

Homework: The Historical Dracula

It may be somewhat shocking, but Dracula was a real person. His full name was Prince Vlad Dracula (1431-1476) also known as Vlad III. Vlad's father, Vlad II, fought against the Muslim Turks of the Ottoman Empire in the religious wars of the time. He joined something called "The Sacred Order of The Dragon" (*Dracu* in Old Romanian), which was a religious order of knights devoted to defending Christian Europe against the Muslim invaders. Vlad II added "*Dracu*" to his name and his son became known as Vlad *Dracu-la* (*la* means "son of" in Old Romanian).



Portrait of Vlad Dracula

Vlad Dracula was an exceptionally fine soldier and general who defended his country against the Turks but he was also an exceptionally cruel ruler who tortured and killed many of his own subjects as well as his Turkish enemies. After his death his own people called him “Vlad *Die Tepes*” (*die* = the, *Tepes* = impaler in Old Romanian). Yet, today in his homeland, he is considered a national hero for defending his country against foreign invasion.

However, Vlad was an exceptionally sadistic killer who not only impaled his victims, but reportedly had picnics during which he ate and drank while watching them slowly die. Vlad was almost certainly what we would today call a “psychopath”, but we can also call him a “monster” because he was certainly an exceptionally evil man.

