DRACULA – YOUTH WITHOUT AGE AND LIFE WITHOUT DEATH

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Abstract:We have got used to seeing Dracula as a bloodthirsty vampire, a creature of night and darkness, the embodiment of the devil. This myth is built on some poor knowledge of occult myths and symbols (by occult we mean hidden and not evil because not everything that is hidden is also evil). We do not intend here to dismantle Dracula's archetypal image but we just want to draw attention to the fact that the myth has other deviations.

Keywords: Dracula, myth, archetype, Dacia, immortal

The historical character Vlad Ţepeş descends from the dynasty founded by Basarab I (1310 - 1354),the first prince of Wallachia. As the Ottoman expansion had already reached the Danube at the end of the XIVth century, and the only states separating Hungary from the Ottoman Empire were Serbia, Bosnia and Wallachia, the Hungarian king, Sigismund I of Luxembourg (1387-1437), attempted to bring these states under its suzerainty to strengthen its southern border. Thus, in 1408, he founded the Dragon Order, one of its aims being the defence of the Christian faith.

The future ruler of Târgovişte, Vlad II Dracul (1436 - 1442, 1443 - 1447), becomes a member of the Order in 1431, in which he will use his heraldic signs, namely the Dragon. Therefore, the presence of this dragon (a devil, as the Romanians called him), used by Vlad II in clothing, mint, etc., also generated the name, for differentiation, of his son, Vlad, Drăculea. Interesting is the fact that Vlad III is known in the Romanian historiography called The Impaler, a nickname given by Turkish historians since the 19th century. XV, as a result of the use of impales to punish serious deeds. The badly acquired image, unjustly, at the time, has two springs. First, it is the economic conflict with the Saxon townspeople in Braşov and Sibiu, whom he asks to pay for customs, and they take revenge by supporting various contenders at the throne, publishing defamatory material. Vlad reacts brutally through the burning of several villages in the spring of 1457 and 1460. Then Matei Corvin (1458-1490), King of Hungary, did not want to get involved in the military conflict with the Ottoman Gate, despite the money received from Pope Pius II and the Venetians. Although Vlad repeatedly demanded his help, Matei Corvin motivated his lack of reaction through the tyrannical and indefatigable character of the Wallachian ruler. Thanks to the propaganda capacity of Matei Corvin and the Transylvanian Saxon cities, Vlad the Impaler is for a time the embodiment of all the evils of the Eastern world, especially the one under the Ottoman influence.

At the end of the sec. XIX, the novelist Bram Stoker (1847 - 1912) made Dracula the Vampire famous and shadowed the voivode's image. Although the Bran Castle is presented as Dracula's Castle, it belonged in fact, to the King of Hungary, and it was meant to guard the road connecting Brasov to Campulung and Bran.

If we go directly to the heart of the novel "Dracula", we will find out its secrets. The Irish writer Bram Stocker puts the following words in Professor van Helsing's mouth: "The Draculas", he wrote, "had dealings with the Evil One. They learned his secrets in the Scholomance, amongst the mountains over Lake Hermanstadt, where the devil claims the tenth scholar as his due." (Bram Stoker, *Dracula,1972*) In the notes there are some words like: strigoi, witch, ordog and pokol, and

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in a manuscript, this Dracula is spoken of as a vampire, which we understand very well. The fact that the Dracula's vineyard is "chosen" and directly linked to Scholomance - Solomonari's School Order - as well as the neighboring of Sibiu (Hermannstadt) with the sacred mountain of the Dacians, Bucegi (Kogaion), completely changes Dracula's image and clarifies the entire mystery surrounding him. Another detail left out of sight is that Dracula has power over the wolves, is eternally young and immortal. The ignorance about the original myths makes the placing of the action in Transylvania unimportant in the eyes of the unread reader, although it is of the greatest importance regarding the true image of Dracula. We will begin to probe the depths of the Dracula myth from its placement in Transylvania to finally find out the hidden face of Count Dracula.

The Place of action and its meaning

"The Carpathian horseshoe became a center of all the whirlwinds of imagination," says Jonathan Harker in his diary(Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1972). Old Dacia was considered the Center of the World, the place where the earth communicates with heaven along the Column of Heaven, the Axis of the World in Romanian mythology, Axis Mundi of the Greek-Roman tradition. Moreover, viewed from either side, either from the east or from the west, Transylvania is a transit territory, which literally means a land situated between two worlds. And to move from one world to another it is necessary to pass through this land. In fact, Jonathan Harker, the English lawyer employed by Dracula to arrange his business in London, crosses the entire Transylvania to get to the Count's residence placed in another "crossing" area, a mountain pass. From a spiritual point of view, the transition from one world to another is made through initiatory death as demonstrated by the sending to heavens of the messenger that passed through the three stages of the megalithic temple in Bucegi in order to finally reach communion with Zamolxe on the altar of heaven (see *Kogaion, The Sacred Mount of Dacia*, 2007).

