

= Ryse : Son of Rome =

Ryse : Son of Rome is a third @-@ person action @-@ adventure hack and slash video game developed by Crytek Frankfurt and published by Microsoft Studios . It was released on November 22 , 2013 as an exclusive launch title for the Xbox One , but was released on October 10 , 2014 for Microsoft Windows by Crytek and Deep Silver . Set in an alternate version of Rome , Ryse follows the life of the Roman centurion Marius Vitus as he becomes one of the leaders in the Roman Legion . Gameplay revolves around Marius using his sword to strike enemies and shield to deflect attacks . Execution sequences are also featured in the game , which are quick @-@ time events that serve as an extension to combat . The game 's combat emphasizes on " flow " , a term referring to a player 's ability to move on to fight against another enemy upon defeating an enemy with few limitations in between . The game features a cooperative multiplayer mode , which tasks players to fight against waves of enemies in maps that are changing dynamically .

The game 's development began in 2006 . Originally it was set to be a first @-@ person Kinect @-@ only title for the Xbox 360 . However , the team later made three new prototypes , and redesigned to become a third @-@ person hack and slash game , with Kinect serving a diminished role . The development of the game was originally handled by Crytek Budapest , but was later transferred to Crytek 's headquarters in Frankfurt , Germany . Revealed as Codename : Kingdom at Electronic Entertainment Expo 2010 , the game was reintroduced as Ryse : Son of Rome at E3 2013 . It was among one of the six projects developed simultaneously by Crytek .

Ryse : Son of Rome received a mixed critical reaction from reviewers upon launch , being praised for its visuals , story and high production values but criticized for its repetitive and simple gameplay . Cevat Yerli , CEO of Crytek , added that he was not satisfied with the sales of the game . Upon launch , the game was supported with several multiplayer @-@ focused downloadable content , but the originally planned Challenge Editor was cancelled .

= = Gameplay = =

Ryse : Son of Rome is an action @-@ adventure hack and slash game played in a third @-@ person perspective . Players assume control of Marius Vitus , a Roman general who is on a quest to avenge his murdered family . Throughout the game , players gain access to weapons that can be used to assault enemies or defend themselves . For instance , players are equipped with a sword that can be used to strike and kill enemies , and a shield that can be used to deflect enemies ' attack and break their defense . The strength of each attack can be decided by players . In addition to melee @-@ based combat , the game features spears and javelins , which serve as ranged weapons .

The game 's combat puts emphasis on " flow " , a term referring to a player 's ability to move on to fight against another enemy upon defeating and killing an enemy with few limitations in between . Combat is combo @-@ based , and rewards are given to players who are able to build a long combo . Marius can block attacks to break enemy combos to counterattack .

When players deal enough damage to an enemy , they can activate an execution sequence . Once the execution sequence has been initiated , enemies involved in the execution are highlighted automatically with colors by the game , and players can perform a series of quick time events by pressing the appropriate buttons . These execution sequences serve to grant additional resources to players , depending on how well the execution is performed . At any time prior to initiating an execution , the player can select one of four categories of executions to perform upon weakened enemies ; the selected type of execution determines the type of resource that will be granted when an enemy is executed . Upon completing a successful execution sequence , players are granted the type of execution that was selected . There are four perks available for players . One boosts the player 's damage for a short period after the execution ; one refills the player 's Focus bar ; one allows players to regain lost health , and the last significantly boosts the amount of experience points received from the kill . These experience points can be used to purchase upgrades for various attributes , such as health , damage , or Focus bar capacity , and to unlock additional

execution moves . The game still automatically completes and finishes these execution sequences when players fail to press the highlighted buttons , but provides a much smaller reward . Lining up two or more weakened enemies in close proximity allows the player to perform a double execution sequence , which greatly increases the reward granted .

In several segments of the game , Marius is involved in large @-@ scale battles . Players are tasked to co @-@ operate with , or command , other non @-@ playable characters to defeat large numbers of enemies . The game features Kinect voice integration , in which players can issue commands to other characters to provide assistance , such as calling in arrows or catapults .

There is also a co @-@ operative multiplayer mode , in which two players team up to accomplish various challenges and fight against waves of increasingly difficult enemies in the Roman Colosseum , a gladiator arena setting . The environments of the Colosseum change dynamically in a match to add variety to the mode . Players can gain access to increasingly advanced armor and weapons as they progress through these multiplayer matches . Microtransactions are also featured , allowing players to purchase in @-@ game upgrades with real @-@ life currency .

