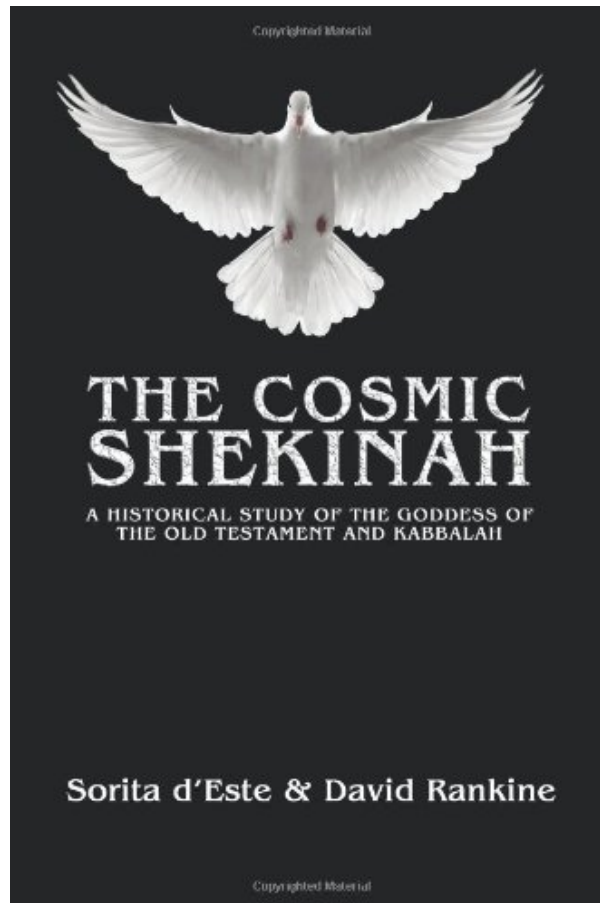


THE COSMIC SHEKINAH BY SORITA D'ESTE, DAVID RANKINE



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THE COSMIC SHEKINAH

A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE GODDESS OF
THE OLD TESTAMENT AND KABBALAH

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About the Author

David Rankine (Wales) has been practicing magic for twenty-five years. He gives regular talks and workshops around Europe. For more information, visit www.ritualmagick.co.uk.

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The Shekinah is the manifestation of the Wisdom Goddess of the Kabbalah, the Old Testament and Merkavah Mysticism. She encompasses the primordial light of creation, the wisdom of the serpent and the inspiration of the dove. She is the beauty of the lily and the embodiment of the Tree of Life. She is also the World soul, heavenly glory, mother of angels, inspiration for prophecy, and source of souls, as well as being the Shabbat Bride and the wife of God. In *The Cosmic Shekinah* the authors present a concise history of the different influences of earlier wisdom goddesses on the development of the Shekinah. These goddesses include the Sumerian Inanna, the Egyptian Ma'at, the Greco-Egyptian Isis, the Semitic Anat and Astarte and the Canaanite Asherah. They show that from these ancient sources the unnamed Wisdom Goddess and wife of God portrayed in the Old Testament and early Jewish wisdom literature arose. It is this unnamed Wisdom Goddess who would subsequently become the source for the development of the Shekinah as well as the Gnostic Sophia. The influence of the feminine divine as the Shekinah has continued to find expression, with the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit of Christianity and the Sakina of Islam all being shaped by the enduring influence of the Wisdom Goddess. Through tracing her roles, myths and functions the authors show that in addition to her resurgence, the Wisdom Goddess has always been present throughout history, even when she has been suppressed and disguised by deliberate exclusion and mistranslation. Drawing on numerous sources including medieval Kabbalistic works, Hekhalot texts of Merkavah Mysticism, ancient literature such as the Egyptian, Sumerian and Ugaritic myths, the Old Testament, Gnostic texts and recent finds in Biblical archaeology, *The Cosmic Shekinah* draws attention back to the light of divine feminine wisdom.

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About the Author

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The Divine Presence

By S. Cranow

The divine feminine, it is contained albeit on a quiet level in all three of the major monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, although they are male dominated. In the kabbalistic works of Jewish mysticism this is commonly known as the Shekina, or the divine presence. In gnostic Christianity it is known as Sophia, considered the Goddess of Wisdom. In Islam the Shekina is called Sakina.

The book traces the very beginning of the feminine divine from the early pagan goddesses of the Middle East all the way to the development of Sophia the Wisdom Goddess. The Hebrew God had a wife. Jewish theology developed from strains of influence stemming from surrounding cultures like the Egyptians, Sumerians and Canaanites. In the Canaanite Pantheon, El, the head Canaanite God had a wife Asherah. In the Hebrew Bible God's wife was also called, Asherah.

Asherah would later give way to the Wisdom Goddess. The Wisdom Goddess drew from such influences as Isis, Inanna, Maat and Asherah. They were Goddesses who taught mankind wisdom. The Wisdom Goddess would later transform into the Shekhinah. The Shekhinah drew primarily from the Near Eastern Wisdom Goddess. Many symbols associated with the Shekhinah were the dove, light, trees, incense smoke and the burning bush. The Shekhinah is mentioned several times in Kabbalistic literature. By the way the authors make excellent references to the Kabbalistic literature and Near Eastern sources.

An examination of Jewish sources shows that there are two Shekinas, an earthly and a heavenly one. The heavenly Shekhinah is wrapped around the male counterpart like a blanket of fire. The earthly Shekhinah hovers in the earth and is the planets' soul. It is the earthly Shekhinah that is in exile with the Israelites.

Sophia, the Christian divine presence drew heavily from Greek, Jewish and other Christian sources in her creation. There was a concept of Gaia in Greek theology that was likened to the soul of the world. The Sophia was often equated with the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary and sometimes even Jesus himself.

The divine feminine is considered the mother of angels and planetary forces. The Shekhinah's role in creation is amply explained in the final part of the book. This final part gives an excellent overview on Kabbalistic mythology. This is the first book I have read by Soritia d'Este and David Rankine and I must tell you that I am thoroughly blown away by this book. It is excellent and understandable. I definitely plan on reading more books by this team of scholars.

The book has excellent sources in their bibliography for further research. Everything is well documented. They make comparisons to other Goddesses and give great background and peripheral information. This book gets five stars out of five stars.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Shekinah

By R.K. Sprau

This is a must-get title along with Sophia, goddess of wisdom, Bride of Christ, On the Wings of Shekhinah. As a historian, one presumes we have no idea what the Shekinah glory as found in the Bible is. This shows the lack of understanding of the modern man of the cloth when it comes to how the early church taught, what the early Jews believed. These three books show a plethora, indeed a goldmine of information on this subject. It is modern man's lack of knowledge and personal bias that makes this topic hard to understand. I recommend you grab these three titles and go back to how the early church and early Jews viewed this all-important topic.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Beautifully written and well researched

By Lotus

Beautiful book, very well written. The only thing I missed was illustrations, when reading it I just googled for pictures of the statues and monuments mentioned in the book and I hope the writers will include them in their next print/issue. A book definitely worth reading! The vast knowledge of the authors of the material they discuss is brought in an easy manner - but while reading you will not only get an understanding of the evolution of Sophia, but some interesting insights in Kabbalistic thinking as well.

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