

Tuomas Hovi

Finding Heritage  
Through Fiction in  
*Dracula* Tourism



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Tuomas Hovi

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**H**eritage is one of the key concepts of this book. As it happens, heritage can also be seen as a major force behind this book. In 1975 my father Kalervo Hovi published his dissertation *Cordon sanitaire or barriere de l'est?: The emergence of the New French Eastern European alliance policy, 1917–1919*.

Some thirty years later, a young Romanian scholar became interested in my father's dissertation and subsequently invited him to give a lecture on the subject at the Valahia University of Târgoviște in Romania. My father decided to ask if I was interested in accompanying him on this trip, to which I instantly agreed.

During this trip in 2002 I found my future research subject, Dracula tourism. This discovery led to a short seminar paper, a master's thesis, several conference papers, a dissertation and finally to this book. Whether one likes to call it a coincidence, fate or even providence, it is nevertheless true that there is a direct link between my father's dissertation from 1975 and this book, although the subject matter is quite different.

Because of this personal heritage and a myriad of other reasons I want to dedicate this book to my father Kalervo and also to my mother Ritva-Liisa Hovi. They both have helped and supported me in many ways during my research career so far.

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In addition to dedicating this book to my parents, I also want to dedicate it to my wife Kristiina and to our lovely and beautiful daughter Anni.

Turku, November 2016  
Tuomas Hovi



The Map of Romania. Pekka Tolonen 2014.

# 1. Introduction

**H**eritage and Dracula.<sup>1</sup> The pairing of these names might seem odd and even ridiculous at first, and yet, they both appear in the title of this book. Heritage can be related to both tangible and intangible culture, ancient monuments or urban environment, nature, or many other aspects of living culture. Heritage is that part of culture which is seen as especially important and worthy of protection, preservation and emphasis.

Dracula is a vampire character known from popular culture. Although he is one of the best-known fictional characters, he can hardly be seen as heritage. Dracula can also refer to a Romanian historical ruler called Vlad the Impaler, whose importance to Romanian history and culture is great. In this book, Dracula – both the historical and the fictional version – is the main attraction of Dracula tourism, the principal subject of my research. Within Dracula tourism, tourists can visit places connected to either the fictional vampire Dracula or the historical Dracula, Vlad the Impaler. In this book, I am interested in the interplay between heritage and fiction, and between tradition and tourism. How and why heritage and Dracula tourism are connected will be revealed and thoroughly analysed in this book.

Heritage and tradition are used in tourism all over the world. Heritage and tradition may come from within the culture of the visited location or outside of it, it varies nevertheless. Tourism is a global and also a globalising phenomenon, and that is why questions regarding the power relations when dealing with tradition, culture and heritage in tourism are becoming more and more topical. These power relations are often visible through stereotypes and stereotypical images, which are cultural generalisations or cultural models that are commonly shared. Stereotypes have the tendency of standardising cultures, and because Westerners are the largest consumer group in the travel industry, the standardisation of cultures is often done on Western cultural terms and stereotypes. These stereotypes are often also based on popular culture. The origins and the subsequent demand for Dracula tourism are rooted in Western popular culture. However, Dracula tourism in Romania is not just Western fiction and fantasy projected onto Romania. Dracula tourism in Romania is

1 This book is based on my doctoral thesis *Heritage through Fiction: Dracula Tourism in Romania* (2014).

a much more versatile form of cultural tourism, combining fiction, tradition, history, and culture. In fact, Dracula tourism can be seen as a way to promote Romanian heritage through Western popular fiction.

## Why Dracula tourism?

Dracula tourism as well as tourism in general is an important field for research, especially from a cultural point of view. Researching tourism from a cultural study point of view, I find interesting that tourism functions as a promotional and marketing tool for countries, and for local actors and travel agencies to promote and market their destinations. It is interesting to see what kinds of cultural and historical aspects are promoted and highlighted, and what is perhaps left out. Depending on the point of view, tourism can be seen as a preserving, developing, or threatening force regarding cultural traditions. Tourism has an important economic, cultural and sociological impact in the world. Measured in numbers, according to the information on the webpage of The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)<sup>2</sup>, tourism is one of the world's largest economic sectors accounting for one in every 11 jobs in the world and generated 937 billion euros in 2014. The number of international tourists is also large; in 2014 they numbered over 1,135 million. Since the global economic crisis of 2009, tourism has been growing every year.<sup>3</sup>

Dracula tourism in Romania is an important research subject for a variety of reasons. Dracula tourism combines tradition, history, culture, and fiction into an interesting whole, and therefore I find it an intriguing subject for cultural research. Dracula tourism in Romania is tourism where tourists visit sites and places that are associated with both the historical Dracula, Vlad the Impaler, and the fictional vampire, Count Dracula (Hovi 2008a, 73). Although there is also some Dracula tourism in Great Britain, Dracula tourism is mainly connected with Romania. In Great Britain it is associated solely with the fictional Dracula, the locations visited being in Whitby and London, whereas Dracula tourism in Romania covers both the fictional and the historical Dracula. Tourists may visit the Dracula locations on their own, but most Dracula tourists go on Dracula tours organised by various travel agencies. These tours differ in their length and in their choice of locations associated with either Dracula. (Hovi 2014, 64–65.) Although the emphasis

2 UNWTO is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

3 UNWTO Annual Report 2014; UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2015 Edition.

on these tours is obviously on history and traditions about Vlad the Impaler as well as the fiction connected to Bram Stoker's book and vampires in general, much more gets related on the tours (Hovi 2014, 73–74). Outside Romania, Dracula is a well-known character from popular culture and has become so famous and so integrated into Western culture that 'Dracula' has come to refer to vampires in general. The reactions to Dracula tourism in Romania have always been mixed. Some people are against it, some are in favour and some are indifferent towards it. Those who oppose Dracula tourism see it as something that could be harmful for Romanian culture and history. (Light 2012, 135–136.) Because Dracula tourism is a combination of Romanian history and fiction deriving from mainly Western popular culture, Dracula tourism is in a way in a state of constant negotiation between local cultural and historical values and outside expectations. Although there are many cases within the tourism industry where the local tourist industry has to negotiate between outside expectations and local cultural values, I find some aspects of Dracula tourism to be quite unique.

Dracula tourism is unique, or at least unusual, in its combination of a known historical figure with a fictional character that derives completely from outside the history and culture of the original historical figure. Although many historical and mythical figures have been absorbed into Western popular culture like Robin Hood, William Wallace (*Braveheart*), King Arthur or the many characters of the Wild West, this has all been done more or less within the same Anglo-American culture and on the culture's own terms. The combination of the historical character and the character from popular culture has often been done with the interest and understanding of the culture where they came from. In the case of Dracula tourism, the character of Vlad the Impaler has been 'forcefully' attached to the Western vampire Dracula without any input from Romanian culture. (Hovi 2014, 61–62.)

One other factor that makes this case unique is Romania's recent history. Because Romania was a socialist country for the last half of the twentieth century (from 1948 to 1989), and therefore many times in a juxtaposition with the West, the prominently Western fictional Dracula character and its use and attachment to Romania adds another dimension to the phenomenon.<sup>4</sup> During the 1980s the attitudes toward Dracula tourism in Romania started to shift from reluctant approval to reactions that were a little more hostile. (Light 2012, 53–54, 82.) For some, the Dracula from literature and its link to Vlad

4 By West and Western I am here referring to the East–West division of the Cold War era and even though I realise that this division is not a black-and-white one, I feel that it is appropriate for this topic.



was even seen as an attack on Romanian history (Ionescu 1986, 24). Remnants of this attitude towards Dracula tourism can still be found in Romania today. During the socialist years Dracula was seen as a Western cultural threat against Romanian history. After the 1989 revolution Dracula was no longer treated as a negative word in Romania, and Dracula was quickly adopted as a brand name by many entrepreneurs in the private sector. (Light 2012, 113–115.) Vampires and Dracula were among other ‘Western’ influences that found their way into Romania after 1989. However, the reactions toward Dracula tourism were and are mixed, and some people, echoing the concerns from the socialist era, still feel that by giving in and embracing the foreign character of Dracula, Romanian culture and history are threatened. It is interesting that the attitudes toward Dracula tourism in Romania have often reflected Romania’s contemporary relations and reactions with Western Europe and the United States. I will elaborate on this more thoroughly in chapter 3. Dracula tourism can therefore also be seen as one case with which to view the cultural impacts of the fall of socialism on a formerly socialist country and the ways the country imagines itself and tries to find its position vis-à-vis the West from a cultural point of view.

## The main research questions and key concepts

This research deals with the use of tradition and history in Dracula tourism in Romania. The key concepts of this research are tourism, tourist, tradition, history, fiction, hybridisation, authenticity and heritage. Although most people, if not all, have a general understanding of what tourists and tourism are, the actual definition of both of these concepts has been very challenging, because of the multiplicity of disciplinary and paradigmatic approaches that have been connected with the tourism phenomena. Tourism has been seen in a relationship between leisure, recreation and other social practises and behaviour and also as an industry. (Hall, Williams & Lew 2004, 4–7.) As an industry, however, tourism is widely regarded as a fundamentally different type of industry from other forms of commodity production because as such tourism is not a simple product but a wide range of products and services that interact to provide an opportunity to fulfil the touristic experience (Debbage & Ioannides 2004, 100). Following the definition given by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) in 1995, Stephen L. J. Smith defines tourism as a ‘set of activities of a person travelling to a place outside his or her usual environment for less than a year and whose main purpose of travel is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited’ (Smith 1995, 22). Tourism

can similarly be seen as ‘the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes’ (Holden 2008, 3).

One classic definition of tourism has been linked with the purpose of the trip and the difference between leisure and work-related trips (Ryan 2003, 24). This definition is not without its limitations because there are usually also some kinds of leisure activities on work-related trips and sometimes also vice versa. Chris Rojek and John Urry have responded to criticism about the problematic nature of tourism as a theoretical category by encouraging those who criticise it to operationalise tourism. As an example they mention the definition of tourism involving a certain amount of time for staying in a country without trying to see whether these stays have the same significance to the visitors. By ignoring this, the researcher is placing together quite different social practices into one operational category and thereby possibly ignoring the reasons that the visitors have for their visits. (Rojek & Urry 1997, 2.) In my view one of the most important factors for defining tourism (and a tourist) lies precisely in the reasons that the visitor has for his or her visit and whether or not he or she defines the visit or parts of it as tourism.

Tradition is understood in folklore studies as being the ‘past in the present’. Tradition is something that is created through human action with thought and imagination and then handed down from one generation to the next. Tradition becomes meaningful and important when the link between the present and a past that is invested with ethnic or national significance becomes topical. (Siikala & Ulyashev 2011, 20.) As a concept, tradition is also confined to the present. According to Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, although tradition is a model of the past, it is inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present (Handler & Linnekin 1984, 276). Like tradition, history is also a wide concept that has many definitions. What I mean by history are the shared and widely acknowledged interpretations of the past, within given groups. These interpretations may also differ within the community and between academia and laymen. The main point is to understand that history is not the same as the past, but consists of interpretations of the past. I am interested in how and what kind of tradition and history are used in Dracula tourism and why and also what kind of tradition and history are seen as important in Dracula tourism. Because the use of history is always a subjective decision in tourism, I want to find out what eras of history are highlighted in tourist sites and what are left out. These decisions are made by actors that include national tourist boards, ministries of tourism, travel agencies (both foreign and Romanian), the owners of locations and tour guides. I am therefore researching the way Romanian travel agencies use history and tradition in their tours. I am

especially interested in history and tradition that is used that is not connected to Vlad or Dracula. I will also look at Dracula tourism and see if it can itself actually be called tradition and even Romanian tradition.

Because of the nature of Dracula tourism I am also interested in the interplay and negotiations between tradition, history and fiction in Dracula tourism and how Romanian tradition and history coexist with Western fiction in Dracula tourism. What I mean by fiction in this case is everything that is connected with Bram Stoker's Dracula, vampires and with the image of Romania and Transylvania in (mainly Western) popular culture in general. It is somewhat difficult to differentiate between fiction, history and tradition because the line between them is not always very clear. The history of Vlad the Impaler that is used in the tour-guide narrations, for example, is partly based on the legend tradition about Vlad, which, although to an extent based on historical events, has many fictitious elements in it. What I mean by fiction here is both what the tour guides themselves call fiction and my own interpretation, but the actual definition and distinction between fiction, tradition and history is more based on the tour-guide narrations and the webpages of various travel agencies than on my own interpretations. Furthermore I will discuss whether the dichotomy of fiction and tradition in Dracula tourism is as black and white as it seems. Is it really purely the case of popular culture from outside of Romania vs. Romanian culture or inside culture vs. outside culture or global culture vs. local culture? I investigate this through the concepts of hybridisation and creolisation. These terms both refer to the same process of the mixing and adaptation of cultural elements into new forms of culture (Baron & Cara 2003, 4; Kapchan & Strong 1999, 241). I am also interested in the idea of how Dracula tourism could be used as a gateway into Romanian history and culture and whether Dracula tourism can also be seen as a channel for expressing cultural differences.

All of the above questions lead in their own way to my main research question, which is how can Romanian heritage and culture be shown and promoted through a seemingly superficial Dracula tourism which is based on Western popular culture? Is it possible to find Romanian heritage through popular fiction in Dracula tourism? In addition to the concepts mentioned and explained above, the three main ideas of this research that need to be more thoroughly explained are authenticity, heritage and popular culture.

## Authenticity

As a discipline, folkloristics has a long history in dealing with the concept of authenticity. Authenticity has been used as a defining and legitimising factor in the formation of the discipline, especially in the United States, and for many decades the dichotomy of ‘authenticity versus inauthenticity’ was one of the driving forces behind this definition. In the 1950s American folklorist Richard Dorson introduced the term *fakelore* to depict the use of folkloric elements in a fictional setting. According to Regina Bendix, Dorson initially used the popular Paul Bunyan stories and later Benjamin A. Botkin’s successful *A Treasury of American Folklore* series as examples of *fakelore*. Dorson wanted to distinguish between properly documented oral folklore and rewritten materials among which he counted Paul Bunyan stories and Botkin’s work. (Bendix 1997, 23 & 190.) After Dorson the dichotomy between real and fake folklore started to crumble with the static, text-oriented approach yielding to a process- and performance-oriented folkloristics (Bendix 1997, 194). In the 1970s and 1980s such researchers as Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock both took stands on authenticity, with Hymes attaching truth and authenticity to performances and Tedlock arguing for authenticity to be captured by critiquing past treatments of native literatures and using new techniques to record narratives. (Bendix 1997, 201–204.)

According to Bendix the emergence of the concept of ethnicity and its research in folklore studies challenged the unreflective use of authenticity in the mid 1980s; ‘Ethnicity studies forced folklorists to question their dichotomous practices, articulated most fruitfully by Abrahams and Susan Kalčik, who spelled out why Dorson’s exclusion of *fakelore* hampered effective study and participation in the multicultural politics of the 1970s’ (Bendix 1997, 208). In a multicultural world the idea of the authenticity or the ‘pureness’ of folklore was no longer seen as useful or even as achievable in folkloristic research. By the late 1980s such concepts as the invention of culture or tradition and the ‘imagined’ had become central concerns of scholarship and the talk of authenticity faded into the background. According to Bendix, Alan Dundes saw that *fakelore* might be just as integral an element of culture as folklore, and it should be studied like other folklore. Since the early 1990s the constructed nature of authenticity has been more or less fully acknowledged and problematised. (Bendix 1997, 214–217; Briggs 1993.) The questions about whether some subject of folkloristic research is authentic have more or less changed to questions about the need for authenticity, who are the actors who need authenticity or how authenticity is used (Bendix 1997, 21).

Even if authenticity is not as visible in folklore research as it used to be, it is still evident in tourism and therefore also in tourism studies. In tourism the words 'authenticity', 'genuine' and 'real' are used constantly to promote certain locations or events. According to Dean MacCannell, 'The rhetoric of tourism is full of manifestations of the importance of the authenticity of the relationship between tourists and what they see' (MacCannell 1999, 14). By marking a site as authentic, destinations have assured themselves a steady flow of tourists engaged in sightseeing (Richards 2007, 4). Because authenticity is so embedded in tourism, it is no surprise that authenticity is also frequently mentioned, discussed and defined in tourism studies. Actually authenticity is such a major theme that one can hardly find a book about tourism where the word and concept of authenticity is not mentioned. The role of authenticity in tourism experiences and expectations is, however, contested to a certain degree. In general the tourist- and tourism-related discourses have conveyed an idea that there are two opposing types of tourism and tourist places: those that enjoy the contrived sites and don't care about the inauthenticity and those that are seeking authenticity in real and natural settings (Tucker 2002, 144). According to Jillian M. Rickly-Boyd, D. J. Boorstin argued in 1961 that tourism is a pseudo-event in which tourists seek inauthenticity as a justification for their inauthentic lives, whereas MacCannell responded to these claims in 1971 by arguing that as a result of the alienation of modernity tourists seek authenticity. Since then some researchers have concluded that even though tourists might still be searching for authenticity on their trips, the authenticity is not objective authenticity but symbolic authenticity, and because symbolic authenticity is not based on an exact, discoverable original, it actually allows tourists to determine what is authentic. (Rickly-Boyd 2012, 272.) Similarly some researchers have come to the conclusion that while in earlier times tourists may have gone in search of the authentic, the postmodern tourist delights also in the inauthentic (MacCannell 2001, 24; Urry 2002, 12).

Eric Cohen argues that authenticity is a socially constructed concept and its social connotation is not given, but negotiable (Cohen 1988, 374). Therefore authenticity in tourism, as in folklore research, is flexible and negotiable. Authenticity is largely based on preconceived stereotypic images that the tourists have of the visited locations and is therefore a negotiation and a combination of the expectations of the tourists and the supply and explanations given by the tourism organisers. The focus on authenticity in tourism research seems to be moving from the concept of authenticity as something one can possess or as a state of mind towards a concept of authenticity that is experienced, felt or performed (Knudsen & Waade 2010, 1). Authenticity is a major factor in Dracula tourism regarding, for example, the tradition that is used

and the combination of history and popular culture. In this work I investigate how authenticity can be redefined and used in tourism research as well as in folkloristics. I am interested in dividing authenticity into experienced authenticity and historic authenticity. I will return to these questions in chapter 5.

In Europe and especially in Germany the questions and discussions of authenticity have mostly focused on the term *folklorism* (*folklorismus*) which was used prominently by Hans Moser in the 1960s. Moser saw folklorism as second-hand folklore or second-hand mediation and presentation of folk culture. (Bendix 1997, 176–177; Šmidchens 1999, 52.) Although Moser intended the term to be an objective and non-judgemental characterisation, the terms he used to describe folklorism like ‘genuine’, ‘falsified’, ‘second-hand’ and ‘breathing originality’ made the objectivity of the term questionable right from the start. Folklorism was very quickly linked to the debate concerning the genuine versus spurious or authentic versus inauthentic. (Bendix 1997, 177&182.) According to Hermann Bausinger, folklorism meant the use of material or stylistic elements of folklore in a context which is different and foreign to the original tradition (Bausinger 1984:1405). Folklorism has traditionally been linked to either economic motives, with tourism being the most obvious example, or with politic and ideological motives like nationalistic celebrations (Šmidchens 1999, 57). Although the illusions of authentic folklore and the search for the authentic might no longer be valid themes in research that focuses on folklorism (Bendix 1997, 186), and some scholars feel that folklorism should be used and perhaps redefined (Šmidchens 1999), I find that the use of the concept is not without its risks. The problem with the term folklorism is that it does make the distinction between folklore and its use (or folklore and non-folklore), and therefore is inevitably evaluative by nature. By labelling something as folklorism the researcher may belittle and downplay the cultural value and significance of the actual performance that he or she is researching. The problem with folklorism lies also in its determination. As the Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko stated,

A lament performed during an interview or on a stage is folklorism of the basest order, even though the performer puts her whole heart into it, whereas the chat between lamenters in an interview or in the dressing room is genuine folklore. Such distinctions make no sense. (Honko 2013, 49.)

Honko was of the opinion that folklorism is an example of how a term or concept that has acquired pejorative overtones can even paralyse research. According to Honko the term folklorism should be disregarded and forgotten altogether because of its connotations of inauthenticity. (Honko 2013, 49.) In

its place Honko offers the folklore process and division of folklore into many life stages and into folklore's two main phases of life. According to Honko, folklorists should 'try to restore the research value of events in the second life of folklore to something approaching their indisputable cultural value' (Honko 2013, 49). By folklore process Honko meant the stereotypic life-history of folklore in any culture which begins in the era before the birth of the concept of folklore and ends with the present-day assessment of the meaning of folklore in its culture (Honko 2013, 38). Honko divided the folklore process into 22 stages. The first 12 stages belong to the first life of folklore or are subordinate to it and the remaining 10 belong to the second life of folklore. The model of folklore process is evolutionary and the stages have an order of their own, but it is also multilinear and the order of the stages can in reality be different. Some stage might also run parallel to another or even be omitted. (Honko 2013, 38–39.) I will deal with the folklore process in more detail in chapter 5.

## Invented traditions

A concept that has been often mentioned in relation to authenticity is the concept of 'invented traditions' by Eric Hobsbawm in *The Invention of Tradition*, which was first published in 1983 and was edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. As 'invented traditions' Hobsbawm counted both such tradition as was actually invented, constructed and formally instituted, and tradition that emerged in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period (Hobsbawm 1983,1). Hobsbawm's ideas have been debated and criticised within folklore studies and they have also been intertwined with the scholarly debates about authenticity (Bendix 1997, 211 & 216; Cohen 1988, 380; Wang 1999, 354–355). Authenticity and the idea of invented traditions are also more widely connected, for example in tourism studies. In tourism questions about authenticity and invented traditions have been raised when for example researching tourist places which are known from popular culture and are based solely on fiction (Peterson 2005, 1085). There are, however, numerous examples of invented traditions in tourism. Besides popular culture, these inventions can, for example, deal with different musical styles, musical performances or folk art.

## Heritage

Heritage or cultural heritage has become a popular field of research in cultural studies. This is especially the case in studies dealing with tourism. The concept of heritage is used in political agendas, in the affirming of national identity, in preserving buildings, customs and traditions that are seen as important and in justifying economic interests. Because of the popularity of the concept of heritage, there is a phenomenal amount of literature about it. Despite, or maybe because of its universality, the term heritage has become harder to define. One might even say that there are as many definitions of the concept of heritage as there are heritage practitioners, although many commentators also leave the definition as broad as possible. (Harvey 2007, 25.) The best-known example of preserved cultural heritage is of course UNESCO and its list of World Heritage sites. Heritage can be officially and politically defined on a global level from the outside as in the case of UNESCO or it can be defined within a country, community or small group. According to Dallen J. Timothy, the heritage tourism experience can be categorised into four types of heritage: world, national, local and personal. These categories are not, however, absolute, for there is shared heritage experience which can be seen as overlapping between these categories. (Timothy 1997, 752.) Similarly, heritage itself can be divided into the same four categories: world heritage, national heritage, local heritage and personal heritage. Even in the case of UNESCO and its list of World Heritage sites where the decisions are made outside the country where the site to be is located, the sites must be put forward by local governments or delegates. (Eriksen 2001, 2; Leask 2006, 8–10.)

Heritage can be seen as a cultural process rather than a physical artefact or record. Heritage is not inert or static and people constantly engage, rework, appropriate and contest it. Heritage is part of the way that identities are created and disputed and this can be done by an individual, a group or a nation state. (Harvey 2007, 37.) Stuart Hall has described heritage as referring to the whole complex of organisations, institutions and practices devoted to the preservation and presentation of culture and the arts, such as art galleries, specialist public and private collections, museums of all kinds and sites of special historical interest (Hall 2007, 87). Heritage can be both tangible and intangible culture. The meaning of heritage has broadened to encompass ‘ancient monuments, the built urban environment, aspects of the natural environment and many aspects of living culture and the arts.’ (Timothy & Boyd 2003, 3–4.) Heritage is associated with efforts to preserve and celebrate ethnicity, locality and history. According to Regina Bendix, heritage is used as a concept and practice that local groups can rally behind with pride and at the same time it allows one



to attract outsiders to come to visit and admire it for a suitable price. (Bendix 2000, 38.) Heritage can be used and seen as a cultural, political and economic resource (Tunbridge & Ashworth 2007, 207–233).

One place where heritage is seen as an especially important resource is the travel industry, where heritage is heavily used and promoted. Heritage and culture have become so important in the tourism industry that cultural heritage has become an independent part of tourism called heritage tourism (Timothy & Boyd 2003, 1). Heritage tourism can be personal and associated with one's family or community heritage or it can be shared and collective heritage. It is also possible that places of personal heritage can simultaneously be national or even world heritage sites. (Marschall 2012, 329.) In fact heritage and tourism have become inextricably linked all over the world (Hall 1994, 180). This link has been viewed in both a negative and positive light. It has been seen as producing inauthentic and falsified tradition (as for example folklorism or even fakelore), something that is not 'real' and authentic. According to some researchers the whole premise of heritage already includes fabrication and falsification and the question of authenticity is therefore not a problem (Lowenthal 2007, 111). Tourism can also be seen as a threat to cultural heritage (Kalay, Kvan & Affleck 2007, xv). On the other hand the link can be seen as a positive thing, as something which helps to preserve heritage, culture and folklore in a changing and globalising world. In short, heritage is a part of culture or history that someone has defined as especially important to preserve.

One way to try to explain heritage is to compare it with the concept of history. According to Dallen J. Timothy and Stephen W. Boyd if history is ideally the recording of the past as accurately as is possible in so far as it can be accurate given present-day limitations of knowledge, then heritage includes a range of aspects such as culture, language, identity and locality which have been defined as especially important and worth saving. So history is what historians and to some degree society regard as worth recording, and heritage is what contemporary society chooses to inherit and to pass on. (Timothy & Boyd 2003, 4; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, 6.) Heritage has been heavily criticised, usually by opposing it to history. Heritage has been called bogus history or viewed as something processed into a commodity through mythology, ideology, nationalism and marketing. David Lowenthal argues that heritage should not be confused with history at all because the two concepts are very different in nature. Lowenthal argues that while history seeks to convince by truth and succumbs to falsehood, heritage exaggerates, omits, invents, forgets and thrives on both ignorance and error. (Lowenthal 2007, 111.) And although selection, alteration and invention also happen in history, the premise in history is to conform to accepted tenets of evidence, a premise that heritage does

not have (Lowenthal 1998, 112; Lowenthal 2007, 111). Bella Dicks argues that if history is also seen as embedded in ordinary people's memorial activities as well as in academic texts then the distinction between heritage and history may be seen as more complex. (Dicks 2004, 134.)

Heritage is also seen as more strongly tied to the present and the future than to the actual past, and is in fact viewed as the contemporary use of the past (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000, 2). Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, for example, has argued that 'heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past' (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 149). Therefore the definition of heritage actually comes close to the definitions of tradition given earlier in this work. Like heritage, tradition is also something that is chosen and selected from the past and interpreted in the present. The difference between tradition and heritage is that tradition as such is not heritage, but it can become heritage if it is seen as important enough for the group, society or nation that uses and defines it. Heritage is not something that exists on its own; it is something that always has to be defined as such by someone. To draw a short conclusion, heritage is parts of our history and culture which at the present time are seen as important enough to showcase for people in the present and to preserve for the future. This safekeeping does not, of course, exclude the political or commercial use of heritage; quite the opposite. In this work I will show how heritage is manifested in Dracula tourism, what kind of heritage can be found there and why it is found and used.

## Popular culture

Popular culture, like many other widely used concepts, is hard to define precisely. Popular culture can be viewed as folk culture, as mass culture, as the 'other' of high culture, as postmodern culture and as global culture (Storey 2003, vi–vii). Popular culture has historically been produced under conditions of subordination and 'the popular' has been determined by forces of domination. Historically popular culture has been seen as degraded mass culture of the common people in comparison to the high culture of the men and women with social and political power. (Fiske 2011, 35–37; Storey 2003, 1.) This distinction between high and popular culture is often thought to have been in existence since the beginnings of human history, but in reality it is of rather recent origin. According to John Storey it was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that high culture started to become a significant institutional space (Storey 2003, 32). Because of the mass production and commercialisation behind popular culture, it was deemed as having no innate value

and there was no value seen in studying or examining the patterns and norms embedded in its products. Of course, at least since the middle of the twentieth century the values and cultural meanings of popular culture have been acknowledged, and popular culture has become a suitable area for academic research. According to Lane Crothers, popular culture offers insights into the meanings and values that its users attribute to it as well as providing a way for researchers to learn about the values, needs, concerns and standards by which different communities of people live. Consequently Crothers sees the adoption or rejection of a particular product of popular culture as fraught with political and social meaning and thus as valuable for explaining patterns of belief and behaviour within societies. (Crothers 2013, 13–14.) There is, however, no need to divide culture into high or low, or into good and bad. For a folklorist and a cultural researcher all forms of culture are valid objects for research and therefore there is no need to place value judgements on different forms of culture.

What I mean by popular culture in this investigation is the mainly Western popular culture related to Count Dracula, vampires, Transylvania and to a certain extent Vlad the Impaler. This popular culture includes books, movies, games, TV-shows and theatre plays, but the emphasis is on books and movies. I see popular culture as just that, popular. That means that it is widely shared, global and easily adoptable; simplifying somewhat, I find books and movies within the chosen field of research to be just that. Popular culture relating to Dracula started in the Gothic literature of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Britain and more precisely in 1897, when Bram Stoker published his novel *Dracula*. Since then the character and the story have gone through multiple variations and metamorphoses in different forms of popular culture, namely films and books. The impact of *Dracula* on Western popular culture has been immense. According to Duncan Light, Stoker's publication sealed the 'place myth' of Transylvania as the social and spatial *Other* of the West, which is still to some extent alive today. Stoker's book was not the first in Western literature to feature Transylvania, but it did have a lasting impact on popular culture, which in turn affects Dracula tourism (Light 2007: 749; Miller 2000: 44). In the Western imagination, Transylvania (and indeed, the whole of Romania) has become the home of the vampire Count Dracula, Dracula's country. This image of Transylvania is so strong that many foreigners think that it exists only in the minds of fiction-writers and film-makers, and express surprise when they learn that Transylvania actually exists as a real region (Hupchick 1995, 49). The popular culture of Dracula has affected Dracula tourism enormously; after all, without it Dracula tourism would not exist.

Although Bram Stoker's book is the natural starting point for Dracula tourism, the countless movies that have been made since 1931 have had an even bigger impact on Dracula tourism in terms of visual imagery and the preconceived images about Dracula and Transylvania that the tourists might have. This is easily explainable because Dracula is the second-most portrayed fictional character on screen (Skal 2004, 299).

Popular culture focusing on vampires does not end with Bram Stoker's Dracula. There have been several vampire booms since the late twentieth century. In addition to the Dracula movies of the 1950s and 1960s, the books by Anne Rice have greatly influenced the genre. Her first major vampire novel, *Interview with a Vampire* (1976), is often seen as starting the second wave of vampire literature where the character of the vampire developed from a monster of folklore towards a more versatile and more humanlike character. This development can be seen as reaching its peak in the recent (c.2005–c.2013) vampire boom following Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* books and the subsequent films as well as such TV-series as *True Blood*. (Hillabold 2013, 79–80.) Yet for some reason this newer vampire popular culture is not used and is not visible in Dracula tourism in Romania. I will deal with this issue in more detail in chapter 6.

## Hybridisation

Hybridisation is a term which describes different cultural elements combining and possibly producing a new form of culture. The mixing of cultural elements is not a recent phenomenon. What has changed is the pace and scope of this mixing. Nowadays cultural elements move and are borrowed quite rapidly because of the media, the internet, increased travel and so forth. There are multiple examples of hybridised forms of culture all around the world. Jan Nederveen Pieterse has mentioned Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam, Asian rap in London or Chinese tacos as emphatic examples of hybridisation of cultures (Pieterse 2001, 19). Popular culture and tourism are also very much examples of hybridisation. Dracula tourism, with its roots in popular culture, is also a good example of hybridisation, as I shall show.

## Methodology and research material

This research is mainly empirical in nature. My main sources are the fieldwork that I have done in 2010 and 2011 and the webpages of ten Romanian travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism. I use the narrative corpora and a

folkloristic perspective as my primary starting points. The stories and images used by the tour guides and found on the webpages form the bulk of my research material. The emphasis and perspective of my research is folkloristic. The theoretical approach is heavily influenced by my research material. I use critical discourse analysis and more specifically multimodal discourse analysis to analyse the webpages of the travel agencies. Discourses can be explained as manners of speaking, ways of thinking and ways to represent a subject. Discourses are not neutral and are often used to strengthen and to promote a cause. (Hall 1999, 98–102.) According to Teun A. van Dijk, critical discourse analysis is used to study ‘the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context’ (van Dijk 2001, 352). Furthermore, critical discourse analysis is used to study the relations between discourse, power, dominance, social inequality and the position of the discourse analyst in such social relationships (van Dijk 1993, 249). By using critical discourse analysis I am looking for certain texts or ‘written ways of speaking’ that recur over and over on the webpages. Discourses are used for a specific reason. By searching for these discourses I am able to identify what kinds of attitudes, ideas and mental images the providers of tourism want to give to the tourists. In this study the relations between power, dominance and inequality manifest themselves in the way certain aspects of culture are brought up within the discourses. Through critical discourse analysis it is possible to focus on the role that discourses have in the production, reproduction and challenging of dominance. Dominance can be defined as the exercise of social power by institutions or groups that result in some form of inequality. (van Dijk 1993, 249–250.) In this research the questions of dominance and inequality are about the way Romania and Romanian culture are portrayed in Dracula tourism.

Unlike discourse analysis, which approaches discourses through language, multimodal discourse analysis is an approach which focuses on how meaning is made through the use of multiple modes of communication (Jones 2013, 1). By combining multimodal discourse analysis with critical discourse analysis, I am able to get better and more comprehensive results from my research. According to Richard W. Hallet and Judith Kaplan-Weinger the discourse of tourism is a discourse of identity construction, promotion, recognition and acceptance that it is created through the manipulation of both linguistic and visual texts (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 5). Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger used multimodal discourse analysis, which incorporates both visual semiotic analysis, and critical discourse analysis to research the websites in their work (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 11). Because the internet is a very visual form of sharing information, it is also important to focus on the imagery that is used

on the websites of the travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism. Sometimes the text and the images may also have different or even contrasting meanings and therefore they are both important to research (van Leeuwen 2004, 15). By combining critical discourse analysis and multimodal discourse analysis and focusing on both the imagery and texts it is possible to get a better understanding of the discursive formation and of the promotion of identity that the provider of the website wants to offer.

I also approach my research material by using the concept of intertextuality. This means that all texts are read in relationship to others and this range of textual knowledge is used when reading a text. These relationships do not, however, need to take the form of specific allusions from one text to another and the reader does not have to be familiar with specific texts to be able to read intertextually. (Fiske 1987, 108.) In literary criticism intertextuality is used to describe the variety of ways in which texts interact with other texts. It focuses in particular on the interdependence between texts and not on their discreteness or uniqueness. (Montgomery, Durant, Fabb, Furniss & Mills 2000, 191.) Although originally a concept of literary theory, intertextuality can also be adapted to many other fields of culture like cinema, paintings, music, architecture, photography and virtually all cultural and artistic productions (Allen 2000, 174). Tourism is also a field where intertextuality can be adopted. Especially in literary tourism, movie-induced tourism and media tourism in general intertextuality can be a very helpful tool to understand both the appeal of the particular form of tourism and the tourist's experiences. By looking at the tourist experiences as texts, I use the concept of intertextuality as a way to understand the reasons behind tourists' expectations as well as the actual experience. I find Dracula tourism especially well suited to this kind of approach because it utilises literature, movies, fiction, history and tradition and is therefore intertextual in nature.

The third theoretical or analytical tool that I apply is the folklore process outlined by the late Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko. In short, this is the stereotypical life-history of folklore in any culture, which begins in the era before the birth of the concept of folklore and ends with the present-day assessment of the meaning of folklore in its culture (Honko 2013, 38). I look to see if it is possible to use, redefine and improve Honko's original idea and use it to counter and obviate the questions regarding authenticity and folklorism in tourism. I am especially interested in seeing how it can be applied when dealing with concepts like authenticity, tradition and tourism.

Finally, I use social constructionism as a theoretical frame for this research. As with many widely used concepts, there is no singular view or school of social constructionism. According to Andy Lock and Tom Strong, social

constructionism is concerned with meaning and understanding as the main feature of all human activities which have their beginnings in social interaction; the ways of meaning-making are specific to particular times and places. (Lock and Strong 2010, 6–7.) Similarly, Dave Elder-Vass argues that social constructionism is not a single synthesis, but rather a large field of social constructionisms balancing between traditional sociological arguments and post-modernist innovations. Elder-Vass finds one definite categorisation that fits all the different views about social constructionism: that the ways in which people collectively think and communicate about the world affects the way the world is. One of the most significant implications of a claim that something is socially constructed is that it could also be constructed differently. (Elder-Vass 2012, 4–5.) Social constructions are therefore fluid and can be deconstructed and constructed again differently. Social constructionism has been used in various fields of research and on varied themes and research topics; Ian Hacking mentions several books and research with different topics where social constructionism is mentioned, arguing that it has been used when talking about for example postmodernism, gender, emotions, homosexual culture, deafness and mind. (Hacking 1999, 1–2.) Hacking's point is to show and also criticise how widely the concept of social constructionism is used.

According to Dave Elder-Vass, language and discourses are most often cited as being the tools used in the social construction of the world (Elder-Vass 2012, 10–11). Of these two factors, I am more interested in discourses that are used to construct something. In my research what is constructed is of course Dracula tourism in Romania. The myriad of topics where social constructionism has been used includes the study of tourism. Research on social construction in tourism has focused on, for example, how tourist destinations have been constructed, experienced and marketed (Koivunen 2010, 158). Tourism is socially and culturally constructed. For example, tourism in Finnish Lapland is constructed mainly around Christmas and Santa Claus, around Lappish nature in general, around skiing or around all of these (Hall 2008, 61; Pretes 1995, 5 & 8). Similarly Dracula tourism is very much a construction, whether focused on fiction, tradition, history or all of them, depending on the providers of the tourism, which in this case are the tour agencies. Social and cultural constructionism in tourism is done through discourses and images. Tourism is largely based on the production, re-production and re-enforcement of images which serve to project the attractiveness of the destination to the tourists (Ringer 1998, 10). The production, re-production and re-enforcement of images are also very much present in Dracula tourism in Romania. In this investigation social constructionism will serve as a frame which combines the different elements of this study, namely the discourses and images, and the

tradition, that are used and constructed in Dracula tourism, the heritage that is brought out and the authenticity that is constructed.

The research material consists of my fieldwork and the websites of ten Romanian travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism. I have made three separate fieldwork trips to Romania, participating in a week-long Dracula tour on each occasion. My main research method here was participant observation. In addition I conducted interviews with the tour guides and with the other tourists. My first fieldwork trip was in April 2010; the tour was organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys. On this tour I was alone with the tour guide because the other participants had cancelled for various reasons. This gave me a good opportunity to talk freely with the tour guide and ask his opinions about Dracula tourism, the tour and the sites to be visited. During this trip I conducted four interviews with three employees of the Company of Mysterious Journeys.<sup>5</sup> The second trip was in October 2010; this was a Halloween-themed tour, again organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys. There were eight other participants on the tour; I had the opportunity to compare this trip with the previous, where I was alone with the guide. I also interviewed the other tourists in my group.<sup>6</sup> The third fieldwork trip was in October 2011; this was also a Halloween-themed tour, but with another tour agency, Transylvania Live. On this tour I conducted one interview with the guide.<sup>7</sup> Although I got permission to use the names of the guides that I interviewed, I decided not to do so in this work. The guides had all worked with their companies for several years and were all experienced tour guides. In April of 2016 as a part of a university course I took some folklore students to Romania. Although this trip was not a fieldwork trip, it enabled me to see what changes, if any, had been made in and to the Dracula sites we visited. During this trip we visited Bucharest, Snagov, Braşov, Sighişoara and Poienari.

Three interviews were conducted in a vehicle while driving between locations, one was made in a café and one was carried out in a hotel restaurant. The interviewees were Romanians but the language used was English. The reason for using only English was that because the interviewees used English in their

- 5 The interviews are of different lengths, the shortest of twenty minutes and the longest a little over an hour long.
- 6 The interviews with the other tourists were conducted via a questionnaire, which I handed to the other participants of the tour. In addition I made three separate interviews. I have used these interviews very sporadically, mostly as background information for this research.
- 7 This interview lasted a little over forty minutes. All the interviews have been transcribed and are in the possession of the author.



work, I found it appropriate to conduct the interview in the same language that they used in guiding the tourists. The web pages that I am researching are also written almost exclusively in English and therefore I feel that the use of the same language also with the interviewees is justified. The first tour was done by car with just me and the tour guide, the second on a bus with eight other tourists, a driver and the guide, and the third was done by car with two other tourists and the guide.

During all three trips I made field notes and kept a research diary, which in addition to the interviews and websites functions as the main research material in my work. As I am interested in the way Romanian travel agencies use tradition and how they deal with the fictitious side of Dracula tourism, I decided to investigate only Romanian travel agencies that offer Dracula tours. I look into the discourses and imagery, and the traditions about Vlad the Impaler (if any), that are to be found on the websites, and how the interplay between tradition, heritage and popular culture manifests itself. The ten travel agencies whose websites I use are the Company of Mysterious Journeys, Transylvania Live, Adventure Transylvania, Atlantic Tour, Ciao Romania, Cultural Romtour, Go Romania Tours, Quest Tours and Adventures, Club TRAVEscu (Ultramarine Travel International Agency)<sup>8</sup> and Visit Transylvania Travel. Of these agencies, seven offer tours that can vary in length and in theme and three offer only one basic Dracula tour. Seven agencies offer special Halloween themed tours. All of the agencies also offer other tours of Romania in addition to Dracula tours. (See Table 1.)

Although my research material, field notes, websites and interviews all seemingly differ, they complement each other and through their variance offer a better understanding of my research topic. The use of multiple sources in one study is not new; data triangulation has been widely used hitherto. Triangulation means simply looking at the same research question, or phenomenon, from more than one source of data. (Decrop 1999, 158; Denzin, N. K. 1978, 301.) I use my field notes mostly as background information and a way to align my own experiences and interpretations with what is said on the websites and in the guide interviews. From the guide interviews I derive information about the attitudes and objectives of the guides and the agencies. Both written and visual forms of information on the websites are considered.

8 From now on referred to as Ultramarine Travel.

Tour agency	Dracula tours	Halloween tours	Other than Dracula tours
1. Company of Mysterious Journeys	12	1	11
2. Transylvania Live	9	4	10
3. Adventure Transylvania	2	1	11
4. Atlantic Tour	1	0	(in Romania) 1
5. Ciao Romania	2	0	30
6. Cultural Romtour	1	1	28
7. Go Romania Tours	11	4	over 50
8. Quest Tours & Adventures	3	0	6
9. Ultramarine Travel	2	0	10
10. Visit Transilvania Travel	4	1	over 30

**Table 1.** The different tours organized by the different travel agencies.

## Ethical questions and research position

Researchers have a responsibility for the quality of their work, for the individuals, groups and societies studied and to those who provide information for the researchers. These responsibilities are commonly referred to as research ethics. (Alver & Øyen 2007, 11 and 17.) Bente Gullveig Alver and Ørjar Øysen argue that ‘research ethics concerns the assessment of how certain boundaries of research ought to be drawn’ (Alver & Øyen 2007, 17). In general, the research-ethical questions, problems, risks and dangers in humanities are less crucial than in some research fields, such as biomedicine. Yet the concepts of risk and damage are ambiguous and sometimes the consequences of research are difficult to predict. Humanities research, especially within cultural studies, usually deals with people’s everyday life and can therefore highlight risks concerning for example the privacy of the subject of research. Certain types of information may acquire protection against trespassing of privacy, such as information about religious and political affiliation, or information concerning health or sexual matters. Usually these questions are dealt with by stressing that consent to participate in the research is free and voluntary, and by the promise of anonymity. (Alver & Øyen 2007, 21–28.) Sometimes the subject of research may not fully understand what is implied by their consent and here the researchers’ responsibility is crucial. The researcher must explain what he is doing, how the material will be used and whether or not the material will be archived. I have tried to acknowledge these problems in my research.

I have positioned myself as a participant observer during the fieldwork and I have always told everyone involved of my position and intentions, and have asked and received permission to use the interviews as I see fit. I asked permission beforehand from both the companies to do my work and explained to them and to the tour guides, as well as to the other participants of the tours, about my work and my aims.<sup>9</sup> I also paid for the trip and was also therefore an equal member of the touring groups. Although I have received permission to use and mention the names of the tour guides that I have interviewed, I have decided not to do so:<sup>10</sup> this is in case (unlikely as it may be) something that the tour guides have told me may not be shared by their employers; I would not wish to cause any problems for my interviewees. I realise that as a researcher with a possibly wide audience, I am in something of a position of power regarding the research into the travel agencies. Because Dracula tourism is a source of income and livelihood for many, the results of this research are not meant to be used for purposes of comparison between the travel agencies; they are purely of academic interest and should not be taken as harbouring criticism towards any specific tour agency. The results are as objective as possible, although I do realise that no research, at least in the humanities, can be purely objective. The researcher is a subject and therefore whatever he or she does is subjective to a degree. This research is done by me, and therefore the results are subjective reflections of my point of view. Another researcher might have asked different questions, chosen different travel agencies or different research methods and therefore might also have ended up with different results. The research is always dependent on the researcher.

9 This permission is audible from the interviews as well as documented on the emails between me and the travel agencies in question.

10 Because I did not explicitly ask for a permission to archive my research material, I have decided not to do so. All my research material (interviews and field notes both in original form and as transcribed) are in my possession.

## 2. Dracula

**D**racula is one of the most recognisable and widely known characters of popular culture. Usually people connect Dracula with the fictitious vampire Count Dracula, created by Bram Stoker in his novel *Dracula*, which was originally published in 1897. The figure has since appeared in dozens of books, comics, movies and theatre plays. In Dracula tourism there are two characters that are known as Dracula, Vlad the Impaler and the vampire Count Dracula. In contrast to Count Dracula, Vlad the Impaler was a historical Romanian ruler. These two characters have often been conflated. Vlad the Impaler is also often presented as the basis or inspiration for Stoker's vampire. Most of the links that have been created between the two Draculas are more or less artificial, yet they are persistent and strong. This linkage is so strong that the names Count Dracula and Vlad the Impaler have in some cases even become synonymous. This connection, however, is in reality almost non-existent.

### Vlad the Impaler

The 'historical Dracula' Vlad the Impaler is one of the most famous rulers of Romanian history, both inside and outside the country. Vlad's fame comes mostly from fifteenth- to seventeenth-century stories about him and from the connection of his name with the famous vampire count. Vlad the Impaler was also known as Vlad Dracula. In Romania Vlad is mostly known by his cognomen *Țepeș*, which means the Impaler. This name was attached to him in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. According to Nicolae Stoicescu, a Romanian ruler called Radu the Great mentions 'Vlad Voevod [Ruler] called *Țepeș*' in a document from 1506 and the Turkish chronicles from the fifteenth century refer to him as 'Kazykly', which means Impaler. (Stoicescu 1978, 184.) This cognomen came from the old and painful execution method of impaling, which was by no means an invention of Vlad. There are however many stories and documents where Vlad is said to have used this method quite often and it is therefore attached to him. (Rezachevici 2006; Stoicescu 1978, 187.) The other name, 'Dracula', comes from Vlad's father, Vlad Dracul (Vlad II), who was the ruler of Wallachia from 1436 to 1442 and again from 1443 to 1447 (Treptow 2000, 33). In 1431 Vlad Dracul was invested with the Order of the

Dragon, an organisation founded by the German emperor, Sigismund of Luxemburg, and dedicated to defending Western Catholicism against heretics and infidels. Vlad Dracul probably wore the golden chain of the order with dragon insignia, and was hence associated with the dragon. The cognomen Dracul or Dracula/Draculea comes from this association, and Vlad the Impaler simply inherited the name. (Andreescu 1999, 183.) In fact the name was also attached to Vlad Dracul's other sons and not just to Vlad the Impaler (Stoicescu 1978, 181–183).

Vlad the Impaler was a Wallachian ruler, a *voivode* who ruled on three separate occasions in 1448, 1456–1462 and briefly in 1476. Although many books and internet sites claim that Vlad was born in 1431 and some go so far as to give an exact date of his birth (Florescu & McNally 1989, 45), the exact date or even the year of his birth is not known. The oldest surviving document mentioning him is from 1437. In order for Vlad to have been a serious candidate for the Wallachian throne in 1448 many scholars assume that he must have been around 17 to 20 years old at that time. Therefore most scholars have concluded that he was born some time between 1428 and 1432, presumably in Sighișoara in Transylvania (Giurescu 1990, 14; Treptow 2000, 46). During Vlad's lifetime Wallachia was situated between two great powers, Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, and the rulers of Wallachia had to balance between them. Vlad Dracul had lent support to the Transylvanian governor John Hunyadi, which the Ottoman sultan did not accept, because he did not want Hungary to gain more influence in Wallachia. In 1442 Vlad Dracul was called to the Ottoman court and was imprisoned after the sultan considered Vlad's actions to be treachery. Vlad Dracul was released at the end of 1442 but had to leave his two sons, Vlad and Radu, behind as hostages. In 1447 Vlad Dracul was killed by the order of John Hunyadi. It is not known for how long his son Vlad was a hostage but after his father's death he became the voivode of Wallachia with the help of the Ottomans for a short period in 1448. (Treptow 2000, 46–56.)

Vlad the Impaler's second and longest reign began in 1456 and lasted until 1462. What Vlad did between 1448 and 1456 is not precisely known, but apparently he was in the Ottoman court for a short while and then left for Moldavia and Transylvania, where he awaited his chance to regain the Wallachian throne. In 1456 Vlad entered Wallachia, this time with the approval of Hungary, drew away and killed the voivode, Vladislav II, and regained the throne. (Andreescu 1999, 50–51, 59.) Vlad used much of his second reign to consolidate his power and especially to strengthen the authority of the state, to balance between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire and to end the disputes between Wallachia and the Transylvanian cities, namely Brașov and Sibiu

(Andreescu 1999, 65; 73; Treptow 2000, 75; 115). Vlad also tried to strengthen order and justice by punishing everybody who disregarded the laws of the country. These (by modern standards) often harsh punishments together with the later horror stories about him gave Vlad a reputation as a harsh but just ruler or in the eyes of his adversaries as a bloodthirsty and cruel tyrant. Although his reputation is partly based upon these actions, many scholars have pointed out that the harsh actions taken by Vlad did not differ from the common punishments of the times. For example, impalement as a form of punishment was quite widespread and used in Africa, the Ottoman Empire and Europe until the eighteenth century. (Rezachevici 2006; Stoicescu 1978, 187–188.)

The reason Vlad used these punishments so vigorously is explained in one famous story about him, known from Romanian folklore as well as from the Slavonic ‘Tale about Voivode Dracula’. In the story, Vlad placed a golden cup in the town market for people to use while drinking from the well and nobody dared to steal it for fear of Vlad’s punishment. (Andreescu 1999, 196.) This story, whether there is any truth behind it or not, demonstrates how Vlad and the way he fought against crime and injustice in his land was seen by the people in Romania. Vlad apparently used these imposing punishment methods in order to scare the people into not breaking the law. This is also the sentiment echoed in the answers given to Georgeta Ene during her fieldwork in the village of Aref in 1969, where she gathered folklore about Vlad Țepeș. In one of the collected narratives Vlad is said to have ruled his country so skilfully that the news spread to the entire world that in Wallachia everybody followed the laws and nobody dared to harm anyone or steal from the people or the state. (Ene 1976, 582–585.) Although Vlad was not the first or the only person to use impalement, he nevertheless used it enough to acquire the cognomen *Impaler*. There is one incident especially which has cemented his reputation and his connection with impalement, namely the forest of the impaled, which was a part of his war against the sultan, Mehmed II.

Towards the end of his second reign Vlad had apparently succeeded in strengthening his power and authority domestically and resolved the differences between Wallachia and the Transylvanian Saxon cities of Brașov and Sibiu. The next step in his plans seemed to have been breaking Wallachia free from Ottoman influence and its status as a tributary state as well as starting or spearheading a Christian crusade against the Turks, an idea that was supported by Pope Pius II. (Treptow 2000, 115; 120.) Vlad ceased to pay the expected annual tribute to the sultan. Sultan Mehmed II demanded Vlad pay the tribute and break off all relations with Hungary. Vlad declared war and attacked Ottoman positions along and south of the Danube in 1461.

(Treptow 2000, 118–124.) The sultan gathered a very large army and crossed the Danube in order to get rid of Vlad, who had a significantly smaller army. Because of Vlad's smaller army, he had to use scorched-earth tactics and guerilla, and even psychological, warfare. One of the most famous incidents of this war was the gruesome sight that the Turkish army encountered somewhere outside of the city of Târgoviște. A Byzantine 15<sup>th</sup> Century historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles wrote that the sultan's army saw a field with stakes that was several kilometres long and a kilometre wide, with some twenty thousand bodies of men, women and children on stakes, which terrified the Turks. (Andreescu 1999, 119–120; Stoicescu 1978, 90; Treptow 2000, 134.) This gruesome sight was obviously a part of Vlad the Impaler's scare tactics against the Turks. The Romanian historian Nicolae Stoicescu argues that because Vlad was a hostage in the Ottoman court as a child, he must have learned about Islamic burial rituals, of which this sight was a gross violation, which would have added to the effect it had on the Turkish army. Some sources even said that the sultan was so appalled by this sight and other attacks made by Vlad that he turned around and went back home, thus leaving Vlad as the victor (Stoicescu 1978, 92). Although the outcome of this war is somewhat disputed amongst historians, Vlad was nevertheless forced to give up the crown and his brother Radu the Handsome became the new voivode of Wallachia with the aid of the Turks. After his defeat Vlad apparently retreated to Poienari, where he was besieged. According to local legends, Vlad managed to escape through the mountains with the help of the locals by shoeing his horse's shoes backwards (Ene 1976, 588). He escaped to Transylvania, where he was to meet the Hungarian king Mathias Corvinus for support. Mathias Corvinus, however, ordered the arrest of Vlad and kept him as a prisoner for the next twelve years. (Treptow 2000, 153.)

The reasons for the actions of Mathias Corvinus have been widely discussed. Corvinus received money from Pope Pius II in order to organise a crusade against the Ottoman Empire. He could not however commit to this because of his disputes with the Holy Roman emperor, Frederick III, over the Hungarian crown. Corvinus needed an excuse to withdraw from the planned crusade and the arrest of Vlad offered him one. He used forged letters in which Vlad supposedly swore allegiance to the sultan and even promised to surrender Transylvania to him. These letters probably originated from the Saxon merchants in Transylvania, who had had many disputes with Vlad. These letters and Vlad's arrest also started the German stories about Vlad, which were to have a long-lasting impact on his image. (Andreescu 1999, 139; Stoicescu 1978, 104–105; Treptow 2000, 152–155.) I will deal with these stories later in this study.

Vlad remained a prisoner until 1474, when Mathias Corvinus released him and offered him the crown of Wallachia once more. The exact conditions of Vlad's imprisonment are not known, but it seems that he was held in Visegrad on the Danube about 7 km from the capital, Buda. It is probable that the terms of his imprisonment were not very strict and that it was more like a house arrest. Apparently he was allowed to have visitors and he was present in the court. He was especially brought to the court whenever the king welcomed ambassadors from the sultan, because of his reputation among the Turks. (McNally & Florescu 1994, 97; Stoicescu 1978, 114.) After Vlad was released from his captivity he served as a commander in the Hungarian army and participated in battles in Bosnia. After Bosnia, Vlad helped Stephen the Great in his struggle against the Turks. Vlad finally regained the throne of Wallachia for the third time in November 1476, but this reign was not a long one: only a month or so later he died in battle against the Turks and Basarab Laiota, the voivode Vlad had replaced. (Andreescu 1999, 142–146; Stoicescu 1978, 120–131; Treptow 2000, 163–166.)

