

RuneQuest Glorantha Review

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Approach to the Review

This is a Functional review, by which I mean that I am going through the whole book and commenting on almost everything. If you don't want that, just skip down to the Summary.

The review is 24 pages long, which is probably way over the top. Apologies for that.

Introduction

This is clearly a supplement that focuses on Mythology, which comes across immediately, Runes, Cults, Kinship, Ideals & Motivations, Magic & Mythology, Heroes & HeroQuesting and Consequences of Combat are all called out as Unique features, which sets the tone straight away.

Introduces the look and feel of RuneQuest, how to roll dice and so on. Clear enough for people who haven't played before.

- **Unique Features of RuneQuest** - Describes those bits of RuneQuest that make it RuneQuest. This is very Gloranthan, but does well at describing what makes RuneQuest such a good system.
- **Gaming in Glorantha** - Gives some suggestions as to how to do this, including Your Glorantha Varies, Importance of Community, Keeping it Bronze Age, Keeping it Fantastic, all good advice.

Glorantha

A potted description of important things about Glorantha.

- **The Runes** - Describes the importance of Runes and lists the various Runes in tables, depending on what kind of Rune is listed.
- **The World of Glorantha** - A very potted description of Glorantha, including it's physical form, Dragon Pass, Gloranthan Society, Elder Races, Gloranthan Technology, Gloranthan Money, History and Vasana's Saga. rather confusingly for us oldies, History combines both God Time and Normal Time, but I suppose it makes sense.

Adventurers

This starts on Page 23, which shows something of the emphasis of the book as a Gloranthan one.

It definitely has the idea of Player Characters as Adventurers, dynamic and going on Adventures.

- **Getting Started** - gives a rough idea of how you create an Adventurer
- Procedure - Lists the steps required to creating an Adventurer
- **Step 1 Homeland** - This lists and describes the various Homelands: Sartar, Esrolia, Grazelands, Prax, Lunar Tarsh and Old Tarsh, with Prax also having the main human Beast Riders. This gives a feel of what each Homeland is about and allows a fairly informed choice. There is a section of Starting Passions that is a bit confusing, as it reads as though it belongs to Old Tarsh, when it should be a section of its own, it would have been better to have this before the Homeland lists.
- **Step 2 Family History** - This is a guide to developing a family history of what your parent and grandparent did. It is quite detailed and goes from Page 27 to Page 45, so 19 pages in all. It also has a section on Skipping Your family History, which is good for those players who don't care, that gives you some Passions to pick, and a shortened version that basically says "ignore everything about parent/grandparent and do your own". Basically, you decide what your grandparent/parent did in various important events that happened, this gives you modifiers on Passions, Reputation and so on. The events for a grandparent are: Battle of Grizzly Peak, Battle of Alda Chur, Boldhome Campaign, Interim Years, Feint to the Sea Campaign, Building Wall Battle and Random Cause of Death. The events for a parent are: First Invasion of Prax, Jar-Eel Liberates the King, Second Invasion of Prax, Starbrow's Rebellion, Grazeland Campaign, White Bull Society Formed, Lion King's Feast, Wolf Pirates Navy, Greymane's Great Raid, Hendriking Campaign, Heortland Campaign, The Fall of Whitewall, Great Winter Year One and Random Cause of Death. Your own background has several events: Great Winter Year Two, Civil War in Esrolia, Battle of Auroch Hills, Civil Strife, Siege of Nochet, Jaldon Goldentooth Summoned, Civil Strife, Battle of Pennel Ford, Sacking the City of Wonders, Liberation of Pavis, Betrayal of General Fazzur, Shaker Priestess Appoints a New King and Liberation of Sartar. So, basically, your early life is the start of the Hero Wars, which is a bit disappointing, as I would have liked to see those scenarios in print. All in all, this gives a very good and detailed background for your Adventurer.
- **Step 3 Rune Affinities** - This allows you to choose 3 Elemental Runes. Vasana's Saga shows her family background, but is in Step 3, where it would have been better at the end of Step 2. Some Deities are shown with their main 2 or 3 Runes, to give you an idea of what a good worshipper should have. Deities listed are: Argan Argar, Babeester Gor, Chalana Arroy, Daka Fal, Eiritha, Engizi The Sky River Titan, Ernalda, Eurmal, Humakt, Issaries, Lhankor Mhy, Maran Gor, Odayla, Orlanth, Seven Mothers, Storm Bull, Waha,

