

Techinu & Baast without the first and the last letters

יכין ובעז

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Solomon's house for the name of God assumed the functions of Moses' tabernacle, and it is therefore not surprising that they shared certain structural features.

However we also read:

ויעש לפני הבית, עמודים שנים

“Also he made before the house two pillars” (2 Ch 3:15; see also: 1 Ki 7:15).

ויקם את-העמודים על-פני ההיכל, אחד מימין ואחד מהשמאל; ויקרא שם-הימיני (הימני) יכין, ושם השמאלי בעז.

“And he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz” (2 Ch 3:17; see also: 1 Ki 7:21).

It is not known whether this structural component, which does not appear in the description of Moses' tabernacle (or Ezekiel's God's house), had a functional role or was just an ornamental element. Furthermore, it is not certain whether it represents an original architectural contribution, or if it was just one feature of an overall imitation of another temple.

The Babylonian priest Berossus (c. 290 BC) wrote that because Queen Amytis missed the green hills of her Median homeland, her husband Nebuchadnezzar II built for her the “Hanging Gardens of Babylon”, one of the supposed Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

We read in the Book of Kings:

ויהי לעת זקנת שלמה, נשיו הטו את-לבבו אחרי אלהים אחרים; ולא-היה לבבו שלם עם-יהוה אלהיו,

“And when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not whole with YHWH his God” (1 Ki 11:4).

However, it seems that some of his wives had significant influence on his heart much earlier. Although we are told that King Solomon loved many foreign women (1 Ki 11:1), it appears that he loved above all, his Egyptian wife. It is therefore not unlikely that as Nebuchadnezzar II did for Queen Amytis, Solomon, designed God's house, to accommodate the esthetic (or even religious) aspiration of his beloved wife.

The Books of Kings and Chronicles inform us that King Solomon' merchants were involved in the international trade in horses and chariots, in particular between Cilicia and Egypt (1 Ki

10:28-29; 2 Ch 1:16-17). The trade relations with Egypt may have led also to acquiring knowledge about the structure of temples that were particularly numerous in Egypt.

Obelisks were prominent in the architecture of the ancient Egyptians, who placed them in pairs at the entrance of their temples. They were named in the Egyptian language “*tekhenu*” a name that sounds similar to the Hebrew יָכִין (*yachin*) - “Jachin.” Yet there is another Egyptian term associated with pillars.



Raising the Djed pillar. A scene on the west wall of Osiris Hall at Abydos

The Egyptian *djed* is also a pillar-like symbol in hieroglyphics representing stability.

The Biblical בעז - “**Boaz**” is the name of the second pillar (1 Ki 7:21; see also: 2 Ch 3:17). Now we read:

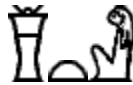
ויצר את-שני העמודים נחשת: שמנה עשרה אמה קומת העמוד האחד, וחוט שתיים-עשרה אמה יסב את-העמוד השני.

“And he fashioned the two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high each; and a line of twelve cubits did compass [it about; and so] the other pillar” (1 Ki 7:15).

In contrast to the assumption of the Greek (and English) translators, in the Hebrew version of this verse it is clearly indicated that the line was only on the second pillar - Boaz.



The “Djed” relief in the Hathor temple. Dendera, Egypt. The image on the right side is of the goddess Bastet.



Bastet in hieroglyphs

In the ancient Egyptian mythology, the goddess Bastet was the goddess of protection and she was represented by a lioness. She was considered as the sister of the goddess Hathor. Here name was also spelled as Baast which sound similar to the Hebrew **בעז** - “**Boaz.**” The line depicted on the djed pillar on five stone reliefs of Hathor temple in Dendera supports such a proposition.



Nymphaea lotus

The capitals of the pillars of the hall of the house of God are described as:

וכתרת אשר על-ראש העמודים-מעשה שושן באולם : ארבע אמות.

“**And the capitals that were upon the top of the pillars in the hall were of lily-work four cubits**” (1 Ki 7:19; see also: 1 Ki 7:22).

The Hebrew word for “lily” is שושן (*shushan*) which sounds similar to the Egyptian “*seshen*” - the name they used for the water plant *Nymphaea lotus*. The ancient Egyptians adored and even worshiped this plant.



***Nymphaea lotus* bud**

Many pillars’ capitals in Egypt were shaped in the form of *N. lotus* flower or of its bud.



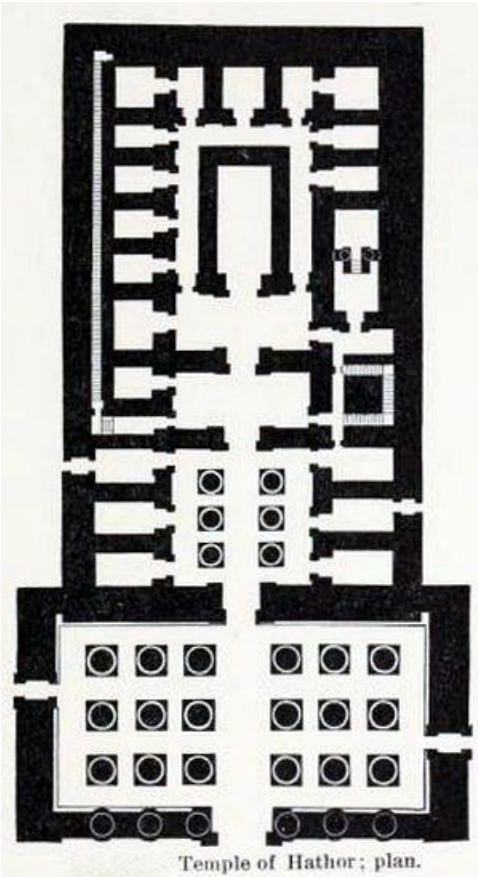
An Egyptian pillar capital shaped like the open flower of *N. lotus*



