

= Myst IV : Revelation =

Myst IV : Revelation is the fourth installment in the Myst computer game series , developed and published by Ubisoft . Revelation was the first game in the series released exclusively on a DVD @-@ ROM format ; a multiple CD @-@ ROM version was not produced as it would have taken twelve compact discs to fit all the data . Like Myst III : Exile , Revelation combines pre @-@ rendered graphics with digital video , but also features real @-@ time 3D effects for added realism .

The plot of Revelation ties up loose ends from the original Myst . The player is summoned by Atrus , a man who creates links to other worlds known as Ages by writing special linking books . Almost twenty years earlier , Atrus ' two sons nearly destroyed all of his linking books and were imprisoned ; Atrus now wishes to see if his sons ' imprisonment has reformed them . The player ends up traveling to each brother 's prison , in an effort to recover Atrus ' daughter Yeesha from the brothers ' plot .

Development of Revelation lasted more than three years ; Ubisoft had as many as eighty employees working on the game . Musician Peter Gabriel lent his voice and a song to the game 's audio ; the original score was written by Exile 's composer Jack Wall . Overall , reception to the game was positive ; reviewers lauded the impressive visuals , sound , and puzzles . Publications such as Computer Gaming World took issue with the control scheme of the game . Revelation is the last game in the Myst series to use both prerendered backgrounds and full @-@ motion video ; the final game in the series , End of Ages , is rendered in real @-@ time throughout .

= = Gameplay = =

Myst IV : Revelation is an adventure game in which the player experiences gameplay from the eyes of an unnamed protagonist referred to as the Stranger . Players explore interactive worlds known as Ages by using the mouse or keyboard , solving puzzles and uncovering the game 's narrative . Players cannot move freely across each Age ; instead , as in the previous games in the Myst series , they travel by clicking set locations called " nodes " , where players can rotate their view in any direction . Revelation also features a " Zip " mode , which allows a method of rapidly crossing explored areas by skipping intermediate nodes ; areas that can be instantly traveled to are stored as thumbnail representations for rapid movement across Ages .

The mouse cursor helps to provide visual cues for player actions and movement . The cursor appears as a hand that changes depending on what the player is hovering the cursor over . For example , to move in a direction , the cursor changes to point in the intended direction . If players can view an item in greater detail , the cursor changes to a hand holding a magnifying glass . By clicking and dragging the cursor , the player performs actions such as pushing , pulling , and tapping items .

Revelation features several gameplay enhancements that aid puzzle solving and plot progression . Early in the game , players receive a camera , which can be used to take screenshots or pictures of clues . Players can use an on @-@ screen journal to jot down notes instead of having to write down clues as with previous Myst games . Much of the game 's story is revealed via flashbacks triggered by an amulet that has the power to relay memories attached to objects . Zip mode , the amulet , the camera , and the journal are available via a menu on the bottom of the game screen .

= = Plot = =

Atrus calls the Stranger to his home in Tomahna to request his friend 's assistance . Atrus is the writer of special books , which serve as links to worlds known as Ages . Twenty years earlier , his two sons , Sirrus and Achenar , destroyed his library on Myst and trapped their parents in order to plunder the wealth of Atrus ' Ages . The Stranger 's intervention saved Atrus , who had imprisoned his sons via traps intended for thieves . Atrus ' wife Catherine hopes that , after twenty years , they have finally repented for their crimes . Atrus is not as sure his sons have reformed , and so wishes the Stranger to act as an impartial judge . After being knocked unconscious by an explosion , the Stranger realizes that Yeesha , Atrus ' daughter , has disappeared .