Yelm, Yelmalio and Yinkin. Interestingly, it includes Argan Argar, which is usually a troll god, even though trolls are not supported in the main rules. Each Element is linked to a Characteristic, Personality, Sense, Skill category, Weapons, Organs, Colour, Metal and Phyla. Vasana's Saga shows the runes she has taken and what effects they have on her. For Power Runes, you take 2 opposed pairs at 75 and the rest at 50, to show which pairs are most important to you. Finally, you distribute 50 points among runes, to give you some control over them, with a score of 80% meaning a string tie to the Rune.

- **Step 4 Characteristics** - The seven characteristics, STR, CON, SIZ, DEX, INT, POW and CHA are briefly described, with species maximums as per RQ2. Characteristics are rolled on 3D6 or 2D+6 for INT and SIZ, but if your total rolled comes to below 92, you can add 3 to boost characteristics up to 18. Optional rules are given: Reroll any die result of 1, Discard an adventurer whose characteristics average 12 or less, Roll again for a characteristic if the initial result is 6 or lower (or 9 and lower in the case of INT or SIZ) and none of the other characteristics are above 13 or Use some other combination of dice and choice, at the gamemaster's discretion. Optional ways of determining characteristics will be covered in the Gamemaster's Guide, which will presumably include point-buy and better rolls (4D6 best 3). The Elemental Runes you chose earlier now can boost your Characteristics by +2 for a Primary Rune and +2 for a Secondary Rune, these can take a Characteristic above 18. If the Primary/Secondary Runes change, then so does the Characteristic Bonus, which seems an unnecessarily complex rule that I can see most people forgetting about or dropping. Homeland Modifiers can also affect Characteristics, with some going up and some coming down. Vasana's Saga shows how her Characteristics are calculated. Attributes are described and we are shown how to work them out, these are Movement, Magic Points, Hit Points, Healing Rate, Damage Bonus, Spirit Combat Bonus, Maximum ENC and Strike Rank. Hit Points are based on CON, with adjustments due to SIZ and POW, which goes back to RQ2 and makes it difficult to calculate on the fly. Skills Category Modifiers use a separate table for each Skill Category, which is both easy to use and confusing, having a single table might have been easier. Skill Categories are: Agility, Communication, Knowledge, Magic, Manipulation, Perception and Stealth. Skill Base Chances and Homeland Modifiers are shown, these would have been better in Step 5 or as a separate Step. Weapons include Elf Bow, even though the main rulebook is for humans only.
- **Step 5 Occupation** - Each Occupation is described, with the entries under each description, rather than in a separate table. Entries are: Homelands, Occupational Skills, Base Income, Standard of Living, cults, Favoured Passions, Ransom, Equipment and Notes. Occupations are: Assistant Shaman, Bandit, chariot Driver, Crafter, Entertainer, Farmer, Fisher, Healer, herder, Hunter, Merchant, Noble, Philosopher, Priest, Scribe, Thief and Warrior (Including Light Infantry, Heavy Infantry, Light Cavalry and Heavy Cavalry). There are some bizarre things, for example Crafters cannot come from Prax, so presumably they don't make leather or bone goods and must buy everything in.
- **Step 6: Cult** - This are where the player chooses which Cult to belong to, it is assumed that all Adventurers start in a cult and that the Adventurer has 50% in a Rune associated with the cult. Cults are described with Runes, Cult Starting Skills, Suggested Special

Rune Magic, Cult Spirit Magic, Cult Sorcery, Favoured Passions, Notes and Associated Cults. Cults listed are: Argan Argar, Babeester Gor, Chalana Arroy, Daka Fal, Eiritha, Engizi The Sky River Titan, Ernalda, Eurmal, Foundchild, Humakt, Issaries, Lhankor Mhy, Maran Gor, Odayla, Orlanth, Seven Mothers, Storm Bull, Waha, Yelm, Yelmalio and Yinkin. Foundchild is included here but not in the list of Deities/Runes in Step 3. Vasana's Saga shows what skills and spells she takes as a member of Vinga.

