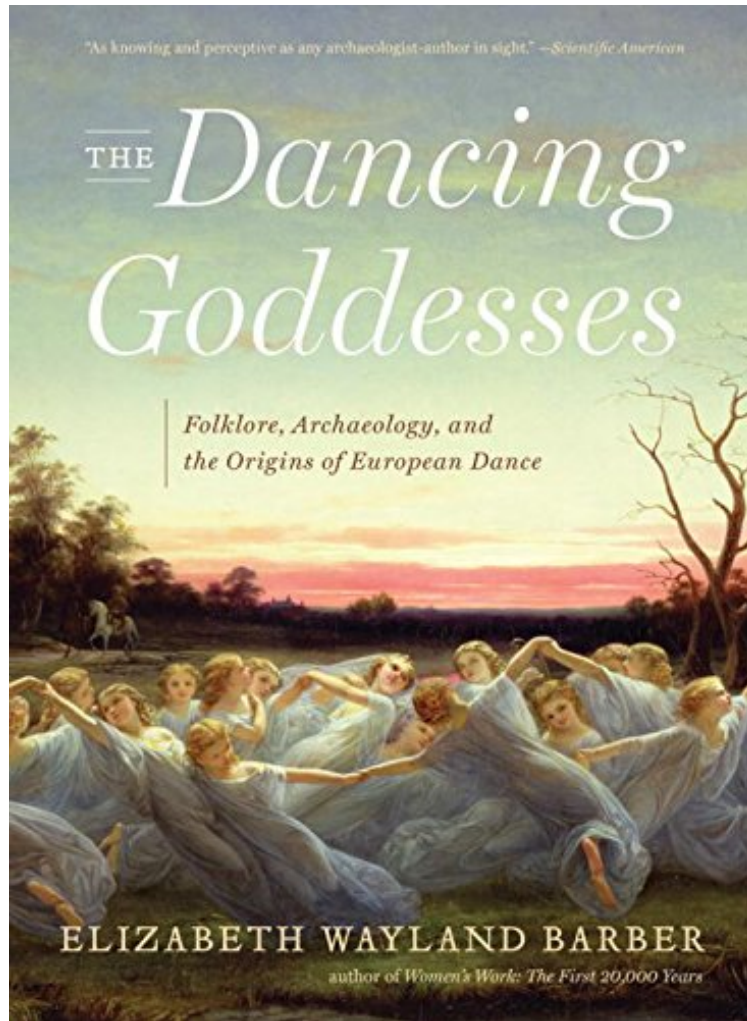


(Mobile ebook) The Dancing Goddesses: Folklore, Archaeology, and the Origins of European Dance

The Dancing Goddesses: Folklore, Archaeology, and the Origins of European Dance

Elizabeth Wayland Barber

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Elizabeth Wayland Barber : The Dancing Goddesses: Folklore, Archaeology, and the Origins of European Dance before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dancing Goddesses: Folklore, Archaeology, and the Origins of European Dance:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must-read for anyone who loves Balkan dancesBy Global ProfThis book is an archeologist's ode to her passion for Eastern European folk dance. Parts are erudite, and full of fascinating facts about the region's culture and history. She explains, for instance, why the colors of white, red and black are so popular. Why embroidery goes around the neck and sleeves (to protect the wearer from evil spirits), why some dances go clockwise and others the reverse, why dances from some regions have "regular" beats, such as 3/4 or

