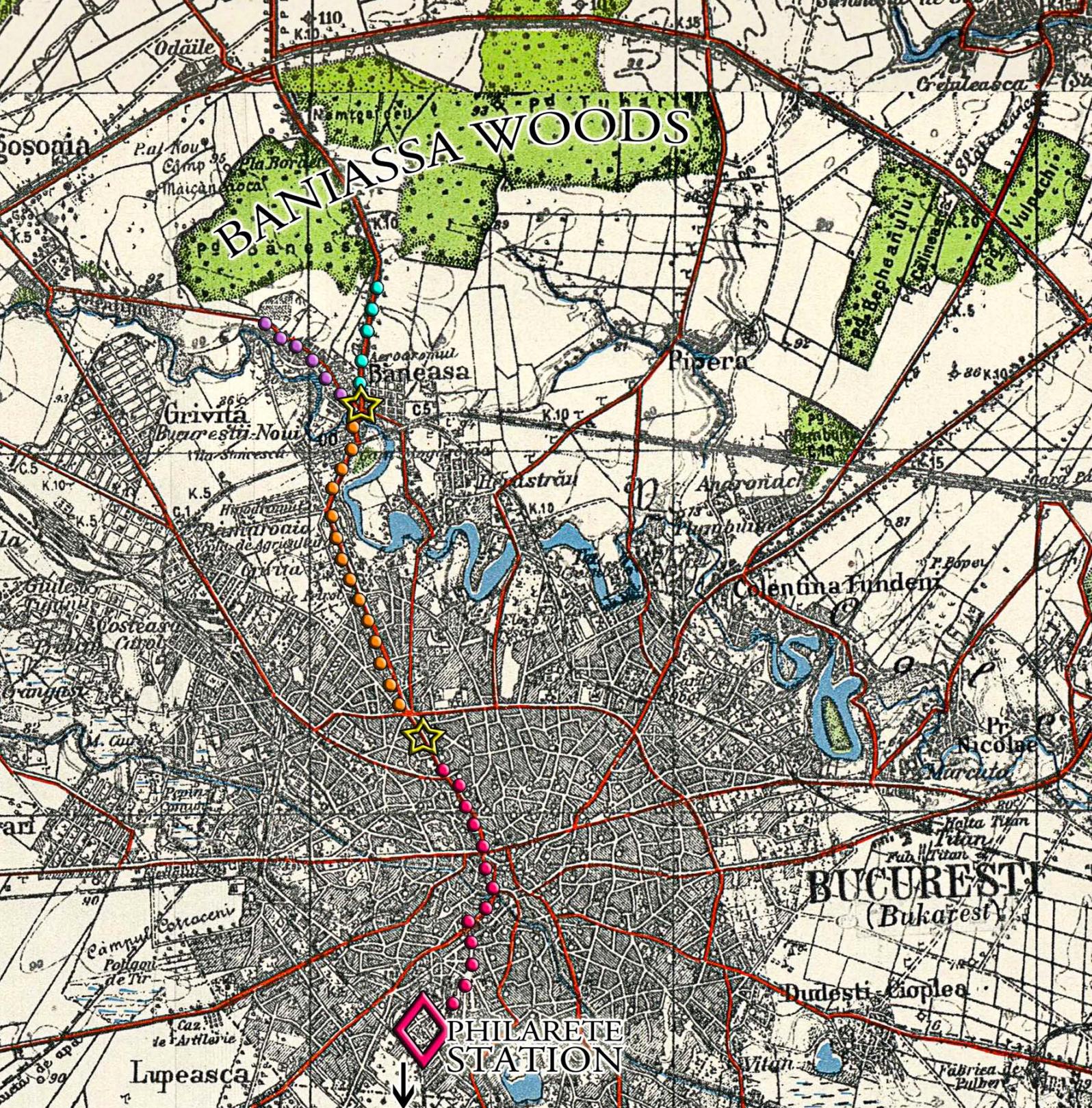
The idea to portray a Russian officer as a blood-sucking aristocratic vampire returns in Nizet's novel *Le Capitaine Vampire*, in which Colonel Boris Liatoukine commands Russian troops in Romania. Like Stoker's Count Dracula, he allegedly rose from the dead, has superhuman powers in spite of his ascetic frame, and can paralyse or even kill his victims by the sheer will-power of his piercing eyes.

The story opens with a conversation between farmers in the fields near Bucharest, May 1877. The men complain about the Russians – officially their allies in the anti-Turkish War – “descending upon [...] Rumania like locusts.” The young Mitica Slobozianu reports that he will be drafted soon to fight on the side of the Russians, who plan to cross the Danube. Then his friend Ioan Isacescu, already a corporal, arrives on the scene – the fiancé of Mitica's sister Mariora. While walking home with his father Mani, Ioan and the old man are harassed by a troop of Cossacks, headed by a Russian officer with yellow eyes. At Mariora's house Ioan learns that his new foe has entered there, besetting his beloved until a young boyar, Relia Comanescu, turned up. In the meantime, we overhear some Russian officers telling tall stories about Boris Liatoukine, a man in his forties with yellow eyes. Although already a Colonel, he is nicknamed “Captain Vampire” – allegedly, he been murdered by his own soldiers, but had returned from the dead.

During the next scene, at a society ball in Bucharest hosted by the aristocratic Comanescus, Liatoukine kills a drunken Polish Hussar just by staring at him. The man had insulted him by citing the rumours about his spooky qualities aloud – including the fact that his two wives had died on the day of their wedding. While Bucharest gossips about the Hussar's uncanny demise, Romania proclaims independence and Ioan and Mitica prepare for joining their garrison. Ioan presents Mariora with a Byzantine copper ring, while Mitica says goodbye to Zamfira, Mariora's best friend. Again, Liatoukine appears on the streets, courted by the Comanescus, but vanishes. On her way home, however, Mariora gets lost after a silly quarrel with her girlfriends and utterly alone in the Baniassa Woods at night, she finds herself at the mercy of the brutal Russian suddenly crossing her path (see map on next page).



Nikolai Dmitriev-Orenburgsky: The Russian army crossing the Danube at Zimnicea-Svishtov, 15 June 1877.



TOP: The routes of Ioan and Mariora on Independence Day, marked on a military map of Bucharest (1933, mapywig.org) Nizet describes how the Chaussée between the centre of Bucharest and Baniassa (Băneasa), Șoseaua Kisselef (now Șoseaua București-Ploiești), was filled with people celebrating the independence of Romania. While after saying goodbye, Ioan and Mitica hasten to the Philarete Station from where the train to Giurgiu will leave by 8:00 p.m., Marioara and Zamfira walk north along the Chaussée and near Baniassa meet Ralitzza, Katinka and Florica. After a quarrel with the other girls, who take a route through Baniassa, Mariora continues alone, claiming to know a shortcut, and bei 8:30 p.m. ends up in the Baniassa Woods, gets lost and suddenly meets Colonel Liatoukine.

LEFT: Map of Bucharest from the year 1871 (detail), showing the Philarete Rail Station (Gara Filaret), where the train from Bucharest to Giurgiu leaves, that brings Ioan and Mitica to their garrison.

Two months later, a message for Liatoukine arrives at the Romanian camp at Nicopolis, south of the Danube,¹ where Ioan and Mitica are stationed. Ioan, hoping for a revenge but not knowing about Mariora's encounter in the Baniassa Woods yet,² volunteers to forward the letter. Arriving at the Russian camp, he witnesses how Liatoukine and his subordinates humiliate and beat the helpless Relia Comanescu, and comes to the rescue. Liatoukine recognises Ioan and in the following dialogues, he and his men insinuate to know Mariora in a rather intimate way; as proof, the Colonel produces the copper ring. Then the Russian leaves Relia and Ioan to a troop of Cossacks, to be punished with the whip. The severe lashing causes a scandal, while Ioan's determination to kill Liatoukine takes on the dimensions of a holy mission. Fighting side by side with Relia and Mitica to take the redoubt of Gravitza, he demonstrates bravery in battle – until Liatoukine shows up once more. Ioan challenges and kills him, plunging Mani's knife three times into the Colonel's heart and cutting off the little finger to recover the copper ring. Wounded by bullets, Ioan ends up in a hospital and catches typhus; when his head is clear again, the ring is gone.



