

"ROBIN HOOD AND GREEN ARROW:
OUTLAW BOWMEN IN THE MODERN URBAN LANDSCAPE"

by Sarah Beach

"Once Upon a Time." That's how stories are supposed to begin, at least traditionally. But as anyone who has even dipped into the scholarship on Robin Hood will be aware, the terms "once" and "time" do not apply to the archer's legend. "Once" implies that the story begins at one place. And "time" implies a specific period. The Robin Hood mythos, however, did not start locked into one location, and the time period of the tales thrived for long without being pinned down.

Over the centuries, Robin Hood has passed through the hands of many storytellers and each have tweaked and pushed and molded the mythos. The result that currently holds sway over audiences is a construct dealing with the adventures of a dispossessed nobleman forced into the life of an outlaw, who fights the injustices of his society. And who happens to be a renowned archer.

Others have chronicled the change of Robin Hood from yeoman outlaw to outcast noble. My interest is in the fact that Robin Hood was co-opted by the aristocracy at all. When an upper class claims an underclass outlaw hero as one of their own, the reason for it lies in the social aspects of mythology. When a figure in popular stories begins to take on mythic qualities, *everyone* desires to have a point of contact with that figure. That is the nature of myth, the playing out of issues that are *humanly* important, not just of interest to a segment of the population. Robin Hood, once he crossed the boundary between irreverent outlaw to champion of the down-trodden, the fighter of injustice, inevitably would be transformed into a figure with connections to all classes. No one, no matter what level of society he belongs to, wishes to identify with oppressors. We all

want to believe that we too would have the fire and determination to oppose injustice.

In the introduction to Dobson and Taylor's *Rymes of Robyn Hood: an Introduction to the English Outlaw*,¹ this observation is made:

That the early Robin Hood legend owed much of its appeal to contemporary dissatisfaction with the corruption of local law and administration can hardly be denied. What remains controversial is the extent to which the cult of the outlaw hero reflects a critique, whether conscious or not, of social as well as legal injustice.

How relevant *can* a medieval figure be to succeeding ages? In referring to Thomas Peacock's novel *Maid Marian*, published in 1822, Dobson and Taylor observe:

Maid Marian reveals, better than any other work in Robin Hood literature, the impossibility of reconciling the medieval outlaw legend with a modern sensibility. To put the problem in its simplest possible terms Peacock could never decide exactly how seriously to regard Robin Hood (RRH, p. 56)

This criticism is extended further, to the Victorian and Edwardian writers who attempted Robin Hood tales.

... not one proved able to make Robin Hood seem relevant to the issues of his own day. The writers of the Romantic period and after popularized Robin Hood only at the cost of converting him from a real outlaw into a literary symbol of a vanished and largely illusory medieval Arcadia. 'Playing Robin Hood and Maid Marian' became an appropriately light diversion for the leisured classes of Victorian society - in fact as well as fiction. (RRH, p. 58)

I mention these criticisms because they are grounded on some assumptions that

need to be questioned. Certainly, we do not now see outlawry of the Robin Hood type much these days. As Dobson and Taylor observe:

In many ways the imposition of outlawry, a punishment rooted in Anglo-Saxon precedent, was bound to be an admission of governmental failure - the last resort of a legal system which lacked policing services adequate to bring notorious criminals to justice. (RRH, p. 29)

Current American culture hovers between a feeling that the policing systems may be inadequate, and a desire to believe in the sufficiency of our justice system. In this cultural condition, the "outlaw" is very ambiguous. Few are keen to celebrate the Unabomber. Yet an undercurrent of "outlawry" remains: one never knows when one's self might come into idealistic or principled conflict with the ruling culture.

To step outside the law of a society is inherently an act of criticism *of* that society. To celebrate an outlaw figure is to celebrate a criticism of a society. So why do we not have more social outlaws and outlaw heroes? Because humans are also *social* creatures with a strong desire for community and the structures of community. The number of people who actually will chose to be "outlaw" for matters of principle is perhaps fairly represented by the number of positive outlaw heroes in the literature of the world (that is, very few).

