

# Domesticating the Vampire Trope Through Translation: The Case of the Two 1897 Translations of Jules Verne's *Le château des Carpathes* (1892)

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## Domesticating the Vampire Trope Through Translation: The Case of the Two 1897 Translations of Jules Verne's *Le château des Carpathes* (1892)

**Abstract:** One of the earliest and most important works of vampire literature to be translated into Romanian is Jules Verne's *Le château des Carpathes* (1892), which saw no less than two renditions in 1897, the year in which Bram Stoker released his famous *Dracula*: Victor Onișor's, published in the then Austro-Hungarian province of Transylvania and an anonymous version, serialized in a Bucharest-based publication from Romania. Although not comparable in terms of production value and critical reception, the two translations find common ground in the fact that they reduce the already minimal presence of vampires in the French author's work in favor of the local "strigoi." This domesticating practice, witnessed as late as 2009 in the case of renditions from the Romanian, appears to have applied in the opposite direction as well, which contributed to a belated association of the term "vampire," heavily influenced by the late nineteenth-century political and pop culture discourses from the West, with the bloodthirsty monster popularized by Stoker.

**Keywords:** domestication, *Dracula*, Bram Stoker, Jules Verne, *Le château des Carpathes*, strigoi, Transylvania, vampire

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Five years before the publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Jules Verne released what Elizabeth Miller considers to be "[t]he best-known work"<sup>1</sup> to associate literary vampires with Transylvania or the Carpathians, *Le château des Carpathes* [*The Castle of the Carpathians*] (1892). The French novelist was not the first writer to make this connection; his mentor, Alexandre Dumas père, made this region the setting of his 1849 "La dame pâle" ["The Pale Lady"], a short "story about a vampire who haunts the Carpathians,"<sup>2</sup> which appears to have been rendered into Romanian as early as 1852,<sup>3</sup> and in 1860, an

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1. Elizabeth Miller, *Dracula: Sense and Nonsense* (Westcliff-on-Sea: Desert Island Books, 2011), 168.

2. Miller, *Dracula*, 167

3. Al. Piru, "Dumas și românii," *Luceafărul* (Bucharest), July 30, 1977, DigiTheca Arcanum.



anonymous German-language author<sup>4</sup> published “The Mysterious Stranger,” where “a Vampire Count terrorizes a family in this area.”<sup>5</sup>

Unlike those two works, however, Verne’s novel does not feature a vampire antagonist per se, even though, as mentioned previously, it is credited as the building block of the Transylvanian vampire trope. In Romania, *Le château des Carpathes* is even more relevant to the myth: the novel has seen at least nine translations into Romanian,<sup>6</sup> and the first one, produced by Victor Onișor and published in 1897, when Stoker released *Dracula*, is the first Romanian rendition of a work by Verne to appear in a book-length format.<sup>7</sup> In this article, I will explore Verne’s contribution to the vampire trope and analyze how the first two translations of *Le château des Carpathes* published in 1897—Onișor’s version, released in Transylvania, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the anonymous rendition, serialized in a Bucharest-based publication from Romania—handled the trope during a period when the word “vampire” was rarely associated with the undead in the target culture.

### Early Intersections of the Trope of the Vampire and *Strigoi* in Translation

When Verne’s *Le château des Carpathes* reached the Romanian market, only fifty years passed since the word “vampire” was introduced in the Romanian language by Constantin Negruzzi’s 1839 translation of Victor Hugo’s “La Ronde du Sabbat” [The Sabbath Round-Dance],<sup>8</sup> which also featured a word of the translator’s own addition, “*strigoi*.” As I show in an article on the early history of the vampire trope in Romania, this country, “widely considered to be the cradle of the [...] myth, was, in fact, neither its originator nor its innovator,” at least in point of the Stokerian acceptance of the term.<sup>9</sup> In 1868, ethnographer Nicolae Densușianu notes that “Lord Byron’s vampire [from the short story ‘Fragment of a Novel’], August Darwell, [sic] [was] foreign to Romanians in Transylvania,”<sup>10</sup> and the episode of the vampire blunder in the first scene of Ion Luca Caragiale’s *O scrisoare pierdută* [The Lost Letter] (1885) seems to confirm it. Although included in a Romanian-language dictionary in 1862,<sup>11</sup> the actual use of the word rarely, if ever, included the supernatural dimension of the word. At the time, what was meant by “vampire” “align[ed] closely with the developments seen in the German and French cultures, to which the Romanian society looked for inspiration,”<sup>12</sup> and in the late nineteenth-century, two of the most popular uses of the word appear to have been the one promoted by Karl Marx, whose *Das Kapital*