4/4, and other regions have odder ones like 7/8, 9/8, etc. Why Western Europe does partner dances, and Eastern Europe does line dances. My favorite parts of the book, however, and the ones that will stick most in my mind, are about Balkan dances themselves. As an avid folk dancer in my teens, I had an intuitive understanding of the sacredness of these dances. Barber explains where this comes from, namely the ritual nature of the dances themselves, which were used to ensure fertility and connect with earth and water goddesses. She had two quotes in the book from William McNeill, author of *Keeping Together in Time*, about the psychological effects of soldiers marching together. I absolutely loved these, because it was the first time I had ever seen anybody describe the magic of moving in unison with a group of people -- in the case of dancing, to timeless tunes and rhythms: "Marching aimlessly about on the drill field, swaggering in conformity with prescribed military postures, conscious only of keeping in step so as to make the next move correctly and in time somehow felt good... A sense of pervasive well-being is what I recall; more specifically, a strange sense of personal enlargement; a sort of swelling out, becoming bigger than life, thanks to participation in collective ritual... It was something felt, not talked about ... Moving briskly and keeping in time was enough to make us feel good about ourselves, satisfied to be moving together, and vaguely pleased with the world at large." "the emotion it arouses constitutes an indefinitely expandable basis for social cohesion among any and every group that keeps together in time, moving big muscles together and chanting, singing, or shouting rhythmically. 'Muscular bonding' is the most economical label I could find for this phenomenon, and I hope the phrase will be understood to mean the euphoric fellow feeling that prolonged and rhythmic muscular movement arouses in nearly all participants in such exercises." Isn't that beautiful? Isn't that exactly what a person feels in something like folk dance? I will keep this book as a reference for a long time. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. It is a great book for lay-readers. By Jennifer Calderone This book is well researched and presented. It is a great book for lay-readers, in part because it includes a bibliography and citations for further reading. I used this book as one of my background texts when I taught a short class in ballet history at a summer ballet intensive. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. for the Dance Academic By Happy Feet Very dry, academic, but interesting. Kept wanting to shout, uh "Shamanism", the purpose of much of the dancing and ritual - she finally gets to that way after the middle. Still, if you like dance history of folk and ancient dances, this should be on your shelf. For a more engaging read, see Barbara Eihrenriech's "Dancing in the Streets".

A fascinating exploration of an ancient system of beliefs and its links to the evolution of dance. From southern Greece to northern Russia, people have long believed in female spirits, bringers of fertility, who spend their nights and days dancing in the fields and forests. So appealing were these spirit-maidens that they also took up residence in nineteenth-century Romantic literature. Archaeologist and linguist by profession, folk dancer by avocation, Elizabeth Wayland Barber has sleuthed through ethnographic lore and archaeological reports of east and southeast Europe, translating enchanting folktales about these dancing goddesses as well as eyewitness accounts of traditional ritual texts that offer new perspectives on dance in agrarian society. She then traces these goddesses and their dances back through the Romans and Greeks to the first farmers of Europe. Along the way, she locates the origins of many customs, including coloring Easter eggs and throwing rice at the bride. The result is a detective story like no other and a joyful reminder of the human need to dance. 80 illustrations

From Booklist *Starred* In her latest, joyfully comprehensive work of scholarly discovery and original analysis, archaeologist, linguist, and prehistoric textiles expert Barber, inspired by her passion for folk dancing, unearths the roots and significance of dance in the diverse cultures of Europe and Russia. Originally dance was not an art form but the essence of life itself, a perception borne out by Barber's many-pronged diggings into folklore, religion, agriculture, seasonal rituals, traditional medicine, ornament, and clothing. She begins with folktales about magical dancing female spirits, bringers of fertility, and village maidens dancing to summon spring. Of courtship dances, Barber wryly observes that certain dances evolved to test whether the bride was physically strong and agile enough to do the hard work women performed in the fields and at home. Taking cues from images of dancers in handicrafts and art and spanning ancient Greece and Rome and the meshing of pagan traditions and Christianity, Barber describes dance cures and dances for the ancestors and revels in such intriguing customs as the Slavic magical sleeve dance. She even draws on cognitive science to investigate how dancing affects the brain, bringing people into accord and strengthening communities. Years in the making, Barber's far-roaming, gracefully interpretive, and sprightly study of European dance will be the go-to resource for many years to come. --Donna Seaman Rich with anecdotes and compelling explanations of the origin of many modern customs (such as throwing rice at a bride), Barber's is an informative and amusing read, often bringing together many diverse sources traditional stories, illustrations of artifacts, and aspects of popular culture into an illuminating whole that will serve as a nice introduction for those unfamiliar with the topic, and a valuable reference for scholars of European dance and folklore. Starred review. [A] joyfully comprehensive work. . . . Barber's sprightly study of European dance will be the go-to resource for years to come. "An impressive study that weaves together dance, folklore, culture, and mythology." About the Author Elizabeth Wayland Barber is the author of *Womens Work* and *The Mummies of rmchi*. Professor emerita of archaeology and linguistics at Occidental College,

she lives in California.