This, then, is the nature of an outlaw legend: the hero represents *some* criticism of the society that he comes from (for we can hardly say that an outcast *belongs* to the society). He is displaced socially, but he does not disappear. He is, as it were, an irritant in the course of events, because he criticizes and because he is unaccountable. Someone who plays by his own rules and not the rules of the surrounding society is an awkward and dangerous force.

Down the centuries, Robin Hood himself has remained ensconced in his

medieval English woodland, safely disrupting a society well distanced from later readers. In America, from the 1940s to the mid-1960s, society by and large favored conformity. Errol Flynn's Robin Hood was a happy experience, and a television version of Robin Hood flashed briefly across the airwaves. But both of these presentations of the outlaw mythos were comfortably set in a far-off time. Other than modeling the fight against tyranny and injustice (and doing it in that historically distanced fashion), these representations of Robin Hood made little impact. But Robin Hood did acquire a descendant in American popular culture.

In 1941, National Comics (now DC Comics) introduced a modern-day Robin Hood in *More Fun Comics*.² Created by editor-writer Mort Weisinger, and drawn mainly by George Papp, the characters of Green Arrow and his side-kick Speedy were freely modeled on the popular Batman and Robin. The millionaire playboy Oliver Queen in his guise of Green Arrow was a sort of daylight version of Batman. What distinguished Green Arrow from other crime-fighters at this time was only what one writer calls his "impossible array of gimmicky arrows" (EAC, p. 157). These included net-arrows, flare-arrows, gas-arrows and the truly, sublimely, ridiculous boxing-glove arrow. As drawn at the time, Green Arrow had blond hair and an exceedingly bland face. Along with the bland face went a bland personality. All this made for a campy, entertaining read, but in the long run left Green Arrow a peripheral character. Then in the mid-60s, the tone of the general society changed, and with it the business of producing popular culture had to change, had to become "relevant."

One of DC Comics' standard heroes was Green Lantern. A stand-up sort of guy, Green Lantern was the eternal boy scout, the world's best cop, and very establishment. But in an era of growing non-conformity, Green Lantern was becoming a bit dull. As observed in *DC Comics: Sixty Years of the World's Favorite Comic Book Heroes*: "sales were slumping and some sort of new

approach was required."³ The assignment for writing this new approach was given by editor Julius Schwartz to Dennis O'Neil. None of the people involved had any idea of what the consequences were going to be. The decision was made to give this conventional, establishment hero a foil, an anti-establishment counterweight, a questioner of authority. And they settled on Oliver Queen, the Green Arrow.

Why did they choose this blond, bland imitation Batman? Dennis O'Neil says:

If we were going to do a series that was inspired by real-life problems, and we wanted to present two views, we needed an anti-authoritarian hero. Ollie got the job more-or-less by default. He'd been around since the early 40s, but ... never had much personality, and very little fan following. So we could make him whatever we needed him to be.⁴

Elsewhere, O'Neil comments that since they had set up Green Lantern as an "establishment guy," "you needed somebody to play off that. So it was almost the plot as much as anything else that dictated Green Arrow's altered personality" (DCC, p. 154). First off, artist Neal Adams changed his appearance, giving Oliver a distinctive mustache which curled up on the sides and a trim goatee beard jutting out from his chin. The bland face acquired a craggy look, and suddenly a face with character leapt off the page. It was different. In fact, it became so unique that in later years jokes would be made, by the characters, that no one was misled when Oliver Queen put on the mask of Green Arrow. He was so distinctive in looks and attitude, one would have to be deaf and blind not to know exactly who had entered the scene.

