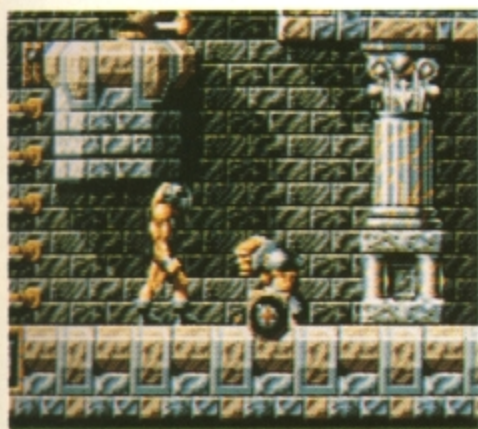


GODS



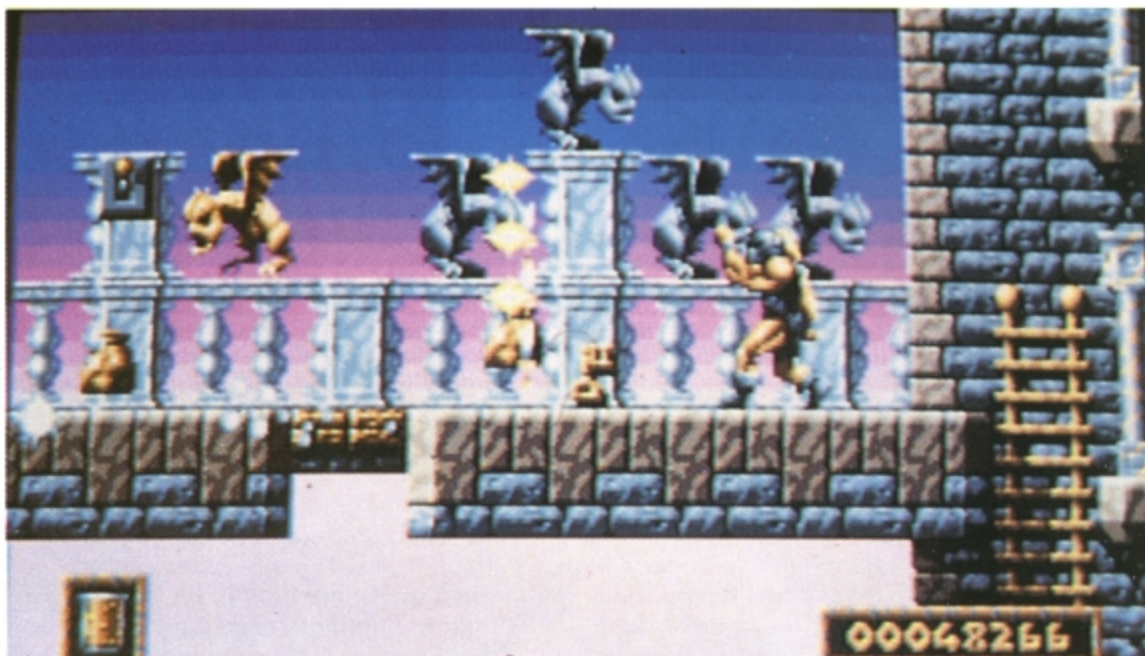
"Hello, little squat goblin thing. Hand me that bonus or be incinerated rather rapidly." This squat, little gubbing is the thief. His tea-leaving fingers are always out to grab jewels and bonuses, but sometimes he's useful for getting those hard-to-reach objects.



This is the Babylonian version of *The Krypton Factor*. The key is half way up the wall on a platform. There are three lights on the wall. You have to rove the level and find three jewels and place them, in order, on the floor. Each gem makes the key move a little further down until it's obtainable. Except which order do you put the bijoux in? (Spook.)

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Gods
PUBLISHER	Bitmaps/Renegade
PRICE	£24.99
FORMAT	ST & Amiga
RELEASED	Out now



We hate the Bitmaps! We hate the Bitmaps! We hate the... we hate the... (Long pause while David McCandless plays their latest game.) We, er... we... love... we love the Bitmaps!

