

## IN MEMORIAM

**John Thomas Gilchrist (1927-1992)**

While travelling to Ottawa in a fierce December snowstorm, John Gilchrist was tragically killed in an automobile accident. His death, following closely the accidental bicycling death in Toronto of his friend, Michael Sheehan of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, was a severe blow to medieval canonistic scholarship in Canada. At his death Gilchrist was engaged in a number of major research projects: a book-length manuscript, *Law, Society, and Religion in the Age of the Investiture Controversy*; a study and edition of the late eleventh-century canonical *Collection in Four Books*; and numerous articles on such subjects as the early crusades in canon law and reform canon law collections of the Gregorian period.

Gilchrist, born in England of parents who maintained properties of the Jesuits, received his BA in history at the University of Leeds. After two years in military service, he completed work for a Diploma in Education, and in 1957 he received a PhD, the first graduate at the University of Leeds to have been awarded this degree in medieval history. Thereafter, he held professorships at the University of Adelaide in South Australia and at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. Gilchrist was one of the handful of doctoral students who satisfied the demanding standards of Walter Ullmann, and it was Ullmann who transmitted to him his loving scepticism of the ways of the ecclesiastical establishment and his deep concern for understanding medieval legal texts. It was also Ullmann who put Gilchrist on to the canonistic manuscript editing project for which he is and will remain best known, the edition and study of the late eleventh-century *Collection in Seventy-Four Titles*. Despite its critical importance as the first major canonical collection compiled by supporters of the eleventh-century reformers of the church, scholars were dependent for the text on Thaner's apparatus in the partial edition of the *Collectio canonum* of Anselm. Gilchrist's edition was the first major canonical collection published in the *Monumenta Iuris Canonici* edited by Stephan Kuttner, and it set a high standard for canonistic editing in that distinguished series.

Gilchrist was not simply a superb text editor; he was an accomplished historian who could interpret what his texts said. Time and again, he would make a sweep through the dozens of canonical collection he had mastered, looking for their treatment of, for example, the Jews, crusaders, economic theory, or a myriad other subjects. All of these sweeps resulted in long, fundamental articles, many in the *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung*. In the view of many scholars Gilchrist's most significant contribution to medieval history in general was his demonstration that what has usually been called the Gregorian reform of the late eleventh century was not really Gregorian as seen in the eyes of contemporary canonist. Gilchrist demonstrated this through a careful and extensive search through dozens of canonical collection written in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In these he discovered that the