



Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography

Stephen Knight

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The only figure in the *Dictionary of National Biography* who is said never to have existed, Robin Hood has taken on an air of reality few historical figures achieve. His image in various guises has been put to use as a subject of ballads, nationalist rallying point, Disney cartoon fox, greenclad figure of farce, tabloid fodder, and template for petty criminals and progressive political candidates alike.

In this engaging and deeply informed book Stephen Knight looks at the different manifestations of Robin Hood at different times and places in a mythic biography with a thematic structure. The best way to get at the essence of the Robin Hood myth, Knight believes, is in terms not of chronological and generic progression but of the purposes served by heroes. Each of the book's four central chapters identifies a particular model of the hero, mythic or biographic, which dominated in certain periods and in certain genres, and explores their interrelations, their implications, and their historical and sociopolitical contexts.

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