

*Inanna: Queen of Heaven and  
Earth. Her Stories and Hymns  
from Sumer*

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# Enheduana (ca. 2285-2250 B.C.E.)

<http://www.ivcc.edu/gender2001/Enheduanna.htm>

- Priestess of Nanna and High Priestess of Inanna
- Wrote down the stories of Inanna
- May have been the first writer we know by name
- Daughter of Sargon the Great
- Seems to have helped to establish Inanna as a supreme god



# Enheduana's Poems: "Inanna and Ebih"

- Inanna appears as a paradoxical duality
- Love and War
- Sex goddess and the goddess of violent and destructive Nature
- She is Not a Mother Goddess, although there were mother goddesses in Sumerian religion
- In Inanna and Ebih, she attacks a mountain God, Ebih, and she establishes her autonomy from the Sky God, An.

# Structure of Poem

- Exordium to Goddess; Identification of her epithets and description
- Opening address of Goddess in third person; then second person
- Personal identification of Enheduana and Inanna expressed in one section

# Winged Inanna and Venus



# Inanna and Enki, God of Wisdom

- Preparation for Journey
- Hospitality in the Abzu: Butter cake, cold water, beer
- The “Gift” of the 14 *me*
- Conflict: Enkum creatures, Uru Giants, Lahama monsters, Eunun,
- Arrival in Uruk: Presentation of *me*; Blessing of Enki



# Inanna and Enki: Conclusions

- Political Dimension: Symbolizes the Ascendance of Uruk and continued friendship with Eridu
- Establishes the Power and Importance of Inanna, the Patron Goddess of Uruk, through possession of the *me*
- Highlights the complex play of power in Hospitality ritual



# Hieros Gamos: Sacred Marriage

- At setting of Moon on New Years, in August
- Ziggurat
- Ceremonial Union of Priest/King with Priestess/Inanna
- Established the Fertility of the Land and the Coming of the Fertile Season

# Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi

- Preparation of Bridal Sheet with help of Brother Utu: Flax, combing it, spinning, braiding, warping, weaving, bleaching.
- Selection of Husband: Farmer of Shepherd
- Giving of Gifts by Suitor
- Agricultural Metaphors for Sex

# Descent into the Kur

- Opened Her Ear to Great Below
- Abandoned Her Temples
- Preparation: 7 *me*
- Commands Ninshubar
- Removal of *me*
- Eye of Death, Word of Wrath, Cry of Guilt



# Rescue by Ninshubar

- Supplicates Enlil
- Supplicates Nanna
- Supplicates Enki
- Enki forms the Kurgarra and Galatur to get Inanna
- Gift of Sympathy: Gift of Inanna
- Price of Return: A Compensatory Death;

# The Substitution

- Galla demand Ninshubur
- Galla Demand Shara, son of Inanna
- Galla Demand Lulal, son of Inanna
- Galla Demand Dumuzi and Inanna Gives Eye of Death, Word of Wrath, and Cry of Guilt
- Dumuzi Supplicates Utu, God of Justice

# Pursuit and Capture of Dumuzi

- Pursuit of Galla
- Geshtinanna Bribed (Water-gift, grain-gift); Tortured but Loyal
- Friend Tells Galla
- Dumuzi Supplicates Utu (turned into a Gazelle)
- Dumuzi Captured; beaten, stripped



# Return of Dumuzi

- People Lament Loss of Dumuzi
- Inanna Weeps and Mourns
- Sirtur, mother-in-law mourns
- Geshtinanna Mourns
- Judgement of Inanna: Six months for Dumuzi and Six for Geshtinanna

# Conclusions and Implications

- Role of Women was prominent and respected; Female Sexuality was Positive
- Agricultural Society; Associated Human Fertility and Fertility of Earth
- Looks toward Great Death and Dying Gods: Persephone/Proserpina, Mysteries of Demeter; Motif of Descent: Gilgamesh, Odysseus, Aeneas, Dante
- Importance of Hospitality and Supplication