- **Step 7 Personal Skill Bonuses** - Allows you to add +25 to any 4 skills and + 10 to any other five skills, with skills capped at 100%. I am not sure why the cap of 100% is applied, unless that is only restricted to Runelords later on. Related languages refers to tables throughout the book and says you should consult those sections, why not put those sections here?
- **Step 8 Other Information** - This covers other information, such as Gender, Name, Age & Year Born, with rules for allocating extra skills for older Adventurers, Handedness, which mentions that Dragonewts are left-handed but does not mention Chaos being left-handed, Scars, Sex & Marriage, Family, Tribe/City/Clan, Family Heirloom, Starting Reputation and Movement. I am not sure why Movement is included here, as it is also included in Attributes. Vasana's Saga shows what Vasana has.
- **Pre-Generated Adventurers** - This gives a few pre-generated Adventurers: Vasana Vareena's daughter, Yanioth Vareena's Daughter, Harmast Baranthos' Son, Vishi Dunn, Vostor Son of Pyjeem, Sorala Daughter of Toria and Nathem Son of Nhean. With a bit of thought, they could have been put on 2 pages each, rather than spread about a bit.

Homelands

This describes the Homelands of Dragon pass, including Prax. I found it a bit confusing. Each Homeland describes Stereotype, Common Attitudes, Politics and Names. Types of Location describe Chaos Nests, Woods, Elf Woods, Hills, Mountains, Marshes and Open Country. Prax has a little section here, all by itself. Rivers are mentioned, with the Oslir and Creek-Stream river called out, but no mention of the Zola Fel. Troll Lands are mentioned and listed. Cultivated Lands are given a section of their own with Village, Town, Fort, Small City, Large City, Metropolis and Tribe listed. Travel contains Royal Roads and Movement Rates. There is a How to Use the Homeland Sections section that details Climate, Explanation of Temperature and Precipitation Charts, Inhabited Places and Uninhabited Places. All in all, I found this entire section to be a bit of a dog's dinner, all mixed up with no theme or structure. With a bit of thought, it could have been arranged to be so much better.

Homelands described are:

- **Sartar** - This has Short History, Stereotype, Common Attitudes, Politics, Religion, Climate and Regions. The Regions described are Alda Chur, Alone, Boldhome, Colymar Tribe, Duck Point, Jonstown, Lismelder, Sun Dome Temple, Swenstown, Telmori Wilds, Whitewall and Wilmkirk.
- **Esrolia** - This has Stereotype, Common Attitudes, Politics, Religion, Climate and Regions. The Regions described are Ezel, Longsi Land, Lyksos River, Necropolis, Nochet, North Esrolia, North March, Rhigos and South Esrolia.
- **Grazelands** - This has Stereotype, Common Attitudes, Politics, Religion, Climate and Regions. The Regions described are Black Horse County, Dragonspine Ridge, Golden Horse Valley, Hiia's Valley, High Meadow, Mare Graze Vale and Seven Foals Vale.
- **Prax** - This has Mythos & History, Stereotype, Common Attitudes, Religion, Tribes, Climate and Regions. The Regions described are Prax, Pavis, River of Cradles, Sun County and Vulture Country.
- **Lunar Tarsh** - This has Stereotype, Common Attitudes, Politics, Tarsh in Flames, Religion, Climate and Regions. The Regions described are Bagnot, Dunstop, Furthest, Goldedge, Slavewall and Talfort
- **Old Tarsh** - This has Stereotype, Common Attitudes, Politics, Important Cults, Climate and Regions. The Regions described are Bush Range, Dragon Pass, Kero Fin, Shaker Temple and Wintertop.

All in all, these are good, with each location described in some detail. However, it is a little jarring where some Homelands have slightly different sections. My first thought was that these have been specifically called out as being different, so Prax has Mythos & History rather than Short History, to call out its mythical nature and Tribes to call out that it has separate tribes, but Old Tarsh has Important Cults rather than Religion and I could not see the distinction.

Game System

This covers the important things, such as how a skill is used, and unimportant things, such as what happens to a lantern if it is dropped.

