

= Fire Emblem : Path of Radiance =

Fire Emblem : Path of Radiance , known in Japan as Fire Emblem : Sen no Kiseki , is a tactical role @-@ playing video game developed by Intelligent Systems and Nintendo SPD , and published by Nintendo for the GameCube in 2005 . It is the ninth main installment in the Fire Emblem series , and the third to be released in the west . As with previous installments , gameplay revolves around positioning characters on a battlefield with the aim of defeating an opposing force . If characters are defeated in battle , they are removed from the rest of the game .

The story takes place in a separate world from other Fire Emblem games in Tellius , a continent inhabited by the humanoid Beorc and the shapeshifting Laguz . Protagonist Ike , a new member of his father 's mercenary group , finds a mysterious woman named Elincia Ridell Crimea during a mission . Crimea is invaded by the Beorc nation of Daein . During the group 's flight , Ike 's father is killed by a Daein general known as the Black Knight . Together with Elincia , who is the last remaining heir to the Crimean throne , Ike and his group travels Tellius to form allegiances with the other countries to free Crimea from Daein 's control , confronting racial tensions and long @-@ standing resentment between the Beorc and the Laguz during their travels .

Path of Radiance began development for the GameCube after the overseas success of the Game Boy Advance game Fire Emblem , becoming the first home console entry in the series since Fire Emblem : Thracia 776 . The game is the first entry in the series to feature 3D graphics , full motion cutscenes , and voice acting . The series ' transition to 3D caused multiple difficulties for the developers . The localization team worked closely with Intelligent Systems to ensure the localization was as true to the original Japanese as possible . Upon release , the game received widespread critical acclaim for its gameplay and story , but several journalistic sites and magazines made negative comments about the game 's graphics . The game debuted at the top of Japanese gaming charts , and was considered to have sold well . A direct sequel for the Wii , Fire Emblem : Radiant Dawn , was released in 2007 in North America and Japan , and 2008 in Europe and Australia .

= = Gameplay = =

Fire Emblem : Path of Radiance is a tactical role @-@ playing video game in which players control protagonist Ike and a group of up to 19 characters across multiple battle scenarios . At the game 's opening , multiple difficulty settings can be chosen : in the Japanese version the options are Normal , Hard , and Maniac modes , while the western versions have Easy , Normal , and Hard modes . Characters who fall in battle cannot be revived , being removed from the rest of the game , and no revival items can be used on them during a battle . If Ike falls in battle , the game will end and the level must be restarted . Between battles , characters can be managed at a Base . In this location , weapons can be managed and forged , and bonus experience points earned in battle can be given to characters . Characters ' skills can be tailored to a degree , but skills inherent to a particular character cannot be removed or changed , and the amount of skills awarded is limited by the character 's skill limit .

During battle , players have access to two species : the humanoid Beorc and the shape @-@ shifting Laguz . Beorc use weapons and magic , while Laguz use close @-@ quarters melee attacks . Laguz have a gauge which fills up during battle , filling at varying speed depending on their status and whether they are under attack . When full they transform into their animal form for a set number of turns . They are unable to attack while in human form , but the time between transformations can be shortened using special items . Playable Beorc characters are each assigned a character class . These classes affect how characters can move on the battlefield , and some are exclusive to certain characters : for example , the Ranger class is exclusive to Ike . Laguz units also have different movement speeds and strengths depending on their transformed form .

Characters used in battle gain experience levels , with larger amounts of experience being awarded depending on a character 's performance in battle : once they have 100 experience points , a character automatically levels up . At level 21 , a character 's class is automatically upgraded . This upgrade can happen at level 10 if the player uses an item called a Master Seal . Once the class

changes , the character is reset to level 1 , while carrying over all the stat increases aggregated up to that point . Bonus experience is awarded by fulfilling secondary requirements outlined at the beginning of the level .

There is also a Support system , accessible through the Base , where player characters can talk with each other and improve their relationships . These actions improve affinity with a character and grant stat boosts in battle . Supports are ranked from C to A , with A being the highest rank .

