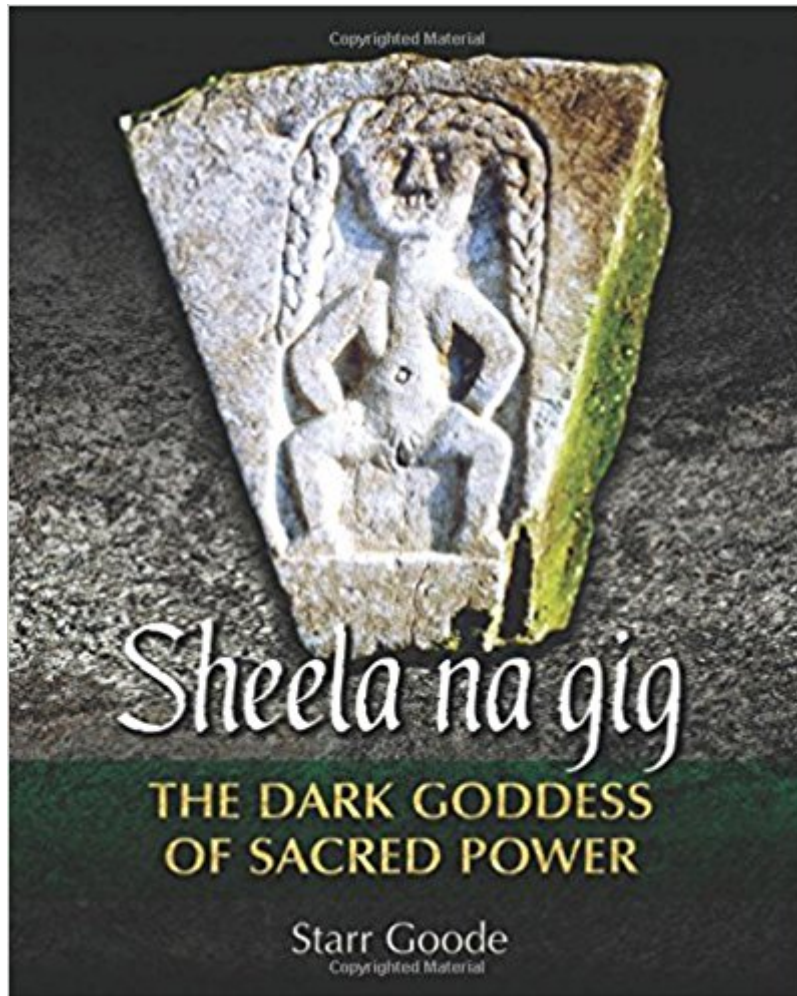




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# Sheela Na Gig: The Dark Goddess Of Sacred Power



## Synopsis

Traces the origins of the Sheela na gig from Medieval times to Paleolithic cave art • Reveals the sacred display of the vulva to be a universal archetype and the most enduring image of creativity throughout the world • Provides meditations on the Sheelas the author encountered in Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales, allowing readers to commune with the power of these icons • Includes more than 150 photographs and illustrations from around the world

For millennia, the human imagination has been devoted to the Goddess, so it is hardly a surprise to find images of supernatural females like Sheela na gigs adorning sacred and secular architecture throughout Ireland, England, Wales, and Scotland. Appearing on rural churches, castles, bridges, holy wells, tombs, and standing stones, these powerful images of a figure fearlessly displaying her vulva embody the power of the Dark Goddess over the mysteries of sex, life, death, and rebirth. Exploring the art and myth of the Sheela na gig from Celtic and Classical times back to Paleolithic cave art, Starr Goode shows how the Sheela embraces a conundrum of opposites: she clearly offers up her ripe sex yet emanates a repelling menace from the upper half of her hag-like body. Through more than 150 photographs, the author shows how the Sheela is a goddess with the power to renew, a folk deity used to help women survive childbirth, and, as a guardian of doorways and castle walls, a liminal entity representing the gateway to the divine. She explains how these powerful images survived eradication during the rise of Christianity and retained their preeminent positions on sacred sites, including medieval churches. The author provides meditations on the individual Sheelas she encountered during her 25 years of research, allowing readers to commune with these icons and feel the power they emanate. Exploring comparable figures such as Baubo, Medusa, the Neolithic Frog Goddess, and vulva depictions in cave art, she reveals the female sacred display to be a universal archetype, the most enduring image of creativity throughout history, and illustrates how cultures from Africa and Ecuador to India and Australia possess similar images depicting goddesses parting their thighs to reveal sacred powers. Explaining the role of the Sheela na gig in restoring the Divine Feminine, the author shows the Sheela to be an icon that makes visible the cycles of birth, death, and renewal all humans experience and a necessary antidote to centuries of suppression of the primal power of women, of nature, and of the imagination.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

