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Mystery Surrounds Recently Discovered Vampire Story

MÁLAGA, Spain — An obscure vampire story is a game changer for nineteenth century vampire literature that contains several tropes pre-dating Bram Stoker's 1897 novel, *Dracula*, by over fifty years.

"The Vampire of Vourla" debuted in a British literary annual called *The Chaplet* in 1844 or 1845. Álvaro García Marín, author of *Historias del vampiro griego* (Histories of the Greek vampire), found the story through Google Books in 2017 while living in Madrid between work.

Now an Assistant Professor at the University of Málaga, García Marín said: "As soon as I realized, with astonishment, that the piece was not mentioned anywhere in Vampire Studies literature, it struck me as a major find due to the amazing features it presented at such an early date (apart from its outstanding quality): a female vampire who received a foreign visitor in her enigmatic and secluded manor, lured him into a sexual relationship, sucked all his blood and, most of all, changed her form into a bat in order to attack her victim into his very room."

He shared his findings in "The Significance of 'The Vampire of Vourla' to Nineteenth-Century Vampire Fiction," an article published in the latest issue of the Vampire Studies Association's *Journal of Vampire Studies*.

García Marín's article "draws our attention to two unique aspects of 'The Vampire of Vourla,'" said Daichi Moriguchi, a lecturer at Ritsumeikan University who presented a paper on the story at a Society of World Literature meeting at Ryukoku University in Kyoto on April 20.

"Firstly, 'Vourla' revives the vampire's animality – the 'Otherness' –, which it originally had since the 18th century, through the representation of the bat," Moriguchi elaborates. "Secondly, it is noteworthy that the anonymous author emphasizes the Greekness of the vampire through the lens of Orientalism which positions his work closely to Tournefort's report [of a Greek vampire haunting Mykonos], [Lord Byron's] "The Giaour" and [John William Polidori's] 'The Vampyre'."

The story headlines García Marín's upcoming anthology, *The Vampire of Vourla, and Other Greek Vampire Tales, 1819-1846*, which includes Polidori's "The Vampyre," Lord Byron's "A Fragment" and four rare, never-before-reprinted vampire tales.

Unlike most of the stories in the anthology, crediting "Vourla" proved to be a significant challenge as it was originally published without a byline.

"Who might have written it? Could it be the work of a female writer, given the astonishing degree of agency it bestows on Heira, the Greek vampire?" wonders García Marín. "We will probably never know, but this is definitely a mystery worth exploring as long as the story can well be considered a new basic milestone of 19th-century vampire literature."

To pre-order a copy of *The Vampire of Vourla, and Other Greek Vampire Tales, 1819-1846*, visit <https://www.valancourtbooks.com/the-vampire-of-vourla.html>.

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For review copies of *The Vampire of Vourla, and Other Greek Vampire Tales, 1819-1846*, contact James D. Jenkins at jjenkins@valancourtbooks.com.

ABOUT

The Vampire Studies Association is a not-for-profit organization founded at City Library, Melbourne, Australia, on October 31, 2018, “to establish vampire studies as a multidisciplinary field by promoting, disseminating and publishing contributions to vampire scholarship.” It publishes the *Journal of Vampire Studies* as a platform for vampire scholars to share their research. For more information about the association, visit <https://vampirestudies.org/about>.

RELEVANT LINKS

Álvaro García Marín, “The Significance of ‘The Vampire of Vourla’ to Nineteenth-Century Vampire Fiction,” *Journal of Vampire Studies* 3 (2023): 46–83, https://archive.org/details/journal_of_vampire_studies_3_2023.

Anthony Hogg, “Publication Date of ‘The Vampire of Vourla,’” *Journal of Vampire Studies* 3 (2023): 90–99, https://archive.org/details/journal_of_vampire_studies_3_2023.

Dean Kalimniou, “Diatribes: Rediscovering Greek Vampires,” Dialogue, *Neos Kosmos*, February 18, 2024, <https://neoskopos.com/en/2024/02/18/dialogue/opinion/diatribes-rediscovering-greek-vampires/>.

Daichi Moriguchi, “Ijin-ron de yomitoku vanpaia: 'Vurura no vanpaia' to Polidori 'Vanpaia' no hikaku kara” 異人論で読み解くヴァンパイア——『ヴルラのヴァンパイア (The Vampire of Vourla)』とポリドリ『ヴァンパイア』の比較から [Reading the vampire through theories of the Other: A comparison between “The Vampire of Vourla” and Polidori’s “The Vampyre”] (Paper presented at the second consecutive study session of “Sekai bungaku to 'i naru mono” 世界文学と『異なるもの』 [World literature and “the Other”] for the Society of World Literature, Ryukoku University, Fukakusa Campus, Kyoto, April 20, 2024), <https://researchmap.jp/vampirforscher/presentations/46235698>.