

Queen sheba



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

I would like to engage on a quest to identify the Queen of Sheba. Having read the rather newly published co-authored book by John Ashton and David Down, *Unwrapping the Pharaohs*, who states that the Queen of Sheba would be identified with the Egyptian Queen/Pharaoh, Hatshepsut. I have often referred to sources, even Christian authors and archeologists that identify the Queen of Sheba as being from the South Arabian capital, " Marib in Yemen. " With the new archaeological discoveries, including the body of Queen Hatshepsut, and the many presentations, it will be interesting to discover the truths about the great pharaoh.

Secular and many Christian sources seem to parrot the same theories which also contradict the archeological interpretations of the discoveries of Sheba and the discoveries of the Queen Hatshepsut in Egypt. Perhaps while the discovery of Sheba supports the Biblical mention of the place as having actually existed; but does this necessarily mean that a queen from this place actually visited Solomon? Or that a person from this place is the famous Queen of Sheba and the same that Jesus alludes? Perhaps new lights will shed a spark of truth and further qualify or authenticate the Bible as the inspired word of God.

More than this, if historians and archeologists can provide enough evidence to support the Queen of Sheba as Hatshepsut, perhaps totally new discoveries will significantly impact knowledge of this time period in Egyptian history and the relationship between King Solomon and Egypt at this time. Truth is challenged by fiction; many times fiction becomes truth. The ultimate importance of this topic is Biblically and historically related. The

Bible is the greatest book ever written! It is the greatest story- HIS story- of how God created man and gave him freedom of choice.

His story tells and instructs in the greatest characteristics any human is capable of possessing, that of an unending and unconditional love. Some of the books of the Bible are excellent historical books, as a matter of fact, the earliest historical books that we have. And, quiet, accurate, because we have cross-references from other sources, and they are found to be most very precise so they are very important. This discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was the most famous event in Biblical archeology, but it was, by no means, the first.

The urge to explore Biblical history has a venerable tradition. It's a search that began in the Holy Land but would lead to Mesopotamia. Throughout history, crusaders, mystics, and believers have been drawn to sites where the great Bible stories took place; but with the arrival of the nineteenth century, a new kind of pilgrim sought to fortify their belief in the Bible through the infant science of archeology. This fortification give rise to the question concerning the identities of the Queen of Sheba and Hatshepsut, Queen and Pharaoh of Egypt.

Much speculation cause debate among scholars, but a picture is worth a thousand words, they say. A somewhat nebulous figure, the Queen of Sheba (fl. 10th century BCE)- known also as Bilgis and as Makeda- figures prominently in Judaic, Islamic, and Ethiopian traditions. Her legendary voyage to meet Solomon, King of Israel, has inspired centuries of speculation about her kingdom and influence in the ancient world. Modern day

Ethiopians believe her, as the mother of their first Emperor, Menilek I, to be the ultimate maternal ancestor of the dominant Ethiopian royal dynasty.

A Queen of Legend Little has been verified about the Queen of Sheba's life-in fact, even such basic details as her given name and the exact location of her kingdom remain uncertain. Tradition places her date of birth in the latter half of the 11th century BCE and her death in approximately 955 BCE; although her kingdom is referred to as both to the south and to the east of Israel scholars generally believe her to have ruled an area in northern Africa roughly equivalent to modern-day Ethiopia, a country which claims her the progenitor of their long-ruling Solomonic dynasty.

The Queen 10th century BCE visit at the grand court of Solomon, King of Israel and son of the legendary Goliathslayer David, however, is well attested in three major ancient sources: the Biblical Old Testament, the Islamic Qu'ran, and the Ethiopian Kebra Nagast (Glory of the Kings). These three perspectives on the Queen meld to create a picture of one of the relatively rare, powerful female monarchs of the ancient world. A Biblical Riddler The most widespread story of the Queen of Sheba stems from an Old Testament passage describing her journey to Jerusalem to meet with the Jewish king, Solomon, renowned for his wisdom.

