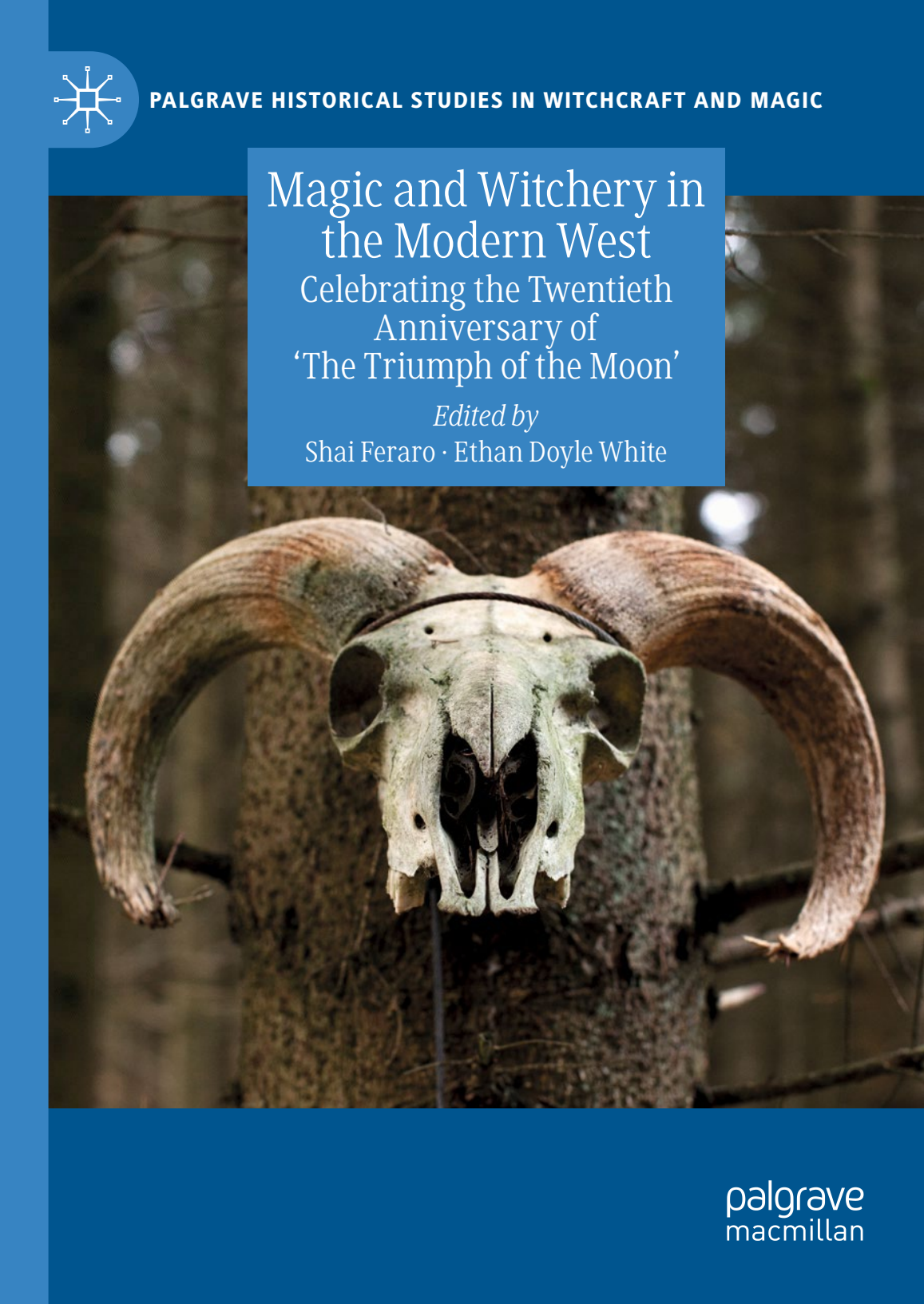
PALGRAVE HISTORICAL STUDIES IN WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC
Magic and Witchery in the Modern West
Celebrating the Twentieth Anniversary of 'The Triumph of the Moon'
Edited by
Shai Feraro · Ethan Doyle White
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For Ronald. Thank you for paving the way.

