

Corpus Draculianum: Dokumente und Chroniken zum walachischen Fürsten Vlad dem Pfähler 1448–1650; Band 1: Briefe und Urkunden; Teil 1: Die Überlieferung aus der Walachei. Albert Weber and Adrian Gheorghe, eds.

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Corpus Draculianum: Dokumente und Chroniken zum walachischen Fürsten Vlad dem Pfähler 1448–1650; Band 1: Briefe und Urkunden; Teil 2: Die Überlieferung aus Ungarn, Mitteleuropa und dem Mittelmeerraum.

Albert Weber, Adrian Gheorghe, and Christof Paulus, eds.

Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018. xxxii + 362 pp. €88.

Corpus Draculianum is a collection of documents and chronicles belonging to the period between 1448 and 1650 regarding the world-famous—albeit controversial—Wallachian prince Vlad Dracula (r. 1448, 1456–1462, 1476/77), also named Țepeș (the Impaler, after his favored method of execution). The collection's editors did not respect the usual order of series volumes, which may create confusion for the reader. The first volume, *Briefe und Urkunden* (Letters and chancery documents), with its two parts *Die Überlieferung aus der Walachei* and *Die Überlieferung aus Ungarn, Mitteleuropa und dem Mittelmeerraum*, appeared after the third volume, *Die Überlieferung aus dem Osmanischen Reich: Postbyzantinische und osmanische Autoren* (ed. Albert Weber and Adrian Gheorghe [2013]). *Die Überlieferung aus dem Osmanischen Reich* comprises all post-Byzantine, Ottoman, Persian, and Arabic chronicles mentioning Vlad. The collection's second volume, compiling the European narrative sources, is still due to appear.

In presenting *Die Überlieferung aus der Walachei*, the editors stated that their intention is not to counteract the Romanian prince's vampirization through literature and films (he entered Western vampire mythology with Bram Stoker's *Dracula* [1893]). Rather, they wanted to revise the state of research by going back to historical sources, liberating him from historiographic, commercial, and other instrumentalization. He is still viewed in the West mostly as a Balkan tyrant with vampirical inclinations; in Romania, based in large part on the national historiography (since the nineteenth century but even more so during the communist period) as a symbol of an authoritarian ruler who defended national interests. On the other hand, ever since Florescu and McNally's *In Search of Dracula* was published in 1972, many visitors from the West come to Romania in search of the true story about Stoker's vampire. The editors even see a switch from "Voivode Vlad the Impaler" to "Voivode Dracula" in Romanian tourism marketing strategies after 1989, visible in initiatives such as the failed project of a Dracula Park in the Transylvanian town of Sighișoara where he was born.

The editors have gathered all known chronicles and diplomatic, epistolary, and literary documents, as well as sphragistic, numismatic, and epigraphic sources, among

which there are also new findings. They have tried to bring new source-critical interpretations, commentaries, and historical contexts to each source, based on recent research on the Romanian principalities. The documents are in seventeen languages, with German translations. The previously published texts were mostly reproduced after comparison with the originals; when this was not possible, the previous edition which best meets scientific standards was used. The editors have done research in Romanian, German, Austrian, Italian, Croatian, Spanish, and Turkish libraries and archives. In this collection, the sources are grouped in volumes according to their proximity to Vlad the Impaler, i.e., whether they originate from Wallachia, its neighboring countries, or more remote regions. Within their respective volumes, the sources are mainly presented in chronological order.

In part 1, all documents from Wallachian elites were published. It contains a foreword and an explanation of the abbreviations used, as does part 2, but also a presentation of editorial principles, including the rules of text transcription. An introduction to part 1 follows, which mainly comprises two shorter studies: a brief overview of the diplomacy of late medieval Wallachia and a study of the most important issues raised by Vlad's chancellery document production. The main chapter consists of sixty-eight written documents (all previously published), in full or in excerpts, as well as sphragistic, epigraphic, and numismatic sources (e.g., the only coin that is likely to be attributed to Vlad, only recently discovered).