= = Plot = =

Ryse : Son of Rome is set in an alternate version of Rome . The game 's tutorial section depicts Marius leading the defense of Rome against oncoming Celtic barbarians led by Boudica . Marius hands a small , nondescript sack to a subordinate with the instructions to display it from an elevated position , then helps secure the Roman emperor , Nero , in a private safe room . At the emperor 's behest he begins to tell his story ; the rest of the game is an extended flashback depicting Marius ' story up to this point .

Marius begins his story as a soldier having just successfully completed his training , who is about to leave Rome to serve his duty in the relatively sedate II Legion , holding a post in peaceful Alexandria . Just before his deployment , he enjoys a return to his family in Rome and the adulation of his father Leontius , a former general and current member of the Roman Senate . Marius ' visit is cut short by a barbarian incursion ; a running battle through the streets of Rome results in the death of his parents and younger sister . Commander Vitallion , a friend and former comrade of the slain Leontius , transfers Marius to his XIV Legion , and promises Marius vengeance for his murdered family . Vitallion leads the XIV Legion to Britain , but the fleet is ambushed off the coast ; Marius leads the counter @-@ attack , rallying the surviving Roman troops and nearly single @-@ handedly preventing the destruction of the remainder of the fleet , which impresses Vitallion . Marius is promoted to Centurion .

After receiving reports of a rebellion at York , Marius heads north to aid the defeated legion stationed there . Upon capturing King Oswald and his daughter Boudica , Basilius , the son of the Emperor , reveals that his brother Commodus has been captured by the barbarians , whose whereabouts are unknown . Basilius , threatens and forces King Oswald into revealing the location of Commodus , who has been traded to the fearsome men north of Hadrian 's Wall . Basilius orders Vitallion and Marius to retrieve him . After crossing the border into Caledonia , the party is ambushed , Vitallion is taken hostage by barbarians , and Marius is separated from his legion . Marius makes his way into the enemy camp , freeing and rallying captured Roman soldiers along the way . He kills the barbarian leader Glott and rescues Commodus and Vitallion from being burned inside a giant Wicker man .

Commodus continues to intimidate Oswald and murders him , causing a breakdown in negotiations . Meanwhile , Marius realizes that the band of barbarians he encountered years ago had invaded Rome and slain his father at Nero 's instigation as a means of eliminating a political rival . Furthermore , the Celts , led by a just @-@ escaped Boudica , lay siege to York , with XIV Legion tasked with defending it until Commodus can escape . In the end , Marius sacrifices himself to buy time for the final ships to sail , but is resurrected by the goddess Summer , who tasks him with taking on the mantle of Damocles , a legendary Roman general who was abandoned to his enemies for political expediency . In that guise , Summer tells him to avenge his family and comrades , and save Rome .

" Damocles " takes advantage of Emperor Nero and his sons ' interest in the gladiator sports , and enters the gladiatorial ludi to confront Nero and his sons directly . His demonstration of martial skill gains him the sponsorship of Nero 's son Basilius , and Marius is then able to slay Basilius during a private audience , where he is also informed by a captive Oracle Priestess that Nero can only be killed by his own sword . After this , Marius confronts Commodus in the Colosseum itself , emerging victorious after a series of unfair battles . As " Damocles " and Nero jointly call for each other 's deaths , Marius escapes , meeting up with Vitallion . According to Vitallion , Boudica has gathered enough barbarian support to storm Rome itself . Vitallion agrees to help Marius put an end to Nero 's destructive rule . Their efforts are successful , but Vitallion is slain by Boudica during the attack . Marius takes up the command and defeats her in turn , though his victory is tempered by their shared realization that they are both victims in Nero 's power plays .

This brings Marius to the " present day " of the game 's narrative : he gives the small sack , containing Boudica 's severed head , to his subordinate , escorts Nero to his safe room , and tells his tale . Nero , who has since deduced that Marius is Damocles , flees deeper into his bolt hole . As Marius gives chase , he is temporarily distracted by Aquilo , the god of the north wind , who has been aiding Nero and whose stated goal is to cause the collapse of Rome . However , Summer helps Marius claim the victory , and Marius tosses both Nero and himself off a parapet , where Nero is impaled on the sword of his own statue , fulfilling the Oracle 's prophecy . Marius falls to the ground and dies from his wounds as Summer and Aquilo both vanish .

The story ends with the barbarians retreating from Rome , disheartened by the loss of their leader , and with Marius being posthumously hailed as a hero for his efforts to fend off their attacks .

