

## IRISH DANCE: AT THE ORIGINS OF THE TRADITION

*The present study examines the development of Irish dance through various musical, athletic and ritual practices that existed in Old Irish culture, as recorded in Old Irish sagas and poetic texts. Although no direct references to dance practices have been preserved in ancient texts, we can analyze the available references to games, rituals, songs and music that could have formed the basis for Irish dance as such. Moreover, referring to the past traditions allows us to formulate hypotheses regarding the potential origins of modern styles in Irish dances. Based on descriptions of ancient rituals, games, and the role of music in mythological plots, we can identify the prerequisites for the emergence of modern social and sports dances and their division into different styles (old style, festival style, competitive practices, dance shows).*

**Keywords:** *Irish dance, Old Irish literature, game, competition, ritual, music*

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