Introduction

The Ninth Day of the *Decameron* occupies a notable position in the textual organization of the work, and yet it continues to be understudied.[1] The situation is perhaps paradoxical: while several different proposals to partition the *Decameron* and thus conceptualize its structural machinery have assigned a significant role to the ninth slot in the work, the variety of themes treated in the stories and their diverse strands of narrative inspiration have undermined these attempts at categorization. The essays collected here represent an attempt to compensate for this adverse effect and produce a cohesive and complete account of the workings of the day, one that exploits both the strategic advantage connected to its position in the work, its *rendita di posizione*, and the relations that each story (or group of stories) establishes with other portions of the text. Through the internal dialogue they institute with one another, as well as their constant cross-referencing to other textual portions of the *Decameron*, these essays provide a reticular image of the day and illustrate its unique role within the complex organization of the book.

When compared to other books in the *Lectura Boccaccii* series, this volume includes a singularity; namely, an essay penned by the volume's editors that is designed to outline the special nature of Day Nine by focusing on the *cornice*. The working relationship established among the members of the *brigata* reaches a new stage at this juncture of the framing narrative, one worth exploring in detail. While this day has

1 See Surdich, "La 'varietà delle cose,'" a particularly relevant essay for the attention it devotes to structural interconnections between Days One and Nine (229–32) as well as to the preparatory role that Day Nine plays vis-à-vis the last day of the *Decameron* (259–64). To Surdich's useful review of preceding contributions should now be added Gittes, "'Dal giogo alleviati.'"

often been seen as apparently marking a simple return to the initial narrative freedom granted by Pampinea, its frame contains much more. Emilia's rule comes, in fact, to redefine the initial constitutive charter of the group's communal life, triggering a radical recodification of the *brigata*'s social setting. As it emerges from our review of the framing narrative, Emilia's exploration of the limits of the law triggers a shift in the dynamic interplay among the narrators. It does so perhaps in a less marked way than will be the case with the heated narrative contests of Day Ten, but just as essentially. What is more, and as will be the case in the following *giornata*, the change in interpersonal relations among narrators extends from the framing narrative, in which they intervene both personally and within their institutional roles, to the individual narrative acts for which they each take responsibility. The intranarrative ramification of Emilia's rule recommended that they be brought into focus, and our essay thus be of service to the following contributions that treat the individual *novelle*.

A further element that emerges from the interplay between the framing essay and the individual contributions characterizing this volume is the holistic approach to the day's work in relation to the various layers of interconnected narrative which organize the *Decameron*. Both our introduction and the *lectura* essays strive to capture the dynamic formation of new power relations in the interplay among the social subjects that act in the stories as well as among individual narrators. From our collective and multifocal reading, Day Nine emerges as interested in pursuing the definition of a new social equilibrium, not only for the *brigata* itself but also for the society outside the limits of the book that the narrators embody and model. This equilibrium takes the form of a new social contract, one in which all parties are represented in a balanced system. The new compact affects not only the institutions of marriage (and the day has significant examples of unbalanced marital relations) but also, more generally, the interaction between different social figures (artists and merchants as well as members of the urban elites and the servile class). What appears as a necessary reassessment of the social dynamics in extratextual reality is mirrored in the ambivalent persona of the day's queen, Emilia. While she is, in the field of gender relations, advocating for woman's subjection to man in marriage, one may argue that she is also, in her apparently contradictory role as female ruler of the day, extending to her subjects the restorative freedom from the yoke of narrative homogeneity.

Like the stories told in each day of the *Decameron*, the essays collected in this volume dialogue with one another on several levels. Taken together, they also approach the Ninth Day of storytelling in a holistic

fashion. In practice, they explore three main areas of the text. First, all essays devote attention to the intratextual sequencing of the tales within Day Nine and to the connections they establish with stories told in other *giornate*. Secondly, taking various approaches and directions in their investigations, but with remarkable coherence, all essays highlight the intertextual connections existing between the tales and specific external sources and analogues. Finally, all also coherently explore the dialogue that the individual stories establish with wider discourses, both social and literary, dominating the culture in which and for which the *Decameron* has been written.

