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THE MOZA TEMPLE AND SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

David Shapira

Abstract

Solomon's Temple, as described in 1Kings 6-7, has been discussed extensively in research. Since no archaeological evidence has been found, nor is it likely for any to be found in the future, researchers look for parallels in temples in the Ancient Near East. Searches conducted in temples from Assyria and Babylon, and from Anatolia have not yielded any actual results, as no parallels to Solomon's Temple, with the required principal characteristics, have been found in those areas. The searches therefore focused on areas near Canaan, i.e Syria, and from the country from which the builders and engineers of the temple originated – Phoenicia. The discovery of the temples in Tel Taayinat and in Ain Dara enthused the researchers and they agreed almost unanimously to regard them as parallel to Solomon's Temple. Even though some elements in the exposed temples in Syria are similar to Solomon's Temple, I will argue in this article that comparing them to the biblical description is far from satisfactory.

In the excavation in Moza, near Jerusalem, over the past two years, a temple from the 9th century BC was exposed, that fits in almost all its components to Solomon's Temple. Even though the excavation is not yet complete, one may learn from the discovered findings a great deal regarding the temple in Jerusalem and in this article, I will claim that this temple is the only parallel that we have to Solomon's temple, as described in I Kings.

One of the challenges facing biblical researchers and biblical archeologists is to find parallels for Solomon's Temple, as described in I Kings 6:7.[1]) To this end, some scholars have looked to Assyria and Babylon, or to the Aegean culture and Anatolia. These attempts have not been very fruitful, since none of these regions have provided true parallels for Solomon's Temple in terms of its fundamental attributes. The search then turned to regions closer to Canaan, such as Syria, and the land from which the Temple's builders and engineers were drawn from—Phoenicia (I Kings 5:32). Elements of Solomon's Temple have been found in certain temples within the Holy Land—such as those at Beit Shean, Lakhish, and Meggido. These feature a tripartite structure, but unlike Solomon's Temple, their chambers are not sequential, nor are they of equal width. The uncovering of the temples at Tel Taayinat and at Ain Dara in Syria, sparked excitement among researchers, who almost unanimously hailed them as parallels of Solomon's Temple[2])—given that they, too, were built in the Iron Age, were long-room temples with a tripartite structure, and featured two columns at the entrance. Yevin[3]) argued that evidence of the reconstruction of the First Temple should be sought at sites in northern Mesopotamia, Syria, and Phoenicia. He focused on archeological findings of temples built in the "royal acropolis" style, at Alalakh, Byblos, Ghozan, Dor Sruchkin (Khorsabad), Hamat, Carcamish, and Shmal (Zangrili). He also mentioned the temple at Tel Taayinat, whose description had not yet been fully published when he was writing up his research. Some researchers have adhered to the biblical description, because the Temple was built with the help of the Phoenicians, hence the Temple's architecture bears Egyptian influences, which the Phoenicians drew from Egypt.[4]) However, most researchers, as previously noted, see the temples of Tel Taayinat and Ain Dara as analogs of Solomon's Temple as described in the Book of Kings. Herzog, on the other hand, has pointed out that there is a fundamental difference between Solomon's Temple and the Syrian ones, which is evident in two respects: the *dvir* at Solomon's Temple—unlike that of the Syrian temples—is not a separate chamber, nor an exposed space, but a cube encased within a closed structure at the rear of the temple (the addition of a closed and sealed room within the hall), measuring twenty cubits on each side. Moreover, the pillars at the entrance to Solomon's Temple do not appear in the Syrian instances. As Herzog puts it: "The fact that to this day no identical temple has been uncovered— or at least, one that is similar to Solomon's Temple—underscores the uniqueness of his design." However, he also thinks that "the study of sites in northern

[1]) This article was written as part of the doctoral dissertation, *"Did Solomon's construction's projects in Jerusalem as described in the Bible, truly have Egyptian influence?"* under the supervision of the late Prof. Avigdor Hurowitz, Prof. Nili Shupak, and Dr. David Gilad.

[2]) Y. Yadin, "The First Temple," *Sefer Yerushalayim*, vol. I, ed. M. Avi-Yonah, 1957, pp. 176–189 ; Usishkin, D., "Solomon's Temple and the temples of Hamat and Tel Taayinat," *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society*, 30 (1976), pp. 76–83; Fritz, V., "Temple Architecture, What Can Archaeology Tell Us About Solomon's Temple?," *BAR* 13, (1987), pp. 38–49; Monson, J., "The New Ain Dara Temple: Closest Solomonic Parallel," *BAR*26/3, (2000), pp. 20–35; Monson, J., "The Ain Dara Temple and the Jerusalem Temple," in: *Text, Artifact and Image*, eds. Beckman G. M., and Lewis, T. J., Providence, 2006, pp. 273–277; Hurowitz, V., "Tenth Century BCE to 586 BCE: The House of the Lord," in: *Where Heaven and Earth Meet, Jerusalem Sacred Esplanade*, eds. Grabar, O. and Kedar, B., Jerusalem, 2009, pp. 14–35; Monson, J., "The Ain Dara Temple," in: *Ten Top Biblical Archaeology Discoveries*, ed. Corbett, J., Washington, 2011, pp. 12–30; Novak, M., "The Temple of Ain Dara in the Context of Imperial and Neo-Hittie Architecture and Art," in: *Temple Building and Temple Cult, Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant* (2-1 Mill. B.C.E), ed. Kamlah, J., Wiesbaden, 2012, pp. 41–54.

[3]) Yevin, S. "The Temple and Temples in Israel," *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, vol. V, cols. 328–346, 1978 (2nd printing).

[4]) Garber, P. L., "Reconstructing Solomon's Temple," *BA* 14/1, (1951), pp. 1–24; Ottosson, M., *Temples and Cult Places in Palestine*, Uppsala, 1980.

Syria (Tel Taayinat and Ain Dara) in recent years reinforces the northern orientation as the primary influence."[5])

Although certain elements in temples that have been uncovered in Syria resemble Solomon's Temple, and Solomon's Temple undoubtedly fits in with the architectural tradition of northern temples, my contention in this article is that citing these temples as analogs of the biblical description is profoundly misleading.

In recent years, at the excavations carried out in Moza near Jerusalem, a ninth-century temple has been uncovered, which matches Solomon's Temple in almost every respect. Although the excavation is not yet complete (due to construction of a bridge near the site), its findings to date reveal much about the Jerusalem Temple. According to the excavation's results of the site that there is a Judahite temple dating to the early ninth century BCE, it is not only the closest analog to Solomon's Temple (as described in I Kings 6–7), but the *only* one to have been discovered to date.

The architectural design of Solomon's Temple

The Temple design: The biblical author describes Solomon's Temple as a long-room type structure, on a central symmetrical axis oriented due east-west, with an entrance from the east (II Kings 7:12, Ezek. 40:6, 43:4), and a free-standing pillar on either side of the entrance. It stood north of the City of David (II Kings 11:19, 12:11) and the Kings Palace.[6]) Its cited dimensions— i.e., 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 30 cubits tall—are traditionally understood as being internal. On three sides of the structure stood side chambers built of wooden "ribs" on three stories. The outer walls at the base were apparently six cubits (~ 3 m.) thick (Ezek.. 41:5), and stepped as it went up, to accommodate the "narrowed rests" (I Kings 6:6) that supported the roof beams of the side chambers. There were three such rests, each one cubit deep, so that the topmost section of the outer wall was only three cubits (~1.5m) deep—which is the windows were situated. The *ulam* (antechamber), measuring 20 cubits long by 10 cubits wide, had no doors at its entrance, and apparently no roof either, and served as a kind of internal courtyard, or open antechamber to the *heikhal* (main hall). The number of windows in the structure is unknown, but presumably they were distributed along the length of the external wall above the side chambers.

The design elements of the temple that most scholars are agreed upon are the fact that it was a long-room type; its dimensions; its east-west orientation (with an entry from the east— presumably to meet the rising sun); that it had a central axis and side chambers on three sides of the building; and that it was part of a "royal acropolis."

However, researchers disagree with regard to all the following: did the Temple consist of one or three chambers? Was the *ulam* roofed, or open? Was the *dvir* a separate structure, or an integrated part of the temple? Was it raised above the *heikhal* floor? Were the two pillars, "Jachin" and "Boaz," freestanding, or structural columns? What are the *ḥalonei shqafim atumim* (I Kings 6:4— "windows of narrow lights" in the KJV)?

