

## The Russian editions of *Dracula*

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*Until recently, the Russian editions of Dracula have not received any attention and study. Within the framework of research for my book Dracula di Bram Stoker – il mistero delle prime edizioni (2014), I have looked into the earliest Russian-language editions, as well as the later publications, both in the Soviet Union era and afterwards. The confusion about the authorship of the novel turned out to be a red thread: Dracula was originally attributed to Marie Corelli (Mary Mackay), while works by Corelli were attributed to Stoker. Almost a century after the release of Dracula in 1897, this error reappeared in republications of Corelli's and Stoker's work in regions formerly belonging to the Soviet Union.*

Keywords: *Dracula, Stoker, Corelli, Russian, first editions, foreign translations.*

### 1. Introduction

The Russian editions of *Dracula* have long been considered a no man's land. It is said that Roman cartographers used to write "*Hic sunt leones,*" here are lions, on uncharted territories on the map of Africa, to indicate that they were both unexplored and dangerous. This expression is usually employed to express that some topic is difficult and requires the utmost accuracy. Except for some sporadic and imprecise hints (Bunson 1973, 74), the Russian editions have never been explored until recently. This essay presents my personal research, in part based on my communication with Ekaterina Kukhto, an antiquarian bookseller in Moscow.

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## 2. The first Russian edition (Saint Petersburg, 1902)

The first Russian edition is, editorially, a bizarre anomaly. It would deserve a scholarly essay of its own. First of all it must be noted that the book has literally disappeared, and it is unavailable even at the two libraries that should or do possess a copy. The one at the library in Saint Petersburg (*Rossiiskaya Natsionalnaya Biblioteka*) has seemingly been lost. Another one, at the National Library in Prague (*Národní knihovna České republiky*) is unavailable since it is included in those books that will be transferred to a new collection. This first edition dates back to 1902; as far as we know today, it is the fourth translation (or adaptation) of *Dracula* after the Hungarian newspaper serialisation and book edition of *Drakula* in 1898 (Berni 2014, 27-30), the Swedish newspaper serialisations of *Mörkrets makter* starting in summer 1899 (De Roos 2017), and the Icelandic serialisation of *Makt myrkranna* (1900-1901) with the subsequent book edition of August 1901 (De Roos 2014). The Russian editions have been widely ignored by the principal bibliographies, and, as we will see, they were marred by confusion about its authorship.

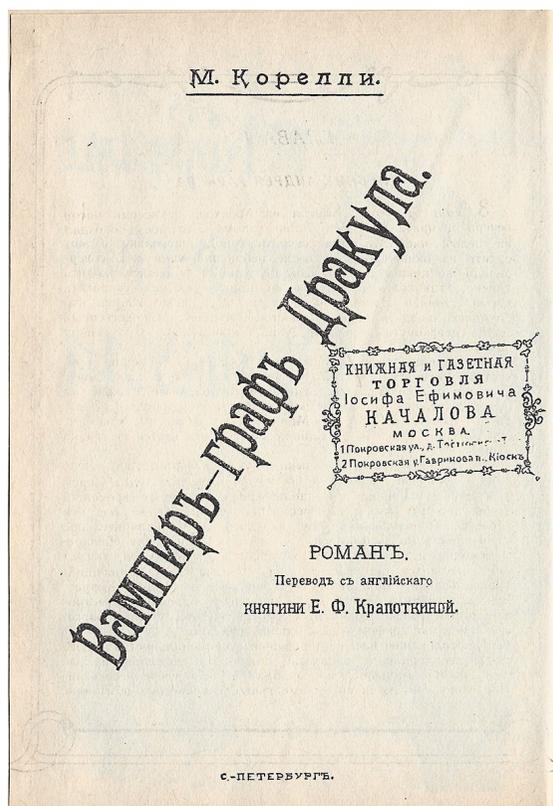
## 3. The “original sin”: Marie Corelli mentioned as the author of *Dracula*

The 1902 edition was printed in Saint Petersburg as *Вампир – Граф Дракула* (*Vampire – Count Dracula*) (see Figure 1). An examination both of the colophon and of the frontispiece does not help to determine the publisher’s identity. The work was perhaps edited by Ekaterina Komarova<sup>2</sup> and her husband Vissarion Komarov,<sup>3</sup> the owners of the magazine *Svet* (*Light*). The book edition was probably preceded by a serialised publication in the same magazine. The translation is attributed to Countess E. F. and the same translation is also taken as a reference in editions published a century later, almost up to the present day. Most strikingly, the novel is attributed to Marie Corelli, the pseudonym of Mary Mackay, the most celebrated “Gothic” author of Stoker’s time, at least as far as English language was concerned.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The daughter of prominent Russian writer Grigory Danilevsky (1829-1890).

