



RuneQuest



This book is dedicated to Dave Arneson and Gary Gygax, who first opened Pandora's box,
and to Ken St. Andre who found it could be opened again.

With thanks to the following playtesters and critics:

Richard Barnhart, Clint Bigglestone, Ann Bruner, George Bruner, Mark Chilenskas, Al Dewey, Don Dupont, Tadashi Ehara, David Forthoffer, Hilda Hannifen, Owen Hannifen, Terry Jackson, Bill Johnson, Bill Jouris, Sherman Kahn, Ken Kaufer, Bill Keyes, Rudy Kraft, Charlie Krank, Jody Lee, Les Lugar, Steve Marsh, Hal Moe, Gordon Monsoon, Hendrik Pfeifer, Dan Pierson, Hilary Powers, Zack Richardson, Rory Root, John Sapienza, Wayne Shaw, Greg Stafford, Anders Swenson, Art Turney, Bill Voorhees, and Warren Walton.

Special 2nd edition thanks: Mark Chilenskas, Bill Keyes, Dan Pierson, John Sapienza, Greg Stafford, Anders Swenson
And all the playtesters whose names we forgot to get, and all the contributors to *ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS*,
THE WILD HUNT, and *THE LORDS OF CHAOS*, who helped us find what was needed for the second edition.

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Classic Edition: Proofreading by Martin Helsdon, Layout by Rick Meints, RuneGlitch by Tom Holsinger

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First Printing - July 2020

ISBN# 978-1-56882-282-4

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May Arachne Solara bless and protect this book.

Despite initial defeats, the emperor eventually marched almost unhindered into the Sartar capitol of Boldhome. He defiled the Temple of Sartar and ravaged the city. So far, it was the typical Lunar conquest.

But the spirits of Sartar Temple incited the natives to rebellion. When the Lunar Priestesses attempted to construct a Temple of the Reaching Moon on Wind Top to extend the Glowline, a dragon unearthed itself under the foundation, devouring the priestess there and half of the attendant armies. Shortly afterward, rebellion in the outpost city of Pavis spelled Lunar defeat, and the victorious barbarian warlord led his army towards Dragon Pass.

The warlord was Argrath Dragontooth, member of a minor Sartar household and refugee from Lunar justice. He had grown famous amongst the tribes of Prax and now claimed heirdom to Sartar's realm. He defeated Lunar forces in a military victory and relit the fire in Sartar's Temple with a command. Thus, the empire was thrown back again.

The bravery and glory of Sartar's fight for independence attracted thousands of volunteers, and people from all about Glorantha became Adventurers in order to build up their skills to take their places in the ranks. The period was known as the Hero Wars, and the fighting around Dragon Pass drew the greatest collection of Heroes and Superheroes the world had ever seen in one place.

This is the game of that period. In these pages one learns how to start to become a Hero, to take one's place in the Hero Wars.

TECHNOLOGICAL BASE

Glorantha is a Bronze Age world. This general statement is meant to illustrate the social development and cultural level of most of the people of the world. Bronze is common, and can be mined directly from the bones of the gods who died in the Gods War. These bones provide a ready source of the metal. Bronze is used throughout the rules to refer to the terrestrial metal to which it is most similar, but it also has some properties which are dissimilar from our earthly metal. We chose to substitute the familiar term rather than the awkward terms of Ga-metal, Ze-metal, and so on, which are documented in Gloranthan references.

Unalloyed, or pure, metals, such as iron, lead, tin, and copper, prevent a person from using magic unless he is "sealed" to the Rune connected with that metal. See *Chapter X* for a list of what metals are aligned to which Runes. Note that all coins are alloyed, as are gold and silver ornaments.

SOCIOLOGICAL BASE

Glorantha is an ancient period and early Dark Ages world. It has far more to do with Mesopotamia, ancient China, Hyboria, and Lankhmar than it does with medieval Europe, Le Mort D'Arthur, or the Carolingian Cycle. Its heroes are Conans, Grey Mousers, and Rustums, not Lancelots, Percivals, and Rolands.

Unlike the worlds in other role-playing games, there is no alignment, as such. People have allegiances to nations, cities, religions, and tribes, not to abstract concepts. It is also possible for people within the game to survive quite well with no allegiances whatever except to themselves.

In Glorantha, the gods, in the forms of their followers and cults, play an active and important part in most major events. However, most gods are complementary, and rarely oppose each other directly. Only the gods of Power are actively antagonistic; and even then only within their own spheres of interest.

MONETARY BASE

The coinage of Glorantha is based on silver. While both gold and copper are used as coins, silver is by far the most common monetary metal. Silver coinage was first introduced into Glorantha by the Lunar Empire. The generic term for silver coins used over the continent is the Lunar, in honor of the Lunar Empire. However, in the empire, the basic silver coin is referred to as an Imperial. In Sartar it is called a Sovereign, and in the city of Corflu, run by various guilds, it is called a Guilder.