If I was an obsequious dork I could point out an 'ironic' little connection between the title of the game *Gods* and the deiform qualities of its authors. But as you all know, I hate the Bitmaps. I hated *Xenon II* (Er... Ed.) and I loathed *Speedball 2* (Er, I'm not sure... Ed.) and now I'm going to despise their latest platform adventure. (Are you positive about this? Ed.) I don't care if you play a brawny gladiator, slicing and dicing his way through four worlds of eight-directional scrolling. And I don't give a toss if there's oodles of treasure, weapons, potions and crystals for teleportation. (I do really - I'm being 'ironic'.)

Teleporting - now there's a dicey old business. You'll never know where you'll end up. One jewel might teleport you to paradise, while another could transport you right into the centre of hell where Beelzebub and all the lads have brought in a sand blaster, a barge-pole and some Angel Delight to celebrate winning the rugby match.

In between worlds is The Shop. It works just like the alien emporium in *Xenon II*: one click for a description of the object, two to buy the thing, three to be annoying, four to have microswitch problems. Tempting your wallet are

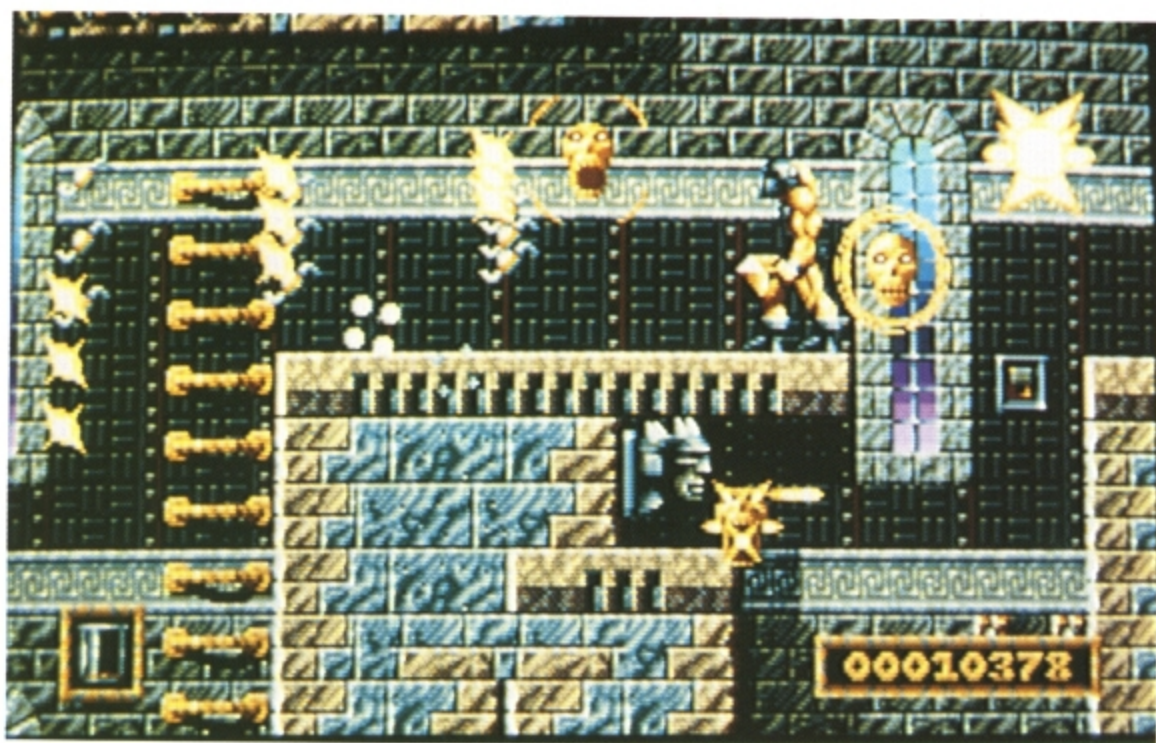
such things as fireballs, spears, shuriken, knives and daggers, as well as potions which power-up your weapons and also do suicidal things like attract monsters.