Battles take place on a grid @-@ based map , with multiple units attached to various sides : the player team , the enemy team , allied characters , and other unaffiliated characters . A character 's class (animal form for the Laguz) and the map 's terrain can effect how far they can move and how far ranged attacks can be . Gameplay is turn @-@ based , with the player moving , then other factions , with the aim being the defeat of the opposing side . Each turn ends automatically when each character is given their orders . The player can also manually end their turn . The standard commands battling including attacking units , using items , rescuing characters , trade items with other allied characters , and wait until a later turn to receive a command . Special commands include talking to characters in battle , opening chests and visiting places on the map , stealing items , and having characters escape from the map . Ike has the exclusive ability to command all free characters , and the level immediately ends if he escapes .

The series ' Weapon Triangle mechanic is present , in which the three main close @-@ combat weapons are strong or weak against each other : axes are strong against lances , lances are strong against swords , and swords are strong against axes . Other similar mechanics exist , such as fire magic being more damaging to some beasts , and arrows being more effective against airborne enemies . Weapon durability decreases over time , with weapons eventually breaking when used enough . Weapons have different levels of strength , with its assigned letter (E to A and S) denoting this . Weapons can also be customized with a unique name . Magic is governed by a similar system to the Weapons Triangle ; fire is weak to wind , wind is weak to thunder , and thunder is weak to fire .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting and characters = = =

As with previous Fire Emblem games , Path of Radiance takes place in a continuity and setting separate from the rest of the series . The game 's setting is the continent of Tellius , inhabited by two species : the humanoid Beorc , and the shape @-@ shifting Laguz . According to legend , the goddess who made the world created Beorc in her image , and created the Laguz to fill the gap between herself and beasts . The two races have struggled to coexist , leading to racial tensions and conflict on both sides . By the events of Path of Radiance , Tellius is divided into seven nations which remain at peace . A key item in Tellius is Lehran 's Medallion , the world 's incarnation of the recurring Fire Emblem . It is a bronze medallion said to contain a dark deity who brought chaos to the world 800 years before and caused all the world but Tellius to be engulfed by the sea . To prevent the dark god being freed , war must be prevented in Tellius .

There are forty six characters encountered through the story that can be recruited , each offering their own contribution to the story . The majority of the main cast comes from the Greil Mercenaries group , led by its founder Greil . The protagonist is Ike , Greil 's son . He is accompanied on his travels by Mist , his sister , and Elincia Ridell Crimea , the lost heir to the Crimean Throne . Other Beorc characters include Titania , a former knight of Crimea ; and Soren , a mage and tactician . The Laguz characters include Lethe , a cat Laguz with a strong hatred of Beorc ; and Caineghis , a lion Beorc who wishes for peaceful co @-@ existence . The antagonists are Dainen generals called the Four Riders , which include the Black Knight , and King Ashnard , the ruler of Daein .

= = = Plot = = =

The game opens with Greil recruiting Ike into his mercenaries upon recognizing the threat of Daein . While on a mission , Ike finds a woman who is revealed to be Elincia Ridell Crimea , a princess who was raised in secret due to her existence being a threat to the Crimean order of succession . Daein invades shortly after this , and Greil 's mercenaries flee over the border into Gallia . They are pursued by the Black Knight who kills Greil . Ike and Elincia decide to work together and drive the forces of Daein from Crimea . Over the course of the game , Ike and his companions overcome long @-@ held racial tensions between the Beorc and Laguz in order to form an alliance against their true enemy , Ashnard , king of Daein . In particular , Ike manages to re @-@ establish relations between the Beorc nation of Begnion and the few remaining members of the heron Laguz clan , which was annihilated in an act of genocide known as the Serenes Massacre . During the course of their journey , they discover that Ashnard is provoking the war to try and release the dark deity contained inside the Medallion , using Daein 's invasion as a template for his plan . In the final assault , Ike and his mercenaries manage to defeat both the Black Knight and Ashnard , thwarting his scheme . With Ashnard defeated and the Daein occupation ended , Elincia is crowned as Crimea 's new queen , who works to make the land a place where Beorc and Laguz can live in peace .

