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TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES

Publisher: Eidos Interactive
Developer: Core Design
Release date: November 2000
Format: PC, PlayStation, Dreamcast
ELSPA Rating: tbc

***Tomb Raider Chronicles* features four of Lara Croft's previously untold exploits, each comprising a separate adventure offering brand new insights into her past. The game takes place only a few days after The Last Revelation, beginning at a memorial service for Lara – her body has not been found.**

After the service Jean Yves, Winston and the family Priest, Father Dunstan, retire to Croft Manor. As they collect their thoughts they reminisce about some of Lara's past adventures, each of which is introduced via FMV 'flashback' sequences.

The locations for Chronicles' four adventures feature the city of Rome, a German U-boat, a small Irish Island and a hi-tech tower block. Each episode has a unique focus and requires the player to adopt a different strategy.

The Irish levels (played as the 16-year-old Lara) depend on the use of cunning and guile rather than weaponry to deal with their many puzzles and traps. The U-boat has a 'X-files' feel, filled with action, whilst the Rome levels comprise classic Tomb Raiding adventuring. Finally, the Tower Block features hi-tech systems that require stealth, strategy and continual guidance from your companion, ZIP.

Chronicles consolidates the most popular elements of previous Tomb Raider titles and also features some familiar faces from its predecessors. Objectives are clear and the linear nature of each adventure enables goals to be easily identified. The game engine is modified for graphical improvement and the smoothest gameplay yet. Environments feature increased detail, improved lighting, a greater number of characters and objects plus greater levels of interaction with characters and objects. Greater use is made of the inventory system and more items may be collected to allow greater variation on the 'combine' option.

New features include additional moves and miscellaneous animations for Lara plus a wider variety of enemy animations. A 'search' option for Lara is included, enabling her to look through files, drawers etc. and take any items of use. New weapons include a sniper rifle and a grappling hook gun. New moves make use of tightropes, suspended bars (Lara may swing from bar to bar) and grappling ropes. The combination of bars and ropes requires the player to traverse areas in a wider variety of ways than previously seen.

Enemy AI is extensively overhauled and Lara's opponents now react to sound, allowing a 'stealth' option to be implemented. Hand-to-hand combat features where Lara creeps up behind enemies and uses either a cosh or chloroform to disable them. Line of sight issues are re-addressed so that enemies are able to hide more effectively - Lara will not lock on until the enemy is clearly visible to the player.

Lara has two new in-game costumes: a 'Matrix' style catsuit with headset, plus an SAS camouflage outfit. The game features a larger amount of full motion video than seen in previous Tomb Raider titles.

The PC format of *Tomb Raider Chronicles* includes the highly acclaimed Tomb Raider level editor as used to create previous Tomb Raider adventures. The system allows the user to create and play unique Tomb Raider levels - in the same manner as the Tomb Raider team.

For further information: Susie Hamilton, PR Manager (susie@core-design.com)

Core Design Ltd

2 Roundhouse Road

Pride Park

Derby DE24 8JE

+ 1332 227800