

LEGEND AND FOLKLORE SYMBOLS: SHEELA NA GIG

Sheela na Gig's presence is only visible in the modern world in antiquated images in Christian churches, but her symbols represent the constants of life and death.

Most images of the peculiar Sheela na Gig are found in medieval Christian churches, particularly over doorways, while her folklore dates as far back as 2000–3000 years. Her likeness has been found on standing stones, ancient megaliths, in Ireland. Sheela na Gig is a Celtic goddess, although she does not have a story; she represents a concept.

Grotesque goddess

Her appearance is often contradictory; in many images she represents fertility by the display of a youthful, plump vulva, yet if she has any breasts at all they are withered and she looks like an infertile old hag.


Sheela na Gig represents the primal extremes of birth and death. Her vulva is a doorway to both the outer world and the inner world. She is the mother who, paradoxically, nurtures and devours all nature at the same time.

The formation of Sheela na Gig's image is often round, like an egg shape, symbolising new beginnings.




SYMBOLISM OF SHEELA NA GIG


Sheela na Gig's image carries within it a legacy of ancient symbols, which can be used to harness the power of this Celtic goddess for your magic.


 The Celtic word *sila* – pronounced "sheela" – means origin or cause. Sheela na Gig is

Paint an egg with a symbol of Sheela na Gig to harness her power.

the beginning and as such she may be represented by an egg on your altar. You could even attempt to paint her image on an egg.

 The vulva of the Sheela na Gig is often depicted in a boat-like shape – a universal symbol related to spiritual crossings; this may be physical birth, a quest, or the final journey in death across the River Styx.

 Despite Sheela na Gig's prominent vulva, the rest of her body and her drooping breasts are quite androgynous; in some cultures, this type of appearance is revered as carrying powerful and paradoxical magic.

 Sheela na Gig's flat, triangular-shaped head and large eyes mirror images of Pagan Europe's snake and bird goddess.