PREFACE

This study of clerical power and its effect upon the livelihood and religion of the faithful is an enlarged and revised version of my doctoral dissertation done at the Goethe University in Frankfurt in 1963. In the interlude, several friends have encouraged me to enlarge and revise the work, and offered many suggestions to improve its factual and theoretical base. My decision to rework the dissertation was based on the belief that the subject merited it, and that a more comprehensive and comprehensible view of papal censures would result.

The earlier work has been corrected, rewritten where necessary and enlarged to incorporate recent literature and new information. The dramatic conflict between Florence and the papacy (1375-1378) remains the core of the book. But new first and last chapters now provide the theoretical and historical background, and the future, of the use of papal censures against republican Florence, as well as set the problem of censures within its European context.

I appreciate very much the help of all those—too many to name—who contributed to the research for this work. Special thanks are due my mentors at Frankfurt, Otto Vossler and Werner Göez. From the time the original dissertation was being written, Gene Brucker has shown interest in my work; I admire his critical spirit and appreciate his friendship. Thomas Krueger and Nicolai Rubinstein read all or parts of the present work, and Julius Kirshner made many helpful suggestions. Jane Goldberg helped me throughout the preparation of the manuscript, and the secretarial staff of Illinois’ Department of History unravelled my scribbling with expertise and—good humor.

My debt to my wife Bernice is very great. Mark and Paul Trexler have suffered the fate of sons whose fathers are preoccupied with their work, and have loved and aided me en dépit.

Villa I Tatti
Florence, 1972

1 Economic, Political and Religious Effects of the Papal Interdict on Florence, 1376-1378. A Study of the Secular Penal Power of the Papacy in the Late Middle Ages (Frankfurt am Main, 1964).