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## NOTE OF JULY 25, 2024

This article was written in September 2018 to be a chapter in a book with the proceedings of the Fourth World Dracula Congress in Dublin in October 2016; it was based on my keynote presentation at that event. The book project evolved and evolved—until it was finally realized in quite another form than first planned. A number of papers were included in the *Bulletin of the Transylvania University of Braşov*, Series IV: Philology and Cultural Studies, Vol. 14(63), 2021; to this volume I contributed “*Mörkrets Makter’s* Mini-Mysteries,” as the original presentation and paper did not reflect the newest discoveries anymore.

In May 2024, with the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Makt myrkranna* and *Mörkrets makter* approaching, I decided to update the text, so that it could serve as a brief introduction to the Nordic versions of *Dracula*. It is now presented to you as bonus material to our next “Children of the Night” International Dracula Congress, which will take place in October 2024. While the information given in *Wikipedia* is constantly being re-edited by contributors relying on secondary sources only, all insights worded in this article are based on my direct study of Icelandic and Swedish primary texts.

Inevitably, parts of this essay overlap with my first article on *Makt myrkranna* of February 2014, with my introduction to *Powers of Darkness* (2017) and with the many other articles I have written since 2014, as I have been deepening and updating my research continuously. For all who have an interest in these earliest *Dracula* adaptations, though, this paper offers a concise overview of all key discoveries, a number of essential illustrations, and a bibliography listing all core publications.

Hans C. de Roos

## 1. THE DISCOVERY OF MAKT MYRKRANNA

*Makt myrkranna* first came to the attention of English-speaking *Dracula* scholars in 1986, when Richard Dalby included its preface in his *Bram Stoker Omnibus*, in an English translation by Joel H. Emerson. In 1993, it was republished in *The Bram Stoker Journal*, together with Dalby's comments and a facsimile of the Icelandic preface text.<sup>1</sup> It had cost Dalby over 25 years to obtain a copy of the rare book, published in Reykjavik in 1901 by Nokkrir Prentarar.<sup>2</sup> Dalby's report caused quite some excitement among Stoker fans, as the preface, dated "London, — Street, August 1898" and signed with the initials "B.S.," seemed to suggest that Stoker proclaimed a link between *Dracula* and the murders by Jack the Ripper:

The Dalby/Emerson translation:

But the events are incontrovertible, and so many people know of them that they cannot be denied. This series of crimes has not yet passed from the memory—a series of crimes which appear to have originated from the same source, and which at the same time created as much repugnance in people everywhere as the murders of Jack the Ripper, which came into the story a little later.

Various people's minds will go back to the remarkable group of foreigners who for many seasons together played a dazzling part in the life of the aristocracy here in London; and some will remember that one of them disappeared suddenly without apparent reason, leaving no trace.

The Icelandic original:

En viðburðirnir eru ómótmælanlegir, og svo margir þekkja þá, að þeim verður ekki neitað. Þessi röð af glæpum er mönnum ekki úr minni liðin, röð af glæpum, sem virðast óskiljanlegir en út leit fyrir, að væru af sömu rót runnir, og slógu á sínum tíma jafnmiklum óhug á almenning sem hin alræmdu morð Jakobs kviðristara, sem komu litlu seinna til sögunnar.

Ýmsa mun reka minni til hinna merkilegu útlendinga, sem misserum saman tóku glæsilegan þátt í lífi tignarfólksins hér í Lundúnum, og menn muna eftir því, að annar þeirra að minnsta kosti hvarf skyndilega og á óskiljanlegan hátt, án þess að nokkur merki hans sæist framár.

The Icelandic preface soon attained the status of a canonical text, as it seemed to offer first-hand clues about the background of Stoker's epochal novel. All the more amazing is that neither Dalby nor any other *Dracula* expert ever examined the rest of the Icelandic version. Dalby's judgment was:

Although this first foreign translation is excessively abridged and cheaply produced, the inclusion of Stoker's preface—which appeared in no other edition—makes it a fascinating and unique volume.<sup>3</sup>

This appraisal was echoed in various specialized bibliographies. The bibliography by William Hughes (1997) simply spoke of an "abridged edition;"<sup>4</sup> Skal's *Hollywood Gothic* (2004) did not mention Ásmundsson's own contribution;<sup>5</sup> the *Dracula* publication history compiled by Browning and Picart (2011)

<sup>1</sup> Richard Dalby, "Makt Myrkranna – Power of Darkness," *Bram Stoker Journal* 5 (1993): 2-8. In the second part of this article, the title *Powers of Darkness* is used for the Icelandic novel.

<sup>2</sup> Nokkrir Prentarar is not listed in the 1901 directory of over 500 Icelandic publishers published by *Skirnir*. "Nokkrir Prentarar" simply means "Various Printers." As far as I could check, only one other book was published under this imprint: a translation of Theodor Storm's *Bulemanns Haus* (1866), in 1904.

<sup>3</sup> Dalby, "Makt Myrkranna – Powers of Darkness."

<sup>4</sup> William Hughes, *Bram Stoker (Abraham Stoker), 1847-1912, A Bibliography*. Victorian Research Guide 25, University of Queensland, Australia, 1997, 21.

<sup>5</sup> David Skal, *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2004), 66.

merely mentioned the extended preface, not the modified story.<sup>6</sup> Even the meticulous Elizabeth Miller more or less copied Dalby's comments while compiling her *Documentary Journey* (2009):

The Icelandic text is divided into two parts of unequal length. Part I (pp. 5-167) corresponds to the first four chapters (Harker at Dracula's castle) in the British edition, and is fairly complete and intact. Part II (pp. 168-210) is a brief précis of the original chapters 5 to 27 (pp. 55-390 in the British edition). What is significant about this book is that the publisher requested and included a special foreword from Stoker. This invaluable piece appears in no other edition (...).<sup>7</sup>



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Three copies of the book edition of 1901; private collection of the author.