An account of her stay at Solomon's court appears in I Kings 10: 1 - 14 and in a nearly word-for-word repetition, 2 Chronicles 9: 1 - 12. Both passages begin: " The queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, and she traveled to Jerusalem to test him with difficult questions. She brought with her a large group of attendants, as well as camels loaded with spices, jewels, and a large amount of gold. When she and Solomon met, she asked him all the

questions that she could think of. He answered them all; there was nothing too difficult for him to explain. The rest of the tale describes the Queen's awe of Solomon's wisdom, riches, and relationship with God, as well as the two monarchs' exchange of gifts. This brief text forms the basis for later embellishments of the queen's voyage. Few other direct references to the queen occur in Biblical sources. In Matthew 12: 42 (repeated almost exactly in Luke 11: 31), Jesus says, " On the Judgment Day the Queen of Sheba will stand up and accuse you, because she traveled all the way from her country to listen to King Solomon's wise teaching. Also, throughout the centuries, the Old Testament book known alternately as the Song of Songs and the Song of Solomon has been speculated to be a series of love poems sent between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. A story that certainly served as inspiration for later Islamic and Ethiopian writers appears in a late paraphrase of the book of Esther explained by C. H. Toy in the Journal of American Folklore article " The Queen of Sheba. " " On a certain day when [Solomon's] heart was warmed by wine, he ... invited all the ... kings of the of the East and the West ... in order that the kings might see his greatness.

All ... came except the moorcock ... [who] excused himself by saying that for three months he had been flying over the earth ... to see if there was any land that did not acknowledge the king's authority. " The bird reports he has discovered a fertile land to the east ruled by the Queen of Sheba and Solomon, intrigued, sends the bird back to the queen with a letter requesting her presence at his court. The queen wrote back, sending presents, and undertook the voyage to Jerusalem in three years-although the journey

normally required seven years-spurred by her desire to pose riddles to Solomon.

Solomon answers correctly, proving his wisdom to the powerful queen. An Islamic Convert The Islamic legend of the Queen of Sheba, or Bilqis (alternatively, Balkis) as she is known in the Arabian tradition, stems from these short Jewish narratives. The story of the Queen's appearance at Solomon's court in the Islamic holy text, The Qu'ran, follows a thread similar to that of the Book of Esther. In Chapter 27 of the Qu'ran, a messenger bird declared: " I have come to thee from Saba with sure tidings.

I found a woman ruling over all of them; she has been granted everything and she has a wondrous throne. I found her and her worshipping the sun, instead of Allah. " The passage further explains that Satan has led the queen and her subjects away from Allah, and Solomon, thinking to test this assertion, sends the bird back to the queen with a letter requesting confirmation of the bird's tale. Upon receiving the queen's response of extravagant gifts, Solomon is not satisfied and writes again, requesting her presence.

The queen visits Solomon and, awed by his court, converts to the worship of Allah. Arabian legends based on the Qu'ran embellish this story to include some speculation about the queen's descent from demons and later, her possible marriage to Solomon. Solomon's advisors inform him that the queen has hairy legs; to discover the truth of this, Solomon constructs a palace with glass floors. The queen, believing the floor to be made of water, lifts her skirts, revealing her legs and feet.

As Toy commented, " later Moslem writers interpreted this physical peculiarity as showing that she was of jinn descent; they constructed a romantic history of her father's marriage to a jinn maiden. " Legends also conjectured that the queen and Solomon wed during her visit to his court and had a son who succeeded to the throne of Sheba. An Ethiopian Queen This marriage figures prominently in the Ethiopian accounts of the queen. Drawing on Jewish and Islamic traditions, the Ethiopian story of the Queen of Sheba - identified with Makeda, Queen of Ethiopia - provides the most extensive picture of the Queen.

