THE LAST MAN WHO KNEW EVERYTHING

Andrew Robinson is a King’s Scholar of Eton College and holds degrees from Oxford University and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. He is the author of more than fifteen books, including *The Story of Measurement* (2007), and four other biographies including *Einstein: A Hundred Years of Relativity* and *The Man Who Deciphered Linear B: The Story of Michael Ventris*. Formerly literary editor of *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, he is now a visiting fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge, and a full-time writer.

“*The Last Man Who Knew Everything* is an excellent introduction to one of the most versatile minds of the 19th century.”

P. D. Smith, *The Guardian*

“Happily, in Andrew Robinson [Young] has a biographer who can do justice to his achievements and show why they matter . . . Young emerges from this absorbing biography as an attractive character, motivated more by curiosity than a desire for fame and fortune.”

Robert Matthews, *New Scientist*

“Anyone interested in what it means to be a genius should read this book.”

Lauren Kassell, *American Scientist*

“Andrew Robinson’s admiration for his subject is profound but judicious. He is careful in the claims he makes and points out that however seductive the myth of the lone genius, the reality of scholarship is more complex and collaborative . . . [Young’s] reputation has since been secured among scientists, but Robinson’s engaging biography will bring him to the wider public he deserves.”

Rosemary Hill, *The Sunday Times*

“*The Last Man Who Knew Everything* is meticulously researched, superbly written, richly illustrated and imbued with an enthusiasm for its subject that does not flag even when analysing some of Young’s most abstruse theories. This book should be cherished by all who value originality, breadth of knowledge and intellectual passion.”

Chandak Sengoopta, *Literary Review*

“In his modest introduction to this fascinating story, [Andrew] Robinson suggests that it is impossible for one person to write a comprehensive biography of this extraordinary man. He adds that his aim is simply to introduce Young to those who are unfamiliar with him. Robinson has achieved this object brilliantly in *The Last Man Who Knew Everything* . . . offering a wonderful testimony to the heights and vagaries of human achievement”.

Sir David Weatherall, *The Lancet*

“The occasional diagram is almost superfluous, because Robinson’s writing is so lucid. In fact the style of the entire book is a wonder. With no flourishes, no time wasting, Robinson calmly deciphers the man and his numerous fields of enquiry. Clearly, Robinson has some polymathic tendencies”.

Michael Sims, *The Los Angeles Times*

“Thomas Young . . . is a neglected English intellectual hero . . . whose life and work is properly celebrated in this fine book.”

Iain Finlayson, *The Times*
“Thomas Young . . . now has the biography he deserves.”

Ben Wilson, The Spectator

“It is a struggle to summarise—let alone to popularise—the achievements of Thomas Young . . . Robinson is the biographer of, among others, Albert Einstein, Michael Ventris and Satyajit Ray, and is one of the few authors with the talent and the temperament to attempt this resurrection.”

Nicholas Shakespeare, The Daily Telegraph

“Thoroughly researched . . . Robinson successfully portrays a genius who lived in a time when the fields of knowledge were fertile for new discoveries.”

Publishers Weekly

“Young’s polymathy gave him a unique understanding of the world but also damned him to be forgotten by it. Until now, of course.”

Seed magazine

“Thomas Young was not someone you’d want to go up against on Jeopardy!”

Kirkus Reviews

“It is wonderful to have such an elegant biography of this remarkable man.”

Philip Anderson, Nobel Laureate, Princeton University

“By documenting the extraordinary life and career of Thomas Young, this book reminds us how most of us tap only a small proportion of our full potential. It is also a cautionary tale on how society reacts to individuals who cannot be pigeonholed.”

Sir Arthur C. Clarke, author of 2001: A Space Odyssey

“Egyptologist, epigrapher of genius, polymath, and life insurance expert, Thomas Young was one of the last true scientific generalists . . . This skillfully wrought, long overdue biography is a masterly assessment of the man and his life.”

Brian Fagan, archaeologist and author of The Rape of the Nile

“Thomas Young was both physicist and physician, practicing medicine throughout his life . . . This is a fascinating and very readable account of the polymathic Dr. Young.”

Chris McManus, Professor of Psychology and Medical Education, University College London, and author of Right Hand, Left Hand

“It is the best biography I have read for many years.”

Sir Patrick Moore, Fellow of the Royal Society, astronomer and writer

“Writing a biography of someone with such a diverse range of exploits is a major challenge, but Andrew Robinson succeeds with clarity and enthusiasm and thereby reminds us of one of Britain’s forgotten geniuses.”

Simon Singh, author of Big Bang and Fermat’s Last Theorem