

Introduction and Acknowledgements

Ever since I developed the idea to bring this book about it has been as much a labour of love as a professional academic enterprise. The project has been born out of a genuine fascination with an author whose work can yield as much reward in instinctive admiration as when it is professionally studied by a scholar of literature. Furthermore it has brought me into more contact with like-minded colleagues from around the world and so this collection would not truly come about without us all sharing our interests and it is in fact the creative fruit of our mutual inspiration.

Moreover, some old and new ties of friendship and affection have come out stronger from the efforts to see this project finalised.

For these reason when I proceed to distribute the due acknowledgements, it may truly seem, as John Donne said of debts to friends in *The Will*, “as though I gave, when I but restore”.

Thus I would like to say a simple *thank you* to George R. R. Martin for giving us all so very much of the finest literary adventure by bringing back to life all the old strength of the “boke of romaunce”.

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