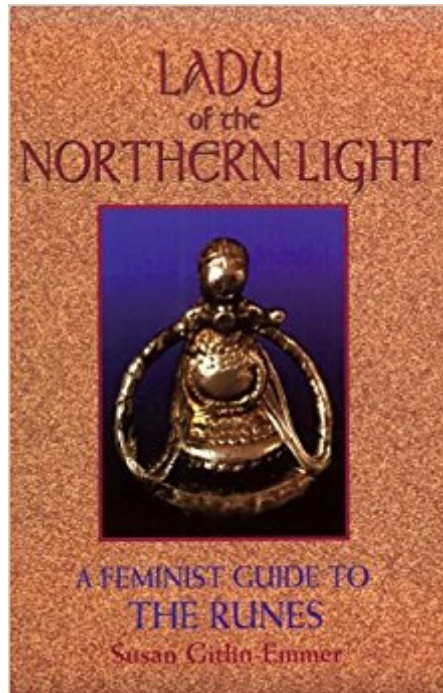




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Lady Of The Northern Light: A Feminist Guide To The Runes



Synopsis

A feminist guide to the runes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A feminist guide to the runes.

Amazing insight rarely shared in written form.

Interesting information about the history of the Goddess. It is not however clear how most of the information applies to the use of the Runes.

I'm currently studying and opening to Wunjo, and so, I read Susan's discussion of this Rune: it was ridiculous. She spent the majority of the time talking about death, burial mounds, and Hel. What? Susan speculations, rather than insightful, tantalizing, or useful, were half-baked feminist argumentation without historical basis or respectful references to back them up. What we get instead is a book full of random Goddess mythologies and stories packed into a book about the Runes. And sadly, many of her Goddess references had nothing to do with the Runes she was talking about. Regarding her feminine take on the Runes, beyond a few insights, her book really had nothing to do with a feminist guide, much less perspective on the Runes themselves. What we get is a classical pissing contest between the Gods

and goddesses. Notice how I capitalized one gender and not the other. She does that throughout her book. Instead of getting a balanced Goddess/God perspective with a movement towards harmony and growth, Susan goes out of her way to force her agenda and beliefs into a system that is unfounded and unrealistic. She even goes so far as to re-name or re-gender some of the Runes. For instance, she names Tiwaz Spindle and Ingwaz the Goddess Ing. Her discussion of Thurisaz focused on pigs and their connection with the Goddesses: huh? Worse than that, Susan outright falsifies historical references with her misleading theories. For instance,

“Tacitus tells of the cart procession and the carrying of torches was probably part of the same ritual” (39). The “one” reference to a torch in his *Agricola* and *Germania* is to burning amber. Not that I need to mention more issues, but another thing that annoyed me was the repetition. We hear about Nerthus’s baths and Freya’s necklace, Brisingamen, more times than I cared to count. Not only are her correspondences contrived, but she repeats them over and over again. And on top of that, she connects these same stories to different Runes as if they were the same energies. While Susan’s book might appeal to some who really don’t care about the Runes and just want to learn a bit about Goddess mythology, for those actually interested in the Runes, this is not worth your money: neither the feminine perspective or mysteries are discussed in *The Lady of the Northern Lights*. It’s just a book of disconnected information on the Goddesses with a thin veneer of Runic information and not even good information. I know my review will annoy or even piss off some readers. I, in no way, have anything against a feminist perspective on the Runes. I actually crave it: for there’s a need for it. Please take this in mind: I have read and reviewed over thirty books on the Runes to date. I’m not female bashing. Susan’s book really is crap. Even though I feel the feminine approaches to the Runes I’ve read so far fall short, I suggest you check out Aswynn’s *Northern Mysteries and Magic* or Whitewolf’s *Runes of the Cosmic Goddess Course*. While I don’t feel or believe these books develop the feminine mysteries much, they do a far better job of approaching it than Gitlin-Emmer.

I have used this book for many years for divination and find it extremely useful. The guidance the author gives is fresh, insightful and inspiring. I learned from her husband that the late Gitlin-Emmer relied on her travels to goddess sites and her ancestral home in Ireland as well as extensive research when developing her interpretations. Her Cherokee background and her commitment to environmentalism influence her interpretations as well. Perhaps this is why they are so powerful.

This book is beautiful and inspiring. It is written from the perspective of Feminist Witchcraft not from Heathenism which is why I think some of the reviewers did not like it. The author uses the meanings of the Elder Futhark as an outline for sharing the nature of Norse Goddesses. I admit that I have no intention of ever using the Runes for divination and read this book because I am devoted to the Goddess in all her aspects and wanted to learn more about her Norse identity. I can't really comment on how this book works as a guide to the Runes but as a guide to the "lady of the northern light" it is brilliant. Ms. Giltlin-Emmer weaves together a tapestry of the Northern Goddess using many sources including the Eddas, Saxo Grammaticus, Tacitus, comparative mythology, folk-lore, ancient and modern folk practice, and feminist witchcraft. The book stems from the premise that there was once a Great Goddess of Europe but even if you don't believe that is true the rest of the book provides a wealth of information. The author admits the runes as we know them come from patriarchal times but supposes they caught on because the ideas behind them were familiar to the Goddess loving people--"Yet, suppose they are older. Not the runes themselves, but the concepts behind them". She then spends the rest of the book linking the ideas behind each rune to Northern Goddess lore. In my opinion the ideas in this book are as valid as any others on the runes. Modern Pagans, and Heathens have to admit that the information we have on ancients who had an oral tradition of spirituality is very scarce--and that the information we have is highly suspect because it was written down by Christians. Modern practice is 1% fact and 99% conjecture and intuition. And this is how it should be if it is to be a living tradition. I do not know if I would recommend this book to beginners. It assumes the reader has a fair amount of knowledge of myths and the meanings behind pagan concepts. But perhaps a beginner could read the book, then do some more research and read it again. This really is a wonderful book. Susan Gitlin-Emmer should be honored along side women like Barbara Walker and Patricia Monaghan. I hope it becomes a classic of the Goddess path.

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