

EARLY U.S. SERIALIZATION OF *DRACULA* DISCOVERED

When Bram Stoker's *Dracula* appeared in the magazine *Argosy: The Word's Best Short Stories* (London, 1926), Bram's widow Florence's introduced it with the following words:

"It is now being serialized for the first time [...] I have willingly given my permission to the Editor to publish it in serial form" (Miller, 2009, 284).

REFERENCE: Miller, Elizabeth (ed). 2009. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* – A Documentary Journey into Vampire Country and the *Dracula* Phenomenon, New York: Pegasus Books, p. 284.

But already in an advertisement in *The New York Times* of 7 October 1899, Doubleday & McClure had stated that *Dracula* had "much success in England, and as a serial in America." Only in 2012, however, Stoker biographer David Skal unearthed the first U.S. serialization of *Dracula* discovered so far. Under the title *Dracula: A Strong Story of the Vampire* it appeared in the *Charlotte Daily Observer*, Charlotte, North Carolina in weekly installments, from 16 July 1899 till 10 December 1899 (Browning, 2012, xviii).

REFERENCE: Browning, John E. (ed). *Bram Stoker's Forgotten Writings*. New York: Palgrave, 2012.

In his new *Dracula* biography *Something in the Blood*, Skal mentions that there must have been even earlier U.S. serializations:

The copyright registration made by McClure in Stoker's name on March 10, 1899, was not for the Doubleday & McClure book but rather for a newspaper serialization, deposit copies of which were received "in parts" between March 10 and April 10—exactly twenty-seven publication days (excluding Sundays), corresponding precisely to the twenty-seven chapters of the novel. These deposit copies no longer exist at the Library of Congress, and no correspondence regarding the matter was officially preserved. To date, an extensive search of newspaper microfilm and digital databases, conducted by the present author and others over a period of many years, has not revealed the identity of the periodical in which *Dracula* first appeared in America in the spring of 1899. But a confirmed weekly serialization in the *Charlotte Daily Observer* (titled *Dracula: A Strong Story of the Vampire*) followed from July 16 to December 10, and a subsequent 1900 serial in the *Buffalo Courier* included the first known illustration for the book, depicting Harker at the Transylvanian inn, receiving a letter from the Count. With an increasing array of digitized historical papers becoming available each year, the number of discovered serializations may well grow; it would, in fact, be quite surprising if they didn't.

David Skal, *Something in the Blood*.
New York: Norton, 2016. Page 371.

Although I did not find the mentioned serialization running from 10 March till 10 April 1899, today, I came across another one that followed shortly after. On Wednesday 3 May 1889, the *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago, Illinois) on page 5 announced a serialization under the title *Dracula, or the Human Vampire*. In fact, the installments employed the title *The Strange Story of Dracula – A Tale of Thrilling Adventures, Mystery, and Romance*. The serialization started on 7 May 1899, more than two months before the first episode in the *Charlotte Daily Observer*, and ended on 4 June 1899. This does not make it the first serialization ever: As I described in June 2016, the serialization of the Hungarian translation by Jenő Rákosi started on 1 January 1898 already in *Budapesti Hírlap*.

REFERENCE: De Roos, Hans Corneel. 2016. "“Buda-Pesth seems a wonderful place” How a Hungarian newspaperman produced *Dracula*’s very first translation and serialisation." *Letter from Castle Dracula* of 30 June 2016.

As discussed in my third interview with www.vampirisme.com (to be published in the coming days), the Swedish serialization of *Mörkrets makter* in *Dagen* (starting on 10 June 1899) and in *Aftonbladets halfvecko-upplaga* (starting on 16 August 1899) may have been inspired by Rákosi’s early initiative. But intriguingly enough, already in the *Daily Inter Ocean* we see that the name “Westenra” is not always spelled correctly. Sometimes, we read “Westerna” (12 May 1899, page 7)¹ and in the announcement of 3 May 1899, we even find “Western” – the very same corruption as used in the Swedish and later, of course, in the Icelandic version.

Perhaps, the Swedish translation/adaptation started from the text as published in the *Daily Inter Ocean*? Still, there are enough riddles left. But for an ordinary day like this, promising no more than a gray and rainy afternoon, exactly one month before the 120th *World Dracula Day*, I am quite content with this little ray of light.

Munich, 26 April 2017

Hans Corneel de Roos

¹ The spelling “Westerna,” by the way, also occurred in the *Charlotte Daily Observer* of 13 August 1899. On 16 May 1899, page 7, the *Daily Inter Ocean* used the correct spelling “Westenra” for Lucy’s mother, however, so that it seems improbable that Lucy’s family name was changed on purpose.