Contents

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Shai Feraro, PhD, is an adjunct lecturer at the Oranim College of Education, Israel. His scholarly interests lie in the connection between new religions and gender issues, and he specializes in the study of

contemporary Paganism in North America, Britain, and Israel. His dissertation (completed at Tel Aviv University's School of Historical Studies) dealt with women and gender issues in British magical and Pagan groups, c.1888–c.1988. For the past six years, he has also studied the Israeli Pagan community, utilizing research methods from the social sciences such as participant observation, interviews, and an online survey. Feraro is the secretary of the Israeli Association for the Study of Religions, and is the co-editor of *Contemporary Alternative Spiritualities in Israel* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). He is also an editorial board member for the *Alternative Spirituality and Religion Review*. His forthcoming postdoctoral project will focus on occult and New Age spirituality bookshops as sites for the production and exchange of rejected knowledge in the UK, c.1893–c.1993.

Manon Hedenborg White holds a PhD in the History of Religions from Uppsala University, Sweden. Her doctoral dissertation, "The Eloquent Blood: The Goddess Babalon and the Construction of Femininity in Western Esotericism," analysed constructions of femininity and feminine sexuality in modern occultism, with a specific focus on Aleister Crowley's religion, Thelema, and its development in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. She has published articles and spoken on a range of subjects pertaining to Crowley, Thelema, gender, and sexuality in modern Western esotericism. Hedenborg White is employed as a postdoctoral researcher at Södertörn University, with funding from the Swedish Research Council. She is also a visiting scholar at the Center for History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents at the University of Amsterdam for the period 2018–2020.

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CHAPTER 1

Twenty Years On: An Introduction

Ethan Doyle White and Shai Feraro

As the twentieth century came to a close, a British historian best known for his work on the volatile world of seventeenth-century England brought out a historical examination of Wicca, a new religious movement that had been established only half a century before. This work, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*, was the first monograph devoted to the history of Wicca to be written by a professional academic. In this, it was a startlingly brave and ambitious work. Prejudices against alternative religions ran high and extended onto those who dared study them. Despite this atmosphere of uncertainty, *Triumph* had many things going for it. It was a ground-breaking study, produced by a well-established historian, and published by Oxford University Press, one of the world's most prestigious publishing houses.

Twenty years later, and the world has moved on. Hutton's career has broadened and developed. As well as his continuing position at Bristol University, from 2009 to 2013 he worked as a Commissioner for English Heritage and then as the chair of the Blue Plaques Panel. He has produced eight further monographs, on a broad range of topics, from the reception

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of Siberian shamanism to the image of the witch through history. He is, if not a household name, then at least an oft-recognised face on British television, known as a regular talking head on history documentaries and as presenter of the series *Professor Hutton's Curiosities* (2013). The emphasis that he places on communicating directly with a broad, non-academic audience through television, radio, and public talks has earned him something of a cult fan following: there are not many professional historians who can claim to have an appreciation group devoted to them on Facebook, let alone one with over a thousand members. At the same time, he remains a well-respected figure among the scholarly community due to his prodigious output and his friendly and helpful demeanour. The editors of this volume, while hailing from different parts of the world and trained in different disciplinary backgrounds, owe a debt to both Hutton and *Triumph* in helping to open up the study of Wicca and modern Paganism as a worthy area of academic enquiry. He led the way in a manner that has allowed a range of younger scholars to follow in his footsteps.

It is at this juncture that we feel it important to take stock and pay tribute to this trail-blazing volume. The study of both modern Paganism and modern occultism has grown rapidly, assisted by a number of newly formed journals and scholarly societies. The year 2005 saw the establishment of the European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism (ESSWE), founded four years after the launch of *Aries*, an academic journal devoted to the subject. Although Hutton has never been closely associated with this academic movement, perhaps in large part because its institutional links are closer to the study of religion than to history, his scholarly interests clearly echo those of the various scholars operating under its aegis. The years following *The Triumph of the Moon* also witnessed the growth of the academic study of modern Paganism. The year 2004 saw the launch of *The Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies* as a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal devoted to the subject, while 2003 marked the first session on modern Paganism at the American Academy of Religion's annual meeting. *The Triumph of the Moon* helped to set the standard for these developments and remains a continuing source of inspiration.