On close inspection of the texts, these questions can be resolved:

***Ulam*—roofed or open?** The *ulam* is thought to be an introductory enclosure to the building, not an integral part of it. Its length corresponds to the width of the building, and it has no doors. It is generally accepted that it adjoined the *heikhal*, with a shared wall between them. In I Kings there are no details as to its height, so we cannot say whether it was taller than the building (as implicit from the description in II Chron. 3:15), or of the same height. The view of some researchers, who believe that it was an open court, appears to be correct:[7]) the *ulam* at the front is an introductory enclosure, apparently unroofed, and not to be considered a chamber.

The *dvir* in Solomon's Temple is a separate structure erected within the *heikhal* after its completion. Noth, and Busink after him, have rightly suggested that the *dvir* was a discrete element, and therefore the Temple building consisted of one chamber, not three.[8]) Herzog notes that if Busink is correct in this regard, then all the parallels drawn between Solomon's Temple and three-chamber buildings are baseless.[9]) The reasons for believing that Solomon's Temple was indeed a single-chamber building are as follows:

The preparation and erection of the *dvir* is described as part of the Temple's interior design, rather than of its construction (vss 2–10);

The *dvir* appears as one of the wooden fixtures, and is explicitly said to be erected within the *heikhal*;

According to the text in I Kings, there was no constructed partition separating the *dvir* and the *heikhal*—only one of the *dvir*'s wooden sides. This is evident from the description in the biblical text: we are first told the length of the building (sixty cubits—v. 2), then that the *dvir* was twenty cubits long (vss. 15, 16), and the *heikhal* itself—forty cubits. Thus, the sixty cubits encompassed both the *dvir* and the *heikhal*, which meant that the partition between the two was of a nominal thickness—corresponding to that of a curtain or a sheet of wood—and not stated for that reason; Subsequently, it is noted that the "cherubim" were set "within the inner house" (v. 27)—i.e., within the *dvir*. This clarifies that the text distinguishes between the building—the *heikhal*—and the "inner house," i.e. the *dvir* within it.

The word *dvir* is borrowed from the Egyptian: an Egyptian scholastic document of the period between 1090 and 730 BCE lists the works of a temple carpenter, including a *dbr*

[5]) Z. Herzog, "Solomon's Temple: A reconstruction of its design and its archeological parallels," in *Jerusalem in the First Temple Period*, edited by D. Amit, R. Gonen, Jerusalem, pp. 68–81.

[6]) Although the biblical text makes no indication as to the location of the Temple and palace, the general view is that they were both situated on what is known as "Temple Mount," north of the City of David and the Ophel. In the absence of any archeological evidence, it is impossible to know precisely where they stood on Temple Mount (according to the Jewish tradition—per II Chron. 2:3—it is Mt. Moriah), and therefore the reconstructions in this study are speculative.

[7]) Based on five attributes of the *ulam*, Carol Meyers believes that it was not part of the Temple, but an entrance courtyard surrounded by a low wall. This is also indicated by the text in chapter 7:12. See Meyers C., "Jachin and Boaz in Religious and Political Perspective," *CBQ* 45, (1983), pp. 167–178, and cf. Cogan, M., *1 Kings, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (ABD), New York, 2000.

[8]) Busink, T. A., *Der Temple von Jerusalem*, Leiden, 1970, pp. 197–209, 581; and Noth, M., *Könige*, Neukirchen- Vluyn, 1968, pp. 99, 119–121.

[9]) Herzog, "Solomon's Temple," 78.

("the god's room"—per Wb)[10]), or *dvir*, which is part of the non-structural woodwork of the temple.[11]) This lends further support to the contention that Solomon's Temple was a single-room structure. As for the location of the *dvir* within the *heikhal*, Hurowitz's suggestion that it was placed at floor level is the most likely. If it were placed on a platform of some sort, or raised above floor level, the text would have noted such an important detail, and describe how one mounted it—and even in Ezekiel's most detailed description there is no mention of steps leading up to the *dvir*.

Ḥalonei shqafim atumim: These are proper windows designed to let light into the building—and not, as Monson contends (based on a comparison with the Ain Dara temple), only an ornamental detail. The biblical passage in question does not discuss ornamentation—only actual construction. The suggestion put forward by several researchers (Noth, Cogan, Busink, Galling, Roselle, Mulder and others) that these were barred windows is supported by archeological evidence in Egypt. Egyptian temples were built so that the roofs of the buildings were progressively lower toward the innermost part of the temple—thus, the first hall (the Hall of Columns) was taller than the next (generally, another hall of columns), which was taller than the following one, etc., until the room of the god, which was the lowest of them all. Windows were installed in the vertical gaps between consecutive roofs: Fig. 1 depicts one example of such barred windows from the large Hall of Columns by Seti I (1306–1290 BCE) at the temple at Karnak.[12])

The pillars Jachin and Boaz: The common view in research literature is that these two pillars did not support the roof and served a purely symbolic rather than structural purpose. The reasons cited for this are:[13]) 1) They are given special names, which distinguishes them from any other element in the temple, and why would they be given such a distinction if they served a purely structural purpose?; 2) "The fact that the pillars were made of a soft metal such as brass, reinforces the belief that the pillars Jachin and Boaz were of symbolic rather than structural value" (Herzog). Hollow brass pillars (Jer. 52:21) were unlikely to be able to support roof that was undoubtedly very heavy; 3) The author of I Kings goes to great lengths to describe the pillars, their size, shape and ornamentation. Such a detailed description would not be provided for a purely structural element, hence they must have served an important symbolic purpose; 4) II Chron. 3:15 explicitly states that the "*he made **before** the house two pillars"*; 5) If the pillars did serve the structural purpose of supporting the building's roof, they would have been included in the description of the Temple's construction in I Kings 6:2–10. The fact that they were mentioned separately (6:21) is further evidence that they were free-standing (Gray 1970); 6) The elaborate ornamentation on the pillars' capitals— "*And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the other chapiter"* (I Kings 7:17)—indicate that the capital was free and did not support the roof; 7) Finally, the pillars stood in front of the *ulam*, and if the *ulam* had no roof, then of course, so, neither did the pillars.

Fig. 1: A window in the Hall of Columns in Seti I's temple in Karnak.

[10]) According to Wb V 439, the word *dbr* means the "Room of God," with the hieroglyphic determinative of *wood.*  Hannig agrees—see Hannig, R. *Die Sprache der Pharaonen Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptische – Deutsch (2800–950 v. Chr.),* Mainz, 2003.

[11]) According to Gardiner (Gardiner, A., *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, Oxford, 1957, p. 64 onwards), the text clearly refers to the Temple's trappings. For further sources on the Egyptian influence, See Keel, O., *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus,* Göttingen, 2007, item 351, and the references there. Cf. also Keel, O., *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, New York, 1978, p. 161.

[12]) Cf. Arnold, D., *Die Temple Aegyptens Goetterwohnungen*, Kultstaetten, Baudenkmaeler, Zürich, 1992 , pp 185–184, where Figure 4.115. The researchers call this type of window lighting "church lighting," i.e., natural light enters the building through the windows at regular intervals set in the walls between roofs of different heights. The Hall of Columns at Karnak is the most famous of this type of fenestration lighting.

[13]) A partial listing of scholars who believe the pillars were free-standing: Scott R. B. Y., "The Pillars Jachin and Boaz," *JBL* 58/2, (1939), pp. 143–149; Wright, G. E., "Solomon's Temple Resurrected," *BA* 4/2, (1941), pp.17–31; Garber, "Reconstructing Solomon's Temple"; Yadin, Y., *Hazor*, London,1972; Bromiley, G. W., "Jachin and Boaz," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1979, p. 947; Herzog, "Solomon's Temple"; Meyers, "Jachin and Boaz in Religious and Political Perspective"; Hurowitz, V., "YHWH`s Exalted House – Aspects of the Design and Symbolism of Solomon`s Temple," in: *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel: Library of Hebrew Bible Old Testament Studies* 422, ed. John Day, London; and others. Fritz is among the very few who believe that they did support a roof—see Fritz, V., *Temple und Zelt: Studien zum Tempelbau in Israel und zu dem Zeltheiligtum der Priesterschrift*, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1977, p. 45.

