Sherri Franks Johnson explores the roles of religious women in the changing ecclesiastical and civic structure of late medieval Bologna, demonstrating how convents negotiated a place in their urban context and in the church at large. During this period Bologna was the most important city in the Papal States after Rome. Using archival records from nunneries in the city, Johnson argues that communities of religious women varied in the extent to which they sought official recognition from the male authorities of religious orders. While some nunneries felt that it was important to their religious life to gain recognition from monks and friars, others were content to remain local and autonomous. In a period often described as an era of decline and of the marginalization of religious women, Johnson shows instead that they saw themselves as active participants in their religious orders, in the wider church, and in their local communities.

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MONASTIC WOMEN AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN LATE MEDIEVAL BOLOGNA

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For Martin and Louie
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Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the support of teachers, colleagues, friends, and family. This book began as a dissertation. Alan Bernstein was my advisor throughout my graduate education. I admire Alan’s enthusiasm for learning and for teaching, and the breadth of his knowledge and interests. I also am grateful for advice from Alison Futrell and Helen Nader. I thank all three of my committee members for their generosity with their time and their expertise, and am happy that they remain mentors and friends. I also learned from my fellow graduate students. Jeanine Bruening, Jodie Kreider, Jerry Pierce, Clark Pomerleau, and Laura Shelton helped me develop my argument. I appreciate the hospitality of Jodie Kreider and Paula Smith-Hawkins during my visits back to Tucson while I was writing the dissertation.

I have been blessed with wonderful colleagues at UC Riverside, many of whom have read drafts of chapters and have otherwise given advice and encouragement. I especially thank Michael Alexander, Shaun Bowler, Tom Cogswell, Piotr Gorecki, John Ganim, Jennifer Hughes, Katherine Kinney, Justin McDaniel, June O’Connor, and Michele Salzman. I was lucky to participate in a residential fellowship group at the UCR Center for Ideas and Society with Vivian-Lee Nyitray, Sherine Hafez, and Feryal Cherif – their comments on chapter drafts were instrumental in the transition of the project from dissertation to book. Funding from the Dean’s Office in the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences and from the UCR Academic Senate supported archival research.

Living in Southern California has allowed me to participate in the California Medieval History Seminar at the Huntington Library, where I have presented drafts of three chapters. I am especially grateful to Susannah Baxendale, Warren Brown, Piotr Gorecki, Marie Kelleher, Carol Lansing, Nancy McLoughlin, Maureen Miller, and Scott Wells for their questions, comments and suggestions. Beyond my California colleagues, conversations with Alison Beach, Emily Graham, Katie Jasper, Erika Lindgren, Ed Muir, Katharine Sykes, Julie Ann Smith, Nicholas Terpstra, and Shona Kelly Wray have provided me with insights and encouragement.
Acknowledgements

I have appreciated the work of the editorial team at Cambridge University Press, including Chloe Dawson, Liz Friend-Smith, Fleur Jones, and Michael Watson. Though they have moved on to other presses, I am grateful to Emily Spengler and Eric Crahan for their interest in my work and their encouragement and guidance through the early stages of the review process. The careful reading and thoughtful suggestions of Constance Berman and an anonymous reader have made this a better book.

The Archivio di Stato Bologna and the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio have been wonderful places to do research. The staffs of both archives have been unfailingly helpful. I owe particular thanks to Gian-carlo Busi and Rosella Rinaldi at the Archivio di Stato and Paola Foschi at the Archiginnasio. I am also indebted to friends and colleagues in Bologna, including Domenico Cerami, Peggy Kidney, Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, Riccardo Parmigiana, and Gabriella Zarri.

My parents, Al and Barbara Franks, instilled in me a love of learning and a sense of humor. They taught me to set high goals and to persevere in achieving them, and also to have an appropriate perspective on inevitable challenges and setbacks. Guy and Vivian Johnson have welcomed me into their family and have shown great support of my scholarly efforts. I am inspired by the memory of Vivian, who was an unofficial dissertation committee member because of her interest in my work and her encouragement. Martin Johnson has been the greatest advocate for the nuns and for me. It is a joy to share our scholarship and our lives. I dedicate this book to Martin and to our son, Louie.