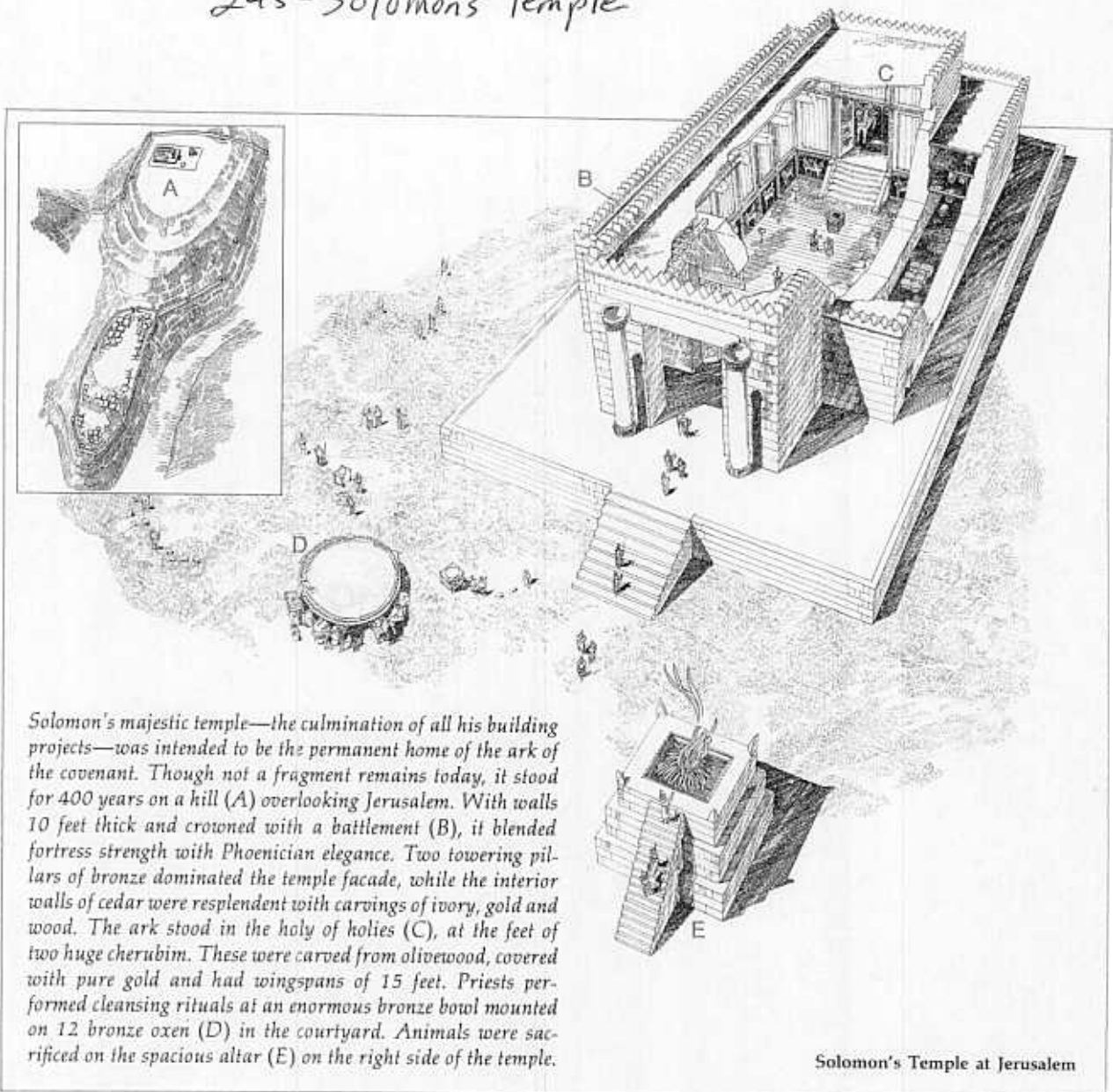


245-Solomon's Temple



Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem

to hamper an enemy. The scope of Solomon's building program indicates that he was a very ambitious man. He built with the idea that Jerusalem was to be among the most splendid and powerful cities in the Near East, and in his time it was certainly an important place.

"Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year."

With a prime minister and a growing staff of civil servants to aid him, Solomon had time to study a wide variety of subjects ranging from

human psychology—illustrated by the story of the two harlots' dispute over the child*—to natural science. "He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish." His reputation for such knowledge had intrigued the queen of Sheba.

Solomon is said to have collected over 3000

* Two harlots, each claiming an infant as her own, came to Solomon asking that he settle their dispute. He called for a sword and announced that he would divide the baby in two, giving half to each woman. One woman cried out, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means slay it," though the other agreed to his solution. Solomon awarded the baby to the first woman, knowing that no mother would permit the killing of her own child.