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4. Tyler R. Tichelaar, who holds a doctorate in Gothic literature, argues in a blog post that “The Mysterious Stranger” is “an unauthorized translation of Karl Von Wachsmann’s story ‘The Stranger’ first published in 1844, more than half a century before *Dracula*, and only a quarter of a century after the publication of [John] Polidori’s *The Vampyre*, considered the first real European and definitely English vampire story.” Tyler R. Tichelaar, “Bram Stoker’s Carpathian Sources for *Dracula*,” *Gothic Wanderer* (blog). WordPress. September 21, 2020. <https://thegothicwanderer.wordpress.com/tag/the-mysterious-stranger/>.

5. Miller, *Dracula*, 168.

6. Gabriela Aurelia Chiran, author of *Limba română literară în traduceri succesive din Jules Verne* [The Literary Romanian Language in Successive Translations from Jules Verne] (2020), identifies only eight translations because she either did not have access to or was not aware of the 1897 serialized rendition of *Le château des Carpathes*. Gabriela Aurelia Chiran, *Limba română literară în traduceri succesive din Jules Verne* (Bucharest: Editura universitară, 2020) 8.

7. It had been serialized first that same year in the Sibiu-based newspaper *Tribuna* [The Tribune], but it was soon republished in a deluxe illustrated edition by the newspaper’s publishing house. Georgiana Lungu-Badea, *Repertoriul traducătorilor români de limbă franceză, italiană, spaniolă (secolele al XVIII-lea și al XIX-lea): Studii de istorie a traducerii (I)* (Timișoara: Editura Universității de Vest, 2006), 167. See also Ștefan Baghiu, “Translations of Novels in the Romanian Culture During the Long Nineteenth Century (1794-1914): A Quantitative Perspective,” *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* 6, no. 2 (2020): 87-106.

8. In *Dicționar de magie, demonologie și mitologie românească* [Dictionary of Romanian Magic, Demonology and Mythology] (1997), Ivan Evseev asserts that Negruzzi published his version of Hugo’s ballad in 1872. *Dicționar de magie, demonologie și mitologie românească*, s.v. “Vampir.” However, Romanian critic Eugen Lovinescu shows that Negruzzi’s translation was initially released on September 17, 1839. Eugen Lovinescu, *Costache Negruzzi: Viața și opera lui* (Bucharest: Editura Institutului de arte grafice “Minerva”, 1913), 96.

9. Anca Simina Martin, “The Trope of the Vampire (and *Strigoi*) in Romanian Culture and Cultural Products Imported to Romania (1839–1947),” *Revista Transilvania*, nr. 7 (2023): 21.

10. Nicolae Densușianu, “Scrutări mitologice la români,” *Familia* (Pesth), October 29 / November 10, 1868, *Digitheca Arcanum*.

11. Iorgu Iordan, “Un dicționar de neologisme românești din anul 1862,” *Studii și cercetări lingvistice* 1 (1950): 57.

12. Martin, “The Trope of the Vampire,” 21.

[*Capital*] (1867) envisions capital as a vampire who feeds of the working class's "living labor,"<sup>13</sup> and that of the *femme fatale*, depicted in the period's movies as a woman who draws financial sustenance and confirmation from men's infatuation with her.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, the *strigoi*, a folk creature similar to vampires—particularly in the sense that the dead variety of this monster signifies those who have "risen from the grave"<sup>15</sup>—had already carved out a solid literary niche for itself, featuring in lesser-known poems such as Alexandru Sihleanu's "Strigoiul" [The *Strigoi*] (1819), which opens with a verse from Byron's *Mazeppa*, a poem published alongside "Fragment of a Novel," one of the first English-language vampire stories. Additionally, there was the more celebrated "Strigoiul" ["The Vampire"] (1849) by Vasile Alecsandri and Costache Negri, the only Romanian work in Otto Penzler's *The Vampire Archives* (2009). Another noteworthy piece, and perhaps the most famous, was Mihai Eminescu's "Strigoi" ["Ghosts"] (1879), thought to have been partially inspired by Gottfried A. Bürger's "Lenore," from which one of Jonathan Harker's coach companions quotes when encountering Dracula's "strange driver" in Stoker's novel. Although not the only works to exploit this trope, what those listed here have in common is that, at surface level, they exhibit an indirect link with the Western vampire—via direct or indirect references to other vampire-related pieces, as is the case of Sihleanu's and Eminescu's poems, or through translation, such as Alecsandri's work—, while in actuality, they display a rather substantial semantic dissimilarity: if Stoker's vampire, which informed the modern iteration of the myth, is a bloodsucking monster, the *strigoi* is essentially a ghost in all the three works mentioned above.<sup>16</sup>

