

**The shape-shifting concept of female evil:
Weregoats' symbolism from a Portuguese legend to Landolfi's *The Moon Stone***

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Lendas e Narrativas, an anthology of two volumes published in 1851 by Portuguese historian Alexandre Herculano, includes among its narratives an intriguing tale imbued with mysticism and charged with hints of Gothic and supernatural: the legend of 'A Dama Pé-de-cabra', the Goat-footed lady, transcribed by Herculano from Portuguese oral tradition. More recently, in 2004, Portuguese writer Hélia Correia wrote 'Fascinação', a short story which constitutes the continuation of Herculano's retelling of this ancient folktale. The lady to whom the legend is entitled is, in fact, a shape-shifting monster, half woman, half goat, who seduces and entraps her lover in a treacherous marriage, only to reveal her monstrous identity at a later stage. In another cultural and historical context, the Italian writer Tommaso Landolfi dedicated his first novel, *The Moon Stone* (1939), to the erotic relationship between a young man, Giovancarlo, and Gurù, a lady-goat who will lead him through an extraordinary path of sexual discovery. By taking into consideration Herculano's legend, Correia's modern reinterpretation and Landolfi's novel, this paper will explore the cultural and metaphorical meaning of the literary motif of the weregoat, with reference to its derivation from Greek and Roman myths. This cross-cultural inquiry aims at interpreting the ambivalent symbolism behind these representations of monstrous female bodies and these goat-shaped fictional creatures' significance in a gender-based reflection.

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