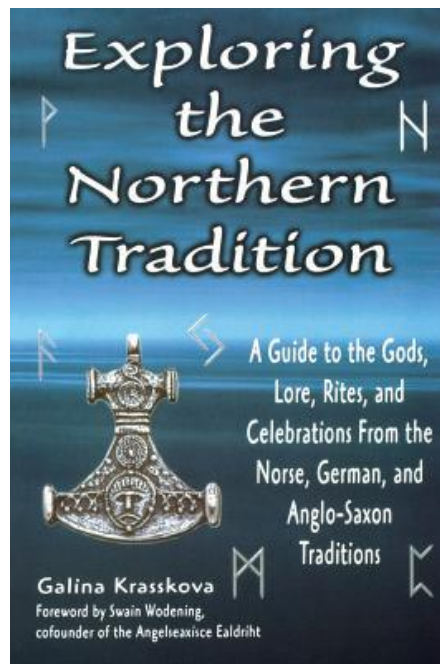




# Exploring the Northern Tradition: A Guide to the Gods, Lore, Rites, and Celebrations From the Norse, German, and Anglo-Saxon Traditions

*Galina Krasskova , Swain Wódening (Foreword by)*

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Exploring the Northern Tradition is an introduction to the modern reconstruction of the ancient religion of the Germanic and Scandinavian peoples. This religion, called Heathenry, is one of the fastest growing polytheistic religious movements in the United States today.

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## **From Reader Review Exploring the Northern Tradition: A Guide to the Gods, Lore, Rites, and Celebrations From the Norse, German, and Anglo-Saxon Traditions for online ebook**

### **Agathokles says**

I am a Hellenic polytheist myself, however, I do enjoy learning about other polytheistic religions in general. But, in particular, I wished to familiarise myself more with Germanic polytheism as it would be closer to my ancestral religion (since I am a Fleming) and I have been contemplating starting a Germanic practice myself, if possible.

This book has served as an excellent introduction into the Northern Tradition, and while I had already learned some information via the internet from a variety of friends, including the author of this book, I also learned a lot of new information. It will take some time to digest it all. I also look forward to reading the other books Galina Krasskova wrote on this subject.

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### **Nicholas Vela says**

I did learn quite a bit from this book, mostly about the deities themselves. I do hope to learn more from other books on the subject of Asatru.

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### **Heather says**

I got this book because 1. I am so sick of Wicca and 2. I thought it was time to investigate my Bavarian Swiss and Anglo-Saxon sides. (The Scots-Irish side can't take up all my reading time!)

It's a slim book, but I think it is good for beginners like me. She really describes the modern Heathen communities and their differences. I am very grateful that the Gods and Goddesses names are in Anglo-Saxon not just Norse. The way she describes working with them in a lot of ways reminded me of Santeria.

How rituals are done was really important because I thought Heathens just drank a lot boasting about themselves til they become sexist, racist fratboys with swords. I didn't think there was any place for women in Heathenism at all actually. (The Pagan standard: Girls like pink and Wicca; boys like blue and Heathenism.)

I had no idea that this was such a complex religion - and I love how it's not Neo-Pagan - it is the indigenous religion of the Germanic peoples. There are many different souls; ancestor worship; a very detailed cosmology; and nine noble virtues.

My Mom and I looked at parts and took out "Heathen" or "Germanic" and said "Lakota" or other indigenous peoples from around the world. The ease in which other, mainly warrior, peoples fit into Heathenism convinced me that it is indeed indigenous.

However, I strongly suggest reading Our Troth or at least Diana Paxson's Essential Asatru with this, so you have more information. (Our Troth can give you ALL the information!)

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## Amy Christensen says

Not only did this book provide me with a wealth of information on my target Goddesses, Freya and Hel, it also introduced me to the Goddess Saga, who immediately connected with me and provided me with a new mission for Cycle 2 projects. I learned a great deal about the Goddesses functions, sacred objects and holy tides.

I also enjoyed learning about the ritual Symbols. This affirmed more of my inherited memory, as I have always had a notion of a time of honor where stories of successful deeds are told and the guest of honor is the one to give the gifts rather than receive them. I have been thinking of having a ritual on my 40th birthday, and I would love for it follow the format of a Symbol with the opening speech (the hallowing), the assigning of a female ealu bora to pass wine to the attendants but first to me as symbolgerefa so that I may toast the Goddesses, the Maegen (luck) of those gathered and then to speak of my accomplishments and state my upcoming goals. Then wine would be passed to the group so others may state their goals and/or take pride in their accomplishments. I might select a Thyle whose obligation is to challenge any goals they think unrealistic, and to keep all on track. Then I would love to honor those people who have had significance in my life with gifts. The Northern tradition relies heavily on hierarchy, and so it would certainly be appropriate for some gifts to be more extravagant than others.