Ancient Near Eastern temples

Egypt and Mesopotamia dominated Western human civilization from the dawn of the third millennium BCE until the rise of classical Greek civilization around the middle of the first millennium BCE. From the outset, these two cultural & political hubs boasted distinct and at times contrasting character and religious outlooks, which were echoed in their respective architecture and art.[14]) Other parts of the Near East—Anatolia, northern Syria and Canaan—had less clearly defined and consistent culture, and equally diverse architectural trends. This may be the consequence of the political instability and incessant warfare that took place in these regions. Accordingly, the scholar Henry Frankfort argues that Anatolia, Syria, Canaan and Persia may be regarded as peripheral areas, whose artistic achievements (and cultural impact on posterity)[15]) were comparatively minor in relation to those of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

To date, dozens of temples have been uncovered in Mesopotamia, Anatolia, northern Syria, Phoenicia and Canaan.[16])

Mesopotamia

The third Ur dynasty (2065–1955 BCE) saw a dramatic change in temple architecture in Mesopotamia, with the invention of a new type of temple design that persisted until the end of the Assyrian period around the sixth century BCE: ziggurats. The old temple was replaced by two new ones: one on top of the structure, the other at ground level. Typically, a ziggurat temple was built on a hill, and was a symmetrical rectangular structure erected on a base that was itself well above human height. The most ancient ziggurat is that of King Urnammu (2095–2012 BCE); the most famous is the Babylonian temple *E.temen.anki* ("foundation of heaven and earth"), which was originally constructed by Hammurabi (1792–1750 BCE), and rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century BCE. According to Roaf, it served as the inspiration for the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–20).[17]) As we shall see, these Mesopotamian temples very unlike those of Canaan.

Temples in Anatolia, Northern Syria and Canaan

Not much archeological evidence remains of the Canaanite temples in the Early Bronze Age. Generally speaking, they were small structures, with a single chamber of a broad–room type. In the Middle and Late Bronze Age (2000–1500 BCE) several types emerged. One was of a long- room type of temple with a single rectangular chamber (nc) an entrance through one of the short sides, and an altar or alcove facing the entrance, to accommodate a small statue of the god. (Some also featured a portico with two columns.) Another type was the "Migdol" temple, distinguished by a pair of towers rather than pillars at the entrance (e.g. Megiddo Temple #2048, or the temple in Area V in Nablus).

Some of these temples were two, or even three, stories high. Symmetrical in relation to their long axis, they were roughly square, and featured two chambers (e.g., Ebla Temple in Area D; Alalakh Temple at Layer 7; and at Hazor, Area H, Layer 15). The temples at Beit Shean and Lachish reflect an Egyptian influence. Yet another type of temple—the most common in the Late Bronze Age—had three chambers. However, some temples— such as the Baal or Dagan temples at Ugarit—fell into none of these categories.[18]) Another type of structure was the *royal temple acropolis*, comprising a palace and temple side by side. The temples at Alalakh Layer 7 and at Nablus date from the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, and examples of temples and palaces side by side from the Iron Age are found at Zincirly and Tell Halaf in Syria.[19])

The dawn of the Iron Age witnessed many cosmopolitical changes in the Canaan and Syria region, following the weakening of the major powers—Egypt and Mesopotamia—on the one hand, and the invasion and settlement of the Sea Peoples in the southern coastal plain and the eastern Jordan Valley. These led to the establishment of new national entities in the region: the Philistines in the coastal plain (with their temple at Tel Qasile exhibiting Aegean influences); the Arameans in Syria; the Ammonites and Moabites east of the Jordan; the Edomites in northern Sinai; and the Israelites in the mountain region. These ethnic changes in the region are reflected in the temple architecture of this period.

Canaanite temples were founded on much the same concept as those of Mesopotamia and Egypt—namely, that the temple was the god's earthly abode, and in a sense a microcosm of the world.[20]) According to the texts found at Ras Shamra, the worship ritual and treatment of the god's idol were similar to those in Egypt and Mesopotamia: the god received gifts, and consumed food and drink offerings. But unlike the temples of Egypt and Mesopotamia, Canaanite temples varied greatly in their design and construction. The most common god—Baal—had many temples devoted to him. In fact, there was not one, but many "Baals": Baal Peor (Deut. 4:3); Baalzebub [Beelzebub] (II Kings 1:2); Baalmeon (Numbers 32:38); Baalzephon (Exodus 14:2); Baalgad (Josh. 11:17): Baalhermon (Judges 3:3): Baaltamar (Judges 20:33); Baalberith (Judges 9:4); Baalperazim (II Sam. 5:20), and so forth. For this reason, in the Hebrew Bible he is sometimes referred to in the plural—as in Judges 2:11: "*And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim.*"

This plurality of forms also extended to the Canaanite goddesses Ashera and Ashtoreth (who appears in plural in Deut. 1:4 and Judges 2:13). This, too, was a reflection of the diverse geopolitical nature of Canaan, which was never a large, powerful, and unified political entity, but a patchwork

[14]) Frankfort, H., *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, New Heaven, 1996.

[15]) Ibid.

[16]) For a review of the temples uncovered in the ancient Near East and their development over history, see Oppenheim, A. L., "The Mesopotamian Temple," in: *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, Vol. 1, eds. Wright, G. E. and Freedman, D. N., New York, 1961, pp. 158–169; Badawy, A., *Architecture in Ancient Egypt and Near East*, Cambridge, 1966). See also Roaf, M., "Palaces and Temples in Ancient Mesopotamia," in: *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol.1, ed. Sasson, J. M., New York, 1995, pp. 423–441, for a review of the development of the Mesopotamian temples from the fifth millennium to ca. 500 BCE; and Frankfort, *Art and Architecture*.

[17]) Roaf identifies four stages in the evolution of temples in Mesopotamia.

[18]) Dever, G. W., "Palaces and Temples in Canaan and Ancient Israel," in: *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 1, Sasson, J. M. (ed.), New York, 1995, p. 610.

[19]) Ibid., p. 611.

[20]) Wright, G. E., "The Temple in Palestine-Syria," in: *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, Vol. 1, eds. Wright, G. E. and D. N. Freedman, New York, 1961, pp. 169–184.

of small city kingdoms—each with its own religion and rituals of worship, and each temple competing with those of neighboring cities. For this reason, one cannot refer to any Canaanite temple as the god's primary abode, nor was there any uniform design underpinning the hundreds of temples built in Canaan and Syria.

The temples of Tel-Taayinat

The temple in Building #2 (*Temple #1* in Fig. 2) was uncovered in excavations carried out by a team from University of Chicago in 1936.[21]) This temple was built on a tell in northern Syria, and dated by the diggers to 825–720 BCE. It was situated south of a large palace (Building #1) on an east-west axis (with the entrance facing east)—a long symmetrical structure with three chambers: a roofed antechamber with two imposing columns supported the roof and a pair of lion statues at their base, a main room (*heikhal*), and a separate room for the Holy of Holies. Its external dimensions were 11.75m × 25.35 m; its entrance straddled the central axis; and it was constructed on a raised base with stairs leading up to the entrance.

Nearby, in 2009, another temple (Building #16—*Temple #2* in Fig. 3) was uncovered by a team of archeologists from the University of Toronto, led by Timothy Harrison.[22]) It measured 9 × 21 m (external dimensions) and lay on a north-south axis, with the entrance at the southern end. It, too, was of the long-room type, and featured three chambers; an antechamber with a single column in the middle of the opening. It was constructed on a raised platform, with steps leading up to the entrance. The inner chamber, the Holy of Holies, was raised still further, with four wide steps leading up to it. At the eastern end of the chamber there is evidence of an altar. Judging by the epigraphic evidence of cuneiform inscriptions in its northern chamber, it stood until the mid-seventh century BCE.

Both these two temples at Tel Taayinat operated at the same time, in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE.[23]) Judging from a deciphered tablet uncovered in the second temple, both temples were converted into Assyrian temples at the end of the eighth century or beginning of the seventh century BCE, in accordance with the Assyrian tradition of maintaining temples in pairs, as was customary with ziggurats.

Close inspection of these temples reveal that the biblical author did not model the description of Solomon's Temple after these temples, for the following reasons: (a) The pillars at the entrance of Temple #1 served a structural purpose, and there is no reason to think they bore any symbolic significance, since Temple #2 had only one column, which was clearly structural. If the two columns in Temple #1 did have a symbolic function, the same would be true for the column at Temple #2; (b) There was no symbolic or religious significance to the temples' orientation, since they differed from each other; (c) They featured three chambers, not one; (d) they have no side chambers; (e) the dimensions are different; (f) Solomon's Temple had no stone partition between the *heikhal* and the *dvir*. All other aspects of these two temples—i.e., the fact that they were of the long-room type, served as the king's temple, etc.—are generic attributes that were common to many temples in the ancient Near East.

