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1 Wintermark people



The Winterfolk were once three separate peoples: the **Kallavesi**, the **Steinr** and the **Suaq**. Although they unified years before they joined the Empire, they preserve the heritage that made each tradition strong. Which tradition you follow is not an accident of birth but a choice made by each Winterfolk child as they reach maturity. Just as one might be born a peasant and rise to become a Thane, so someone can be born to Steinr family and leave to follow the path of a Kallavesi mystic or journey with the Suaq as a scout. Children gravitate towards whichever tradition calls most strongly to them as they come of age.

All three traditions are equally respected; they are all crucial to the survival of the nation. Although a single tradition predominates in each territory of Wintermark ? this is a consequence of landscape and history ? most communities include members of all three. They refer to themselves as Winterfolk, especially when talking to outsiders. They no longer consider themselves three peoples; they are one people, but with three traditions.



Many Winterfolk maintain the old belief in the **Skein** which says that when one decides to do something, one should be absolutely committed. Vacillation is anathema as is trying to go back on one's skein by trying to undo a decision one has made. When they hunt monsters across the icy wastes, they seek to kill all of them. When they design a fortress or a suit of armour, they strive to make it impregnable. When they go to war, they are prepared to die for their cause.

They judge people not by the company they keep or by their words, but by the things they do. They live their lives to the full, throwing themselves into whatever they are doing with gusto. They are generous in triumph, but selfish in defeat. The mark of a Wintermark hero is that they take personal responsibility for their failings but they share their victories with everyone. The more people involved in a heroic deed, the more heroic it is seen to be. Whenever the Scops tell a tale of a battle, everyone who fought at that battle stands a little taller, even if their specific deeds are not recounted.

All Winterfolk admire personal **heroism**. They relish challenges as an opportunity to prove themselves. Battle is an obvious opportunity to show one's worth, but they also recognise the challenges that are overcome with cunning or wisdom. Whether triumph is won by force of arms, imagination and cunning or wise and profound insight does not matter to the Winterfolk. What counts is how significant and notable the triumph was and how many benefit as a result of the deed. Winterfolk heroes are those whose prowess and noble qualities serve or inspire others.

While the stereotypical Winterfolk crafter is often thought of as a weapon or armour smith, they are also known for their expertise in civil and military engineering, their construction of great fortresses and other defensive structures and their delicately engraved jewellery. The Winterfolk prize individuality, not just as people, but in the things they do and the things they make. Winterfolk craftsmen take immense pride in incorporating complex **runes** into the things they create. The Winterfolk delight in this act of creation; they enjoy making beautiful and unique things, whether it be a torc, a weapon or a poem.



1.1 Names

Winterfolk names are primarily Saxon and Finnish in flavour.

1.1.1 Sample names

- **Male:** Alric, Aarne, Burmoth, Cynestan, Dunstan, Eadric, Eomer, Esa, Kye, Marko, Oswald, Siward, Theodric, Topi, Urho, Ville, Wulfric.
- **Female:** Agatha, Anja, Eawyn, Edith, Elina, Emma, Gytha, Inga, Kaisa, Lyidia, Maethild, Needa, Reet, Ricola, Suvi, Wynflaed, Ymma.

When they are born Winterfolk take their second names from the thane's hall to which they belong, (which in turn will have been named after its founder) or less commonly they may take their mother or father's name. In either case the name is adjusted to make the name flow.

The Winterfolk strive to commit deeds worthy of a name, to earn a name. This name is bestowed by the scops and is a word or phrase that reflects the character's achievements. You can create a character who has already achieved their name or one that is still looking to earn their name.

- *{given name} {thane's hall}ing* e.g. Alric Marking (Alric of Marko's Hall), Reet Ceorling (Reet of Ceorl's Hall).
- *{given name} {parent's name}sson* or *{given name} {parent's name}sdottir* e.g. Hrothgar Arnesson, Adla Runasdottir
- *{nickname and given name}* e.g. *Wulfric the Bear*, *Wise Lyidia*, *Black Dow*.

1.1.2 Naming resources

- [Saxon names](#)
- [Finnish names](#)

2 Wintermark culture and customs

2.1 Skein

The Winterfolk believe that each individual has a skein, a path down which that individual travels. A person's skein is not predestined at birth, rather it is fixed in places by the significant choices they make as they pass through life. The steps along the way are only the consequences of your skein; the critical moments are the points at which the individual makes a momentous choice - this is when their skein can alter. In the Winterfolk view, what happens in your life, your skein, is a direct consequence of the choices you make, the path you choose through life - the key therefore is to make the right choices.

Obviously not all the choices that a person makes are notable; what is important are the key points when far-reaching decisions are needed. At such points an individual's skein forks with the opportunity for different consequences. The **Kallavesi** have handed down various methods to help them identify these moments and more importantly to be able to identify what the consequences might be. Those who can accurately read a person's skein and give them advice to help them make the most auspicious choices, called mystics, are important figures in Winterfolk society.

According to the mystics, once the skein has been forked then it cannot be reversed. A person's skein can only be travelled one way; decisions cannot be undone, so it is foolish to dwell on any decision once the choice has been made. By accepting that your skein is fixed, you can commit yourself to your course and make the best of what has been decided. By travelling forwards along your skein you can hope that the future will bring opportunities to make more auspicious choices.

2.2 Scars

Scars are important to the Winterfolk. According to tradition a warrior who emerges blooded from a battle has demonstrated heroism by finding a worthy enemy to fight, and is celebrated as a consequence. As a sign of recognition, some Thanes will cut a young warrior who has fought well in their first battle but not been blooded. Others will mark a young warrior before their first battle as a way to encourage them to avoid taking unnecessary risks. Some bands re-open old wounds before a battle begins so that those who face them can mark their courage. All such cuts are little more than a nick, but done with a sharp knife so that they bleed profusely.

When a warrior is wounded in a memorable fight, they will often encourage the **grimnir** to treat the wound "*so that it scars well.*" Scars are badges of honour; they serve as a visible mark of the warrior's skill and permit them to boast about the battle later - there is rarely anything to brag about a fight in which you didn't get a scar.



2.3 Hospitality

Any traveller visiting a hall in Wintermark may claim one drink, one plate of hot food and a bed by a hearth for one night, without any payment or even thanks. This generosity is mandated for one occasion only; beyond this a hall owes a traveller nothing and may turn them out into the night. However, a guest who works for their sustenance and shelter is entitled to hospitality for another night, and it is customarily unacceptable to refuse a traveller who offers to work. Wintermark folktales are filled with stories of unwanted guests who overstay their welcome which usually end when a cunning **Suaq** tricks them into taking unmerited food or drink, or into failing to complete their assigned work.

Some Thanes choose to follow this tradition when camped with their people in the field, others refuse as tradition only demands they offer hospitality when in their hall.

2.4 Birds and feathers

Birds are sacred to the Winterfolk, who believe that they bring a child's soul at the moment of their birth and carry it away at the moment of death. Some wealthy Winterfolk keep birds of prey, to ensure that the heaviest and most powerful souls are brought to their children when they are born. Birds favour souls of their own nature, so a raptor usually carries the soul of a warrior or great hunter, while an owl or a raven usually brings the soul of a wise mystic or a cunning scout to be reborn.

A bird's wisdom is contained in the feathers that allow it to fly, and birds discard a feather when they are done with an idea or thought. Winterfolk of a particularly spiritual bent, especially **stormcrows** and Kallavesi mystics, often collect feathers and wear them for a lunar month. They seek to gain mystical insight by absorbing the discarded thoughts of the bird that shed the feather. Killing an animal specifically to collect its feathers is said to bring bad luck.

Birds are often used as symbols of the virtues in Wintermark. The raven symbolises **Wisdom**, the goose and the jay both symbolise **Vigilance**, the eagle, heron and swan all symbolise **Pride**, jackdaws often symbolise **Courage**, magpies symbolise **Prosperity**, hawks and falcons symbolise **Loyalty**, and the rook symbolises **Ambition**.

2.5 Art and history

Crafting is second nature to the Winterfolk. Stone, metal and wood are carved with **runes**, but they are rarely painted, coloured or enamelled, as crafters prefer to show the beauty in the underlying colours of the materials. By contrast fabric and leather are often decorated with carefully painted or embroidered images that complement their colour and texture.

This nation is also known for its poetry, intended to be recited or sung rather than read. While epic tales of heroic deeds or historical poems are popular in formal situations, there is also a tradition of short and entertaining poems, often improvised, in informal situations such as a tavern.

The high art of the Scop, the professional entertainer in Wintermark, is in the creation and recital of alliterative verse, the oldest form of traditional Wintermark poetry. Scops are often travellers, moving from hall to hall performing and looking for new material. Many are poets using rhyming structures common throughout the Empire or else using the traditional Wintermark alliterative verse but some Scops master an instrument instead. Suaq Scops traditionally give formal recitations of epic tales, having learned by rote the sagas of the Winterfolk. In contrast Kallavesi Scops often prefer to work with a small audience, telling symbolic stories with complex imagery that are adapted to reflect their audience's situation; the best are designed to help their listeners make auspicious decisions.

Scops have an important responsibility in Wintermark, for they are the ones who grant people their names. The scops watch the younger heroes of Wintermark, those who have still to make a name for themselves. Once an individual has performed a deed of note, they give them a name, to replace their childhood name.

Riddles are also a national pastime. Cold winter nights are both long and tedious, and it is all too easy to fall asleep on duty or lapse into a numbed state of depression. Thinking up and answering clever riddles helps keep the mind limber.

