

CASTLE DRACULA



ITS EXACT LOCATION RECONSTRUCTED
FROM STOKER'S NOVEL, HIS RESEARCH
NOTES AND CONTEMPORARY MAPS

by

DANS CORNEEL DE ROOS, MA

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BY HANS CORNEEL DE ROOS, MA

MUNICH

EMAIL: INFO@HANSDEROOS.COM

HOME PAGE: WWW.HANSDEROOS.COM

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ABSTRACT

Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* was published in 1897. In ten weeks, the centenary of Stoker's death will be commemorated. Today, *Dracula* is one of the best-known narratives worldwide. Since the 1970's, a wealth of secondary literature has developed. Several annotated editions of the novel have been published, as well as Stoker's personal research notes. The location of the vampire's headquarters, **Castle Dracula**, however, could not be reconstructed until now. Rather, it is generally assumed Stoker had no exact position in mind while writing the story.

Based on the novel's travel descriptions, this paper will narrow down the Castle's territory with the help of modern satellite-based maps, interactive route navigators and high-resolution scans of contemporary military maps of Transylvania and Moldavia, until only two mountain peaks remain. An analysis of Stokers notes will reveal that Stoker's actually had one of these two peaks in mind while designing the final chapters of his book, but choose not to mention its name:

Mount Izvorul Călimanului, 2,033 m high, located in the Transylvanian Kelemen Alps near the border with Romania, at 47°08'03" North, 25°17'19" East.

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PUBLICATION DATA

This paper contains the abridged text of a more elaborate essay on the geographical background of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*: **THE DRACULA MAPS**. This essay will be published in April 2012 as part of the planned book:

The Ultimate Dracula

Moonlake Editions, Munich,
ISBN Nr. 978-3-943559-00-2

together with 17 full-page and double-page maps. In this essay, the novel's chapters dealing with the English sites (Whitby, London, Hampstead, Purfleet, Exeter) will be discussed as well. Although these chapters contain no direct information regarding the location of Castle Dracula, they illuminate how Stoker in the majority of cases presented addresses which are too vague to be verified or merely fictitious, although looking like authentic addresses. This helps us to understand how the novelist dealt with the most outstanding address of his story: the mountain on which Castle Dracula is to be found.

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The maps presented in this paper have been reduced in size and compressed. High-resolution maps available on request.

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“I was not able to light on any map or work giving the exact locality of the Castle Dracula, as there are no maps of this country as yet to compare with our own Ordnance Survey Maps.”

Dracula, Chapter 1, Jonathan Harker’s Journal of 3 May

PROLOGUE

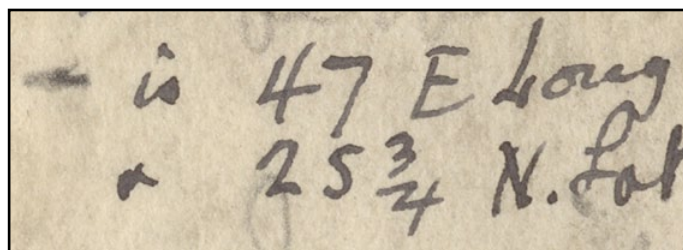
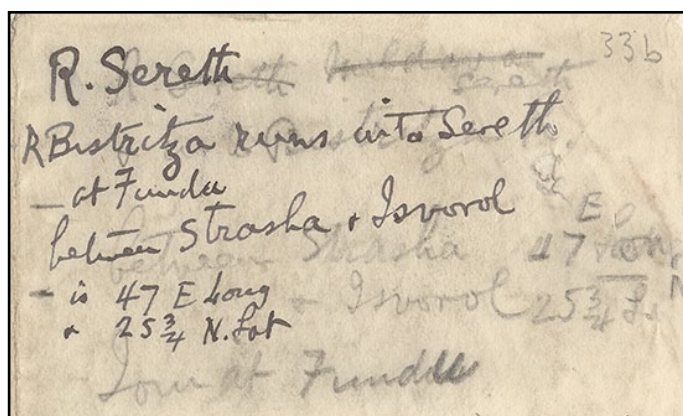
The site of Castle Dracula was discovered on the evening of 24 January 2012, between 8:32 and 9:51 pm. The day before, I had examined a detail from Bram Stoker’s handwritten research notes. These had been published by Robert Eighteen-Bisang and Elizabeth Miller in 2008. After two months of studying the novel and old military maps, I was quite sure that Vărful Rețiș in the Kelemen Alps fitted the travel descriptions of the story best. That the Count’s men had crossed the Transylvanian border between Bradu and Tulghe around the 47th Parallel was already clear to me – some weeks before, I had found the shortest route between Straja and the Kelemen Alps with the help of Google’s route navigator. My manuscript had been proofread and typeset by now, the printer was waiting...

At first glance, the transcription of this fragment made no sense at all. That Stoker had mixed up Latitude and Longitude was evident: The coordinates pointed to the border crossing. Maybe what seemed like a dash with a dot in the middle was a kind of shorthand reference to the borderline? I emailed a request to the Rosenberg Museum and Library in Philadelphia, the owner of the papers. Within 24 hours, a high resolution scan was made available to me. My suspicion proved wrong: dash and dot were written in pencil, the coordinates in ink. So how did these coordinates fit together with the rest now?

When an idea flashed through my mind and a quick look on the map confirmed I had found the key – a key I never expected even to exist – I had difficulty believing it ... That smart old fox!! If I had not known the very name of that site before, I surely would not have recognised the word for what it is ... the true location of Castle Dracula.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At this place I would like to thank all persons and institutions who supported me and my team while dealing with the *Dracula* subject since May 2010. This paper and the more elaborate essay it was derived from, **THE DRACULA MAPS**, are a spin-off of a much broader effort to visualise Bram Stoker’s famous novel. Special thanks is due to Karen Schoenewaldt and her colleagues at the Rosenbach Library & Museum, Philadelphia, who answered my request with the speed of light, to Clive Leatherdale for his kind words of support, to Elizabeth Miller and Robert Eighteen-Bisang for their uncorruptable research in all matters *Dracula*, to Wilhelm “Karpatenwilli” Scherz for background information on the Carpathians, to Nigel at hampsteadheath.net for historical photos of Hampstead, to Magdalena Dinu for translating Romanian place names, to Eva Tillmann, Nadine Herbst & Georgiy Mai, who helped with typesetting, to my colleague and friend Liudmila Baryshnikova for her artistic input and to my circle of proofreaders, especially MacGregor Buchanan and his daughter Seonaid, as well as Caitlin Kenney, who rose to the task of correcting a still-changing manuscript. Further proofreaders were Erin Shepherd, Melanie Grant, Reina Berger and Stephanie Schafrath. Should any error have remained, I am responsible for it as the author, of course. Last but not least to Peter Berkesand and Prof. Erik Sandewall at Linköping University Electronic Press, who enabled me to publish this paper at short notice and to my friends Alida Kreutzer, Friedo Niepmann, Reinhold Koch and Roy Helsing, for their ongoing interest in my projects.



Bram Stoker. *Dracula*: Notes & Outline, ca. 1890 - ca. 1896, p. 33b (detail), EL3.S874d MS Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, PA.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1897, when *Dracula – A Mystery Story* originally appeared, it has become one of the most famous narratives of all time – largely due to the many stage and movie adaptations of the novel. Secondary literature on the book has grown to fill a small library, especially since the 1970's. Various annotated versions with lengthy footnotes have sought to illuminate every single aspect of the novel, including its geographical background – I refer to the editions by Raymond McNally & Radu Florescu (1979), Leonard Wolf (1975, revised edition 1993), Clive Leatherdale (1998) and Leslie Klinger (2008). Since Stoker deceased, nearly a hundred years have passed: In ten weeks, on 20 April 2012, the centenary of Stoker's death will be commemorated. Still, no scholar yet has managed to determine the location of the single most important site pictured by the story: Castle Dracula. Instead, it is generally assumed that the novelist had only a vague idea of its place – the closer his protagonists come to the vampire's headquarters, the fuzzier the route descriptions get, until finally, all detail seems to be lost in a whirl of snow. Some authors even reproach Stoker for his seemingly slapdash preparation, which they believe to be the cause of this imprecision. In this paper, I will demonstrate that the opposite is true: Bram Stoker knew very well, where the Castle was supposed to be, but decided not to mention an accurate "address" in his novel. Not Stoker's own research was insufficient: Fans, critics, editors and scholars have failed to examine his writing closely enough.

We know that Stoker never visited Transylvania while writing the novel which would make this region a synonym for vampire-land.¹ Though writing fiction, the author pretended to present a series of factual reports: "I state again that this mysterious tragedy which is here described is completely true in all its external respects."² Stoker's words have caused more than one *Dracula* reader to try and locate the places portrayed in his novel with so much realistic detail. In their essay *Locating Dracula – Contextualising the Geography of Transylvania*, Gerald Walker and Lorraine Wright explain how Stoker uses snippets of geographical information to render an atmosphere of danger and mystery, a realm where fear, lust and instinct carry more weight than the regulations and timetables civilised British citizens abide by.³ The metaphors for this shift are the transition from West to East, from the technological world to primitive nature, from detached observation to the wildest emotions. They demonstrate how during his journey to Castle Dracula, Jonathan Harker enters various zones where he gradually has to leave the wisdom of his old world behind: By train from Munich to Budapest, then to Klausenburg, on to Bistritz; from there by coach through the Mittel Land, entering the Carpathians; finally carried away in the Count's caleche to Castle Dracula, the centre point where all evil forces materialise with utmost brutality.⁴ Though fully aware that this castle is a mythical fantasy rather than a stone building, Walker & Wright cannot resist the temptation of defining the geographic boundaries of the vampire's "core region": Between 24°30' and 25°30' longitude East and between 47° and 48° latitude North – an area of ca. 76 x 111 km.⁵ Within this area, they believe the Castle to be situated south of the Borgo Pass and at about the same latitude as Bistritz.⁶ A recent quest to map the footsteps of the vampire hunters proposes the area around the village of Tihuța in the Borgo Pass as the location of the Count's infamous residence.⁷ Leslie Klinger's mock interpretation, claiming a blackmailed Stoker was forced to publish a "cover up" concealing the truth about the Count's ongoing activities, equally ignores the distance between the Pass and the Castle.⁸ Klinger takes a critical look at Stoker's route descriptions, eager to find contradictions which would prove Jonathan Harker never travelled via Bistritz. His maps illustrating the final chapters, however, produce no new insights.⁹ Comparing the distance between the Castle and Veresti to its distance from Bistrița, Klinger simply equates the location of the Castle with that of the Borgo Pass.¹⁰

1 Elizabeth Miller reports that many of her (Canadian) students easily associate Transylvania with Count Dracula, but believe the country is purely fictional – Miller, 2000, p. 199.

2 Foreword to the Icelandic Edition, *Makt Myrkanna*, 1901. In the 1897 Constable edition, it reads: "All needless matters have been eliminated, so that a history almost at variance with the possibilities of latter-day belief may stand forth as simple fact."

3 In: Davison, Ed., 1997, pp. 49-74

4 Stoker uses the German names for all localities in Transylvania and Romania. When directly referring to Stoker's text, we will keep to these German nominations. On our maps, you will either find the present-day Romanian nominations first or the spelling as used on the map itself.

5 Walker & Wright believe this area to be 34,000 square km large, but are grossly mistaken. Due to the definition of the meter by Napoleon, the length of the equator is 40,000 km and the distance between the meridians is $40,000 \text{ km}/360^\circ = \text{ca. } 111 \text{ km}/^\circ$ at the equator. Towards the poles, this longitudinal distance decreases, as the meridians converge. Assuming the earth is a perfect sphere, the latitudinal distance between two degrees, e.g. between 47° and 48° North, remains constant: $20,000 \text{ km}/180^\circ = \text{ca. } 111 \text{ km}/^\circ$, just like the distance between two meridians at the equator. Since the two Americans believe the km to be 1.6 mile long (see Section II of this essay), their error is even more surprising.

6 Walker & Wright, 1997, diagram at p. 52

7 See <http://infocult.typepad.com/dracula>, *Dracula Blogged*, with map mark-ups by Andrew Connell.

8 Klinger, 2008, p. XLIXf

9 See Klinger, 2008, Baedeker maps with Klinger's mark-ups on p. 471 and 475.

10 Klinger 2008, p. 474, footnote 47 states: "Veresti (...) is (...) almost triple the distance (105 miles) to the Borgo Pass (and the Castle) from Bistritz (about 35 miles)". The "almost" must result from Klinger's bad conscience, since 3×35 exactly equals 105.

In the first section of this paper, I will deal with Harker's initial trip. At the time *Dracula* was written, highly detailed maps of Transylvania *did* exist. Like the Ordnance Survey Maps, these were created for military reasons.¹¹ I will present some of these contemporary maps and define the area where the vampire's fortress could be located. I will leave attempts to advertise the Poenari Castle, the Bran Castle, Bathory's Csejthe Castle or a castle near Rodna as possible models for Castle Dracula aside, since it is improbable Stoker ever heard of these buildings.¹² The only goal of this paper is to understand the geographical framework Stoker may have had in mind, test its internal logic and link it to the actual landscape as precisely as possible.