What these sort yet illustrative examples show is that translators from different decades, whether Romanians or not—Alecsandri's poem was rendered by William Beatty-Kingston in 2009, whereas "Strigoi" was produced by English feminist Sylvia Pankhurst in collaboration with a Romanian consultant (I.O. Stefanovici) in 1936—tend to domesticate the trope of the *strigoi*, substituting it with the non-culture-specific "ghost" and, in rare cases, with "vampire." Since Verne's *Le château des Carpathes* is not only one of the earliest pieces of vampire literature to be rendered into Romanian but also the source text for two distinct Romanian translations published in the year in which Stoker released his *Dracula*, a closer look at how those two versions approach the myth may reveal that the domesticating practice extended to translations into the Romanian as well.

### The Two 1897 Translations of Jules Verne's *Le château des Carpathes*

To further explore and understand this phenomenon, a short preamble regarding the two 1897 renditions into Romanian is in order. In 1839, at the time when Negruzzi's rendition of Hugo's "La Ronde du Sabbat" introduced the word "vampire" in the language, the country's elite had already embraced French culture, following the Russo-Turkish War of 1828–29, which diminished the Ottoman Empire's influence on Moldavia and Wallachia and brought the two Romanian Principalities under the protectorate of a French-speaking Slav aristocracy.<sup>17</sup>

"[S]tarting immediately after 1830, French imposed itself as the language of culture,"<sup>18</sup> and the youth of Moldavia and Wallachia flocked to Paris for higher education. The influence of French culture persisted for decades, and Transylvania, a Habsburg, then Austro-Hungarian crown province since 1804, "looked sympathetically towards France," too, despite the fact that "the German cultural model

13. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume One. Chapter Ten: The Working-Day. Section One: The Limits of the Working-Day," *Marxists*, 1999, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch10.htm>.

14. For an in-depth chronological discussion of those two semantic dimensions of the vampire trope in Romania, see Martin, "The Trope of the Vampire," 17–25.

15. *Dicționar de magie, demonologie și mitologie românească*, s.v. "Strigoi."

16. The *strigoi* in Sihleanu's and Alecsandri's poems are a "ghost-like" matricide and "a frightened ghost [...] who rises from the grave" respectively, while in Eminescu's "Strigoi," Maria/Mary, "the Danube Queen," is described as a ghost and Arald—the other *strigoi*, judging by the title of the work—dies in order to be reunited with her, meaning that he also becomes a ghost, as also suggested by Sylvia Pankhurst and I.O. Stefanovici's first translation into English. Alexandru Sihleanu, "Strigoiul," in *Poesii: Armonii intime* (Vălenii de Munte: Tipografia "Neamul Românesc", 1909), 33. Vasile Alecsandri, "Strigoiul," in *Opere complete (I): Poesii* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socec & Comp., 1896), 53. Mihai Eminescu, "Ghosts," trans. E. Sylvia Pankhurst and I.O. Stefanovici, in *Poems of Mihail Eminescu* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1930), 69–108.

17. Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 160.