The Winterfolk are not uneducated, but books and scrolls are treasured among them simply because paper and parchment fare poorly in the damp climate. In Wintermark, history exists primarily in oral form, or on rune-carved slabs of stone, sheets of metal, or artefacts of bone. The Winterfolk celebrate and remember the past, but they are never bound by it. This attitude to the past is the foundation of the Wintermark legal system where each transgression is judged on its own merits, rather than on the basis of past precedent. This practical attitude to legality helped to form the basis of the Imperial codes of law.

2.6 Age, infirmity and the good death



The land of Wintermark is harsh but this serves to make the Winterfolk strong. It is the cold forge in which each of them is tempered. They face life unbowed by the ferocity of their land and refuse to acknowledge their own mortality. For this reason, death in their prime while striving to meet a challenge is preferable for many to the weakness of old age. Warriors seek the good death on the battlefield, but the good death is any ending that comes while pushing yourself to achieve one final act of **heroism**.

A few choose to walk north into the Heart of Ice, the great ice-storm Sydanjaa, and are never seen again. Legend says that they battle forever against the creatures deep in the storm. When someone chooses to walk into Sydanjaa they do not imagine it will achieve anything, but that it is preferable to a slow decline leading to weakness of mind and body in dotage. There is a widespread acceptance of the idea that those who challenge Sydanjaa find the good death in an attempt to unravel the mysteries and riddles of the endless storm.

Those who are maimed or crippled by birth or bad luck are expected to strive to overcome any infirmity. They seek ways to compensate for any physical weakness, pushing themselves harder than their able-bodied companions or learning new skills that allow them to continue to strive regardless of any perceived disability. In legend, many Wintermark heroes are maimed or crippled by the loss of a hand or eye before they can reach their good death.

2.7 Funerals

Heroes are interred in the Kallavesa marshes, their bones lying in the dark waters alongside those of the first king of Wintermark and the great heroes who have come since. As a hero's life fed the nation when they were alive, their body feeds the marsh in death. *?To sleep in Kallavesa?* is a powerful metaphor for the rewards of glory and heroism, and to speak of *?those who sleep in Kallavesa?* is to invoke the very heart of what it means to live in Wintermark.



Wealthy Thanes usually pay for a beautifully crafted wooden boat for their body which is then sunk beneath the waters. Paupers make do with a reed raft. Kallavesi mystics are skilled at preserving bodies for the long journey to Kallavesa.

In the past there has been conflict between the funereal mystics and the priests of the [Necropolis in Highguard](#). The Highborn have strong traditions regarding the funerals of heroes and especially Emperors. Several times they have tried to claim that the remains of Winterfolk heroes who have done some great service for the Empire should be honoured by being interred in their cold marble crypts rather than lying in the swamp alongside their ancestors.

3 Wintermark look and feel

3.1 Overview



The Wintermark look is rugged and practical, but strives to express the wearer's individuality. As a nation, the **Winterfolk** are expert craftsmen, who take immense pride in their work and treat complex runic sigil-work as a necessary part of every piece they make.

Winterfolk art tends to be intricate and detailed. Stone, metal and wood are carved with **runes**, so craftsmen can show off their skills. The people of the Wintermark use bright scarlet for things like banners, because they can be seen for miles through snow and atop mountainsides.

The most common costume for the Winterfolk is a thigh-length tunic over trousers. The differences between the three traditions come in the way they add to and adorn this basic style.

Also see [Wintermark Costumes](#) and [Wintermark Icons and Artistry](#).

3.2 Feel

Iron, hard, firm, strong, unmoving, earnest, craftsman, perfectionist, pragmatic (Steinr and Suaq), dreamer (Kallavesi), individual.

3.3 Breakdown

3.3.1 Winterfolk

3.3.2 Clothing

The basic Wintermark costume for men is a thigh-length tunic. The tunic can be linen or wool. Most Wintermark women wear the same or a close fitting dress. The Viking apron dress exists but is considered slightly old fashioned.

Tunics are worn over close fitting trousers, often with wrappings ankle to knee.

3.3.3 Armour

Heavy, layered armour with thick leather plates over chain.



3.4 Suaq

3.4.1 Influences

Think of Lapp reindeer herders and Inuit; independent scouts and hunters.

3.4.2 Materials

Furs and hides, ivory, scrimshaw carved bone items.

3.4.3 Colours

Light, washed out tones of cream, ivory, taupe, pale grey.

3.4.4 Clothing

Suaq often wear a long tight coat of animal skin (skin side out, fur side in) or lighter painted deerskins in warmer parts. Clothing is emblazoned with drawings and symbols of animals, which are usually painted on to the leather or material.

3.4.5 Armour

Adorn with heavy furs that offer protection against the cold.

3.4.6 Shields

Uncommon, but possibly leather stretched over wood.

3.4.7 Weapons

Hunting weapons, bows, spears, staves for crossing treacherous ice.



3.5 Steirn

3.5.1 Influences

Rohirrim, Tolkien's Dwarves, Beowulf (2005), Saxons, Skyrim.

3.5.2 Materials

Metals, furs, leather, stone, woollen cloth; richer fabrics may be appropriate for high status Thanes.

3.5.3 Colours

Dark shades of green, blue, red and brown, also dark metals ? iron, coppers, bronze.

3.5.4 Clothing

Steirn clothing is designed to show off the owner's wealth. It may be dyed a bright colour, be intricately embroidered or have decorated hems in a contrasting colour or material. Clothing is often worn with jewellery with torcs and cloak pins common.

3.5.5 Armour

Heavy, layered armour (chain with dark leather/plate over), intricately decorated and personalised so each person's kit looks different.

3.5.6 Shields

Ideally tear-drop shaped kite shields; round shields are an acceptable alternative.

3.5.7 Weapons

Long swords, spears, Dane axes - heavy and practical, decorated with runes.



3.6 Kallavesi

3.6.1 Influences

Finland, Kallevala, the Crannogmen from Game of Thrones. Bog-dwelling shamans.

3.6.2 Materials

Homespun checked Wool, linen, fur, leathers, wood and wicker, polished stones (semiprecious).

3.6.3 Colours

Greys, duns, moss, smoke, occasional bright flashes of colour, dark feathers.

3.6.4 Clothing

Kallavesi costume often includes a cloak of wool or fur over the top of the traditional tunic. Garments use more drab colours and more worn looking fabric. They embellish their appearance with feathers, beads and fetishes and ideally an animal headdress of some kind.

3.6.5 Armour

Light leathers and furs.

3.6.6 Shields

Rare, but possibly small wicker bucklers.

3.6.7 Weapons

They carry axes, staves, fishing spears and gutting knives.

3.7 Steirn costume

Steirn tunics may be layered to show off hems that are decorated with a contrasting fabric or braid. Theoden's costume from Lord of the Rings shows the sort of outfit a wealthy and powerful Thane might wear to display their prosperity - the tunic is made from a rich fabric that is intricately embroidered.





3.8 Kallavesi costume

Kallavesi clothing is the standard Wintermark tunic over trousers, often in a rougher woven fabric and embellished with furs and feathers. The Kallavesi wear furs with the fur side out. The [stormcrow](#) mystic wears the traditional ragged but heavy cloak and a costume adorned with tatters of material and fetishes. Feathers in particular are important to the Kallavesi and the Kallavesi shamans in particular.





3.9 Suaq costume

The heavy coats of the Suaq protect them against the cold. Reindeer and seal skins are turned fur side in for warmth. Ideally the heavy fur coats should be richly decorated with important symbols ? designs of animals and enemies the warrior has killed. In warmer climates the coats may be leather and in the imperial heartland in summer they may chose to wear linen or canvas versions.

The brown fur shaman costume is made by [Denise Piggini](#).





3.10 Steirn warriors

The Rohirrim in Lord of the Rings epitomise the Steirn warriors. Layered armour, leather or less commonly plate over mail, but with the armour intricately tooled and embellished.





Armour by [Idiom Productions](#)

3.11 Suaq & Kallavesi warriors

Kallavesi and Suaq warriors wear fur over mail or simply leather or fur by itself. The Kallavesi decorate their armour with feathers and beads and many wear an animal headdress. The Suaq paint their armour with symbolic designs of animals. F The bear heads were made by [Evenlode Studio](#).





3.12 Shamans & Icewalkers

Kallavesi Shamans are practiced seers and mystics. Most supplement the normal Kallavesi dress with an animal headdress decorated with feathers and fur.

Suaq **icewalkers** use their magic to complement their wits. They wear traditional Suaq clothing but supplemented with jewellery and amulets.



3.13 Children





3.14 Images to avoid

An LRP setting is defined as much by what you leave out as by what you include. In defining the Wintermark look we have actively chosen to exclude some elements. Please do not use any of the images or looks seen in this section. In particular please note that the Winterfolk were inspired by Saxons rather than Vikings and the setting does not include longships and the associated imagery.

3.14.1 Avoid: Horned helmets

The Steirn draw their inspiration from traditional Saxon imagery as well as the Rohirrim, rather than the Vikings. In particular horned helmets are completely inappropriate for the nation.



3.14.2 Avoid: Hero pants

The ideal Wintermark trousers are tight not baggy. The more Viking or Rus style hero pants are perfect for Varushka. It's perfectly acceptable to wear hero pants in Wintermark, it is simply that they are more suited to Varushka.