<sup>3</sup> Colonel Vissarion Vissarionovich Komarov (Saint Petersburg, October 14, 1838- December 22, 1907). Journalist, publisher, politician and soldier of the Russian and Serbian army. After a valiant career he retired in Saint Petersburg where he founded and directed numerous magazines and periodicals such as *Russian World*, *St. Petersburg Gazette*, *Star*, *Russian Gazette*, *Light*. He directed them from his home, in a large building in the city centre.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Mackay (London, May 1, 1855 - April 1, 1924) was famous during the Victorian era. Publishers competed for her books, that succeeded as bestsellers. Literary critics, however considered them to be of low quality. She boasted to be of Italian origin, but “Corelli” was merely a pen name.



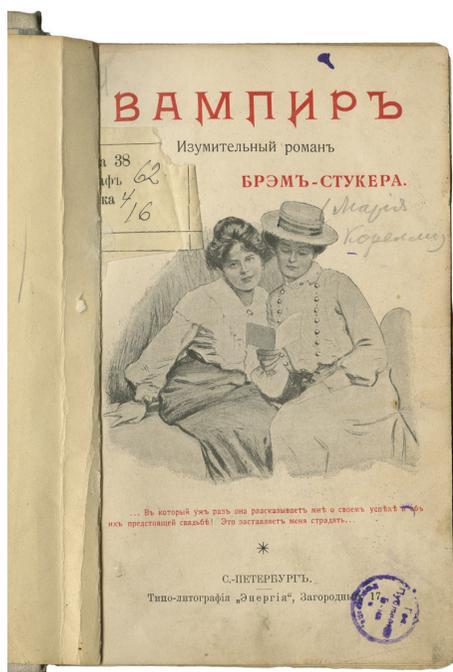
**Figure 1.** 1902 edition, printed in Saint Petersburg

Her popularity in England, in Europe and all over the world has been analysed by scholars such as Annette R. Federico, Brian Masters, Teresa Ransom, Brenda Ayres and Sarah Maier. She was very popular among the aristocrats of her time and apparently, Queen Victoria read her books eagerly, as well as prime ministers and crowned heads in various countries in Europe, America, and even Asia. Her popularity was enhanced by the development of low-cost editions during the Victorian Age, contributing to the diffusion of her novels in England, but also in the British colonies and in the entire world. Such facts cannot justify, however, the incredible blunder committed in Russia in 1902, where she was credited with Stoker's novel.

#### 4. The second Russian edition (Saint Petersburg, 1904)

A second version was published in – again – Saint Petersburg in 1904, printed by the publisher Énergija<sup>5</sup>. This time the title was simply *Вампир* (*Vampire*) and the novel was correctly credited to Bram Stoker. The translation was by another, anonymous translator; his (or her) name has remained a mystery until today.

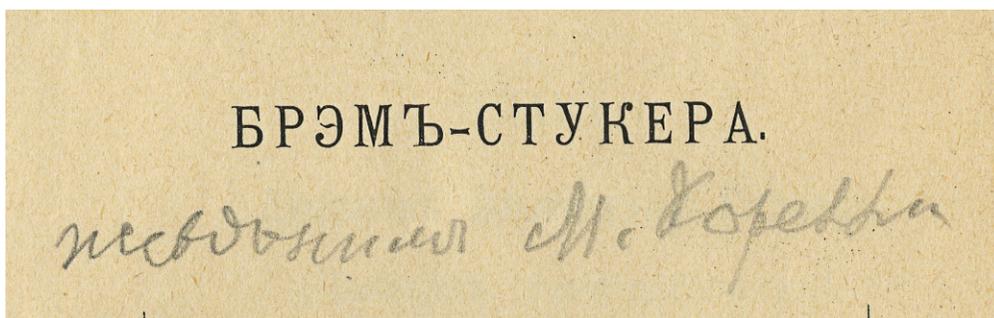
However, two important elements emerge from the *Rossiiskaya Natsionalaya Biblioteka* in Saint Petersburg. The first one is the illustrated cover of the 1904 edition, the first one in Russia of this kind known until today (see Figure 2). It is a romantic and naive picture that does not correspond to the book's content. It shows two women in intimate conversation: perhaps Mina Harker and her soul mate Lucy talking about their respective marriages? The choice of this image clearly indicates how in Russia, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker/Marie Corelli was first and foremost considered as literature for women, most notably for aristocratic ones. We should not forget that the translator of the first edition was a countess.



