



The History of Morris Dancing 1458-1750 (Studies in Early English Drama)

John Forrest

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Morris dancing is one of the more individual of English folk customs and one that has been greatly misunderstood. Seen as a descendant of pagan folk ritual, the tradition of morris dancing has been based on calendar customs and distorted by preconceptions imposed on it by the folklorists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. John Forrest has carefully analysed the wealth of evidence to show that morris dancing does not in fact have pagan or ancient origins. His examination of the early documentation traces the passage of dance ideas between groups of people who have conventionally been considered folklorically distinct and ties morris traditions into the wider area of communal customs and public celebrations. Twenty years in the making and impeccably researched with a huge treasury of source material, "A History of Morris Dancing 1458-1750" is an essential reference work for anthropologists, social historians, and specialists in English literature.

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