In Section II, I will compare the routes of the Count and the vampire hunters on their way to Transylvania. After examining the big picture – sailing ship vs. Orient Express – I will take a closer look at the routes of the three different teams through Moldavia and Bukovina, after the vampire hunters split up in Varna.

Sections III, IV and V once again consider the position of the Castle, looking for the spot where the diverging routes of Dr. Van Helsing and Mina, the Slovaks, the Szgany and the mounted men cross again. I will demonstrate that Stoker's story shows far less contradictions than Klinger claims to reveal, provided we are prepared to discard the dogma that all roads to the Castle must lead through the Borgo Pass.¹³ Zooming in on the scene even more, we can narrow down its supposed location until only one single peak remains, located at 47°08'03" North, 25°17'19" East¹⁴ – a mountain expressly mentioned in Stoker's own research notes but never recognised as such by *Dracula* scholars.

Finally, I will illuminate how Stoker obscured its precise location, and for what reason. Until now, no *Dracula* scholar even suspected the novelist had a specific site in mind, let alone that he knowingly blurred the Castle's true "address". This shows that his mystification was extremely effective: The best way to keep a secret is to make the world believe that there is no secret at all.

11 In 1790, the English Government feared the revolutionary French might plan an invasion and instructed the Ministry of Defence ("Board of Ordnance") to create precise maps of South-West England. The Austro-Hungarian Surveys were initiated by Empress Maria-Theresa in May 1764 after the Austrian troops during the Seven Years' War had suffered serious setbacks due to a lack of reliable maps.

12 See Miller, 2000, p. 130 ff.

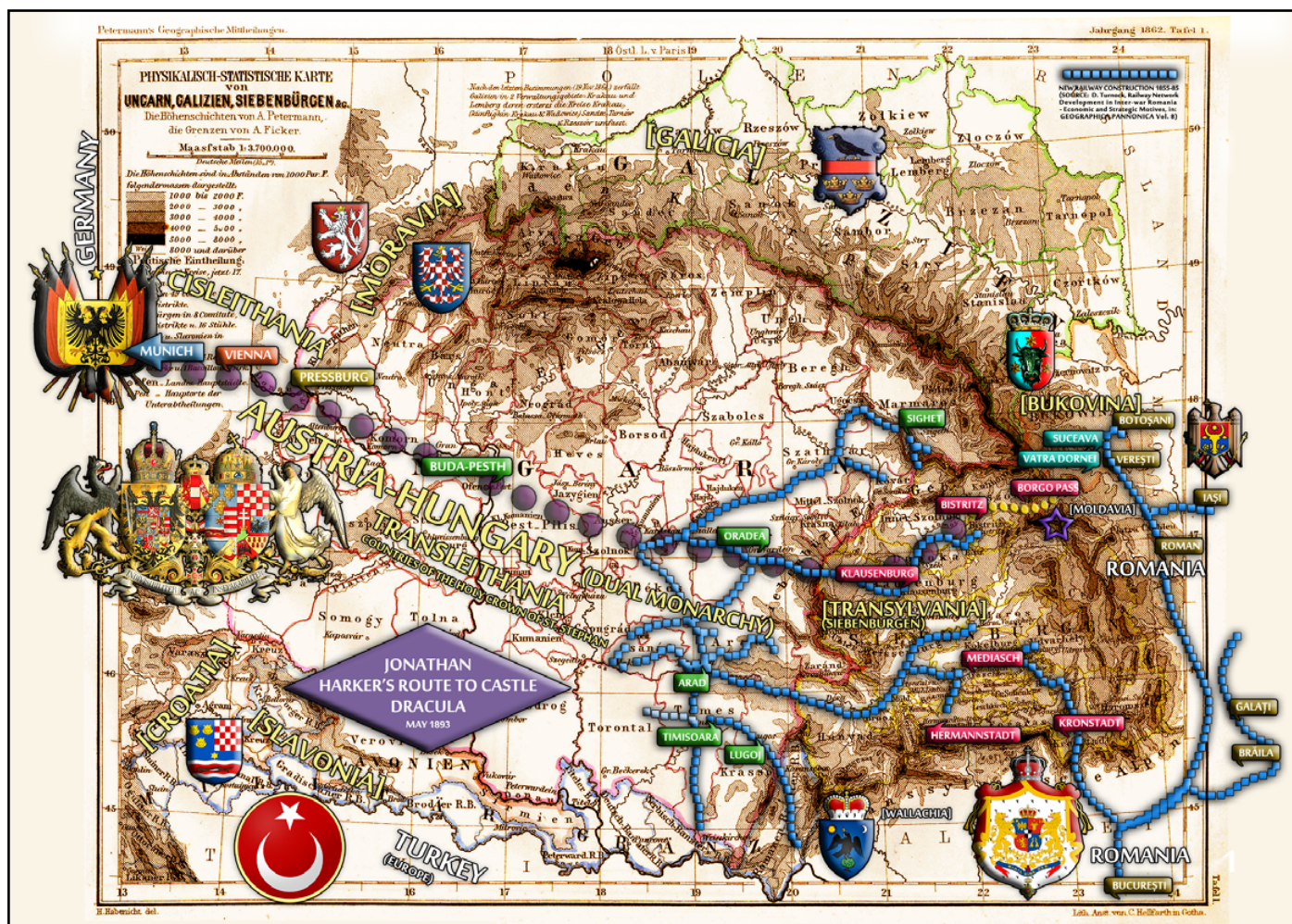
13 We find this assumption in the annotated editions by Wolf (1993), Leatherdale (1998) and Klinger (2008). Already 15 years ago, Walker & Wright, 1997, p. 67 hinted that Harker and Godalming approach the Castle in North-West direction, without entering into any details.

14 The best guess until now was by Harker & Wright, since the two cardinal errors they make compensate for each other, as I will demonstrate in Section V. Bistritz is located at 47° 08', ca. 4 km north of the position of the Castle I will present in this essay.

SECTION I – JONATHAN HARKER ON HIS WAY TO CASTLE DRACULA

TRANSYLVANIA AFTER 1867

The novel begins *medias res*: Jonathan Harker has already left Munich. His train route through Vienna and Budapest to Klausenburg (Romanian: “Cluj-Napoca”) and Bistritz (“Bistrița”) is marked on Map #1, published in 1862, showing the altitude of the terrain. It is the first of a series of maps from Stoker’s era which now can be accessed online. What Harker calls “the horseshoe of the Carpathians” is the mountain range building the natural border of Transylvania. The tallest peaks reach heights of ca. 8,000 feet. The main train routes run through the lower parts of the country. Originally developed in England in the 1820’s and 30’s, this transport system rapidly expanded all over Europe during the second half of the 19th Century and greatly changed the physical, economic and social landscape. The blue square dots show the lines constructed in Eastern Europe between 1855 and 1885.¹⁵



Map #1 Petermann & Ficker – Transylvania and the Habsburg Monarchy – Jonathan Harker’s train trip to Bistritz – the Borgo Pass

By vote of the politically dominant Magyars, the Principality of Transylvania, which had been autonomous for over 700 years, became a part of Hungary in January 1867. The same year, the Empire was re-organised as the so-called Dual Monarchy. Apart from Austria, Hungary and Transylvania, it encompassed Bohemia and Moravia (now the Czech Republic), Bukovina, the southern part of Poland (Galicia, including Krakow and Lemberg), Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Herzegovina and parts of Italy.

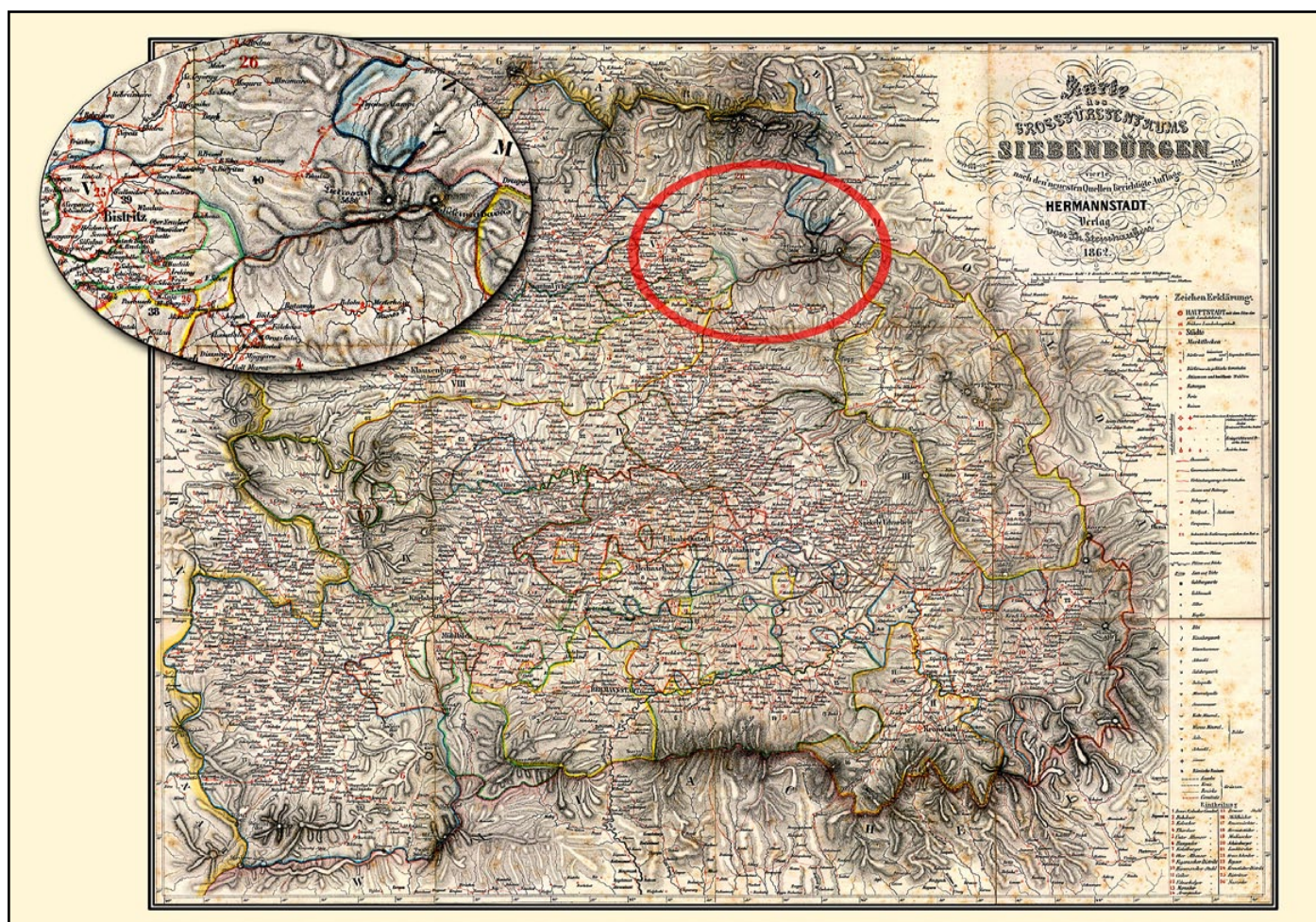
The motto of the Austro-Hungarian Union, “Indivisibiler ac inseparabiliter”, meaning “indivisible and inseparable,” betrays how vulnerable this political construct really was: After World War I, the empire broke apart and Transylvania became a part of Romania. As Walker & Wright note, Romanians already made up for the largest part of the population at the time of Harker’s journey, but in his novel, Stoker assigns them no important role.¹⁶

15 Outlined after a map created by David Turnock, *Geographica Pannonica*, No 8-03. See also Boner, 1865, Map of Projected Railways through Transylvania, in connection with the great European and future Turkish Lines. To face page 605.

16 Walker & Wright, p. 58 and 72. Bielz, 1857 and Boner, 1865, provide us with detailed figures for every region of Transylvania.

Map #2, published in Hermannstadt in 1862, indicates the villages Prundu Bârgăului¹⁷ and Tihuța¹⁸ on the route from Bistrița to Bukovina. The area with the road from Bistritz to the North-East is enlarged as an inset.

On later maps, like the *K.u.K. Spezialkarte*, scale 1: 75:000, from the years 1875-1876 and 1906 (updated version) respectively, after Tihuța the road passes through Piatra Fântânele¹⁹ before making a sharp turn to the north.²⁰



Map #2 Siebenbürgen, 1862 – From Bistritz through Tihuța & Borgo Pass to Bukovina

THE MEETING POINT IN THE PASS

According to Stoker's notes, the diligence would start at 2 pm from Bistritz. Harker was to meet the Count's driver at the Borgo Pass by 10 pm, but due to its hurried pace, the stage coach from Bistritz arrived there early at 9 pm.²¹ The 1896 Baedeker for Austria states the distance Bistritz-Kimpolung (Romanian: "Câmpulung") (126 km) was covered by diligence in 17 hours.²² The resulting average speed is ca. 7½ km/h. The trip to the meeting point takes six or alternatively seven hours, equals 45 or alternatively 52½ km – see diagram.²³

17 German: "Borgo Prund", Hungarian: "Borgóprund".

18 Here indicated as "Tihutza", also written "Tihuca" (K.u.K. Spezialkarte 1876) or "Tihucz" (K.u.K. Spezialkarte 1907 and Third Austro-Hungarian Survey 1890-1910 and travel description by Julius Tsernátóy).

