Runes and Rune Reading: An Introduction to the Runic Symbols of Northern Europe

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The book has several color illustrations, charts of the symbols, and a clear chapterized text. Runes and Rune Reading: An Introduction to the Runic Symbols of Northern Europe joins a fairly large contingent of volumes contributing to this popular topic. Modern readers of all ages are fascinated by the medieval world, and many adults are also drawn to the intuitive possibilities of the somewhat mysterious nordic runes. "Rune Reading" occurs when a person looks at a runic symbol, chosen in one of various ways, and reflects on the qualities which it traditionally represents. This can be done for oneself, or for others. It can be done just to provide "a thought for the day" as inspiration from the natural world. Or, for believers - the author admits to being one such, despite his early training in science - the runes might be considered a tool for accessing a beneficial higher guidance. But we can also call this simply common sense, or conscience, or a blend of the two. The bottom line, however, is always that we make our own decisions, and are at our best when acting prudently and for the benefit of all. This particular author makes remarks that might have come from the language of psychology and counseling. He has lived in or traveled in the lands from which the runes emerged (and, although he does not say so in the book, has an academic background in language and linguistics). But this is not meant as an academic book as such. Far from it. It is meant to be fully accessible to general readers from teen upwards. The glimpse which the book Runes and Rune Reading provides, into the northern European mindset of a thousand years ago, is expressed with humor and a mildly scholarly touch. Each of the best-accepted 24 runes (they are primarily letters of an alphabet that never saw general use) is presented in a mini-chapter of its own. Its link with nature is established, as is its meaning for the "enquirer", assisted by the "rune reader" to whom the book is mainly directed. The rune names given and discussed are the Old English or Anglo-Saxon ones. The continental Germanic names are provided in charts, and many of these are mentioned in the text. The Viking connection is not ignored: it was Viking longships which brought rune-lore to many places outside Scandinavia, including of course the British Isles and Ireland. Whatever reason buyers or borrowers may have for picking up the book, they will come away with a sense of a piece of history which is not entirely remote; at once alien yet quite tantalizingly familiar in places.

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