This representation of the triple initiation of the solomonar / messenger sent to Zamolxe by the Dacians is closely related to the image of the triple Druid chamber, represented as three concentric squares joined on each of the sides by a line which finally draws an imaginary cross, symbol of the Center and the manifestation of the center in the world. The area inside the last square is the Holy Land, the Old Court of Mateiu Caragiale, the Primordial Court with the meaning of "the oldest" designated by the square or circle inscribed in the center of some representations of the swastika.

It is the Court of Ler the Emperor identical to the spiritual center of the world. However, the three squares of the triple Druid encirclement that surrounds the center of the world have a different meaning from this point of view, namely that which reveals the title of "keepers of the holy country" borne by some chivalric orders of the Middle Ages. The Templars, the Ioannians, the Crusaders to name only the most famous, all had the title of *the holy country guardians, the guardians of an ancient ancestral tradition* (Rene Guenon, *Simboluri ale ştiinţei sacre,* 2008). In this light the opening that shows us a triple "enfolding" of the World Center is created: the warriors, king-priests, and the sarabos tereos / sarabos that Jordanes recalls, a super-cast of the Getic world out of which the great priests and kings were chosen. Turning back to Dracula and ignoring the fantastic stories of the merchants of Brasov and Sibiu that Vlad the Impaler affected their interests in Valahia, we will say that he, as Lord of Wallachia, was part of the "chosen vine" of the Draculas who were part of an esoteric chivalric order called the Dragon's order. Or the Dragon is in close connection with the Center, as the owner of wisdom. Thus, like King Arthur, he is legitimated as the Pole envoy of the Center at a strictly right time, as it is the case with the eight-pointed star (the octagon) that is crowning the front of Vlad the Impaler's fur cap. (Andreescu, Stefan, *Vlad Tepes (Dracula). Intre legenda si adevar istoric*, 1976)

On the other hand, the winding and mixing of the lines of the triple Druid chamber give rise to a vortex of a labyrinth, a labyrinth that is identical to the way the apprentice travels to reach the mysteries of initiation and which, in the Middle Ages, was traced on the pavement of cathedrals marking precisely this sense to the Center towards the "Holy Land".

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Switching from one world to another is done by crossing the "threshold", a threshold that is guarded by guardians, sometimes in the language of myths, like monsters. Dracula belongs to this category, as the Minotaur, the Cerberus, the Dragon belong to the same category.

Archetypes: castle, wolves, enchanted forest, immortality

Dracula's residence, where the English lawyer J. Harker finally arrives too, is a castle located in a mountainous landscape, on a cliff, watching imposingly and inaccessibly the entire wooded land. The Romanian tradition tells us that this Ler Emperor resides on a tall mountain, in a castle that no one can find but only the one that Ler the Emperor likes. Tradition also says that many people found this castle but did not return to the world of ordinary people. The resemblance goes to the identification with the features imprinted on Dracula's home.

Indeed, the English lawyer passes through a forest populated with wolves, defenders and convoys for Dracula's residence. The wolves have the same role that Ariadna and her thread have in the Minotaur labyrinth, just as the same Greek legend tells us that the young men were brought as "food" to the Minotaur who guarded the way to the center of the Labyrinth to obtain the full initiation. Actually, a wolf is the one who saves the young Englishman when he loses in a "Walpurgis night", the equivalent of "Sanziene' s nights" with the dangerous game of the wicked fairies (iele).

All the wolves, as defenders of the threshold, will be the ones who will threaten him on his way through the haunt of the witch forest, the maze, the initiatory road as he approaches the initiation place, the castle of Count Dracula but they retreat to the intervention of the Count who, himself, had the ability to turn into a wolf, calling these animals (wolves) children of the night. It has to be said that one of the capacities acquired by conjurors/solomonar at the end of their traineeship was the knowledge of the language of the animals.