3.14.3 Avoid: Thor's hammer

Thor's Hammers have become as evocative and iconic as a crucifix. They are irrevocably associated with Thor, a deity who does not exist in the Empire game setting, so please avoid this specific piece of jewellery.



4 Wintermark history



For hundreds of years the peoples of the extreme north, the Suaq and Kallavesi, were isolated from the rest of humanity by a troll kingdom that held sway over the mountain passes of Hahnmark. The trolls warred with the humans and forced them further and further into the cold, bringing them to the desperate brink of extinction.

The Steirn say that they fell from the heavens in a shower of falling stars. They claim that there is meteoric iron in their blood, and this is what gives them their indomitable spirit. Cousins to the Vard who conquered Varushka, the Steirn chose to head westwards while the Vard pushed east.

Caught between the orcs and the trolls their situation became increasingly desperate. Following visionary dreams sent by the shamen and mystics on the other side of Hahnmark, a small band of heroes made a heroic trek through the mountains to seek out the Suaq and the Kallavesi. Following a historic meeting, the warriors, the hunters and the mystics embarked on a bold campaign against the trolls. While the Steirn and Suaq embarked on a last-ditch campaign to harry their subhuman foes from north and south, the Kallavesi performed a great ritual that collapsed the glaciers of the mountains onto the troll armies, sealing them forever in a frozen underworld.

After the war a victory celebration was held in Hahnmark. A traditional Steirn grand moot ? a Witan ? was called, where three representatives of each people spoke on the nature of their achievement and of what must be done next to survive. It is said that amidst the speeches the leaders of the Suaq, the Kallavesi and the Steirn each shed a single tear for the trolls, and that these three tears froze in an instant, becoming clear gems. These gems were collected by the most cunning of the Suaq hunters and set in a crown forged from the torcs and rings of the fallen heroes of the three people. The wisest of the Kallavesi mystics crowned wily Ulmo of the Suaq King of the Three Tears, ruler of a new nation, Wintermark.

The crown was passed from monarch to monarch through the history of Wintermark. When the nation joined the Empire, the last King returned it to the Kallavesi mystics and told them to keep it as a symbol of unity not only for the three peoples, but for their union with the Empire. The Kallavesi gave the crown to the Winterfolk hero they considered to best exemplify the virtues of Wintermark, until 373AE when the last wearer Inga Suvvisdottir was slain during the fall of Skarsind. The crown is lost; it is believed to be in the hands of the barbarians.

4.1 Joining the Empire

While the first few decades of the new nation were tumultuous, by the time of the First Empress the Winterfolk had learnt the strength that comes from standing together. King Aloh Bearing was known to be a confidant and friend to the Empress. When the Empress spoke of her vision of one people united in defence of humanity, he was amongst her first and most enthusiastic supporters. The common opinion among Winterfolk is that they are the model for Empire and the bedrock on which it was built, and it is certainly true that both the Senate and the Imperial legal system are based on the traditions of the Winterfolk.

5 Wintermark political leadership



Wintermark remains sparsely populated and the only large town is the former capital at Kalpaheim in Hahnmark. The majority of Winterfolk live in one of the many small settlements, called halls, that dot the land. Each hall is led by a Thane, and although Imperial justice is now dispensed by trained magistrates, the Thane continues to settle disputes that lie outside the law and to provide civic and military leadership.

Traditionally the Kallavesi chose the Wintermark monarch, although they never chose one of their own. This tradition is reflected in many halls, with the Winterfolk looking to the wise and prophetic Kallavesi to choose the most able candidate from amongst the Suaq and the Steinr. There are halls with Kallavesi Thanes, but these are usually the exception and occur when the majority of the inhabitants of the hall are Kallavesi.

The Winterfolk prefer strong, decisive leaders who make bold decisions and stick with them. They have little time for people who vacillate or prevaricate. When the Kallavesi believe that a powerful martial leader is needed they tend to pick a Steinr Thane, if they feel the situation calls for a clever shrewd leader they choose a Suaq. In either case they make an effort to ensure they pick a Thane who the hall can unite behind, the people of Wintermark have little interest in strained loyalties and internal disagreement.

The forerunner of the Senate was the Witan, a grand moot held at Kalpaheim. Here the representatives of each hall met to discuss the business of the nation with the monarch. Today it is a festive gathering; those who involve themselves in national and Imperial business gather to eat, drink and plan for the year ahead. It is also a time for finding husbands and wives, for seeking out mentors or apprentices, resolving internal conflicts and generally keeping the nation of Wintermark functioning as a strong, healthy whole.

5.1 Leading a territory

The symbol of Wintermark is three interlocking rings, representing the belief that the nation is stronger for the influence and inclusion of all three traditions. To preserve this heritage the Winterfolk ensure that they pick a single Senator who follows each tradition. The Steinr select the senator for Hahnmark, the Suaq select the senator for Sermersuaq and the Kallavesi the senator for Kallavesa.

For each territory, every candidate who wishes to be considered sets out a jar bearing their name. Any Winterfolk of the appropriate tradition who wishes to express support may drop a single coin into one or more of the jars over the next hour. The face value of the coins is irrelevant, but by tradition, wealthy or earnest supporters will try to outdo each other by adding a more valuable coin. At the end of the hour, the jar containing the most coins bears the name of the new Senator. The money is taken by the civil service and distributed amongst the poorest Winterfolk present.

Although the senators are chosen by followers of a single tradition, in theory it is possible for any of the Winterfolk to stand as a candidate for any territory. In practice it is rare for the Steinr not to choose one of their own, and likewise for the Suaq and the Kallavesi.

6 Wintermark economic interests



Wintermark commonly exports crafted goods and imports food. Good relations exist between the Winterfolk and their southern neighbours in [the Marches](#). The grain, barley and salted meat that flows north in exchange for beautifully crafted and enchanted goods ensures that since the foundation of the Empire the Wintermark has never suffered a great famine of the kind that was common before.

Merchants are important in Wintermark, but they are often regarded with caution. A merchant who uses trade to enrich themselves at the expense of their Thane and hall will be given short shrift, but a merchant who uses wisdom and cunning to bring wealth and prosperity to their hall and the warriors it supports will be held up as an example to all.

6.1 Mediator

The most prestigious role for Winterfolk merchants is to act as a mediator, negotiating [weregilds](#). A fair weregild is considered one that matches the severity of the crime and satisfies the victim but is accepted by the perpetrator. The Winterfolk tradition of weregilds has passed into Imperial Law and they are officially set by magistrates who took over the responsibility from the Thanes. However Wintermark magistrates habitually employ a mediator to negotiate with both parties to find the right weregild. Such negotiations must often be done in haste, so that all can see that justice has been done. Identifying the right weregild and convincing both parties to settle for it is considered an exceptional skill and talented mediators are in high demand and well regarded. By tradition they are expected to be paid in equal amounts by both parties.

6.2 Maggot

Those who use their skills to enrich themselves are often called maggots. Maggot is Wintermark slang for a looter on a battlefield. Before the Empire, maggots who were caught were summarily executed, as Thanes expected to divide the loot from the field between their warband. That tradition is now rarely used except when Wintermark warriors are taking the field alone. Since the adoption of Imperial Law, a looter can only be convicted if they are stealing from the body of an Imperial citizen, not from an enemy. However the epithet remains a powerful Wintermark insult, applied to greedy merchants and camp followers. Ultimately anyone who makes profit from battle without taking the field themselves risks being reviled as a maggot.

7 Wintermark military concerns



Wintermark has a strong warrior culture. Everyone wants to be a hero, and there are many opportunities for heroic action on the battlefield. This means that while **heroism** does not have to mean fighting, it does for many Winterfolk. The warrior culture crosses all three traditions; while outsiders may think of the Steinn warrior in chain with runebound weapon and shield when they envision a Winterfolk warrior, the Suaq and the Kallavesi traditions stretch back to a time before the first Steinn set foot in Hahnmark.

The Steinn generally prefer close melee to archery or skirmishing, most often fighting with a one-handed weapon and shield and wearing layers of mail and thick leather. Their generals are often larger-than-life figures who lead from the front and seek out the counsel of the warbands they will lead before planning their strategies ? but who brook no disagreement once the plan is decided.

The Suaq employ their hunting craft equally well in the forest and on the battlefield; their archers give close support to their spearmen who in turn look to attack the flanks and other weak points in their enemy's lines. Suaq generals pick their battles carefully, looking to make best use of the terrain and any situational advantage they can create for their army.

Kallavesi warriors tend to favour the axe, either a shorter axe in either hand or a long handled axe near as tall as a man. In battle they often try to take on the demeanour of a ferocious animal such as a boar, wolf or bear. They are alert for omens, reading the flow of the battle around them and anticipating threats and opportunities. Kallavesi generals work closely with the shamans to pick the most auspicious locations and strategies for a battle.

The generals of Wintermark, regardless of tradition, have a responsibility for their people and are expected to call a retreat if it becomes appropriate. A futile death is not a good death and once the order is given, warriors withdraw without shame or ridicule. Winterfolk strive not to rout ? when they retreat it is a matter of tactics.

7.1 Bannermen

At the heart of most Wintermark forces is one or more bannermen. The bannermen are an old Steinn tradition. They are warriors, men or women, whose role is to inspire and enthuse the rest of the warband. Most bannermen are skilled warriors, but their purpose is to rouse the courage and fighting spirit of their band. The traditional responsibility of the bannermen is to carry a warband's banner, a difficult and dangerous job that makes it impossible to carry a shield. Even if they are not personally carrying the banner, they tend to stay close to it as it is the heart of the unit.

