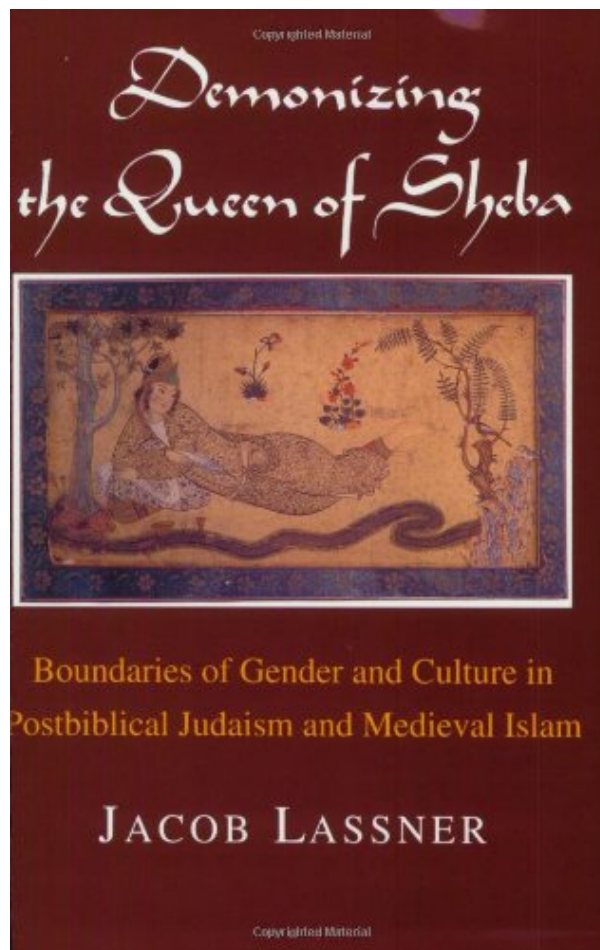
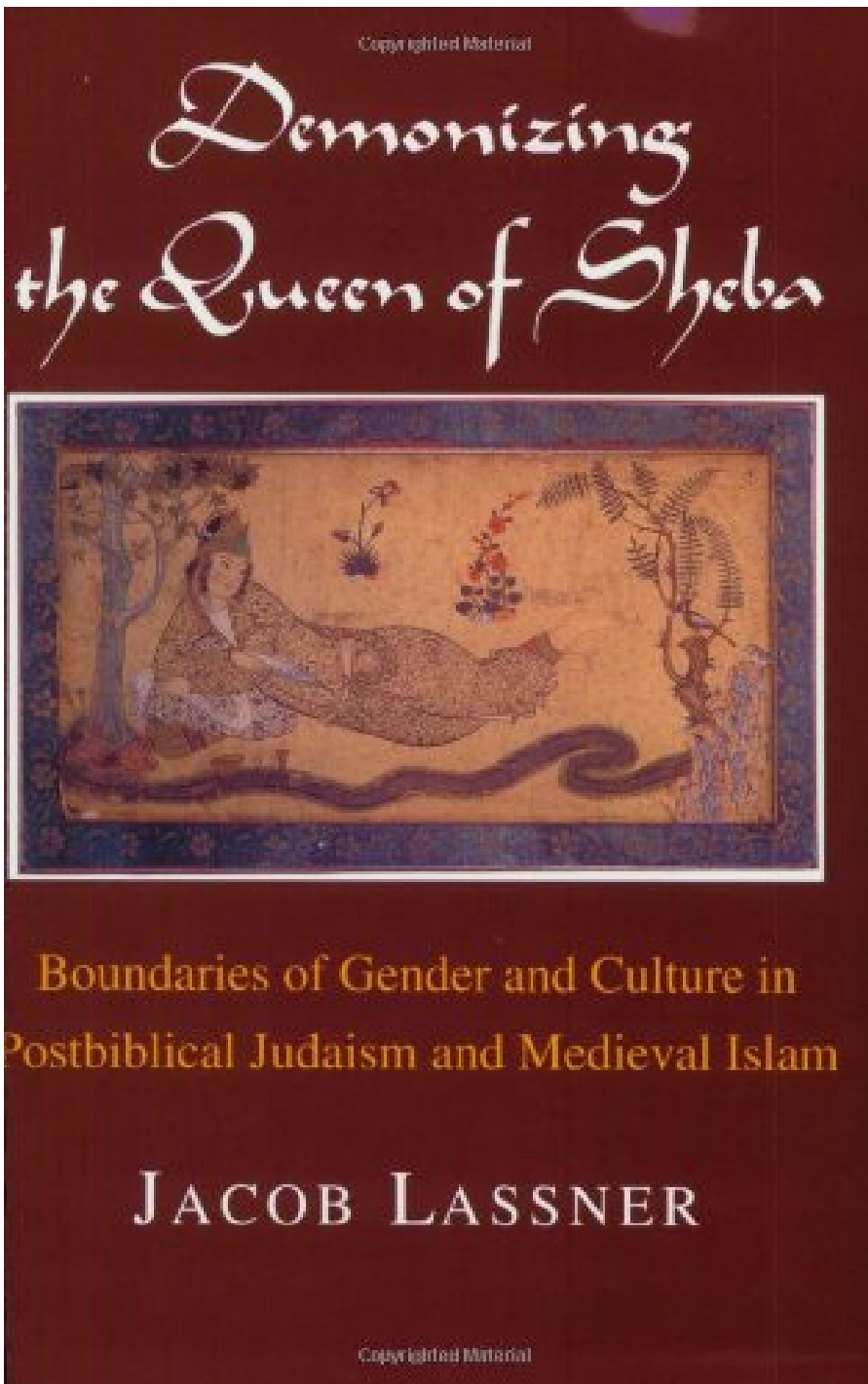


