



## The Tale of Dracula the Voivode | сказаніе ш дракоулъ воеводѣ

### Text Information

Author | Efrosin

Language | Russian variant of Old Church Slavonic

Period | 15th Century

Genre | Chronicle

Source | Russian National Library, Kirillo-Belozerskii Monastery, Efrosin Manuscripts, No. 11/1088, fond 351, manuscript pages 204-217

Collection | Making History: Chronicles, Legends and Anecdotes

URL | [http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/efrosin\\_tale\\_dracula/](http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/efrosin_tale_dracula/)

Transcription, translation and introduction by Kimberly St. Julian-Varnon.

### Introduction to the Text

The story of Dracula has become a signature piece of the Western literary canon thanks to Bram Stoker's rendition of the centuries-old Eastern European tale. However, the original narrative, whose roots are believed to be from the Southern Slavic-speaking regions of Eastern Europe, is not a tale of love and everlasting life. It is an account of the life of Dracula's prototype, the 15th-century Wallachian prince Vlad Tepes, whose merciless behavior as a voivode (warlord) led to the moniker Vlad the Impaler. The epithet Dracula is used in the text rather than the name Vlad. The origins of the moniker Dracula are still debated. The two leading explanations are that it is either a title denoting his father Vlad Dracul's membership in the Order of the Dragon, or it is a derivation of the Romanian term *drac* with the meaning "son of the Devil."

The earliest Old Russian version of Vlad the Impaler's life dates to 1486, when an Orthodox Monk, Efrosin, copied the story into one of his notebooks. There is no consensus on the origin of the story, but it is accepted that Efrosin's is the earliest surviving copy. Specialists hypothesize that he could have received the source text from the infamous 15th-century Muscovite diplomat and heretic Fedor Kuritsyn. Kuritsyn could have taken the story from the court of the Hungarian king, Matthias Corvinus. Others argue that Kuritsyn's brother, Ivan Volk Kuritsyn, translated the story and passed it on to Efrosin. We know for sure that Efrosin's rendition is the first Russian/East Slavic narrative of Vlad the Impaler's devious deeds.

Efrosin's manuscript demonstrates the diverse reading and writing culture of the Russian Orthodox monks at the Kirillov-Beloozersky (St. Cyril-Beloozero) monastery in northern Russia. Efrosin became a focus of Soviet and Russian medievalists when his collection of religious and secular texts was transferred from the St. Petersburg Theological Academy and placed in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg in 1918 (then the Russian Public Library). The manuscript in which "Dracula" is found is one of only six miscellanies that have survived to the present day from Efrosin's library. The manuscript represents the secular and private writings of the monk whom scholars describe as the monastery's "academic bookman." Efrosin's considerable personal collection of writings includes multiple secular tales. Furthermore, Robert Romanchuk, a specialist in philology, has argued that Efrosin's secular manuscripts are unique and represent an "individual with an interest in 'forbidden knowledge,'" rather than an overarching intellectual trend among the Orthodox monks in the monastery. Another example of Efrosin's interest in forbidden knowledge is "The Tale of Solomon and Kitovras," which was later added to the same notebook.

### Introduction to the Source

The "Tale of Dracula" was produced in 1490 in the Kirillov-Beloozersky monastery near Beloozero (Belozersk), Russia. The monk Efrosin adapted the text from an unknown source. At the end of the text, he notes that he wrote an earlier version of the story in 1486 and rewrote it in 1490 (the 1486 version has not survived). The "Tale" is part of a 500-folio manuscript codex in which Efrosin copied secular tales and diverse texts of encyclopedic content. Scholars consider the "Tale" one of the first historical novels in Russian literature. Some believe that this text, along with Efrosin's other writings, shows a Renaissance-like movement in Russian Orthodox religious culture in the late 15th century. The book in which the "Tale" is included is one of only seven surviving manuscripts by Efrosin. They are held in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg. For the text's transcription and translation, I have used digital copies of the original manuscript #11/1088, fond 351, folio pages 204-217 of the Efrosin Collection at the Russian National Library.



Efrosin. "The Tale of Dracula the Voivode | сказаніе ш дракоулъ воеводѣ". Trans. Kimberly St. Julian-Varnon. *Global Medieval Sourcebook*. 2025. sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/efrosin\_tale\_dracula/.

## About this Edition

The transcription retains the original elements of the manuscript. The goal of the transcription is to render the manuscript as closely as possible, including the superscript letters, abbreviations, spelling errors, and punctuation. Efrosin relied on commas, periods, and diacritic marks on certain letters to mark the beginning of a new word. Personal and geographic names have been translated in the context of 15th-century history. I referenced Matei Cazacu's monograph *Dracula* to verify these names.

I'd like to thank Dr. Julia Verkholtsev of the University of Pennsylvania for her assistance in this project.

## Further Reading

Cazacu, Matei. ed. Stephen w. Reinert. trans. from the French, etc. by Nicole Mordarski, Stephen W. Reinert, Alice Brinton, and Catherine Healey. *Dracula*. Boston: Brill, 2017.