Bannermen find many ways to motivate their colleagues. Steinn bannermen often carry instruments of war, drums, horns and the like to perform music on the battlefield to lift spirits. Kallavesi bannermen prefer to anoint their fellows with oils and use ancient tales to remind their comrades of past heroes. Some Suaq bannermen prefer to lead their warriors in song while others learn the surgeon's art.

Winterfolk generals know that the bannermen are key to the battle, and encourage the Thanes to pick wisely; a few good bannermen can change the course of the battle with their skills. In some situations a good bannerman is more important than the Thanes who actually command, because their presence can keep a group of warriors focused and prevent them routing. A wise general traditionally wants to have the bannermen present when strategy is discussed. While the Thanes may have insight into the situation, it is the bannermen who are relied on to remember the plan and make sure their comrades keep to it.

7.2 Grimnir

Especially important are the Grimnir, the doctors and healers of Wintermark. They combine the study of herbs and traditional healing methods with practical experience that is invaluable to the militaristic Wintermark society. While they have an important role to play on the battlefield, they have a wider role to see to the health of everyone in their hall.

While Winterfolk warriors are highly valued, those who keep those warriors alive and healthy are valued even higher. By ancient tradition the Grimnir are forbidden from the front lines of any conflict; they are expected to hang back and keep themselves out of harms way. After all, a dead doctor heals no

warriors. Some Grimnir push this tradition to the limit, staying just behind the front line, but most take their responsibility seriously and carry out their work a safe distance away from the fighting.

The Grimnir are denied the obvious chances for **heroism** that warriors can find on the battlefield. Instead they work to the last to save the lives of their comrades rather than concerning themselves with renown. Wintermark warriors acknowledge this sacrifice, treating the Grimnir with a profound respect. The Grimnir can be all that stands between a warrior and a lingering, painful, futile death. During a battle it is normal for a Grimnir to be accompanied by a few warriors, often those whose life they have saved. Unlike the Grimnir, these warriors do not hang back; they are expected to fight their way through to the wounded and bring them to be tended by the Grimnir.

The Grimnir tradition began with the Suaq. In the past, the healers of a Suaq tribe did not accompany the hunters into the wilderness but instead maintained the camp and prepared to heal those who were injured by wild beasts. The Steinr added their own traditions wherein the surgeon responsible for tending the wounded was also entrusted with the task of maintaining the hall or home ? "*good health is founded on a strong hearth*". Consequently, while most Thanes aspire to be powerful warriors, it is not uncommon for a Thane to be a sworn Grimnir, seeing to the health of everyone who lives in their hall.

8 Wintermark religious beliefs

The priests of Wintermark provide spiritual and moral guidance through the tales of the greatest heroes of the past. Called **stormcrows**, they wear the traditional Kallavesi feathers and a black or grey tattered and layered robe. The stormcrows compose and recite verses which recount the feats of the Paragons and other heroes.



A stormcrow provides the moral centre of every hall, pushing them to perform the deeds their souls long to achieve and to live up to the legacy of the heroes who have gone before. Their duties are often very serious, but many also strive to be the heart of the community, providing cheer through the dark winter nights and reminding their fellows of the joys of being alive. A stormcrow might find themselves preaching the need to laugh in the face of death, conducting grand and glorious death rites, or testing their congregation with riddles. Whatever form religious observance takes, it usually ends with music, laughter and feasting.

Inevitably the stormcrows favour those tales that sing to the Wintermark spirit. **Pride** and **Courage** are prized above all things followed closely by **Wisdom**. Tales of **Ambition** or **Prosperity** are usually reserved for those thanes who seem to be exhibiting an unseemly tendency towards caution or miserliness. In battle, however, at least one stormcrow will endeavour to remain by the side of whoever has command. In this way they seek to remind them that it is a warrior's place to show Courage, but a thane's place to show Wisdom.

In Wintermark it is considered a cowardly, childish thing to gossip about the inadequacies or misdeeds of another. Instead the stormcrows serve as a sort of confessor. Anyone can go to them and share a story of a misdeed or failing they have witnessed, and then depart secure in the knowledge that the stormcrow will deal with it. The priest seeks out the truth of the matter and deals with the situation as openly or discreetly as they see fit. When a stormcrow says *?the birds told me?* they mean that someone has confided in the stormcrow. They will not reveal the source. Likewise a person who feels guilty can seek out a stormcrow and confide whatever it is that is prompting the guilty feelings. A stormcrow can lay a penance, and witness the completion of that penance, effectively absolving the person of their shame.

Stormcrows also serve as witnesses to what their people say and do. In Wintermark it is important to carry through on any deed that you have claimed you will do. They have no patience for empty boasting. This embodies the Virtue of Courage as well as the idea that it is important not to go back on your Skein. Stormcrows fight alongside Winterfolk who have made boasts or claims for their achievements in a coming battle or who have otherwise set themselves a particularly dangerous task. In this the stormcrow serves two important roles. Firstly they can carry back the tale of a good death or vouch for the honesty of accomplishment if a person survives the battle. More importantly a stormcrow knows that by acting as a watcher they can bolster the courage of the person they are watching, helping them to stay true in the face of their fear.

8.1 The Frayed

Individuals who make inauspicious choices, committing crimes or making cowardly or greedy decisions that betray the trust of others, lock themselves into an unheroic skein. They incur the contempt of their fellows as their skein carries them towards **the Labyrinth of Ages** with their souls stained by their actions. They are called the frayed, a reference to the way their choices have damaged their skein. Wintermark heroes who are convicted of serious crimes, or individuals who feel great guilt over a personal failing, become frayed.

For the frayed to restore their skein to a heroic path takes a great deal of effort and wisdom; for most warriors battle is their only opportunity to achieve this. Here the frayed fight alongside a warband rather than as part of it and seek out the most dangerous fights in the hope of redeeming themselves. Those who do so and survive may eventually rejoin their warband. If they became frayed due to committing a crime, then it is never mentioned again once their sentence is complete. Those who have not have been able to redeem themselves through acts of bravery and valour continue to fight as a frayed until they prove themselves or die.

It is common for several frayed to fight together in battle to improve the chances of all and some groups of frayed take an oath to continue to fight together as a warband until all have proven themselves. If worthy, such bands often attract a stormcrow, who fights with the band even though they are not frayed. The stormcrow provide spiritual guidance as well as witnessing their efforts to redeem themselves.

The Winterfolk are, by nature, a virtuous people and their Stormcrows were teaching about Pride and Courage long before we arrived. Our words about the reincarnation of souls were also accepted as confirmation of truths already known to them. Their superstitions around birds are misguided, but I sense no idolatry here; merely the lingering traces of older traditions from less enlightened times.

Wayfarer Malachi in Epistles to the Winds of Virtue, 12 BE

9 Wintermark magical traditions



The Suaq, Steirn and Kallavesi each had their own magical heritage long before they joined to create the nation of Wintermark. Although they have shared magical knowledge extensively since then, these approaches are as much an extension of the traditional beliefs and attitudes of the three people as they are to any particular magical skills. There are Suaq Runesmiths or Steirn icewalkers for example, but they are uncommon. For the most part the three people have maintained their magical traditions along with their cultural heritage.

9.1 Runesmiths

All crafting is magical to some degree, but the Steirn make the ancient magic of their runes an integral part of all craftsmanship. Whether or not the runes are visibly etched into the finished item, you can be certain the proper symbols were painstakingly inscribed during every stage of the construction. Runes represent primal powers and are used not just in metal and stonework but everywhere from a set of clothes, to a banner, to a loaf of bread.

The Steirn see magic as a potent weapon, every bit as deadly as an axe or a sword. Runesmiths who learn battle magic can make formidable combatants or powerful healers; they use the runes to enact immediate magical effects. The original runesmiths developed their strength working the anvil, but as they gained a reputation for daring in battle, more Steirn magicians began to emulate them. They prize boldness and vigour, and may be as comfortable in the thick of melee as any warrior. Many runesmiths wield a heavy oak staff or rod carved with runes when fighting, and like to spar with other runesmiths or warriors through unarmed combat, pugilism and wrestling.

Some runesmiths focus their attention on the mastery of the rituals, often of the Summer Realm. These runesmiths use their runes to mark out their allies and grant them strength and protection. Others prefer to concentrate on Autumn rituals, feeling an affinity for the magics of skill and wealth.

9.2 Icewalkers

The Suaq see magic as a practical tool, a key to open doors, a way to solve problems indirectly. The Suaq call those magicians who are thought to show wits and cleverness icewalkers - a title that confers a degree of respect and admiration beyond the ability to simply perform magic. Icewalkers strive to embody the best values of the Suaq people; erudite, pragmatic and shrewd.

Icewalkers favour using ritual magic of the Day Realm to perform divinatory and scrying rituals to help find their quarry. Suaq magicians are widely known for their clever negotiations with Eternals, trying to use their wits and glib tongues to negotiate bargains that favour the icewalker and her people more than they favour the Eternals. Outwitting a powerful creature of another Realm is sometimes seen as the pinnacle of heroism for an icewalker.

Ritual magic for the icewalkers often involves invoking natural things or creatures, and drawing parallels between them and the target of their magic. For example, an icewalker who wishes to divine an area might create a parallel between themselves and a high-flying eagle, while one who wishes to grant his comrades great strength might compare them to a flood, storm, earthquake or herd of wild boar. They often cement this magical simile by painting or carving an appropriate rune onto the target or a piece of their equipment.

