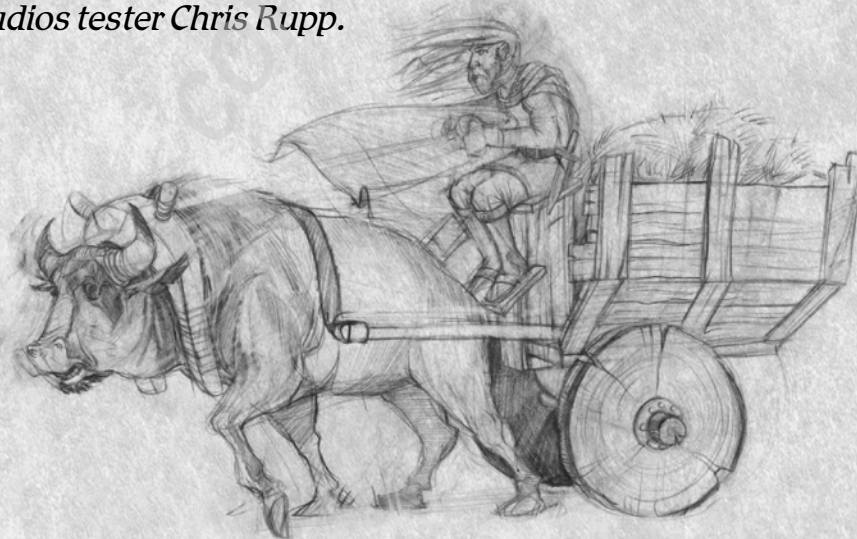


Managing Your Economy

*W*aging war, commanding groups of mythological creatures, invoking devastating god powers, researching powerful new technologies — it's all part of the incredible Age of Mythology experience. But none of these things would be possible without the resources required to fund them. In Age of Mythology, economy is the backbone of your civilization.

This section covers Age of Mythology's basic economic concepts. It includes a profile of all five resources and the effects of improvements on them. We show how strategy should dictate your economic focus, how to run an efficient economy, and how to use your Market and trade to balance resources and create an additional income. For advanced economic strategies, check out Chapter 10, written by expert player and Ensemble Studios tester Chris Rupp.



CHAPTER 1

Resources

Without resources, it's impossible to train a military, advance to the next Age, or even erect a viable defense. There are five resources to collect or gain in *Age of Mythology*, and each plays a vital role—some more than others, depending on your game situation.

TIP



For detailed statistics for all general and culture-specific resource improvements, check the Appendix in the back of this book.

This section covers *Age of Mythology*'s five resources: food, wood, gold, favor, and population. Some resources are available in different types, such as food, and some civilizations collect certain resources differently, such as favor. Each culture also has a different place to deposit resources. You'll find info on the resources here, as well as

charts explaining all the economic improvements that can be made to each resource.

Table 1.1 shows where each culture deposits its collected food, wood, and gold, and where it gains favor.

CULTURE	FOOD	WOOD	GOLD	FAVOR
Egyptian	Granary, Town Center, Dock	Lumber Camp, Town Center	Mining Camp, Town Center	Monuments
Greek	Granary, Town Center, Dock	Storehouse, Town Center	Storehouse, Town Center	Temple
Norse	Ox Cart, Town Center, Dock	Ox Cart, Town Center	Ox Cart, Town Center	Combat (especially with Hersirs)

Table 1.1 Resource Deposit Sites per Culture

Food

Food is the most important resource in *Age of Mythology* because it funds villagers, or resource gatherers, who in turn generate more food and other resources, which in turn are used to build structures, train military units, or advance to the next Age. It's a domino effect where everything can be traced back to food.

ES TIP



Egyptian laborers gather resources slower than other cultures. The only way the Egyptians can ever achieve Greek rates is with Book of Thoth improvement.
— Greg "DeathShrimp" Street

It's nearly impossible to develop an effective strategy that ignores food. While it's possible to concentrate on other resources and perform effectively, food will be your primary resource, particularly in the first Age and even into the second (see Figure 1.1). As the game progresses (when you have plenty of villagers), food becomes less important and other resources assume center stage.