Wicca, Paganism, and Occultism

Wicca is a new religious movement that came to public awareness in England during the 1950s, although it was likely constructed over the course of the previous three decades, using a variety of older sources. Its

early practitioners presented it as the survival of an ancient pre-Christian belief system which had persisted throughout the centuries of Christian dominance in the form of a witches' cult. In adopting this origin myth, early Wiccans were utilising the historical framework developed by various scholars, most notably Margaret Murray (1863–1963), who argued that the witch trials carried out in early modern Christendom were an attempt to extinguish a surviving pre-Christian religion. Although historians demolished and discarded this framework during the 1960s and 1970s, the "Murray thesis" remained important for the development of Wicca and is still retained by some practitioners today as a mythic origin story.[1]

Precise definitions as to who or what constitutes a real "Wiccan" have varied amid emic arguments over that designation; the term emerged in Britain during the early 1960s to describe the religious movement in its broad sense, although some denominations subsequently sought to restrict the term solely to themselves, thereby denying others the legitimate usage of it. While both definitions remain in use, the broader and more inclusive variant is likely more widespread.[2] In examining Wicca in the broader sense of the word, we find a religion that is theologically diverse, containing duotheists, monotheists, polytheists, agnostics, and atheists within its midst. When deity forms are utilised, they are usually drawn from the pre-Christian belief systems of Europe and its environs and commonly include both female and (or in place of) male divinities. Practitioners typically identify as "witches" and perform rites—either solitarily or in groups known as covens—which involve spellcasting as a common practice and which practitioners refer to as being "magical" in nature. Wiccans often mark a series of seasonal festivals known as Sabbats, collectively termed the Wheel of the Year; this emphasis on observing the changing of the seasons leads many practitioners to identify Wicca as a form of "nature religion" or "nature spirituality."[3]

Wicca is the best known and largest form of modern Paganism, a broad milieu comprising a variety of religious, spiritual, and esoteric groups consciously inspired and influenced by the non-Abrahamic belief systems which existed in Europe, North Africa, and the Near East prior to the establishment of Christian and Islamic hegemony.[4] Alongside Wicca, other prominent forms of modern Paganism include modern Druidry, whose practitioners identify with the druids of Iron Age Western Europe, and Heathenry, a movement heavily inspired by the belief systems of the pre-Christian societies of linguistically Germanic Europe.[5] Numerically smaller forms include groups professing to revive the belief systems of the ancient Greeks, Canaanites, and Egyptians.[6] In Eastern and Central

Europe, various "Native Faith" movements have developed in recent decades in an effort to reconstruct the ancient polytheistic traditions which were supplanted by Christianity. These groups usually try to distance themselves from Western forms of modern Paganism.[7]

Like most modern Pagan religions, Wicca also constitutes a form of esotericism and of occultism. Defining "esotericism" remains a contested issue, although the term has long been associated with such diverse practices as Kabbalah, Theosophy, and New Age. The historian of religion Wouter Hanegraaff has argued that esotericism can be best understood as a conceptual category within Western culture into which society's "rejected knowledge" has been relegated by both mainstream Judeo-Christian religion and the forces of scientific rationality.[8] Within scholarship on esotericism, the term "occultism" is usually reserved for esoteric currents that developed from the nineteenth century onwards, in part because the term itself first appeared in the 1840s. Hanegraaff has argued that these can be distinguished from other, older esoteric traditions because they have had to either "come to terms with a disenchanted world" or operate "from the perspective of a disenchanted secular world."[9] In reflecting beliefs which are at odds with both Judeo-Christian doctrine and established rationalist understandings of the universe, Wicca is clearly a form of esotericism, something made particularly clear through its heavy utilisation of elements from older esoteric currents, such as Freemasonry and ceremonial magic. At the same time, the fact that it emerged within a disenchanted twentieth-century society and operates in a context where it has to respond to scientific rationality places it within the category of occultism.