- **Time in the Game** - Covers Campaign Time, Real Time, Narrative Time, Full Turn and Melee Round. It also covers Day, Week, Lunar Phase, Seasonal Time and Sacred Time.
- **Ability Use** - Covers how to use abilities, Skills Base Chance, Characteristic Rolls, Results (Success/Failure/Critical Success/Special Success/Fumble) and Reattempting Ability rolls.
- **Opposed Rolls** - Describes how skills can be used against each other, with the following results: Winner & Loser, Tie, Two Losers. This is surprisingly short and could be beefed up with examples of Sneak vs Perception and so on.
- **Abilities above 100%** - All skills are reduced by the amount over 100, including the Adventurer's skills, with Special/Critical/Fumbles worked out accordingly.
- **Augmenting Abilities** - One skill may be used to augment another, with a roll determining how much augment is given. Sigh, why have an extra roll to complicate things? It just slows things down. Why not just have the Special chance as an augment?
- **The Resistance Table** - This shows how to use the Resistance Table, has a nifty formula, describes specific uses and Augments to the Resistance Table, which is a nice idea.
- **Damage** - Covers Hit Locations, Results of Damage, Damage Equal to or More Than the Location's Hit Points, Damage Equals or Exceeds Double the Location's Hit Points, Damage Equals or Exceeds Triple the Location's Hit Points and Severed and Maimed Limbs.
- **Death and Permanent damage** - This describes the seven day journey to the Halls of Judgement, after which the only way back is via a HeroQuest.
- **Healing** - Covers Healing Magic, First Aid and Natural Healing.
- **Resurrection** - Says that only Chalana Arroy has the Resurrect spell, which is a change to what has gone before. I suspect this is an oversight and some other cults will still get Resurrect. The cost of a resurrect is the Adventurer's ransom, which is a change from before, but a good change.
- **Encumbrance** - This thorny topic covers things for ENC, Maximum ENC, ENC Penalties, consequences of ENC for Dodging, Size of Items and Coins. Hi hum, I wonder how many people will actually use this?
- **Chases** - This covers how to do a chase, including Range Categories and Movement in a Chase. They look as though they could work.
- **Natural Conditions and Damage** - This covers Darkness (With the Dropped Lantern Table), Disease (With standard and Cults of Terror Diseases), Drowning & Asphyxiation, Falling, Fire, Poison, Thrown Objects, Weather and Exposure/Hunger/Thirst.

Skills

This covers how skills are used and has some parts repeated from previous sections.

- **Base Chance** - Covers the Base Chance of a skill in 16 lines.
- **Who Rolls for Success with the Skill** - Player normally, but sometimes the GM, bringing back the GM's Screen and secret rolls, straight from the 70s.
- **Modifying Skill Rolls** - Covers Augmenting skills again
- **Skill Descriptions** - Describes each skill, by Skill Category. There are lots of good stuff here, but far too much to detail individually.

Combat

Covers Combat in all shapes and forms.

- **The Melee Round** - Split into 4 phases: Statement of Intent, Movement of Non-Engaged Characters, Resolution of Melee/Missiles/Spells and Bookkeeping.
- **Strike Ranks** - Covers what they are, how to calculate them, modifiers, preparing/changing weapons, magical attacks, actions taking more than 12 Strike Ranks, Activities outside Melee and Activities inside Melee. Interestingly, an Adventurer may not attack both physically and magically in the same round, something I will not be using.
- **Movement** - Adventurers can move in combat, which adds to their effective Strike Rank
- **Disengaging from Melee** - Gives options for Retreating, Knockback and Fleeing.
- **Weapon Use** - Covers the Attack, Parry and results of an Attack/Parry, Dodging, Subsequent Parries, Damage to Weapons, Combat with skills above 100%, Splitting Attacks and Using Passions or Runes in Combat.
- **Combat Results** - This describes what the results of combat are, in other words what damage is done. It covers Special Damage, Impaling Damage, Parrying an Impaling Blow, Double Damage, Weapon Stuck in Target, Slashing Damage, Incapacitating the Target, Crushing Damage, Double Bonus Damage, Critical Hit, Fumble and Effects of a Fumble on the Fumbler. Whew, there's a lot of stuff there.
- **Weapons** - Covers Melee Weapons (Category, Base, STR/DEX, Damage, HP, ENC, Length, SR and Type), Missile Weapons (Category, Type, Base, STR/DEX, Damage, HP, ENC, Range, Rate and Type), Thrown Weapon Damage Bonus, Shooting While Moving, Shooting at Protected Targets, Shooting at Moving Targets and Shooting into Melee. I don't understand why the rules for missile Weapons are here, rather than earlier in Combat.
- **Armour** - Describes what Armour is (Type, Material, Absorbs, ENC, Cost and Move Quietly), Materials, Types (In far too much detail) and Helmets. Shields seem to come under Armor, with headings (Size, STR, Damage, HP, ENC, SR), Shield types, Notes on

Shield use, Shield Attacks and use of Shield against Missile Weapons. I am not sure why Shields have HP and Armor has Absorbs.

