

A review of sorts from Board Game Geek (Jan 2008):

“You people have your first orgasm over AGRICOLA but this nearly-masterful game remains largely unplayed and ignored? ORIGINS barely looks or sounds like a game on paper, what with the rigorous scientific documentation/justification for rules and mechanics and all, but what appears to be an opaque, inaccessible exercise in potential fun murder reveals itself to be a CIVILIZATION-style game that finally manages to do almost everything right. The scope is the entirety of human history (from proto-human brains and up), each turn is 1000 years, and the range of possible actions and level of detail seems harrowingly impossible given the relative degree of depth and low complexity of the rules. Once you get used to the terminology, the bizarro visual layouts, and the "I have no idea what to do" quandary of the first several turns you'll find that it's really no more difficult than a "heavy" Euro. However, in ORIGINS the rules and mechanics all make complete sense and have an actual foundation in not only the theme but also in reality. That being said, the level of abstraction is almost perfect- it splits the difference between simulation and game just right. The game is ruthlessly unforgiving (if AGE OF STEAM makes you cry, don't bother with ORIGINS) and it's entirely possible to run your people straight into the ground with poor decisions and bad play- or if your neighbors wind up with metallurgy before you and enslave your people. As for the randomness many have bitched about here, how fucking stupid and anti-thematic would it be if you knew when the climate was going to change over a 1000 year period? Sorry, life is sometimes random and if you escape into games to avoid reality then you'll have plenty to whine about in ORIGINS. This is a great game, one that will reward repeated play and exploration and I really appreciate the level of research and thought that Mr. Eklund has put into the game. Despite the mortarboard approach, it's a fun game to play just to see how well you can do even if you don't win or even do well at all, and a lot of the interest for me is in how it simulates the ebb and flow of civilization- you'll boom and bust and then boom again. This is a better game than even THROUGH THE AGES and the closest any title has come to matching the achievement that is CIVILIZATION. But y'all go on, back to the dirt farm.” *Mike Barnes*