An Egyptian pillar with an N. lotus closed bud shaped capital

If indeed the biblical **יָכִין** (*yachin*) is related to the Egyptian “*tekhenu*”, **בֹּעַז** - “**Boaz**” to the Egyptian “*Baast*”, and the **שֹׁשָׁן** (*shushan*) to the Egyptian “*seshen*”, then, they may indicate that Solomon’s house for the name of God was modeled after some Egyptian temple.

Although considerably modified several times after it was built in the last quarter of the third millennium BC, the plan of the temple of Hathor could be reconstructed.



In the floor plan drawing: The Large Hypostyle Hall; The Small Hypostyle Hall; on the right side of the main chamber was a staircase to the roof.

The similarity between this plan and that of Solomon's house for the name of God is beyond the trivial (1 Ki 6:2-36).

Two large pillars in front of each of its entries are still observable today:





Unlike the Mesopotamian empires, the Egyptians had their own copper mines and they also exploited those in the southern Sinai and the southern Negev. However, there is no evidence that they erected pillars made of copper (or bronze).

Furthermore, while we read in the Book of Kings that the Egyptian King Shishak raided the treasures of the House of *YHWH* and of the royal palace, yet there is no mention that he (unlike the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar; 2 Ki 25:8-17; see also: Jer 52:12-20) also took the copper pillars that stood in front of the entrance to the temple (1 Ki 14:25).



Shrine of Hathor in Timna Valley

The Egyptian goddess Hathor was also the goddess of mining and Beno Rothenberg excavated near the copper mine in Timna Valley, a few miles north of Eilat, a 14th century BC shrine dedicated to Hathor. Its dimensions were 15 by 15 meters. In the 13th century BC, the shrine was largely expanded by Ramses II. Several thousand fragments of hieroglyphics, sculptures, and jewelry were found in that location.

“Solomon’s Pillars” is the current name of the cliffs near Timna Valley. The name is based on the erroneous assumption of Nelson Glueck who believed that the Solomon’s copper mine was the copper mine that he excavated in Timna.

Although the copper for making the Jachin and Boaz pillars did not originate in Timna (1 Ch 18:8), the copper seems to be another thread that connects the architecture of Solomon’s house for God with the Egyptian adoration of the goddess Hathor.

Unlike the capitals of the pillars of the hall which measured four cubits, the capitals of the two pillars that stood before the temple were five cubits high (1 Ki 7:16), and above them was another structure:

עמדים שנים, וגלת הכתרת אשר-על-ראש העמודים שתיים; והשבכות שתיים-לכסות את-שתי גלות הכתרת, אשר על-ראש העמודים ואת-הרמנים ארבע מאות, לשתי השבכות-שני-טורים רמנים לשבכה האחת, לכסות את-שתי גלות הכתרת, אשר על-פני העמודים.

“The two pillars, and the two bowls of the capitals that were on the top of the pillars; and the two networks to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the top of the pillars; And the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were upon the top of the pillars” (1 Ki 7:41-42; see also: 2 Ch 4:12-13).



“Covered” capitals in the temple of Hathor

Daniela Rosenow, an archeologist with the Tell Basta Project, reported that in the great temple of the goddess Bastet built by the kings of the Twenty-second Dynasty, at Bubastis, several Hathor capitals were found (D. Resenow. The great temple of Bastet at Bubastis. Egyptian Archaeology 32:11-13, 2008).



Hathor capital from the Temple of Bubastis on display at the Nicholson Museum.

Another temple of the goddess Bastet was in the ancient Egyptian town of *Neytahut* (named by the Greeks as Leontopolis). The Arabic name of this place is: Tell el-Yehudiyeh and here Sir W.M. Flinders Petrie excavated in 1905 the Onias IV's Jewish temple, which was erected on the ruins of the Bastet temple.



Tell el-Yehudiyeh ware juglets. Rockefeller Museum. Jerusalem.

Onias IV (in Hebrew: **חוניו הרביעי** - "Khonyio the fourth") was expected to follow his father as the High Priest of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, but that position was given by the contemporary Seleucid ruler to one Alcimus. Onias left for Egypt where the King Ptolemy VI Philometor allowed him to build in c. 154 BC a temple at Leontopolis.

This Jewish temple, where even ritual sacrifice of animal was regularly preformed, was a competitor of the temple in Jerusalem for over two centuries. It was destroyed following the orders of Roman Emperor Vespasian in 73 AD, thus it outlived the temple in Jerusalem by three years.

It is rather ironic that while the first Jewish temple was modeled after an Egyptian temple, the last Jewish temple was erected in Egypt itself.