There are other variants of occultism which have also utilised the term "witchcraft" in reference to themselves and their practices. These include certain forms of Thelema, the religion established by Aleister Crowley in 1904, and various groups operating under the banner of Satanism or Luciferianism. Thus, while we might speak of Wicca as a form of modern witchcraft, it is not the only religious tradition that can be classified in this way. This testifies, in a sense, to the enduring power of the witch as a symbol with resonance for individuals living today. As Hanegraaff notes, the witch is a "positive antitype" and gains its power through its "implicit criticism of dominant Judeo-Christian and Enlightenment values"; "there is hardly a better way to express one's rejection of the values informing mainstream society than claiming the name of its traditional enemies."[10] To put it another way, the image of the witch carries with it countercultural chic.

As the title of this work makes clear, the chapters in this edited volume are united in their focus on magic and witchery, or witchcraft, in the modern Western world. Both are of course old terms and carry a great deal of baggage, both as they have been used in colloquial parlance and how they have been defined and redefined by scholars over the years. The last decade has seen increasing attention paid to the concept of "magic" by scholars of religion, and as a result there has been a growing acceptance that the term is too loaded with negative connotations to prove much use as any sort of cross-cultural and pan-historical analytic category.[11] Thus, that is not the meaning of "magic" as it is being used here. Rather, this book looks at "magic" as a category with emic value within forms of modern occultism. Within this milieu, "magic" has come to be employed in reference to an occluded force through which individuals—"magicians"—can bring about physical changes in the universe through their own willpower, usually facilitated through ritualised or ceremonial acts.[12] It is this emic understanding of "magic" that is held to by most Wiccans, Satanists, Thelemites, and other occultists and can usefully be re-adopted for the etic purposes of scholarly examinations of these religious traditions.

The Triumph of the Moon

The Triumph of the Moon has its origins in Hutton's longstanding interest in the reception of Europe's pre-Christian religions and in the modern Pagan milieu more specifically. In part, this interest was inherited from his mother, a modern Pagan "of a recognisable Victorian and Edwardian kind." She did not engage in religious rites, although "was deeply influenced by the Greek and Roman classics, regarded the Olympian deities as the natural divinities of the world, had a sense of a single archaic mother goddess as standing behind them, and felt an immanent divinity in nature."[13] She was Russian, although gave birth to Hutton in Ootacamund, southern India, in 1953. As a child, and following the sudden death of his British father, Hutton relocated with his mother to Britain, where they settled into a council flat in eastern England.[14] Raised as a Pagan within this environment, Hutton shared his mother's passion for the ancient past and found an outlet for this interest in a local archaeological society. With this society and other groups, he took part in various excavations between 1965 and 1976, as well as visiting every Early Neolithic chambered tomb in England and Wales between 1966 and 1969.[15]

As a teenager, Hutton engaged with the counter-culture of the 1960s and 1970s, taking part not only in its political aspects, including protests against misogyny and racism—in 1978 he was nearly killed by neo-Nazis due to his support of the Anti-Nazi League[16]—but also more cultural and artistic facets, like performances at folk clubs and free festivals. It was during this period that he gained his first experiences with modern Paganism as a practical religious system, attending seasonal rites organised by a Pagan group in Epping Forest, a woodland straddling the Essex/Greater London border, in 1968–1969.[17] It was also at this point in his life that he encountered one of the most prominent figures in Wiccan history, Alex Sanders (1926–1988), the founder of the Alexandrian tradition.[18] Operating within this milieu, Hutton initially believed in the witch-cult theory and other accounts of pre-Christian survivals that were popular with Pagans: "I believed everything I read in Margaret Murray, Robert Graves, Sir James Frazer, Gerald Gardner, Charles Godfrey Leland, and authors who thought that medieval Celtic literatures embodied reliable portraits of the ancient pagan past: simply because all of them either embodied or built upon what was then absolute academic orthodoxy."[19] In 1973, he even debated the historical veracity of Leland's claim to have found a surviving pagan witches' cult in late nineteenth-century Tuscany with the historian Norman Cohn (1915–2007), an expert in the early modern witch trials. Hutton has noted that in that exchange, Cohn "floored" him, an experience that contributed to his desire to read more of the new research, and original records, on the witch trials of the early modern period.[20]

