This book has taken some years to complete, interspersed as its writing has been with other, shorter projects, with teaching and with what might be summed up as Life. Over that time, I have drawn on parts of it for teaching, and presented papers on elements of my research at conferences and seminars in the UK, France, Spain and the USA. I am grateful to the students and fellow academics who have listened, commented, asked pertinent questions and enriched my thinking with theirs. Thanks too to Anthony Cond and Chloe Johnson at Liverpool University Press for their invaluable support, and to the anonymous readers they enlisted to review the draft manuscript. The readers’ reports were not only hugely encouraging, but also exceptionally detailed and helpful. And, finally, I want to thank the friends and family members who have read and discussed parts of the work in progress – and those who have just provided the support of love, friendship, fun and the belief that it was a book worth writing.

All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.
