

The Armanen Futharkh: A Controversial Rune Row?

by
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The row of eighteen runes, or the Armanen runes, which are more commonly known as the 'Armanen Futharkh', is a somewhat controversial one. It came about during the early part of the 20th century that came in a vision to the Austrian occult mystic and Germanic revivalist Guido von List, born October 5th 1848 in Vienna, and whom died May 17th 1919 in Berlin. The image below is of the Armanen runic row as taken from the runic table drawn by Guido von List in his '*Das Geheimnis der Runen*'.



This vision of eighteen runes, which List later referred to as the 'Armanen' runes, came to him while in an eleven month state of temporary blindness after a cataract operation on both eyes in 1902. This was a time in List's life in which, at the age of fifty-four, he underwent a time of rest and relaxation, deliberation and reflection, contemplation, meditation, deep thought and insight. This was a significant period for List in which his beliefs were codified and solidified. This vision of the Armanen runes in 1902 apparently opened List's "inner eye" whereby "The Secret of the Runes" were revealed to him and discussed in his monumental and greatly influential work '*Das Geheimnis der Runen*' (*The Secret of the Runes*), which was later published in 1908.

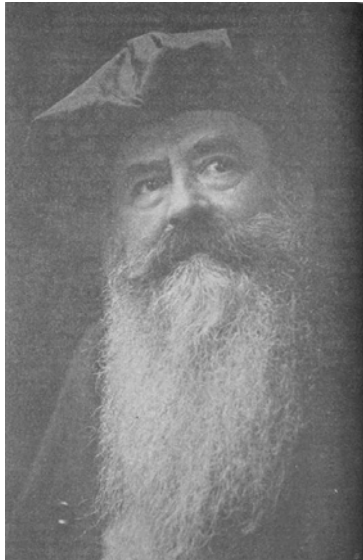
In fact, in November of 1902 List wrote to his dear friend, the respected industrialist and publisher, Friedrich Wannieck, stating that, due to his operation, it would have been '*impossible to begin to work mentally on my intended unravelling of the secret of the runes*' but that '*at that time-previously unperceived Laws of Generation and Evolution*' came to him. On April 29th 1907 List again wrote to Wannieck, thanking him for his '*encouraging interest*' saying that he can now give himself '*over to research and am able to dedicate myself to these almost unlimited areas of interest.*'

These runes came to be seen by List and his contemporaries, including some very prominent and distinguished people of the time, as the primal runic row. With many followers this is also the belief today. This conviction, although still believed today, is disputed by some. However, it is not the intention of this essay to prove rightly or wrongly as to this belief. I merely intend to give an objective point of view as to their worth and value as a magickal runic system as viewed from a practitioners use of them.

Regardless of ones personal perspective and belief at present, List is, and must be accredited as being the pioneer of *völkisch* runic mysticism, Armanenschaft

occultism, and must also be noted as the very first to ever link a runic scriptural series with the runic stanzas revealed by Odin in the '*Hávamál*' (*Words of the High One*) in the section known as '*Rúnatáls-thátr-Odhins*' (*Odin's Rune Wisdom*). List, pictured below left in 1905 from the book "*Guido v. List - Der Wiederentdecker Uralter Arischer Weisheit - Sein Leben und sein Schaffen*" by Johannes Balzli in 1917, actually associated a specific individual rune of his eighteen rune Armanen Futharkh to each of the eighteen stanzas of the '*Rúnatáls-thátr-Odhins*'.

List's Armanen Futharkh was, according to him, encrypted in the eighteen spells of the *Hávamál*, which is found in the '*Edda*' or more commonly known as the '*Poetic Edda*' in which it is written that they are revealed to us by Wotan when he 'sacrificed' himself upon the sacred World Tree, or Tree of Life, Yggdrasil .



The Armanen Futharkh is still widely used in the present day within occult and mystic currents of esoteric Armanenschaft by its practitioners, including myself, but it is steeped in controversy by a few due to its 'authenticity' or recent discovery when looked at in contemporary times in conjunction with its allegedly older counterparts. To some Germanic heathens and esoteric runic occult mystics the Armanen Futharkh is seen as 'fake' as it is not 'authentic' or 'old' enough; just a personal vision of List's or just simply made up, and is

thus seen as not really being worthy of true and unbiased study, interpretation, nor ritual practice.

In stating this I mean that there are those today that have this point of view, which is of course acceptable and understandable in a free society, as they see this Futharkh as not originating from a 'traditional' or accepted heathenish time-period, as they do, for example, the 'Elder' of 24 runes. However, this all depends on how this, or any Futharkh, is looked upon and what they mean in a spiritual sense to the individual soul practitioner. Personally, I have always felt a far stronger and much more overwhelmingly deeper spiritual and occultic-magickal, mystical and esoteric connection within myself to the Armanen Futharkh. I cannot explain why I feel so closely connected to these runes as opposed to the other runic rows, such as the 'Elder', 'Younger', or 'Anglo-Saxon' runic rows.