19 Like the First (Josefinian) and Third Survey maps, these black-and-white maps were produced by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy for military.

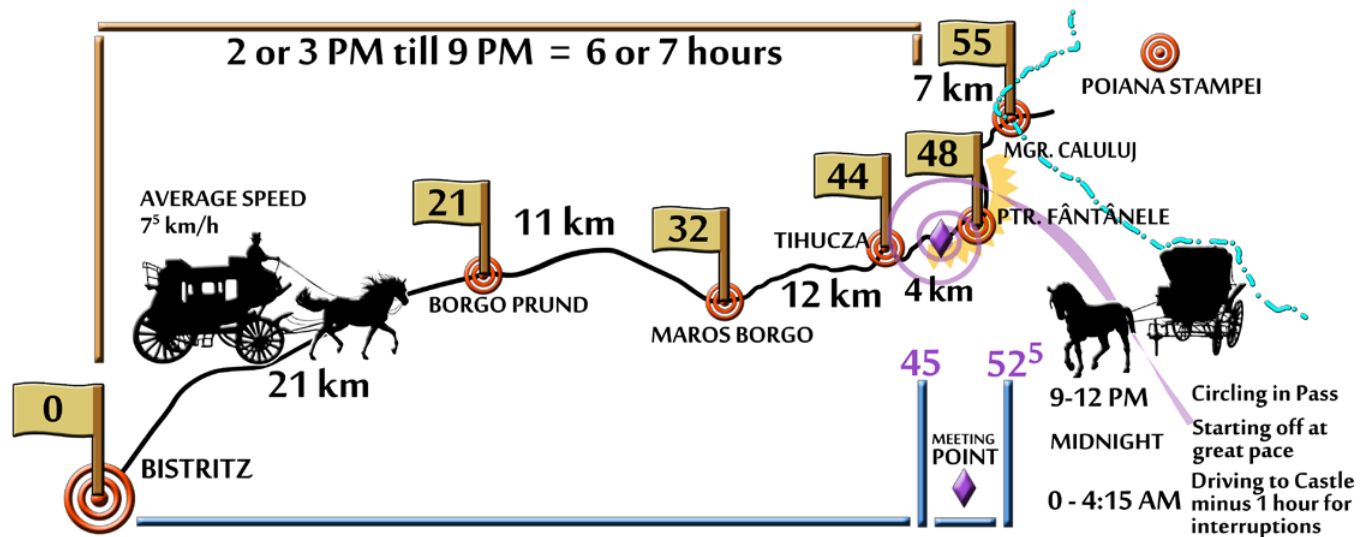
20 On the 1876 version spelled "Piatra Fontineleloru", on the 1907 version "Piatra Fintînelelor". In Romanian, the vowels *â* and *î* sound the same. "Piatra" means "stone" or "rock", "Fântânele" means "angels fountain" or "angels well", German "Engelsbrunn", Hungarian "Angyalkút".

21 See Eighteen Bisang & Miller, p. 84f and 96f. In the Count's letter, however, Jonathan is advised the stagecoach will leave by 3 pm. The difference is possibly due to the Central European Time deviating one hour from Greenwich Mean Time. Cf. Klinger, 2008, p. 27, footnote 54.

22 Klinger, 2008, p. 33, footnote 81.

23 Klinger, 2008, p. 21, footnote 39, states the Borgo Pass already commences at Borgo Prund and has a length of 33 miles. The meeting point agreed with the Count, however, certainly was not in or near to Borgo-Prund, as Harker's Journal describes clearly enough. Later, the American corrects himself by stating the distance from Bistritz to the meeting point at the Pass might be 30 miles (48 km) – see Klinger, 2008, p. 33, footnote 81, referring to Baedeker. Klinger calculates the duration of the trip from its distance, but

Conclusion: The agreed meeting point was either just after Tihuța (44 km from Bistritz) or some kilometres after Piatra Fântânele (48 km from Bistritz), where the road turns north.

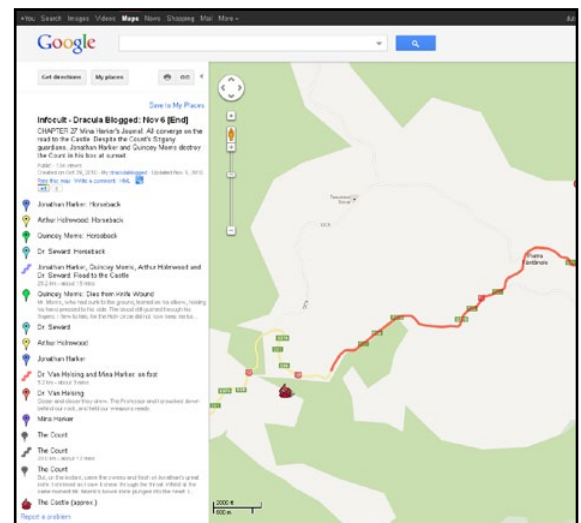


On modern maps, the village of Tihuța is not indicated as a separate entity any more. Instead, the Borgo Pass, which stretched from Tihuța to the Bukovinian border, is today named “Tihuța Pass”.

FROM THE BORGO PASS TO THE CASTLE: TIME FRAME AND DIRECTION

Andrew Connell’s map comments suggest the Castle was situated very close to the former village of Tihuța.²⁴ In Piatra Fântânele, we today find *Hotel Castel Dracula*, which claims to be situated precisely where Jonathan Harker spent his anxious nights with the vampire brides. But while the route of the coach from Bistrița to Bukovina was probably almost identical with the modern N17, the distance of Castle Dracula from the main road must have been significant. Harker’s diary describes how the Count’s caleche²⁵ first circles around in the Pass. When Harker notes it is a few minutes to twelve, a howling sound can be heard and the driver is forced to descend and calm down the frightened horses. Harker’s journal continues:“

“The driver again took his seat, and shaking his reins, started off at a great pace. This time, after going to the far side of the Pass, he suddenly turned down a narrow roadway which ran sharply to the right. Soon we were hemmed in with trees, which in places arched right over the roadway till we passed as through a tunnel.”²⁶



Google Map with mark-ups by Andrew Connell proposing the Tihuța area as the Castle’s location

For Harker, coming from Bistritz, the “far side” of the Borgo Pass must have been the north-east end.²⁷ Turning sharply to the right means to drive in a south-east direction.²⁸ The trip seems lengthy and the road is “in the main always ascending”, which makes it likely that the mysterious driver and his guest are moving in the direction of the mountains peaks south of the Borgo Pass. When Harker finally arrives at the Castle and has finished his night supper, dawn is already approaching. This means, it is around 5:30 am.²⁹ If we allow the “famished” young lawyer 15 minutes for his “hasty toilet” and a full hour for eating his roasted chicken and some polite conversation, he must have arrived at the Castle by 04:15 am. If we deduct

I suspect he first computed the meeting point the same way I did here.

24 See <http://infocult.typepad.com/dracula/>.

25 From the French *calèche*, light carriage, also known as “barouche”.

26 *Dracula*, Chapter 1, Jonathan Harker’s Journal, Entry for 5 May.

27 This is confirmed by Van Helsing’s Memorandum of 4 November: Arriving at the Pass from the Bukovina side, Mina instantly points to the side road Jonathan has travelled.

28 I share this conclusion with Walker & Wright, 1997, and Klingner, 2008, p. 37 footnote 93.

29 On 5 May 1901, Klausenburg had twilight at 5:32 and sunrise at 6:06 am. Source: <http://sunrisesunset.com/> The year 1901 is the earliest year for which a calendar is accessible.

another hour for the many interruptions, the actual driving took three hours and fifteen minutes.

THE CASTLE'S DISTANCE FROM THE BORGO PASS

The Count's lighter barouche with four "swift" horses – praised as "splendid animals" – and only one passenger, starting off "at a great pace" and later "spe(e)d(ing) onwards through the gloom", must have been much faster than the over-loaded stagecoach with its "little horses."³⁰ Let us assume 10 km/h as its travel speed.³¹ In case the driver's loops have ended up near Tihuța once more and he needs to drive to the "far end" of the pass first (11 km), the two men distance themselves (3¼ x 10) - 11 = 21½ km from the Pass. If they are at this far end already, the distance is 3¼ x 10 = 32½ km south-east of the main road.



Map #3 Third Austro-Hungarian Survey, 1890-1910 – Transylvania – Mountain region 21½ - 32½ km south-east of the Borgo Pass

Conclusion: The Castle must be located in the area between 21½ to 32½ km south-east of this main road section.

The resulting area is marked on Map #3, based on the Third Austro-Hungarian Survey (1890-1910). I have confined the Castle's domain to Transylvania – although the route descriptions do not strictly exclude the possibility it is on the Romanian side of the border.³²

30 Klinger, 2008, p. 23f., footnote 46 notes that a diligence normally carried three passengers. Harker reports "One by one several of the passengers offered me gifts (...)", later he speaks of "a chorus of screams from the peasants and a universal crossing of themselves", so that we get the impression the English *Herr* had at least half a dozen travel companions crowding with him in the stagecoach.

31 About the speed of a jogger (9-10 km/h or 6 miles/h), but still slower than a bicycle at low to medium speed (16 km/h or 10 miles/h).

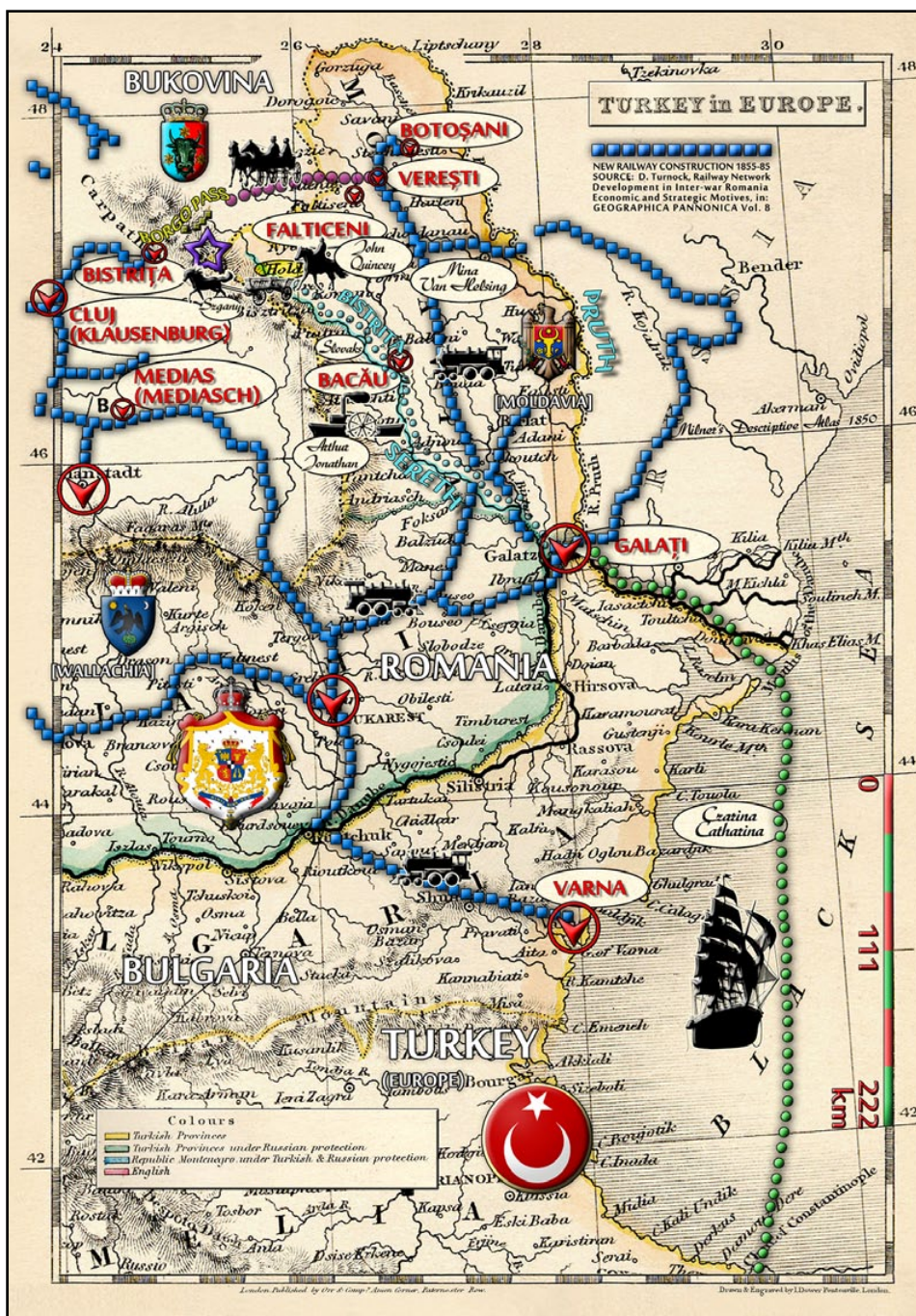
32 If we are to believe Stoker, the eastern borders were rather permeable; none of the vampire hunters is ever asked to show travel papers when intruding Turkish, Romanian or Habsburg territory. Cf. Walker & Wright, p. 71 and Leatherdale, 1998, p. 453, footnote 33.