## 2. THE HUNGARIAN TRANSLATION

*Makt myrkranna* lost its status as the first known foreign translation in or around 2010, when Professor Jenő Farkas from University Eötvös Loránd, Budapest, pointed to the Hungarian translation published by Jenő Rákosi (1842-1929) in his newspaper *Budapesti Hírlap* from January 1, 1898 on.<sup>8</sup> In 2015, my colleague Simone Berni discovered the deposit copy of the 1898 Hungarian book edition in the Széchényi National Library in Budapest.<sup>9</sup> From my side, I managed to locate the scans of the newspaper installments, together with Rákosi's comments on Stoker and his book. With the help of my Hungarian friends, I could establish that the Hungarian text was an almost 100% true translation of the 1897 Constable edition.<sup>10</sup> Farkas' claim that Rákosi spotted Stoker's book on a London book fair around Christmas 1897 because of its conspicuous yellow cover seems incorrect to me, however.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> John E. Browning and Caroline J. Picart, *Dracula in Visual Media* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2011), 268.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Miller (ed.), *Bram Stoker's Dracula – A Documentary Journey into Vampire Country and the Dracula Phenomenon* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2009), 279.

<sup>8</sup> Jenő Farkas, *Drakula és a vámpírok* (Budapest: Palamart Kiadó, 2010), reviewed by Pavel Olvas in his blog article "[Farkas Jenő \(1944-\): Drakula és a vámpírok](#)" of November 8, 2012 at. See also the interview with Jenő Farkas in Marius-Mircea Crișan, *Impactul unui mit: Dracula și reprezentarea ficțională a spațiului românesc*, (Bucharest: Pro Universitaria, 2013), 259.

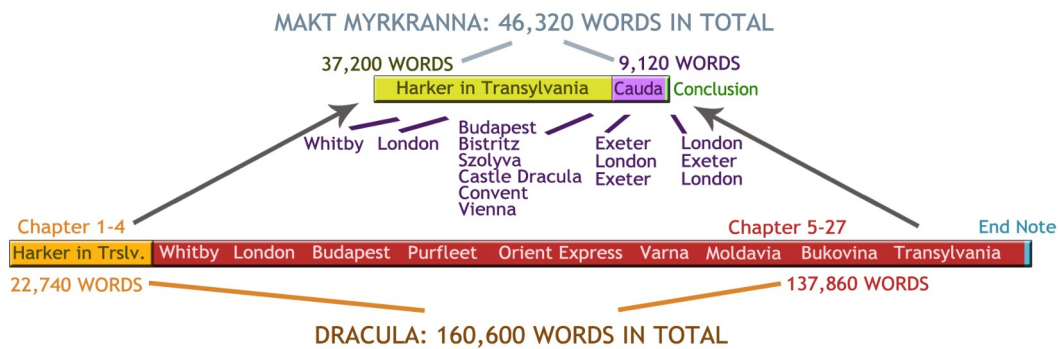
<sup>9</sup> Simone Berni, "Dracula, di Bram Stoker – Il mistero dell'edizione ungherese del 1898," *Cultura*, July 4, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> See my article "'Buda-Pesth Seems a Wonderful place': How a Hungarian Newspaperman Produced *Dracula's* Very First Translation and Serialisation," *Letter from Castle Dracula*, June 30, 2016: 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> In his newspaper of April 5, 1898, Rákosi described Stoker as an *American* novelist and claimed that *Dracula* was the sensation of the *American* book market—long before it was published there. Farkas's idea that Rákosi saw *Dracula* on a London book fair must be based on a translation error. See my essay "Next stop: Chicago! Earliest U.S. Serialisation of *Dracula* Known so far Discovered. Was it the Source of *Mörkrets makter*?" *Vamped.org*, May 26, 2017.

### 3. KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MAKT MYRKRANNA AND DRACULA

*Makt myrkranna*, by contrast, offered a genuine surprise when I managed to locate the complete text in an Icelandic newspaper archive in January 2014. Before it appeared in book form in August 1901—the edition unearthed by Dalby—the story had been serialized in the Reykjavik newspaper *Fjallkonan*, published and edited by Valdimar Ásmundsson (1852-1902).<sup>12</sup> A first examination showed that although the Icelandic version was much shorter than Stoker’s original story (ca. 46,000 versus ca. 160,000 words), it also contained new characters and scenes. The first part, depicting Harker’s adventures in Transylvania, had been expanded from ca. 22,700 words to ca. 37,200 words, while the remaining chapters had shrunk from ca. 138,000 words to only 9,100 and abandoned the epistolary style so typical of *Dracula*.



Quantitative comparison of *Makt myrkranna* to *Dracula*. Diagram by the author.

While in *Dracula*, Jonathan Harker soon feels disgusted by the three vampire women, his Icelandic counterpart Tómas keeps craving for the single blonde vixen who is described to him as the Count’s cousin, thrice removed. The Count also shows new qualities: he has been married three times, employs a deaf and mute housekeeper woman, conspires with high-ranking men in France and England in an effort to overthrow Western democracy, and outs himself as a libertine with a connoisseur taste for beautiful young women. He has a laboratory and seems to dabble in alchemy. Most surprisingly, Harker discovers that his host acts as the high priest of a horde of ape-like adepts who sacrifice gorgeous young girls in a secret pagan temple underneath the castle. While in England, the vampire moves in aristocratic and diplomatic circles and hosts an evening party in his sumptuously furnished Carfax mansion. The narrative ends still in London, when Van Helsing stabs the Count in a hidden crypt beneath his house. Both the Count’s elegant public role and the shortened ending anticipate the changes that Hamilton Deane and John Balderston made a quarter of a century later, with Florence Balcombe’s permission.

