

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**THIS BOOK TOOK** on its final shape during a couple of years of upheaval. The pandemic and several unexpected concurrent personal events will have affected this work, for better or worse, and I'm very grateful to several people for their support and encouragement particularly during this time.

Kate McClune, Holly Furneaux, Kate Loveman, Cathleen Waters, and Victoria Stewart: I couldn't have finished this without you.

Heather O'Donoghue: thank you for reading the whole book in draft and making invaluable suggestions for improvement, and for your unwavering belief in my potential.

Anna Henderson, at Arc Humanities Press: thanks for your patience and forbearance during this process and your motivating and collaborative approach as I attempted to do something "a bit different."

I'd also like to thank the readers for Arc, who saved me from many errors and typos but, more importantly, helped me confirm my sense of what I wanted to do (and what I didn't) and clarify and refine my approach. I'm sorry I didn't always follow your advice.

The nature of this book means I've strayed into many areas outside of my formal training in medieval literature. As well as those listed above, thanks to Erin Goeres, Laura Varnam, and Emily Corbett for feedback and encouragement of various kinds. Apologies in advance for any inevitable missteps, which remain my own responsibility.

I'm grateful to past hosts (including Chris Callow, Carolyne Larrington, Carl Phelpstead) and audiences for feedback and encouragement after talks, lectures, and seminars.

My parents provided me with the gift of excellent children's literature from the start, and my English teachers Mrs Rushton and Mrs Brown inspired me in beginning to engage critically with all kinds of literature.

Finally, thanks to people around the world, strangers, acquaintances, and friends who sent good wishes and support on social media (@dragonista99), via email, and in person, and encouraged me in various ways during a challenging time, personally and professionally.

No thanks are due to any institutions or funding bodies.

A few years ago I was struck by a Twitter exchange between two well-thought-of academics, and it's remained with me ever since. One had been lightly complaining about the sidelining of one of their published pieces; the other's response was along the lines of "don't worry, just think about who's still going to be read a hundred years from now." Though a well-meaning attempt at consolation, it seems antithetical to the aims of scholarship, at least as I see it. I have written precisely because I hope that in a hundred years (if the world survives that long) my scholarship will have long been superseded. Here's to the future.

*This book is dedicated to my niblings*