In general, the reflection on novel modes of expressing a new perception of reality is a central theme of the *Decameron* and one that seems particularly relevant to the sequence of stories in Day Nine. The topics chosen by the narrators of this day often recall those they had chosen as queens or kings during their own days of sovereignty. These thematic occurrences link the *novelle* of this "liminal" day in order to build a network of internal narrative echoes, reuniting the various threads Boccaccio disseminates in the previous seven days. Even from a different thematic perspective, these readings often discover important points of contact, such as in IX.1 (David Lummus), which notes the general feeling of weariness among the day's storytellers, and which connects queen Emilia to the first narrator. This observation leads us to consider the relation between *novelle* (IX.1 and IX.9), for example, as well as the link between Emilia's introduction to Day Nine and that of the frame.

Beyond a general consonance of themes and questions broached across different narratives, some interconnections between stories are signalled by the narrators themselves. One may point to the onomastic imbrication between IX.5 and IX.6, which is based on the recurrence of the name Niccolosa, or the sequencing of IX.3 and IX.5, with both stories celebrating Calandrino's exploits and treating the figure of the artist as an innovative interpreter of reality who questions its relationship with appearances, as both Anichini (IX.3) and Ciccuto (IX.5) show. Similarly, the trope of the impossible pregnancy, with metaphorical implications spanning the semantic field of production from the religious to the artistic to the economical, links *novelle* IX.3 and IX.10. As these contributions suggest, what makes this day notably "repetitive" is not at all a "crisis of creativity" but rather its internally dialogic dynamics, in which narrators respond to one another, as if in preparation for the game of one-upping which will mark the next and final segment of the narrative.

Also noted in the various essays are continuities not explicitly signalled in the frame or in the prologues to the individual stories, but

nevertheless essential for the plot of the meta-*novella* and the dynamics of interpretation which it presents (and mimics for the readers). One may point to the triptych of IX.7–IX.9–IX.10, with the first two stories revolving around the violent retribution economies which the patriarchy establishes for women's agency and societal role (as explored by Grace Delmolino and Albert Russell Ascoli, respectively), and the latter two being devoted to a contrastive (and satirical) depiction of women as animals, in the language of both metaphor and magic (as both Ascoli and Max Matukhin point out).

Day Nine's tales present a very high degree of intratextuality with other days; for example, Lummus shows how the opening tale IX.1 has textual ties with I.1 and even II.4. A central theme of the *Decameron* – the metaliterary reflection on authorship – finds exceptional relevance in IX.4 (Patrizio Ceccagnoli), where Boccaccio stages a dialogue between two Ceccos, the author and his fictional double, by exploiting Boccaccio's recurrent rhetorical strategy of metaphoric literalization as in VI.1 or III.5. *Novella* IX.2, analysed by Maria Pia Ellero, provides a prime example: it is the literal realization *in factis* of a similar situation which Dioneo presented *in verbis* in I.4 and found as well in other *novelle* with parodic religious themes, such as VII.6 or III.1.[2]

The stories of Day Nine also align with their predecessors in the *Decameron* when they rely on the rich mental library of readers to produce meaning (to *make* sense in an active way). Essays in this volume which point to these connections range from Simona Lorenzini's attention to Chaucer's redeployment of the plot of IX.6 in his *Reeve's Tale* to Johnny L. Bertolio's evocation of a Dantean background for IX.8, an underlying allusion which is based on a set of characters (Ciacco and Filippo Argenti) who have been featured in the first circles of *Inferno*. Along the same lines, Lummus signals the relevant presence of Cavalcanti in the parody of the "mortal" effects of unrequited love in IX.1, and Ceccagnoli that of Cecco Angiolieri's lyrical corpus for IX.4. In the same vein, Lummus and Ellero indicate the importance of models taken from French and Occitan traditions such as the Oitanic *fabliaux* (*Dit de la Nonnete*, Jean de Condé) for IX.2 or the *fins* and *fols amor* for IX.1. One may view the constant attention which Matukhin pays to texts (specific *fabliaux*), models (Apuleius's *Golden Ass*), and wide cultural discourses (the treatment of sexuality within grammatical categories)

2 On this issue, the work of Pier Massimo Forni remains a crucial reference point for several essays. See his *Adventures in Speech*.

in his reading of IX.10 as a comic meditation on the natural-unnatural divide in matters of both sexuality and culture.

