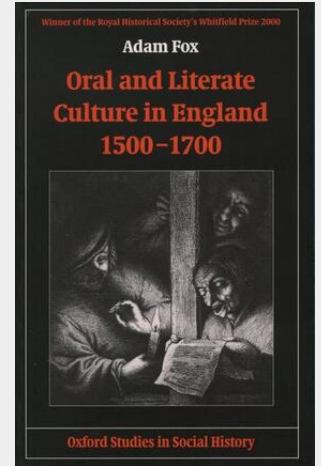


Fox

ORAL & LITERATE CULTURE IN ENG

This book explores the varied vernacular forms and rich oral traditions which were such a part of popular culture in early modern England. It focuses, in particular, upon dialect speech and proverbial wisdom, 'old wives' tales' and children's lore, historical legends and local customs, scurrilous versifying and scandalous rumour-mongering. Adam Fox argues that while the spoken word provides the most vivid insight into the mental world of the majority in this society, it was by no means untouched by written influences. Even at the beginning of the period, centuries of reciprocal infusion between these complementary media had created a cultural repertoire which had long since ceased to be purely oral. Thereafter, the growth of reading ability together with the proliferation of texts both in manuscript and print saw the rapid acceleration and elaboration of this process. By 1700 popular traditions and modes of expression were the product of a fundamentally literate environment to a much greater extent than has yet been appreciated.



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