

= God of War : Ghost of Sparta =

God of War : Ghost of Sparta is a third person action @-@ adventure video game developed by Ready at Dawn and Santa Monica Studio , and published by Sony Computer Entertainment ( SCE ) . It was first released for the PlayStation Portable ( PSP ) handheld console on November 2 , 2010 . The game is the sixth installment in the God of War series and the fourth chronologically . Loosely based on Greek mythology , Ghost of Sparta is set in ancient Greece with vengeance as its central motif . The player controls the protagonist Kratos , the God of War . Kratos is still haunted by the visions of his mortal past and decides to explore his origins . In Atlantis , he finds his mother Callisto , who claims that his brother Deimos is still alive . Kratos then journeys to the Domain of Death to rescue his brother . After initial resentment from Deimos , the brothers team up to battle the God of Death , Thanatos .

The gameplay is similar to that of the previous installments , and focuses on combo @-@ based combat , achieved through the player 's main weapon ? the Blades of Athena ? and a secondary weapon acquired later in the game . It features quick time events that require the player to complete various game controller actions in a timed sequence to defeat stronger enemies and bosses . Up to three magical attacks and a power @-@ enhancing ability can be used as alternative combat options . Ghost of Sparta also features puzzles and platforming elements . The combat system was updated with 25 percent more gameplay than its PSP predecessor , God of War : Chains of Olympus .

Ghost of Sparta received praise for its story , gameplay , and graphics . Several critics agree that it is the best @-@ looking game on the PSP . Others have compared the overall game to those on the PlayStation 3 ( PS3 ) , and some have said that the graphics are better than those of the PlayStation 2 ( PS2 ) . Ghost of Sparta received several awards , including " Best Handheld Game " , " Best PSP Game " , and " PSP Game of Show " at the 2010 Electronic Entertainment Expo ( E3 ) , and " Best Handheld Game " at the 2010 Spike Video Game Awards . By June 2012 , it had sold almost 1 @.@ 2 million copies worldwide , making it the fifteenth best @-@ selling PlayStation Portable game of all time . Together with Chains of Olympus , Ghost of Sparta was remastered and released on September 13 , 2011 , as part of the God of War : Origins Collection and the remastered version was re @-@ released on August 28 , 2012 , as part of the God of War Saga , both for the PlayStation 3 .

= = Gameplay = =

The gameplay of God of War : Ghost of Sparta resembles that of the previous installments . It is a third @-@ person single player video game viewed from a fixed camera perspective . The player controls the character Kratos in combo @-@ based combat , platforming , and puzzle game elements , and battles foes who primarily stem from Greek mythology , including minotaurs , cyclopes , harpies , Gorgons , and satyrs . The undead legionnaires , keres wraiths , geryons , automatons , Boreas beasts , and Triton warriors were influenced by the mythology , but created specifically for the game . Platforming elements require the player to climb walls , jump across chasms , swing on ropes , and balance across beams to proceed through sections of the game . Some puzzles are simple , such as moving a box so that the player can use it to access a pathway unreachable with normal jumping , but others are more complex , such as finding several items across different areas of the game to unlock one door . The game features new weapons , magical powers , and navigational abilities not present in previous games and has been cited as featuring 25 percent more gameplay than God of War : Chains of Olympus .

= = = Combat = = =

Kratos ' main weapon is the Blades of Athena , a pair of blades attached to chains that are wrapped around the character 's wrists and forearms . In gameplay , the blades can be swung offensively in various maneuvers . Later in the game , Kratos acquires a new weapon , the Arms of Sparta ? a

spear and shield offering alternative combat options ( e.g. , Kratos can use the shield for defense and the spear for offense , such as throwing it at distant targets ) . Kratos gains a special ability , Thera 's Bane , that infuses his blades with fire , and is similar to the Rage ability in previous games , providing increased attack damage that is strong enough to pierce through enemy armor . As with the Items in God of War III , this ability automatically replenishes itself ( represented by the Fire meter ) , allowing further usage . Both the Arms of Sparta and Thera 's Bane are used to overcome environmental obstacles ( e.g. , certain doors require the use of Thera 's Bane to open ) . Kratos learns to use up to three magical abilities , including the Eye of Atlantis , Scourge of Erinys , and the Horn of Boreas , giving him a variety of ways to attack and kill enemies . The relic Poseidon 's Trident is retained from the prior installment , which allows him to breathe underwater , a necessary ability as parts of the game require long periods of time there .

