

## **The Demon – Guardian of Water**

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The myth of the demon-guardian of water of all water sources utilized by humans embraces a significant place in the spiritual world of the Bulgarian people and is spread all over their ethnic territory. The demon's most popular folklore names are proprietor or "sajbia" of the water. The people's notions and beliefs for this imaginary mythological personage, considered to be the possessor of waters, are traced on the basis of rich, mostly verbal sources. Its various abstract manifestations are through diverse images of inhabitants of the animal world, usually with very awkward forms and supernatural dimensions, hybrid creatures, or anthropomorphous impersonations in male or female hypostasis. Along with its versatile image, the researcher has attempted to discover its genesis, and to identify some features of its behavior with regards to Water and Man. In order to get as close as possible to the popular concepts of the proprietor (sajbia) of water, the author discusses the image-presentations of the object of her research on different material objects related to water: bridges, water fountains, well walls, etc. The author explains the semantic load of the images while seeking the motivation of their existence exactly in those places, and relating it, eventually, to the very strong cult for water in the spiritual world of Bulgarians.