= = Development = =

Development on Path of Radiance began at Intelligent Systems after the international success of the first localized game in the series , released overseas under the title Fire Emblem . Due to high development costs , the team had been unwilling to develop a title for the GameCube , but after Fire Emblem 's success overseas , they decided to return from portable to home consoles for its next release . Nintendo SPD was also involved in development . Path of Radiance was the first Fire Emblem to have 3D in @-@ game graphics , full @-@ motion video cutscenes and voice acting . It was also the first home console game since Fire Emblem : Thracia 776 for the Super Famicom . Transitioning from 2D graphics to 3D graphics was one of the biggest challenges during development , especially the transition from the tilted overhead view to a unit @-@ to @-@ unit battle in third @-@ person . One of the features left out due to this process was a dedicated battle arena . At the same time , they introduced the base as members of the development team wanted a place where characters could interact separate from the battlefield . As there was no combat gameplay involved , other types of activity were created , such as special support conversations . To make moves in battle and cutscenes realistic , the team used motion capture , then made sure it appeared a little over the top so the fantasy feeling of the Fire Emblem series remained intact . By the end of development , Narihiro had some regrets about the quality of the game , saying in an interview that he considered it to be only 70 % complete when released .

The character designs were done by Senri Kita , an artist new to the series . In contrast to previous Fire Emblem games , where the protagonist was of royal blood , the main character Ike was intended to be of lower social rank , a mercenary who becomes involved in royal politics and conflict rather than being born into it . Ike was born from the many ideas for new directions being suggested for the new 3D game , with many people wanting the protagonist everyone could empathize with . His status as a mercenary was a highly requested character trait by male staff . A character that returned from previous games was Jeigan , who was this time designed as a female character . Designing all the characters to be unique under the new conditions proved a challenge . This also resulted in higher @-@ quality character artwork being produced during the initial design stages . The full @-@ motion videos were created by Japanese animation studio Digital Frontier . Introducing the cutscenes into the game proved challenging for the team . The game 's subtitle does not refer to a specific object or place , but instead acts as a metaphor for the journeys of Ike and other characters .

= = Release = =

A new Fire Emblem title was first announced in April 2004 , with the full reveal coming in an issue of Weekly Sh?nen Jump . The game 's title , story details and chosen platform were announced in

Weekly Shōnen Jump , with a release date announced as some time during 2004 . The game was first shown publicly by Nintendo at their Nintendo World Touch DS event in early 2005 . The version of the game displayed there was an early model , and between its reveal and release , it underwent some changes to improve the usability and quality . As a pre @-@ order bonus , Nintendo created a special CD containing selected tracks from the game , and a special calendar commemorating the series ' 15th anniversary . The first western demonstration of the title was at E3 2005 . It was the third Fire Emblem title to be localized , after Fire Emblem and The Sacred Stones . Players with save data from the Game Boy Advance Fire Emblem games are able to connect with Path of Radiance and access concept art and special maps revolving around characters from those games .

= = = Localization = = =

The localization of Path of Radiance was handled by Nintendo of America 's localization branch Nintendo Treehouse . During the process , the team worked closely with Intelligent Systems staff members . The biggest challenge for the team was translating from Japanese to English , which required staff from Japan to come over and check their work . When translating the dialogue , the localization team wanted to preserve the story 's depth and serious tone , despite often having a limited text and character space for interaction and expression . While they had the option to add extra text boxes , this would potentially have made going through conversations tedious for players , so they worked to match the number of text boxes used in the Japanese version . Some character names , such as Eirika and Noel (originally Eirik and Knowl) were changed so they could be pronounced more easily while retaining their original meanings . The western version 's difficulty was also toned down : the Japanese version 's Maniac setting was removed , Hard Mode was toned down , and a new Easy was introduced . These adjustments were based on both western test player feedback , and feedback from Japanese players complaining about the game 's high difficulty . The amount of dialogue and text that needed translating was estimated at less than that in Animal Crossing , but still enough to take several months to complete . Due to its serious nature , the team needed to take a different approach to its localization than other Nintendo titles . As far as possible , the team remained faithful to the original script , aside from pieces like jokes which would not have made sense to people unfamiliar with Japanese humor . While most of the time they refrained from putting out @-@ of @-@ context remarks in character dialogue , an exception was Anna , a recurring Fire Emblem character who featured in optional tutorial missions . As she existed outside the game to a degree , they had more freedom to have her make pop culture references .

