PREFACE

The contemporary family has within it all the freedom and complication which the liberation from what seemed the natural roles of husband and wife in their relations to each other and to their children has accomplished. Where former times saw women as the guardians of the domestic realm, not only of bearing children and nurturing them but of the whole domestic order, and men as the guardians of economic and political life, of competition and constitution, in the contemporary western world what seemed natural, rational and indeed liberating to previous ages is no longer the measure of our spirit.

There are those in our time who descry the loss of traditional roles and the order they enabled; there are likewise those who revel in the infinite freedom of the individual which has collapsed that order. It is a time of liberty and loss, the freedom and well-being of women, for example, achieved at the cost of broken homes. But emerging from that rubble is the ethical demand that the family not destroy the freedom it is meant to foster. Men also have been opened to participation in domestic activities foreign to them in previous times, and now know something of the struggle of working mothers with little rest at work or at home. Here is ground for a deeper equality and sharing of the burdens of the everyday.

We cannot return to a past age without subjugating the freedom which is its heritage, but we likewise cannot find in the limitless freedom of solitary individuals that which binds one to another and makes possible a common spiritual life. This volume of Animus explores contemporary and historical forms seeking the principles through which we can know better the spiritual order of reason and desire which is the institution of the family.

In this volume, which we order more or less historically, Vernon Provencal sets the theme with his treatment of Aristotle on the family, and Floy Andrews Doull draws a portrait of the Roman family in her essay on St. Augustine's treatise on widowhood. If Doull shows the negative side of family life, from which the Christian would escape in consecrated continence, David Peddle's essay on St. Augustine's account of the development of the child cradles that development in its Trinitarian origin and end. There are three articles on what might be gleaned from seventeenth thought concerning the family: Floy Andrews Doull writes on Descartes' responses to the grave family concerns of Princess Elizabeth; Heidi Ravven suggests the novel thesis that Spinoza provides a philosophy more promising for contemporary feminists than their Cartesian-Kantian presuppositions; and Paul Epstein situates marriage in late seventeenth century France in his reflections on Molière's Le Misanthrope. A second essay on a literary treatment of the family is provided by Holly Pike's analysis of Lucy Maud Montgomery's work. Finally, in F.L. Jackson's essay on the Hegelian account of marriage and the family, the theme is brought to its conclusion in our
own age. Although possessing a certain breadth, the volume offers articles on its theme largely determined by the interests of its contributors. It cannot pretend to be comprehensive of its theme, and invites further reflections in the form of articles on "The Family" to be included in subsequent volumes of *Animus* as supplements to this volume.