

Editorial

For a few days last May Antiquity made a rare appearance among the more prosaic posters pasted to Roman walls. A detail of one of Piranesi's engravings of the crumbling Arch of Titus graphically represented the creed that there can be no future if the past is disregarded (*Nessun futuro senza passato*), while announcing the presence in the city of a sizeable gathering of ICOMOS members. On a personal note, may the new editor of *Monumentum* record that it was during the General Assembly that he was persuaded to accept the flattering invitation to assume his new role.

One factor which influenced the decision was the realization that so many of his colleagues who were present in Rome possessed valuable experience and learning that ought to be made available to a wider audience; and it was only after receiving many offers of help that he felt confident enough to take on the responsibility. As a result, forty colleagues from all over the world have been invited to become Editorial Correspondents; without their assistance the task of representing the international world of conservation would be impossible. It is encouraging that almost half have signified their acceptance and none, so far, has refused. Their names and addresses will be printed in future issues of the journal, and the Editorial Committee looks forward to their active participation.

Monumentum is, of course, well known already to ICOMOS members, and the new editor shares M. Parent's gratitude for the work of Prof. Lemaire and his colleagues. Nevertheless, at this time when the method of publication and the editorial direction are changing, it is appropriate to attempt to outline the general lines it is proposed to follow. Although the journal is intended primarily for conservators in the building professions, it is designed to attract a readership in other sectors as well as a non-professional but interested public. The scope is intended to extend from a single element in a building to a man-made landscape: and although there are concentrations of conservation in some parts of the world (most obviously in some European countries), there is an obligation to be as international as possible in the subjects selected as topics for the articles. There will also be an attempt to balance the contributions in the two official languages of ICOMOS, English and French.

Although there will be a sound practical and technical basis which will give the journal the standing of a reputable reference, there is also a duty to present views that might be controversial, and to discuss mistakes that have been made. *Monumentum* will aim to be the single recognized vehicle for international exchange of information about achievements, projects, ideas, exhibitions and publications; but it will also draw attention when

appropriate to a need for action. In practice, conservation is a unique combination of historical understanding and knowledge, and of sympathetic treatment and design; this quality will be implicit in the balance of articles published, and these will also emphasize the individual, personal nature of conservation in practice within generally accepted doctrines.

The intention is to group the contributions over a period within categories which will provide a number of series of thematically connected articles. Those which will be introduced initially, some of which are incorporated in this present issue, are:

The world of conservation

This will consist of interviews with selected architect/conservators who will discuss their work and ideas. The subjects will be chosen so that each will be representative of one or more important aspects of conservation doctrine and organization as well as being an experienced professional in his own right.

Areas of concern

Historic town centres, sites or groups of buildings will be discussed in relation to their quality and significance. Some of the articles (as in the present issue) will be based on UNESCO reports with the permission of the countries concerned: others will be based on alternative forms of professional assessment. The status of *Monumentum* will carry weight if these articles are used in an attempt to secure action.

Design in conservation

Analyses of individual additions and adaptations, or new buildings in an established context, will be presented as case studies; but as design is such a fundamental element in conservation it is intended to include, for example, the presentation of buildings and sites, and the introduction of new elements and works of art in buildings. The first of a series of four articles commissioned from Roy Worskett, 'Design in Conservation, New Buildings in Historic Areas', will now be published in Volume 25, Number 2; we regret this unavoidable change in our advertised programme.

Techniques and materials

Potentially the largest section, this will report on completed work and provide detailed technical information on methods and materials used. It will also contain case studies of individual conservation projects which include a large element of structural work.

In retrospect

Since an historical knowledge is essential in the work of an architect/conservator there will be assessments of key buildings in the history of conservation; these will incorporate the most up-to-date historical research. There will also be contributions which discuss the work or writings of key architect/conservators in history. As a memento of last year's General Assembly in Rome, the editor offers a personal contribution concentrating on the early nineteenth-century treatment of the Arch of Titus which figured so prominently in the ICOMOS literature.

In addition to these major series of articles there will be reviews of exhibitions and books; and in time it is hoped to include a chronicle of activities based on information received from Editorial Correspondents.

During the relatively short span of fourteen years since the publication of the first issue of *Monumentum* there have been some noticeable changes in official reactions to the broad concept of conservation. These are by no means universal; but some countries have introduced legislation and made more generous provision for the upkeep of historic buildings. Rising building costs, shortage of materials, and public pressure have all resulted in a reappraisal for continued use of the inherited building stock in general. These events, in turn, have had an effect on the building professions, and the new responsibilities have raised questions of professional competence and the need for training specialists. The lack of sound principles of evaluation and treatment, the almost lost knowledge of traditional building methods and materials, and the ambivalence in design decisions within the existing buildings and towns; these are some of the major questions facing the professional conservation world today. If *Monumentum* can help to resolve any of them in some degree it will have achieved the ambitions of those who founded it fourteen years ago and those who now take over the task.

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