- **Mounted Combat** - Covers combat while on a beast, including Lance, Mounted Archery, Controlling a Mount During Battle, Special Hit Locations for Mounted Combat, Use of the Pike Against Charging Cavalry, but has no Charging Rules (presumably to avoid the 10 page discussions on Forums)
- **Chariots** - Covers combat from a chariot, including Attacking from a Chariot, Attacking a Person on a Chariot, Controlling the Chariot Team, Dragging and Trampling.
- **Fighting in Phalanx Formation** - Covers six or more people in formation, including Shield walls and Hedgehog, covering Knockback Prevention, limit to Number of Attackers, Defense in Formation, Stay in Formation, Break Formation & Parry, Attacking in Formation and Moving the Phalanx. All very detailed, but how many people will use them?
- **Other Combat Rules** - As if the above was not enough, here are more rules, including Attacking from Advantage or Disadvantage, Darkness, Grappling, Knockback, Two Weapon Use and Notes on Combat.

There is a lot in the Combat Chapter, which is expected for a game like RuneQuest that does emphasise Combat. It is missing a lot of stuff for Mounted and Chariot Combat, such as Charges, riding through Combat, Swiping While passing and Stopping a Charge, much of which is applicable to Mounted and Chariot Combat.

Runes

More detail on how Runes are used.

- **Using Runes** - Rune Magic is cast using the Skill in the Rune and Adventurers may attempt to get Runic Inspiration by concentrating on the Rune and augmenting a non-combat skill
- **Becoming Inspired** - This allows an Adventurer to use a Rune as an Augment in combat, but I cannot see how this differs from the Runic Inspiration above. Runes and Personality describes how Runes affect an Adventurer's Personality. Casual Use of Runes describes how Runes can be used when a player doesn't know what to do. Magical Tests describes how to use a Rune to pass a test. Conflicting Runes shows how an Adventurer can use their own Runes in an Opposed Contest to see which one wins out in any situation, so an Adventurer might have Air/Storm and Harmony, but be torn between violence and peace. Runes and Passions describes how Runes can conflict with Passions. Personality Disputes allow a GM to force an Adventurer to behave in a certain way in a certain situation.
- **Other Rune Experience Checks** - Covers gaining experience in a Rune due to the general situation rather than actually using the Rune.

Passions & Reputation

This covers how Passions can be used in the game.

- **Basic Passions** - Describes Devotion (Deity), Fear (Type/Individual), Hate (Group/Individual), Honour, Loyalty (Group/Place/Individual) and Love (Group/Individual)
- **Using Passions** - This covers Inspiration, i.e. using a Passion as an Augment, but takes a whole page to do it.
- **Gaining a Passion** - With GM and Player discussion a new passion can be gained through gameplay at 60%.
- **Mandatory Rolls** - Extreme Passions, i.e. those at 80% or higher, can force an Adventurer to behave in certain ways, either by having an opposed Roll to see if the Adventurer is forced to behave in a certain way, or by reducing the Passion to below 80%, which is the biggest cop-out ever.
- **Reputation** - Describes what it is and how it is used, including Gaining Reputation, Reputation Gains, Extraordinary Deeds, Heroic Deeds, Tracking Reputation, Using Reputation, Identifying an Adventurer, Impressing Others and Reputation Bonuses/Penalties. All good stuff, the Reputation stuff is better than the Passions, unfortunately.

