

0. THE LEGEND OF DRACULA - Story Preface

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**8. THE LEGEND OF DRACULA**



In this image we see a rendering of Vlad III (also known as "Vlad Tepes" and "Vlad Dracula"). It is based on a painting known as the "Ambras Castle portrait of Vlad III," c. 1560.

Romanian oral tradition, German pamphlets and Russian manuscripts all reflect the cruelty of Vlad Dracula. A few stories, from *In Search of Dracula*, make the point.

- Romanian Story of the Condemned Boyar.

*One day a boyar urged Dracula to leave the scene of mass impalements. The smell of rotting flesh was too much for the Prince of Wallachia, the boyar insisted. Dracula asked the man, "Do you mean to say it stinks?" Assured that was exactly his point, Vlad Tepes rewarded the boyar for his concern. "Servants, bring me a stake three times as long as those that you see yonder. Make it up for me immediately in order that you impale the boyar, so that he may no longer be able to smell the stench from below." Soon, the condemned man was above the smell of all but his own dying flesh.*

- Translation from a German pamphlet.

*In the year 1460, on the morning of St. Bartholomew's Day, Dracula came out of the forest with his servants and had all the Wallachians of both sexes tracked down...And he had the village completely burned up with their goods and it is said that there were more than 30,000 men killed.*

- Translation from a Russian manuscript.

*There lived in the Wallachian lands a Christian prince of the Greek faith who was called Dracula in the Wallachian language, which means devil in our language, for he was as cruelly clever as was his name and so was his life.*

However ...

The real story about Dracula, the ruler, appears to be quite different from the legends.

What if he had to be a tyrant to correct misguided policies in his country? What if he used impaling as a method of public punishment to deter others from wrong-doing? What if his actions, in fighting the Turks, were actually good, not bad, for his own country?

To answer those questions, we'd have to scrape away centuries of legends to examine Dracula's real motives. Is it possible to do that? How would we go about it?

A Romanian-language film - available online (via YouTube) with closed captions (CC) in English which can be activated as soon as the video begins to play - attempts to shed light on the historical Dracula. The story of the real man both converges *and* diverges from all the folklore.

Dracula, the man and the legend, continues to fascinate. Whether a character in a novel (Bram Stoker's "Count Dracula"), a monster in a movie (*Nosferatu's* "Count Orlok"), or a tyrant in history books ("Vlad the Impaler"), his place in the world's gallery of rogues will be secure for centuries to come.

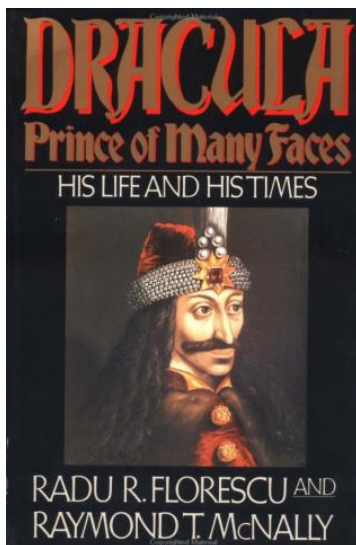
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## Media Stream

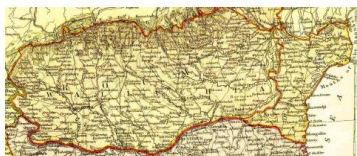


### Dracula: Prince of Many Faces - by Radu R. Florescu

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### Wallachia - Map

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### THE LEGEND OF DRACULA

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