18. Boia, *History and Myth*, 161.



was dominant for the Romanians of Transylvania.”<sup>19</sup> In fact, it was Sibiu, one of the region’s most prominent multiethnic burghs, that saw the release of the first translation of Jules Verne’s *Le château des Carpathes* [*Castelul din Carpați*] in 1897—which was also the first rendition of a work by Verne to be published in book-length format—, produced and prefaced by Victor Onișor and Elie Dăianu respectively, advocates of the Memorandum movement, who “[foregrounded] Hungarian oppression [in the novel] and silently [localized] the German foreign element, while simultaneously emphasizing Transylvania’s agency and the Romanian element.”<sup>20</sup>

The same year also saw the release of *Castelul Carpaților*, a second rendition of the novel in Romania, serialized anonymously starting with the first issue of the Bucharest-based publication *Ziarul călătoriilor și al întâmplărilor de pe mare și uscat* [The Journal of Travels and Adventures by Land and Sea]. Even though it did not garner as much critical attention as the Transylvanian version, and it “features too much translational inconsistency and too little textual evidence” to suspect “a silent dialogue” with Onișor’s version on the Transylvanian question,<sup>21</sup> its publication is nonetheless relevant, bearing witness to the fact that Romania and Transylvania found a common ground in their appreciation of French culture. However, “although released in late May, several months before the two [renditions], neither the preface to the book-length edition of Onișor’s *Castelul din Carpați* and its reviews, nor the press articles advertising the unsigned [translation] mention the publication” of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*.<sup>22</sup>

The reviewers, however, duly noted that, in their opinion, the novel “[provided] an accurate representation of the cultural and national relations of the Romanians across the mountains,”<sup>23</sup> while also “[remarking] on [...] [its] contribution to promoting scientific advancements [...] [and] [commenting] on their role in ‘combating ill-founded beliefs in ghost and supernatural beings,’ merits which Dăianu also highlights in his preface” to Onișor’s Transylvanian rendition.<sup>24</sup> Singular voices such as Transylvanian-born critic Ilarie Chendi argue to the contrary, claiming that “[t]he more [...] superstitious [the French novelist] portrays [Romanians], [...] the more *impactful* his novel.”<sup>25</sup> The superstitions to which Chendi refers include, among others, Verne’s allegation that Transylvanians believe in vampires.

### **The Genus *Vampiricus* in *Le château des Carpathes***

However, as mentioned previously, *Le château des Carpathes* does not feature a vampire villain in Stoker’s apprehension of the term, i.e., a bloodsucking undead monster. It does contain, on the other hand, two characters who share some similarities with this understanding of the trope. First, there is Orfanik, whom “[t]he learned world had taken [...] for a madman, whereas he was a man of genius,” developing an “inappeasable hatred” of his peers who could not grasp that “in all that concerns the practical application of electricity [he was] an inventor of the first order.”<sup>26</sup> With funds from his equally mysterious and lonesome patron, Baron Rodolphe de Gortz, Orfanik would become, according to Christopher Frayling, an “evil [scientist] posing as a [vampire] to keep the peasants away”<sup>27</sup> from de Gortz’s isolated castle in the Carpathians, an interpretation with which Carol A. Senf agrees in *The*

19. Boia, *History and Myth*, 163.

20. Anca Simina Martin, “Jules Verne and the Transylvanian Struggle for Independence: Political Appropriation in Victor Onișor’s 1897 Translation of *Le château des Carpathes*,” in *The German Model in Romanian Culture / Das deutsche Vorbild in der rumänischen Kultur*, eds. Maria Sass, Ovio Olaru and Andrei Terian (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2023), 84.

21. Martin, “Jules Verne,” 84.

22. Martin, “Jules Verne,” 75–6.

23. Tribuna literară, “Voci din presă despre *Castelul din Carpați*: Liga Română,” *Tribuna* (Sibiu), February 10 / 22, 1898. Digitheca Arcanum.

24. Martin, “Jules Verne,” 85.

25. Original emphasis. Ilarie Chendi, “Jules Verne: *Castelul din Carpați*. Recensiuie (II),” *Familia* 47 (1897): 555.

26. From this point onward, I use the 1900 English translation of Verne’s novel to ensure consistency with the language in which this article was written and accommodate readers who are not fluent in French. Wherever Verne’s text and this rendition do not coincide, I give my own translation or provide in square brackets the source-text counterpart. Jules Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians* (Akron: The Saalfield Publishing Company, 1900), 187.

27. Christopher Frayling, *Vampyres: Genesis and Resurrection from Count Dracula to Vampirella* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2016), 49.

*Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (1988).<sup>28</sup> Verne, however, outlines a different portrait for this character; specifically, a closer reading of the text reveals that Orfanik, disheartened with the scientific world and “in the depths of misery,”<sup>29</sup> would attach himself at de Gortz’s hip, who “encouraged him in his work, [...] [helping] him with money [...] on the condition that [de Gortz] alone should profit by his inventions.”<sup>30</sup>

In other words, the baron appears to have exploited the scientist—his name, which seems to derive from the word “orphan,” suggests that he was in need of a figure of authority, as do the narrator’s rhetorical questions on the scientist’s background, “[h]ow old was he? whence was he born?”<sup>31</sup>—, a theory which is more plausible in light of Orfanik’s interests outside de Gortz; for instance, “[w]hile the [baron] was intoxicating himself with the singing of the incomparable [prima donna La Stilla, with whom he was obsessively in love], Orfanik was busy in completing the discoveries made by electricians,”<sup>32</sup> and after de Gortz’s death, which “seemed in no way to affect this learned egotist and maniac,”<sup>33</sup> the scientist “made no difficulty about replying to the questions put to him in the course of the [magistrates’] inquiry,”<sup>34</sup> showing once again that, as the narrator puts it, Orfanik’s “heart was,” indeed, “entirely in his inventions.”<sup>35</sup> But what did his inventions consist of and which of them made Frayling and Senf believe that the “evil scientist is posing as a vampire”?

First, he metaphorically brought La Stilla back to life after her untimely death by recording her final performance on a phonograph and throwing a light on a portrait of hers “[b]y means of glasses inclined at a certain angle,” which made “La Stilla [appear] by reflection as real as if she were alive.”<sup>36</sup> Second, in order to protect the castle from prying eyes, Orfanik devised a piece of “machinery, which was always in working order,” projecting “diagram outlines of monsters [...] on to the clouds” and “[giving] a spectral appearance to everything.”<sup>37</sup> To some extent, such phenomena—“resurrecting” the dead and “controlling” various phenomena—are, indeed, part of a vampire’s arsenal, but rather than confirm that Orfanik poses as a proto-Stokerian vampire, these inventions, owing as they do the baron’s obsession with La Stilla and privacy, and not least to his finances, prove once again that the scientist’s pursuits were intended to satisfy his patron’s wishes first and foremost.

In *Dracula and the Eastern Question*, Matthew Gibson proposes a different interpretation, arguing that in his novel, Verne takes Paul Féval’s Hungarian vampire from *La Vampire [The Vampire Countess]*, whose “eternal youth” is preserved “by preying upon the young and beautiful” and turns it into the myth of a Hungarian vampire—or of the environs of the Austro-Hungarian empire,<sup>38</sup> to be exact—“who both draws the real life out of his object of desire and preserves it,” not by means of supernatural forces but through the use of technology.<sup>39</sup> However, reading the baron as a vampire implies, like in the case of his protégé, Orfanik, reading not only La Stilla’s “resurrection” as a technologized vampiric transformation but also her untimely death as the work of an energy vampire, who, by feeding on her living labor—“it was not the woman but the voice which had become so necessary to [the baron’s] life as the air he breathed”<sup>40</sup>—, “[does] not seem to have aged.”<sup>41</sup>

The only vampires per se to feature in Verne’s novel are, in fact, a collective character, yet unlike all the other explicit supernatural creatures in *Le château des Carpathes*—which are also the product of Orfanik’s illusion-inducing machines—, they are, in fact, relegated to three fleeting mentions. The first reference, which comes at the very beginning of the novel, appears in a context in which the narrator

28. Carol A. Senf, *The Vampire in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 14.

29. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 187.

30. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 187.

31. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 126.

32. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 187.

33. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 207.

34. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 207.

35. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 207.

36. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 209.

37. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 190.

38. Matthew Gibson, *Dracula and the Eastern Question: British and French Vampire Narratives of the Nineteenth-Century Near East* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 152.

39. Gibson, *Dracula and the Eastern Question*, 152.

40. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 125.

41. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 184.





explains that Frik, the shepherd of the village near the castle, believes himself capable of controlling “vampires and stryges,”<sup>42</sup> which seems to suggest that the narrator refers to two different creatures. The second one, however, portrays them as the same entity, with “[t]he pope and the school-master [...] [affirming] [...] that vampires known as stryges, because they shrieked like stryges, quenched their thirst on human blood.”<sup>43</sup> Further into *Le château des Carpathes*, when Verne refers for the third and last time to vampires, this time without mentioning the “stryges,” the narrator describes how the former are “[fighting] to seize [Patak, the village doctor] in their claws or swallow him in their jaws,”<sup>44</sup> which seems to indicate once again that vampires and “stryges” are separate breeds of monsters.

However, there is evidence to suspect a relation of synonymy between “vampires” and “stryges,” especially when considering that Verne appears to use a second spelling variant of the latter, “striges”; like “vampires,” “stryges” feature three times in the work, twice accompanied by “vampires” and once in an enumeration with “dragons and fairies,”<sup>45</sup> yet the text also contains two occurrences of “striges,” one earlier in Patak’s recollection of the monsters haunting him, when he describes “their nocturnal flight,”<sup>46</sup> and the other when the narrator explains how, “[d]uring the first week of June no one would [...] work in the fields,” lest “[t]he coulter of the plough [...] might [...] set in flight a flock” of “striges.”<sup>47</sup> The *Dictionnaire général de la langue française du commencement du XVIIe siècle à nos jours* [General Dictionary of the French language from the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day] (1926) confirms not only that Verne uses “stryge” and “strige” interchangeably—the preferred variant of the word was the former until 1835—but also the fact that one of its obsolete meanings is that of “vampire.”<sup>48</sup>

### Translation Approaches to the Vampire Trope in the 1897 Romanian Translations

This spelling inconsistency, coupled with the semantic versatility of the word “*strigoi*,” gave way, as seen in Table 1, to several translation variants for the trope discussed in this article:

VERNE	ONIȘOR	ANONYMOUS
According to him, the vampires and stryges obeyed him <sup>49</sup>	Unii spuneau, că de el ascultă <b>strigoii</b> <sup>50</sup> [Some said that the <i>strigoi</i> listen to him]	Unii spuneau că vampirii și <b>vîrcolacii</b> ascultau de vorba lui <sup>51</sup> [Some were saying that vampires and <b>werewolves</b> listened to him]

42. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 6

43. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 24.

44. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 78.

45. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 25.

46. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 77.

47. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 103.

48. *Dictionnaire général de la langue française du commencement du XVIIe siècle à nos jours*, s.v. “Strige.”

49. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 6.

50. Jules Verne, *Castelul din Carpați: Roman din viața poporului românesc din Ardeal*, trans. Victor Onișor (Sibiu: Tipografia, 1897), 8.

51. Jules Verne, *Castelul Carpaților (I), Ziarul călătoriilor și al întâmplărilor de pe mare și uscat 1* (1897): 5.

<p>They affirmed, and even produced “corroborative evidence” that [...] vampires known as <b>stryges</b>, because they shrieked like [<b>strygies</b>], quenched their thirst on human blood<sup>52</sup></p>	<p>Pe basă de dovezi pipăibile, ei afirmă, că pe câmp umblă [...] <b>strigoi</b>, cari strigă după sânge de om<sup>53</sup></p> <p>[On the basis of tangible evidence, they affirm, that the <i>strigoi</i>, who are crying for human blood]</p>	<p>—</p>
<p>They looked like [...] enormous <b>vampires</b>, fighting to seize him in their claws or swallow him in their jaws<sup>54</sup></p>	<p>se văd [...] <b>vampiri</b> enormi, cari s’avântă în toate părțile, cască gura, întind ghiarele, ca și când ar vre să prindă și să înghită<sup>55</sup></p> <p>[enormous <b>vampires</b> are seen, who rush in all directions, their mouths open, stretching out their claws, as if they want to grab and swallow]</p>	<p>S’ar fi zis că erau [...] <b>liliaci</b> uriași, cari se lăsau spre dînsul, ca și cum ar fi vrut să-l apuce în ghiare, ori să-l înghiță de viu<sup>56</sup></p> <p>[It was as if they were [...] huge <b>bats</b> that swooped down on him as if they wanted to grab him in their claws or swallow him alive]</p>
<p>On that isolated plateau, inaccessible, [...] there could be no doubt that there lived dragons and fairies and <b>stryges</b><sup>57</sup></p>	<p>Pe această înălțime izolată, inaccesibilă, [...] nu puteau se locuească altceva decât balauri, zine, <b>strigoi</b><sup>58</sup></p> <p>[On this isolated, inaccessible peak, [...] nothing but dragons, fairies, and <i>strigoi</i> could live]</p>	<p>—</p>

52. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 24. The square brackets signal that the English rendition of the novel used in this article differs from the original. In this case, the English translator employs the word “stryges” twice—“vampires known as stryges, because they shrieked like stryges”—yet in Verne’s text, vampires are said to shriek like “strygies.” Jules Verne, *Le château des Carpathes* (Paris: J. Hetzel et Compagnie, 1892), 36. This term does not feature in the previously mentioned *Dictionnaire général de la langue française* (1926), and it appears only once in *Le château des Carpathes*. This indicates either that Verne uses inconsistent spellings of the same word, or that he intended the second occurrence of the term to read like a different term altogether, which was not enshrined in the dictionary. If the latter is true, the word probably refers to what the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* and *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române* [The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language] identify as an “[owl] that [lacks] ear tufts, [...] including the tawny owl and the barred owl” or a “nocturnal bird of prey, reddish yellow with dark brown spots, which feeds mainly on mice.” *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “Strix.” *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române* ‘09, s.v. “Strigă.”

53. Verne, *Castelul din Carpați*, 28.

54. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 78.

55. Verne, *Castelul din Carpați*, 29.

56. Jules Verne, *Castelul Carpaților* (VI), *Ziarul călătoriilor și al întâmplărilor de pe mare și uscat* 4 (1897): 31.

57. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 25.

58. Verne, *Castelul din Carpați*, 29.

<p>He heard the nyctalops fanning the rocks with frenzied wing, the [<b>striges</b>] in their nocturnal flight<sup>59</sup></p>	<p>Mai auzia rîndunelele de noapte, cari în sbor atingeau cu aripile lor stîncile, <b>liliecii</b> eșiți la plimbarea lor nocturnă<sup>60</sup></p> <p>[you would hear the night owls, which in flight touched the rocks with their wings, the <b>bats</b> on their nocturnal flight]</p>	<p>Auzia bufnițele cari zburau pe d’asupra stîncelor, <b>liliacii</b> făcându’și preumblarea de noapte<sup>61</sup></p> <p>He could hear the owls flying over the rocks, the <b>bats</b> having their nightly flight]</p>
<p>The coulter of the plough as it cut the furrow, might it not set in flight a flock of staffii or [<b>striges</b>]?<sup>62</sup></p>	<p>De sub brazdele plugului, scormonind răzoarele n’ar fi putut să iasă cete întregi de stafii și de <b>strigoii</b>?<sup>63</sup></p> <p>[Wouldn’t whole groups of <i>strigoi</i> and ghosts come out from under the coulter of the plow, digging up the furrow?]</p>	<p>[...] oare plugul brăzdând pămîntul nu va face să zboare cărdurile de stafii sau de <b>cucuvele</b>?<sup>64</sup></p> <p>[wouldn’t the plow furrowing the soil make the bevy of ghosts or <b>little owls</b> fly?]</p>

As is readily evident from the entries in Table 1, Onișor prefers the local *strigoi* as an equivalent for “vampires,” and the spelling variants “stryes” and “striges,” preserving the former only once, when it is not accompanied by “stryges.” In other words, whenever the source text implies a relation of synonymy between “vampires” and “stryges,” the Transylvanian translator emphasizes the aural and semantic similarity between “stryges” and “*strigoi*” at the expense of the Western—and possibly lesser-known—vampire. Conversely, the anonymous translator, when it does not abridge Verne’s references to the supernatural creatures haunting the castle, replaces “vampires” and “stryges/striges” with the target-language counterparts for “bat” and “little owl.” In fact, the only instance in which this phenomenon does not occur is the first one in Table 1, when the source text explicitly calls for words that denote otherworldly beings, describing Frik the shepherd as “a sorcerer, a caller-up of apparitions.”<sup>65</sup> In all the other contexts, which portray “stryges/striges” as birds, the unknown translator appears to exploit the fact that these source-text terms and the target-language “*strigoi*” derive from the same root, the Latin word “striga,” which in Romanian has produced “strigă,” a derivative of “*strigoi*,” referring to nocturnal birds, as explained in endnote #52. A similar phenomenon appears partially in Onișor’s rendition, where he translates “striges” as “bats” in a context in which, at first sight, Verne does not appear to reference supernatural entities—“He heard nyctalops [animals with night vision] fanning the rocks with frenzied wing, the [striges] in their nocturnal flight”—, while resorting back to “*strigoi*” in the following one, where “striges” features accompanied by “staffii” [ghosts]. That the anonymous translator resorts, in this context, to “little owls” instead of a word denoting otherworldly beings in this confirms, in my view, that the unnamed translator deliberately minimized Verne’s depiction of Transylvanians as a superstitious people.

