

Solomon's Temple, King Hiram, Hiram Abiff & the Phoenicians

From the book
Phoenician Secrets
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Every reader of the Old Testament is familiar with the story of how King Solomon, King Hiram of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff came together to build Solomon's Temple in 966 BC. That temple became an integral part of Freemasonry, providing everything from the layout of the lodge room with its pillars of Jachin and Boaz, to the rituals of craft Masonry, Royal Arch, and higher degrees.

Now the book *Phoenician Secrets* points out something that has been in plain sight for almost 3000 years yet virtually never explored: King Hiram and Hiram Abiff were Phoenicians from the city of Tyre. The significance of this is that the wonderfully complex and richly textured Phoenician society turns out to have a number of similarities to Freemasonry. One of these was the strong Phoenician penchant for secrecy in shielding their affairs from outsiders. But there were many other similarities as well.

To begin this story at the beginning -- how do we know King Hiram and Hiram Abiff were Phoenicians? To see this, consider that the city of Tyre was one of the three original cities of the Phoenicians, going back to it's founding around 2750 BC. This is affirmed in all the traditional and modern historical sources, including:

In the wish to get the best information that I could on these matters, I made a voyage to Tyre in Phoenicia. . . .

Herodotus 2:44

By now all Syria and all Phoenicia except Tyre were under Macedonian control, and Alexander [the Great] was encamped on the mainland which was separated from the city of Tyre by a narrow strait.

**Quintus Curtius Rufus
The History of Alexander 4.2:1**

In Tyre, quantities of Phoenician pottery from very disturbed levels were recovered in 1970. . . .

Bikai, *Pottery of Tyre* p.1

Next, we know that Hiram was king of Tyre during the time of King David and King Solomon, as pointed out in the Jewish Tanakh and the Old Testament of the Bible.

And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father; for Hiram was ever a [great admirer] of David. And Solomon sent unto Hiram saying . . . "I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God . . . therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon. . . ."

1 Kings 5:1-6

Since some people do not believe everything in the Bible is historical fact, it was reassuring to find a confirmation of Hiram's historical existence in the writings of Josephus.

Upon the death of Abibalus, his son Hirom took the kingdom. This king . . . joined the temple of Jupiter Olympius, which stood before in an island by itself, to the city, by raising a causeway between them. . . . They say further, that Solomon, when he was king of Jerusalem, sent problems to Hirom to be solved, and desired he would send others back for him to solve. . . .

Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1:17

Which brings us to Hiram Abiff, the master builder, who was described to us this way.

And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.

1 Kings 7:13-14

Clearly we see that Hiram Abiff was from the Phoenician city of Tyre. Yet his mother was from the Hebrew tribe of Naphtali occupying what is now Northern Israel beside the Sea of Galilee. Through his mother, then, he could have claimed Jewish heritage. Since his father was from the Phoenician city of Tyre, that heritage was also his. For all we know, Hiram retained this "dual citizenship" for the rest of his life. But it is also clear that upon his father's death (his mother was a widow) Hiram decided to stay in Tyre rather than move to his mother's homeland near Galilee. Hiram was still living in that Phoenician city and practicing his father's building trade when....

King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.

1 Kings 7:13

The many vivid stories of this long-lived Phoenician society are then explored in *Phoenician Secrets*, bringing out many practices which will be immediately familiar to every Mason. The rituals of Masonry are not disclosed in this book; it is hoped that every Mason already knows them. However all the details of the corresponding Phoenician society are fully disclosed.

This is in every sense a complete history of these intriguing people in the ancient Mediterranean who deeply affected other societies around them. They especially affected the roots of Freemasonry, making this a wonderful experience for every Mason.