

= Hamurabi =

Hamurabi is a text @-@ based strategy video game of land and resource management first developed by Doug Dyment in 1968 . It was developed by Dyment at Digital Equipment Corporation as The Sumer Game before the rise of the commercial video game industry in the early history of video games as a computer game for fellow employee Richard Merrill 's newly invented FOCAL programming language . The game consists of ten rounds wherein the player , as the ancient Babylonian king Hammurabi , manages how much of their grain to spend on crops for the next round , feeding their people , and purchasing additional land , while dealing with random variations in crop yields and plagues . The Sumer Game was possibly inspired by the 1966 The Sumerian Game , a much more in @-@ depth text @-@ based economic simulation intended for children .

Multiple versions of the game were created for the FOCAL and FOCAL @-@ 69 languages , but in 1973 David H. Ahl released BASIC Computer Games , a book of games written in the BASIC programming language and the first million @-@ selling computer book , which included his version of The Sumer Game . This expanded version of the game , titled Hamurabi , quickly became the more prominent version due to the popularity of both the book and the programming language . Hamurabi influenced many later strategy and simulation games and is also an antecedent to the city @-@ building genre .

= = Gameplay = =

Hamurabi is a text @-@ based strategy video game centered on resource management in which the player , identified in the text as the ancient Babylonian king Hammurabi , enters numbers in response to questions posed by the game . The resources that the player must manage are people , acres of land , and bushels of grain . These are managed over the course of ten rounds , each of which represents a year . Each person can farm a set amount of land , which produces grain . Grain , in turn , can be used to feed people , who otherwise die the following round , or planted for the following year 's crop . The player may also buy or sell land to their neighbors each turn in exchange for grain . Each round begins with an adviser stating " Hamurabi : I beg to report to you " the current status of the city , including the prior year 's harvest and change in population , followed by a series of questions as to how many bushels of grain to spend on land , seeds , and feeding the people .

The game 's variations are driven by random numbers : the price of land is randomly decided each round from between 17 and 26 bushels per acre , the amount of bushels generated each round is randomly decided , random amounts of bushels are eaten by rats , and new people come to the city each year in random amounts . Each year also presents the possibility of a plague reducing the population by half . The game ends after ten rounds , or earlier if the entire population of the city dies or at least 45 percent of the people starve in a single round . The end @-@ game appraisal , added in the 1973 version of the game , compares the player to historical rulers ? such as " Your heavy @-@ handed performance smacks of Nero and Ivan IV . "

= = Development = =

In 1968 , Digital Equipment Corporation ( DEC ) employee Richard Merrill invented the FOCAL programming language . As an early program for the language , fellow employee Doug Dyment developed The Sumer Game , programming it for a DEC PDP @-@ 8 minicomputer . The game is sometimes erroneously attributed to Merrill in 1969 , but a 1973 program catalog by the Digital Equipment Computer Users Society ( DECUS ) lists Dyment as the original developer . The game was originally described as : " This is a simulation program / game which will run on a minimal PDP @-@ 8 system . The economy of a Sumerian city in the year 3000 B. C. is simulated in the fashion of a modern @-@ day ' business game . ' " " Business games " were text @-@ based business management simulation games , such as The Management Game , which was used in business schools such as at Carnegie Mellon University since at least 1958 . By 1961 , there were over 89 different business and economic simulation games in use , with various graphical capabilities . In

1966 , IBM employee William McKay developed a business simulation called The Sumerian Game for the Board of Cooperative Educational Services in Northern Westchester County , New York . It is not known whether The Sumer Game was inspired by the prior Sumerian game , which was a much more in @-@ depth text @-@ based economic simulation intended for children , developed in consultation with ancient Middle East history experts .

Multiple versions of the The Sumer Game were created ; the 1973 DECUS catalog additionally lists a French @-@ language version by Belgians J. F. Champarnaud and F. H. Bostem for the FOCAL @-@ 69 version of the language , and a 1978 catalog adds Ruben by James R. B. Howard II and Jimmie B. Fletcher , " a modification of the " King of Sumeria " game " with additional features . The French version of the game , however , despite being listed as " Sumer ( French ) " , described itself not as a translation of the original game , but as a translation of " Hamurabi ( The Sumer Game ) " , due to another version of the game which was already released by then .

Around 1971 , DEC employee David H. Ahl had written a version of The Sumer Game in the BASIC programming language . Unlike FOCAL , BASIC was run not just on mainframe computers and minicomputers , but also on personal computers , then termed microcomputers , making it a much more popular language . In 1973 , Ahl published BASIC Computer Games , a best @-@ selling book of games written in BASIC whose 1978 edition was the first million @-@ selling computer book , which included his version of The Sumer Game . The expanded version was renamed Hamurabi and added an end @-@ of @-@ game performance appraisal . The popularity of both the book and the programming language itself meant that Ahl 's version of the game became the more widely known version over the relatively obscure original , as evidenced by the 1973 French FOCAL version considering " Hamurabi " to be the more prominent name . BASIC Computer Games noted that the game was a modification of a game " written in FOCAL at DEC " , but listed the author as " unknown . " The 1978 edition of the book noted that the game 's name was intended to be " Hammurabi " , the correct spelling of the Babylonian king , but not only was one " m " dropped in the file name to fit in an eight @-@ character limit , but Ahl consistently misspelled the name inside of the game , leading to the generally accepted name of the game to be Hamurabi .

= = Legacy = =

In addition to the multiple versions of Hamurabi , several simulation games have been created as expansions of the core game . These include Kingdom ( 1974 ) by Lee Schneider and Todd Voros , which was then expanded to Dukedom ( 1976 ) . Other derivations include King ( 1978 ) by James A. Storer , and Santa Paravia en Fiumaccio ( 1978 ) by George Blank ; Santa Paravia added the concept of city building management to the basic structure of Hamurabi , making it an antecedent to the city @-@ building genre as well as an early strategy game . Hamurabi held the status as the forerunner of economic simulation games even after the creation of its more complicated descendants ; as late as 1983 's M.U.L.E. , critics described games with similar systems in terms of being similar to Hamurabi .