The combat system has been updated to allow Kratos to " pummel enemies to the ground as well as throw them " , and perform air @-@ to @-@ air attacks . An " augmented death system " is also used , featuring specific weapon and magic death animations . This game 's challenge mode is called the Challenge of the Gods , which features five Challenges of Ares , with an additional eight Challenges of Athena that can be unlocked . The challenge mode requires players to complete a series of specific tasks ( e.g. , kill all enemies without being attacked ) . A new mode exclusive to this game has been added called The Temple of Zeus , which allows players to sacrifice collected red orbs ( from both in @-@ game and the challenge mode ) to unlock additional features , such as the Challenges of Athena , bonus costumes for Kratos , behind @-@ the @-@ scenes videos , and concept art of the characters and environments . Completing each difficulty level unlocks additional rewards . A Combat Arena ( similar to the version in God of War III ) allows players to pick adversaries and adjust the level of difficulty to improve their skills .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting = = =

As with other games in the God of War franchise , God of War : Ghost of Sparta is set in an alternate version of ancient Greece populated by the Olympian Gods , Titans , and other beings from Greek mythology . With the exception of flashbacks , the events are set between the games God of War ( 2005 ) and Betrayal ( 2007 ) . Several locations are explored , including the fictional city of Atlantis ( and later a sunken version ) . Atlantis is a mythical city erected by the Sea God Poseidon , and houses the Temple of Poseidon . Near the city is real @-@ world location , the Methana Volcano , which is contained by the archimedean screws and is also the prison of the Titan Thera , who is guarded by automatons . On the outskirts of the city is the Temple of the god Thanatos , the location of Death 's Gate and portal to the Domain of Death . Other locations include the Island of Crete and its capital city , Heraklion , the Mounts of Aroania , the ancient city of Sparta ( also home to the Temple of Ares ) , the Mounts of Laconia , and a brief scene above the city of Athens featuring Suicide Bluffs , the highest cliff in the city overlooking the Aegean Sea and a recurring location during Kratos ' adventures .

= = = Characters = = =

The protagonist of the game is Kratos ( voiced by Terrence C. Carson ) , the God of War after having killed the former , Ares ( who appears in flashbacks and voiced by Steven Blum ) . Other characters include Athena ( Erin Torpey ) , the Goddess of Wisdom who warns Kratos about exploring his past ; Deimos ( Mark Deklin ) , the younger brother of Kratos and imprisoned and tortured in the Domain of Death ; Thanatos ( Arthur Burghardt ) , the God of Death and main antagonist ; Callisto ( Deanna Hurstold ) , the mother of Kratos and Deimos ; Thera ( Dee Dee Rescher ) , a Titan imprisoned beneath the Methana Volcano ; and Erinys ( Erin Torpey and Jennifer Hale ) , Thanatos ' daughter . Minor characters include Lanaeus ( Fred Tatasciore ) ; a servant of

Poseidon ; King Midas ( Fred Tatasciore ) , a king whose touch will turn anything to gold ; the gravedigger ( Paul Eiding ) , who warns Kratos to not alienate the gods ; a loyal Spartan soldier ( Gideon Emery ) ; and Poseidon ( Gideon Emery ) , the God of the Sea . Zeus ( Fred Tatasciore ) , the King of the Gods , appears in the " Combat Arena " ( bonus feature ) after the player selects the gravedigger .

= = = Plot = = =

A series of flashbacks reveals that an oracle had foretold that the demise of Olympus would come not by the revenge of the Titans , who had been imprisoned after the Great War , but by a marked warrior . The Olympians Zeus and Ares believed this warrior to be Deimos , the brother of Kratos , due to his strange birthmarks . Ares interrupted the childhood training of Kratos and Deimos , with Athena on hand , and kidnapped Deimos . Kratos attempted to stop Ares , but was swept aside and subsequently scarred across his right eye by the Olympian . Athena stopped Ares from killing Kratos , knowing his eventual destiny . Taken to Death 's Domain , Deimos was imprisoned and tortured by Thanatos . In honor of his sibling , Kratos marked himself with a red tattoo , identical to his brother 's birthmark .

Years later , when the game begins , Kratos has taken Ares ' place as the new God of War on Mount Olympus . Still haunted by visions of his mortal past , Kratos decides against Athena 's advice to explore his past and travels to the Temple of Poseidon , located within the city of Atlantis . The sea monster , Scylla , attacks and destroys Kratos ' vessel off the coast of Atlantis , although the Spartan drives the beast off . After a series of skirmishes across the city , he eventually kills Scylla .