9.3 Mystics

The Kallavesi see magic as a means to insight and wisdom. The enigmatic Kallavesi approach to life leads many of their heroes to become skilled magicians, of which the most famous are mystics. As well as magic, the mystics study the skeins, the idea that there are fated paths down which

individuals travel. At critical points in life there are choices to be made, moments when your skein can shift, for better or worse, as a result of your decision. A mixture of magic, wisdom and divinary arts are used to allow a mystic to determine the most auspicious choices to make.

9.4 Artok

In [Sermersuaq](#), the most northern point of the Empire, lies Sydanjaa, the never-ending ice-storm, sometimes called the Heart of Ice. This vast blizzard is a great mystery, blowing night and day across the tundra without respite. Beasts emerge from Sydanjaa that possess magical powers and their bodies often provide magical components. One of the most important are the great ice golems known as Artok. These creatures emerge from the storm to tread fixed paths before they head back into the ice. They can be tamed for a time by carving them with runes, during which time they are potent weapons of war if they can be controlled. Unfortunately they are difficult to take south, as they need the cold to function for long.

10 Wintermark hearth magic

10.1 Runes

In addition to being used by magicians, the **runes** are a widespread and popular hearth magic. A baker might bake the rune of plenty into the crust of a loaf of bread, while a farmer might scratch the rune of fertility onto the handle of his plow. The runes do not have discernible game effect when used in this way, but within the setting the baker's loaf might last a little longer, and the farmer's field might be a little less prone to pests.

10.2 Animals and Masks

Many animals have an association with **Virtue** in Wintermark. This tradition began with the **Kallavesi** and **Suaq**, but many **Steinr** have embraced it as well. Animals are seen as having laudable spiritual qualities, and by calling on the animal, the Winterfolk seek to embody those qualities.



The Kallavesi wear animal masks to draw on the spiritual strength of an animal. A magician might wear a bird mask to draw on the animals' wisdom, while a warrior might wear a bear or boar mask to draw on the creature's courage. The Suaq do not normally wear the masks but paint the animals on their clothing and equipment instead. The Steinr may use either approach but more commonly give people nicknames that draw on the symbolism of the animals they respect.

10.3 Birds

Birds are well-regarded in Wintermark; the Kallavesi in particular regard them as wise and powerful creatures. Every part of a bird contains magic; their feathers help provide wisdom and inspiration while their bones bring strength and good health. Winterfolk often carry the hollow bones of a bird in a pouch. These are stroked with crossed fingers for luck at times of stress or when a wish is made. It is believed that breaking a bone from a powerful bird in the face of an enemy can sometimes conceal you from its sight.

10.4 Curse Coins

If a Winterfolk wishes a person ill, they may give them or pay them in curse coins, which bring bad luck to the recipient. The more numerous the cursed coins, the worse the luck. Curse coins are normal coins that have been blackened with soot, so they are readily visible to anyone who is paying attention, but one is easily overlooked in a pouch. Once the coin has been accepted, the curse cannot be removed by cleaning the soot off - the coin must be given to another to move the curse to them or else washed clean in the blood of an enemy, otherwise the curse remains. Wintermark folklore contains many stories of Suaq icewalkers tricking people into accepting cursed coins or planting them on an enemy unawares.

11 Wintermark lineage and species attitudes



The Winterfolk tend to judge people as individuals so they rarely discriminate against a particular lineage, though they are unforgiving of people's failures. For Winterfolk to say that an individual *cannot help themselves, it's in their blood?* is meant as a final condemnation not as a mitigating justification.

A spontaneous **changeling** birth is regarded as a sign of good luck, and having *sharp ears?* is a common compliment for anyone who shows alertness or initiative.

There are a number of groups of Kallavesi that are heavily dominated by those with the **naga** lineage. Some of these naga-dominated halls disdain magic, preferring to focus on the arts of war and take a rapturous joy in battle which can disquiet even the militant Steinr.

The bold, direct and uncompromising nature of the **briar** lineage makes them welcome among many Winterfolk, especially those of the Steinr tradition. The bark-like material that covers their wounds is treated like any other **scar** and a briar with strong lineage is often given additional respect as a result.

In Wintermark most orcs are regarded as worthy opponents, an enemy suitable to give or receive a good death from. They were also quick to accept the Imperial Orcs once they proved their loyalty. Quietly some even comment that the Imperial Orcs have recently proved a more reliable and effective ally than some nations of the Empire.

12 Wintermark territories

Wintermark is criss-crossed by a network of watchtowers and beacons that allow the Winterfolk to maintain vigilance against barbarian attacks. Many of these structures are isolated, but halls have sprung up around several of them, often taking their names from the beacons or watchtowers they protect.

12.1 Hahnmark

The territory of Hahnmark is spread along a series of treacherous mountain passes, the rolling foothills beneath and the wide plains that stretch toward Sermersuaq and Kallavesa. It is the ancestral homeland of the Steinr in Wintermark, and in ancient times was the centre of the troll kingdom.

The largest settlement in Wintermark, the great town of Kalpaheim, was once the capital of the Winterfolk. It guards the largest pass through the mountains that lead to the more hospitable lands to the south. A massive carving of King Ulmo in the side of a mountain looks down upon Kalpaheim, to remind all that the eyes of history are upon them. This impressive feat is one of the wonders of the Empire, constructed long before the nation joined the Empire by a trio of [Artok](#) under the control of the [icewalker](#) Gilda Heimssdottir. She also dug out a number of tunnels into the mountains and parts of the hall now occupy them.

The other passes through the mountains are likewise protected by fortified halls, preventing access to the rolling hills that drop down towards fertile plains.

12.2 Kallavesa

This is the ancestral home of the Kallavesi, a land of cold stagnant bogs. The land changes through the seasons, but always has a feeling of brooding stillness. In the warmer months it is a boggy marsh cut through with streams and fjords. In the winter the waterways freeze over and the whole land is covered with frost and snow. The marsh serves as the national graveyard and this is a place of ancient secrets and mysticism. The stories of the mystics say that in ancient times a flight of crows flew over the marshes scattering feathers into the waters below. Where each feather landed, a Kallevesi emerged from the marshes.

Thanes' halls are traditionally constructed entirely from wood here and those built in marshy areas are raised up on stilts. Many halls in Kallavesa are built around sacred places or places with a magical reputation.

12.3 Sermersuaq

Sermersuaq is the ancestral home of the Suaq people. The forests and tundra of this territory are rich with animal life that sustains the Winterfolk, ranging from great furred beasts to small game and hunting birds. The northern waters are home to seals and penguins, and full of fish and whales. As one travels further north, the land becomes colder and colder until a traveller comes to transient ice floes that mark the the farthest extent of the land claimed by the Winterfolk. This fertile territory is under constant threat from northern barbarians whose hunting parties also seek to exploit the profusion of life here, regularly engaging in skirmishes with the Winterfolk who live here.

The territory takes its name from the legendary figure of Sermersuaq. Sermersuaq was said to be so powerful that she could balance a kayak on the tips of three fingers, and kill a seal just by rapping it on the head with her knuckles. According to legend, Sermersuaq rode out heavily pregnant from Sydanjaa on a mammoth. She gave birth to one thousand children, half of whom drowned themselves and returned as seals to provide food for the others. Some say Sermersuaq was an Eternal and that all the Suaq share a trace of her bloodline, others argue she is an allegory for the enduring and tenacious spirit of the Winterfolk.

Beyond the ice floes is the wasteland of Tsirku, where the ground is permanently covered in snow. The landscape is far from flat, there are ice plateaus pock-marked with crevasses and areas where the ice is rent apart giving way to cold salty lakes. Here rages the eternal ice-storm Sydanjaa, a roaring blizzard that blows all year round and from whose depths no traveller has ever returned.

12.4 Skarsind (Lost)

Skarsind a place of alpine slopes and valleys, pine forests and rising mists. Gildenheim in the east was the second largest settlement in Wintermark. Founded by Gilda Heimssdottir, it stands over the entrance to a frozen underworld cavern into the walls of which are carvings in a mysterious alphabet that are said to be the source of the magical runes used throughout Wintermark.

The folk of Skarsind were particularly noted for their fine rune work and many of the best craftsmen travelled here to study their craft. There were troubles with tribes of yetis that live in the valleys above Skarsind, but most of the danger here came from the barbarians living on the far side of the mountains.

In 373AE a savage blizzard swept down out of the mountains. The blizzard raged for three days, serving as magical cover for an army of barbarians who marched beneath it. They attacked Gildenheim with the assistance of a dozen enslaved [Artok](#), smashing great holes in the defenses. The blizzard continued for another four days, and the orcs used the advantage it gave them to ravage many of the low-lying halls. The Winterfolk who were not killed in the attacks are now kept as thralls by the victorious barbarians.

There are still pockets of resistance in Skarsind, mostly based around the mines and halls to the north-east, but the situation is looking increasingly desperate. Since the initial attack the weather has remained unnaturally harsh, with snow falling for nine months out of each year, and supplies and the will to fight are both dwindling. There is little doubt that the barbarians here have the support of powerful magic, and unless it is dealt with Skarsind will never be reclaimed by the Winterfolk.

A saga called [Lament for Skarsind](#) is popular in some parts of Wintermark.

