This project has made me learn just how grateful it is possible to be for the unfathomable depths of generosity I have found in friends, family, and colleagues.

First and last, Nelly Oliensis: I don’t know what would have become of the project without her sharp questions, her untangling and rephrasing of ideas that were expressed with quite unnecessary obscurity, her reading suggestions for relevant theoretical and philosophical perspectives when I was drafting chapters of my dissertation, and—most of all—her warm and steadfast encouragement (though I’m sure I haven’t convinced her of everything I argue here). And for providing through his emails just the light editorial touch, guidance, and firm support I needed as I completed the book, I owe an immeasurable amount to my editor, Eugene O’Connor.

Others read single chapters or the whole manuscript at various stages from its tiny kernel as a dissertation to its most recent drafts. In different ways all contributed to the development of the book’s overall shape (with the usual caveat that what’s good I owe to them, while they’re not to be blamed for what isn’t): Melissa Mueller, Lydia Syson, James Ker, Chris van den Berg,
Howard Mancing, Keith Dickson, Aaron Seider, Angelica Duran, Jim Tatum, Margaret Williamson, Allen Romano, David Wray, Shadi Bartsch, Danielle Allen, Peter White, Ted Lisowski, Matt Pincus, Leslie Kurke, and the members of my lovely dissertation committee all those years ago (along with Nelly Oliensis): Kathy McCarthy, Marianne Constable, and William Fitzgerald. The Ohio State University Press’s anonymous readers helped a lot, and so did another still unknown reader when the project was at a much earlier stage. I am grateful, too, to Steve Oberhelman and an insightful anonymous reader for Helios, who helped me to sharpen an essay which is now chapter 3. But of all these, I would single out with even warmer gratitude for their lavishly detailed comments Melissa Mueller, James Ker, Chris van den Berg, Jim Tatum, Allen Romano, Danielle Allen, Matt Pincus, and Kathy McCarthy.

Much of my stimulation has come from conferences and talks, particularly from fellow participants in the “For a Theory of the Novel of the 21st Century” workshop at the Center for the Study of the Novel at Stanford, the APA in San Antonio, the International Conference on Narrative in Birmingham, and the Indiana Classical Conference, as well as audiences at talks I gave at York University, Dartmouth College, the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, the Department of Classics at Stanford, Scripps College, and SUNY Buffalo.

Many of my thoughts and questions about fama and fiction are indebted to students here at Purdue, at Dartmouth College, the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and UC Berkeley. I am thankful to these institutions, too (and to the Mellon Foundation’s doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships) for generous research support and for employment in various capacities. And I can’t imagine what it would mean to think or teach in this line of work at all without Oliver Taplin, who was my undergraduate tutor at Magdalen.

Finally, none of this would have meant anything without all the other kinds of help given by amazing friends, colleagues, and family, especially Lucy Gaster, Nick Deakin, Luke Syson, Anna Lawrence Pietrononi, Julia Davids, Jill Peterson, Celina Gray, Christiane Hullmann, Jo Depledge, Amanda Oberg, John Fox, Jo Crawley-Quinn, Jo Park, Uthie Srinivasan, Elena Coda, Jen William, Anu Subramanian, Nicki and Matt Haines, Patty Hart, Patrice Rankine, Nick Rauh, Marcia Stephenson, Polly Gaster, and the younger generation: Sophy, Poppy, Molly, Benedict, Felix, Judy, Sol, Popi, Andrew, Margot, Leonia, Arthur, Phoebe, Adam, Rufus, and Solomon.