

EDITORIAL

Regular subscribers and readers will notice that having completed its first 75 issues, *African research & documentation* has undergone a major design facelift. A new typeface, a new page layout with running footers, and a re-designed cover are all intended to make the journal fresher in appearance, more striking on the shelf and easier to read. Diana Guthrie has been the moving spirit in this redesign, and her proposals (based on suggestions by Doppler Press) were discussed and the new layout finalized at the annual ARD Management Committee meeting in February 1998. The changes mark both a modest but continuing increase in the number of subscribers to the journal (and it should be noted that at the same Management Committee meeting it was agreed to make no changes in the subscription rate before the year 2000) and a re-affirmation of SCOLMA's commitment to the journal. It continues to attract scholarly contributions, many with a long term value, (it is pleasing to see the significant number of contributions to ARD which are cited each year in 'Africana reference works', the annual column in *African book publishing record*) as well as being hospitable to shorter items, often of short term interest and to simple announcements and news items. The reviews section has blossomed under the careful husbandry of Terry Barringer, and is now more extensive both in number of titles covered and in types of material accepted for review than it was some years ago before the creation of the post of Reviews Editor.

Coming issues will continue to build upon past contributions, especially those which have explored poorly documented categories of source material. There will be Part 2 of 'Photographs of Africa: a preliminary bibliography' and hopefully papers on the photographs collection of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and on photographs of early exploration in Africa. There should be more articles on oral history sources. It is hoped that the annual supplements to SCOLMA's *Writings on African archives* will continue, together with a series of supplements to *Maps and mapping in Africa* (1997). A nod to the past will hopefully include bibliographies of the writings of two of SCOLMA's distinguished past Chairmen, Jim Pearson and Donald Simpson. With regard to the present and future ARD will continue to monitor the growing number of electronic sources in the Africanist field, while sadly noting casualties among paper sources, not all of them compensated for by electronic replacements. The bad news for all those involved in African studies around the world was the apparent demise at the end of 1997 of the Hans Zell imprint (see items in 'Notes and news' in this present issue). Although the parent company Bowker-Saur have declared their continuing commitment to publishing the serial bibliographies in the former Zell stable: *International African bibliography*, *African studies abstracts* and *African book publishing record* there is obviously concern over their long term future. It is interesting to note that *Index Islamicus*, acquired from Mansell by Bowker-Saur at much the same

time as IAB, moves on to CD-ROM later this year. There were calls at the Africana Libraries Council meeting in Columbus, Ohio in November 1997 for a world-wide co-operative approach to indexing the periodical literature of African studies. Can this be achieved? In what format(s) might the end product be published? *ARD* will carry articles looking at the various issues involved.

The previous paragraph looks at some of the plans for the content of future issues, but of course many of the most interesting contributions are unplanned, at least by the editorial board. *ARD* is always happy to have contributions offered for publication, of any length and on any aspect that falls within its remit 'library, archive and bibliographical matters relating to Africa and African studies'. As overall Editor I should like to express my appreciation of the efforts of all those who make up the *ARD* team (see details inside front cover), but I am sure that all of us would agree that what will really sustain the journal and its readership as we move on towards issue 100 are the contributions, from short news items to full-scale articles. Our columns are open.

John McIlwaine