Acknowledgements

For a historian of the Middle Ages researching in Italy is a labour of love. There can be no greater pleasure than seeking out the *Archivio di Stato* in Pavia or Milan and spending pleasant days in the company of archivists whose work ethic includes a frequent cappuccino break and a long lunch. I owe much to the many archivists in the state archives of Bergamo, Como, Cremona, Lodi, Milan, Parma, and Pavia.

This project evolved out of my earlier work on the *Humiliati* and I must thank Katherine Jansen for starting me down this path so many years ago. For the current work I have been supported by a number of colleagues, friends, and family to whom I am eternally grateful. First, I am indebted to Marianne Davis for her meticulous reading of draft after draft, her constructive suggestions, her cheer-leading me through many a frustration, and generally making me a better writer. To the extraordinary cartographer and world's greatest son, Charles Brasher, thank you for giving visual life to my findings. Melba Mayall, at ninety-five years young, once again proved to be an able research assistant, helping to catalogue information for the appendix.

To my colleagues at Shepherd University, I am grateful for your support and encouragement. In particular, Anders Henriksson, thank you for allowing me the time and space to carry out my research while fulfilling my teaching and departmental responsibilities. Over the years Josh DiSalvo, of the Shepherd University library, has been instrumental in accessing hundreds of sources for me, sometimes from very obscure locations, which has also greatly enabled me to carry out my research in addition to my university duties. I must thank Steven Rigby for the very thorough and constructive comments he provided as well as those of Cynthia

Botteron, Mark Sachleben, and several anonymous readers. Additional thanks for editorial assistance to Carlo Bella and Lucia del Moro. Finally, and most importantly, none of this work would have been completed, much less begun, without the unwavering support and unfailing encouragement of my travel agent, reader, research assistant, and world's greatest husband, Niel Brasher.