There are five ways to harvest food—herding, hunting, foraging, farming, and fishing—and all of them produce at different rates. Some methods even require other resources! Generally, you should collect food starting with the fastest available method, then move on to slower methods when your first sources have been exhausted. That means you'll usually start with hunting, then go to foraging, then herding (after the animals have had time to fatten), and then farming. The map layout also plays a key role. For instance, fishing can be substituted for farming, on a water map. If there are no wild animals

near your start position, begin foraging until you can hunt effectively. Let's look at the five methods in detail.

Herding

The “herdables” are domesticated animals that can be controlled instead of hunted. (Chickens are the exception: They can't be controlled, but they also don't run away, or attack villagers.) Herdables are positioned randomly on the map and begin unaligned but waiting to be captured. To capture a herdable, move one of your units within the animal's line of sight. Once captured, the herdable can be moved to any location, though most likely toward a Town Center, Granary, or Ox Cart to prepare for processing.

It's possible for an enemy player to capture one of your herdables if one of your units isn't close by. Protect these food sources well by keeping a unit close as you escort the herdables back to base.

In *Age of Mythology*, the herdable units—goats, pigs, and cows—actually fatten, or increase their food potential, over time. (Each herdable has a maximum value, however.) So, while it's important to seek out as many herdables as possible (even stealing your enemy's animals), it's unwise to process them early in a game. Instead, use two of the other food-gathering methods—hunting or foraging—before processing the herdables.

Like all animals in *Age of Mythology*, herdables slowly decay after being killed. As the animal decays, the amount of food you're able to collect decreases. Therefore, it's important to retrieve as much food as possible before the animal decays completely or stops providing food.

“Task” three to four villagers around the herdable, positioned on the side of the animal closest to the food-deposit site. Villagers on the far side of the animal might take too long to reach the deposit site, or bump into the other villagers, slowing down the gathering process. Also, only process one herdable at a time, to minimize food loss. If you task too many villagers on a herdable, the extras will simply stand around and watch—definitely bad news for an economy!

Table 1.2 shows the herdables, their initial food value (at the time they're found), and their maximum food potential if left to fatten. Research the Husbandry technology (improvement) to increase the rate of fattening on herdables, and the gathering rate of your villagers on those herdables.



Figure 1.1 Food is your primary concern at the beginning of the game. You need more food to fund more villagers!

ESTIP



Don't forget to look at the mini-map. See those brown spots? Those are food! You should investigate them and eat whatever food is there.

—Matt “Maimin_matty” Scadding

ANIMAL	INITIAL FOOD	MAXIMUM FATTENING
Goat	50	300
Pig	50	300
Cow	75	400

Table 1.2 Herd Animals Initial and Maximum Food

ESTIP



Chickens aren't herd animals or hunted animals. They don't fatten, don't convert, and techs don't apply to them. They are really in a group by themselves with berries. Chickens start with 75 food a piece.

—Greg "Deathshrimp" Street

Hunting

Villagers gather food fastest by hunting wild animals (listed at the end of this section). However, accomplishing the task isn't always the easiest, or *safest*, method of collecting food. You can't control wild animals—instead, you must attack them. Though villagers are the primary hunters, in *Age of Mythology*, military units can join in the hunt. Some wild animals, such as walruses, boars, crocodiles, lions, and elephants, fight back, while others, such as deer, elk, zebra, and giraffe, simply try to escape. Odin is the only Major God who provides an immediate "bonus to hunting": Odin's gatherers hunt 10% faster than those of other cultures.

Even the aggressive animals, however, might run away instead of attacking, so it's difficult in *Age of Mythology* to lure wild animals to a Town Center, Granary, or Ox Cart. Often, time must be spent building a Granary or moving an Ox Cart to the wild animals' location, in order to gather the food as quickly as possible.

Use at least five or six villagers to hunt an aggressive animal. Losing villagers to animal attacks in the Archaic Age will set you back economically. After military units have been produced, use them to assist the villagers in hunting. Just as with herdables, the meat of dead huntables slowly rots, so use five or six villagers to gather as much food as possible from the slain animal.

Table 1.3 displays wild animals and their food value.