Finally, the tales of Day Nine are of the same cloth as their predecessors in the *Decameron*, in the ways in which they dialogue with wider cultural discourses and their historical and geographical contexts. Lummus stresses the importance of Pistoia not only as a place connected to the stilnovistic poetic tradition through Cino da Pistoia but also as the birthplace of political conflict between white and black Guelphs, which constitutes the backdrop of Florence's peak poetic season. The Tuscan landscape of Calandrino's *novelle* is another element leading these narratives out of the city of Florence and into the countryside, while the tale of the two Ceccos brings us to the tradition of comic poetry and indirectly to Dante's *tenzoni* with the Aretine author. Bertolio's inter-code reading of the pun at the centre of Ciacco's trick on Biondello brings into play the Bible as a macro-code that acts as decryptor for expressions of a baffling idiolect around which the tale actually revolves: the *arrubinare* of the wine resonates with the biblical *grapes of wrath*. Similarly, Ascoli's crucial reading of Emilia as a Queen Solomon (both in her role as a somewhat paradoxical ruler of the day and as the narrator of the specific and highly contested Solomonic ninth *novella*) is based on the intersection of a wide array of traditions that have at their centre the figure of the biblical king: from the treatment which the wise ruler receives in Dante to the way his figure is handled in the popular Solomon and Marcolf stories.

The essays of this volume do not just form a collection of readings retracing the allusions and evidencing the network of interrelations among individual *novelle*, days as well as the overarching structure and poetics of the *Decameron*. Each of them also presents original contributions to a new understanding of an all too often understudied day. The polyphonic and yet organized quality of the narrative interactions between the stories told in Day Nine, we hope, will transpire from the individual critical readings that make up the body of the volume. It is now time to turn to their individual contributions and critical interconnectedness.

In reading the opening story for the day, David Lummus starts by isolating Filomena's attention to the "physicality" of storytelling, a feature embedded in the metaphor of yoking she uses in her preamble. It is a choice of language that relocates the *brigata*'s narrative act from the field of pastimes into that of work. The incipitary move will have repercussions throughout the day, running as a *fil rouge* through several of the themes mobilized in the various stories. Lummus's reading then proceeds to explore two interconnected themes in Filomena's tale, in which

a resourceful lady rids herself of two unwanted suitors, tricking them into metaphorically and quite literally courting death – by impersonating a dead outlaw and stealing his corpse, respectively. The first theme is the transposition of the traditional lyrical love-death connection from the realm of cultural tropes to the narrative mechanics of the plot. This shift is not just parodically comic; it also brings to the fore the irreducible presence in the world of desiring bodies and measures their impact on literary antecedents, such as Cavalcanti's negative phenomenology of love or Dante's treatment of Francesca's pursuit of an irrational and deadly passion. The second interpretive thread Lummus isolates concerns the geopolitical circumstances of the story, which is significantly staged in the recognizably factional society of the Guelph city of Pistoia. In this light, the essay reads the political-familial connections between the family of the protagonist (Madonna Francesca de' Lazzari), the two Florentine White Guelph exiles (her suitors), and the mysterious Scannadio (in whose figure Lummus detects traces of a specific Pistoiese starring in Dante's *Inferno*: Vanni Fucci). Mobilizing their knowledge of the literary intertexts that structure the plot and their awareness of historical circumstances connoting the story's personnel, the tale asks its audience to coordinate both dimensions, appreciating how Boccaccio transfers his criticism of uncontrolled desire from the philosophical and moral to a political level. Boccaccio's use of geographical and historical references appears, thus, not aesthetic or allusive, but rather structural: a way of casting light on his historical "realism" as a crucial, functional element in the narrative workings of the story and its meaning.

By reconstructing and emphasizing the vast network of subliminal echoes and connections with other *novelle* in the *Decameron*, Maria Pia Ellero reads Elissa's story as a return to the narrator's favourite theme: the power that a *leggiadro motto* possesses to structure social interactions to the advantage of its users. The case in point is the clever riposte a young and courtly nun devises during her hasty trial, after she is caught having sex with a lover in her cell. Isabetta's *motto* allows her to escape punishment by pointing out that her abbess has just indulged in the same activity, as her wearing a man's breeches instead of her wimple amply proves. In the quick retort she produces, the story also showcases the power of a carefully crafted response to rend the veil of appearances and bring into sharp, critical light the truth of the power dynamics that underlie them. The story's message emerges from the coming together of several strains equally investigated in the reading: a traditional *fabliau* plot (that found in the *Dit de la Nonnete* and in the *Roman de Renart*), gnomic and skoptic classical treatments of an ethical theme (the critique of those who attack a vice while being guilty of the