SECTION II – A CHASE ACROSS EUROPE

In this paper, focusing on the position of Castle Dracula, I skip the chapters taking place in Whitby and in or near London. The complete essay features extensive chapters on the geographic background of these locations.

THE VAMPIRE HUNTERS SPLITTING UP

After the scene at the Piccadilly house in London, where the men learn that the Count is planning to leave the country, the action moves back to Eastern Europe. At Doolittle's Wharf (a fictional address, like many of the London addresses), the Count boards the *Czarina Catherine*, with destination Varna. Since the train is quicker and the route shorter, the vampire hunters decide to travel by railroad, starting from Charing Cross Station only on 12 October, a full week after the ship's departure. They travel through Paris and board the Orient Express in the direction of Varna, Bulgaria. Up to Vienna, the group travels the same way Jonathan has taken to Klausenburg. The *Czarina Catherine* has to pass the Strait of Gibraltar and the Dardanelles – two opportunities to check the progress of the vampire's journey. On 24 October, their Lloyd's agent Rufus Smith reports the ship has been sighted at the latter point, controlled by the Turkish authorities. An entire week they spend in Varna, waiting for the Count's vessel to show up, only to learn the fiend has tricked them by directing it to Galați ("Galatz"), ca. 280 km north of Varna.³³ Mina's behaviour is more and more affected by her mental bond with Dracula. Desperate to catch the vampire, the group decides to split: Jonathan and Arthur chase the boat with the Slovaks and Count's box up the River Sereth³⁴ by steam launch, Quincey and Dr. Seward follow the river by horse, while Mina and Van Helsing travel by train up to Verești and then continue by horse carriage to the Borgo Pass over Bukovinian territory. Our Map #4, based on Milner's *Descriptive Atlas* of 1850, shows these routes.



Map #4 Milner's *Descriptive Atlas* of Europe, 1850, Turkey in Europe – Routes in Romania

FUNDU & STRASBA/STRAJA

Mina informs us that at Fundu, the Sereth is joined by the Bistrița as a tributary. The first group follows this stream. Walker & Wright state that they were not able to find any city with the name of "Fundu" or a similar nomination and Wolf equally

³³ *Dracula*, Chapter 25, telegrams from Rufus Smith of 24 and 28 October.

³⁴ Romanian: "Siret", Hungarian: "Szeret".

is at a loss.³⁵ In effect, the antique *Tabula Geographica Moldaviae*, added to the first German edition (1769-1770) of *Descriptio Moldaviae* by Demetrius Cantemir, already shows “Fundul” somewhat south of Bacău.³⁶ On the maps of the Third Austro-Hungarian Survey, Fundu is also mentioned.³⁷

Another village along the river route mentioned in the novel is “Strasba” – in fact, “Straja” – ca. 20 km west of Piatra Neamț along the Bistrița.³⁸ A distraught Harker hopes to overhaul the Slovak boat transport before this point:

“I hope that before we get to Strasba, we may see [Quincey and John on horse]; for if by that time we have not overtaken the Count, it may be necessary to take counsel together what to do next.”³⁹

One wonders, why at Straja, a little village not mentioned on most maps? Maybe there was an insurmountable rapid here? But still in the first half of the 20th Century, timber logs were transported downstream as rafts floating all the way down to Galați. If too many sharp rocks had been in the way, the valuable timber would have splintered. The location for wild water canoeing most popular today is not at Straja, but much further upstream at Zugreni (35 km downstream of Vatra Dornei), where the narrowed river crosses the Rarău Mountains and large cliffs cause wild turbulences. Klinger additionally mentions low bridges as obstacles.⁴⁰ Without further historical research, I am not able to assess the navigability of the Bistrița between Fundu and Straja in the year 1893. Today, the character of the stream has greatly changed due to the construction of parallel canals feeding a series of hydro-electric power-plants. Provided no serious barriers were in the way, a steamship navigating non-stop “at good speed” should be able to cover this 100 km stretch within a 24 hours.⁴¹

CLIMBING & TRAVELLING AT NONSENSICAL SPEED?

Leatherdale, on the contrary, believes that “Stoker has abandoned all semblance of rational timekeeping,” arguing that “the three pairings have had to climb from near sea-level at Galatz, to almost one mile above sea-level by the time they reach the Borgo Pass.”⁴² This sounds impressive until one realises that here in Munich, where I live, thousands of leisure enthusiasts – office workers without special training – escape the crowded city on the weekends to take a mountain walk, climbing up to 600 - 1,000 meters on a single day just to stretch their legs and breathe some fresh air. The height difference the vampire hunters negotiate must be divided by the nearly seven days of their itinerary⁴³ and spreads out over a travel distance of 450 to 530 km.⁴⁴ Moreover, they “climb” on horseback, by steamboat, train or carriage.

All in all, the distance from Galați to the Borgo Pass is shorter than from London to Exeter and back⁴⁵ – a routine trip for the hardened Harkers, to the extent that Mina even knows the train schedule by heart: less than 4½ hours one way.⁴⁶ It seems that the prudent Leatherdale has been taken in by the heroic tone of Stoker’s characters, causing him to believe that in the final chapters, “steam launches, pack-horses, and carriages ridden by old men and frail women” travel at “nonsensical speed” in order to drag the story to its climax.⁴⁷ In the following section we will see that the opposite is true – especially for that “old man” Van Helsing and his “frail” companion Mina, who – after racing to Verești – are crawling towards their final destination at a snail’s pace. But more important, we will determine if all of the “three pairings” referred to by Leatherdale will factually arrive at the Borgo Pass, as he suggests. As I will demonstrate, only *one* couple will show up there!

35 Walker & Wright, 1997, p. 65; Wolf, 1993, p. 417, footnote 29.

36 “Bacow” on this map; German: “Barchau”, Hungarian: “Bákó”: Baedeker, 1896, spells it as “Bakeu”. The antique drawing – reprinted on the title page of this paper – is based on the original design by Cantemir and the map by August Gotlob Boehm (Nürnberg, 1765).

37 Cf. Klinger, 2008, p. 470, footnote 36.

38 Leatherdale, 1998, p. 487, footnote 139. Klinger, 2008, p. 478, footnote 56. also pointing to McNally & Florescu, 1979. See also Section VII.

39 *Dracula*, Chapter 26, Jonathan Harker’s Journal of 2 November.

40 Klinger, 2008, p. 472, footnote 41, referring to McNally and Florescu, 1979,

41 Navigating upstream, the steam launch additionally has to compensate for the speed of the water running down. If the latter is 6 km/h, the engines must perform 10 km/h in order to reach a net speed of 4 km/h upstream.

42 Leatherdale, 1998, p. 486, footnote 138.

43 Travelling from Tuesday early morning, 30 October (start of the steam launch from Galați) through Monday 6 November at sunset, when all parties meet again near Castle Dracula.

44 Today, the road route from Galați to Poiana Stampei through Bacău, Piatra Neamț, Bicz, Holda and Vatra Dornei, following the Bistrița, is 447 km, but Mina and the Professor make a detour via Verești. The men, pursuing the Szgany, will make a shortcut saving them ca. 85 km (see section VI).

45 Via Salisbury: 171 miles = 275 km one way.

46 “You [Van Helsing] could catch the quick 3:34 train, which will leave you at Paddington before eight.” *Dracula*, Chapter 14, Mina Harker’s Journal of 25 September

47 Leatherdale, 1998, p. 486, footnote 138.

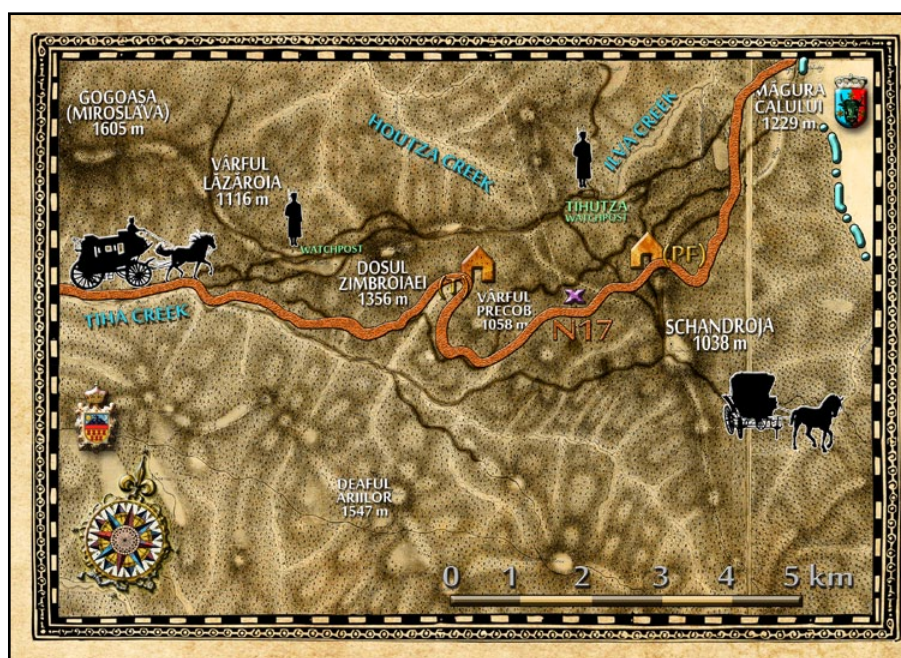
SECTION III – MINA & VAN HELSING ON THEIR WAY TO THE CASTLE

TIMEFRAME, SPEED AND DISTANCE

Not surprising, it is the “old man”, accompanied by the “frail woman” Mina. The distance by road from Galați to Verești today is 322 km. Leaving on 30 October at 10:40 pm and arriving at noon the next day, the train trip took 13 hours. Klinger calls this “incredibly fast by later time schedules” and points to the 1896 *Bradshaw’s Continental Railway Guide*, indicating a duration of 18 hours, with 2½ hours transfer time in Bucharest.⁴⁸ Maybe Stoker skipped the waiting in Bucharest, maybe he reckoned 25 km/h would be an appropriate travel speed, or maybe he misjudged the distance to Verești, just like he underestimated the distance from there to the Borgo Pass.⁴⁹ Maybe, too, he wanted to speed up the story, but why then the delay in the rest of their trip? Although the landscape descriptions may get more compact, the driving hours still longer and Van Helsing explains to the peasants they are “hurrying” to Bistritz, their actual travel speed with a purchased horse carriage from Verești to the Borgo Pass is only 4½ km/h at the most.⁵⁰ On the morning of 3 November, they reach the north-east end of the Borgo Pass. Shortly after, Mina discovers the road Jonathan has taken with the Count. Van Helsing notes:

“At first I think somewhat strange, but soon I see that there be only one such byroad. It is used but little, and very different from the coach road from the Bukovina to Bistritz, which is more wide and hard, and more of use.”⁵¹

Our Map #5, based on Section map Nr 68 from the First (Josephinian) Survey, between 1763 and 1785, shows us the many different pathways that existed before the main route through Tihuța and Piatra Fântânele was established. The only byroad which seems to qualify is a set of trails crossing Mount Schandroja.⁵² After travelling for two more days – even when the Professor dozes off, the horses continue to trot – they arrive at the night camp where they are vexed by the vampire sisters. The distance between the Borgo Pass and Castle Dracula – accounting for an even slower travelling speed in the mountain region – thus must have been at least 55-60% of the distance from Verești to the Borgo Pass, which means substantially longer than Harker and the Count could have driven within three hours.



Map #5 Section 68 of Josephinian Survey, 1763 - 1785, byroad to the South-East

Walker & Wright do not note this discrepancy since two prominent mistakes they make outweigh each other: On the one hand, they ignore the fourth day of travelling by horse carriage,⁵³ on the other hand, they equate the 70 miles from Verești to the Borgo Pass (Mina’s estimate) with 44 km (70/1.6 instead of 70 x 1.6).⁵⁴ Leaving out this fourth day falsely suggests the distance between Borgo Pass and Castle is only half of the distance of the 44 km erroneously mentioned (22 km); in reality, it must at least be 60 to 80 km. Leatherdale equally overlooks one full day of travelling.⁵⁵

48 Klinger, 2008, p. 479, footnote 59.

49 On 31 October, Mina notes the distance from Verești to their goal would be ca. 70 miles, equal to ca. 115 km. This is correct from a bird’s (or a bat’s) perspective and when leaving out the distance between the Transylvanian border and the Castle, but along the road (via Câmpulung, Iakobeny, Vatra Dornei and Poiana Stampei, now E85 and N17) the stretch of way to the Borgo Pass alone is ca. 160 km. Cf. Klinger, 2008, p. 479, footnote 60.

50 The couple travels three nights and two days (31 Oct. after dinner till the morning of 3 Nov.), driving the coach in shifts. Even if we deduct 24 hours for eating, hypnotising, changing the horses and for sanitary stops, they need 36 hours of driving to cover 160 km (see previous footnote). If Stoker’s estimate of 70 miles = 115 km were right, driving velocity would even sink to ca. 3 km/h.

51 *Dracula*, Chapter 27, Memorandum by Abraham van Helsing, 4 November.

52 On the 1876 *Spezialkarte*, the “Schandroia” is indicated as “Cicera Sandroja”; on the 1907 version as “Chicera Sandroaii.”

