



# **Sports and Physical Exercise in Early Modern Culture: New Perspectives on the History of Sports and Motion**

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It is often assumed that a recognisably modern sporting culture did not emerge until the eighteenth century. The plethora of physical training and games that existed before 1700 tend to fall victim to rigid historical boundaries drawn between "modern" and "pre-modern" sports, which are concerned primarily with levels of regulation, organization and competitiveness. Adopting a much broader and culturally based approach, the essays in this collection offer an alternative view of sport in the early modern period. Taking into account a variety of competitive as well as non-competitive forms of sport, physical training and games, the collection situates these types of activities as institutions in their own right within the socio-cultural context of early-modern Europe.

Treating the period not only as a precursor of modern developments, but as an independent and formative era, the essays engage with overlooked topics and sources such as court records, self-narratives, and visual materials, and with contemporary discussions about space, gender and postcolonial studies. By allowing for this increased contextualization of sport, the collection is able to integrate it into more general historical questions and approaches.

The volume underlines how developments in early modern sport influenced later developments, whilst at the same time being thoroughly shaped by contemporary notions of the body, status and honour. These notions influenced not only the contemporary sporting fashion but the adoption of sports in elite education, the use of sports facilities, training methods and modes of competition, thus offering a more integrated idea of the place of sport in early modern society.

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