However, a preference for “*strigoi*” is witnessed in the case of the anonymous translator, too, with the caveat that they use it only when the context explicitly mentions supernatural beings:

59. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 77. In this case and the next one, the English translation features the spelling “stryges,” while Verne uses “striges.” Verne, *Le château des Carpathes*, 116.

60. Verne, *Castelul din Carpați*, 89.

61. Verne, *Castelul Carpaților* (VI), 30.

62. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 103.

63. Verne, *Castelul din Carpați*, 120.

64. Jules Verne, *Castelul Carpaților* (VIII), *Ziarul călătoriilor și al întâmplărilor de pe mare și uscat* 6 (1897): 45.

65. Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, 6.



Table 2. “ <i>Strigoi</i> ” as Substitute for Other Supernaturals Entities (in order of appearance)	
ONIȘOR	ANONYMOUS
gobelins [goblins]	—
génie malfaisant [evil genie]	génie (malfaisant) [(evil) genie] x8
maléfices [curses] x2	—
êtres surnaturels [supernatural beings]	êtres surnaturels [supernatural beings]
château visionné [haunted castle] > Onișor: castel locuit de strigoi [castle inhabited by <i>strigoi</i> ]	—
—	esprits [spirits] x6
—	êtres surhumains [superhuman beings]
—	revenant de mauvaise mine [evil-looking revenant]

Table 2 shows that Onișor’s translation features six extra mentions of “*strigoi*” in addition to the four instances reproduced in Table 1, while the anonymous translator uses the word nearly twice as frequently, amounting to a total of 17 occurrences. What is particularly interesting regarding the two translators’ use of “*strigoi*” as substitute for other supernatural entities is not only the fact that it coincides in just two contexts—“génie (malfaisant)” [(evil) genie] and “êtres surnaturels” [supernatural beings]—but also that the unnamed translator is, in this case, more consistent than Onișor in terms of what the term replaces in the target text. More specifically, in the anonymous rendition, “*strigoi*” replaces ghastly apparitions—genies, supernatural and superhuman beings, spirits, as well as revenants—, which is in line with the meaning with which the word appears in contemporary local texts, such as the poems mentioned earlier in this article.

### Conclusion

What this article shows is that the two translations of *Le château des Carpathes* published in 1897 do not establish a silent dialogue on Transylvania’s struggle for union with Romania, but they find a common ground in the fact that they domesticate Verne’s text, replacing non-culture-specific references to supernatural beings and “vampires” with the Romanian-specific “*strigoi*.” Although not the first renditions of a work featuring vampires in Transylvania—close to half a century earlier, George Baronzi had published *Castelul brâncovenesc* [The Brankovan Castle], which turned out to be a translation of Alexandre Dumas père’s “La dame pâle,” released only three years before this version—, they are relevant in other respects: Onișor’s Transylvanian rendition is the first translation of a work authored by Jules Verne to appear in book-length format, and the fact that it was published in the same year in which Romania saw a new serialized rendition of the same work, which similarly domesticated the source-text mentions of the undead, bears witness to their attempts to localize the French novel

Moreover, the fact that this process of domestication happened at the expense of the source-text references to vampires, already minimal in the French novel, confirms, as shown earlier in the article, that the word “*strigoi*” is preferred to “vampire” when the context calls for references to the latter. This, in turn, shows that, despite emerging alongside “*strigoi*,” the neologism “vampire,” heavily influenced by modern political and pop culture discourses from the West, evolved in a different semantic direction, so much so that at least until the publication of Ion Gorun’s 1928–9 rendition of Stoker’s *Dracula*, the word was rarely associated with the undead.

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