= Medieval : Total War =

Medieval : Total War is a turn @-@ based strategy and real @-@ time tactics computer game developed by The Creative Assembly and published by Activision . Set in the Middle Ages , it is the second game in the Total War series , following on from the 2000 title Shogun : Total War . Originally announced in August 2001 , the game was released in North America on 19 August 2002 and in Europe on 30 August for Microsoft Windows .

Following a similar form of play to Shogun : Total War , the player builds a dynastic empire in Europe , North Africa and the Middle East , spanning the period of 1087 to 1453 . Gameplay is both strategic and tactical , with strategy played out in turn @-@ based fashion on a province @-@ by @-@ province level , while military units of varying types and capabilities fight against each other in real time on a 3D battlefield .

Medieval : Total War received acclaim from reviewers ; several critics commending it as a milestone in gaming . The real @-@ time battles were praised for their realism and the new feature of siege battles but also received some criticism for unit management . The depth and complexity of the strategy portion was also received well by reviewers , together with well integrated historical accuracy . The game was a commercial success , topping the British video game chart upon release .

= = Gameplay = =

Medieval : Total War is based upon the building of an empire across medieval Europe , North Africa and the Middle East . It focuses on the warfare , religion and politics of the time to ultimately lead the player in conquest of the known world . As with the preceding Total War game , Shogun : Total War , the game consists of two broad areas of gameplay : a turn @-@ based campaign map that allows the user to move armies across provinces , control agents , diplomacy , religion , and other tasks needed to run their faction , and a real @-@ time battlefield , where the player directs the land battles and sieges that occur .

The strategic portion of the game divides the campaign map among twenty factions from the period , with a total of twelve being playable . The initial extent of each major faction 's territory , and the factions available , depends on the starting period of the game , Early (1087) , High (1205) or Late (1321) , reflecting the historical state of these factions over time . The factions themselves represent many of the major nations at the time , including the Byzantine Empire , France , England , the Holy Roman Empire and the Turks . Several factions , such as the Golden Horde , emerge during the course of play at their historical time . These factions , together with several other factions appearing at the start of the campaign , are unavailable to the player in the main campaign . Each faction varies in territory , religion and units ; however , factions of the same culture share many of their core units .

In addition to the main campaign , Medieval : Total War also features a game mode where the player can undertake various historical campaigns and battles . Historical campaigns allow the player to control a series of famous battles from a war of the medieval period , such as the Hundred Years War and the Crusades , playing as historic commanders like Richard the Lionheart . Individual historic battles have the player controlling a historical figure in an isolated battle that occurred in the era , such as controlling William Wallace through the Battle of Stirling Bridge .

= = = Campaign = = =

The main campaign of Medieval : Total War involves the player choosing one of the fourteen playable factions and eventually leading them in conquest on the strategy map . Each of the factions controls a number of historical provinces , which on the map contain a castle and , if located by the sea , a port as well . In the campaign , the player controls construction , unit recruitment and the movement of armies , fleets and agents in each of these provinces , using these means to acquire and defend the provinces . Diplomacy and economics are two other aspects the player can use to

advance their aims , as well as having access to more clandestine means such as espionage and assassination . Religion is very important in the game , with the player able to convert provinces to their own religions to cement the people 's loyalty . Another campaign mode is available , called " Glorious Achievements " , in which each faction has several historically @-@ based goals to achieve , which score points ; the faction with the most achievement points wins the game . The campaign mode is turn @-@ based , with each turn representing one year , allowing the player to attend to all needs of the faction before allowing the artificial intelligence to carry out the other factions ' moves and decisions .

The campaign is carried out in a similar fashion to Shogun : Total War , but features many enhancements . The game is set mainly in Europe , but also features the Middle East and North Africa . Production can occur in every province , with the player building from one of the hundreds of connected buildings and units in the game 's technology tree . Income to develop provinces and armies comes from taxation of the provinces and trade with neighbouring provinces . There is no specific technology research , but several advances , such as gunpowder , do become available over time . Castles provide the basis for more developed construction in the game , with players having to upgrade to the next castle level to be able to build more advanced buildings ; upgrades such as a curtain wall and guard towers can be added to individual castles . Many buildings have economic functions , such as trading posts that generate money , while others are military buildings and allow the training of more advanced unit types . Whilst there are many common unit types , several unique units are available . These units are either restricted to a single faction or are dependent on the control of a particular province . Each unit possesses different strengths and weaknesses .

