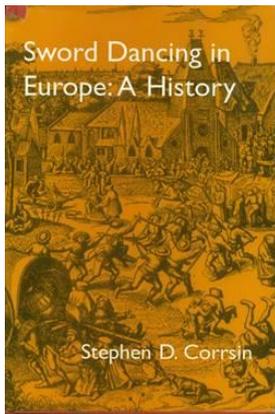


Sword Dancing in Europe: A History

Stephen D. Corrsin. The Folklore Society. Hisarlik Press, London 1997

Dr. Corrsin's long anticipated *Sword Dancing in Europe: A History* was published in 1997, as publication 3 of the "Tradition Series" of the Folklore Society. Since its appearance, he has continued his research in the general field. His next major work, which is planned for 2001, has the working title: *Ideology and Myth in the European Folk Dance "Revival," 1870-1945*.

It will focus on the highly ideological scholarship concerning "ritual" dancing in England, Germany, and Austria, in the period up to the Second World War. This includes both "ancient ritual survival" notions, and extremist nationalism. (His wife insists on calling this future book "Folk Dancing Fascists" which is more exciting if less accurate.)



Phil Heaton writes; "I would recommend you find, borrow or steal this book...just read it".

Stephen Corrsin's *European History* is brilliant and covers a great swathe of the known information of linked sword dancing from across Europe. Its chapters on English dance and the Shetlands are particularly enlightening. In his last chapter he writes enigmatically;

'Dear brother: Do you remember that our dance swords were confiscated last Christmas, after the row while we were tramping between villages? But a pile of discarded saw blades in the workshop gave us some ideas the other day...'

Some other opinions,

"...his delight in his subject is infectious... [*Sword Dancing* is] a genuinely pioneering book which both gathers together all that has been said in the past and also offers a secure base from which future scholarship can begin". Roy Judge, Folklore Society; author of ***The Jack in the Green: A May Day Custom***

"What an incredibly balanced approach to scholarship: assemble the literature through time, address the misdirected scholarship of the past, particularly the nationalistic, lace this with field observations, and indicate where future inquiries might best contribute to our understanding... we have a study which is so thorough and balanced in its approach and conclusions that it should appeal to anyone conducting research on folk dance. It is also a model for good research on other forms of folk expression".

James R. Dow, Professor, Iowa State University; co-editor of ***The Nazification of an Academic Discipline: Folklore in the Third Reich***