same), and philosophical considerations about the role of witticism as a cultural form of necessary respite from work (the Aristotelian and Thomistic coordinated definition of the social use of *lusus*). Intimately related to the Aristotelian concept of *lusus*, Boccaccio's comic has an implicit ethical and political connotation, as directed to and functional for enhancing social eutrapelia. Ellero's exploration of the comic as one of the tools Boccaccio presses into the service of his criticism of current cultural paradigms also potentially has, however, a dark side. By placing on trial the comic and elegiac versions of typical *fol'amor* characters (the abbess and Isabetta, respectively), Elissa's narrative also tries and tests a literary tradition whose alleged and partial realism is at odds with the need to give order to reality. Ellero's focus on the disruptive consequences of apparent virtue and real lack of moral coherence referred to the internal dimension of the conventual life may lead one to wonder whether her considerations may apply to the external social dimension of having an entire community be only apparently virtuous but essentially corrupt. The abbess's and Isabetta's lack of virtue essentially produces and condones chaos in what should be an ordered community. It also contains, in embryo, the same destabilizing potential associated with a lack of virtue in institutions – be they religious or secular – to prevent the formation and preservation of a well-ordered society.

Revolving around the iconic juxtaposition of Calandrino's imaginary fertile womb and the literally well-fed, swollen bellies of his tricksters, Federica Anichini's reading of Filostrato's third instalment in Calandrino's cycle emphasizes the illusionistic quality of the prank that Bruno, Buffalmacco, and Nello play on their gullible fellow painter, which is of one cloth with the imaginary narrative space in which *Decameron* readers are attracted by Boccaccio's art of storytelling. Just as painters endow appearances with the force of truth, a *fatto*, Anichini insists, so too does the text in which storytellers operate. Thus, in her reading, the tale becomes an opportunity to investigate not only the continuous reversal of traditional, medieval gender expectations, which is so prominent in this particular story, or the potentially antisocial quality of the vice that the *beffa* targets in Calandrino, namely his lack of liberality, but also the more profound power of verbal fiction to serve the critical exploration of the factual world outside the text. Anichini subverts the traditional framing of Calandrino as the embodiment of an a-critical reading of reality's images and makes him the symbol of the dangers intrinsic to a literal interpretation of fictive realities. Thus, the play between emptiness and fullness, simultaneously physical and imaginary, defines Calandrino as a figure at the centre of gender

dynamics, inappropriately occupying the female space of verbal invention and reproduction.

Patrizio Ceccagnoli's intertextual analysis of Neifile's story recounting the trick that Cecco di Fortarrigo plays on his travel mate Cecco Angiolieri by stealing his identity and his possessions, after having gambled away his own, concentrates on the potential metaliterary significance of Boccaccio's onomastic dyadic choice for the *novella*'s protagonists. The mixing and mistaking of the protagonists' identities become Ceccagnoli's key to a reading of the plot through the many lexical and thematic connections it exhibits with poems from Angiolieri's corpus. The two characters named Cecco move within the confines of the story, Ceccagnoli argues, just as two other Ceccos – the author and his autobiofictional persona – emerge from a critical reading of Angiolieri's poetry. Instead of considering this *novella* as a biographical reference to Angiolieri, or simply a comic parody of his poetry, Ceccagnoli shows how its very structure suggests not a mimetic staging of the Sienese poet's provocative poetry but rather a subversion of it. In the story, Cecco di Fortarrigo becomes the agent of a quasi-Dantean contrapasso, a morally inferior and yet eerily successful doppelganger of Cecco Angiolieri, who in the end is made to suffer at the hands of a character who has all the features of his own literary persona. Cecco's existential journey toward emancipation turns out to be also a poetic one, and both prove similarly a failure. Boccaccio's double play with Cecco and his fictional persona may point to a rejection of Angiolieri's brand of comic as unfit to provide the cultural foundation for rebuilding an ethically sound new political body.