âœ. . . an exciting book on the Sheela na gig, an iconic image Starr Goode has called âˆthe perfect antidote to the war on women.â™ History, travelogue, and an artistâ™s insightful âˆgazeâ™ make this a must-read and very accessible text.â• (Vicki Noble, author and co-creator of Motherpeace Tarot)âœ. . . groundbreaking, comprehensive, and fascinating. . . . No study of the feminine archetype is complete without the insight, knowledge, and extensive imagery presented in this book.â• (Anne Baring, author of The Dream of the Cosmos: A Quest for the Soul)âœ. . . an all-encompassing layered work where all the parts harmonize with the whole . . . a poetic paean to the Great Mother. The writing is clear and exquisite. I strongly recommend it not only to students and researchers on womenâ™s spirituality but to the public at large.â• (Cristina Biaggi, Ph.D., author of Habitations of the Great Goddess)âœStarr Goode has written a masterful work on the Sheela na gigs. She gives a solid historic and prehistoric foundation for the iconography of the Sheelas, beginning with the Aurignacian period of the Upper Paleolithic. Goode shares her wealth of knowledge, and she beautifully balances the scholarly with a deep sense of the spirituality which the Sheelas represent.â• (Miriam Robbins Dexter, author of Whence the Goddesses: A Source Book)âœAs Starr Goode tells us in this gorgeously illustrated book, Sheelas have for millennia adorned churches, castles, bridges, holy wells, tombs, and standing stones throughout the British Isles and in a few European sites. Highly Recommended.â• (Barbara Ardinger, SageWoman. Barbara Ardinger, SageWoman. Barbara Ardinger, SageWoman)

Starr Goode, MA, teaches writing and literature at Santa Monica College. An award winning writer, she has been profiled in the LA Weekly, the Los Angeles Times, the Wall Street Journal, and The New Yorker. She was the producer and moderator for the cable TV series The Goddess in Art, the

episodes of which are now housed in the permanent collection of the Getty Museum as well as available on YouTube. She lives in Santa Monica, California.

This is a wonderful, healing, beautifully written, very informative and scholarly book.

If you are a fan of Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party," then you will want to get this book! It's a full frontal exposure of the power of the "dark goddess" hiding right in our midst. My initiation with Her came many, many years ago, before she was well known by gringos outside the circle of "Jungians." I had learned of her twin transformative mysteries "alcoholic drunkenness and dream incubation" first hand and marveled at the power of her tough love. When I gave a lecture on Her at Edgar Cayce's A.R.E., there was a sell-out crowd. Folks were expecting tales of Mother Mary and other angelic beings, popular representatives of the "Feminine." The lady I was introducing them too, however, was no Barbie Doll! Even today, when it is even more important than ever that we recognize Her presence and activity, we tend to marginalize Her attributes. Seeing the statues the author has uncovered in Western Europe (birthplace of gringo mentality) is a shock. This dark goddess is not bashful about her stuff. She displays it proudly as if it were her coat of arms. What is the secret of her power? Sexuality, death and rebirth. What does it mean that such a "Spiritual Divine Being" shoves her stuff in our face? Not the usual role model. What gives this book special value, beyond the author's discovery of this lost part of our heritage and the immense collection of photographs, is that she uses this discovery of our forgotten psychic DNA to invite us to an alternative mode of consciousness, one that would provide us with a more sustainable lifestyle. I'm not going to try to explain it, you'll need to read the book!

Little known topic and now I have an entire book

All the photos of sheelas from all over the world are fabulous! A very interesting concept and clear writing that takes the conversation on Sheela to a new level. A great inspirational book.

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