= = Development = =

Ryse : Son of Rome was originally developed by Crytek Budapest . In 2004 , Crytek released its debut title Far Cry , and in 2006 , Microsoft Studios released Xbox 360 and was working on a prototype for Kinect called " Project Natal " . Ideas for Ryse originated in 2006 by Crytek 's CEO Cevat Yerli , who was eager to expand the studio , and wanted the studio to work on multiple projects simultaneously . Early work and concept development began shortly afterwards , with Crytek working on a pair of fantasy games that were set in the same Medieval universe . They were Kings , a massively multiplayer online role @-@ playing game , and Kingdoms , a first @-@ person action role @-@ playing game . They hoped that with Kingdoms , they could create an " up @-@ close " and " visceral " experience .

Crytek then pitched the game to different publishers , and eventually , in 2009 , the company pitched the two projects to Microsoft . According to Nick Button @-@ Brown , the general manager at Crytek , the game was not functional at that time , and only served to prove to the publisher that a first @-@ person melee game was fun for players . The representative from Microsoft , Phil Spencer , admired Crytek 's intention to expand , and thought that Microsoft 's games line up for the Xbox 360 was lacking a first @-@ person melee @-@ combat game . As a result , they accepted to publish Kingdoms , and rejected Kings . The two companies agreed that the project would be a natural fit for Microsoft 's yet @-@ to @-@ be @-@ announced Kinect .

It was originally revealed as Codename : Kingdoms during Microsoft 's E3 2010 press conference , along with the announcement that the game was being developed by Crytek . During the Microsoft Press Conference at E3 2011 , Ryse was announced as a Kinect @-@ only title . The announcement entailed a prerendered trailer with minor gameplay footage . The gameplay footage featured players using their own body gestures to control the protagonist to fight against enemies , and perform actions like sword wielding , blocking attacks with a shield , and head @-@ butting . The trailer served as a test for Crytek to see whether the general audience liked the Kinect features or not .

In early 2011 , the game 's direction was shifted from building a world of " high fantasy " to building a realistic ancient Rome , and the development of the game was shifted from Crytek Budapest to Crytek 's headquarter in Frankfurt , Germany . The Budapest office was significantly downsized afterwards , and its focus was shifted to develop smartphone games . It became one of six projects

the company was working on . Development of the game continued after its E3 2011 reveal . Different experiments were carried out for the game to see what elements would work and what would not . A team at Crytek Frankfurt proposed to turn the game to an @-@ rail interactive movie , which the team believed was suitable for Kinect 's features and would be able to showcase the power of CryEngine . The idea was later scrapped .

During the game 's development , the team worried that the game may be too tiring for players , and that Kinect may not be able to detect their movements accurately , leading to frustration . As a result , the team developed three prototypes for the game . The first prototype allowed players to play the entire game with Kinect , the second one tasks players to play the game with a Xbox 360 controller , with Kinect features , while the third one completely removed the Kinect features . Crytek eventually chose the second prototype , and shifted the game 's perspective to become a third @-@ person video game . In June 2012 , Phil Spencer , corporate VP of Microsoft Studios , maintained that the game was still in development. and added that Kinect will only be " part of the game " . With the changes in the game 's control scheme , the game 's focus also changed , with the team aiming to create a cinematic and character @-@ focused experience for players . The change also extended the game 's development process , and eventually , in May 2013 , Ryse was confirmed to be a launch title for Microsoft 's next game console , Xbox One . In June 2013 at the E3 Microsoft Conference , Crytek showed a gameplay video . Kinect was no longer part of the active battle but had a diminished role by providing squad commands through speech and gesture . The team at Crytek decided to make it a launch title instead of delaying it for further polishing , as they considered the launch of Xbox One an " emotional " event and wanted to be a part of it .

Ryse 's combat puts lots of focus on " flow " and crowd control . As a result , the team introduced a rhythm @-@ styled combat which is similar to that of Batman : Arkham Asylum . The flow was described to be one of the most important parts in the game 's mechanics , and the artificial intelligence of enemies were designed to break and disrupt players ' flow . The team later chose to introduce the execution mechanics as they found that the combat was proven to be too difficult for players , and that the execution mechanics provided an easier way for players to defeat enemies . The game also focused on precision and timing , tasking players to hit enemies at the correct time and position to gain greater rewards . The developer also hoped that players will use creativity when dealing with enemies . A concept called " mashing to mastery " was introduced in Ryse , in which the game 's combat was designed to be accessible for newcomers and be challenging for hardcore players . In order to achieve the " mashing to mastery " mechanic , the team introduced the execution mechanic , which is a series of quick @-@ time events , as the team at Crytek hoped that it would make these scenes more rewarding to players , as well as allowing the flow of combat to continue .