### 4. WHAT DO THE RIPPER MURDERS HAVE TO DO WITH IT?

I started translating *Makt myrkranna* to English in February 2014 and soon discovered that Emerson’s rendering of the preface had serious flaws, including the already quoted line about the Ripper murders “which came into the story a little later.” This phrase suggests that the Whitechapel crimes would be featured in this Icelandic novel, which was understood as an abridged translation of *Dracula*. As a consequence, the text of *Dracula* itself should contain some—hidden—reference to the Ripper homicides.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The text of the 1901 book edition is almost identical to the *Fjallkonan* text, except for the installment of October 13, 1900, omitted from the 1901 edition and later republications; the second and third edition show minor text and spelling deviations, discussed in my annotation of *Powers of Darkness* (New York: Overlook Press, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> David Skal suggested that a review of *Dracula* in *The Stage*, proposing a connection between Stoker’s plot and “the stabbing of women recently notorious in London,” may have inspired Stoker to declare such a link *ex post*. See Skal, *Hollywood Gothic*, 65, quoting *The Stage* of June 17, 1897. In his email correspondence with me, Clive Bloom of Middlesex University pointed to the scene in which Professor Van Helsing slits the throats of the vampire women when he visits Castle Dracula alone—a



Valdimar Ásmundsson, Bríet Bjarnhéðinsdóttir and their children Laufey (l) and Héðinn (r), around 1900.

This, in turn, has triggered feverish speculations that Stoker himself may have known the identity of the Ripper.<sup>14</sup> In fact, I found out, the Icelandic preface states that the murders by Jack the Ripper “*happened a little later*,” that means, later than the “series of crimes” the preface addresses in the first place—crimes that—according to the Emerson translation—had caused “repugnance in people everywhere.”<sup>15</sup> In *Dracula*, however, there is no public awareness whatsoever that the deaths of the *Demeter* crew, of Mr. Swales, of Lucy and her mother, of Renfield and Skinsey were interrelated; not even the police has such a suspicion. Neither features *Dracula* a “remarkable group of foreigners who for many seasons together played a dazzling part in the life of the aristocracy here in London.”<sup>16</sup> In *Makt myrkranna*, however, the Count, together with

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method reminiscent of the Whitechapel murders. See also Robert Eighteen-Bisang, “Dracula, Jack the Ripper and A Thirst for Blood,” *Journal of Dracula Studies*, 7 (2005): 29-46.

<sup>14</sup> See Neil Storey, *The Dracula Secrets: Jack the Ripper and the Darkest Sources of Bram Stoker* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: History Press, 2012). For a fictionalized version, see James Reese, *The Dracula Dossier: A Novel of Suspense* (New York: William Morrow, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> In 2004, Robert Eighteen-Bisang commissioned an alternative translation for Transylvania Press, created by Sylvia Sigurdson and reproduced in Storey, *The Dracula Secrets*: “Many people remember the strange series of crimes *that comes into the story a little later*—crimes which, at the time, appeared to be supernatural and seemed to originate from the same source and cause as much revulsion as the infamous murders of Jack the Ripper! (my italics—HdR)” This translation is even less accurate than Emerson’s: the Icelandic relative clause “er komu litlu seinna til sögunnar” (“which happened a little later”) is written in the past tense and refers to the Ripper Murders, not to the “strange series of crimes” that many people still remember. For details about the various translations and alleged transcripts of the preface, see my article “Bram Stoker’s Original Preface Revealed?,” *Letter from Castle Dracula*, April 18, 2014: 3-19.

<sup>16</sup> This phrase contains two further translation errors. The Icelandic text does not mention a group. Instead, it refers to the stranger who suddenly disappeared as “annar þeirra,” lit.: “the other one of them.” Ásgeir Jónsson, the editor of the third Icelandic edition, pointed out to me that this refers to the other of a *pair*. The Icelandic “saman” relates to the seasons (“many seasons on end”), not to the foreigners. The confusion triggered by Emerson’s erroneous translation can be fathomed from Elizabeth Miller’s note: “Who are these foreigners? Are we to believe that one of them, a suspect in the “Ripper” murders, was yet another model for Count Dracula?” Quoted from Miller, *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, 280.

Countess Varkony, Prince Koromeszo<sup>17</sup> and the wife of the French Ambassador, Madame de Saint-Amand, indeed plays such a role. Likewise, a “series of crimes” as mentioned in the preface can only be identified in the Icelandic story, where Harker and the Count discuss “these crimes, these horrible murders, those slaughtered women, found in the Thames, drifting in sacks; this blood that runs—runs and flows—with no murderer to be found”: an unmistakable reference to the so-called “Thames Torso Murders” that started in May 1887, a year earlier than the Ripper Murders.<sup>18</sup> Like these “Thames Mysteries,” the deaths of Lucy’s mother and that of her housemaid are properly investigated by the police in *Makt myrkranna*; in *Dracula*, by contrast, police detectives are conspicuously absent.



