ON TIME, PUNCTUALITY, AND DISCIPLINE
IN EARLY MODERN CALVINISM

In *On Time, Punctuality, and Discipline in Early Modern Calvinism*, Max Engammare explores how the sixteenth-century Protestant reformers of Geneva, France, London, and Bern internalized a new concept of time. Applying a moral and spiritual code to the course of the day, they regulated their relationship with time, which was, in essence, a new relationship with God. As Calvin constantly reminded his followers, God watches his faithful every minute. Come Judgment Day, the faithful in turn will have to account for each minute. Engammare argues that the inhabitants of Calvin’s Geneva invented the new habit of being on time, a practice unknown in Antiquity. It was also fundamentally different from notions of time in the monastic world of the medieval period and unknown to contemporaries such as Erasmus, Vives, the early Jesuits, Rabelais, Ronsard, and Montaigne. Engammare shows that punctuality did not proceed from technical innovation. Rather, punctuality was above all a spiritual, social, and disciplinary virtue.

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Translated by Karin Maag
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To the memory of André (1876–1970)

and

Pierre Engammare (1927–78)
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While writing a book is usually a solitary endeavor, its development arises out of fruitful dialogue. I am pleased to be able to express my appreciation to those who contributed to this book, thanking them for sharing their time with me. The first impetus came from Ms. Marie-Clotilde Hubert, who gave me the opportunity in early 1997 to reflect on the structuring of time in sixteenth-century Geneva. Based on this initial research, I created an outline for a book. I wish to thank the late Michel Simonin, a leading figure in the field of sixteenth-century studies, who allowed me to begin research on the Genevan calendars during a conference on heretical books, held at the Centre d’Etudes Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours in June 1999. Most of the book was written during two periods away from Geneva. In July and August 2000, Karin Maag, the dynamic director of the Meeter Center at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, welcomed me with kindness and efficiency. During my stay, I was given the opportunity to present the results of my research to a select group of interested listeners, including Richard Muller, whose participation led to fruitful debate. Two years later, in June and July 2002, Terence Cave welcomed me to St. John’s College, Oxford, where I completed a draft of the book, using the resources of the college library and the Bodleian. Richard Cooper also made me welcome at Brasenose during the same trip, and read Avec le temps. I am grateful to all of them.

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Finally, Isabelle, who has been for a long time my preferred conversation partner, my first reader, and my primary research colleague, did not support this project at first because she wanted to see me leave Calvin aside for a few moments of scholarly freedom and focus on the *Pictures of the* {

\[2\] The call numbers for books on the understanding and measurement of time in the Warburg library are FAH-FAN and HAF 60–63.
Acknowledgments

Bible. If this book convinces her that it can be useful in any way, that would be my greatest reward … together with the smiles of Anne, Valérie, and Stanislas.

Oxford, the Bodleian Library, July 2002
Rotalier, February 2004
PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Some reviewers indicated that the French edition did not pay enough attention to monastic rules or Books of Hours. I took advantage of this translation to correct this weakness, to make my viewpoint more explicit, and to compare accurately the monastic and medieval ordering of time to the Genevan and Reformed punctuality of the sixteenth century. The reader will find this new section in Chapter 2. I also took advantage of the publication of the English text to present the discovery of the first French Genevan calendar published by Conrad Badius in 1555, which was unknown to me until 2005 (see Chapter 4). Moreover, this English translation allowed me to correct or develop some points, such as technological changes in measurement of time in early modern Europe, and some other minor points here and there.

Last but not least, I gratefully thank Karin Maag who decided to translate this book into English, and did it marvelously.

… and nowadays I add Sibylle’s smiles.

Geneva, November 2008

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Grand Rapids, January 2009