

Appearance

Commonly, people associate the Asaltante with primitive or simple clothes, made of roughly spun linen or wool, leathers, and furs. However, they may often be seen in more modernized garb.

The common person usually wears simpler clothes of earth-toned colors, and will often tie strips of cloth or leather around his arms or legs to add dimension or color, and practicality trumps aesthetic value. Meanwhile, wealthier members of society can be more readily identified by the intricacy of their clothing, its embellishments, and the fur that lines or trims much of their clothing.

Silver tends to be the preferred metal for jewelry and hardware in Asaltante outfits, and patterns resembling unending knots are common decorations for cloth and tattoos.

Both men and women are known to braid their hair, and men often decorate their beards with braids and beads, if they wear one.

Behavior

Asaltante generally place great emphasis on martial prowess, and give respect to physically capable individuals. Bravery is equally important, and they often feel little resentment for negative events, as they view their fates are predestined by the gods.

History

The Asaltante were initially nothing more than collections of hunting clans that were led by their most capable member. However, as time passed and clans broke apart and encountered one another, disputes on hunting territories erupted, and an era of conflict ensued. After several generations of disputes and skirmishes, the clans finally established territorial boundaries and settled their differences. Having established permanent territories, most Asaltante families established farms.

Having established homesteads in fixed territories, some clans returned to skirmishing with one another, as resources became strained. In an effort to end the conflicts, the Council of Jarls was formed, and the independent states united to form the nation of Nimri.





Nimri joined the Old Empire but quickly left when Mercius came to power. Throughout the Great War, the Asaltante assisted in the rebellion by sacking imperial ports, and supplying soldiers with plundered equipment.

Society

The Asaltante social structure has three layers—thralls, karls, and the aristocracy. Thralls are slaves who were likely prisoners taken during raids or battles. By tradition, thralls are usually set free after five years, and given a gold coin. Oftentimes, freed thralls will be welcomed in the community as karls. Karls are commoners—farmers, warriors, artisans, and the like. The nobles of the Asaltante include thanes and jarls. Thanes are roughly the equivalent of barons, and as such, are low-ranking nobles who rule over small

tracts of land and individual towns. Jarls on the other hand, each oversee their own district of the country, and act much in the same way that a Count would.

Nimri is divided into nine districts, each ruled by its own jarl. When making a decision that would affect the entire nation, the jarls gather to form a council, and will vote on their course of action.

Coming of Age

When a child reaches 13 years old, he and his family visit the local thane. Upon their arrival to the thane's mead hall, the child is offered a cup of mead and a piece of salted fish, each serving as symbol for the sea, and the land, which they call home. As the child partakes of the food and drink, the thane asks them to swear loyalty to their thanes, their jarls, and their homeland.

If the child accepts, he is offered a bracelet made of silver or another valuable metal, and welcomed as an adult member of the community. Should he refuse however, they are forced into servitude as a thrall.

Religion

The Asaltante have their own beliefs regarding greater powers. Although they respect Endo, Prana, and Gaia, they tend to worship others as well. These include Ibil, the Lord of Trickery, his brother Orneus, the God of Law, Etrin, Goddess of the moon, and Baran, the God of the sun. The afterlife in the gods' realm of Umbric, according to Asaltante beliefs, can only be reached by dying in combat. As such, the elderly have been known to wander the lands in search of their last fight.

Courtship

The fathers of the respective bride and groom arrange marriages, which most often serve to provide mutual gain for both families. Beyond the occasional meeting between the bride and groom under their fathers' supervision, little courtship takes place.

Marriage

For one week prior to their wedding, the bride and groom are locked away in their respective houses, forbidden to see each other. Throughout this time, they are accompanied by older members of their family, of the same sex, and are given advice on their duties as a husband or wife.

On the third night, the man is blindfolded and led to a family crypt. Here, he is instructed to recover a sword from the grave. Here, it is believed that he must confront the ghost of his ancestor, who will lecture him on his duties, both as a father, and as a husband. If no suitable crypt is available, the groom's family is likely to hide a sword for him to find.

One day before the wedding, the bride is taken to the bathhouse or other suitable bathing area, where she will wash away her past as a maiden, all the while, being instructed on the duties and expectations of a wife and mother. Later, the groom is taken to the same place, and instructed on his coming duties as he washes away his bachelorhood.

The wedding garb worn is simple, with the only difference to their normal clothes, being the addition of an amulet bearing the mark of Etrin, and the bride's bridal crown, which is usually passed down to her by her mother. The groom carries the sword he recovered, and often wears an axe at his hip, as a symbol of his ability to both protect and provide for his new bride.

Once the two families have gathered, the groom approaches a boy from the bride's family, and offers him his sword. In exchange, the bride's father presents him with a new blade. A local priest oversees an exchange of oaths of loyalty, before the marriage is blessed in the name of the gods.

Once the ceremony is finished, the two families make their way to a nearby mead hall or similar gathering site, to feast and drink. Here, the newlyweds are expected to share a cup of mead together, to confirm their union. At the conclusion of this feast, the couple is offered a series of gifts by their families—often practical items, such as blankets or tools—along with enough mead to last the pair for a month. It is believed that in order to have a fruitful and healthy marriage, the couple must spend the month following their wedding, drinking their mead together.

Funerals

The dead are most often cremated aboard a small, decorative boat, and offerings of food, drinks, flowers, money, and livestock usually accompany the body. Funerals—especially for wealthy or otherwise important members of Asaltante society—are public affairs. Once the body has been washed and prepared, the Day of Whispers is held. One by one, the individual's family and friends spend a period alone with the body, sharing their final thoughts with them.

Following the Day of Whispers, the corpse is paraded through the community, to the boat that will serve as the funeral pyre. However, if no suitable boat or body of water is available, the body is burned on a funeral pyre, and the remains are collected and buried in a family crypt. Songs, dancing, drums, and bells are common during the trip, and the general atmosphere is more akin to celebration, than mourning.

Festivals

Every three years, a ritual known as a Blótan is held. During this time, members of all levels of Asaltante society make a pilgrimage to the Temple of the Gods near Ariadre, bringing goats, cattle, and horses with them. Over the course of three days, the animals are sacrificed and their blood is collected in bowls. The blood is offered to effigies of the gods, sprinkled on the walls of the temple, and occasionally sprinkled on the people attending the ritual. Toward the end of the event, the slaughtered animals are butchered and their meat is used to produce a stew that is cooked by the jarls in attendance. Mead is also consumed during the feast that follows, with four cups left to stand for Orneus, Etrin, Baran, and another for departed souls.

Games

Physical sports are common pastimes for all members of Asaltante society, and involve activities such as running, jumping, climbing, and lifting large rocks. Dice and board games, such as chess, are also popular, particularly among the higher-ranking members of society.

Gender and Family Roles

Asaltante men function primarily as hunters, warriors, and laborers, while the women tend to the children and livestock, and perform general house chores. When the men are away, the women are granted authority over their husbands' property, and will take up arms to defend it, if the need arises. If a man dies, his property and possessions are transferred to his widow.

Traditional Occupations

While all members of Asaltante society are capable warriors, most hold practical occupations as well. The most common of these, being related to rearing livestock and raising crops. However, artisans such as boat builders and blacksmiths are also in no short supply.

Aging and Life Expectancy

On average, Humans may live for up to 70 years.