**Figure 2.** Illustrated cover of the 1904 edition

<sup>5</sup> Data from the copy conserved at the *Biblioteca Centrale Nazionale* in Rome, id. Code IT\ICCU\BVE\0356047.

The second relevant element is a librarian's annotation in pencil, both on the cover and on the frontispiece of the copy of the 1904 edition conserved at the *Rossiiskaya Natsionalaya Biblioteka*. It clearly reads, next to Bram Stoker's name on the cover, "= Marie Corelli" and, even more explicitly, on the frontispiece, "pseudonym of Marie Corelli" once again next to Bram Stoker's name (see Figures 3 and 4).



**Figures 3 and 4.** Annotations in pencil, stating that "Bram Stoker" would be a pseudonym of "Marie Corelli." Cover and frontispiece of the Saint Petersburg edition of 1904, conserved at the *Rossiiskaya Natsionalaya Biblioteka*

### 5. The third and fourth Russian edition (Saint Petersburg, 1912 and 1912-1913)

Further surprises emerge with the 1912-1913 editions, a new translation attributed to N. Sandrova<sup>6</sup>. In this case, too, both the title *Вампир. Граф Дракула* (*Vampire. Count Dracula*) and the author's attribution, Bram Stoker, are correct. The publisher is M.G. Kornfeld<sup>7</sup> in Saint Petersburg. In fact, there were two editions. The first one was in one volume (published in 1912) and the second one was in two separate volumes released in 1912 and 1913 respectively.

Ekaterina Kukhto has observed that the frontispieces of both editions dated 1912 (conserved at the *Rossiiskaya Gosudarstvennaya Natsionalnaya Biblioteka* in Moscow and at the *Rossiiskaya Natsionalnaya Biblioteka* in Saint Petersburg, respectively) are in fact different (Figures 5 and 6) regarding the spacing of the characters, and that one of them displays the indication "tome II." This is the definitive proof of the existence of two different editions, one in a single volume (we can call it the "third" edition) and the other in two volumes (we can call it the "fourth" edition, as its second volume appeared only *after* the one-volume edition of 1912).