However, his looks were not the only things changed. He lost his fortune, for starters. Again, from Dennis O'Neil:

We wanted to remove him from the Bruce Wayne persona and give him a unique identity and we needed a radical/anarchist type to provide both dramatic contrast to and a dialectic with straight-arrow, WASPy Hal Jordan. A millionaire playboy would have been bad casting as a fiery anti-establishment humanist. And having him lose his fortune made for good melodrama. (LET.)

Along with his new radical/anarchist mind-set came a sarcastic attitude.

Suddenly, there was *nothing* at all bland about Green Arrow, and from that point on, there never would be.

Now, let us note here that these changes made to the character of Green Arrow were done for the simple purpose of giving Green Lantern a foil in stories addressed to the relevance-hungry audience of the late '60s-early '70s. Other than the fact that Green Arrow was an archer, they had no *intention* of casting Green Arrow as Robin Hood. But the result was inevitable: a Bowman, socially displaced, and an iconoclastic questioner of authority. Where have we heard this before? Regardless of their intentions at DC, Robin Hood motifs began informing everything about the character of Oliver Queen, the Green Arrow. Where before Green Arrow merely repeated the limited motif of an archer fighting crime and injustice, with this change in the character the trappings of the outlaw legend began to come into play.

That is the basic outline of the shaping of the character of Green Arrow. The hands of different authors added elements that became woven into the whole. So, even in the aspect of multiple authorship *Green Arrow* has parallels to the Robin Hood legends.

Let us now consider specific parallels between the Robin Hood legend as received now and Green Arrow's history *within* his stories.

First, we have the aspect of Robin Hood as a displaced aristocrat. It is

admittedly a late addition to the legend. However, as I observed earlier, everyone wants to have their own connection to the myth, so I will include it. How Robin becomes dispossessed is not important to this discussion, only that he *was* so displaced in his society. For Oliver Queen, however, (as the story stands now) there are two elements to his social displacement. In a 1995 recapitulation of how Oliver began his career as Green Arrow,⁵ writer Chuck Dixon shows us the rich, idle and obnoxiously boorish Oliver Queen on his yacht. Walking the deck late at night, drunk, and musing on the swashbuckling romantic adventures of Errol Flynn (both on film and in life), Oliver falls overboard. He ends up on a deserted island and has to fend for himself. This salutary lesson in survival at least cures Oliver of his boorishness. It is also his first experience of social displacement. During the course of his return he has a couple of adventures and discovers he likes the swashbuckling life. On his return, the man who had been watching over his fortune asks Oliver:

“And what will you do with your idle hours now? Other than ravaging your father’s fortune?”

Oliver: “I’m thinking of becoming active in the community. Doing something to make society a better place.” (GA Annual, p. 33-34)

He begins his career as a crime-fighter. However as mentioned in another story,⁶ he loses his fortune because he has not been paying attention to it. With that, he moves into the low-income neighborhood and begins to more fully identify with the downtrodden.

It is at this point that Robin Hood the fighter of social injustice begins to fill out the attitudes of Oliver Queen. In the first of the stories by Dennis O’Neil, “No Evil Shall Escape My Sight!”⁷ (the phrase comes from Green Lantern’s oath of commitment), Green Lantern flies above an inner city neighborhood and sees a young man push a large, suited man to the ground. The neighbors support the

young man and Green Lantern, astonished, thinks, "And the onlookers are *encouraging* him! No respect for law and order – *none!*" He intervenes, sends the young man off to police headquarters and helps the businessman cheerily on his way. The neighbors promptly pelt Green Lantern with cans and bottles and he assumes a riot is beginning. He is about to weigh in against them when a voice, off panel, warns him, "Touch him first, Green Lantern, and you'll have to touch me second..." It is Green Arrow. He continues, "... and I'll touch back! *Believe* it, chum! Back off! Go chase a mad scientist or something!" Now Green Lantern is even more perplexed. "*Green Arrow!*" he says. "You're *defending* these ... these anarchists?" Oliver proceeds to educate his establishment friend that the businessman he had helped was the slum landlord, who was refusing to fix the building and was trying to evict the tenants, including an elderly relative of the pugnacious young man sent to the police. Chagrined, Green Lantern assists Green Arrow in bringing the shady businessman to justice. It is not precisely an instance of "steal from the rich to give to the poor," but it does echo that famous Robin Hood motif.