Nikolai Dmitriev-Orenburgsky (1883): The Russian IX Corps under General Nikolai Kridener taking Nikopol (west of Svishtov) in July 1877.

Crippled and disillusioned, the ex-soldier returns home, meets Zamfira, learns that his father has died, then travels to Bucharest intending to kill his unfaithful fiancé – he suspects Mariora to have betrayed him and be the maîtresse of Liatoukine now. When he meets her with the help of the girl Sperantza, however, Mariora can convince him that the Colonel only took her ring, nothing else. They decide to marry, but before the ceremony, a strange wedding gift arrives: a wooden box, containing the copper ring and Mani's old knife, which Ioan had left in his enemy's breast.

Still searching for Mitica, Ioan and Mariora are granted an audience with the Minister of War. They arrive in Bucharest early and visit a church, where a wedding takes place. When the freshly-married leave the church, Ioan and Mariora recognise them: Epistimia Comanescu walks hand in hand with Prince Liatoukine, now a general. While Mariora faints, Ioan sees that the groom's little finger is missing. From the epilogue we learn that Epistimia did not survive her wedding night.

1 [Nikopol](#) at the south bank of the Danube, 4 km east from the point where it is joined by the River Osam. It was taken by the Russians in the [Battle of Nikopol on 16 July 1877](#). Stableford mixes this Nikopol up with Nicopolis ad Istrum, at the River Jantra (Iatrus), 3 km before it joins the Danube further north, which was founded by Roman Emperor Trajanus between 101 and 106 AD, to celebrate his first victories against the Dacians (“Nicopolis” in Greek means “City of Victory.”)

2 Nizet refers here to Băneasa Forest (Romanian: Pădurea Băneasa), 10 km north of the Old City of Bucharest, covering around 80,000 hectares (200,000 acres). In the novel *Noaptea de Sânziene* (~1949) by Mircea Eliade, it is described as a paranormal site or “forbidden forest.”



Nikolai Dmitriev-Orenburgsky: The Russian army taking the Gravitza Redoubt, before losing it to the Turks again. Nizet describes the Third Battle of Gravitza on 30 August 1877, in which the Romanians, sent ahead by the Russians, stormed the redoubt with massive losses.

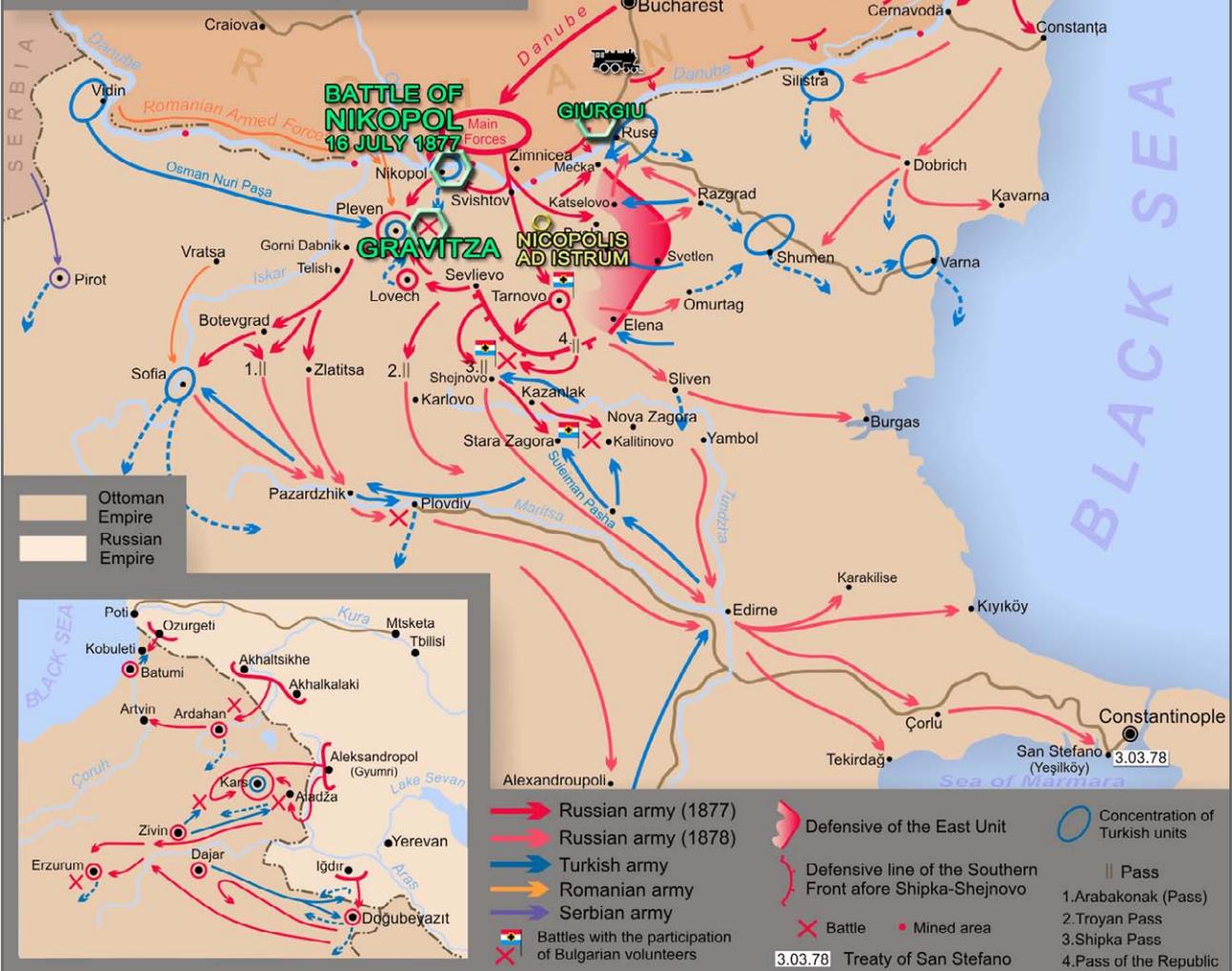
Illustrated London News of 20 Oct. 1877: "Unsuccessful attack of the 15th Dorobanzer Regiment (Roumanians) on the Second Grivitza redoubt." Through the efforts of the newspapers, readers in Western Europe (like Marie Nizet in Paris) had a vivid image of the battles fought in the East.