- A monograph that examines the life of Vlad Tepes, exploring his influence on Stoker's *Dracula* and contemporary Eastern European vampire lore.

Nandris, Grigore. "The Historical Dracula: The Theme of His Legend in the Western and in the Eastern Literatures of Europe." *Comparative Literature Studies* 3, no. 4 (1966): 367-396.

- This dated yet fascinating article discusses the history of the *Dracula* narrative, from Bram Stoker's impact on Western literature to the folkloric and historical origins of the vampire tale. Nandris also compares the Western and Eastern European renditions of the story.

National Library of Russia. "Fifteenth-Century Euphrosynus Manuscripts." [http://expositions.nlr.ru/EfrosinManuscripts/eng/efr\\_sborn.php](http://expositions.nlr.ru/EfrosinManuscripts/eng/efr_sborn.php).

- English-language version of the National Library of Russia's website on the Efrosin Collection. This page includes descriptions of the material culture of the collection including how the manuscripts were bound and used in the monastery.

Romanchuk, Robert. *Byzantine Hermeneutics and Pedagogy in the Russian North: Monks and Masters at the Kirillo-Belozerskii Monastery, 1397-1501*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

- Romanchuk's discusses the origins of the *Dracula* story and how Efrosin may have obtained the now lost original Old Russian tale (pages 8-25, specifically).

Romanchuk, Robert. "'Intellectual Silence' and Intellectual Endeavor in Medieval Slavia Orthodoxa." *Russian History* 46 (2019): 193-212.

- This article uses the manuscripts produced by Orthodox monks, including Efrosin of the Kirillov monastery, to show how the academic needs of the monastic institutions shaped their book production.



## The Tale of Dracula the Voivode | сказаніе ш дракоулъ воеводѣ

бы в мунтъянской земли греческымъ вѣры христианинъ воевода именемъ дракоула влашескій іазыко, а наши дїаволъ. толико зломдѣръ тако по имени его, (// 204v) тако и житїе его. Прїидоша к немоу нѣкогда ѿ таурьска поклисарє. и егда внидоша к немоу и поклонишѧ по своему швычаю, а капъ свой з главъ не снаша. иже вопроси й, что рѣ тако оучинисте, ко гдю великоу прїидосте, и таковоу срамотоу ми оучинисте. ини ѿвѣщаша, таокъ, швычай нашъ гдю и земля наша имѣ. иже гдя имъ, и азъ хощу ваше закона потвердиши, да крѣпко стоните. и повелѣ имъ гвоздѣемъ малы желѣзны ко главѣ прибили капы. и ѿпусти ихъ, рекъ имъ, шёше скажите гдю вашемъ, ини навыкъ ѿ вѣ, тоу, срамотоу терпѣти. мы не навыкохъ. да не посылае своє швычамъ (// 205r) ко ини гдремъ, кои не хотѧтъ его имѣти, но оу сеbe его да держї.

Цръ же велми разсердити сеbe ш тѣ и поиде воинствѣ на не и прїиде на не со многими силами. иже, собравъ елико имѣаше оу сеbe воиска и оудари на таурковъ ноцию, и мнѣство изби й, и невозмѣ пропивоу великоу воиска малыми людми, и вѣзратися. и кои с нимъ з бою тѣ прїидоша. и нача ихъ сѣя смотрити, кои раненъ спре, томоу чѣвѣлю поваше, и випазѣ его оучинаше, коихъ же сза, тѣ на колъ повелѣ всажати проходѣ. гдя ты еси не мѹю но жена. а тога коли поиде на тауркы. тако гдя всему воискуо своему. кто хоще смирѣть помышлости. тои не хо (// 205v) со мню штspanи зде. цръ, слышавъ то, поиде прочь с великою срамотою, безчислено изгоуби воиска, не сми на не поити.

Цръ же поклисаря послало к немоу да емоу дѣдань. дракоула же велми почти поклисаря ино. и показа емоу все свое имѣнїе, и рѣ емоу, азъ не токмо хощу дань давати црю, но є вѣстьмъ своимъ воинствѣ и со всему казною хощу к немоу ити на слѹбоу. да како ми повелити, тако емоу служкоу. и ты, возвѣсти црю какъ поидоу к немоу, да не велити црю по своему земли никоего зла оучинити мнѣ, и мнимъ людѣ. а газъ скро хощу по тебѣ ко црю ити. и дань принесоу и самъ к немъ (// 206r) прїидоу. цръ же оуслыша то ѿ послы своего что дракоула хоще прїити к немоу на службоу. и послало є почти и ѿдари много. и велми рѣ бы вѣ бо тога ратоулася со вос точными.

There was in the Muntenian<sup>1</sup> land, a Christian voivode<sup>2</sup> of the Greek faith named Dracula in the Wallachian tongue, but in ours, the Devil<sup>3</sup>. His life was so wicked, like his name. Once, ambassadors from the Turkish tsar came to him. And when they came in they lowered their heads according to their custom, but they did not take off their caps from their heads. And he asked them, "Why did you do that – you came to a great lord and you subjected me to such humiliation?" And they responded, "Such, Master, is the custom of our land." He said to them, "And I want to confirm your custom so that you may observe it firmly." And he commanded that their caps be nailed to their heads with small metal spikes. And he released them and said, "Go and explain to your master: if he is used to enduring humiliation from you, we are not used to it. And let him not send his custom to other rulers, who do not want to have it, but let him keep it to himself."