13 Wintermark children

Children are considered a mixed blessing in Wintermark, for every new child is another mouth to feed. While Wintermark has not suffered a major famine since it joined the Empire, there is still a tradition of giving new parents gifts of grain, or dried fruit, or meat to help celebrate the birth. Twins are considered unlucky by the Winterfolk, and it is still common for a childless friend or relative to adopt one of the twins and raise them as their own child even though the practical need to spread the burden of feeding babies and small children has mostly passed.

Older children are expected to work hard to help their parents. They are not allowed to fight before they are strong enough to hold a warrior's sword at arm's length without shaking. No Thane will permit a child to take the battlefield with them unless they can pass this test.



Children are encouraged to talk to adults in the Hall, so that they may find a trade or calling that suits them, but never to pester them, lest they distract them from their business. Once a child is old enough to choose an apprenticeship, they are encouraged to stay close to their tutor where they can work to help. *?Heroism is not found in the mouth?* is an old Winterfolk saying. Even before then, children are expected to act and to be treated as small adults.

When playing amongst themselves, however, children are encouraged to be boisterous and energetic. Children are often given wooden practice swords and will divide themselves into orcs and warriors to play-fight it out. Some **stormcrows** enjoy the company of children and will spend their time teaching them the legends of Wintermark heroes of old to inspire them.

13.1 Things every child should know

- **Stand on your own two feet.** Every person in Wintermark should be able to stand up for themself.
- **Heroism is not found in the mouth.** Listen to what adults are saying, and avoid spreading tales. If you must tell someone, find a **stormcrow** and let them know what you have heard.
- **Never back down when you know you are right.** Never let anyone bully you or keep you from your rights. The Winterfolk stand firm and keep what is theirs.
- **Be cunning as the Suaq, and wise as the Kallavesi.** Learn about riddles and challenge each other with them. Riddles will sharpen your mind like a whetstone sharpens a sword.
- **Choose your own path.** Learn about all three traditions of the Winterfolk so that you can decide which one you wish to follow.

14 Wintermark music

14.1 The Music of Wintermark

14.1.1 Style summary

Alliterative poetry and heroic saga songs spoken or chanted, scraping fiddles, breathy pipes, and low drones. Themes of winter, seasons, mythical creatures, tales of hardship, dark wit, and of course riddles!

For inspiration for Wintermark look to the music of the old Americas, Scandinavia and Iceland, along with certain British folk with a minor or modal sound.

14.1.2 Commonly known songs

- [Oy lay la loyla](#) - one of several calls used when herding animals or bringing home a hunt

14.1.2.1 A musical tradition

From [Wintermark Military Concerns](#): Steinr Bannermen often carry instruments of war, drums, horns and the like to perform music on the battlefield to lift spirits. Kallavesi Bannermen prefer to anoint their fellows with scented oils and use ancient tales to remind all of the heroes of the past. Some Suaq Bannermen prefer to lead their warriors in song while others learn the chirurgeons art. Most Bannermen are skilled warriors, but whatever their art, their purpose is to rouse the courage and fighting spirit of the band, supporting them on the battlefield.

14.1.2.2 One for the kids

[Ho Ho Away We Go](#), very easy song with optional harmonies.

14.1.3 Further examples

14.1.3.1 Songs

- [Cattle Calls](#)
- [The Snow It Melts the Soonest](#)
- [Two Men Came to Your Hall Door](#)
- [I Wish My Baby Was Born](#)
- [modir min i, TO DO](#)
- [Low Down in the Broom](#)
- [My Ain True Love](#)
- [The Scop's Gift](#)
- [Lament for Skarsind](#)

14.1.3.2 Instrumentation and tunes

- Orcadian/Shetland tunes have the right sort of sound for Wintermark, as does the Swedish fiddle.
- Pan pipes, ocarinas, or low whistles could be used to great effect here too, using any breathy slow music.
- Scandinavian fiddle/folk resources: <http://www.people.iup.edu/rahkonen/Fiddling/scandi.htm>

14.1.3.3 Other performance traditions

- NEEDED: Alliterative poetry and heroic saga songs spoken or chanted.
- Riddles!

14.1.4 How to adapt your repertoire

- Whether singing or playing, get people to join in with a long low drone or untuned drums.
- When playing from your folk tune repertoire, flatten all your 7ths (turning the major scale into the mixolydian mode). Here is a search for [mixolydian mode tunes](#)
- Sing in a raw style and emphasise the story behind the song.

14.1.5 Our sources

- June Tabor, Vasen, Althing (vocal group), Ensemble Norma, Enkelit, Flight of the Condor soundtrack, Andean pipe music generally and processional songs.
- A great source of Swedish fiddle tunes: <http://www.norbeck.nu/abc/index2.asp?cat=s&sort=title>

Here is a [youtube playlist](#) of appropriate or inspiring music.

15 Wintermark costumes

This is a placeholder page for content that PD are actively working on.

Note: The tone and style of this page may need editing. All costume advice pages should be written in third person voice, using verbs that make clear that this page is advice, not direction.

15.1 Look and feel

Women and men, young and old are always ready to protect their home, family and the empire. Costume should reflect this. Wealthy men may display their fortune in richer fabrics, decorative borders, beautiful armour and longer tunics but these things will not grant them respect. Similarly women may wear longer fuller skirts or tight fitting kirtles but they should always be able to kill two orcs before breakfast whilst wearing them.

"they are perfectionists who value quality over mass production" - a group of Winterfolk are very unlikely to have a uniform or matching clothes.

"Wintermark art tends to be intricate and detailed" - add borders and trim to your tunics. This can be added to in between events to spread costs. Embroidery and beading may also be appropriate. Another idea might be to create or buy tooled leather 'patches' that you could add to plainer leather armour to build on its individuality and intricacy. If you are feeling arty, persuade a leather crafter to show you how to carve runes into your armour.

"the most common clothing for the Wintermark is a thigh length tunic over trousers" - all of the Winterfolk wear a version of this. Try several layers with varying sleeve and hem lengths. Women will wear the same as this or with a longer fuller tunic/dress. Wealthier women may also wear a kirtle or very simple form of the bliaut and corsage (see specifics section). More details on this are given later. Trousers are slim but not fitted, and normally wrapped with strips of cloth from ankle to knee. The differences between the three subcultures will be expressed in the way you adorn the basic costume. more details follow.



15.1.1 Suaq

Over their tunics the Suaq wear a hooded coat. In the cold north this would be made of thick animal pelts, fur side in. In warmer climates perhaps leather and in the imperial heartland in summer they may choose to wear linen or canvas versions. Base coat colors tend to be pale to blend with the icy landscape. Although they may keep them plain for hunting and scouting, at home most choose to paint or embroider their coats with bright sigils - symbols of animals and enemies the warrior has killed. Icewalkers tend to adorn their coats with fetishes in a similar way to Kallavesi mystics.



15.1.2 Kallavesi



The clothing of the Kallavesi tends to be a little more primitive and this is where some iron-age styles may be more appropriate. Clothes are a little rougher, unlikely to be tailored and colors will be more drab with occasional flashes of color. Instead of decorative borders they adorn their clothes with fetishes and feathers, beads and bones. Headdresses are central to their identity as an individual and as a member of the Kallavesi and a symbol of their wisdom, power or responsibility. These are usually animal headdresses- either figuratively or literally as they believe it helps them draw on the animal's strengths. Mystics usually chose animals associated with wisdom or guile while warriors favour strong animals like bears, boars and stags.





15.1.3 Steirn

Steirn clothing is most similar to the central look. They will have multiple layers of tunics and more decorative borders. Although their clothing may be simple, a wealthy Wintermarker may have clothing as exquisitely crafted as a lord of Dawn. Their wealth is most likely to be displayed in the details: the embroidery and expensive decorative borders, the multiple layers and beautiful jewellery.



15.1.4 Similar nations

The Wintermark shares close trade connections with their neighbours in the Marches; with grain and wealth comes influences on fashion. Among those with the money to spend on decorative clothes more tailored fashions are seen, with women in kirtles laced closer at the waist and hips and longer hem lines.

The Wintermark's and Varushka's ancient origins can be seen in their similarities of costume. Both nations most commonly wrap their trousers to the knee although Varushkan baggy trousers are seen as rather flamboyant by Wintermarkers. Tunics of varying length and decoration are the staple of both nations. In the Wintermark these are normally pulled on over the head but Varushkan styles are commonly open at the front and asymmetrical or diagonal-cut. The Wintermark do not share Varushka's love of mixing bright primary colors. Hats are common in Varushka but Winterfolk favour hoods. Men and women of the Wintermark are frugal and practical and are more likely to wear leather or fur layers or other materials that are hard-wearing and sensible for their harsh climate.

Practicality in clothes and armour is something the Winterfolk share with the Navarr. Their well used leather armour is often similar. Kallavesi mystics may also be occasionally mistaken for a Navarr blood mage, however the latter do not wear animal headresses and do not believe in invoking animal spirits

15.2 Research

15.2.1 Historical inspiration

Saxon is the main historical influence but most things from the Roman exit through to mid 13th century should be suitable as change is minor during this time. In general, viking reenactment costume should be fine with a few exceptions: Try to avoid anything iconic of Vikings alone as this is not a key look for the Nation and the Winterfolk are neither seafarers nor raiders. Thor's hammer is a well recognized religious symbol that does not exist in Empire and should not be used. 'Viking' hero pants are more suited to Varushka. Iron age costume may also be appropriate - particularly for the Kallavesi. The checked patterns of a simple plaid can look good but be careful not to stray into the realms of tartan, which is not acceptable. Kilts in any form did not exist in our own history until the Jacobean era, and should not be worn.