ANIMAL	FOOD	ANIMAL	FOOD
Baboon	100	Crocodile	200
Crowned Crane	100	Polar Bear	200
Hyena	100	Zebra	200
Lion	100	Boar	300
Monkey	100	Giraffe	300
Wolf	100	Aurochs	400
Caribou	150	Hippopotamus	400
Deer	150	Walrus	400
Elk	150	Water Buffalo	400
Gazelle	150	Rhinoceros	500
Bear	200	Elephant	750

Table 1.3 Wild Animals Food

ESTIP



Get the Hunting Dogs improvement as soon as possible if you plan on hunting in the first Age.

—Nate "Redline" Jacques



Foraging

Villagers forage from berry bushes or chickens, typically located near the Town Center in random map or multiplayer games. Foraging is one of the slower methods of gathering food. (It's not as slow as farming or fishing—at least until improvements are researched—but it's much slower than hunting or herding.) Each berry bush contains “100 food,” and is far enough from the Town Center that a Granary or Ox Cart should be built or moved near the berries to hasten gathering. The farther a villager has to walk to deliver food, the more time is wasted not collecting resources!

Unlike animals, which decay after death, berry bushes retain their food until collected by villagers. Therefore, it's not important to place all your villagers on a single bush to minimize loss—there won't be any! Spread out your villagers to minimize bumping. Position them close to the nearest deposit site to minimize walking distance.

Even though collecting from berries is slow, it's wise to use the bushes as your first food source while waiting for herdables to fatten and searching for a pack of wild animals.



Farming

Farming is slow but dependable, and it's generally one of the safest methods of gathering food. Its downside is that each farm requires other resources (either wood or gold, depending on the culture), and villager “build time” to create. Once built, however, each farm provides an infinite amount of food, and never has to be replaced unless destroyed by enemy units or god powers (see Figure 1.2).

Shift to farming only when other food-gathering methods have been exhausted.

Multiple farms require resources, and it's typically more important in the early game to use those resources for construction, or for military units and improvements. Plus, since it's slower than hunting, herding, or foraging, farming will often become your final food source. You likely will need to switch to farms after exhausting your other sources during the late Classical Age or early Heroic Age. (Your mileage may vary, depending on your early game strategy.) Farms are extremely weak and should be protected by Towers and military units, or by placing them around a Town Center.

Farms become much more productive after researching the general improvements called Plow, Irrigation, and Flood Control. Research these at your culture's food-deposit site (Granary or Ox Cart) to increase farm yield by 10–15%.

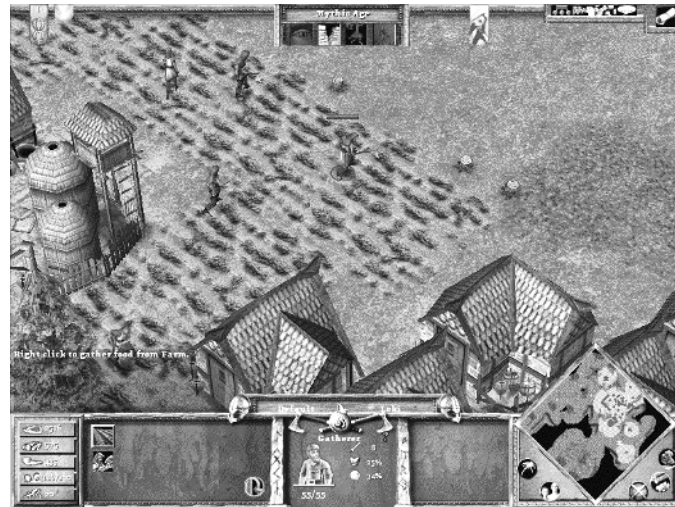


Figure 1.2 Farming produces a slow, but steady, supply of food.

Fishing

Fishing could be thought of as the water map equivalent to farming: It's slower than herding, hunting, or foraging, but provides a constant rate of food (and schools of fish provide an infinite amount of food). But like farming, fishing requires additional resources and build time. Fishing ships first need a Dock, which requires resources and time to construct. Then, each fishing ship requires a population slot, as well as resources and build time.

TIP



If you plan to fish, researching the Dock improvements is mandatory! The Classical Age improvement, Purse Seine, boosts fishing's gathering rate by 50%. The Heroic Age improvement, Salt Amphora, doubles the carrying capacity of fishing ships, and boosts gathering by another 25%.