And the tsar was very angry about this and set off against Dracula with his army, and came against him with considerable forces. He [Dracula], having gathered as much of his own army as he had, attacked the Turks at night and killed a great number of them. But not being able withstand a great army with so few people, Dracula turned back. And he began to examine those who came with him from the battle; to those wounded in the front, he gave great honor and bestowed knighthood, but he commanded those wounded from behind to be impaled on a stake, saying, "You are not a man, but a woman." And when he went to the Turks again, he said to all his warriors: "He who thinks about death, let him not go with me, but remain here." Having heard that, the tsar went away with great shame; having lost countless of his army, he dared not go against Dracula.

And the tsar sent an ambassador to demand tribute from him. And Dracula received that ambassador with great honor, and showed to him all his possessions, and said to him, "I not only want to give tribute to the tsar, but with all my army and all my coffers, I want to go into his service. And as he commands me, so I will serve him. And you, tell the tsar this: when I go to him, let him command that no evil will be done to me or my people in his land. I will go to the tsar soon, following you, and I will bring him the tribute and come to him myself." The tsar, hearing this from his envoy, that Dracula wanted to come to him in service, bestowed honors and many gifts upon his envoy. And he was very glad because he was then waging war in the east.



и послал скоро по всѣм градам и по земли, да когда дракоула поиде, никоегдѣ зла никто, да бы, дракоула не оучинилъ. но еще и чѣмъ емоу воздавали. дракоула же поиде, събравса съ всѣмъ воинствомъ. и приставове црпти с нимъ. и велю честъ емоу воздавахоу. он же преиде по земли его яко, е, дни. и внезапоу верноуса и нача пачинти градове и села. и мнѣство много поплѣни и изсѣче. вѣкы на колѣ сажахоу поуркѣ. а ины //206v на полы пресѣкала и жжигала. и до скоушилъ младенецъ. ничтѣшъ шстави всю землю тоу поустоу оучини. прочай же иже соудъ. хрпїлане на свою землю прогна и насеши. и мнѣство много користи вѣзѣ возврати. приставовъ тѣ почтїшъ ѿпусти. рѣ, шеше повѣстѣ цю вашемоу яко видѣстїе. сколько могдѣ толико есмь емоу послаждїй. и буде емоу оугдана тоза слѹба. и азъ еще хощу емоу тако слѹжити, какова ми есть сила. царь же ничтѣшъ емъ не може оучинити. но срамомъ побѣженъ бы.

И толико ненавида во своеи земли зла. яко хто оучинїй кое зло. татовоу или разбои. или коую //207r лжоу или неправдоу. тои никако не боудѣживть. аще велики боларинъ. и сїеннїй, и индѣ, или прости. аще и велико багъство имѣлъ бы кто, не може искоупити ѿ смрти. и толико грозенъ бы. источникъ его и клада на единомъ мѣстѣ, и к томоу кладазоу и источнику пришли поупїе мнози ѿ многихъ странъ. и приходжахоу лише мнозин пїахоу ѿ кладаза и источника водоу споудена во вѣ и слѣка. он же оу того кладаза на поустѣ мѣстѣ поставил чароу велю и дивноу златоу. и хто хотишае водоу пити, да тою чарою пїепъ на тѣ мѣстѣ да постави.

и елико шно времѧ пребы. никтѣ смѣаше тоу чароу взамти. //207v Единомъ поусти по всеми земли свое велѣнїе, да кто старъ и немощенъ, и чимъ вреденъ и нициъ, вси да прїидоу к немоу. и собраша бесчисленое мнѣство ници и странны к немоу чающе ѿ него великия лаги. он же повелѣ собрати вѣ въ единоу храминѣ, великоу на то оустроеноу. и повелѣ дати имъ гости и пити доволно, он же ядше и возвеселиша. он же сѣ приде к нимъ и гла имъ что еще пребоуете. он же ѿвѣщаша вѣдѣ гдю вѣ и твое величество, как та бѣ вразумїй. он же гла к нїи хощете ли да сотворю вѣ беспечалны на сїи свѣтѣ, и ничай же поужни боудете. он же чающе ѿ него велико нѣчто. и глаша //208r вси хощемъ гдю.

And the tsar sent a message to all the cities across the land so that when Dracula went through, no one should cause him any harm, but instead should honor him. And Dracula set off, having assembled his entire army, and the tsar's wardens accompanied him and greatly honored him. And he passed through the tsar's land [Turkish land] for five days, and suddenly turned back and began to capture towns and villages. And Dracula captured and killed great multitudes: some Turks he impaled on a stake, and others he cut in half and burned, including suckling infants. He left nothing, emptying the entire land, and those who were Christians he drove to his land and resettled. And he returned, having seized a great multitude of riches and, having honored the wardens, he let them go, saying: "Go tell your tsar what you saw – I served him as much as I could, and if my service pleases him, I am ready to serve him this way again, as much as I can." And the tsar could do nothing against him but was defeated with shame.