The crusade of fighting injustice continued in a series of stories: fighting the oppression in a company mining town,⁸ assisting an American Indian tribe settle a dispute about land rights.⁹ But the supervisors of these comic book adventures did not make the mistake of implying that an outlaw hero like Green Arrow (or even an establishment hero like his friend Green Lantern) could solve all of society's ills. They demonstrated this most dramatically in a two part story in 1971,¹⁰ wherein Oliver's ward and sometime side-kick Speedy (also known as Roy Harper) became involved in using drugs. Roy, about the age of a college freshman and left too much to his own devices, has become a junkie. Green Arrow is faced with a problem that has no easy solution. There is no obvious villain (although he and Green Lantern do go after the drug dealers and

suppliers), and the "victim" is no incidental person in his life. Roy goes cold-turkey to kick his habit, but relations between mentor and ward remain prickly at best. If anything, this particular story-line shows the limits of the outlaw hero legend. There are some social problems that the iconoclast cannot remedy.

This mention of Oliver's ward brings us to the supporting cast of our outlaw hero. Robin Hood, of course, gained a mini-community in his Merry Men. But Green Arrow has a much more limited supporting cast. Roy Harper, the ward/side-kick owes more to the model of Batman and Robin than to anything or anyone in the Robin Hood mythos. But Oliver Queen was not without a companion parallel to Maid Marian. And like the figure of Maid Marian, this woman had an existence before coming into the orbit of Green Arrow. Dinah Lance, the Black Canary, had been another of DC Comics' crime-fighters. Just as Marian did not originally belong to the Robin Hood mythos, so too did Black Canary have a career before becoming the great love of Oliver Queen's life. Unfortunately, she was not the *only* love of his life and after many years she put an end to the relationship. Here the parallels between Robin Hood and Green Arrow are more a matter of coloring than dictating how the motif is played out. The only other significant "Robin Hood" supporting character for Green Arrow is a character named Eddie Fyers. Eddie is a sort of anti-Little John. Where Little John is so often presented as a large man with a gentle heart who is unbendingly loyal to Robin, Eddie is virtually his opposite. Short (occasionally called a "sawed-off runt" by Oliver), self-centered with homicidal responses, Eddie Fyers is a former C.I.A. operative, now freelancing, who has a very ambiguous relationship with Green Arrow. They are not quite fast friends, but neither are they firm enemies. The single point that Little John and Eddie Fyers have in common is that of martial prowess, for just like Little John, Eddie has a formidable reputation in hand-to-hand combat.

For all that Eddie Fyers presents a negative image of a Robin Hood motif, he is responsible (on at least one occasion) for bringing into play in the Green Arrow stories the aspect of Robin Hood as hunted outlaw. In a four-part story from 1990,¹¹ Eddie Fyers convinced Oliver to plant a device in a ship in Panama. Fyers told Green Arrow that the ship belonged to drug dealers and the device was a tracking device. In actuality, the ship was "a United States Navy vessel, on assignment with the anti-drug interdiction force in the Caribbean" (GA #35, p. 7), and the device was an explosive one. Oliver Queen is arrested for treason for his participation in what the government calls a terrorist act. Since he is not, at the time, gainfully employed, Oliver gets a public defender who urges him to accept a plea bargain. Oliver refuses, knowing Fyers set him up, but not why. While he is being transported to a security prison, a tire of the car is shot out, making it possible for Oliver to escape. The shooter was Eddie Fyers. At this point, Oliver becomes the object of a massive manhunt. Where Robin Hood had an actual price on his head, Green Arrow becomes the object of a "shoot-to-kill" order. Oliver goes into hiding in the underground of Seattle (the city he had been living in), while trying to track down Fyers and find out what exactly is going on. As a sidelight to the adventure, while hiding out, Oliver meets a young woman named Marianne (an intentional reference to Maid Marian). She asks his name and he replies "Robert ... Huntingdon." She knows her folklore, so she is, of course, skeptical. At the end of the adventure, to make a long story short, Green Arrow tracks down the men who used Fyers to set him up. They explain why he was chosen:

