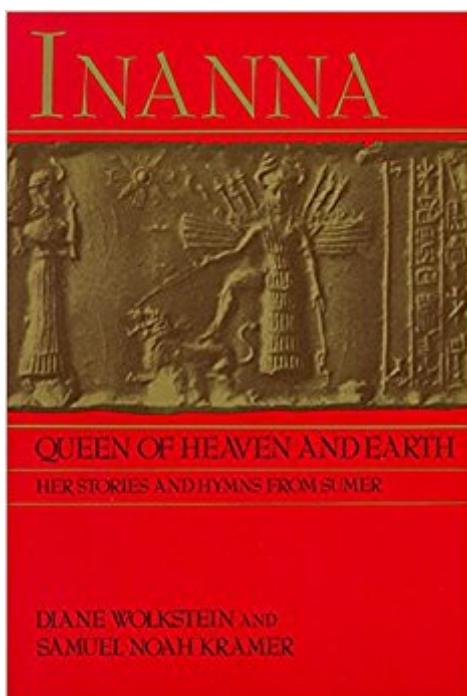


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# Inanna, Queen Of Heaven And Earth: Her Stories And Hymns From Sumer



## Synopsis

A fresh retelling of the ancient texts about Ishtar, the world's first goddess. Illustrated with visual artifacts of the period. "A great masterpiece of universal literature."--Mircea Eliade

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is an admirable translation, a great masterpiece of universal literature."--Mircea Eliade "A splendid mutual accomplishment and a great gift of mythology...."Inanna "is a book to be cherished."--P.L. Travers "In the myth of Inanna, Wolkstein and Kramer give us back the totality of woman, the ruler-wife-lover-redeemer, whom all worshiped and from whom all life flowed. It is a thrilling rediscovery."--Olivier Bernier "Wolkstein has been able to convey in English the rich metaphor, the erotic fullness, and the ritual pacing of these ancient stories....Taken together with the illustrations, historical discussions, and textual commentaries, this book is worth a tower of scholarly tomes....Such a feat is remarkable and rare."--Barre Toelken, Director of Folklore and Ethnic Studies, University of Oregon "I felt shivers of recognition reading these ancient lines that proclaim Inanna's discovery of her prowess....Kramer and Wolkstein make us love their awesome goddess whose stormy complexities have been concealed in cuneiform tablets for thousands of years."--Nor Hall

Text: English (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Perhaps see my comments about Asia Shepsut's JOURNEY OF THE PRIESTESS ("The Priestess Traditions of the Ancient World --- A Journey of Spiritual Awakening and Empowerment"). Both of these books are part of the insightful recognition that ancient societies' respect of women and their cultures have a tremendous importance for us today who live under the oppression of male dominated cultures and religions such as Muhammidism, Judaism and Christianity. Four other helpful books on this subject are Barbara Mor's The Great Cosmic Mother, Barbara Walker's The Crone and Riane Eisler's The Chalice and the Blade and her Sacred Pleasure. Dive in. Our current world lacks the wisdom of these ancient societies with their women gods and culture!

This is solid story-telling and translation of the most compelling goddess from human record. The two make a perfect pair and really bring Inanna to life. I was writing a fiction story that has Inanna as a supporting character, and I read this book twice to really get a feel for the depth and drive that Inanna displays. It was instrumental in my writing and also inspirational in my life. Hats off to these two for this stellar book.

I can't recommend this enough. It is by far the most approachable translation of the ancient texts that I have come across.

I'm a pretty big nut when it comes to Sumerian gods and goddesses, so this book was a no brainer. I also have "Inanna: Lady of the Largest Heart," which I would highly recommend in addition to this book for those who want to learn more about Inanna and Sumeria. This is mostly a collection of short hymns to Inanna, and show her gentle side. Some of the hymns are rather explicit in their descriptions of sex, something kind of out of character for a goddess of love (and of war, let's not forget!). A lot of the poems are really heartwarming, for lack of a better term. I'd actually read some of these to my girlfriend for "romantic poetry," and we both enjoyed them (even though she isn't really into the Sumerian stuff). There are a lot of copies of the ancient Sumerian tablets and images of Inanna, which will really help you get a clear picture of her. The second half of the book is information about Inanna and Sumeria, not exactly really interesting for me, but well written. This would be the best book to pick up for those interested in Inanna, then check out "Lady of the Largest Heart."

For the distillation of the myths, themselves, there is nothing quite like this book. It makes the Sumerian myths accessible, but the anthropological interpretations are dated and continue to

mislead the public as to current academic interpretations. The wholesale categorization of Inanna as a "fertility goddess" is a naive concept from the ignorant past which contradicts everything we actually know about her role in Sumerian society. A revised edition would be welcome.