And he [Dracula] hated the evil in his own land so much that if anyone committed any crime, theft, robbery, lie or injury, he would not live. Whether he be a noble boyar<sup>4</sup>, a priest, a monk, or a commoner, even if he had great wealth, still he could not ransom himself from death. And that is how formidable Dracula was. There was a well and its spring in his land, and many routes from many lands converged at this spring and well. And many people arrived and drank the cold and sweet water from the well and spring. He took (moved) the well to an empty space and there he placed a large, beautiful golden goblet, and anyone who wanted to drink the water could drink from the goblet in that set place.

And much time passed, but no one there dared take the goblet. Once he sent an order across his lands that all who were old, weak, crippled, or poor, should come to him. And innumerable multitudes of the poor and wayfarers gathered before him awaiting his great mercy. He commanded them all to assemble in one great house. And he commanded that they be given enough to eat and to drink. They feasted and rejoiced. He came to them and said: "What more do you require?" They all answered him: "God knows, Master, Your Majesty, as God will instruct you." He said to them, "So you want me to make you happy in this world, and you would need nothing more?" They expected nothing grand from him and all said, "This is what we want, Master."



ѡн же повелѣ запереть хрѣ и зажечи ѿгнѣ, и вси тоу изгорѣша. и глаше к боларѣ своимъ, да вѣстѣ что оучинї таکо. и никтѣ да не боудеть ницы в моей земли, но вси бѣти. второе свободи ихъ да не стражоу никтѣ ѿни на сеѧ свѣтѣ ѿнициеты ѿни не доуга.

Единою прїдоша к немоу ѿугорскыя земли два латинска мниха малтины рѣ. ѿн же повелѣ имъ развести разно. и призыва к себѣ единого ѿни и показа ему окроу двора мнѣстство бесчисленое людеи на колѣхъ и на колесѣ, и вопроси его добро ли таکо сътвори и како ти соу иже на коли. (//208v) ѿн же гла ни гдю злочини а, без малти казниши, пѣблѣ гдю малтивоу быти. а ти же на колы мици соу. призвав же и дроугаго и вопроси его таکо. ѿн же ѿвѣща. ты гдю ѿни поставленъ еси лѣтвотораціи казнити. а добро твораціи жаловати. а ти лихо творили по своимъ дѣломъ вѣспрѣали, ѿн же призвавъ перваго. и гла к немоу, да почто ты из монастыря и ис келїи своеи ходиши по велики гдремъ не знаєшничтѣ. а ини салъ еси гдаль, яко ти мици соу. азъ и тебе хощоу мика оучинити. да и ты с ними боудеши мицъ. и повелѣ его на колъ посадити про (//209r) ходомъ, а дроугому повелѣ дати. И доукатъ злато. гла ты еси разоуменъ моу и повелѣ его на возѣ с почестіемъ ѿвести и до ѿугорскыя земли.

Нѣкогдѣ прїиде коупецъ гость иѣкы ѿугорскыя земли вѣ его града. и по его заповѣди шставилъ возъ свои на улицы града прѣ полатю. и товарищъ свои на возѣ. а самъ спаше в полатѣ. и пришѣ нѣкто, оукраде с воза. рѣ, доукатъ злато. купецъ же иде къ дракоулѣ. повѣда ему изгоубленіе злато. дракоула же гла ему. поиди всю нощь шбрашеши злато. и повелѣ по всемоу градоу искати тата. гла, аще не шбрашеш тата. то вѣ (//209v) съ града погоублю. и повелѣ свое злато несть положити на возѣ в ноши. и приложи единъ златои. коупецъ же вѣсправъ и шбраште злато. и прочѣ единю и дваци. шбрашеш единъ лишнїи златои. и шѣ къ дракоулѣ гла, гдю шбреши злато. и се есть единъ златои не мои, лишнїи. тога же приведоша и тата ѿнѣ и съ злато. и гла коупцу иди с миромъ. аще бы ми еси не повѣдалъ злато, готовъ бы и тебе с симъ татамъ на колъ посадити.

He commanded that the building be locked up and set on fire, and all those who were there burned. And he said to his boyars, "And now you know why I did this. And there will be no one poor in my land, but all (will be) rich. Second, I emancipated them so that no one of this world would suffer from poverty or from illness."

Once two Latin [Catholic] monks came to him from the Hungarian lands for alms. He ordered them to separate. And he summoned one of them to him; he showed him around the courtyard—the innumerable number of people on stakes and on the wheel—and asked him: "Did I do well? How are those on the stake?" He [the monk] said, "No, Master, you do evil and punish without mercy. A master ought to be merciful. But you on the wheel are martyrs." Dracula summoned the other and asked him the same. He answered: "You, Master, are placed from God to excessively punish evildoers, and to grieve those who do good. But you carry out your accepted deeds in excess." He [Dracula] summoned the first [monk] and said to him: "Why did you come from the monastery and from your cell to a great master, not knowing anything? And now the same will be said: that you are a martyr. I want you to be made a martyr, and you will be a martyr with them." And he commanded him to be put on the stake but ordered the other to be given 50 gold ducats, saying: "You are a knowledgeable man." He ordered him into the cart and to be lead away with honor to the Hungarian land.