"You fit the profile we were looking for ... *highly* visible, reactionary, known to step outside the *technical* bounds of the law. Champion of lost causes. Tilter of windmills." (GA #38, p. 18)

These shadowy men could simply have said, "You were a useful Robin Hood on

whose head we could put a price." (The use of "reactionary" here is, of course, in its most literal meaning: he reacts to things. Anyone less conservative and resistant to change than Oliver Queen would be hard to find.)

Oliver Queen as hunted outlaw also overlaps a frequently repeated motif as an outcast or exile from his society. It may seem like a distinction without a difference, particularly in reference to Robin Hood. But with Green Arrow there are several occasions where he, in effect, exiles himself for real or perceived transgressions. To give perspective on this pattern, Chuck Dixon, in his recapitulation of Green Arrow's early career, has Oliver on the desert island remember an incident from his childhood (GA Annual #7, p. 12-13). One Christmas when he was very young, he was given his first archery set (and not one with the suction cup tips). He went out to a snowy field, and on his first shot killed a rabbit. So begins his status as "the world's greatest archer." The youngster's anguished reaction was to abandon his equipment and run away (home, in this case).

In the universe of DC Comics the principles of their heroes were shaped by the Comic Book Code. Part of the consequences of the Code was that heroes were not to be shown killing other people. Along with the push for socially relevant stories, Dennis O'Neil pushed the envelope on this issue of killing. In a three part story from 1972,¹² Green Arrow accidentally kills a sniper shooting at him. Distressed by this failure to stick to his code (He had reason: his left shoulder had been injured twice recently, so his aim was off.), he destroys his equipment, thus declaring "Green Arrow is dead." He seeks refuge in a mountain Zen monastery. Even though Oliver declares that he no longer wants to have anything to do with archery or violence, the monk working with him has greater insight into the nature of Oliver Queen. Indeed, the story ends with Oliver being called back to his career: he was needed. His reaction? "Okay! Save the plea! I'll

go! I'll trot into the mess we call civilization - the stink ... the foulness! Little Robin Hood me ... into the fray once again! But don't expect me to smile!" Here we have both a direct reference to Robin Hood, *and* a criticism of society. (And he does smile again, of course.)

Self-exile after apparent transgression becomes Oliver's standard reaction. After he messes up his relationship with Black Canary, he exiles himself from Seattle.¹³ After he is obliged to (apparently) kill Hal Jordan, his old friend, he again destroys his equipment, and retreats to the Zen monastery once more.¹⁴ But Green Arrow is inherently an outsider in the communities he lives in. The covert organization he had occasionally worked for determines that he is unbalanced and therefore dangerous to them. His execution is sanctioned and assassins go after him in the monastery. They do not succeed, but rather than bring further danger to the monastery, Oliver exiles himself from it.

Time after time, the writers of *Green Arrow* reinforced the outcast/outlaw aspect of their hero. Although some Robin Hood stories end with the outlawed nobleman reinstated in his rightful place, that fate was not to be Oliver Queen's. In 1995, at the climax of a five part story-line, Oliver Queen dies.¹⁵ Green Arrow had gotten involved with some eco-terrorists, initially because he was assigned to infiltrate the group and then because he is more than half convinced of the righteousness of their cause. Unfortunately, he discovers they intend to destroy the city of Metropolis. Another transgression, for he had helped the eco-terrorists a bit too much. This time, however, he goes for the ultimate self-exile. In order to prevent the destruction of Metropolis, he blows up the plane carrying the device which would do that job. He is on the plane, of course. However, in proper legendary fashion, no body was found.

