Preface

The title of this volume, *Literature and History in the Age of Ideas*, will immediately suggest to those familiar with the writings of George R. Havens the title of his intellectual history *The Age of Ideas: From Reaction to Revolution*. It will also suggest for those who know the "livingness" of that history, which vividly illustrates the principle that "ideas live only in people," one preoccupation of his scholarship. Textual and bibliographical scholarship, analyses of the genesis of individual works and of the evolution of ideas, have led always to the broadest historical and humanistic focuses in Professor Havens's scrutiny of the doctrine of the *Encyclopédie*—that men are only what ideas have made them. His preoccupation in that scrutiny has constantly been to clarify the complex interactions of books and ideas, in eighteenth-century Frenchmen's rethinking of their past, their present, and their future directions, with the men, the material conditions, and the institutions of a France evolving "from reaction to revolution." With the scope and diversity that the general topic of this volume has been given by its contributors—from essays in bibliography, on the conditions of the book trade, in the history of science and of political theory, general considerations of historical writing and literary genres, the evolution of the Enlightenment and its heritages, to the series of essays on individual works of *philosophes* and men of letters—a number of orders of presentation would have been possible. The most prudent arrangement might well have been, following Bayle's example, an alphabetical one.

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The essays in this volume have been arranged, however, perhaps less prudently, but in the spirit of *The Age of Ideas*, by subject in a broadly chronological order. The essays on Voltaire, whose presence is, moreover, very often felt in the volume, on Rousseau, and on Diderot, have been grouped together, nonchronologically, as have been three essays on books, which are further linked by the common but diversely illustrated subterfuges of clandestinity. A first grouping of essays, whose subjects and chronology suggest "Beginnings" in an Age of Ideas, designated itself naturally in those essays that examine the new alignment of the arts and the new rhetoric of the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*; the new history that emerges from the pyrrhonist and humanist traditions; the consolidation of experimental science and of Newton's influence in France; Montesquieu's transformation of journalistic sources into the satiric art of *Les Lettres persanes*; the making of a *philosophe* in that intellectual circle around Jean Bouhier, from the late 1720s to the 1730s, in which Cuenz worked toward a synthesis resembling Voltaire's during the Cirey years. Similarly, the four concluding essays of the volume suggested quite as naturally the heading of "Heritages," as they examine the ideological and creative reactions of Lamartine and of Stendhal to the heritages of the Enlightenment, readership of French texts in the American eighteenth century, and conclude with a personal essay on the conscience of the Enlightenment. But what was less clear, if headings were to be given, was the point at which "Beginnings" as a section was to end or that at which "Heritages" was to begin. The majority of the essays that treat Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, tendencies of thought or trends in literature, explore beginnings—of individual thought to come into contact with itself, of literary creativity to find its expressive resources, and of both to mobilize the tactics of clandestine organization and public challenge. The ever-present "beginnings" of all authentic intellectual activity and artistic creation preclude finally—as do the "heritages" of this Age of
Ideas situated in the continuity of traditions of other ages of ideas—all but the most hypothetical subdivisions.

At each stage in the planning, editing, and completion of this volume, I have found nothing but good will, good wishes, and good advice. I wish especially to thank Professor Otis Fellows and Professor Georges May for their wisely practical advice and generous encouragement. The encouragement and assistance of the chairman of the Department of Romance Languages, Professor David Griffin, of Professor John Rule of the Ohio State Department of History, of Dr. Richard Armitage, Professors Eleanor Bulatkin, and Walter Meiden, and of Mr. Weldon Kefauver and Mr. Robert Demorest of the Ohio State University Press, have also greatly aided my completion of this book. It has been a privilege and a great personal pleasure to edit and to offer this volume of studies from former students, colleagues, and friends, to Professor Havens and to offer to students of the eighteenth century in France the bibliography of his writings to date. The project of this volume of studies was born in conversations with the late Robert Mitchell, professor of French at the University of Pittsburgh, whose work with Professor Havens on Voltaire’s Mahomet, long in revision, was to have enriched this collection of essays. His death before the project took shape has deprived me of the keen-minded discussions of it he certainly would have engaged in and saddens all of his colleagues who looked forward with pleasure and confidence to reading his final positions in those now interrupted discussions.

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