The Queen of Sheba in History and Legend

Afr 374C (35450) / Isl 372 (42080) / JS 364 (40354) / MES 320 (42175) / RS 353 (44430) / WGS 340 (48415)

Spring 2010: MWF 2–3 in Mezes 2.122

Instructor: Prof. John Huehnergard
WMB 5.138
tel. 471-7081
huehnergard@austin.utexas.edu
Office hours: Tu 11–12
W 3:30–4:30
F 11:30–12:30

Course Website: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/mes/courses/27946

I. Course Description:

The course will cover the biblical story of the Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon; a brief survey of ancient Sabean ("Sheba-an") archaeology and culture; stories about the Queen of Sheba in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions; the Queen of Sheba and Solomon as the parents of Ethiopia's first king; the Queen of Sheba in Western art, literature, music, and film.

II. Course Aims and Objectives:

To trace how a short episode related in a few verses of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament came to be interpreted in a wide variety of ways in the three monotheistic religious traditions, as a founding story for Ethiopian national identity, and in the present day.

III. Format and Procedures:

In two of each week's class meetings there will usually be a lecture on a particular topic relating to the story of the Queen of Sheba and its interpretations in various early and modern cultures. In the third meeting we will discuss the week's readings and lectures.

Feedback Statement:

I hope that you will give me feedback on your learning in informal as well as formal ways. I would like to know your reaction to what we're doing in class, so I encourage you to tell me, so that together we can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.

IV. Course Requirements:

1. **List of assignments that will impact the final grade and % weight given each:**
   a. Midterm exam (Friday, March 12): 25%
   b. Final exam: 30%
   c. Class presentation: 25% (a prepared, 15-minute presentation in class, on an approved topic related to the course material)
   d. Class participation: 20%

2. Readings:

- Lassner, Jacob. 1993. *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba: Boundaries of Gender and Culture in Postbiblical Judaism and Medieval Islam.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Simpson, St. John, ed. 2002. *Queen of Sheba: Treasures from Ancient Yemen*. London: British Museum Press.
- Articles and book chapters available online and/or on the course website.

3. Class attendance and participation policy:

You are expected to attend each class meeting having done the reading and/or completed the assignment for that day, and prepared to ask questions and to participate in class. Please let me know as soon as possible if an emergency will prevent you from attending.

Religious Holy Days:

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

4. Other policies:

(a) Policy concerning homework: All reading and other assignments should be completed before the beginning of each class.
(b) Policy concerning make-up exams: If you must miss an exam for religious observance or a medical reason, you may take a make-up exam at a time set by the instructor.
(c) Policy concerning late assignments: More than 2 instances of unexcused failure to come to class with homework completed will result in lowering of the course grade.

5. Date of Final Exam: Monday, May 17, 2:00–5:00.

6. Use of Blackboard in class

In this class we will use Blackboard — a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at http://courses.utexas.edu — to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and for online surveys. You can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so please plan accordingly.

V. Academic Integrity

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

VI. Other University Notices and Policies

Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail

address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at: http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html.

Documented Disability Statement

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.

- Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).
- Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for field trips are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility, etc.).
- Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD's website for more disability-related information: http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal.

Q drop Policy

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:

> "Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number."

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Tentative Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week 1 (Jan. 20, 22): "And I'm the Queen of Sheba"

Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: 1 Kings 10:1–13 (Simpson, p. 12; Lassner, p. 161).
The Queen of Sheba online.

Week 2 (Jan. 25, 27, 29): Solomon in All His Glory

Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: 1 Kings chapters 1–11; 2 Chronicles 9:1–12. Links on course website.
Simpson, *The Queen of Sheba*, 31–38. F. Pennacchietti, Legends of the Queen of Sheba. PDF on course website.

Week 3 (Feb. 1, 3, 5): Where and what was Sheba?

Sheba elsewhere in the Bible: Psalm 72:10, 15; Jeremiah 6:20; Ezekiel 27:22, 23, 38:13; Isaiah 60:6; Job 1:15; 6:19.
Simpson, *The Queen of Sheba*, 51–66: C. Robin, Saba' and the Sabaeans.
Simpson, *The Queen of Sheba*, 67–72: R. Hoyland, Kings, Kingdoms and Chronology.
Lemaire, André and François Bron. 2010. Solomon and Sheba, Inc. *Biblical Archaeology Review* 36/1.