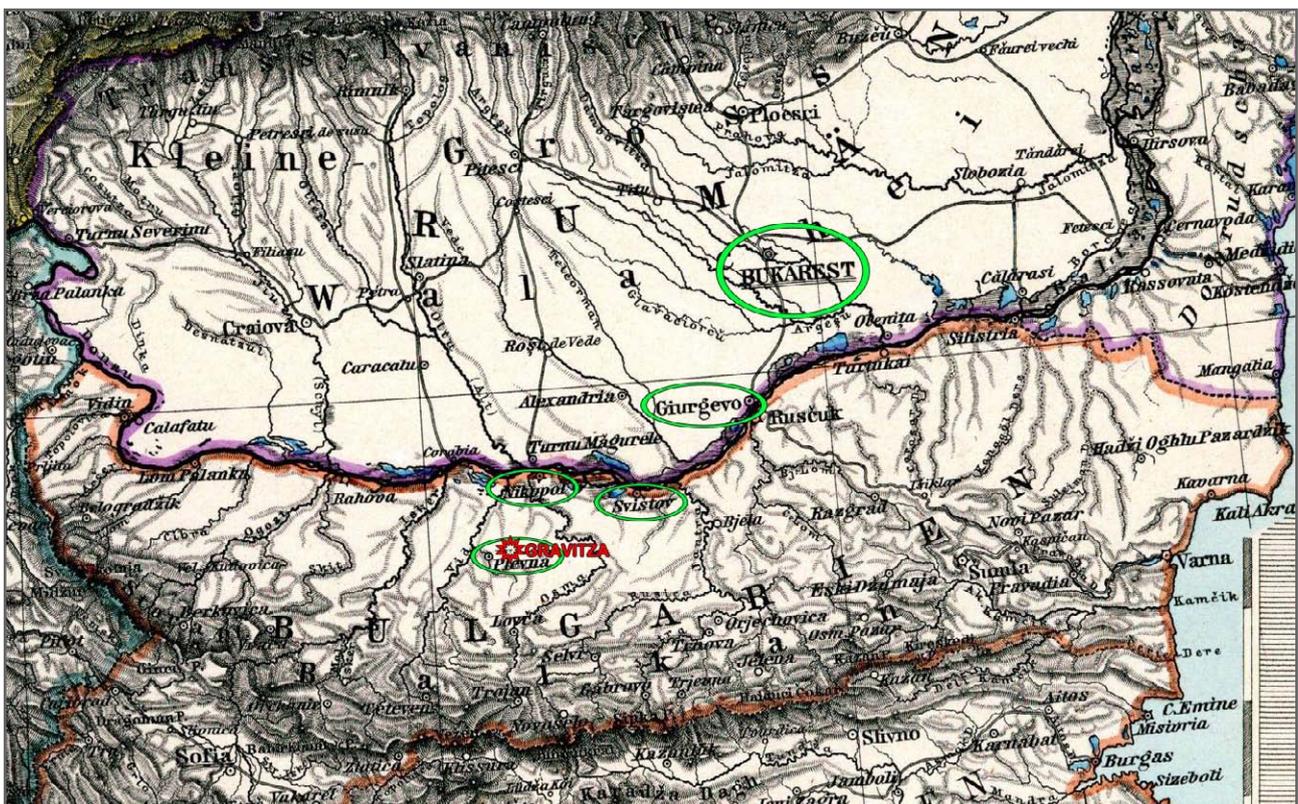
Henryk Dembitzky (1830-1906): Romanian troops storming the Gravitza redoubt on 30 August 1877, Alexander's Day, as described by Nizet. The Romanians wear grey uniforms, while the Turks wear blue with golden embroidery.

Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878)

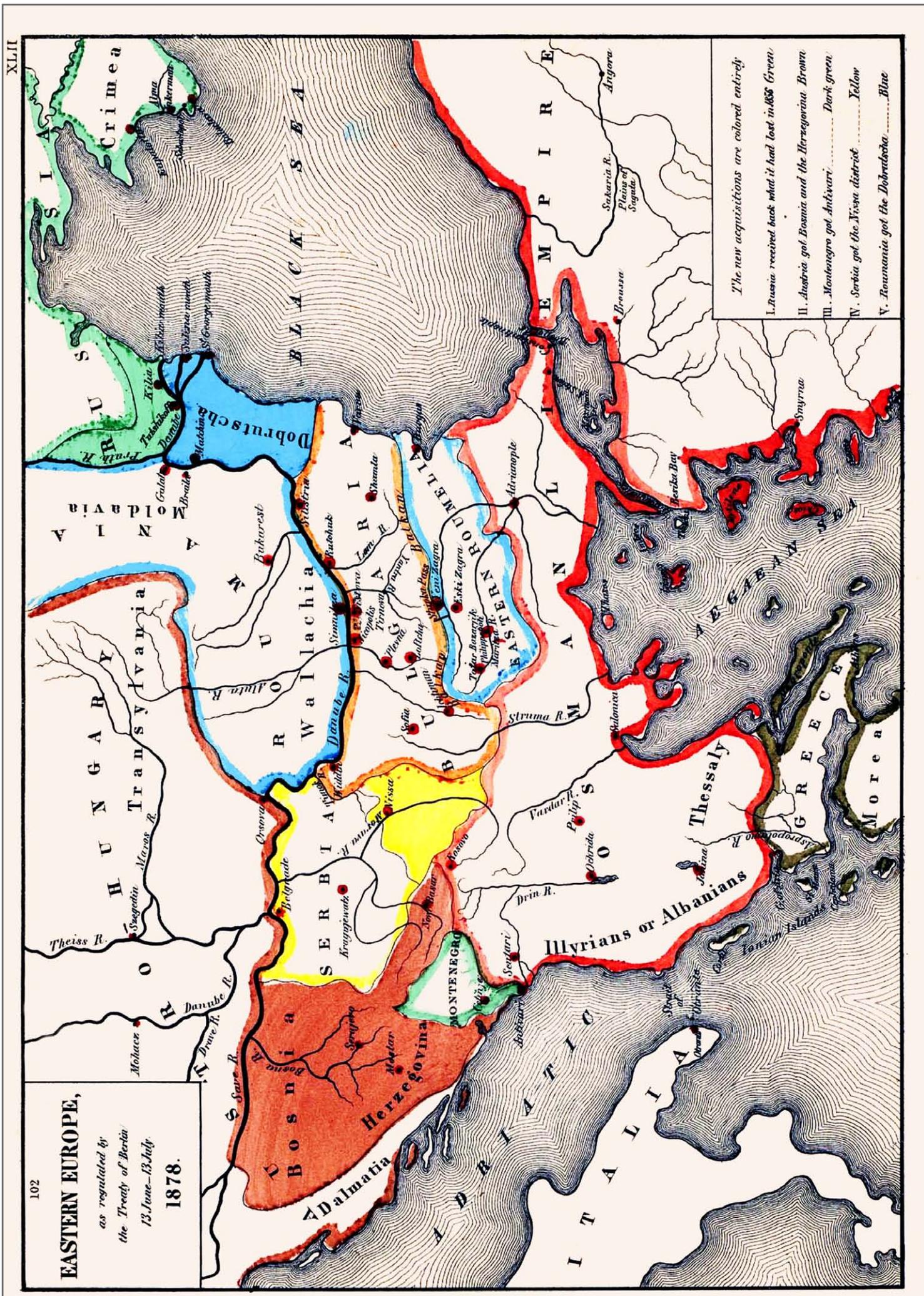


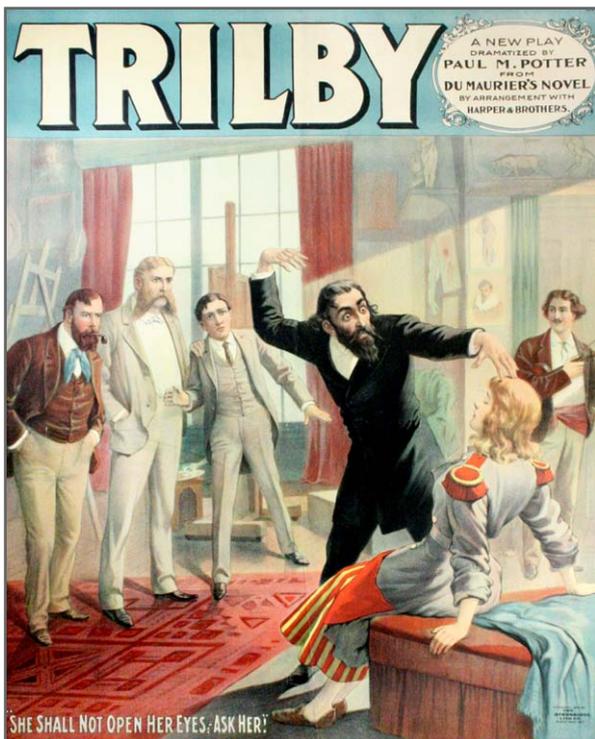
TOP: Troop movements in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Stableford confuses the place of Ioan's camp, Nikopol, first mentioned in 136 AD, with Nicopolis ad Istrum, founded by Emperor Trajanus between 101 and 106 AD. Source: Wikipedia. My mark-ups in green & yellow.

