

Martin Brett

Editor, 1991–2002

Appreciations are less painful to write than obituaries, yet in the case of a departing co-Editor, there is still a funereal note to strike. Martin has given nearly twelve years of devoted service to the *Journal*, and the entreaties of all around him in the *Journal* office were not sufficient emotional blackmail to extend this period. I could not have wished for a better, more meticulous, more reliably supportive or more entertaining colleague in the last seven years. As I was entering courtship with the *Journal* and judging whether this might become a promising union, Martin's excellent post-prandial armagnac was a strong indication that we could do business together, and so it has proved.

Dual Monarchies, as the Habsburgs discovered, are never easy ventures, particularly since the British transport system conspires to enforce a *cordon sanitaire* between Oxford and Cambridge. However, in this Dual Monarchy, the situation has never been desperate, and rarely has it been serious. Martin has been at the heart of our enterprise in our Cambridge office, and his presence has made the toil of a journey from the other place seem like a day's holiday in the university calendar. His hospitality to his fellow-Editor has been unflinching, and over lunch and coffee, his commentaries on the academic scene would have aroused the envy of Juvenal. With exquisite tact and self-denial, he has never allowed his passions for cricket and interesting motorcars to impinge on our conversation.

Over the last quarter-century, the *Journal* editors have customarily held two epochs of Christian history in severalty, drawing a boundary set at the fall of Granada and Columbus' landfall across the Atlantic. At all times during our joint tenancy, Martin has nevertheless drawn on his encyclopaedic knowledge of the world of scholarship to suggest appropriate referees and book reviewers in all periods, while constantly deploring the fact that such ever-growing crowds of authors have chosen to launch their creativity on the academic world. He has the ability of a born tutor to scan the text of a submitted article on any subject and spot the inconsistencies, the circular arguments, the solecisms; his sense of verbal balance and clarity of expression is unsurpassed. In some cases, articles have become (in the phrase of modern popular publishing) 'as told to Martin Brett'. In expressing my gratitude, I am speaking for a host of contributors who have found that they ended up speaking more wisely than they knew. But I am also happy to join with Mary

Mitchell, Christine Linehan and Anne Waites, the other members of the editorial team during Martin's time, in recording a more conscious debt of thanks to him for his constant thoughtfulness, good nature and willingness to offer sound advice.

At the conclusion of a royal funeral, there is always a discreet change of atmosphere as the new monarch is welcomed. With distinctly more cheerful anticipation than that with which Philip of Spain marked the accession of Queen Elizabeth on the death of his English Queen Regnant, I warmly welcome James Carleton Paget as fellow-Editor, and do so with all the more confidence because of the flourishing state of the *Journal*, so reinforced by Martin's sterling guidance.

DIARMAID MACCULLOCH