There are several versions of the death of Vlad the Impaler. According to some sources, he was surprised and killed by Basarab Laiota. Some sources claim that it was his own men who killed him by mistake, while others say that he was murdered by one of his own men following orders from the Turks. (Andreescu 1999, 148–149; McNally & Florescu 1994, 102–103; Stoicescu 1978, 128–129.) There are also several candidates for his burial place. The popular belief is that he was buried on the monastery island of Snagov (McNally & Florescu 1994, 105–115). Some sources indicate that his head was sent to the sultan as a present and that the rest of his body was buried in Snagov. (Andreescu 1999, 150; Stoicescu 1978, 131.) Although the belief in Snagov as his burial place is strong and widespread, there is little evidence to support it. (Giurescu 1991, 22.)

Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu note the local belief that the original tomb on Snagov was desecrated and the body was moved from its original place near the altar to another spot near the entrance of the church. This was supposedly done deliberately in order for Vlad's unworthy remains to be trampled upon by the faithful. This was said to have been done by Greek monks in the seventeenth century. According to some legends the monks also threw animal bones in the original grave to further desecrate it. (McNally & Florescu 1994, 105–115.) This veracity of this tradition has, however, been challenged. In 1933 the Romanian archaeologist Dino Rosetti carried out archaeological excavations on Snagov. In his excavations he found that the so-called tomb of Vlad the Impaler in front of the altar contained many animal bones; it was in fact a prehistoric pit, and not the result of the activities of Greek monks.



Close to the entrance of the church Rosetti did indeed find a tomb that seemed to belong to a wealthy unknown man. The tomb contained fragments of a purple funerary veil, pieces of a yellow-brown velvet coat, silver buttons and buttons made of golden thread as well as a golden ring, and a segment of a golden thread with three faience buttons, adorned with petals of garnet on a golden plate. This tomb is considered by some as the actual tomb of Vlad the Impaler, although originally Rosetti made no such claims. According to Constantin Rezachevici, it was only in 1973 that Rosetti made the claim to a journalist that this tomb was indeed the tomb of Vlad the Impaler. (Rezachevici 2006.)

Apparently Rosetti based this claim on the local legends about the tomb and about Vlad as the founder of this monastery. According to Rezachevici these legends only date from the nineteenth century and have no factual basis. The original church in Snagov was built during or right after the reign of Vladislav I in the fourteenth century, many years before Vlad the Impaler was even born. In addition the church that stands nowadays in Snagov is from the sixteenth century and did not exist in Vlad the Impaler's lifetime. It is impossible to think that Vlad's tomb would have been dug up and transferred from an earlier church to the present one, especially since the builder of this church, Neagoe Basarab, was from a rival family. (Rezachevici 2006.) So even if Vlad was originally buried in Snagov, the tomb would have been destroyed during the construction of the present church. According to Rezachevici a more probable place for Vlad's tomb is the first church of the monastery of Comana, which was founded by Vlad the Impaler. Unfortunately this church was demolished and a new monastery was built on top of it in the late sixteenth century. (Rezachevici 2006.) Although Vlad's tomb has not been found and the connections to Snagov are tenuous, Snagov is still considered as the possible burial place of Vlad by many. Many tourists still visit the church and take pictures in front of the so-called tomb of Vlad the Impaler in front of the altar.

## The tradition of Vlad the Impaler

Besides the historical documents, a lot of the information about Vlad the Impaler comes from the stories concerning his life and deeds. The most famous and widespread stories can be divided into German, Russian (or Slavic) and Romanian stories. Although there are many similarities between them, these three story collections differ from each other in tone and especially in the way they portray Vlad the Impaler. The tradition about Vlad the Impaler that I am

referring to in this book is based on these stories and the way they have been used and the way they have influenced the image of Vlad the Impaler ever since. The tradition about Vlad the Impaler started already during his lifetime. According to Stefan Andreescu there must have existed an oral tradition favourable to Vlad the Impaler in Wallachia and in Southeastern Europe in the fifteenth century which in turn influenced both the Russian and the German stories (Andreescu 1999, 208).

In addition to the German, Russian and Romanian traditions there also exist Byzantine and Turkish sources and other written sources such as the memoirs of the pope Pius II called *The Commentaries of Pius II* where Vlad is also mentioned. The most prominent contemporary Byzantine scholars to write about Vlad, according to Stefan Andreescu, were Laonikos Chalkokondyles, Doukas and Kritovoulos (or Kritoboulos) of Imbros. Doukas gives the most favourable account, while the writings of Chalkokondyles tend to give a sensible, reliable and more objective rendition of the events he describes. The account given by Kritovoulos on the other hand is much more favourable to Sultan Mehmed II. (Andreescu 1999, 184–190.) Kritovoulos was intent upon glorifying the actions of the Ottomans, especially Mehmed II, and he therefore show Vlad as an unfaithful, ungrateful, rash and arrogant man who appeared to be nothing but a minor nuisance to the sultan (Andreescu 1999, 191; Kritovoulos 1954, 178–180). Most of the Turkish sources are accounts of how the treacherous Vlad revolted against the sultan and how the sultan subjugated Wallachia, beat Vlad and put his brother Radu on the throne. In some sources Vlad also has positive features, although most of the time his image is solely negative. (Andreescu 1999, 192–194; Stoicescu 1978, 174–175; Treptow 2000, 190–205.) Pope Pius II, a contemporary of Vlad's, mentions him in his commentaries as John Dragula, who inflicted terrible pain on people and was responsible for the deaths of over 55,000. The *Commentaries* of Pius II seem to echo the image of Vlad from the German horror stories, resembling them in the descriptions of the myriad means of torture and killing. (Pius II 1957, 738–740.) In addition to these sources, there are also several European historical works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which mention Vlad, mostly in a positive light (Stoicescu 1978, 172–177).

All of these sources can be seen as parts of the tradition of Vlad the Impaler, and they contain many of the same stories or episodes as the German, Russian and Romanian stories. They are not, however, as widely circulated and have not enjoyed such a long-term notoriety as the German, Russian and Romanian stories.

## The German stories

The German stories have survived both in manuscript form and as printed pamphlets. So far four surviving manuscripts and thirteen prints or pamphlets have been uncovered. The manuscripts are from the late fifteenth century and the prints from the late fifteenth century to late sixteenth century. The stories are a collection of short episodes, mostly dealing with atrocities associated with Vlad the Impaler. Altogether there are forty-six episodes, although none of the surviving manuscripts or prints contains all of them. The order and number of episodes differ somewhat between the various editions. The four manuscripts that have survived are named after the places where they are kept: Colmar, Lambach, St Gallen and London. The Colmar manuscript is from the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the Lambach manuscript dates from 1480, the St Gallen manuscript from about 1500 and the London manuscript from the end of the fifteenth century. In the manuscripts Vlad is called Dracol or Tracol. The surviving pamphlets were printed around (modern) Germany between 1488 and 1559–1568. In the pamphlets Vlad is called Dracol or Dracole with the added title ‘voivode’ in different variations. (Harmening 1983, 81–82; 99.) Many of the pamphlets also contain title-page pictures or woodcuts. Most of these woodcuts are portraits of Vlad the Impaler but there is also a famous scene from one of the stories depicting Vlad having breakfast in the midst of many impaled victims. The stories do not have a chronological or thematic structure. Only the beginning and end episodes of some of the stories can be seen as a framework of sorts. The episodes are either simple lists of cruelty with details about the place and time or fluctuating episodes without locations or dates, and more anecdotal in nature. (Striedter 1961, 407.) Some of the episodes are more realistic than others, some are based on real events but exaggerated, some share universal folkloric themes and some are purely works of fiction. All the stories begin with the mention of the death of Vlad’s father by the orders of the ‘old Governor’. Then the stories mention that Vlad and his brothers embraced Catholicism and promised to uphold the Christian faith, and then they briefly describe the enthronement of Vlad in Wallachia. The first political act of Vlad that is mentioned is the execution of his predecessor, Vladislav II. Other historical facts that are referred to are the attacks on Braşov and the lands surrounding Sibiu, and the capturing and execution of another rival, Dan III. (Harmening 1983, 99; Treptow 2000, 59, 100–106, 112.)

Most of the episodes that can be shown to refer to historical events are connected with military actions undertaken by Vlad. Most have a clear chronological structure and are usually slightly longer than the others. Although the events described have historical roots, they are usually exaggerated, especially

concerning the numbers of the victims. The German stories do have a sort of a chronological structure at the beginning and in most of the prints in the end. The chronological ending is found in one surviving manuscript (London, British Library) and in ten surviving prints, although the final episode itself is different in the manuscript. Here, Vlad's (Dracula's) wedding and his arrest are described (Harmening 1983, 25). The prints end with the arrest of Vlad, his christening and his restoration (Harmening 1983, 99). In the middle some of the episodes describe historical events in a chronological manner, but they are surrounded by episodes that depict various atrocities associated with Vlad without any coherent and chronological structure.

The German stories have generally been regarded as propaganda and as containing huge exaggerations. They portray Vlad as a bloodthirsty tyrant and a madman, and were mostly written as propaganda against Vlad the Impaler by the Saxon merchants, with whom he had many disputes. In addition, the Hungarian king Mathias Corvinus was also instrumental in the formation, and especially in the circulation, of the stories. As mentioned earlier, Corvinus needed an excuse to withdraw his support for Vlad and the fight against the Turks. By using forged letters about Vlad's betrayal and horror stories collected from the Saxon merchants of Transylvania, the king could justify his actions to the pope. The propagandist function becomes clear, for example, in the way Vlad is described in one episode as having caused more pain than Herod, Nero Diocletian and all of the tyrants and oppressors of Christians put together. (Harmening 1983, 110–111.) This is clearly both exaggeration and propaganda, trying to identify Vlad with the well-known oppressors of Christians. Another example of propaganda is in the number of victims, which must be a huge exaggeration: Vlad supposedly killed over 80,000 men, women and children over six years (Harmening 1983, 113–114). Although the overall image of Vlad in the stories is negative, there are a couple of episodes where his actions are somewhat rationalised.

It seems that the original German text which was used as the basis for the propaganda launched and fostered by the Hungarian court was conceived independently in southern Transylvania. Although the hostilities between Wallachia and the Transylvanian towns had cooled down, the raids made by Vlad were obviously still fresh in the memory of the Transylvanian Saxons from Sibiu and Braşov. According to Stefan Andreescu, there was a deliberate campaign of defamation of Vlad the Impaler launched by the Hungarian court in 1462. In 1462–1463 the court apparently deliberately fostered the dissemination of the negative legend of Vlad the Impaler in Central and Eastern Europe. (Andreescu 1999, 236–237.) In these stories Vlad was responsible for many kinds of torture and violence. Some of these torture methods include

mutilations, forms of impalement, excision of women's breasts, boiling victims alive and in general desecrating corpses (Treptow 2000, 218–221). Similarities between the German stories and other horror stories from history are apparent. For example many of the torture methods can be found in martyrdom legends and from the horror stories of the Finnish Civil War from 1918 (Peltonen 1996, 145–147). The similarities can be explained quite easily. Many of the torture methods described in the stories are actual means of punishment of the time so it is no wonder that they are used. (Peltonen 1996, 147; Rezachevici 2006.) They also reflect the circulation of international motifs. Although Vlad the Impaler died in 1476, stories continued to be printed around Germany for the next century. This indicates that while the original propaganda function of the stories must soon have faded, they were absorbed into the popular literature of the time. The prints became popular, and have even been called one of the first best-sellers in Europe. The popularity of the stories is largely due to the invention of a movable type by Johannes Gutenberg, which enabled their widespread dissemination in print. (McNally & Florescu 1994, 78; Treptow 2000, 176.)

In addition to the pamphlets and manuscripts, the long narrative poem by Michel Beheim called 'von ainem wutrich der hies Trakle waida von der Walachei', which is clearly connected with the German stories, can be added to the German tradition about Vlad the Impaler. Michel Beheim was a court poet and worked in several courts around Europe in the fifteenth century. He wrote his poem while working at the court of the Holy Roman emperor, Friedrich III, in Vienna in 1463. According to his own account as mentioned in his poem, Beheim heard stories about Vlad's cruelty and injustice from a Catholic monk called Brother Jacob. Jacob had apparently escaped Vlad's persecution of monks and had arrived at the imperial court seeking refuge. Beheim spoke frequently with Brother Jacob and used these conversations as the basis of his poem. In addition to these discussions, Beheim based his work on news heard at the court and a written source about the deeds of Vlad. This written source was probably sent from the Saxon towns first to Buda and then onwards to Austria. It is probable that there was a concerted effort from Matthias Corvinus' chancery to circulate this as propaganda, as noted earlier. Most of this written source are part of what is now called the St Gall manuscript (from 1462). The poem starts with the death of Vlad's father and the beginning of Vlad's (second) reign. From there on the poem describes various gruesomely inventive punishments perpetrated by Vlad for more or less the next thousand lines. The poem ends with the capture of Vlad and his imprisonment in Hungary. (Dickens & Miller 2003; Gille & Spriewald 1968, 285–316; Willcocks 2007, 184–186.)

The German stories present a negative image of Vlad, and are clearly exaggerated. Saying that Vlad was a bloodthirsty tyrant and a madman who inflicted more terrifying, frightening and unspeakable torture than all the early persecutors of Christians leaves no room for interpretation of the meaning and the attitude towards Vlad in these stories (Andreescu 1999, 229). The overall tone of the stories is negative, and irrational. In a way the modern vampire or monster Dracula tradition can be seen as a continuation, albeit a shaky one, of this tradition.

## The Russian stories

The Russian or Slavonic stories about Vlad are a collection of stories entitled *The Tale of the Voivode Dracula*. They were written no later than 1486 and the oldest surviving manuscript dates from the year 1490. The tale ends with the statement written by a monk called Efrasim who writes that he transcribed the text in 1490 from an original text written in 1486. The manuscripts were copied many times in Russia in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but not printed until the nineteenth century. There are about twenty extant manuscripts that have survived to this day. (Florescu & McNally 1989, 208; McNally 1982, 127; Striedter 1961, 421.) The exact writer or collector of the tale is not known and this has been the subject of a somewhat heated debate which seemed to not reach consensus (Andreescu 1999, 202; McNally 1982, 127; Striedter 1961, 413). *The Tale of the Voivode Dracula* is not a chronicle nor a proper biography since it does not follow a chronological order and it does not provide consistent information about Vlad. It is mostly a collection of anecdotes of literary and historical value and it has even been called the first historical novel in Russian. (Andreescu 1999, 195–196; McNally 1982, 127.) The tale is a collection of nineteen episodes, which can be divided in two sections.

According to Stefan Andreescu the first thirteen episodes derive from the original nucleus of folklore about Vlad the Impaler that circulated around Wallachia. There are four story episodes that are found in the German, Russian and Romanian story tradition about Vlad the Impaler. These are found within the first thirteen episodes. The last six episodes and the introduction were probably written by a scholar, whose idea it was to collect and record these anecdotes into a coherent tale. The scholar seemed to have combined information he gathered about the latter part of Vlad's life with the circulating oral legends. (Andreescu 1999, 201.) There are both similarities and differences between the Russian and the German stories. Altogether there are ten

points of coincidence between the two versions, which proves that they both had similar sources. It is also possible that the author or collector of the Russian tales knew or at least was aware of the German stories even though they cannot be seen as the source for the Russian stories. The Russian stories start with an introduction, relating that in the Wallachian land there lived a Christian prince called Dracula, meaning the devil in the Wallachian language, who was cruelly clever and lived his life according to this name. (Andreescu 1999, 200.) The first three stories are about the nailing of the caps to the heads of the Turkish messengers and the sultan's reaction to this. After these chronological and coherent story episodes, there are ten episodes about the actions taken by Vlad. These vary in length and are not chronological or interconnected. Most of these episodes are also found in almost identical form in the German stories. The last six episodes tell of the capture, imprisonment and death of Vlad. (Andreescu 1999, 195–200.)

The major difference between the Russian and the German stories is in the way Vlad is portrayed. In the German stories, Vlad is clearly portrayed as a cruel madman with only few hints of any redeeming qualities. The Russian stories present an altogether different image, mostly a positive one with the exception of two episodes from the latter section of the *Tale*. In these two episodes, Vlad is said to have tortured and killed little birds and mice while being a prisoner and having 'loved the sweetness of the earthly world so much that he abandoned Orthodoxy and forsook the light in favour of darkness' (Catholicism). These two negative episodes might have been more the personal interpretations of the author than any stories originating in folk tradition. The author of the *Tale* must have been Orthodox because he was more critical about Dracula's abandonment of Orthodoxy than his cruelties. (Andreescu 1999, 199–205; McNally 1982, 130.) The image of Vlad in the Russian stories is that of a brave, bold, wise and (self-declared) great ruler who is also sometimes given to bouts of excessive cruelty. (Andreescu 1999, 205.) One major factor explaining the differences in the image of Vlad between the German and the Russian stories lies in the function of the stories.

The propaganda function of the German stories has already been elaborated upon. The purpose of the Russian stories is less clear. It is plausible that in addition to being a historical and literary work, the *Tale* could have been intended as a tract in favour of the autocratic one-man rule of the Russian tsar, Ivan III. For example the different worldviews in the stories are illustrated especially in the tale about the two monks. Vlad asks from two monks what people thought about him. One monk lied and told Vlad that people told nothing but good things about him and that he was a just ruler. The other monk told him that he had done badly and that nobody spoke kindly about

him. In the German version Vlad kills the monk who lied and lets the one who spoke the truth live, thus punishing a liar. In the Russian version Vlad punishes the one who told the truth because that is not how one should behave and speak in front of great sovereigns, and rewards the monk who spoke well about him. (Andreescu 1999, 197; Harmening 1983, 36.) Although it was originally probably not in fact intended as a 'mirror of princes', the *Tale* became a source of inspiration to the Russian administration at the close of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth. In the Russian stories, Vlad is seen as a ruler with unlimited authority over people of all walks of life, a ruler who had been invested with sovereign power and who had no one to answer to but God. (Andreescu 1999, 257–262; McNally 1982, 132; McNally & Florescu 1994, 199.)

The *Tale* was apparently popular in the Russian administration and influenced the tsars of Russia for some time. Especially strong was its impact on the narrative tradition about Ivan IV, the Terrible. (Florescu & McNally 1989, 212.) There are many similarities between the stories of the two autocrats in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (Perrie 1987, 96.) For example in one episode of the *Tale*, Vlad lures beggars and thieves into a house to eat and drink as much as they want. Then he promises to relieve them of the cares in this world and has the house boarded up and set aflame. (Andreescu 1999, 197.) A similar story is told about Ivan the Terrible, who in 1575 lured beggars inside, promising them charity but killing them (Perrie 1987, 97). According to the legends, after a battle both Vlad the Impaler and Ivan the Terrible rewarded those soldiers who had wounds on the front of their bodies and punished those who were wounded in the back (Andreescu 1999, 203; Perrie 1987, 97). Another famous story that is almost the same in both traditions is the nailing of the hat of a Turkish ambassador to his head because he refused to take it off in front of the ruler (Andreescu 1999, 196). In the version about Ivan the Terrible, recorded in the early seventeenth century, the ambassador is Turkish; in later versions he is first Italian, then French, and in the latest version a Jewish merchant (Perrie 1987, 97–99). Some of the similarities between the stories can be explained by the use of wandering motifs; it is clear that the *Tale* was widely known and used in Russia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

## The Romanian stories

Behind both the German and the Russian stories, there was an oral tradition favourable to Vlad the Impaler circulating in Wallachia and in South-eastern Europe (Stoicescu 1978, 175).



Although they predated the German and Russian stories in their origin, the first of the Romanian stories about Vlad was collected and recorded only in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. It concerns the construction of the Poienari fortress, in which Vlad orders the inhabitants of Târgoviște to build the fortress as a punishment. (Andreescu 1999, 207–208; Stăvăruș 1978, 51.) The same story was later collected in the mid-eighteenth century by Neofit, the metropolitan of Wallachia, when passing through Poienari. Besides the story about the construction of the fortress, Neofit also collected a story about the Turkish attack and Vlad's escape from the fortress. (Stoicescu 1978, 133.) This latter tale is still told and known today in the village of Aref near the Poienari fortress. Some of these stories were collected in the early twentieth century by Constantin Rădulescu-Codin and Petre Ispirescu, but the authenticity of these stories as real folklore is debated, especially in the case of Ispirescu (Andreescu 1999, 207–208). The stories about Vlad the Impaler that were written by Ispirescu and published posthumously seemed to have been influenced more by written sources, especially the German stories about Vlad, than by folklore and cannot therefore be seen as authentic folklore (Stăvăruș 1978, 51; Stoicescu 1978, 135). The stories collected by Ispirescu are considered to belong more to literature than folklore (Florescu 1977, 31).

In 1969 Georgeta Ene and a group of researchers carried out a survey in the village of Arefu and collected thirty-two folkloric pieces. These pieces contained twenty-five historical legends about Vlad the Impaler – ten stories, each with several variants. Some of these are similar to the German or Russian stories, but there are also stories that are completely unknown in literature. Some of these could have been learned from literature or in school, but some of them seem to be authentic pieces of local folklore. Most of these concern the fortress of Poienari or its ruins, or places around the village, and they have direct links to the history of the area. (Ene 1976, 582–584.) The stories collected in 1969 are about the construction of the Poienari fortress, its treasure, Vlad's escape from there, the gift to the villagers of Arefu, the origin of Vlad's name, his daughter or wife, the burning of layabouts, thieves and cripples, foreign merchants, the bishop who hated the smell of corpses, the woman who made a short shirt for her husband and Vlad's war with the Turks (Ene 1976, 583–584).

Among these ten different legends, one can find similarities with the German and Russian stories in four legends, namely the burning of the poor, the foreign merchant, the bishop who hated the smell of corpses, and the woman who made a short shirt for her husband. Although they are similar and are clearly related, there are small differences between them. For example, in the story about the burning of the layabouts, thieves and cripples, which is

found in all three story traditions, the reasons for Vlad's actions and the status of the victims differ. In all of the stories, Vlad summons people to a house and to a feast that he has prepared and then when the people are eating he orders the doors to be shut and the house to be set on fire, killing everyone inside. In the German stories the victims are beggars and Vlad kills them because they eat the bread of others without working for it (Harmening 1983, 36). In the Russian stories the victims are old, poor and sick. Vlad asks them if they want to be relieved of their worries and wants in this world; when the people answer positively he orders the doors to be shut and the place burned down. He explains his actions by saying that now the people are no longer a burden to others and that they do not need to suffer any more. (Andreescu 1999, 197; McNally & Florescu 1994, 201–202.) In the Romanian stories the victims are layabouts, thieves and cripples, whom Vlad kills because they did 'all sorts of dastardly and thievish deeds' (Ene 1976, 584). According to the informants who told the story, Vlad's actions were motivated by his desire to introduce peace and order inside his country (Ene 1976, 585). There is a faint distinction in the victims and in the actions taken by Vlad between these stories. In the German stories the victims are beggars who Vlad kills because they are not working for their living. So, one could argue that in his eyes they are useless and have no human dignity. In the Russian stories the victims are old, poor and sick and Vlad kills them out of mercy and so that they are no longer a burden to others. So Vlad is acting on behalf of the victims and on behalf of his subjects in general. In the Romanian story Vlad is clearly punishing people who are wrongdoers and are causing harm to others, thus making his land safer for all people.

The story about the bishop who hated the smell of corpses and was therefore impaled high up so that the stench would not bother him anymore is also found in all three stories. The only difference is the victim. In the German story the victim is an honourable man, in the Russian he is a servant and in the Romanian he is a bishop. (Andreescu 1999, 198; Ene 1976, 586; Harmening 1983, 99.) Here again the clear distinction in the status of the victims demonstrates the different audiences and functions of the stories. In the German story the killing of an honourable man is undoubtedly seen as a bad thing. In the Russian story the victim is a servant who dares to complain in the presence of a great ruler and is punished because of this offence. The victim in the Romanian stories, a bishop, may be an indicator of the attitudes of the commoners towards the clergy.

The legend about the treasure in Poienari may also be connected with both the German and the Russian stories about how Vlad hid his treasure and killed the people who helped him to hide it. In the Romanian version

there is a treasure in Poienari but no-one can find it, because it is put under a spell and sworn to the devil. Those who have tried to find it have been killed, some by Vlad himself. Another version of the story mentions a treasure in the forest but does not mention anything about the cruel actions of Vlad. (Ene 1976, 587.) The idea that the treasure is somehow cursed or under a spell, is a wondering folklore motif found in many tales and legends all over the world.

The image of Vlad in the Romanian stories is positive. Vlad is a mighty ruler who loves his country, a fair judge and an unyielding man (Stăvăruş 1978, 52). During the 1969 fieldwork, many informants explained Vlad's actions as positive, righteous and justified. Here Vlad is also seen as a just ruler and as a defender of his country. (Ene 1976, 589.) They are also more folkloric than the German or Russian ones, in the sense that many of them use wandering motifs from other stories (McNally 1991, 219). An example is Vlad's flight from the Poienari and from the hands of the Turks. Here Vlad's horses are shod backwards and the Turks cannot follow him. This is a wondering motif found in many stories around the world. I have heard this story three times in Arefu. The first time was in 2005, when I was first visiting the ruins of Poienari. On our way back from the castle we went into Arefu and asked if any locals knew stories about Vlad. One person said that a local retired headmaster would know something; he told us four stories, of which Vlad's escape from the castle was one. The second and third time I heard the story in Arefu was on a tour by the Company of Mysterious Journeys, first in the April of 2010 and then on the October/November tour of 2010. In both cases, the story was read aloud in English from a paper by the daughter from the family whose house we visited. Apparently the story was collected from the villagers and translated into English by Nicolae Păduraru, who was the founder of the Transylvanian Society of Dracula and its own travel agency the Company of Mysterious Journeys.

In the story, the Turks invade Wallachia and follow Vlad to the fortress of Poienari. The Turkish army arrives in the evening and they plan to attack the fortress in the morning. In the Turkish army there is a native Romanian soldier who had been sent to the army of the sultan as a boy but who was still loyal to the Wallachian ruler. This soldier warned Vlad of the coming attack by attaching a note to his arrow and shooting it up into the castle and through a window where he saw a light. Vlad read this note and quickly sent a man to ask for help from the nearby village of Hares, which was the old name of Arefu. A couple of elders from the village came to Poienari, one of them a smith. They told Vlad how to find a safe way to Transylvania (*Ardeal*), and the smith advised Vlad to shoe his horses backwards. Vlad asked how much the people wanted as a reward for their help, but the elders told him that they did not want money because it could be taken away from them, but if Vlad would

give them land it would help them and their offspring more. Vlad liked the answer and donated mountains and pastures that are still in the possession of the villagers to this day. Then Vlad escaped from Poienari and the Turks could not follow him, because he had shod his horses backwards and so the Turks only saw many tracks leading into the fortress and no tracks going away from the fortress. And this is how Vlad escaped to Transylvania.

The two versions of this story that I heard in Arefu in 2005 and in 2010 are almost the same. There are only small details that differ. In the 2005 version, three elders from Arefu help Vlad escape and show him the way in the night. The next morning they are already far away and almost at the border of Transylvania at the foot of a mountain. It is here that Vlad rewards the elders, with the familiar dialogue about money versus the owning of land. There is a rock where the deal was signed on a hare skin; this rock is still called ‘the Voivode’s rock’. In addition to this story, I also heard two others in 2005, which can also be found in the collection of Georgeta Ene. These concern the construction of the fortress and the punishing of a lazy woman. The man who told us these stories also said that he knew the tale of the golden cup, but he did not actually tell it. He also said that there used to be many other stories told about Vlad while working in the fields and in the village gatherings, but that nowadays people do not tell them any more. It is plausible that the legend tradition about Vlad the Impaler has indeed stayed alive in Arefu for over five centuries. Reasons for its survival can be seen in the location and the history of the village and in the presumption that the families living in Arefu have done so for a long time and have not moved around very much. This presumption is shared by the tour guides that I interviewed on the tours. The two main reasons why the stories have survived are the ruins of the fortress located near the village and the fact that the villagers, to my understanding, still own the lands around the village. The ruins of the fortress function as a permanent place of memory and the story about the way in which ownership of the lands came to the villagers is kept alive to explain this ownership. Nowadays the tradition can be said to be alive because of Dracula tourism.

In the Romanian stories Vlad is mostly called Vlad voivode (*Vlad-vodă*), Vlad the Impaler (*Vlad Țepeș*) or Vlad the Impaler voivode (*Vlad-vodă Țepeș*). I am not inclined to accept the statement made by Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu that in Romania itself the name Dracula was associated with ‘the Impaler’ (McNally & Florescu 1994, 208). In their seminal book, *In Search of Dracula*, McNally and Florescu translated some Romanian stories into English in which the name used of Vlad is Dracula. In the translated stories of Ispirescu, for example, the name Vlad is changed to Dracula even though in the original texts the name is clearly Vlad the Impaler (*Vlad-vodă Țepeș*).

So it seems that the change was made by McNally and Florescu. (Ispirescu 1988, 317–326; McNally & Florescu 1994, 208–218.) In fact in Ispirescu's writings the name Dracula is used about Vlad the Impaler's father, not about Vlad the Impaler (Ispirescu 1971, 285; Ispirescu 1988, 312). The anthology by Tony Brill also confirms that the name Dracula was not used of Vlad the Impaler (Brill 1970, 62–68). In fact one of the informants interviewed by Georgeta Ene said that Vlad Țepeș was a good voivode for his time and only the treacherous boyars called him Draculea or the devil's own son (Ene 1976, 589).

## The modern fame of Vlad the Impaler

By the modern fame of Vlad the Impaler I mean the changing image of him in Romania and abroad since the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (or since the heyday of the circulation of the German and Russian stories). In Romania Vlad's reputation and fame as a good and just ruler remained strong from the mid-fifteenth century more or less to this day. During the nineteenth century when the idea of nationalism was forming among the Romanian intelligentsia, Vlad Țepeș was one of the historical figures that were used in the creation of the idealised Romanian national past. Vlad was the main character in many poems and stories made during the nineteenth century. The most famous of these is the line in the poem 'Scrisorea III-a' by Mihai Eminescu. The line 'Where art thou, old prince Vlad Țepeș,' often also translated as 'Why do you not come Lord Țepeș,' is still heavily quoted even to this day. (Andreescu 1999, 288; Eminescu 2000, 180–181; Light 2012, 45.) Vlad was mainly seen as someone who protected the Romanian people from the boyars and as a ruler who favoured hard justice. In the late nineteenth century historians started to approach history in a more analytical way. Some of them described Vlad as a mad tyrant who did terrible things and who should not be looked upon as a model ruler for the Romanians. This view did not prevail, however, and most of the historians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century came to the conclusion that Vlad did terrible things but not without reason. (Boia 2001, 199–200; Light 2012, 45.)

Although some researchers have downplayed Vlad's position in Romania's historiography during the early twentieth century, it is clear that he was seen as an important historical ruler. An example of this is the Romanian Atheum building in Bucharest, which was inaugurated in 1938. There is a large fresco inside, which represents all the important figures of Romanian history, among them Vlad the Impaler. If he had been just a marginal historical figure he would surely not have been included in the fresco. (Boia 2001, 212.) During



**Fig. 1.** A statue of Vlad the Impaler in Târgoviște. Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2010).

the early twentieth century the image of Vlad was that of a cruel but just leader who, although he did terrible things, always had a reason to do so (Light 2007). For some reason the use of the image of Vlad the Impaler in politics by the far-right in Romania during the 1930s and 1940s has often been overlooked whereas the Communist party's use of his image is widely acknowledged. Vlad must have been looked on positively in order for a political party to use him in its campaigns. The most famous far-right movement was the Legion of the Archangel Michael, which later became the political party the Iron Guard. One book that was considered standard reading within the movement described and idolised a nation with a strong leader who

was strict but just, a new Vlad the Impaler who was anchored to the nation. Although Stephen the Great was a more prominent figure in the movement's propaganda, Vlad was also seen as important enough to be used as an ideal ruler. Vlad was also mentioned in the songs of the Legionnaires. For example in the song 'On your Blessed Grave' ('Peste Mormântul tâu Sfânt') the singers wish for Vlad the Impaler to return to them along with Mircea the old and Stephen the Great and offer one more sacrifice for their people (Miscarea Legionara.) A newspaper called *Libertatea* from 1932 compared the programme of the party to the times of Vlad the Impaler, where only gallows and stakes could bring peace and justice to the country. In addition there was one party, although not a significant one, that was named after Vlad, the League of Vlad the Impaler (Liga Vlad Țepeș). (Heinen 1986, 192 & 216, 219–220.)

After the Second World War the attitudes towards nationalism inside Romania changed. Following the coming to power of the Communist party, Romanian historians at first largely ignored figures like Vlad the Impaler in favour of other medieval rulers who had closer ties to Russia. The rulers who had earlier been seen as heroes of the Romanian nation were now seen in a less glorious light. Many of them were viewed as representatives of the feudal

class that was exploiting the peasantry. This image of the Romanian rulers did not last long, however, as Romania started to distance itself from the Soviet Union during the 1960s and adopted a more nationalistic, although still socialist, policy. (Boia 2001, 215 & 220–221; Light 2012, 50). For a while Vlad the Impaler was even seen within Communist historiography as a class hero who struggled against the evil boyars (Treptow 2000, 73).

During the 1960s and 1970s Vlad the Impaler and the other medieval voivodes were restored to the pantheon of Romanian national heroes. This has often been seen as the rehabilitation of Vlad but in reality, as Duncan Light argues, it was simply a return to the discourse about Vlad that had existed before the Second World War (Light 2007; Light 2012, 50–51). Some scholars have exaggerated the status of Vlad in socialist historiography and propaganda while some suggested that Nicolae Ceausescu was especially interested in Vlad and even exhibited a hero-worship attitude towards him. (Florescu & McNally 1989, 219–220; McNally & Florescu 1994, 4). Although the quincentennial of Vlad the Impaler's death in 1976 was commemorated, the event was not much different from those organised to commemorate other medieval leaders like Michael the Brave, Stephen the Great or Mircea the Old. (Light 2007; Light 2012, 52.) In reality Vlad's status was that of a secondary figure in the Romanian nationalistic historiography and in the public and political sphere. It seems that Mircea the Old, Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave were much more appreciated and used by the political elite than Vlad the Impaler. (Boia 2001; 220–222; Light 2007.) One interesting example of Vlad's importance is the 1989 film about Mircea the Old. In the movie, directed by Sergiu Nicolaescu, Vlad the Impaler is shown as a little boy being taught by his grandfather Mircea the Old. Vlad plays a prominent role in the film as the prospective heir to Mircea's throne. The choice of adding Vlad in the movie is interesting, since in reality Mircea the Old died over ten years before Vlad was born. It is clear that the director and screenwriter purposely wanted to add Vlad the Impaler in the movie, even though this was historically inaccurate. The reasons for adding Vlad must have had something to do with his popularity among the party or the people.

Since the 1989 revolution and the end of Communist rule, the image of Vlad has remained much the same as during the Communist era. He enjoys an esteemed reputation in Romania. Politicians have used Vlad as an example of justice; many Romanians yearn for such a strong leader and the famous lines from Eminescu's poem are frequently quoted. In the presidential and parliamentary election campaigns in 2004, this notion of Vlad as a bringer of justice was used to excess. The presidential candidate and later president Traian Basescu in particular lauded Vlad as one of his heroes for his strong

anti-corruption stand. Later in 2007 the supporters of Basescu erected 322 cardboard stakes in a park in Bucharest, one for each parliamentarian who voted for the (later failed) impeachment of the president. Many young people also hold Vlad in high esteem and think that Romania needs a new Vlad as ruler, not because of his cruelties but because of his strict sense of justice and order. There is also a special operations force of the Romanian gendarmerie (a military branch of the Romanian police force) called ‘Vlad Țepeș’.<sup>1</sup> With these kinds of attitudes it is easy to understand why many Romanians are not very eager to give up their historical Dracula, Vlad the Impaler, in favour of the fictitious vampire Count Dracula. (Light 2012, 117–118.)

The connection between Vlad and the vampire Dracula is still something which Romanians have mixed feelings about. Some people are strongly against any kind of connection between the two, some do not have problems with it and some are ambivalent about it. (Light 2013, 160–161.) Although many people are against the connection, many also believe that it brings money and tourists in to Romania and is therefore beneficial to the country. (Girard 2007; 89.) Although any actual connection between Vlad the Impaler and the fictitious Count Dracula has for the most part been rejected and opposed, there are also instances where this connection is acknowledged and utilised. For example the Romanian contestant Larisa Popa wore a dress that combined elements of both Vlad the Impaler and Dracula in the Miss Universe 2011 pageant in São Paulo (Gândul 2011). Similarly, the performance of Cezar, the artist who represented Romania in the Eurovision Song Contest 2013, was seen as incorporating elements of the fictional Dracula.<sup>2</sup> In 2010 a local historian, who had also been working as a teacher in an elementary school, told me that while giving a history class about Romanian history and mentioning Vlad the Impaler, about whom the children did not know much, many of the class immediately shouted the name Dracula. Although the current school history books refer to Vlad as Vlad the Impaler (Vlad Țepeș), they also mention the name Dracula and give a historical explanation for the name, but interestingly they do not refer to Bram Stoker (Cârțână 2000, 40; Scurtu, Curculescu, Dincă & Soare 2000, 47). These examples show that the idea of connecting the two characters is not necessarily seen as negatively as hitherto in Romania.

1 Brigada Specială de Intervenție ”Vlad Țepeș” a Jandarmeriei.  
<http://www.brigadaspeciala.ro/> [accessed 17.5.2016].

2 Many commentators have made this claim, although officially the Dracula theme was not mentioned. See for example <http://eurovisionireland.net/2013/05/11/romania-second-eurovision-rehearsal-day-6-with-full-video-of-cezars-performance/> [accessed 17.5.2016].



In 2006 a state-owned television channel, Televiziunea Română, launched a programme called *Mari români* (*Great Romanians*) in which the public could vote for the most important person from Romanian history (*Mari Români* 2006). Vlad the Impaler finished in twelfth place just behind Nicolae Ceaușescu. Stephen the Great was voted as the most important historical figure and of the historical voivodes only Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave were voted greater than Vlad the Impaler. This echoes Vlad's place in the pantheon of Romanian historical rulers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and during various regimes as being important but not as important as Stephen the Great or Michael the Brave.

Outside Romania the image of Vlad the Impaler has varied, although it has not been as visible as in Romania. Apart from a few mentions in history books of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the first time Vlad was mentioned in a literary work was in a collection of poems by Victor Hugo called *La légende des siècles*. The poem is about Vlad's refusal to pay tribute to the sultan and the way he fought against him and killed and impaled his emissaries. In the poem Vlad is called 'Vlad, a nobleman from Tarvis, called Beelzebub'. (Hugo 1912; Stoicescu 1978, 176; Treptow 2000, 17.) The devil connotation in the name echoes the image of Vlad from German and to a certain extent also from Russian stories. The next literary work that shaped the image of Vlad the Impaler outside Romania, albeit indirectly, was of course Bram Stoker's *Dracula* from 1897. Because he did not actually base his vampire count on Vlad the Impaler, Vlad's popularity was not to increase until the publication of *In Search of Dracula* by Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu in 1972. Although they were not the first to think of the connection between Vlad and the vampire Dracula, their work was so successful that it influenced many writers, scholars and even film-makers. After its publication Vlad the Impaler started to appear in Western popular culture. In Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape* (1975) and its sequels the vampire Dracula is Vlad the Impaler, who became a vampire by simply refusing to die. Vlad has appeared in many novels over the years, but especially after the 1990s dozens of novels featuring Vlad in some form have been published. In many novels about him, he appears either as the vampire Count Dracula himself or a monstrous vampire similar to him, as in *Children of the Night* (1992) by Dan Simmons or more recently *The Historian* (2005) by Elizabeth Kostova. There are also many more recently published books that are fictionalised biographies or historical novels about Vlad and his times. For example *Vlad: The Last Confession* (2011) by C. C. Humphreys or the Romanian novel *Draculea: The Engraved Chest of Time: The true story of king Vlad Dracula as told by his loyal knights* (2009) by Vășile Lupașc are fictionalised

biographies of Vlad. These types of novels do not usually connect Vlad with vampires in any way.

In addition to literature Vlad has appeared in comics such as for example in *Marvel's* 'The Tomb of Dracula' (1972–1979) or in 'Dracula: Vlad the Impaler #1–3' from 1993 (Lake 2003). There is also cartoon book or a graphic novel called *Vlad the Impaler* (2009) by Sid Jacobson. Vlad has also appeared in many videogames either as the protagonist or as a side character. The most influential movie that has contributed to the connection between Vlad and the vampire Dracula was the 1992 box-office hit *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, where at the beginning Vlad the Impaler curses God and turns into a vampire. The influence of this movie may partly explain the growing interest in Vlad the Impaler since the 1990s. Besides this film Vlad has appeared in less successful films like *Vlad* (2003) and in the biographical *Dracula – The Dark Prince* (2000). In 2014 a movie called *Dracula Untold* was released. In this movie Vlad the Impaler becomes the vampire Dracula. The movie thus addressed Dracula's historical roots and offered one interpretation on how Vlad the Impaler became the vampire Dracula. There have also been rumours about another movie based on the life of Vlad the Impaler being produced by Plan B Entertainment and Summit Entertainment.

In addition to books, games and movies one thing that also affects the image of Vlad the Impaler is tourism. Dracula tourism in Romania is something where traces of all of the above traditions can be found in some form.

## The fictitious Dracula by Bram Stoker

Of the two Draculas which are featured in Dracula tourism, the fictional vampire count is undoubtedly the more famous. Bram Stoker's Dracula has never since been out of print since its publication in 1897. In the novel a young lawyer, Jonathan Harker, travels to Transylvania in order to finalise the sale of some properties in England with Count Dracula. When Harker arrives in Dracula's castle in the Borgo Pass he soon realises that the count is not entirely human. Dracula soon leaves for England while Harker is left as a prisoner inside the castle. Dracula travels to England with a ship and arrives at Whitby, on the Yorkshire coast, where he finds his first victim, Lucy Westenra<sup>3</sup>, who is also the best friend of Jonathan Harker's fiancée, Mina Murray, and attacks her.

3 Lucy is technically not the first victim, since Dracula has killed all the people on board the ship *Demeter* on his way to Whitby. Lucy is however the first major victim in England and essential to the plot of the novel.

The attack leaves Lucy in a worsening state and eventually turns her into a vampire. Meanwhile Jonathan has managed to escape from Transylvania and joins Mina and their friends. Lucy's former suitor, Dr John Stewart, calls his friend Abraham van Helsing to help, and he concludes that Lucy must have been bitten by a vampire. Together with Arthur Holmwood and Quincy Morris they kill the vampire Lucy and find the hiding place of Count Dracula. Dracula escapes capture and flees to Transylvania. Harker, van Helsing, Mina, Stewart, Morris and Holmwood follow Dracula to his castle and manage to kill him.

*Dracula*, which was by no means the first vampire novel, was part of a larger Gothic literary scene in Great Britain at the time. The Gothic movement was a part of the broader movement of Romanticism. The rising interest in vampires in Gothic literature started in Germany in the early eighteenth century, notably in the works of German poets like Heinrich August Ossenfelder and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. From Germany the fictional vampire made its way to England. (Miller 2003, 22). Earlier famous examples of vampire fiction from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain include John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), *Varney the Vampyre, or the Feast of Blood* (published in a book form in 1847), which was written either by James Malcolm Ryder or Thomas Preckett Prest, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) and even Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1831), which although technically not a vampire novel is still included in the Gothic scene. (Miller 2009, 57–75.) Stoker's novel owes much to the earlier novels. John Polidori's *The Vampyre* was the first vampire fiction novel to portray the vampire as an aristocrat, as in Stoker's novel, which became the norm for the vampire figure for a long time. Unlike the vampires from folklore, which for the most part are not very appealing, the vampire from fiction became a mysterious and seductive aristocratic figure. (Barber 1988, 2; Senf 2009, 75.) Stoker's novel owes much too to Le Fanu's *Carmilla*. Stoker originally intended his novel to be placed in Styria, Austria, but he then decided to change the location to Transylvania, probably because of the similarities with *Carmilla* (Miller 2003, 35). The change of location was also crucial for finding a name for the vampire count and for the whole novel. Stoker found the name Dracula in a book he was using as research material for his novel; before this the name of the vampire was the more obvious Count Wampyr. (Frayling 1992, 306; Miller 2003, 32–33.)

During Stoker's lifetime the novel achieved moderate success and sales, but it did not gain worldwide recognition until more than ten years after his death. Successful stage adaptations of *Dracula* in Britain and later in New York resulted in the first 'official' *Dracula* movie in 1931, starring Bela Lugosi, which was a blockbuster. The 1931 *Dracula* was not, however, the first *Dracula*

film as such. The German silent film *Nosferatu* from 1922 was a loose adaptation of Stoker's novel. Because the film-makers had failed to obtain permission from Stoker's widow to make the film, they had to change the names of the characters, but the basic plot remained the same. (Miller 2003, 67–68.) There is also an earlier Hungarian film called *Drakula halála* (*Dracula's Death*) from the early 1920s, which has a character called Drakula. The film appears to be lost, with only fragments remaining. The film is about an asylum where one of the inmates thinks he is Dracula. Although the film is the first to have a character called Dracula, the plot of the movie does not follow Bram Stoker's novel at all. (Miller 2003, 67–68; Miller 2003, 296; Skal 2004, 89.)

Since 1931 the novel *Dracula* has enjoyed enormous success. It has been translated into at least twenty-nine languages. Besides the more than five hundred editions of the novel, the character of Dracula has inspired and appeared in countless plays, movies, comic books, TV-series and games over the years. (Eighteen-Bisang 2009, 268; Light 2012, 27; Miller 2003, 15–16.) Although many people know of *Dracula* and probably know the plot to the novel, most seem to know it from the movies (Light 2012, 27). This should not come as a surprise given the fact that Dracula is one of the most portrayed fictional characters on screen (Skal 2004, 299). In fact after 1931 the character Dracula has appeared in one form or another in movies or TV-shows every decade and almost every year to this day.<sup>4</sup>

## The connection between the two Draculas

Vlad the Impaler and Bram Stoker's vampire Count Dracula are often conflated into essentially the same character. Vlad the Impaler is also often presented as the basis or inspiration for Stoker's vampire. Most of the links that have been created between the two Draculas are, however, more or less artificial. Sometimes this linkage is so strong or it is seen as so obvious that the names Count Dracula and Vlad the Impaler have become synonymous. Elizabeth Miller, a professor emerita of Literature, has argued against this connection in several books and articles and even goes so far as to say in her book *Dracula: Sense and Nonsense* that 'never has so much been written by so many about so little'. (Miller 2000, 180.) This somewhat erroneous connection has been made both in the media, in guidebooks and in academic books and articles and has been used in literature, movies, TV-shows and comics. One of the

4 IMDb Count Dracula (character): <http://www.imdb.com/character/ch0002561/> [accessed 17.5.2016].

major contributors to this connection was the 1972 book *In Search of Dracula: A True History of Dracula and Vampire Legends* by Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu. While it was not the first scholarly work to suggest that Vlad was the inspiration for Stoker's novel, it did bring both the connection and Vlad the Impaler to public attention. McNally's and Florescu's book was a bestseller and it has influenced many writers and scholars to this day. (Light 2012, 47; Miller 2000, 181.)

Even though *In Search of Dracula* is seen as a ground-breaking work and has been hugely influential, it has its shortcomings especially in dealing with the supposed connections between Vlad the Impaler and Stoker's *Dracula*. This book and those that followed (*Dracula, Prince of Many Faces: His Life and his Time* from 1989 and the second edition of *In Search of Dracula* from 1994) the writers rely heavily on assumptions and suppositions and also make some mistakes and misleading statements.<sup>5</sup> Because of the book's influence, many of the errors have become widespread.<sup>6</sup> (Miller 2000, 181.) Elizabeth Miller has convincingly challenged many of the assertions about the connection both in McNally's and Florescu's books and in other publications in her books and especially in *Dracula: Sense and Nonsense*. (Light 2012, 48, Miller 2000.)

Although *In Search of Dracula* was the book that brought the connection between Vlad and Count Dracula to public attention it was not the first to make this connection. Some scholars have suggested that Bacil F. Kirtley was the first to suggest the link in his article 'Dracula, the Monastic Chronicles and Slavic Folklore', which first appeared in 1956 in *Midwest Folklore* (Light 2012, 46; Miller 2000, 185). Kirtley examines the Russian collection of tales about Vlad (discussed above) and their possible link with the novel *Dracula*. He clearly states that Stoker based his vampire count on Vlad the Impaler (Kirtley 1956, 135–136). However, Kirtley was not the first to make this connection, for it had been already made at least fifteen years earlier. Stephen Csabai wrote in his 1941 article 'The Real Dracula' that Stoker had based his Transylvanian count on Vlad the Impaler and that Stoker's monstrous hero was a mere beginner compared to the 'original' Dracula. Unlike Kirtley, who

- 5 These mistakes include claiming that in Michel Beheim's poem Vlad is said to have dipped his bread in blood, thus making him a vampire, or that the local people in Arefu no longer connect Vlad with vampires, thus assuming that they did so earlier (McNally & Florescu 1994, 85 & 123).
- 6 This is the reason why I find it important to correct the errors in their books throughout my own work. It is not my intention to gloat over their mistakes. Because of the success and vast influence of their books, their errors have spread so far that I feel that they need to be addressed.

used the Russian stories, Csabai based his article on the German stories about Vlad and the poem by Michael Beheim. (Csabai 1941, 327–330.)<sup>7</sup> Since Csabai's and Kirtley's articles the connection, according to Miller, has been proposed by at least Harry Ludlam in 1962 and Grigore Nandriş in 1966 before McNally and Florescu wrote their interpretation of the connection in 1972 (Miller 2000, 185). So it is apparent that people have tried to connect Vlad the Impaler and the vampire Count Dracula at least since 1941, but what *is* the connection – and is it in any respect real (beyond the name of Dracula)?

The popular conception seems to be that Bram Stoker knew about Vlad the Impaler and purposely based his vampire count on him. It seems that often the only evidence given for this conception is the name Dracula and the fact that both have a connection with Transylvania. Bram Stoker's working papers for *Dracula* have survived and are housed at the Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia. His novel has a few references that can be seen as loosely connected to Vlad the Impaler, but the connection is not strong. Most of these, if not all, can be traced to one source: William Wilkinson's *An Account of the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia* from 1820, where Stoker found the name Dracula; Wilkinson mentions the Wallachian voivode named Dracula, who fought against the Turks, and another voivode of the same name, who also fought against the Turks and was later defeated and replaced by his brother (Wilkinson 1820, 17–19). Wilkinson mentions that Dracula means devil in the Wallachian language. It is very likely that this association of the name with the devil was the reason why Stoker chose it. (Frayling 1992, 317–319; Miller 2000, 189.)

There are a couple of sections in *Dracula* where the reader is told about the past of Count Dracula. Abraham van Helsing speaks of Dracula as 'the voivode who won his name against the Turk, over the great river on the very frontier of Turkeyland'. The count also talks about his history to Jonathan Harker himself in one chapter. He speaks about a voivode of his own race who beat the Turk on his own ground but who was later betrayed by his brother. Then he speaks more of this Dracula, who later inspired another one of his race who also battled the Turks. (Miller 2009, 208; Stoker 2000, 25 & 293.)

7 The article by Stephen Csabai is mentioned in the bibliographies of both *Dracula*. *Prince of Many Faces* and *In Search of Dracula* written by Radu R. Florescu and Raymond T. McNally. However, they do not mention him as being the first to make the connection between Vlad and Dracula. Apparently for this reason, even though both Duncan Light and Elizabeth Miller have read both of the above books, they still refer to Kirtley as the first to make the connection.

These sections of the book, the only ones in which there is a reference to the historical Dracula, can all be traced back to Wilkinson's book. Thus although Stoker did use the name and a couple of historical facts about Vlad the Impaler, Elizabeth Miller is surely right in noting that these references do not suffice to say that Stoker based his character on Vlad. (Miller 2000, 187–189.) Furthermore, Stoker did not know that the Dracula in question was Vlad the Impaler, and the fact that Count Dracula refers also to a second Dracula, who also fought against the Turks, seems to indicate that the fictional Dracula was not based on any single historical Dracula.<sup>8</sup> So in conclusion, although the connection between Vlad the Impaler and the vampire Count Dracula is widespread, the factual basis for it is wafer thin and vague at best. The perception of the connection between the two Draculas has, however, changed in recent years. This is partly due to the writings of Elizabeth Miller, but also because interest in the history of Vlad the Impaler seems to be growing. (Light 2012, 55.)

## The vampire tradition in Romania

Although this research is not about vampires as such and deals only in passing with the cultural phenomenon that vampires have become in popular culture, I feel that I must at least address the connection that Romania has or does not have with vampires. This connection is an interesting one and not without its challenges. In popular culture vampires have been linked with Romania and especially with Transylvania<sup>9</sup> at least since the eighteenth century. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was the pivotal book that sealed the myth of Transylvania as the land of superstitions and vampires, a myth that still exists and is exploited today (Light 2012, 33). The character of the vampire of popular fiction has developed over the years from a monstrous nobleman to the teen heart-throbs of the *Twilight* franchise and in between these examples the vampire of popular fiction has had many different manifestations.

The vampire of folk belief is very different from and more ancient than the vampire of popular culture. The folklore vampire is generally defined as a corpse that returns from the grave to suck the blood of the living. Although

8 Unless of course we believe that this passage refers to Michael the Brave, who did battle against the Turks at the end of the sixteenth century and who is thought to have been a direct descendant of Vlad the Impaler's brother Vlad the Monk (Vlad Căluğărul) (Florescu & McNally 1989, 11). But this is very speculative and there is no evidence to support it.

9 Although at that time Transylvania was of course not a part of Romania.

the vampire is commonly associated with Eastern Europe, its basic characteristics can be found in a variety of cultures and is found for example in India, Malaysia, China and Indonesia (Burns 2009, 29; Oinas 1998, 47.) Some have seen the roots of vampire belief in ancient Babylonian, Greek and/or Roman texts. Despite these references to creatures that share some features with vampires in other parts of the world, the largest and most coherent body of vampire lore can be found in Eastern Europe. (Burns 2009, 29–30; Oinas 1998, 47.) According to Katharina M. Wilson, the earliest recorded uses of the term *vampire* appear in the early eighteenth century in French, English and Latin, and they all refer to vampirism in Poland, Russia and Macedonia. The second widespread introduction of the word occurs in German, French and English and refers to the Serbian vampire epidemic on 1725–32. The first occurrences of the term *vampire* in European languages all refer specifically to Slavic superstitions. (Wilson 1998, 5–9.) According to Felix Oinas the belief in vampires is or was a part of the folklore among the Slavs, mainly the Ukrainians, the Czechs, Poles, Macedonians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Russians and their neighbours such as the Greeks, Romanians, Albanians (Oinas 1998, 47–48).