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About the Author

Jacob Lassner is the Phillip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor Emeritus of Jewish Civilization and professor of history and religion at Northwestern University. His numerous works include *The Middle East Remembered*, *Jews and Muslims in the Arab World*, and *Islam in the Middle Ages*.

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Over the centuries, Jewish and Muslim writers transformed the biblical Queen of Sheba from a clever, politically astute sovereign to a demonic force threatening the boundaries of gender. In this book, Jacob Lassner shows how successive retellings of the biblical story reveal anxieties about gender and illuminate the processes of cultural transmission.

The Bible presents the Queen of Sheba's encounter with King Solomon as a diplomatic mission: the queen comes "to test him with hard questions," all of which he answers to her satisfaction; she then praises him and, after an exchange of gifts, returns to her own land. By the Middle Ages, Lassner demonstrates, the focus of the queen's visit had shifted from international to sexual politics. The queen was now portrayed as acting in open defiance of nature's equilibrium and God's design. In these retellings, the authors humbled the queen and thereby restored the world to its proper condition.

Lassner also examines the Islamization of Jewish themes, using the dramatic accounts of Solomon and his female antagonist as a test case of how Jewish lore penetrated the literary imagination of Muslims. *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba* thus addresses not only specialists in Jewish and Islamic studies, but also those concerned with issues of cultural transmission and the role of gender in history.

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Demonizing the Queen

By VanEzzania

One of the most detailed research books about the Queen of Sheba! Lassner's research is extensive and goes

into many aspects of gender and religion relating to the Biblical queen. While greatly detailed with some helpful information I did find myself sometimes (sometimes not every time) disagreeing with some of Lassner's research. For example on pages 32-33, he mentions the foreign woman in the Book of Proverbs and likens her to the goddess Anath while also describing her as the dangerous woman archetype that ancient Israel feared and how elements of her were attributed to the Queen of Sheba when she (the Queen of Sheba) was demonized by post-Biblical readers. While I agree that the Queen of Sheba was demonized and given these similar attributes of the foreign Proverbs woman, I am not totally on board that the goddess Anath was the source behind her (the foreign Proverbs woman); that's just my perspective however. Lassner is well-sourced and it is beneficial that he looks from both Jewish and Muslim viewpoints concerning the Queen of Sheba.

Now in relating to what the previous reviewer said: Indeed, Lassner does use some colorful words when writing this book, however this is a research book. Lassner uses whatever words he chose to use and if you do not understand his words you may simply look them up in a dictionary to understand them. Yes there are a few big words in this book but it in no way puts the reader at a disadvantage.

I would recommend this book for the following: Research on the Queen of Sheba (there isn't much on her these days), research on post-Biblical and medieval Islamic religious texts, or post-Biblical and medieval Islamic views of gender.

7 of 26 people found the following review helpful.

Quintessential chaos

By A Customer

It seems that Dr. Lassner pulled out a dictionary and said, "I will use the words 'quintessential,' 'albeit,' and 'polemic' at least 50 times in this book." Highly repetitive and chaotically disorganized, this book is written in a style that is meant to show off Lassner's vocabulary and "scholarship," while putting the reader at a disadvantage.

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