53 Walker & Wright, 1997, p. 68f. Infact, Mina and Van Helsing, after arriving at the Borgo Pass on 3 Nov. early morning travel to the vicinity of the Castle until 4 Nov. late afternoon.)

54 Walker & Wright, 1997, p. 69, bottom of page.

55 Leatherdale, 1998, p. 493, footnote 28.

Only one strictly logical solution remains: Before Jonathan suddenly wakes up the moment the caleche reaches the Castle's courtyard, he must have been sleeping for a full day or even two! Given the vampire's abilities to send his victims into a stupor-like coma – like Jonathan experiences when Dracula pays his nightly visits to Mina in Purfleet – this is not completely unlikely. Once at Castle Dracula, Jonathan has no means anymore to check the calendar and when he finally arrives in Budapest, he is a mental wreck suffering from brain fever.

THE MURES RIVER AS A NATURAL BARRIER

Practically, though, such reasoning has little significance: On Map #3 we see the River Mureş (Hungarian: “Maros”) flowing to the West, ca. 40 km south of the route from Bistrița to Bukovina. Neither the Count's caleche nor Van Helsing and Mina are reported to have been crossing this major barrier. Moreover, if the Castle actually was two days driving or at least 60 km south of the Borgo Pass, across the River Mureş, the Count would more likely have directed his visitor by train to Reghin (Hung. “Szász Régen”, German “Sächsisch Regen”) or even to Târgu Mureş instead; in 1893, both towns were already connected to the Western railroad system.⁵⁶ For these reasons, I believe the novel points to the area between the Borgo Pass and the Mureş. Since along this river, there are many villages and towns, the Castle should be found at least 10 km north of the Mureş Valley, as already visualised on Map #3.⁵⁷

PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE

There is no guarantee, of course, that Stoker designed a plot consistent with all the outer facts. Moreover, the text suffers of internal contradictions, as just discussed.⁵⁸ If we assume nothing of the geographical information supplied by Stoker really relates to “external respects”, we might give up the search at this point. But if we suspect Stoker had a concrete area in mind where the Castle should be located, the excessively long hours the Professor and his protégé spend on the road are to be understood as an expression of psychological rather than physical distances – just like Harker in Chapter 1 needed almost eleven hours by train from Klausenburg to Bistritz, a distance of only 160 km.⁵⁹ More important even, it seems that Stoker needed to decelerate Van Helsing and Mina in order to make the storylines of the different parties converge towards the dramatic showdown. The many nerve-racking delays the vampire hunters experience – the week wasted in Varna, the technical problems with the launch – are justified and necessary, from a narrative point of view, to postpone the final confrontation with the slower-travelling Count till all have reached the Castle. Before this background, Van Helsing and Mina, after their quick train trip to Verești, must be slowed down artificially.

WHAT DID MINA SEE IN THE EAST?

To understand where the byroad leads to and to know what happened to the other parties, we must examine the end of the story first: We know that all routes will cross or converge at a field or plateau at ca. one mile east of Castle Dracula. From here, Mina and Van Helsing watch the approaching Szgany and the four mounted men who are overhauling them. The box

56 For Târgu Mureş, see Turnock, 2003. The connection from Alba Iulia to Târgu Mureş was completed in 1871. The connection to the east, along the Mureş via Deda to Gheorgheni (Hungarian: “Gyergyószentmiklós”) came later and was completed in 1909. For various reasons, the novel is believed to take place in the year 1893 (See Introduction). Klinger, 2008, p. 31, footnote 75 proposes Jonathan actually travelled by train from Klausenburg to Szász Régen and from there took the diligence eastwards through the Mureş Valley, in the direction of the Pékas Pass (Bicaz Pass or Bicaz Canyon – HdR); Johnson's description of the towering mountains there – including “God's Seat” – indeed matches Stoker's landscape characterisation much better. As I found out, even Harker's lines about the Castle may have been inspired by Johnson; describing his arrival at the chateau of Baron Koloman Kemény in Vecs in a *wagonnette*, the Major wrote, “Soon after we had passed this cross, the grand old castle for which we were bound came into view. Perched up on a height, its frowning battlements and grim old towers presented a perfect picture of a mediaeval stronghold (...).” (Johnson, 1885, p. 256). Though Stoker may have borrowed such phrases, the idea that Jonathan never travelled to Bistritz only makes sense within Klinger's mind game, assuming a series of real events had to be “covered up” later. In Stoker's notes, Bistritz and Borgo-Prund are expressly mentioned, Szász and the Bicaz Pass are not; Johnson's mountain descriptions are simply subsumed under “CARPATHIANS” – see Eighteen Bisang/Miller, 2008, p. 230f. The notes, some written as early as 1890, drive Klinger to a further bold claim, that the events pictured in the “Harker Papers” must have taken place in 1888 or 1889 and that Stoker introduced facts from the year 1893 (Death of Charcot, *New Women*, *Westminster Gazette*) only later.

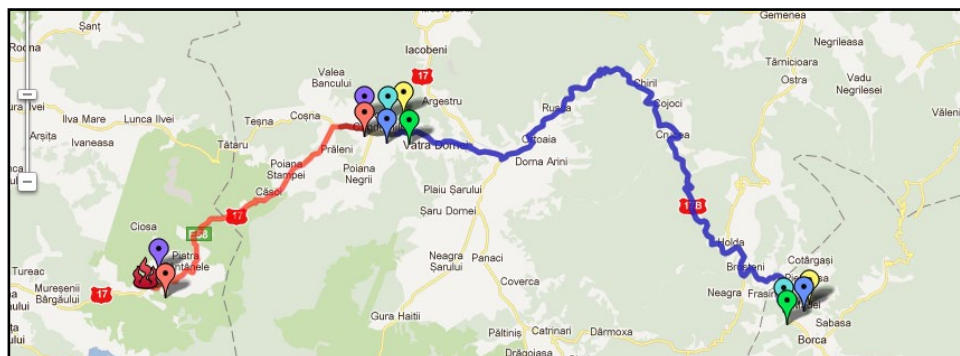
57 Before descending with Van Helsing from the peak on which the Castle is situated, Mina observes: “We had to take some of our provisions too, for we were in a perfect desolation, and so far as we could see through the snowfall, there was not even the sign of habitation.” (Journal of 6 November)

58 For a discussion of further contradictions in the novel, see Miller, 2000, 100ff.

59 Noted by Walker & Wright, p. 59, indicating Stoker tends to decrease the travel speed whenever his protagonists enter the primitive world of the Carpathians, thereby marking the difference between the speed-obsessed West and the laid-back Orient, where trains are always delayed. Harker leaves Klausenburg by 8:30 am with an hour delay and arrives in Bistritz in the evening twilight, which occurred around 9:15 pm. According to Wolf, 1993, p. 4, footnote 23 the regular duration of the trip was four hours and 45 minutes. Stoker's notes show he planned this train trip of 76 miles to last twelve hours – see Eighteen Bisang/Miller, p. 84 ff.

with the resting Count has been passed from the Slovaks to the Gypsies, who transport it with a “leiter-wagon.”⁶⁰ Jonathan and Arthur have abandoned their steam launch and follow the convoy by horse. Quincey and John do the same, although apparently taking a slightly different road.

Connell suggests the box with the Count is transported via Holda, Watra-Dorna and Pojana Stampi⁶¹ through the Borgo Pass – followed by the mounted vampire hunters (route marked by bright green dots on Map #11 and 14).⁶² This would mean the entire group would duplicate the route taken by van Helsing and Mina (red dots). Connell’s mark-ups seem to echo a general consensus among *Dracula* annotators, Wolf, Leatherdale and Klinger included.⁶³ But Mina’s diary of 6 November describes something completely different:



Google Map with Connell’s mark-ups, proposing the Count is transported via Vatra-Dornei.

“It was late in the afternoon when the Professor and I took our way towards the east whence I knew Jonathan was coming. (...) When we had gone about a mile, I was tired with the heavy walking and sat down to rest. (...) I knew from the way Dr. Van Helsing was searching about that he was trying to seek some strategic point, where we would be less exposed in case of attack. The rough roadway still led downwards. We could trace it through the drifted snow. (...)

From the height where we were it was possible to see a great distance. And far off, beyond the white waste of snow, I could see the river lying like a black ribbon in kinks and curls as it wound its way. Straight in front of us and not far off, in fact so near that I wondered we had not noticed before, came a group of mounted men hurrying along. In the midst of them was a cart, a long leiter-wagon which swept from side to side. (...)

Then came a sudden cry, “Look! Look! Look! See, two horsemen follow fast, coming up from the south. It must be Quincey and John.” (...)

Looking around I saw on the north side of the coming party two other men, riding at breakneck speed. One of them I knew was Jonathan, and the other I took, of course, to be Lord Godalming. They too, were pursuing the party with the cart.”

Apparently, Mina is looking East over to the Bistrița River (marked light blue on our Map #6)⁶⁴ or to its tributaries (marked darker blue).⁶⁵ Taking into account Castle Dracula was at least 21½ to 32½ km south of the Borgo Pass, the most logical option for the Szgany was to take over the Count’s box far south of Vatra Dornei and drive straight to the West. Alternatively, the Slovaks could navigate their boat up one of the tributaries as far as possible, before the box was consigned to the Gypsies. In both cases, the Count’s men would enter Transylvania directly from the Romanian side, crossing the mountain border far south of the Borgo Pass, between Drăgoiasa and Gheorgheni.⁶⁶ In Section IV we will examine this more in detail. Between these two little towns, the mountain range is ca. 1,200 to 1,500 m high. From Pietra Neamț up to Holda the Bistrița runs roughly parallel to this border, an estimated 15 to 20 km further to the East.

60 Like Johnson and Crosse, Stoker refers to the German *Leiterwagen*, a large cart with two axles and half-open sideboards shaped like ladders (*Leiter*). The cart is drawn by horses and mostly used to transport hay or other agricultural products. The first axle is controlled by the drawbar, so that the cart easily follows the direction taken by the horses.

61 Village names as spelled on Map #6.

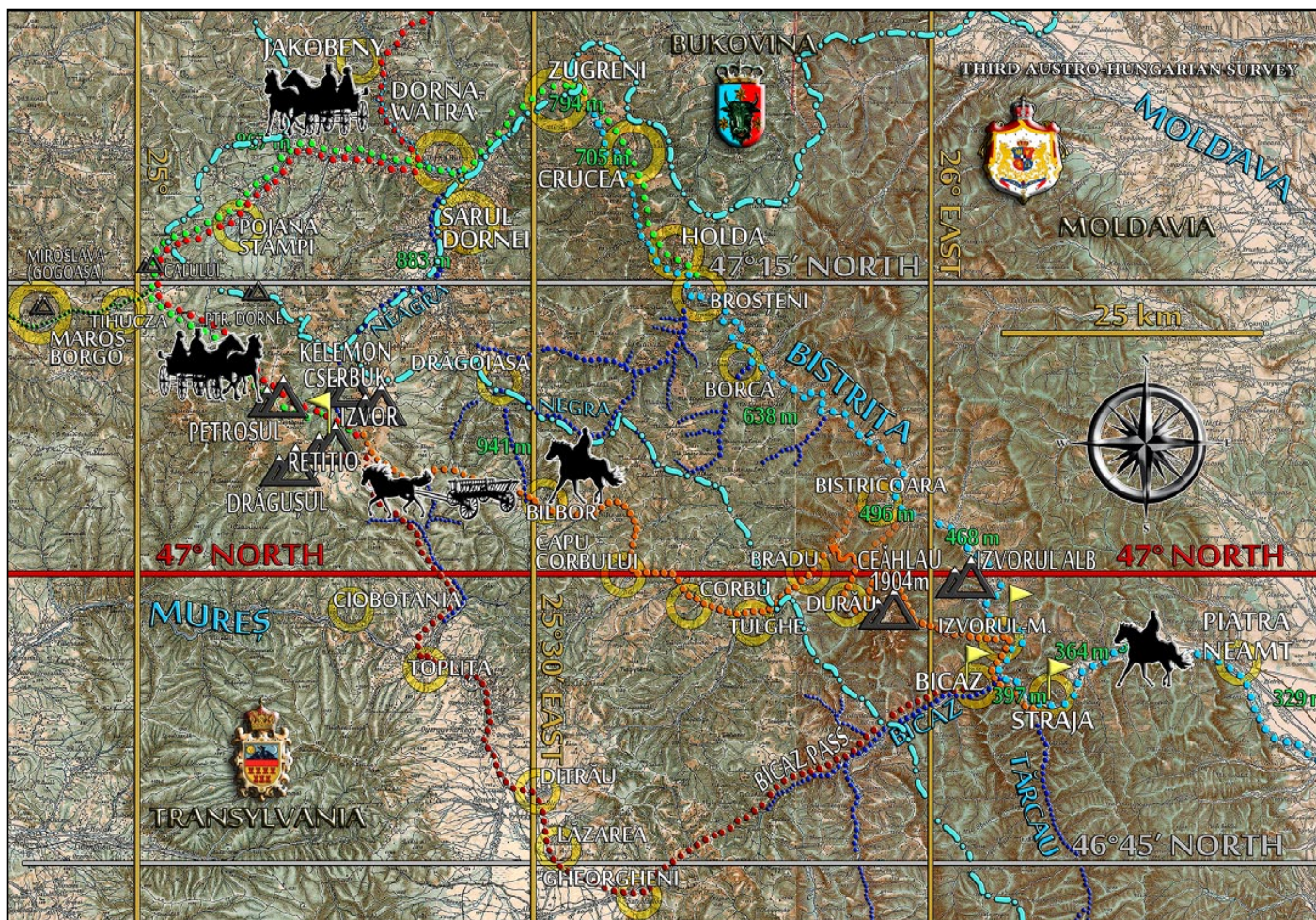
62 See <http://infocult.typepad.com/dracula/>, linking to <http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?client=firefox-a&hl=en&ie=UTF8&msa=0&msid=217978292123004808450.000493cb8457a953269a0&z=10>.

