

Realms

V I R G I N

By now everybody must have at least one game in their collection where they can play God over a world or something like that. In the past Mega-Lo-Mania, Populous and Powermonger, to name but a few, have captured the imagination of gamers worldwide.

Now Virgin are getting in on the act with Realms. We first did a piece on this almost a year ago but it's finally arrived in all its glory.

Developed by Graftgold, Realms puts you in the role

of a young heir immediately after the King's funeral. Your new people have recently gone through famine, poverty and war in a world that is now divided.

Each realm is bidding to become the ultimate power in the land, and you must make sure that it's your people who are victorious.

To start with you'll be given what's described as an easy scenario with just two different races involved - Elves and

Elvish heavy infantry from Llorien 988 warriors expert with missiles. A very loyal unit, they feel unbeatable.



From this screen you can clad your warriors in the garb of your choice.

Orcs. As the leader of the Elves you must make sure you provide adequate protection for your cities or they will soon be over-run by the enemy.

Once you have become the least bit proficient at the game there are several more challenging scenarios, each one harder to conquer than the last. This is one product you won't be finishing off in a couple of minutes!

When you begin you'll be

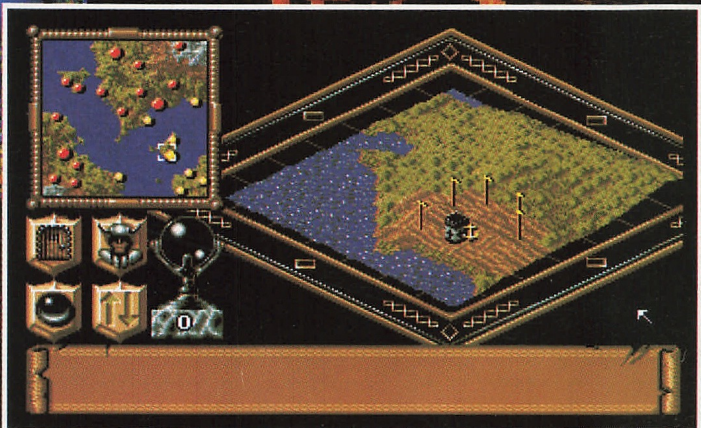
told that the game is creating your world and asked to wait a short while. After this you'll be shown a map of the world you're currently playing in. From here you can zoom in on any city, army or specific section of the land.

If you choose one of your cities you'll be shown a stone building. Clicking on this again will take you into the city where you'll be given information on its current population, morale and health. From here you can also do things like raise an

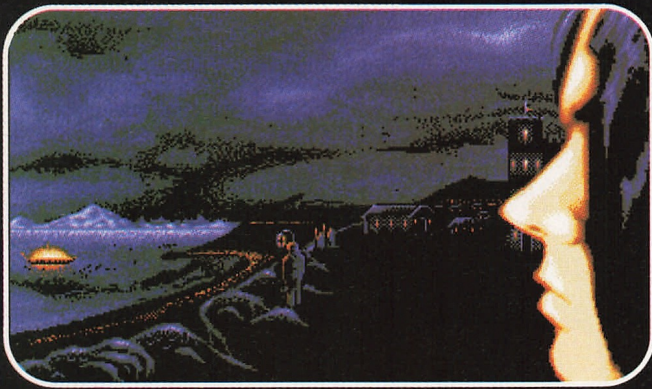
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From this world map you can flick to any corner of the globe with the slightest click of a button.



This is one of the other scenarios. Here water has been introduced to make life that bit more difficult.



The King is dead and you're the heir to the throne.



You know that your forthcoming task will be difficult.



In a moment of desperation you ask the Gods for help.



They answer and give you the Power!

army, buy grain, improve health and reinforce your city with timber or stone walls. Whatever you choose to do will cost you cash so you'll have to spend wisely.

The only regular source of income is cash from your cities. Occasionally if you force a city to surrender you'll be given the option to do several unsavoury things to it, such as completely razing it to the ground or maybe just looting it.

It is important to keep routes open from all your cities to your capital so that your taxes can get through easily. Lose a couple of vital roads and you'll find your funds being bled dry.

Should you choose to add to your army, you'll be presented with the Army screen (well, what did you expect?). From here you'll be told what kind of army you have and you'll then be able to equip them to your individual requirements.

Once again, the better the equipment, the more it is going to cost you. Once you're happy with what you've got, click on the door icon and your boys will be more than ready for action.

Your armies are controlled by putting the pointer on their flag and clicking. This will then give you a target cross

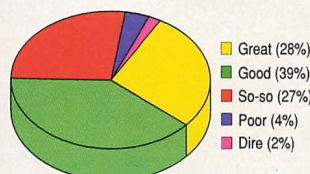


The outcome on this battlefield will decide your army's future.

which you can position anywhere on the world map. The next time you click will be the destination of your army. Using this method it is easy to direct your men to enemy cities, where they can then lay siege.

The game is presented mostly in the 3D style we've all become accustomed to for this sort of game. Sound is a little bit dodgy but that is rapidly becoming the normal state of affairs for ST stuff, more's the pity.

PUNTER-POWER™



GAME: REALMS
PRICE: £29.99

RATING=87%

Realms is the kind of game that if you just dive into, you'll lose instantly. Only after you give it a bit of time, and read the manual carefully do you start to realise that there are strategies in there to be discovered. The game is almost too easy to control. Any brain dead reviewer could do this blindfolded! This is obviously a big plus. With so many scenarios you're in for a few long nights. It isn't everybody's type of game, but it's worth considering.