The Stranger sets out to find Yeesha , travelling to the prison Ages of Spire and Haven . On Spire , Sirrus has used his scientific knowledge to craft explosives , allowing him to breach the chamber that contained the linking book back to Tomahna , and has escaped ; journeying to Haven reveals that Sirrus has also freed Achenar . The Stranger journeys to the Age of Serenia and encounters Achenar , holding a " Life Stone " ; Achenar tells the Stranger that Sirrus is mad and has captured Yeesha , reveals that he kept a journal from twenty years earlier hidden on the island , and warns the Stranger not to let Atrus come after them . Achenar 's journal reveals that he and Sirrus planned to trap their mother Catherine on Riven and use a " Memory Chamber " , a gigantic flower @-@ like structure used to preserve the memories of the dead , to take control of Atrus ' body and steal his knowledge of the Art of Writing . The Life Stone that Achenar stole is used to power the Memory Chambers , leaving the current one in danger of collapse . Shortly afterwards , the Stranger finds Sirrus in an underwater harvester used for collecting memory globes for storing those memories ; he blows up the harvester and flees to an older Memory Chamber , decrepit and abandoned . After encountering the Stranger there , Sirrus tells the Stranger that Achenar is the guilty one , and asks the Stranger to find Atrus and bring him to Serenia to set things right .

Finding that the old Memory Chamber door has been locked by Sirrus with a special color @-@ code combination , the Stranger goes to the active Memory Chamber to seek aid from the Serenian Protectors , who believe that the answers can be found in their " mirror realm " , known simply as Dream . Obtaining a " spirit guide " , the Stranger enters Dream and interacts with their guide , who tells them to interact with the Ancestors , the spirits of all Serenians who have died and had their memories preserved , to bring them into harmony . After bringing the Ancestors into harmony , the Stranger discovers the combination to Sirrus ' color @-@ code lock . Returning to the " waking world " and entering the old Memory Chamber , the Stranger finds Yeesha strapped into a chair , and she begs to be released from it with a silver lever . At that moment , Achenar arrives with a crossbow and the Life Stone , and warns that Sirrus used the Memory Chamber to remove Yeesha 's memories and transfer his own into her body ; Achenar points to an amber lever , which will reverse the mind @-@ transfer .

At this point , as in the other games , the ending varies . Delaying too long will result in Yeesha (who is in fact Sirrus) taking Achenar 's crossbow and shooting first him , then the Stranger . The silver lever will release Yeesha (again , possessed by Sirrus) , who drops a large stone on Achenar and the Stranger , and then shoots the Stranger dead . In the good ending , the Stranger pulls the amber lever , reversing the mind @-@ transfer process . But because of the age of the Memory Chamber , it becomes unstable ; Achenar tells the Stranger to return to Dream and set Yeesha 's memories right , while he uses the Life Stone to stabilize the chamber by inserting it into the chamber 's shrine , poisoning him with its contained toxic spores . In Dream , the Stranger finds a monstrous creature , representing Sirrus ' Dream @-@ form , anchored to Yeesha 's essence and preventing her from returning to her body ; with no spirit guide , Sirrus is forced to cling to Yeesha to avoid being lost forever . He maintains his anchors by jumbling up Yeesha 's memories . The Stranger restores Yeesha 's memories and frees her from Sirrus ' grasp ; Sirrus ' Dream @-@ form is destroyed by the shifting waves of Dream , killing him . The Stranger awakens to find Achenar , fatally poisoned , confirming that the transfer was successful ; he dies shortly afterward . The Stranger then returns to Tomahna to meet with Atrus , who says that Catherine has taken Yeesha to Tay (the " rebel Age " used to evacuate Catherine 's people in Riven) , and remarks that while his sons are gone , his daughter is safe .

= = Development = =

When Mattel Interactive still owned the rights to the Myst series , development of Myst IV was contracted out to DreamForge Entertainment , developers of the game Sanitarium ; Dreamforge was hired before Presto Studios to develop Myst III : Exile . Dreamforge 's Myst used real @-@ time graphics , and was two years into development and twenty percent complete when Ubisoft , who had by this point acquired the rights to the series , cancelled the project and decided to restart development from scratch internally .

According to Geneviève Lord , Revelation 's producer , concluding the story of the two brothers had originally been intended as the plot for Myst III , but due to a limited amount of time to develop the game , as well as to not interfere with Dreamforge 's Myst game , whose plot details were still forming , the plot was dropped and then redeveloped when Ubisoft began work on Myst IV . Cyan , Myst and Riven 's developer , set down " a certain number of rules " that Ubisoft had to follow , according to Lord , but otherwise the team was free to develop new ideas , keeping in the spirit of Myst lore .