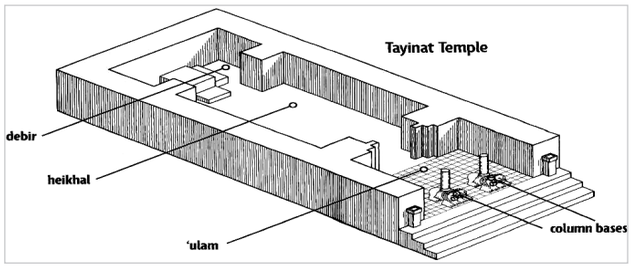

Fig. 2: Reconstruction of Temple #2 at Tell Taayinat. From Hurowitz, 2011, p. 50)

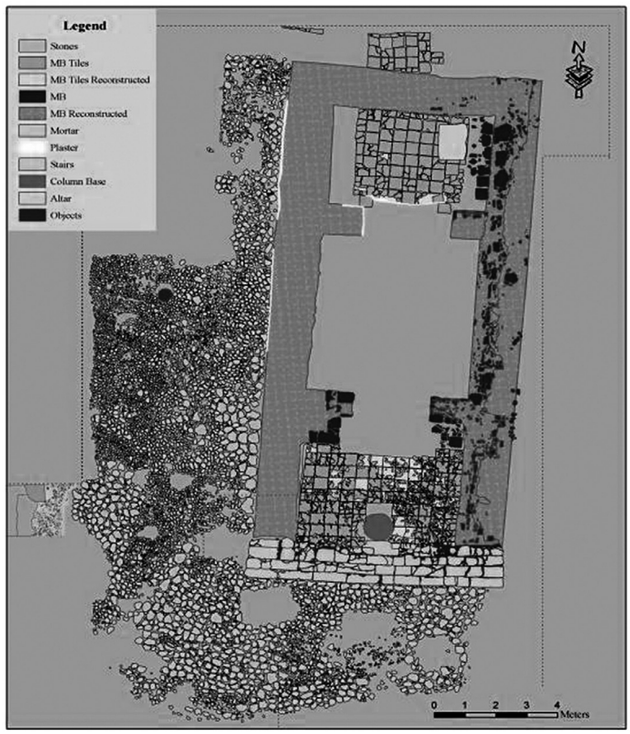

Fig. 3: Temple structure #16 at Tell Taayinat. From Harrison, "Late Bronze/Early Iron Age Transition," Fig. 15

[21]) Haines, C., *Excavations in the Plane of Antioch II*, Chicago, 1971, pp 53–55, Plates 100, 103; Davey, C., "Temple of the Levant and the Building of Solomon," *TB* 31, (1980), pp. 107–146, Kitchen, K., *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, Cambridge, 2003 p.133; Harrison, T., "The Late Bronze/Early Iron Age Transition in the North Orontes Valley," in: *Societies in Transition Evolutionary Processes in the Northern Levant between Late Bronze Age II and Early Iron Age : Papers Presented on the Occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the New Excavations in Tell Afis: Bologna, 15th November 2007*, ed. Venturi, F., Bologna, 2010, pp. 83–102; Harrison, T., "West Syrian Megaron or Neo-Assyrian Langraum? The Shifting Form and Function of the Tell-Taayinat (Kunulua) Temples," in: *Temple Building and Temple Cult, Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2-1 Mill. BCE)*, ed. Kamlah, J., Wiesbaden, 2012, pp. 3–21

[22]) http://www.utoronto.ca/tap/reports/2009Report_en.pdf

[23]) Harrison, "West Syrian Megaron or Neo-Assyrian Langraum?," p. 18.

The temple at Ain Dara

The temple at Ain Dara[24]) (Fig. 4), which lies about 80 km north of Tel Taayinat, was excavated in 1980–85 by a team led by Ali Abu Assaf, who determined that it operated between ca. 1300 to 740 BCE, in three distinct phases. Phase 1 was from its construction around 1300 to 1000 BCE, during which time it remained virtually unchanged. In the second—ca. 1000–940 BCE—the temple remained in its original form, with the addition of a basalt surface placed in front of the building, in the portico behind the two entrance columns. In the third phase (940–740 BCE), a covered corridor (and, possibly, ancillary chambers) surrounded the building on three sides. The building measured 20 x 30 meters internally (34 x 42 externally), was almost square in plan, and lay on a southeast (entrance)-to-northwest (Holy of Holies) axis. The first two phases were dated based on comparison with other excavated sites, rather than by stratigraphic findings.[25]) Based on a lion symbol at the site, Ali Abu Assaf determined that it was a temple to the goddess Ishtar (Ashoreth).

Huge footprints are embedded in the flagstones at the entrance to the temple—symbolizing the god's entry into his abode. The temple was built on a raised mound, accessed by several steps. At the portico stood a pair of roof-supporting columns. Behind it lay the entry space into the temple's first hall, whose walls featured carved reliefs of lions and sphinxes that protected the temple. The central hall—the *heikhal*—was a chamber of approximately 16 meters square, at the far end of which stood a raised platform—the Holy of Holies. In the rear wall of the Holy of Holies was an alcove, presumably for the god's idol. The platform was raised approximately 60 cm above the *heikhal* floor, to distinguish the *dvir* from the rest of the *heikhal*. On one side panel of the *dvir* were a number of holes, which in Monson's view served to attach a wooden partition between the Holy of Holies and the hall. In the eighth century BCE, an 11-cubit (~ 5.5m.) wide stone corridor surrounded the temple on three sides. In Monson's view, this corridor space was at least two stories high, judging by the thickness and strength of the walls that bounded the corridor on either side. The walls on either side featured reliefs of various scenes—including the king on his throne; date palm trees; the god's image; sacrificial altars, etc.—from which Monson concluded that the corridor was not a storage space, but served ceremonial purposes. At the entrance to the temple was a large stone pool, for ritual purposes.

Monson believes the temple at Ain Dara is the closest equivalent to Solomon's Temple.[26]) Based on his publications about this temple, I have drawn up a list of the elements that he believes reflects the parallels between the two temples. Closer inspection reveals that there are several problems with this comparison, and that in fact in most instances there is no true correspondence between the respective elements, and therefore that there are no particular parallels to be drawn:

Temple orientation: no correspondence. The Ain Dara temple lies on a southeast-northwest axis (with the Holy of Holies at the northwestern end)—and there is no indication that this orientation held any symbolic or religious significance. Conversely, Solomon's Temple lay on an east-west axis (with the *dvir* at the west), and most researchers agree that this is related to the sun. **Dimensions**: no correspondence. The Ain Dara temple's internal dimensions are 20 x 30 meters, while those of Solomon's Temple were approximately 35 × 10. The external dimensions of the Ain Dara temple were 42 × 34 meters, while Solomon's Temple—if the side chambers and wall thicknesses (6 cubits—approximately 3 meters—per Ezekiel) are taken into account—measured 46 × 21 meters. If one temple were modeled on the other, one would expect a more faithful correspondence between their respective dimensions.

Both temples were built on a raised platform. Here the correspondence is moot: the temple at Ain Dara (like those at Taayinat) was built on a raised base that was accessed by means of four steps of volcanic rock. Monson cites Ezekiel's vision of the future temple— "and they went up unto it by seven steps" (40:22)—but this is not supported by the description in I Kings. The temple description in Ezekiel's vision should be treated with great circumspection.

Both temples have a tripartite structure. Here, too, there is no correspondence. As previously noted, Solomon's Temple is single-chamber structure, while the Ain Dara temple in fact features four spaces, not three: the portico with the two structural columns corresponds to the *ulam* in the Jerusalem temple, but is much narrower than the *heikhal* (in contrast to the Jerusalem temple, where it was of the same width); an antechamber measuring approximately 8 x 16 meters; a central hall corresponding to the *heikhal* in Solomon's Temple; and a *dvir* at the far end of that hall, on a raised platform. Monson argues that there is evidence of a wooden partition that separated that *dvir* from the central chamber—as in Solomon's Temple—however, in the latter case the *dvir* was not merely separated by means of a wooden partition, but was a discrete structure in its own right.

The portico. No correspondence: in Solomon's Temple the *ulam* was of the same width as the *heikhal*, and unroofed, while at the Ain Dara temple it was roofed, narrower, and lower than the adjacent chamber.

The pair of columns at the entrance. No correspondence: at the Ain Dara temple, the columns were of volcanic rock, and supported the roof—while at Solomon's Temple they were freestanding and made of brass, held symbolic significance, and the only items in the Temple to be given names. Moreover, the Ain Dara columns were considerably

[24]) Abu Assaf, A., *Der Tempel von Ain Dara*, Mainz, 1990; Monson, "The New Ain Dara Temple," 20–35; Monson, "The Ain Dara Temple and the Jerusalem Temple"; Monson, "Tenth Century BCE to 586 BCE"; Monson, "The Ain Dara Temple," (2011); Hurowitz, V., "Solomon's Temple in Context," *BAR* 37/2, (2011), pp. 46–57; Hurowitz, V., "Yhwh's Exalted House Revisited New Comparative Light on Biblical Image of Solomon's Temple," in: *The Ancient Near East in the12th-10th Centuries BCE: Cultured and History*, eds. Galil, G., Gilboa, A., Kahn, D., and Maeir, A., Münster, 2012, pp. 229–240.