Reaching the temple , Kratos locates his mother , Callisto , who attempts to reveal the identity of his father . When Callisto is suddenly transformed into a hideous beast , Kratos is forced to battle her , and before dying , Callisto thanks him and beseeches him to seek out Deimos in Sparta . Prior to departure , Kratos encounters and frees the trapped Titan , Thera , which causes the eruption of the Methana Volcano , and subsequently destroys the city . During his escape , he has another encounter with the enigmatic gravedigger , who warns him of the consequences of alienating the gods .

After a battle with Erinyes , Kratos arrives in Sparta and witnesses a group of Spartans tearing down a statue of Ares , intent on replacing it with one of Kratos . Kratos then chases a dissenter loyal to Ares into the Spartan Jails , who attempts to kill Kratos by releasing the Piraeus Lion . Defeating both foes , Kratos journeys to the Temple of Ares , where he encounters the spirit of his child self and learns that he must return to the now sunken Atlantis and locate the Domain of Death . Before leaving , a loyal Spartan provides him with his former weapons ? used during Kratos ' days as a Captain of the Spartan army ? the Arms of Sparta . After returning to the sunken Atlantis , Kratos receives great resentment from Poseidon for sinking his beloved city .

Entering the Domain of Death , the Spartan frees his imprisoned brother . Enraged that Kratos had failed to rescue him sooner and stating he will never forgive him , Deimos attacks Kratos , but Thanatos intervenes . The god takes Deimos against his will to Suicide Bluffs ( the site of Kratos ' suicide attempt ) , where Kratos saves Deimos from falling to his death . A grateful Deimos then aids his brother in battling the god with the Arms of Sparta . Thanatos , however , kills Deimos but is destroyed , in turn , by Kratos . Remarking that his brother is finally free , Kratos places Deimos in his grave ( leaving the Arms of Sparta as a grave marker ) , while the gravedigger states that Kratos has become " Death ... the Destroyer of Worlds . " Athena appears , begs for forgiveness , and offers full godhood for not revealing the truth , but Kratos ignores her and returns to Olympus , promising that " the gods will pay for this . " As Kratos is seen leaving , Athena looks apologetically at Kratos and whispers out of his earshot , " Forgive me ... brother . "

In a post @-@ credits scene , the gravedigger places Callisto in a grave by Deimos ( with an empty third grave nearby ) and states " Now ... only one remains . " The final scene is a brooding Kratos sitting on his throne on Mount Olympus .

= = Development = =

God of War : Ghost of Sparta was announced on May 4 , 2010 , on PlayStation.Blog. According to Sony , Ready at Dawn utilized " state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art visual technologies " that allowed " higher quality environments and characters . " Ghost of Sparta apparently offers " over 25 % more gameplay " than its PSP predecessor , Chains of Olympus , while adding more enemies on screen and a greater number of boss encounters . Development of Ghost of Sparta took 23 months to complete . Chains of Olympus Game Director Ru Weerasuriya did not return to direct due to his busy schedule at Ready at Dawn , so Dana Jan , the Lead Level Designer on Chains of Olympus , became director . At Comic @-@ Con 2010 , Jan noted that when development began in 2008 , the goal was to make the game " bigger " than Chains of Olympus , which had apparently " pushed " the PSP to its functional limits . Jan stated that Ghost of Sparta has taken the PSP to its " absolute capacity " , with one additional feature being more on @-@ screen foes . The game concept was originally used as a teaser for players who obtained the platinum trophy from God of War III . The trophy revealed a site called spartansstandtall.com ? it initially featured a simple animation of torrential rain falling into a body of water and a Spartan shield encompassed by a meter on the screen . The meter was speculated to have been filled by players achieving the trophy and reaching the site . On May 4 , 2010 , the meter reached maximum and the site was updated for a final time , revealing an image of Kratos standing above a reflection and the logo for God of War : Ghost of Sparta , as the official site . On June 15 , 2010 , Sony displayed a cinematic trailer narrated by Linda Hunt during their 2010 Electronic Entertainment Expo ( E3 ) Press Conference .