The status of the Romanian vampire tradition is complex. Many researchers are of the opinion that vampires are known in Romanian folklore, just as they are in the folklore of the countries that border it. Yet others argue that the vampire is completely unknown in Romanian folklore. Duncan Light states, basing his argument on an interview made with the Romanian folklorist Sabina Ispas, that the vampire as such is unknown in Romanian folklore and that the *strigoi* is a ghost or an undead spirit that never drinks blood (Light 2012, 29, see also 145). Indeed most Romanians that I have talked with, be they folklorists, historians, linguists or tourist guides, share this point of view. According to one tour guide: ‘We don’t know anything about vampires. In our tradition we have others, *moroi* or *strigoi*, but never do we speak about vampires. ... We don’t have vampires.’<sup>10</sup>

Another tour guide told me that there is no tradition about vampires in Romania and Romanians do not know anything about vampires, but the Hungarians in Transylvania do have a vampire tradition. And even though Romanians do not believe in Dracula as a vampire or vampires in general, they do have their own evil spirits: ‘... but on the other hand we do have our own evil spirits in the folklore, so maybe we’re not afraid of Dracula the vampire, but

10 An interview with a tour guide in 2010.



we will be afraid of our spirits that they may, after the person dies, they may turn into evil spirits.’<sup>11</sup>

Another employee of a travel agency also stated that vampires and even the word ‘vampire’ are new both to Romania and to Romanians: ‘. . . but I don’t know if five years ago we had any vampires, only for comics or for something for joking, not, not to use in our, in our common language. And people from the villages, they do not, even now they do not know what a vampire is’. The same employee said that the word ‘vampire’ has come to Romania and to Romanian language after 1990 via movies and television series.<sup>12</sup>

The vampire of folk belief is also almost absent from the websites of the tour organisers that I have investigated. It is interesting that most of the websites have no references to vampires at all, even though vampires (whether of tradition or fiction) may play a part in the expectations of the tourists that participate in the tours.

How can this contradiction be explained? It can be seen as a mixture of semantic, historical and cultural reasons and misconceptions, and the result of the socialist period in Romania. I will first look at the research on Romanian vampires. There are many books that state that the vampire is known in Romanian folklore without necessarily going into too many details (Burkhart 1989, 92–93; Kligman 1988, 2–3; Senn 1982, viii). One of the most famous and often quoted articles about Romanian vampire belief is Emily Gerard’s ‘Transylvanian Superstitions’, written in 1885, which Bram Stoker also used as a source for his book. Most of her article deals with Transylvanian superstitions in general, but there is also a short reference to vampires. Gerard mentions that every Romanian peasant believes in the vampire, which is also called *nosferatu*. (Gerard 2009, 185; Miller 2000, 48.) Even though Gerard was a writer and an amateur anthropologist, and actually visited Transylvania, there has been some doubt whether her description is reliable. The term *nosferatu* at least does not appear to be known in Romania. According to Elizabeth Miller, the word is not known in Romanian or any other language, and is presumably a translation error of some sort (Miller 2000, 48–49). Harry A. Senn, who did fieldwork in Romania looking for folklore about werewolves and vampires, also states that he did not encounter the word *nosferatu* there (Senn 1982, 125). Despite this lack of consensus and the dispute about the word *nosferatu* there are many scholarly works that argue for the existence of vampires in Romanian folklore.

11 An interview with a tour guide in 2011.

12 An interview with a tour guide in 2010.

Alan Dundes states in *The Vampire. A Casebook*, which he edited, that the vampire is more prevalent in Romania than anywhere else in the world and that the vampire is rampant there (Dundes 1998, 12 & 57). Although Dundes may have exaggerated, as Emily Gerard did in her article, his conclusion is based on scholarly research, primarily on two articles about the Romanian vampire that appear in his book. These articles are ‘The Vampire in Romania,’ by Agnes Murgoci, which was originally published in 1926, and ‘The Romanian Folkloric Vampire,’ by Jan Louis Perkowski, which was originally published in 1982. (Murgoci 1998, 12–34; Perkowski 1998, 35–46.) Murgoci examines the reasons behind the beliefs that some people come back to life after they have died. She examines different kinds of beings that either come back to life after they have died or that can send their souls and bodies to wander with these reanimated corpses. Murgoci names these as dead-vampire-type vampires and live-vampire-type vampires. She also mentions a third type of vampire called *vârcolac*, which is more like an animal or a soul of a child that eats the sun and the moon during eclipses. According to Murgoci the names *strigoi*, *moroi*, *vârcolaci*, *pricolicii* are used in Romanian to describe vampires. Murgoci also translates the terms as vampires in the English versions of the stories that she analyses. Whether these beings can be described as vampires is, however, not so clear. This is especially the case with the *vârcolac(i)*. (Murgoci 1926, 321 & 331–335.) Given that consuming the sun and moon seems to be the only special thing that the *vârcolaci* does I find it hard to see why Murgoci has identified it as a vampire.

Murgoci quotes fifteen stories which she has identifies as ‘vampire stories’. In order to find out if the beings in Murgoci’s article could be identified as vampires rather than as some other figures of folk belief we have to determine what the vampire of folklore and folk belief is. This is not an easy task, because the vampire of folklore is a complex figure and the definitions vary from culture to culture. Generally the vampire is defined as a reanimated corpse or a soulless body that returns from the grave to drink the blood of the living (Burns 2009, 29; Dundes 1998, 160–161; Melton 2009, 35; Oinas 1998, 47). This is indeed the familiar image of the vampire from literature, but it is also found in folklore. This definition is, however, a little too strict because not all vampires of folklore drink blood. In fact some of them even prefer milk over blood (Dundes 1998, 163). Another broader definition is that the vampire is a living corpse, or a revenant or the spirit of a dead person that returns after death and causes harm to its family, to its loved ones or to the community. The vampire may cause a lingering death to its victim or the death might also be sudden and unexpected but in some cases the vampire does not cause death but is merely a nuisance. If the vampire kills its victim, it does so by causing

an illness, by strangling or by sucking the victim's blood. (Barber 1988, 7–8; Barber 1997; 827.)

One even broader definition is that the vampire is a being that derives physical or emotional sustenance from its victim and the victim is weakened by this experience (Oinas 1998, 47). Vampires can also be identified by their appearance in the grave. Usually the body of someone thought to be a vampire is described as looking like it is still alive; it has blood on its lips or mouth, it is bloated and does not show any signs of rigor mortis. There are also specific ways in which a vampire can be killed and destroyed according to folk belief. If there is knowledge of the identity of the vampire, then its grave is easy to find. If the identity of the vampire is not known, then the grave can still be found, for example with the help of animals. Once the grave of the vampire is located and dug open, the vampire can be destroyed in many ways: by driving a stake through the corpse, by driving a nail through its head, by cremating the corpse, by decapitating it or by cutting its heart out. (Barber 1988, 68–73.)

The *vârcolac(i)* listed by Murgoci as a vampire therefore does not seem to have any vampire characteristics. In contrast, in many of Murgoci's stories the characteristics of a vampire are evident. In several stories the relatives of a recently deceased person became sick and upon the grave of the deceased being dug up, he or she is found to be still lifelike. The bones are cleaned, or the heart and liver, or whole corpse, burned. (Murgoci 1926, 324–325.) In some stories a man dies and comes back as a vampire to torment his fiancée and her family and in some stories a woman steals milk from other cows for herself. (Murgoci 1926, 340–346.) Although the latter story variants may refer more to a witch than to a vampire, the other stories clearly show that the beings in question share so many characteristics with vampires that they can be identified and labelled as such. In one story the being actually kills its victims and even drinks their blood, thus actualising the basic attribute of a vampire (Murgoci 1926, 341–342). Even if some of the beings that Murgoci defines as vampires are only debatably classified as such, and even though she admits herself that some beings might be either vampires or witches, it is clear that most of the beings that are featured in the stories she quotes in her article can indeed be labelled vampires.

Even if one might be a little doubtful about Murgoci's findings and definitions and therefore might still challenge the actual existence of vampires in Romanian folklore, the next article, by Jan Louis Perkowski, in *The Vampire. A Casebook* makes the existence of vampires in Romanian folklore quite evident. Perkowski introduces texts that were collected from all around Romania where the supernatural being in question is without a doubt a vampire. In the texts the vampires are called *strigoi*, *moroi* and *pricolici*. These texts are

from the 1930s and were collected by the Romanian linguist Emil Petrovici. (Perkowski 1998, 36.) Unlike Murgoci, Perkowski does not translate these terms as vampires in the actual stories/texts that he analyses, but uses the original Romanian names. Although the ‘vampires’ (*strigoi*, *moroi* and *pricolici*) in these texts share many similarities with the vampire of folklore such as their origin, attributes and cures, the most striking similarity lies within the activity patterns. In these texts the *strigoi* returns home from the grave, kills his relatives, marries and sucks the blood of his wife, causes illness, kills livestock and torments his relatives. The *moroi* kills cattle and drinks their blood and feeds on his relatives and especially their hearts and the *pricolici* feeds on his relatives and torments them. (Perkowski 1998, 43.) These attributes are clearly those of the vampire from folklore and folk belief.

In addition to the articles by Murgoci and Perkowski, the book *Șapte eseuri despre strigoi* (1998) by Otilia Hedeșan also affirms that the vampire is or at least was known in Romanian folklore. Hedeșan introduces several stories, originally published in 1916 in a book by Tudor Pamfile, about supernatural beings (*strigoi* and *priculici*). Most of these beings can clearly be labelled vampires. Among various vampire characteristics, the most striking thing is the sucking of blood which several *strigoi* in the stories do. There can be little doubt, then, that the vampire is a part of Romanian folklore, or at least it still was in the early twentieth century. (Hedeșan 1998, 30–36.) It seems that while the word *vampire* is not used in Romania, the vampire as a creature of folklore and folk belief is indeed also found in Romania. Although not widely used and apparently unknown by the peasantry, according to Hedeșan the word *vampire*, a neologism from French, actually appeared in Romanian for the first time in 1872 in a poem by Costache Negruzzi. In 1904 the word appeared in a Romanian encyclopaedia, where the first definition of the word referred to a South American bat and the second definition to a character from mythology. The second definition describes it as the spirit of a dead person who comes out of his grave to suck blood and is known to the Romanians around the Danube under the name *strigoi* or *moroi*. (Hedeșan 1998, 12–13.) Romanian historian Matei Cazacu refers to several stories and court cases from the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century where the belief in a dead person coming back from the grave to harm people is evident. There have also been recent incidents in Romania where the body of a dead person was dug out of the grave and was pierced through the heart with a stake, cut into pieces and buried again. According to Cazacu it is clear that the belief in vampires in the territory of present-day Romania is and was a part of the folk belief. (Cazacu 2008, 347–348; 355 & 372.)

In the light of all of the above, the claim that there are no vampires in Romanian folklore or folk belief feels strange. There are two possible reasons for this that I can think of, first a question of semantics and secondly a question of cultural politics and national self-image. It seems to be true that the word *vampire* was not used or even known in Romanian folklore or in Romanian vernacular. That, however, does not mean that the folklore or folk belief does not recognise vampires. In many cases the Romanian supernatural beings *strigoi*, *moroi* and *pricolici* are in fact of the same folkloric character as the vampire, differing only in name; the similarities are so strong that *strigoi*, *moroi* and *pricolici* must be labelled as vampires. Then again if what is perceived to be a vampire is the aristocratic vampire known from the Gothic literature and especially from Bram Stoker's book, then Romanian folklore does not have vampires. If this is the case then no folklore from any country would have vampires, because the aristocratic vampire is for the most part purely the product of literary fiction. The vampire from folklore is quite different. (Barber 1988, 2; Johnson 2001.) Whether or not there is a vampire tradition in Romania seems therefore to be a question of semantics. In light of the essential folklore vampire characteristics of the Romanian supernatural beings discussed above there is, however, no question about the existence of vampires in Romanian folklore.

Yet there is more to this question however than just a simple argument over nomenclature. The other explanation that I find plausible is both a political and cultural one. It is clear that the vampire was a supernatural being in Romanian folklore and folk belief at least until the early twentieth century. There are two things that have happened between the early twentieth century and the present that might explain why people are wary or even hostile towards the idea that vampires do belong to Romanian culture. The first is the socialist regime and especially the last decade of the Ceauşescu era, and the second is the growth of interest in Dracula and vampires in popular culture that started in the 1970s. These two issues may explain the lack of enthusiasm felt towards the vampire phenomenon in Romania. Dracula tourism started to grow in Romania slowly during the 1970s and the state's reaction towards it was tolerant but not encouraging.<sup>13</sup> Dracula tourism, based upon a belief in the supernatural and vampires, was fundamentally discordant with Romania's identity as a socialist state and was not something that the government wanted to endorse (Light 2012, 69). The state's attitude towards Dracula tourism and therefore towards the character of the vampire Dracula hardened during the 1980s. This was partly because the label 'Dracula' and 'vampire' was increasingly applied to Ceauşescu in the Western press, an issue of which Ceauşescu

13 I will explain the history of Dracula tourism more thoroughly in chapter 3.

seemed to be aware. This lessened the government's eagerness to associate itself with the Western Dracula even further. The notion of Ceaușescu being like Dracula or like a vampire reached such a height that after the 1989 revolution, rumours circulated in Bucharest that Ceaușescu had drunk the blood of new-born babies in order to increase his strength. (Light 2012, 39, 82.) The linking of Vlad the Impaler and Dracula was also seen as problematic in Romania. Dracula was even mentioned as an example of a deliberate action intended to tarnish and compromise the national history of Romanians by Adrian Păunescu, one of the socialist regime's ultranationalist 'court poets' (Light 2012, 54). Even if this last sentiment was a huge exaggeration, it nevertheless exemplified the state's attitude towards the Dracula phenomenon. The backlash against the whole Dracula phenomenon was out of proportion, especially since most Romanians had no knowledge of the Dracula of Western popular culture. In light of this it is easy to understand why Dracula and vampires became something negative in Romania during the 1980s.

After 1989 Dracula tourism started to grow again and *Dracula* and other books and movies in general that were previously censored were published and translated into Romanian. Although many Romanians, especially the young, showed much interest in anything related to Western popular culture, Dracula and the focus on vampires in popular culture did not specially generate much interest. One of the reasons may have been the growing awareness that much of the Western world associates Romania with vampires. (Light 2012, 39–40.) This to my mind is the second main reason why many Romanians seem to be reserved towards the connection of vampires and Romania. After the socialist period, where cultural identity was more or less structured and directed by the state and was undoubtedly sometimes at odds with many Romanians, the idea that cultural identity might once again be crafted by someone else, in this case Western popular culture, could understandably cause resentment. Many Romanians do not want their country to be reduced to 'Dracula's territory' or the 'home of vampires', as Romania or at least Transylvania is known in popular culture. Therefore it is understandable that the tour guides, who want to give a positive image of Romania to reflect their own image and concept of their country, do not want to talk about vampires. The idea that Romanian folklore does not have vampires is of course both true and false. It is true that the word 'vampire' is not known or used in Romanian folklore and therefore one can say that there are no vampires in Romania. On the other hand, as already argued, in many cases the *strigoi*, *moroi* and *pricolici* are all essentially vampires, just with different names. The fictional aspect of vampires is also so strong, visible and popular that one might be reluctant to say anything about the local vampire lore, in order to not look stupid or appear ignorant.

Before 1989 speaking about vampires might have caused inconvenience to those who spoke about it. After 1989 the superficiality of and the contempt towards the Western Dracula myth and local anti-Western notions might have hindered people from talking about vampire lore. (Hedeşan 1998, 48–49.)

The reasons for denying the presence of the vampire in Romanian folklore can be explained by the sort of political and cultural reasons I have detailed above. In light of this I find Dracula tourism especially interesting because its whole premise is based on vampire fiction. And yet at the same time many tour guides and travel agencies downplay and even deny the existence of vampires in Romanian folklore and folk belief. I find the main reason for this to be their desire to give a positive image of Romania to reflect their own image and concept of their country. Because the vampire is such a strong figure in popular culture and because Transylvania and therefore also the whole of Romania have been portrayed in popular culture as the home of vampires, it is understandable that the tour agencies and tour guides do not necessarily want to strengthen this image.

### 3. Dracula Tourism

**D**racula tourism may be defined as tourist visits to sites and places that are associated with both the historical Dracula, Vlad the Impaler, and the fictional vampire, Count Dracula (Light 2012, 3). Dracula tourism is mainly connected with Romania, although there is some Dracula tourism also in Great Britain. In Great Britain this is associated solely with the fictional Dracula, whereas the Dracula tourism in Romania involves both the fictional and the historical Dracula. In Great Britain, Dracula tourism is mostly centred on the town of Whitby (the site of the fictional Dracula's arrival in the country), although there are a couple of sites in London that can also be connected with Stoker's novel. (Light 2012, 62–63; McNally & Florescu 1994, 293–295.) Although Dracula and Dracula-themed tourism is very visible in Romania and has undoubtedly generated more discussions and reactions than any other form of tourism there, the numbers of Dracula tourists in Romania have always been quite low, at present in the region of tens of thousands, and clearly under 100,000 per year. (Light 2012, 135.)

Dracula tourism has also always been controversial and reactions to it have varied. On the one hand it has been seen as a good advertisement for Romanian tourism and on the other as a cultural threat to Romania. Although tourists can visit the Dracula locations on their own, most go on Dracula tours organised by travel agencies. These tours differ in their length and in their choice of locations visited, associated with either Dracula. Like all tourism, Dracula tourism aims to offer tourists special experiences. Traditionally, economical offerings have been divided into three parts: commodity, goods and service. Experiences are a fourth economic offering, a commodity that has been at the heart of entertainment. Ever since the first Walt Disney World, specially themed amusement parks and restaurants have opened up all over the world. In these places the experience has become as important as the other economical offerings provided there, by way of services, commodities and goods. (Pine II & Gilmore 1999, 2–3.) Dracula tourism is definitely a form of tourism that aims to offer varied experiences to tourists. This aim is most visible during Halloween on the special Halloween-themed tours and parties.



## Defining Dracula tourism

The nature of Dracula tourism can be hard to define. It can be seen as cultural, literary, movie-induced or dark tourism. (Light 2012, 16–27.) In fact Dracula tourism is all of these. Cultural tourism can be explained as incorporating all movements of people to specific cultural attractions outside their normal place of residence, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations or arts and drama activities, with the intention of acquiring new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs. (Richards 2010, 15). The description of cultural tourism is, however, not without its problems because as it has expanded so have the meanings attached to it. In the past cultural tourism was mostly associated with high culture whereas today it includes many popular cultural attractions, sport, living heritage, recent nostalgia and the so-called everyday life of local communities. Cultural tourism has also expanded from tangible heritage of the past towards the intangible products of contemporary culture. Some have argued that because of this wide definition, there is a risk that cultural tourism is losing all meaning as a distinct category. (Richards 2007, 2.) Despite its ambiguity and the difficulties in the definition, however, cultural tourism has become an important part of tourism both in terms of economic value and as a subject for academic research (Richards & Munsters 2010, 1–2).

One aspect of cultural tourism is heritage tourism, which is seen either as the same thing as cultural tourism or as a special form of it. One way to make a distinction (if needed) between cultural tourism and heritage tourism is in their relation to the past. In heritage tourism the focus is more on the past whereas in cultural tourism it is on the present. Heritage is also a much narrower concept than culture, because heritage is always just a selected part of history and culture, one that is deemed as especially important and desirable to preserve. (Timothy & Boyd 2003, 2–5.) Dracula tourism has elements of both cultural tourism and heritage tourism, and could easily be defined as either. Dracula tourism certainly involves visits to cultural attractions and heritage sites outside the normal place of residence with the aim of acquiring new information and experiences to satisfy cultural needs. It could also be defined as medieval-related tourism.

By (neo-)medieval-related tourism I mean tourism that utilises the Middle Ages in some form or other. Medievalism is defined as the beliefs and practices that are regarded as characteristic of the Middle Ages such as medieval thought, religion and art. Medievalism can also refer to, and this definition is more relevant to tourism, the adoption of, interest in or adherence to medieval

ideals, styles or usages.<sup>1</sup> The Middle Ages are frequently referred to in Dracula tourism, partly because Vlad the Impaler lived towards the end of this period. The Middle Ages are seen as a special period of time that fascinates many people. Otherness is often used to project one's own fantasies, categories and norms onto others (Hovi 2006, 124). The interest in the Middle Ages has been explained as somehow being the 'other', a counterpart to the present, and as assuaging a longing for a simpler way of life. The Middle Ages and medieval man have been given the symbolic role of presenting all that has been lost or rejected in modern times. The interest in the Middle Ages is based on both the contradictory historical image of the Middle Ages as dark and murky and the notion of the period as having a fairy-tale mysticism to it. (Gustafsson 2002, 269 & 277.) The Middle Ages have also often been portrayed in popular culture, and the sometimes stereotypical image of the period is undoubtedly familiar to many people through movies, books and music (Frayling 1995, 7–36).

The Middle Ages are used in three ways in Dracula tourism and on the websites of the travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism. The most common way is just referring to a place, such as a city or a castle, as medieval. The second way is by hinting that medieval history means something mysterious, magical or even charming, and therefore something special. The Middle Ages are also used as a location. Tourists can feel or relive the medieval atmosphere or even walk into the Middle Ages, as if it was a real location that one can visit.

Besides medieval-related tourism, Dracula tourism can also be defined as literary or movie induced tourism. Literary tourism is tourism in which people visit locations that either have connections to certain writers, or that form the settings for literary works (Herbert 2001, 314). Famous examples of literary tourism are Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters, and the locations connected to both these authors and to their books (Herbert 1995, 35 & Light 2012, 16–17). In some cases tourists visit literary landscapes also to engage with broader meanings, values and myths than just the location itself. This is evident in Dracula tourism, where tourists visiting Transylvania can engage with ideas of otherness and superstitions beyond Stoker's original Dracula (Light 2012, 16–18). Nowadays literary tourism cannot be separated from movie-induced tourism. This is tourism where people visit destinations or attractions that they have seen on television or film (Busby & Klug 2001, 317). Sometimes tourists are also drawn to locations where filming is believed to have taken place, such as with Braveheart in Scotland or many Dracula films

1 Definition of the term from The Oxford English Dictionary: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/115639?redirectedFrom=medievalism#eid> [accessed 7.1.2014].

in Romania. The movie *Braveheart* from 1995 was mostly filmed in Ireland yet it generated a significant increase in tourist visits to Scotland, where the film story is set. Similarly, none of the classic Dracula films were filmed in Romania or Transylvania. (Light 2012, 21.) There are, however, a few more modern versions of Dracula that indeed have been filmed at least partially in Romania, but in general Dracula films have been filmed elsewhere. Yet people want to see Transylvania and imagine that the films were actually filmed there. In both movie tourism and literary tourism the real and the imaginary are merged in ways that give the visited locations special meaning. Movie-induced tourism is seen as less personality-based than literary tourism, and it rarely takes place at locations that are associated with key individuals involved in the creation of films, like actors or directors (Light 2012, 21). I also agree with Graham Busby and Julia Klug that although literature continues to play a vital role in popular culture, the defining media of the twenty-first century are film and television. (Busby & Klug 2001, 319–320.)

Thus, although many movies and television dramas are based on literature, movies are probably more influential for tourism than works of literature. Both literary tourism and movie-induced tourism are major factors in the marketing of particular locations. For example, the films *Rob Roy*, *Braveheart* and *Loch Ness* are estimated to have attracted between £7m and £15m in extra tourist revenue in Scotland in the mid-1990s. Similarly the BBC TV-series *Pride and Prejudice*, which is based on the book by Jane Austen, was the reason that the visitor numbers in Lyme Park, Cheshire, where parts of the series were filmed, jumped 178 per cent. (Busby & Klug 2001, 320.) Dracula tourism can definitely be categorised as both literary tourism and movie-induced tourism. Although many tour agencies that offer Dracula tourism utilise Bram Stoker's Dracula in many ways, many of the visual elements in Dracula tourism are definitely movie-inspired. Although Dracula tourism could just be defined as literary or movie-induced tourism, the associated elements of horror and death prompt me to categorise Dracula tourism as dark tourism.

Dark tourism is travel to places associated with death, disaster and destruction. Although new as a concept, dark tourism has always been an identifiable form of tourism. The categorisation of dark tourism is complex, and alternative terminology has been applied to the phenomenon. It has been called thanatourism, morbid tourism, Black Spot tourism, grief tourism and even 'milking the macabre'. (Sharpley 2009, 9–10.) A form of dark tourism in which the tourist seeks a scary opportunity at a destination that may have sinister history or may be promoted as having one has been called fright tourism, or alternatively ghost tourism, spook tourism or haunting tourism (Bristow & Newman 2005, 215; Light 2012, 62). In Richard Sharpley's opinion, although

the phenomenon is complex, all of these terms share a common factor, which is the association in one form or the other between a tourism site or experience and death, disaster and suffering. Even if in the case of fright tourism the main element may not be death as such, it can challenge or heighten the tourists' own sense of mortality and therefore be included in dark tourism. (Sharpley 2009, 10.) The reactions and attitudes towards death in contemporary Western society have become inconsistent. On the one hand both real and commodified death and suffering are constantly consumed through audio-visual representations, popular culture and the media (Stone & Sharpley 2008, 580). There are also views that death has become institutionalised and invisible in everyday life and that the reactions towards the nature of death have changed from seeing it as a natural occurrence to a personal catastrophe and misfortune (Hovi 1999, 9). Dark tourism can thus be seen as a way for a tourist to deal with death and mortality in the modern or postmodern world.

Two prominent scholars in this field, J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, argue that for a tourist location to be labelled as reflecting dark tourism, the events that happened at that site must have taken place within the memories of those still alive to validate them and they must posit questions or introduce anxiety and doubt about modernity and its consequences. For Lennon and Foley dark tourism is strictly tied to the present and authentic places of death and suffering. (Lennon & Foley 2000, 12.) Many scholars have challenged these views about dark tourism (Seaton 2007, 377). However, the definition is essentially accurate in that dark tourism attractions that have a shorter history and connections to authentic places of suffering and death tend to be considered darker than other sites. Philip R. Stone has proposed 'a dark tourism spectrum', which takes into account different possible shades of darkness or perceived levels of 'macabreness' within an overall dark tourism product (Stone 2006, 152). Stone has also proposed a seven-point typological foundation for dark tourism supply, which ranges from the lighter side of the spectrum to the darker. On the lighter side are the so called 'dark fun factories', which allude to visitor sites, attractions and tours with a predominately entertainment focus and commercial ethic. These sites also present real or fictional death and macabre events but in a more family-friendly setting or in a socially acceptable environment in which to gaze upon simulated death and associated suffering. Sites like these include the London Dungeon. On the other side of the spectrum are places like conflict sites or places which have genocide, atrocity and catastrophe as the main theme. (Stone 2006, 152–157.) The most famous example is of course the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and State Museum. The sites perceived as belonging to the darker side of the spectrum

are usually places where the events tend to be recent. The lighter side of the spectrum includes events that are usually chronologically more distant.

Dracula tourism can certainly be defined as dark tourism. It combines elements of fictional fright tourism with historical atrocities that are part of dark tourism in general. It falls on the lighter side of Stone's spectrum. Although it has elements of real death and suffering via the history of Vlad the Impaler, the focus seems to be more on the fictitious Dracula and fright tourism than dwelling on the atrocities attached to Vlad. The element of death, horror and fright still plays such a big part on the Dracula tours that I would definitely categorise Dracula tourism as a part of dark tourism, even though it also has elements of cultural, heritage, literary and movie-induced tourism. The fright element seems to be one of the key factors for people choosing to participate in the Dracula tours with their horror, vampires and the supernatural (Light 2009, 193).

## History

After the early years of state socialism, when Romania was all but closed to foreign tourists, the country began to turn its attention to the development and promotion of international tourism in the late 1950s.<sup>2</sup> During the 1960s Romania became one of the most accessible socialist countries for Western tourists and in the 1970s tourism was promoted towards the West primarily for political and propagandist reasons. Most of the international tourists were directed to the Black Sea coast, but by the mid-1970s other forms of tourism around the country had developed. This was also the time when some Dracula enthusiasts from the West, who wanted to see for themselves the locations found in Bram Stoker's book and in the Dracula films, started to visit Romania. For many tourists Transylvania was an especially interesting destination. It

- 2 A lot of the background information about Dracula tourism in Romania in this chapter is based on the book *The Dracula Dilemma. Tourism, Identity and the State in Romania* (2012), written by Duncan Light. Although my research is enormously influenced by Light's work and our investigations share the same subject, there are clear differences that need to be addressed. The emphasis in Light's work is on the whole history of Dracula tourism in Romania, while mine is on the post-1989 years. In addition my work deals with heritage, tradition and folklore which Light scarcely addresses. My analysis of the web pages, the approach to Dracula tourism in terms of intertextuality, hybridisation and discourses as well as the focus on the narrative nature of Dracula tourism are sufficient justification for my research, with its aims differing from Duncan Light's.

had and still has a special meaning in Western popular culture as a mysterious land of vampires and other supernatural beings. The connection is so strong that the fact that Transylvania is a real place comes as a surprise to many Westerners. (Hupchick 1995, 49; Light 2012, 28 & 57–63.) This type of tourism was a minority interest in Romania itself, since most of the foreign tourists were from other socialist countries and knew very little about Dracula. Even Western tourists mainly visited beach or mountain resorts and Dracula was not an important part of their holidays. According to Duncan Light, Dracula tourists were not a homogeneous group and Dracula tourism was (and still is) a diverse phenomenon which embraced a broad range of interests and motives. Some tourists could be identified as literary tourists, some as film tourists, some were looking for the supernatural roots of the Dracula myth and some were interested in the historical Dracula, Vlad the Impaler.<sup>3</sup> The original interest in Vlad the Impaler was a direct result of the publication of *In Search of Dracula* and later as the result of the success of the movie *Bram Stoker's Dracula* from 1992. (Light 2012, 57–63.)

Dracula tourism was tolerated by the Romanian government, but it was not encouraged. Romania wanted to use international tourism to celebrate the agenda and achievements of state socialism and to raise the country's international profile, and as such Dracula tourism based around a belief in the supernatural and vampires was fundamentally discordant with Romania's identity as a socialist state (Light 2012, 69). Nevertheless, the Romanian government realised that the Dracula connection could offer considerable economic benefits, so the government sought ways to manage the phenomenon. The national tourist office (ONT) developed a Romanian-led tour based on the historical Dracula, 'Dracula – Legend and Truth'. This tour was centred on the life of Vlad the Impaler and it included visits to places associated with him. It was popular and attracted tourists from Spain, America, West Germany, France and Sweden. According to Duncan Light this tour did not really meet with the expectations of many tourists because it did not address the fictional Dracula. (Light 2012, 71–72.) Romanian tourism grew throughout the 1970s and the number of tourists from the West increased.

During the 1980s conditions in Romania worsened as a result of Nicolae Ceaușescu's policies. He wanted to reduce Romania's dependence upon Western Europe and introduced severe austerity measures in order to pay off the country's foreign debt. This involved, for example, reducing domestic consumption and investment and rationing energy supplies. As a result, living standards for Romanians declined, with rationing of food, electricity and fuel,

3 This same characterisation is still valid today among Dracula tourists.

and this also affected tourism. Although there were still some tourists visiting Romania for Dracula the attitudes towards Dracula tourism and towards the whole Dracula phenomenon hardened. The label 'Dracula' was applied to Ceaușescu in the Western Press in a negative way, which lessened the government's desire to associate itself with the Western Dracula even further. The Romanian government began to view Western tourists with suspicion, and foreigners were also the subject of careful surveillance by the regime. The number of tourists visiting Romania declined significantly, and by the end of the 1980s it was no longer an attractive destination for Western tourists. (Ionescu 1986, 25; Light & Dumbrăveanu 1999, 901; Light 2012, 82.)

Although there was not really any involvement from the government in including the Western fictional vampire Dracula within tourism, there were two local initiatives in north-east Romania that did this. Alexandru Misiuga, who worked as the director of the County Tourist Office in the county of Bistrița, was able to convince the authorities to build two hotels in the county with its direct connections with the fictional Dracula. In 1974 a hotel called *Coroana de Aur* (*the Golden Crown*) was opened in the city of Bistrița. The name of the hotel came from Stoker's book (where it is *the Golden Krone Hotel*, where Jonathan Harker stayed the night before heading off to Dracula's castle), although Alexander Misiuga told officials that the name was connected with a local medieval voivode, Petru Rareș. The second hotel that Misiuga was able to convince the authorities to build was Hotel Tihuța. (Light 2012, 75, 101.) This was built at more or less the same place as Stoker placed Dracula's castle in his novel, near the top of Borgo Pass. After seven years of work, the hotel was opened in 1983. During Communist times the hotel could not use the word 'Dracula' in its name, but after the revolution of 1989 it changed its name to Hotel Castle Dracula, which was Misiuga's original idea. (Light 2012, 104; Transylvanian Society of Dracula, 8–9). Besides these two excursions into the Western Dracula myth there were also some official ONT tour guides who began to promote Dracula tourism on their own initiative, offering tourists opportunities to visit locations connected to the fictional Dracula in Transylvania (Light 2012, 81).

After the revolution and the violent overthrow of Ceaușescu in December 1989 Romania began its transition into a democracy and a market economy. This also meant that the earlier restrictions and regulations concerning tourism were removed. Tourism started to grow but this growth was erratic. By the mid-1990s tourism in Romania was actually in a state of stagnation and decline. (Light & Dumbrăveanu 1999, 903–905.) The decline reached its worst in 2002, when Romania received fewer foreign visitors (4.9 million) than in 1989. However, after 2003 it has attracted more and more foreign tourists and

in 2008 visitor arrivals reached 8.9 million, the highest figure ever recorded, although the economic crisis caused a small decline in arrivals soon after that. (Light 2012, 120.) After 1989 Dracula tourism also started to grow. In the early 1990s Dracula tourists continued to visit Romania but their numbers were much lower than before. After 1993 their numbers started to increase, partly because of the success of the film *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Many of the tour agencies offering Dracula tours were foreign and the ones in Romania were still offering tours themed around the life of Vlad the Impaler. The Transylvanian Society of Dracula, originally a Romanian non-political, non-profit, cultural-historical non-government organisation founded in 1991, started to organise Dracula tours. Initially it worked in partnership with a private travel agency in 1992 and from 1994 onwards through its own travel agency, the Company of Mysterious Journeys. The Company added new elements to its tours, namely evening performances in the village of Aref that included traditional dancing and telling of local folktales about Vlad the Impaler, and witch-trial performances and knighthood tests. New locations, stories and features about the fictitious Dracula and the vampire myth in general were also added. (Light 2012, 124–125.) Many other Romanian travel agencies copied these activities for their own tour itineraries.

The reactions of the Romanian government towards Dracula tourism remained ambivalent for most of the 1990s. In the mid-1990s the state began to slowly re-engage with Dracula tourism and in particular the minister of tourism at the time, Dan Matei Agathon, was very eager to utilise Dracula for Romanian tourism. The custodian of Bran castle, which is one of the most-visited 'Dracula sights' in Romania, was also open to the idea of using the fictitious Dracula connection in order to get more visitors to Bran. In 1993 the castle hosted a symposium about Dracula, and the custodian, Cornel Taloş, also organised performances in the castle's interior courtyard. Then the attitudes towards Dracula tourism changed again. Taloş was replaced as the custodian by the ministry of culture and all events at the castle connected with the vampire myth and the fictitious Dracula were prohibited. The new custodian, Raul Mihai, was initially opposed to the Dracula connection and did not do anything to exploit it.<sup>4</sup> The minister of tourism also changed in 1996. (Light 2012; 126–127.) According to Duncan Light, Romania sought to present itself from the mid-1990s as a credible future member of the European Union and NATO. It also sought to convince Western opinion that it shared the same

4 Except in 2002, when he introduced Halloween events and 'nights of terror' in order to generate more income. However, he returned to his earlier position about the Dracula connection in 2003.



values and agenda as the West and therefore Dracula, vampires and the otherness of Romania were things that the government did not want to be associated with. (Light 2007, 758.) However, in 2000 things changed again, as Dan Matei Agathon was again appointed minister of tourism and launched ambitious proposals for a Western-style theme park based on the Dracula myth, called 'Dracula Park'.<sup>5</sup> (Iordanova 2007, 50; Light 2012, 126.) There were five possible locations for the park: Bran, Bucharest, Sighișoara, Târgoviște or the Tihuța (Borgo) Pass; in 2001 the Breite Plateau near Sighișoara was announced as the chosen site (Iordanova 2007, 51; Light 2012, 138–139).

The Dracula Park project confronted many problems such as the choice of the location, copyrights, financial problems and both domestic and international opposition towards the project, until it was officially abandoned in 2006. The opposition towards the park was widespread. Some were against the whole idea of a Dracula amusement park in Romania, some opposed its planned location and others were concerned about the project's unsustainable nature and its environmental and cultural impact on Sighișoara. Most of the domestic opposition was centred on culture and the image of Romania. Many were concerned that the park would only strengthen the unwelcome image of Romania as the homeland of vampires, and they also criticised the commodification of a vampire myth that had no real connections to Romania. One criticism was the fear that the park would further exacerbate the confusion between the vampire Count Dracula and Vlad the Impaler and that this would be damaging to the image of Vlad. Many of the churches in Romania also opposed the project, especially the Lutheran Church in Sighișoara. They argued that Dracula Park represented a celebration of the occult and that this was entirely inappropriate in a country with Christian values. (Light 2012, 144–145.) The park was also seen as a threat to the cultural significance of the town of Sighișoara.

However, not all people opposed the project. Many locals from Sighișoara were in favour of the project, because it promised work and income to the town, which could have been used to preserve the city. (Jamal & Tanase 2005, 445.) One tour guide I interviewed said that most of the people (99.9 per cent, in his words) from Sighișoara and many people around Romania were in favour of the project. He was also of the opinion that the park would have helped to separate the two Draculas from each other, so that in the citadel of Sighișoara the merchandising and tourism could have focused on Vlad the Impaler and the history of the city while the park, some six kilometres from

5 Originally it was supposed to be called Dracula Land.

the city, could have focused on the fictitious Dracula and vampires.<sup>6</sup> The percentage of those in favour of the project may have been exaggerated, but this interview demonstrated that not all were against the park. International opposition was largely due to the fact that Sighișoara is a UNESCO World Heritage site and that the Breite Plateau is a natural landscape with 400-year-old oak trees regarded as a national treasure. UNESCO issued a report regarding the Dracula Park project, and its conclusions were negative: the park should be relocated. UNESCO felt that the park would have had a negative impact on Sighișoara's historic centre and also an undesirable influence on cultural tourism. Greenpeace and the UK-based Mihai Eminescu Trust, and many non-governmental Romanian organisations were also against the park for cultural and environmental reasons. Although for a while it seemed that the protest and critics were having little impact, the government did react in 2002 and decided that the park would be relocated to Snagov. (Cosma, Pop & Negrusa 2007, 47–48; Jamal & Tanase 2005, 444–446; Light 2012, 148.)

Dracula Park was seen as a threat to Romanian heritage and cultural history and all the arguments against Dracula tourism in general were focused on this project. Although there were plans to relocate the park to Snagov, after a couple of years of legal and political problems surrounding the plan it was abandoned altogether in 2006. The attitude of the ministry of tourism towards Dracula tourism in Romania has since been mostly either negative or indifferent (Light 2012, 151–152 & 160). It does however seem that there are people who are not ready to let the project die altogether. In 2015 the president of the Romanian Tourism Authority, Simona Man told the Romanian media company Mediafax that they are making a proposal to the government for a new Dracula themed park. The plan is to build it somewhere between Sighișoara and Brașov. The project would be developed on the model of the previous plans, but perhaps with a new name. Instead of Dracula Park, it could be called The Impaler Park after Vlad the Impaler. According to Simona Man, the Romanian Tourism Authority wants to bring new opportunities for Romanian mountain resorts.<sup>7</sup> So it seems that at least the idea about the park is still alive, although there have been no news about the actual construction of the park. Whether or not the park will ever be built, remains to be seen.

6 Interview with a tour guide 11.4.2010.

7 Mediafax, <http://www.mediafax.ro/social/simona-man-ant-parc-tematic-dracula-intre-sighisoara-si-brasov-prin-parteneriat-public-privat-13792647> [accessed 22.5.2016], Romania Insider, <http://www.romania-insider.com/romania-wants-to-sink-its-teeth-into-a-new-dracula-themed-amusement-park/140952/> [accessed 22.5.2016].

## Dracula tours

Although one can visit locations connected with Vlad the Impaler or the fictitious Count Dracula alone, most Dracula tourists take part in specially organised tours that visit these locations. There are many travel agencies, both foreign and Romanian, which offer Dracula tours. Most tours start in Bucharest and make a round trip in Transylvania before returning. There are also tours that start in other places like Cluj-Napoca or Budapest. Most of the tours take about a week, although there are also shorter and longer options available. Although these tours are organised throughout the year, many travel agencies arrange special themed Dracula tours around Halloween.<sup>8</sup> Originally in the early 1990s many Romanian travel agencies modelled their own Dracula tours on the old tour that the National Tourist Office had organised in the 1970s, which was mainly connected to Vlad the Impaler and not to the fictitious Dracula. Many foreign travel agencies started to organise Dracula tours themed around both Draculas. The Company of Mysterious Journeys was one of the first private Romanian travel agencies to start to organise Dracula tours. They added several new elements to the tours, like the witch-trial shows and knight shows, which several other travel agencies later apparently copied.<sup>9</sup> (Light 2012, 70 & 124–125.)

## Places

The locations visited in Dracula tourism can be divided into those that are associated with Vlad the Impaler, those associated with the fictitious Dracula and those not associated with either Dracula. Most of the tours start in Bucharest, the capital of Romania. Although Bucharest has quite a strong connection with Vlad the Impaler, as the city itself is first mentioned in a document signed by him, it is not much of a Dracula location. There is a statue of Vlad the Impaler in front of the old ruins of the princely palace, which was originally built by him. There was also a Dracula restaurant called Club Count Dracula in the city. This theme restaurant was based on both the fictitious Dracula and Vlad the Impaler. On the first floor there were three dining rooms, one

8 See Appendixes 1 & 2 for examples of typical Dracula tour itineraries. The first is “The Classic Dracula Tour” by The Company of Mysterious Journeys and the second is “Halloween in Transylvania with Vlad the Impaler- the full Dracula Tour” by Transylvania Live.

9 One tour guide told me that many other travel agencies actually copy their tours.

themed around hunting and the other two around the Middle Ages and Vlad the Impaler. In the basement were various rooms, including ‘The Chapel’, which had a horror-show décor with ‘blood’, ‘severed heads’ and a coffin. There was also a Dracula show, where ‘Dracula’ came and took one of the guests at the restaurant to his coffin. We visited this restaurant during the Halloween tour in 2010. Before the meal the lights suddenly dimmed and music from the soundtrack of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* started to play. Then an actor portraying Dracula came into the room and walked slowly into his coffin. A moment later he emerged from the coffin and came to our table and posed for the camera, ‘biting’ people’s necks, and then he left. This was followed by the dinner, which was called ‘Renfield’s Dinner’, and was made to look like a rat (in reality it was chicken).<sup>10</sup> This was a special show made for tourists in order to provide an experience for the evening and not just a good meal. This restaurant was also very much targeted towards tourists, judging from both the décor and the prices, which were above average. Other than these few sites, Bucharest is the starting point for many tours just because it is the capital and is easy to access.

Besides Bucharest the most common places linked with Vlad the Impaler on the Dracula tours are the monastery island of Snagov, Târgoviște, Sighișoara, Brașov, Poienari citadel and the villages of Aref and of Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca, Mediaș and the castle of Hunedoara. There are only two places that can be associated with Stoker’s book that are visited on the Dracula tours, namely the city of Bistrița and the Hotel Castle Dracula in the Tihuța (Borgo) Pass. The city of Cluj-Napoca (as Klausenburg) is mentioned in *Dracula* as the first place where Jonathan Harker spends the night in Transylvania on his way to Bistrița and Castle Dracula, but this is hardly mentioned in the Dracula tours or on the internet sites of the travel agencies. The city of Mediaș is mentioned in *Dracula* when Jonathan Harker drinks the Golden Mediasch wine in Bistrița, but this is also rarely mentioned. The city of Galați is also mentioned in *Dracula* as the city and the port at which Count Dracula disembarked on his way back to Transylvania. Galați is not, however, included in any Dracula tours that I have found. There are also sites that are visited on some Dracula tours that have no connections to either Vlad the Impaler or to the Dracula of fiction. These sites include the castle of Bran, the castle of Peleş, the city of Turda, the fortified church in Biertan, the Danube delta and the painted churches of Moldavia.

Târgoviște was the capital of Wallachia during Vlad the Impaler’s time, and many of the famous stories about Vlad are connected to it. The main attraction in the city is the ruins of the princely palace, where Vlad lived and ruled. There is an old watchtower called Sunset Tower (Turnul Chindei) attached to

10 Based on the fieldnotes of the author.



**Fig. 2.** The alleged tomb of Vlad the Impaler in Snagov. Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2016).

the ruins, where there is an exhibition about Vlad's life. Of all the over thirty rulers who lived in the princely palace, Vlad is the only one whose life is exhibited specially. There are several information plates around the area where the information is in both Romanian and in English.<sup>11</sup> There are also at least three statues of Vlad the Impaler in the city, so it is made clear that he is a historical ruler whose connections to the city are remembered and appreciated.

Snagov monastery is marketed as the burial place of Vlad despite any evidence to support this. Although there has been an attempt to formulate a 'Snagov saga' around the monastery island which tells of Vlad's burial (McNally&Florescu 1994, 104), there really is no evidence to suggest that Vlad is actually buried here. According to the Romanian historian Constantin Rezachevici there are multiple reasons why Snagov is very unlikely the burial place of Vlad the Impaler as I have already stated in Chapter 2 (Rezachevici 2002). Despite all this Snagov is still marketed as the burial place of Vlad the Impaler and there is even a picture of him above the assumed grave in front of the altar. There is also a small exhibition about Vlad and about the monastery in the entrance of the church.

The Transylvanian city of Sighișoara is the alleged birthplace of Vlad and has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1999. The main criteria for its

11 This is a rather new addition. When I first visited the ruins in 2005 these were not there and the only information available about the ruins and Vlad was in the tower exhibition, and it was in Romanian, as it was in 2007 and 2010.

UNESCO status is that Sighișoara is an outstanding example of a small fortified city in the border region between the Latin-oriented culture of central Europe and the Byzantine-Orthodox culture of south-eastern Europe.<sup>12</sup> The main site to be visited on the Dracula tours in addition to the city itself is the house where Vlad the Impaler is thought to have been born. This is now a restaurant called Vlad Dracul House (Casa Vlad Dracul). Although the actual house is one of the oldest in Sighișoara and the restaurant for the most part utilizes more history than fiction, there is a newly added feature to the restaurant that is more fictional based. There is a room on the third floor of the restaurant that is advertised as the room where Vlad was born. Tourists can visit this room in exchange for a small fee. Inside the room there is a coffin where an actor playing Vlad/Count Dracula lies and scares the tourists. Although the city is marketed with the UNESCO connection and as one of the most beautiful and best-preserved medieval towns in Europe, it is also full of souvenir shops selling all kinds of merchandise linked with Vlad, Dracula and horror in general. Sighișoara was also the proposed site of the Dracula Park project for a long time.

The Transylvanian city of Brașov has a long shared history with Vlad the Impaler. Brașov was an important and wealthy medieval city close to the border of Wallachia. Its wealthy Saxon merchants exercised great influence over Wallachian politics, which caused tension between them and city councillors on the one hand and the Wallachian rulers on the other. This was the case during Vlad's time, and after several incidents with the merchants and councillors of Brașov, he attacked the city and punished them. This attack is described in one of the most famous German stories about Vlad where he is said to have had his breakfast in the midst of several impaled victims from Brașov. (Harmening 1983, 21; Treptow 2000, 100–101 & 217.) Although Brașov is a heavily visited Dracula site, it seems that Dracula is almost completely absent here: there is little Dracula-themed merchandise to be found around the city or even in the souvenir shops.

The ruins of the citadel of Poienari and the nearby village of Arefu have close connections to both Vlad the Impaler and to the folklore and oral legends about him. The citadel was originally built in the thirteenth century, but it fell into ruins in the fourteenth century. Vlad rebuilt it during his second reign and therefore it is also known as his castle. (Light 2012, 95–96; Moiescu 2009, 26 & 62.) The oldest Romanian story about Vlad that was collected was about the construction of the Poienari fortress. In this story, collected already in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, Vlad ordered the inhabitants

12 <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/902> [accessed 17.5.2016].



**Fig. 3.** Impaled 'victims' in front of the ruins of Poienari. Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2011).

of Târgoviște to build the fortress as a punishment for their crime against his brother. (Andrescu 1999, 207–208; Stăvăruș 1978, 51.) There are about 1400 steps that lead up to the citadel. On the way there are a couple of information boards where the tourist can read about Vlad's escape and about the construction of the citadel. These information boards emphasise the link between the ruins and Vlad, especially for tourists who are travelling alone. Up on the hill just in front of the ruins there are two impaled human-sized figures on a stake.<sup>13</sup> This is a visual way for the tourist to immediately affirm the connection in their minds of the place with Vlad the Impaler. Poienari is also marketed as the 'real castle of Dracula' by some websites.<sup>14</sup> This labelling is interesting, because it is true and false at the same time. This depends on who the Dracula in question is, Vlad the Impaler or the vampire Count Dracula.

When compared with the castle of Bran, for example, Poienari was the real castle of Vlad the Impaler while Bran was not. Then again if the Dracula that is referred to is the fictitious Dracula, then Poienari is of course not the real Castle Dracula. The 'real' castle of Dracula was located in Bram Stoker's book in the Borgo Pass in Transylvania. Here is another example of how easy it is for the organisers of Dracula tourism to play with the name Dracula. By referring to Poienari as the real castle of Dracula, it is more than plausible that the tourists immediately connect it with a mental image of the castle of the vampire Count Dracula, familiar from popular culture. Dracula's castle was, and probably still is, one of the most sought-after places for many Dracula enthusiasts (Light 2012, 86) and therefore referring to Poienari as Dracula's castle is understandable from a marketing point of view. Travel agencies market Poienari in different ways on their websites. On some websites Poienari is referred to as the fortress built by Vlad the Impaler, on others it is the real castle of Dracula and on others again it is as the real castle of Dracula and the name Vlad the Impaler is in parentheses after that. However, even when Poienari is marketed as the real castle of Dracula, when the tourists get to the actual location, there is really nothing there to make one connect it to the fictitious Dracula. The fortress is rather small and it is in ruins.<sup>15</sup>

- 13 When I visited the ruins in October 2010, the "impaled victims" weren't set up yet. Then when I visited the site in November 2011 they were there. The same goes for the information boards. The amount of souvenir shops and other touristic facilities have also increased every time I've been to Poienari (2005, 2010, 2011 and 2016).
- 14 Of the ten travel agencies, only three market it as the real castle of Dracula.
- 15 It is interesting that there seems to be a shared presumption of the castle of Dracula and how it should look. The public image seems to be of a big Gothic castle sitting on a mountain top, and it seems that the castle of Bran fits that perception. This image of



Near the ruins of Poienari lies the village of Arefu (sometimes also called Aref). This was the place where Georgeta Ene collected stories about Vlad in 1969. According to many websites and travel guidebooks in Arefu tourists can sit around campfires and listen to the locals, who claim to be the descendants of those who helped Vlad escape from Poienari, telling stories about Vlad the Impaler (Williams & Wildman 2001, 256; Reid & Pettersen 2007, 105; Pettersen & Baker 2010, 107). There are indeed still people in Arefu who do tell stories about Vlad the Impaler, at least for tourists.

The Transylvanian cities of Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca and Mediaş also have links to Vlad and are visited on some tours, as is the castle of Hunedoara. Sibiu's main connection with Vlad is that his son Mihnea the Bad is buried there and that Vlad attacked lands surrounding the city in 1457. This attack is also mentioned in the German stories. (Treptow 2000, 100.) Sibiu was and is an important cultural city and it was also the European Capital of Culture in 2007, which explains why it is visited even though the connections with Vlad are not that strong. Cluj-Napoca is the birthplace of the Hungarian king Mathias Corvinus, who imprisoned Vlad in 1462 and later released him in 1476. Other than that there are no real connections with Vlad. Mediaş does not have many connections with Vlad either. When he was captured by the Hungarians in 1462 he was apparently transported to Hungary via Mediaş, but that seems to be the extent of the connection. Hunedoara castle belonged to John Hunyadi, the father of Mathias Corvinus. Hunyadi had Vlad's father killed and his son Corvinus had Vlad imprisoned. Vlad was apparently also a prisoner in the Hunedoara castle for a short while. Mediaş and Cluj-Napoca also have few connections with Stoker's *Dracula*.

The two main locations connected with the fictional Dracula, the Hotel Coroana de Aur in Bistriţa and Hotel Castle Dracula in the Borgo Pass, are the only places in Romania where fictitious places and events from Stoker's book have been assimilated as such. The Coroana de Aur has the same name as the hotel in Stoker's book, where Jonathan Harker eats and rests before heading off to meet Count Dracula in his castle in the Borgo Pass. The hotel was built in the 1970s, as mentioned earlier, and it does not really fit with the description of the hotel in Stoker's novel, yet it purposely shares the name and (general) location of the hotel in *Dracula*. (Light 2012, 102–107.) The Hotel Castle Dracula is also a good example of a place that was made because of Dracula tourism and which has no links to the history or culture of its surroundings. The hotel was built in the 1980s near the place where the castle of

the ideal Dracula's castle has been largely influenced by movies, since in Stoker's book the castle is not intact but in ruins.

Count Dracula was located in Bram Stoker's novel. Although it could not use its originally intended name during the Communist era, and although the idea of the hotel was marketed to the state officials quite differently, the real reason for its location was Stoker's novel and Dracula tourism. (Light 2012, 104–105.) Both hotels are interesting because they are both real and unreal at the same time. This is especially the case with the Hotel Castle Dracula: they are real, tangible buildings, but at the same time they are imaginative places because of the ideas and emotions people project onto them. These ideas and emotions come from popular culture.

The castle of Bran is the most famous and most visited Dracula site in Romania, although it is also quite ambiguous and its connections with either Dracula are all but non-existent. On the other hand it is a Dracula site and on the other hand it is not. The castle was first mentioned in 1377 and it was built by the Saxons of Braşov to administer and defend the border crossing and the collection of taxes between Wallachia and Transylvania. Following the union of Wallachia and Transylvania the castle ceased to function as a border point. Later it was the summer residence of Queen Marie of Romania from the 1920s, and following the proclamation of the People's Republic in 1947 it was nationalised and remained the property of the state until 2006. The castle is in good condition as it has undergone several restorations during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (Light 2012, 87–88.) Bran became known as Dracula's castle during the 1960s and 1970s, when Western tourists started to visit Romania. Many wished to see the castle of Dracula that they had read about and seen in many movies, but there was almost nothing for them to see. The Gothic castle of Bran, standing on a rocky outcrop, certainly resembled Dracula's castle as known from the movies. When Bran had become known as Dracula's castle, the Western travel press and popular writing started to promote the myth even further. (Light 2012, 87–91.) Although Bran might resemble a vampire castle, it is nowhere near the Borgo Pass where Stoker situated Count Dracula's vampire castle in his novel. It does not really resemble the castle as it was described in the book, either, which was partly in ruins. Nor does Bran have a strong connection with Vlad the Impaler. Vlad might have visited it on occasion and he might have been held there as a prisoner, but it was never his castle. Yet the confusion about Bran is still alive and it is called Dracula's castle on many websites and in news articles even today. The interior of the castle is also in contradiction with the castle's outward appearance, especially considering the Dracula connection. The interior of the castle is mostly portrayed as it was during Queen Marie's stay and does not fit very well with the idea of vampires or Dracula. There is one room in the castle where vampire fiction, Dracula, Romanian vampire tradition and Vlad's relationship to



**Fig. 4.** The Gothic castle of Bran, standing on a rocky outcrop. Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2010).

Count Dracula are explained. There is also one room where there are medieval looking costumes, one of which is 'Vlad's'. Other than that there is no mention of Vlad or Dracula anywhere in the castle, except the souvenir shop. There is a new addition to the normal interior in the castle, namely a torture room. Although the exhibition is a historical one showing historical torture devices, I feel that the reason they have added this exhibition could be seen as catering to Dracula tourists. Especially, since it is in stark contrast with the rest of the interior in the castle. Outside the castle there is a large marketplace, in which local people sell anything from local food products to T-shirts, coffee mugs and even *Scream* masks.<sup>16</sup> Bran is also full of restaurants and hotels and is clearly a popular tourist site.