63 See Klinger, 2008, Baedeker maps with Klinger’s mark-ups on p. 471 and 475, as mentioned before. Upon reading the book closely, I have the strong impression Stoker would have considered it a lack of authorial craftsmanship to repeat a travel description. Mina’s route to Budapest is completely different from Jonathan’s; Jonathan’s journey to Munich is omitted, since the entire group makes the same trip again in October. Equally, Mina’s train trip to Whitby is suppressed, since Jonathan travels to Whitby later on. The most elegant way to avoid this problem is to create different routes for all parties involved.

64 Leatherdale, 1998, p. 505, footnote 110 maintains the river cannot have had kinks and curls so near to its source. A look at Map #6 teaches us that all the way up from Fundu up to Vatra Dornei, the Bistrița *does* have many such loops.

65 This matches Harker’s Journal of 5 May, describing the eastern horizon as very distanced when he looks from his window room. Cf Klinger, 2008, p. 27, footnote 56.

66 Hungarian: “Gyergyószentmiklós”, German: “Niklasmarkt”, see footnote 56.



Map #6 Third Austro-Hungarian Survey, 1890-1910 – Romania & Transylvania - The Count's box being transported & pursued

From the Petroșul, with 2,102 m the highest peak between Borgo Pass and Mureș, the view to the East is blocked by the Kelemon Cserbuk with 2,015 m.⁶⁷ Next to this alp, we find the Izvoru (2,033 m)⁶⁸ and the Rețișo (2,021 m).⁶⁹ Together they build a crest connecting the central ridge of the Călimani Mountains to the eastern border with Romania.⁷⁰ The dominant mountain backs of this region are marked with a golden glow on Map #7, based on the 1907 *Spezialkarte*.

Looking for the greatest common divisor of the route descriptions from Chapters 1 and 27, I conclude that the Cserbuk, the Izvor and the Rețișo – including their sub-peaks – are the only summits with an unobstructed east view to the Bistrița to be reached from the Borgo Pass by a light caleche rapidly driving ca. three hours south-west.

After crossing the Schandroja, staying east of Vârful Cornului, the trail leads across the origins of the Dornișoara Creek and the Dorna. Following the course of the Vorova Creek, one crosses the mountain ridge connecting the Vârful Maiaris with the Vârful Timăului at its lowest saddle point (1,789 m). From there, the terrain descends again towards the valley of the Neagra Saralui Creek.⁷¹ South of this tributary of the Bistrița, the discussed massif can be ascended by different pathways.

THE SHADE AND ITS SHADOW

Klinger unwillingly demonstrates how much confusion may result from interpreting isolated text lines without consistent mapping. From the direction of the late afternoon shadow, he correctly concludes that “where the mountain rise so steep” (Van Helsing, 4 Nov.) – the destination the Professor and Mina are heading to – must be the East. From this, Klinger finds

67 On the 1907 *K.u.K. Spezialkarte*: “Kelemen Cserbuk”. From the Petroșul, one can see the Bistrița River, but only when looking North-East; straight to the East, the Cserbuk is in the way. In order for Mina to see the Szgany approaching the Petroșul from the North-East, the mounted group would have to pass a densely populated area, especially the village of Neagra Șarului. The Dragușul may be high enough to look across the border ridge, but after descending a hundred meters, the view is blocked.

68 On the 1907 *K.u.K. Spezialkarte*: “Kelemen Izvor”.

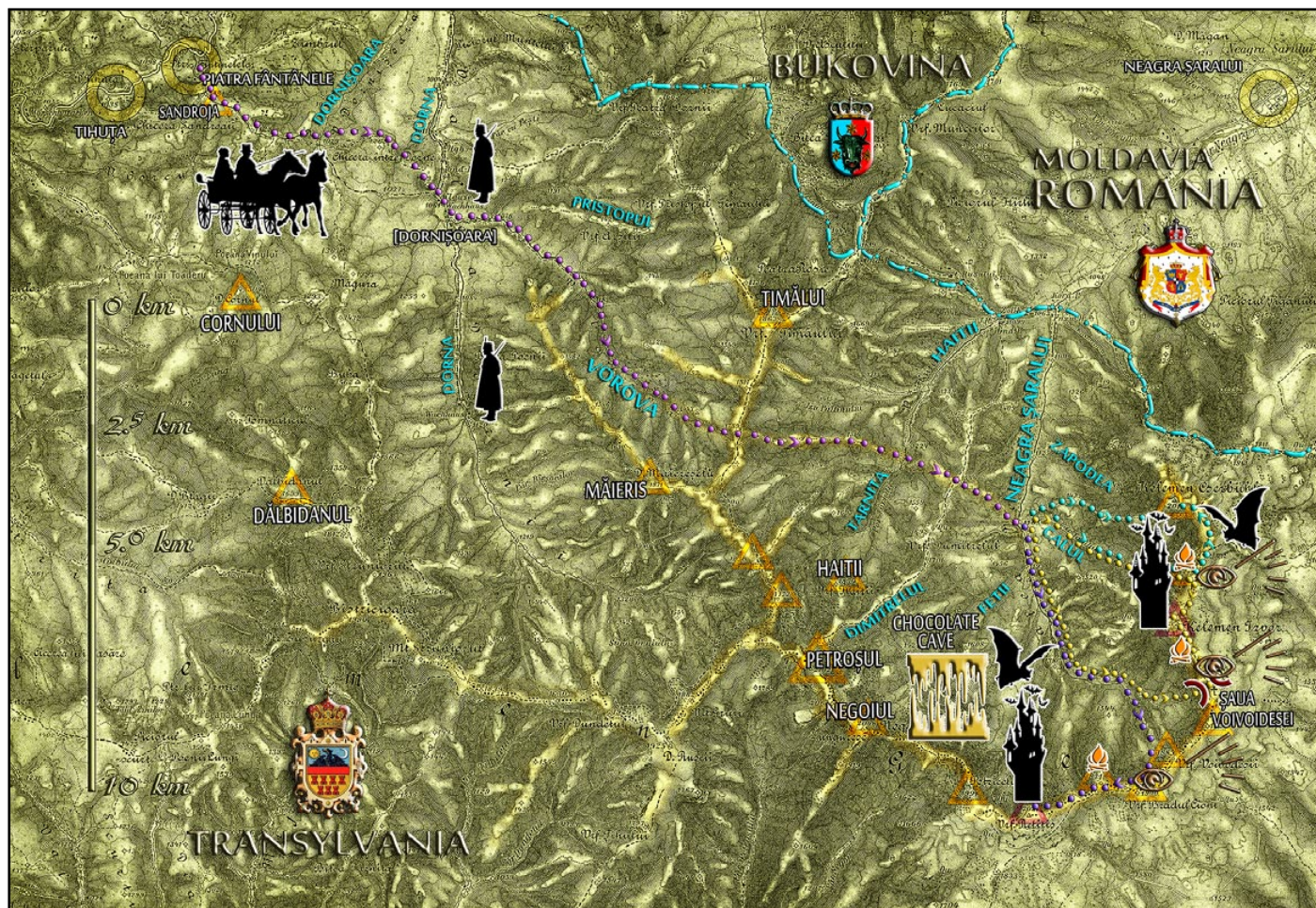
69 On the 1907 *K.u.K. Spezialkarte*: “Vârful Rețișis”, “Piatra Piscu” on the 1876 version.

70 This central ridge is marked by the Măieris (1,885 m), Haitii (1,856 m), Petroșul (2,102 m), Negoii Unguresc (2,081 m) and Petricelul (1,993 m)

71 Locations given as spelled on the 1907 map. The creek south-east of Drăgoiasa is also mentioned as Neagra on some maps. To discern it from the first, we keep to the name “Neagra”, as mentioned on the *Spezialkarte*.

they have initially been driving to the “westward end of the Pass” and now “have curved back facing eastwards”, arguing that “they did not travel all the way to the Pass only to turn back eastwards from it.”⁷² But the book tells us that immediately after arriving at the east entrance of the Pass, Mina finds the byroad to the South-East.⁷³ What other choice did they have than to change their direction? Unlike the other couplings, they had no Slovaks or Gypsies poling or riding ahead of them to show them the way – the Borgo Pass with its much-mentioned byroad was their only point of orientation. To drive the full length of the Pass towards the West and then curve back East, as Klinger proposes, would lack just the kind of efficiency he calls for.

Klinger’s comment on the descent from the Castle in Jonathan’s direction equally shows his confusion: He proposes they climb all the way down and then stroll east through the Borgo Pass, in the direction of Vatra Dornei.⁷⁴ But Mina reports they only progress for one mile; the Castle must be at least 21½ km away from the Pass – a two-day trip as we have read before.



Map #7 K. & K. Spezialkarte 1876/1907 – The route from the Borgo Pass to the mountain crest with Cserbük, Izvor & Rețișo

GOING BACK EAST?

Even the wisest Dracula scholars are puzzled as to why they seem to use the same “rough roadway” again that brought them to the Castle. We already read they had the late afternoon sun in their back on 4 November, so how can they retrace their steps now going east? Instead of dismissing this as another incongruity, we might as well understand the road is winding, as most mountain paths do. Starting from the Borgo Pass, the route has been South-East-East. At the Neagra Valley, where the Calul Creek joins the main stream, the Professor and Mina have various options. Our Map # 6 demonstrates that two of the three main peaks can be accessed from the East. The Rețișo can be reached by following the Neagra to its origin, then taking the pathway along the edge of the crest. To arrive at the Izvor, one must follow the Calul and then head for the Șaua Voivodesi. From there, the trail leads north-west to the highest peak of this mountain block. The Cserbük can be accessed from the South, but the route from the West seems shorter and more viable: Like the Petroșul and the Dragușul before, the Cserbük drops out.

⁷² Klinger, 2008, p. 484f., footnote 15.

⁷³ On p. 37 footnote 93, on p. 36, footnote 92 and on p. 485, footnote 15, Klinger recognises the correct position and direction of this byroad. On p. 474, footnote 47, and p. 484, footnote 13, Klinger complains Jonathan’s Journal does not describe this road clear enough to discern it. But this is met by the Professor’s comment already quoted: “At first I think somewhat strange, but soon I see that there be only one such byroad.”

⁷⁴ Klinger, 2008, p. 493, footnote 38.

SECTION IV THE BORGIO PASS DOGMA REVISITED : THE TRUE ROUTE OF THE SZGANY

THE BISTRITA'S LOOP TO THE CASTLE: A BANANA PEEL

Though neither Jonathan's nor van Helsing's and Mina's description of their trips from the Borgo Pass to the Castle define clear landmarks, its substantial distance from the Pass should have been obvious to such trained readers like Wolf, Leatherdale and Klinger. Accordingly, they should have noted that navigating up the Bistrița all the way to Vatra Dornei, then driving through the Borgo Pass would have caused the Count's men fatal delay. But that the Castle can only be reached through the Borgo Pass has grown into a such a fixed idea that Stoker's hints pointing in another direction are ignored and even ridiculed.

The banana peel that even the keenest Dracula commentators seem to slip on can be found in Mina's presentation of Romania's geography, already referred to in Section IV:

"(..) the Sereth is, at Fundu, joined by the Bistritza which runs up round the Borgo Pass. The loop it makes is manifestly as close to Dracula's castle as can be got by water."⁷⁵

If we understand this loop to be the large half-circle the Bistrița makes north of Holda, along Crucea and Zugreni, this indeed invokes the image of the Slovaks poling their boat up all the way to Vatra Dornei. But Mina's words should be understood in their context: deciding between either the Pruth or the Sereth as the Count's most plausible water route. Before the start of the steam launch, Mina is amended by her husband:

"We took it, that somewhere about the 47th degree, north latitude, would be the place chosen for crossing the country between the river and the Carpathians."⁷⁶

Harker's wording should have alerted the editors: If the vampire hunters had indeed agreed that the Count were to be transported through the Borgo Pass, the young lawyer surely would have used this term, already known to his companions from his Journal. Instead, he introduces a completely new reference frame and an element of uncertainty. If Mina's word still represented their highest wisdom, why bring up the matter at all? Why send only the "old man" and the "frail woman" to the Borgo Pass? Instead, the whole party should have boarded the train to Verești, to arrive the east entrance of the Pass the morning of 3 November, well before the Count's men.⁷⁷ Why the anxious remark about catching up with the Count before Straja, if they had all the time in the world to set up such a foolproof ambush?