The discovery of the first victim in the Thames Torso Murders series; *Illustrated Police News* of May 27, 1887

## 5. WAS BRAM STOKER THE AUTHOR OF POWERS OF DARKNESS?

I published these findings in February 2014.<sup>19</sup> Until then, Stoker’s authorship of the preface and of the Icelandic novel itself had never been questioned; now, I had to raise such doubts myself. The style of *Makt myrkranna* is different from that of *Dracula*. There are no lengthy legal discussions nor any sentimental assertions of friendship between the members of Van Helsing’s crew. The interactions between the Count and his guest show an understated kind of situational humor and the Icelandic story features a series of well-shaped semi-nude girls—both are absent in Stoker’s original. The text contains many references to medieval Icelandic sagas—some of them so subtle that I assume that Ásmundsson inserted them himself.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> On p. 175 of *Makt myrkranna*, the name is spelled “Koromezzo.” On pp. 201–202, it is “Koromeszo,” like in the Swedish text.

<sup>18</sup> Valdimar Ásmundsson (transl.), *Makt myrkranna*, Harker’s Diary of May 8, first published in *Fjallkonan* of March 2, 1900.

<sup>19</sup> See my article “*Makt Myrkranna*—Mother of All *Dracula* Modifications?” *Letter from Castle Dracula*, February 3, 2014: 3–19.

<sup>20</sup> Valdimar prepared an illustrated book edition of Icelandic sagas in 38 volumes for the publisher Sigurður Kristjánsson. In their obituaries of Valdimar, his wife Briét and the journalist Jón Ólafsson agree that Valdimar was believed to have no peers

If Stoker indeed was the author of the preface, he must at least have been aware of some fundamental changes to the plot; this would imply a cooperation between him and the Icelandic newspaper man, who in the 1901 book edition is mentioned as “translator.” I could not find any correspondence or publishing agreement between Stoker and Ásmundsson, however.<sup>21</sup> As a consequence, I had to look for authorial clues in the text of the Icelandic preface and the story itself.

## 6. LINGUISTIC CLUES AND PARALLELS WITH STOKER’S EARLY NOTES

In the preface, I found several indications that Stoker personally might have had a hand in it. The Thames Torso Murders never received any press coverage in Iceland, while Stoker most probably was familiar with these crimes and the press voices linking them to the Whitechapel Murders.<sup>22</sup> And even *if* an Icelandic editor had been familiar with details of the Thames Mysteries, *why* would he include a reference to a crime series unknown to his local readers? The Van Helsing character, moreover, was described as being based on a real person. The *British Weekly* interview with Jane Stoddart<sup>23</sup> of July 1, 1897 contains a similar statement. The chances that Valdimar ever happened to read this interview are small. The *Hamlet* quote at the end of the Icelandic preface, finally, also seemed to point to Stoker: several hundred times, Stoker’s boss Henry Irving performed the role of the Danish prince and in *Dracula*, Harker refers to the play repeatedly.

When I asked him for his opinion, Ásgeir Jónsson, editor of the third Icelandic edition of *Makt myrkranna*, commented that the style of the preface was untypical of Ásmundsson:

Valdimar Ásmundsson had a way with words and an extremely good command of his mother tongue. Our Nobel laureate, Halldor Laxness, has called him the “best pen in the whole of Iceland in the beginning of the twentieth century.” The translation of *Dracula* itself, although not loyal to the original text, is written in an extremely vivid and skilful way—that is why I decided to republish it. However, the preface is very clumsy, the sentences are very un-Icelandic and unlike Valdimar—they have much more of an English character.”<sup>24</sup>

Surprisingly, the body of the novel itself contained several elements that appeared to correspond to Stoker’s early notes for *Dracula*, such as the appearance of a deaf and mute housekeeper woman and of a police detective, the location of Carfax and the asylum in London itself, the featuring of a secret blood-red room and the role of Dr. Seward as a “mad doctor.” This again seemed to suggest that Stoker actively contributed to the Icelandic version, or perhaps provided Valdimar with an early draft of *Dracula*.<sup>25</sup> Last but not least, the names of several new characters (Tellet, Barrington, Varkony, Mary Holmwood) seemed more likely to be connected to Stoker’s own life than to that of Valdimar.<sup>26</sup>

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among his contemporaries in this field.

<sup>21</sup> With many thanks to Bragi Thorgrímur Ólafsson and Erlendur Már Antonsson at the National and University Library of Iceland and Gísli Baldur Róbertsson at the National Archives of Iceland, who informed me about the Ásmundsson letters archive.

<sup>22</sup> The Ripper’s *modus operandi* was to cut the throat of his victims and mutilate them; still, all of them could be identified, while the victims of the Thames Mysteries remained anonymous. The “canonical” Ripper Murders ended in November 1888, but when a female torso, wrapped in sacking, the belly sliced, was found in Whitechapel on September 10, 1889, some London newspapers speculated that the Ripper had returned and that both crimes series might have been perpetrated by the same person, using different methods.

<sup>23</sup> In *Dracula* analysis, the interviewer is mostly mentioned as Jane Stoddart. In fact, her name was Jane Thompson Stoddart (1863-1944), as evidenced by her autobiography, *My Harvest of the Years* (1938). Although she does not mention Rákosi in her book, she may have met him at the Second International Press Congress in Bordeaux in 1895, which both attended. Would it be possible that she later drew Rákosi’s attention to *Dracula*?

<sup>24</sup> Email from Ásgeir Jónsson of February 1, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> For a more detailed discussion, I refer to my article “*Makt Myrkranna* – Mother of All *Dracula* Modifications?” in *Letter from Castle Dracula* of February 3, 2014 and to my introduction to *Powers of Darkness, 2017*.

