

## **Circulus Magicus: The Magical Plowing and Similar Rituals in Folklore**

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(Summary)

The ritual plowing aims to establish a magical circle around a city or a village and thus dispel evil from it. The earliest recorded examples are related to Rome and the Thebes, and they were spread across most European nations due to the Roman influence. In the Middle Ages such plowing was carried out mainly in times of epidemics. In Bulgaria the ritual is performed by twin men with a twin pair of oxen while in the Eastern Europe and especially Russia it is reserved exclusively for women. The symbolic plowing by naked men is performed in Turnovo in 1347 during the Black Death and in Liaskovec in 1837 during a cholera plague. Other examples of the sacred circles feature the protection of a church or a holy city by girdling it with a cloth or crawling around it while praying (Russia, Bosnia etc.).