= = Reception = =

In Japan during its opening week , Path of Radiance sold over 100 @, @ 357 copies , selling through 64 @. @ 16 % of its initial shipment . By the end of 2005 , the game had sold 156 @, @ 413 copies . In its UK debut , it reached the top of the GameCube charts . Although no exact sales figures have been published , Nintendo cited the game as being among its successful GameCube titles for 2005 . According to the developers , the fact that it was released near the end of the GameCube 's lifespan affected sales , but it still managed to help sell the hardware and convinced Nintendo that the Fire Emblem had selling power on home consoles .

Reception of the game was generally positive : on aggregate sites GameRankings and Metacritic , it received scores of 85 % and 85 / 100 based upon 47 and 42 critic reviews respective . In IGN 's GamerMetrics List for 2005 and GameSpot 's 2005 Readers ' Choice award , Path of Radiance was at # 2 in their respective lists behind Resident Evil 4 . The game was among those nominated at the 2006 Golden Joystick Awards in the " Nintendo Game of the Year " category . The game was named by GamesRadar as one of the best GameCube games of all time in 2014 , and Destructoid listed it among the five best Fire Emblem games in the series in 2013 .

Famitsu 's reviewers each praised the gameplay , story , and the introduction of full @-@ motion movies . One reviewer cited it as the series ' new exemplar , while another pointed out rough edges

in the graphical redesign and that the new 3D perspective made seeing some parts of the map difficult . 1UP.com 's Shane Bettenhausen was positive overall , saying " [Path of Radiance] delivers a superbly paced and rewarding adventure " . RPGamer 's Chris Privitere said " While Fire Emblem : Path of Radiance doesn 't necessarily add anything new to the tactical genre , it does everything very well " , recommending it to players while stressing the need for patience . Peer Schneider of IGN called the game " yet another worthy installment in Intelligent Systems ' venerable strategy RPG series " . RPGFan reviewer Mark Tjan said that while not the best Fire Emblem game he had played , " it 's certainly a good game and worth picking up if you 're searching for an SRPG worth your time and money " . Nintendo World Report 's Karl Castaneda was also highly positive , though commenting that its graphical quality were more suited to the early days of the GameCube 's life and that it might have been a great success if released during that period . Eurogamer 's Tom Bramwell , despite feeling that the game was flawed by inherent problems in the Fire Emblem formula , enjoyed the game and was willing to replay once he had finished . Greg Kasavin , writing for GameSpot , saying that " by replacing the traditional random battles that typify most Japanese role @-@ playing games with a fun and exciting turn @-@ based combat system , and by going out of its way to deliver a memorable and genuinely emotional story , Fire Emblem : Path of Radiance accomplishes what all role @-@ playing games attempt , but very few actually manage to do " . The majority of praise went to the game 's story and gameplay , while criticism was focused on the graphical quality .

= = Legacy = =

The team 's successful return to a home console convinced them to carry on the story of Tellius in another home console release . The next entry , Fire Emblem : Radiant Dawn , began development in May 2005 for the Wii . It was released in 2007 in Japan and North America , and 2008 in Europe and Australia . Protagonist Ike has also appeared as a playable fighter in Super Smash Bros. Brawl and Super Smash Bros. for Nintendo 3DS and Wii U.