[25]) Novak ("The Temple of Ain Dara," 48–50) argues that a temple's architectural design is not a reliable indicator of its date, but rather its ornamentation.

[26]) See Monson ("The Ain Dara Temple," 2011). Novak, too (The Temple of Ain Dara," 52), believes that this temple is a replica of Solomon's Temple—so much so, that if the description of Solomon's Temple were not labeled as such, he believes everyone would think that it referred to the temple at Ain Dara. He bases this claim on the fact that Solomon's Temple is a long-room temple with an entrance foyer; two columns at the entrance which, in his view, were structural (for this reason, he believed that the roof of the side chambers were not supported by the building's wall, but rather by the entrance columns); the gallery that is more than one story high; the entrance into the gallery from within the temple; and the cherubim, which echo the reliefs of a lion, eagle and winged demons at Ain Dara.

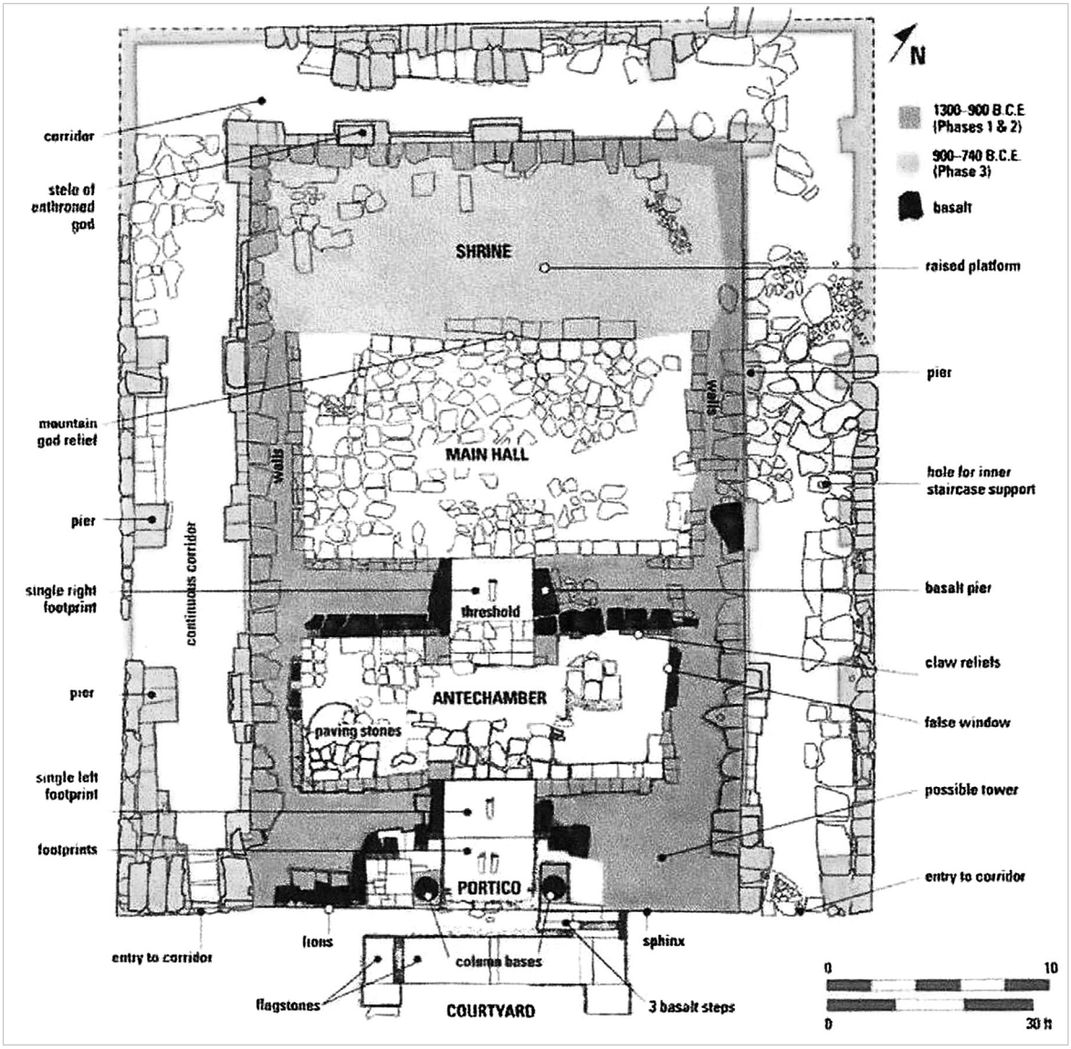

Fig. 4: The temple at Ain Dara

narrower than those at Solomon's Temple (90 cm diameter, versus approximately 2 meters for Jachin and Boaz, according to the biblical description).

Large wash basin in the courtyard. No correspondence: the "*Molten Sea*" at Solomon's Temple (II Kings 25:13) was made of brass, circular in shape, and 5 meters in diameter—while at Ain Dara the basin was of limestone, rectangular, and much smaller (3.5 x 2 x 0.7 m).

Side chambers. No correspondence: at Ain Dara a corridor surrounded the temple on three sides, was broad, made of stone (not wood, as in Jerusalem), and not divided into chambers. Monson concluded that it served for ritual purposes, rather than for storage. It is unclear whether it was roofed, or featured a second story. The Jerusalem temple featured side chambers made of wood (I Kings 6:6), and galleries supported by stepbacks in the Temple wall. According to the text in I Kings, the outers walls of the chambers were not made of stone; the outer stone wall described in the Book of Ezekiel appears only in Ezekiel's vision, and if it did exist, was a later addition. **Ornamentation**. Here there is partial correspondence: the temple walls at Ain Dara were ornamented with reliefs of lions, various chimeras and other mythical creatures that Monson compares to cherubim. However, these figures differ markedly from the cherubim that are said to have adorned the *dvir* of Solomon's Temple. While certain ornamental elements (such as vertical flutes, geometric ornaments, and lily-like forms) are similar, Hurowitz notes that these ornaments indicate that the temple served as the god's chariot—in contrast to Solomon's Temple, where most of the illustrations were of plants, garlands, lilies etc., which represented the Garden of Eden.[27]) Thus, the mythical figures at Ain Dara are not akin to the cherubim in Solomon's Temple.

The *dvir*'s elevation. No correspondence: the raised platform of the Holy of Holies at Ain Dara stood 60cm above

[27]) Hurowitz, "Yhwh's Exalted House Revisited," 232.

the *heikhal* floor. In the case of Solomon's Temple, opinions are divided, but based on the textual evidence, most commentators and researchers believe—that the *dvir* stood on the floor of the *heikhal*. Ronald de Vaux believes that it was raised 10 cubits (~5 meters) high; Busink suggests that it was perhaps only 5 cubits high (~ 2.5m). Neither interpretation corresponds to the modest elevation of 60cm at Ain Dara.

The *dvir*. No correspondence: in Solomon's Temple, the *dvir* was a separate element that was brought into the *heikhal*, whereas at Ain Dara the shrine was an integral part of the temple's construction. Moreover, at Ain Dara there was no wall separating the shrine from the *heikhal*— rather, it was set apart by its raised platform, and there may have been a wooden partition between them, as well.[28])

From all the above, it is apparent that there is no correlation between the temple at Ain Dara and Solomon's Temple in most of the respects that Monson lists. Based on his conclusion that the two temples were very similar, Monson went on to use findings at Ain Dara to interpret obscure terms in the Book of Kings. However, in my view, these interpretations are unconvincing:

The meaning of "*ḥalonei shqafim atumim"* (I Kings 6:4). Monson treats a decorative element of imprinted geometric shapes within a frame as though they were these "blind windows."[29])

However, at Solomon's Temple these are described as an architectural element (I Kings 6:4), not an ornamental one.[30])

The meaning of the word ***tzla'ot*** ("[side] chambers"—KJV). Monson believes that these are analogous to the corridors surrounding the temple at Ain Dara:

> These walkways at 'Ain |Dara' are 18ft wide, as are the biblical side chambers (when the 5 cubit [about 8 foot] and 6 cubit [about 10-foot] outer wall of the Biblical Temple are added together). The AinDara hallway is reached through doors on either side of the temple entrance, which bring to mind I Kings 6:8.[31])

In other words, the width of the corridor—11 cubits (~18 ft.) includes the thickness of the external wall, and in his view, this precisely corresponds to the depth of the side chambers at Solomon's Temple. But according to the text in I Kings, there was no external wall at all—only a wooden partition of nominal thickness—and therefore the depth of the side chambers at ground floor was only 5 cubits. Even if we use Ezekiel's description, which contends that there was a stone wall surrounding the side chambers, Monson's estimate is inaccurate, since according to Ezekiel the thickness of the external wall was only 5 cubits, not 6 (Ezek. 41:9), and the internal depth of the chambers was only 4 cubits, not 5 (ibid., v. 5)—for a total of 9 cubits, not 11, as Monson contends.

