

Modern Greek and Bulgarian Narratives about Magicians Pulling the Moon Down from the Sky

Oksana V. Tchoekha

(Summary)

The paper refers to a particular type of narrative stories about witches believed to be able to turn the moon into a cow or a calf, to pull it down, to milk it or to question it about the future. Such beliefs are agreed to be of an ancient origin and the collection of the texts from Epirus published by Benekos contains old variants of these stories – the witches, dressed in white, play musical instruments, dance offering the moon some food and invite it to come down to question it about the future. References to similar stories are found in the Hellenistic literature and in the pottery fragments. Modern Greek tradition offers, however, modifications of the stories – the witches milk the moon turned into a cow. This motif seems to be quite new and coming from the traditions of the Balkan Slaves, first of all from Bulgarian tradition where the plot is present not only in a narrative form but also in church paintings.

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Oksana Tchoekha
Institute of Slavic Studies
of the Russian Academy of Sciences
32-A Leninsky Prospect
119334 Moscow, RUSSIA
tchoekha@gmail.com