The castle of Peleş is also an interesting site on the Dracula tours, because it has absolutely nothing to do with either Dracula, and yet it is visited on many Dracula tours. The castle was built in the late nineteenth century for the royal family of Romania and it is nowadays a museum. The city of Turda is an old salt-mining town, where the mines were active from the thirteenth century until 1932. Nowadays the salt mines are a tourist site. There is a hotel in Turda called The Hunter Prince Castle or also Dracula's Castle. This shows a mixture of a medieval theme, a hunting theme and also a horror theme. Turda is a part of the tours more or less simply because of this hotel and because its location is suitable for a stop between sites that have more to do with Vlad or Dracula. The salt mine is also visited on the tours that stop in Turda. The fortified churches

<sup>16</sup> Masks like the one the killer wore in the *Scream* movies.

in Biertan, Viscri and Prejmer are three of the seven fortified churches in Transylvania which together form a UNESCO World Heritage site. Romania has altogether seven locations that are UNESCO World Heritage sites, so it is understandable that the Romanian tour operators want to include some of them in the tours if possible. There are also two other UNESCO World Heritage sites that are visited on some tours, but these tours are quite rare. The sites are the Danube delta and the painted churches of Moldavia. Curtea de Argeş is also visited on many tours although it also does not have a real connection to either Dracula. The cathedral and the monastery of Curtea de Argeş are the main attractions on these tours. All of these sites are particularly interesting because of their lack of connection with either Dracula. I will deal with this subject later on in chapter 7.

## Stereotypes and discourses used in the websites

Stereotypes are commonly shared cultural generalisations or cultural models. Stereotypes and stereotypic images are used and created especially in tourism advertising. Often these stereotypic images are based around one subject such as reggae music with Jamaica or kangaroos with Australia. (Zimmerbauer 2001, 122–123.) With Romania this one subject is of course Dracula. In Romania the reaction towards the use of Dracula as a marketing tool for tourism is, however, ambivalent, unlike for example the use of the kangaroo in Australia, where it is the logo of the Australian government agency responsible for attracting international visitors to Australia, Tourism Australia.

Stereotypes are used because tourists often have formulaic conceptions about the resort they are visiting. These kinds of stereotypes can protect the visitor from anything that is strange in the foreign culture. Stereotypes also have the tendency to standardise cultures. Because Westerners are the largest consumer group in the travel industry, the standardisation of cultures is often done in Western cultural terms and stereotypes. (Petrisalo 2001, 80.) This is also partly the case with Dracula tourism. Most of the stereotypic images that are used in Dracula tourism deal with the place myth of Transylvania and the role Transylvania and Romania have played in Western popular culture. In general tourists come to destinations with certain stereotypes of the host culture. In some cases these stereotypical images can even be strengthened during the trip, regardless of what the tourists may see or hear there. (Sharma 2004, 94.)

In Dracula tourism at large, the stereotypes that are used are usually connected with vampires and of Romania and Transylvania as a mysterious place

of superstitions and the supernatural. Stereotypes are used both in the tour narrations and on some of the websites of the travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism. On the websites stereotypic images of vampires and castles are used, and in many cases the name Dracula is employed when speaking about Vlad the Impaler. In the tour narrations stereotypic images are reinforced by hinting at danger and mystery and talking about local superstitions. Then again some tour agencies want to challenge these stereotypic conceptions about Romania; sometimes they succeed and sometimes not. For example, one tour guide told me about a couple who were on a tour in Transylvania on a rainy and foggy day. The guide apologised for the weather but the couple were very happy, because that was what they had expected of Transylvania, although in reality the region is quite sunny. Another tour guide told me that even though they tell the tourists that there are no vampires in Romanian folklore, some of the tourists do not believe this because the preconceived stereotypic images that they have of vampires in Romania are too strong.<sup>17</sup> In many cases the use of stereotypes becomes visible by looking at the discourses that are used in Dracula tourism.

Discourses can be explained as manners of speaking, ways of thinking and ways of representing a subject. Discourses are not neutral, and are often used to strengthen and to promote a certain cause. (Hall 1999, 98–102.) Discourses, like stereotypes, are widely used in tourism. Richard W. Hallet and Judith Kaplan-Weinger have researched several official tourism websites and the discourses that they use in their book *Official Tourism Websites* (2010). They argue that ‘the discourse of tourism is a discourse of identity construction, promotion, recognition and acceptance’ and that it is ‘created through the creation and manipulation of both linguistic and visual texts’ (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 5). They used multimodal discourse analysis, which incorporates both visual semiotic analysis and critical discourse analysis to research the websites in their work. Because the internet is a very visual form of sharing information, it is important to focus on the imagery that is used on the websites of the travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism. By focusing also on the imagery and on the visual texts it is possible to get a better understanding of the discursive formation and of the promotion of identity that the provider of the website wants to offer. (Hallet & Kaplan 2010, 11.)

Noel B. Salazar argues that ‘tourism imaginaries of peoples and places cannot be considered simply as commoditised or commercial representations

17 Although as I pointed out in chapter 2, in this case the stereotypes about Romania and vampires can actually be said to be also based on real folktradition and not just on popular fiction.

with an interpretative or symbolic function' (Salazar 2010, 46). Salazar argues that the imaginaries often propagate historically inherited stereotypes that are based on myths and fantasies (Salazar 2010, 46). The same can be said about the imagery used in tourism. The imageries used in tourism advertisements are often based on stereotypes. In the case of Dracula tourism the negative stereotypes that are used are based on popular culture and the idea of Romania (and especially Transylvania) as the mysterious home of vampires. Because tourism marketing relies heavily on imagined scenarios in order to turn places into easily consumable attractions, Romania could easily be marketed as vampire country (Salazar 2010, 47). Therefore I am interested in seeing whether these negative stereotypes are in fact used in the imagery on the websites of the travel agencies or not. Many countries use tourism as an actual and potential source for external revenue and to promote and construct cultural and national identities. Many countries also use tourism as a means to legitimise themselves as territorial entities. (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 7–8.) This promotion is often done via official tourism websites that are usually constructed by government agencies. These websites often focus on nature, history, traditions and the vitality of the country and its people, using stereotypical images of these different categories.

## The Romanian National Tourist Office website

On the main page of the website of the Romanian National Tourist Office there are pictures of mostly castles, monasteries and nature, and the five categories describing the country are authentic, natural, cultural and active Romania as well as health and wellness. The pictures of the castles speak of the history, continuity, strength and endurance of the nation. For example, in their research into Baltic tourism websites Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger found that the official Estonian tourism websites use pictures of historical buildings that can be used to construct an identity of fortitude and the return of the country's sovereignty (Hallet & Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 31–32). The function of the pictures of castles on the website of the Romanian National Tourist Office can be seen as similar. The four categories and discourses describing Romania, authentic, natural, cultural and active, give an image of Romania as a country that has its roots in the countryside and in history, yet at the same time as culturally active and vital, and having a unique nature.<sup>18</sup> These kinds of stereotypic images and

18 Also the fifth category, 'wellness and health' serves the same purpose. The information on the site mentions that some of the spas in Romania date to the Roman times.

discourses are often used in tourism marketing. Dracula tourism is not very prominently featured on the website of the Romanian National Tourist Office, although information about it can be found in the Special Interest-section of the website. It is obvious that Dracula is not something that the official Romanian tourist office wants to promote as the image of Romania and especially as the primary image.<sup>19</sup>

Unlike the official tourism websites, the websites of the travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism do not have a mandate or an official obligation to market and promote Dracula tours and therefore also Romania in a particular way. It is thus interesting to see how they promote Romania through their websites and what kind of discourses and stereotypes they use: these represent and confirm the image that the provider of Dracula tourism wants to give of Romania. Because I am interested in the relations between Dracula tourism and Romanian culture, tradition, history and heritage, I am looking into discourses that can reveal something about these relations.

## The websites of Romanian travel agencies

As research material I have used the websites of ten Romanian travel agencies that offer Dracula tours. These agencies are the Company of Mysterious Journeys, Transylvania Live, Adventure Transylvania, Atlantic Tour, Ciao Romania, Cultural Romtour, Go Romania Tours, Quest Tours and Adventures, Ultramarine Travel and Visit Transilvania Travel. Of the ten travel agencies, five offer tours that can vary in length and in theme and five offer only one basic Dracula tour. Most of the agencies that offer Dracula tours offer for example Halloween tours or tours that are shorter or longer than the usual tours. The Company of Mysterious Journeys offers altogether twelve different Dracula tours while Go Romania Tours offers eleven, and Transylvania Live offers nine; Visit Transilvania Travel and Quest Tours and Adventures both offer three. Even though the shorter, longer or specially themed tours differ from the basic tours, they do share the same basis as the basic tours. The shorter tours, such as the many weekend tours, visit places from the normal

This also connects Romania with the history of Western Europe.

- 19 Dracula is not mentioned on the main page nor in the Main Attractions section. Information about Dracula and Dracula tourism can be found in the Special Interest section, where it is the fourth from the top. The Romanian National Tourist Office, <http://www.romania.travel/> [accessed 4.5.2016].

basic tours and the longer and specially themed tours visit the same places as the basic tours and some additional locations.

These travel agencies also differ from one another in terms of the other tours that they offer and whether or not Dracula tourism is the main focus of the agency. Many travel agencies also offer tours that are not linked to Dracula in any way. The travel agencies can be divided into two categories. Some travel agencies offer mainly Dracula tours but also other types of tours around Romania and for some agencies Dracula tours and tourism are just one special-interest item in their repertoire. Of the ten travel agencies only two fit clearly into first category, the Company of Mysterious Journeys and Transylvania Live. The Company of Mysterious Journeys is the official travel agency of the Transylvanian Society of Dracula and therefore it primarily organises tours that are themed around Dracula. In addition, it also offers other themed tours where the theme varies from romantic to mysterious. Even though some other tours are not themed around Dracula, they still visit sites connected with Vlad the Impaler or the fictitious Dracula.<sup>20</sup>

The travel agency Transylvania Live also offers other kinds of tours around Romania and especially in Transylvania, but it is quite clear from their website that Dracula tourism is their main focus. In addition to the many Dracula tours, they also organise other sightseeing tours, culturally themed tours and romantic tours for couples. That Dracula is the main focus of the agency can also be concluded from the fact that, like the Company of Mysterious Journeys, they also feature Dracula in many of the non-Dracula tours.<sup>21</sup> All the other travel agencies offer all kind of tours around Romania and Dracula tours are just one of many. Atlantic Tour and Ultramarine Travel also organise trips to other countries than Romania. GoRomania Tours also offers many tours around Romania that are not connected with either Dracula, such as ones that visit the UNESCO World Heritage sites in Romania. What makes GoRomania Tours especially interesting is the fact that even though they offer different kinds of guided tours around Romania, on their main webpage it is clearly stated that in their opinion the main reason why people come to Romania and take part in their tours is Dracula. One difference between the travel agencies

20 See for example the Romantic tours from the Company of Mysterious Journeys, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/romantic\\_tours/places/people/legends/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/romantic_tours/places/people/legends/) [accessed 4.5.2016].

21 For example the Valentine's Day in Transylvania tour that is marketed for couples has many Dracula attractions. For an overview of all of the different tours provided by Transylvania Live, see <http://www.visit-transylvania.co.uk/index.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].



is also whether they visit the two main locations that are connected to fiction, namely the Hotel Coroana de Aur in Bistrița and the Hotel Castle Dracula in Borgo (Tihuța) Pass. Out of the ten travel agencies, only five offer tours that also visit these two locations.<sup>22</sup> The other five agencies only visit locations that are either connected to the historical Dracula, Vlad the Impaler, or locations that do not have any connections with either Dracula.

All of the Romanian travel agencies that are researched here offer their tours primarily in English. Out of the ten travel agencies five also offer information, and three also provide Dracula tours, in other languages, or at least information about them in other languages. The Company of Mysterious Journeys offers Dracula tours in Russian, Cultural Romtour offers Dracula tours or at least information about the tours in Spanish and in German, and Ciao Romania offers Dracula tours or at least information about the tours also in Italian, German and French. Ultramarine Travel also offers tours and trips in Romanian, but none of them have any connections with Dracula. On the Romanian language website there is no information at all about Dracula, either about Vlad the Impaler or about Count Dracula. Atlantic Tour also offers trips in Spanish and Romanian, but again there is no reference to Dracula or Dracula tourism on these pages. The choice of language is no coincidence. It is clear that Dracula tourism is something that is directed at foreigners, especially to the English-speaking world. The fact that most of the tour agencies do not have anything on their websites in Romanian and even those that do have no information about Dracula shows clearly that this information and service is not intended for Romanians. Thus the websites of the travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism are clearly marketing an image of Romania that they want foreigners to have of the country.

All of the above-mentioned travel agencies have examples of the day-by-day itineraries of the Dracula tours on their websites. Some of the itineraries are longer than the others and describe the locations visited in more detail. On some itineraries it only states where the tourists will go on different days of the tour. There are also strong similarities in the way some locations are described. Some can be explained as using sentences and descriptions that have become commonly accepted and used. Examples of these kinds of descriptions are for example 'the Pearl of the Carpathians', used of Peleş castle, and the 'best-preserved medieval citadel/town', used of Sighișoara. Then again some of the similarities can be explained by the fact that many of the travel agencies appear to have copied the tour itineraries from other travel agencies.

22 These five agencies are The Company of Mysterious Journeys, Transylvania Live, Go Romania Tours, Ultramarine Travel and Ciao Romania.

## Imagery

The imagery is very similar on all the websites of the Dracula travel agencies, but there are also major differences. All rely on using pictures from the locations to be visited, but the number and variety of the pictures vary. I was interested whether the travel agencies used pictures on their websites to promote either the historical or the fictional side of Dracula tourism. In 2014 when I wrote my dissertation out of the ten travel agencies six used pictures and imagery that was clearly fiction-based and known from popular culture, but for the most part they were not used very widely. Since 2014, the fictitious imagery seems to have become even more minimal. There are still few examples. For example, on both the main page and the page marketing the Dracula tours of Transylvania Live there is one picture of the castle of Bran with a shadowy image of a vampire in the sky over the castle. Other than that there are no pictures of vampires or anything else to hint at vampires, or the Transylvania and Romania known from popular culture, on this website, other than pictures from the Halloween parties and one picture of a roadside cross.

I would interpret the use of the Halloween pictures, although clearly influenced by popular culture, as being more of an example of the tours being fun and entertaining rather than anything intended to reflect an image of the country. The picture of the cross can also be variously interpreted, depending on the intertextual approach taken. It is, however, a handmade wooden cross that has cultural meaning and was probably made in honour of a saint or to remember a victim of a road accident. Yet it is also a picture of a cross in and from Transylvania, which might stir up mental images from popular culture of cemeteries, coffins and vampires. This latter reading becomes more credible if one reads the caption of the picture: 'Cross guarding the road for your travel to Transylvania.'<sup>23</sup> This caption can also be interpreted in two ways. Either it is a simple act of well-wishing and a religious symbol, or it implies that because the tourist is in Transylvania a cross is particularly needed for protection. The latter is of course a direct reference to Stoker's *Dracula*, with the hint that in Transylvania protection against vampires is called for. The Company of Mysterious Journeys does not have any pictures referring to vampire fiction on their website. At one point they did have a pop-up advertisement of their Halloween tour for 2013. This ad was a drawn image of several pumpkins, a moon, and a bat with the following text: 'New! Halloween in Transylvania 2013

23 <http://www.visit-transylvania.us/romania-travel-transylvania/halloween-dracula-tour.html>; the caption can only be seen if one points and presses the mouse button over the picture [accessed 4.5.2016].



**Fig. 5.** Adventure Transylvania, 'Halloween in Transylvania'.

... the count is waiting for fresh ... friends!' Other than this the pictures on the website are from locations that are visited on the tours and some pictures from previous Halloween parties. The travel agency Visit Transilvania Travel does not have any popular culture imagery on their web pages. Go Romania Tours advertises some of their Dracula tours on their website with the picture of Christopher Lee as Dracula from one of the Dracula movies he made, with vampire teeth and blood dribbling from his mouth. This very graphic image of the vampire Dracula is, however, the only picture with any connections to the fictional character. The other images and pictures on the website are of places, buildings and activities that have historical or cultural value.<sup>24</sup> The main page

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.goromaniatours.com/> [accessed 4.5.2016].



**Fig. 6.** Quest Tours and Adventures, 'Follow the Blood – Halloween in Transylvania'.

of Adventure Transylvania had one picture of the head of a vampire character with two wolves' heads, one on each side of it, and one picture of a carved pumpkin. The image of the vampire was taken from the 1991 movie *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. In 2014 they had removed all the other fictitious images with the exception of a shadowy figure holding a scythe on the page header picture. On the itinerary page of the Halloween tour, there was a cartoonish picture of a castle on a mountain top, some crosses, a witch flying on a broomstick and some bats flying around the castle with a large full moon on the background.

These images are no longer on the web page and on the itinerary page of the Dracula tour there are no pictures referring to fiction at all, only a picture of Vlad the Impaler with impaled victims in the background. The other images are from places, buildings and activities that seem to have cultural or historical value.<sup>25</sup> The travel agency Ultramarine Travel has some images that refer to the fictional vampire, but it's also very minimal. There is only one little picture that can be interpreted as fictitious, on the upper left corner of the Dracula tour website is an image of a flying bat. Other than this there are no references

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.adventuretransylvania.com/index.htm> [accessed 4.5.2016].

Tour agency	Fiction, popular culture	Heritage, history culture
1. Company of Mysterious Journeys		x
2. Transylvania Live	x	x
3. Adventure Transylvania		x
4. Atlantic Tour		x
5. Ciao Romania		x
6. Cultural Romtour		x
7. Go Romania Tours	x	x
8. Quest Tours & Adventures		x
9. Ultramarine Travel	x	x
10. Visit Transilvania Travel		x

**Table 2.** Imagery used on the web pages.

Although it might appear from this table that many web pages use imagery from vampire fiction and popular culture, the actual use of these images is very random and tangential.

to fiction and the three other pictures on the website are of locations that are visited on the tour.<sup>26</sup>

Somewhat surprisingly on the website for the Halloween tour 2013 by the travel agency Quest Tours and Adventures, the fictional and horror side of Dracula tourism was fully exploited. The name of the page is ‘Follow the Blood – Halloween in Transylvania’ and there are pictures of bats, impaled victims, a witch flying round the moon and an image of red eyes opening and closing. The text is also written in red and some of the letters are made to look like they have blood dribbling down from them.<sup>27</sup> This was, however, the only website that openly used the imagery of the fictional side of Dracula tourism out of the ten travel agencies and their websites that I have examined. Although the web page is still available, it seems that the tour in question is no longer available on the main page of Quest Tours and Adventures. It is clear that the fictional side of Dracula tourism is not very widely used in the imagery of the websites of Dracula travel agencies. Most of the imagery consists of pictures of locations that are visited on the tours and many pictures actually seem to promote

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.ultramarine.ro/engleza/tururi/dracula.htm> [accessed 4.5.2016].

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.romtour.com/HALLOWEEN-TOUR.htm> [accessed 4.5.2016].

the historical and cultural side of Romania and Dracula tourism. Some websites also seem to use pictures of locations that have explicit heritage value.

Almost all of the travel agencies that I have researched here use pictures of castles and other historically and culturally important buildings. There are many similarities in the pictures used. This can partly be explained by the fact that they all visit more or less the same locations, but in addition certain places and locations seem to be emphasised more than others. For example, a picture of the castle of Bran can be found on nine of the websites, as can a picture of Sighișoara. These two locations are the best-known sites on a Dracula tour so it is no surprise that they are pictured on the websites. However, the fact that a picture of the castle of Peleş can be found on five and a picture of one of the fortified churches (Biertan, Viscri or Prejmer) on four websites is somewhat surprising. These locations have nothing to do with either Vlad the Impaler or the fictional vampire Count Dracula, but they are seen as historically and culturally important to Romanian heritage. For example, on the websites of Transylvania Live and Visit Transylvania Travel there are pictures of the castle of Peleş, but no picture of the two main locations with fictional connections, Hotel Castle Dracula or Hotel Coroana de Aur in Bistrița, even though both agencies organise tours that visit these locations. Similarly the travel agency Ciao Romania has pictures of Biertan and Viscri on their Dracula tour website, but no pictures of either Hotel Castle Dracula or Hotel Coroana de Aur even though they too visit those locations on their tours.<sup>28</sup>

Many travel agencies also use other imagery that seems to focus more on Romanian history, culture and heritage than on Dracula and fiction. Examples of this kind of imagery are pictures of the cathedral of Curtea de Argeș, UNESCO World Heritage sites like Biertan, Viscri and Prejmer, and Bucharest. It is clear that by using and choosing these kinds of pictures and imagery the providers of the Dracula tourism in question want to give a diverse and versatile image of Romania, its history and culture and not just one that is merged in popular culture.

## Discourses

As with the imagery of the websites, I am interested in seeing what kinds of discourses the travel agencies use on their websites and whether the discourses can be interpreted as promoting either the historical or the fictional side of Dracula tourism. Critical discourse analysis focuses on the social

28 <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].

power and control of groups or institutions. According to Teun A. van Dijk groups have greater or lesser power if they are able to control minds and members of other groups and the control is done through privileged access to such social resources as knowledge, information and culture or forums of public discourse and communication (van Dijk 2001, 354–355). In the case of tourism this happens very much through the internet. Within Dracula tourism it is interesting to see what kinds of discourses are used by those who have access to public discourse and communication. In this case these are the travel agencies which offer Dracula tourism. A question to consider is whether the discourses challenge the outsider view of Romania, influenced by popular culture, as a mysterious and strange land. There may be many discourses to be found on the websites, depending on the researcher and the questions asked, but two distinct discourses are very clearly identifiable. I am calling these the fiction discourse and the heritage discourse. The fiction discourse deals with the fictional side of Dracula tourism and it utilises ideas and stereotypes from popular culture, hinting at danger or mystery. The heritage discourse is connected to promoting historical and cultural locations and highlighting them even if they do not have any links with either Dracula. It is noteworthy that even though the imagery used on the websites does not really promote the fictional side of Dracula tourism, some of the discourses used in fact do so. This is not altogether surprising, given that the text and the images may have different or even contrasting meanings (van Leeuwen 2004, 15).

The two discourses under consideration can both be found on the same websites, sometimes even following each other. Out of the ten travel agency websites, the fiction discourse can be found in seven: the Company of Mysterious Journeys, Go Romania Tours, Quest Tours and Adventures, Atlantic Tour, Ultramarine Travel, Cultural Romtour and Ciao Romania. The fiction discourse is more used on some websites than others and its use also differs depending on the theme of the tour. For example, some of the travel agencies that offer special Halloween-themed tours seem to use the fiction discourse more on these tours than on the others that they offer.

The most commonly used aspect of a fiction discourse is the hint of danger, not some common danger that tourists may encounter on their travels, but one that is very specifically connected to the ideas about vampires and Transylvania inherited from popular culture. This discourse is also used in specific places of the tour itineraries: at the beginning before entering Transylvania and when going to Bistrița and the Hotel Castle Dracula. In addition to these, the discourse is also used when describing the Halloween party, which is held somewhere in Transylvania, usually in Sighișoara or in Hotel Castle Dracula. The hints of danger are usually connected with Transylvania.

On many websites it states that the tourist is safe for now because they are still in Wallachia before the tour moves on to Transylvania:

You don't have anything to fear here, we're in Wallachia, but tomorrow we will drive up to Transylvania.<sup>29</sup>

...overnight in the safety of innocence in Bucuresti<sup>30</sup>

Peles. Let's visit it, as it might be the last serene minute of the trip.<sup>31</sup>

The fiction discourse is undeniable here, with the tourist being tantalised by the impending dangers of Transylvania.

The second place where the fiction discourse is specifically used is when the tour goes to Bistrița and to Hotel Castle Dracula. This part of the tour is usually promoted as the point where the tour leaves history and reality behind and moves into the world of fiction:

...departure to the dangerous buffer-zone separating Transylvania proper from the domains of the count (known to the innocents as the County of Bistrita-Nasaud)<sup>32</sup>

We enter Count Dracula's domain and arrive in Bistrita. Prince Vlad is now history, here Count Dracula reigns.<sup>33</sup>

Direction Bistrita where we enter the real land of Dracula. No other place is so identifiable as the place of vampires, ghosts and bloody scenes the Bargau step, Tihuta, that connects Transylvania to Moldavia. This wild and mysterious place was used for the setting of the movie "Dracula" by Coppola. Dinner and overnight in Tihuta in Dracula's Castle, the 3\* hotel

29 Atlantic Tour, Dracula – The True Story of Vlad the Impaler, <http://www.in.atlantic.ro/en/tours/163-special-interest-/807-dracula-the-true-story-of-vlad-the-impaler.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].

30 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, The Classic Dracula Tour, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/classic\\_dracula\\_level\\_1/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/classic_dracula_level_1/) [accessed 4.5.2016].

31 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, Dracula, the Prince and the Vampire, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/dracula\\_prince\\_vampire\\_classic/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/dracula_prince_vampire_classic/) [accessed 4.5.2016].

32 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, Dracula, the Prince and the Vampire, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/dracula\\_prince\\_vampire\\_classic/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/dracula_prince_vampire_classic/) [accessed 4.5.2016].

33 Ultramarine Travel, Dracula Classical Tour, <http://www.ultramarine.ro/engleza/tururi/dracula.htm> [accessed 4.5.2016].



built on the ruins of the Royal Castle of Dracula. In the film based on the novel by Stoker, Vlad the Impeller died here. Despite his death, his spirit never found its peace.<sup>34</sup>

The survivors of the night should rush to stamp their “Transylvanian Diplomas” (and passports) with that unique castle-stamp. Some of you may have lost your shadow, or reflection in the mirror - minor inconveniences of your new status. Others may lose them later.<sup>35</sup>

Again the fiction discourse is self-evident. The fact that the tour is moving to Bistrița and to the Borgo Pass is seen as something special, mysterious and even dangerous. This location is described as dangerous, wild and identifiable with vampires, ghosts and bloody scenes. The fact that the area is especially mentioned as the domain or land of Count Dracula, and the hints of survival and turning into a vampire in the hotel, also illustrate the fictional discourse. The fiction discourse is also used by some tour guides, especially on the road towards Bistrița and to the Borgo Pass. On one tour which I participated in, a tour guide told us about the Hotel Castel Dracula and warned us about going out alone at night or opening the windows or even talking to any strangers. This was obviously a reference to Count Dracula’s advice which he gave to Jonathan Harker about wandering in his castle in Bram Stoker’s novel. The tour guide also told us about the crosses on the side of the road and said that they would protect us, but only if we stayed on the main road.

The third place in the itineraries where the fiction discourse can be found is the section describing Halloween parties. Because Halloween is by its nature fiction-based, Western and foreign to Romanian traditional culture, it is no surprise that the fiction discourse is used when describing the Halloween parties on the tours:

Still, an evening to fear, you’ll attend the killing of a vampire; you’ll be part of the crowd seeking to take the bloody creature to a special place where the ritual can begin, The Ritual of Killing of the Living Dead (as seen on Travel Channel).<sup>36</sup>

34 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].

35 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, The Classic Dracula & Halloween in Transylvania, <http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/halloween-2016-transilvania/> [accessed 4.5.2016].

36 Transylvania Live, Halloween party in Transylvania with Vlad the Impaler – short break, <http://www.visit-transylvania.us/romania-travel-transylvania/halloween-party-transylvania.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].

But remember, it is Halloween night and Hunyad's Castle is one of the most haunted places of Europe, a place where nobody dares to spend the night alone. So the ghosts and spirits may join us during the night. Don't get lost in the castle! Don't go behind the locked doors! Don't disturb the spirits! Otherwise ...<sup>37</sup>

The problem is to survive the night (highly unlikely) and enjoy the prizes.<sup>38</sup>

The fiction discourse is evident in the Halloween party descriptions in the ways the actual day and night of the Halloween party is a time of fear and danger. It is used at specific places on the tour itineraries: when crossing from Wallachia to Transylvania, when going into Bistrița and Hotel Castle Dracula on the Borgo Pass and at Halloween. When describing other locations on the tour itineraries the fiction discourse is all but absent.

The heritage discourse is not quite as easy to define as the fiction discourse for it is not as obvious. It is concerned with promoting and highlighting historical and cultural locations, and especially if they do not have any connections with either Dracula. Some of these locations are clearly identified as heritage sites (such as UNESCO World Heritage sites), while others I have defined as heritage sites myself. The latter are locations which are clearly promoted as historically or culturally important on the websites, being described with epithets like 'the most beautiful', 'the biggest', 'the best preserved' or 'one of the oldest'. These epithets make it clear that the location is viewed as something special to Romanian history and culture, or in other words as heritage. The heritage aspect is especially evident because these locations have no connection to Vlad the Impaler or the fictitious vampire Dracula and yet they are a part of the Dracula tours. Unlike fiction discourse, heritage discourse can be found on every travel agency web page that I have examined. On the web page of two travel agencies, Ultramarin Travel and Cultural Romtour the discourse is not as strong as on the others, although there are hints of the heritage discourse to be found there also. The heritage discourse is clearest when dealing with the UNESCO World Heritage sites that can be visited on the

37 Go Romania Tours, The Real Dracula Halloween Tour – Truth and Myth of the Legend of Vlad Tepes, <http://www.goromaniatours.com/itin/historic-tours/dracula-halloween-tour.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].

38 Cultural Romtour, Halloween in the Land of Dracula, <http://culturalromtour.com/trips/halloween-in-the-land-of-dracula/> [accessed 4.5.2016].

tours, namely Sighișoara and the fortified churches of Transylvania, the most famous being Biertan.<sup>39</sup>

Next stop, a UNESCO World Heritage site, Sighisoara Medieval Citadel.<sup>40</sup>

In the evening we arrive in Sighisoara, a magnificent living medieval fortress, UNESCO World Heritage site.<sup>41</sup>

Leaving behind Medias you will drive to the Saxon village of Biertan, where you will visit the fortress church that is one of UNESCO World Cultural Heritage sites.<sup>42</sup>

Departure to Viscri, a charming Saxon village, hidden behind the hills and the forests of Transylvania and protected by its citadel. (Unesco Patrimony)<sup>43</sup>

Besides its obvious use with the UNESCO sites, the heritage discourse can be found in the way certain locations are described as especially old, large or beautiful. They are usually also mentioned as special in a European context, thus linking Romanian history with other European history. In addition to being a UNESCO World Heritage site, Sighișoara is also promoted as being the best-preserved medieval town in Romania or even as being the only still-inhabited citadel in Europe. Other typical examples of such discourse are the castle of Peleş and the church in Curtea de Argeș, but there are also other such sites like Brașov, Sibiu or Alba Iulia:

Peleş Castle is one of the best preserved and the most beautiful royal residences in Europe.<sup>44</sup>

39 There are also tours that visit other fortified churches that are also on the list, like Viscri or Prejmer.

40 Transylvania Live, Vampire in Transylvania – The Awarded Dracula Tour, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/europe-sightseeing-tours-romania/dracula-tour-transylvania-travel.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].

41 Adventure Transylvania, The Real Dracula Tour, <http://www.adventuretransylvania.com/tours/dracula-tours/> [accessed 4.5.2016].

42 Atlantic Tour, Dracula – The True Story of Vlad the Impaler, <http://www.in.atlantic.ro/en/tours/163-special-interest-/807-dracula-the-true-story-of-vlad-the-impaler.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].

43 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].

44 Transylvania Live, Vampire in Transylvania – The Awarded Dracula Tour, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/europe-sightseeing-tours-romania/dracula-tour-transylvania-travel.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].

Curtea de Argeş is considered to be the most beautiful monastery from Central Eastern Europe made by Prince Neagoe Basarab in the sixteenth century and by its famous master builder Manole.<sup>45</sup>

See its Princely Church and its frescoed interior which is one of the first examples of Romanian paintings.<sup>46</sup>

Your next stop is the Medieval Saxon City of Brasov. The most famous landmark of Brasov is the Black Church, the largest gothic edifice in South-Eastern Europe.<sup>47</sup>

Sibiu is one of the most important fortified towns in Transylvania. The city is reminiscent of old European cities such as Nuremberg and it was founded in 1190 and grew to be the chief city of the Transylvanian Saxons.<sup>48</sup>

In many cases the implied heritage refers to both Romanian and to a larger shared European heritage. By referring to Peleş as being the most beautiful palace in Europe or to Curtea de Argeş as the most beautiful monastery of central eastern Europe, or to the Black Church in Braşov as the largest Gothic church in south-eastern Europe, it is clear that the author wants the reader to connect Romania and Romanian history with a larger European context. This connection is evident in the last quotation from Go Romania Tours, where the city of Sibiu is portrayed as one of the most important fortified towns in Transylvania and is then likened to Nuremberg (on the web page as Nuremburg), which is considered one of the most important medieval cities in Europe. So although Sibiu is culturally and historically important as a Romanian (Transylvanian) city as such, the connection to Nuremberg makes the connection to European history in general much stronger.<sup>49</sup>

45 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 4.5.2016].

46 Go Romania Tours, The Dracula and Transylvania Tour, <http://www.goromaniatours.com/itin/historic-tours/dracula-transylvania-tour.html> [accessed 9.5.2016].

47 Transylvania Live, Halloween in Transylvania with Vlad the Impaler- the full Dracula Tour, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/europe-sightseeing-tours-romania/dracula-tour-transylvania-travel.html> [accessed 9.5.2016].

48 Go Romania Tours, The Dracula and Transylvania Tour, <http://www.goromaniatours.com/itin/historic-tours/dracula-transylvania-tour.html> [accessed 9.5.2016].

49 Because Romania was a Communist country and is still seen as part of the 'East', it is very probable that by emphasising a shared history with Western Europe the providers of tourism want to show what Romania has in common with Western Europe

There are a few cases where the heritage and fiction discourses can be found in successive or even the same sentences:

Drive next to Medias. Here you'll become acquainted with a unique artist, the only one in the world who uses spider webs for his paintings. As you probably know, spiders are creatures happily tolerated by the count, so you'll have further proof of how they are not merely reminiscent of 'delights' past.<sup>50</sup>

Arrival to Romania, the land of folkloric treasures, legends and beauty, but also the home of Count Dracula.<sup>51</sup>

These texts are interesting because both the heritage and the fiction discourses can be found in them. The first citation is from the website of Transylvania Live. It is interesting because most of the text found on the website is very matter-of-fact, for the most part just describing the locations historically, and the fiction discourse is not widely used on the website. The tour visits a well-known local artist and therefore promotes local culture that is seen as important enough to present to foreign tourists, which therefore can be labelled as local heritage too. It seems that this visit has to be justified as being a part of the Dracula tour and therefore the reference to fiction is used. Although Vlad was held as a prisoner in Mediaş for a short while and the city is mentioned in Stoker's book, the city does not really have a strong connection to Vlad or to Dracula. This might also explain why there is a need to refer to Count Dracula in the text.

The website of Atlantic Tour is an interesting example because the text on the website starts by mentioning that the traveller is still in Wallachia and has nothing to fear, but the next day they are going to Transylvania, thus clearly using the fiction discourse and playing with the idea of Transylvania as a dangerous place. However, after that one sentence the text for the most part differentiates fiction from history and concentrates on the historical and cultural aspects of the tour, until the description about Sighişoara:

and therefore maybe downplay Romania's 'Easternness' and otherness towards the West.

50 Transylvania Live, Vampire in Transylvania – Dracula Tour, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/europe-sightseeing-tours-romania/dracula-tour-transylvania-travel.html> [accessed 9.5.2016].

51 Ultramarine Travel, Dracula Classical Tour, <http://www.ultramarine.ro/engleza/tururi/dracula.htm> [accessed 9.5.2016].

...then the house where Count Dracula/Vlad the Impaler was born in 1431.<sup>52</sup>

It is interesting that on a website that for the most part tries to differentiate the historical from the fictional Dracula there is still a need to name the fictitious character in this situation.

There is one further form of discourse that I find interesting, what I call the *Dracula discourse*, meaning the use of the name Dracula when referring to both Vlad the Impaler and the vampire Count Dracula in such a way as to obscure the difference between them.<sup>53</sup> The use of the name Dracula is of course valid because Vlad was also known by that name, but in my opinion this is done on the websites in order to confuse the tourists about the differences between two characters. This becomes evident in the cases where Bran castle or the ruins of the fortress of Poienari are depicted. On many websites both of these locations are referred to as Dracula's Castle or the real castle of Dracula.

Departure for Dracula's Castle in Bran, a veritable fortress built on the top of a rock.<sup>54</sup>

Then visit the Poenari Castle. Standing on a cliff but know in ruins this is known as the real castle of Dracula (Vlad Tepes).<sup>55</sup>

We will make our first stop in Arefu (it is said that the descendants of Dracula's soldiers are there) and visit the ruins of one of Dracula's fortresses (at Poienari).<sup>56</sup>

- 52 Atlantic Tour, Dracula – The True Story of Vlad the Impaler, <http://www.in.atlantic.ro/en/tours/163-special-interest-/807-dracula-the-true-story-of-vlad-the-impaler.html> [accessed 9.5.2016].
- 53 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, Transylvania Live and GoRomaniaTours use the name 'Vlad Dracula' of Vlad the Impaler but makes a clear separation between him and the fictitious Count Dracula, so I do not count them among those using the Dracula discourse. The case is also similar with Ultramarin Travel.
- 54 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 9.5.2016].
- 55 Visit Transilvania Travel, Dracula and Transylvania Tour, <http://www.visittransilvania.ro/romania-tours-vacations/dracula-and-transylvania-tour-%E2%80%93-5-days-17-english.html> [accessed 9.5.2016].
- 56 Cultural Romtour, Halloween in the Land of Dracula, <http://culturalromtour.com/trips/halloween-in-the-land-of-dracula/> [accessed 9.5.2016].

Tour agency	Fiction discourse	Heritage discourse	Dracula discourse
1. Company of Mysterious Journeys	x	x	
2. Transylvania Live		x	
3. Adventure Transylvania		x	x
4. Atlantic Tour	x	x	x
5. Ciao Romania	x	x	x
6. Cultural Romtour	x		x
7. Go Romania Tours	x	x	
8. Quest Tours & Adventures		x	x
9. Ultramarine Travel	x		
10. Visit Transilvania Travel		x	x

**Table 3.** Discourses used on the web pages.

Spend the night in the little town of Curtea de Arges a few minutes away from the most spectacular castle of Dracula – Poenari.<sup>57</sup>

Because Dracula's castle was and is one of the most sought-out locations for the Dracula enthusiast to visit, it cannot be a coincidence that these two castles which share history with Vlad the Impaler (Poienari more than Bran) but have nothing to do with the fictitious Dracula are referred to as Dracula's castle. However, there are no websites that only use the name Dracula when referring to either character. Out of the ten websites, six websites use both Dracula and Vlad the Impaler when referring to either character. Three websites use mainly the name Vlad the Impaler but also Vlad Dracula or Dracula and only the Company of Mysterious Journeys uses one name throughout its website, Vlad Dracula. It seems that even if the travel agency wants to only promote the historical and cultural side of Dracula tourism, they still use the name Dracula as a way to appeal to those tourists who are mostly interested in the fictional side of Dracula tourism. The discourses used in Dracula tourism could also be divided into three types according to their relation to Vlad, Dracula or Romania: one would be about the historical ruler Vlad the Impaler, one about the fictitious Dracula and one about Romanian culture. The division into fiction discourse, heritage discourse and Dracula discourse also fits into this division.

57 Adventure Transylvania, Dracula Tour, <http://www.adventuretransylvania.com/dracula-tour.htm> [accessed 9.5.2016].

## Socially constructed discourses and images

The construction of a tourist site through media, tourist agency websites and governmental and private marketing plays a significant role in determining tourists' understanding and consumption of the locations they visit (Milne, Gregin and Woodley 1998, 116). According to Martin Young the social construction of tourist sites is composed of two general sub-systems. The first is the system of place promotion or production and the second is that of place consumption. The social construction of tourist sites is therefore done both by the provider and the consumer of the tourism in question. In his research into the Daintree and Cape Tribulation area in Queensland, Australia, Young concluded that the place meanings constructed by the local tourism industry were designed to attract visitors rather than providing a realistic portrayal of the place or its history, and that the place meanings consumed by the tourists were very similar to those constructed by the tourism industry. It appears that the role of direct and personal place experience does not always alter the given place constructions. (Young 1999, 387.) There are similar aspects to Dracula tourism in Romania, where the tourists' own conceptions, or constructions, of the image of Romania and especially Transylvania as a mystical and mysterious land were not affected by the actual visit and the tour guide narrations, even though these would actually challenge this image. However, it is quite surprising that unlike in the case of Daintree and Cape Tribulation, the discourses and images constructed in Dracula tourism are not strictly designed to attract visitors at the expense of a realistic portrayal of Romania.

It would be easy for the tourist agencies of my research to use solely discourses and images of the Dracula of popular culture in order to attract visitors, especially through the imagery. Although the potential for the use of imagery involving vampires and Dracula from popular culture is almost limitless, the websites of the tour agencies are surprisingly subtle in this regard. There is only one travel agency that exploits the fictional side of Dracula tourism in their imagery and even they only use it on the website for their Halloween tour. As mentioned before, it is clear that the fictional side of Dracula tourism is not widely used in the imagery of the travel websites that offer Dracula tourism. Most of the imagery that is used is pictures of locations that are visited on the tours and many pictures actually seem to promote the historical and cultural side of Romania and Dracula tourism. Some websites also seem to use pictures of locations that have explicit heritage value. This is not random or done by chance. The use of certain kinds of images and pictures is a way to construct a desired image of Romania. It is therefore clear that by using and choosing these kinds of pictures and imagery the providers



of Dracula tourism want to give a diverse and versatile image of Romania, its history and culture and not just one that is merged in popular culture. This is very much a social and cultural construction and could be constructed also in another way if chosen. Unlike the imagery, the discourses that are used on the websites do also promote the fictional side of Dracula tourism more clearly. The fiction discourse is not, however, used throughout the tour itineraries, but only for specific places on the tours, namely for places that are somehow more closely connected to popular culture, such as when crossing from Wallachia to Transylvania and when going in to Bistrița and Hotel Castle Dracula on the Borgo Pass.

When describing other locations on the tour itineraries the fiction discourse is all but absent. This again is not random or done by chance. It is very clear that the tour agencies do not want to promote the idea of Romania as Dracula's country or as the mysterious and magical vampire-infested land known from popular culture. By using historical and cultural imagery and by narrowing the use of fiction discourses to the places that are connected to popular fiction, the tour agencies wish to promote Romania in a way that separates the fictional and foreign elements from the history and culture of the country. By doing so they are using their power to control the image of their country against a (presupposed) outsider view of Romania. It is clear that the tour agencies are constructing a deliberate social and cultural construction of Romania through Dracula tourism that fits their own ideas and conceptions of Romania.

## 4. The Use of Tradition in Dracula Tourism

Various kinds of stories and story traditions are used in Dracula tourism. In this chapter I focus on the types of stories and story traditions that appear in Dracula tourism, and how they are used. According to Anna-Leena Siikala and Oleg Ulyashev the concept of tradition refers to those expressions, modes of thought and action which are constantly seen to maintain and establish cultural continuity. Almost any cultural process can reach traditional status and significance but it must satisfy the requirements of tradition and include the shared goals and activities of the ethnic group and nationality in question. Labelling something as tradition is a conscious act which is motivated by the need of a certain group for self-definition. According to Siikala and Ulyashev the concept of tradition is usually actualised during periods of social upheaval or when cultural boundaries are being threatened. (Siikala & Ulyashev 2011, 20.)

By tradition used in Dracula tourism, I mean the German, Russian (or Slavic) and Romanian stories about Vlad the Impaler from the fifteenth century onwards. Although there are also both Byzantine and Turkish sources and other written sources about Vlad, the German, Russian (or Slavic) and Romanian stories are the most famous and widespread. For this reason the tradition that is used in Dracula tourism is also framed around these story traditions. This tradition about Vlad the Impaler is based both on these stories and on the way they have been used and have influenced the image of Vlad ever since. Other types of tradition that are used in Dracula tourism are for example the artists that are introduced on the tours, the folk customs that are showcased or the local foods and drinks that are served. In Dracula tourism, tradition is used both on the tours and on the websites of the relevant travel agencies. As research material I use my field notes and interviews I made during my three fieldtrips to Romania in April and October of 2010 and in November of 2011, and the websites of ten Romanian travel agencies that organise Dracula tours. Adding stories and narratives to places is an essential part of providing content and significance in tourism (Aarnipuu 2009, 35). According to Jillian Rickly-Boyd all tourist sites but especially heritage sites also construct narratives. Generally heritage sites provide tourists with metanarratives that are of national significance. In addition to this, localising narratives of uniqueness are also used on heritage sites by illustrating

examples of local community provenance. These narratives can be called heritage narratives, which are stories that people tell about themselves, others and the past, and which emphasise the positive sides of the past and tend to sift away anything that is problematic. (Rickly-Boyd 2010; 262.) In Dracula tourism stories and narratives are used and added to locations to add content and significance to these sites. Some of them are clearly derived from popular culture while others come from Romanian culture. Tour guides have a crucial role in the actual presentation of the place visited, its culture, traditions and history. Although tour guides are at least to an extent bound by the currently dominant tourism images and the instructions and restrictions given by the travel agency or even the country, they do have the power to challenge these. They can decide (depending on the situation) what to tell and what to show to the tourists. According to Noel B. Salazar they are in a position to determine which traditions and which parts of the local heritage and culture is exposed and which are hidden and to emphasise the meanings and significances of places visited. (Salazar 2010, 116 & 141.) In Dracula tourism this can be seen for example in the way the emphasis in Bucharest is on more recent history and why the castle of Peleş is a part of many tours. Because Dracula tourism relies on many levels of tradition, narration and presupposition, it is necessary to look first at its intertextual nature. It can also be viewed through the idea of invented traditions, suggested by Eric Hobsbawm. It can either be seen as invented tradition itself or as utilising and inventing traditions.

## Invented traditions?

When discussing traditions and the use of traditions in tourism one cannot ignore *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983). Eric Hobsbawm argued that many traditions that appeared to be old, or were claimed to be such, were in fact often quite recent in origin and sometimes also purposely invented. As 'invented traditions' Hobsbawm included both those traditions that were actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those traditions that emerged in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period and established themselves rapidly. Hobsbawm argued that 'invented tradition' meant a set of practices, governed by accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature that included an implied continuity with a suitable historic past. (Hobsbawm 1983, 1.) Eric Hobsbawm and the other writers in *The Invention of Tradition* see 'invented tradition' mainly through politics, especially in terms of nationalism and nation-building. So-called invented traditions are, however, not limited to

political use, and for example tourism as an industry is both a big provider and a consumer of invented traditions (Hollinshead 2009, 284).

Examples of invented or reinvented traditions in tourism are numerous. For example, the musical styles and performances in Zanzibar or in Bali that have been invented or reinvented for tourists are good examples of these (Vander Biesen & De Beukelaer 2012, 2; Johnson 2002, 9). Not all invented traditions are directed just at tourists, however. In her discussion of three inventions of tradition in the village of Interlaken in the Swiss Alps, Regina Bendix argues that the traditions in question had actually also the function of 'creating and asserting local identity in the face of seasonal mass foreign invasion.' Although tourism played a part in the creation of these traditions, tourism was not the main agent of change in Interlaken. (Bendix 1989, 131 & 143.) One interesting example of invented tradition is the so-called Juliet's house with its famous balcony in Verona (from *Romeo & Juliet*), where tourists leave romantic letters and messages in the hope of finding an everlasting love. Although there is practically no evidence to suggest that the characters from Shakespeare's play actually existed, and the balcony is from the seventeenth century, tourists still flock to the site annually, wanting to see the actual place where the famous scene happened.<sup>1</sup> The balcony is an example where a tradition was invented for the tourists that did not originate from history or from folklore, but from fiction.

Dracula tourism in itself can be seen as invented tradition and it certainly uses invented traditions. It originates in fiction and Western popular culture and hence does not have any folkloric roots as such, although it utilises folklore. If Dracula tourism can be seen as invented tradition then the question of when it was invented is interesting. It can be said to have been invented in the 1960s and 1970s, when tourists started to want to see places connected to the Dracula of popular culture, and the tradition of Bran castle as Dracula's castle, for example, was invented at the same time. Then again one might argue that the tradition started when Bram Stoker decided to place the home of his vampire count in Transylvania. The successive books and especially the movies strengthened this tradition and then influenced Dracula tourism in Romania. At least the roots of this invention lie in Stoker's book. Some tour agencies, like the Company of Mysterious Journeys, also use folklore on their tours. The storytelling and folkdance in Arefu village, for example, can be seen as invented or at least re-invented forms of tradition. Although Dracula tourism can be viewed as invented tradition or at least can be said to use and produce

1 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/9666843/Verona-clamps-down-on-tourists-visiting-Romeo-and-Juliets-balcony.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

invented traditions, this does not mean that it is bad or inauthentic tradition. By labelling something as invented tradition, the authenticity and value of that particular tradition has often been questioned. This view of invented tradition as inauthentic has been criticised in cultural studies. Anna-Leena and Jukka Siikala argue that even though some traditions may be constructions, selections or inventions they are worthy of revival because they are cultural phenomena that have ideological value in the negotiation of identity. (Siikala & Siikala 2005, 45–46.) Similarly, in the invented or re-invented music performances in Bali, the music that is performed for tourists is a living heritage that is imagined as representative of Balinese heritage through its recontextualisation, and not outmoded music that has been rediscovered as representative of an imagined Balinese heritage (Johnson 2002, 16).

Following on from Hobsbawm's observations that many traditions were recent creations arising for political reasons (Hobsbawm 1983, 1 & 263), it is interesting to see how certain traditions have been invented and how they have been used to strengthen national or ethnic identity in a nation state or in smaller groups. In cultural studies, although the history of a certain tradition is interesting, it does not mean that the actual tradition is any less interesting as a research subject. Pertti Anttonen has argued that instead of classifying or regarding some traditions as inventions or not, or as authentic or inauthentic, researchers should consider all traditions as both inventions and human interventions. Anttonen argues that all traditions are socially constructed categories and people use them to structure their experience to reproduce the social world. (Anttonen 2005, 106.) So whether or not a tradition is 'age-old' or a recent invention, it is still an authentic and interesting tradition in itself and a phenomenon that has cultural value.

## Intertextuality

Intertextuality is considered a crucial element in the attempt to understand literature and culture in general (Allen 2000, 7). According to Graham Allen, intertextuality has its origins in twentieth-century linguistics and especially in the works of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and his notions about linguistic signs, and in the works of the Russian literary theorist M. M. Bakhtin and his arguments about the social aspects of language. In the late 1960s Julia Kristeva produced the first articulation of the intertextuality theory while attempting to combine Saussurean and Bakhtinian theories of language and literature. (Allen 2000, 3, 7–15.) Since Kristeva intertextuality has been widely used by scholars both in literary studies and in culture studies in general.

The theory of intertextuality assumes that all texts are read in relationship to others and that this range of textual knowledge is used when reading a text. These relationships do not, however, need to take the form of specific allusions from one text to another and the reader does not have to be familiar with specific texts to be able to read intertextually. (Fiske 1987, 108.) In literary criticism intertextuality is used to describe the variety of ways in which texts interact with other texts. It focuses in particular on the interdependence between texts and not on their discreteness or uniqueness. (Montgomery, Durant, Fabb, Furniss & Mills 2000, 191.) According to John Fiske, who has researched intertextuality within television culture, intertextuality exists in the space between texts. (Fiske 1987, 108.) Popular culture circulates intertextually among primary texts, secondary texts that refer to the primary texts directly and tertiary texts that are in a constant process in everyday life (Fiske 2010, 99–100). Fiske uses Madonna as an example of intertextual reading. In his interpretation Madonna herself is the primary text, secondary texts are for example press stories and criticisms of her and the tertiary texts are conversations about Madonna or adopting her dance movements in a high school dance. According to Fiske a character and performer like Madonna only exists intertextually. Therefore no single concert, album, video or poster can be an adequate text of Madonna. (Fiske 2010, 99–100.) Although originally a concept of literary theory, intertextuality can be adapted to many fields of culture like cinema, paintings, music, architecture, photography and virtually all cultural and artistic productions (Allen 2000, 174).

Intertextuality has also been used in folkloristics. Lotte Tarkka argues that in folkloristics intertextuality implies that the folkloric text is not found in isolated and separate poems, songs or narratives that are indexed in motif indices and archived, but in their intertextual interpretation. A specific folkloric text only has meaning when it is read in relation to other texts around it. This does not mean that the individual pieces of folklore are unimportant as such, but their more comprehensive understanding needs an intertextual interpretation. (Tarkka, 1993, 172–173.) According to Tarkka an intertextual study in folkloristics can extend beyond the verbalised and the strictly textual and include expressive aspects of performance (Tarkka 2013, 89). Similarly, intertextuality can be applied to tourism as well. Especially in literary, movie-induced and media tourism, intertextuality can be a very helpful tool for understanding both the appeal of the particular form of tourism and the tourist's experiences. In Dracula tourism, the tourist reads his or her experience in relation to the books, movies and other sources about Dracula that he or she knows, as well as in relation to the tour narrations by the guides.

The experience of the tourist can also be seen as the text in the case of tourism. The experience can be seen as being intertextual because there are many pieces of information and many texts that affect the experience. Especially in literary and movie-induced tourism the books and films and everything associated with them affects the actual tourism experience. Just as texts are read in relationship to others, the text of the tourism experience is read using knowledge acquired beforehand and in relationship to it. In Dracula tourism the primary text would be the actual experience of the tourist on a Dracula tour. Because Dracula tourism is thoroughly influenced by popular culture, with Stoker's novel and the vampire character of Count Dracula as the focal point of the tour, the secondary text would therefore be *Dracula*. Then again, many tourists may never have actually read the book but relate instead to the countless movies about Dracula. The character of Dracula has changed since the novel and some of these changes might come as a surprise to people. One of the biggest changes is the fact that he could be destroyed by sunlight. This feature, taken for granted and is also used and implied in Dracula tourism, is the result of the influence of films about Dracula and first appeared in F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*, and has been linked to the character ever since. In Stoker's novel Count Dracula cannot be killed by sunlight. (Miller 2003, 51.) Because of the direct influence of the Dracula movies, I would rather suggest that the secondary text in this case is both the novel *Dracula* and the movies made about Count Dracula. The tertiary texts in this case would be all the other literature and films about vampires, Transylvania and Vlad the Impaler and the websites of the travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism. The tertiary texts might also include conversations and travelogues on websites.

Intertextuality can be used as a way of understanding the reasons behind the tourists' expectations and the actual experience. A tourist usually has pre-conceived conceptions about the place that he or she is visiting. These come for example from books, movies, the internet and travel brochures. These pre-trip impressions help people to connect to places with certain values, connotations and feelings, which all create expectations. (Salazar 2010, 22.) The tourists partaking in the Dracula tours share a common knowledge about vampire fiction and about Dracula in particular. This shared knowledge can be called a shared cultural inventory. According to Trevor J. Blank 'cultural inventory is a cognitive storehouse of knowledge that compartmentalizes memories and values assigned to the meaningful symbols in culture and society for easy access. Cultural inventory also serves as a psychological filter for interpreting communicative events and is often shaped by intersection of folk and popular culture. (Blank 2013, 7.) In literature and movie-induced tourism, the importance of books and movies is naturally stronger than in other types of

tourism. In Dracula tourism the tourists expect to see the ghostly and strange Transylvania from popular culture and sometimes their preconceptions are so strong that they are not affected by the 'reality' of the place. The tourist might not necessarily see the ruins of a historical fortress as such but as the ruins of Castle Dracula known from books and movies, or 'earlier texts'. The castle of Bran, for example, has been read as Dracula's castle since the 1970s because it fits the image of the Transylvanian castle of popular culture, even though it is in fact in Wallachia and has no connections with the books or movies about Dracula. Similarly the ruins of the citadel of Poienari and the story about the suicide of Vlad's wife can be read and interpreted with the knowledge of Francis Ford Coppola's movie about the suicide of Vlad/Dracula's wife and therefore the ruins can be viewed as being the ruins of the fictitious Count Dracula's castle. The shared cultural inventory shapes the tourists experience from these places. The Hotel Castle Dracula in the Borgo (Tihuța) Pass is also an interesting location in terms of intertextuality. Because of its location and its name, the reading of the hotel is obviously done through earlier texts like Bram Stoker's novel and the countless movies and other books that have been made about the vampire Count Dracula.

