GAMING THE PAST

Hello all! Today I'm writing an article – indeed hoping to finish writing it – about the entertaining world of computer games which deal with the past. This is for a book about digital engagement strategies for archaeology being edited by Chiara Bonacchi of the Institute of Archaeology. Archaeologists have written quite a bit about other forms of media portrayal of the past, but not so much about computer games (with a few notable exceptions including fellow DofA blogger Shawn Graham). They are such a big cultural phenomenon – and business – today though that they shouldn't be ignored, especially as they are already engaging lots of people's interest in the past.

I'm looking particularly at strategy games like *Civilization*. While we can criticise various aspects of the way such games model the past, I don't want to dwell on that and instead aim to draw attention to the vibrant fan communities and 'modding' scene, with players actively contributing new content to a game's development. Later on I'll post some links to a couple of websites which demonstrate the breadth of engagement that's already happening through this medium.