BELOW: Stielers Handatlas of 1891, showing again the places where Ioan, Relia and Mitica fought or were stationed: Giurgiu (Giurgevo), Svishtov (Svistov), Nikopol, Gravitza and Plevna (Plevna). Stielers map shows the new borders after the 1878 Treaty of Berlin (see next page).



The Treaty of Berlin (July 1878) revised the Treaty of San Stefano (3 March 1878): Russia wins back the territories it had lost in 1856; Bulgaria's autonomy and Romania's independence are recognised, but Macedonia is returned to Turkey while Romania is forced to trade Moldavia east of the Pruth (Bessarabia) against the Dobrukscha region. Map: *An Historical Atlas* by Robert H. Labberton, E. Elaxton & Co., 1884.





Certain parallels with Stoker's *Dracula* plot are undeniable, and Matei Cazacu, who rediscovered this forgotten novel and published it as an appendix to his book *Dracula, suivi du "Capitaine vampire"* (2004) values this as evidence that Stoker derived his central ideas from Nizet's story. But as Brian Stableford, the translator and editor of the English version, demonstrates, the similarities addressed by Cazacu are not specific enough to prove that Stoker had studied or imitated Nizet's work. Vampire stories – French, German or English – were ubiquitous in the 1870's and 80's and Liatoukine shared his grisly qualities with a myriad of other supernatural villains. Stableford even doubts that Nizet meant to portray Liatoukine as a vampire *au sens propre*: the Colonel seems not to be interested in blood at all. That he wields malicious hypnotic powers is no convincing argument either: the abuse of hypnotic trance was fervently discussed by the medical and legal magazines of the era and several novels dealt with the issue;³ Stoker, a studied lawyer with many physicians in the family, had a keen interest in the topic.⁴ Inevitably, he knew the play *Trilby* (1895), based on the 1894 novel by Daphne du Maurier:

the extraordinary success of this stage piece (260 performances at *The Haymarket Theatre*) drew theater-goers away from *The Lyceum Theatre* and allowed Herbert Beerbohm Tree to build *Her Majesty's Theatre*.

The trope of an evil person sabotaging the love relationship of a betrothed or married couple is even more widely spread in literature,⁵ and if Stoker needed any specific impulse to include this theme in *Dracula*, he did not have to look to the work of an unknown young Belgian author. In Hall Caine's autobiography *My Story* (1908) I found:

During many years thereafter I spent time and energy and some imagination in an effort to fit Irving with a part, and the pigeon-holes of my study are still heavy with sketches and drafts and scenarios of dramas which either he or I or our constant friend and colleague Bram Stoker (to whose loyal comradeship we both owed so much) thought possible for the Lyceum Theatre. I remember that most of our subjects dealt with the supernatural, and that the "Wandering Jew," the "Flying Dutchman," and the "Demon Lover" were themes around which our imagination constantly revolved.⁶



Vernon Hill: The Demon Lover.

The mentioned ballad of the Demon Lover⁷ describes how the Devil, claiming to be a former love partner, half seduces, half forces a married woman to leave her husband and children and sail away with him – in the end, she perishes:

‘O fause are the vows o’ womankind.
But fair is their fause bodie;
I ne’er wad hae trodden on Irish ground.
Had it na been for love of thee.’ —

³ For a list of pre-1897 vampire novels, see Appendix I.

Marie's younger brother Henry also wrote a novel dealing with hypnosis.

⁴ See for example Stoker's description of Irving's stage qualities as a demonstration of "double consciousness" in Stoker, Bram. *Reminiscences of Henry Irving*. London: Heinemann, 1906, Vol. II, p. 21.

⁵ E.g. Hagen in the Nibelungen Saga, separating Siegfried from Brunhild; in Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales, evil fairies, stepmothers and witches intervene in the life of young girls: *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, *Roland*. In 1877, Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* premiered, in which the evil sorcerer Von Rothbart sabotages the love relationship between Odette and Siegfried. The much-cited *ius primae noctis* implied that a feudal lord had the right to sleep with the brides of his serfs and peasants before the wedding was consumed. Although it is questionable if it ever was practiced in medieval Europe in its literal form, there was a tradition that serfs and peasants had to ask for their lord's permission before marrying. Both Prince Liatoukine's and Count Dracula's interventions thus have their roots in feudal and patriarchal customs.

⁶ Caine, Hall. *My Story*. London: Heinemann, 1908, p. 349.

⁷ Here quoted from *Ballads Weird and Wonderful, with 25 drawings by Vernon Hill*. London/New York: John Lane: 1912 pp. 7ff.

Then she's gane to her twa little babes,
Kiss'd them baith cheek and chin;
Sae has she to her sleeping husband
And done the same to him.

She set her foot upon the ship,
No mariners could she behold;
But the sails were o' the taffetie,
And the masts o' beaten gold.

[...]

“O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
That the sun shines sweetly on?” —
“O yon are the hills o' heaven,” he said,
“Where you will never win.” —

“O whatten a mountain 's yon,” she said,
“Sae dreary wi' frost and snow?” —
“O yon is the mountain o' hell,” he cried,
“Where you and I will go.”

If we wish, we can detect several similarities with Stoker's vampire story: the demon sailing on a ship without crew, or the use of taffety⁸ and gold – in Castle Dracula, Harker is surprised to see the expensive tapestry on the walls and the washing bowl of massive gold.



Another weird horseman claiming his victim: Frank Kirchbach's *Lenore* (1896), after *The Ballad of Lenore*, written by Gottfried A. Bürger, 1773.

While I tend to agree with Stableford's arguments, there is *one* scene in *Le Capitaine Vampire*, however, that neither he nor Cazacu discusses – a scene so similar to a situation described by Stoker, that it appears as if the Irishman must have read Nizet's book all the same.

As we remember, the first meeting between Mariora and Liatoukine takes place when the Colonel enters her house uninvitedly; Ioan's distressed fiancée reports:

⁸ “Taffetie” or “taffety”: dated form of “taffeta”: a crisp, smooth, plain-woven fabric with a slight sheen, made of various fibers and used especially for women's garments. From Middle English “taffata,” Old French “taffetas,” Old Italian “taffetà,” from Persian “tāfta,” silk or linen cloth, from past participle of “tāftan,” to twist, spin.

“This is what happened,” she began, in a very low voice. “This morning, Zamfira and Baba Sophia went to Bucharest, leaving me alone here. All the men were in the fields. I wasn’t doing anything—I was thinking about you!—when I heard the gallop of an approaching horse.

“I ran to the door, expecting to see the boyar Comanescu, whom we were expecting. It wasn’t him; it was a Russian officer. He dismounted. I thought he wanted to speak to me and I went towards him. Oh, I shouldn’t have gone towards him—but how could I know? Eventually, he pointed to his horse, which was panting, and said two words: ‘water, horse.’ The way he spoke, which was anything but polite, shocked me; nevertheless, I went to fetch water, assuming that he couldn’t speak Rumanian very well. I was mistaken, Ioan—that man expresses himself better than an Oltu riverman!⁹ While the horse was drinking, I observed its master. Jesus Christ!”

Mariora went on: “If I live to be a hundred, I won’t forget him! He was tall, so pale and thin that he could have been taken for a dead man. It seemed that I could hear his bones rattling—but what frightened me most of all was the yellow gleam in his round eyes. When the horse had finished, I turned to go back in; to my great astonishment, the man followed me. I told him that the house wasn’t an inn. He replied that it was all the same to him and continued following me. I didn’t dare say anything; there was a sepulchral tone in his voice that made me shudder. He sat down at the table as if he owned the place and ordered me abruptly to sit down in the chair opposite. I was terrified; I no longer knew what I was doing; I obeyed.

“He stared at me fixedly for about ten minutes. I had an urgent desire to run away, but I felt my strength diminishing—and I had noticed, besides, that he had set himself between me and the door. Finally, he got up. I got up too. His eyes never left me. He came towards me. I drew back, and kept going backwards—but the wall was there. I closed my eyes, for I had just felt a cold hand grip my arm—which had the same effect as if a snake had touched me.

