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Letters

Orientation in Jerusalem

My attention was drawn to the article "Getting From Here to There" (SN: 3/19/83, p. 188)... The research conducted by Marvin Levine reported in Wray Herbert's article is most interesting. I should like to link his work with my own experience of overcoming a psychological barrier in connection with the Temples of Jerusalem.

The location of these ancient temples, the First Temple erected by King Solomon, and its successor the Second Temple rebuilt by Zerubabel, has for generations been enshrouded in mystery. My claim is that one of the reasons for the failure of scholars and explorers to solve the Temple puzzle is that they read maps of the Temple area in Jerusalem in the conventional way with *north* at the head of the map. I, too, at

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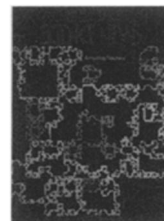
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Cover: The labyrinthine pattern shown, called a Mandelbrot cluster, is the latest fractal creation from Benoit B. Mandelbrot, who invented fractal geometry about a decade ago. Fractals like this one are becoming important tools for describing irregular natural forms and representing physical processes like diffusion. (Illustration: IBM Research)



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the beginning of my research on the location of the Second Temple was likewise "mind set."

Some time later, I attempted to live in Temple times by placing myself in the position of those who imported to posterity the literary information about the Temple—its description and dimensions. A different stage setting emerged. For example, finding one's bearings was entirely divorced from north as the principal direction. The direction of the Temple that mattered was east-west, not north-south; the Holy of Holies was situated in the west as a demonstrative negation of the sun cult. This meant that maps of the Temple area had to be rotated through 90° with *west* and not north at the head of the map. In this way, the Temple problem was simplified. It was then possible by synthesizing two types of evidence, the literary sources and archaeological finds of *known bearing*, to determine precisely the location of both Temples.

Another point of possible interest is that when I have laid a map or aerial photograph of the Temple area before an interested person, he invariably turns it so that north is at the top. I, on the other hand, want to turn it through 90°; I have been thoroughly conditioned to view this site as in Temple times.

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