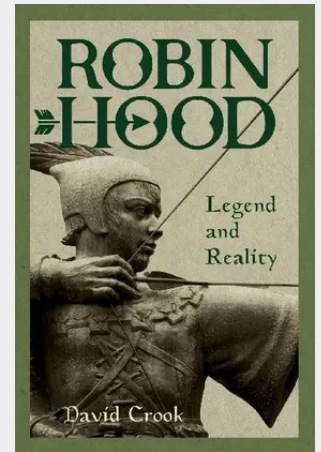


Crook

Robin Hood

Legend and Reality

Detailed research into documentary sources offers an exciting new identification of the "real" Robin Hood. For over a century and a half scholars have debated whether or not the legend of Robin Hood was based on an actual outlaw and, if so, when and where he lived. One view is that he was not a legend as such but a myth: an idea, rather than a person who could possibly be identified in historical records and placed in a real historical and geographical context. Other writers have gone even further, arguing that he is a literary concoction, with no traceable original, and that seeking to pin him down to a particular time and location is futile and unnecessary. This survey begins by tracing the development of the legend, and contemporary views about it, between the thirteenth and early twenty-first centuries, taking account both of new interpretative literature on the subject and fresh discoveries from the author's own research in the early records of the English royal administration and common law. It then gives a detailed account of the places that came to be associated with the legend, and of evidence illustrating the importance of the outlaw's name in the development of English surnames. The concluding chapters deal with the administration of criminal law in medieval England, and the evidence that points to the possible origins of the legend in the activities of a notorious Yorkshire criminal, tracked down and beheaded in the county in 1225.



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