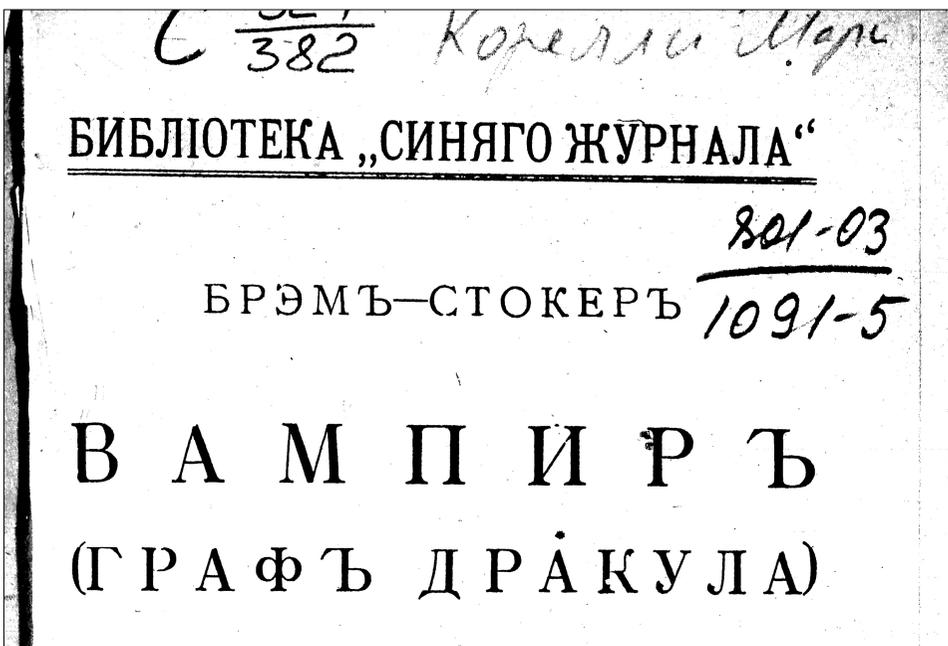
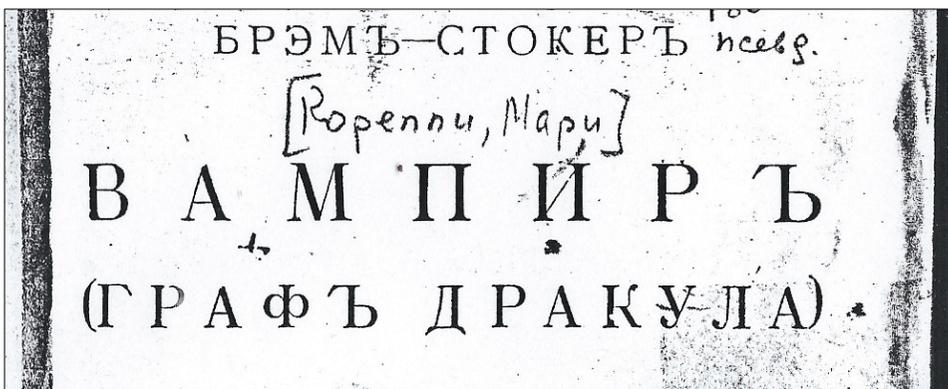


**Figures 5 and 6.** Two different editions: one-volume edition of 1912 (left), two-volume edition of 1912-1913; here only the second tome of 1913 (right)

<sup>6</sup> N. Sandrova is in fact the pen name of the translator Nadezhda Iakovlevna Goldberg who translated several novels from English for the publisher Kornfeld.

<sup>7</sup> E.M. Kornfeld, G.K. Kornfeld, and M.G. Kornfeld – a dynasty of and editors and publishers, mostly of periodicals and comics, based in Saint Petersburg over the years 1875-1918.

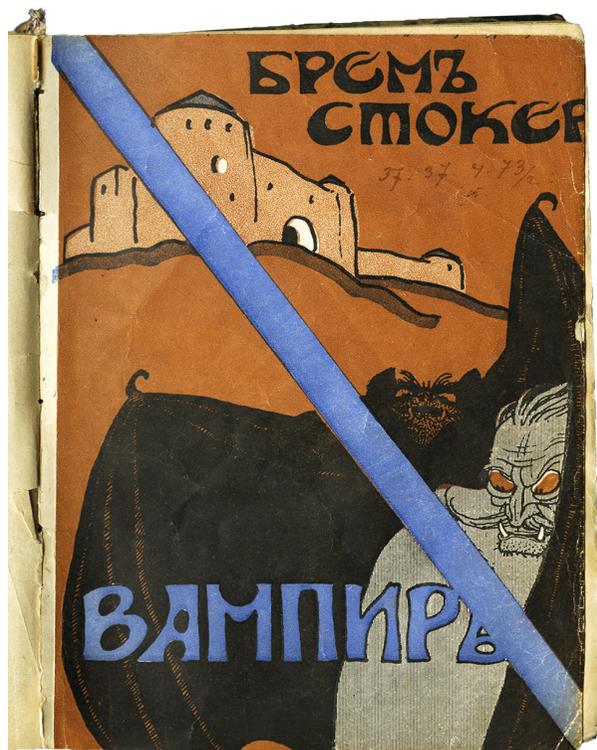
Upon closer inspection of the copy conserved at the Moscow Library, Ekaterina Kukhto has also noticed some annotations in pencil made by librarians on the frontispiece of the books of the two-volume edition (see Figures 7 and 8). Essentially, they mirror the previous ones (see chapter 4 of this article), in the sense that obviously, “Bram Stoker” was again considered to be a pseudonym of “Marie Corelli.” For some reason, this “original sin” could not be purged.