While in the monastery the last time, Oliver had encountered a young man who was fascinated with the career of Green Arrow. This young man, named

Connor Hawke, had a burning desire to be a great archer, so when Oliver left, Connor went with him. Later it was revealed that Connor was a son of Oliver's, one he had not known he had. After Oliver's death, Connor goes to visit Black Canary to tell her that the older man was dead. To her, Connor expresses part of his grief:

"I just wish they'd found a body. It doesn't seem *final* somehow.

Oliver has no resting place, you know?"

(Black Canary replies) "Well, Robin Hood can help us there, too. The legend said that when Robin and Marian were dying, Robin fired an arrow into the air. And where it landed was where they were buried."

(GA #101, p. 13-14)

Connor goes back to the area around the monastery, recalling a conversation he had had with Oliver about Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest. Then he shoots an arrow into the forest before him. The last page of this transition issue of the comic book shows the arrow struck in the ground in the woods, and the ghostly images of the Robin Hood characters lifting their mugs of beer in a cheer - and Robin is given the appearance of Oliver Queen.

So ends the saga of Oliver Queen and the influence of Robin Hood on the *Green Arrow* comic book. At least, so it would appear. Aside from the by-word among comic book readers that if there is no body, the character is not *really* dead, the current editor of the comic book has maintained that the Robin Hood legend is still important to the nature of this magazine. The use of the medieval legend, aside from the continued presence of archery, has become a bit more subtle. The feature that remains strongest is that of the outsider who comments and critiques upon society. For Connor Hawke is inherently an outsider to most communities, in that he has a mixed racial background. His father, Oliver Queen, was white, while his mother is half Korean and half black. The appearance

Connor has been given, is that of a young man with Asian features, darker skin coloring, and blond hair and green eyes. On top of this visual statement, since Connor spent his teen years at the zen monastery, his outlook is singularly unworldly.

Thus begins a new generation of "outlaw" heroics. J.C. Holt, in his book *Robin Hood*, observes of the difference between the history of Robin Hood and the fictions that have been added to the legend:

The fancy present in all legends falsifies, and fancy saturates the tale of Robin Hood. It made heroes of outlaws. It confused violence and crime with justice and charity. In bridging the gap between the real and ideal world it presented some of the social problems of the Middle Ages as sharply cut issues of right and wrong. In this it achieved an enduring confidence trick.¹⁶

The writers of *Green Arrow* have been aware of this confidence trick since Dennis O'Neil reshaped the character of Oliver Queen. They have produced stories that show that social problems are not "sharply cut issues of right or wrong." Over the years, they have played out the primary elements of what can be called the "Outlaw Hero Legend." It begins with a commitment to causes believed to be righteous and personally chosen, not imposed by authorities or society. Consequently, the legend enfolds the questioning of authority, in order to determine whether that authority is acting correctly, doing what is right. This questioning leads to breaking the bonds of conformity. Then, these elements are clothed in a passion for life, in order that the hero be sustained during the inevitable consequence of social displacement. Society, after all, rarely welcomes its critics with open arms.

I began with "once upon a time." Holt addressed this matter:

... unlike an incident or a set of events, a story is not fixed in time

and place. It provides a continually shifting point of focus. As the circumstances which sustain it change – the audience, the means of communication, the social assumptions and conventions, the intellectual milieu – so the story itself changes. And there is a time-lag. Whatever a new generation makes of such a tale, something of the older appreciation of it is likely to survive. So the relationship of the content of a story to its context involves complex chronology. How otherwise could it come about that a children's hero in the twentieth century should owe his triumphs to the bow and arrow? (RH, p. 189)

We tell stories. Those stories affect other people. And some stories resonate with such power that they outlive their time of origin.

