This work has been ten years in the making, during which time I have had the privilege to be supported by distinguished research institutions, universities, colleagues, and dear friends.

Most of the research and writing of this book was undertaken at the Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies in Florence, while I was an Andrew W. Mellon fellow there in 2015–16. My first thank you goes to this institution and to the anonymous committee that chose my project as one of the fifteen to be awarded that year, together with Lino Pertile, who was in his last year of directorship at that time. Also, I am most grateful to the two people who recommended me for this fellowship, Paolo Cherchi and Ron Witt, whose generosity during my graduate years at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, will be always fondly remembered.

The year at I Tatti was all the more productive and formative because of the people who were there with me: the director Alina Payne, whose enthusiasm and creativity were contagious, and my fellow scholars, with whom I engaged in many stimulating and constructive discussions. My particular gratitude goes to Davide Baldi, Francesco Bausi, Luisa Capodieci, Mariano Pérez Carrasco, Diletta Gamberini, Allen Grieco, Holly Flora, Ingrid Houssaye Michienzi, Christian Kleinbub, Jonathan Nelson, Diego Pirillo, Courtney Quaintance, and David Rosenthal. I also thank the very helpful, expert librarians and staff of the Villa I Tatti, too many to name in this brief space.

In the same years, I had the pleasure of working at the State Archive of Florence, at the Biblioteca Nazionale and in the Laurentian Library. I want to thank the friends I met at the Archive for their consistent help and discussions on Boccaccio: Nicoletta Baldini, Giuseppe Biscione, Marco Cursi, Francesca Fantappiè, Francesca Klein, Steven Milner, Emanuela Porta Casucci, Laura Regnicoli, Sergio Tognetti, and, most of all, Vieri Mazzoni, whose generosity in time and expertise was always exceptional.

I was fortunate also to spend the summer of 2017 at the Mellon Summer Institute of the Getty Research Institute, where I had far-reaching discussions on Boccaccio, Petrarch, and poetry with my dear friend Maddalena Signorini.

Many colleagues invited me to present my work at their institutions, and I am grateful to them for those opportunities and for the discussions that followed: Marco
Veglia at the University of Bologna (2013), Johannes Bartuschat at the University of Zurich (2013), Zygmunt Barański at the University of Notre Dame (2014), Valerio Cappozzo at Olemiss (2015), Giuseppe Mazzotta at Yale University (2018), Elisa Brill at the University of Toronto (2018), and Sabrina Ferrara at the Centre d’Études Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours (2019). I also wish to thank Tedolinda Barolini for her interest and support of this project during its early stages.

This book would not have made it to publication without the constant encouragement of all my colleagues in the Department of French and Italian at Vanderbilt University, in particular Letizia Modena, William Franke, Andrea Mirabile, and Daniela D’Eugenio. I owe a special thanks to the several chairs who were supportive in very practical ways while I was writing the book: Virginia Scott, Lynn Ramey, Robert Barisky, Laurel Schneider, and Meike Werner. I cannot express all the gratitude I have for William Caferro, chair of the Department of the Classical and Mediterranean Studies, in which I am an affiliated faculty, for the numerous conversations we had on Boccaccio and the other Florentines of the period, for the exchange of archival documents, and for his continuous support through a challenging period of my academic career. Annalisa Azzoni of the Divinity School has always been my best friend in Vandyland, and I cannot leave her out. Our administrative assistant Laura Dossett has also been a major support, as has Marion Pratt, who was at the grant office until 2018.

One reason I have never stopped working on Boccaccio is the community of scholars of Boccaccisti worldwide, active in the American Boccaccio Association (which I have the honour to serve as treasurer, and have served as secretary for two mandates) and the Ente Nazionale Giovanni Boccaccio. These scholars, like Boccaccio, have wit, joy, compassion, deep emotional connections, and understanding of the misadventures of life, all qualities that make our gatherings occasions to celebrate friendship and to work in a collaborative and enthusiastic atmosphere. I cannot name every member of the ABA, but I do want to thank Simone Marchesi for his consistent help, solid presence, and humanity; I had the pleasure to serve the association with, among others, my colleagues and friends Susanna Barsella, Valerio Cappozzo, Francesco Ciabattoni, Maggie Fritz-Morkin, Eugenio Giusti, Timothy Kircher, Victoria Kirkham, Christopher Kleinhenz, Marilyn Migiel, Kristina Olson, and Michael Papio.

A heartfelt thank you is due to all those who have read the manuscript and made suggestions that have improved it enormously; above all, the two anonymous readers for the University of Toronto Press. I also thank Brian Maxson and Gregorio Invrea for their readings, Daniel Solomon for his help in numerous translations, and in particular Maura High, my copy editor, whose friendship and professionalism I have enjoyed from my time at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. For the final touches on my manuscript, sincere thanks is due to copy editor Judy Williams, Barb Porter in the managing editorial department, and Suzanne Rancourt in the acquisitions department at University of Toronto Press.

Last, but not least, my heart is full of gratitude for my son Giorgio, who was just a little boy when I started writing this book and is now a young man, for his sunny smile, affection, and endless joy of life.