The intertextual reading of the Hotel Castle Dracula can also be said to be the main reason why many tourists are disappointed with it (Light 2009, 195). Because of the intertextual reading, or interpretation, the tourist is expecting to see the castle of Dracula that is known from books and movies even though many tourist brochures and tourist guides contradict this reading. When I interviewed the other participants of the Halloween tour in 2010, many of



**Fig. 7.** Hotel Castel Dracula in Tihuța Pass ('Borgo Pass'). Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2010).



them felt that the hotel was a disappointment. The main reasons for the disappointment were that it was not worth the long ride there, it didn't meet with the expectations of the tourists and that it had potential to be much better than it was. One specific reason that one tourist gave was in fact that it wasn't a real castle while another tourist felt that it was basically just a normal hotel.

Also the loss of potential that Castle Dracula could have been.

The hotel has much potential. The tourist industry need to rework the interior and 'goth' it right up. It's a long journey, which builds expectations that sadly were not met.

Not very good, so far away and just like a normal hotel room, with some novelty items.

Castle Dracula – this was not a castle and took a whole day of travel; the time could have been put to better use.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike in Poienari and Bran, where there is a real castle or at least ruins even if the locations are wrong, in the case of Hotel Castle Dracula the location is actually right (in accordance with Dracula) but the hotel, regardless of the name, is no sort of castle at all. So the contradiction within the intertextual reading and the experience of Hotel Castle Dracula is what causes the disappointments in tourists. The actual place does not fit in with the intertextually preconceived image that the tourists have. It is interesting to see that the Hotel Castle Dracula seems to have been a bit of a disappointment also from a touristic point of view. This is evident from the answers I got from the other tourists I interviewed. This comes especially clear when for example comparing the Hotel Castle Dracula to Bran. Everyone whom I interviewed mentioned enjoying the Castle and at the same time acknowledged that it was a tourist site. So, unlike the Hotel Castle Dracula, Bran actually fits the preconceived images of the tourists both as a tourist site and as a "Dracula's castle". In some cases Bran can also be disappointing in terms of intertextuality, because although it looks like a 'Dracula's castle' from the outside, the interior is far from what Dracula tourists might expect. This disappointment was evident in the reactions of the students I took to Romania. Although they probably knew more about the places before hand than the 'ordinary' tourist, they still expected more from the castle as its interior is not 'gothic' or 'vampire related' in any way.

2 Interviews in the possession of the author.

The tourists read and experience their visit in relationship to other texts and use this textual knowledge as a basis for their experience. By acknowledging this intertextual reading of the tourist experience we can understand the tourists' expectations and the reasons behind their experience. In tourism the intertextual reading of a text can be transformed and interpreted as intertextual reading of the experience. By understanding tourists' intertextual experience and expectations, the tour providers can adapt their approach and attitudes more easily. The intertextual reading of the tourist experience is by no means the only thing that affects the tourist's experiences, but it is a valid approach to the study of how tourist experiences are made. This is especially the case in literature tourism and movie-induced tourism, where the starting point for the trip is a book or a movie, which affects the experience intertextually from the start.

## Narrative spaces and place narratives

In Dracula tourism people visit places that are for the most part connected to Vlad the Impaler or to the fictional Count Dracula. Places can be explained both geographically and culturally. Although geographical places have concrete and tangible locations, they get their cultural meanings through life, experiences, stories and narratives. Places can also be invented, imagined, remembered or forgotten. A place becomes existent, experienced and narrated through dialogue with larger social and cultural formations. (Knuuttila 2006, 7.) The sites and places that are visited on the Dracula tours also get their cultural meanings through experience and narratives. They could be called both narrative and narrated spaces. The concept of narrative space can be used to illustrate the tangible and intangible dimensions of narration and the intertextual characterisation of this kind of multidimensional narration. In literature and in movies a narrative space is the physically existing environment in which characters live and move (Buchholz & Jahn 2005, 552). It is a combination of the spatial frames, the setting, the story space, the narrative world and the narrative universe. My interpretation of the narrative space is that it is a place where the narratives are told and where they actualise, and the place itself is a part of the narrative, actualising into an experienced space. Narrative is the representation of a story and consists of two main components, the story and the narrative discourse (Abbott 2008, 237–238). The set of narratives in Dracula tourism is the combination of the tour narrations told by the tour guide, and the information gathered by the tourist from the websites of the travel agencies and from popular culture. When tourists visit locations

this narrative is actualised and forms a narrative space at that location. Unlike in literature or in the movies, in tourism a narrative space is not static even if the spatial frame and the setting stay the same. The narrative space might change depending on the tour guides, the information from the websites and the tourists themselves.

Besides the experienced narrative space, I use the concept of place narratives to analyse how stories that are told in locations constitute the places themselves. Place narratives are never constructed from nothing, but are linked to the landscape, to past mythical or historical events and to real people (Selberg 2010, 229). They can also be constructed from fiction (Buchman; Moore & Fisher 2009, 239). I focus on what is being told and what is left out in the narratives and at the same time I examine whether there is a common narrative to be found in these places. In Dracula tourism and on the Dracula tours the set of narratives is not only composed of history, stories and concrete places, but also of the mental images and ideas that the tourists have from popular culture. These elements form the set of narratives in Dracula tourism. By looking at Dracula tourism as a set of narratives it is possible to reveal what kind of tradition is used and what kind of image is presented through these narratives. If the narratives are all consistent and do not challenge each other they can turn a visited site into a coherent narrative space. It is also important to notice that not all of the locations visited form a single coherent narrative space. This is, however, not a problem because the fact that one cannot form a narrative space at certain locations is an interesting observation in itself.

## Sites connected with Vlad

The main sites that are connected with Vlad the Impaler in Romania are the palace ruins in Bucharest, ruins of castle of Poienari and the village of Arefu, the cities of Sighișoara and Brașov, the ruins of the palace in Târgoviște and the monastery church on the island of Snagov. There are also some sites that are visited on the Dracula tours that have a link with Vlad, but this link is not very strong. Sites like these include Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca, Mediaș and the castle of Hunedoara. In the places associated with Vlad the tour narrations often use stories from Romanian tradition. This is especially the case with the ruins of Poienari and the nearby village of Arefu.

Out of the ten travel agencies that I focus on, Poienari is visited by nine. The village of Arefu is visited only on the tours organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys and on some tours organised by Transylvania Live. The stories that are connected with Poienari concern the escape of Vlad from the

Turks, the suicide of Vlad's wife and the construction of the castle. In the first story Vlad escaped from the castle with the help of locals from the village of Arefu who helped Vlad shoe his horse backwards and thus enabled him to escape from the Turks. After escaping, Vlad rewarded the people who helped him by giving them land.<sup>3</sup> In the second story Vlad's wife committed suicide in order to escape becoming a prisoner to the Turks. The third story is about the construction of the castle: Vlad punished the boyars from Târgoviște by imprisoning them during Easter festivities, marching them to Poienari and making them construct the castle in their festive clothing. (Ene 1976, 583; Stoicescu 1978, 35). These same stories or references to them are also found on the websites of travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism. The websites do not all refer to all three stories and the length and detail of references to the stories also varies. Out of the nine websites all three stories are mentioned only on the website of Company of Mysterious Journeys.

Five hundred years ago, a row of boyars left Targoviste to rebuild the fortress of Poienari, as punishment for their disloyalty. In the late afternoon, behold the ruins of Poienari. In 1462, Prince Vlad was besieged here by the Ottomans. Vlad sent for help and advice in the village of Aref, across the hill, but his wife waited no more: she threw herself into the River Arges, to avoid captivity. The Arefeans came at night and managed to take the prince all the way to Transylvania, across the high Carpathians. Vlad rewarded them with 16 mountains as pastureland – no wonder Aref remembers. Vlad Dracula 500 years apart.<sup>4</sup>

There are no mentions of any of these stories on three websites, namely on Transylvania Live, Ultramarine Travel and Cultural Romtour. On the website of Club Travelescu there is only a mention of the fact that Vlad retreated from the Turks and Transylvania Live merely describes the place, referred to as 'Vlad's old and faithful fortress'. On the Cultural Romtour webpage there is no reference to the actual stories but it does mention that it is said that the descendants of Dracula's soldiers are in Arefu.<sup>5</sup>

- 3 This story appears to be historically true. There is a letter from the chancery of Voivode Mircea the Shepherd from 1546 where the ownership of the lands around the village of Arefu are returned to the villagers after a boyar had taken them over. The letter also acknowledges that this ownership was given to the villagers in the time of Vlad the Impaler. (Ene 1976, 583.)
- 4 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, The Classic Dracula Tour, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/classic\\_dracula\\_level\\_1/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/classic_dracula_level_1/) [accessed 9.5.2016].
- 5 <http://culturalromtour.com/trips/halloween-in-the-land-of-dracula/> [accessed 9.5.2016].

On the website of Quest Tours and Adventures there is only a mention of the story about the construction of the castle.

Prepare to climb the steps of Poienari Fortress, now in ruins. Here, the traitor landlords worked to their death.<sup>6</sup>

The story about the suicide of Vlad's wife is also told on the website of Ciao Romania as is the story about the construction of the castle.

Afternoon departure to the Fortress of Poienari built by the boyars who subsequently were impaled by Dracula. The castle Poienari is also witness to the suicide of Vlad's first wife when she threw herself from the tower in the river Arges. There are 1480 steps waiting for you to get to this fortress.<sup>7</sup>

The stories about Vlad's escape and the suicide of his wife are mentioned on the websites of three travel agencies, Go Romania Tours, Adventure Transylvania and Visit Transylvania Travel.

Entering through a narrow wooden bridge, you come across the crumbling remains of two towers within; the prism shaped one was Vlad's (Dracula's) residential quarters, from here, according to the legend. The Impaler's wife flung herself out from the window, declaring that better this way than be captured by the Turks, who were besieging the castle. Legend has it that Vlad himself escaped over the mountains on horseback.<sup>8</sup>

In 1462 Prince Vlad was besieged here by the Turks. He sent to the village of Arefu across the hill for help but his wife, fearful of capture, threw herself into the river far below. The villagers came at night and managed to smuggle the Prince across the high Carpathian Mountains to the safety

- 6 This travel agency has some links with the Romanian National Tourist Office; at least their tours are advertised on the Romanian National Tourist Office's website. Quest Tours and Adventures, Dracula: Myth and History, <http://www.romtour.com/DRACULA-MYTH-AND-HISTORY.htm> [accessed 9.5.2016].
- 7 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 9.5.2016].
- 8 Go Romania Tours, The Real Dracula Halloween Tour – Truth and Myth of the Legend of Vlad Tepes, <http://www.goromaniatours.com/itin/historic-tours/dracula-halloween-tour.html> [accessed 9.5.2016].

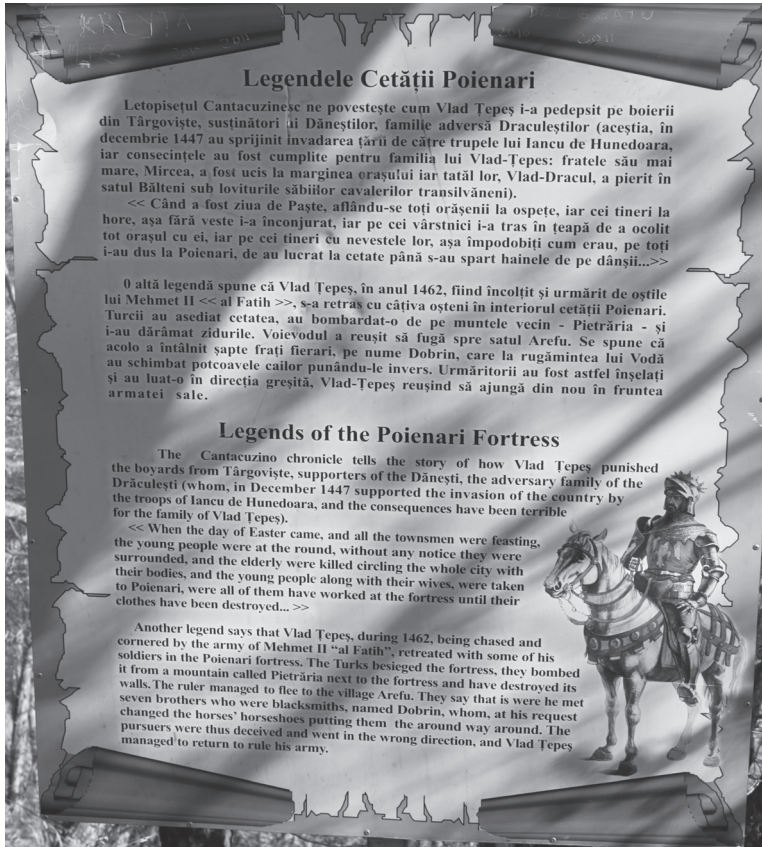
of Transylvania and, in return, he gave them 16 mountains as pastureland, a reward they still remember, more than 500 years later!<sup>9</sup>

The second reference is from the Dracula: Myth and History tour organised by Quest Tours and Adventures. In their itinerary it only says that ‘the traitor landlords worked to their death’, referring to the story about the construction of the castle, but does not go any further. The third reference is from the Dracula tour in Transylvania, organised by the travel agency Ciao Romania. It refers to two stories, the construction of the castle and the suicide of Vlad’s wife, but again does not explain the actions in any way. The fourth reference is from the The Real Dracula Halloween Tour – Truth and Myth of the Legend of Vlad Tepes tour organised by Go Romania Tours. It refers to two stories, the suicide of Vlad’s wife and Vlad’s escape from the castle. This reference is a little longer and mentions the same motive for the suicide of Vlad’s wife as the original stories do. It also mentions Vlad’s escape over the mountains on horseback, but fails to mention how. The fifth is from the Dracula tour, organised by Adventure Transylvania. The text is a little longer and it refers to two stories, Vlad’s escape and the suicide of his wife. Here the reason for Vlad’s wife’s suicide is given as are the details about Vlad’s escape and the rewarding of the people who helped him.

All of these stories are from the local Romanian folklore and these episodes are not known in the German or Russian stories. They link the ruins of Poienari and the village of Arefu with the history and times of Vlad the Impaler for the tourist. During the climb up to the ruins the guides usually relate the construction of the castle, and then in the ruins they tell the stories about Vlad’s escape from the citadel, the war against the Turks and the suicide of Vlad’s wife. The fact that the story of the suicide of Vlad’s wife has been utilised in popular culture<sup>10</sup> can bring an added element of closeness and familiarity to the narrative and to the experience. This story is told in Poienari even to the extent that the actual place where Vlad’s wife killed herself is sometimes shown to tourists.<sup>11</sup> One tour guide told me about the use of this story in Poienari:

- 9 Adventure Transylvania, Dracula Tour, <http://www.adventuretransylvania.com/dracula-tour.htm> [accessed 9.5.2016].
- 10 This was done very explicitly in Francis Ford Coppola’s movie *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* (1992).
- 11 As was the case on the Dracula tour in the April of 2010 that I participated in, organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys.

Yes, because when they arrived in the citadel of Poienari, they were surrounded by the Turkish army. And his wife was a very pretty woman, this is the story and I suppose she was a very pretty woman. She preferred to die instead of remaining a prisoner to the Turks. And she jumped down directly from the wall of the citadel. And this was a cruel moment in the life of Tepeș.<sup>12</sup>



**Fig. 8.** A sign post on the way up to Poienari Castle telling the story of the construction of the castle. Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2011).

Through the climb up to the ruins, the stories told there, the information boards and the impaled figures, the information learned from the websites and the expectations inherited from popular culture, the ruins of Poienari

12 An interview made by the author with a tour guide in 2010.

become a narrative space that is clearly defined both spatially and discursively. Poienari becomes the narrative space of the events that happened there when Vlad was sieged by the Turkish army. The tourists get an authentic feeling or experience about the events when combining the location with the stories. There are no contradictory narratives told here to challenge its coherence as a narrative space. Even the use of the term 'the real Dracula castle' of Poienari does not challenge the narrative space of Poienari, because when the tourists reach the actual location, there is nothing there to link the place to the vampire Dracula of books and movies. Poienari becomes a narrative space where the stories about Vlad the Impaler come to life and this binds the site to Vlad's times and brings an experience of authenticity to the tourist. As a narrated space it also authenticates the place within Romanian culture and history by focusing on the stories and legends about Vlad that are exclusively from the Romanian tradition.

The nearby village of Arefu is also a destination of some Dracula tours. The Lonely Planet tour guide mentions Arefu as a place where tourists can sit around campfires and listen to the locals, who claim to be the descendants of those who helped Vlad escape from Poienari, telling stories about him (Williams & Wildman 2001, 256; Reid & Pettersen 2007, 105; Pettersen & Baker 2010, 107). Although this is mentioned in the Lonely Planet books, it seems that only the Company of Mysterious Journeys organises these kinds of trips to the village of Arefu, although it is also visited on some tours organised by Transylvania Live. On the tours organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys, tourists are taken to the village to the house of one family. There they are offered local foods and drink and then the family members and their friends perform local traditional dances and sing traditional songs. They also tell the story of how Vlad escaped from Poienari with the help of the people of Arefu village. I have heard this story three times in Arefu. The first time was in 2005 when I visited the ruins of Poienari for the first time. We passed through Arefu and asked if anyone knew any stories or legends about Vlad the Impaler and one person told us this story. The second and third times that I heard the story in Arefu was on a tour by the Company of Mysterious Journeys, first in the April of 2010 and then on the October/November of 2010. In both of these cases the story was read aloud in English from a paper by the girl from the family whose house we were visiting. The tourists visiting Arefu are also told that the locals are direct descendants of those people who helped Vlad escape from the castle Poienari:

In the late afternoon, behold the ruins of Poienari. In 1462, Prince Vlad was besieged here by the Ottomans. Vlad sent for help and advice in the village of Aref, across the hill, but his wife waited no more: she threw



herself into the river Arges, to avoid captivity. The Arefeans came at night and managed to take the prince all the way to Transylvania, across the high Carpathians. Vlad rewarded them with 16 mountains as pasture-land - no wonder Aref remembers. Vlad Dracula 500 years apart. Tonight, around a bonfire, in the village of Aref, 30 farmers will tell you the legends they remember about Vlad; they are the descendants of those who served the prince, and you shall be their guests, in their houses - a dive in Time and Mythology.<sup>13</sup>

The village of Arefu does not really form a narrative space or a narrated space on its own. Its narrative function is to strengthen both the narrative and the narrated space of the ruins of Poienari. The narratives told in Poienari and Arefu can clearly be identified as heritage narratives for they are localised narratives that emphasise the uniqueness and the community provenance of the stories and their connection with both Romania and especially with the surroundings of the village of Arefu. They also emphasise the positive sides of the past and of Vlad, mostly ignoring the problematic aspects. In this case the positive side is the way the Vlad and the local villagers worked together against the enemy and the Other that was the Turks. The stories emphasise how Vlad was helped by the locals during a difficult time in a difficult situation.

The palace ruins in the city of Târgoviște are also an important site on Dracula tours, although surprisingly few Dracula tours visit them. Of the ten travel agencies that I focus on, Târgoviște is visited on some of their tours by six agencies: the Company of Mysterious Journeys, Transylvania Live, Ciao Romania, GoRomaniaTours, Quest Tours & Adventures and Adventure Transylvania. One of the reasons why Târgoviște is not visited on some tours may be its location. Most of the tours start from Bucharest and then head west to Curtea de Argeș and Poienari and thence to Bran, Sighișoara, Bistrița and Brașov. From Brașov most of the tours go either straight back to Bucharest or first visit the castle of Peleş in Sinaia. Depending on the timetable and the route taken, Târgoviște can be in the wrong direction, and to go there may take too much time. On the tours that visit Târgoviște it is always at the beginning of the tour, so they go from Bucharest to Târgoviște and then to Sinaia and Brașov or to Curtea de Argeș and Poienari.

The stories that are told in Târgoviște on the tours concentrate on the alleged atrocities committed by Vlad that happened in the city or in its vicinity. On the websites of the Company of Mysterious Journeys and Adventure Transylvania,

13 Company of Mysterious Journeys, The Classic Dracula Tour, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/classic\\_dracula\\_level\\_1/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/classic_dracula_level_1/) [accessed 11.5.2016].

Târgoviște is advertised as sheltering dramatic stories of might, greed, justice and cruelty.<sup>14</sup> This is a clear reference to the many stories about Vlad that are connected to Târgoviște. The website of Transylvania Live just states that the ruins of Vlad Țepeș's old palace are in Târgoviște, the former capital of Wallachia, and that it is situated on the right bank of the Ialomita river. Târgoviște also has a connection with Poienari and the story about the construction of the castle there.

Five hundred years ago, a row of boyars left Targoviste to rebuild the fortress of Poienari, as punishment for their disloyalty.<sup>15</sup>

Another story that is told in Târgoviște concerns the merchant whose money was stolen there. In the Russian variant and one of the Romanian variants when the stolen money is brought back to the merchant there is one extra coin, which the merchant points out to Vlad. In another Romanian version the merchant does not report the extra coin and is impaled because of this. (Ispirescu 1988, 318–326; McNally&Florescu 1994; 208–211; Stăvăruș, 1978; 54–55.) A tour guide told me this story with both variants in 2010:

Târgoviște: it's a place where Vlad Țepeș was a lot of times. There was his court and of course there we can speak a lot about Țepeș, about the way how he treats the enemies, about the way how he treats the thieves, because that was another interesting story. For example a merchant came to tell Țepeș: I remain without money, somebody stole my money. Okay, go home and you must come back tomorrow. And he comes back tomorrow. In the morning he was back. And Țepeș was with a bag full of money in his hand and he says: this is your money back. Yes, this is my money. You know how many coins were inside? Yes, I know. Count, count to see if the amount is the same. And he starts to count and he finds one extra piece of golden coin. And he says yeah, yeah, it's exactly the same amount I had before. And that was the moment when Țepeș became angry and he said: No. It was not true, this is not your money back, because there's one extra coin, instead of 120, there are 121 coins. Why are you a liar? And like this he ordered the merchant to be punished. Another one was the same thing like this, he received his moneybag back.

14 [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/classic\\_dracula\\_level\\_1/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/classic_dracula_level_1/) [accessed 13.5.2016]. On the Adventure Transylvania site only the word 'might' is left out. <http://www.adventuretransylvania.com/dracula-tour.htm> [accessed 13.5.2016].

15 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, The Classic Dracula Tour, [http://www.mysteriousjourneys.com/dracula\\_tours/classic\\_dracula\\_level\\_1/](http://www.mysteriousjourneys.com/dracula_tours/classic_dracula_level_1/) [accessed 13.5.2016].

And he counts and he says yeah, there's one extra. It's not mine. And that was recompensed with other money and he was let go free.<sup>16</sup>

In the tours organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys, both of these story variants are told in Târgoviște. On the tour organised by Transylvania Live, the tour guide told us how Vlad nailed the hats to the heads of the Turkish envoys because they showed him disrespect. This story is known in all three story traditions about Vlad, although in the German variant the merchants were Westerners. Some of the stories that are told in Târgoviște are interesting because they seem to be a combination or conflation of the German, Russian and Romanian tales. The story of how after a feast Vlad burned alive some of the noblemen who were his enemies actually combines three stories known from the German, Russian and Romanian story tradition:

Yes. We, we know of a story when he killed the boyars, because a lot of them tried to sell him to the enemies. And he discovered this and he organised a big party for them. Very big party with lots of food, with lots of drinks. And he said: I invite you, everybody, to have a party with me so we can be friends again. He let them eat and drink and when they become drunk he closed the doors from the house where they were, and started a fire and everybody burned there inside and like this he punished the fake friends, let's say.<sup>17</sup>

This story is especially interesting because it shows that the story tradition used in Dracula tourism has already been transformed, at least partly, into something new. It combines stories about the burning of the poor/sick/beggars/thieves<sup>18</sup> known from the Russian, German and Romanian traditions and those about the punishing of the boyars from Târgoviște known from the German and Romanian traditions. In the original stories of the first type, Vlad invited all the victims together into a big house, offered them a lavish meal and then had the doors locked and the house burned down. In the second type, Vlad gathered all of the noblemen into his palace and asked them how many rulers they remembered. None of them gave him the same number, or the right figure, and Vlad had them all impaled. (Andreescu 1999, 197; Ene 1976, 584–586; Harmening 1983; 112&116). Thus the tour guide mixed two story episodes and made a new story out of them. A similar mixed story can

16 An interview made by the author with a tour guide in 2010.

17 An interview made by the author with a tour guide in 2010.

18 The victims differ a little in the various versions.

be found on the website of Ciao Romania.<sup>19</sup> In this case, the mixing of the stories is even clearer.

Targoviste remembers the day when the boyars were called to a party in the town and they were asked if they want to be relieved of their difficulties. As the response was affirmative Vlad had them burn all so that no one would have more to suffer.<sup>20</sup>

In the original German, Russian and Romanian stories it was the poor/sick/beggars/thieves who were asked if they wanted to be relieved of their difficulties, not the boyars. So in this case two stories are again combined into a new story. These new stories are interesting because they improve the image of Vlad the Impaler. The victims in this new story are noblemen who betrayed Vlad and therefore they can be seen as being more deserving of their punishment. Whether this was done deliberately or whether it is just a coincidence is uncertain. The Transylvania Live tour guide also told us the story of the nailing of the hats to the heads of the Turkish ambassadors.<sup>21</sup> It is an interesting side note, that on that tour, the guide was asked about possible statues of Vlad in Târgoviște and he replied that there are none. This was somewhat surprising since there are actually at least three statues of Vlad in the city. Whether this was a misunderstanding, lack of time or knowledge is, however, not known to me. The stories used in Târgoviște derive from all three story traditions about Vlad the Impaler. Through these stories together with the ruins and with the exhibition about Vlad in the Chindia Tower, Târgoviște becomes the narrated and the narrative space of the alleged atrocities committed by Vlad there.

The medieval Transylvanian cities of Brașov and Sighișoara are also important sites on the Dracula tours. In Brașov the stories told by the guides focus on the alleged atrocities of Vlad as in Târgoviște, but on a smaller scale. Of all the Transylvanian cities Brașov may have the most familiar and famous history concerned with Vlad the Impaler. Brașov's importance is clear from the fact that is visited in almost every Dracula tour, organised by both Romanian and foreign travel agencies. It is also visited by all of the ten travel agencies that I focus on. Despite the connection with Vlad, the tour narrations emphasise the city more as a medieval Transylvanian town and not as a place especially connected with Vlad the Impaler.

19 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 13.5.2016].

20 <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 13.5.2016].

21 See page 45 for the explanation of the story.

The only thing that is mentioned about Vlad on the Dracula tours in Braşov or on the websites is the fact that Vlad had enemies here and that he attacked the city a couple of times and subsequently impaled his victims on the Tâmpa Mountain overlooking the city.

Depart for Brasov where Vlad's enemies – the rich Saxon merchants – lived.<sup>22</sup>

Just over the mountains that surround Brasov, during Dracula's campaigns against the rich local merchants, were placed the dying bodies, in agony.<sup>23</sup>

The number of stated victims varies from Lonely Planet's forty to two hundred, related by the guide from the Company of Mysterious Journeys (Williams & Wildman 2001, 128; Reid & Pettersen 2007, 131; Pettersen & Baker 2010, 133). The most famous Braşov story about Vlad is the famous German tale of how he ate his breakfast in the midst of his impaled victims. This story can be found all over the internet, and there is even a picture (originally an old wood engraving) depicting it, yet it is not mentioned on any of the websites in question, nor is it told on the tours. For some reason other than the story about Vlad attacking Braşov and impaling merchants on the mountainside, the tour narrations concentrate on the history and cultural importance of the city and not on Vlad or Dracula.

On the tour organised by Transylvania Live in 2011 that I participated in, the guide did not actually relate anything about Vlad in Braşov, speaking only about the city and its history in general. One possible reason might be the fact that all of the stories connecting Vlad with Braşov are from the German story tradition and not from the Romanian. Although these stories are nowadays widely available on the internet, the fact that they are not used is probably a conscious decision. It is very likely that most Romanian tour agencies that offer Dracula tourism do not want to promote the image of Vlad the Impaler as a bloodthirsty madman known both from the medieval German stories and from later Western popular culture, and wish to concentrate on the Romanian tradition about Vlad. As a narrated space Braşov is a medieval Transylvanian city that was and still is important both historically and culturally. Braşov does

22 Atlantic Tour, Dracula – The True Story of Vlad the Impaler, <http://www.in.atlantic.ro/en/tours/163-special-interest-/807-dracula-the-true-story-of-vlad-the-impaler.html> [accessed 13.5.2016].

23 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 13.5.2016].



**Fig. 9.** Vlad Dracul House in Sighișoara. The alleged birthplace of Vlad the Impaler. Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2010).

not really form a coherent narrative space, however, because the narratives used there are too fragmented and the references to the theme of the tour are too vague to form a coherent narrative space out of the city.

In Sighișoara, where Vlad is thought to have been born, there are very few if any historical or folkloric narratives that are used on the tours. The tourists visit a house which is said to be the birthplace of Vlad, but other than that the link with Vlad the Impaler is left very vague. I asked our tour guide what is told about Vlad in Sighișoara and he replied:

Vlad the Impaler was not very connected with Sighișoara. He spent the first five years of his life there and after a few times he had some commercial relations with the Saxons from Sighișoara because he bought a lot of things, a lot of weapons from Sighișoara for his army, but nothing else.<sup>24</sup>

Because Sighișoara is the assumed birthplace of Vlad the Impaler it is a part of almost all Dracula tours, organised by both Romanian and foreign travel agencies. The emphasis of the tour narrations here and of the information on the websites is mainly on the fact that it is a well preserved medieval fortified city, the medieval history of the town in general and the city's status as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The two things that are mentioned on eight

<sup>24</sup> An interview made by the author with a tour guide in 2010.

websites out of the ten are that Sighișoara is the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler and that it is a UNESCO World Heritage site.<sup>25</sup> Some websites do not mention that it is a UNESCO site, but still emphasise the city's beauty and importance by stating that it is one of Europe's most beautiful or best preserved and still inhabited fortified cities. On some websites it is even called the only still inhabited citadel in Europe.<sup>26</sup> Even though Vlad and Dracula are very visible in the shops around the old citadel there are no mentions of the fictitious Dracula on any of the websites of the tour organisers except for the travel agency Atlantic Tour. On their itinerary it is stated that in Sighișoara tourists visit the house where Count Dracula/Vlad the Impaler was born.<sup>27</sup> This differs greatly from all the other tours organised by the other nine travel agencies.

On some websites the cruelty often associated with the Middle Ages is also emphasised by referring to the witch-trials that took place in the city in the Middle Ages, to other harsh punishments and to the Torture Room Museum, said to be located in the same room as prisoners were tortured in during the Middle Ages.

Hear tales about punishments at the stake and even view the actual torture instruments on display in the Square History Museum. Do not skip the Torture Room.<sup>28</sup>

Some travel agencies also offer a witch-trial show as part of the city tour of Sighișoara. This kind of historical re-enactment is typical of many tourist sites where the emphasis is on the Middle Ages. Another typical re-enactment that can be part of the tours is either a show with fighting knights or an actual test or challenge where the tourists may become knights themselves. In some cases these shows also feature Vlad the Impaler in some form. On the tour I participated in in 2011 for example, there was a test of knighthood after the witch-trial show where the tourists could face a knight in competition. Usually there are several tasks to be undertaken, but in this case it was just a simple

25 For example, see the Vampire in Transylvania Dracula Tour by Transylvania Live, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/europe-sightseeing-tours-romania/dracula-tour-transylvania-travel.html> [accessed 13.5.2016].

26 For example, see the Dracula and Transylvania Tour by Visit TransilvaniaToday, <http://www.visittransilvania.ro/romania-tours-vacations/dracula-and-transylvania-tour-%E2%80%93-5-days-17-english.html> [accessed 13.5.2016].

27 Atlantic Tour, Dracula – The True Story of Vlad the Impaler, <http://www.in.atlantic.ro/en/tours/163-special-interest-/807-dracula-the-true-story-of-vlad-the-impaler.html> [accessed 13.5.2016].

28 Quest Tours and Adventures, Dracula: Myth and History, <http://www.romtour.com/DRACULA-MYTH-AND-HISTORY.htm> [accessed 13.5.2016].



**Fig. 10.** The old German (Saxon) cemetery in Sighișoara. Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2010).

arm-wrestling competition. After the tourists ‘won’, they/we were knighted by a man dressed up as Vlad the Impaler.<sup>29</sup> In my opinion these mentions of the cruelties of the Middle Ages are told on the tours and mentioned in the websites for two reasons. Firstly there is a historical and cultural reason for referring to these kinds of events: these kinds of events really happened there. The second reason lies in the nature of the tours. Despite the lack of stories about Vlad the Impaler or the fictional Dracula in Sighișoara, the tour organisers can keep the atmosphere of the tours alive with these references to cruelty and death that took place at approximately the same time as Vlad lived.

Interestingly there is one exception in Sighișoara that challenges the place narrative of the medieval, a German cemetery where the oldest graves date back no further than the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, this cemetery is sometimes promoted as being ancient, mysterious or even scary, clearly playing with the idea of Transylvania derived from popular culture and combining history with fiction in trying to create a mysterious atmosphere.<sup>30</sup> In the tour itinerary from 2014 by the travel agency Adventure Transylvania the cemetery is categorised as ‘gloomy’:

29 These are based on the author’s field work notes.

30 After the Halloween Party organised by Transylvania Live in October 2011, some of the people who attended the party wanted to visit this cemetery because of this idea.



Later we will climb the covered stairs to the thirteenth-century Hill Church, and the gloomy cemetery, walk around the thick walls of this amazing citadel.<sup>31</sup>

This has been changed in the current itinerary of the tour. The cemetery is no longer portrayed as gloomy and in fact the itinerary doesn't even mention the cemetery any more.

The other exception is Halloween. Many travel agencies offer special Halloween tours which include a Halloween costume party, usually in Sighișoara, Hunedoara, Bistrița or in the Hotel Castle Dracula. The Halloween tours emphasise the fictional and the horror aspects of Dracula tourism. They often include witch-trials or shows about the rituals involved in killing a vampire.

Get ready then for the Halloween Party: a delicious traditional Romanian festive dinner washed down with fiery spirits, excellent Romanian wine and accompanied by a special programme including the Ritual of Killing of the Living Dead, the Witch Trial, Dracula's Wedding, Romanian Folk Show and many dark surprises.<sup>32</sup>

The place narratives of Sighișoara construct an image of a unique medieval city with a strong relevance to Romanian cultural heritage, but Sighișoara does not really form a narrative space. The narrative here is constructed through the city itself, with the added shows of historical re-enactments. The Dracula aspect is very vague and comes into play merely through the fact that Vlad is thought to have been born there and through the use of the idea of Transylvania as a mysterious place.

Of the ten travel agencies focused on, Snagov is visited by seven. Most tour agencies only refer to Snagov as the (alleged) burial place of Vlad the Impaler on their websites. Some websites mention the empty tomb and hint at something mysterious.

During an archaeological research in 1930 they found that there were only horse bones in the tomb. Where is the body? It seems that Dracula has never found the peace.<sup>33</sup>

31 See Appendix 3.

32 Transylvania Live, Halloween in Transylvania with Vlad the Impaler, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/romania-travel-transylvania/halloween-in-transylvania-halloween-vacation-halloween-idea.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

33 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

The stories told on Snagov usually deal with the reasons for the empty tomb inside the church. According to these stories Vlad's body was removed from the tomb in front of the altar either because the monks thought that he was so evil that they moved his tomb nearer the entrance so that everyone would walk over Vlad's body or that the monks moved the body in order for it to be safe.<sup>34</sup> Either way because there is no body or a confirmed tomb found, it is easy for the tour guides to play around with the idea that Vlad has transformed into a vampire and disappeared. This is usually not said outright but only hinted at. Also the monastery's somewhat isolated location plays into the idea of a mysterious burial place, as until 2010 the only way to get to the island was by boat (there is now a bridge). Although Snagov is interesting and important as a Dracula site because it is seen as Vlad's burial place, it seems that it has not been a fixed site to be visited on some of the tour agencies, at least not for very long. For example Adventure Transylvania and the Company of Mysterious Journeys did not offer tours that went to Snagov in 2008, but they have organised them since.<sup>35</sup> Snagov is not very hard to reach as such, but it is a little way off the main roads and there are no big signs pointing towards it. I have visited Snagov monastery three times, once on my own, once with a tour guide and once on a tour. The first two times it was quite hard to find our way there, even for a fairly local cab driver.<sup>36</sup>

The narrative of Snagov is that of a mysterious island monastery where Vlad is thought to have been buried, but his tomb is empty. As a narrated space Snagov is the burial place of Vlad the Impaler. Snagov can also be seen as a narrative space composed of a combination of historical facts, the somewhat isolated location and the hints of mystery about the grave given by the tour guides and the preconceived ideas that many tourists have about vampires and tombs. Because there are virtually no stories about Vlad and Snagov, it is the

34 From the fieldwork journal of the author.

35 The Company of Mysterious Journeys did organise tours that visited Snagov, such as the Halloween tour of 2013, but currently (2014) their tours do not visit the island.

36 The first time I visited Snagov was on a private trip in 2005. We drove to Snagov village, asking for directions many times on the way and rented a boat in Snagov with a drunken (this we found out half-way there) driver to get us there. The second visit was organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys in 2010 and the cabdriver got lost twice during the drive there. Also the guide didn't really seem to know the way there either. The bridge to the island was under construction and the priest from the monastery in fact transported us to the island on a boat. The third time that I visited I took part in the Vampire Tour in Transylvania, Dracula Tour – Halloween Edition organised by Transylvania Live in 2011. This time the bridge was ready and it was quite easy to get to the island itself.

somewhat isolated location of Snagov together with the preconceived ideas from popular culture about vampires and gravesites that form the basis for the narrative space of Snagov.

Bucharest is interesting as a Dracula site, because it does not actually function as such. Here, the focus is not on Vlad the Impaler even though he is connected in many ways with the city's history. The first time Bucharest is ever mentioned was in an extant letter signed by Vlad – a fact mentioned on almost every website – and the royal palace, now in ruins, was originally built by him. Yet on the three tours that I have participated in, the mention of Bucharest by Vlad seems to be more like a side note. The city seems to function more as a point of orientation towards Romanian history, culture and the whole Dracula tour than as an actual Dracula site. In fact the emphasis of the tour narrations in Bucharest seems to be on the events of the 1989 revolution. This is not entirely surprising since the effects of the revolution can still be clearly seen in the city. In addition to the history of the city and the events of the 1989 revolution the tour narrations also tell of the development of Romania since the revolution up to the present day. The narrations about the 1989 revolution are connected with buildings and events that happened around the city, such as the Palace of the Parliament, the Memorial of Rebirth in Revolution Square, which commemorates the struggles and victims of the revolution, and University Square.<sup>37</sup>

On the two tours by the Company of Mysterious Journeys the ruins of the princely palace were not visited at all and on the tour by Transylvania Live we simply walked to the ruins and looked at them for a while from the outside, but we did not go in. We did, however, visit the Count Dracula Club restaurant on the Halloween tour organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys in 2010, but other than that both Vlad the Impaler and Dracula have a much smaller role in Bucharest than at most of the other sites on the tour. The ignoring of the palace ruins, the one site in Bucharest that has actual connections with Vlad the Impaler, confirms my impression of Bucharest as an orientation point rather than a Dracula site.<sup>38</sup>

Bucharest does not really form a narrative space that could be researched on the Dracula tours. The tour narrative of Bucharest is not about Vlad the Impaler or Dracula, but is actually more a combination of the history of Romania as a whole. Vlad is mentioned briefly on the tours but mostly what the tour guides tell is about the city itself, the Romanian kings and the 1989 revolution.

37 This is based on the fieldwork journal of the author.

38 At least this is my experience from the two tours that I have participated in.

The narrative of Bucharest is more of an introduction to Romanian history than anything to do with Vlad or Dracula.

The Transylvanian cities of Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca and Mediaş and the castle of Hunedoara are visited on some tours. They have some history associated with Vlad the Impaler. Out of the ten travel agencies, nine visit Sibiu, four visit Mediaş and three visit Hunedoara and Cluj-Napoca.<sup>39</sup> Of these, Cluj-Napoca and Mediaş have the weakest connections with Vlad. Cluj-Napoca does not have any strong links with Vlad and there are no stories about him that are linked to the city. Cluj-Napoca is the place where the Hungarian king Mathias Corvinus, whose actions greatly influenced the faith of Vlad, was born. On the tour organised by Transylvania Live that I took part in, the tour guide told us about the connection between Vlad and Corvinus. Cluj-Napoca is also mentioned in *Dracula* as the first place where Jonathan Harker spends the night in Transylvania on his way to meet with Count Dracula in the Borgo Pass. This was referred to distortedly on the website of the Company of Mysterious Journeys in 2013, where it stated on the itinerary of the Halloween tour that in *Dracula* the count himself entered Transylvania through Cluj-Napoca.<sup>40</sup> The other websites just mention Cluj-Napoca as a beautiful medieval city with no references to either Vlad or Dracula. There are also no stories about Vlad that are linked to Mediaş, and the websites only mention Vlad as having been a prisoner there. The website of Atlantic Tour mentions specifically that he was the prisoner of the Hungarian king, Mathias Corvinus.<sup>41</sup> On the website of Transylvania Live there is no mention of Vlad at all linked to Mediaş, but his imprisonment was related by the guide on the tour itself, as was the fact that in *Dracula*, the wine of the region is mentioned.<sup>42</sup>

Like Braşov, Sibiu has a history involving Vlad that at times has been tumultuous. This is not referred to on any of the travel agency websites, however. Sibiu is usually just referred to as beautiful and one of the most important medieval towns in Transylvania. Only two websites mention the fact that Vlad's son Mihnea the Bad was assassinated here just outside the Evangelical Cathedral, where he is buried. Although there is no mention of it on the website of Transylvania Live, the tour guide told us about the murder of Vlad's son

39 I do not have much to say about the Hunedoara castle, because none of the tours that I participated in visited the place, and I have not visited it myself.

40 See Appendix 4.

41 <http://www.in.atlantic.ro/en/tours/163-special-interest-/807-dracula-the-true-story-of-vlad-the-impaler.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

42 These are based on the authors' field work notes.

and about his grave while our tour was in the city.<sup>43</sup> The castle Hunedoara is mentioned on three websites but only one has a reference to Vlad the Impaler. The website of Go Romania Tours states that according to rumour Vlad was a prisoner in the castle.<sup>44</sup> The website of the Company of Mysterious Journeys has no mention of Vlad and the castle and the website for Visit Transilvania Travel mentions that it is considered one of the most haunted places in Europe.<sup>45</sup> This is most likely mentioned in order to connect the site with the theme of the tour. One cannot find a coherent narrative space for these sites that has anything to do with Vlad the Impaler.

## Sites connected with the fictitious Dracula

On the Dracula tours the sites that are connected with Stoker's book and the fictitious vampire Count Dracula are the city of Bistrița with its Golden Crown hotel and the Hotel Castle Dracula, built in almost the same location in the Borgo Pass as the vampire count's castle in Stoker's book (Light 2012, 102–107). In Bistrița and the Borgo Pass the focus is clearly on Stoker's novel, popular culture and the supernatural. Actually the whole region of Transylvania is used in Dracula tourism quite interestingly. Because of the success of Dracula and its influence on popular culture ever since, Transylvania has become known as a land of superstition, vampires and myths, an 'in-between' place that holds a unique place in Western popular culture. In the Western popular imagination Transylvania has become synonymous with the supernatural. In a way Transylvania is an anomaly, a part and yet not a part of modern and rational Europe. It can also be seen as a liminal space; it is somewhere between the known and unknown worlds, between the past and the present and between the sacred and profane. The journey to Transylvania can be seen as a metaphorical crossing of an imagined spatial or temporal threshold. (Light 2009, 188; Pritchard and Morgan 2006, 764.)

When Stoker published *Dracula* in 1897 he sealed the place myth of Transylvania, as the social and spatial Other of the West, which is still to some extent alive today. Although Stoker's book was not the first in Western literature to

43 These are based on the authors' field work notes.

44 Go Romania Tours, The Real Dracula Halloween Tour – Truth and Myth of the Legend of Vlad Tepes, <http://www.goromaniatours.com/itin/historic-tours/dracula-halloween-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

45 Visit Transilvania Travel, Dracula and Transylvania Tour, <http://www.visittransilvania.ro/romania-tours-vacations/dracula-and-transylvania-tour-%E2%80%93-5-days-17-english.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

feature Transylvania, it did have a lasting impact on popular culture, which in turn affects Dracula tourism (Light 2007: 749; Miller 2000: 44). This image of Transylvania is so strong that many foreigners actually think that it exists only in the minds of fiction writers and film-makers, and they express surprise when they learn that Transylvania exists as a real region (Hupchick 1995, 49). In Western imagination Transylvania (and one could say the whole of Romania) has become the home of the vampire Count Dracula, Dracula's country.

Of the ten travel agencies researched, Bistrița and the Hotel Castle Dracula are visited by only five. The tour narrations and the narratives that are found on the websites about these two locations are clearly created on the basis of Stoker's *Dracula*, movies about Dracula, vampires and Transylvania and the place myth of Transylvania. The tour guides do not usually tell many stories about the locations, but seem to rely on the preconceptions that the tourists have about Transylvania and the locations mentioned in *Dracula*, or the movies. Fiction plays a large part in Dracula tourism for obvious reasons and it especially used on the route from Sighișoara or from Brașov to Bistrița and to the Borgo Pass, or in other words from the sites that are connected with Vlad the Impaler to the sites that are connected with Stoker's book. So the tour guides tend to make a clear separation between what they perceive as real Romanian history and fiction derived from Western popular culture. In the Hotel Castle Dracula in the Borgo Pass the focus on fiction is also obvious. The tour narrations here revolve around the idea of the hotel as the home of the fictional vampire Count Dracula.

Some of them prefer to sleep there instead of sleeping in the castle. Some of them are afraid of what can happen in the castle after midnight. And for this, nobody can condemn them.<sup>46</sup>

Even when Count Dracula is not explicitly mentioned, the tour narrations usually play around with the idea of the place myth of Transylvania. What I mean by fiction here is everything connected with Stoker's *Dracula* and with the image of Romania and Transylvania in popular culture in general. It would be difficult to draw a distinction between fiction, history and tradition as used in Dracula tours because there is no clear line between fiction and so-called reality. For example, the history of Vlad the Impaler that is used in the tour guide narrations is partly based on the legend tradition about Vlad which, although based loosely on historical events, is also more or less fiction. In this case what I mean by fiction is what the tour guides themselves

46 An interview made by the author with a tour guide in 2010.

call fiction. So the definition and distinction between fiction, tradition and history is based mostly on the tour guide narrations and the opinions of the tour guides and not so much on my own interpretations.

Fiction is used in the tour guide narrations in two ways. Sometimes it is clearly stated or brought up and sometimes it is only hinted at. In the two Dracula tours by the Company of Mysterious Journeys that I participated in the distinction is made clear in the tourist guide narrations by stating explicitly that the group is leaving behind history and reality and crossing into the domain of the fictitious Count Dracula, as on the itinerary from the Classic Dracula Tour of the Company of Mysterious Journeys:

Proceed to the buffer-zone separating Count Dracula's domain (the county of Bistrita-Nasaud) from the rest of Transylvania. Prince Vlad dims out into history; Count Dracula emerges from nightmares, terror and fright.<sup>47</sup>

The place myth of Transylvania is used in tour narrations clearly in the way the tourist's presence in Transylvania is constantly highlighted and emphasised. Tourists are told that the many crosses that can be found alongside the roads are there to protect them and that one should not wander beyond them. Similar things are told in the Hotel Castle Dracula, where tourists are warned not to wander around the hotel. They are also taken outside when it is dark and guided towards a campfire by a man dressed as Dracula. There they are offered a 'bloody' drink (in actuality *țuică*<sup>48</sup>) and ghost stories are told. Sometimes there is also a 'ritual of the purifying fire' where tourists jump over a campfire



**Fig. 11.** The Coroana de Aur (Golden Crown) hotel in Bistrița. Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2010).

47 [http://www.mysteriousjourneys.com/dracula\\_tours/classic\\_dracula\\_level\\_1/](http://www.mysteriousjourneys.com/dracula_tours/classic_dracula_level_1/) [accessed 7.1.2014].

48 *Țuică* is a traditional Romanian spirit made usually from plums or apples.

in order to ‘cleansing their souls’. After this they are led to the basement of the castle to visit Dracula’s coffin. When all the tourists are down in the room where the coffin is situated, the lights go out and ‘Dracula’ jumps from the coffin and runs out of the room.<sup>49</sup> It is clear that the tour guides assume that the tourists know about Dracula and the Borgo Pass and also share the idea of the place myth of Transylvania as being something dangerous and superstitious. The use of Transylvania and the presumption that the tourists know and have even internalised the place myth of Transylvania is clear for example on the website of Quest Tours and Adventures in their itinerary for the Dracula: Myth and History tour.

Observe the construction of the houses in the village; notice the mysterious gates: you are now in Transylvania.<sup>50</sup>

On the website the last sentence is written in bigger letters that are moreover coloured red. Here the person who is responsible for the text is clearly assuming that people who read it know the reputation of Transylvania from popular culture by connecting the ‘mysterious gates’ with the fact that the tourist is now in Transylvania. After leaving the Hotel Castle Dracula and Bistrița the emphasis of the tour narrations turns back to the historical and cultural aspects of Romania, although the tours that are held during Halloween tend to emphasise the fictional side too at other locations than just Bistrița and Hotel Castle Dracula. It is thus clear that even though the tourist agencies play along with the idea of Transylvania as the mysterious home of vampires, they tend to downplay the fictional side before and after Bistrița and the Borgo Pass.

The place narratives of Bistrița and the Hotel Castle Dracula are clearly formed around the plot of *Dracula*, or rather the plots of all the Dracula films and books that the tourist has seen or read. So the narrative space of Bistrița and Hotel Castle Dracula is more or less the same as in *Dracula*. For example, the tour itinerary of the Vampire in Transylvania-Dracula tour by Transylvania Live clearly states that the tourists are actually following in the steps of Jonathan Harker and can eat the exact same meal as he did in the Novel:

49 These are based on the authors’ field work notes.

50 <http://www.romtour.com/DRACULA-MYTH-AND-HISTORY.htm> [accessed 17.5.2016].



In Bistrita you can visit Golden Crown Restaurant and taste the very meal Jonathan Harker, the main character of *Dracula* Novel, served when he was in Bistrita.<sup>51</sup>

In Bistrița and the Hotel Castle Dracula the narrative space is constructed out of the both the actual and the fictitious locations, which are combined together with hints and innuendos in the tour narrations by the guides. The intertextual experience is especially evident in the Hotel Castle Dracula, which is at the same time a hotel from the 1980s and the castle of Count Dracula. The tourists read and experience the place through the knowledge they have of Transylvania and Dracula from popular culture and the boundaries between reality and fiction are blurred in their experiences.

## Other sites

There are sites on the Dracula tours that do not have anything to do with either Vlad the Impaler or the fictitious Dracula. The most important and most common of these sites are the castles of Bran and Peleş, the cathedral in Curtea de Argeş, the hotel in Turda and the UNESCO World Heritage site of the fortified churches of Transylvania. Bran is especially interesting, because it is connected in Dracula tourism with both Draculas, even though in reality it has very little if anything to do with either. Bran has been dubbed Dracula's castle since the 1970s because it is easy to get to and it looks like a Gothic vampire castle. Vlad the Impaler might have visited it on occasion, but it was never his castle. As for the vampire Dracula's castle in Stoker's novel, it is nowhere near Bran. Yet the castle is being marketed as Dracula's castle even today. (Light 2007, 753.) Bran is the most visited and one of the best known Dracula sites in Romania. Of the ten travel agencies researched nine tour agencies visit Bran, as do most of the foreign tourist agencies as well. Out of the nine travel agency websites researched only two do not refer to it as Dracula's castle. On some websites the castle is simply called Dracula's castle but on others the connection with fiction goes further.

Visit Dracula Castle, in Bran Village.<sup>52</sup>

51 Transylvania Live, "Vampire in Transylvania-Dracula tour", <http://www.visit-transylvania.us/europe-sightseeing-tours-romania/dracula-tour-transylvania-travel.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

52 Quest Tours and Adventures, *Dracula: Myth and History*, <http://www.romtour.com/DRACULA-MYTH-AND-HISTORY.htm> [accessed 17.5.2016].

Explore Transylvania's symbol, Bran Castle. The edifice owes its fame both to its unique charm and to the myth Bram Stoker created around Dracula.<sup>53</sup>

Visit Bran Castle (1377), this is the Castle from the Dracula Novel – a castle in a pass in the Carpathian Mountains.<sup>54</sup>

Your next stop will be Bran where you'll visit the Bran Castle – made famous by Bram Stoker's novel as the residence of the vampire count.<sup>55</sup>

The first reference is from the itinerary of the Dracula: Myth and History tour organised by Quest Tours and Adventures. It simply states that the castle is called Dracula Castle. Here of course the travel agencies can play around with the name Dracula because it can be connected to either Vlad the Impaler or to the vampire Count Dracula; Bran castle was never Vlad's castle and he never owned it. (Light 2012, 89; Stoian 2008, 5.) In the following references the connection between Bran and the fictitious Count Dracula departs from just owing its fame and charm to Stoker's book to actually being the same castle as in Stoker's book. The last reference is from the itinerary of the tour Dracula – The True Story of Vlad the Impaler, organised by Atlantic Tour. There it is clearly stated that Bran castle is the same as the vampire Count Dracula's castle in Stoker's book. In the tour itineraries organized by GoRomania Tours, the description of Bran castle is a little conflicting. On the other hand Bran castle was clearly connected with Bram Stoker's Dracula:

Also called Dracula's Castle, it is situated not far from Brasov (25 kilometres) at the entrance in the Bran – Rucar passage. The castle got its fame from Dracula's legend written in 1897 by Bram Stoker and later on made into a film by Francis Ford Coppola.<sup>56</sup>

On the other hand the connection is clearly belittled and the historical aspect is emphasized:

- 53 Transylvania Live, Vampire in Transylvania Dracula Tour, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/europe-sightseeing-tours-romania/dracula-tour-transylvania-travel.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].
- 54 Adventure Transylvania, Real Dracula Castles Tour, <http://www.adventuretransylvania.com/tours/dracula-tours/> [accessed 17.5.2016].
- 55 Atlantic Tour, Dracula – The True Story of Vlad the Impaler, <http://www.in.atlantic.ro/en/tours/163-special-interest-/807-dracula-the-true-story-of-vlad-the-impaler.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].
- 56 GoRomania Tours, The Dracula and Transylvania Tour, <http://www.goromaniatours.com/itin/historic-tours/dracula-transylvania-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

The next morning we will head to Bran Castle, often referred to as “Dracula Castle”. Although in history it is said he may have set foot in the residence once during a siege of the castle. Despite these allegations this is one of the most picturesque castles in the country.<sup>57</sup>

It seems that Bran is a place where the historical Vlad and the fictitious Count Dracula are merged. I find this interesting since neither has a strong connection to Bran. The stories that are told by the guides may come from either fiction or tradition. All in all it depends on the travel agency how and what kind of tradition is used. For example, the agencies that offer mostly horror tours usually use the German horror stories combined with the fiction about Count Dracula and vampires.

