

= Champion of the Raj =

Champion of the Raj is a turn @-@ based strategy video game developed by Level 9 Computing and published by Personal Software Services . It was released exclusively in the United Kingdom for the Amiga , Atari ST and systems running DOS in 1991 . It is the thirteenth and final instalment to the Strategic Wargames series . The game revolves around European imperialism and colonialism of India , in which six factions : British , French , Mogul , Sikhs , Gurkhas and Marathas fight to gain overall control of India .

The game contains elements of combat and arcade sequences , including traditional elephant racing and big @-@ game hunting . The core of the gameplay is focused on strategy , in which the player must conquer all territories of India through diplomatic or offensive means . Champion of the Raj received mixed reviews upon release . Critics praised its colourful graphics and storyline ; however strong criticism was directed at the game 's constant use of disk swapping and long loading times .

= = Gameplay = =

The game is a turn @-@ based strategy and revolves around colonialism of India . Before starting the game , the player must pick a player @-@ character and the respective faction they wish to side with . The choices include a viceroy of the British East India Company , a consul of the French East India Company , a Mogul emperor , a Maharajah of the Maruthras , chief of the Gurkhas or a Maharajah of the Sikhs . At the beginning of the game , the player @-@ character is kidnapped by an assassin and is imprisoned inside a prison cell . A woman soon frees the player @-@ character , and informs them of their task to either conquer India or persuade rival political factions to unite through diplomacy . The game begins in 1800 , when the Mogul empire lost control of India . The majority of the game is presented through an in @-@ game headquarters screen which displays a map of India , a book detailing information of individual Indian states , and a group of icons which allows the player to issue commands .

If the player wishes to take over a territory through diplomatic means , they must initiate dialogue with the local leader . If the player has a high enough popularity , the local leader may invite them to a sporting event , such as elephant race or a game hunting session , which will give the player an opportunity to unite that territory under their faction . If the player 's popularity is not high enough , they may hold a Durbar festival in an attempt to impress the local leaders . If diplomacy fails , the player has the option to invade any territory by force . Soldiers can be hired through payments of gold ; however , if the player does not have a sufficient amount of gold at the end of the turn , a rebellion may start . Rebellions will sometimes initiate lethal encounters with assassins , in which the player @-@ character must defend themselves through sword combat . Additionally , the player can bring assassins to their side by successfully launching an attack on their temple . The game will end once either all of the territories are united , or if the player @-@ character is assassinated .

= = Background = =

Personal Software Services was founded in Coventry , England , by Gary Mays and Richard Cockayne in November 1981 . The company was known for creating games that revolved around historic war battles and conflicts , such as Theatre Europe , Bismarck and Falklands ' 82 . The company had a partnership with French video game developer ERE Informatique and published localised versions of their products to the United Kingdom . The Strategic Wargames series was conceptualised by software designer Alan Steel in 1984 . During development of these titles , Steel would often research the topic of the upcoming game and pass on the findings to other associates in Coventry and London . In 1983 , the company received recognition for being " one of the top software houses " in the United Kingdom , and was a finalist for BBC Radio 4 's New Business Enterprise Award for that year .

In 1986 , Cockayne took a decision to alter their products for release on 16 @-@ bit consoles , as

he found that smaller 8 @-@ bit consoles , such as the ZX Spectrum , lacked the processing power for larger strategy games . The decision was falsely interpreted as " pulling out " from the Spectrum market by video game journalist Phillipa Irving . Following years of successful sales throughout the mid 1980s , Personal Software Services experienced financial difficulties , in what Cockayne admitted in a retrospective interview that " he took his eye off the ball " . The company was acquired by Mirrorsoft in February 1987 , and was later dispossessed by the company due to strains of debt .

= = Reception = =

The game received mixed reviews upon release . Gordon Houghton of The One for ST Games disliked the arcade sequences in the game , stating that they are " a waste of disk loading time " , despite acknowledging its way of giving the strategy genre a wider appeal . Ed Ricketts of ST Format stated that despite its simplicity , the game was " enjoyable " to play . Fiona Keating of CU Amiga praised the game 's entertaining storyline and colourful graphics , however she criticised its " shortcoming " sound . Jonathan Davies of Amiga Power criticised the simplicity of the gameplay , stating that despite the " impressive " graphics , the game " was not meant for a few minutes of playtime " . Gary White of Advanced Computer Entertainment heavily criticised the visuals , stating that it had an " appalling " presentation and poor sound quality .

The disk loading time was the most criticised aspect from reviewers . Houghton found the loading times " hefty " and recommended that the player use two disk drives instead of one , as constant disk swapping was required in the game . Ricketts similarly found the swapping of " half a dozen " floppy disks a " nightmare " on the Atari ST . Keating found the " huge " amount of disk swapping to be the game 's largest drawback , as well as the long loading times that accompanied it . Davies stated that scrolling times were " painfully slow " due to the excessive disk accessing . White stated that the game had a disk access routine " so bad " that it was almost impossible to access icons during gameplay , as the cursor movement was always a second behind actual mouse movements .