

1. Introduction:

Akerbeltz or Aker (In the Basque language **Aker** means male goat and **Beltz**, black) is a spirit in the popular mythology of the Basque Country. He lives inside the earth and has many lesser spirits as servants. In Christianity, Akerbeltz was identified with the demon who presided over the witches covens or meetings.

2. Origin

The cult of this mythological character in the Basque Country seems to come from remote times. This is confirmed by Roman inscriptions from the 3rd century founded in Aquitaine with the word Aherbelste, which according to renowned linguists relate it to 'akerbeltz'. This inscription is supposed to refer to a god that was worshiped at that time, the god who leads and protects other animals. This himself could be the genius that the witches (**Sorginak**) worshiped in the 16th-17th centuries.

3. Appearance

This well-known mythological character takes the form of a black goat, as its name indicates. Sometimes he shows us his benevolent side, but other times he shows us his dark side. When he shows us his good side, he has similar characteristics to **Mari**, becoming the head of other geniuses.

4. Role

It is told in the legends that he protects the animals that are in his care, and even has powers to cure their diseases. That is why It's normal in the villages to have a black male goat, so that it protects the domestic animals that are raised in the place.