Told in the Kebra Nagast (The Glory of Kings), a 14th century compilation of regional oral histories, this version also begins with a voyage to King Solomon's court at Jerusalem. " The Queen was dumbstruck with wonder at the things that she heard from [a traveling merchant], and she pondered in her heart that she would to go to Solomon, the King," related the Kebra Nagast, which further details her voyage from Ethiopia bringing lavish gifts to the King. During the queen's stay, Solomon became infatuated with her.

Determined to have the virginal queen, Solomon extracts a promise from the queen to take nothing that belongs to him and then orders a grand banquet to be served the night before her departure. As Harold G. Marcus detailed in A History of Ethiopia: " He directed his cook to serve the best wines to prepare the spiciest dishes, both of which happily suited Makeda. After having eaten and drunk her fill, the queen fell into a stupor, during which Solomon had jugs of water, labeled as his property, placed strategically around her sofa.

When Makeda reawakened, she immediately gulped down some water, an act that permitted King Solomon to satisfy his lust. " Solomon, having afterwards dreamt that God was granting him an heir by the queen, requested that the queen send their son to Jerusalem when the boy came of age. Accordingly, the queen gave birth to a son, Ebna Hakim, who traveled to his father's court as an adolescent. In Pillars of Ethiopian History, William Leo Hansberry recorded that " Solomon ... was overjoyed to see his handsome and noble-minded son. Solomon did his best to persuade Ebna Hakim to remain to Jerusalem, with the intention of making him his successor; but the young prince was deaf to his father's pleas. " Solomon thus confirmed his son as the future King of Ethiopia and gathered several of his advisors' sons to return with Ebna Hakim and assist him during his rule. This group refused to leave Jerusalem without the legendary Ark of the Covenant-the chest reputed to contain the original tablets of the Ten Commandments sent to Moses by God, among other religious artifacts-and so, stole the Ark.

As Marcus commented, " The larceny was apparently approved by God, who levitated the youths and their holy cargo across the Red Sea before discovery and chase by Solomon's forces. " To this day, Ethiopian tradition places the Ark in the northern Ethiopian city Axum. When the queen died in the mid-10th century BCE, her son rose to the Ethiopian throne as Emperor Menilek I. This Solomonic Dynasty ruled Ethiopia for much of the next 2000 years; the last emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Sellassie, claimed descent from Solomon and the queen through Menilek. A Lasting Legacy



As these varied accounts show, the Queen of Sheba has fascinated and inspired numerous cultures for nearly 3000 years. The lack of any verifiable details of her life does not seem to inspire doubt about her existence. As Nicholas Clapp commented in *Sheba: Through the Desert in Search of the Legendary Queen*, " Her encounter with King Solomon must have happened ... because as biblical tales go, it was so dull. She shows up; she's awed; she's crestfallen; she leaves. Nobody is led in or out of temptation, is distraught or gets killed; there is no evident moral message.

The story had the earmarks of a day-in, day-out formal court record ... [this is] reinforced by passages immediately preceding and following the Sheba story, passages that dwell on Solomon's prowess in foreign affairs. " Instead of being ignored due to its brevity, the bare narrative given in the Old Testament has served as ample fodder for fanciful stories and modern scholarly and popular speculation about the relationship between the wealthy, intelligent queen and the religious, wise King Solomon.

Centuries after her death, the Queen of Sheba still rules over the imaginations of people both within and far beyond the boundaries of her ancient kingdom. Books Clapp, Nicholas, *Sheba: Through the Desert in Search of the Legendary Queen*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001 Holy Bible, American Bible Society, 1978. Kebra Negast, trans. Miguel F. Brooks, *The Red Sea Press, Inc.* 1996. Marcus Harold G. , *A History of Ethiopia*, University of California Press, 1994. Qu'ran, trans. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, Interlink Publishing Group-Olive Branch Press, 1997. Shah, Tahir, *In Search of King Solomon's Mines*, Arcade Publishing, 2002.