



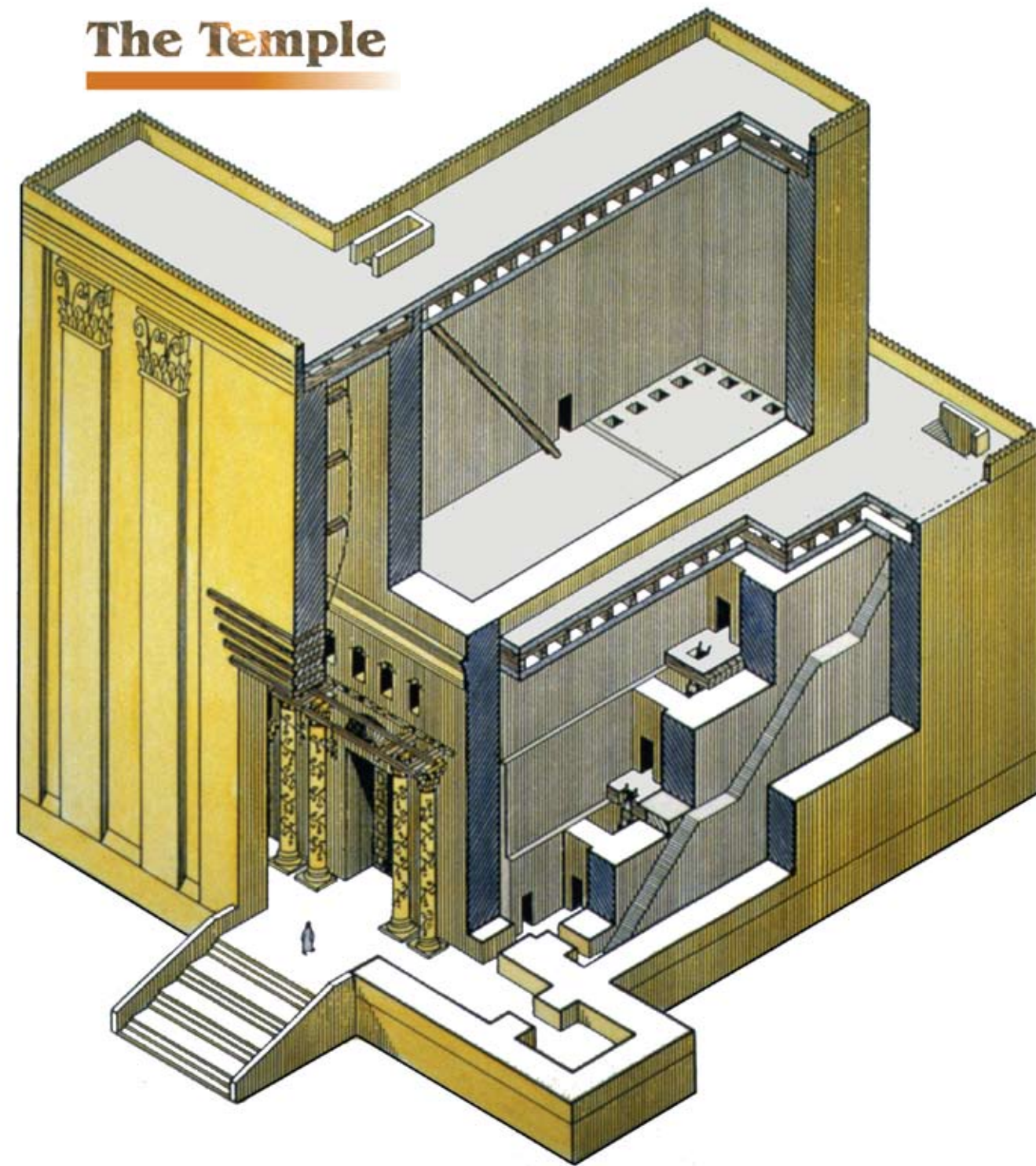
The chambers on the north side of the Temple.

words, the portion of this building that extended beyond the line of the *Hel* was not considered holy. One of the rooms stored the altar-stones which the Syrian kings had defiled, while the other had steps leading down to an underground mikveh or ritual bath. Of the two chambers within the *Hel*, that in the southwest was used to keep the lambs in readiness for the daily sacrifices, and that in the southeast was used to make the shewbread. The building was known as the Chamber of the Hearth because of the fires that were kept burning there continually to warm the priests who ministered barefoot.

On the south side of the Temple Court, there was a parallel arrangement of gate-houses. These were, from east to west, the

Water Gate, the Gate of the Firstlings and the Kindling Gate. In between these gate-houses was the Golah (or Exile) Chamber, where water was drawn from a cistern beneath, and a Wood Chamber. *Middot* also mentions another building, on the south side of the Temple Court, which was vital for the organization of the Temple. This was known as the Chamber of Hewn Stone (*Lishkat ha-Gazit*) and was the site of the convening of the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish legislative, religious, and judicial body for judgment. Edersheim notes that "it ought to be remarked that about the time of Christ the Sanhedrin removed its sittings from the Hall of Square Stones (*sic*) to another on the east of the Temple-court" (p. 53, n.1, 54).

The Temple



The five oak beams over the entrance to the Temple Porch are clearly visible in this cutaway view. The facade has been removed so that the four columns over which the Golden Vine wreathed can be seen. This view also makes it

possible to appreciate the description of the Temple in Middot 4.7 as "like to a lion...narrow behind and wide in front." The writer of the Mishnaic tractate makes the comparison with Ariel, one of the biblical titles of Jerusalem, meaning "Lion

of God." The Temple itself was only 70 cubits (120 ft., 36.75 m) wide and 78 cubits (134 ft., 40.95 m) long. Three storeys of cells surrounded the Temple proper of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Above these stood an

Upper Chamber, which had a device for lowering baskets into the Holy of Holies for maintenance purposes and a ladder in the form of two cedar beams with steps cut into them, to reach the upper roof.