

Master Planning: Faction-Tropes

The Great House Hlaalu

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The Identity of Great House Hlaalu

Societal Personality

The Hlaalu's specific Tribune in **Almalexia**.

The subtleties of economics do not matter a great deal in the design of video game worlds, but one thing should be understood about the Hlaalu ideology: it is *not* capitalism. The Hlaalu ideology has much more in common with mercantilism. The Hlaalu seek to profit themselves, the house, and Morrowind through economic activity. They are generally unscrupulous. They use force to set up house-enforced monopolies and economic regimes.

The Hlaalu value personal self-sufficiency & autonomy, ingenuity & entrepreneurship, and cunning. They are playing a game that is bigger and more self-conscious than any other Dunmer. They have no objection to lying, in general.

Hlaalu society is a society of disguises in which things are frequently not as they seem. An open port full of commerce is run by cheating, chauvinistic tongs. A small publican's hides a Twin Lamps safehouse in its basement. A shipping magnate carries a fortune in skoom in the hull of his boats. And most importantly, the Hlaalu elite carry a secret which will only be known to the player if they advance far in the Hlaalu questline.

Political & Economic Structures

Like all the Great Houses, Hlaalu is political machine, acting as a patronage system and governance structure in areas it controls. Most Hlaalu members are independent merchants, yeomen, and artisans who are in business for themselves. Their connection to the house gives them a competitive advantage, connecting them with other traders, protecting them from thieves and contract violators, and so on. The most successful of these sort of traders can be recognized as House Peers, the Hlaalu social elite.

The Hlaalu become independently wealthy through a variety of activities. Primary agricultural crops in Hlaalu areas are comberry, hackle-lo, wickwheat, meadow rye & or scrib cabbage. Comberry is the most major of these, and its primary use is to ferment it into alcohol at breweries. The Hlaalu also farm kwama eggs, a main Morrowind food staple, in cavernous mines, and mine valuable earth stones and metals from around Morrowind, especially ebony and

volcanic glass. In addition, some Hlaalu make much money as merchants, traders, or craftman in the Hlaalu cities.

The core of the house is the Hlaalu Council Company, which acts as the central administrative organ. The Company does not itself participate in any productive industry. It earns money by controlling the avenues of trade in Hlaalu territory. It controls border passes at Kragenmoor & Shadowgate (west of Narsis), allowing it to charge tariffs on all products which pass in and out of Morrowind (at favorable rates to Hlaalu merchants, of course), and was historically the sole importer of slaves from the West (not including slaves from Argonia). It also controls a great deal of the internal freight infrastructure, including the ports at which it charged tolls for docking as well caravansarai at key stopping points along land routes. The Company is, by Hlaalu law, the only entity allowed to charge interest on loans, making it in practice the only major lender. Almost all land in Hlaalu territory that is not an Imperial grant belongs to the Company, and it leases that land to independent merchants to cultivate.

This Company does not have a unitary will. Conflict within House Hlaalu is over control of the Hlaalu Council Company. One of the most powerful and organized factions in House Hlaalu is a fraternal order called the Camonna Tong. [explanation of the Camonna Tong]

[anything else?]

Major Historical Events

After the Anunciation of the Tribunal, while House Redoran set about to rebuilding the borders and House Indoril set about to generating the theological and juridicial governance of Morrowind, many of the other houses set about to actually rebuilding Resdayn, after decades of war, the disappearance of a large & economically important minority of the population (the Dwemer), and the ecological damages of the eruption of Red Mountain. Foremost among those who took up mundane matters of rebuilding were the houses of the Othreleth Woods & the upper Thirr, including such houses as Hlaalu & Narsuaes.¹

These houses were also able to sustain their independence when the bulldozer that was modern House Indoril began absorbing other houses into its mass. Their competitive advantage was their connection to trade with Cyrodiil and beyond, including the import of Khajiit slaves

¹ And more!

traded to them by catcatchers, rivergoing nedes who harassed the shores of Ne Quin-al² during the degenerate periods of the First Empire. These houses, less committed to the theosophic & theocratic bent that the Indoril took, had vague notions of separate realms for the temple and the house, while still being devoted to the Tribunal. In their perception, the Tribunes were Nerevar's successors in matters of faith,³ while the houses were Nerevar's successors in matters of everyday life.

By the Second Era, these houses had coalesced under the leadership of Hlaalu, and were recognized in Dunmer social theology as one of the Great Houses, a worldview that has been anachronistically stretched back to the days of the Chimer. They took on the role of mediating trade with the outside world, and so long as Morrowind was fully independent, they were widely regarded as the least significant house. However, with the Armistice, which recognized Morrowind's sovereignty while creating a role for the Empire in its governance, the Hlaalu's opportunities for power greatly expanded. In narratives of the Indoril, Dres, & Redoran, the Hlaalu have come to be seen as traitors for their relationship with the Empire, including aspersions on their role in the period leading up to the Armistice.

In about 3E 425, political maneuvering led to the replacement of the Chancellor of House Hlaalu. Previously, this position had always been held by members of the personal Hlaalu family, a status that no other Great House had maintained. The new leader, a self-made woman, is visionary, brilliant, and cutthroat, and is playing the other actors of Morrowind like chumps for the betterment of herself & her house.

Another recent development is an Imperial ban on inter-province slave trade, and the trade of slaves over “Imperial waters,” which includes the Inner Sea. This has halted the flow of slaves into the province from the West & also had a prohibitive impact on slavery in the new Vvardenfell colonies.

The Big Secret

The Hlaalu perceive in their work a secret mission, and they are the furthest thing from

2 Ne Quin-Al, or Anequina, is the Khajiit kingdom of the northeast of Elsweyr, including the city of Rimmen.

3 Faith in Dunmer society being extended to more existentially important roles than in our society. The Tribunal's role in defending Morrowind's borders is a natural extension of their role as leaders of the faith, as faith is the structure by which the Dunmer find their personal and national identity.

traitors to the Dunmer. They are the last defense of the Dunmer against their enemies, fervent nationalists who only pretend to do the bidding of the Empire. Every member of the Hlaalu council, much of the House Peerage, and many of the officers of the Council Company are part of a secret conspiracy to defend Morrowind to the last, not even known to the leaders of the other houses.

Their traitorous actions during the war with Septim was the enactment of a secret plan to ensure the Armistice would occur, because they like the Tribunal saw that Morrowind could not stand militarily. In the present, they take over territory, place one of their own on the throne of Morrowind, engage in trade with the Empire, et cetera, so that when the Tribunal end their reign, Hlaalu can guide Morrowind into the future. They are aware of the weakness of the Empire, and they are ready to pounce on any opportunity provided by its decline.

Hlaalu has little loyalty the present form of the Dunmer society; social structures can be fleeting. But their loyalty above all is to the Velothi project, to the Dunmer people, with or without the houses and the Tribunal.

Hlaalu Architecture & Major Settlements

Architecture

Narsis

Andothren

Balmora

Kragenmoor

Hlaalu NPC Types & Major Characters

Hlaalu Quest Storyline