Figures 7 and 8. Annotations in pencil made by librarians on the frontispiece of the books of the two-volume edition (photo copies)

This defect has never been eradicated from Russian bibliographies. It was never corrected nor admitted – not even investigated. Later, it re-emerged, like a virus to which no antidote has been found and that re-appears time and again.

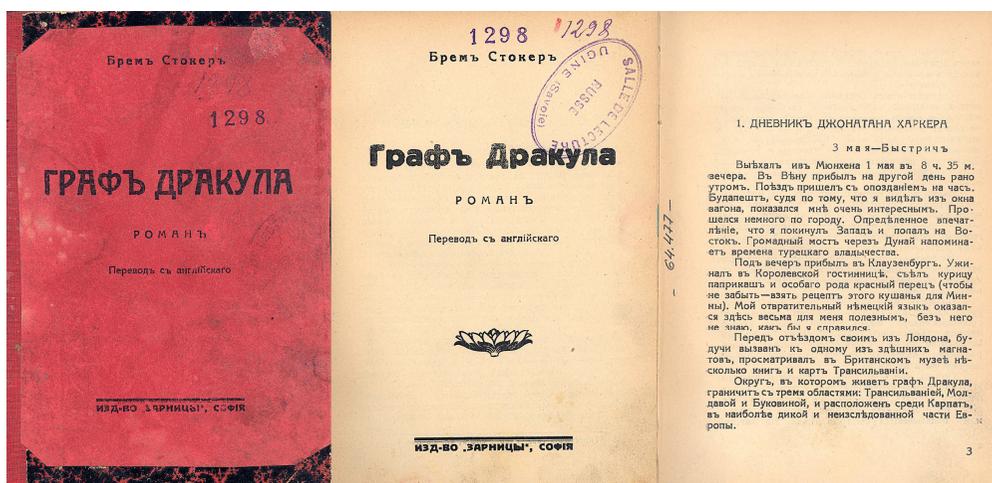
Another curious element is the cover of the 1913 single-volume edition. Although it is not the first one, it is definitely the most charming one among all the earliest Russian editions. What is most peculiar is the blue diagonal band (see Figure 9). At first sight it might look like something used to strengthen the cover, or to mend it, or in any case some extraneous detail. In fact, by holding the volume or by observing a scan in high definition one notices that the band is part and parcel of the cover illustration. It is curious but not accidental. One might even think that the publisher asked the illustrator for an element that would evoke for the readers an idea of “censorship” thus emphasizing the novel’s “forbidden side.” Russian censors usually underlined the title on the cover or the one on the frontispiece with a blue pencil. So far there is no evidence that blue bands were also used. Perhaps this happened in Western Europe where a band might evoke the concept “banned,” “bandit,” and thus “forbidden.”



**Figure 9.** Blue diagonal band on the cover of the 1913 single-volume edition

## 6. The Russian-language edition published in Bulgaria (c. 1927)

Only by the end of the 1920s another edition was published. It was printed in Russian language, but in Sofia, Bulgaria, with the title *Граф Дракула* (*Count Dracula*) by the publisher Zarnitsy. Unfortunately, the print year is not indicated. By a comparative analysis of other books printed by the same publisher over those years (and of the advertisements they contained at the end) we can only exclude that such *Dracula extra moenia* was printed after 1926. The publisher ceased its activities after 1927 (or at least there are no books printed after that year that can be credited to Zarnitsy). Thus, 1927 seems the only possible date for this extremely rare edition<sup>8</sup>. Other scholars are more cautious and indicate “approximately 1930” (Dalby 1986, note 49).