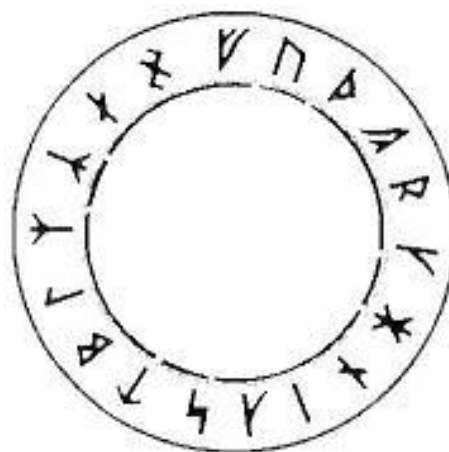
I personally see this particular runic system of eighteen runes, as with any other runic system, as it appears to its users, as something which one should utilise by following ones own instincts, but only after doing deep research into all of the runic rows available to get a truly balanced perspective. One should look at all angles from all possible roots, regardless of any particular area of study, without bias or personal preference. This is the only way to get an unbiased, balanced and independent point of view. That much is fact.

I believe this because runic mysticism is a very personal matter and ones connection with whichever rune row one comes to use should truly come from within and be that which works for them.

To those few with the view of shunning the Armanen system off the cuff, I see this to be an extremely erroneous, ignorant and a rather naïve view to take, but, by saying this, I do not mean to offend.

Of course, the older and more traditional runic rows are ancient, based on archaeological findings, steeped in the mists of time and are historically accepted by many as being 'true' - this is not in doubt or any dispute. However, other than their visual symbolical structure (which has also differed over time from past to present), there is no real record, Heathen or Christian alike, as to their 'true meanings', 'interpretation', 'use' or 'naming' in any mystical or magickal sense by our ancestors. This is a fact. It is also fact that all of these contributing factors have changed to some varying degree to suit modern day interpretation.

Pictured on the right is an Armanen runic circle, designed by Victor Ordell L. Kasen, that was based on the Armanen runic revisions of Karl Spießberger.



The only real documents interpreting and detailing these other more 'traditional' runic rows are the Icelandic, Norwegian and Anglo-Saxon rune poems, but the question has to be asked: 'Whom created these rows? Whom wrote the poems? Were these interpretations generally accepted in ancient times or were they of one man or woman's personal perspective? How much are these poems influenced by Christianity? Or in fact, could they be outright disinformation?'

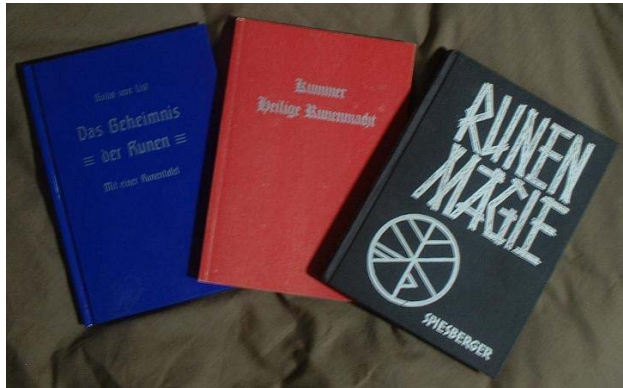
The simple fact of the matter, and truth, is that we simply do not know. I am confident that there is the possibility that what these 'traditional' runic rows mean today and how they are interpreted or marketed does not necessarily denote what they meant all those years ago to our ancient ancestors.

The same could also be said for the Armanen rune row of course. However, you have to look at every aspect in relation to each other. In fact, the more 'traditional' runic rows' meanings are today based on latter day practitioners' interpretations and beliefs and their names by latter day linguists in a similar fashion. For example, there is no real ancient record saying that one rune is called 'Fehu' or 'Uruz' or 'Ansuz'. In all honesty, the names, and likewise the meanings of the runes, as ascribed today, may not be those which were ascribed to in the 'traditional' and 'accepted' time period of our Heathen ancestors.

Indeed, on the other side of the coin, the names, meanings, interpretations and pronunciations of the runes today may very well be similar to those used by our ancestors all those years ago, but again it must be stressed, the simple fact is that we simply do not know.

Actually, it must also be noted that up until the Germanic runic-revival by List and his contemporaries in the late 19th and early 20th century, his teachings amongst others

after him and his fellow Armanist colleagues, including Siegfried Adolf Kummer, Rudolf John Gorsleben, Peryt Shou (Albert Christian Georg [Jörg] Schultz), Tarnhari (Ernst Lauterer), Friedrich Bernhard Marby and Karl Spießberger etc, there was no real documentation as any runic Futharkh's 'true' meaning or practices.



Pictured left are the books '*Das Geheimnis der Runen (1908)*' by Guido von List, '*Heilige Runenmacht (1932)*' by Siegfried Adolf Kummer, and '*Runenmagie (1955)*' by Karl Spießberger.