Fishing can be a slow and expensive process, particularly in its early stages. It requires a lot of wood. But the longer the fishing boats operate, the more profitable the operation becomes. An important note: A school of fish can support just one boat, so you must scout out a new school for each fishing boat you build. Fishing is also more vulnerable to enemy attacks than farms.

Fishing can generate a powerful economy, particularly with its Classical and Heroic Age improvements (Purse Seine and Salt Amphora). If you can control the seas, your fishing operation becomes a second revenue stream while your opponent will only be able to use villagers on land. The heavy wood investment will pay off in the long run, with large amounts of food filling your reserves. But beware: Scout the enemy's naval power frequently to ensure your investment's safety. Since you can't construct Towers or walls in the sea, fishing ships are extremely vulnerable to enemy attack. Protect them with naval vessels or your entire investment could be sunk! You can garrison fishing boats in your Dock to protect them. The Dock does not fire back, like a Town Center, however.

Wood

Villagers gather wood from a single source: trees. You will often find single trees, sometimes called "stragglers," around your initial Town Center, and a forest of trees not far from there. While the trees around your Town Center are typically close enough to avoid needing an extra deposit site, forests are far enough away that they require one, to hasten collection and minimize a villager's walking distance.

Depending on your strategy and culture, wood may be a nearly ignored resource or one you'll focus on primarily. For instance, the Egyptian culture requires very little wood, particularly in the early Ages—none of their buildings, including farms and Towers, need wood! However, the Egyptian Heroic Age and Mythic Age Tower upgrades, siege weapons, and Archer units do require the resource. In fact, any strategy reliant on lots of Archers requires a substantial wood income.

Gold

Villagers collect gold from mines scattered across each map (or created with Thor's Dwarven Mine god power). Gold mines can differ in size; each size offers a different amount of gold. Gold isn't extremely important in the Archaic Age (though some strategies may dictate a



gold economy that begins that early), but it certainly becomes vital as an *Age of Mythology* game progresses. All Age-advances after the Classical Age require gold, as do improvements, military units, and many mythological units (see Figure 1.3).

Table 1.4 reveals all gold-mine sizes, and their respective values. Thor's Dwarven Mine god power lets you place a gold mine anywhere on passable terrain. The amount of gold provided by the Dwarven Mine depends on the Age in which it's used.

Collecting gold follows the same principles as gathering food and wood. You need a deposit site close to the mine to minimize villager walking distance: The faster the gold reaches your coffers, the better, and the less time villagers spend walking (and not collecting resources), the better! Avoid placing too many villagers on gold, or time will be wasted when the villagers bump into each other trying to deliver their deposits. Five or six collectors per mine, all on the side closest to the deposit site, is optimal.

SIZE	GOLD AVAILABLE
Archaic Age Dwarven Mine	250
Classical Age Dwarven Mine	1000
Medium Pit and Heroic Age Dwarven Mine	3000
Large Pit and Mythic Age Dwarven Mine	6000

Table 1.4 Gold Quantity per Mine Size

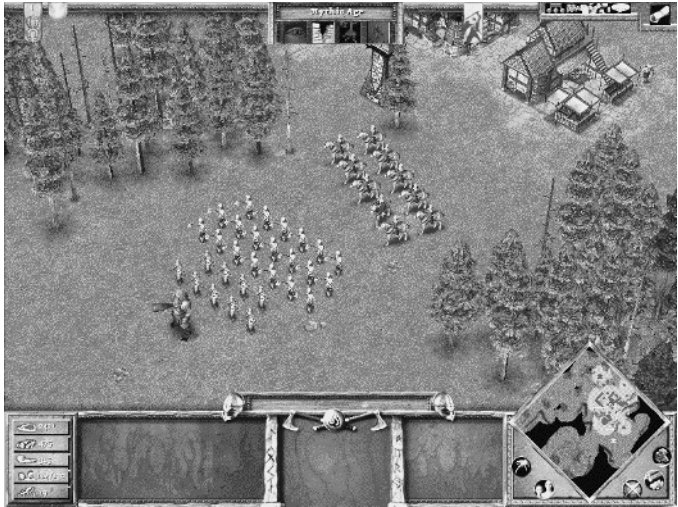



Figure 1.3 'Twas ever thus: Funding armies takes large amounts of gold.