Although fascinated by the prehistoric past, Hutton decided that his talents were better suited to history rather than archaeology. After gaining undergraduate and master's degrees in history from Pembroke College, Cambridge, in 1980 Hutton completed his DPhil at St John's College, Oxford, on the English Civil War.[21] Embarking on an academic career, first at Magdalen College, Oxford, and then at Bristol University, his first four academic monographs were devoted to early modern history.[22] His interest in the period extended from purely academic pursuits and into an involvement with the Sealed Knot, a historical re-enactment group devoted to the English Civil War.[23]

Spreading his wings and moving onto a subject other than early modern Britain, in 1991 Hutton brought out *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles*, a summary of what was then known about the pre-Christian belief systems of the Atlantic Archipelago.[24] The work was well

received in archaeological circles, and in 1994 he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Being the first publication to provide such an overview of the subject, it was little surprise that it also attracted interest from modern Pagans and helped to establish Hutton's early reputation in Pagan circles. This was followed by two studies of British folk culture and the ritual year, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400–1700* and *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain*.[25] Although reflecting the growing scholarly consensus that most recorded folk customs were not "pagan survivals" but reflected medieval or early modern developments, these works also proved popular among more intellectual sectors of the Pagan milieu.

Although the professor keeps his personal religious beliefs private, he has retained close links to the modern Pagan community in Britain and in the latter half of the 1990s decided that the time was right to produce a historical account of part of it. In writing *The Triumph of the Moon*, Hutton was taking a chance. It allowed him to pursue a subject that was clearly of interest to him and a great many others, but which bore with it little academic respectability and would no doubt open him up to ridicule from certain unsympathetic quarters. In particular, he was interested in exploring how Wicca had actually come into being. It was already apparent to many senior British Wiccans that their inherited origin story was inadequate, for since the 1960s and 1970s scholarship on the early modern witch trials had demonstrated that there had never been a witchcraft religion to start with, whether Satanic or pre-Christian in basis. In 1990, he had attended a conference on "New Age Dimensions of Goddess Spirituality" held at King's College London. Many prominent British Wiccans were in attendance, and they declared "one by one, that [Wicca's] traditional historiography should be regarded as myth and metaphor rather than a literal history." This opened up the way for Hutton to recover, "so far as it could be done—their real history."[26]

Prior to Hutton's work, virtually all historical research into the history of Wicca had been carried out beyond the walls of the academy, typically by practitioners themselves. Two prominent Alexandrian Wiccans, Janet (b. 1950) and Stewart Farrar (1916–2000), had teamed up with the ex-Gardnerian "Mother of Wicca" Doreen Valiente (1922–1999) to produce and publish studies on how Gerald Gardner (1884–1964) adapted his Wiccan liturgies over time.[27] The American Aidan A. Kelly (b. 1940) had also explored some of these texts for his PhD research in the mid-1970s, although only published it in 1991 with the popular-focused esoteric

company Llewellyn.[28] Kelly's work proved highly controversial and was criticised by several prominent figures within the Wiccan community, sometimes unfairly.[29] A few professional historians had also paid some attention to the subject of Wiccan history. In his 1962 work on early modern witchcraft, *A Razor for a Goat*, Elliot Rose devoted several pages to a discussion of Wiccan history, mostly to critique Gardner's claims regarding Wicca's ancient origins.[30] Rose's work was followed by a 1996 chapter by the ex-Wiccan James W. Baker, in which he recognised Wicca as an "invented tradition" and sought to identify some of the older material which influenced it.[31] Later, the scholar of English literature Diane Purkiss devoted part of her discussion of the representation of the witch figure to Wicca's ideas about its history.[32] These were supplemented by Tanya Luhrmann's pioneering anthropological study of a Wiccan coven and other London-based occult groups, originally conducted as part of her doctoral research.[33] Luhrmann's work was well received in anthropological circles, although as Hutton himself encountered, many in the British Wiccan community were offended by her book's suggestion that, due to "interpretative drift," magicians and Wiccans underwent a form of self-delusion, coupled with her apparent abandonment of Wicca and magic on the completion of her dissertation. Accordingly, there was a level of mistrust towards subsequent researchers who came after her.[34]