As my heritage is Scandinavian and German I feel very drawn to the Northern Traditions. I feel it like a memory; I know it in my soul. However, Ms. Krasskova describes herself as a heathen and makes a point to draw a heavy line between the term Heathen and Pagan. Neo-Pagan is nearly put forth with disdain in the writing, and Ms. Krasskova warns that some orthodox heathen groups tip into racism. As a practicing priest of Heathen for over 12 years, I think Ms. Krasskova would not make such a statement lightly. As one who has been called to serve Diana and Persephone, I know that I could never join a Heathen kindred where the requirement to join would be to ignore the summons of my Greek Goddesses. Saga though has plans for me and she doesn't care that I'm one of those annoying "neos." Well, she would say that she doesn't find me annoying at all. She is calling me and the fact that I'm Viking, well, she considers that a bit of a bonus.

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## Allyson Shaw says

If you are looking for an introduction to heathenry, I prefer Paxton's book on the topic. However, if you find yourself a solitary Heathen without a heathen community (online pedantic mansplaining space does not a community make) this book is helpful. Though many will not admit to conversion to heathenry, this book does. I enjoyed her DPG revelations. The downside is that parts may be too basic for many, too neopagan for others. Her thoughts on depression are just downright wrong, and dangerous. Because of this I considered giving it 3 stars.

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## Aitziber Conesa says

Un libro que cumple con lo que promete, una exploración somera y básica de las múltiples visiones respecto al paganismo nórdico o Heathenismo. Tal vez demasiado centrada en dar datos que sería preferible conseguir por medio del estudio de la mitología, al respecto de las divinidades y con el defecto, desde mi punto de

vista, de incluir demasiadas indicaciones sobre meditaciones con los dioses e inciensos varios.

Es de agradecer ser introducción a algunos conceptos que se dan por sentados en los foros sobre el tema como: universalismo, tribalismo o folkish, wyrd, orlog etc.

Su visión es totalmente abierta, y explica muchas cosas pasando por encima de la tradición (lore) y el troth. Aún así, cuando lo hace, le indica, cosa que hay que reconocerle.

Lectura amena y ligera hasta para alguien que, como servidora, tampoco domina el idioma. Escrito de forma altamente afectiva, tal vez en exceso, pero esto no puede ser criticable desde el momento en el que se entiende el libro es la defensa de la autora de su modo de vida.

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### **Monty Milne says**

I didn't much care for this, but that doesn't mean it's a bad book - it's just not really my thing. The basic problem is one shared by all new age religions: what we really know for certain about heathen cultic practices can probably be written on the back of an envelope, which means that when people like Ms Krasskova claim to be resurrecting an ancient tradition this is a very questionable claim.

I'm interested in the pre-Christian world view of my genetic ancestors, and I'd like to develop a post-Christian spirituality which reflects elements of this past. There are things in this book which could be of some help - but I dunno...when Ms Krasskova starts talking about different aspects of the Nordic deities which have been revealed to her as a result of her spiritual encounters with them, I think that's all very nice for her, but it doesn't really tell me anything except that she has a very active imagination and a well developed sense of creativity. I wish a cynical old atheist like me could develop a deeper spirituality which paid tribute to the Northern Tradition, but I don't know if this is possible - and I certainly don't think I can find it here - with the greatest respect to Ms Krasskova.

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### **Sarah says**

I can certainly understand why some Heathens would get into a fuss over this books - it does seem to distill Heatherny down to a very simplistic level. But looking at it as a pagan coming in from a post-Wiccan view, it is taking Northern Traditions and putting them into a framework that many neo-pagans would be comfortable with, without distilling the basic beliefs.

Krasskova covers, without claiming to be the complete authority, major deities, beliefs and sources for myths and literature. Furthermore, Galina also provides ideas for meditations, prayers and rituals that a practitioner may use to deepen their relationship with the deities.

This book would clearly not be of interest to anyone who feels that a Heathen god is not one that can be personally communed with, but for a person who is coming from a neo-pagan background that is interested

in Northern traditions, it might be a useful work.

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### **Angrboda Lyndasdottir says**

A good introduction to modern Heathen practice. I particularly love Krasskova's devotional poems.

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### **Paritosh says**

Good as a basic introduction to the Norse pantheon and customs. But it deals a lot more with modern Heathenry and their practices. I wouldn't recommend it unless you are interested in adopting Heathenry as a way of life.

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### **Penelope says**

A very good comprehensive guide to the Northern European Paganism and often recommended by many a Norse Pagan/Asatruar. Perfect for those who are searching for information on the Norse/Germanic Pagan traditions.

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### **Galina Krasskova says**

read through it again preparatory to making revisions...