The Norse can use a special gold-miner known as the Dwarf. Norse Dwarves gather gold faster than the other Norse gatherers, but gather food and wood more slowly. If you choose to worship Thor, however, Dwarven miners are cheaper, and collect food and wood on a par with other Norse gatherers.





Favor

Favor, *Age of Mythology's* fourth resource, is used to fund unique mythological units, and the improvements offered by the Gods. These powerful units and improvements give *Age of Mythology* a wealth of options, and a diverse style, unmatched in the real-time strategy genre.

The Greeks, Egyptians, and Norse gain favor from their Gods in different manners. This section details how each culture gains favor, and provides insight on how best to balance the gaining of favor against other economic needs.

Greek Favor

The Greeks gain favor by worshipping at the Greek Temple. You must manually task Greek villagers onto the Temple to begin worshipping. The Greeks are the only culture with direct control of the rate at which they gain favor. Each added villager doesn't double the rate of favor-gain, though: To balance the Greeks' direct control of gain, each subsequent villager provides less favor than the one before.

Egyptian Favor

Egyptians gain favor from their Gods by erecting Monuments. There are five Monuments in all; they must be built in the proper order; and each one adds more to favor-gain than the preceding one. Valuable food and gold resources—and the laborers' resource-gathering time—must be used to erect the Monuments. Although the Egyptians don't have the ability to increase or decrease the rate at which they gain favor, the Monuments allow for a consistent gain, which can be planned for accordingly (see Figure 1.4).



Figure 1.4 *Egypt! Increase the rate at which you gain the Gods' favor by building another Monument.*

Norse Favor

Norse warriors gain favor by fighting. Any combat will suffice, including hunting and gathering food from animals! The Gods bestow the most favor to the Norse Hero unit, the Hersir, which gains double favor from combat and even gains small amounts of favor for just being on the map. But Norse mythological units never generate Favor. As the Norse commander, it's difficult to plan for favor, since you must fight to gain some, and it can be nearly impossible to fill your favor coffers if you're faring poorly in battles.

Population

Age of Mythology's fifth resource isn't collected but instead built. Population governs the maximum number of units (military, mythological, economic, naval) you can have under your control at a particular time. Certain units occupy more population slots than others. For instance, a villager only uses one population slot while some of the larger mythology units occupy four or even five.

You can increase population by building Houses, or (after you have reached the Heroic Age) by acquiring settlements—specified areas on the map on which you can erect new Town Centers. Houses provide an additional “10 population,” and each settlement provides 15 (see Figure 1.5).

You can build a maximum of 10 houses. This increases your “population cap” by only 100, but it’s possible to increase population even further. To do so, acquire settlements after advancing to the Heroic Age. With settlements, there’s no fixed population cap; the possible total depends on the number of settlements you acquire, the particular improvements you research, and even which Major God you choose to follow.



Figure 1.5 Build Houses to increase your population cap, which permits the production of more units.

EST TIP



Keep checking to make sure your 10 houses are still standing: It's easy to lose one or two and forget to rebuild them, forcing you to fight with a smaller population than the enemy.

—Chris “Swinger” Rupp

Important Economy Concepts

Now that you’re well versed on *Age of Mythology*’s five resources, it’s time to learn how to maximize their potential. This section offers tips on directing your economy according to your strategy, managing an efficient economy, using your Market to trade resources and gain extra gold. We also offer a sample strategy to get your economy off to a profitable start.

Strategy Dictates Economy

In *Age of Mythology*, the ways in which players choose to run their economies will differ. Economies aren’t the same across the board. One player may choose to emphasize wood gathering while another may put priority on favor and gold. Above all, players’ military strategies determine how best to manage their economies.

Before beginning a random map or multiplayer game, consider what you’re trying to accomplish in the game. Are you planning to use a strategy heavy in mythological units? Would you rather attempt an early cavalry assault? Or perhaps you’re planning to play defensively, and create a massively productive economy to fund Mythic Age warfare?

After considering your strategic options, determine what will be required to fund that strategy. Archer-heavy strategies require a priority on wood. Big-economy strategies require a

TIP



For specific examples on developing an economy, head over to Chapters 12, 13, and 14 in our Advanced Multiplayer section. These advanced chapters on each culture offer specific strategies and include villager “build orders” and “task orders” to get you started on the right foot.

large population of villagers. Mythological-unit strategies require a consistent stream of favor. Adjust your economy accordingly, and keep in mind that you may need to adjust even further, if battles aren’t going your way. Head over to Chapter 11 for more advanced tips on using the economy to fund a strategy, including the three “standard” approaches: rush, turtle, and boom.