This was the state of affairs when Professor Hutton decided to take a chance by delving further into the subject. By this point, he was already settled as a tenured professor and thus, he noted, he "could afford to take the risk."[35] Many of his fears regarding the academic acceptance of the work were proved correct, and he has since revealed how working towards *The Triumph of the Moon* affected his career trajectory at the time:

> [I]t is remarkable how high a price I paid for my association with Wicca, especially after *Triumph of the Moon* came out. An American scholar visiting Cambridge University asked historians what I was doing, and was informed that he could forget about me, because I had gone mad, become a witch, and left the academic profession. The student newspaper in my own university put a photograph of me on its cover with caption "Warning! This Man Could Be A Witch!" For nearly ten years my career stalled. I was not considered fit for positions of higher managerial responsibility or any honours, applications for research grants were rejected, invitations to give guest lectures and papers dried up.[36]

This disparaging response did not derive from concerns about Hutton's methodology or the accuracy of his conclusions and arguments, none of which raised serious concern among his peers. Rather, it stemmed from the fundamental prejudice against Wicca and other forms of alternative spirituality that permeate much of the academy. This sentiment holds that beliefs in magic or forms of occultism are essentially irrational and that those who study them must therefore share in this fundamental irrationality. Many of those working in this area of scholarly investigation have encountered similar sentiments.[37] One of Hutton's doctoral students, the late Dave Evans (1962–2013), found that on meeting one noted professor, he was informed that they did not regard his subject, "the history of esotericism[,] to be worthy of any academic time or effort, as they turned their back on [him] and walked away."[38] Describing his experiences in the Netherlands during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Hanegraaff commented on how professors of religion regarded New Age: "they didn't know anything about it, they were not interested, they were usually quite dismissive, they usually had a tendency of mostly making fun of it, they didn't take it seriously as religion."[39] This attitude has not totally gone away; one of this anthology's co-editors has found colleagues light-heartedly characterising their work on Wiccan history as "Harry Potter studies."

Hutton gained a warmer reception within the academy in the late 2000s following the publication of his work on the reception of the Iron Age druids, namely his magisterial 2009 work *Blood and Mistletoe* and its 2007 counterpart aimed at a wider audience, *The Druids*.[40] This was presumably regarded as a more fitting and respectable subject for historical enquiry, having previously been examined by well-regarded scholars like Stuart Piggott (1910–1996). The restoration of Hutton's reputation within the British academy may also have been influenced in part by broader developments that had occurred within the academic study of esotericism and modern Paganism, as noted above. The study of modern Paganism has still yet to fully establish itself, though; in 2010, Hutton cautioned that the subject "remains marginal and the preserve of relatively few scholars who rarely occupy positions of strength."[41] Nevertheless, the fact that there is a growing community of scholars committed to the study of the subject—something largely absent when Hutton was writing *The Triumph of the Moon*—means that his book is no longer alone and will likely be received more warmly by many academic readers than it might have done at the time of publication.

The other community who took an interest in Hutton's book were Pagans themselves. In many cases their response has been positive. Since the publication of *Triumph*, he has been invited to speak at various Witchfest events in the UK, as well as giving the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids' first Mount Haemus Lecture in 2000. In 2011, Hutton described how he "still receive[s] regular letters from people who were either first attracted to Wicca as a result of reading *Triumph* or who were reassured by it after a collapse of confidence resulting from loss of faith in its traditional history."[42] At the same time, he has also received a hostile reception from members of the Wiccan community who were angry at what they saw as his part in criticising their traditional origin myths. Much of this hostility occurred privately, with Hutton noting that "every morning for years I put up with abusive emails from Pagan fanatics, mostly in America, who misunderstood my work as an attack on their faith."[43]