Early in 2016, I once more discussed the linguistic qualities of the Icelandic preface with Ásgeir Jónsson. Further participants in this discussion were Ásta Svavarsdóttir, Haukur Thorgeirsson and Ari Páll Kristinsson, Research Professors at the Arní Magnússon Institute for the Study of Icelandic Language, Reykjavík; Jón Karl Helgason, Professor for Icelandic Language at the University of Iceland; Gauti Kristmannsson, Professor for Translation Studies at the University of Iceland, Faculty of Icelandic and Comparative Cultural Studies; Professor Ástráður Eysteinnsson, Professor of Comparative Literature, University of Reykjavik and Dean of the School of Humanities at the University of Iceland; Ragna Eyjólfssdóttir, winner of the Icelandic Children’s Book Prize 2015; translation specialists Eva Dögg Diego Thorkelsdóttir and Magnea Matthíasdóttir. Ásgeir pointed to the mentioning of the Secret Police in the preface: Around 1900, Iceland had no such agency, and the word “njósnaarlögreglan” invented by Valdimar was never used in the Icelandic press again. The expression “röð af glæpum” (“series of crimes”) equally was a novelty, required by Icelandic language purism as an equivalent for a foreign phrase.<sup>27</sup>

For various reasons, all experts in this round agreed with Ásgeir’s assessment that the preface must have been translated from another language. Encouraged by this result, I compiled a voluminous dossier about the possible cross-connections between Stoker and Ásmundsson.<sup>28</sup> I managed to identify half a dozen persons who *could* have connected Bram to Valdimar: the work of Frederic W. H. Meyers (Secretary of the Society for Psychical Research) had been prominently featured in *Fjallkonan*; Professor Willard Fiske had visited Reykjavik in 1879 and later negotiated with Valdimar about purchasing antique manuscripts, while *The Million Pound Banknote* of his good friend Mark Twain had been serialized in *Fjallkonan* in 1894; the Icelandic Browning specialist Jón Stefánsson lived in London, published on *Hamlet* and was friends with Bernhard Shaw, May Morris and Stoker’s best friend Hall Caine, who visited Iceland twice; Dr. Frederick James Furnivall of The Shakespeare Society was in touch both with Valdimar’s friend Steingrímur Thorsteinsson and with this Jón Stefánsson. But although I worked through the letters, diaries and memoirs of at least twenty Victorians connected to Stoker, I found no proof of a direct or indirect contact between the *author of Dracula* and Ásmundsson.

## 7. THE TWO SWEDISH VARIANTS

The solution of the riddle—and the confirmation of Ásgeir’s suspicion—only turned up *after* my translation had been released by Overlook on February 7, 2017. *Powers of Darkness* received wide international publicity and my article in *The Literary Hub* was clicked more than 30,000 times.<sup>29</sup> The wave of excitement also reached Sweden. When I returned from an Asia trip early March, I found a message from Swedish fantasy fiction expert Rickard Berghorn. Alerted by the buzz around my book, Berghorn felt reminded of a Swedish text he had come across in 2016: *Mörkrets makter* meant exactly the same as *Makt myrkranna*. Hence, according to Berghorn, the Icelandic version might have been a translation of the Swedish story, that had been serialized in the newspaper *Dagen* and the magazine *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-upplaga* starting in June 1899 and in August 1899 respectively.

Compelled to check this claim, I contacted the Swedish National Library and received a 264-page scan of *Mörkrets makter*. Berghorn proved to be correct, but there were some puzzling disparities. Berghorn claimed that the Swedish version of *Dracula* was *longer* than Stoker’s original and was completely written in diary

<sup>26</sup> For the sake of shortness, I refer to my article “Bram Stoker’s Original Preface Revealed?” and again to my introduction to *Powers of Darkness*.

<sup>27</sup> Email from Ásgeir Jónsson of February 1, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> *Weighing the Odds*, unpublished manuscript, 2016.

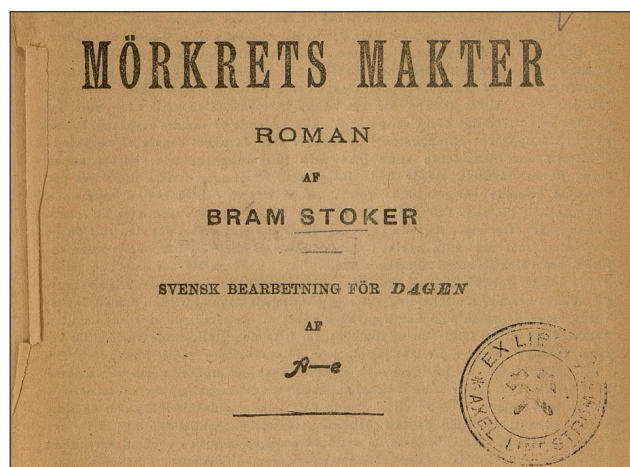
<sup>29</sup> “On *Dracula*’s Lost Icelandic Sister Text. How a Supposed Translation proved to be much more,” *The Literary Hub*, February 6, 2017.

