
THE GREEN SABAZIOS

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(S u m m a r y)

According to the ancient sources, Sabazios was a Thracian-Phrygian deity, originally worshiped in Phrygia, where his cult spread in Thrace and Hellas form. The iconographic monuments and dedicatory writings from Thrace, Moesia and Dacia are much later — from the Roman period (c. 1st—4th AD). Nevertheless, from them we can judge about the original essence of the cult and the significance of the divine name.

The Greek written sources mention the names Σαβος and Σαβάζιος, which could be interpreted as “awe of the deity” or could be connected with the Kabeiroi, although both versions are doubtful. Therefore, it is better to examine the symbols of the deity and the present folklore traditions as well.

From the Greek written sources we know the main colours in the Sabazios, in the pine strobile. Additional elements are the lizard, turtle and frog — all they are green. The present article emphasizes on the significance of the green colour. It symbolises the spring, the life and the immortality. Similar is the symbolism of the pine tree. The same idea is presented in some Bulgarian folklore songs and customs, related to the Christian Saint Atanas, but mentioning, the name Sabo (Sabazios-?). Hence the main destination of Sabazios is to be the protection of life.