

NEW DIRECTIONS

The Director Writes

Over the past two and a half years, I have tried on this page to give a director's-eye view of the nature, scope and utilization of our collections, of our archives resulting from expeditions and collecting, and of our publics, actual and potential, for whom the Museum exists and for whose benefit, as we hope, the policies emerging on these pages are being developed.

Over the next few issues of *Expedition*, I shall want to say something of our research in the field in the vexed condition of world affairs in which this decade began, and something also of the Museum's attitudes and potential in face of the world-wide destruction of archaeological sites whether by development or by the search for loot to feed the art markets of the great cities.

But let us pause for a moment. As these words are written, the year is turning into the eighties, the decade in which the Museum will celebrate its centenary, on 6 December 1987. This is a challenge and a target about which a great deal more will be heard as the date draws nearer. How do we stand, though, at this moment, after two years of 'new directions'?

The collections are being inventoried, store-rooms have been cleaned and re-organized, exhibits, large and small have been mounted, notably our first big exhibition for many years, the successful "Search for Ancient Egypt" which closed in September. An exciting two-year schedule of exhibitions is now before us, "Egyptian Mummies and Their Secrets," "The Looting of the Maya," and our biggest effort to date, "The Arts of Benin," for which we have just received a one-year planning grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The revived monograph series is under way, with three volumes published, three in proof and as many as ten more on the stocks. By the spring we shall have published as many monographs in two and a half years as in the previous decade. The *MASCA Journal* has been launched and its third issue has just appeared. A major report on our archives has been produced and three grant applications have been launched to provide the funds to set up the best museum archive in the country.

MASCA flourishes; MICA (The Museum Institute for Conservation Archaeology) has been born and is alive and well and digging in Philadelphia and round about. A major plan for renovation of the entire building is far advanced; a very major development campaign will be launched this year. The Museum was in the field in ten countries in 1979 and will be as far flung this year.

We are desperately short of money, but times of difficulty are times to plan for the future. The course now being charted by the Board of Managers is consciously designed to take the Museum beyond our centenary and far into the twenty-first century.

MARTIN BIDDLE