“He picked me up, effortlessly, went back to his seat at the table, and sat me down on his knee, rudely. I was afraid of irritating him by futile resistance. ‘Look at me,’ he said.

“His will seemed to have become mine. I looked at him, just as he instructed—but, as his back was to the window, I could see men sowing barley in the distance, far away in the fields. It was to them that I looked for my salvation, but my screams wouldn’t have been able to reach them. I told myself that the only thing that I could do was to put myself in God’s hands and I prayed. The man didn’t budge. But I couldn’t pray for long; a strange numbness overwhelmed me by degrees. It seemed to me that I was falling asleep. I mustered the residue of my will-power to resist that drowsiness, which was bound to be my ruination, but I couldn’t do it, and my dazed head soon lapsed on to the man’s shoulder. Then...”

“Then?” Ioan broke in, in a strangled voice—and his fingers gripped Mariora’s wrist with so much force that his nails sank into her flesh.

“Then,” she said, “Relia Comanescu came in—I was saved!”¹⁰

If we compare this to the encounter between Edward Caswall, the morose master of Castra Regis, and the farmer girl Lilla, as narrated by her lover and later husband Adam Salton in Stoker’s *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911), the similarities seem too specific to be merely coincidental:

“I found Lilla and Mimi at home. Watford had been detained by business on the farm. Miss Watford received me as kindly as before; Mimi, too, seemed glad to see me. Mr. Caswall came so soon after I arrived, that he, or someone on his behalf, must have been watching for me. He was followed closely by the negro, who was puffing hard as if he had been running--so it was probably he who watched. Mr. Caswall was very cool and collected, but there was a more than usually iron look about his face that I did not like. However, we got on very well. He talked pleasantly on all sorts of questions. The nigger waited a while and then disappeared as on the other occasion. Mr. Caswall’s eyes were as usual fixed on Lilla. True, they seemed to be very deep and earnest, but there was no offence in them. Had it not been for the drawing down of the brows and the stern set of the jaws, I should not at first have noticed anything.

⁹ A person living near the River Olt; the boyars from this region played an important role in Romanian history – HdR.

¹⁰ Stableford, Brian. *Captain Vampire*. Encino, CAL: Black Coat Press, 2007, pp. 46-47. Cazacu, Matei. *Dracula*, suivi du « Capitaine vampire ». Paris: Editions Tallandier, 2004, pp. 528-529.

But the stare, when presently it began, increased in intensity. I could see that Lilla began to suffer from nervousness, as on the first occasion; but she carried herself bravely. However, the more nervous she grew, the harder Mr. Caswall stared. It was evident to me that he had come prepared for some sort of mesmeric or hypnotic battle. After a while he began to throw glances round him and then raised his hand, without letting either Lilla or Mimi see the action. It was evidently intended to give some sign to the negro, for he came, in his usual stealthy way, quietly in by the hall door, which was open. Then Mr. Caswall's efforts at staring became intensified, and poor Lilla's nervousness grew greater. Mimi, seeing that her cousin was distressed, came close to her, as if to comfort or strengthen her with the consciousness of her presence. This evidently made a difficulty for Mr. Caswall, for his efforts, without appearing to get feebler, seemed less effective. This continued for a little while, to the gain of both Lilla and Mimi.

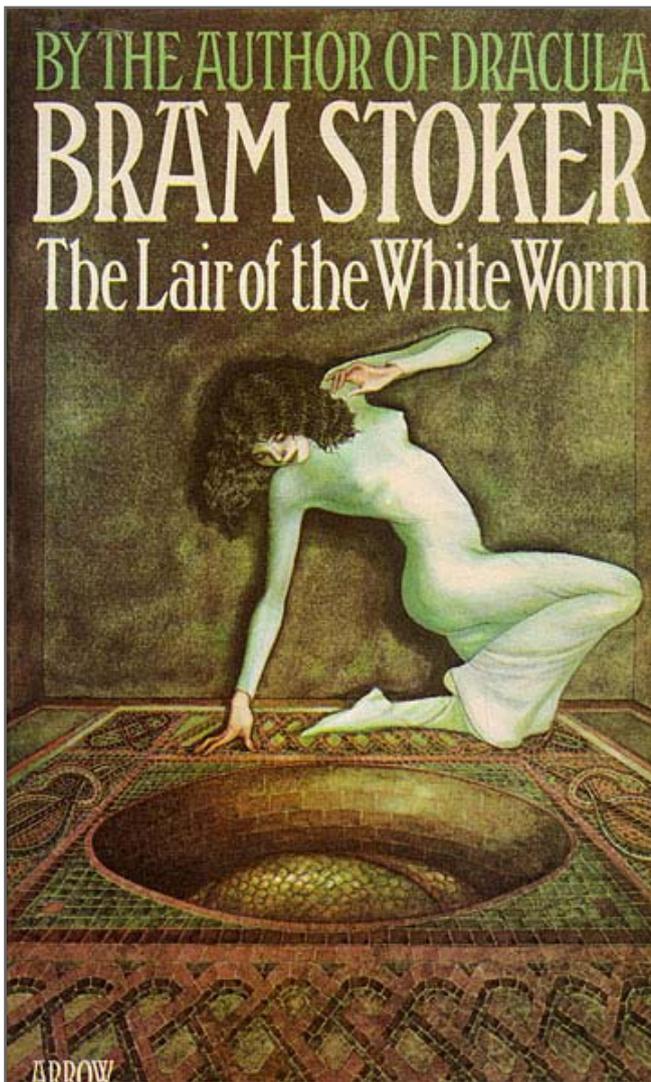
Then there was a diversion. Without word or apology the door opened, and Lady Arabella March entered the room. I had seen her coming through the great window. Without a word she crossed the room and stood beside Mr. Caswall. It really was very like a fight of a peculiar kind; and the longer it was sustained the more earnest--the fiercer--it grew. That combination of forces--the over-lord, the white woman, and the black man--would have cost some--probably all of them--their lives in the Southern States of America. To us it was simply horrible. But all that you can understand. This time, to go on in sporting phrase, it was understood by all to be a 'fight to a finish,' and the mixed group did not slacken a moment or relax their efforts. On Lilla the strain began to tell disastrously. She grew pale--a patchy pallor, which meant that her nerves were out of order. She trembled like an aspen, and though she struggled bravely, I noticed that her legs would hardly support her. A dozen times she seemed about to collapse in a faint, but each time, on catching sight of Mimi's eyes, she made a fresh struggle and pulled through.

"By now Mr. Caswall's face had lost its appearance of passivity. His eyes glowed with a fiery light. He was still the old Roman in inflexibility of purpose; but grafted on to the Roman was a new Berserker fury. His companions in the baleful work seemed to have taken on something of his feeling. Lady Arabella looked like a soulless, pitiless being, not human, unless it revived old legends of transformed human beings who had lost their humanity in some transformation or in the sweep of natural savagery. As for the negro--well, I can only say that it was solely due to the self-restraint which you impressed on me that I did not wipe him out as he stood--without warning, without fair play--without a single one of the graces of life and death. Lilla was silent in the helpless concentration of deadly fear; Mimi was all resolve and self-forgetfulness, so intent on the soul-struggle in which she was engaged that there was no possibility of any other thought. As for myself, the bonds of will which held me inactive seemed like bands of steel which numbed all my faculties, except sight and hearing. We seemed fixed in an IMPASSE. Something must happen, though the power of guessing was inactive. As in a dream, I saw Mimi's hand move restlessly, as if groping for something. Mechanically it touched that of Lilla, and in that instant she was transformed. It was as if youth and strength entered afresh into something already dead to sensibility and intention. As if by inspiration, she grasped the other's band with a force which blanched the knuckles. Her face suddenly flamed, as if some divine light shone through it. Her form expanded till it stood out majestically. Lifting her right hand, she stepped forward towards Caswall, and with a bold sweep of her arm seemed to drive some strange force towards him. Again and again was the gesture repeated, the man falling back from her at each movement. Towards the door he retreated, she following. There was a sound as of the cooing sob of doves, which seemed to multiply and intensify with each second. The sound from the unseen source rose and rose as he retreated, till finally it swelled out in a triumphant peal, as she with a fierce sweep of her arm, seemed to hurl something at her foe, and he, moving his hands blindly before his face, appeared to be swept through the doorway and out into the open sunlight.