But instead of exploring the implications of Harker's remark, Leatherdale perceives this as evidence for Stoker's superficial preparation:

"This gives an insight in Stoker's research. Lines of latitude are significant only when dealing in generalities, when map details are insufficient to pinpoint any particular location. It is meaningless to talk about changing rivers at a line of latitude unless that is the best Stoker could go on. The 47th Parallel passes near the town of Vatra Dornei, at which the River Bistritza today is little more than a stream. The road from Vatra Dornei connects Bistritz with the Borgo Pass."⁷⁸



Golden Bistrița at Vatra-Dornei. © Cezar Suceveanu

Apparently, Leatherdale hesitates to draw the consequences from his own words: The Bistrița being little more than a stream at Vatra Dornei, now and then, the boat transport most probably was given up long before. Even if the river loop along

⁷⁵ *Dracula*, Chapter 26, Mina Harker's Memorandum (entered in her Journal).

⁷⁶ *Dracula*, Chapter 26, Jonathan Harker's Journal of 30 October.

⁷⁷ Klinger, 2008, p. 474, footnote 46f. asks himself a similar question: Why not all hurry to the Castle to await Dracula there?

Although Klinger in the next footnote maintains, it makes no sense to make a detour via Verești, the Professor and Mina arrive at the Castle on 4 November, two full days before the Szgany. Even if the train to Verești had taken five hours longer, as scheduled, Mina and the Professor would have arrived in advance.

⁷⁸ Leatherdale, 1998, p. 484, footnote 127. Changing the rivers is only one option; the other option is to switch from boat to horse and leiter-wagon. Wolf mixes up Geography even more: First he states Cimpolung Moldovenesc (Câmpulung) would be situated approximately at the 47th Parallel, three pages later that "Veresci just a few miles north of the 47° Latitude" would be the place addressed by Harker's remark, on the next page that the 47th Parallel would run through Dorna-Watra (Vatra Dornei), still two pages later he gives the location of Straja as 47° N., In fact, Câmpulung is located at 47°32', Verești even at 47°36' North, 67 km north of the 47th Parallel, in effect nearer to the 48th Parallel. If Verești would have been the place to leave the river, this would have been the Sireth, not the Bistrița! See Wolf, 1993, p. 417, footnote 29; p. 420, footnote 35; p. 421, footnote 38, p. 423, footnote 41.

Crucea and Zugreni "... is as close to Dracula's castle as can be got by water" – this is true if we ignore tributaries like the Neagra, joining the Bistrița at Broșteni – to follow the water route up to Vatra Dorna is not the shortest but the *longest* and the *slowest* thinkable route, as I will demonstrate in detail below.

If we look up the 47th degree on the map, the Straja piece of the puzzle falls into place at last: Past Straja, located just south of it, the Bistrița is joined by the Bicaz River, flowing through the town with the same name. From there, the Transylvanian border is only 8 km away – The Slovaks could navigate up the Bicaz River, or the Szgany could take the box and disappear into the Count's homeland. This is what Harker must have feared more than the rapids, this is what would have required counsel with his friends, since having lost sight of the Count, Harker and Holmwood would have no clue which route to follow; on horseback, the Count's men would be much quicker and have many more opportunities to hide.

Conclusion: Straja and nearby Bicaz at the 47th Parallel in Harker's mind constitute the pivot, where the Count's men could change direction and cross over to the Eastern Carpathians.

THE SHORTEST ROUTE TO THE CASTLE

With the help of an interactive route planner, I was able to find out what the vampire's helpers knew beforehand: The shortest route to the Castle. Starting from Bicaz, where the routes split, three options present themselves:

A) The "classical" route hitherto taken for granted by most *Dracula* scholars: From Bicaz via Roșeni, Ruseni, Frumosu, Borca, Broșteni, Holda, Crucea and Zugreni to Vatra Dornei, situated in Bukovina at 47°22' N. Though only 40 km north of the 47th Parallel, the winding Bistrița and its parallel road (now the N15 east of the stream and the 17B up north) take 137 km. To be added are 36 km through Pojana Stampi to Piatra Fântânele and ca. 25 km from there to the South-East – altogether ca. **190 km**. This route is already marked by the Bistrița in light blue and Connell's route in bright green on Maps #13 and 14.

B) Instead of the Borgo Pass, the transport troop could cross the Bicaz Pass. Via Gheorgheni, Lăzarea and Ditrău, the Szgany could reach Toplița (today 93 km away from Bicaz along the N12) and from there advance to the Kelemen Alps or "Toplicza Alps"⁷⁹ along the Voivoidesii Valley – another 32 km. In total: **125 km**, significantly shorter than the "classical" route and with the advantage of travelling on the Transylvanian side of the border. Navigating the boat upstream the Bicaz would be an additional option, though slower than horse and cart. I marked this route in brown-red.

C) The third and quickest variant is to drive from Bicaz to the North-West via Izvorul Montelui, Durău, Bradu, Tulghe (the border town, Hungarian: "Tolgyes"), Corbu, Capo Corbului and Bilbor. Along the modern N155F, N15 and N174B this makes 93 km, including a detour over Bistricioara. With horses and leiter-wagon, the Szgany would have taken the shortcut across the natural bridge (curved orange arrow) through this part of the Ceahlău Massif, saving 13 km. From Bilbor, one reaches the Reșițio across the valley of the Negra and Voivodesii Creeks: ca. 25 km. In total 93 -13 + 25= **105 km**, which is 85 km or 45% shorter than the Vatra Dornei route. I marked this route in orange.

Conclusions: Even if the Castle had been located in the middle of the Borgo Pass (which it certainly was not), the routes over Bilbor and over Toplița both would have been shorter than over Vatra Dornei. From Bilbor, the Szgany must head for the West, whereas from Toplița, their direction would be north. The Bilbor route therefore matches Mina's description better than the Toplița one.

The orange route marked on Maps #14 and 15 shows that the transport must have left the Bistrița at Izvorul Montelui, located at 46°57' North, just 5 km south of the discussed Parallel.⁸⁰ Obviously the route of the Szgany winds itself around this Parallel like a liana around a jungle tree; since the Szgany must follow the curves of the mountain backs, their road is not straight. Harker's description is so exact that it cannot be perfected without mentioning the single villages along this route.⁸¹

79 Demeter, 1888, uses this name for the discussed Kelemen peaks, referring to the Hungarian name then in use for Toplița.

80 Please note there are 25 places by this name in Romania – the easiest way to look it up is to search for Lake Bicaz first; the 47th Parallel exactly crosses the Izvorul Alb on its west side, Izvorul Montelui is 5 km south of it.

81 The precision is so uncanny, that we may even ask ourselves if Mina, with her reputation of accuracy, did not mean the large river loop between Piatra Neamț and Bicaz in the first place, where the Bistrița is as close to the Transylvanian border as it will ever get. On the other hand, she mentions the Borgo Pass – which Jonathan does not. How nicely she and her husband would have harmonised, if the Castle really had been located near the Bicaz Pass instead of the Borgo pass, as suggested by Klinger! (see footnote 56).

V HOW MUCH DID STOKER KNOW? DISINFORMATION STRATEGIES AT WORK

DECIPHERING STOKER'S HANDWRITING

From Stoker's notes, we know he transcribed remarks from a variety of books. In order to compose a rough geographical framework with Castle Dracula being situated ca. three hours driving south-east of the Borgo Pass, on a high peak in the wilderness, Stoker did not need much more than the fragments harvested from Boner and the 1896 Baedeker of Austria. Additionally, the author would have needed to know the course Bistrița River east of the border mountains in order to see that at the 47th Parallel, different route options develop. But the fact that Stoker *was* able to weave the names of Fundul and Straja – flyspots on the map – into his narrative fabric proves he *must* have had a detailed geographical overview. We know he had made himself familiar with ethnical, political and cultural aspects of the region, copying detailed information on clothing, dishes, furniture and customs – so why should he have left geographic precision aside? After having established the routes of Mina, the Professor and the Szgany, with only the Rețișo and the Izvor left as candidates for the Castle's site, I decide to look into the matter once more. The only coordinates relating to the final chapters I found were on a scrap of paper reproduced as "Rosenbach 33b" (notes for planned Chapter 29.⁸² Leatherdale, looking for the precise location of Fundu, had put me on the track by the following remark:

"Stoker's notes say: "Bistritz River runs into the Sereth at Fundu below Strasba and Isvorul 47 E. Long 25½ North latitude."⁸³

If we check this on the map, we end up in the desert, quite literally: 47° East Longitude, 25½° North Latitude points to the Saudi-Arabian *Najd*, north-west of Riyadh. Eighteen-Bisang & Miller transcribe Stoker's handwriting as follows:

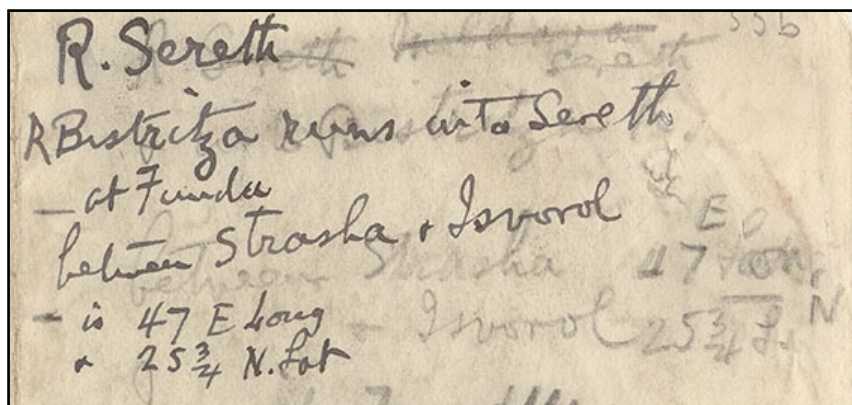
"R. Sereth

R. Bistritza runs into Sereth at Fundu between Straska & Isvorol

Is 47 E Long

25 ¾ N Lat"

This suggests Fundu would be located "between Straska and Isvorol". "Straska" probably refers to "Strasba" or "Straja", but which "Isvorol" is meant here – maybe Izvorul Montelui north of Straja? But if Stoker knew these tiny villages from a map, he also *knew* that Fundu is *not* located between them, but 100 km downstream (see Section IV). Studying the facsimile of Stoker's handwriting, I reached the following conclusions:



Bram Stoker. *Dracula: Notes & Outline*, ca. 1890 - ca. 1896, p. 33b (detail), EL3.S874d MS Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, PA.

- Stoker did neither write "Straska" nor "Strasba" but "Strasha" – which is phonetically correct.⁸⁴ The German name is "Strascha." In Romanian, "Straja" means "watchpost."
- Stoker obviously misplaced Latitude and Longitude. Meant is: 47° North Latitude, 25 ¾° East Longitude.
- These coordinates neither fit Fundu nor Straja nor Izvorul Montelui north of Straja: Stoker certainly did *not* write "25 ¾ E" to describe locations *East* of 26° E. Instead, they point to the border area between Bradu (Romania) and Tulghe (Transylvania): the very place where the Szgany cross the border to Transylvania while heading for the Kelemen Alps.

The solution of the riddle: Stoker did *not* write

"R. Bistritza runs into Sereth at Fundu between Straska & Isvorol."

Instead, he wanted to memorise:

"Between Strasha & Isvorul is 47 N Lat, 25 ¾ E Long"

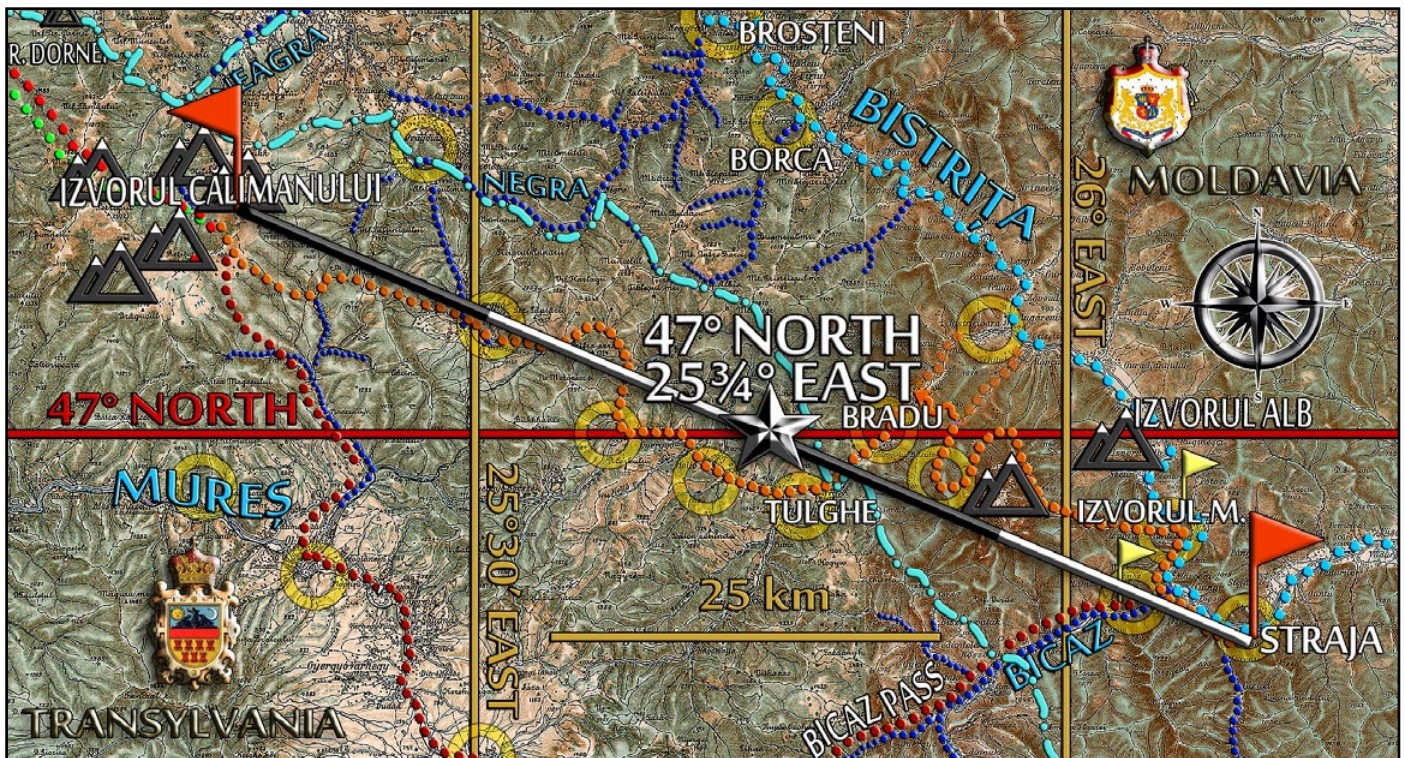
82 Eighteen-Bisang & Miller, 2008, p. 112 f. "17/3/96" (Column 2) or "5/4/96" (Column 3) would be a possible dates for these notes.