Some Romanian travel agencies like the Company for Mysterious Journeys and Ultramarine Travel (at least according to their website) on the other hand tend to focus more on the history and traditions of Romania. On the website itinerary of the Dracula Classical Tour by Ultramarine Travel, Bran is called just Bran castle and not Dracula’s castle.<sup>58</sup> One company that does not try to market Bran with the idea of Dracula’s castle in Bran, and is also forthcoming in acknowledging this is the Company of Mysterious Journeys.

Visit Castle Bran, 1377, defending the Transylvanian end of the Pass. This is the ‘American Castle Dracula’ (since 1960), as it ‘looks very much like the vampires’ castles in the Hollywood movies’ (TSD survey).<sup>59</sup>

But [there] does not stand any relation and the new owners actually are trying to advertise with this [that] Bran is Bran, Dracula is Dracula. They are by no means related, historically not related, and so, so it’s really, it’s really interesting, the fact that they know that’s a phony castle but we bring them there. OK, look at it, it’s nice, it has other, another background, but it’s not what we would like to show you.

57 GoRomania Tours, The Real Dracula Halloween Tour - Truth and Myth of the Legend of Vlad Tepes, <http://www.goromaniatours.com/historic-tours/dracula-halloween-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

58 <http://www.ultramarine.ro/engleza/tururi/dracula.htm> [accessed 17.5.2016].

59 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, The Classic Dracula Tour, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/classic\\_dracula\\_level\\_1/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/classic_dracula_level_1/) [accessed 17.5.2016].

Although they also do play around with the fictitious Dracula in general. The quotation continues: ‘Anyway, Bran does stop the mobs from pestering the solitude of the Count in his remote Borgo Pass castle.’



**Fig. 12.** Peleş Castle. Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2011).

We show to everybody Castle Bran because a lot of foreigners consider this is the vampire castle, doesn't matter [that] Țepeș was not there, and there is no connection. But we try to explain: no, it's not a vampire castle, he was not here, we have no vampires, but they don't believe us anyway.<sup>60</sup>

The Company of Mysterious Journeys does take tourists to Bran, but they tell them that it is not the Dracula castle known from Stoker's book or from the Dracula movies and that it does not have many connections with Vlad the Impaler either. Yet it is visited, because it is a famous tourist site and because it is known as the 'tourist castle Dracula.'

The place narratives about Castle Bran are of it being the castle of Dracula. This is constructed from the actual visit to the castle, where the marketplace in front of the castle is filled with Dracula and horror merchandise and the mentioning of the castle being, or at least being called, Dracula's castle. This narrative is slightly challenged by the fact that in reality it was not and is not Dracula's castle, a fact that becomes clear if one visits the castle. In my opinion, because the place narratives about Castle Bran as the castle of Dracula are not coherent with the actual location and the interior of the castle, Bran does not form a narrative space where the tourist gets an authentic experience of being in Dracula's castle. Although some tourists might actually still believe it to be Dracula's castle just because of its looks and the fact that of all three places marketed as 'Dracula's castle' on the Dracula tours, Bran is the only real castle

60 Interviews with two tour guides, made in 2010.

**Table 4.** The visited places on the Dracula tours by the different tour agencies.

Visited places *	CMJ	TL	AdT	AT	CR	CRT	GRT	QTA	UT	VTT
1. Bucharest	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. Snagov	x	x	x		x		x	x		x
3. Targoviste	x	x	x		x		x	x		
4. Peles	x	x		x			x	x	x	x
5. Brasov	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6. Bran	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
6. Sighisoara	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7. Bistrita/Borgo Pass	x	x			x		x		x	
8. Poienari	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
9. Arefu	x					x				
10. Curtea de Arges	x	x	x	x	x		x			x
11. Sibiu	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
12. Cluj-Napoca		x			x		x			
13. Medias		x		x			x			x
14. Turda		x			x					
15. UNESCO World Heritage Sites	x			x	x		x			x
16. Other places **	x			x	x		x	x	x	x

\* Company of Mysterious Journeys (CMJ), Transylvania Live (TL), Adventure Transylvania (AdT), Atlantic Tour (AT), Ciao Romania (CR), Cultural Romtour (CRT), GoRomaniaTours (GRT), Quest Tours and Adventures (QTA), Ultramarine Travel (UT), Visit Transilvania Travel (VTT).

\*\* This category includes places that are visited on only some of the tours. These places are for example Hunedoara, Alba Iulia, Târgu Mureş, Râşnov and Bukovina.

that is still whole and intact, this is not enough to form a coherent narrative space of Bran as the castle of Dracula.

The castle of Peleş is quite exceptional as a Dracula site, because it has absolutely nothing to do with either Vlad or Dracula and it is not even marketed as having a connection. Out of the ten Romanian travel agencies offering Dracula tours, seven organise tours in which Peleş castle is visited. It is constantly mentioned as ‘the most beautiful royal palace in Europe’ or the ‘pearl of the Carpathians’. The castle is one of the sights even on tours that otherwise concentrate solely on the horror and vampire theme. The reasons for the inclusion of sites like Castle Peleş on the Dracula tours vary, but one of the main justifications is that the organisers simply want to show them to foreign tourists. This is especially the case with the Castle Peleş, which is visited on tours organised by both the Company of Mysterious Journeys and Transylvania Live.

Yes, because like I say we want to present also what is good in our history and Peleş castle is one of most beautiful castles from Europe from the nineteenth century. And because it’s very beautiful we try to present [it] also to our tourists to see also another face of Romania, the romantic face of Romania.<sup>61</sup>

Well, yeah. Well, I would say yes, yes, because still you’re in Romania and from my point of view you should, you should learn a few things about Romania too. And plus we are passing next to the place, we know that it’s a unique, it’s like, like you said, like Peleş castle, it’s a unique place in Romania and there won’t be too many around Europe, so from my point of view it’s a very good thing.<sup>62</sup>

Castle Peleş, built for the Romanian royal family at the turn of the twentieth century, is shown to tourists because it is considered as something important for Romanian culture (Hovi 2011, 83). The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century are also seen as a kind of a golden age in Romania and the castle is a reminder of that era.

The cathedral in Curtea de Argeş is visited on seven of the ten tour agencies researched here. One of the most often told story about Curtea de Argeş is the legend of Master Manole, the builder of the church.

The Transylvanian city of Turda is also a feature on some Dracula tours, even though it too does not have any real connections with either Vlad or

61 An interview made by the author with a tour guide in 2010.

62 An interview made by the author with a tour guide in 2011.

Dracula. There is a hotel in Turda called The Hunter Prince Castle or also Dracula's Castle. It looks somewhat like a medieval castle and is partly decorated as such. The stop in Turda does not offer any special narration about Vlad or Dracula, but it is marketed as having an intimate medieval atmosphere and having the old salt mine nearby. Only two of the travel agencies researched offer tours that visit Turda.

The fortified churches of Biertan, Viscri and Prejmer are three of the seven fortified churches in Transylvania that together form a UNESCO World Heritage site. Of these three, Biertan is often considered the most beautiful. The three churches are also a feature on many Dracula tours. Of the ten travel agencies studied here, four organise tours including Biertan, two visit Viscri and two call at Prejmer. None of the websites mention anything about Vlad or Dracula connected with any of the churches. (See Figure

## Narrative spaces?

Places are produced through place narratives that separate the world of tourism from everyday life. Sometimes certain areas and places are elevated or even segregated from the commonplace. In religious tourism and on pilgrimages this is done by making places unique or even holy. Current tourist geography is becoming steadily more magical and mythical. (Selberg 2010, 238.) Although Dracula tourism and pilgrimage share some common features, in Dracula tourism this elevation is not achieved through religious actions (Hovi 2010, 223), but instead through narrative spaces. There are only four places visited on the Dracula tours that can be seen as forming a narrative space. These locations are Poienari, Târgoviște, Snagov and Bistrița/Hotel Castle Dracula.<sup>63</sup> All of these locations form a narrative space where the narratives are connected to the locations so strongly that tourists can get an authentic experience of the place via the stories and narratives told.

In Poienari this narrative space is constructed around the history and legends about Vlad the Impaler and Poienari and with the actual place. There are no contradictory narratives told hereto challenge its coherence as a narrative space. This narrative space is also formed exclusively from Romanian tradition and therefore authenticates the site as part of Romanian heritage. Târgoviște forms a narrative space that, like Poienari, is also constructed around the history and legends about Vlad the Impaler and the actual location of the palace

63 I consider the Hotel Coroana de Aur in Bistrița and the Hotel Castle Dracula as together forming one location.

ruins in the town. Unlike in Poienari, the stories and legends that form the narrative space are known from all three story traditions, German, Russian and Romanian. The narrated space of Snagov is the burial place of Vlad the Impaler. This narrative space is composed of the combination of historical facts, the somewhat isolated location and the hints of mystery about the grave given by the tour guides and the preconceived ideas that many tourists have about vampires and tombs. The narrative space of Bistrița and Hotel Castle Dracula is the narrative space of *Dracula*. This narrative space is constructed from the both the actual and the fictitious locations, which are combined together with the hints and innuendos in the tour narrations by the tour guides and the intertextual interpretations of the tourists.

The four narrative spaces that can be found or identified in Dracula tourism all differ from each other, except in the way they all integrate the actual location into the narrative space. The first two are clearly based around tradition and history, whereas Bistrița and the Hotel Castle Dracula are purely based around fiction and popular culture. The narrative space in Snagov is a combination of history, tradition and fiction and so it differs from the others.

## Vampire tradition

As mentioned in chapter 2, vampire tradition or even any mentions of vampires are for the most part absent in the websites of the tour agencies organising Dracula tourism. Of the ten websites, only two have a reference to the vampire of folk tradition. On the tours organised by Transylvania Live, the tourists can watch and even partake in a show called ‘The Ritual of Killing of the Living Dead’, which has some elements of tradition in it.

Still, an evening to fear, you’ll attend the killing of a vampire; you’ll be part of the crowd seeking to take the bloody creature to a special place where the ritual can begin! The Ritual of Killing of the Living Dead is followed by an Evening sitting, the Romanian term is Sezatoare.<sup>64</sup>

I saw this show during my fieldtrip in 2011. It started with people dressed in traditional peasant clothes coming to the room carrying an open coffin with a ‘corpse’ (dummy) in it. Then they lowered the coffin onto a table and walked around it three times, repeating a prayer. After that they impaled the ‘corpse’.

64 Transylvania Live, Vampire in Transylvania – Dracula Tour, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/europe-sightseeing-tours-romania/dracula-tour-transylvania-travel.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].



All of the tourists watching this also received a garlic necklace and a wooden cross for protection. The other reference is from the website of Ciao Romania, where there is a famous quotation from Emily Gerard's *The Land beyond the Forest*:

More decidedly evil is the nosferatu, or vampire, in which every Romanian peasant believes as firmly as he does in heaven or hell.<sup>65</sup>

Although this quotation is quite clear in that it refers to Romanian folklore and folk belief about vampires, whether the claim is actually true is debatable, as discussed in chapter 2. However, it is a clear and rare reference to the folkloric vampire on the travel websites. On three websites there is some reference to vampires, but they refer to the vampire of fiction and popular culture. There are a couple of pictorial references to the vampire of popular culture on the websites, but even they are quite subtle. On the website of the Company of Mysterious Journeys the Halloween tour is marketed with an image of pumpkins and a large bat flying in front of the moon, and the website of Transylvania Live shows an image of a vampire hovering over Castle Bran. The image of a bat is also used on a couple other websites, but other than that there is nothing referring to vampires. And although the image of a bat is a subtle reference to vampires, it is still a clear one.<sup>66</sup> On five websites there is absolutely no mention of vampires at all, either traditional or fictional, even on the Halloween-themed tours.

## Medievalism

Medievalism is used in Dracula tourism mainly for three reasons: Vlad the Impaler lived at that period, people are fascinated with the Middle Ages, and it fits in with the overall theme of Dracula tourism. Most often a location is described as being from the Middle Ages, as with Braşov or Sighişoara, which are almost always referred to as being medieval cities:

After breakfast visit of the fortress city of Sighisoara one of the few inhabited citadels in Europe, which retains its medieval centre on the top of the hill.

65 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

66 The bat is one of the most iconic metaphors for bats found in several books and movies.

Arrival in Brasov, a medieval town known as the ‘The crown city’, the city of merchants and craftsmen.<sup>67</sup>

The Middle Ages are also used to hint at something mysterious, magical or even charming, indicating that the location is therefore something special. The Middle Ages are also presented as if they formed a real location that one can visit.

Are you ready to spend Halloween night in a very old medieval castle? Get ready to fit in the medieval atmosphere full of mystical legends. The fifteenth century castle is ready to host you this night and reveal to you its history and hidden secrets.

As soon as you’ll pass the entrance gate you’ll be in a medieval world and get ready to experience it. Remember that medieval means old customs, old music, old legends and mysticism.

During the dinner enjoy Romanian cuisine, an outdoor barbeque and live medieval and Romanian folk music and dancers. The special shows of medieval knights, lights and sounds will complete the evening.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to the ways that the Middle Ages are referred to on the websites, medievalism is used in the shows about knights or witch-trials and by constantly referring to cruel torture or killing methods that were used during those times, which strengthens and plays along with the discourse of the Middle Ages as exceptionally cruel and dark.

## Other tradition

What I mean by other tradition on the Dracula tours is tradition that has nothing to do with Vlad the Impaler. Many of the tours organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys visit the village of Arefu, where the locals tell a story about Vlad the Impaler that has direct connection with the history of the village. The locals also perform traditional folkdances while dressed in

67 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

68 Go Romania Tours, The Real Dracula Halloween Tour – Truth and Myth of the Legend of Vlad Tepes, <http://www.goromaniatours.com/itin/historic-tours/dracula-halloween-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

traditional folk costumes. Usually the tourists are also invited to one of the houses in the village where they are served traditional Romanian food and drinks.

In general food is an interesting aspect of the use of tradition on the Dracula tours. It is one element of tourism through which local and national specialities can be promoted (Hallett & Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 45–48).<sup>69</sup> Transylvania Live, Ciao Romania and Quest Tours and Adventures all mention in their itineraries a visit to a traditional Romanian restaurant, where there is also a folk show.<sup>70</sup>

The tours organised by the Transylvania Live visit two art exhibitions, one in Mediaş and the other in Bistriţa. In Mediaş the tour visits the artist Emil Muresan, who uses spider webs for his paintings. In Bistriţa the tours visit an old tower that was part of the medieval city walls, where there is an exhibition of puppets made by Alexandru Misiuga, who died in 2009. In addition to being an artist, Misiuga was an important figure in Dracula tourism in Romania: he was the man behind both the Coroana de Aur hotel in Bistriţa and the Hotel Castle Dracula in the Borgo (Tihuţa) Pass. The Company of Mysterious Journeys and Ciao Romania also mention the legend of Manole on their websites, although without going into details. A tour guide from the Company of Mysterious Journeys told me the legend in 2010:

According to the legend, Manole was the name of the master mason who was assigned to build the church in Curtea de Argeş. The walls of the church kept crumbling and everything Manole had built during the day-time collapsed during the night. Manole was instructed to bury the first woman that he sees inside the walls in order for the structure to last. The first woman who came by was Manole's own wife, and he had to bury her inside the walls, but after that the walls of the church were intact. When the church was almost finished the ruler who had ordered the construction of the church came by and had Manole and his men stranded on the roof of the church and intended them to die there. Manole tried to escape

69 In their research on tourism websites, Richard W. Hallett and Judith Kaplan-Weinger (2010) use Louisiana as an example of how local food can be used to market a location.

70 <http://www.dracula-tour.com/halloween-dracula-tour-in-transylvania.html> [accessed 17.5.2016], <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016], <http://www.romtour.com/DRACULA-MYTH-AND-HISTORY.htm> [accessed 17.5.2016] On the tour itinerary of Transylvania Live the folk show is not mentioned, but on the tour that I participated in, it was a part of the programme in a traditional restaurant that we visited in Bucharest.

by jumping and flying for a while but he fell down and died. On the spot where Manole landed and died appeared a well.<sup>71</sup>

The well in question (according to the legend) is still in the grounds of the church and is shown to tourists, along with the exact palace where Manole is said to have buried his wife. On the websites of Quest Tours and Adventures and Atlantic Tour the church in Curtea de Argeş is called Manole's monastery, but there is no mention of a legend. I would assume that on the actual tours it might be mentioned. The importance of Curtea de Argeş is evident by the fact that it is visited on the tours of seven tour agencies.

Other activities that are labelled as tradition like traditional food, folk customs, the legend of Master Manole and the visit to the art exhibitions are added to the tours because the organisers want to show other sides of Romania and its culture than just Dracula (historical or fictional). This serves the same purpose as adding locations that have no connections to Dracula. In my opinion these locations and traditions are considered as something so important to Romanian culture that they need to be brought out on the tours. These important parts of culture can also be called local heritage; I will deal with this aspect of Dracula tours more closely in chapter 5.

## Constructed tradition

Although the tradition itself that is used in Dracula tourism could be seen as a social construction, I am more interested in the way the tradition that is used is chosen, the ways in which it is used and how certain locations are produced by using tradition. In other words, how the tradition and its use are constructed. Tradition is used in Dracula tourism in a similar way to discourses and imagery on the websites of the travel agencies, as discussed in chapter 3. The tradition used or the stories told on the tours and mentioned on the websites are mainly from the Romanian tradition about Vlad the Impaler. The stories are also mainly used when visiting Poienari and Târgovişte, two historically important locations connected to Vlad. In Poienari the stories are known only from the Romanian tradition. In Târgovişte the stories derive from all three traditions, Romanian, German and Russian, but they are interestingly mixed together. The result of this new compilation story is interesting, because, as mentioned earlier, it actually improves the image of Vlad. In addition to these stories, the attack on Braşov and the impaled Saxon merchants are mentioned. This story is known from the German tradition and it is referred to on some

71 Based on the fieldnotes of the author.

tours and websites, but even when it is referred to it is done so only cursorily, without really going into details. In Braşov, Sibiu and Sighişoara the emphasis is on promoting the medieval history of the cities and not on the tradition about Vlad. The use of tradition and history not related to Vlad in places like Bucharest, Curtea de Argeş and Arefu shows the intentions of the tour agencies in promoting Romania beyond the superficial Dracula link.

The fact that the stories that are used are mostly from the Romanian tradition, and the fictional side of Dracula tourism is mostly limited to Bistriţa and the Hotel Castle Dracula and partly to Bran, and different kinds of tradition and history not related to Vlad are being used on the tours confirms my hypothesis that the tour agencies wish to promote Romania in their own way, and try to separate the fictional and foreign elements from the history and culture of Romania and bring out varied aspects of Romanian culture and history. The use of very obviously constructed tradition in Dracula tourism confirms this.

## 5. The Hybridisation of Culture

The local reaction in Romania towards Dracula tourism has been ambivalent and mixed. Most of the criticism has been because it is seen as something strange and unfamiliar or even non-authentic. It may be seen as a foreign and unfamiliar form of culture that has been forced on Romania or as a combination of indigenous and foreign culture, or even as a part of modern indigenous culture. It can also be seen as a case of global versus local culture and even as 'glocal' culture. I approach these definitions through the much-debated concept of hybridisation. To simplify, this means a mixing of cultures which produces new forms of culture (Storey 2003, 108).

### Cultural conflicts between tradition and fiction

The cultural conflicts in Dracula tourism have been quite obvious from the start. Because its whole premise is the link between history, tradition and fiction, it is no surprise that it has caused several cultural conflicts. When the first Western tourists started to travel to Romania in the 1960s and 1970s, some of them wished to see the places connected with Dracula that they knew from Bram Stoker's novel and from the movies about Dracula. As already mentioned, the locals in Romania for the most part did not know what the tourists were talking about, because the Western Dracula myth was almost completely unknown there at the time. For many of those Dracula enthusiasts who wanted to see the literary or the supernatural roots of the Dracula myth, the most sought-after place was Castle Dracula in the Borgo Pass, where Stoker had placed his entirely fictional castle. As there was no castle there, foreign tourists were taken to Castle Bran, which had already become a tourist site, although as a museum of feudal art. Bran quickly became known as Dracula's castle. Trying to respond to the demands of the tourists, the national tourism office launched a tour called Dracula: Legend and Truth, which focused solely on Vlad the Impaler and did not mention the fictional character or vampires at all. This tour was not liked by many tourists looking to hear about the fictional Dracula. (Light 2007, 755–757.) These were the first, but certainly not the last, cultural conflicts in Dracula tourism. Both of these clashes of culture, Castle Bran turning into Dracula's castle in the Western media and the refusal of the Romanian government to make compromises with Western fiction, were

caused by the conflict between the influence of Western popular culture and the government's refusal to accommodate the demands of the tourists. Since 1989 Bran has evolved into a full-blown tourist location. The cultural conflict seems to be more or less over and the village of Bran has adapted to being a tourist location.

The population of Bran is approximately 5000. There are at least nine hotels, one camping place and over forty guesthouses, bed and breakfasts and hostels.<sup>1</sup> Just outside the entrance to the castle area is a market place, which has grown notably in the last decade. Although the tourism, which for the most part happens because of the castle and its connection to Dracula, has brought economic opportunities to the locals, there are people who are not happy about this progress. In an interview I made in 2010 a person working for the Company of Mysterious Journeys felt that what had happened in Bran is a pity and that the village is finished and has lost its authenticity. According to the guide the village used to be a beautiful place with houses that had big courtyards, and there were shepherds and sheep before it turned into a kitsch market where people sell industrially made masks, T-shirts and artefacts influenced by popular culture and accommodated to the demands and expectations of foreign tourists.<sup>2</sup> This romanticised view is, of course, in a way a little patronising, but it still exemplifies the cultural dispute over the progress of Bran and about the conflict between the pressure coming from outside and the local traditional way of life, or between fiction and tradition. Noel B. Salazar has argued that especially in the developing countries, the locals have little to say over how they are represented in tourism. Some locals may also decide to enact tourism fantasies because they understand the economic benefits even though they might not agree with them (Salazar 2010, 154). Although Romania is by no means a developing country, the same analogy can be made with regards to adapting the Dracula theme for economic purposes. The locals who sell Dracula T-shirts, masks, mugs, dolls etc. may not appreciate them or see them as representing them in any way but continue to sell them because the tourists are buying them.

1 This information is from the website Booking.com, a firm specialising in booking accommodation online, [http://www.booking.com/searchresults.html?aid=310019;label=bran-ro-1-PzBm\\*R56nUGix6CE\\_B392QS18233398026;sid=2dd42a56319ba0c12232a83b3fe0dd04;dcid=1;city=-1153567;class\\_interval=1;csflt={};nflt=clear\\_ht\\_id%3D1%3Bclear\\_ht\\_id%3D1%3Bclear\\_ht\\_id%3D1;offset=0;order=popularity;review\\_score\\_group=empty;score\\_min=0;ssb=empty&lang=en-gb](http://www.booking.com/searchresults.html?aid=310019;label=bran-ro-1-PzBm*R56nUGix6CE_B392QS18233398026;sid=2dd42a56319ba0c12232a83b3fe0dd04;dcid=1;city=-1153567;class_interval=1;csflt={};nflt=clear_ht_id%3D1%3Bclear_ht_id%3D1%3Bclear_ht_id%3D1;offset=0;order=popularity;review_score_group=empty;score_min=0;ssb=empty&lang=en-gb) [accessed 17.5.2016].

2 Interview made in 2010.

Although Bran is still mentioned as the Dracula castle in the media and is also sometimes marketed as such in tourism, its link with the fictional Dracula is by no means an easy one. It was opened to the public as a visitor attraction in 1957 as a museum of history and feudal art. The castle was adopted as the castle of Dracula in the 1960s in the minds of the Western tourists and in the Western media. This happened very rapidly and mainly for two reasons: it was in Transylvania and it looked the part.<sup>3</sup> The Romanian government, however, did not make any concessions towards this and besides the castle's appearance there was nothing inside to link it with either Vlad the Impaler or the fictional vampire Dracula. Although the Romanian government must have recognised the link between Bran and Dracula, they did nothing to encourage it. The market place outside the entrance to the castle grew in the 1970s and 1980s to eventually cover the whole car park. The souvenirs that were sold there did not, however, make any references to Western vampire fiction or to the Western image of Dracula. (Light 2012, 93–95.) After the 1989 revolution the merchandise in the market started to change from local products and handicrafts towards the more industrialised merchandise referred to in the interview I mentioned above. In the marketplace the fictional side of the Dracula phenomenon started to gain more influence, but this was not the case with the actual castle. After 1989 the building's managers have had an ambivalent attitude towards the association of Dracula with the Bran castle, though some custodians of the castle have tried to accommodate its associations with Dracula.

In the early 1990s there were performances and displays in the castle's interior courtyard which were highly profitable for the museum, but they were not liked by the Ministry of Culture, which changed the custodian of the castle in the mid-1990s and ceased these events. In the early 2000s there were again some attempts to reconcile tradition and fiction, as some Halloween events were organised in the castle. However, this did not last long and in 2003 the manager of Bran castle returned to a position of discouraging the Dracula associations. Because of a new law passed in Romania in 2001 and 2005, it was possible for former owners to claim property seized during the Communist era. Castle Bran was nationalised by the Communist regime from its owners in the 1940s, and in 2006 the ownership was returned to the grandchild of Queen Marie Dominic von Habsburg. After originally trying to sell the castle, the new owners decided to open the refurbished and slightly refurbished castle as a museum in 2009. (Light 2012, 127–129.) For the most part the castle is presented and furnished as a royal holiday home from the interwar period.

3 See chapter 3 for more information about this.



Apparently the new owners were not very enthusiastic about the association between Bran and the fictional Dracula and have not promoted it in any way.<sup>4</sup>

The association between fiction and tradition is, however, nowadays acknowledged at the castle: there are several information plates in two rooms about Vlad the Impaler, the fictional Dracula, vampires, Romanian superstitions and the supposed connections between Vlad the Impaler and the vampire Count Dracula. These were not there when I visited the castle for the first time in 2002.<sup>5</sup> Although the information for the most part tries to separate the fictional side from history, there are parts that surprisingly support the idea that Stoker's fiction was influenced by historical aspects of Vlad the Impaler. On one information plate it states that Stoker started with Vlad the Impaler's brutality and turned it into vampirism, and on another it states that Bran was quite possibly a source of inspiration for the castle of Count Dracula in the novel. These are interesting concessions to the idea that Stoker knew and used information about Vlad the Impaler for his novel, especially because as such they are not true. There is also similar information available on the official website of the castle, where the distinction between history and fiction is made more explicit. Although the conflict between Romanian tradition and Western popular fiction in Bran is still alive, there seems to be a sort of compromise between the two opposing sides at the moment. As a museum the castle is presented unambiguously as a royal holiday home from the interwar period with no real references to the vampire fiction. However, the castle hosts many events and festivals, of which some are connected to fiction, such as the Halloween parties that have been organised there at least since 2010. The posters for the Halloween parties are also interesting as they seem to utilize more and more elements from popular culture and fiction. On the first poster there is an image of the castle at night with a big moon behind it. On the 2011 poster there is a picture of Bran and the moon with many bats flying over the castle; in the 2012, 2013 and 2014 posters there is a picture of Bran and the full moon with the image of Bela Lugosi as Dracula hovering over the castle. The poster from 2015 has the picture of the castle and a full moon which are surrounded

4 At least according to a story on the website of The Orange County Register written by Alison Mutler from The Associated Press, Dominic van Habsburg is quoted as saying about the Dracula association: 'We are talking about a fable, a novel; I don't think that's OK', adding that he will meet with the people of Bran to discuss plans for the castle. <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/castle-26696-habsburg-bran.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

5 This was during a personal trip and was not a real field trip.



**Figures 13, 14, 15.** Advertisement posters for Halloween parties at the castle Bran. (Bran Castle Official.)

by images of skulls, pumpkins and bats as well as pictures of people in Halloween costumes.

The best-known incident of cultural conflict within Dracula tourism is the case of the planned theme park, Dracula Park. This was supposed to be a Dracula theme park in Transylvania, which would have featured a wide-ranging list of attractions ‘including a castle, a labyrinth, an Institute of Vampirology, a conventional amusement park, exhibitions of Romanian history, along with shops, restaurants and accommodation.’ (Light 2007, 758.) The plans for the theme park were met with a vigorous campaign of domestic and international opposition. Although the park was opposed for a variety of reasons, such as environmental and economic reasons, the most vocal opposition came from a cultural point of view. Some argued that the construction of Dracula Park would be an unsuitable development for Romania that would enforce the association of the country with horror fiction in the Western popular imagination. Dracula Park was seen by its opponents as a problem for the image of the country, and many critics argued that Romania should promote itself for tourism on the basis of culture and history and not through Dracula. These opinions were shared by historians, clergymen and many people in Sighișoara, and were also widely circulated in the press. Most arguments reflected concerns about the confusion it would add about the link between Vlad the Impaler and the fictitious Dracula and about the notion that the vampire was a Romanian creation or even known at all in Romania. Many churches also opposed the park, viewing its construction as against the principles of Christianity. (Light 2012, 144–145.)

Dracula Park also had its supporters, but the opposition was more vocal and eventually won, so that the plans were abandoned. The cultural conflicts

or clashes in Dracula tourism in Romania are the result of the expectations of tourists not meeting with the self-image of the locals. Because the fictional side of Dracula was foreign and still is not that well accepted or liked in Romania and because the tradition of Vlad the Impaler and his place in the national history of Romania is still highly regarded in Romania, these conflicts do arise. Most of them happen on a small scale, but sometimes, as in the case of Dracula Park, this conflict surfaces and becomes surprisingly potent.<sup>6</sup>

## Hybridisation

The mixing of cultural elements in folklore and in traditions is both normal and old. Traditions and folklore do not exist in isolation, where they cannot be affected by new people and new cultural forms. Folklore and tradition are and have always been constantly evolving and changing. Nowadays this happens much more rapidly than before and might therefore appear to be a new phenomenon. Because people and ideas move much faster than before new mixtures of culture are born all the time. In cultural studies this mixture has been researched using concepts like syncretism, bricolage, creolisation and hybridisation. Syncretism was formulated in order to analyse certain religious forms that combine African practices and beliefs with Christianity. It refers to the attempts to explain why certain forms are carried over and others are lost in conditions of displacement and new contact. Syncretism is seen to highlight adaptation, assimilation and the reconciliation of cultures, and not their plural coexistence. Bricolage is also a term that is used to analyse mixed forms in culture. The term can be applied to many forms of cultural borrowings that tie together various influences to produce a new whole, such as hip-hop or techno-rave music. Unlike syncretism, bricolage is seen as being particularly apt in describing the unmotivated combinations that characterise the playfulness of many postmodern forms. Creolisation is also a widely used concept in social sciences and humanities. It has its roots in linguistic theories but has been used, for example, to explain the variations and transformations in social and expressive life resulting from conditions of diaspora, colonialism and market trade. Creolisation has also been used to research culture at the borders, rituals combining traditions and challenging homogeneity, verbal arts and identity formations. (Kapchan & Strong 1999, 240–241.) Creolisation has also been used to research the intermixings of languages, cultures,

6 I say surprisingly because the numbers of the Dracula tourists are still quite low and hence the reactions toward Dracula tourism seem sometimes a little exaggerated.

and ethnicities and it has used to challenge the forms of nationalism based on ethnic background (Ilmonen 2012, 35 & 39).

Deborah A. Kapchan and Pauline Turner Strong have stated that although creolisation is used in linguistics and folkloristics, the concept of hybridity is more widely used and circulated in academia. They note that contemporary work in hybridity is cross-disciplinary, which is evident in studies of popular culture, media, immigrant populations, subaltern studies, history and expressive culture. (Kapchan & Strong 1999, 242.) All of these terms could be reduced to meaning more or less the same thing, the combination of cultural elements mixing together and possibly producing a new form of culture.

According to Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 'hybridity has become a prominent theme because it matches a world of intensive intercultural communication, growing migration and diaspora lives, everyday multiculturalism, and the erosion of boundaries at least in some spheres' (Pieterse 2006, 1). There are multiple examples of hybridised forms of culture all around the world but especially in the so-called Western world. Pieterse has mentioned Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam, Asian rap in London or Chinese tacos as emphatic examples of hybridisation of cultures (Pieterse 2001, 19). Cultural hybridisation is, however, not without its relations of power. According to Pieterse when dealing with globalisation as hybridity, the localised territorial cultures are gradually overshadowed by translocal cultures. (Pieterse 1995, 57–61 & Storey 2003, 117–118.) Hybridisation does not always mean that the cultural exchange is equal. According to Lane Crothers globalisation can through hybridisation change cultures in favour of the interests, needs and values of the dominant trading partners (Crothers 2013, 31). Hybridisation and globalisation can therefore also be seen as threats to culture. Although in Dracula tourism the cultural forms that are mixed or hybridised are not as far from each other as in the Pieterse's examples, I will show how Dracula tourism can be viewed in terms of hybridity.

## Halloween

One of the most visible examples of hybridisation of cultures in Dracula tourism is Halloween. Although Halloween itself can be considered as a hybrid form of culture, it is still very much an Anglo-American phenomenon that has been adapted in many other countries. In the United States, for example, it is the second biggest holiday in terms of the income that it generates among consumer industries. It has incorporated some elements from Christmas

festivities here, and in Northern Ireland elements have been adopted from the British Guy Fawkes Night celebration.<sup>7</sup> (Santino 2009, 9–13.)

Despite the fact that Halloween is still mostly an Anglo-American phenomenon, it has become a truly globalised holiday. The reasons for its rapid spread are numerous but the main ones are media and television, the leisure industry and commercialisation, and the fact that it has become popular in schools. This has been the case for example in Spain, Germany, Russia and the Netherlands. In all of these countries Halloween is mainly celebrated by children in schools and kindergartens and by adults in bars and private parties. (Cardus 2009, 110; Mikos 2009, 119; Prokhorova 2009; 146–148; Helsloot 2009, 157.) In Romania, Halloween has also become a more or less stable holiday, celebrated by the same groups as just noted for Spain, Germany, Russia and the Netherlands. The celebrations of Halloween in Finland are also similar.

Halloween is very much a form of hybrid culture. It is a mix of cultural forms and in many countries has overshadowed local cultural holidays, mainly All Saints' Day. It is also very important for Dracula tourism as many Dracula tours are organised during Halloween. Of the ten travel agencies that I am researching, three travel agencies do not offer any kinds of Halloween tours. In addition to the Dracula-themed Halloween parties organised by the travel agencies there are also many Halloween parties organised by more local actors in places that are connected with either Vlad the Impaler or Dracula, such as Bran or the Hotel Castle Dracula. Although the Halloween parties organised by the travel agencies are predominantly for foreign (mainly American and British) tourists, the fact that others organise Halloween parties (schools, restaurants, bars, private citizens) means that Halloween has truly become a part of Romanian culture as well. The Halloween-themed Dracula tours are usually built around the fictitious side of Dracula tourism and around the place myth of Transylvania. The agencies use imagery and discourses that are either straight from specific examples of popular culture or at least imply it.

Halloween parties and tours are a clear example of special experiences that the tour agencies offer. Although all tourism aims to provide experiences and not just a visit to a certain place, Dracula tourism and especially the Halloween tours definitely aim to provide a special experience to the tourists that they might not get anywhere else. Many manufacturers stage their own experiences as a sideline to sell their main product in order to give the customer a memorable event (Pine II & Gilmore 1999, 20). Staging experiences does not,

7 In the USA the decorations and especially the use of lights has been seen as a borrowing from Christmas decorations, and in Northern Ireland the fireworks displays for example have been seen as an adaptation of the Guy Fawkes celebrations.

however, simply mean adding entertainment to existing offerings. Although a tourist can get a wonderful experience simply by observing, the experience may be deepened when tourists can participate in the action themselves. (Pine II & Gilmore 1999, 30–31.) Guest participation is a big factor in creating experiences in Dracula tourism too. Dracula tour agencies stage Halloween parties with extra show numbers in order to produce special experiences and memorable events. For example, on the Halloween party organised by Transylvania Live in 2011, the show ‘The Ritual of Killing of the Living Dead’ included participation by the tourists. The tourists were all given a garlic necklace and a wooden cross for protection and they could also participate in the killing of the vampire with a stake, followed by a ‘moon howling competition’ outside.<sup>8</sup>

Out of the seven travel agencies that offer Halloween Dracula tours, only one, Cultural Romtour, does not use any imagery or discourses related to the image of Romania and Transylvania from popular culture. It is interesting that the tour agencies use either imagery or discourses themed on Dracula or horror, but not both. Only Quest Tours and Adventures uses both.<sup>9</sup> Most of the websites mention Dracula or use imagery connected with the character somehow, some more explicitly than others. For example, on the website of Transylvania Live the information about the Halloween tour and Dracula is very factual in style and does not really utilise the images or discourses from popular culture, other than one picture, where there is a picture of Castle Bran with an image of Dracula hovering over the castle.<sup>10</sup> The website of Adventure Transylvania had an interesting and very ‘Halloweenish’ picture of their tour despite the fact that the text next to the picture was factual in style and even explicitly stated that it was a historic tour not meant to be scary or to have a horror theme.<sup>11</sup> The place myth of Transylvania is also clearly used on these tours. On some websites Transylvania is simply mentioned as the place where the locations visited are situated, while on others the myth is utilised more thoroughly. These examples show how Halloween is used as a special situation, where the fictitious side which otherwise might be absent from the tours can be utilised more thoroughly. The hybrid nature of Dracula tourism becomes more evident during Halloween, which as discussed before can be seen as a sort of hybrid in itself.

8 This is based on the author’s field work notes.

9 See chapter 3.

10 <http://www.dracula-tour.com/> [accessed 17.5.2016].

11 See chapter 3.

## Souvenirs

Another example within Dracula tourism where hybridisation can be seen is the souvenir industry. Tourism and especially Dracula tourism has had a huge impact on the nature of souvenirs in Romania. One of the best examples of this is Bran, where I would say Dracula tourism has had the most effect in all of Romania. According to Duncan Light, by the mid-1990s many souvenirs based on Vlad the Impaler started to appear in the market place outside Bran castle and many T-shirts, postcards, mugs, masks and magnets featuring the image of Vlad the Impaler or Dracula were sold alongside more traditional goods like local food and handicrafts. By the late 1990s the nature of the souvenirs at Bran had changed to souvenirs that appeared to be authentic and traditional, but were in fact intensively produced with little relationship to the traditions around Bran. What has happened in Bran is not a unique example, for it has long been argued that the arrival of tourists in large numbers leads to the decline of local and traditional forms of culture and to the commercialisation and commodification of the culture. Following this argument, local culture and its meaning for local people is for ever changed. This again fits Pieterse's and Storey's interpretation of globalisation and hybridisation. The authenticity of these kinds of new products is also often questioned. (Light 2012, 129–130.)

Tourism, and especially the arrival of tourists in large numbers, have been seen as leading to the decline of local and traditional forms of culture and their meanings (Greenwood 1989, 136; Light 2012, 130). The situation in Bran, however, is somewhat different and more complex, as Duncan Light has pointed out. Although it experienced a growth in mass tourism since 1989, this is not a new phenomenon here. While it is true that the number of tourists declined during the 1980s, in the 1970s the number was over 220,000.<sup>12</sup> What has changed is the context. After the precise restrictions of what to sell and not to sell dictated by the state ended, local traders started to sell products that the tourists demanded. (Light 2012, 131–132.) These kinds of products included, for example, painted plaits, woodcuts, carved wooden plates and tankards featuring images of Bran or Vlad the Impaler. In addition there are also many generic wooden goods, ceramics and lacework sold in Bran, of which most are manufactured or mass-produced elsewhere in Transylvania.

12 It was only in 1998 that the visitor numbers in Bran reached this level again. Since then they have, however, been growing and in 2009 reached around 500,000. (Light 2012, 127.)



**Fig. 16.** A marketplace outside Bran castle. Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2011).

These souvenirs are often referred to as ‘fake’ or ‘kitsch’ and are not very highly appreciated by many Romanians.<sup>13</sup> This contemptuous or even condescending attitude is, however, at least partly misplaced in my opinion. Although these souvenirs are not seen as authentic by many, they can be viewed as new forms of authentic and traditional Romanian culture. According to Duncan Light these souvenirs can be seen as an authentic memento that forms a connection with the place visited, in this case Bran. Most of these souvenirs are also made in Transylvania; they are themed around Transylvania and for the most part might not be available outside Transylvania or at least outside Romania. (Light 2012, 132.) They can also be viewed as tourist art. This is local art that has been influenced by and developed because of tourism. These types of local art and handicrafts are especially made for outside buyers, namely tourists. Although tourist art is often labelled kitsch and inauthentic, the term actually comprises a large number of works of art. Some of them can be called simple knick-knacks, and some are unique pieces of high-quality art. Tourist art does not automatically mean bad aesthetic quality or the degeneration of traditions. (Kupiainen 1996, 168–169.) In many cases around the world tourism has not really destroyed or corrupted the local traditional forms of art, but it has changed and even broadened the themes used in traditional handicrafts. So even if tourist art and souvenirs are not traditionally known or

13 An interview made by the author with a tour guide in 2010.



made in the local culture, they do represent forms of current, contemporary traditions in the area. (Kupiainen 1996, 172.)

Souvenirs and tourist art in general are usually a combination of local traditions and tourism demands, and are therefore hybridised forms of culture. Although in the case of Dracula tourism many souvenirs may not have anything to do with the local cultural forms, some old traditional handicrafts like woollen clothing or woodcarving are combined with imagery or certain words or names (such as Dracula, vampire) from popular culture. Not all of the souvenirs or merchandise that is sold, for example outside the castle in Bran, is manufactured as mass-produced, and there are still merchants that also sell traditional items, though they are in the minority. According to Duncan Light a survey conducted in 2004 indicated that only 12 per cent of traders in Bran were selling local traditional-style handicrafts while almost 40 per cent were selling products that were produced elsewhere (Light 2012, 130). The souvenirs in Dracula tourism represent local traditional handicrafts, new or contemporary forms of handicrafts and tourist art and mass-produced souvenirs. To me the whole souvenir industry that has been built up around Dracula tourism in Romania is a fine example of a hybrid form of culture that combines local traditions and Western popular culture.

## Dracula tourism as hybrid culture

Hybridisation can also be seen in Dracula tourism in general; it may in fact be seen as a hybrid form of culture in itself, combining Western popular culture with Romanian tradition and history. Sometimes these are clearly separated, and sometimes mixed together. On most of the Dracula tours, sites connected with Vlad the Impaler and those associated with the fictitious Dracula are usually clearly separated. At locations connected with Vlad the discourses used are usually only about Vlad and Romanian history, whereas at sites connected with the fictitious Dracula the discourses usually only relate to popular culture and fiction. There are, however, four clear exceptions to this: Bucharest, Castle Bran, Bistrița and Hotel Castle Dracula. In Bucharest the focus of the tour, as mentioned earlier, is not so much on Vlad or Dracula, as on an orientation towards Romanian history, culture and the whole Dracula tour. Many tours visit the ruins of the princely palace, with its obvious connections with Vlad, and used to visit the Count Dracula Club restaurant, which tried to make connections between the two characters but with a clear emphasis on the fictitious side. The restaurant, which no longer exists, was an almost perfect hybridisation of the two elements within Dracula tourism – Romanian history and

Western popular fiction. On the first floor of the restaurant there were three specially themed rooms, a medieval room, a hunting room and a Transylvanian room. The hunting room and the Transylvanian room were decorated with a hunting theme and a folkloric theme. The medieval room was adorned with a medieval theme centred on Vlad the Impaler, but it also hinted at the fictional Dracula. This included a movie being shown on the TV screen on the wall,<sup>14</sup> placemats that were shaped like bats and a Count Dracula-themed menu.

Castle Bran can also be seen as a hybrid form of culture, combining Western popular culture with Romanian history. Bran is an interesting example of hybridisation because it has been a cultural hybrid since the 1970s.<sup>15</sup> In the case of Bran a culturally and historically important historical Romanian building was as it were transformed into a fictional castle. Thus Bran is both a real historical castle and a fictitious fantasy one at the same time. In this case the experience of Bran is the hybrid more than the actual location. Most tourists have a preconceived idea of Bran as Dracula's castle and, as noted earlier, it certainly looks the part. When tourists actually visit the castle they sometimes feel disappointed because the interior does not reflect what they expect of Dracula's castle at all. Moreover, the marketplace outside the castle sells all kinds of souvenirs with Dracula and vampire themes, again possibly adding confusion to the experience.

The Coroana de Aur hotel in Bistrița and the Hotel Castle Dracula in the Borgo Pass are clear examples of hybridisation. Both hotels were built in order to get Western tourists to Romania and hence they both relied on Western popular culture. As explained in chapter 3, the Coroana de Aur hotel was built in Bistrița in the 1970s and it was named after a hotel of the same name in Stoker's novel. The Hotel Castle Dracula was built in the 1980s close to the actual location where Count Dracula's castle was situated in Stoker's novel. (Light 2012, 76 & 101.) Both of these hotels are real buildings that represent something fictitious and therefore unreal which has no historical connection with the region or Romania. The hybrid nature of these locations is quite obvious since they both utilise Western popular culture, namely Stoker's novel, in a Romanian setting that has no real connection with what they portray outside the world of fiction.

14 When I visited the restaurant in October 2010 the movie in question was the comedy *Dracula: Dead and Loving It*, directed by Mel Brooks; in October 2011, the movie was *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola. The restaurant closed down in 2015.

15 See chapter 3.

## Vlad the Impaler as Count Dracula

Hybridisation can also be seen in the way the two Draculas are sometimes combined. Although in many cases they are kept separated, they are also marketed as being the same. In many cases the combining of the two Draculas is done using the name 'Dracula' when referring to either, thus making the confusion between the two apparent. Of the ten travel agencies that I am researching all use the name 'Dracula' on their tour itineraries. While some agencies try to separate the two, others do not. Of the ten agencies, five only use the name Dracula in the titles of their tours.<sup>16</sup> These tours are either simply named as Dracula tours or they are called Dracula and something, as with the tours organised by Visit Transylvania Travel, called Dracula's Castle Tour, Dracula and Transylvania Tour or On the Steps of Dracula, or the tour organised by Cultural Romtour called Halloween in the Land of Dracula. All of these travel agencies use the name Dracula even though for the most part they are referring to Vlad the Impaler. One might reason that the name Dracula is an authentic historical name that was used of Vlad and his family and therefore its use can be defended, but I do not believe that this is the reason.

The main motivation for using the name Dracula is because it is known to the tourists and is instantly connected with the fictitious Count Dracula, thereby creating a hybrid form of popular culture and history. Although most of these travel agencies mention Vlad the Impaler and the connection and separation between history and fiction in their tour itineraries, the way this is done varies. For example, the tour itinerary of Adventure Transylvania clearly states right after the title of the tour that it is a historic tour of all those places related to the cruel Vlad the Impaler – Dracula, thus clearly stating the difference between fiction and history. Ultramarine on the other hand clearly utilises the fictional element a little further by stating on its tour itinerary that the tourist will visit castles where Count Dracula was born, lived and died. In this case the connection made between Vlad the Impaler and the fictitious Count Dracula is patent.

The other five tour agencies make the distinction between the two Draculas more evident.<sup>17</sup> The Company of Mysterious Journeys, for example, offers tours that use both names, such as Classic Dracula, Dracula, the Prince and the Vampire and The Life and Deeds of Prince Vlad the Impaler – Dracula.

16 These tour agencies are Ultramarine Travel, Visit Transylvania Travel, Ciao Romania, Adventure Transylvania and Cultural Romtour.

17 These tour agencies are the Company of Mysterious Journeys, Transylvania Live, Go Romania Tours, Quest Tours and Adventures and Atlantic Tour.

By offering tours, some of which only have the name Dracula in their title, one which brings out both meanings of the name, and one with just the name Vlad the Impaler and no Dracula at all, a clear distinction is made between the characters, and a hybrid form of Dracula is eschewed. Some tour agencies like Quest Tours and Adventures offer both a tour strictly based on just Vlad the Impaler and another which visits both locations connected with Vlad and others connected with Stoker's novel. The travel agency Atlantic Tour offers just one tour, entitled Dracula – The True Story of Vlad the Impaler, clearly indicating that what they mean by Dracula is just Vlad and not the fictitious vampire count.

The two Draculas are combined in Dracula tourism in many other ways, usually in tourist merchandise. Many T-shirts, coffee mugs, dolls, postcards etc. either depict Vlad as a vampire or use the words Dracula as if written in blood, with the image of Vlad the Impaler. One good example of this hybrid Dracula is a T-shirt I found in Bran in 2010, where there is a picture of Vlad the Impaler with the text 'Vlad Tepes, the king of vampires'. Another example is a little wooden doll of Vlad the Impaler with vampire teeth. With all the above information it is quite evident that Dracula tourism in itself is a form of hybrid culture, which combines Romanian history and culture with Western popular culture about Dracula and vampires in general. The hybrid image and interpretations of the two Draculas is not limited to Dracula tourism in Romania. As I have already mentioned in chapter 2, the fictional Dracula has been adapted in Romania in many ways (Miss Universe Competition, Eurovision Song Contest) and it has also been connected with Vlad, although the depth of this connection varies. Although Dracula tourism may have influenced or strengthened this hybrid reading of Dracula, this connection is not limited to tourism.

## Dracula tourism as Romanian culture?

Tourism has often been seen as a something that homogenises local cultures. It has been seen as bringing forth change seen only as diminishing original cultures and reducing global differences. According to Mark Crang this has been addressed in recent research in two ways: first by examining tourism as a dynamic force creating and consuming places, and by viewing and treating tourism as a modern culture in and of itself. (Crang 2004, 74.)

According to Martin Lohmann and Jörn Mundt tourism has been a significant agent of change that has affected both the societies of countries from which tourists come and countries they visit. This change affects economic

and political situations and the cultures of the societies exposed to tourism. They see tourism as an essential element of culture formation and as a cultural factor that like the mass media has a significant impact on the individual's perception of the world. (Lohmann and Mundt 2002, 223–224.) Dracula tourism in Romania has had an effect in Romania, both in economic and cultural terms. It can certainly have an impact on the individual tourist's perception of Romania. Although it has generally been viewed as something harmful for Romanian culture that merely exploits it, one could say that in fact it has become part of Romanian culture. Dracula tourism is operated largely by Romanian companies, Dracula merchandise is being sold by locals, a large portion of the souvenirs are also made in Romania and the name Dracula can be seen on Romanian products such as wines and other alcoholic beverages, restaurants, hotels, cafés and camping sites.

By definition and in origin Dracula tourism is very much derived from Western popular culture and the expectations of Western tourists coming to Romania. Therefore it is originally something unfamiliar that has come from outside Romania and Romanian culture. Although originally a foreign idea, many Romanians have become very heavily involved with Dracula tourism. Stephen Boyd mentions Uluru (Ayers Rock) in Australia as an example where the locals have become involved with tourism in order to have some control of it. Uluru is one of Australia's leading tourist attractions and while many tourists are interested in seeing it, its cultural and religious importance to the Aboriginal people has not been seen as interesting to the tourists. The Aboriginal communities have become very involved in tourism to Uluru in order to gain control and exercise choice over how it is presented. (Boyd 2004, 481.)

The fact that many locals have become involved in Dracula tourism can be seen in this way. By doing so, they can have a say in how Romania and the Dracula connection is presented on the tours. I would conclude that not only does Dracula tourism use and introduce Romanian history and culture; it is in fact already a part of it. Although there are still people who oppose it in Romania and are not pleased with it, the fact is that Dracula tourism is a part of Romanian culture. There is almost no way to completely ignore it, because it is so visible despite the seemingly low numbers of actual Dracula tourists. If Euro-Disneyland near Paris can be seen as (postmodern) authentic French culture (Kupiainen & Sihvo 1996, 303; Zimmerbauer 2001, 126), then Dracula tourism in Romania can very well be seen as authentic Romanian culture. The authenticity does not evaporate because Dracula tourism is not traditional old Romanian culture or because it has its roots in foreign popular culture; it is a part of Romanian culture simply because it exists in Romania. It is also visible in Romania, provides employment there, and is partly operated by locals.

There is also no real need for a division in Dracula tourism between global and local culture. Although the origins and demand for Dracula tourism are very much a global phenomenon, as is the whole popular culture around the vampire Dracula, and although Dracula tourism in Romania also utilises local culture, in my opinion it is futile to make a difference between global and local culture in this case. At least since the 1989 revolution Romania has been a part in the same global cultural world in which the Dracula phenomenon also exists. By Dracula phenomenon I mean the vast amount of popular culture around the vampire Dracula which also includes Vlad the Impaler. Even though Dracula tourism can be seen as a hybrid form of culture, cultures have always been hybrid. Because globalisation is more accelerated in the contemporary world than before, so is the hybridisation of cultures and cultural forms. (Pieterse 1995, 64 & Storey 2003, 118.) This does not, however, mean that hybridisation and globalisation are necessarily new phenomena; they are just more easily recognised. Dracula tourism can therefore be seen both as a form of hybrid culture and as Romanian culture which has been influenced and affected by global cultural forms. Nowadays also the boundaries between strictly Romanian culture and outside culture have become blurred, especially since Vlad the Impaler has also become a global figure in popular culture. Because of the extent of the Dracula phenomenon, Dracula tourism in Romania is in my opinion an example of glocal culture. This does not mean that there are no local aspects to be found in it, but as a whole Dracula tourism is both global and local culture at the same time.

## 6. Authenticity and Heritage

**A**uthenticity and heritage are concepts that are found in both tourism studies and in tourism itself. They are also hard to define satisfactorily. Authenticity is something that is seen as being real as opposed to unreal by a defined group. Terms like inauthenticity, fakelore, folklorism and invented tradition have been used to try to differentiate between forms of cultural expressions, historical locations or buildings. Folkloristics as a discipline has long been concerned with the concept of authenticity (Bendix 1997, 23 & 190) and although I am not convinced that the debate about it has been altogether settled, in this work I am more interested in the need for and use of authenticity. I am not alone in this approach; according to Regina Bendix the questions about whether some subject of folkloric research is authentic have more or less changed to questions about the need for authenticity or how authenticity is used (Bendix 1997, 21). The concept of authenticity is very visible and widely used in tourism and therefore also in tourism studies. In tourism the words 'authenticity', 'genuine' and/or 'real' are used constantly to promote certain locations or events. The 'rhetoric of tourism is full of manifestations of the importance of the authenticity of the relationship between tourists and what they see' (MacCannell 1999, 14). Marking a site as authentic ensures a steady flow of tourists engaged in sightseeing (Richards 2007, 4). In tourism authenticity has become both a label for a valuable and deep level of reality and a key competitive factor in contemporary economics. In order to access and use culture in practice often means that the organisers of tourism need to deal with the so-called guardians of culture, here meaning cultural professionals such as academics or other cultural agents (Hornskov 2010, 81–82).

The concept of heritage is also widely used in political agendas, in the affirming of national identity, in preserving buildings, customs and traditions that are seen as important and in justifying economic interests. Despite its universality, or maybe because of it, the term 'heritage' has become harder to define. One might even say that there are as many definitions as there are heritage practitioners, although many commentators also leave the definition as broad as possible. (Harvey 2007, 25.) Heritage is something that is chosen and selected from the past and interpreted in the present. Heritage is not something that exists by itself and it has to be defined by someone as heritage.