Although there are strong historical influences for this nation it is important to remember that this is a fantasy setting. The best costumes will take Saxon as a starting point and add an individual fantasy feel. Don't be restricted by what is historically accurate.

15.2.2 Lord of the Rings Rohirrim

The armour of Rohan is perfect for the Steinn. Leather armour, sometimes with metal plate, is layered over chain and occasionally scale. Gimli's armour follows similar lines and is also appropriate. Theoden's clothes are a perfect example of a wealthy Wintermarker. Use caution when copying Eowen's dresses as some of these are more typical of other nations. The white dress with corsage (tight vest laced at the back) is a great example of a wealthy woman's dress. However, the scoop-neck velvet green gown belongs in Dawn, the side-less surcoat perhaps in the Marches and her funeral gown might be worn in Highguard.





15.2.3 Game of Thrones

The snow-coats of the wildlings are great for Suag hunters (But wearing human skulls might be considered too 'barbaric' even for the Winterfolk). Inspiration for the feel of the Wintermark can be taken from the Night's Watch and Starks.



15.2.4 King Arthur 2004

Inspiration can be taken from the Saxons in this film. In general the Picts less suitable. Bors leather armour looks great and if layered over chain might be perfect. Tristan and Gawain's armour has the right feel but plate mail and brigandines are not central to the look.



15.2.5 Beowulf and Grendel 2005

Beautiful clothing. Great examples of the effectiveness of layering costume.





15.2.6 Jade warrior

Set in iron age China, Jade Warrior (2006), has inspiration for the snow coats and hoods of the Suaq.





15.2.7 Skyrim

Skyrim successfully mixes fantasy with Norse inspiration. In particular the Norse layered leather armour would look excellent for the Wintermark. The leather corsets worn by many of the women are not sufficient as armour and horned helmets should not be worn.



15.3 In detail

Layers, layers, layers. The best way to make a great costume is by using multiple layers each revealing the one below.

As mentioned previously the edge trim on tunics will mark you out as a Wintermarker, particularly the Steinr. Try or buy tunics with a contrasting color at the neck/hem/cuff then think about adding trim or embroidery.



The above images are from The Midgard Seamstress <http://www.facebook.com/themidgardseamstress>



The above trims although not specific or necessarily perfect can all be bought from shops or markets at low cost.

For the low-fantasy and early-period Wintermark, the best fabrics are natural ones or good imitations. Heavy cottons, linens and wool will be best for most characters with maybe some velvet and raw silk for the very richest. Avoid shiny satins or crushed velvet/velour. Twills and simple checked plaids will look good but careful not to stray into the realm of tartan.

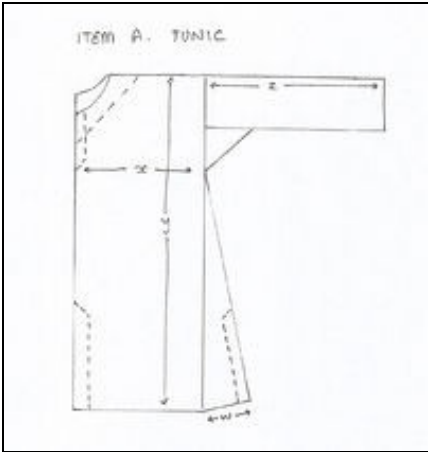
All colours are suitable but muted or natural hues are likely to look best.

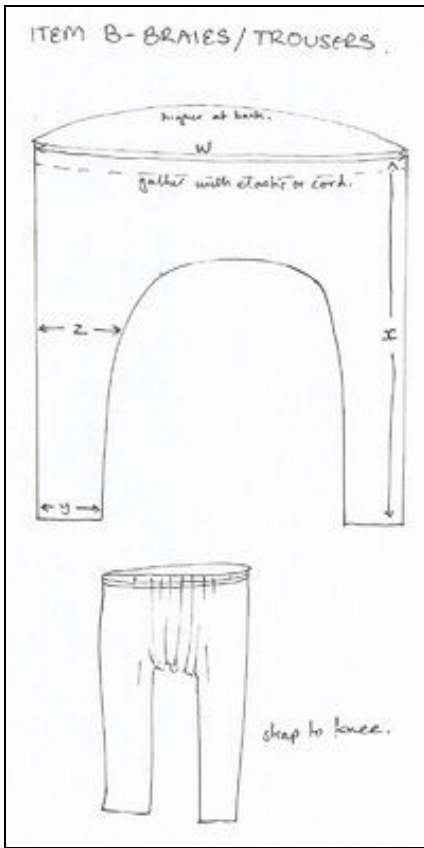
Try not to use visible buttons. Toggles or lacing will look much better and try closing neck openings with brooches as this look good and save on fiddly eyelets if you are making your own costume.

Most costumes will look better if tied in with a decent leather belt and accessories such as pouches and jewellery.

15.4 Specifics

It can be hard to find well priced costumes and appropriate Dark Ages patterns can be hard to come by. The good news is that almost all the Wintermark costumes can be made with very simple flat-patterns with straight-edged shapes. Most people with even very basic skills will be able to make or supplement their kit. Below are basic (not to scale) patterns with each of the following costume suggestions. You need to work out the appropriate dimensions for you and dont forget to add 2-3 cm at the edges for seams.





This is the very basic Wintermark kit comprising a tunic and trousers bound to the knee. The tunic is easy to make and a run through is given in the tutorial below. The trouser pattern is useful because the gathers around the crotch are comfy and make tearing the seams very difficult.

Another simple trouser pattern and tutorial can be found at: <http://www.vikingsonline.org.uk/resources/authenticity/basickit/basickit5.html>

The following costume suggestions are mostly based on variations of the tunic with a couple more simple ideas thrown in. Full instructions will eventually be added for each pattern.

Here is a tutorial to make a basic tunic: [How To - Make a T - Tunic](http://www.virtue.to/articles/tunic_worksheet.html). Or alternative instructions here : http://www.virtue.to/articles/tunic_worksheet.html or <http://www.angelfire.com/ia2/barony/newmembersguide/sewingtipstxt.html>

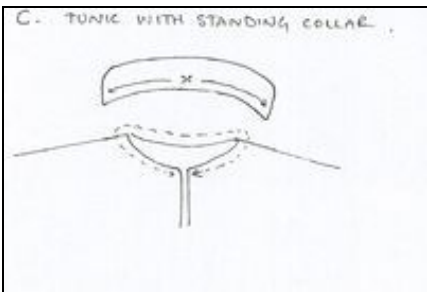
15.4.1 Wintermark man and woman





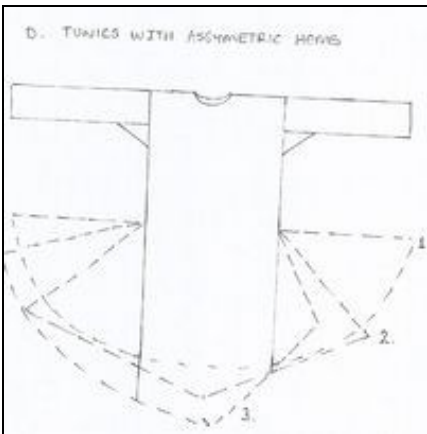
All of these are formed from two layered tunics. Lengthen dimension Y for longer length in the body and dimension Z can be altered for short or long sleeves. Tunics can have either front or side splits or none at all. Use wider gores (triangles at the sides from waist to hem) to create fuller skirts. The neckline shown here for the man is an off-centre split and there is a 'bib' of contrasting material and trim. The pattern for the hood is in the next section.

15.4.2 Wintermark male variations - utility and high status



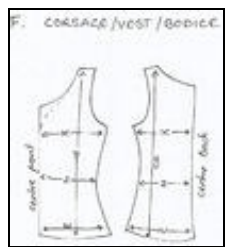
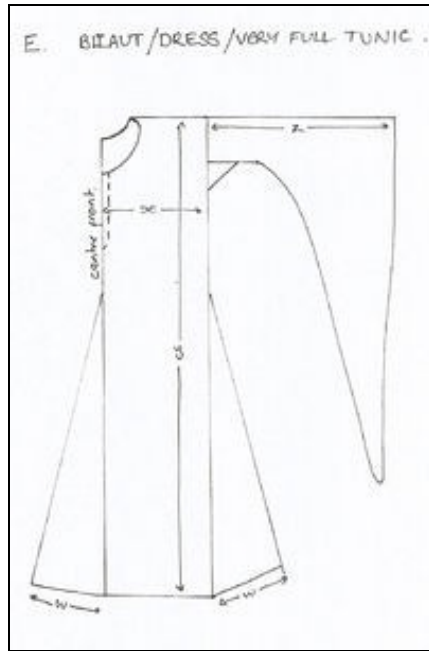
Here the under-tunics have a short standing collar at the neck line, very similar to early medieval shirts. Sleeves can be attached separately. This is particularly useful if you make a tunic layer out of leather as it avoids bulky seams. Thick fabrics/leather can have added metal studs or rings and be worn as armour. For a higher status male character make tunics longer and more ornate.

15.4.3 Asymmetric hems



If you are feeling confident you can also add detail and individuality by playing with hemlines. this simple pattern creates pleats at the side and shows how to change the basic hem shape. Of course sleeve length can be varied and neck fastenings changed too.