and journal style.<sup>30</sup> The text I received from Stockholm, however, was definitely *shorter* than *Dracula* and after the Transylvanian section switched to conventional chapters, presented by an omniscient narrator—just like in the Icelandic publication. While pointing these discrepancies out to my Swedish colleague, I concluded that we must have laid hands on two different variants. Indeed, as it turned out, Berghorn had obtained the text as originally published in *Dagen* and later reproduced in the magazine *Tip-Top*, while the variant I had received from Stockholm had been assembled from the installments in *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-upplaga*; both publications shared their management and their editor-in-chief, Harald Sohlman (1858-1927). Ásmundsson must have used “my” shorter variant, as the chapter titles of *Makt myrkranna*, with some omissions,<sup>31</sup> match those of the *Aftonbladets Halfvecko-upplaga* serialization. After three years of intense searching, I had finally unearthed the true source text of the Icelandic version of *Dracula*.<sup>32</sup>

This did not answer the central question, though: to what extent was Stoker involved in these modifications? Instead of asking how *Dracula* came to Iceland, we now must ask, how did the story come to Sweden? Instead of asking, how Valdimar may have heard about the Thames Mysteries or may have picked up the names of Tellet, Varkony and Barrington, we must ask the same questions about the Swedish translator/editor. And the question, whether the similarities between Stoker’s notes and the Icelandic plot were purely coincidental or not, now shifts to the Swedish variants.

## 8. WHO CREATED THE SWEDISH TEXT?

The first step in answering these questions, I believed, was finding out the identity of the Swedish translator, who uses the pseudonym “A—e” both in the longer and the shorter text variants.



As *Mörkrets makter* seemed to be a prestigious project, appearing in two variants simultaneously, I reckoned that “A—e” had to be a seasoned author or journalist, with translating experience and a good contact with Harald Sohlman. By the end of March 2017, I came across the name of Anders Albert Anderson-Edenberg<sup>33</sup> (1834-1913), as the co-editor of a publication in honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Publicistklubben*, the Swedish association of journalists and photographers—a book to which Harald Sohlman contributed as well.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> See my interview with Berghorn as published in the *Children of the Night Congress Bulletin* of March 5, 2017.

<sup>31</sup> The chapters on Renfield, for example, have completely been omitted from *Makt myrkranna*. Altogether, Ásmundsson shortened the post-Transylvanian part from 24,000 words (Swedish version) to only 9,100 words.

<sup>32</sup> As already suspected, the references to Nordic sagas were added by Ásmundsson. Among others, Ásmundsson replaced the reference to Tannhäuser and his stay at the Venusberg by the saga of Hildur, the Elven Queen.

<sup>33</sup> In many instances, like in the following press cutting, his name is spelled with double “s.”

<sup>34</sup> See the articles “Eko” in *Aftonbladet* of May 26, 1899, 3, and “Eko – Publicistklubbens vackra festskrift” in *Svenska Dagbladet* of May 27, 1899, 2, mentioning Anderson-Edenberg as the Secretary of *Publicistklubben* and as a co-editor of this publication, together with Hugo Victorin.

Nyss utkommet i alla boklädor :

**EKO**

**Festskrift,**  
utgifven till  
**Publicistklubbens**  
**25-årsjubileum.**  
Pris 1 krona.

**Rikt och omvexlande innehåll.**  
**Elegant utstyrel.**  
Requisitioner torde insändas till C. & E. Gernandts Förlags Aktiebolag, Stockholm.

**Textbidrag** af Andersson-Edenberg, J. A. Björklund, A. U. Bääth, Sigrid Elmlad, S. A. Hedlund, G. F. Hedvall, Carl Herslow, Bengt Hägge, Alfred Jensen, Jeremias i Tröstlösa, Aron Jonason, Carl Larsson, Claës Lundin, Georg Nordensvan, Viktor Rydberg, Birger Schöldström, Albert Seberg, Harald Sohlman, Emil Svensén, G. Torelius, Anna Wahlenberg, K. Warburg, Richard Wennerquist, Hugo Victorin, Harald Wieselgren, Henrik Wranér, Fr. Åkerblom, V. E. Öman.

**Artistiska bidrag** af Viktor Andréén, G. Ankar-crona, Albert Engström, A. Forsberg, N. Kreuger och Carl Larsson.

**Porträtt och autografer** af klubbens samtliga 38 ordförande, porträtt af klubbens stiftare, af flertalet medverkande författare m. fl.

Advertisement in *Kalmar* of May 31, 1899. Here, Anderson-Edenberg's name is spelled with "ss."

From 1857 till 1859, Anderson-Edenberg had worked as a teacher. From 1864 till 1873, he had been editorial secretary at *Dagens Nyheter*—the largest Swedish newspaper at that time. But already from 1867 on, he began writing contributions for the monthly magazine *Svenska Familj-Journalen*; in 1873, he became part of its regular staff; in May 1877, he was promoted to editorial secretary; from 1883 till 1887, he was its chief editor. Its publisher, Gernandt, also was the publishers of the *EKO Festskrift*. After 1887, Anderson Edenberg acted as the Stockholm correspondent for various Swedish, Swedish-American and Finnish newspapers. In 1874, he had been a co-founder of *Publicistklubben*, of which Sohlman also became a prominent member. Both were active in committees formed at the Twelfth Meeting of Journalists in August 1895; Sohlman was involved in organizing the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Swedish Journalists in Visby in 1898<sup>35</sup> and in preparing the Fourth International Press Congress in Stockholm in June 1897.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, it seems probable that Sohlman and Anderson-Edenberg already were closely acquainted *before* the preparation of the *Festskrift* in spring 1899; as early as 1873, Harald's father, August Sohlman, had written an art-historical essay for *Svenska Familj-Journalen*.<sup>37</sup>

During his life, Anderson-Edenberg used around a dozen pseudonyms. For a translation of the play *Mellan drabningarne* by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910), the Norwegian 1903 Nobel Prize Winner in Literature, he used "A.E."<sup>38</sup> For various articles in *Svenska Familj-Journalen*, his pseudonym was "A.-E."<sup>39</sup>

My suspicion hardened when I discovered numerous parallels between the elements added to Stoker's original and phrases or topics published in *Svenska Familj-Journalen*. In *Mörkrets makter*, Harker compares himself to the prince tip-toeing through Sleeping Beauty's enchanted castle; in *Svenska Familj-Journalen* we find a Swedish translation of this fairy tale by Charles Perrault.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> See the article "Publicistmötet," *Sundsvalls Tidning*, August 20, 1895: 3.