Once a merchant guest came to his town from the Hungarian lands. According to his [Dracula's] instructions, he [the merchant] left his own cart in the street in front of the palace and his goods in the cart, while he slept in the palace. And someone came and stole 160 ducats of gold from the cart. And the merchant went to Dracula and told him about the loss of the gold. Dracula then said to him, "Go, and tonight you will discover the gold." And he commanded that the thief be searched for through the entire town, saying, "If the thief is not found, I will destroy the entire town." And he ordered his own gold to be brought and put in the cart at night, and he added one piece of gold. The merchant got up and discovered the gold and after he counted it once and twice he found one extra piece of gold. And he went to Dracula and said, "Master, I found the gold and this is one extra piece of gold that is not mine." And at the same time, the thief was brought in with the gold. And Dracula said to the merchant, "Go in peace; if you had not told me about the [extra] gold, I was going to impale you with the thief on the stake."



Аще жена, кам ѿ моужка прелюбы сътвори. ии же велаши срамъ еи вырѣзати и кожу содрати. и привазати ея на гоу и ко (//210г)коу тоу на столпѣ сре града и торгла повѣсити, и двцамъ кои дѣствиа не сохранят, и вдовѣ таکо, а ины сосца ѿрезах<sup>8</sup>. иже же кожу содравше со срама ея, и роженъ желѣзенъ разжегши вонзаху въ срамъ еи, и оусты исхожаше. и тако привазана стояше очи столпа нага. дондѣ пади кости еи распадоутса, и птица в сѣтѣ боуда.

Единою мѣдашоу емоу поупѣ и оузрѣ на нѣкое сиромахѣ срачию издреноу хоудоу. и въпроси его, имаш ли жену. ии же ѿвѣща имамъ, гдю. ии же гдѣ веди ма в дѣтви да вижю. и оузрѣ жену его младоу соуциоу и зѣравоу. и гдѣ моужкоу ея. вѣ сили лей (//210v) сѣмлъ. ии же ѿвѣща гдѣ много имѣлоу и показа емоу много лноу, и гдѣ женѣ его да почто ты лѣностъ имѣеши к моужкоу своеему. ии долженъ есть сѣампи и шрапти и тѣбе хранити. а ты должна еси на моужка своего шдежю свѣтлоу и лѣпоу чинити. а ты и срачици не хощеши емоу оучинити, а зѣравоу соуциоу пѣло. ты еси повинна а не моужъ твои. аще бы моу не сѣалъ лноу. то бы, моу твои повиненъ бы. и повелѣ еи роукѣ ѿсѣци. и проупъ ея на колъ всадити.

Нѣкогдѣ ѿвѣдоваше по троупїемъ мрѣвѣи члвкъ, иже (//211г) на колѣ сажены, мнѣсмво бо шкроу стола его. ии же среди ихъ гадаше, и пѣмъ оуслажашѣ. слоуга гдѣ прѣнимъ гастри спавлаше. смрадоу иного не моги тѣрпѣти, и запкну носъ. и на странѣ главоу свою склони. ии же вопроси его, ччто рѣ таک оуиниши. ии же ѿвѣща гдю не могу смрада сего тѣрпѣти. дракоула же, тоу, и повелѣ его на колъ всадити. гдѣ, тало ти есть высоко жити смрадѣ не можетъ тѣбе доити.

Иногдѣ прииде ѿ оугорскѣ корола матѣкаша и поклисаръ до него, члвкъ не малъ боларинъ, в ласѣ родѣ. и повелѣ емъ сѣстри с собою на ѿвѣдѣ сре (//211v) троупїа того. и прѣнимъ лежаше единъ колъ велми дебель и высокъ весь позлащенъ. и вопроси а поклисара дракоула. ччто рѣ оуиниихъ сен кол, таکо повѣж ми, "Tell me, why did I make the stake this way?" посол же той велми оубояса и гдѣ. гдю мнити сѧ таکо нѣки великии члвкъ прѣ тобою согрѣши. и хощеши емоу почтеноу смрѣть оучинити паче ниы. дракоула же гдѣ, право рекль еси ты еси велика гдя посолъ кралевьскї тѣвѣ оучини сен колъ.