Marcello Ciccuto's essay goes back to the play of appearance and reality, by framing the final chapter in Calandrino's cycle, his misadventures in courting the young Niccolosa, within the *Decameron*'s wider reflection on the artistic revolution of the fourteenth century. By presenting the new generation of painters as emancipated subverters of those unchecked and unchallenged notions of imitation to which Calandrino is said to adhere, Ciccuto maintains that Boccaccio equates their narrative superiority to their ability to use art for testing and crossing the boundaries of representation. Since images are deceiving and no longer linearly connected to their referents, any mimetic approach to reality also ceases to grant access to its inner truth. Calandrino's gullibility thus becomes the foil for his companions' creativity and emerges as an emblem of the epistemological crisis of mimesis as a privileged mode of artistic expression. The painters in Fiammetta's tale are not simply the master artificers, in the pranks they organize for Calandrino, of a new kind of illusion. They are also the best-suited mediators of

the new epistemological approach characterizing the *Decameron*. Articulated in the clashing of the phantasies of erotic prowess Calandrino cannot uphold and the reality of a beating by his wife he cannot escape, their lesson ultimately consists in an invitation to move beyond sterile imitation of models in art to testing the boundless force of human imagination.

Simona Lorenzini's new approach to the comedy of errors connected to the adventurous bed-trading triggered by Niccolosa and Pinuccio's night of furtive love-making in her father's inn takes into account the multiple dimensions of Boccaccio's narrative strategy. She considers how the *ars combinatoria* is here deployed at a structural level, and projects it onto the rhetorical ability of the central character in the tale, the innkeeper's wife, to defuse a potentially dangerous crisis in the household. The wise manipulator of both verbal signs (her words carefully craft a different story and a different reality that soothes her husband) and practical circumstances (the darkness of the room in which the sexual transgressions take place, the established effects of wine on people), Niccolosa's mother wields for Lorenzini the therapeutic power of imagination to bring peace to a troubled social setting, intervening with words into the masculine realm of deeds. Again, the theme of imagination and its power emerges as one of the threads Boccaccio weaves into the fabric of this meta-day in which he reflects on the art, purpose, and limits of literature in re-establishing a desired order in the presence of chaos.

In her reading of the tale of Talano d'Imolese's predictive dream punishing the *ritrosia* of Margherita, his wife, Grace Delmolino offers a stimulating reverse perspective on a story traditionally interpreted from the male point of view of the "prophetic" husband. Her reframing proves the viability of a non-misogynist reading of Pampinea's tale, one in which the female protagonist's agency in the face of the violent suppression of her will is central to the plot. The essay pays crucial attention to the normative and moralizing rhetorical mechanisms that guide the *brigata*'s reaction to the story, as a confirmation of the power intrinsic to patriarchal order to mete out exemplary punishment on any woman's effort toward self-determination. Connecting the story to some heroines from the *De mulieribus claris*, Delmolino shows the coexistence of an apparently contradictory binary disposition in Boccaccio, whose texts at once praise women's firmness of will as constancy and blame their steadfastness as unsettling stubbornness. In her analysis, the term *ritrosia* is thus both the ideological linchpin and the destabilizing weakest link in the essentialist misogynistic rhetoric that the narrator adopts and at once exposes in her telling of the story. This rhetoric,

which equates a subject's exercise of her own will to a trigger for physical violence, may be transposed into the order of the ferine (in the present story) as well as into those of the supernatural (in the visions of V.8) or the metaphysical (in Emilia's prologue to IX.9). The combined effort of Pampinea and Emilia as narrators and rulers over days of free and freed storytelling, respectively, brings this core notion under coordinated, though ambiguous, attack. The lesson emerging from the story once again works on both the individual ethical level and on the collective political one: men's violence in suppressing women's will is as socially disruptive as women's determination never to yield.

Johnny Bertolio reads Lauretta's short tale about the strike-and-counterstrike pranks that Biondello and Ciacco play on each other in this strictly Florentine *novella* by focusing on the combinatorial effects and the symmetrical construction that characterize it. His analysis hinges on the reverberations of a biblical metaphor, the wine of wrath, which is deployed in the mysterious language undergirding the *beffa*. The allusion to wine as "ruby-like" in the story's plot is for Bertolio the entry point for reading an episode of violence and social dissension in the body politic of Dante's Florence. The hell-like *città partita*, split by factions which the *novella* evokes by mobilizing some prominent members in Dante's infernal nomenclature, is not a neutral backdrop for the tale. Lauretta not only introduces Ciacco and Biondello as two classical hangers-on to the dinner parties in the powerful houses of Vieri de' Cerchi and Corso Donati, the emblematic heads of the White and Black Guelph parties in Florence, but also evokes the no less Dantean Filippo Argenti as the instrument of one's contrapasso-like revenge on the other. The result is a multi-layered tale that barely hides beneath its lighthearted surface the diagnosis of a deeper civic moral and bodily disorder than the venial and comic faults of the protagonists may suggest.