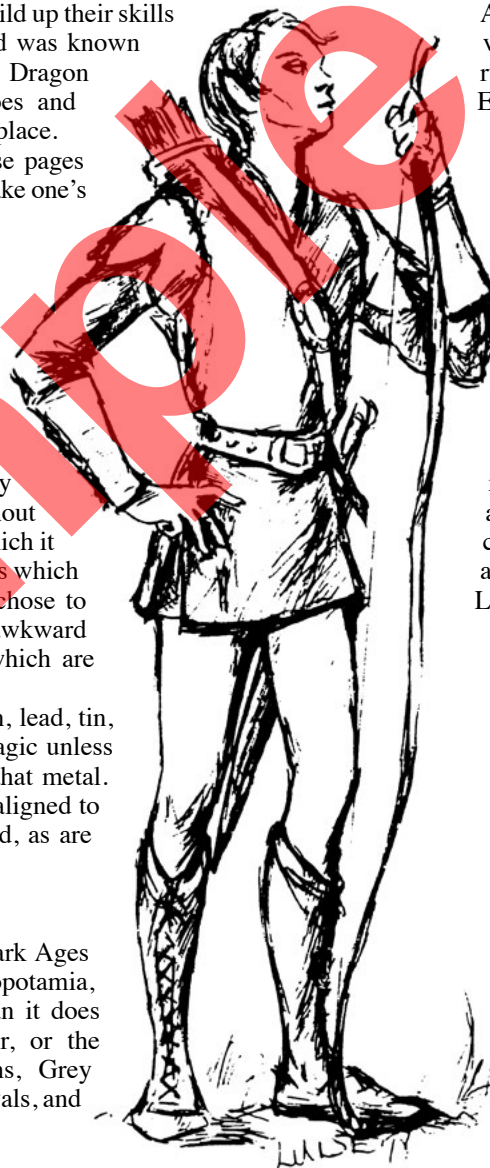
All of these coins are roughly equivalent in value. Note that a Lunar, abbreviated in the rules as L, is worth about one pre-WW II English pound, or five US dollars.

Gold was the first coinage of the world, brought to the people by the enigmatic Gold Wheel Dancers. In their honor, gold coins are still called Wheels. Gold, however, is scarce and very valuable. One golden Wheel equals 20 Lunars of silver. Gold is still mainly used as a means of settling debts between nations rather than individuals.

Copper coins were invented by the dwarves. As is usual with any innovation brought out by that most inventive race, humans shrink from acknowledging the contribution. The copper coin is called a Clack, or often just a Copper. It takes ten Clacks to equal one Lunar.

1 Wheel = 20 Lunars

1 Lunar = 10 Clacks



II. HOW TO CREATE AN ADVENTURER

CHARACTERISTICS

To create a human Adventurer, the player rolls 3D6 for each of the following characteristics. This provides a range of from 3 (low) to 18 (high) for each characteristic and this range gives the basic parameters of human development. Other races such as elves, dwarves, and dragonewts may have different ranges for many characteristics. These differences are dealt with in the section on monsters, *Chapter VIII*.

1. STRENGTH (STR) - An Adventurer's STR affects the damage he does, the kind of armor he wears, and what weapons he can wield. It can be increased through training, explained later, up to the rating for the character's Constitution or Size, whichever is highest. If STR is a character's highest rating of the three then it cannot be increased except by magic.

2. CONSTITUTION (CON) - This is the measure of the health of a character. It is the major factor in determining the amount of damage a character can take before he dies. The CON of an Adventurer is what all attacks by Poison or Disease must be matched against. Training can increase CON. It can be increased up to the rating for the character's STR or Size, whichever is largest. If CON is the character's highest rating of the three then it cannot be increased except by magic.

3. SIZE (SIZ) - This indicates the mass of a character. It affects his ability to do and absorb damage. Both large and small SIZ Adventurers have certain advantages. Large persons can absorb and deal more damage, but find it hard to defend themselves and hard to skulk in shadows. Small people have the opposite benefits and drawbacks. SIZ cannot be naturally altered.

4. INTELLIGENCE (INT) - This characteristic is trickier. It is a measure of an Adventurer's ability to deal with abstractions and memorization. This includes the theory behind skills such as fighting, thieving, magic, and crafting. INT is the major modifier of a character's ability to progress in skills through experience. It also determines how many spells a character may memorize. This characteristic never changes, save through some miraculous intervention.

5. POWER (POW) - This represents a character's ability to work magic. It is also the measure of his soul. A high POW shows the favor of the gods, allowing an Adventurer to hit easier, defend himself, and otherwise excel, for he is in tune with the Universe. Of course, a high POW detracts from an Adventurer's ability to skulk around in shadows and remain unobtrusive, for the aura of POW draws attention. POW varies over time. Spell use depletes a character's POW, and rest restores it. Successful spell casting

can cause an Adventurer to gain more POW. Full rules for this are given in *Chapter V, Basic Magic*.

6. DEXTERITY (DEX) - This is the measure of how fast and accurately a character can perform different functions such as fighting and magic. DEX can also be raised by training up to the limit of the species maximum, explained later in this chapter.

7. CHARISMA (CHA) - CHA is the measure of leadership. This is the ability to say "follow me" and find oneself leading a charge. It should not be mistaken for beauty. CHA is useful for obtaining training cheaply and has various other uses which will become apparent throughout the rules. CHA can be changed by the success or failure of previous ventures which have a definite influence on the Adventurer's current CHA.

MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM CHARACTERISTICS

No characteristic may be increased for any reason (including magic or divine intervention) beyond the maximum amount rollable on the characteristic dice (18 for humans) plus the number of dice rolled (3 for humans). Thus, no human may have any characteristics higher than 21.

The minimum characteristic possible for any reason is the number of dice rolled (3 for humans). No characteristic may be voluntarily reduced below this point.

