



Look closely at your armchair. Does it resemble Mount Olympus, the Seat of the Gods? Currently, perhaps not – but in *Populous* that's exactly what it can become, as you look down on a world in which you have divine powers, and influence the lives of the population at the touch of a mouse button.

As a Divine Being, the more followers there are to worship you, the more power is put at your disposal to influence worldly affairs to your own advantage – and you're going to need a few advantages in order to survive. Why? Because it's war down there.

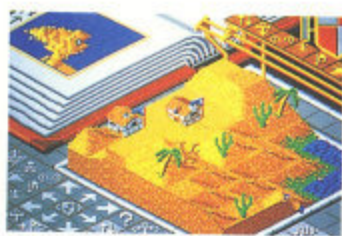
Another bunch of people living there follow a rival deity (controlled by either the computer or a friend, who can be sat right next to you or playing miles away via a modem or datalink cable) and these worlds aren't big enough to support both tribes, so one has to go. And that's where you come in.

First thing to do is build up a good following. This is achieved by ordering your meagre population (which starts at about three tiny men, each representing a tribe) to settle. In this mode, the tiny men wander the countryside looking for flat pieces of land to build houses (representing towns and villages) on. The flatter the immediate surroundings, the more advanced a house the little chaps can build – up to a castle. The more advanced the dwellings, the faster your power builds up and the greater the population's technology level, which helps later when it comes to fighting.

So what if the land is too uneven to build on? Easy: flatten it for them. Using the left mouse button, click on a piece of land and, lo and behold, a small hillock appears! This is very handy for filling in gaps between other hills and thus creating flat land. The right

POPULOUS

A little divine intervention from ELECTRONIC ARTS



A Desert World – your followers, having run out of flat land to build on, are idle in their houses. You won't gain power until they populate more land...



...so level the land off and they'll be encouraged to go forth and multiply! Remember – the flatter the surrounding land, the more advanced the dwellings.



See? They have been tempted. If you now level off the rest of this part of the coast, they will hopefully move onto that as well.

Click on these icons to scroll the main play area around one step at a time.

Once your energy indicator reaches the corresponding icon on the energy bar, click on these icons to invoke a disaster.

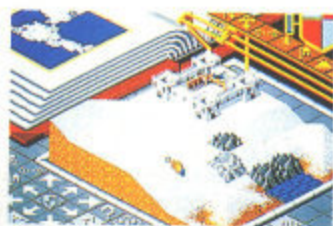
These icons, when selected, order your population to settle, fight if possible or settle if not, group together (for strength) or go to the Papal Magnet.

Select these icons to zoom in on the part of the world containing your Papal Magnet, any knights or battles.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£24.95dk	April 89
AMIGA	£24.95dk	April 89
IBM PC	Version possible, price TBA	

LANDSCAPE GARDENING

Populous contains three games. The tutorial game speaks for itself, the custom game allows you to alter over 60 game parameters (making the opposing deity as tough or as soft as you wish) and the campaign game consists of over 1,000 increasingly-difficult worlds. Like *The Sentinel*, you don't have to play through all the land-



A Snow World. Life is harsh in this climate.

scapes in the campaign game at one sitting: the next world you play depends on the score achieved, and you can access the last world played by simply typing in its name.

As well as the difficulty of the opponent increasing, the climates of the worlds change, affecting how your population reacts. For



A Fire World. Boy! That sea is dangerously hot!

example, *Grass Worlds* are the most friendly, whereas *Ice Worlds* are inhospitable places where it can be difficult to persuade followers to leave their cosy homes to settle in other areas.

Desert and Fire Worlds are also harsh and the people tend to die young. This may not sound too worrying, but you do have to change strategy to compensate. For example, if you're used to having lots of knights wandering around a *Grass World* bumping off the enemy, you may be in for a nasty surprise when you try that tactic on a *Desert World*, where knights tend to die off before they can travel far or do much damage.

mouse button has the reverse effect, so by creating and digging out pieces of land you can encourage your population to grow.

Right, the population's growing nicely, your power is increasing and it's a lot of fun playing with the landscape. But your people aren't populating the more remote areas lovingly created for them – what to do? Simple, make them journey to settle by placing what's known as the Papal Magnet in the right spot. The Papal Magnet is a kind of religious icon, a monolith that your population is attracted towards when put in 'Go to Papal Magnet' mode.

If your followers have a leader they all head towards the leader who in turn heads for the Magnet, but if you have no leader they head directly for the Magnet and the first to reach it becomes the new leader. Leaders can be fun guys, especially since you can turn leaders into knights, who immediately set off for the nearest enemy settlement, kill the inhabitants and burn down the houses, destroying the land which the community was using to sustain itself. Knights remain on the rampage until they're eventually killed.

Once you get your people in the right



Gain enough energy and you can turn your leader into a knight.



Knights set off in search of enemy dwellings, fight the occupants then burn the houses.