On rarer occasions, practitioners have sought to challenge Hutton in a public setting. In 2003, an Australian Pagan recently arrived in Britain named Jani Farrell-Roberts openly criticised him in a short article published in *The Cauldron* magazine.[44] A more concerted criticism of *The Triumph of the Moon* was made in a slim, self-published volume by Ben Whitmore, an Alexandrian Wiccan based in New Zealand. Whitmore's 2010 book, *Trials of the Moon*, focused largely on critiquing Hutton on matters of detail as part of a broader argument that *Triumph* had failed to seriously consider that pre-Christian beliefs had survived in folk culture before being revived in the form of Wicca.[45] In response to what Hutton has described as Whitmore's attempts to "annihilate my reputation," the professor has since addressed the latter's work on two occasions.[46] It is significant that none of Hutton's critics come from scholarly backgrounds in history or any related discipline, and none are professional academics. As Hutton has observed, it is also noteworthy that his public detractors have arisen not from Britain but from within the Pagan communities in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States.[47] Several scholars of Paganism have since turned their attention to this phenomenon, exploring it from various angles.[48]

Since Hutton's tome was published, further research has taken scholarly understandings of the history of Wicca and modern witchcraft in new directions, gradually expanding our wider pool of knowledge. A number of researchers—most notably Philip Heselton, Joanne Pearson, Henrik Bogdan, and Ethan Doyle White—have built upon Hutton's pioneering work by exploring early Wicca as it emerged and developed in Britain during the early to mid-twentieth century.[49] The growth of feminist-ori-

ented forms of Pagan witchcraft in Britain in the latter decades of that century has also attracted research, namely from Shai Feraro.[50] Moving away from Britain, there have been others, such as Chas S. Clifton, Robert Mathiesen, and Michael Lloyd, who have focused on the place of Wicca and related forms of modern Paganism in the United States.[51] Hutton's work has also provided a solid grounding for the work of various anthropologists and folklorists too. Helen Cornish was conducting research among the Wiccan community in Britain at the time that *Triumph* was published and was thus able to witness the effect that it had, subsequently referring to a "Huttonisation" of Wiccan history.[52] On the other side of the Atlantic, the folklorist Sabina Magliocco built on Hutton's work in her discussion of how the Wiccan and Pagan communities utilise folklore.[53] Reflecting the respect in which *The Triumph of the Moon* is held among scholars of modern Paganism, in 2009 Dave Evans and Dave Green published a volume commemorating the tenth anniversary of the book.[54] It is difficult to imagine how this research would have developed and taken shape had it not been for Hutton's book to lead the way. On a personal note, one of the editors (Feraro) found it invaluable during his post-graduate years. One specific chapter, "Uncle Sam and the Goddess," provided the inspiration for his PhD thesis, a study of women and gender issues in British magical and Pagan groups. Hutton was kind enough to meet with him at his Bristol office and generously provided advice and council both during and following the course of his research. For the other editor (Doyle White), *The Triumph of the Moon* and *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles* were the very first academic books that he ever read, while still in secondary education, and played an important role in setting forth the academic path that he has pursued ever since.

The Triumph of the Moon has had a chequered past, bringing condemnation and scorn from sectors of both academia and from parts of the Pagan community, the first for daring to take the subject seriously, the latter for refusing to take its claims literally. This, however, is a testament to the importance of Hutton's work and to his bravery in writing it. Had his work been inconsequential, its reception would likely have been tepid.

Outline of the Chapters

This book is a celebration of Ronald Hutton and of *The Triumph of the Moon*. More than that, however, it is a celebration of scholarship on the historical development of Wicca and modern Western witchcraft, taking stock of that which has gone before while venturing out to explore new

areas of research. In a sense, it is a *festschrift*, although Hutton is still an active scholar and we hope that he will continue to both educate and entertain for many years to come. To this end, the editors have brought together contributions from a range of different disciplinary backgrounds and geographical locations, all of which focus on the place of magic and witchcraft in the modern West.