"All at once my own faculties were fully restored; I could see and hear everything, and be fully conscious of what was going on. Even the figures of the baleful group were there, though dimly seen as through a veil--a shadowy veil. I saw Lilla sink down in a swoon, and Mimi throw up her arms in a gesture of triumph. As I saw her through the great window, the sunshine flooded the landscape, which, however, was momentarily becoming eclipsed by an onrush of a myriad birds."

It is typical for Stoker's tendency to elaborate on dramatic moments that he inflates a single threat to create an Unholy Trinity. Moreover, he repeats this scene twice, with different outcomes; on the third occasion, Lilla – not supported by her half-sister Mimi this time – loses consciousness and dies.

I know of no other novel picturing such an exceptional situation: an aristocratic "overlord" unexpectedly intruding into a common household, with the clear intention to stare down the simple girl living there, humiliating her by her agonising helplessness. Maybe this is due to gaps in my reading, but on first sight, this specific scene seems to be the



link between Nizet’s and Stoker’s work that Cazacu and Stableford – maybe not familiar with *The Lair of the White Worm* – must have overseen. And if we look at Salton’s state of numbness, so similar to Harker’s stupor when Count Dracula forces Mina to drink his blood, and assume that Caswall’s behaviour (a Roman with Berserker fury) echoes that of the Transylvanian vampire, we cannot exclude the possibility that in Stoker’s mind, the characters of Colonel Liatoukine, Count Dracula and Caswall were all connected.

Coincidence or not: Such parallels are no reason to appreciate *Dracula* less than we did hitherto. Neither are they an excuse to judge Nizet’s novel only under the aspect of its possible influence on Stoker. As Stableford correctly points out, *Le Capitaine Vampire* is a literary work in its own right – and a good one, too. I would even go further and reverse the question: If Stoker actually read Nizet’s book – or other French novels of that time, such as Zola’s *Nana* (serialised in 1879; 55,000 book copies sold out in one day) – why did he not pick up more from their style of writing?

In his blog *Carrefour est-ouest*, Gérard Delaloye states that Nizet’s novel, “crudely conceived and hastily written,” was “forgotten as rapidly as it had been created”¹¹ and that in order to reach a “perfected form,” the vampire myth had to return to Ireland where Bram Stoker, an “established writer, journalist and theatre man” found the right combination of “vampirism, Romanian folklore and London salons.”¹²

Apart from the fact that none of the scenes in *Dracula* takes place in a “London salon,” I must disagree with Delaloye.¹³ Although Nizet wrote her – much shorter – novel much faster than Stoker wrote his *Dracula*, I find her characters, although sometimes exaggerated, psychologically more grounded than Stoker’s all-too-noble heroes. While the latter are always overflowing with the best of unselfish intentions, Nizet demonstrates a more subtle and sober look of human nature. The way Mariora always knows how to appeal to Ioan’s feelings and Ioan’s wisdom that once he faces his fiancée again, he will not be able to reject her, show – in a nutshell – more insight and differentiation than Jonathan’s and Mina’s indissoluble loyalty.

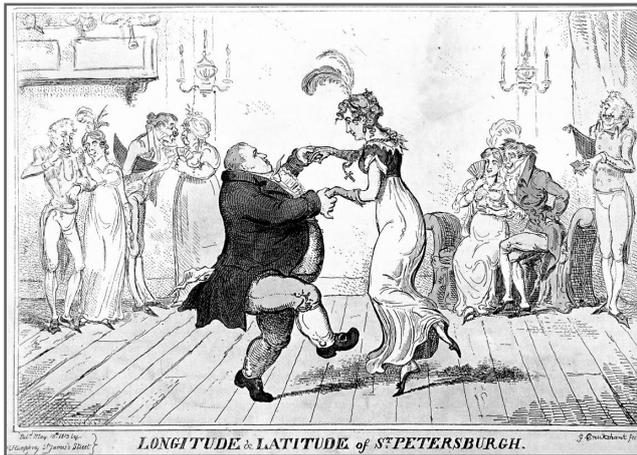


London salon scenes only appear in later stage and movie versions.

11 « Mal torché, écrit à la va-vite, le court roman de Marie Nizet est oublié aussi rapidement qu’il a été conçu. »

12 « Pour trouver une forme achevée, il [= the vampire myth – HdR] retournera en Irlande où Bram Stoker, un auteur déjà confirmé, journaliste et homme de théâtre, réunit les divers ingrédients – vampirisme, folklore roumain, salons londoniens – pour créer en 1897 l’impérissable Dracula, digne frère en horreur du docteur Frankenstein. » All quotes from <https://gerarddelaloye.wordpress.com/2012/01/12/ou-des-vampires-vont-et-viennent-entre-lirlande-et-les-carpates-transylvanie-4/>, posted 12 January 2012, accessed on 18 October 2015.

13 Except for Lucy, who probably lives in the north of London, none of the “good” characters lives in the capital, and the action taking place at Lucy’s home Hillingham focuses on her bedroom, not the parlour. Only in the later stage and movie versions, *Dracula* is turned into a drawing-room drama. Still photo from Tod Browning’s *Dracula*, Universal Pictures, 1931.



Ironical portrait of a society ball by George Cruikshank, 13 May 1813. It shows Countess Lieven dancing with her husband, the Russian Ambassador from St. Petersburg. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Nizet's portrait of the Comanescu family, always zealous to marry off their daughters Epistimia ("not in the least stupid, and [knowing] how to conduct an intrigue") and Agapia ("putting on her best squint") to "eight thousand hectares of agricultural land" or to "two million rubles," is a little jewel of subversive humour. When it comes to the atrocities of modern warfare, Nizet's cynicism is appropriate¹⁴ and although her support for the Romanian cause may be called one-sided or even naive, her passion and compassion come across as real and her characters are not driven by sentimentality. Where Stoker's heavy-handed explications are sometimes tiring the reader, Nizet's prose is rhythmical, concise and to the point. In short: Marie Nizet, born twelve years after Stoker but publishing her book eighteen years before *Dracula*, in my opinion was Bram Stoker's superior as a narrator.

Such critique of Stoker's style as a storyteller is not new; Dr. Michael Delahoyde (nearly a namesake of Delaloye) of Washington State University comments:

The novel [*Dracula*] is usually considered flawed, or even "a spoiled masterpiece." Explanations are feeble or lacking for why Dracula wants to come to England, why he's so wealthy, how he is existing successfully, etc. But then, literary artistry is not everything; and psychologically perhaps the novel is a great success, functioning more like a fairy-tale or a fever dream. Obviously it's a story we want to hear badly enough to put up with the stretches of dullness and the undelineated cardboard characters whose voices mostly sound identical.¹⁵

Although *Le Capitaine Vampire* has fairy-tale and dreamlike qualities as well,¹⁶ it was forgotten for more than a century, while *Dracula*, via stage adaptations and movie versions, gradually made its way to a global mass audience. The various steps on this route have been described in detail by David Skal in his *Hollywood Gothic* (2004). But the question why the fate of the first novel was so different from that of the other has not been satisfactorily answered yet.

München, 14-21 October 2015
Hans C. de Roos

14 Stableford explains that *Le Capitaine Vampire* was one of the first books that openly and critically dealt with the horrors of war. Colonel Liatoukine does not appear as the "typical" supernatural bloodsucker, but rather as a representation of Russia's military ambitions and of imperialist expansion in general: In the 19th century, Great Britain, Holland, France, Spain, Portugal, Austria-Hungary and Russia all claimed to have a right to territories that traditionally never had been populated by the British, the Dutch, the French, etc. Due to their belated unification as national states, Germany and Italy appeared only later on the imperialist scene, but did their best to build up national marine forces and conquer colonies in Africa before this continent was completely split up between the other European powers. For an analysis, see Hobsbawm, Eric J. *The Age of Empire: 1875–1914*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987. I have tried to find illustrations that illuminate the political and military backgrounds of Nizet's novel.