Dana Jan stated the reason they chose to have the game take place between God of War and God of War II was because " It seemed to make a lot of sense to fill in that void . " Jan said with some scenes , " the team wasn 't sure how gamers would react " because " God of War usually doesn 't slow ... down " and the team " worried if these scenes would be captivating enough to keep player interested and still feel like God of War . " For puzzles , Jan stated that they tried to make the outcomes unexpected because players assume that they will have to " push something , carry a body or smash something with [ the ] blades . " Hinting at a possible future installment from Ready at Dawn , Jan stated that he is " intrigued " by the flashbacks in God of War and God of War II and that " There 's definitely a back story to Kratos that nobody 's touched on . " For the character Deimos , Jan stated that the first reference was actually in the Chains of Olympus finale . In the game , Helios states " Do you think that they 'll survive ? " and Athena says " They must . " Jan said that this line was " purposefully put " in that game and that there are also references to Deimos in God of War III . He confirmed that Kratos and Deimos are not twins and that while Kratos ' father is Zeus , " Deimos ' father is more of a mystery . " He confirmed that a character named Dominus appears in the game ( Kratos ' original name ) and " the scene featuring a soldier named Dominus was a nod to that . " He also stated that he does not know where God of War : Betrayal fits chronologically in the series .

Several voice actors returned to reprise their roles from previous installments , including Terrence C. Carson , Erin Torpey , Gideon Emery , Steven Blum , Paul Eiding , and Linda Hunt , who voiced Kratos , Athena , Poseidon , Ares , the gravedigger , and the narrator , respectively . Actors Mark Deklin and Arthur Burghardt voiced the characters of Deimos and Thanatos , respectively . During flashbacks to Kratos ' childhood , Antony Del Rio , Bridger Zadina , and Jennifer Hale provided the respective voices of Kratos , Deimos , and Callisto . Both Erin Torpey and Jennifer Hale voiced the character Erinys via overdubbed voices . Josh Keaton , who had previously voiced the loyal Spartan soldier ( credited as the Last Spartan ) , did not return to reprise the role , and as such , Gideon Emery voiced the character in addition to Poseidon . Series veteran Fred Tatasciore voiced the characters Lanaeus , King Midas , and the minor role of Zeus . The voice directors were Kris Zimmerman and Gordon Hunt .

= = Release = =

The demo for God of War : Ghost of Sparta was available for play at Sony 's E3 2010 booth to

attendees of the event . The 15 @-@ minute sequence pits Kratos against various sea and land enemies , including the main opponent Scylla , a sea monster . The sequence also features Kratos using a new weapon , " Arms of Sparta " ( a spear and shield ) , and the magical attack , " Eye of Atlantis . " On September 3 , 2010 , Ready at Dawn emailed registrants of GodofWar.com and SpartansStandTall.com a voucher for the demo and on September 7 , PlayStation Plus members received early access to it . On September 28 , the demo was made available to all PlayStation Network ( PSN ) members to download from the PlayStation Store .

The game was released in North America on November 2 , 2010 , in mainland Europe on November 3 , in Australia and New Zealand on November 4 , and in the United Kingdom and Ireland on November 5 . By June 2012 , God of War : Ghost of Sparta had sold almost 1 @.@ 2 million copies worldwide . Together with God of War : Chains of Olympus , the game was released as part of the God of War : Origins Collection on September 13 , 2011 , in North America and September 16 in Europe . The collection is a remastered port of both games to the PlayStation 3 , with features including high @-@ definition resolution , stereoscopic 3D , anti @-@ aliased graphics locked in at 60 frames per second , DualShock 3 vibration function , and Trophies . God of War : Origins Collection was also released to download on the PlayStation Store on September 13 in North America ( including full game trials of both games ) . By June 2012 , God of War : Origins Collection had sold 711 @,@ 737 copies worldwide . On August 28 , 2012 , God of War Collection , God of War III , and Origins Collection were released as part of the God of War Saga under Sony 's line of PlayStation Collections for the PlayStation 3 in North America .

= = = Marketing = = =

As a pre @-@ order bonus at select retailers , players received exclusive downloadable content ( DLC ) available via the PlayStation Network . The content included the original soundtrack , a Ghost of Sparta PSP XrossMediaBar ( XMB ) theme , a PS3 dynamic XMB theme ( " Palace of Hades " ) , a PSN Avatar , a Legionnaire Skin for use in @-@ game , and an exclusive documentary , God of War ? Game Directors Live . PSPgo owners received the pre @-@ order items by purchasing the game between November 2 and 23 , 2010 , on the PlayStation Store . GameStop offered an exclusive Challenge arena , " The Forest of the Forgotten " , in addition to the other bonuses .