Ryse 's intention was to build a cinematic story . The team put emphasis on building the game 's protagonist , Marius Vitus , who was described as a character with three different sides . The game 's cinematic director , Peter Gornstein , considered that adding personalities to characters as one of the most important features in creating a good story , as it allows players to care for and emphasize the character . He also hoped that the character is consistent throughout the game . As a result , the team developed transition sequences , in which gameplay can fluidly transit to cinematic . The game also put emphasis on the protagonist 's motion capture . To achieve this , the team collaborated with The Imaginarium Studios to develop the cinematic and motion @-@ capture technology for the game . According to Yerli , having good motion capture technology can help " create the ultimate emotion " . The game 's camera was originally set to be controlled by artificial intelligence , drawing inspirations from Seven Samurai and Children of Men , but the idea was later scrapped and a dynamic camera was designed to replace it . The camera was also made closer to the playable character than other hack and slash games , as they hoped that they could show a " claustrophobic brutality " from it . According to Crytek , having a close up camera has always been the game 's core element .

The developers claim to have drawn much of the inspiration for the game 's combat and tactics from " ... the innumerable Roman campaigns that led to the modern concept of total war " . Fifteen hero level characters were given full motion capture with the same detail as Marius . Unlike Crytek 's

previous projects , the game is set in ancient Rome , a place which the developer thought was underrepresented in video games . The game also features different Renaissance @-@ inspired imagery . In order to create an accurate environment , the team visited different locations in Rome . While the game is set in Rome , its story is not entirely historically accurate . Crytek described it as a " historical mash @-@ up " , in which the team selected their favourite historical events and put them together into the game .

Crytek contracted Ruffian Games to develop a competitive multiplayer mode for Ryse , but the feature was later cut from the final game . Despite that , a co @-@ operative multiplayer mode was introduced , and tasked players to fight against waves of increasingly difficult human enemies . The team originally hoped to add sea battles and animals to the game , but after internal testing , these features were removed . A Xbox SmartGlass feature called the Challenge Editor was set to be introduced to the game after its launch . It allowed players to create custom challenges for the game 's co @-@ operative multiplayer . However , Crytek announced that the development of this feature had been ceased in February 2014 .

The game 's music is composed by Borislav Slavov and Peter Antovszki , Crytek 's in @-@ house composers . Slavov had previously led the soundtrack development of Crysis 3 and Warface . The soundtrack development began in February 2013 , right after the completion of Crysis 3 . Slavov considered composing the music for Ryse a great challenge for him , as he had to compose 250 minutes of music within a short time frame . Crytek also hired an external composer , Tilman Silescu , to help compose the music for the game .

= = = Release = = =

Ryse was originally revealed as a Xbox 360 title that was set to be released in early 2011 . Revealed at E3 2010 as Codename Kingdom , the game missed its release window , and its official name was revealed during E3 2011 as Ryse . It was reintroduced as Ryse : Son of Rome at Microsoft 's press conference at E3 2013 with a gameplay demo . The game served as a launch title for the Xbox One , and was released on November 22 , 2013 . The season pass , featuring different in @-@ game bonuses and items , was released on the same day . The game was supported with downloadable content upon launch . Mars ? Chosen , Morituri Pack , Duel of Fates Pack , and Colosseum Pack were released from 2013 to 2014 and featured new maps and modes for the multiplayer portion of the game . A Legendary Collection , which featured the base game , the game 's seasonal pass , and all the additional content released for the game , was released on October 7 , 2014 .

On August 7 , 2014 , Crytek announced that Ryse would be released for the PC platform in the fall of 2014 . This version of the game is stated to support 4K resolution and included previously released downloadable content . The PC version was released on October 10 , 2014 . Crytek published the digital version of the PC version of the game , while Deep Silver published the retail version .

= = Reception = =

Ryse : Son of Rome received mixed reviews . Aggregating review websites GameRankings and Metacritic gave the Xbox One version 64 @. @ 30 % based on 47 reviews and 60 / 100 based on 77 reviews and the Microsoft Windows version 63 @. @ 20 % based on 10 reviews and 61 / 100 based on 27 reviews .