Each faction has a variety of different generals , some related to the royal family and in line to the throne , and the rest members of the nobility , who command units in the field and can assume offices of the state . Each of these characters has a base ranking for several attributes , such as command ability and piety , which affects how they carry out duties on the battlefield and governing the provinces . These attributes , and other factors such as health , are influenced by ? Vices and Virtues ? , defining the character 's personality and actions . These traits can be acquired seemingly randomly , or may be given to the character through actions in the game . Non @-@ military units , collectively referred to as " agents " , may be trained . The types of agent a faction is able to produce depends on its religion , but all factions have emissaries , spies and assassins available to them . Emissaries conduct diplomatic tasks such as start alliances between two factions , or bribe foreign armies ; spies allow detailed information to be collected from foreign provinces or characters , while assassins can attempt to kill both foreign and domestic units . Factions also have access to various religious agents to spread their religion , and Christian factions can marry their princesses to domestic generals or other factions for political reasons . Occasionally in the game , a character will be trained bearing the name of a famous historical figure , with better than normal starting abilities . A general such as Richard the Lionheart , El Cid or Saladin will be a capable military commander , while a bishop such as Thomas Becket will have higher piety than normal .

Rebellions can occur if the loyalty of a particular province falls too low , with a rebel army appearing in the province to attempt to assume control from the owners . Civil wars may also take place if several generals commanding large armies have sufficiently low loyalty . In the event of a civil war , the player is given the choice to back either the current rulers or the rebels . It had been planned to allow other factions who had established a prior claim to the throne by marriage to princesses to join in a civil war to claim the throne for themselves ; however , this was never implemented . Naval warfare is carried out upon the campaign map , where ships can be built and organised into fleets . These fleets can be used to control the game 's sea regions and form sea lanes , allowing trade and troop movement between provinces that have constructed a port . Fleets can engage in sea battles with foreign fleets , although unlike land battles these are resolved by the computer . Religion plays an important aspect in Medieval : Total War , with religious differences between the Catholic , Orthodox and Muslim factions affecting diplomacy and population loyalty . Catholic factions must also respond to the wishes of the Papal States ; factions gain favour by refraining from hostilities with other Catholic nations and responding to Crusades , else they run the risk of excommunication .

The option to launch a holy war in the form of a Crusade or Jihad is open to both Catholic and Muslim factions .

=== Warfare ===

The battle system takes place on a 3D battlefield in real @-@ time , instead of the turn @-@ based system of the campaign . Battles are similar to those in Shogun : Total War , where two armies from opposing factions engage in combat until one side is defeated or withdraws . Warfare in Medieval : Total War occurs when the player or the artificial intelligence moves their armies into a province held by a hostile faction . The player is then presented with the option of fighting the battle on the battle map , or allowing the computer to automatically resolve it . Alongside the campaign battles , players have the option of both historical and custom battles , where the player controls what climate , units and terrain will be present on the battlefield .
During battles , players take control of a medieval army containing various units , such as knights and longbowmen , each of which has various advantages , disadvantages and overall effectiveness . Players must use medieval tactics in order to defeat their enemy , using historical formations to give units advantages in different situations . All units in the game gain experience points , known as " valour " , which improves unit effectiveness in combat as it increases . Every battle map contains various terrain based upon that of the province on the campaign map , with separate maps for each of the borders between provinces ? four hundred unique maps are available for the game . The climate , surroundings and building style for every map varies depending on the part of the world it is located in ; for example , a map based in the Middle East will have a hot , sunny climate , sandy terrain and Islamic architecture . Sieges are an important aspect of the game introduced to the Total War series , occurring when the invading army elects to attack the defending army which has retreated inside the province 's castle . Upon starting the engagement , the attacker has to fight their way through the castle 's defences , winning the battle once the enemy units have been defeated . Each unit in the game has morale , which can increase if a battle is going well for their faction , or decrease in situations such as sustained heavy casualties . Morale can drop low enough to eventually force a unit to rout off the battlefield , with the player having the option to attempt to rally the men back into the battle through their general . Each side 's army can capture routing enemy units and ransom them back to the owning faction , with important generals having greater ransom values .

=== Multiplayer ===

Medieval : Total War features a multiplayer game mode similar to that in Shogun : Total War , where players can engage in real @-@ time battles with up to seven other players . Players create and control armies from the factions available in the game , where players can use them to compete in online tournaments or casual battles . The campaign mode cannot be played multiplayer ; this feature was later added to the Total War series in Empire : Total War ? but only at the beta stage , before being later removed .

