Queen Makeda, more commonly known as the Queen of Sheba, is a figure whose story is told in various historical and religious texts, including the Bible, the Quran, and Ethiopian lore. Her kingdom is believed to have been located in the region encompassing present-day Ethiopia and Yemen. The Queen of Sheba's reign is estimated to have been around the 10th century BCE. She is often depicted as a model of wisdom, wealth, and political power. Despite her prominence in these texts, there is little archeological evidence confirming her existence, making her a subject of much intrigue and mystery. One of the most famous tales involving Queen Makeda is her visit to King Solomon in Jerusalem. This story is described in the Bible (1 Kings 10:1-13) and the Quran (Sura 27:22-44). According to these accounts, she traveled to Israel after hearing of Solomon's great wisdom, bringing with her a caravan of gifts, including gold, precious stones, and spices. The visit is portrayed as a meeting of minds, where she tested Solomon with riddles and questions to assess his wisdom, and he reportedly impressed her with his answers. The Queen of Sheba's legacy is particularly strong in Ethiopian culture. According to the Kebra Nagast ('The Glory of Kings'), a 14th-century account, she had a son with King Solomon named Menelik I, who became the first emperor of Ethiopia. This narrative establishes a link between the Ethiopian monarchy and the Solomonic dynasty, suggesting that Ethiopian emperors were descendants of King Solomon, thus providing a divine right to rule. This claim was a cornerstone of Ethiopian imperial legitimacy until the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974. In addition to her political significance, Queen Makeda is often associated with the Ark of the Covenant, a sacred chest said to hold the tablets of the Ten Commandments. The Kebra Nagast tells of how her son, Menelik I, brought the Ark from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, where it is believed by some to still reside in the city of Axum, guarded by a select group of monks. This claim contributes to Ethiopia's historical and religious identity, with the Ark being a symbol of national pride. The Queen of Sheba's story has inspired countless artistic works over the centuries, including literature, paintings, music, and film. She has been portrayed by various cultures as a symbol of wisdom, beauty, and power. In medieval Christian art, she is often depicted in the Adoration of the Magi, symbolizing the spread of Christianity. Her story has also been adapted into operas, such as Charles Gounod's 'Queen of Sheba' and Karl Goldmark's 'Die Königin von Saba.' Despite being a celebrated figure in history and religion, there is no definitive historical record of Queen Makeda's life or reign. Her existence is primarily known through religious texts, which are often considered more allegorical than factual. Archaeologists and historians have attempted to piece together evidence of her kingdom through excavations in both Ethiopia and Yemen, but conclusive proof of her reign remains elusive, leaving her as a semi-legendary figure shrouded in myth. Queen Makeda's influence extends into Islamic tradition, where she is known as Bilqis or Balkis. In the Quran, her story with King Solomon is similar, with additional elements such as the hoopoe bird that acts as a messenger between them. Islamic accounts also elaborate on the Queen's conversion to monotheism after witnessing the wisdom and miracles of Solomon, further emphasizing her role in religious narratives as a seeker of truth and wisdom. The Queen of Sheba's image has been used in various political contexts throughout history. During the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1935-1941), Emperor Haile Selassie invoked her legacy to rally support for Ethiopian independence, emphasizing the nation's ancient lineage and sovereignty. In modern times, she is often cited as an example of powerful women in history, serving as a symbol of female leadership and empowerment. The search for the historical Queen of Sheba has led to various hypotheses about her kingdom's location and influence. Some theories suggest that she ruled over the Sabaean Kingdom, with its capital at Marib in present-day Yemen. This ancient civilization was known for its wealth derived from the incense trade and its impressive engineering feats, including the Marib Dam. The Sabaean's architectural and cultural achievements lend credence to the descriptions of the Queen's prosperous realm. Queen Makeda's story has been embraced by different cultures and has taken on various forms. In Western culture, she has been romanticized in literature, such as in H. Rider Haggard's novel 'Queen Sheba's Ring,' and she continues to be a popular subject for historical fiction. In Rastafarian belief, she is considered a central figure, and her purported lineage with King Solomon is seen as evidence of the divine nature of Haile Selassie, whom Rastafarians revere as a messianic figure. Her multifaceted legacy demonstrates her enduring appeal and the way she has captured the human imagination across millennia.