

PREFACE

At the time when I was completing the final draft of this book a major dispute broke out among Catholic scholars concerning the theology of papal infallibility. It was occasioned principally by Hans Küng's study, *Unfehlbar? Eine Anfrage*, and it is still continuing. My book was not provoked by the current controversy and it is not addressed directly to the theological issues that are now being debated—though it may prove to have some relevance for them. The present work deals with the history of papal infallibility. But its aim is not to demonstrate by ingenious historical arguments—in the manner of some older polemical works on this theme—either that the popes have sometimes contradicted one another in the course of the centuries or, alternatively, that the papal magisterium has never erred “from the path of apostolic tradition” in its more solemn pronouncements. My purpose has not been to retrace the paths of old controversies. Instead I have tried to do something new—to provide for the first time an adequate historical account of how the doctrine of papal infallibility originally grew into existence.

Much of the research for this book was carried out in Munich during the academic year 1966-1967. I would like to express my gratitude to the authorities of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek and of the Monumenta Germaniae Historica for permission to work in their rich collections. Through the kind hospitality of Professor Dr. Hermann Tüchle I was also able to use the resources of the Seminar für Kirchengeschichte of the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität.

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The book includes some paragraphs from two previously published articles. These are “‘Sola Scriptura’ and the Canonists” in *Studia Gratiana*, 11 (1967) and “From Thomas of York to William of Ockham” in the Proceedings of the *Congressus De Historia Sollicitudinis Omnium Ecclesiarum* held at Rome in 1967. I am grateful for permission to use this material in the present work.

My wife helped with the index and the typing; but that is not why this book is dedicated to her.

Ithaca, N.Y.

B.T.