== Development ==

Medieval : Total War was originally announced by The Creative Assembly on 3 August 2001 , with the working title of Crusader : Total War . Development of the game started shortly after the release of Shogun : Total War . Early in development it was decided to change the name to Medieval : Total War ; this was to have a name that better reflected the scope of the game . In a press release , The Creative Assembly announced that the game would be published by Activision instead of Electronic Arts , the publisher of the previous games . The Creative Assembly also outlined the features of the game , including the game covering the medieval era from the 11th to 15th century , with players being able to participate in various historical scenarios of the time , such as the Hundred Years ' War . Media releases over the subsequent months gave screenshots of the game , with more

information on Medieval : Total War 's features . The game uses an updated version of the game engine used in Shogun : Total War , allowing larger battles than previously possible with an increased troop limit of ten thousand . The improved game engine also allowed more battle maps than previously possible , now based upon where the conflicting armies are located on the strategy map . Other new battlefield enhancements included terrain detailed with villages and vegetation and improved castle siege mechanics , with players now having to focus on destroying the walls before assaulting and capturing the castle . The game features improved artificial intelligence from Shogun : Total War , with the individual unit AI and the tactical AI ? which controls the overall army tactics ? separated to more effectively control the opposing forces .

The Creative Assembly 's creative director , Michael de Plater , stated in an interview that " We were never 100 percent satisfied with the name ' Crusader ' ... it didn 't cover the full scope or the rich diversity of the game " . The focus on the medieval period was chosen because " it was perfectly suited to the direction in which we wanted to take the gameplay .... we wanted to have great castles and spectacular sieges . " Designer Mike Brunton wrote before the game 's release that sieges were one of the most important features to be added to the Total War series , explaining how it led to increasing the troop limit from twenty in Shogun : Total War to over a hundred in Medieval : Total War . For increased authenticity , research was carried out into the medieval period aspects such as assassinations and historical figures . Leaders from the period were included in the game ; to represent their personalities and actions the " vices and virtues " system was incorporated into the game , designed to make characters more realistic in their actions .

A demonstration of the game was released on 26 June 2002 , featuring tutorial missions and a full single @-@ player mission . The game was released on 19 August in North America and on 30 August in Europe . The Creative Assembly released a patch on 5 November 2002 , which was targeted to fix the several bugs that were still present in the game . A new historical battle based on the Battle of Stamford Bridge was later released by The Creative Assembly , made available through Wargamer .

= = Reception = =

Medieval : Total War received " favorable " reviews according to the review aggregation website Metacritic . In the United Kingdom , the game went straight to the top of the video game chart after its release , staying at the top for two weeks . The United States charts saw Medieval : Total War reach fourth in its second week after release , behind Warcraft III , The Sims and its expansion The Sims : Vacation .

Reviewers praised the many different factors adding to complexity of the campaign , ActionTrip noting that " Medieval adds a new strategic balance to the game , which teaches that great empires come with an even greater responsibility " . Eurogamer praised the way the player had to manage production queues , guard the loyalty of important generals and make use of spies and assassins , calling the level of control " far ahead of anything seen in the previous game " ; many other reviews shared a similar view . The number of factions in the game , each with their own historically accurate units and territories , was commended , with IGN and Game Informer stating it " gives the game huge replay value " , with GameSpot adding " the strategic portion now has a lot more options " . Many reviewers gave praise to the fact the historical setting of the Middle Ages was said to be well integrated into the game ; PC Zone acknowledging the " brutality and instability " of the era is well included in the game , with GameSpot praising the religion in the game , " religion played an enormous role in shaping history , and so it is in the game " . GameSpy stated that the different historical starting positions made the games attention to detail " impressive and noteworthy " ; the historical battle system was also highly received from Computer Gaming World , stating that they successfully " provide an authentic glimpse of the past " . However , GameSpot commented on a problem with a lack of information , " you 'll have a tough time keeping track of all the goings @-@ on in your provinces " , suggesting this could be solved through a more informative interface . Overall , reviewers highly complimented the strategic gameplay , many saying it was similar to a Civilization @-@ style game .

The battle system in Medieval : Total War was considered by many reviewers to be the highlight of the game . In their review , Eurogamer felt " The sensation of scale and drama in these conflicts is incredible " , praising the visual effects and combat . The different battlefields and their environments were praised by IGN , with ActionTrip agreeing that " Medieval : Total War looks better than Shogun " , adding that the terrain and units are more detailed than those in Shogun : Total War . GameSpot praised the realistic battles , mentioning that the real @-@ world battlefield considerations like fatigue , ammunition , facing , and morale included in the game was a " welcome change " . GameSpy also stated the " chaotic " battles were appropriate to the era , but criticised the siege aspect , claiming it to be " too plain and underwhelming " , with a lack of detail compared to the other 3D elements . The soundtrack to the game was well received by IGN , " The soundtrack is full of rousing context @-@ sensitive orchestra moments which get you in the mood for bloody slaughter " commenting it is fitting for a game that " delivers body counts like no other " ActionTrip also admired how the game 's music changed pace as the battle commenced , praising The Creative Assembly for its " masterfully placed audio and visual effects " . The artificial intelligence for Medieval : Total War was thought to be much improved over its predecessor , CGW mentioning the AI was intelligent enough to prevent brute force alone from winning fights . Criticism was received on the larger battles giving low frame rates and performance , while ActionTrip also noted several unit management issues with path @-@ finding and unit facing , stating " it 's demoralising to see archers facing the wrong way " .

