

## Western Great North



Seven Nordic Kingdoms make up the sub-region generally referred to as the Western Great North. These kingdoms generally replicate Scandinavian and Teutonic cultures in our own world. The kingdoms themselves are generally have some tie to Viking/Norse, early Vandals, Angles and Saxon type cultures including various of the early Germanic tribes of the West Reich. In this portion Al'Akwannon you will find I have blended various traits and characteristics from these societies from as early as the Iron Age through Classical Antiquity and beyond

The seven kingdoms are named as below as are some typical references to our own cultures. Keep in mind that while there will be a solid basis tied to the culture(s) listed, it is not all encompassing but merely a rule of thumb. They are also listed in order of regional influence and relative power:

- (75) **Kaltessvard**: Viking/Norse style society, strong king, strong governors (jarls) and influence over most surrounding countries
- (70) **Pheralon**: Angle/Saxon style society (thus a blend of Germanic/Norse); strong king, friendly rival with Kaltessvard
- (74) **The Fjordlands**: Viking/Norse style society; large nomadic society of the Fenni, smaller population but strong
- (51) **Balconis**: Gothic/Vandal style society (East Germanic pre-Hun/Asian influence,) similar strength to Fjordlands
- (58) **Kingdom of Uln**: Similar to Novgorod, more Nordic than Russian styled, low influence but very strong/small kingdom
- (64) **Thelgar**: established Sami type culture (Fenni) with a large nomadic population and far flung tribal allegiances
- (49) **Ice Kingdom**: Dwarves, mostly underground, standard Slavic style Dwarves with Norse style influences, unknown strength

**Brief History:** The eldest people of the region are the Fenni, a ruddy skinned, dark haired people in the far north of the region who have history dating back over two thousand years. They originally spanned over the northern half of the region and were traditionally nomad hunters and fishers living in extended family groups. They have strong shamanistic ties to nature and the god Gakti (an aspect of Vorondil) the Hunter.

Nearly a thousand years later, the appearance of Norlan (Viking-esque) men on the shores of what is now Pheralon and Kaltessvard began to change the landscape. They established outposts, they multiplied and their families began to spread in different directions. Over the next several hundred years, the positions of power waxed and waned under a highly feudal society. Different rulers lived by somewhat different axioms and by the mid portion of what Central Al'Akwannon deemed the "Holocaust" years (about 700 years ago,) the Norlan dominated area was basically divided into a northern and southern kingdom.

The north kingdom heavily developed the social style of the Norse/Viking type which evolved into the current system while the south kingdom established the Wergild system. As the north kingdom encouraged their jarls to expand their borders toward the north and east they encountered the Dverg (dwarves.) Discovering the Dverg had a expertise in metal smithing they were not accustomed to, they began to trade with them immediately and improve their military power. As the jarls pushed further they continued to encroach upon the traditional Fenni lands until a great shaman leader Annok-Tallus united tribes, stirring them up to fight against the Northmen. Their fierce attacking drove off the jarl's men and after a few decimating waves of defeat amid stories of strong magic wielded by the antler wearing Fenni warriors, the nomads were finally left alone.

In the south there were many who did not like the Wergild system of monetary value on life and instead fiercely believed that family and clans themselves were the social value on which things should be based and that money was irrelevant in such matters. Slight and insults much less things like rape and murder to one's kindred, they thought, should not be able to be paid for. Only retribution in like kind, life for a life, could make things right in their eyes. This disagreement under various veils escalated until the Utrada Wars (wars of secession; about 400 years ago) began around the end of the Holocaust age and raged for at least two decades. During this time, one prince, his family, his retinue and their families fled. Prince Uln made his way into a highly mountainous region, hiring Dwarven engineers, establishing a mountain citadel and carving out the beginning of the Kingdom of Uln.

As the dust settled near the beginning of the New Kingdoms era, the Utrada Wars ended establishing the Kingdom of Pheralon with its Wergild system and the Kingdom of Balconis with its Kunja system. Nearly one hundred years later (about 250 years ago,) the northern kingdom split in a strangely amicable fashion as two Koningur with favorable support divided the Northland into Kaltesvard and the Fjordlands. Thelgar was subsequently recognized as an independent nation of the Fenni while the leadership of the Fjordlands still works to maintain a good relationship with a large number of nomadic and Fenni fishing villages which range across the northern portion of their country. For roughly two hundred years, the region has been fairly stable with governments working to maintain peace and trade. Aside from family disputes and hatreds, the region has prospered entering into the Age of Darkness. Darkness they have yet to see in the snows of the northwest.

**Religions:** A few of aspects of Vorondil and Fjoroth reign supreme here while a few other of the lesser North Gods also have a small presence. Among the Dwarves, Kauthar Wonderhand is the most well known god and is known to many of the humans

Gakti, the Hunter – shamanistic style worship among the Fenni people; aspect of Vorondil

Skadur, the White Hunter – the Norlan version of Gakti, aspect of Vorondil

Thandir, the Warrior – patron war god of the Norlans, aspect of Vorondil

Fjoroth, Lord of the Ice Wind – patron sea and storm god of the Norlans, primary aspect

Zir, Harvest Mother – patron goddess of farming, harvests, wealth and plenty, aspect of Sanya Freya