Meaning of the term ***migra'ot*** ("narrowed rests"). Monson suggests that these were low-standing pilasters of volcanic rock attached to the walls of the corridor—however, Hurowitz has already pointed out that these bear no resemblance to the *migra'ot* which, according to the description, were situated on the outer wall of Solomon's Temple, and served to support the upper galleries. Furthermore, the columns found in the corridor at Ain Dara were for ornamental, not structural, purposes, and in the language of the Book of Kings would have been referred to as *elim*.[32])

The *dvir* was elevated. On this point, commentators are divided, but most believe that the *dvir* stood on the Temple floor, and was not elevated. Monson cites the 'Ain Dara temple as evidence that the *dvir* was elevated—then uses that very assertion to support his claim of parallels between the two temples. This is circular reasoning.

The columns supported the roof. Monson proposes that Jachin and Boaz supported the temple roof, based on the parallels that he draws with the Ain Dara temple, and so he writes: "The pillars Jachin and Boaz were not freestanding, and supported the roof, and indeed the comparison with the columns at Ain Dara help to establish this."[33]) This, too, is circular reasoning.

The architectural similarities between the Ain Dara temple and the biblical descriptions of Solomon's Temple are typological in nature, and while they possibly indicate that the two temples were built in a similar architectural tradition, they do not help us understand the origin of the inspiration for the design of Solomon's Temple. The most significant difference between the two temples is in ideology, and ritual. The Ain Dara temple, judging by its iconography, is markedly different in this respect from the one in Jerusalem: the Jerusalem Temple was devoid of any iconographic elements, and symbolized the Garden of Eden rather than God's abode, while the Ain Dara temple displayed elements of movement—the god's chariot. Particularly prominent in its wall reliefs at the base of the Holy of Holies are various winged chimeric figures with a human face: a bull, a lion, eagle, and man.[34]) These suggest that the Ain Dara temple served as a kind of "hangar" for the god's chariot, rather than his place of abode.[35]

The principal hallmarks of Iron Age temple types

In his extensive survey of temples in the Levant, Kemlah discusses the differences between the design of temples of the early and mid-Bronze Age with those of the Iron Age. While the temples of the earlier periods tended to be of the broadroom type—usually with an antechamber—those of the Iron Age follow no particular dominant pattern. Nonetheless, as evident in Table 1, there are three attributes that hold true for virtually all temples of that period:[36])

Their overall form is a rectangle with an entrance in the middle of one of the short walls.

The length-to-width ratio of the temple ranges from 1:1.2—1:1.4 (with the exception of the two temples at Tell Taayinat, where the ratio is larger—1:2.2).

The dimensions of the temples in the northern Levant differ from those in the south—both in overall area and in the size of the central chamber (the *heikhal*).

In Kemlah's view, this table demonstrates that the Jerusalem temple was markedly different from other Iron Age temples, and that it is similar to the other temples cited here only

[28]) Cf. Keel, O., *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, New York, 1978, p. 161.
[29]) Monson, "The New Ain Dara Temple," 24.
[30]) Cf. Hurowitz, "Tenth Century BCE to 586 BCE," 232.
[31]) Monson, "The New Ain Dara Temple," 23.
[32]) Hurowitz, "Tenth Century BCE to 586 BCE," 232.
[33]) Monson, "The New Ain Dara Temple," 22.
[34]) Cf. the animal figures described by Ezekiel as the faces of the cherubim (Ezek. 1:10).
[35]) Hurowitz, "Tenth Century BCE to 586 BCE," 233.
[36]) Kamlah, *Temple Building and Temple Cult,* 51. I have added the temple at Moza to this table.

Table 1: A comparison between Levantine temples of the Iron Age (per Kemlah).[37])

Temple	External dimensions		Central chamber (*heikhal*) dimensions	
	L x W (meters)	Ratio	L x W (meters)	Area (sq.m.)
Aleppo (Iron 1 – 2A)	42.0 × 42.0	1:1	27.8 × 12.2	335
Ain Dara	42.0 × 34.0	1:1.2	16.8 × 16.7	280
Tell Afis	32.5 × 24.0	1:1.3	13.3 × 6.6	90
Tell Taayinat (Bldg 2)	24.4 × 11.7	1:2.2	10.0 × 7.0	70
Tell Taayinat (Bldg 16)	17.2 × 8	1:2.2	5.5 × 5.3	30
Pella (Stage 6)	12.0 × 8.0	1:1.4	7.0 × 7.0	50
Beit Shean (northern)	19.3 × 11.3	1:1.7	12.0 × 8.0 (?)	100 (?)
Beit Shean (southern)	21.3 × 17.3	1:1.2	14.0 × 7.3	100 (?)
Ataroth (Stage 1)	13.0 × 10.0	1:1.3	12.0 × 7.5	90
Ataroth (Stage 2)	13.0 × 10.0	1:1.3	12.0 × 5.0	60
Ekron (Temple 650)	21.3 × 17.3	1:1.3	11.0 × 8.0	90
Moza	21 × 7 (?)***	1:3		
Jerusalem (I Kings 6)	**35.0 × 10.0**	**1:3.5**	**30.0 × 10.0****	**300**

Notes:
* These are internal dimensions. External dimensions (including surrounding chambers, 2.5m deep, plus 3m. thick walls) were approx. 47 × 21 m, at a ratio of 1:2.23.
** Length of the heikhal, including the dvir.
*** Moza does not appear in Kemlah's original table, but was added by me. Here, too, the dimensions are internal.

in three respects: its rectangular form, the presence of side chambers, and the presence of a *dvir*. In his view, the fact that they are not more similar is because the dimensions given in the biblical text are exaggerated (see Table 1)[38]). However, if the findings of the excavation at Moza do indicate that the temple there is the closest known parallel to Solomon's Temple, the latter's dimensions are not overstated in the biblical text.

The appendix to this paper includes a table that compares this sample of 39 northern temples with Solomon's Temple, in eleven different respects:

1. Orientation (north/south; east/west)
2. Building type (long-room or wide-room, number of chambers)
3. Entry on central axis, symmetry
4. Dimensions
5. Length-to-width ratio
6. Columns/pillars and their function (architectural or ornamental)
7. Was the temple part of a royal acropolis?
8. Existence of side chambers
9. Distribution of side chambers (in stories? If so, is it in three stories?)
10. Characteristics of the *dvir*
11. Characteristics of the courtyard construction (was the enclosure made of three rows of columns of hewn stone, and one row of cedar columns?)

From this comparison it is apparent that there is no full correspondence between any of the temples in question and Solomon's Temple. For example, the temples at Taayinat and Ain Dara—which in researchers' view are the ones most like Solomon's Temple—resemble it only in three or four respects.

In summary, therefore, none of the temples that have been put forward as analogs for Solomon's Temple plausibly meet that description. Although in typological terms, the architectural design of Solomon's Temple is broadly in line with that of northern temples (especially those of northern Syria), there are at least ten different typological types of Canaanite/Syrian temples in the ancient Near East. From even a cursory comparison of such temple types, it is quickly apparent that they represent a very wide variety of buildings of various forms and orientations, with no uniform design pattern or consistent architectural theme. The only parameters that most temples of them have in common is that they were rectangular, and modestly sized. The Jerusalem temple, on the other hand (based on the description in the Hebrew Bible) was decidedly larger.

The conclusion, therefore, is that the Canaanite/Syrian temples have very few features in common, and such that exist are typological in nature and do not point to any particular ethnic, geographical, religious, or chronological hallmark that is unique to this region.

Conversely, the findings of the temple that has been unearthed at Moza in two salvage excavation seasons, suggest that there are reasonable grounds to believe that it is the closest equivalent to Solomon's Temple.