<sup>36</sup> See the article "Sammankomster/Publicistklubben," *Aftonbladet*, December 14, 1895: 7.

<sup>37</sup> August Sohlman, "Konsthistoriskt. Jernarbeten från svenska medeltiden," *Svenska Familj-Journalen* 12 (1873), no. 1: 19, 20, 22. On the preceding pages, an article signed "-d-" portrayed six Swedish key journalists, including August Sohlman: see "Svenska Porträtgruppen – Publicister – Första Serien," *Svenska Familj-Journalen* 12 (1873), no. 1: 15-19. Possibly, August Sohlman and Anderson-Edenberg were friends before August Sohlman's early death in July 1874.

<sup>38</sup> Stockholm: Albert Bonnier, 1867. See my interview with Adrien Party ("Vladkergan") for *Vampirisme.com* of March 27, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> E.g. "Stockholms Djurgård och des sommarlif" (*Svenska Familj-Journalen* 7 (1868), no. 7: 208-210); "I gatans grannskap" (*S.F.J.* 9 (1870), no. 6: 171-173); "I den eviga staden" (*S.F.J.* 9 (1870), no. 10: 296-299); "I den eviga staden. S:t Angelo eller Engelsborgen" (*S.F.J.* 10 (1871), no. 8: 236-239); "Vår äldsta helsökälla" (*S.F.J.* 10 (1871), no. 9: 273-274); "I spelsalen" (*S.F.J.* 11 (1872), no. 1: 16, 18); "De små förvärfskällorna" (*S.F.J.* 11 (1872), no. 5: 142-145); "Säfstaholm" (*S.F.J.* 11 (1872), no. 7: 216-217); "En liten vrå bland bergen" (*S.F.J.* 14 (1875), no. 8: 237, 239); "Vestgöta Lejon" (*S.F.J.* 12 (1873), no. 5: 135-138); "Bilder från Europas hufvudstäder. I. Wien" (*S.F.J.* 12 (1873), no. 7: 214-216); etc. etc.

<sup>40</sup> "Den sofvande prinsessan i den förtrollade skoge," *Svenska Familj-Journalen* 12 (1873), no. 1: 14-16; no. 3: 86, 88; no. 4: 111-112; no. 6, 169: 171-172.



Anders Albert Anders(s)on-Edenberg (1834-1913)

The metaphor of the flower that blossoms in summer and withers in winter before nature regenerates again in spring can also be found in Anderson-Edenberg's short story *The Last Journey*, just like the notion that nature likes to vary and squander and distributes its gifts unevenly.<sup>41</sup> In the July issue of *Svenska Familj-Journalen* of 1872, we find an extensive article about Carl Maria von Weber and his romantic operas *Der Freischütz* and *Preciosa*;<sup>42</sup> both operas are mentioned in *Mörkrets makter*. While in the Transylvanian nunnery, Vilma (Mina) describes two of the nurses as "true Valkyries from the Bavarian highlands." *Svenska Familj-Journalen* of 1876 contains an illustrated article about the Walhalla Temple near Donaustauf, Bavaria, with its 14 Valkyrie statues, and a poem by Anderson-Edenberg, titled "Valkyrian."<sup>43</sup>

Altogether, I found more than a dozen of such parallels; both in number and in quality, they surpass the similarities between Stoker's notes and the Swedish version.<sup>44</sup> While the parallels with Stoker's notes seemed to suggest that he sent an early draft of *Dracula* to Sweden,<sup>45</sup> I had the impression that everything that is new and exciting in the Swedish variants, especially the added layers in the vampire's character and the heightened eroticism, had flown from the pen of the Swedish translator/editor; the Swedish word *bearbetning* (adaptation) already indicates that he (or she) was more than just a translator.

<sup>41</sup> "Sista resan," *Svenska Familj-Journalen* 11 (1872): 360-363.

<sup>42</sup> "Carl Maria von Weber," *Svenska Familj-Journalen* 11 (1872), no. 7: 207-210.

<sup>43</sup> "Walhalla i Bayern" and "Valkyrian," *Svenska Familj-Journalen* 15 (1876): 169 and 312 respectively. The Walhalla article, signed "-x," may have been authored by Anderson-Edenberg himself: over the years, he contributed various articles about cities and countries along the Danube. That he personally was in Styria, not far from Donaustauf, is evidenced by a poem about his memories of the Traunsee Lake. See "Slottet vid sjön. Poem av A.-E.," *Svenska Familj-Journalen* 21 (1882), no. 3: 115.

<sup>44</sup> See *Tis Fris* of April 1, 2017 and my article "The Origin of the First *Dracula* Adaptation," *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov*, Series IV: Philology and Cultural Studies, Vol. 10 (59) No. 1 – 2017. For a more detailed study of Anderson-Edenberg's life and work and his suspected role in the creation of *Mörkrets makter*, see my essay "Was Anders Albert Anderson-Edenberg the First Author to Modify *Dracula*?" in *Vamped.org* of March 26, 2018.

