

The Soreg.

A reticulated fence of sticks, called "soreg," 10 handbreadths in height and at a distance of 10 cubits from the outer wall of the courts, surrounded the Temple. This fence was on the edge of the foundation of the platform called "ḥel," which was between the fence and the courts. The soreg served as a barrier beyond which Gentiles and the ceremonially unclean might not pass (Kelim i. 8); and it was provided with a guarded entrance opposite each gate of the courts. The exclusion of Gentiles angered the Greeks, who, when they gained control over the Jews, made thirteen openings in the soreg; but after the Maccabean victory these breaches were repaired. Leading up from the ḥel to the courts were twelve marble steps, each of $\frac{1}{2}$ cubit rise. These steps were protected from the sun and rain; and on them the people sat and rested (Pes. 13b).



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