Ubisoft 's development of Revelation took over three years and more than eighty employees . Early on , the development team made the decision to use pre-rendered graphics for the game , to match the style of previous Myst games . This proved to be a challenge , as the studio had never developed a pre-rendered game before , and had to hire over fifty new employees who had experience in the field . Full production was started on the game before artistic direction and engine development tools were fully established , and the resulting lack of focus and communication meant that a bad working relationship existed between the game designers , programmers , and modelers for most of the production .

As an improvement over the prerendered technology present in Myst , Riven , and Exile , Revelation uses its " ALIVE " engine to animate nearly everything in the game . The water animations , for example , are fully rendered for each location . The trees sway in the breeze , and the sky has moving clouds . Wildlife includes creatures that walk through the environment and occasionally interact with the player . The game also features a number of effects applied in real time , such as lens flares , dynamic lighting , and an optional focal blur . In a trend started by the original Myst , the game uses live actors to play the game 's roles in live-action video sequences . There are more than 70 minutes of video , and the game allows players to look around and interact with the video while it is playing .

== Audio ==

Jack Wall composed , conducted , and produced the music for Revelation ; the game was his second game score , following the music for Myst III : Exile . Wall was initially a sound engineer and producer , and stated composing " was kind of like a next step for me , rather than something I decided to do early on " . The success and recognition of Exile 's score landed Wall the job of writing Revelation 's music with a budget of \$ 100 ,000 ? twice the amount he had worked with for Exile .

Wall reused , reorchestrated and expanded themes composed by previous Myst composer Robyn Miller ; for example , Wall reused Atrus ' Theme from Riven and the brothers ' leitmotifs from the original game . Wall credited the Myst universe and story with allowing him to write music " Western ears are somewhat less accustomed to " ; Revelation 's score was inspired by Eastern European music that Wall enjoyed in the 1990s .

In addition to Jack Wall 's score , the game features a song by Peter Dinklage entitled " Curtains " , originally a B-side from Dinklage 's single " Don 't Give Up " . Dinklage also performed a voiceover for the game .

== Reception ==

Overall , Revelation was received positively by critics ; the game garnered 82 % and 81 % averages on aggregate sites Metacritic and GameRankings , respectively ; the Xbox version of the game received less favorable scores than the PC version .

As with previous Myst games , the visuals and interactivity of Revelation were singled out as the strongest features . Reviewers praised the use of subtle animations to bring the scenery to life ; GameSpot 's Greg Kasavin stated that the additions " truly helps make each scene in the game seem like more than just a panoramic picture , and instead it feels like a real place " . Jack Wall 's score and the sound design were consistently praised . The addition of the in-game camera and notes system was also positively received . PC Zone proclaimed that although it would have

been easy for the developers to lose heart after the disappointing *Uru : Ages Beyond Myst* , Ubisoft had instead produced " one of the most polished games " the reviewer , Paul Presley , had ever come across .

Certain reviewers criticized aspects of the gameplay that had not been fixed or altered from previous *Myst* titles . *Computer Gaming World* , for example , complained about having to hunt for the small hotspots that allowed actions to occur . A reviewer for *The Houston Chronicle* judged the method of traveling from node to node as tiresome to navigate . Another complaint was that the slow cursor animations made searching for actions occasionally tedious . Many publications noted the rather steep computer requirements ; in addition to requiring a DVD @-@ ROM drive , the game took up more than 7 gigabytes when fully installed . Charles Herold of *The New York Times* , the only mainstream critic with a negative view of *Revelation* 's music , dismissed the score as " tediously literal " .

Revelation would be the last *Myst* game that used prerendered graphics or full motion video . Cyan Worlds , the original developer of both *Myst* and *Riven* , used real @-@ time rendered graphics for the next installment in the series , *Myst V : End of Ages* . *Myst V* was announced as the final game in the series .