<sup>45</sup> In his blog article "Why the Icelandic 'Dracula' Adaptation Is Probably Not Evidence for a Lost Original Version of Bram Stoker's Classic Vampire Novel," (February 15, 2017), Jason Colavita argues that all parallels with Stoker's notes could result from coincidence. Although some of Colavita's arguments are beside the point (e.g. about the "group of foreigners"—an expression incorrectly introduced in the Dalby translation of the Icelandic preface), the discovery that *Makt myrkranna* was translated from the Swedish has fundamentally changed the perspective, as this explains why the Icelandic preface reads like a translated text; it no longer is proof of Stoker's personal input.

## 9. THE RÁKOSI CONNECTION, THE CHICAGO SERIAL AND WADSTRÖM’S MEMOIRS

Two other findings suggested that *Dracula* may have come to Sweden indirectly. First, there is the cooperation between Harald Sohlman and Jenő Rákosi; both played a prominent role at the Fourth International Press Congress in Stockholm in June 1897; they kept in touch in 1898, when Rákosi was the first to translate and serialize *Dracula*.<sup>46</sup> A second clue is that in the announcements of the first known American serialization of *Dracula*, which I unearthed in April 2017, Lucy’s surname is changed to “Western”—just like in *Mörkrets makter*. As this serialization appeared in the Chicago *Inter Ocean* from May 7 till June 4, 1899, and the first installment of *Mörkrets makter* was published on June 10, 1899, at the time I discovered it, it seemed possible that the Swedish editor had used the American publication as his source text, or at least consulted it—and copied the spelling “Western.”<sup>47</sup> By now, however, William Trimble from Chicago has established that the *Inter Ocean* serial was abridged to c. 150,000 words, but that details from letters omitted from the Chicago publication still appeared in *Mörkrets makter*: the Swedish translator must have used a complete text.<sup>48</sup> In May 2018, I came across an important clue suggesting that Stoker may not have been involved in the Swedish publication at all: the last part of the Swedish preface is echoing phrases from the memoirs of a Stockholm priest, Bernhard Wadström (1831-1918), released on March 30, 1899, two months *before* the preface of *Mörkrets makter* appeared. All this reduces the chance that Bram Stoker authored the Swedish preface himself, or that it was authorized by him; it seems very unlikely that Stoker would consent to a plagiarism, and even less likely that he would have committed it himself, as he could not read Swedish. Therefore, the phrases copied from this Swedish source strongly suggest that *Dracula* was pirated in Sweden.<sup>49</sup> A further clue again came from William Trimble: in all 20 instances he was able to check, the Swedish version matched the changes implemented in the Donaldson typescript as documented by Leslie Klinger.<sup>50</sup> As it is believed that Stoker made these edits only in Spring 1897, shortly before *Dracula* was printed and released, we may now exclude the possibility that the Swedish narrative was based on an early draft version. By extension, we can also assume that the parallels between Stoker’s early Notes and plot elements in the Nordic texts are the result of coincidence, as Colavita suspected all along.

In his introduction to his English translation of the *Dagen* version (2022), Berghorn introduced a range of alternative candidates that may have assumed the identity “A—e” and created the Swedish texts.<sup>51</sup> The discussion around the Nordic versions of *Dracula* certainly has not ended yet; I presented a series of still unsolved riddles in my paper “*Mörkrets Makter’s* Mini-Mysteries.”<sup>52</sup> To help answer such open questions, however, it would be helpful if more scholars from Sweden would join the debate; although Berghorn deserves accolades for identifying *Mörkrets makter*, his research is severely lacking and he appears unwilling or unable to comply with the standards of a fair discussion, as I have recently demonstrated.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>46</sup> For details, see my interview with Adrien Party (“Vladkergan”) for *Vampirisme.com* of April 30, 2017.

<sup>47</sup> See my articles “(Re-)découverte d’une ancienne sérialisation américaine de *Dracula*” in *Vampirisme.com*, April 27, 2017, and “Next Stop: Chicago,” *Vamped.org* of May 26, 2017.

<sup>48</sup> Email exchange with William Trimble of February 5-6, 2022. See William Trimble (ed.), *Powers of Darkness by Bram Stoker. Swedish Adaptation by A—e* (Chicago: self-published E-Book, February 6, 2022), footnote 37 after Part 2.

<sup>49</sup> For a detailed account, see my article “Was the Preface to the Swedish *Dracula* Version Written by a Priest? Bernhard Wadström and the ‘White Lady’,” *Vamped.org* of May 26, 2018.

<sup>50</sup> Leslie Klinger, ed., *The New Annotated Dracula* (New York: Norton, 2008), *passim*. See Trimble, *Powers of Darkness by Bram Stoker*, Editor’s Preface, 6th paragraph.

<sup>51</sup> Rickard Berghorn, ed. and trans., “*Dracula’s* Swedish Cousin: A Great Literary Mystery,” introduction to Bram Stoker and A—e, *Powers of Darkness: The Unique Version of Dracula* (Netlanda: Timaios Press, 2022), 11–49.

<sup>52</sup> Hans C. De Roos, “*Mörkrets Makter’s* Mini-Mysteries,” *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov*, Series IV 14(63) no. 1 (2021): 67-102.

<sup>53</sup> For a critique of Berghorn’s approach, see my paper “[The Berghorn Supremacy. Fouls and Offsides in the Debate about the Nordic Versions of Dracula.](https://www.vampvault.jimdofree.org)” published by [www.vampvault.jimdofree.org](https://www.vampvault.jimdofree.org), May 26, 2024.

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