PREFACE

The preface is, perhaps, the most difficult part of a book to write. It is not easy to express gratitude in the formal prose of a few brief paragraphs and make that expression sound at all convincing, either to those for whom it is intended or to the casual reader who runs his eyes over this page as he moves on quickly to the text of the book itself. And yet not to acknowledge the debts which one owes, however justifiable the hesitation, would be far worse than to acknowledge them inadequately.

The research upon which this book is based was undertaken at Harvard University and at the University of Göttingen. The project was made possible with the aid of the Pilling Traveling Fellowship from Drew University, the Westengard Traveling Fellowship from Harvard University and a Rockefeller Doctoral Fellowship. These research grants enabled me to gain access to important research collections in European libraries, to buy requisite microfilms of rare manuscripts and to discuss my project with scholars engaged in pursuing related research.

Father Reinhold Weijenborg, O.F.M., and Father Damasus Trapp, O.S.A., discussed my research with me while it was still in its early stages. Professor Hubert Jedin of Bonn reacted to my thesis when it had taken more definite shape and offered valuable criticism. To those who read and criticised the finished manuscript—Professor George H. Williams of Harvard, Dr. Maria Grossman of Andover-Harvard Library, and Professor Leif Grane of Copenhagen—I owe a special debt of gratitude.

Professor Ernst Wolf of Göttingen, whose important study, *Staupitz und Luther*, is discussed in some detail in the pages which follow, received me graciously into his home and fully and frankly discussed his own work on Staupitz with me. Though I was led finally in my own research to disagree with many of the conclusions which he defended in his earlier book on Staupitz, it was always with the greatest reluctance that I differed with him and only when my own reading of the evidence compelled me to do so.

Professor Heiko A. Oberman, now Director of the Institut für Reformationsgeschichte of the University of Tübingen, guided my research on Staupitz and subjected my results to searching criticism.
He debated page by page, paragraph by paragraph, sentence by sentence the typewritten manuscript as I submitted it to him. And having satisfied himself at last with the development of the argument in the final draft, he became as vigorous an advocate of the finished thesis as he had been a demanding critic of the manuscript. This combination of rigorous scholarship and of warm, personal encouragement stimulated my research on Staupitz and made my study of his thought a far better book than it would otherwise have been.

Finally, I should acknowledge publicly the cheerful willingness with which my wife adapted, not only to the strain of a prolonged period of graduate study and research but also to the strangeness of life in an alien culture. That adaptable spirit contributed not a little to the speedy completion of this book.

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Epiphany, 1968