If any wife committed adultery against her husband, he [Dracula] would order them to cut out her shame<sup>5</sup> and rip off her skin and bind her naked, and her skin would be put on a pillar in the middle of town to be hung up in the marketplace. Dracula ordered the same be done to a virgin whose virginity was not protected; and in the case of widows, their breasts cut off. In other cases, they ripped off the skin from the woman's shame, and brought hot irons which they thrust into her shame and out of her mouth. And thus, she would stand, bound naked to the pillar, until her body and bones fell apart or she became food

Once Dracula was being driven along the road and noticed a poor man and asked him whether he had a wife. He answered: "I do, Master." Dracula then said: "Bring me to your home, so I can see." And he beheld his young and healthy wife, and said to her husband: "Do you sow linen?" He answered: "Master, I have many linens." And he showed him the many linens. And Dracula said to the wife, "Why do you show idleness toward your own husband? He must sow and plough and protect you. And you must make your husband light and decent clothing. But you do not want to make him shirts, though your body is healthy. You are guilty, but not your husband. If your husband did not sow linen, then your husband would be guilty." And he commanded her hand chopped off and her corpse put on the stake.

Sometimes he dined under the corpses of the dead, who were impaled on the stake, a number [of them] around his table. He ate in the middle of them and took delight [in it]. His servant, having placed [the food] in front of him to eat, could not endure the stench and shut his nose and turned his head to the side. Dracula asked him "Why did you do that?" He answered: "Master, I can not endure the stench." Dracula then commanded him to be impaled on the stake, saying: "There you dwell so high, the stench cannot reach you."

Another time an ambassador from the Hungarian King Matthias<sup>6</sup> came to him; the person was a noble boyar<sup>7</sup>, a Pole by birth. And he commanded him to sit with him for dinner in the middle of the corpses. And before them lay one thick, golden, and high stake, and Dracula asked the ambassador, "Tell me, why did I make the stake this way?" The envoy was very frightened and said: "Master, I assume thus: a great person before you sinned. And you want to make his death more honorable than others'." Dracula said: "You spoke correctly, you are an envoy of a great master. This stake is prepared for you."



иже ѿвѣща, гдю аще достоиное смрти содѣллъ боудоу, твори ѿ ѿщеши прѣви во еси соѹа, не ты повиненъ моеніи смрти но азъ (//212r) самъ. дракоулъ расмиаса и рѣ, аще бы ми еси не тако ѿвѣща вонстину бы, бы еси на семь колѣ. и почти его велми и ѿдаришъ ѿпости гла. ты, вправдоу ѿди на поклисарство ѿ велики гдюен к велики ѿ гдремъ. наѹчен во еси съ гдюмы великими говорити. прочий же да не дерзноутъ. но первое оѹчими боудоутъ какъ имъ съ гдюмы великими бесѣдовати.

таковъ ѿвѣчай имѣаше дракоулъ. ѿколе к немъ приходжаше посолъ. ѿ црлѣ и ѿ корола неизлащенъ и не оѹмѣаше пропивъ кознѣ кто ѿвѣщати, то, на колъ его всажаше, гла не азъ повиненъ твоеніи смрти, и гдю твои. и ты (// 212v) самъ, на мене ничтѣ рци зла. аще гдю твои вѣдага твѣ малоумна и не наѹчена послал тя есть ко мнѣ к великоумноу гдю. то гдю твои оѹбил тя есть. аще самъ дерзилъ еси не наѹчивса. то самъ оѹбилъ еси себѣ тако поклисарю оѹчиниша колъ высокъ. и позлащенъ весь, и на него всажаше. и гдю его тѣ рѣчи ѿписоваше с прочими. да не шлѣ к великоумноу гдю малоумна и ненаѹчена мѣжа в посольство.

Оѹчиниша же емоу мастери бочки желеzны. иже насыпа и злато в рѣку положи. а мастеровъ тѣ посѣчи повелѣ, да никто дувѣсть съдѣла (// 213v) иного имъ шкаансства, то кмо тезо имениты емоу дївол.

Нѣкогдѣ поиде на нѣ воинствѣ король оѹгорскы матишаши, иже поиде пропивъ емоу, и срѣтеса с нїи и оѹдаришъ ѿбои, и оѹхватиша дракоулъ живиа, ѿ своимъ изданъ по крамолѣ. и приведень бы дракоулъ ко крали, и повелѣ его метноути в тѣмнице. и сѣде в вишеградѣ на доунаи выше воудина. вѣ лѣ. а на моунтѣланской земли посади иного воеводоу. оѹмершу же помоу воеводѣ. и краль поустри к немоу в тѣмнице. да аще восхоще быти воевода на моунтѣланской земли. такъ и первѣ, то да латинъ (//214 v) скую вѣроу прїиметъ.

He answered, "Master, if I have done something suitable for death, do as you wish. Righteous is your judgement. You are not guilty of my death, but I am." Dracula laughed and said: "If you had not answered me truthfully, you would have been on that same stake." He showed him great honor and released him, saying, "You justly go in embassy from a great master to a great master. You know how to speak with great rulers. The rest will not dare<sup>8</sup>. But first they will be taught how to converse with great masters."

Dracula had such a custom that when an unrefined envoy came to him, from a tsar or king and did not know how to answer his cunning [questions], then he was impaled on the stake, saying: "I am not guilty of your death, or your master," "or you yourself. But say nothing ill about me. If your master, knowing you are unwise and uneducated, sent you here to me, to a wise master, then your master killed you; if you brought yourself, unprepared, then you killed yourself." Thus (he) arranged for the ambassador the highly gilded stake and impaled him on it, and sent a complaint to his master with another (envoy) so that the ruler would not send a wise leader an unwise and uneducated man as an ambassador.