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### **Steve Cran says**

Lately I have been taken in by Asatru, the worship of the Norse Gods. Odin is the father god and Frigga is his wife. Perhaps the most famous of the Gods are Thor and his mighty hammer. The Gods of Norse are numerous and many. Neo Paganism is coming on strong and Heathenism or the worship of North European Gods is the strongest movement.

Heathenism is often a misunderstood term. Many people think of savages or uncouth people with no civilization. Of course the opposite is true. The original heathens the viking had a very developed society and were very sophisticated.

The word Heathen is a definition for a very broad group of people. Not all Norse People worshiped the same God or Goddess yet they had the same mythology and same pantheon. The same holds true to day. Some people or very devoted to the Sky Gods while others are devoted to the Land Gods. Still others have devoted themselves to the Jotun or giants. Many heathens are not very accepting of the Jotun as they are enemies of

the Gods. In the end of days there will be a final battle called Rokknagar.

Within the heathen community there are several fault lines that serve to divide the community. The first fault line revolves around the debate between relying on strict observance of written material and the use of personal gnosis or visions from the Gods. Another fault line is folkish vs. Universal. The folkish believe that only those of Anglo-Saxon descent should be following the ways of the old Norse God. The Universalist believe that anyone can worship the old Norse Gods. Theodish believe in a series of oath and recreating the community structure as it was of old.

This is an excellent book. It covers the mythology of how the world was created and a description of the various gods and what they did. On some of the Gods there was even a mention of a meditation that could be devoted to them. Before every god or Goddess is described there is a prayer that can be offering up to them.

Heathen do not consider themselves to be neo-pagans. One way they differentiate themselves is that they follow a warrior code. The Warrior code is summed up in nine principles. The principles are courage, truth, honor, fidelity, discipline, hospitality, industrious, self reliance and perseverance. Many heathen live by the warrior ethic and study martial arts and firearms to live by that noble spirit. Many Heathen are also involved in the Military and law enforcement as it is honorable to protect your community. There is a big emphasis on honoring oath and honoring ones ancestors.

Within Heathenism there are several core concepts. The first one is Wyrð which can be roughly translated as your personal destiny. A lot goes into making your personal destiny. Your Wyrð is affected by your behavior and that of your ancestors and community.

Blots are celebrations or rituals that have a sacrifice which honor one of the Gods or Goddesses. Usually the area is spiritually cleansed and a deity invoked. Some times there is a sacrifice or feast depending on ones group. Another ritual is the Symbel which is to strengthen kindred ties in the group.

There is also a division of the soul. As well mention of the Holidays. There are several divisions of the soul. The first is the the Lik or the physical body. The Next soul part is the Aedem or divine breath. Odin gave mankind their breath. It is our breath that connects us to the divinities. The third is hamingja your personal luck. Next is Maegen Our vital force or Ki as the Japanese call it. The next one is our Willa this is how we focus our desires upon the world. The next two are intellect and memory. Memory is deemed more important than the intellect for it is the memory that connects us to our tribe and ancestors. Wod is or passion and Ecstasy, Fylgia our guardian spirits. Orlog is our personal destiny, Hama thee ethereal soul skin, We also have self consciousness.

This book is short and very comprehensive. there is a glossary in the back as well as suggested reading and a Bibliography.

## Ruby Hollyberry says

Probably THE best introduction to the magic and Pagan religions of Northern Europe currently in existence. The Northern Tradition can seem to be a thorny range of overlapping or mutually exclusive terminology, confusing to anyone curious, and not at all a welcoming bunch to the newbie. Heathens (the most general term but not one that everyone uses or agrees with) tend to be lore-crazy, obsessed with archaeological facts and Christian Era ancient literature that needs to be read with several grains of salt. Also their gods do not all get along with each other and there are (by some accounts) three separate pantheons, who sometimes go to war amongst themselves despite their interrelationships. So people fascinated or outright "called" by the Northern Indo-European and related gods are likely to run into trouble asking innocent questions of hard-line practitioners of whatever stripe. And the authors writing on the subject are nearly all controversial in some groups' eyes. This is a simple, understandable book that explains much of this as clearly as possible and gives a general overview of pretty much all of it. If you are attracted to the Norse and would like to know more, this is the best possible place to start. Read it first before looking for yahoo groups or other online communities, to prepare. (You might want to read the Eddas as well, and get it over with). Also if you aren't sure it is the path for you, this should help clarify to what extent you are meant to incorporate Germanic elements into your practice.

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## Äsruþr Cyneapsson says

Some aspects of these work resonated well with me, others were a jarring mismatch. The work comes across as a kind of neo-Theodish approach to Heathenry. There are some great rites and prayers here, for those who pray - whereas I refrain from such. As with all books, I would recommend giving it a read - see how you value it.

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