Now, the creatures in *Gods* are the kind you don't want to attract - with the sort of skin that reminds you of an



endoscopic view of someone's oesophagus. They've either got arms or they haven't. And if they've got arms, they don't have elbows. And if they possess elbows, then their necks somehow disappear.

The worst thing then is that they're intelligent. One type of flying horror can actually avoid your shots, examine your firing technique, and then find a safe place to attack from. Another nasty has a map of the level in his head and can work out the quickest route to you. The end of level beasties, too, get cleverer as time goes on. The first, a giant centurion, just strides back and forth, but by the end of the second level, the mutha, a dragon, flaps about and actually gobs fire at you. The cheek.



Macca: Gods isn't one of your mortal arcade games. It's part of a much bigger scheme. It has a much-touted 'learning process'.

It teaches you things. For instance, you learn not to walk into mantraps, not to fall from very high places onto very hard floors, and not to let the bulbous nasties kick your butt. But aside from these very elementary 'GCSE' skills, there are your complex 'A' level type questions:



1 "The echelons are strewneth with secretive bonuses' (Eric Bitmap). Discuss how this statement contributes to the game as a whole." The levels are huge and sprawl in all sorts of arcane directions. But here and there is the odd nook or cranny (which requires a little skill and revision to locate) where you might find an extra weapon or potion. These sort of events are staged to react to the gameplay. So, for instance, if you complete a section of the level in double extra-quick ninja time, you'll be rewarded with a big fat of bonus. Similarly, if you experiment with the levers, you'll find doors of the dungeon opening up to you like, er, a lot like doors. Also, the more you play it, the more you become savvy to its nuances and the more you discover extra added bits and hidden doobries.

2 "Compare and contrast this game with others of its type with the emphasis on graphics and playability." Well, Gods certainly won't win the industry's Most Original Concept In The Universe award but, there again, it might scoop the Tired Old Format

Cleverly Revitalised prize. For that is what it is. Platforms and ladders and dungeons and levers were around before bright spark Samson gave Delilah a pair of scissors for Christmas. But now Les Frères de Bitmap (as they're probably known in France) have injected a bit of spice into the genre.

Gods reminds you instantly of *Black Tiger*. You know, exploding nasties leaving tokens, massive weapons, magic potions, a-jumping and a-climbing. Then graphically it reminds you of the *Killing Game Show* (which was a bit of a crib of the Bitmaps style anyway) with all the two-armed nasties and similar scrolly

scenery. Then suddenly it might strike you as smacking slightly of *Rainbow Islands*, especially when you hear the 'ding' when you collect bonuses – and that's the point.

Just as *Xenon II* was a compilation of the best features from the shoot 'em up genre, *Gods* is all the fab platform arcade adventures squished into one.

Also, like *Xenon II*, (You always did like that game. Ed.) everything is placed to make it more playable. Each level has a password, you don't lose your weapons when you die, and a clever 'monitoring' system decides how well you're doing and cunningly shandifies or alcoholises the game accordingly.

3 "I want to slag off the Bitmaps' (D. MACCA). Comment on the irony in this statement." It hasn't happened has it? Will it ever? One day, will I be able to start a review with "This Bitmaps' game is a hulking pile of steaming jobjobs"? Alas, *Gods* is good, very good. Fast, action based, well graphicked, cleverly designed, puzzle ridden, slickly programmed, brilliantly musicked by Nation 12, addictive, compulsive, fun, warm, cuddly, lovely – oh *God*. Another ZERO Hero for the Bitmap boys. But beware, Bitmaps – that hulking pile of jobjobs is still waiting in the wings. One day. One day...



One of the power-ups is the parrot-familiar. It mosies around firing a proportion of your weapons, taking out nasties with crass pirate clichés like "Pieces of eight", "Yo-ho me hearties" and "Pass that rum then oil me down, me shipmates".



Outside the city are all the usual parapets and towers as well as a unhealthy profusion of gargoyles. No matter, my tumbleweed weaponry is more than adequate for the 'wupping' of their collective butts.



This lily-livered schlumbag of a centurion is to be found drinking shandy at the end of Level One.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	87
S	SOUND	87
A	ADDICTIVENESS	90
E	EXECUTION	89

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

Another brilliant Bitmaps game. Godamnit.

90