Most wars are accompanied by rape and other forms of sexual abuse; historians estimate that at the end of WW II, soldiers of the Red Army raped between 400,000 and 2 million German women, while in Hitler's army, such crimes were not prosecuted at all after the *Kriegsgerichtsbarkeitserlass* of 13 May 1941. Stableford reckons that Mariora's account of her nightly confrontation with Liatoukine in the Baniassa Woods was not up to the facts. Probably, she shared the experience of countless other women raped during war, who had no opportunity to report the truth without social repercussions.

15 Quoted from <https://public.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/dracula.html>; accessed 18 October 2015.

16 Stableford mentions the references to *Little Red Riding Hood* (Mariora meeting the Big Bad Wolf in the forest) and *Cinderella* (Mrs. Rosanda Comanescu trying to set her two false daughters up with the richest parties available); in his afterword, he also suggests that Ioan's confrontations with Liatoukine have a hallucinatory character – how could Liatoukine have known about the bond between Mariora and Ioan, for example, when the latter in the Russian camp accused him of "violating women"?

APPENDIX I: A list of pre-1897 Vampire Literature, retrieved from

<http://glittercats.tumblr.com/post/125835154131/pre-dracula-vampire-literature-masterpost-part-ii>

1850-1859

Le Vampire (The Vampire) by Alexandre Dumas(1851) [[Cadytech.com](#)]

La Baronne Trépassée (The Dead Baroness aka The Vampire and the Devil's Son) by Pierre Alexis Ponson du Terrail. (1852) [[Ebooksgratuits.com](#) - French PDF] [[Black Coat Press](#) - English Translation]

“Le Vampire” (“The Vampire”) by Charles-Pierre Baudelaire (1857) [[Fleursdemal.org](#) - Multiple Translations] [[Poemhunter.com](#)]

“Quetait-ce?” (“What Was It?”) by Fitz-James O’Brien (1859) [[University of Adelaide](#)] [[Bartelby.com](#)]

1860-1869

Le Chevalier Tenebre (The Shadow Knight aka Knightshade) by Paul Henri Corentin Féval (1860) [[Black Coat Press](#) - English Translation (\$)]

“The Mysterious Stranger” by Anonymous (1860) [[The Literary Gothic](#)]

“The Cold Embrace” by Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1860) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[Gaslight](#)]

“Les Métamorphoses du vampire” (“Metamorphosis of a Vampire”) by Charles P. Baudelaire (1860) [[Fleursdemal.org](#) - Multiple Translations]

Le Vampire Du Val-de-Grace (The Vampire of the Val-de-Grace) by Leon Gozlan (1861) [[GoogleBooks](#) - French] [[Archive.org](#) - French] [[Black Coat Press](#) - English Translation (\$)]

Spirite: A Fantasy by Théophile Gautier (1861) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[Wikisource](#) - French] (not explicitly about vampires, although it does concern the re-arisen dead)

La Vampire (The Vampire aka The Vampire Countess) by Paul Henri Corentin Féval (1865) [[Project Gutenberg](#) - French] [[Black Coat Press](#) - English Translation (\$)]

La Ville-Vampire (Vampire City) by Paul Henri Corentin Féval (1867) [[Archive.org](#) - French] [[Black Coat Press](#) - English Translation (\$)] (apparently features Gothic author Ann Radcliff as a vampire hunter)

“The Last Lords of Gardonal” by William Gilbert (1867) [GoogleBooks: [Part 1](#) | [Part 2](#) | [Part 3](#)] [[Gaslight](#)]

1870-1879

“The Vampire Cat of Nabéshima” by Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford in *Tales of Old Japan* (1871) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[Project Gutenberg](#)]
Carmilla by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, in his *In a Glass Darkly* (1872) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[Archive.org](#)] [[Project Gutenberg](#)] [[Lesvampires.org](#)] [[SFE.net](#)]

“Ombra” by Mrs. Richard S. Greenough, in *Arabesques* (1872) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[Archive.org](#)]

Le Capitaine Vampire (Captain Vampire) by Marie Nizet (1879) [[Black Coat Press](#) - English Translation (\$)]

1880-1889

“The Fate of Madame Cabanel” by Eliza Lynn Linton (1880) [[Scribd](#)] [[Vampiresrealm.files.wordpress](#)]

“Posle Devedeset Godina” (“After Ninety Years”) by Milovan Glišić (1880) [[Kodkicosa.com](#) - Serbian]

“The Man-Eating Tree” by Phil Robinson, in his *From Under the Punkah* (1881) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[Archive.org](#)]

“Klara Milich” by Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev (1882) [[University of Adelaide](#)]

“The Vampyre” by Owen Meredith (1882) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[Archive.org](#)]

“Life’s Secret” by Rev. Lal Behari Day, from *Folk Tales of Bengal* (1883) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[Archive.org](#)] [[Project Gutenberg](#)] [[Vampiresrealm.files.wordpress](#) - PDF]

Manor by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1884) [[Project Gutenberg](#) - German] [[Amazon.com](#) - English Translation (\$)]

“Strigoiul” (“The Vampyre”) by Vasile Alecsandri [[Lesvampires.org](#)] [[Thevampiresrealm.wordpress.com](#) - Romanian]

The Horla by Guy de Maupassant (1887) [[University of Virginia](#)] [[Project Gutenberg](#) - French]

“Ken’s Mystery” (aka The Grave of Ethelind Fionguala) by Julian Hawthorne (1887) [[East of the Web](#)]

“A Mystery of the Campagna” by Anne Crawford (under pseudonym Von Degen) (1887) [[Vampiresrealm.files.wordpress.com](#) - PDF]

1890-1897

“The Old Portrait” by Hume Nisbet (1890) [[Multoghost.files.wordpress.com](#)]

“The Vampire Maid” by Hume Nisbet (1890) [[Project Gutenberg](#)] [[Lesvampires.org](#)]

“Let Loose” by Mary Cholmondeley (1890) [[Project Gutenberg](#)] [[The Literary Gothic](#)] [[Lesvampires.org](#)]

Le château des Carpathes (The Castle of the Carpathians) by Jules Verne (1892) [[Archive.org](#)] [[Project Gutenberg](#) - French]

“The Death of Halpin Frayser” by Ambrose Bierce (1893) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[East of the Web](#)]

The Parasite by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1894) [[Project Gutenberg](#)] [[University of Virginia](#)] (about psychic vampirism,)

“The True Story of a Vampire” (aka “The Sad Story of a Vampire”) by Stanislaus Eric aka Count Eric Stenbock (1894) [[Lesvampires.org](#)]

“A Kiss of Judas” by X.L. (Julian Osgood Field), in his *Aut Diabolus Aut Nihil, and Other Tales* (1894) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[Archive.org](#)]

Lilith by George MacDonald (1895) [[Project Gutenberg](#)] [[Ccel.org](#)]

“Good Lady Ducayne” by Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1896) [[GoogleBooks](#)] [[University of Minnesota Duluth](#)] (not explicitly about vampires, although it does concern the harvesting of a victim’s blood)
“The Vampire of Croglin Grange” by Augustus Hare (1896) [[Project Gutenberg](#)] [[Lesvampires.org](#)] [[National Wildlife Foundation](#) - PDF]
“Phorfor” by Matthew Phipps Shiel (1896) [[GoogleBooks](#)]

APPENDIX II: Some pre-1897 novels and stage plays dealing with mesmerism, the abuse of hypnosis or crimes committed by persons with a double consciousness:

1870: Charles Dickens, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (unfinished)
1880: William Mintorn, *Le somnambule*
1885: Charles Richet (Charles Epheyre), *Possession*
1886: Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*
1887: Charles Richet (Charles Epheyre), *Sœur Marthe*
1888: Kate Marion Cordeux (Daniel Dormer), *The Mesmerist’s Secret*
1893: Paul Lindau, *Der Andere*, stage play
1893: Henri de Gorsse & Louis Forest, *Le procureur Hallers*, stage play, based on the play by Lindau
1889: Violet Fane, *The Story of Helen Davenant*
1894: George du Maurier, *Trilby*

BOOK NEWS: VAMPYRES AMONG US BY MARK BENECKE & INES FISCHER

Shortly after delivering a fascinating presentation on “real vampires” or “vampyres” at the BBEC Conference, Mark Benecke and Ines Fischer sent us their new book *Vampyres among us – Volume III* for review, with a study conducted by Ines Fischer. It is clad in a glamorous cover in stylish black-and-red design and published by Edition Roter Drache (www.rotendrache.org); it also bears the logo of the Transylvanian Society of Dracula – German Chapter. The edition is limited to 400 copies. A few issues are still available through this [Amazon link](#).

