

been much more enthusiastic about a new book on Strang if it had combined Harvey's literary gifts with a more humane, less jeering approach to its subject. That would have been a book that I could have felt comfortable assigning to students, confident that the more bizarre aspects of the story would not bias them against a sincere attempt to understand the dreams and motivations of people who join new religious movements like Strangite Mormonism.

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*Miracles of Our Own Making: A History of Paganism.* By Liz Williams. Reaktion Books, 2020. 352 pages. £15.95 cloth; ebook available.

*Miracles of Our Own: A History of Paganism* bears a slightly misleading title. It is not a history of the Christian concept of paganism nor a history of modern Paganism as a whole. Rather, it is a (comparatively short) overview of modern Paganism in Britain coupled with a (much longer) discussion of various historical topics that are of particular interest to modern Pagan groups, such as the druids of the Iron Age, the witch trials of the early modern period, and the ceremonial magicians of the nineteenth century.

Although Liz Williams' credentials as the holder of a doctorate in the history and philosophy of science are presented on the jacket cover, *Miracles of Our Own Making* is not an academic work, nor does it claim to be. Instead it is a work of popular history, clearly aimed primarily at individuals who are new to modern Paganism but interested in deepening their involvement. To this end, Williams follows her historical discussion with a brief guide to performing a ritual (based loosely on the Wiccan model) alongside a list of advice to newcomers, urging them to avoid "cult-like" groups (323), to show caution around those demanding sex or money, and to be sensitive to issues of cultural appropriation. Williams has been involved in Pagan Druidry for many years and runs an esoteric store in Glastonbury, with her advice thus drawing on her own considerable experience in the British Pagan and esoteric scenes.

Although the book does not always draw upon the latest scholarship on the topics it discusses, and specialists in periods like the Iron Age and early medieval period would certainly find things to quibble about, it is noteworthy that the volume avoids many of the sweepingly incorrect claims that were once common in modern Pagan literature. Williams makes clear, for instance, that there is no evidence for pre-Christian polytheistic religions surviving into the high middle ages and beyond in Britain, a claim that was once fundamental to a wide range of Pagan groups.

*Miracles of Our Own Making* is probably of little interest to scholars of modern Paganism and other new religions, except perhaps as a primary source for those interested in Pagan accounts of their own history. Nevertheless, the book is engagingly written, and I can see it gaining a wide readership in modern Pagan circles.

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