15.4.4 Wealthy woman's bliaut-style tunic dress



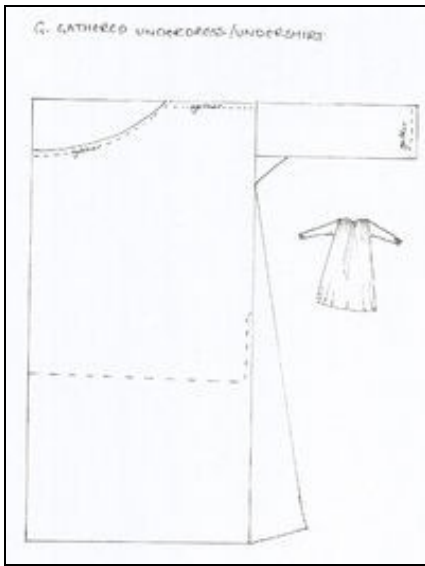


The full sleeved tunic dress is still very simple but has added gores at the front and back as well as the sides for a very full skirt. Keep the arms straight, slightly belled or very full as shown here.

A corsage can be worn over the top. This streamlines the silhouette and can help hold in bellies in the place of a corset. Fit dimension X to bust measurement (divide by 4 but dont forget to allow 2-3cm for seams) dimension z to waist and dimension w to hips. Dimension y is from top of shoulder to hip-line. This can be lightly boned if preferred and is best made of a more heavy duty fabric. Ornament it as required and lace up the back to close. The easiest way to do the edges is with bias binding. Hopefully a tutorial will be uploaded soon.

15.4.5 Wealthy woman's kirtle



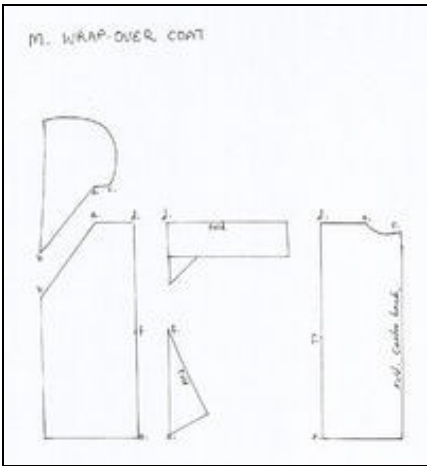


The kirtle is more complex as it is a fitted item but patterns are easily available from reenactment sites or main stream suppliers like Buttrick. The gathered under-tunic can be worn by men and women and I have included it here because it is a really great way of staying warm as the pleats trap air against your skin. The more fabric you use the warmer the result.

15.4.6 Suaq coats



Wrap over Coat



This is a very simple wrap-over coat design similar to a dressing gown. You can use a gusset at the side for it to flare from the hips.

Hooded tunic coat



Use tunic A with the hood from pattern M.

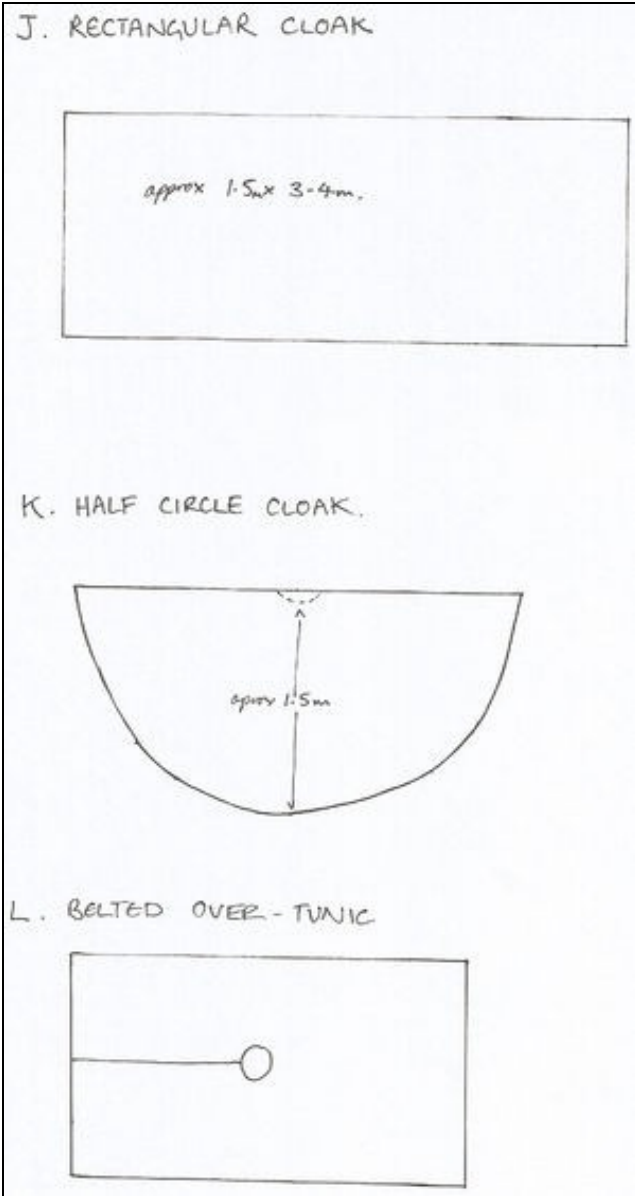
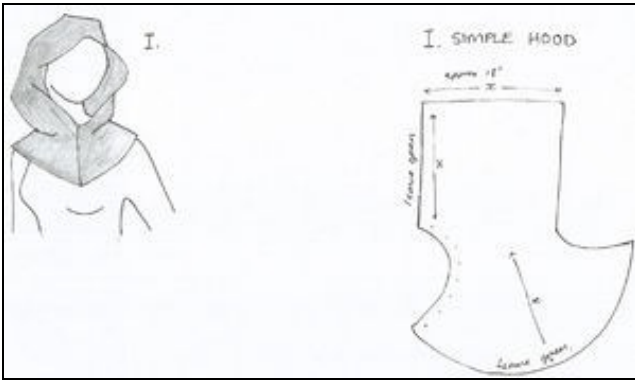
15.4.7 Kallavesi looks

This is harder to define and will involve more fantasy elements. The two drawings use only the flat pattern A tunics and might be easier to make for beginners as edges could be left unhemmed.



15.5 Hats and outerwear

The main outwear for the Wintermark is a cloak. Try rectangular and semicircle cloaks in heavy fabrics. These can be fur edged or lined and decorative borders are ideal. Try to avoid full circle, or gathered at the neck or per-attached hood styles as they are evocative of later in history. Pull them up over your head, or wear a separate hood to keep the rain off. Hats or caps although 'not wrong' are more Varushkan as are coats (except Suaq coats).



I. This is a very simple hood pattern, simply cut two, and would be very easy to hand stitch if necessary.

J. Rectangular cloak - couldn't be easier



K. Semicircular cloak - can be plain or richly adorned



L. Gathered over-tunic. Simple and look good with un-hemmed edges for a rough Kallavesi look.



15.6 Jewellery

A google search for Saxon jewellery will mostly display historical items of gold with semiprecious stones.



Simple jewellery can be easily made or bought in most markets. Bone (resin), seeds, glass, wooden, shell, ceramic or metal beads can be purchased from most sewing or craft shops and cheap arm bands can be found online or from most lrp traders.



Torcs and ring brooches are particularly iconic of the Dark Ages and make a great investment.



When buying more expensive metal jewellery keep it bold and chunky avoiding fine chains or delicate pendants. As always avoid OOC religious icons.

15.7 Armour

15.7.1 Steinr

The basic look is leather over chain but the rest is up to your imagination. Although some Steinr may have rougher leather, the greatest crafters of the Wintermark produce beautiful, detailed, carved and runed leatherwork with inlay and occasionally metal plates. Helmets are leather or metal plate, often with plumes mimicking the tails of the extinct horse.





The above images are from Lord of the Rings



Armour by [Idiom Productions](#)



The above images are from [Idiom Productions](#) Costume and Props Workshop







15.7.2 Kallavesi and Suaq

Here thick furs and rougher leathers are more commonly worn. The headdresses of Kallavesi warriors are often bulky and protective.



15.8 Bibliography and Resources

15.8.1 Further Reading

<http://www.3owls.org/sca/costume/saxon.htm>

15.8.2 Patterns

- [McCall's kirtle pattern](#)
- [Historical patterns](#)
- [Tunic pattern](#)
- [Child dress pattern](#)
- [Female tunic and bliaut pattern](#)

15.8.3 Online Shops

- [Angrave Designs](#) produces custom orders (including embroidered borders).
- [The Midgard Seamstress](#) Custom made UK LARP and Re-enactment costumes
- [Dein LARP Store](#) has a large range of appropriate dresses, trousers and tunics. Note their page has a translate button and they ship to UK.
- [LRP Store](#) sell short and long sleeved tunics.
- [LARP Fashion](#) sells several styles of tunic and some simple trousers and dresses.
- [Velvet Glove](#) have several plain tunics.

- [Medieval Merchant](#) stock tunics and dresses.
- [Chow?s Emporium](#) has tunics.
- [LARP Inn](#) has two tunic styles.
- [StahlGilde](#) sells tunics.

15.8.4 Armour

- [Battle Ready](#) provides quality leather armour for men.
- [Evenlode Studios](#) provides quality and custom leather armour.
- [Idiom Productions](#) provides for custom leather orders.
- [Totally Leathered](#) provides custom tooled leatherwork & bespoke armour.

15.8.5 Jewellery

- [Crafty Celts](#) - Torcs, jewellery, buckles and belts (American company but they will ship to UK).