After carefully evaluating a wide range of what he labels "recuperative" readings of Emilia's *novella*, Ascoli stakes one essential claim; namely, that Emilia is intended as a divisive character at no fewer than three levels: in the tales she tells throughout the *Decameron*, in the way she frames and narrates the present story, and in her demeanour as ruler of the day. The divisiveness Emilia embodies is articulated first in her choice to narrate the violent outcome of Melisso's and Giosefo's consultations with King Solomon on how to deal with a contrary wife and garner friendship, respectively. The enigmatic and equally contradictory Solomonic judgment pronounced in the story (love those you want to be loved by, and beat your wife) is mirrored in Emilia's own contradictions. Associated on the one side with the theme of authority,

exercised over a community of free men and women, and on the other with the theme of violence, designed to obtain submission of those who want to exercise their own will, Emilia's story works as a general memento not to transgress what she calls the order of nature (the misogynist aspect) and the nature of the law (the political question). Interpretation is the second level at which Ascoli detects the tale's complexities and ambiguities. In presenting her tale as impossibly allegorical, Ascoli argues, Emilia showcases on the hermeneutic level the same authoritarian stance she endorses both as a woman narrator who demonstrates a violent antipathy to the female sex and as a day's queen who is at once authoritarian and libertarian in her ruling. She embodies, thus, an interpretive and political contradiction, being at once a figure of power and providing with her misogyny the grounds to question her very authority. She is, in sum, central to Boccaccio's reflection on governance and wisdom. In stressing the complex and contradictory character of Emilia, which calls into question the nexus of women's "education" and male "authority," Ascoli's reading also interrogates from a distance the other famous case in which the same violent logic of mad brutishness finds an equally successful and equally troublesome application; namely, *Decameron* X.10.

Max Matukhin's careful intertextual study of the apparently linear and often dismissed parodic final tale of the day mobilizes classical (Apuleius), patristic (Augustine), scholastic (Alan de Lille), and romance (*fabliaux*) antecedents. These sources reveal Boccaccio's particular attention to the link between language and sexuality and show the tale's potential to speak several discursive truths at once. With respect to his models, Boccaccio uses his narrative techniques of demotion, reversal, and parody to produce a narrative connected on the one hand with the overarching theme of initiation and transformation through metamorphosis (which was at the core of Apuleius's narrative), and on the other with theological concerns about sacramental rituals. Boccaccio uses this technique to dramatize the unproductive character of the sexual act "deviated" from reproduction and animated, as in this case, by a "mercantile" desire for material goods. Under Matukhin's lens, Donno Gianni's magical metamorphic equine incantation – the unachieved turning of Gemmata, the wife of his *compare* Pietro, into a mare – becomes an opportunity not only to explore the porous boundaries between high and low culture but also, and perhaps more essentially, to test the no less fraught divide between culture and nature, as it was articulated in the medieval discourse around sodomy. A tale in which a priest has sexual intercourse with a married woman, in an animal-like and allusive position, implicates social, positional, and

topographical breaches in sexual normativity, on which Dioneo's story sheds a quite literal light.

As we hope has emerged from these introductory pages, this volume sees its reading of Day Nine as an analysis of individual elements – the ten stories as well as the various proceedings which take place in the frame – not as a gathering of independent entities, but in a holistic vein. We have attempted, both in the individual essays and in the introductory contribution we co-signed, to unearth the possible threads connecting the *cornice* of the day to the broader economy of the macro-tale, its *novelle* to the themes and logical nodes that tie together the *Decameron* as a whole. Boccaccio's text is a network of subordinated and coordinated verbal objects, which encourages us to distinguish different narratives planes while discouraging us from considering each as separate or independent from those that surround it. The *Decameron* thus appears not simply as a container for narratives but as a carefully constructed literary invention that entrusts its pedagogical message to the interplay of all its parts. Finally, we have attempted to illustrate the special relationship between Days One and Nine, particularly in the ways they tackle the interconnected questions of freedom and order. Through the dialogue established between these two days, their queens, and their respective rulership, we have endeavoured to provide a glimpse into one of Boccaccio's educational goals: namely, that the construction of a well-regulated text and the building of a well-regulated community are interrelated practices – be it the *brigata* in their days in the countryside, or the future city reborn after the plague, both must be organized, given form, and provided with the necessary means to be maintained.