The introduction explains that vampires do not only exist in the novels by Bram Stoker and his colleagues, but also in real life, as normal – or not-so-normal – people who identify themselves with the vampire role. This can vary from innocent schoolgirls who like to use some extra kajal around the eyes or roleplayers who only suck blood in their fantasies, to persons who attempt to draw energy from their victims or actually drink blood. This study only addressed persons who had consumed blood (or felt a lust for it) and shows that human blood is clearly preferred over animal blood. This human blood can come from preserves or from friends who willingly donate it – but in the German-speaking online community organised by Ines Fischer, 12% of the interviewed members have made the step to prick a partner with a needle or making a small cut with a razor blade unasked. In the large majority of cases, this was part of an erotic role play and none of the partners involved did experience this as an assault. The borders with other subcultures are floating and there



also may be an overlap with certain psychological conditions such as Asperger Syndrome or depression, or medical conditions such as photophobia. But as the authors convincingly state: “It probably does not take us any millimetre further if we, like some vampyres, deny these overlaps or, like some psychologists, use them merely as a sorting aid. An identity is an identity, whether as a biologist, male, female, cowboy enthusiast, men’s talor, pipe fitter, family man or rose breeder.”

Mark and Ines therefore plead to discuss the vampire phenomenon “in an open, free, objective and verifiable manner” and not to be guided by prejudice – such as believing that only young people would pick this path or that they must be imitating horror movies. As already demonstrated in Timișoara, there are people who discover their vampire identity only in their late twenties or even later, while there are others who indulge in blooddrinking fantasies even before sexual maturity, and still others who keep up their identity for a long time after having discovered it as teens or twens. The large majority of interviewed members, however, for the first time felt a lust for blood between the age of 13 and 17, the awaking as a vampire thus overlapping with a period of emerging sexual desires. Another interesting fact is that the interviewed members of this community have a higher-than-average education.

The book reproduces the questionnaires filled in by 100 participants and presents an evaluation of these data, looking at region, age, gender, sexual orientation, preferred rituals, choice of donor, safety measures, frequency and volume of blood consumptions, emotions before and after consuming blood, participation in other subcultures, sleeping patterns, sensitivity to light and noise, social mentality, etc. Although the sample of 100 is not large, the authors made sure that the questionnaires were only accessible to members in relevant online groups, that only completely filled out questionnaires were taken into account and that “posers” were sorted out. Both the questions and the answers thus come from persons with a truly sanguineous interest in the issue. Recommended for all with a lust for blood – or knowledge.

ONE SUNNY DAY IN TRANSYLVANIA

The BBEC Conference on Beliefs and Behaviours in Education and Culture held by the West University of Timișoara, Romania was concluded with a one-day trip to the land of Transylvania. This treat was appreciated especially by the group of enthusiasts of Gothic and Vampire Studies gathered at the workshop “Where’s the Place of Dracula: (De)Constructing Stereotypes in the Study of the Mythical Space in Literature and Space.” Every respectable specialist of Gothic Studies (whether openly or secretly) dreams about experiencing a glimpse of the supernatural or, even better, meeting a vampire, preferably Count Dracula in his own person (common knowledge). I am not an exception, so I was looking forward to this trip with excitement, impatience and appetite whet by a vast number of excellent articles, speeches and ideas of my fellow scholars presented during two afternoons at our vampire panel.

On day three we set off for the Hunedora Castle (also referred to as Corvin Castle) situated in the heart of Transylvania. Regardless of the thorough knowledge of Bram Stoker’s novel and long years spent on studying origins, history and rational academic views behind the literary masterpiece, in the mind of a Film Studies scholar, the image of Dracula will forever be associated with Bela Lugosi rather than with the historical Vlad Țepeș, the infamous “blood thirsty” Vlad the Impaler. Imagine my joy when the first traces of Count Dracula encountered during our post-conference escapade turned out to be cinema related! Right outside Timișoara, still in Timiș County, there is a town of Lugoj (Hungarian Lugos), the place of birth and hometown of the iconic Bela Lugosi. Even though we did not stop to visit, a mere signpost grew to a rank of a sign prophesying wonders awaiting us further away.



The Bela Lugosi Cinema in the pedestrian zone of Lugoj.

After some hours we reached our destination. Hunedora Castle is one Europe’s largest castles, built by order of John Hunyadi, General and later Governor of Hungary. Currently it is also known and popular as a haunted castle, which annually attracts crowds of tourists from all over the world as well as numerous researchers, scholars and writers. One of the alleged ghosts haunting the castle is none other than Vlad Dracula - the Impaler. The signs and remainders of the human Vlad’s era can be found, among others, in the torture chamber hidden in the castle’s dungeons, open for tourists as part of the museum. Although we know almost for certain that neither Hunedora Castle nor any other in this area served as a model for Bram Stoker’s fictional Dracula Castle (there is a sketch in Emily Gerard’s book but Stoker probably never read it), a one day visit to Hunedora is enough to see that it could easily become an inspiration for any Gothic novel and film. Built in Renaissance & Gothic style, with its tall towers and menacing thick walls, the castle makes an impression of an impenetrable fortress cradling thousands of mysterious stories and memories of people who perished within its walls. Did we encounter ghosts and vampires? – Probably a wrong time of the day. The blazing June sunshine did not grant success of this quest either. Nevertheless, the memory of one perfect day in Transylvania remains. Next stop Whitby!

P.S. A big thank you to the conference organisers and all the fellow vampire enthusiasts for sharing your passion and making it a fabulous and unforgettable experience. Here’s to the next one!

Magdalena Grabias, Lublin, Poland

ENJOY HALLOWEEN!

(BUT... DON'T KEEP YOUR PUMPKINS OVER CHRISTMAS!)

“The belief in vampires of plant origin occurs among Gypsies who belong to the Moslem faith in Kosovo-Metohija. According to them there are only two plants which are regarded as likely to turn into vampires: pumpkins of every kind and water-melons. And the change takes place when they are “fighting one another.” In Podrima and Prizrenski Podgor they consider this transformation occurs if these ground fruits have been kept for more than ten days: then the gathered pumpkins stir all by themselves and make a sound like “brrrl, brrrl, brrrl!” and begin to shake themselves. It is also believed that sometimes a trace of blood can be seen on the pumpkin, and the Gypsies then say it has become a vampire. These pumpkins and melons go round the houses, stables, and rooms at night, all by themselves, and do harm to people. But it is thought that they cannot do great damage to folk, so people are not very afraid of this kind of vampire.

“Among the Moslem Gypsies in the village of Pirani (also in Podrima) it is believed that if pumpkins are kept after Christmas they turn into vampires, while the Lešani Gypsies think that this phenomenon occurs if a pumpkin used as a syphon, when ripe and dry, stays unopened for three years.

“Vampires of ground fruit origin are believed to have the same shape and appearance as the original plant.

Quoted from Tatomir Vukanović's account of his journeys in Serbia from 1933 to 1948. Published in four parts in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* from 1957 to 1960.