The craftsmen made iron cisterns for him; Dracula filled them with gold and placed them in the river. And Dracula commanded those craftsmen killed so that no one who carried out the deceit would take them, only he of the same name as the devil<sup>9</sup>.

Once the Hungarian King Matthias went against him with his warriors. Dracula met with him, went against him, and both fought, and he [Matthias] captured Dracula alive, handed over by his own [men] in an act of treachery. Dracula was brought to the king, and he commanded him to be thrown in prison. And he was there in Visegrad<sup>10</sup> on the Danube, four miles past Buda, for twelve years. And another voivode<sup>11</sup> sat in the Wallachian land. When this voivode died, the king went to him [Dracula] in prison<sup>12</sup>, and [said] if he wanted to be the voivode in the Wallachian lands, he would first accept the Latin faith.



аще же ни, то оумрети в темници хощеть. Дракоул же возлюби паче временного свѣтла сладость, нежели вѣчнаго и бесконечнаго, и ѿпade православїа. и ѿспоупи ѿ истинны. и ѿставил свѣтъ и прїа тмоу. оузы не возможе темничныя временныя тяготы понести. и оуготовася на бесконечное мчнїе, и ѿставил православною нашоу вѣроу. и прїатъ латынскою прелестъ.

кral же не покмо дастъ емоу воевѣство на моунтпїанской земли. но и сестроу (/215 г) свою рѣноую дастъ емоу в женоу. ѿ неа же ёдва сна. пожив же мало тако. і. лѣ. и тако скончася в тои прельсти. Глюп же ѿ немъ тако и в темници сѣдал не ѿспася своего злого шбычая. но мыши лова и птицы на торгоу покоупала и тако казнаше ихъ. ѿвоу на колъ посажаше. а иной главъ ѿсѣкаше, а со иныхъ перїе ѿциїав поускаше. и наѹчися шити, и тѣмъ в темници кормлаше.

егда кralъ изведе его ис темници, и приведе его на будинъ. и дастъ емоу домъ в пеци пропивоу будини. и еще оукрала не быль. слоучися нѣкоему злодѣю оутии на его дворъ и съхра (/215v)ниса. гонаціи же прїдоша и начаша искати и наидоша его. дракоул же восставъ вѣтъ мечь свой и скочи с полаты, и ѿсѣче главоу приставъ ѿномоу держкащему злодѣя, а злодѣя ѿпусти. прочий же вѣжаша и прїдоша к биревоу, и повѣдаша емоу бывшее. бирев же съ всѣми посадникы, иде ко кralю, жалуася на дракоулу. корол же посла к немоу вопрашаа. что ёдаково зло оучини. ии же тако ѿвѣца. зло никоѣ оучини. но ии самъ себе оуби. Находа разбойнически на великаго гдру. домъ всакъ такъ погибнетъ. аще по (/216г) ко мнѣ пришел гавъ бы. и азъ во своемъ домоу нашел бы того злодѣя, или бы выдалъ. или проси его ѿ смрти. кralъ повѣдаша. королю же нача сматлatisa и дивити его ср҃ю.

Конец же его сице, живаше на моунтпїанской земли. и прїдоша на землю є поурги, начаша паднити. ии же оудари на ии и повѣгоша поурги. дракули нѣ воиско безъ мати начаша ѹ сѣчи. и гнаша ѹ дракоул ѿ радости възгнавъ на гороу да видить како сѣкоуть поуруковъ. и ѿпоргъсл ѿ воиска близи і его, мнаци тако поуручинъ и оудари его единъ копїемъ. ии же видѣвъ тако ѿ свой (/216v) оубиваэмъ. и тоу оуби свой оубицъ мече своимъ. е. егдѣ мнозими копїи сводоша. и тако оубиентъ бы.

If not, then he wanted to die in prison. Dracula desired the temporary pleasure of this world, rather than the eternal and infinite [pleasure of the afterlife], and retreated from Orthodoxy. And [he] shrank back from the truth and left the light to go into the darkness. Alas, unable to bear the temporary burden of prison, and ready for infinite torment, he left our Orthodox faith

The king not only gave him the voivodship in the Wallachian lands, but he gave him his own birth sister as a wife; from her two sons were born. Dracula lived a brief time, ten years, and was tortured in his deceit. They say about him, that sitting in prison, he did not repudiate his wicked customs, but caught mice and bought birds at the market and tortured them. Either [he] put them on the stake or cut off their heads, and from others plucked out the feathers. He learned how to sow, and so fed himself in prison.