The temple at Moza

In 2012 and 2013, an Iron Age temple was uncovered at an archeological dig at Moza, dating to the ninth century BCE.[39]) The site is identified as the biblical Matzah (Joshua

[37]) Table figures (with the exception of those of the Jerusalem temple) are per Kamlah, ibid., 518. The dimensions of the Jerusalem temple are internal, while those of the other temples are external.
[38]) Ibid., 521.

[39]) For more on the results of the excavation, see three papers by Kisilevitz, S. "Mimtzaim pulhaniim mitqufat habarzel behafirot Moza" [Ritual artifacts from the Iron Age excavations at Moza], *Hidushim*

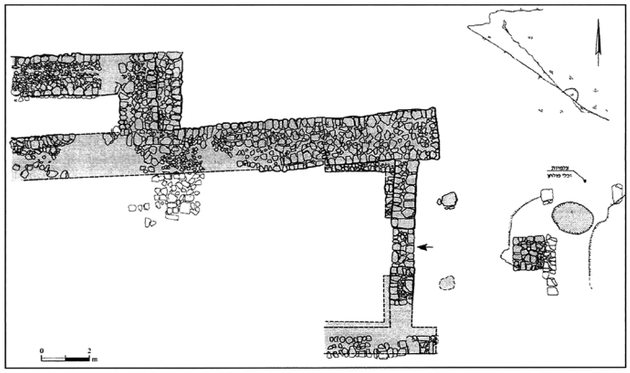

Fig. 5: Detail of the plan of the temple at Moza, per Kisilevitz, 2013, p. 28

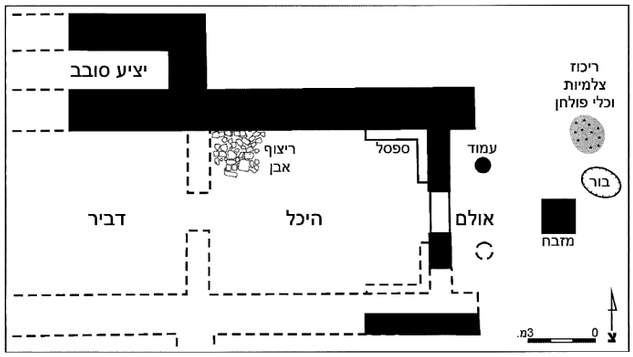

Fig. 6: Reconstruction of the plan of the temple at Moza, per Garfinkel and Mumçuglu, 2014, p. 165

18:24)—a settlement of the second Iron Age period (ninth–sixth centuries BCE). Of particular interest for our purposes is the temple's plan (Fig. 5) and reconstruction (Fig. 6).[40]) It was built on an east- west axis, with the entrance facing east; consisted of three elements—a courtyard with an altar at the center, an entrance hall (*ulam*?), and a central one (*heikhal*), with benches at the southeastern and northeastern corners. Based on the excavated sections to date, it measured 18m. long by 7m. wide at its eastern end. Its northern wall was massive—some 2m. thick—and two freestanding pillars stood at its entrance, flanked by an *anta* on either side (at the time of writing, only the base of one pillar—measuring approximately 60cm—has been uncovered). The western end of the temple has not yet been excavated, but the diggers appear to be very close to exposing it. Apparently the building consisted of a single chamber—like the Jerusalem temple—and its *dvir* was possibly a wooden structure that stood at the western end of the *heikhal*.[41]) To the northeast of the temple, a disposal pit was found with broken ritual tools, clay vessels, and a large number of animal bones, which at first inspection appear to be the remains of young, "pure" animals with no flaws or defects.

The building's plan, its attendant findings and date of construction indicate that it co-existed with the one in Jerusalem, at an aerial distance of 7km due west.[42]) Its design is almost identical in every respect to that of Solomon's Temple, judging by the description in I Kings 2–10— namely:

- The temple was oriented due east-west, with the entrance from the east.
- It is symmetrical, with the entrance straddling its central axis.
- The entrance lobby was flanked by an *anta* on either side (similar to the *ulam* in Solomon's Temple)
- Two freestanding pillars stood at the entrance, one on either side.
- It is a long-room type structure, with a central hall (*heikhal*).
- It has a single chamber. Garfinkel's reconstruction suggests that its central hall was divided into a *heikhal* and a *dvir*, but the interior appears nonetheless to have been a single chamber, for two reasons. First, based on Garfinkel's reconstruction, the *dvir* was larger in area than the *heikhal*, in contrast to familiar temples. Second, the stones found on the floor were not the foundation of a wall, but paving stones. It is, therefore, a building with a single chamber—the *heikhal*—at the end of which there may have stood a wooden *dvir* that has not survived.

Based on what has been uncovered to date, its internal dimensions were 18m long by 7m wide; the internal dimensions of the Jerusalem temple (*heikhal* and *dvir*) were 30m x 10 m. If future excavations reveal the total length of the Moza temple to be 21m. (which is likely, according to the diggers, as they are close to the western wall), the length-to-width ratio of the two temples is similar.

The northern wall is approximately 2m. (~ 4 cubits) thick. The thickness of the outer wall at Solomon's Temple, according to Ezek. 41:5, was 6 cubits (~ 3m.)—meaning that the ratio of outer and inner wall thicknesses was similar in the two temples (at Moza—7:2; in Jerusalem 10:3).[43])

The Moza temple may have had a surrounding gallery, as well (see Garfinkel's reconstruction, Fig. 6).

The temple at Moza—which, according to initial research, was Judahite—indicates that the biblical description of Solomon's Temple is not exaggerated. This temple is the closest parallel of Solomon's Temple that has been found to date. Its completed excavation and publication of the findings will be a watershed development in the research on Solomon's Temple. Kemlah, for example, has been highly skeptical of the dimensions of the Jerusalem temple as cited in the Hebrew

Bearchaeologia Shel Yerushalayim Usvivotehah, 7, pp 38–42 Kisilevitz, S., "Miqdash yiḥudi beMoza uvo tzalmiot ukhlei pulhan mitqufat habarzel 2a" [A unique temple at Moza with icons and sacred vessels from Iron Age 2A], *Kadmoniot* 147, pp 31–25; Kisilevitz, S., "The Iron IIA Judahite Temple at Tel Moza" *Tel-Aviv* vol. 42, 2015, pp. 147–164 [in Hebrew]. Cf. J. Garfinkel and M. Mumzuglu, *Beit Hamiqdash veArmon Shlomo* [The Temple and Solomon's Palace], Jerusalem, 2014, pp 166–163 [in Hebrew].

[40]) Temple reconstruction is by Yossi Garfinkel (*The Temple and Solomon's Palace*, 165). The building is only partly recognized because the southern section has since been swept on the downslope, and its western section has not yet been unearthed. Nonetheless, the sections that have been exposed do give an indication of the overall plan (according to Garfinkel).

[41]) According to Shua Kisilevitz, the excavation will continue only in 2017, but she agrees that this is a possibility.

[42]) Garfinkel, *The Temple and Solomon's Palace*, 165.

[43]) The outer wall served as the base and support for the roof beams: the larger the structure, the thicker wall needed to be.

Bible, given how markedly different they are from other Iron Age temples in the Levant.[44]) However, the fact that a very similar temple has been found in a provincial town near Jerusalem with dimensions that are only a third smaller than those of the Jerusalem Temple suggests that the biblical dimensions are certainly plausible.

One of the questions that the excavators have encountered is why the angle between northern and eastern walls is not a true right angle. Their initial hypothesis was that the terrain did not allow this, or perhaps that, as a provincial town, they were more lax in their building standards.[45])

The Moza Temple and its contribution to reconstructing its architectural exemplar— Solomon's Temple

The discovery of the temple at Moza casts new light on the issue of the architectural and conceptual origins of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. As previously noted, Solomon's Temple bore a number of distinguishing features that have no parallels in the archeological findings of the ancient Near East. The most prominent of these is the ingenious formation of side chambers by means of "narrowed rests" (I Kings 6:6)—i.e., a stepped exterior wall to the Temple—with the express purpose of serving as a base for the beams of three storeys of side chambers. Such a wall has not been found in any of the hundreds of temples that have been published to date.

Another substantial difference is the unique ornamentation on the walls of Solomon's Temple. According to the descriptions of the Book of Kings, they featured no iconography of any sort, nor indeed any representation of God in the temple. This was undoubtedly due to the nature of the religion and the rituals conducted in it, which were fundamentally different from those of any other throughout the ancient Near Eastern region.