The whole history of Dacia was under the sign of Zamolxe - the wolf. Identified with Apollo, Zamolxe is the Hyperborean wolf, the Great White Wolf, Apollo being also called the Lykaios/ wolf. (Lovinescu, V., *Dacia hiperboreană*, 1994)

The ancient name of the Dacians as defenders of the Spiritual Center of the World was *daoi* or *daoaus*, which in the traco-frigian dialect means *wolf*. The Pelasgians, the Dacians on these lands, were considered divine/dioi by Greeks. On the other hand, the wolves as animals perceived as children of the night are identical to the wolves as humans (daous / daoi)perceived as mothers of the earth, born out of the black earth (Geea). For the term Getae used by the Greeks to designate the inhabitants of Dacia meant nothing more than "Gea's sons (of the motherland)," as Pelasg was born on the high heights of the black earth to be the beginner of the mortal race. (The first man born on Earth was called Pelasg, and he was a particular exemplar from all points of view).

What is curious is that Dracula, when he goes to London, does not carry fortunes and things necessary to live on a daily basis, but chests with earth because he could only sleep in the earth from his home country. This tradition of carrying land with oneself in exile existed with the Romanians up to the last century. In Romanian mythology we also find the belief that the "lily-white wanderer", on his way of initiation, must make brother with the wolf in order to pass the threshold and cross the Great Divide, to the other world. The Englishman does not do this because he thinks he is too rational to believe in fairy tales and fails miserably.

The other realm is indissolubly linked to the mystery of youth without old age and life without death. These precepts were preached by the Dacian High Priest. Zamolxe's laws were not just moral perceptions applicable to society but perceptions that literally opened the door to immortality, not just of the soul but of the body too.

It may be strange but the fairies, the solomonaries, werewolves and other categories of mythical creatures seem very real in the descriptions of our peasants, and all these are identifiable with the priests and priestesses of the Zamolxian cult in its double hypostasis. In fact, Dracula himself is a dead, immortal dead man, who has acquired the mystery of life without death and youth without the old age, thus proving himself to be the Grand Master Initiator.

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Conclusions

The placement of the Dracula novel in Transylvania designates this Romanian land as the "enchanted forest", the same forest that appears in the Romanian fairytale *Harap Alb* or *Zâna Zânelor*, a space of mystery, initiation, death and rebirth. In the mountains of Transylvania, Dracula, the owner of immortality and youth without old age, is the guardian of the initiatic secret, which makes him identical to a "guarding monster of the threshold" between the two realities: Eternity and the world of mortals.

Even his living dead man's status shows the fact that he actually belongs to both worlds: to humans and to eternal life, to transitoriness and to eternity, exerting the fascination of forbidden things, the terror of the unknown, fully felt by the one that advances on the path of initiatory knowledge, the attraction of mystery and temptation.

As regards the terror of the unknown on the initiation path, Strabon states very clearly: "The soul is afflicted and agitated by death, just as it is the initiation into the great mysteries. The first stage consists only of errors and uncertainties, efforts, wandering and shadows. Then once you get to the brink of death and initiation, everything turns into appalling horrors and fears. But once this scene is over, here is a divine and miraculous world ...; perfectly initiated, you are crowned, triumphant, you are going through the areas of the blessed ones."

It is exactly the way Jonathan Harker walks disrespecting Dracula's interdictions. For Dracula, in his qualities, is identical to the Great Solomonar/Conjuror, who acquired the knowledge of animals' language, the ability to become unseen, dead for the world, yet living on the border between the worlds. He is the great Initiate and Initiator, High Priest and Great Hierophant, officiant of some ancient Initiative rites. As such, the castle of the Count could only be found on the archetypal mountain, the sacred mountain that connects heaven to earth, and where people can communicate with gods.

Through a crypt-like mythological language, Bram Stocker, shows us first of all an unsuccessful initiation, Jonathan Harker entering into a real whirlwind of horror because he violates the prohibitions imposed by the Grand Master Initiator who knew the dangers that would emerge in the candidate's way, as the master of the castle, of the Old Court. Therefore, the true heroes of the novel are not the English " good boys", but Dracula, a character that is by no means as negative as it seems at first glance.

At the end of the novel, Dracula is defeated by Professor van Helsing. But is he even defeated? His castle, which contained the mystery he owned, and which, from this point of view, is the same as the castle of Ler the Emperor where only the initiates(the chosen ones) can get and remain there forever. That castle remains as intangible and enigmatic, embracing within it the same secret: the mystery of life without death and youth without old age.

The mystery closed itself again as if contemptuous at a world of neophytes, too modernist, and too proud of its discoveries to believe in "fairy tales." The mystery has retreated in itself, remaining only known to those who have already acquired it by virtue of a law governing the running of a cycle: the alternation (night day, good evil, black and white).

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