Figures 10, 11 and 12. The Zarnitsy edition, Sofia, c. 1927

The Zarnitsy edition (Figures 10, 11 and 12) is a new translation but the translator’s name is not indicated and there are no elements allowing even a guess. The circumstances under which it was produced, however, are rather uncommon. After the October Revolution and the ensuing civil war a remarkable number of Russian migrants settled in other countries where they pursued their usual activities, including publishing. The most important archive concerning book circulation in the Russian diaspora is André Savine’s: this bookseller compiled a bibliographic record

<sup>8</sup> Concerning the publications of the so-called Russian émigré publishers we must state that publishing novels or fiction in general was extremely rare, the more so for foreign authors.

including each and every book he came across<sup>9</sup>. Regrettably, Savine's file for Zarnitsy's *Dracula* does not indicate the year in which it was printed (see Figure 13), so it is not particularly helpful in this regard. As long as more precise information is missing it seems reasonable to define this book as a Russian *émigré* edition, in order to distinguish it from Russian domestic editions.

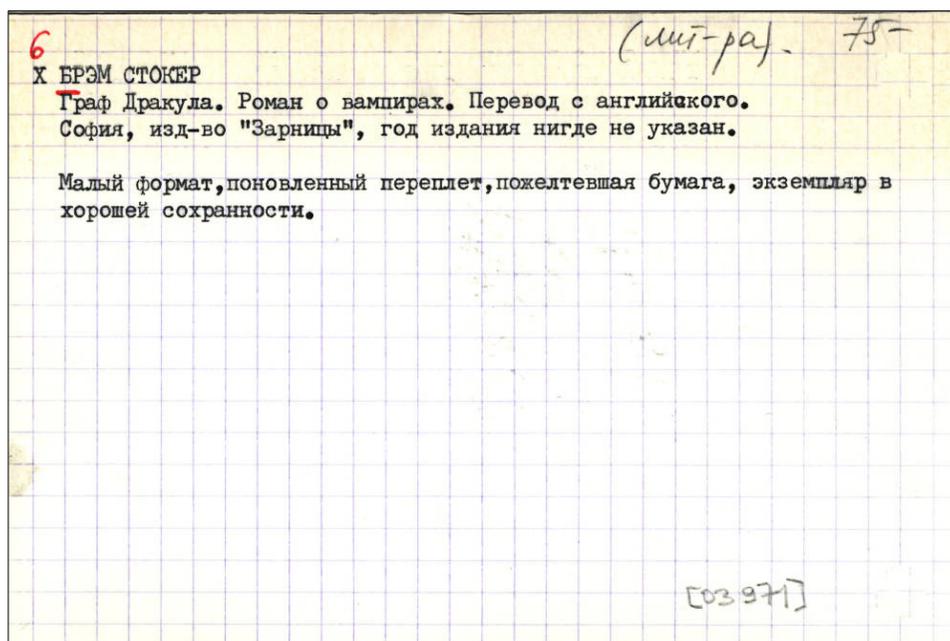


Figure 13. Savine's file for Zarnitsy

## 7. Soviet Union editions published in Tallinn and Moscow (1990)

After 1927, the most eventful year was 1990, precisely when the Soviet Union was falling apart. Two editions were released in that year, just a few months after each other. The first of them was *Граф Дракула. Вампир* (*Count Dracula. Vampire*), printed in Tallinn (which is the capital of present-day Estonia but by then was in the Soviet Union) by the publisher Gart on August 15, 1990. The translation is by N. Sandrova (pen name of Nadezhda Iakolevna Goldberg), dating back to 1912-1913, as already discussed in chapter 5 of this article. Two versions exist: one with a black cover (see Figures 14 and 15), and one with a red cover.

<sup>9</sup> <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/customhome/collection/rbr/>



**Figures 14 and 15.** Black cover of one of the two 1990 editions from Tallinn (then still in the Soviet Union)

An almost contemporary edition was printed in Moscow by the ADA, the “Center of the Veterans for Peace,” an association of Komi veterans of the Afghan war.<sup>10</sup> Dated November 30, 1990, it was the first *Dracula* edition printed in Moscow (see Figures 16 and 17).