One thing that must be said (and I truly hope that it is already practised), is that this information, as with any information on

Germanicism, runosophy, runology, or indeed any subject matter, be read and studied with an open, unbiased and equitable mind. I say this because only with an open and unbiased mind, in conjunction with reading many different points of view, relating to all runic rows alongside your own instinctive preferences, can you make an intelligent and educated decision, and thus truly form and develop a balanced and intelligent personal outlook and opinion.

It can be safely said I feel, that all modern day works on runic revivalism and mysticism can, to some small degree at the very least, trace their derivation back to List. Indeed, List is the central figure, justifiably so in mine and many others' opinions, whom stands out in, and over, the history of occult runic revivalist mysticism and abstruse and arcane mystical-magickal esoteric workings.

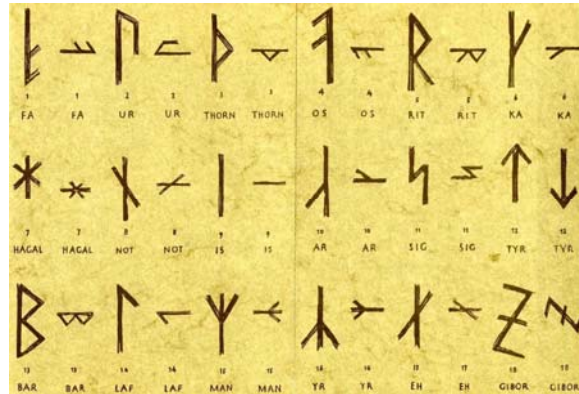
I can understand why there are those that find this rune row controversial, including its author (even though the latter I believe to be predominantly an opinion through lack of independent research) but as I stated earlier, one should conduct their own study into these matters with an impartial mind.

I do truly hope that this short article has cleared up some misconceptions and has urged you to, at the very least, look, and actually see, with your eyes fully open. Indeed, the older rune rows are extremely worthy of study; this is not disputed, certainly not by myself, and would be erroneous not to do so, but they are no more worthy of study than, for example, this latter day revealed runic row of the Armanen, for it all depends on ones inner calling and if they work and talk to you directly and passionately.

I must also comment that our Germanic Heathen spirituality is a revived spirituality, a modern take on the 'old Heathen religion .' Indeed, as it is practised today by various groups, it is a 'Germanic Heathen Creed for the Modern World'.

A spirituality needs to work for a people, a folk, based on their circumstances and Zeitgeist. Our world is very different from that of our ancient ancestors. This is not to say that we shed and throw away the old and recreate the new, but our folk are an evolving and growing people and so too is our religion.

Pictured right is an Armanic runic interpretation, as illustrated by Karl Spießberger, as a pull out from his *'Runenmagie'*.



The Armanen Futharkh is, depending on your belief of its origins, a reconstructed runic row and what we practise today is a reconstructed faith. Knowing this, would it not also make sense to make use of (or at least give serious study time to) a revived, newly revealed and modern day rune row, one based on a time and environment far closer to our own today? Based on all that I have said previously, I do not believe that a rune row hidden in the mists of time is any more or less worthy of study than one that was revealed in modern times, especially based on the material we have of its original meanings. Of course, anyone can create a runic row and declare it the primal one, the true and only row to work from. However, it must be proven to work, and if it works for 'you' and calls to 'your' inner self then so be it. We should, by all rights, take advantage of this. For me, and many others, the Armanen Futharkh is that runic row.

The Armanen Futharkh, although new, remains a Germanic one, as does our folk. As stated, it was revealed at a time so much similar to ours today and was revealed specifically for esoteric and mystical purposes and practises.

Along with the Armanen runes being revealed at a time very similar to ours today (urbanised, technological, mass populated and scientifically advanced) we actually know the meaning, interpretation, purpose and the names of the runes, for it has an accomplished and absolute written study and complete account of lore and tradition which the 'modern' day practitioner can build upon and develop for themselves.

Indeed, the Armanen Futharkh is today proving once again to be very popular and influential. Some even believe it to be more so today in contemporary times than the 'traditional' rows in certain areas of Europe - mainly Germany, Austria and England. However, because a runic row is popular and influential, regardless of which one, does not make it the right row – this is a fatal misapprehension, that unfortunately many of the unenlightened believe.

So, to conclude – I hope that you truly grasp the concept of what I am trying to do with this article by simply voicing my opinion based on the other side of the coin and thus giving food for thought. After all, it is just my take on the subject. What I am not intending to do, however (and I hope it does not come across as such), is trying to seem righteous and patronising above all else, to others and their opinions. I truly hope that this article helps to some small degree to understanding why so many make use of the Armanen rune row based on another perspective. I simply wanted those interested and those that have passed them off as fake to take another look (if not a

first look) and see that they are truly worthy of study and truly worthy of deliberation, contemplation, meditation and deep thought. Simply because a rune row is not steeped in the mists of time, so to speak, does not make it any less 'authentic'. I do indeed hope that this short article has given you food for thought regardless of your stance.

This treatise is written in admirable and venerable appreciation of, and in memory to, '*Der Wiederentdecker Uralter Arischer Weisheit*' - my honourable teacher and friend, '*Der Meister*' Guido von List.

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