

The Bitmap Brothers, have become synonymous with excellence. Their impressive list of games reads something like a hall of fame: Xenon, Speedball, Xenon II, Cadaver, Speedball 2 – every one a number one! Now comes Gods, a platform game with a difference.

The game is based on happenings in Greek mythology. As the hero of the game it is your task to complete a series of levels, defeating all-manner of blood-thirsty beasts as you go. All of the game takes place within a city created by the great gods as entertainment. The beings from Mount Olympus lay down the challenge suggesting no mortal man could survive the traps and terrors of the city.

Many men had attempted to get to the other side of the construction, none had succeeded. Now you, a fresh young warrior, have risen to the challenge. If you fail a slow and painful death awaits, if you succeed you'll be granted one wish from the gods.

Your heart's desire is to be an immortal yourself. Your character looks suspiciously like that of Greek strongman, Hercules. Whether or not this is the case isn't totally clear as you seem to wear an ornate helmet throughout the action.

The point of the game isn't to simply

battle your way to the end of each level before taking on a formidable-looking enemy. Indeed, Gods also includes a range of taxing puzzles which must be solved.

The game utilizes a fair degree of artificial intelligence. For instance, one of the first puzzles sees you collecting a stone pot. The game's message bar will inform you that you have to deposit said item in a store room. Many players will find this task relatively simple, however novices may need a little help and the game will aid slow learners with

extra hints. Not only will the game give hints, it will also introduce more intelligent monsters to challenge skilled players. In addition to helping the less able, the game will also reward obvious talent. If you manage to reach the end of the first stage within a certain time limit, you'll be rewarded with an extra goodie.

It's split into three definite worlds, each one providing progressively more of a challenge. Indeed, the first section of the game eases the player into the action, teaching him various strategies.

Those Bitmaps do it again!

GODS

Publisher: Renegade Price: £25.53

Graphics

The visual presentation is up to the usual Bitmap Brothers standard. Highly polished, the variation is great. Colour has been used to good effect and the all-round feel is one of general excellence.

Sound

Nation 12, the same guys responsible for the cracking sound on Speedball 2, have done it again – the in-game Gods music is stunning! The sound effects are also of arcade quality – the various samples come across really clearly.

Gameplay

The artificial intelligence found within the game makes it a challenge to players of all abilities. The joystick controls do prove to be just a little unresponsive at first. However, once conquered the overall gameplay is brilliant.

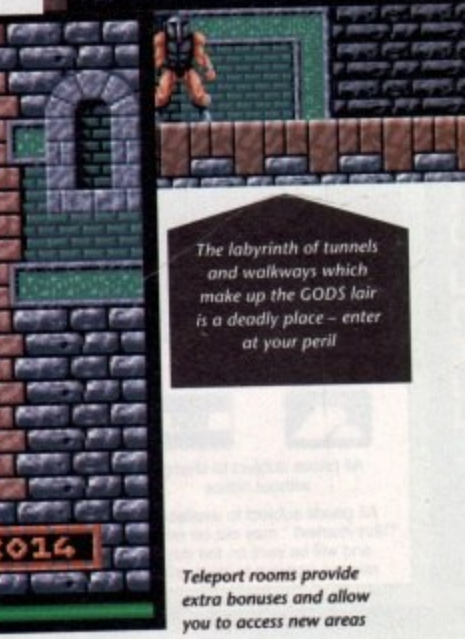


Thieves can bring stuff from normally inaccessible areas



The labyrinth of tunnels and walkways which make up the GODS lair is a deadly place – enter at your peril

Teleport rooms provide extra bonuses and allow you to access new areas





The end of each particular level sees you coming face to face with a particularly mean nastie. These large end-of-level guardians can prove to be a real challenge. Should you manage to defeat a guardian and thus complete a level, you'll be given a password allowing you to start at that particular point next time you play.

As you progress through the game you'll encounter various monsters and traps. The former beings can be despatched in the time-honoured tradition while the latter may need more devious thought.

Killing creatures will yield precious gems that boost your wealth. Other items such as keys, power-ups and new weapons can also be collected and

used. Throughout the action you'll no doubt encounter a shop keeper. Like the galactic salesmen found in Xenon 2, these fellows carry an impressive arsenal. Providing you have enough cash you can buy all sorts of deadly goodies. These range from simple extra lives and energy restoratives, to homing fireballs and spears. Perhaps the most deadly weapon is your familiar. Assuming the shape of an eagle, this beast flies around the screen taking out many of the maurading meanies.

All in all Gods is another first-rate Bitmap Brothers game. All the symptoms are there, the great sound, brilliant graphics and outstanding gameplay.

Nick Clarkson



Secret levers and buttons are everywhere, hit them to open new sections



Extra lives, energy and weapons can all be found in the shopkeeper's store



Goodies galore - treasure rooms supply well-earned bonus points

