

Personality of the Empire-in-Morrowind

Real world references for the Empire include the Roman frontier, the British Empire in Asia, the US Coalition in the Middle East and the Old Republic from Star Wars.

The Empire is a grand project to unite all the peoples of Tamriel (and further afield) under one banner. It is a conquering power, but in many ways an idealistic endeavour. The Cyrodiilic peoples who form the core of the Empire genuinely believe in the moral supremacy of their civilisation, and seek to spread their influence through commerce and diplomacy. Brute force is a last resort, and is occasionally employed.

The Empire as a whole, and the Imperials in particular, are a rapacious bunch that are always looking to lever an advantage for themselves. They admire skilled negotiators and successful businessmen and place great value on wealth and political influence 'back home'. They value diversity and welcome new ideas (as long as they don't threaten the existing order), in stark contrast to the xenophobic and traditionalist Dunmer.

There is a growing sense of unease among the imperial citizenry of Morrowind. Many are beginning to wonder if the days of the Eastern Colonies are numbered.

General Structure of the Empire-in Morrowind

Morrowind is ruled by the Empire, but it is governed at arm's length and enjoys significant autonomy. Even this is resented by the Dunmer natives, however.

The key representative of the Empire in Morrowind is King Hlaalu Helseth himself. The kingdom of Morrowind is an administrative fiction, an attempt to model the government of Morrowind on that of Cyrodiil. The Emperor is personally represented by the Proconsul, based in Old Ebonheart. During King Llethan's reign the Proconsul called the shots, but under Helseth that may be about to change. Along Cyrodiilic lines the king is served by the Dukes of Vvardenfell, Telvannis, Narsis, Mournhold, Velothis, and Deshaan. They exercise imperial power in their respective regions, but their power varies according to local circumstances. These civilian aristocrats maintain their rule through the Imperial Legion, which has many fortifications scattered across the province. The Legion's presence is a symbolic reminder of the Emperor's jurisdiction, and in practice their main task is to police and defend imperial settlements.

Key Historical Events Influencing the Present Situation of the Empire-in Morrowind

The terms of the armistice between the Empire and the Tribunal allowed for the direct seizure of certain tracts of land. These became the sites of Old Ebonheart, Firewatch and the other settlements and forts of the mainland. Initial plans to 'imperialise' the province gradually fell through as the Dunmer resisted the pressure to assimilate, while grudgingly but faithfully sticking to their side of the armistice agreement and denying the Empire an excuse to clamp down and increase their presence. Their only real success story has been House Hlaalu, which has embraced the Imperial project and become an indispensable ally in the region.

The territorial ambitions of the Empire are focused on the Inner Sea. All of their largest settlements were built on this body of water. As this waterway is a key transit route through the heart of the province, this allows the Empire some commercial oversight. Should the political situation destabilise it also means they can mobilise troops to quickly seize Almalexia and Vivec City, among others. This process is continuing in the present day with the establishment of (New) Ebonheart, Seyda Neen and Raven Rock.

The Current Situation

The colonial exercise in Morrowind hasn't been as successful as its architects hoped. A sense of inertia has developed, and the Empire has gradually scaled back its ambitions in the province. This apparent loss of interest is reflected in the day-to-day running of the imperial forts and settlements, many of which are suffering from corruption and uninspired leadership. While still powerful enough to crush any one rebellious Great House with ease, in the event the five houses combined their strength in revolt the forces of the Emperor would struggle to control the situation.

The biggest concern the imperial settlers of Morrowind have at present is the situation at the Emperor's court. Uriel Septim is old and sick, and his sons are rumoured to be magically created doppelgangers (Martin Septim is, of course, unknown at this point). It seems likely that the death of the Emperor will precipitate a succession crisis, and it has been suggested that the Imperial Legion may be recalled from Morrowind to secure the situation in Cyrodiil. If the Legion leaves and the Empire plunges into crisis, then there is little that can stop Morrowind's secession. Those imperial citizens remaining in the province at this point will face an uncertain future at the hands of their new masters.

The Emperor himself, however, has other concerns. His power over the complex bureaucracy of the Empire is not absolute, and while factions within the Legion and the Elder Council pursue their own agendas he is troubled by stirrings beneath Red Mountain, and by certain ancient prophecies. With that in mind, he and his personal spies, the Blades, have engineered the timely appearance of a particular individual, born on a certain date to uncertain parents, at the port of Seyda Neen.