The game 's visuals received critical acclaim . Brian Albert from IGN thought that Ryse would be the perfect title for people to show off their console due to its high graphical quality . He also praised the game 's wide variety of environments and fluid character animation . However , he criticized the game 's boss @-@ design . Hollander Cooper from GamesRadar strongly praised the game 's graphics and the level of detail . Simon Miller from VideoGamer.com thought that the game fulfilled its purpose as an Xbox One launch title , and demonstrated the power of the console . Andrew Reiner from Game Informer considered that the game 's cinematic as " towering achievements of

visual design ". Brad Shoemaker from Giant Bomb thought that the graphics had successfully surprised players .

The game 's gameplay received polarized reception . Marc Camron from Electronic Gaming Monthly called it " basic " , and thought that despite the fluid and smooth combat , and the addition of the reward system which added a layer of strategy to the game , the game 's execution system hindered the flow of the game by slowing down the overall pace of combat . He added that the game 's combat lacked complexity and depth , and was too repetitive for players to enjoy . Albert also thought that the combat system was too basic . In addition , he noted the repetitive pattern of enemies . He also criticized the game 's over @-@ emphasis on graphics , which led to the simple gameplay . Cooper thought that the game 's combat was satisfying , and thought that the game 's swordplay had successfully captured the sense of weight and impact . However , he also considered the system repetitive . Reiner criticized the execution sequences , which he considered excessive and over @-@ simplistic . Shoemaker also thought that the game lacked both variety and depth . Mark Walton from GameSpot thought that the game design was too linear , and that the game discouraged any form of exploration .

The game 's story also received praise from critics . Camron praised the game 's voice @-@ acting and setting , which he thought was " intriguing " . However , he thought that the narrative was too basic , and missed many details that could have further improved the game 's story . Albert admired the game 's story , and thought that it was handled with great care . He added that the game 's plot was easy for players to follow , even though the game features multiple unexpected twists . Cooper described the game 's narrative as surprising , adding that the later part of the game successfully added personalities to both the game 's heroes and villains . However , Walton called the game 's script as " laughable " and said that the dialogue made the plot unbelievable for players .

Critics had divided opinions on the game 's multiplayer . Camron thought that it was a nice addition to the game , even though he thought it lacked the complexity a multiplayer mode should have , and that it failed to extend the game 's longevity . Miller echoed this statement , and thought that the multiplayer mode failed to hook players . Walton thought that players would not return the mode after experiencing it once , and he described the mode as " bland " . Albert , in contrast , considered the mode a unique addition to the game , and thought that it had successfully added some strategy elements to the game . Chris Carter from Destructoid thought that the multiplayer mode was better than the game 's main campaign . He described it as a " pleasant surprise " .

The amount of content featured in the game received mixed reviews . Miller thought that the game only revolved around one idea , which led to its simplistic gameplay . Camron and Cooper thought that the campaign was too short for most players . Shoemaker thought that for a full @-@ priced game , it lacked content . Reiner furthered criticized the game 's low replay value . Carter advocated that players purchase the game when its price dropped . He added that while the game features lots of ideas , most of them failed to deliver .

While no exact sales figure was revealed , Yerli expressed his disappointment with the sales of Ryse for the Xbox One in August 2014 , blaming the low sales of the Xbox One .

== Controversy ==

A Federal Trade Commission investigation uncovered an undisclosed paid endorsement deal between Microsoft Studios and Machinima Inc . Microsoft Studios paid for fake organic reviews , and bound Machinima Inc. to ? not portray [Microsoft] , the Xbox One , or the Launch Titles in a negative manner ? . Ryse : Son of Rome was specifically listed in the FTC document as being one of the titles to receive fake reviews , and price quotes for these reviews range between \$ 15 @,@ 000 and \$ 30 @,@ 000 .

== Sequel ==

According to Yerli , Ryse : Son of Rome is not a " one @-@ off " title and will serve as the beginning of a new franchise . However , several reports claimed that Ryse 2 was cancelled

because of a conflict between Crytek and Microsoft over who would own the rights to the franchise . In exchange for funding Ryse 2 's development , Microsoft wanted to take over the Ryse intellectual property . Crytek would not agree to these terms , so the project was cancelled . Cevat Yerli , however , denied that the game was cancelled in an interview with Eurogamer , adding that the relationship between Microsoft and Crytek remained strong and positive . Ryse was among one of the last titles developed by Crytek before the company entered financial crisis and re @-@ construction . The new Crytek is focused on developing free @-@ to @-@ play games and being a " game service " instead of a video game developer . Despite this , Ryse is still an intellectual property owned by Crytek .