**Figures 16 and 17.**  
The 1990 Moscow edition  
(ADA)



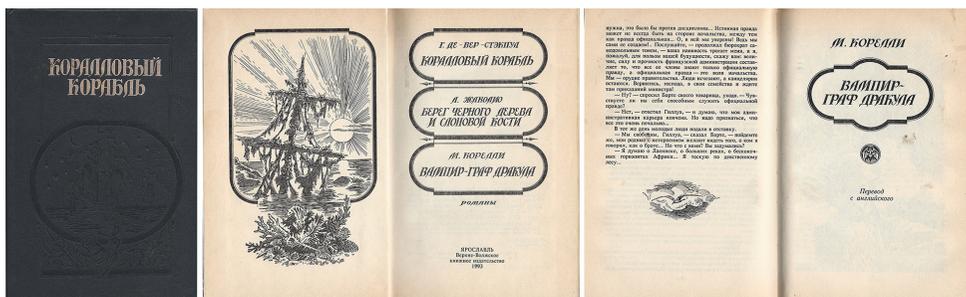
It equally used the translation of N. Sandrova. As Ekaterina Kukhto has noted (private communication of December 2015), it was announced that half a million copies of this edition would be printed; the first printing, however, consisted of fifty thousand copies only, and all the copies Kukhto was able to trace belonged to this first print run.

<sup>10</sup> Komi Republic: one of the federal republics of Russia, c. 1,500 km north-east of Moscow.

Thus, we cannot be sure that the figure of half a million was accurate. The book has a rather modern cover created by V. Denisov. In sum, there were three republications of *Dracula* in the Soviet Union<sup>11</sup>: the two versions published in Tallinn, and the Moscow edition, all based on the same 1912-1913 translation.

## 8. The “original sin” resurfaces

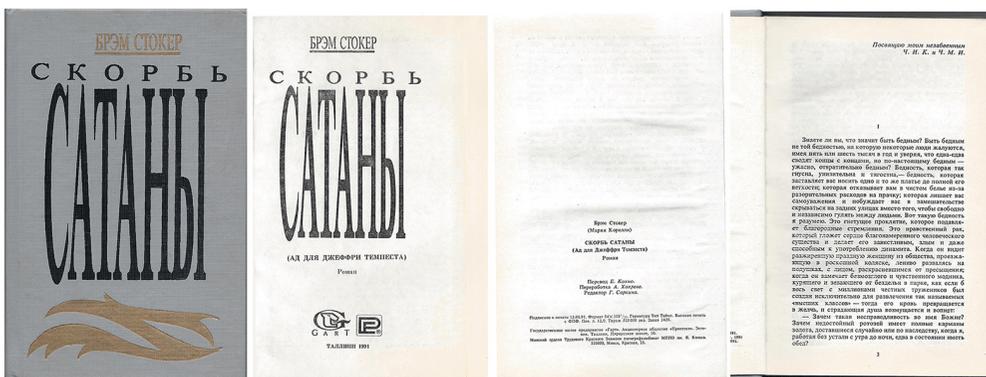
The old confusion of Bram Stoker with Marie Corelli seemed to disappear for a while. But all of a sudden it resurfaced again. In the course of her research, in summer 2014, Kukhto identified a collection of tales published in 1993 by High-Volga Publisher in Yaroslavl (see Figures 18, 19 and 20). Such a collection includes *The Ship of Coral* by Henry De Vere Stacpoole, *La Côte d’Ebène* and *La Côte d’Ivoire* by Louis Jacolliot, and, unexpectedly, *Vampire (Count Dracula)* by Marie Corelli.



Figures 18, 19 and 20. Compilation of works by Henry de Vere Stacpoole and Louis Jacolliot, plus *Vampire (Count Dracula)*, falsely attributed to Marie Corelli. High-Volga Publisher, Yaroslavl, 1993

Kukhto adds that there had been a precedent two years earlier (private communication of December 2015). Already in 1991, Gart (Estonian since the new-won independence of August 20, 1991) had published *The Sorrows of Satan*, perhaps Marie Corelli’s most famous work, also indicating Bram Stoker as its author (see Figures 21, 22, 23 and 24).

<sup>11</sup> USSR, December 30, 1922 - December 26, 1991.



Figures 21, 22, 23 and 24. Marie Corelli’s novel *The Sorrows of Satan*, falsely attributed to Bram Stoker. Figure 23 shows the colophon. Tallinn: Gart, 1991

Moreover, a publisher from the autonomous province of Kalmykia, RIO Dghangar, in 1992 published *Вампир. Граф Дракула* (*Vampire. Count Dracula*), credited to Marie Corelli, and in the same collection *The Ship of Coral* (see Figures 25, 26, 27 and 28).