83 Leatherdale, 1998, p. 479, footnote 86.

84 From Stoker's notes we know he sometimes wrote names as phonetical variants of the correct spelling, like "Minna" for "Mina" (Rosenbach #19 and 21), "Dimetry" for "Dimitri" (#40b), "saffire" for "sapphire" (#47). "Strasha" could be such a variant of "Straja", and "Isvorul" is a phonetic equivalent of "Izvorul". If either "Isvorol" or "Isvorul" is the correct transcription is open to debate.

From this follows that “Izvorul Montelui” north of Straja is *not* meant. But there are 25 villages by this name in Romania. So what exactly did Stoker have in mind? We find the answer by drawing a line from Straja through the point described by these coordinates. As if by a sudden wind blow, the veil of mystification is lifted:

“Castle Dracula is located on top of the Izvorul Călimanului.”



Map #8 Third Austro-Hungarian Survey, 1890-1910 – “Between Strasha and Isvorul is 47° North Latitude, 25 ¾° East Longitude”

Stoker, of course, must have read the mountain from a map first, maybe in a much earlier stage of research;⁸⁵ now he was drawing a line between the location of Castle Dracula and Straja in order to find the most plausible place for the Szgany to cross the border: “Between Straja & Izvorul Călimanului is 47 N Lat, 25 ¾ E Long.” “Isvorul” or “Izvorul” are two of the many spelling variations for the Izvor peak discussed in Section III; with an altitude of 2,033 m, it dominates the mountain crest. Via the Șaua Voivodesei, it can be approached from the South-East. Shortly before arriving at the summit, Van Helsing and Mina make their night camp; The Professor goes up to the Castle alone. The next day, they go the opposite direction for one mile. Looking for a vantage point, the Professor may have selected the Șaua Voivodesei itself – “Șaua” is the Romanian word for “pass”. From here, Van Helsing and Mina were able to overlook the entire area to the East, the so-called “Drăgoiasa Depression.” After crossing the hills between Belbor and the mountain block, the Szgany must have ascended the crest from the east side following the path up to the Șaua Voivodesei, where the final showdown took place – a most condign location for the former Voivode to draw his last non-breath.

Harker’s view from the “forbidden room” equally fits into the picture now – admittedly better than from the Rețișio:

“To the west was a great valley, and then, rising far away, great jagged mountain fastnesses, rising peak on peak (..).⁸⁶

Harker speaks of the Neagra valley. Across the valley and to the left are the other peaks of the region. Just two miles away from the Castle, a rare volcanokarst cave and a sulphur deposit existed,⁸⁷ conferring new significance to Van Helsing’s words:

“The very place, where [Dracula] have been alive, Undead for all these centuries, is full of strangeness of the geologic and chemical world. There are deep caverns and fissures that reach none know whither. There have been volcanoes, some of whose openings still send out waters of strange properties, and gases that kill or make to vivify.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Eighteen-Bisang and Miller, 2008, p. 9 points out Stoker may have written notes that have been lost over time.

⁸⁶ *Dracula*, Chapter 3, Harker’s Journal of 15 May. Cf. Walker & Wright, 1997, p. 60.

⁸⁷ During the Communist regime, brimstone was mined by means of surface exploitation at the Cariera de sulf din Muntii Calimani; During Stoker’s age, the unique “Chocolate Cave” with its stalactites of volcanic stone, described by Prof. Naum et. al. in 1962, must have been intact still. Sources: Kienas 1997, Mada 2010, Naum et. al., 1962, Szakacs, 1999.

⁸⁸ *Dracula*, Chapter 24, Mina Harker’s Journal of 5 October.

"LET ME BE ACCURATE IN EVERYTHING"

Despite the clues deeply buried in the text, Stoker obviously did not want to give away the name of the mountain he had in mind. Whenever the novel promises utmost exactness, the opposite is the case:

"All yesterday we travel, always getting closer to the mountains, and moving into a more and more wild and desert land. There are great, frowning precipices and much falling water, and Nature seem to have held sometime her carnival. Madam Mina still sleep and sleep. And though I did have hunger and appeased it, I could not waken her, even for food. (...) As we travel on the rough road, for a road of an ancient and imperfect kind there was, I held down my head and slept. Again I waked with a sense of guilt and of time passed, and found Madam Mina still sleeping, and the sun low down. But all was indeed changed. The frowning mountains seemed further away, and we were near the top of a steep rising hill, on summit of which was such a castle as Jonathan tell of in his diary. At once I exulted and feared. For now, for good or ill, the end was near."⁸⁹

Just like Jonathan, who was slumbering when the caleche reached the courtyard, the Professor and Mina nod off while the horses find their way to the Castle, signaling the place cannot be approached in a rational or practical way, but only in a dream-like state. The final kilometres driven by the Szgany and the men on horses equally seem to take place within a soundless void, while Mina watches them through her looking-glass. Again, there is a narrative hiatus: Dr. Seward's last report is dated 5 November, while the horsemen are spotted by Van Helsing only on 6 November, late in the afternoon. And again, the travellers seem to dive into a kind of mental limbo:

"We ride to death of some one. God alone knows who, or where, or what, or when, or how it may be . . ."⁹⁰

In his entry of 4 November, Jonathan also says farewell to this world – not for the first time:

"We must only hope! If I write no more Goodbye Mina! God bless and keep you."⁹¹

In order to reach the Castle, one must be ready to plunge into the unknown, to die or at least swoon. And in all instances – this also goes for Jonathan's escape from the Castle – the geographical description stutters. It has been debated that Stoker presents his Count Dracula as the Anti-Christ, promising eternal life and performing rituals like a "blood baptism", thereby reversing Christian ceremonies. In this sense, Castle Dracula is the antipole of the Grail Castle, which eludes any purposive search and can only be reached by guidance. Like in Arthurian legend, the pure-hearted are awaited and welcomed here – not to heal the wounded Fisher King but to quench the thirst of the Vampire King.⁹² Apart from psychological, religious and mythical connotations, such descriptive lacunae serve Stoker's strategy to avoid authentic addresses. The novel's chapters relating to Whitby and London equally feature many vague, fake or garbled addresses, like "at Purfleet, on a byroad", "The Crescent", "Hillingham", "Kingstead", "Shooter's Hill, Hampstead", "347 Piccadilly", "Potter's Court, Walsworth", "Jamaica Lane, Bermondsey", "197 Chicksand Street" and "Doolittle's Wharf", in areas Stoker and his readers were amply familiar with and no emotional discontinuity had to be stressed.⁹³



William Pogany, *Parsifal leaves the empty Grail Castle*

89 *Dracula*, Chapter 27, Memorandum by Abraham van Helsing of 5 November, morning. At first sight, it seems illogical the "frowning mountains" look more distanced now. In fact, Van Helsing and Mina have reached the summit of the mountains they were heading for – seen from this perspective, they do not "frown" any more. In the distance, the travellers can now watch the more friendly border range and the hills across the Negra Valley. "Let me be accurate in everything" is the pledge of Van Helsing's Memorandum of 5 November. To confuse things even more, Van Helsing states about the trip to the Castle: "By and by we find all the things which Jonathan have note in that wonderful diary of him." (Memorandum of 4 November) But after the caleche has taken the byroad leading away from the Borgo Pass, we find no such "things" in Harker's journal at all – the description of the wolves, the nervous horses, the darkness, the blue flames and the driver's odd behaviour cannot have been of any practical help to Van Helsing.

90 *Dracula*, Chapter 27, Seward's Diary of 5 November. The only riddle that remains is why the horsemen "riding at breakneck speed" needed from dawn till next day's sunset for ca. 115 km. Cf. Klinger, 2008, p. 494, footnote 42, starting from the false premise that the boat transport continued to Vatra Dornei. Maybe Stoker had made the time schedule before checking the distances?

91 *Dracula*, Chapter 27, Jonathan Harker's Journal of 4 November.

92 In Victorian England, the Arthurian Grail legend became popular with Pre-Raphaelite artists. Stoker's neighbour Rossetti participated in decorating the new union building at Oxford University. William Morris wrote poems about the Grail and had Arthurian tapestries made, which in turn were described by Edward Burne-Jones in his prose. Arthur Hacker's *The Temptation of Sir Percival* (Oil on canvas, 1894, now in Leeds Art Gallery) reminds of Jonathan Harker being tempted by the three vampire brides.

93 In the unabridged version of this essay, the geographical background of the chapters taking place in England are extensively discussed, as well the way Stoker handled the issue of authentic and non-authentic addresses.

THE END

We know the writer deleted three paragraphs in the final chapter, in which all traces of the Count's massive stronghold were to be erased by a gigantic eruption. Several authors have speculated Stoker wanted to leave open the possibility of a sequel. Klinger instead proposes a highly complicated scheme: The Count would have pressed Stoker to invent the Castle's destruction as to discourage any further adventurers to come and look for the bloodsucker – still Un-Dead and kicking – in Transylvania, but finally the novelist, sabotaging this malicious plan, would have written the truth: "The Castle still exists". That this double-cross vampire trap is at odds with the rest of his hoax – namely, that the vampire personally controlled and edited Stoker's writing to make sure all facts were properly masked – Klinger has to admit.⁹⁴ Should we suspect now that behind the scenes, it was the Count Himself who forced the winner of the Edgar Award to risk his credibility, so that the Truth about His Existence will remain suppressed? Or do we witness Klinger's courageous revolt against the Count's control here?⁹⁵

My personal guess is that this dramatic cataclysm was originally invented to clean up the traces of an identifiable location, till Stoker finally felt the building's coordinates were blurred enough anyway to preclude falsification.⁹⁶ That we are now able to detect the Castle's location all the same and so unravel the novel's greatest mystery is due to a historically new situation: Only since recent years, highly detailed military maps from the novel's era can be accessed and consulted online and checked against modern satellite images, local photographs and videos, seamless street panoramas and real-time route simulations.⁹⁷ Stoker's contemporaries did not have such powerful tools at their disposal, nor did they have access to his private notes, so that the novelist could be assured that during his lifetime, no one would climb the Izvorul and point at the missing Castle – that is, as far as it is possible at all to point at something absent...

Hans Corneel de Roos
Munich, in January 2012



Winter in the Carpathians. © Vitalyphoto | Dreamstime

94 Klinger, p. 499f., footnote 53.

95 It is not the first time Klinger contradicts himself. On p. 484, footnote 13, Klinger explains the Count might desire the final confrontation to take place at the Castle, "where he would have allies", but p. 494, footnote 42 states the Szgany had no reason at all to race to the Castle. On p. 36, footnote 92, Klinger dismisses the gold treasures the vampire may find in St. George's Night as "small hordes" for which the "seemingly wealthy Dracula" need not stop; on p. 38, footnote 94, Klinger proposes these treasures may have had extraordinary value for the vampire. I assume that if the Count had not been able to recover his lifetime possessions after turning into a vampire, these gold heaps surfacing once a year must have been the very basis of his continuous wealth and his means of financing a private army of Slovaks and Gypsies over 400 years. No other source of income is suggested in the novel and Harker's Journal of 25 June for once is clear enough in this point: In his host's room he finds "... gold of all kinds, Roman, and British, an Austrian, and Hungarian, and Greek and Turkish money, covered with a film of dust, *as though it had lain long in the ground.*" (my Italics – HdR).

96 In Klinger's paradigm, Stoker avoids verification of his novel by changing names and places. In my view, the opposite is true: Stoker openly admits that he changed names – allegedly to protect the reputation of the people involved, like the scholar Van Helsing – so that his narrative cannot be proven untrue by putting a finger at the false data.

97 Digital scans from the Third Military Survey for online use were created in Sept. 2008, scans of the Josephinian Survey for Transylvania in December 2009, scans of the Austrian *Spezialkarte* in December 2010. Google Streetview for Great Britain has been online since March 2009.

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