Out of the written documents, thirty-one letters and other chancellery documents are from Vlad himself, and the others come from his allies or opponents: pretenders to the throne, boyars (nobles), and other Wallachian rulers. The sources are in Latin, Church Slavonic, Romanian, and Hungarian. One of the editors' main conclusions is that Vlad's state was much less centralized than previously thought; thus, the thesis of the boyars' hostility toward him, with far-reaching consequences, is not tenable anymore. The editors add a bibliography on Vlad the Impaler up to 2017, the genealogical tree of the Basarab dynasty to which he belonged, a chronology of Wallachian medieval rulers, and a short glossary of Romanian terms.

Part 2 completes the Wallachian sources with similar ones of foreign provenance. Italian diplomatic dispatches form a large part of the inventory, many of them being published for the first time here. This is also the case with, among others, Mehmed II's letter in Persian (known from before) about his campaign in Wallachia in 1462. Other European documents are of Hungarian (including Transylvanian), Moldavian, Polish, and German provenance. According to the editors, this corpus has not been sufficiently analyzed with a critical eye so far; analysis has instead come from the perspective of Vlad's "propagandistic demonization." Thus, this part of the collection also comprises an introductory study on the circulation of news and reports in connection with him during the epoch, and on the portrait drawn of him in European narrative sources. The former, especially the Italian dispatches, show Vlad neutrally or positively as an anti-Ottoman fighter, while in the latter ones (on which the scientific discourse is

usually based) he appears as a violent, even criminal, tyrant. There are 122 documents from the period between 1448 and 1489 in Latin, Italian, German, French, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish. Most of them are published in German translation for the first time. Both parts 1 and 2 comprise *regesta*, photographs of selected documents, Wallachian prince's portraits, tables, diagrams, maps, and indexes of persons and places.

This critical source edition is a very important enterprise for those interested in the Dracula myth (historical figure/vampire), the medieval history of Romania, and, in general, southeastern Europe (for example, its Ottoman conquest) or the late medieval crusades. The editors have made a considerable effort to gather and master very complex source material. Their desire for completeness brought together older sources but also new archival documents. Their approach to these sources is praiseworthy and must be placed within the context of the so-called uses and abuses of the Middle Ages. The editors offer some new readings of the previously published documents, trying to draw, along with the new findings, a more balanced and complete picture of Vlad's life and rule. Translation into German will help familiarize a broader potential audience with the historical material presented. However, these indispensable reference books on the matter also deserve to be translated into other languages, especially English, in order to widen the circle of those who can read the story of Vlad III Țepeș Drăcula as presented directly by the sources. And let us hope, along with its editorial team, that *Corpus Draculianum* will set new impulses for research in the field.

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Dracula. Matei Cazacu.

Ed. Stephen W. Reinert. Trans. Nicole Mordarski, Stephen W. Reinert, Alice Brinton, and Catherine Healey. *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450* 46. Leiden: Brill, 2017. xxxiv + 458 pp. \$172.

Matei Cazacu's *Dracula* is a book about Vlad the Impaler that attempts to capitalize on the celebrity of Bram Stoker's character. Unlike the classic story of the evil twin, in this case both the historical figure, a mid-fifteenth-century Wallachian lord, and his literary doppelgänger, the nineteenth-century vampire villain, display a taste for ferocious cruelty. The first six chapters of the book are a meticulously documented biography of Vlad, the fifteenth-century lord, set in a broader historical context. The seventh chapter deals with Vlad's competing memories throughout the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* enters the scene as late as the eighth chapter, when Cazacu looks into Stoker's literary sources and even discusses a possible plagiarism. The ninth and last chapter, a brief history of beliefs about vampires in Romania, is a rather feeble attempt to connect the medieval lord to his literary posterity. As Cazacu himself