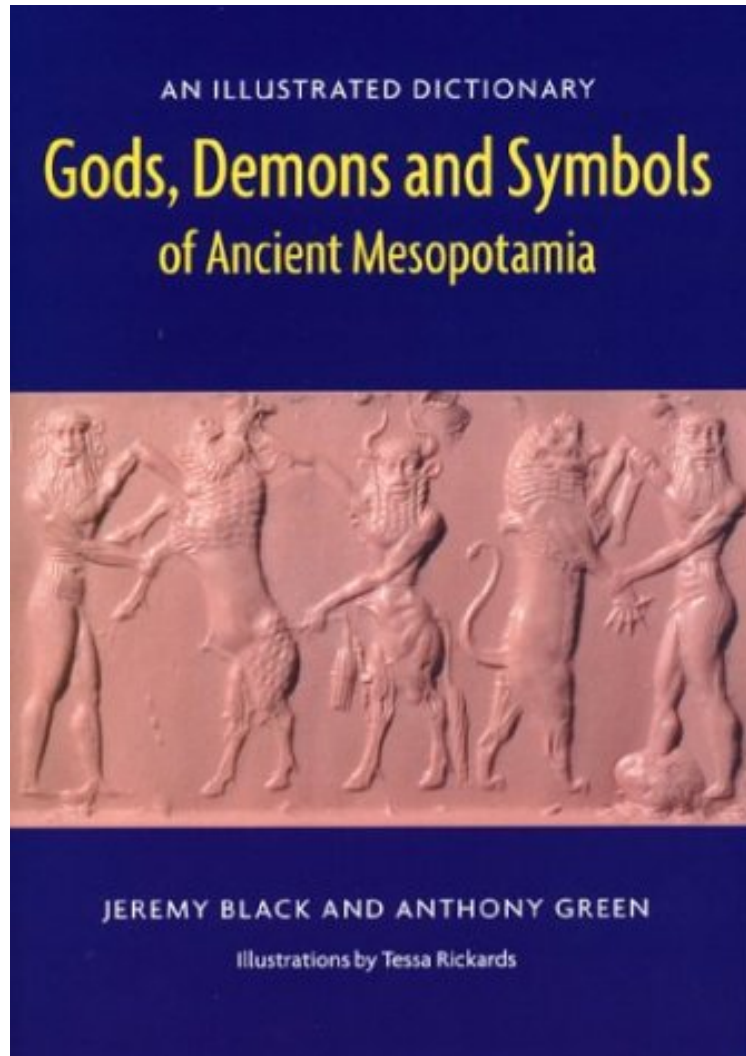


Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary

Jeremy Black, Anthony Green

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Dictionary of the GodsBy S. CranowSeveral thousands of years ago the first civilization, Sumeria , was born in Mesopotamia (the land between two rivers. They had system of gods and theology. They developed cities with irrigation and organized political leadership. Their culture was the basis for the later Babylonians, Assyrians and Chaldeans would later rule Mesopotamia after the Sumerians. Mesopotamian culture

