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In Vampires, Burial and Death Paul Barber sets out to find the truth behind vampire folklore. He demonstrates that most of the stories about vampires in folklore ultimately derive from a lack of understanding of the processes that bodies undergo after death.

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An armchair Dr. Van Helsing tracks down the real origins of the vampire legend. According to Barber--who skips right over the Vlad the Impaler hypothesis--stories of vampires rising from the dead are ""an elaborate folk hypothesis"" evolved to explain mysterious phenomena associated with death, especially the grisly facts of bodily decomposition.

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Ukrainian folklore also described vampires as having red faces and tiny tails. During cholera epidemics in the 19th century, there were cases of people being burned alive by their neighbours on charges of being vampires. In South Slavic folklore, a vampire was believed to pass through several distinct stages in its development. The first 40 ...

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