Is the Robin Hood legend relevant for this day and age? Perhaps more so than the archaic sport of archery would seem to indicate. The hum of a bowstring. The flight of an arrow. The laughter of an outlaw hero. These things remain personal and alive, and therefore communicable. Ideally, there will never be a cure for a Robin Hood infection.

NOTES

- 1: Dobson, R.B. & J. Taylor; *Rymes of Robyn Hood: An Introduction to the English Outlaw*, (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976), p. 30. Hereafter cited as RRH.
- 2: Goulart, Ron, editor; *The Encyclopedia of American Comics*, (New York, Facts on File, 1990), P. 157. Hereafter EAC.
- 3: Daniels, Les; *DC Comics: Sixty Years of the World's Favorite Comic Book Heroes*, (New York; Little, Brown and Co., 1995), p. 154. Hereafter DCC.
- 4: O'Neil, Dennis, Letter to Sarah Beach, postmarked September 3, 1997.

Hereafter LET.

- 5: Dixon, Chuck, "From the Beginning," *Green Arrow Annual #7*, 1995.
- 6: Maggin, Elliot, "What Can One Man Do?," p. 1, *More Hard Traveling Heroes*, compilation 1993.
- 7: O'Neil, Dennis, "No Evil Shall Escape My Sight!" *Green Lantern #76*, April 1970.
- 8: O'Neil, Dennis, "Journey to Desolation," *Green Lantern #77*, June 1970.
- 9: O'Neil, Dennis, "Ulysses Star is Still Alive," *Green Lantern #79*, September 1970.
- 10: O'Neil, Dennis, "Snowbirds Don't Fly," *Green Lantern #85*, August-September 1971, and "They Say It'll Kill Me ... But They Won't Say When!" *Green Lantern #86*, October-November 1971.
- 11: Grell, Mike, "The Black Arrow Saga," Parts 1-4, *Green Arrow #35-38*, August-early October 1990.
- 12: O'Neil, Dennis, "The Killing of an Archer," "Green Arrow is Dead," "The Fate of an Archer," *Flash #217-219*, August-September 1972, October-November 1972, December 1972-January 1973.
- 13: Dooley, Kevin, "Home Alki," *Green Arrow #81*, December 1993.
- 14: Puckett, Kelley, "Cast Upon the Waters," *Green Arrow #0*, October 1994.
- 15: Dixon, Chuck, "The Trap," *Green Arrow #100*, September 1995, and "Run of the Arrow," *Green Arrow #101*, October 1995.
- 16: Holt, J.C., *Robin Hood* (New York; Thames and Hudson, 1982), p. 199.
Hereafter RH.

Legend has it that Robin Hood was an outlaw living in Sherwood Forest with his "Merry Men" but did he really exist? There are several versions of the Robin Hood story. The Hollywood one is that of an incredibly handsome man "Errol Flynn" clothed in garments of Lincoln green, fighting for the rights of the oppressed and outwitting the evil Sheriff of Nottingham. Robin having fought in the Crusades alongside the Lionheart before returning to England to find his lands siezed by the Sheriff. All versions of the Robin Hood story give the same account of his death. Robin asked Little John to bury him where the arrow landed, which he duly did. A mound in Kirklees Park, within bow-shot of the house, can still be seen and is said to be his last resting place. English ballads tell the story of the outlaw Robin Hood, who lived in Englands Sherwood Forest. No one knows for sure if Robin Hood existed, but the ballads about him give valuable information about English society in the late 14th and early 15th century. Statue of Robin Hood. 3 Sherwood forest in central England was formerly a royal forest. 4 In the first stories about him, Robin appears as a simple highway robber trying to avoid capture. Later tales present him as a man wrongfully denied his noble title. The stories about Robin celebrate his courage, generosity, skill in archery, and comic flair. He does not hesitate to fight and steal from his enemies, but he always shows compassion for the poor, protects women and children, and offers assistance to anyone of honor.