The moon goddess - Ishtar, Demeter, Inanna - a foundation of the goddess principle for more than 3,000 years. This text does a nice job of bringing the Sumerian version - Inanna - to the modern reader. The translation - in verse - is readable, logical and mystical. The exceptional commentaries and artwork in the book bring the reader into the background and environment of Sumeria - interpretation of the legends and stories in light of their relationship to the times and culture - as well as hypothesis on interpretation as they relate to other cultures and the modern reader. A great resource for anyone interested in the topic.

The result of a collaboration between Sumerian scholar Noah Kramer and folklorist Diane Wolkstein, this book is a thoughtfully annotated translation of the major Sumerian cuneiform texts devoted to the goddess Inanna-among the oldest religious texts in the world. It is illustrated with black-and-white reproductions of ancient Sumerian art, mostly on clay tablets. Our understanding of Sumerian culture continues to grow as new texts are found and our perceptions change. This book was published in 1983, and included material unknown to the general public at the time. There are four major stories of Inanna told here: "The Huluppu Tree," "Inanna and the God Of Wisdom," "The Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi," and the extended epic "The Descent of Inanna." Seven hymns to the goddess round out the collection. In "The Huluppu Tree," we meet the adolescent Inanna, expectantly awaiting the attainment of her queenship. The Huluppu tree, which she has planted and tended as a symbol of her hopeful authority, becomes infested with evil creatures, like personal demons, that will not depart and bring her to despair. She eventually appeals to Gilgamesh to vanquish the demons, and they exchange gifts made from the wood of the tree, bringing them both to greater power. In "Inanna and the God of Wisdom," Inanna, now sexually mature but still youthful and unproven, is welcomed by Enki, God of Wisdom, who acts the role of proud grandfather, giving a feast in her honor. Enki's magnanimity increases as he drinks, and he ends up offering Inanna all the magical keys to human civilization. Inanna, with enthusiastic politeness, accepts the gifts, and then makes a quick exit, getting a head start before Enki thinks better of his generosity and sends his monsters in pursuit of the errant goddess. Inanna, with the help of her trusted companion goddess, gets passed the monsters and arrives in Uruk with her magical cargo, where she comes into her full power. Enki, apparently wise enough to let go of his greed in the face of fate,

acknowledges Inanna's victory and ascendance. In "The Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi," Inanna, after some initial resistance, enters into an erotic courtship with Dumuzi the shepherd. This text is strangely alluring, moving with untroubled ease from sexual frankness to touching detail. (The scene where Dumuzi knocks on the door of Inanna's house for the first time feels like it could have come straight from a modern teenager's diary). After the marriage is consummated, Dumuzi curtly informs Inanna that he's going to be very busy being king now-don't wait up, hon. This poignantly rapid slide from courtship to neglect sets the scene for events in the next narrative. In "The Descent of Inanna," the goddess, now Queen of Heaven and Earth, finds herself drawn to enter the underworld, realm of the dead, ruled by her evil and somehow tragic sister-self, Ereshkigal. One by one, she is stripped of all the symbols of her power at seven gates, to be left naked and alone before the Queen of the Underworld, who kills Inanna with a single blow and hangs her on a hook to dry. Inanna has planned her own rescue in advance, though, and escapes to the surface, thronged by demons intent on finding someone to take her place. Inanna will not surrender to them her loyal sons, but when she returns to find her husband Dumuzi, not in mourning, but proudly sitting on his thrown and dispensing authority, she strikes him down and sends the demons after him. The tale of Dumuzi's flight is nightmarish and filled with dream imagery. Thanks to the efforts of his compassionate and self-sacrificing sister, and the softening of Inanna's own anger, a Persephone-like bargain is reached, and Dumuzi is allowed to return to the living for half of each year. The hymns that round out this book are an exciting glimpse of the actual religious practice of the Sumerians. Especially interesting for modern Pagans is the annual ritual wedding between goddess and king. I'm someone who tends to be rather skeptical about the ancient precedents of modern goddess worship, but these texts caught me off my guard. They are amazingly modern (or is it timeless?) in their content. The goddess actually grows psychologically and spiritually through the series of narratives, and the portrayal of the sexual dynamic between men and women rings uncannily true across four millennia. Inanna's story is the original heroine's journey. And, unlike most of her male counterparts, she doesn't need to kill anything to attain her spiritual victory. (Well, almost. Dumuzi gets a serious lesson in raw goddess power!). Her character seems to flow from woman to goddess and back again so smoothly, that it is impossible not to feel a living religion in these texts, one in which there was an intimate dialog between the powers of the goddess and the human experience of her priestesses. These original texts are better than any modern retelling of Inanna's story I have come across, not just because they are more "authentic", but because they are hauntingly moving. Unlike the familiar mythology of the Greeks and Romans, which has come down to us in a more or less "literary" style, these works seem more spiritual, even liturgical. Repetition is combined with a

directness of wording, and the result is often very powerful; there is a primal intensity about them. They disarm you with their open, almost child-like language, and then leave you sitting, mute and amazed, in that timeless central cavern of the human experience.

Beautiful

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