Running an Efficient Economy

Running an efficient economy doesn’t mean just tasking countless villagers onto a particular resource until your coffers are overflowing. While that may fill your bank with resources to spend on units, structures, and upgrades, your opponent will likely still have more resources available—because your opponent is running a more efficient economy than you are!

ES TIP



Each random map can provide different resources. For example, Watering Hole has no berries or chickens, but overflows with huntable animals. Even within the same map, you might find less gold than you expected, but more food. Finding relics, or seeing what gods your opponent is choosing might also alter your strategy.

—Greg “Deathshrimp” Street

Here are some tips on running an efficient economy.

- ◆ It’s very important to minimize villager “walk time.” The farther you task villagers from their deposit site, the more time that villager spends not working. Place deposit sites close to your villagers, or task them on resources close to the deposit site!
- ◆ Don’t task too many villagers on a particular food, wood, or gold resource. If you use too many, the villagers bump each other and increase their time spent not working. Move some off and task them on a different resource.
- ◆ Carefully monitor the proportions and amounts of your resources. If you find that you’re accumulating too much of one resource and it’s just sitting unused, shift villagers off that resource and send them to collect another.
- ◆ Check for idle villagers often (a banner appears in the upper right corner of the screen), to ensure that none of your villagers are standing around doing nothing.
- ◆ When training new villagers at a Town Center, set the structure’s gather point to the resource you want them to begin collecting (see Figure 1.6). Upon being trained, the villagers will automatically start collecting that resource (rather than just standing next to your Town Center, waiting for you to tell them what to do).

- ◆ Use the gathering guidelines in this chapter to determine how best to accumulate resources quickly. Don't begin farming before seeking out herds of wild animals!
- ◆ Research economic improvements as soon as you have extra resources in your coffers. Careful scouting of the enemy will determine if those resources should be spent on defense, military units, or economic improvements.
- ◆ Treat Fishing Ships, and later Caravans, as Villagers. You may not need as many farms or gold miners if you are getting resources in other ways.
- ◆ Villagers occupy population slots too. In the late game, you may find that you have too many villagers and can't support a large army. Don't be afraid to delete villagers—you can always train more later.



Figure 1.6 Send villagers directly to a resource by adjusting the Town Center's gather point.

Using the Market and Trade

You can build a Market upon reaching the Heroic Age (and you might as well; the structure is required in all cultures to advance to the Mythic Age). The Market is used to trade resources. For instance, if you're low on wood, you can use the Market to trade gold for more wood. If you're low on gold, you can trade food or wood for gold. The Market can't be used to trade food for wood directly.

Using the Market haphazardly isn't advisable because you incur a transaction fee with each use. It's not an even trade. In all but the rarest of instances, you'll sell off more resources than you'll receive. Considering that it took valuable villager time to gather those resources, you're automatically setting your economy back a little, particularly if your opponent has maintained an economic balance.

ESTIP



Don't forget the economic upgrades that improve resource gathering, because these can make a big difference to your income. Consider upgrading hunting, mining, and wood-cutting in the first Age when your food production exceeds your ability to create villagers, or after you have begun advancing to the next Age.

—Chris "Swinger" Rupp

ESTIP



You can set up trade routes between your Market and your own settlement (or the settlement of any ally). Therefore, if an enemy is controlling your extra gold mines or the map is running out of gold in the late game, if you have remembered to start building trade carts ahead of time you'll be able to maintain a gold income even without possessing a mine.

—Justin "GX_Bear" Rouse

The Market is best used when you need just a bit more of a particular resource to fund a significant addition to your military or base. For instance, you wish to erect a Fortress, Midgol Stronghold, or Hill Fort quickly, and need just a smidgen more gold. Consider using the Market to build the structure sooner, but be cognizant of the resource penalty.

Trade Caravans are a function of your Market, and provide an extra revenue stream (of gold). Caravans travel between the Market and allied settlements, delivering extra gold into your reserves. The longer the Caravan's route, the more gold the Caravan delivers.

