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• Screening: documentary about Vlad Tepes & vampire superstitions
• The historical Dracula: Vlad Tepes
• The historical female “vampire”: Erzsebet (Elizabeth) Bathory
Sample Exam Questions

1. Identify the territory associated with the folkloric belief in vampires. Cite the names of, at least, 4 countries where such believes are consistently encountered.

2. In what aspects are folkloric accounts different from stereotypical presentations of vampirism in Western fiction and film. Give at least 3 points of differentiation and illustrate them with examples from the folkloric texts you have read.

3. The reasons for becoming a vampire and the choice of who becomes one have to do with the particular society’s view of
   – Moral and social deviation
   – Abnormalcy/Deformity
   – The relationship between body and soul
   – The concept of life and death
Give a general description of these views as they appear in European folklore. Give examples to support your argument.
Central & Eastern Europe, 1300 AD
Europe: 14th-16th cen. AD

- Feudal states, weak centralization, territorial fragmentation
- Religious dissent: Catholicism (West) vs. Orthodox Christianity (East)
- Threat from the East: the Ottoman invasion of Europe
- The Catholic West has to rely on the (predominantly) Orthodox Balkan countries for warding off the “infidels”
Central & Eastern Europe
1500 AD
The Political Geography of Romania during the 15\textsuperscript{th} cen.

- Three parts: Wallachia (in the south), Moldavia (in the north-east), Transylvania (in the north)
- Wallachia & Moldavia with the status of states (principalities), Transylvania—a loose conglomerate of feudal cities ruled by local government and controlled by Hungary
Main “Inside” Players

• Wallachia:
  – predominantly Romanian population
  – state religion: Orthodox Christianity
  – large & powerful boyar class w/ shifty interests & loyalty
  – tries to preserve independence by ballancing between powerful neighbors: Hungary & the Ottoman Empire

• Transylvania:
  – mixed population: Romanians, Szekely, Saxons (Germans)
  – large Saxon merchant class controlling financial and political power in the land
  – main religion: Catholicism
Main “Outside” Players

- **Ottoman Empire:**
  - Rule: centralized power in the hands of the sultan
  - Religion: Islam
  - Goal: conquer & rule the “infidels” (Europe)
  - Relation to Wallachia: exacts tribute, considers conquest

- **Hungarian Empire:**
  - Rule: dynasties battling for the imperial crown
  - Religion: Catholicism
  - Goal: win over the other dynasty, keep an eye on the Turks
  - Rel. to Wallachia: tries to make Wallachian princes puppets of its own interests

- **Holy Roman Empire:**
  - Rule: the Pope (combination of religious authority & political power)
  - Religion: Catholicism
  - Goal: stop the Ottoman invasion of Europe
  - Rel. to Wallachia: tries to recruit its armies for the crusade
The Historical Dracula: Vlad Tepes (1431-1476)

• The vagrant prince:
  – ’31-’42: childhood in Transylvania
  – ’42-’48: captivity in Asia Minor
  – ’48: two-month reign in Wallachia
  – ’48-’51: exile in Moldavia
  – ’51-’56: residence in Transylvania
  – ’56-’62: ruler of Wallachia
  – ’62-’74: captivity in Hungary (converts to Catholicism, marries a member of the Hungarian royal family)
  – ’74-’76: in Hungarian service
  – ’76: two-month reign in Wallachia
Vlad’s position as a ruler
- External pressures: while the sultan attempts to make Tepes a Turkish vassal, the Catholic West tries to recruit him as a crusader against the “infidels”
- Internal pressures: struggle against rival dynasties; boyar opposition; ethnic hostilities; espionage paranoia

Main targets of Vlad’s aggression:
- Disloyal members of the nobility (boyars)
- The Saxon merchant class of neighboring Transylvania
- Potentially “subversive” elements (non-Romanian ethnic groups, foreign Catholic missions, criminals, etc.)

Violence—Vlad’s instrument for strengthening the foundations of his state, imposing moral discipline on his subjects, discouraging attacks from internal and external enemies
The Popularization of Dracula

- Vlad’s reign coincides w/ the discovery of the printing press & a cheap method for producing paper
- Popular pamphlets of Drac’s atrocities printed in Germany & France depict him as a maniacal blood-thirsty tyrant
- Romanian folklore portrays him as a severe but just ruler, the iron hand of “law and order,” brave warrior against the Turks, defender of national independence
Erzsebet (Elizabeth) Bathory (1560-1614)

- Hungarian countess
- Nicknames: the Blood Countess, the Tiger of Cathice
- On her estates tortured & killed more than 600 girls
- Bathed in the blood of young girls to maintain her looks