Borrowing from Dallen J. Timothy, heritage can also be categorised into four types: world, national, local and personal heritage. (Timothy 1997, 752.) In each of these categories both the definition of heritage and the definer of the heritage differ, as is the case with the concept of authenticity too. Heritage can be defined both on a small local level and on a bigger global level. Sometimes some form of tradition or cultural idea can be defined as heritage by a researcher even if it was not necessarily so defined by anyone else. Heritage can be described as parts of our history and culture which at the present are seen as important enough to showcase for people now and to preserve for the future. Within tourism, heritage is seen as an especially important resource, and it is heavily used and promoted. Heritage and culture have become so important in the tourism industry that cultural heritage has become an independent part of tourism called heritage tourism, and in fact heritage and tourism have become inextricably linked all over the world (Hall 1994, 180; Timothy & Boyd 2003, 1).

Heritage and authenticity are also linked in many ways. For something to be seen and labelled as heritage, it must also be seen as authentic. The criteria for a site to be included on the UNESCO World Heritage List also implies a level of authenticity. At the same time if a site is included in the World Heritage List and is marketed as such, it also implies to the tourists that the site is indeed a place of authentic heritage (Tauschek 2013, 163). The promise and idea of authenticity is apparent on the web page of UNESCO:

The protection, management, authenticity and integrity of properties are also important considerations.<sup>1</sup>

According to Dallen J. Timothy many curators, heritage site interpreters, archaeologists and historians loathe the idea of authenticity being anything but objective. To them the objects and places are inherently authentic by their own characteristics and their authenticity can be verified through scientific and archival evidence. (Timothy 2011, 107.) While I do not share the rather pessimistic view of some people working on heritage presented by Timothy, the strong links between heritage and authenticity emerge in his critique.

At first it might seem difficult to link Dracula tourism in Romania with concepts like authenticity and heritage. After all, from a historical point of view Dracula tourism is basically inauthentic because it derives from popular culture and is therefore clearly invented, and the interest in it is for the most part something that comes from outside Romania and is still mainly directed

1 UNESCO World Heritage Centre – World Heritage List, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/> [accessed 17.5.2016]. The emphasis is the author's.



at foreigners, especially people from a Western cultural background. Yet there is authentic tradition involved in Dracula tourism and heritage. If we conceptualise authentic as something that is old, and shared by a community or a group of individuals, and not artificially constructed for a certain purpose, then authentic tradition is used in Dracula tourism. On the other hand if we consider any form of cultural expression that is used in some form or the other as authentic, then of course anything in Dracula tourism is authentic. Authenticity can also be divided into historical and experienced forms, a division that I will elaborate on later. In addition to evaluating the authenticity of the tradition that is used in Dracula tourism I will also elaborate why and how authenticity is used in Dracula tourism. Like authenticity, heritage can also be found surprisingly often in Dracula tourism. I will deal with all the aspects of authenticity and heritage in Dracula tourism more thoroughly in this chapter.

## Dracula tourism and authenticity

The question of authenticity in Dracula tourism is both problematic and interesting. At many tourist sites authenticity or the assumption and perceiving of authenticity tends to be appealed to when opposing something that is seen as strange or a threat to the self-image of a community. So even though authenticity as such might not always appear very visible, it becomes an issue where the self-image of a community, location, city or even a country is at risk. Authenticity or the understanding of authenticity has also been one of the main reasons why Dracula tourism has been objected in Romania (Iordanova 2007, 49–50; Light 2012, 70). Place branding is very important in tourism; this is often done with some kind of a reference to authenticity, because of its perceived economic value. In order for place branding to really work, it usually has to feel authentic to the tourists and to a lesser degree also to the local community. (Ooi & Stöber 2010, 78–79.) The branding of Romania as Dracula's land, for example, does not really work because it does not feel authentic for many reasons. The problem with the Dracula theme in Romania is also that many cultural professionals, the so-called guardians of culture, do not see it as authentic (Light 2007, 759).

Many questions relating to authenticity can be identified in Dracula tourism. Whether the tradition that is used, the places visited, the experiences of the tourists and indeed the whole phenomenon of Dracula tourism are authentic are questions that arise when dealing with tourism of the Dracula type. Although I first look at the tradition that is used in Dracula tourism and see how it is seen in terms of authenticity, I realise that the actual question of

the authenticity of a given form of folklore or tradition is pointless in the long run. Folklore and tradition are alive and constantly changing and therefore one cannot find an authentic, if this means original, form of folklore or tradition because there really is none. It is also not possible to deprive a living culture of its authenticity, because the things that people do in their lives are authentic and real, irrespective of whether the roots of these things are old or not (Siikala & Siikala 2005, 46). Authenticity is also always socially constructed and in many cases also negotiable, so the question of authenticity cannot be fully answered, because authenticity does not have an objective existence. There is no authentic tradition to be found, or authentic locations to be visited: only tradition and locations that are labelled as authentic. Therefore the more interesting question is why something is perceived as authentic and why authenticity is used in tourism in the first place. Despite acknowledging all of the above, I will firstly try to examine the stories that are used in Dracula tourism within the framework of authenticity. I will do this mainly for two reasons. Firstly, because Dracula tourism is usually opposed with arguments over the inauthenticity involved, I am interested in seeing how authentic the stories can be seen as in a scientific sense, relating to the age and originality of the stories. Secondly, because the use of stories, especially in the village of Arefu, is marketed and seen as authentic by several of the organisers of Dracula tourism, I am interested in seeing how they validate their point of view.

Most of the stories about Vlad the Impaler that are used in Dracula tourism are linked with either Târgoviște or Poienari and Arefu.<sup>2</sup> Most of these stories are familiar from Romanian folklore, such as those about the construction of the Poienari citadel, the suicide of Vlad's wife in Poienari and Vlad's escape from there with the help of the locals from Arefu and their being rewarded. All of these stories have been known at least since the seventeenth century and it is more than likely that they were actually first told or formulated during Vlad the Impaler's lifetime in the fifteenth century (Andreescu 1999, 207–208; Stăvăruș 1978, 51; Stoicescu 1978, 175). In terms of historical authenticity these stories can be seen as authentic Romanian folklore even in its strictest definition. These stories are just used in a different setting and context from originally. The storytelling in the village of Arefu, mentioned on the website of the Company of Mysterious Journeys and in travel guides,<sup>3</sup> is interesting in terms of authenticity. The Company of Mysterious Journeys states:

2 See chapter 4.

3 Such as in the Lonely Planet guide books about Romania (2001, 2007, 2010).

Tonight, around a bonfire, in the village of Aref, 30 farmers will tell you the legends they remember about Vlad; they are the descendants of those who served the prince, and you shall be their guests, in their houses – a dive in Time and Mythology.<sup>4</sup>

Although the word ‘authenticity’ is not mentioned here, it is implied in the way the relationship of the farmers to Vlad via their ancestors is brought up. The storytelling of the farmers is thus historically authenticated by linking the storytellers (farmers) to the times of Vlad the Impaler. When I asked about this storytelling in Arefu from two people working in the Company of Mysterious Journeys, they both explicitly said that it is authentic folklore that everyone in the village must know and that they also tell these stories to themselves. Although I might not be altogether convinced that these stories are still told around the village, whether or not this is actually true is irrelevant. What is clear is that the people working in the travel agency believe that the folklore is authentic and also market it as such in order to strengthen the village’s value both as a tourist site and as an example of Romanian tradition that differs from the image of Romania known from popular culture. In the Lonely Planet tour guide books about Romania it states that tourists come to Arefu to sit around camp fires, sing folk songs and listen to tales told by villagers whose ancestors had dealings with Vlad the Impaler (Pettersen & Baker 2010, 107; Williams & Wildman 2001, 256).

When I visited Arefu in April and in October 2010, the story was told by the daughter of the family that organises the programme for the visits. The girl, ten years old at the time, read the story aloud in English. Apparently it was collected from the village and translated into English for the tourists. It told of how Vlad was warned in Poienari about the impending attack of the Turks, how he escaped from the citadel with the help of local people from the village of Arefu and how he rewarded the locals for their help. On my first fieldtrip the girl read the story during breakfast in the family’s kitchen and on the second fieldtrip she read it while performing folkdances for our tourist group with more locals. In terms of authenticity this scenario is interesting. Unlike on the website, this story was not told by thirty farmers, but by one girl who read it in English and straight from a previously written text. A more cynical researcher might come to the conclusion that this storytelling cannot be authentic, because it is done outside its normal context and for foreign tourists, and it is translated and read in a foreign language. Yet the actual story

4 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, The Classic Dracula Tour, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/classic\\_dracula\\_level\\_1/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/classic_dracula_level_1/) [accessed 17.5.2016].

is authentic and real, even though it might have lost some nuances in translation and is therefore not original word for word. But then again I would argue that no stories stay exactly the same year in, year out and therefore change in oral stories, or folklore, is quite normal and authentic. The actual story is also almost the same as the story I heard when visiting Arefu for the first time in 2005. Then it was told to me by a local retired headmaster, who said that these stories used to be told around the village while working or celebrating but not so much any more.<sup>5</sup> Similar stories were also collected by Georgeta Ene from Arefu in 1969, so the story is authentic as such (Ene 1976, 583–584). The setting of the storytelling is very different from originally, but that does not mean that the stories or even the storytelling setting is not authentic in the historical meaning of the term. It is just different from the original. I will come back to this later on in this chapter.

The other stories that are told on the tours are known from the Romanian, German and Russian stories from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In addition to the stories told in Poienari, there are some that are told specifically in Târgoviște. These include the story about the merchant who was worried about his money, in two versions, and the tale of the feast for the nobles and their massacre. The story about the merchant is known in both the Romanian and Russian traditions, but not in the German; they are from the fifteenth century and therefore authentic pieces of folklore and Russian literature (which was based on folklore). The stories about the feast for noblemen are more complex in terms of authenticity because they combine two stories known from the Romanian, German and Russian traditions.<sup>6</sup> In this case it could be argued that they are either told or remembered wrongly or they are in fact new stories that have evolved from the original ones. So again they are either authentic pieces of modern storytelling or inauthentic counterfeits told to tourists, depending on the viewpoint. All of these distinctions about whether or not these stories featured on Dracula tours are historically authentic or not are, in my opinion, pointless in the long run. The fact that they are told again and again to new people makes them authentic as pieces of current folklore and tradition.

Authenticity also emerges as an issue in Dracula tourism in the form of experience. Authenticity needs here to be divided into two classes. The first is so-called historical or scientific authenticity. This is the traditional or vernacular view of authenticity, which is often connected to the age of the subject at hand. The older something is, the more authentic it appears to be.

5 See chapter 2.

6 See chapter 4.

The second form of authenticity is felt or experienced authenticity. This form is not so much connected to the actual historical knowledge of a certain site or tradition, but rather to the experience of authenticity of the tourist. This experience is usually connected with preconceived images that the tourist has from popular culture and can take place at apparently inauthentic locations. If the location fits with the mental images that the tourists have created of that location, the attraction is usually experienced as authentic (Löytönoja 2008, 19–20). In Dracula tourism both of these forms of authenticity can be found. Nowadays the authenticity subsists in images and stereotypes and not necessarily in reality. Some scholars have said that the question of authenticity is even completely irrelevant in the tourists' viewpoint. (MacCannell 2001, 24; Urry 2002, 12; Zimmerbauer 2001, 125.)

Besides the views on history, stereotypes also impact on the experience of authenticity in tourism. This often goes hand in hand with stereotypes. Relevant to the authenticity of a tourist experience is for example interaction with the local culture; tourists want some direct contact with the distinctive culture of the destination, such as historic buildings and traditional events. Another factor in the authenticity of a tourist experience is conformity to the stereotypes of the destination. The perception of authenticity is related to tourists' preconceived images and stereotypes. (Ooi 2002, 166.) Although traditionally the experience of authenticity has been essential in tourism, in the context of tourism the authenticity of origin is, however, not seen as important as constructed, subjective authenticity. In other words the image of being authentic is more important in tourism than the actual historical authenticity. (Löytönoja 2008, 20.) Sometimes if the seen reality does not match the preconceived stereotypes and mental images, the latter may stick in the tourist's mind as the reality. So if a building or a demonstration of local tradition does not feel authentic to the tourist, even if it is real and authentic, the tourist may not get an authentic experience.

Tom Selwyn argues that if we agree that tourists seek the authentic, then it needs to be added that authenticity has two aspects, one of which has to do with feeling – hot authenticity; the other concerns knowledge – cool authenticity (Selwyn 1996, 7 & 24–25). Selwyn makes a distinction between a social and a scientific version of authenticity, or between an emic and an etic one where the first is supported by the tourists and the latter represents a theoretical top-down approach (Cohen E. & Cohen S.A. 2012, 1297). Similarly, two main views about authenticity have arisen recently in tourism studies. In object-related authenticity, authenticity is seen as synonymous with originality; in subject-related authenticity, existential authenticity covers bodily feelings, emotional ties, identity construction and narration related to place. (Knudsen & Waade 2010, 1.) Object-related tourism has also been divided into objective

authenticity and constructive authenticity. Objective authenticity refers to the authenticity of origins and involves a museum-linked usage of authenticity of the originals, which are also the toured objects perceived by the tourists. The experience of authenticity is thus caused by the recognition of the toured objects as authentic and real, and therefore there is an absolute and objective criterion used to measure and define authenticity. Following this definition the authentic experiences the tourists think they have gained can be judged as inauthentic, if the toured objects are in fact historically false, contrived or, to quote MacCannell, staged authenticity. (Wang 1999, 350–351.) Constructive authenticity refers to the projected views of authenticity of the tourists or tourism producers. These projections are projected onto toured objects, traditions and locations in terms of the imagery, expectations, preferences and beliefs. Constructed authenticity is the result of social construction, which is not an objectively measured quality of what is being visited. According to Ning Wang the appearance of authenticity comes from being constructed as such in terms of points of view, belief, perspectives and powers. The notion of authenticity is relative, negotiable, contextually determined and ideological. According to Wang this authenticity of the toured object and what the tourist actually seeks is symbolic authenticity. (Knudsen & Waade 2010, 1–10; Wang 1999, 350.) Symbolic authenticity is not based on an exact and discoverable original and therefore it allows the tourists themselves to determine what is authentic in the visited locations (Rickly-Boyd 2012, 272).

Subject-related authenticity refers to existential authenticity covering bodily feelings, emotional ties, identity construction and narration related to place; it differs from objective and constructive (or symbolic) authenticities by involving personal or intersubjective feelings activated by the liminal process of tourist activities. This type of authenticity does not come from the toured objects but from engaging in non-ordinary activities and is free from the constraints of the daily. According to Ning Wang, analytically speaking, existential authenticity is a distinctive source of authentic experiences in tourism, in addition to the objective and constructive authenticities, and as activity-related authenticity is logically distinguishable from the object-related case. (Wang 1999, 351–352.) In existential authenticity the perspective is different from in the predominantly object-related authenticity used in tourism research, and the perspective is more towards a focus on the personal investment of the tourist. Existential authenticity may have nothing to do with the authenticity of toured objects and therefore can happen even apart from them. (Wang 1999, 352.)

In addition to object- and subject-related authenticity Britta Timm Knudsen and Anne Marit Waade have introduced the concept of performative

authenticity, in which the tourist experience is performed and produced as real and authentic. The performativity can take place in either standard forms or as a more negotiated, creative, ironic and opposed activity. They argue that authenticity as the empathetic understanding of the world through the body can take place in cases where the cultural Other is staged. There are many examples of these kinds of performative authenticities, where the tourists can live, enact or re-enact the life of others, such as prison life on Alcatraz Island, Soviet-era life in Lithuania or the re-enactment scenes of the Middle Ages or the Civil War in the USA. (Knudsen & Waade 2010, 12–15.) In addition to these approaches to authenticity researchers have come up with definitions of authenticity, such as ‘look-alike’ authenticity and alienating authenticity (Gran 2010, 37), or ritualised authenticity (Østergaard & Christensen 2010, 251–252). If the concept of authenticity at one point was criticised for being too loose a term, it may now face the problem of being divided into too many categories and losing its usefulness. Even though I see the value in all of the above definitions and clarifications of authenticity and I recognise many features that are common in Dracula tourism, I still feel that a simplification of authenticity is better suited for my work.

The division of authenticity into object-related and subject-related authenticity is a valid and useful one, although I prefer to call it historical authenticity and experienced authenticity (Hovi 2008b, 81). What I mean by historical authenticity comes close to Ning Wang’s definition of objective authenticity in that it refers to the authenticity of origins and involves a museum-linked usage of authenticity of the originals which are also the toured objects perceived by the tourists. The experience of authenticity is thus caused by the recognition of the toured objects as old, authentic and real, and hence there is an absolute and objective criterion used to measure and define authenticity. This definition is especially suited to constructions such as ruins and castles. In the case of intangible tradition, historical authenticity can be defined in terms of whether objects are made or enacted by local people according to their customs or traditions. And in this sense authenticity connotes traditional culture and origin, a sense of the genuine, the real or the unique. (Wang 1999, 350–351.) Historical authenticity means the kind of authenticity that can be proved to be real in terms of historical and cultural documentation. Historical authenticity gets its authenticity or ‘realness’ from the passing of time. Or in other words the older something is the more authentic it seems to be. In Dracula tourism historical authenticity is used in the way locations are marketed as historical, medieval and/or from the times of Vlad the Impaler or in the way something is mentioned as traditional or real. In these cases the authenticity derives from history.

Sightseeing of mediaeval Brasov (the second city of Transylvania) – of many and sometime awesome memories of Vlad.

Cross into Transylvania via the spectacular Rucar-Bran Pass (traditional connection between Valahia and Transylvania).<sup>7</sup>

POIENARI CASTLE; standing on a cliff but now in ruins this is known as the real castle of Dracula (Vlad Tepes).<sup>8</sup>

In these examples the authenticity clearly derives from history. Braşov is mentioned as a medieval city endowed with memories of Vlad the Impaler and the Rucar-Bran Pass is mentioned as a traditional connection between Wallachia and Transylvania. The Poienari castle is marketed as the real castle of Dracula (here mostly meaning Vlad the Impaler) making a clear distinction between history and fiction or the authentic and inauthentic.

Experienced authenticity combines or includes existential and performative authenticity. Experienced authenticity is simply the feeling and experience of authenticity that the tourist gets from a certain location or from a certain form of cultural expression. This authenticity may have nothing to do with the historical authenticity or the ‘realness’ of the visited location or form of cultural expression viewed by the tourist. There are many cases where the tourist gets an authentic experience from something even if it is not historically authentic as such, such as from reproductions or copies in a museum (Andersen 2010, 95–96). There are many examples in Dracula tourism of experienced authenticity. Although much of the experienced authenticity in Dracula tourism is concerned with Vlad the Impaler and the Middle Ages, it is surprisingly mostly connected with the fictitious Dracula and aspects of popular culture. For example the Hotel Castle Dracula in the Borgo Pass is marketed as been built on the same place or even on the ruins of the vampire Count Draculas castle in Stoker’s novel and as bringing alive an authentic Dracula atmosphere:

The Borgo Pass is the border between Transylvania and Bucovina, with fantastic landscapes. The Hotel situated on a 1116m altitude with a fantastic view of the Carpathian mountains. The Hotel dates from 1983,

- 7 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, The Classic Dracula Tour, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/classic\\_dracula\\_level\\_1/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/classic_dracula_level_1/) [accessed 17.5.2016].
- 8 Go Romania Tours, The Real Dracula Halloween Tour – Truth and Myth of the Legend of Vlad Tepes, <http://www.goromaniatours.com/itin/historic-tours/dracula-halloween-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].



built in the style of a medieval mansion, it was created to bring alive an authentic Dracula atmosphere.<sup>9</sup>

Dinner and overnight in Tihuta in Dracula's Castle, the 3\* hotel built on the ruins of the Royal Castle of Dracula. In the film based on the novel by Stoker, Vlad the Impeller died here.<sup>10</sup>

The aura of authenticity is also linked with Bistrița and to the Coroana de Aur hotel, where tourists can have the same (authentic) menu as Jonathan Harker had in Stoker's novel:

Harker left a description of his dinner at the 'Golden Krone'; let us take the same meal ourselves, the same wine, and think of a toast.<sup>11</sup>

In Bistrita you can also visit Golden Crown Restaurant and taste the very meal Jonathan Harker, the main character of Dracula Novel, served when in Bistrita Citadel.<sup>12</sup>

By implying that the tourist may be able to feel an authentic Dracula atmosphere or eat the exact same meal and eat it in the same place as Jonathan Harker did in Stoker's novel, the tourists may get an authentic experience from a place that is in many ways inauthentic, for example in living a part of the novel and visiting the seemingly authentic places mentioned in it, even though Stoker never visited Transylvania and the hotels were only built in the 1970s and 1980s. Some travel agencies also market Poienari and Bran as the castles, and in some cases as the real castles, of Dracula. This is interesting in terms of authenticity because on the other hand it authenticates the places as old and historical locations that are directly connected with Vlad the Impaler and on the other hand by using the name Dracula they direct the tourists to think of the fictitious Dracula. Thus a tourist may also have an authentic experience of Bran or of Poienari as the castle of the vampire Count Dracula. As such, a location is not authentic, in that authenticity is not something that exists, but is created through encounter. A location can signal authenticity or

9 Go Romania Tours, The Dracula and Transylvania Tour, <http://www.goromaniatours.com/itin/historic-tours/dracula-transylvania-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

10 Ciao Romania, Dracula Tour in Transylvania, <http://www.ciaoromania.co.uk/dracula-tour.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

11 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, The Classic Dracula tour, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/classic\\_dracula\\_level\\_1/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/classic_dracula_level_1/) [accessed 17.5.2016].

12 Transylvania Live, Halloween in Transylvania with Vlad the Impaler – the Full Dracula Tour, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/halloween-dracula-tour-in-transylvania.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

look authentic, but a location without encounter is not authentic. Thus the experience of authenticity can happen at apparently inauthentic locations. (Ringgaard 2010, 109–110.) The tourist can get an authentic experience from Bran or Poienari as the castles of Dracula even though they are definitely inauthentic.

Both Bran and Poienari also fit the stereotypical image of Dracula's castle,<sup>13</sup> which the Hotel Castle Dracula on the other hand does not, so it is not surprising that some tourists may prefer Poienari and Bran over the Hotel Castle Dracula as the real Dracula's castle. Then again the naming of these locations as the castles or the real castles of Dracula can be seen as a reaction to and distinction from the fictional side of Dracula tourism in favour of Romanian historical past. The historical and the experienced authenticity are not mutually exclusive. One example of a place that is able to combine historical and experienced authenticity is the Casa Vlad Dracul restaurant in Sighișoara. As well as being a restaurant it is also thought to be the house where Vlad the Impaler was born, as it was apparently owned by his father Vlad Dracula while living in Sighișoara from 1431 to 1435 (McNally & Florescu 1994, 15). Although there is absolutely no evidence of Vlad being born there, the house is visited on the tours and is as much a tourist attraction as it is a restaurant. The house is marketed as being the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler, Vlad Dracula or even Count Dracula on Dracula tours.

You can even enjoy lunch in the very house where Vlad the Impaler was borne, turned today into a cosy restaurant 'Casa Vlad Dracul' Restaurant.<sup>14</sup>

You will visit the famous Clock Tower Museum, The Armour Room and The Torture Room, then the house where Count Dracula/Vlad the Impaler was born in 1431.<sup>15</sup>

- 13 Bran is a Gothic castle that stands on a rocky outcrop in a narrow pass and the ruins of Poienari stand on a rocky crag above a river valley, so they both fit the stereotypical image of Dracula's castle. The Hotel Castle Dracula on the other hand is a strange mixture of castlesque structure and socialist architecture.
- 14 Transylvania Live, Halloween in Transylvania with Vlad the Impaler – the Full Dracula Tour, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/halloween-dracula-tour-in-transylvania.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].
- 15 Atlantic Tour, Dracula – The True Story of Vlad the Impaler, <http://www.in.atlantic.ro/en/tours/163-special-interest-/807-dracula-the-true-story-of-vlad-the-impaler.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].



Fig. 17. Vlad Dracul House in Sighișoara. The alleged birthplace of Vlad the Impaler.  
Photo: Tuomas Hovi (2010).

Here the house, the actual building is historically authentic and even if it was not the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler it is still from the fifteenth century. In addition to this historical authenticity the tourists can have an authentic experience of the birthplace of either Vlad the Impaler or even Count Dracula.

Whether or not something is actually authentic or not is not that important, and it is really a pointless question in the long run. More important, citing Regina Bendix, are the questions about the apparent need for authenticity in tourism and the reasons why and how authenticity is used. (Bendix 1997, 21) If something is labelled as authentic it is always as a reaction to something which is not seen as authentic. Authenticity is used in Dracula tourism and in Romanian tourism in general as a way to differentiate between Romanian tradition and Dracula tradition which might not be seen as Romanian. For example in Sighișoara there are many shops and kiosks that sell souvenirs that are somehow connected with vampires, Dracula or Vlad the Impaler. There are also souvenir shops there that market themselves as selling authentic souvenirs, to make a distinction between Dracula-themed souvenirs and what they perceive as authentic Romanian souvenirs. So authenticity is also used as way to separate Dracula from Romanian tradition. Even though, like many other folklorists, I have argued that the question of authenticity as such is not important in folklore studies or research, it is still a concept that keeps coming up in different forms. As I have discussed, authenticity is important both in the tourism experience and in the research and planning of tourism. Authenticity or the striving for the authentic can still be seen as important for the locals inside a certain culture even though it might not be very relevant scientifically or within folkloristics.

According to Hanne Pico Larsen the people of the small Danish-American city of Solvang in California have accepted that their town is also a themed tourist destination, but are very conscious about what they accept as being an authentic portrayal of their lives. There was a plan for a ferris wheel to be built in Solvang, which the locals opposed, fearing that it would cheapen the image of the town. They won, and the Ferris wheel was not built. Even though Solvang as it looks today was built to satisfy tourists, there exists a deep angst about appearing as a theme park and a self-awareness of the city as a themed space. The balance between receiving and welcoming tourists and maintaining a self-image that feels authentic is a problematic one in tourism. (Larsen 2010, 100–104) As was the case in Solvang with the ferris wheel, in Romania the limits of theming and branding came with the idea of the planned Dracula Park, which was seen as being both inauthentic and giving in to the notions of the image known from popular culture of Romania as synonymous with horror and vampires (Light 2007, 759). Both these cases show that authenticity

is still very much an issue in practice, if not within academic discussions. One way to look at the use of folkloric material within tourism and in this case within Dracula tourism is through the concept of the folklore process.

## Dracula tradition and the folklore process

By folklore process Lauri Honko meant the stereotypical life-history of folklore in any culture, which begins in the era before the birth of the concept of folklore and ends with the present-day assessment of the meaning of folklore in its culture (Honko 2013, 38). By using the idea of the folklore process we can in my opinion easily the questions of authenticity, fakelore or folklorism, as briefly mentioned in the introduction to this book. Although folklorism as a term has been used in research in a more or less neutral way (Kurkela 1989) and even though some researchers have argued for its reinstatement (Smidchens 1999), the term has, as Honko noted, acquired pejorative overtones that cannot be overlooked. This does not, however, mean that the concept has completely disappeared from folkloristics. In her article about the country wedding in Ljubljana, Saša Poljak Istenič argues that folklorism can be defined ‘with regard to those that practice and receive it, adapting tradition to their needs; as part of the folklore process,<sup>16</sup> the conscious recognition, adaptation, use, and repetition of folk traditions as a symbol of the identity of a local or regional community, an ethnic group, or a nation’. (Istenič 2011, 55–56.) Interestingly, she also refers to folklorism as being folklore that is used outside the environment in which it arose. Here the second existence of folklore is defined by the change in context. This is very much the same idea that Honko referred to as the folklore process. Istenič also argues that researchers should rely on the theoretical assumption of the parallel existence of folklore and folklorism rather than on their opposition. (Istenič 2011, 55.)

Although similar to Honko’s ideas, the fundamental difference is the need to separate the second existence (or life) of folklore from folklorism. The problem here, in my view, is this separation. Seppo Knuutila has criticised the term *folklorism* because he feels it has often been misleadingly connected with folklore itself: tradition and folklore has been presented as turning into folklorism when they are removed from their original context and thus labelled as secondary and inauthentic folklore. (Knuutila 2002, 255–256.) Thus the use of the term is problematic. By separating the second existence of folklore

16 What Istenič refers to here by folklore process is not the same concept that Honko argued for.

off as folklorism, there is a risk that it is treated as secondary or inauthentic folklore and not given its due value as a research object or as an independent manifestation of tradition. To me the term and the concept of folklorism are problematic for this very reason. By simply accepting all expressions of folklore as folklore, researchers do not need to use terms and concepts that may come across as evaluative or even as pejorative.

In the folklore process Honko divided the process into two major life phases of folklore. (Honko 2013, 38.) In its first life, folklore is in its original natural environment, where it is a part of the tradition and everyday life of its 'users.' Folklore's first life ends when it is found and archived by researchers. Folklore's second life begins when it is resurrected from the archives and recycled in an environment that differs from its original cultural context (Honko 2013, 48). By presenting folklore with different life phases Honko managed to avoid the evaluation of folklore as better and worse folklore. Folklore is just as relevant, authentic and real as a research subject in its first life as it is in its second life. So by using Honko's idea of folklore's different lives we can say that even if the stories told to the tourists in Dracula tourism are not real, old and authentic in their historical sense, the tradition in itself is real and authentic. It is just living its second phase of life. So whether or not the tradition is old and continued unbroken from the fifteenth century or if it is learned from books in the twentieth century does not matter. The tradition and folklore are authentic and real, but are simply used in an environment that differs from the original cultural context (Honko 2013, 48).

Honko divided the folklore process into twenty-two stages, twelve belonging to the first life of folklore or subordinate to it, and the remaining ten to its second life. The model of the folklore process is evolutionary and the stages have an order of their own, but it is also multilinear and the order of the stages can in reality be different. Some stage might also run parallel to another or even be omitted. (Honko 2013, 38.) The first twelve stages are:

1. The first life of folklore.
2. The partial recognition of folklore from within.
3. The external discoverers of folklore.
4. The definition of folklore.
5. The description of a culture from the inside and its use.
6. The description of a culture from the outside and its use.
7. The emergence of human relations from folklore work.
8. Collection, the documentation of folklore.

9. Archiving, the conservation of folklore.
10. Feedback from the scientific to the folklore community.
11. Establishment of a working programme by the tradition and scientific communities.
12. The scientific analysis of folklore. (Honko 2013, 39–48.)

The first life of folklore is characterised by the natural and almost imperceptible existence of folklore in the folklore community. It is an organic part of everything that happens where traditional elements fulfil functions of their own in the cultural system and is therefore not noticed, recognised or emphasised. This is, of course, as Honko himself also stated, a highly idealised picture of folklore, which in reality seldom if ever exists. The next stages of the first life phase are the partial recognition of folklore both from within and from outside the culture, the definition of folklore and the description of a culture both inside and outside and its use. These stages describe the existence and discovery of folklore in a community. The next stages describe the co-operation between researchers and the folklore community and end with archiving and scientific analysis. The second life begins when folklore is ‘resurrected’ from the archives or somewhere else and used again in some form. The ten stages of folklore’s second life are:

1. The ‘second life’ of folklore.
2. The emancipation of the folklore community.
3. The use of folklore in cultural policy.
4. The commercialisation of folklore.
5. The safeguarding of traditional culture and folklore.
6. Traditional culture in schools and research training.
7. Satisfying the needs of tradition communities.
8. Support for the performers of folklore.
9. International exchange in folklore work.
10. The definition of the status of folklore in the modern world. (Honko 2013, 48–53.)

The second life of folklore describes the use of folkloric material in an environment that differs from its original cultural context. This is where Honko saw the problem with the attitudes of researchers towards this second life of folklore. Honko felt that many researchers failed to realise that there is always

an element of change even in the most exact reproductions, and not only in free adaptations of folklore; all the phenomena in the second life of folklore have not been given their due value as research objects or as independent manifestations of tradition. (Honko 2013, 48–49.) After the rediscovery of folklore and the emancipation of the folklore community, the second life of folklore includes the political and commercial use of folklore, the safeguarding of traditional culture and folklore and its roles in schools and research. The second life of folklore ends with the support for the performance of folklore and with the international exchange of folklore work, and with the definition of folklore's status in the modern world. (Honko 2013, 48–53.)

For Honko the mechanism of recycling material in an environment that differs from its original cultural context is different from the mechanism of the original culture. Therefore we cannot speak of the continuation of the folklore process as such, and this recycling almost never involves the integration of material into the original folklore process even when this does continue in some form. Although the folkloric material that was already put aside regains influence, it very rarely returns to its roots in the communities where it originally came from. And even if it does it usually assumes a form that is unfamiliar to the oral communication process, such as books, recordings or films. (Honko 2013, 48.) I would, however, argue that in tourism this does actually happen and the folkloric material may return to the community where it originally came from, and therefore one could see a continuation or at least a resurrection of the material in its original community. In tourism this can also happen in a way that is familiar to the oral communication process. I will come back to this issue later on in this chapter. After the rediscovery of folklore and the emancipation of the folklore community, the second life of folklore includes its political and commercial use, the safeguarding of traditional culture and folklore and its roles in schools and research. The second life of folklore in the folklore process ends with the support for the performance of folklore and with the international exchange of folklore work and the definition of folklore's status in the modern world. (Honko 2013, 48–53.)

Honko wrote on the folklore process firstly in Finnish in *Sananjalka* in 1990 and then in English in the *Folklore Fellows' Summer School Programme* in 1991, which was not properly published. Since 2013 the article has been available in English in a collection of Honko's writings entitled *Theoretical Milestones: Selected Writings of Lauri Honko*, edited by Pekka Hakamies and Anneli Honko. Unfortunately after his death in 2002 Honko never wrote about the folklore process again. He did not define or reflect on it in any more detail and therefore it seems to be a little incomplete. Even though the folklore process is somewhat problematic if taken word for word as Honko wrote it,



it can still be of value to folklore research. The presentation of the folklore process is outdated and too formalistic. It can be used to describe and analyse tradition and folklore that has been collected and archived long since, but in a modern context it is a little inflexible. The different forms of tradition and culture change, transform and are passed on much faster nowadays than in 1990. The internet, media and the constantly increasing travel all affect the easy accessibility of information about traditions and cultures. In this case a particular form of tradition or folklore might have already moved into its next life phase before it has been properly recognised, analysed and/or archived. For example, the jokes, fake virus alerts, chain emails and other material that is forwarded via email, email forwardables, form a body of folklore that might be hard to fit into the stages of the folklore process as such and yet are certainly folklore (Kibby 2005, 789). The folklore process has also been criticised for not being able to recognise such contemporary forms of tradition as are in their first life phase (Knuuttila 2002, 256). Although I understand this criticism, I do not really see it as a problem because to me the folklore process can be used to approach those kinds of expressions of tradition and folklore that are already recognised and used in a different context from originally.

Some Finnish researchers like Anna-Liisa Tenhunen have also questioned the division of folklore into only two life phases. In her own work on laments, she has divided the tradition of laments into three separate life phases. (Tenhunen 2006, 14.) Folklore and tradition can in my opinion be divided into as many life phases as the researcher sees fit, with regard to the particular form of tradition or folklore. Whether or not all the stages that Honko suggested in his article can be found and recognised is not as important as finding and recognising the change of context in the use of a certain piece or form of folklore. The clear distinction in my opinion between the life phases has to be that the context and the purpose of the particular expression of folklore and tradition is different from previously.

I find the second life and the other possible following life phases useful in researching the use of folklore and tradition in tourism. As a whole the folklore process is interesting when looking at the scheme for the discovery and use of folklore in a certain culture, but as an analytic tool I feel that the first life phase in the folklore process is not that interesting or even useful other than as way to contextualise and perceive a form of folklore or tradition that has already been 'found', recognised, collected and archived. In this sense the folklore process can be used as a tool to see the progression, development, evolution and/or the origins of a certain form of folklore and tradition. With the idea of the second life (or the possible subsequent lives) of folklore it is easy to validate the value of this type of folklore, if not for other researchers

then for the community or the people who might criticise this use of folklore. By defining a form of folklore as living its second phase of life, it can be researched and studied as its own entity free from unfair comparisons with its 'original' form. Or as Honko stated, with the second life of folklore we can 'restore the research value of events in the second life of folklore to something approaching their indisputable cultural value' (Honko 2013, 49).

The tradition and folklore that is used in Dracula tourism can for the most part be identified as belonging to the second life of folklore. The stories are circulated in an environment that differs from their original cultural context. The story tradition or the folklore about Vlad the Impaler as a whole and its later use in tourism can be viewed via the folklore process. In its first phase of life the folklore about Vlad the Impaler circulated in Wallachia and in south-eastern Europe from the fifteenth century (Stoicescu 1978, 175). Some of the stories were written down during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the actual oral tradition more or less continued in parts of Wallachia, especially in the area of the ruins of Poienari citadel and the village of Arefu at least until 1969, when the stories about Vlad the Impaler were discovered, collected and archived by a team of researchers including Georgeta Ene (Ene 1976, 582–584). The oral tradition about Vlad, however, continued to live in its first phase of life and was not obliterated by its collection and archiving. Although some of the stories seem to have been forgotten since 1969, those about the siege of Poienari by the Turks, Vlad's escape from Poienari with the help of the villagers of Arefu and the rewarding of the villagers are still told in the village, at least to tourists. Whether this is seen as a continuation of the tradition still in its first phase of life depends on whether or not the stories are really still told by the villagers to one another. If they are only told strictly to tourists, then the context has changed and therefore we can say that the folklore about Vlad the Impaler told in the area has moved to its second life phase. Without going into all of the stages listed by Honko, the folklore about Vlad has been both commercialised as a part of the tourist experience and used in the local cultural policy (stages 15 and 16). The local administration in Argeş County, where Arefu is located, have used the tradition about Vlad in a local festival called Dracula Fest Arefu, combining commercialised and cultural political aspects of the tradition.

The folklore about Vlad can actually also be seen as living in at least three life phases at the same time. The German and Russian stories about him were clearly influenced by the Romanian oral stories and therefore we could say that they and the way they influenced the Western image of Vlad later used in popular culture are the second life of the original folklore. The current use of the Romanian stories and the German and Rus Kirshenblatt-Gimblettian,

though in lesser way, can be considered as the third life phase. This is, however, only the case if we take the context of the use of the folklore as being the main criterion separating the phases of life of folklore. The use of Romanian oral stories as the basis of the German and Russian stories and their later influence on popular culture does not really fit into the folklore process described by Honko, because the recycling of folkloric material started already during the fifteenth century and it was not the result of the work of folklorists or anthropologists. The tradition about Vlad the Impaler is thus a little problematic in terms of the folklore process. Therefore I think that the folklore process should be simplified in order for it to be used in researching modern folklore. One possibility is to give up or at least simplify the stages that Honko created. By doing so, we can define the first life of folklore as taking place in an original form and in an original context (at least supposedly). The second and other possible subsequent lives start when the context of the use of the folklore changes, usually for commercial, political or recreational reasons. This does not mean that the folklore is any less valuable, authentic or real, it just takes place in a different context. The folklore process could be used as a framework for research into a particular piece of folklore or tradition, its history and its current form. It can also be seen as a dynamic construction of a tradition with the process constantly evolving and also constantly being negotiated. It is also debatable if tradition can be divided into consecutive phases of life or whether the phases actually exist parallel with each other.

Honko stated that there is no continuation of the folklore process as such between the two life phases because the mechanism of recycling of material in an environment that differs from its original cultural context is different from the mechanism of the original culture. He also felt that this recycling of material almost never involves the integration of material into the original folklore process even when there is a continuation in some form, and even though the folkloric material that was already put aside regains influence, it very rarely returns to its roots in the communities where it originally came from. Even in the cases that it does come back, it usually assumes a form that is unfamiliar to the oral communication process. (Honko 2013, 48.) In the case of Dracula tourism I would argue against this view a little. The Romanian stories that are told on the Dracula tours have come back to life in a form similar to the original even though the setting and the context are still very different. The stories are told aloud, they change and vary and are told better by some performers (guides) than others. Especially in the case of the storytelling in the village of Arefu, the folkloric material can be seen as having returned to its roots, if in fact it ever left.

## Dracula tourism and heritage

Heritage is that part of the past which is selected in the present for contemporary purposes. These purposes can be economic, cultural, political or social. As an economic resource heritage is used and exploited everywhere as the principal component of strategies promoting tourism, economic development or rural and urban regeneration. Heritage is also used to define the meanings of culture and power and is therefore also a political resource that possesses a crucial socio-political function. (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge 2000, 17.) In short I would say that heritage is a part of culture or history that someone has defined as especially important to preserve for various reasons.

Heritage is also used in political agendas, in the affirming of national identity, in preserving buildings, customs and traditions that are seen as important and in justifying economic interests. It may consist of both tangible and intangible culture. The meaning of heritage has broadened to encompass anything from ancient monuments to the built urban environment, and from aspects of the natural environment to living culture and the arts. (Timothy & Boyd 2003, 3–4.) Heritage is associated with efforts to preserve and celebrate ethnicity, locality and history. Regina Bendix notes that heritage is used as a concept and practice that local groups can rally behind with pride and at the same time it allows one to attract outsiders to come to visit and admire it at a suitable price. (Bendix 2000, 38.)

Heritage is used and promoted especially in the travel industry and tourism, where it is seen as an important resource. Tourism has been seen both as a threat to cultural heritage (Kalay, Kvan & Affleck 2007, xv) and as a positive thing, as something which helps to preserve heritage, culture and folklore in a changing and globalising world. Heritage and culture have become so important in the tourism industry that cultural heritage has become an independent part of tourism called heritage tourism (Timothy & Boyd 2003, 1). In fact heritage and tourism have become inextricably linked all over the world (Hall 1994, 180).

Heritage can be linked to Dracula tourism in many ways; it is manifest on three levels: as defined from above, as with UNESCO World Heritage sites, as local heritage and as a form of opposition.

## UNESCO

The obvious link between heritage and Dracula tourism is the addition of sites to Dracula tours that are important to Romanian culture, even though they have little to do with either Vlad the Impaler or the vampire Count Dracula. Many tour agencies visit at least two of the seven Romanian UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely the Transylvanian villages with fortified churches in Biertan, Viscri or in Prejmer, and the historic centre of the town of Sighișoara. The last of these sites is of course also linked with Vlad/Dracula because it is the place where Vlad the Impaler is thought to have born.

In addition to these, the Company of Mysterious Journeys also organises tours that visit two other UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely the painted monasteries in northern Moldavia and the Danube delta. It is clear in the way these sites are mentioned on the tour itineraries that they are seen as something special. The UNESCO link is mentioned even though some of the locals and tour guides may have their own opinions about UNESCO.<sup>17</sup> Although this kind of language is quite normal in travel promotion in general, descriptions like ‘Heaven on Earth’, ‘the best preserved’ and ‘one of Europe’s most beautiful and still inhabited fortified cities’ speak clearly of the importance and appreciation of these places. The Company of Mysterious Journeys is the only tour agency out of the ten travel agencies used in my research that organises Dracula tours that also visit the painted monasteries in Moldavia and the Danube delta, which is the only natural World Heritage site in Romania.<sup>18</sup>

...cross the Carpathians into Moldova – the upper region of which is called Bucovina, or Heaven on Earth. It’s there. Even the International Federation of Travel Writers and Journalists awarded it ‘The Golden Apple’ reserved for outstanding sites and cultures, while UNESCO has several ‘World Heritages’ here.<sup>19</sup>

An initiatory journey into the Danube Delta’s world: history, nature, people and culture – a story told during 3 days. The local map reveals us

- 17 At least one tour guide I interviewed had a very negative attitude towards UNESCO. The tour guide even went as far as to say that the UNESCO doesn’t even really care what happens on some of the sites.
- 18 The UNESCO World Heritage sites of Romania, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/ro> [accessed 17.5.2016].
- 19 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, Dracula, the Prince and the Vampire, [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/dracula\\_prince\\_vampire\\_classic/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/dracula_prince_vampire_classic/) [accessed 17.5.2016].

places and stories about the history of Danube Delta and the history of Periprava and Ultima Frontiera: the fishing farm, the lacks, the communist ruins, birds and fishes, water, earth and sky – all of them find their place in our introductory story. The sunset welcomes us with a dinner inspired by Lipovans special cuisine.<sup>20</sup>

Surprisingly, unlike with the painted churches in Moldova, there is no reference to UNESCO or of the Danube Delta being a UNESCO World Heritage site on the tour itinerary on the website of the Company of Mysterious Journeys. Still the appreciation and the meaning of the Danube Delta are evident in the quotation above. Sighișoara and the fortified churches are also visited on many tours. All of the ten tour agencies visit Sighișoara, and the fortified churches (or at least one of them) are visited on tours by seven travel agencies.

Leaving behind Medias you will drive to the Saxon village of Biertan, where you will visit the fortress church that is one of UNESCO World Cultural Heritage sites.<sup>21</sup>

Next stop, a UNESCO World Heritage site, Sighisoara Medieval Citadel. Founded by Saxons during the twelfth century, Sighisoara still stands as one of Europe's most beautiful and still inhabited fortified cities.<sup>22</sup>

When a site is listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, it usually improves its economic value, as well as adding cultural esteem and merit. (Tauschek 2013, 164.) That is one of the main reasons why the inclusion in the list is sought after. In Dracula tourism the UNESCO sites are not shown because they add economic value to the tour, but because they add cultural value: their inclusion is clear evidence of this. It is also clear that bringing the UNESCO name forward the heritage aspect of these sites is in a way validated as being important for the whole world and not only to Romanian culture. And at the same time by showing off these sites the Romanian travel companies can validate parts of Romanian culture and history as important enough to achieve such status. The reason these sites are added to the Dracula

20 The Company of Mysterious Journeys, Journey into Hell and Heaven from the Heart of Transylvania to the Danube Delta, <http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/tour-transylvania-danube-delta/> [accessed 17.5.2016].

21 Atlantic Tour, Dracula – The True Story of Vlad the Impaler, <http://www.in.atlantic.ro/en/tours/163-special-interest-/807-dracula-the-true-story-of-vlad-the-impaler.html> [accessed 17.5.2016].

22 Transylvania Live, Halloween in Transylvania with Vlad the Impaler – the Full Dracula Tour, <http://www.dracula-tour.com/halloween-dracula-tour-in-transylvania.html> [accessed 17.5. 2016].

tours, even though they have nothing to do with Vlad or Dracula nor are they even presented as such, is to deepen the understanding of Romanian cultural heritage.

## Local heritage

There are also sites on the Dracula tours that have nothing to do with Vlad the Impaler or Dracula that are not UNESCO sites but still seem to be culturally important enough to be included. These include, for example, the castle of Peleş and the salt mines of Turda. These sites have no connection whatsoever with the two Draculas, but are still on the tours. The salt mines are a part of a Vampire in Transylvania Dracula tour by Transylvania Live. The mines date back to Roman times, but have absolutely nothing to do with Vlad or Dracula other than that they were probably functioning during Vlad's time. They are, however, one of the oldest salt mines in Transylvania and therefore form a historically and culturally important site. Peleş is especially interesting in terms of cultural heritage and Dracula tourism. It is a part of many Dracula tours organised by many travel agencies, both Romanian and foreign. The castle was built in the late nineteenth century for the royal family of Romania. It is constantly called 'the most beautiful royal palace in Europe' or the 'the pearl of mountain resorts in Romania'.<sup>23</sup> It is important for Romanian heritage in two ways: it is architecturally unique in Romania and is in good condition, and it represents the Romanian royal family and a period in the country's history when Romania started to transform into a modern industrial state. The first king of Romania, Carol I, who built the castle, is also very highly regarded in the country.<sup>24</sup> The importance of Peleş is clear when looking at some of the tour itineraries and tour agency websites. For example, it is a feature of the tour called Dracula's Castle Tours, which visits castles and ruins that are connected with Vlad, even though it has no connections whatsoever with Vlad or the fictional Dracula. Similarly there is a picture of the castle on the website of Quest Tours and Adventures. Having a picture of Peleş would not be that interesting if there were also pictures of other castles more directly connected with Vlad

23 See chapter 4.

24 In 2003 Carol I came in the second place in a TV show called Great Romanians (Mari români), where it was determined through a vote whom the general public considered to be the hundred greatest Romanians of all time. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/100\\_Greatest\\_Romanians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/100_Greatest_Romanians) [accessed 17.5.2016].

or the fictional Dracula, but there are none. There is not even a picture of the castle of Bran, which is usually the most used image on the websites.

The Vampire in Transylvania Dracula tour organised by Transylvania Live also visits two Romanian artists, while many of the tours organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys visit the village of Arefu, where the locals tell stories about Vlad and their (supposed) ancestors and perform local traditional music and dances, and serve local traditional food and drinks, using the Vlad/Dracula connection to show odd traditional Romanian heritage. The two local artists visited are Alexandru Misiuga and Emil Muresan. Alexandru Misiuga passed away in 2009, but the tour still visits a tower in Bistrița where there is a small exhibition of his art. In Mediaș the tours visit Emil Muresan, who is a sculptor but who also uses spider webs to make paintings. Although the two cities visited, Mediaș and Bistrița, both have a connection to Stoker's novel *Dracula*, the artists or at least their works do not.<sup>25</sup> Some agencies also offer folk shows comprised of traditional dances, music, costumes and food.<sup>26</sup> Most of the Dracula tours organised by the Company of Mysterious Journeys visit the village of Arefu near the ruins of the Poenari fortress. In Arefu the locals tell stories about Vlad the Impaler, mostly the story about Vlad's escape from Poenari with the help of people from the village. The locals also dress up in traditional clothes, dance traditional dances, play traditional music and serve traditional food for the tourists. This is organised together with one family in the village, who have worked with the Company of Mysterious Journeys for some time. Similarly on a tour organised by Quest Tours and Adventures, after visiting a local museum of glass icons, the tourists can 'have a taste of the traditional home cooking, welcomed by a local family'.<sup>27</sup>

Dallen J. Timothy argues that cultural and historical integrity can often strengthen the authenticity of heritage places and experiences. One example of this is the expectation that the indigenous past and traditions will be told and portrayed by indigenous people. (Timothy 2011, 109.) Although the experiences feel authentic it is at the same time quite clear that these folk shows are

- 25 Although his art is not connected to the Dracula myth in any way, Alexandru Misiuga is actually the man behind both the Castle Dracula Hotel in Borgo Pass and the Hotel Coroana de Aur in Bistrița.
- 26 On the tour organised by Transylvania Live in 2011 we had dinner at a restaurant which had a band playing traditional music and dancers dancing traditional dances dressed in traditional costumes. They performed three traditional dances, one Wallachian, one from Moldova and one from Maramureș. Based on the author's fieldwork notes.
- 27 Quest Tours and Adventures, *Dracula: Myth and History*, <http://www.romtour.com/DRACULA-MYTH-AND-HISTORY.htm> [accessed 17.5.2016].



staged culture and may not fully present the local culture (at least not in its present form) as such. The show in Arefu village, for example, is clearly staged and it can therefore be described as what Dean MacCannell has called *staged authenticity*. This appeals to the tourist's need to see the so-called back regions where the *real* or the local people interact. The back regions that are shown to tourists are usually not the real ones, but staged back regions. (MacCannell 1999, 94–99.) Staged authenticity can also be described as those incidents where local lifestyles, living cultures and cultural landscapes are staged for tourist consumption (Timothy 2011, 104). The authenticity of the traditional costumes, songs and dances is therefore staged because it is performed for an audience and does not reflect the real or normal everyday interactions of the locals. In terms of authenticity of the presented heritage, similar incidents have also caused concern in the past.

According to Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett the Office of Folklife Programs at the Smithsonian Institution has long advocated that for example costumes that are used only for stage performances should not be allowed in their Festival of American Folklife (which later became known as the Smithsonian Folklife Festival). This was seen as a paradox by many participants, since the whole festival was a staged performance itself. (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 73.) Such questions concerning the authenticity of the heritage presented are in my opinion more a problem for scholars than for performers or tourists. The performance of culture in a setting that differs from its original cultural context is almost always a staged performance. The difference in the notion of authenticity in these stagings is to a great extent a question of aesthetics. The organisers of the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife choose to present a very ascetic approach to staging, where the performers perform without costumes or sets and on a bare platform in order to avoid an image of staged and inauthentic culture (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 216). Because the premises in tourism are quite different from this, the staging is not seen as a problem. The fact that the locals in Arefu, for example, are dressed in traditional clothes while performing traditional dances and telling local stories, is done in order to give the tourist a more authentic experience of local heritage. Here the costumes actually bring more authenticity to the experience of heritage to the tourists. When I first heard the story about Vlad told by the girl in Arefu in the dining room of the local host family, the girl read it out loud from a paper while wearing her normal everyday clothes. When she struggled over words, her parents and the tour guide helped her. The next time I heard the story, she again read the story from a paper but she was wearing a traditional costume, surrounded by more local people in similar clothes and the story was told outside by the fire in the garden. If I had

not had a ‘researcher’s gaze’, I am sure that the latter situation would have felt more authentic than the first. As far as the so-called ‘scientific authenticity’ of this situation is concerned, by applying Lauri Honko’s folklore process this problem (if it even is a problem) is solved. By approaching this performance of tradition as the second life of folklore, the authenticity and the cultural value of the performance is validated. Although the staging of a cultural performance is generally seen as challenging the authenticity of the performance, in this case the staging of the cultural performance actually lent a degree of authenticity to the heritage experience.

The castle of Peleş is seen as representing an era in Romanian history that is deemed important by Romanians. As the tour guide from Transylvania Live told me, it is important for him that the tourists learn something about Romania while they are there, even if they are in Romania just because of Dracula.

Most important for instance we take people to see the royal summer residence in Peleş, which has basically nothing to do with Dracula, but if you are there it’s a pity not to see it.<sup>28</sup>

The addition of these sites and these tour narrations may also function as a way to connect Romania through its history to Western Europe and emphasise the fact that before the Communist times Romania had stronger connections with the West. After all the Romanian royal family came from Germany and therefore shares a link with other European royal families. (Boia 2001, 162–163.) Having a place like Peleş on a Dracula tour has to do with Romanian national pride and its importance to Romanian culture and heritage. The fact that it is in many cases the only site on a Dracula tour that does not have any connection with Vlad confirms this conclusion.

The fact that sights like the castle of Peleş, Curtea de Argeş, the salt mines of Turda, the visits to the artists, the show in the village of Arefu and the chance to eat local traditional food prepared by a local family are added to the Dracula tours can be explained in two ways. It could be that these sites and activities simply bring exotic experiences to the trip. Another, and in my mind a more fruitful explanation, has to do with cultural heritage and cultural identity. The emphasis of local and indigenous heritage interpreters and the meeting of local cultural performers lends credibility and authenticity to heritage sites and events (Dallen 2011, 110). Therefore, by adding these cultural encounters to the tours, the tour organisers are able to strengthen the heritage

28 Based on an interview made 17.4.2010. The interview is in the possession of the author.

aspect of the tours and the experience of authenticity. These sites also fulfil the function of deepening the understanding of Romanian cultural heritage even though, apart from Arefu, they have nothing to do with Vlad or Dracula. The tour organisers and guides clearly want to show other places than just those connected with either of the Draculas. This interpretation is verified by interviews made with tour guides in 2010:

That depends on how much our tourists are interested in knowing our country. If they are interested only for Dracula, historical or fictional, then we offer more Dracula, but many times the tourists are very happy to hear about other places and to see other places, not only Dracula. And we offer them these possibilities to take a little bit at left side to see what it is here. Nothing to do with Dracula, but it is pity to visit a place only focusing on one thing and not to put the stories into a context. Not only the story as it is, but to put it in the context of a country and how Bram Stoker could have imagined having the book happen at these places in Romania.<sup>29</sup>

Yes. It's important because it's a part of our history and we are happy to show them what the reality is in fact.<sup>30</sup>

The monastery island of Snagov is also interesting in terms of heritage. The church is visited on Dracula tours because it is thought to be the burial place of Vlad the Impaler. Although there is no evidence of this, Snagov is marketed as his burial place and there is even a picture of him above the assumed grave in front of the altar of the church. There is also a small exhibition about him and about the monastery in the entrance of the church. According to the monk living on the island, the church administration responsible for the monastery does not like the connections made between the monastery and Vlad/Dracula. In 2010 when I visited the site, I asked what the monk himself thought about the connection between Snagov and Dracula. He said that the Dracula connection is the only reason why tourists come to the site and therefore it is good because they bring money which can be used to maintain the monastery and its historic buildings. The entrance fee to the church is not very expensive, but the fee for taking photos is 20 euros (at least in 2010 and 2011), which is quite

29 Based on an interview made 15.4.2010. The interview is in the possession of the author.

30 Based on an interview made 11.4.2010. The interview is in the possession of the author.

a high price.<sup>31</sup> So it is clear that even though the church officials are not very pleased with Dracula tourism in Snagov, they see and utilise the economic benefit in order to maintain the monastery and its buildings. Dracula tourism is tolerated in order to help preserve the local cultural and historical heritage.