Ghost of Sparta was also available in a special limited edition PSP bundle pack , which included the game , a voucher to download Chains of Olympus , a UMD of the 2010 film Kick @-@ Ass , a 2 GB Memory Stick Pro Duo , and a special black and red two @-@ toned PSP @-@ 3000 . For a limited time , specially marked packages included a voucher enabling a download of the " Deimos Skin " for use in God of War III . The Deimos Skin was available in the PSP bundle pack , and PSPgo owners received the bonus skin with the pre @-@ order items . In Europe , the Deimos Skin can still be obtained by purchasing Ghost of Sparta from the PlayStation Store .

= = Soundtrack = =

God of War : Ghost of Sparta ? Original Soundtrack from the Video Game ? composed by Gerard K. Marino and Mike Reagan ? was released on iTunes on October 18 , 2010 , by Sony Computer Entertainment and includes three bonus tracks from Chains of Olympus . It was also included as downloadable content in the Ghost of Sparta pre @-@ order package . Square Enix Music Online ( 8 / 10 ) stated that several tracks were intended for purely contextual purposes , with the remainder of the soundtrack rating well in comparison to the soundtracks of the main installments in the series .

= = Reception = =

God of War : Ghost of Sparta was received positively by various media outlets . Nicole Tanner of IGN stated that in terms of gameplay , " there 's nothing unique here , but that 's not a bad thing . " 1UP 's Chris Pereira said that the controls are " largely the same " as Chains of Olympus , but it " is

still an extremely well @-@ paced action game . " He said that it is put together so well that it is worth playing , " unless you 've become truly tired of the franchise " . Joystiq 's Randy Nelson stated that the scope of the game seems like it " was planned for release on consoles " , but " if you were hoping for something really innovative , you 're out of luck . " Joe Juba of Game Informer stated that " the other core fighting mechanics are familiar , but the tweaks go a long way toward improving gameplay " . PlayStation : The Official Magazine stated " [ Ghost of ] Sparta offers an immersive experience on par with many of the best PS3 games " . Simon Parkin of Eurogamer praised the battle system as strong , however , he stated " There is a sense that Ghost of Sparta is a step back for the series " and claimed that it is " best enjoyed by newcomers " or " those yet to play " God of War III .

Praising its story , Pereira claimed that it is " a more personal story than the other GOW games , but one that still features the series ' signature trademarks " , and also said that the sex mini @-@ game is " arguably the most over @-@ the @-@ top of the bunch " . Nelson stated that it is " a game that upholds the standard of quality in gameplay , storytelling and sheer wow factor of the series , while also ? like Metal Gear Solid : Peace Walker before it ? blurring the lines between portable and console experiences with its amazing presentation . " Juba said that it " doesn ? t have any mind @-@ blowing moments " , but " this isn ? t an optional side @-@ story ; Ghost of Sparta is a must @-@ play for God of War fans . " GameTrailers said it has a " pretty cool story " that will " definitely feel familiar " . Parkin , however , stated the " game 's primary problem ... is in its in @-@ built focus " and that the series " is principally concerned with endlessly upping the ante . " He also claimed that the developers have " [ taken ] away the sense of wonder " that is expected of a God of War game and stated " the remaining components struggle to carry the experience . "

In terms of visuals , Tanner stated that the graphics are " better than a big chunk of PS2 games " and that it is the " best @-@ looking game on the PSP thus far . " Pereira said that it looks as good if not better than other handheld games available . Nelson said the graphics are " the best you 've ever seen on a handheld . " He also said that it makes the first two God of War games on the PlayStation 2 look dated . GameTrailers said " you 'll be treated to the very best visuals the PSP has to offer " . Parkin described the set @-@ pieces as " incredible " for a handheld platform , however , he stated they " seem tired " in comparison to the opening scenes of God of War III .

= = = Awards and accolades = = =

At E3 2010 , Ghost of Sparta received nine awards , including " Best Handheld Game " , " Best PSP Game " , and " PSP Game of Show " from several media outlets , as well as three nominations . PlayStation : The Official Magazine awarded it the " Gold Award " . Kotaku awarded it " Editor 's Choice " , stating " God of War : Ghost of Sparta is a palm @-@ sized epic video game . " At the 2010 Spike Video Game Awards , it received " Best Handheld Game " . At the 2011 British Academy of Film and Television Arts ( BAFTA ) Video Game Awards , Ghost of Sparta was a nominee for the " Handheld " award .