Magic

- **Types of Magic** - Spirit Magic, Rune Magic and Sorcery, all based on Runes
- **Magic Points** - Start as POW, can be drained by spell use and regained through rest or Meditation
- **Resisting Spells** - Use POW vs POW on the Resistance Table
- **Rune Points** - Permanent sacrificing POW to a Deity gives a number of Rune Points, between 1 and CHA, replenished through Worship, Increasing Chance of Success with magic allows an Adventurer to augment magic use with Meditate or dance/Sing/Whatever, Ritual practices and Augmenting with Skills allow an Adventurer to increase the casting chance, not sure why this is under Rune Points, though.
- **Spells** - Covers Terminology (Intensity, Ritual, Spell, total Magic Points), Types of Spells (Active Spell, Enchantment, Passive Spell, Ritual Spell, Stackable/NonStackable Spell, Summoning, Variable/Nonvariable Spell), runic Association, Spell Effects, Boosting a Spell, Spell Ranges (Touch/Ranged), Spell Durations (Instant/Temporal)
- **Enchantment** - Covers permanent changes through magic, including Making an Enchantment, Binding Enchantment, binding Spirits into Animals, Limit to Binding, other Enchantments, Conditions of Enchantments (Area Effect, Attack, Link magic Points, Link Spell, Target, User)

Spirit Magic

This is the equivalent of RQ2's Battle Magic, RQ3's Spirit Magic and RQ6's Common Magic. I'd have preferred the term Common Magic, personally, but there you go.

- **Learning Spirit Magic** - From a Cult or From a Shaman,
- **Limits to Spell Holding** - Up to CHA
- **The Focus** - All Spirit Magic needs a Focus. How many people actually use this? We certainly don't, we normally ignore this rules before Encumbrance.
- **Spellcasting Ability** - POWx55
- **Resistance Roll** - use the Resistance Table, but can be augmented
- **Spell Strike rank** - nifty formula of DEX SR + magic points of spell + boosting magic points = Spell's SR
- **Spell Limits** - Basically says when a spell is cast, the Adventurer doesn't need to maintain it, unless it is Active
- **Range** - Either Touch or Ranged (50m)
- **Spirit Magic Procedures** - Summary of the above
- **Duration** - Instant or 2 minutes (10 meles Rounds)
- **Spirit Magic Spells** - Describes the various Spirit Magic Spells in the rulebook, but there are far too many to go through.

Rune Cults

Describes the interaction between worshippers and Deities, formalised into a Rune Cult.

- **Deities** - Describes what a God is
- **Classes of Cults** - Splits cults into Major Deity, Medium-Powered Deity, Minor Deity, Subsidiary Deity and Powerful Spirit
- **Fundamentals of Rune Cults** - This describes the cult's structure and limitations, with membership (Lay Members, Initiates, God talkers, Rune Priests and Rune Lords), Worship, Divination, Divine Intervention, Cult Spirits, Elementals and Other Cult Spirits
- **Lay Members** - Description, Becoming a Lay Member and Benefits
- **Initiates** - Description, Becoming an Initiate, Duties & Restrictions, Benefits and Membership in Multiple Cults
- **Rune Priests** - Description, Requirements for Rune Priests, Benefits, Temple Resources & Support, Easier POW Gain Roll, Easier Rune Point Replenishing, Access to Enchantment Spells, Further Training & Experience, Allying a Spirit, Spell teaching, Divine Intervention and Duties & Restrictions
- **God Talkers** - Requirements for God Talkers, Duties & Restrictions and Benefits. It would be useful if this was in the same format as Rune Priest.

- **Rune Lords** - Description, Requirements for Rune Lords, Benefits, Support of the Cult, Easier Rune Point Replenishing, Use of Rune Metals, Improved Resistance to Magic, Access to Enchantment Spells, Further Training & Experience, Allying a Spirit, Spell teaching, Divine Intervention and Duties & Restrictions
- **Rune Lord-Priests** - Description, again it would be better in the above formats
- **Chief and High Priests** - Description, again it would be better in the above formats
- **Leaving the cult** - Describes a cult Spirit of Retribution, but doesn't describe how you leave a cult
- **Subcults** - Describes what it is and says it has no existence outside the cult, includes Joining a Subcult and what effects membership has
- **Associated Cults** - Describes them and includes Gaining Access to Associated cult Rune Spells and Casting Associated Cult Rune Magic
- **Temples** - Describes them and includes Functions of a Temple (Worship, Replenish Rune Points, Gain Access to Rune Spells, Learn Spirit Magic, Temple Defence, Temple and Resources), Temple Sizes (Site, Shrine, Minor Temple, Major Temple, Great Temple), Sample gloranthan Temples (Orlanth, Ernalda, Issaries, Lhankor Mhy, Chalana Arroy, Humakt, Babeester Gor, Yelmalio)
- **Wyters** - Describes them and lists abilities, including wyter sizes and a sample wyter, Temple Defences and ancient or sacred sites give Rune Points towards the defence of the Temple)
- **Cult Format** - Has Name, Runes, Description, Holy Days, Initiate Membership, Cult Skills, Favoured passions, Cult Spirit Magic, Prohibited Cult Spirit Magic, Rune Magic, Enchantments, God Talker, Rune Priest, Rune Lord and Associate Cults
- **Cults** - Describes the following Cults: Argan Argar, Babeester Gor, Chalana Arroy, Daka Fal, Eiritha, Engizi The Sky River Titan, Ernalda, Eurmal, Foundchild, Humakt, Issaries, Lhankor Mhy, Maran Gor, Odayla, Orlanth, Seven Mothers, Storm Bull, Waha, Yelm, Yelmalio and Yinkin
- **Cult Compatibility** - Has Enemy, Hostile, Neutral, Friendly and Associate Cults and a nice little table

