



The Secret History of Vampires: Their Multiple Forms and Hidden Purposes

By Claude Lecouteux

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A look at the forgotten ancestors of the modern-day vampire, many of which have very different characteristics

- Looks at the many ancestral forms of the modern vampire, including shroud eaters, appesarts, and stafii
- Presents evidence for the reality of this phenomenon from pre-19th-century newspaper articles and judicial records

Of all forms taken by the undead, the vampire wields the most powerful pull on the modern imagination. But the countless movies and books inspired by this child of the night who has a predilection for human blood are based on incidents recorded as fact in newspapers and judicial archives in the centuries preceding the works of Bram Stoker and other writers.

Digging through these forgotten records, Claude Lecouteux unearths a very different figure of the vampire in the many accounts of individuals who reportedly would return from their graves to attack the living. These ancestors of the modern vampire were not all blood suckers; they included shroud eaters, appesarts, nightmares, and the curious figure of the stafia, whose origin is a result of masons secretly interring the shadow of a living human being in the wall of a building under construction. As Lecouteux shows, the belief in vampires predates ancient Roman times, which abounded with lamia, stirges, and ghouls. Discarding the tacked together explanations of modern science for these inexplicable phenomena, the author looks back to another folk belief that has come down through the centuries like that of the undead: the existence of multiple souls in every individual, not all of which are able to move on to the next world after death.



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The Secret History of Vampires: Their Multiple Forms and Hidden Purposes By Claude Lecouteux Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #112224 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Inner Traditions
- Published on: 2010-02-01
- Released on: 2010-02-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .50" w x 6.00" l, .75 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 200 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"Both scholarly and accessible in this translation, *The Secret History of Vampires* is a gem. Lecouteux reveals ancient precursors to the vampire myth that are overlooked by most researchers. These and other theories are backed by a plethora of supporting evidence, including primary sources in the appendices, making this a must-add to any vampire library." (Konstantinos, author of *Vampires: The Occult Truth*)

" . . . readers interested in exploring vampire legend and lore will find this to be a book they can really sink their teeth into." (Richard D. Wright, *Tranquil Things*, Jan 2010)

"The book is comprehensive and small enough to provide a source as a great sit down-with-coffee book. Vampire lovers will in fact love this book . . . feels comprehensive and intriguing enough to perhaps give you an edge over vampiric discussions in the future--enjoy! (Bone Digger, *horrornews.net*, March 2010)

"Anyone curious into the origins of myths in general and the public perception of vampires in particular absolutely must read *The Secret History of Vampires*! Highly recommended especially for public library folklore shelves." (The Midwest Book Review, April 2010)

"The best-seller lists are fang-deep in vampire tales . . . So, to educate myself, I read a rather serious, scholarly tome on the subject: *The Secret History of Vampires* . . . Oh, what legends and stories are between these pages! . . . The dead are, indeed, dangerous." (Ann LaFarge, *Hudson Valley News*, Vol. 1, Issue 25, May 2010)

" . . . a serious academic work on the real thing." (The Cauldron, September 2010)

"Vampire lovers will in fact love this book . . ." (HorrorNews.net, January 2011)

"Something for the serious student of the occult. It is a guaranteed page turner!" (EarthRites.org, May 2011)

"The book is excellent for any library, be the owner vampire or vampire hunter or simply the paranormal enthusiast or admirer from afar, wishing for a bite." (Examiner.com)

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FOLKLORE / MYTHOLOGY

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