It's tough to build around burnt-out houses, so to get rid of them, dig them down to sea-level.

place, all you have to do is switch them back into Settle mode and they'll populate the right area. Assuming things are going well and the other player appears to be struggling it might be a good idea to switch them to Battle mode. Then they'll look for enemy houses and fight the inhabitants, taking over the house if they win. If there are no baddies in sight they'll settle as normal. This is a handy way to polish off the last of the other player's followers, so destroying the power of the opposing god, and winning dominance over the whole world. Then it's on to another world, a new kind of landscape and another challenge.

Populous is a terrific game. The 1,000 worlds alone will take months to play through – and don't expect to win each one – but the ability to play against a friend (especially a remote one) increases the lasting interest even more. Unless you're the world's most obsessive shoot-em-up fan, you're bound to enjoy playing Populous for a long, long time.

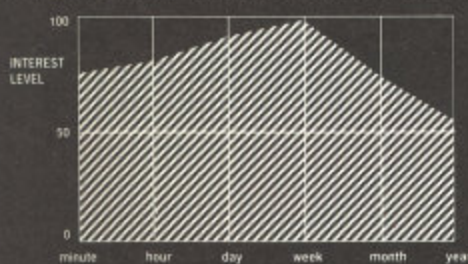
● Andy Smith

AMIGA VERSION

Terrific graphics, well presented, are complemented by life-like sound effects and eerie choir-like music. Absolutely wonderful stuff that will keep you playing and playing. Bullfrog are going to find this one a tough act to follow.

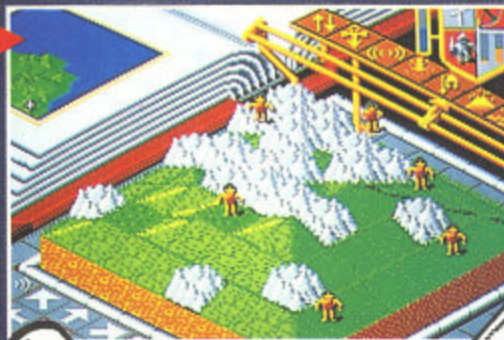
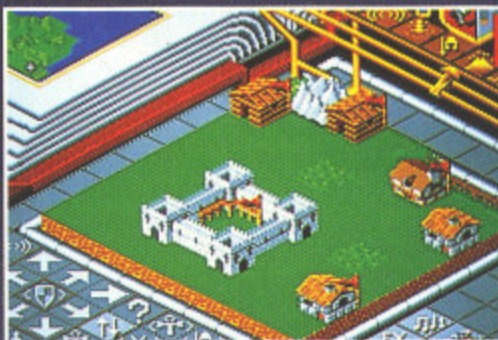
GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	6
AUDIO	8	FUN FACTOR	9
ACE RATING 963			

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



AMIGA //

If only every Amiga game was as good!



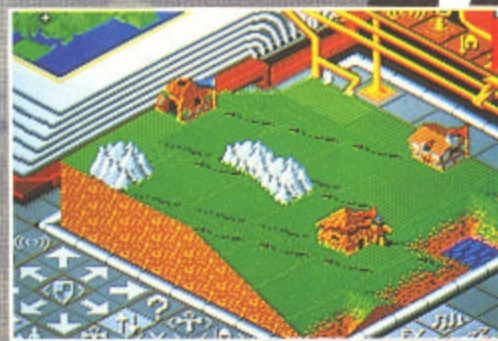
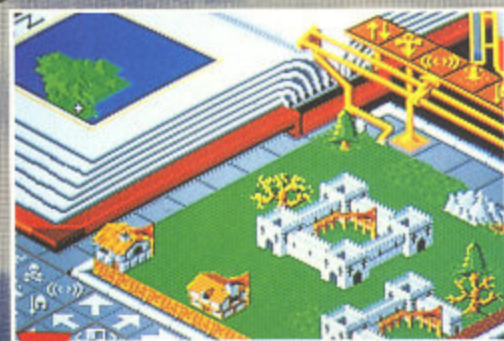
ACTS OF GODS

Knights may be nasty pieces of work, but if you really want to upset the other god, try throwing a natural disaster at him. Volcanoes (Above) not only destroy houses, but also throw up large boulders that are limiting to build around and can only be removed by lowering them into the sea.

Earthquaking (Right) a part of enemy territory is not quite as deadly as a volcano but still fun, destroying buildings and removing huge chunks of land. If he has built on low-lying land, a timely earthquake can have some of his people floundering in the water, and if he doesn't build land under them quick, they'll drown.

An equally effective means of getting rid of some of his chaps is to stick a swamp somewhere in his territory – any of his followers wandering into it will be swallowed up.

Even less subtle than volcanoes are floods (Below). The water table rises over the whole world, hopefully covering most of his territory.



Flooding, before and after. Encourage your population to settle on high, flat areas and if your opponent's none too smart he'll content himself with populating the lowlands. Activate the flood and Bingo! Most of his population will be wiped out!