Hugh B. Urban opens the volume with a chapter taking us back to the mid-twentieth century and to Gerald Gardner, the "Father of Wicca." Urban examines how Gardner was influenced by ideas drawn from Hindu Tantra in the formulation of his Great Rite, the main sex magic act in the Gardnerian ritual system. At the same time, Urban highlights that Gardner and other early Wiccans like Doreen Valiente downplayed this influence, likely out of concern that the negative associations which Tantra had in the British imagination would rub off on Wicca. In emphasising these South Asian influences on the burgeoning Wiccan movement, Urban contributes to broader critiques of the utility of the concept of "Western esotericism," arguing that this term underplays the relationship between Western and non-Western traditions. Moving us forward several decades, Shai Feraro follows with an examination of the Pagans Against Nukes (PAN) group, established by a Gardnerian Wiccan high priest in 1980. Set up in protest against the planned deployment of American nuclear Cruise missiles on British soil, Feraro highlights PAN's instrumental role in the linking of American-influenced feminist/Dianic Witchcraft and Goddess Spirituality with British Wicca and Wiccan-derived Paganism by way of demonstrations, social and ritual activities, and specifically through its mouthpiece, *The Pipes of PAN*.

Turning from historical to anthropological perspectives on modern Pagan witchcraft, Helen Cornish contributes a chapter based on fieldwork conducted at the Museum of Witchcraft (now the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic) in Boscastle, Cornwall. She examines how modern occult witches approach the Museum and the broader Cornish landscape around it, with a specific focus on how the figure of the Wise Woman has gradually become dominant in narratives that seek to build a meaningful and authentic link to the past. Heading further west, Jenny Butler's chapter draws on her long-term ethnographic research with the Irish Pagan community and focuses on the influence of Irish culture—whether through the landscape, mythology, folklore, the Irish language, or notions of Celticity—on local manifestations of Wicca and Paganism.

Sabina Magliocco examines how the beliefs of modern Pagans have been shaped by historical and folkloric notions of fairies, elves, and related spirit beings. While deeply rooted in both historical literature and folklore, Magliocco argues that fairies have undergone a significant reappraisal within modern Paganisms, becoming friendlier, less dangerous, and altogether tamer than their folkloric predecessors, something she links to modern Pagans' ecologically minded attempts at re-enchanting the universe. This emphasis on eco-spirituality leads us to Sarah M. Pike's contribution, which builds on Hutton's discussion of how early nineteenth-century English Romanticism impacted views of the divine in nature, and in particular how the opposition of an earth-identified goddess to modernity influenced modern Paganism. These sensibilities, argues Pike, have influenced environmentalist activism since the 1970s and during the 1990s and 2000s developed into two competing images—that of the earth as nurturing Mother, who cares for her human children, and that of a wild nature, unknowable to and unconcerned with human life. The cultural psychologist Léon A. van Gulik takes the volume in a new direction with his chapter, which emerges from his fieldwork among the Wiccan community in the Netherlands and Flanders. Exploring the themes of creativity and renewal among the Wiccan community, van Gulik identifies various competing binaries at play among practitioners, including traditionalism and eclecticism, and egalitarianism and elitism. He goes on to discuss how these Wiccans' creative process is furthered by the various tensions that arise from the interplay between individuals and the group.

Wiccans are not the only modern occultists to adopt the term "witchcraft" in reference to themselves and in the penultimate three chapters this volume turns to some of these other, less studied groups. Building on Hutton's treatment of Aleister Crowley's influence on Gardnerian Wicca, Manon Hedenborg White discusses two post-Crowleyan constructs of witchcraft developed by Thelemites: that of John Whiteside "Jack" Parsons (1914–1952), who headed the Ordo Templi Orientis' Agape Lodge in Los Angeles, and Kenneth Grant (1924–2011), head of the New Isis Lodge in London. Although neither created a specific tradition of witchcraft *per se*, both Parsons and Grant wrote extensively on the subject, providing interpretations different in important respects from that of Gardner and other early Wiccans. Ethan Doyle White's subsequent chapter constitutes a scholarly biography of Andrew D. Chumbley (1967–2004), an English occultist who established the Cultus Sabbati in the early 1990s. Through this small group and his varied writings, Chumbley promoted a