Figures 25-28. *The Ship of Coral* and *Vampire – Count Dracula*, both falsely attributed to Marie Corelli, published in Kalmykia by RIO Dghangar, 1992. Figure 28 shows Harker’s journal (дневник) for 3 May (3 МАЯ), Bistriz

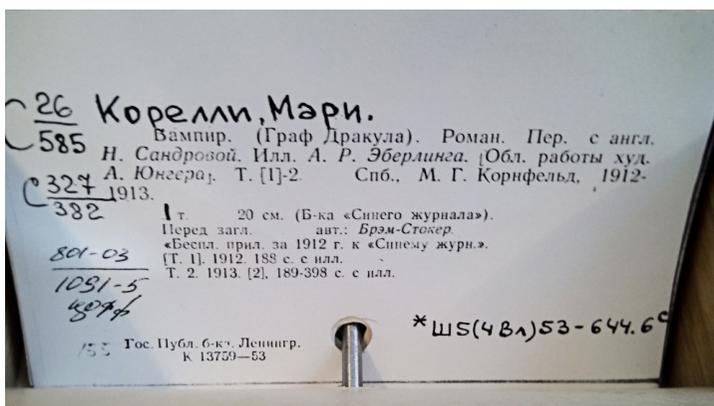


The decisive example of this “original sin,” however, can be found in a file drawer of the old archive at the *Rossiiskaya Gosudarstvennaya Biblioteka* in Moscow. This archive lists all works that were printed earlier than 1980. The author file for Bram Stoker reads: “Bram-Stoker – see under Corelli, Marie” (see Figure 29).

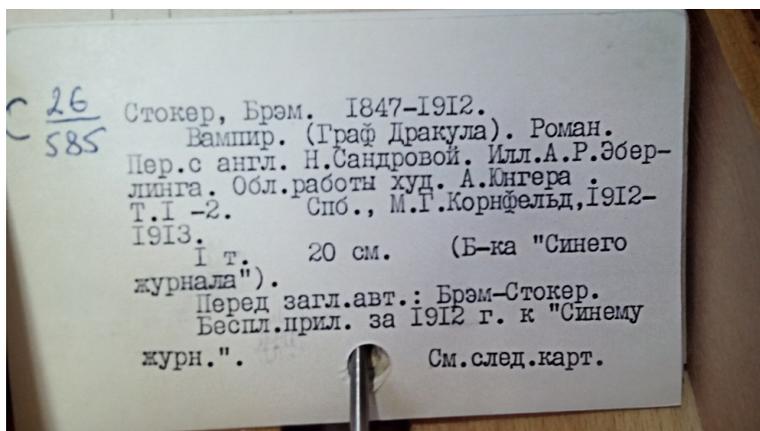


**Figure 29.** Bram Stoker confused with Marie Corelli: file card from the old paper archive of books published before 1980, Moscow State Library.

If we compare this with the aforementioned annotations in pencil by an unknown librarian on the frontispiece of both volumes of the 1912-1913 edition (at the same library), namely “Bram Stoker pseudonym of Corelli, Marie” (see Figure 30), it is evident that “Bram Stoker” was long considered a pseudonym of “Marie Corelli.”



**Figure 30.** File card from the old paper archive of books published before 1980, Moscow State Library. An unknown librarian added “Marie Corelli” as a pseudonym for “Bram Stoker.”



**Figure 31.** Another file card from the old paper archive of books published before 1980, at Moscow State Library (Rossiiskaya Gosudarstvennaya Biblioteka). On this card, Bram Stoker is correctly mentioned as the author of *Dracula*.

*Dracula* was thus printed several times and attributed to Stoker or Corelli under the erroneous assumption that they were one and the same author. This old error has never been completely erased from the bibliographical references and thus it has survived almost up until today, with the aforementioned 1991 and 1993 editions, and the books by Marie Corelli in turn credited to Stoker. Although these mistakes are obvious, they have a complex history – as I have tried to demonstrate here.

There is no doubt, however, that they should be considered as anomalies, since on the whole, Soviet (and later Russian) bibliographies have always been extremely accurate and reliable.

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