



# The Sacred Whore: Sheela Goddess of the Celts

*Maureen Concannon*

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## **The Sacred Whore: Sheela Goddess of the Celts** Maureen Concannon

Accessible study of the ancient carved stone images of naked female figures found throughout Ireland. Unnoticed and ignored for centuries, they are being rediscovered on early churches, medieval castles and bishops' tombs. Is this a signal to pay attention to the feminine side of the human psyche? This is the story of these mysterious carvings, their history, location and psychological significance. Called Sheela-na-Gigs, these figures display and emphasize the genital organs, symbols of fertility and new life. Originally symbols of God as "The Great Mother" in pre-Celtic society, the Celts integrated them into their druidic religion to later become part of Celtic Christianity. Then the victory of the Roman over the Celtic Church gradually turned the Divine Hag into a Harlot. But to Irish chieftains Sheela was the Divine Hag, Goddess of the Land. They are found at early monastic settlements in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, and pilgrim routes on the continent set up by Irish missionaries. September 2004, photos, drawings, maps, 5½ x 8½

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