Week 4 (Feb. 8, 10, 12): Frankincense and myrrh

Simpson, *The Queen of Sheba*, 88–101: N. Groom, Trade, Incense and Perfume.
Simpson, *The Queen of Sheba*, 153–156: F. Bron, Languages and Writing.
Simpson, *The Queen of Sheba*, 161–179: A. Sima, Religion.

Week 5 (Feb. 15, 17, 19): Early Jewish interpretations

Josephus, Flavius. *Jewish Antiquities*, book VIII, chapter 6, especially paragraphs 5–6.
Simpson, *The Queen of Sheba*, 31–50. F. Pennacchietti, Legends of the Queen of Sheba.
Lassner, *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba*, 9–35, 161–175.

Week 6 (Feb. 22, 24, 26): Early Christian interpretations

Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: Song of Songs, chapter 1, especially 1:6.
New Testament: Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:43; Acts of the Apostles 8:26–40.
Båtsvik, Rigmor. 2006. The Queen of Sheba in the Legend of the True Cross. *Bodleian Library Record* 19/2: 229–238.
Other reading to be announced.

Week 7 (Mar. 1, 3, 5): Bilqīs: Muslim interpretations (1)

Qur'ān: Sura 27 ("The Ant"): 15–44 (Lassner, pages 185–186).
Lassner, *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba*, 36–119, 185–214.
Other reading to be announced.

Week 8 (Mar. 8, 10, 12): Muslim interpretations (2); Review; Midterm

No new reading.
Mar. 10 (W) Review
Mar. 12 (F) Midterm

March 15–19: Spring Break Week

Week 9 (Mar. 22, 24, 26): Solomon, Makeda, & Ethiopia

Kebra Nagast: The Queen of Sheba and Her Only Son Menyelek. 1932. Translated by E. A. Wallace Budge. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pages 16–95. Online at Google books.

Fiaccadori, Gianfranco. 2007. Makeda. *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Volume 3, pages 672–679.

Ullendorff, Edward. 1968. *Ethiopia and the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 131–145.

Week 10 (Mar. 29, 31, Apr. 2): Ethiopian interpretations

Littmann, Enno. 1904. The Legend of the Queen of Sheba in the Tradition of Axum. In Enno Littmann, ed., *Bibliotheca Abessinica*. Volume 1, pages 1–40. Online at Google Books.

Other reading to be announced.

Week 11 (Apr. 5, 7, 9): Modern interpretations: literature

Browning, Robert. 1883. Solomon and Balkis. In *Jocoseria*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 27–32.

Kipling, Rudyard. 1912. The Butterfly that Stamped. In *Just so Stories*. Gazrden City, NJ: Doubleday Page. 225–249.

Yeats, W.B. 1919. Solomon to Sheba; Solomon and the Witch. In *The Wild Swans at Coole*. New York: Macmillan.

Yeats, W.B. 1920. Solomon and the Witch. In *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*. Churchtown: Cuala.

Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1991. At the Call of the Race of Sheba; Elegy for the Queen of Sheba. In *The Collected Poetry*. Translated by Melvin Dixon. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. 41–45, 228–234 (English; = 309–316, 565–572 French).

Other reading to be announced.

Week 12 (Apr. 12, 14. 16): Modern interpreations: art and opera

Simpson, *The Queen of Sheba*, 12–30: L. Llewellyn-Jones, The Queen of Sheba in Western Popular Culture.

Balicka-Witakowska, Ewa. 2007. Makeda in [Ethiopian] Art. *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Volume 3, pages 679–80.

Handel, G.F. 1749. *Solomon (Libretto)*. http://opera.stanford.edu/iu/libretti/solomon.htm.

Gounod, Charles. 1862. *La reine de Saba*. Synopsis at http://www.charles-gounod.com/vi/oeuvres/operas/saba.htm.

de Nerval, B. Gérard. 2001. The Story of the Queen of the Morning and of Soliman, Prince of the Genies. in *Journey to the Orient*. Translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by Norman Glass. London: Peter Owen. 123–211. (Source for Gounod's story.)

Other reading to be announced.

Week 13 (Apr. 19, 21, 23): Modern interpretations: at the movies

Movie *Solomon and Sheba* (1959).

Movie *The Bible: Solomon* (1997), scenes 1, 14–15, 20–25.

Movie *Biography: Solomon & Sheba: An Epic Love Story* (2005).

Weeks 14 and 15 (Apr. 26, 28, 30; May 3, 5, 7): The Queen of Sheba in the 21st century

Class Presentations

Reading to be announced.

Monday, May 17, 2:00–5:00: Final Exam