CASTLES, CONFUSION, AND THE COUNT: VLAD THE IMPALER'S IMPACT ON TOURISM IN ROMANIA

Rachel Lawrence

ABSTRACT

Vlad the Impaler is often buried in the vampire myths of Count Dracula, even in Romania where the Impaler lived and died. His castles are forgotten, while those stolen by Bram Stoker and Hollywood reap the benefits of a shadow of association. Despite this, Romania capitalizes on Vlad’s image, and blends it with the vampire to create a booming tourist industry. If this continues, Vlad the Impaler, who is identified as a Romanian national hero, will be lost in the image of something far worse, and Romania will lose its hero to a myth.

Vlad the Impaler (1431-1476) was the inspiration for Bram Stoker’s Count Dracula, and the Impaler’s family name was in fact Dracula. Stoker adopted the name for his blood-sucking Count, and now the two seem interchangeable. Castle Bran is called Dracula’s Castle, but little evidence suggests that Vlad was ever there. Vlad the Impaler’s castle is largely unknown, yet has a completely different history and exemplifies the Impaler’s drive for order and defense, and now the two seem interchangeable. Castle Bran is called Dracula’s Castle, but little evidence suggests that Vlad was ever there. The Impaler’s castle is largely unknown, yet has a completely different history and exemplifies the Impaler’s drive for order and defense, and now the two seem interchangeable. Castle Bran is called Dracula’s Castle, but little evidence suggests that Vlad was ever there.

A Dracula Land theme park in 2001 was supposedly going to mix the Count and the Prince, making it educational yet interesting, and making resources available for both the Count and the Impaler. Finally, the Impaler’s lost grave, and corpse, has not helped the vampire myth. These aspects of the Prince-Count confusion require analysis in order to separate the two. By examining two castles, a failed theme park, and the alleged grave of the Impaler, the Prince and the Count can be distinguished, the Impaler’s national-hero status can be evaluated, and potential impacts on Romanian tourism can be explored.

KEYWORDS

Romania; Dracula; Tourism

FULL TEXT:

PDF

REFBACKS

There are currently no refbacks.

The Proceedings is produced as a service of UNC Asheville.