would have a profound impact of the neighboring cultures who would borrow extensively from Sumeria. Most obvious would be the gods. They were copied by other culture with sometime little or no modification. Other nations like the Elamites, Gudeans and Isis Larsin would come in and conquer parts of Mesopotamia but in the end they would become Sumerianized. This book gives a dictionary entry for different aspects of Mesopotamian civilization. The book talks about the gods. Using Inana as an example. Inanna was a goddess of love initially. Later as the Akkadians took over she became Ishtar, goddess of love and war. Mind you she was a protectress of prostitutes and she had them in her temple. Before she became the Inanna we love and know there were other goddesses of love like Isharra who were absorbed into her. Plus there were other Inannas for different town and cities. These different Inannas had different characteristics and performed different functions, eventually they got absorbed. Still wonder why we say all Goddesses are one Goddess. Assur and Marduk are ones that got exchanged quite a bit. Marduk was the God who slew Tiamat and Kingu when they rebelled and threatened chaos. It was Marduk that slew them and created humanity and the world from them. Marduk was so popular that some worshipped him strictly to the point of becoming a monotheistic religion. When the Assyrians came to power they chose their god Assur to take his place. He would take on different characteristics of different gods. He would become the head honcho who took down Tiamat. Exactly who were the inhabitants of Ancient Mesopotamia. First were the Sumerians and they did not have a mighty empire but rather they were divided by city states. Each state had its own patron deity. They were honored usually in a high temple called a Ziggurat. The top of the Ziggurat was the portal the god came through on. All the way down to the lower level is where people gathered to worship the god. The Sumerians appeared to just pop up in Mesopotamia and they spoke an agglutinative language. They wrote in Cuneiform. Next would come the Akkadians who were Semitic invader descended from Amorites. Hammurabi was Amorite. From the Akkadians would spring the Assyrians and the Babylonians. The Babylonians had 2000 gods many with no names. If you read this book you will get a good in depth history of these gods. Some gods came from other pantheons and settled into the Mesopotamian way of doing things. More often their gods were borrowed by neighboring cultures. Such borrowing would include Ishtar. She was borrowed by the Canaanites and called Astarte. Ishtar then traveled to Greece where she became Aphrodite. The storm god Adad who is represented by a bull or bison was present among the Hurrians and Canaanites. For those of you involved in paganism and magic you will not be surprised to know that the Sumerians started the magic circle. They also started Hieros Gamos or the mating of the Gods. The book is short but crammed with lots of information. If you enjoy Mesopotamian history then this book is for you. Definitely read in conjunction with other books on the subject.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Highly Recommended... Depending on what you're looking for By Digital Gal NBI absolutely loved this book, but there are some major flaws that may be deemed insurmountable by some readers. First, there's no index (enough said). Second everything is organized alphabetically which will almost certainly cause problems for readers hoping to use this book as a reference. Many of the gods, demons, and practices listed go by multiple names, and titles; which will make looking up specific entries difficult. If you're new to the subject matter, or a student, I highly recommend this text; however, I caution those with a lack of patience. If you're not willing to read some off subject entries on the way to the one you're really looking for then you may want to consider looking elsewhere.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. I actually say I "love" it, not just like. By Xuchilbara The reason it has one less star than it should is because of black and white pictures and something mentioned in my below review: This book is very resourceful. It even talks about magic circles and the Tower of Babel. One can use the magic it talks about in this book, it goes fairly in depth. The thing on magic is long and can be utilized. If you're just learning about Mesopotamia this book is very good. If you're a Christian or Abrahamic in some way this can also help you in studying the bible. But it's better outside of that. One can see the similarities and where Greece got many concepts including griffins, mermaids, and centaurs. As far as studying people is concerned you start seeing that many ancient conceptions, and this likewise relates to the bible too, have been around much longer than people previously thought. This book is helpful to those with Greek, Egyptian, and biblical backgrounds. The book is written in a manner which is very easy to read. So, you don't have to be someone who constantly reads academic books to understand it. It is not dry and the descriptions are done in a way which most people should find understandable. My only problem with this book is THERE IS NO INDEX. Do you know just how bad it is to have a dictionary with out an index? It's a travesty against mankind! I feel like the authors were trying to troll people excluding an index. I mean, really.

Ancient Mesopotamia was a rich, varied and highly complex culture whose achievements included the invention of writing and the development of sophisticated urban society. This book offers an introductory guide to the beliefs and customs of the ancient Mesopotamians, as revealed in their art and their writings between about 3000 B.C. and the advent of the Christian era. Gods, goddesses, demons, monsters, magic, myths, religious symbolism, ritual, and the spiritual world are all discussed in alphabetical entries ranging from short accounts to extended essays. Names are given in both their Sumerian and Akkadian forms, and all entries are fully cross-referenced. A useful introduction provides historical and geographical background and describes the sources of our knowledge about the religion, mythology and magic of "the cradle of civilisation".

"The authors know their material inside out . . . The choice of illustrations, both half-tone and line-drawings, and the careful, cross-referencing of entries make this book a compelling compendium of ideas and images." (History Today)