Certain unique elements can be discerned in the descriptions of King Solomon's construction works in Jerusalem that have no parallels in previous archeological findings of the ancient near East. These differences, and the absence of a true parallel to Solomon's Temple anywhere in the ancient Near East, have not escaped the notice of scholars. As Zeev Herzog has pointed out: "The fact that until today no identical temple has been uncovered in the archeological excavations—or at least, none that is similar to Solomon's temple — underscores the uniqueness of his design."[46]) In the summary of his research, Magnus Ottoson agrees: "In the search of parallels to the plan of the Temple/Palace at Jerusalem no equivalent is supposed to have been found in Palestine."[47])

The design of the Moza temple and the period that it is believed to have stood (from the beginning of the ninth century BCE until the destruction of the First Temple in the sixth century BCE) presents a new possible solution to this question. Given that it is similar—nearly identical—to Solomon's Temple (judging by the latter's description in the Hebrew Bible), the Moza Temple was likely inspired by the design of Solomon's Temple, given its geographical proximity and shared cultural domain in which the Judahite monarchy developed. This, coupled with the absence of any other true parallel to Solomon's Temple throughout the ancient Near East, suggests that this temple design was conceived in Judea, and spread from Solomon's capital, Jerusalem, to the rest of the kingdom. While the architectual concept behind Solomon's

Temple may have incorporated certain key elements from foreign temples (in particular, that of Ain Dara), its fundamental design was tailored to the Judahite religious and cultic outlook, which was different from other nations and required a distinctive architectural expression.

The distinctive features of Solomon's Temple and its smaller facsimile at Moza are well summed up Ahlström review of the origins of the former:

> "Although there are indications of foreign influence on the Jerusalem temple, it is also possible that Solomon's architects (or the king himself) created a temple, that the exact parallel of which has not yet be found. Consequently, Solomon's temple may be an Israelite contribution to the architecture of the ancient Near East".[48])

The notion that Solomon's Temple was "an Israelite contribution to the architecture of the ancient East" aptly sums up its significance in the Near Eastern region in ancient times.

Summary and Conclusions

In comparative studies carried out in a bid to find an architectural parallel to Solomon's Temple, as described in I Kings 6:1–10, among the temples of the ancient Near East, no true match has been found in most of the parameters—not even in the vicinity of Canaan (i.e., Syria), nor where the Temple's builders and engineers came from, namely, Phoenicia. The temples uncovered in northern Syria—two in Tel-Taayinat and one at Ain Dara—prompted much excitement among scholars, who almost unanimously agreed to present these as parallels of Solomon's Temple. However, as we have seen in this study, these temples differ in many architectural features from Solomon's Temple in the biblical description, and so cannot be said to be true parallels or even sources of inspiration for Solomon's Temple.

In recent years, a Judean temple dating to the early ninth century BCE has been uncovered at Moza (biblical Maza), which corresponds in almost every respect to the description of Solomon's Temple. Its geographic proximity and common architectural and cultural background, coupled with the absence of any true parallel of such a design in the ancient Near East, suggests that this design is of Judahite provenance. This discovery of a Judaic temple near Jerusalem is an important contribution to the debate over the historical veracity of Solomon's Temple in the tenth century BCE, and sheds new light on the issue of its architectural and conceptual origins.

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[44]) Kamlah, J., "Temples of the Levant – Comparative Aspects," in: *Temple Building and Temple Cult, Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2-1 Mill. BCE)*, ed. Kamlah, J., Wiesbaden, 2012, p 521.

[45]) In the view of Shua Kisilevitz..

[46]) Herzog, *Miqdash Shlomo* [Solomon's Temple) [in Hebrew].

[47]) *Temples in Palestine*, p. 113.

[48]) Ahlström, G. W., Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine, Leiden, 1982, p.36

Appendix - table compares northern temples with Solomon's Temple

source	Correspondence	acropolis	Three rows of hewn stone & cedar	Devir is a discrete entity	side chambers	width/length ratio 1:3	one room	Entrance on symetric axis	Orientation	Free-standing Pillars	Long Room	Origion	Activate Period	Name
												Israeli	Iron II	Solomon's Temple
Callaway, The 1964 Ai Excavationsw *Basor* 17 1965 31-39	2/12	*											E.B	Et Tell
Loud G. *Megiddo II* Chicago 1948 fig 143	1/12												E.B	Megiddo Stra. 7
Loud G. *Megiddo II* Chicago 1948 78-87 fig 180 -	1/12												EB/M.B	Megiddo stra. 15
Moortgat A Tell Chuera III 1962 plan 2	4/12											Temple for 2 gods	EB	Tell Chuera
Dunand,F*ouilles the Babilos 1* Paris 296-299 fig 248	1/12												M.B	Byblos buiding 2
Notes and News *IEJ 23* 1973 243 fig.1	1/12												M.B	Shechem building 7300
Woolley, *Alalakh* Oxford 1955 71-73 fig.4	0/12												M.B	Alalakh stra. 12
Davey 1980	0/12												M.B	Alalakh stra. 7
Margueron J. Quatre Campagnes de Fouilles 1972-74 *Syria 52* 62 fig.3	5/12											Temple for 2 gods	M.B	Meskene
Matthiae P. Unite et Development du Temple dans du Bronz Moyen *RAI 20* 1975 49 pl.3	5/12												M.B	Tell Mardikh D
IBID 63 Pl.8	5/12												M.B	Tell Mardikh B
Parott A. *Mari Capitale Fabuleuse* 1974 100-108	5/12											Temple for 2 gods	M.B	Mari Temple of Dagan
Wright G. *Schechem The Biography of A Biblical City* London 1965 80-102	3/12											Migdol	M.B	Shchem
Loud G. *Megiddo II* Chicago 1948 102-105 fig 247	2/13											Migdol	M.B	Megiddo
Schaffer The Cuneiform Texts of RasShamra Lpndon 1939 pl/39	0/12											Temple to Baal	M.B/LB	Rsa Shamra
Schaffer The Cuneiform Texts of RasShamra Lpndon 1939 pl/39	0/12											Temple to Dagan	M.B/LB	Rsa Shamra
Yadin, Hazor 1972 102-104 fig.26	4/12												M.B/LB	Hazor area A
Yadin, Hazor 1972 75-95 fig.20 ;	2/12												LB	Hazor area H
Clamer and Ussishkin A Canaanite Temple at Tel Lachish, *BA 40.2* 1977 71-76	2/12												L.B	Lachish stra. 6
Rowe, A. *The four Canaanite Temples of Eth Shan* u-pen 1940 13-21 ch.3 pl.8	0/12												L.B	Beth Shan stra.7
Dunand,F*ouilles the Babilos 1* Paris 1954 fig 767	0/12												L.B	Byblos- obelisk temple
Usishkin - Lachish 2	1/12												L.B	Lachish
Orthmann W. Mumbarat 1974 *MDOG 108* 1975 26-29 Ibid 29-32	4/12												L.B	Mumbaqat temple II
Rowe, A. *The four Canaanite Temples of Eth Shan* u-pen 1940 22-30 h.4 pl.10	2/12												LB-I.A	Beth Shan stra.5
Loud G. *Megiddo II* Chicago 1948 25 fig 382	0/12												LB-I.A	Megiddo area AA stra.8
Arad: it's inscriptions and Temple, *BA 31* 1968 1-32	4/12											Israelite	IA2	Arad
Kohlmeyer 2012 pp. 55-65	4/12												IA2	Aleppo
Fugman E. *Hama II.* 1 Copenhagen 1958 234 fig/ 308	5/12												IA2	Hama stra. E
Loud G. *Megiddo II* Chicago 1948	3/12												IA2	Megiddo stra. 7A
Bourke 2012 pp. 169-171	4/12											Canaanite	IA2	Pella
Karageorghis V. *Kition* London 1976 cha.5	4/12											Ashtoreth Temple	IA2	Kition
Vaux R. Le Fouille de Tell el Farah pres Naplouse *RB 64* 1957 575 fig.8	2/12												IA2	Tell el Pharah
Haines C. *Exacavations in the Plane of Antioch II* 1971 53-55 pls.100, 103	6/12												IB	Tell Taynat bldg. 2
Harrison, T., "West Syrian Megaron or Neo-Assyrian Langraum	4/12												IB	Tell Taynat bldg. 16
Harrison, T., "West Syrian Megaron or Neo-Assyrian Langraum	4/12											Ishtar Temple	IA2	Ain Dara
S. Gitin 2012 p. 231	6/12											Phalestinite	IB	Eekron 650
Mazzoni 2010	5/12												IAB	Tell Afis
Kisilevitz, S., "The Iron IIA Judahite Temple at Tel Moza"	10/12		?									Judhaite	IAB	Moza
	5/12											first and second millenium		Egyptian palaces*

All Egypyan's temples in 2nd and 1st centuries BCE were same model *

Correspondance	
NO correspondance	
Quistion	