**Conflicts/Alliances:** currently trade runs as free as it can (mostly limited by snow and ice for the land locked countries and winter storms in general) between these countries. There are, however ancient family feuds between some noble bloodlines of Kaltesvard, Pheralon and Balconis for which tension still persists between certain specific families. Pheralon and Balconis see themselves as “brother” countries, sharing the common more Germanic style background even though they shared a bitter war of secession. Kaltesvard and the Fjordlands feel similar about themselves as “Viking” brethren. Thelgar is the most fringe republic being established as the traditional lands of the “Reindeer Herders” was slowly being impinged upon centuries ago. Thelgar was established during a stand made by a “nomad king” who united tribes and stood up to lesser “Viking” types. Uln is a very aggressive trade partner with a strong capital but has traditionally stood neutral in political matters. The Dwarves of Sfera Norca (the Ice Kingdom/North Kingdom) also trade liberally with all of the countries. Dwarves are considered socially a “merchant class” to most all the cultures

**Races:** by far most of the population fits the “Common Human” racial template. Many of these humans have dominate Norlan traits (Scandinavian, fair skin, blond and red hair, blue and green eyes common, average 3-4 inches taller, etc.) There are a number of more mixed human traits that would make for a standard wide variety of skin tones (yet generally on the lighter side,) hair and eye colors. Half Orcs and Half Ogres are not uncommon but are a very small percentage of the population and are invariably thrall (slave) class beings. Dwarves are also not uncommon and are generally merchants and their body guards and are also a very small percentage. There are also a small percentage of “Common Humans” of various racial profiles from far flung corners of the globe, but other non-human races are almost unheard of

**Social Classes:** The below are listed for each of the pseudo cultures and in order of power and influence from highest to lowest. Keep in mind these are only generic social designations and being a freed man in the retinue of a King, Prince, Chieftain, Jarl, etc. can make such a man much higher in respect than others and thus there are many corner cases. Additionally, keep in mind that women are 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens in any case and are always under the protection of a male figure. Use the below as general reference in establishing where you fit

## **Norse/Viking Styled (Kaltesvard/the Fjordlands)**

**Koningur** – king, there is occasionally more than one king in a single country, but not often. For the most part the Koningur is also a Jarl, but the highest of the high

**Jarl** – highborn, born with some thread of noble blood, these are the governors, lords and earls who manage larger regions of the country. They answer only to the king

**Skald** – poets, poets and musicians are traditional storytellers and keepers of history and as such are held in high regard assuming they actually have skill and are recognized by the freemen and others around them

**Frimann** – freeman, there are actually three levels of freeman, the **Godi** (landowners given minor administrative rights by Jarls and the top level of freeman,) each freeman chooses a Godi to “support” and the one in the “area” with the most support is considered the Karl. Karls report to the local Jarl. The **Kjopmann** (landowning farmers and merchants) and finally the **Arbidren** (non-land owners who work for the Kjopmann)

**Bingen** – bondsman, basically an indentured servant

**Thrall** – the slave class

**Gragaas** – vagrants, even though “freemen,” paupers and vagrants have no residence, cannot be taxed and though held to different legal ramifications than slaves, a Gragaas is generally viewed as lower in society than the Thrall, though only just

## **Angle/Saxon Styled (Pheralon)**

**\*Wergild** – a major difference between this social style and the Nordic style involves the wergild, a monetary value set to any man, thus there are fewer “social classes” and more set on the value of a man based on his worth (this combines estates, heroicism, blood history, etc.)

**Konig** – king, the king attains this rank as being a respected chieftain among all other Fursti and thrust into this role, it is not a divine right

**Fursti** – chieftains, the fursti are war chiefs

**Thanes** – warrior freemen, warriors are considered higher ranking than merchants and farmers (generally a warrior is considered worth more than a non-warrior and thus will have a higher Wergild)

**Ceorls** – freeman, farmers, merchants and the free men who work for them (Wergild determines who is higher class than another man)

**Chattel** – the slave class (they have no rights, but have a minor Wergild as if property)

## **Goth/Vandal Styled (Balconis)**

**\*Kunja** – a major difference between this social style and the others of this region are that a great deal of emphasis is placed on the clans or “kindreds” which establish all of the divisions

**Kuni** – king, the king is established by the leader of the greatest Kunja

**Kindins** – warlords, leader of associated great families, the Sibja

**Sibja** – great families/kindreds,

**Fadreins** – patriarchal families with some measure of wealth/power,

**Waurstja** – freeman families,

**Unleth** – paupers and liberated slave families

**Gestis** – outsiders and foreigners

**Bandja** – prisoners and slaves

## **Novgorodi Styled (Kingdom of Uln)**

**\*Women** – a major difference between this social style and the others of this region are that women are actually given some social status (in certain areas) which compares to men

**Princ-Augst** – high-prince (king),

**Princi** – princes,

**Boyar** – landowners,

**Cilveki** – freeman families,

**Zimiveki** – serfs and indentured servants,

**Verga** – slaves,

## **Sami Styled (Thelgar)**

**\*Siida** – social class is not all that relevant in this culture as everything is based on Siida, or the extended family unit which lives and uses natural resources together. Some of them live in permanent settlements where as others are highly nomadic (such as the groups in the northern Fjordlands)

**Korkea-Noadi** – high-shaman (nomad king),

**Noadi** – shaman, elders who know history, herbalist skills and sometimes magic

**Vanhempi** – elders, simply the eldest (functional) person in the family unit, deferred to in most debate settling matters