When the king liberated him from the prison and summoned him to Buda, he gave him a home in Pest opposite Buda. But he was not at the king's court. It happened that some criminal went into his [Dracula's] courtyard and hid there. Hunters arrived and began to search for [the criminal] and came upon him. Dracula got up, took his sword, galloped from the palace, and cut off the head of the steward who had held the criminal, but released the criminal. The other escaped and came to an administrative official and told him what occurred. The administrative official, along with all the princes, went to the king to lament about Dracula. The King questioned him: "Why did you do such evil?" Dracula then answered that no one could commit a wicked act, without Dracula killing the wrongdoer himself. Approaching the robber in the great master's home, he killed him. "If he [the steward] had come to me and announced [what happened], then I would have found a criminal in my own house or handed [him] over, or set him free from death (not have killed him)." He was brought to the King. The King began to laugh and marveled at his courage.

Dracula's end was thus: he lived in the Wallachian land, and the Turks attacked his land, and began to take prisoners. He struck them and defeated the Turks. Dracula's army began to cut them down without mercy. Dracula, in joy, rode up the hill to see the Turks cut down. And [he] pulled away from his army, which, close to him, assumed he was a Turk and one of them hit him with a lance. Dracula, seeing that he had been wounded, then killed his own murderer with his sword. Five more lances pierced him, and thus he died.



корол же сестроу свою вза́л, и со двéма сыими, въ оугорскому земл на боудинъ. единъ при кралевѣ сиѣ живе. а дроугїи бы оу варднскѣ бископа и при на оумре, а трёлго сиа старѣшиша михаил тау же на боўиноу видѣх, ѿ ѹрл пврскѣ прибѣгъ ко кралю, еще не женивса прижї его дракоула съ единою дѣвкою, спефан же молдовскыи з кралевы воли поса на мѣнтиянской земли нѣкоего воевѣскаго сна влада именѣ, бы во тои влادъ (//217г) ѿ младенства инокъ, потомъ и сїенникъ и игоуменъ в монастыри. потомъ ростригся и сѣл на воевѣство и женился, понамъ воевѣскою жену. иже после дракоулы мало побилъ. и оубил его спефанъ волоськї, того женоу понамъ и ннѣ воевода на мѹнтиянской земли владъ, иже бывыи чернечи и игоуменъ : в лѣс ч. ч. д. фѣ гї прѣ писа, та, в лѣт с. ч. чи. гї. ки. в дроуѣ преписа дзъ г҃ешны ефросинъ :

The King took his sister, along with the two sons, to Buda in the Hungarian land. One son lived under the king. The other was a bishop in Varndinsky and died among us; a third son, the eldest, Mikhail, they saw there in Bud, running to the king from the Turkish tsar<sup>13</sup>. Still unmarried, Dracula had him [Mikhail] with a girl. Stefan the same Moldovan<sup>14</sup>, following the king's will, placed in the Wallachian land a son of a voivode named Vlad<sup>15</sup>. This Vlad was the one who was alone from childhood, then a priest, and the superior in a monastery. Then [Vlad] defrocked and settled down into the voivodship and married. He took the wife of the voivode who was killed a little after Dracula. Stefan of Moldavia killed him, then took that wife. Now the voivode in the Wallachian land is [another] Vlad, who was a hermit and solitary. I, the sinful Efrosin, wrote the above on February 12 in the year 6994 [1486], then I rewrote it again in January 28 in the year 6998 [1490]<sup>16</sup>.

## Critical Notes

- 1 Muntenia is an Old Slavic term for Greater Wallachia.
- 2 Voivode is a term for princes and appointed rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia.
- 3 The narrative describes the life of Vlad Tepes (Vlad the Impaler) who ruled Wallachia. Vlad Tepes' moniker "Dracula" is most likely a reference to his father's moniker "Dracul," which means "devil" in Romanian. For more on the etymology, see: Matei Cazacu. *Dracula*. Boston: Brill, 2017. 3.
- 4 Boyars were the highest-ranking nobles of the Russian and Eastern European nobility.
- 5 "Shame" in this context is a euphemism for a woman's genitalia.
- 6 Matthias Corvinus, Matthias I, of Hungary and Croatia (ruled 1458-1490). It is believed that his court is the place of origin of the Dracula tale.
- 7 Boyars were the highest-ranking nobles of the Russian and Eastern European nobility.
- 8 In this instance, it is possible Dracula is saying that other ambassadors would not dare to speak to Dracula in such an honest manner.
- 9 This line infers that Dracula killed the craftsmen so only he would know where the gold-filled cisterns were.
- 10 A castle town in Pest, Hungary, where Matthias Corvinus held a palace.
- 11 Voivode is a term for princes and appointed rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia.
- 12 Lines 125-128 illustrate a slight discrepancy in the manuscript's story. How could Dracula go to the marketplace and farm while in prison? It is possible because of his noble status that he was imprisoned within his land holdings.
- 13 This can be interpreted as indicating that the son changed allegiances from the Moldavian king to the Turkish tsar.
- 14 Reference to Stefan III of Moldavia (1457-1504), who had the military support of Vlad Tepes.
- 15 It seems that this son of the voivode Vlad is Dracula's replacement.
- 16 Efrosin, as an Eastern Orthodox Monk, used the Byzantine Calendar. This calendar takes the year 5508 BCE as year one, so to convert a year to the common era, we can subtract 5508.