Medieval : Total War received very favourable reviews , despite a few criticisms , gaining high distinction from the industry . GameSpot summarised by saying that while the game " isn 't well suited for the casual gamer " , most strategy gamers will " find a lot to like in it , for a very long time . " Although GameSpy described Medieval : Total War as " hit [ting] a few bumps in the road " , they mentioned the game has enough to keep players interested for many months . Eurogamer was enthusiastic in pronouncing Medieval : Total War " a milestone in gaming " . IGN closed by stating that the game " delivers an encompassing experience " , while CGW finished by proclaiming " there simply isn 't enough room in this magazine to extol its virtues . "

Medieval : Total War was the recipient of a number of industry awards . PC Gamer UK named it the top game of 2002 , replacing the previous entry , Valve Software 's Half @-@ Life . In awarding the distinction , PC Gamer stated : " It was the only contender . " The game received an EMMA award in Technical Excellence for its audio by Jeff van Dyck , commended for having a " game soundtrack and score that is lush , well @-@ mixed , and adds dynamically to the gameplay . The extensive diverse musical tracks sound authentic and fully engage the user . " The game received a number of distinctions from game publications , such as the " Best Strategy Game of 2002 " award from GameSpy , mentioning " It 's not that Medieval is just two great games in one . It 's two games that feed off of one another for the ultimate rush . " The Creative Assembly itself was also awarded the European Computer Trade Show PC Game Developer of the Year award , for the production of Medieval : Total War .

= = Expansions and versions = =

The Creative Assembly announced the development of an expansion pack , Medieval : Total War ? Viking Invasion , on 7 January 2003 . The Viking Invasion expansion pack adds a Viking campaign taking place from 793 to 1066 , set upon an expanded map of the British Isles and western Scandinavia . The campaign replaces the original factions with earlier Anglo @-@ Saxon and Celtic kingdoms such as Wessex , Mercia , Wales and Scotland , as well as the Vikings . The Viking faction is designed to raid the British Isles ; to achieve this the faction has access to faster ships and gains money for every building destroyed upon the battle map . The Anglo @-@ Saxon and Celtic factions have the goal of repelling the Vikings and ultimately controlling the British Isles . New historical units were included with the expansion pack , such as the huskarls . Medieval : Total War : Viking Invasion brought several enhancements that were also added to the original campaign : flaming ammunition giving the player an option to set alight enemy castles , and a pre @-@ battle deployment screen , allowing the player to organise their forces and view the terrain and opposing

forces before the battle begins . In addition , three new factions were added to the main Medieval : Total War campaign , along with ribauldequin artillery and the game 's patch . The expansion pack was released on 7 May 2003 in the United States and on 9 May in the United Kingdom .

Activision , the game 's publisher , produced a combination of Medieval : Total War and Medieval : Total War : Viking Invasion , called the Medieval : Total War Battle Collection , released on 7 January 2004 . Medieval : Total War Battle Collection contained both games , patched to the latest version , and their manuals . On 30 June 2006 , Sega , the company that took over the publishing of the series , released a collector 's edition version of the Total War series , called Total War : Eras . The edition included patched versions of Shogun : Total War , Medieval : Total War and Rome : Total War , together with their expansion packs , a documentary detailing the creation of the game series , and Total War memorabilia .

= = = Reception = = =

Viking Invasion received " favorable " reviews , albeit slightly less than the original Medieval : Total War , according to Metacritic . Reviewers felt the new gameplay features for the Vikings were the most important enhancement of the expansion pack , with Eurogamer commending the Vikings ' raiding system as something that fixes what " the original Medieval lacked " . ActionTrip praised the new campaign as being a challenge for players : " even on the normal difficulty setting , Viking Invasion is a very challenging game " , a view shared by other critics . The pre @-@ battle screen was commended by GameSpot , calling it a " handy new feature . " GameSpot also praised the new additions to the original campaign , mentioning they have " made castle sieges more interesting " . The main criticism for Medieval : Total War ? Viking Invasion was the graphics , with both ActionTrip and Eurogamer stating that they were " starting to feel a little bit creaky " . A lack of new multiplayer options was considered by GameSpot to be " unfortunate " , mentioning that " a multiplayer campaign option would have been a great new feature " . Overall , the expansion was received well by critics in the industry . IGN concluded by saying fans " won 't be disappointed with the Viking Invasion " , while Actiontrip finished stating ; " the graphics are beginning to look old " but the challenge made the expansion " worth it " . The review by GameSpot finished by saying " overall , the expansion is a great addition to Medieval " , and Eurogamer concluded with praising the addition it made to Medieval : Total War : " It 's a worthy expansion pack to a truly excellent game " .