Romanian heritage can also be seen in the way the Romanian tradition about Vlad the Impaler is used especially at sites that are directly linked with him. Places like the ruins of the princely palace in Târgoviște and the fortress of Poenari are good examples of these. Both of these places are marketed mainly in connection with Vlad the Impaler, although there is also much further history attached to both of them. Both also have a strong connection to the Dracula tradition because many of the historical stories about Vlad are connected to these places. These stories are also used in the marketing and in the narrative tourist production of both the princely palace in Târgoviște and the ruins of the fortress of Poenari. Adding stories to places is an essential part of providing content in tourism (Aarnipuu 2008, 35), bringing them to life and also giving them meaning. With little exaggeration one could argue that without the surrounding narrative that gives it its meaning a ruin is just a pile of bricks and stones. The stories used in Târgoviște and Poenari are specifically from the Romanian oral tradition, although some of the stories connected with and used in Târgoviște are also known from the German and the Russian traditions. Both the ruins in Poenari and those in Târgoviște are preserved and partly renovated to serve as tourist sites. This means that they are seen as places of value and to be saved for future generations, or in other words as places of heritage. In my opinion, by adding stories specifically from Romanian folklore, these places can be tied more to the Romanian cultural heritage than some other places in Dracula tourism. By doing so it is also possible to make a clear distinction between history, heritage and Romanian culture with the fictitious places associated with Stoker's novel.

## Forms of opposition

The feelings about and the reaction to Dracula tourism in Romania have always been mixed and even ambivalent. It is seen as a way to bring people and income to Romania yet it has also been seen as a threat to Romanian culture and history. (Iordanova 2007, 55; Light 2007, 758.) In my opinion heritage can also be found in the opposition of Dracula tourism. It is quite possible that some important sites for Romanian culture, both past and present, such as

31 Based on the fieldnotes of the author.

those mentioned above, are willingly brought into conjunction with Western and foreign vampire and horror themes. According to Pekka Hakamies, it is not unusual for people in some cases to cling to old traditions as a form of silent protest against a dominant ideology and government that is regarded as unfamiliar or foreign. At the same time this kind of protest has worked as a unifying force that has strengthened local identity. (Hakamies 1998, 11.) Having places that are not linked with either Dracula as parts of the Dracula tours can be approached in the same way. Marketing these sites can be seen as a local cultural protest against a foreign and unfamiliar image of Romania. At the same time this can be seen as a way to strengthen local identity and culture against a foreign (cultural) threat.

The opposition to Dracula tourism in Romania is usually small-scale and voiced mainly by individuals, but in the case of the Dracula Park project, the opposition became quite loud and visible. Although there were many people in favour of the project, the opposition was more vocal. The idea for a Dracula theme park started in the early 1990s, but was first actively promoted around 1995. The plan was to build a huge theme park which was to include for example a fake castle, an artificial lake and rides that would have a vampire theme: a Dracula roller-coaster, a ghost train, a house of horrors, vampire dungeons, torture chambers, blood-filled catacombs, a judgement chamber, a scary mirror house, a labyrinth garden, a tournament site and an alchemy laboratory. There was also a plan for a 700-bed luxury hotel. (Iordanova 2007, 50.) The supporters for the project argued that Romania should try to profit more from Dracula tourism. The opponents of the project were concerned about the country's reputation and the prospect of Romania and its history being for ever linked with horror and vampires. The park was planned near the medieval city of Sighișoara, which as mentioned earlier is also a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The location of the park was problematic in two ways. Many people saw it as a threat to the surrounding environment and nature. The park was supposed to be built on Breite Plateau, which is a protected natural area containing one of the oldest oak forests in Romania. Many environmental activists were concerned not only about the preservation of the oak trees, but because the Breite Plateau is also home to some rare species of flowers, wolves, stags and eagles, and faced loss of ecosystem and open space. The plans to build the park were opposed by many international and domestic environmental groups such as Greenpeace, Pro-Europe League (Liga Pro Europa) and Sustainable Sighisoara (Sighisoara Durabila). (Iordanova 2007, 51–52; Jamal and Tanase 2005, 444–445.)

The location of the park near the medieval city of Sighișoara was also seen as very troublesome in terms of cultural values. Because Sighișoara is a UNESCO World Heritage site, the location of the park would have diminished the city's cultural standing in many people's minds. (Iordanova 2007, 51–52.) Historians were also concerned that the location of the park near the alleged birthplace of Vlad the Impaler would add to the confusion between the historical and the fictional Dracula. UNESCO also issued a report regarding the Dracula Park project and its conclusions were negative; they requested that the park should be relocated. They felt that Dracula Park would create a kind of mass tourism which would have a negative impact on Sighișoara's historic centre and an undesirable influence on local cultural tourism. (Cosma, Pop and Negrusa 2007, 47.) There were many concerns that the park would affect the town's image, cultural heritage and its medieval character. In addition many Christian denominations in Romania opposed the plan because they feared that it would bring occultists and Satanists into the city and were not happy with the fact that Romania would be associated with Dracula. (Iordanova 2007, 51; Jamal and Tanase 2005, 445–446; Ybarra 2003.)

An interview I made in 2010 with a Dracula tour guide is interesting in view of all the opposition to Dracula Park. The guide was very much in favour of the project and said that the park would in his opinion actually have helped to keep the two figures separated. He also said that the environmental issues were exaggerated and that the building of the park would have helped in the preservation of the oak trees. He also mentioned that almost all of the people in Sighișoara and also many people in Romania were in fact in favour of the project, but there was a strong campaign against the park, which gave a lot of misinformation about the project. Whether this is true or not is questionable, but it nevertheless shows that the way the project was opposed and eventually abandoned was maybe not as black and white as implied by the media and people who wrote about it.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless the strong opposition to the Dracula Park project shows that it was considered to be a threat to Romanian heritage in many ways.

One form of opposition towards the linkage between Romania and vampires, although not to Dracula tourism itself, can be seen in the total absence of any references to the more recent vampire craze. As I have mentioned, popular culture about vampires does not end with Stoker's *Dracula* and its spin-offs. The latest vampire boom (from around 2005 to 2013) started with Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* books and the subsequent films and TV series like *True Blood* (Hillabold 2013, 79–80). Apparently the novels have sold millions

32 Based on interviews made 11.4.2010. They are in the possession of the author.

of copies and have been translated into over thirty languages, and the Twilight Saga film series (five films) has grossed at least \$3.3 billion in worldwide receipts.<sup>33</sup> Despite the popularity of these franchises, they are all but absent in Dracula tourism in Romania – and this despite the fact that the *Twilight* books have all been translated into Romanian and the films have been shown in cinemas around Romania. The absence of references and imagery connected to the Twilight phenomenon is a clear expression of opposition towards the idea of Romania as the land of vampires. Although the Twilight franchise does not have any strong connections to Transylvania or Dracula, it does deal with vampires and has generated a lot of interest in vampires in general. Ignoring this phenomenon altogether, even though it would be easy to commercialise and utilise, is evidently something that has been undertaken on purpose. This omission of the latest vampire craze can therefore be seen as a form of opposition to an unfamiliar and unwanted image of Romania.

## Constructed authenticity and heritage

Authenticity is always a social or cultural construction. There is no authenticity without someone labelling something as authentic. Authenticity has also countless times been called useless or unimportant and yet it is still constantly referred to and exploited, especially in the tourism industry. Authenticity in Dracula tourism is constructed through the use of Romanian tradition, through the emphasising of history and through the distinctions between history and fiction provided by the travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism. Although the Hotel Castle Dracula and the Golden Crown Hotel in Bistrița are also constructed as authentic, their authenticity is clearly and specifically derived from fiction and therefore this also emphasises the construction of the authenticity of Romanian history and culture in Dracula tourism. Heritage is also very much a social and cultural construction and like authenticity it is always a product of deliberate actions by an individual person or a group. In other words there is no heritage without someone labelling something as heritage. (Timothy & Boyd 2003, 2–7.) As Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett has stated, heritage is not something that is lost or found or stolen and reclaimed, but a mode of cultural production (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 150). Heritage

33 This information is from Wikipedia. For the information about the films: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Twilight\\_Saga\\_%28film\\_series%29#cite\\_note-thompson-1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Twilight_Saga_%28film_series%29#cite_note-thompson-1) [accessed 17.5.2016]. For the information about the novels: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twilight\\_%28series%29#Reception](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twilight_%28series%29#Reception) [accessed 17.5.2016].

is, however, important because through it one can survey what people see and determine as important in their culture. Because heritage is constructed and this construction is done on purpose, what is constructed must hold a special place within the cultural and historical understandings of the culture in question.

Heritage in Dracula tourism is threefold: as defined from above, as with UNESCO World Heritage sites, as local heritage and as a form of opposition. The construction of heritage can be seen in the choices that are made of what to show on the tours. By choosing to show World Heritage sites on the Dracula tours, the tour agencies clearly want to portray Romanian history and culture as important enough to be included on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The addition of local heritage to the tours also functions in the same way. By showing sites that are important for Romanian history and culture, by presenting folk customs and local artists and by focusing on the Romanian side of the tradition about Vlad the Impaler the tour agencies aim to show what they think is important in Romania and emphasise Romanian history and culture through Dracula tourism. The third way in which heritage can be found in Dracula tourism is in the form of opposition to this tourism. Because the travel agencies benefit from Dracula tourism they do not oppose it as such; rather, this opposition emerges in the way alternatives are offered to the image of Romania as 'Dracula country', with an emphasis on other aspects of indigenous culture and history. The construction of authenticity and heritage is done in order to present the kind of image about Romania sought after by the organisers of Dracula tourism. Authenticity and heritage within Dracula tourism are constructed in order to counter the image of Romania known from popular culture as a mysterious land of the vampire, Count Dracula.



## 7. Conclusion. Dracula tourism as heritage?

In this book, I have been asking whether it is possible to uncover Romanian heritage through popular fiction in Dracula tourism. And if so, how can Romanian heritage and culture be presented and promoted through a seemingly superficial Dracula tourism which is based on Western popular culture? I have approached this question using concepts like authenticity, heritage, folklore process, popular culture, and methods like social constructionism and multimodal discourse analysis. Additionally, I have been looking at the tradition and history that are given significance in Dracula tourism – how and why they are used, and what eras of history are highlighted or downplayed at tourist sites in the first place. Regarding this last question, the tradition and history that were used that had nothing to do with Dracula or Vlad the Impaler were of special interest, as they revealed the parts of Romanian history and culture that were considered important enough to be presented for tourists oriented towards a different interest (Dracula). As for the use of tradition, I also wanted to discuss if Dracula tourism could in fact be considered a form of tradition, and even Romanian tradition. In connection to this discussion, I have also paid attention to the interplay and negotiations between tradition, history and fiction in Dracula tourism, and the ways in which Romanian tradition and history coexist with Western fiction, in Romania. I was also interested in seeing and discussing whether the question was purely a case of popular culture from outside Romania vs. Romanian culture, inside culture vs. outside culture, or global culture vs. local culture. The final sub-question was whether or not the tour agencies that I used in this research were in fact using Dracula as a gateway into Romanian history and culture, and whether Dracula tourism could also be seen as a channel for expressing cultural differences. All these smaller sets of questions have helped me in uncovering answers to the main question of my research.

The idea of heritage and Dracula tourism may seem odd at first, but the link becomes more evident the more one looks at the websites of the tour agencies. My main research material consisted of the fieldwork that I carried out in 2010 and 2011 and of the webpages of ten Romanian travel agencies that offer Dracula tourism. Because I was interested in the relationship between Dracula tourism and Romanian heritage, history and culture, I focused on Romanian tour agencies only. Including foreign tour agencies, especially

American companies, would have given a different perspective, most likely emphasising the fictional side of Dracula tourism and downplaying the heritage side,

The connections or lack thereof between the historical and the fictional Dracula, and the reasons why they are often linked, are important to know in order to understand the nature of Dracula tourism. As far as I am aware, I am also the first researcher to refer to Stephen Csabai's 'The Real Dracula' from 1941 as being the first scholarly article to suggest the link between Vlad and Count Dracula. Previous research has indicated that this connection was first made by Bacil F. Kirtley in his 1956 article 'Dracula, The Monastic Chronicles and Slavic Folklore'. The ambiguous attitude towards the idea of vampires in Romanian tradition in Romania is very interesting. The reasons for this and why Romanian vampire tradition is downplayed in Dracula tourism can be explained as being for both political and cultural. The political reasons had to do with the official reaction towards Dracula tourism and vampire lore, especially in the 1980s, when the words *Dracula* and *vampire* were increasingly applied to Nicolae Ceaușescu in the Western press, an issue of which Ceaușescu seemed to be aware. This dissuaded the government from associating itself with the Western Dracula even further than before. Even though the state reactions towards the Dracula phenomenon were out of proportion, they still had an effect, making Dracula and vampires something negative in Romania during the 1980s.

The other reason has to do with culture, or at least with cultural identity. After the socialist period, where cultural identity was more or less structured and directed by the state and was undoubtedly sometimes at odds with many Romanians' own views, the idea that the cultural identity could once again be crafted by someone else, in this case Western popular culture, could understandably cause protest. Many Romanians do not want their country to be reduced to 'Dracula's country' or the 'home of vampires', as Romania (or at least Transylvania) is known in popular culture. One further explanation for the downplaying of vampire tradition in Romania has to do with semantics. Because the word 'vampire' is not known or used in Romanian folklore it can technically be said that there is no vampire tradition in Romania. It is, however, clear that the vampire is known in Romanian folklore, under indigenous names; there are many beings in Romanian folklore that share the basic characteristics of a vampire of folklore and folk belief. Because the vampire is such a strong figure in popular culture, and because Transylvania and therefore also the whole of Romania have been portrayed in popular culture as the home of vampires, it is understandable why the tour agencies and guides do not

necessarily want to strengthen this image when presenting their country to foreign tourists.

By investigating the stereotypes and discourses used on the websites of the travel agencies I had chosen, I was able to suggest ways of understanding the interplay and negotiations between tradition, history and fiction in Dracula tourism and how Romanian tradition and history coexist with Western fiction in Dracula tourism. In Dracula tourism most of the stereotypes that were used were connected with vampires and Romania/Transylvania as a mysterious place of superstitions and the supernatural. The discourses mostly used on the websites dealt with the fictional side of Dracula tourism and with the promoting of historical and cultural locations and highlighting them even if they did not have any connections with either Dracula. I named these two discourses the *fiction discourse* and the *heritage discourse*. By focusing also on the imagery found on the websites I managed to arrive at a more complete understanding of the stereotypes and discourses used. One interesting result was that the websites of the tour agencies do not really use much imagery involving vampires and Dracula from popular culture, but resorted for the most part to pictures of locations visited on the tours, and many of these pictures actually promote the historical and cultural side of Romania and Dracula tourism. Unlike the imagery, the discourses that were used on the websites also promoted the fictional side of Dracula tourism. The fiction discourse was, however, not used throughout the tour itineraries, but only at specific places, namely at the places that were more closely connected to popular culture, when crossing from Wallachia to Transylvania and when going into Bistrița and Hotel Castle Dracula on the Borgo Pass. When describing other locations on the itineraries the fiction discourse was all but absent. It is very clear that the tour agencies do not want to promote the idea of Romania as Dracula's country or as the mysterious and magical vampire-infested land known from popular culture. By using historical and cultural imagery and by narrowing the use of fiction discourses to the places that are connected to popular fiction, the tour agencies wish to promote Romania according to their own desires, and they try to separate the fictional and foreign elements from the history and culture and construct and present a desired, diverse and versatile image of Romania, its history and culture and not just one that is merged in popular culture. By limiting the fictional discourses and stereotypical images to the locations more closely connected to popular culture the travel agencies in my opinion were and are able to negotiate and interact between the desire to promote the image of Romania that they want and the tourists' expectations stemming from popular culture.

Although Dracula tourism uses invented traditions and can in itself be seen as invented tradition, the branding of a piece of tradition as invented is not very fruitful. Even if some traditions may be constructions, selections or even inventions, they are still authentic and interesting in themselves and form cultural phenomena that have value.

Because Dracula tourism is very much a composition of fiction, tradition and history I find intertextuality useful in order to understand the experience and expectations of tourists. In Dracula tourism this intertextual reading of the locations visited is set against a background of a preconceived conception about Romania, Transylvania and Dracula. I argue that in tourism the intertextual reading of a text can be transformed and interpreted as intertextual reading of the experience, and by acknowledging this intertextual reading, it is easier to study and understand both the experience and the expectations of the tourists. By applying the concepts of narrative space and narrated space I was able to investigate the type and method of the tradition used. The tradition that is used or the stories that are told on the tours and mentioned on the websites of the travel agencies are mainly from the Romanian tradition about Vlad the Impaler. The use of tradition in Dracula tourism is similar to the use of discourses and imagery on the websites of the travel agencies, because it too emphasises the Romanian historical and cultural side in Dracula tourism. The stories from Romanian tradition about Vlad are mainly told when visiting Poienari and Târgoviște, two historically important locations connected to Vlad. The stories from the German tradition such as those that are connected to Braşov are seldom, if ever, told on the tours or mentioned on the websites and even when mentioned, this is done only cursorily.

The medieval history of Romania is emphasised in locations like Braşov, Sibiu and Sighișoara where Vlad or Dracula is mentioned only in an aside, while in Bucharest or Curtea de Argeş the intention of the tour agencies is to promote Romania beyond the superficial Dracula link. Bucharest is especially interesting in this regard. It seems that its role as a tour location is to function as an introduction to Romanian history and contemporary culture. The main tour narrations in Bucharest relate the history of the city and the events of the 1989 revolution, and the development of Romania since the revolution up to the present day. The fact that the stories that are used are mostly from the Romanian tradition, that the fictional side of Dracula tourism is mostly limited to Bistrița and the Hotel Castle Dracula and partly to Bran, and that traditions and history not related to Vlad are brought up on the tours confirms my hypothesis that the tour agencies wish to promote Romania as they want to. It is also clear that they are trying to separate the fictional and foreign elements

from the history and culture of Romania and bring out various aspects of Romanian culture and history.

The questions about whether Dracula tourism can be seen as Romanian culture or tradition, and whether all Dracula tourism can be reduced to divisions between foreign popular culture and Romanian culture, or between inside culture and outside culture, or between global culture and local culture are considered in chapter 5. I have approached these questions through the concept of hybridisation, which basically means the mixing of cultures to produce new forms of culture. In Dracula tourism hybridisation can be seen manifesting itself in four ways: during Halloween, in souvenirs, in Dracula tourism itself and in the way the fictional Count Dracula is connected with Vlad the Impaler. Although the origins and demand for Dracula tourism are very much a global phenomenon and Dracula tourism can be seen as a hybrid form of culture, cultures have always been hybrid. Therefore it is in my opinion futile to make a strict difference between global and local culture in this case. Dracula tourism can be seen both as a form of hybrid culture and as Romanian culture which has been influenced and affected by global cultural forms. The boundaries between strictly Romanian culture and outside culture have also become blurred, especially since Vlad the Impaler has also become a global figure in popular culture. Because of the extent of the Dracula phenomenon, Dracula tourism in Romania is in my opinion an example of 'glocal' culture. This does not mean that there are no local aspects to be found in it, but as a whole Dracula tourism is both global and local culture at the same time. Hybridisation and globalisation have been seen as overshadowing local cultures in favour of translocal cultures and this change in cultures is often done in favour of the interests, needs and values of the dominant trading partners. Although this is also very much the case with Dracula tourism, the tourism agencies' activity in highlighting local Romanian culture, tradition and history can be seen as a way of reacting to this.

Authenticity and heritage are concepts that might seem difficult to link with Dracula tourism in Romania at first. Although authenticity is a controversial concept within folklore studies, I found it necessary to address it because it is widely used both in tourism studies and in tourism itself. Despite several attempts to replace the term, it has survived, whereas the terms developed to replace it like *fakelore* or *folklorism* have not survived or gained acceptance. I have also tested the idea and the usefulness of the concept of the folklore process by the late Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko in researching the use of folklore and tradition. By abandoning the twenty-four stages of the folklore process we can define folklore in its first life as taking place in a (supposedly) original form and context. The second and other possible subsequent lives

start when the context of the use folklore changes, usually as a result of commercial, political or recreational circumstances. The context of how tradition and folklore is used is thus the main component when dividing a certain piece of folklore or tradition into its life phases. I find that by simplifying the folklore process that Honko described, it can be used as a framework to research a piece of folklore or tradition, its history and its current form and its use. The folklore process can also be seen as a dynamic construction of a tradition, a process that is constantly evolving and is constantly negotiated. With the idea of the second life (and the possible subsequent lives) of folklore, questions about authenticity are obviated and the value of this type of folklore can thus be validated. A form of folklore defined as living its second phase of life can be researched and studied as an entity, free from unfair comparisons with its 'original' or 'authentic' form.

In Dracula tourism the understanding of authenticity has been one of the main reasons why Dracula tourism has been opposed in Romania. Dracula tourism has in other words been seen as inauthentic by its critics. Most of the stories used in Dracula tourism are authentic pieces of Romanian folklore, if what is meant by authenticity is something that is old and has been alive and used in the community for a number of years. On the other hand even if the stories and narratives used were new, they would still be authentic as pieces of current folklore and tradition, because they are told again and again to new people. In this book I have divided the concept of authenticity into so-called historical or scientific authenticity and experienced authenticity. In addition to the traditional view of authenticity I have thus introduced, following a number of other scholars, the concept of experienced authenticity in order to study the desire for and the idea of authenticity within Dracula tourism. This form of authenticity is not so much connected with the actual historical knowledge of a certain site or tradition, but rather with the experience of authenticity of the tourist. This experience or feeling of authenticity is usually connected with preconceived images that the tourist has from popular culture and can take place at apparently inauthentic locations. By using the concept of experienced authenticity, a researcher can understand why tourists can get a feeling of authenticity even in places that are clearly inauthentic in the traditional sense of the concept.

I have defined heritage in Dracula tourism on three levels. Firstly, heritage is used in Dracula tourism by setting UNESCO World Heritage sites as locations for the Dracula tours, even though they have nothing to do with Vlad or Dracula. This, in my view, is done in order to deepen the understanding of Romanian cultural heritage. Secondly, there are sites on the Dracula tours that have nothing to do with Vlad the Impaler or Dracula that are not

UNESCO sites, but still seem to be culturally important enough to be included on these tours. Visiting these sites also fulfils the function of deepening the understanding of Romanian cultural heritage even though most of them have nothing to do with Vlad or Dracula. Putting the emphasis on local and indigenous heritage interpreters, and arranging meetings with local cultural performers, lends credibility and authenticity to the heritage sites and events that are visited and experienced on Dracula tours. Therefore, by adding these cultural encounters to the tours, the tour organisers are able to strengthen the heritage aspect of the tours and the experience of authenticity.

Local heritage is also presented by using stories specifically from Romanian folklore at certain sites. In this way these sites can be more tightly tied to Romanian cultural heritage than some other places in Dracula tourism. By doing so it is also possible to make a clear distinction between history, heritage and Romanian culture and the fictitious places associated with Bram Stoker's book.

Thirdly, heritage in Dracula tourism has also appeared in the form of opposition towards Dracula tourism. Although the opposition is usually small-scale and voiced mainly by individuals, in the case of the Dracula Park project it became quite loud and visible. There were mixed reactions towards this project among the organisers of Dracula tourism. Within the Dracula tourism movement, opposition towards the whole Dracula phenomenon is understandably mild, and consists of providing alternatives to the image of Romania as 'Dracula country'. Heritage and authenticity are both social and cultural constructions; they do not exist without someone labelling something as authentic or as heritage. Authenticity and heritage within Dracula tourism is constructed in order to present the kind of image about Romania that the organisers of Dracula tourism seek, in order to counter the image of Romania known from popular culture as a mysterious land of the vampire, Count Dracula.

To sum up, heritage is certainly to be found within Dracula tourism in Romania. It is brought out mainly by limiting the fictional discourses and stereotypical images to the locations more closely connected with popular culture, thus negotiating and interacting between the desire to promote the desired image of Romania and the tourist expectations stemming from popular culture. It also seems that this trend has even somewhat strengthened in the last couple of years. The focus on some of the web pages of the tourist agencies seems to have changed towards history and the historical Dracula, Vlad the Impaler.

Heritage is also brought out by using stories that are mostly from the Romanian tradition, by limiting the fictional side of Dracula tourism to Bistrița, to

Hotel Castle Dracula and partly to Bran, and by utilising different traditions and histories not related to Vlad the Impaler. Dracula tourism should also be acknowledged as being a part of contemporary Romanian culture and therefore the focus when discussing Dracula tourism does not have to be on differentiating between local and global forms and influences of culture. Dracula tourism can thus be seen both as a form of hybrid culture and Romanian culture which has been influenced and affected by global cultural forms.

Finally, heritage can be seen in Dracula tourism in three different ways; by adding UNESCO World Heritage sites as locations to the Dracula tours, by focusing on and utilising local heritage and in opposition towards Dracula tourism in the form of alternatives to the image of Romania as Dracula's country.

It is quite clear that Dracula tourism is not fully embraced in Romania. Many of the students whom I took to Romania as part of a University course in April of 2016, found it quite surprising how small scaled Dracula tourism in Romania is and how it is not very visible anywhere. Although we didn't visit Hotel Castel Dracula or Bistrița, we did visit many of the major Dracula sites in Romania. Dracula was mostly visible only in the souvenir shops and even then mostly in Bran and in Sighișoara (an of course at the airport). So it is evident that Dracula is (still) something that is not readily or widely used in Romanian tourism.

My research indicates how clearly the Romanian travel agencies try to separate the fictional and foreign elements from the history and culture of Romania and bring out aspects of Romanian culture and history through the seemingly superficial Dracula theme, and thus use Dracula tourism as a channel for expressing cultural differences. The Romanian travel agencies that I have researched use Dracula tourism as a gateway into Romanian history, culture and tradition.

In other words, the tourists are finding heritage through fiction in Dracula tourism.



# Appendix 1

Source: [http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula\\_tours/castle\\_dracula/travel/](http://www.mysterious-journeys.com/dracula_tours/castle_dracula/travel/)



## The Company of Mysterious Journeys: The Classic Dracula Tour

(8 days, 7 nights)

A Level 1 Society Tour

## Day 1 – In the safety of innocence

We assume you have the standard apprehension of Dracula, of vampires in general – derived from many films and few books. You may, on the contrary, be well informed, but you did not yet measure your knowledge up against the reality.

### Welcome in Romania!

Spend a safe night in Bucuresti (Bucharest). At dinnertime, a senior member of the Society will hand you the “Transylvanian Diploma”, to be stamped along the route to castle Dracula, or who will believe you otherwise?

arrival in Bucharest, capital of Romania

transfer to hotel; welcoming cocktail and briefing

dinner attended by a senior member of the Transylvanian Society of Dracula

overnight in the safety of innocence in Bucuresti

## Day 2 – In the footsteps of the historic Dracula

Morning: the city of Bucuresti – from Prince Vlad Dracula’s time (1456) to the present day

The horse-caravans in the Middle Ages covered 60 kilometres between sunrise and sundown, in a summer day. Bucuresti is 60 km. from the Danube .

Visit the ruins of the Princely Palace and touch the vaults built by prince Vlad Dracula.

Then meander through the old shopping area around the palace – to the “Bear Wagon”, meeting place of writers and artists by 1890 (refreshments).

Visit the Treasury – a brief story of Romania in gold and gems, the royal treasury included. Then see the second largest building on earth, the Republic House, built by the late communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

Afternoon : Leave the city of Bucuresti after lunch and visit the weird Castle of Hasdeu , in Campina – said to negotiate communications with Beyond (initiation step).

sightseeing tour of Bucuresti – Society style

lunch in Bucuresti (of your own)

after lunch, visit Castle Hasdeu in Campina

dinner and overnight in Sinaia, the royal resort

### Day 3 – The historical fortress Dracula

Visit Castle Peles – the most beautiful royal palace in Europe; Peles alone is worth your entire trip to Romania .

Drive to Targoviste, capital of Valahia under Prince Vlad Dracula. The ruins of the palace shelter dramatic stories of might, greed, justice and cruelty. Five hundred years ago, a row of boyars left Targoviste to rebuild the fortress of Poienari, as punishment for their disloyalty.

In the late afternoon, behold the ruins of Poienari. In 1462, Prince Vlad was besieged here by the Ottomans. Vlad sent for help and advice in the village of Aref , across the hill, but his wife waited no more: she threw herself into the river Arges, to avoid captivity.

The Arefeans came at night and managed to take the prince all the way to Transylvania , across the high Carpathians. Vlad rewarded them with 16 mountains as pastureland – no wonder Aref remembers. Vlad Dracula 500 years apart.

Tonight, around a bonfire, in the village of Aref , 30 farmers will tell you the legends they remember about Vlad; they are the descendants of those who served the prince, and you shall be their guests, in their houses – a dive in Time and Mythology.

breakfast; visit Peles – the royal palace

drive to Targoviste; lunch

visit the ruins of the Princely palace

arrive in Curtea de Arges; refreshments

behold Poienari – the historical fortress Dracula

initiation show “The Night of Prince Vlad the Impaler – Dracula”

dinner in the village of Aref

overnight in the village of Aref or Curtea de Arges

### Day 4 – Beyond – Transylvania

Optional morning climb to the ruins of fortress Poienari (1456 steps).

Cross into Transylvania via the spectacular Rucar–Bran Pass (traditional connection between Valahia and Transylvania ). On the way, behold the fortress “King’s Stone”, where Vlad was made a prisoner of Mathias Corvinus, king of Hungary (1462).

Visit Castle Bran, 1377, defending the Transylvanian end of the Pass. This is the “American Castle Dracula” (since 1960), as it “looks very much like the vampires’ castles in the Hollywood movies” (TSD survey). Anyway, Bran does stop the mobs from pestering the solitude of the Count in his remote Borgo Pass castle.

Sightseeing of mediaeval Brasov (the second city of Transylvania ) – of many and sometime awesome memories of Vlad.

After lunch, tour mediaeval Brasov , then stroll by yourselves till dinner time.

Optional – a chance to become noble, to join the Order of Transylvanian Knights. You will be schooled into knightly Orders, then taken to the Sacred Zone, then to the Citadel. The Castellan and his court of knights, ladies-in-waiting and pages will advise and guide you through the chivalry tests: archery; strength of arm; walking on a beam; jumping a fire; answering a riddle; dancing a minuet.

Should you be able to pass the tests – and many could – then investiture ceremonies will be activated – oath, sword-on-shoulder, knighthooding diploma, medallion. You may now mention your noble title on cards and stationary, even paint the coat-of-arm on the door of your car.

optional climb to fortress Poienari

cross into Transylvania; visit Castle Bran; lunch

sightseeing of mediaeval Brasov; free till dinner

optional – join the Order of Transylvanian Knights

dinner as mediaeval banquet, floor show

overnight: in Brasov or Poiana Brasov

## Day 5 – The Witch-trial

According to Jules Michelet, at least 200,000 women and men were burnt as witches and wizards across Europe between the 15 and the 18 centuries. The Catholic parts of Transylvania had their share of such trials. The last took place as near as 1753, in Targu Mures. This is a dramatic page in our history as humans and an initiation step on the way to Castle Dracula.

Witness a witch-trial, as performed by actors in period costumes, using genuine prison cells and the same settings.

Dine in the very house in which prince Vlad Dracula was born, in 1431, and share into the secrets of the Alchemy Bar.

breakfast; drive to Sighisoara

lunch

sightseeing of the walled town

initiation show: “The Witch–Trial”

dinner in Vlad Dracula’s house

overnight in Sighisoara

## Day 6 – The castle of the vampire–count

Proceed to the buffer–zone separating Count Dracula’s domain (the county of Bistrita–Nasaud ) from the rest of Transylvania .

Prince Vlad dims out into history; Count Dracula emerges from nightmares, terror and fright.

Cross the buffer–zone (some turned around) and arrive in the mediaeval town of Bistrita .

One hundred and ten years ago, in the pages of Bram Stoker’s novel, “Dracula”, a young English solicitor, Jonathan Harker, took a train from London to “the post–town of Bistritz “ – on his way, and doom, to castle Dracula in the Borgo Pass , Northern Transylvania .

The Count had told Harker to go to the “Golden Krone” hotel, upon arrival in Bistrita. We should carefully follow into Harker’s steps – as the only known way to the castle and the meaning of its Master.

Harker left a description of his dinner at the “Golden Krone”; let us take the same meal ourselves, the same wine, and think of a toast.

By sunset we should be at Castle Dracula. Sunsets in the Borgo Pass , watched from the Moon Tower of the castle, are cosmic shows.

“Enter freely and of your own will” into the castle of the Count of Dracula, remembering what he said: “The old centuries had, and have, powers of their own that mere ‘modernity’ cannot kill”.

You will be told the rules of survival at Castle Dracula. Visit the public parts (you do not wish to see the others) and answer the invitations of the guide only (no–one else’s). It is already night outside. As Chelsea Quinn Yarbro put it: “If you ask if I believe in vampires in the daytime, I would say it is not true; but if you ask me at night, my answer could be different”.

breakfast

cross the buffer-zone to Bistrita

“Jonathan Harker’s” lunch

arrival at Castle Dracula; visit the public parts

the ritual of the purifying fire

masked ball (please bring your own costume, mask)

dinner by candlelight; overnight at Castle Dracula

optional: reception ceremony in the Transylvanian Society of Dracula (one way to get away with it)

### Day 7 – Arise among the living

We noticed, in 35 years of experience, that there is no such thing as ending a Society tour on Dracula abruptly: one more day of emergence from the depths of the myths is absolutely necessary.

This is that day.

No more Dracula, no superstitions, no supernatural, no mythology. Please return among the living.

You have been on a tour treasuring the information gathered by the Society via its congresses, symposiums, seminars, from researchers and writers, from thousands of Dracula hunters or buffs.

return to Brasov

lunch in Targu Mures

farewell dinner

overnight in Brasov or Poiana Brasov

### Day 8 – So long, Friends!

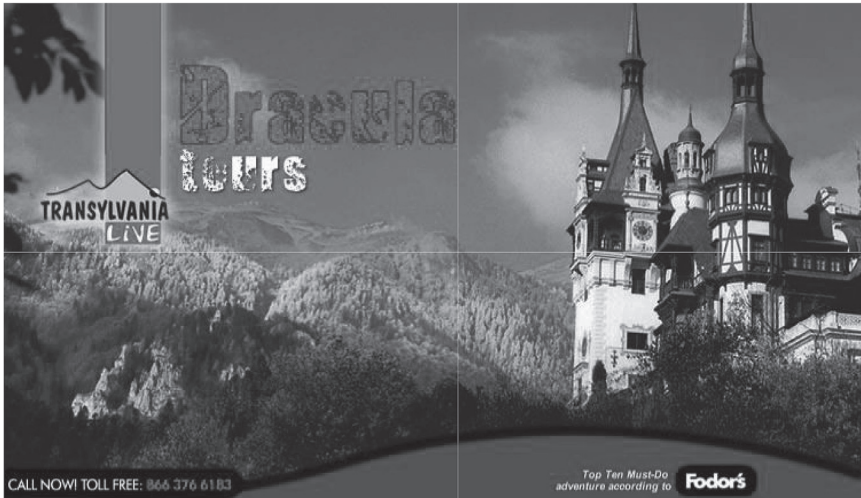
How about a Level 2?

Direct departure to the airport (two hours and a half)

Departure from Romania

## Appendix 2

Source: <http://www.visittransilvania.ro/romania-tours-vacations/dracula-and-transylvania-tour-%E2%80%935-days-17-english.html>



### Transylvania Live: Halloween in Transylvania with Vlad the Impaler – the full Dracula Tour

2 HALLOWEEN PARTIES INCLUDED

Tour code: RO7.BHADT

Departure: Bucharest

Day by day itinerary

Price & Departure

Special notes & info

the awarded Halloween Tour in Transylvania

## Highlights

The funniest Halloween Party from Transylvania – in Sighisoara Citadel, Dracula's Birthplace

Dracula's Castle in Transylvania – built in accordance to Bram Stoker's imagination, on Borgo Pass where the Irish writer placed the castle of Count Dracula, accommodation, candle lit dinner and a camp fire with all the right stories.

Ritual Killing of the Living Dead – Help a haunted spirit to gain his peace – attend the ritual of killing a strigoi. Halloween Party afterwards to celebrate the victory or recover from defeat – learn more

Sighisoara Medieval Citadel – the best preserved and still inhabited medieval citadel in Europe with a UNESCO World Heritage status, Vlad the Impaler's birth place.

Halloween Party at Bran Castle – also known as Dracula's Castle, a legendary Transylvanian fortress dating back to 1377

Vampiresa Hunting – will lead you to middle ages, times of great struggles of any kind.

Snagov Monastery – where, according to the legend, Vlad was buried after his assassination

Poenari Fortress – Vlad's old and faithful citadel perched high on a cliff, more than 1000 stairs to climb.

Introducing Unique Characters – meet Dracula's descendents – make the acquaintance of a unique spider web painter in Medias!

Vampire Treats: indulge yourself with a Vampire dinner to find out why it's worth killing for a meal!

## Day by day itinerary

Snagov – Dracula's thomb – Halloween in Transylvania DAY 1, Bucharest

Welcome to Romania ! Our guide connects with you at the Airport or Moxa Boutique Hotel from Bucharest. Prepare to immerge into the legend. Drive to Snagov to visit Snagov Monastery where, according to the legend, Vlad was buried after his assassination. This is located on a small island of Snagov Lake. The architectural style of the monastery follows the pattern that is characteristic to the monasteries on the Holy Mount Athos in Greece. Your first day



ends with a welcome dinner in one of Bucharest 's top traditional restaurants. 4\* centrally located accommodation.

## Poenari Citadel – Halloween in Transylvania

### Day 2, Bucharest – Poenari – Sibiu (309 km, 5h 20min driving)

Morning drive to Poenari . Enjoy a morning visit of Poenari, to visit the ruins of Vlad's old and faithful fortress. The fortress located close to Fagaras Mountains , on a canyon formed by Arges Rives is perched high on a cliff, in fact a steep precipice. To visit the impressive fortress and admire the unique and breathless view from the top you'll need to climb over 1400 stairs. Late afternoon arrival in Sibiu. Evening in Sibiu, the European Cultural Capital for 2007. The fortified town of Sibiu has been the centre of Romania 's German minority since medieval times and it is one of Romania 's most beautiful cities. The city contains the largest concentrations of tourist attractions in Romania . Accommodate in a 4\* hotel, enjoy a traditional Saxon dinner in one of the best restaurants in Sibiu .

### Dracula's Castle – in a Halloween Tour Day 3, Sibiu – Medias – Bistrita – Dracula's Castle (Pasul Tihuta) (261 km, 4h 50 min driving)

Today you'll enjoy a stunning scenery, following the steps of Jonathan Harker to Borgo Pass– Bram Stoker's character from Dracula novel. Medias is first on the list. Here you'll become acquainted with a unique artist, the only one in the world who uses spider webs for his paintings. As you probably know, spiders are creatures happily tolerated by the count, so you'll have further proof of how they are not merely reminiscent of delights' past. Next stop is Dracula's Castle in Borgo Pass, a 3\* hotel which was built in accordance to Bram Stokers imagination. After visiting Dracula's coffin you'll enjoy a candle lit dinner and fire camp at the castle with all the right stories for a night to remember.

Optional : Experience a carriage ride! Be in the spirit of medieval kind of transportation ( just to realize the nowadays high comfort while traveling).

### Halloween in Transylvania DAY 4, Pasul Tihuta – Cluj Napoca – Turda (194 km, 3h 20min driving)

Morning drive to the city of Cluj Napoca to enjoy a city tour revealing beautiful medieval buildings such as Saint Andrews Cathedral. From Cluj drive to

Turda, a small town with an intimate medieval atmosphere, home to one of the oldest Salt Mine in Romania. Accommodate in a 4\* hotel, often referred to as a medieval fantasy with beds. Delight yourself with a vampire menu for dinner.

Optional: How about a genuine Dracula tattoo? Should you wish to permanently remember your trip to Transylvania, you have your chance.\* Please have in mind that an up-front reservation is requested.

### Halloween Party in Sighisoara DAY 5, Turda – Sighisoara (120 km, 2h driving)

Prepare to descent to the heart of one of the biggest saline in Romania , the Salt Mines of Turda, with impressive halls named after kings and queens. Next stop, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Sighisoara Medieval Citadel. Founded by Saxons during the 12th century, Sighisoara still stands as one of Europe 's most beautiful and still inhabited fortified cities. Sighisoara is also the place where Vlad the Impaler, known as Dracula, was born.

20 : 00 Put on your costume and get into the mood, this is the reason for your travel to Transylvania. Prepare yourself for Halloween Party. You'll enjoy a delicious traditional Romanian festive dinner washed down with fiery spirits, excellent Romanian wine and accompanied by a special program including the Ritual of Killing of the Living Dead ( as seen on Travel Channel), the Vampiresa Hunting and many dark surprises.

### Halloween Party DAY 6, Sighisoara – Brasov – Bran ( 145 km, 2h , 20 min driving)

Stroll around the streets of the old citadel; admire the Clock Tower, concentrating Sighisoara's history, the beautiful Church on the Hill and the unique Covered Stairs. Your next stop is the Medieval Saxon City of Brasov. The most famous landmark of Brasov is the Black Church , the largest gothic edifice in South – Eastern Europe. Brasov is a city with an outstanding medieval atmosphere which has played a vital role in Romania's history, both old and new. Three quarters of the city is surrounded by mountains, and it is one of the best preserved medieval cities in Europe.

### Bran Castle

21:00 The ultimate Halloween Party at the Bran Castle – also known as Dracula's Castle! Enjoy an unforgettable night tour of Bran Castle, meet the Wicked

Fairies and get lost in their euphoric dance along with a glass of local red wine. Watch a horror movie projection and feel amazing being part of a great and dynamic Halloween After Party in the courtyard of Bran Castle until 4:00 am.

### Halloween Tour in Transylvania DAY 7, Bran – Sinaia – Bucharest (174 km, 2h 50 min driving)

Your last Romanian morning. Continue your journey with Sinaia, the pearl of mountain resorts in Romania. Explore the main point of attraction, the royal Peles Castle . The edifice was built in 1873 and is an architectural mixture of the German School and neo-renaissance style. The castle has 160 rooms, all of them opulently decorated in leather and wood from the most valuable tree species. Peles Castle is one of the best preserved and the most beautiful royal residences in Europe. Late afternoon arrival in Bucharest , past 5:00 pm.

## Appendix 3

Source: <http://www.adventuretransylvania.com/halloween-dracula.htm>



# Halloween in Transylvania

## Adventure Transylvania: Halloween in Transylvania

... a historic tour of real places related to the real 15th century prince Vlad the Impeller – Dracula. This is not meant to be a scary or horror tour, but an enjoyable walk through the dramatic times of Dracula.

### Day 1 – Welcome to Romania – October 28th

We will pick you up from Bucharest Airport;  
Transfer to your 3\*\*\* Hotel for your first night in Romania.  
Explore Bucharest city at night.

### Day 2 – Bucharest city tour – October 29

City tour of Bucharest in the morning

Visit the ruins of the Princely Palace, the castle that Dracula built for himself in the 15th century

The Palace of Parliament –second largest building in the world a legacy of a more recent “Dracula” – the communist dictator executed in 1989 – Ceausescu.

Drive to Targoviste, the capital of Wallachia during Prince Vlad Dracula’s time

Visit the ruins of the Royal court which shelters many dramatic stories of greed, justice and cruelty.

Overnight in Curtea de Arges in Montana 3\*\*\* Hotel.

### Day 3 – The real castle of Dracula – October 30

Visit the most spectacular castle of Dracula ruins of Poienari – perched high on a rugged crag over the Arges gorge. The 1480 steps lead us to Dracula’s real fortress.

In 1462 Prince Vlad was besieged here by the Turks. He sent to the village of Arefu across the hill for help but his wife, fearful of capture, threw herself of the cliff.

The villagers came at night and managed to smuggle the Prince across the high Carpathian to the safety of Transylvania and, in return, he gave them 16 mountains as pastureland, a reward they still remember, more than 500 years later!

Drive to Sighisoara. Have dinner in the house where Prince Dracula was born.

Overnight in Casa Wagner 3\*\*\* hotel in Sighisoara

#### Day 4 – Halloween Dinner at Dracula’s – October 31

There will be a guided walk round the old walled Sighisoara town, one of the best preserved in Europe.

You will visit the clock tower, check out the Torture Chamber, and the arms hall.

Later we will climb the covered stairs to the 13th century Hill Church, and the gloomy cemetery, walk around the thick walls of this amazing citadel.

Drive to Moeciu – (15 minutes from the Bran Castle)

Halloween dinner. (depending on local happenings we will try to get the best party)

Overnight in a gorgeous location up in the Carpathians – Moeciu.

#### Day 5 – Dracula Castles – November 1st

Visit the Bran Castle, built around year 1377 as part of the Transylvanian defense ring, the castle belonged to Dracula’s grand father – Mircea the Old – and was constantly disputed by Vlad Dracula. The castle is a real “must see”

Visit Brasov – medieval walled city. Great sites to visit as The Black Church, the Council Square, the old defense walls that are still well preserved on the south and west side of the old city the watch towers and the narrowest street in Europe

Overnight back in the Carpathians pass at Moeciu.

#### Day 6 – Escape – November – 2nd \*\*

Drive to Bucharest Airport (2.5 hours) If your flight isn’t too early we could stop to visit Snagov Monastery – the place where Vlad Dracula is buried.

Transfer to Bucharest Airport

## Appendix 4

Source: <http://www.mysteriousjourneys.com/halloween-2013-transylvania>



### The Company of Mysterious Journeys

Company of Mysterious Journeys On orders from The Count himself:

Halloween 2013 Shall Take Place at Castle Dracula HALLOWEEN 2013 in TRANSYLVANIA During a “Classic Dracula” Society Tour (1.2.2013) (Oct.28 – Nov.4) – A level 1.3 Society tour

“Friends of the Count,

Think twice before you book this tour; by comparison, a journey to Mars, or Pluto, is a piece of cake. As if ‘Transylvania’ is not challenging enough, you will journey to the Realm of the Count, and his castle on the spookiest of nights: Halloween!

On the other hand, the most daring in our midst will share otherworldly events, and should they obey the rules of survival at the castle, they will leave our tour with tales that they will tell to their grandchildren.

We advise you, therefore, to carefully examine the contents of this tour and see if you can face it. As Murphy said: “If anything can go wrong, it will”

Sincerely, Transylvanian Society of Dracula”

### Oct. 28, DAY 1 – LITTLE TO FEAR

Welcome in Romania via CLUJ NAPOCA, one of the most important cities of Transylvania, and named the Youth Capital of Europe for 2015. Do you remember “Dracula”, the famous novel of Bram Stoker? The Count himself entered Transylvania through Cluj....

Our guides will meet you at the airport and railway stations, and take you to your hotel in Cluj Napoca for cocktails, briefing, and Q/A. Your innocence in matters dracularian will protect you...for now. Receive your “Survival Certificate” that will be stamped along the Way (your relatives will know how far you reached). The most intriguing site near Cluj Napoca is Padurea Hoia-Baciu (The Hoia-Baciu Wood).

“The Hoia-Baciu wood (HBW) , close to the city of Cluj-Napoca in Transylvania, Romania, is the site of some unconventional phenomena which have been recorded and researched for nearly 50 years. People of various ages and educational levels seem to create a modern variety of folklore on the basis of these unconventional occurrences. The HBW has a tendency to become the Romanian version of The Bermuda Triangle.”

– Prof.dr. Adrian Patrut Lecturer, University of Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania, Romania

Chairman, the Romanian Society of Parapsychology TSD SYMPOSIUM, MAY 2006

Dinner in Cluj Napoca Overnight in Cluj Napoca in 4-star hotel

### Oct. 29, DAY 2 – TRANSYLVANIA AND THE COUNT DRACULA – BORGOPASS

Today, comes a different supernatural entity known as the vampire-count Dracula. Let’s stick closer together. The guide will prudently introduce you to the roots, role, and meaning of supernatural entities; a dangerous realm (you asked for it, remember?) which comes complete with rules of protection and survival.

Cross the buffer-zone prior to Count Dracula’s domain (Bistrita County) along a road – the only road – marked on the sides by numberless shrines. We



need to keep this road straight, and you'll see why. Mediaeval Bistrita is mentioned on the very first page of Stoker's masterpiece. We will proceed with caution into Jonathan Harker's footsteps along the only known way to the castle, and the meaning of its Master. We feast today on the same meal and wine Jonathan Harker did at the same "Golden Krone" Inn & Tavern. Stamp your Certificates in a hurry and dash to the Borgo Pass so as to arrive at the castle before sunset.

Sunsets over the Borgo Pass, as seen from the Moon Tower of Castle Dracula, are cosmic shows. The whole region at 1200 metres altitude has been described as one of the most beautiful on Earth. The Count is choosy.

Visit the public parts of the castle (you do not wish to see the others) Dinner by candlelight at the castle – in the Centre of the draculistic world! Overnight at Castle Dracula, on the Borgo Pass.

Note: it is true that things do get out of hand at Castle Dracula, sometimes (that is why the castle has its own, private cemetery). Please try to remember and obey the rules.

P.S. It would help refreshing your readings of Stoker's novel, chapter One.

## Oct. 30, DAY 3 – SIGHISOARA: THE BIRTH PLACE OF THE HISTORICAL DRACULA

If you have survived this far (unlikely): please stamp your Certificate, even your passport, at the castle (there is just one such stamp worldwide). Should your shadow begin to thin, or should your reflection in the mirror be blurred, there is little one can do about it. But these are minor inconveniences of your new status, aren't they?

Drive to mediaeval Sighisoara, the best preserved XV century walled-town of Europe, and birth-place of Prince Vlad Dracula (the one who's name was borrowed by Bram Stoker to baptize his vampire-count).

Sighisoara is located in the centre of Transylvania, and it is here among the ancient echoes of horror you will witness an authentic Romanian witch trial. Jules Michelet said that some 200,000 women and men perished as witches or wizard across Catholic Europe between the 15th and the 18th centuries. The last such trial in Transylvania occurred in 1753. This is a dramatic page in our history as Romanians, and yet another initiation step you must endure.

Should the witch survive the trial (it happened), we shall ask her for some herbs, potions, and charms. After all, the witch and the vampire share allot in common: supernatural powers, shape-shifting, flight. Indeed, let us tempt you further:

Optional: Win yourself the noble title of Knight in The Order of Transylvanian Knights if you can pass the SIX tests of chivalry: archery, strength of arm, walking/balancing on a length of beam, jumping through fire, answering a riddle, and finally dancing a minuet. Should you pass them, and many could, then investiture ceremonies will be activated: oath, sword-on-shoulder, knighthood diploma and medallion. The Castellan of the Citadel and his court of knights, ladies-in-waiting, pages, jester, will advise you through the tests. There is a difference between Mr. or Ms. Johnson, and Sir or Lady Johnson, wouldn't you say?

The locations of the Secret Ceremonies in Sighisoara are, of course, secret.....

Witch Trials in Sighisoara

Dinner in the genuine cellars of your hotel in Sighisoara (XV century)

Tests of Worthiness if Desired

Overnight in Sighisoara.

## Oct. 31, DAY 4 – HALLOWEEN IN TRANSYLVANIA

On orders from the Count, his society has prepared the Halloween party in a 15th century fortress (the Count changes the location of the Halloween party almost every year; you do not need to know why). The contents and the place of a Halloween party organized by the TSD in Hunedoara (the first time when the Count wants to spend the Night of the nights here) are generally reserved for those who book in advance, but we can spare a few hints:

Reception on the bridge of the Castle, by knights and pipers

Hosted by the Count himself

Servants of the Count will greet you with plum brandy and bread (an old Romanian custom)

Bonfire on the rear grounds of the Castle with barbeque, wine and boiled plum brandy

Knighthooding games

Chivalry contests

Halloween exhibitions

Dinner buffet

Dieta Hall, the biggest room of the castle will wait for you the second round of the dinner – buffet, wine, plumbrandy, beer (any other kind of drink: on the spot – on your own)

Authentic mediaeval music played live  
 Folk dancing and music  
 Discoteca Halloween  
 Halloweenest costume contest  
 Lady Transylvania 2014 pageant, open to all the ladies of the group  
 Dracula's wedding show  
 The Investiture of the Lady T as Countess Dracula

Reminder: this is a Halloween in Transylvania, for Count's sake!  
 Overnight in Hunedoara, Transylvania.

### Nov. 1, DAY 5 – WAS IT ALL TRUE? OR.....

If you have survived this second taste of the afterlife throughout the night at Hunyadi's Fortress, you are cool.

There is no way to end a Society Tour on Dracula abruptly. One more day of emergence from the supernatural realms is absolutely necessary. This is that day: no more Dracula, no more pixies, goblins, trolls, werewolves or witches. Please return among the living.

Free, finally free – and surviving.

We leave Hunedoara, after visiting around the superb sites related to our Pre-Christian history. Cross the mountains to Sibiu. Visit and listen the legends here. You may wish to lunch where Carol XII of Sweden, Emperor Franz Joseph of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Franz Liszt, or even Johann Strauss have also lunched – at a hotel built in 1555, in mediaeval Sibiu (Cibinium – on the Roman maps). The towering Evangelic church in Sibiu shelters the tomb of Prince Mihnea – Vlad's son.

Dinner. Overnight in Sibiu – 4 star hotel

### Nov. 2, DAY 6 – BRASOV

Continue your trip in Transylvania, reaching Brasov. A new site on our way is The Citadel of Fagaras. The 1291 document of the First Attestation, is a record in which Ugrinus as a magistrate asked the King to return these lands to the Romanians. The document itself and the archaeological finds certainly support the existence of the feudal settlement of Fagaras before 1291.

Visit Castle Bran, 1377, defending the Transylvanian end of the Pass. This is the “American Castle Dracula” (since 1960), as it “looks very much like the vampires’ castles in the Hollywood movies” (TSD survey). Anyway, Bran does keep the mob from pestering the solitude of the Count in his remote Borgo Pass abode. Feel free to browse the wares from the Roma parked at its entrance, afterall it is the only place in the world where such things can be had.

Sightseeing of mediaeval Brasov (the second city of Transylvania) – of many and sometimes awesome memories of Vlad. Accommodation in Poiana Brasov – Alpin Hotel (4 star) Dinner.

### Nov. 3, DAY 7 – BUCURESTI

On the way to Bucuresti, the Capital of Romania, we shall stop on the Snagov Island, to listen the stories and legends related to Vlad the Impaler, told by the Priest there. Sightseeing of Bucuresti: historical sites, strolls. Optional (if we are arriving in Bucuresti in due time) we shall visit the Parliament House, the second largest building of the World, after the Pentagon.

Dinner and overnight in Bucuresti (4 star hotel)

### Nov. 4, DAY 8 / LONG, ROMANTIC DRACULARIANS!

Pending of your departure, free in Bucuresti or transfer to the airport.  
P.S. What about a Level 2 society tour on Dracula?

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