Rune Magic

This describes the various spells, together with some repeated stuff from above.

- **Rune Points** - As above
- **Gaining Rune Magic Spells** - How to gain them
- **Casting a Rune Spell** - Roll under the Rune associated with the spell
- **Resistance Roll** - using the resistance table, possibly with augment
- **Spell Effects** - What casting a spell looks like
- **Stackable Rune Magic** - How certain spells can be stacked together
- **Replenishing Rune Points** - As above but specifies special cases (Sacred Time, High Holy Day, Seasonal holy Day, Minor Holy Day, Associate Cults, Holy Site, Votive Image)
- **Sacrifice** - Bonuses to Worship for sacrificing things, really good idea and makes sense in Glorantha, covers Living Things and Valuable Objects, but I would also suggest that sacrificing something of excellent quality should bump up a level, so sacrificing a snow-white rabbit should give +10% rather than the usual +5%.
- **Sacred Places** - Covers a bonus for worshipping at a Sacred Place, but only covers Temples, what about a place that is an Storm Bull Holy Site but doesn't have a temple? For example, there is a rock in Prax that glistens wet if it has rained or is going to rain and is sacred because Storm Bull relieved himself on the rock, there is no temple but this should give a Bonus to Storm Bull worship.
- **One-Use Rune Spells** - The Rune Pool points used to cast them cannot be replenished, so they are gone, they had better be powerful spells to make them worthwhile
- **Common Rune Magic** - Available to any cult and castable with any rune associated with the Cult, these are: Command Cult Spirit, Dismiss Magic, Divination, Extension, Find Enemy, Heal Wound, Multispell, Sanctify, Soul Sight, Spirit Block, Summon Cult Spirit , Warding, so it's nice to see Multispell coming back and in a better form than the original RQ2 spell
- **Rune Spells** - A list of Rune Spells, far too many to go through, but all the old favourites plus some new ones
- **Devising Rune Spells** - Describes how to create new Rune Spells, but from a rules mechanic point of view as to game balance and in relation to Cults and existing spells. I would have been nice to see some rules for in-game creation of Rune Spells, presumably they will come with the HeroQuesting rules.

Shamans

- **What is a Shaman?** - Describes what a Shaman is, fairly well.
- **Tools of the Shaman** - Lists their tools: Drums, rattles, bones, songs, dances, gestures, drugs and enchanted items
- **Paths to Shamanhood** - Three levels, Student, Assistant and Shaman
- **Student** - Describes how to become a student
- **Assistant Shaman** - Must have an opening, Animal Lore, Plant Lore and First Aid at 25% and roll POWx3%, Duties, Restrictions and benefits are described
- **Shamanic Skills** - Describes the skills of Spirit Combat, Spirit Dance, Spirit Lore and Spirit Travel
- **Horned Man** - Provides an interesting history of the Horned man, god of Shamans
- **Axis Mundi** - Another piece of text describing why the Cosmic Mountain or Centre of the World is so important to Shamans
- **Becoming a Full Shaman** - After a year of training, an Assistant Shaman may attempt to awaken a Fetch, the roll to be allowed to do so is fairly easy, $((POW \text{ and } CHA) / 2) * 5$, but Summoning the fetch is a mini-HeroQuest, which is nice, and can result in a powerful fetch plus some taboos
- **The Fetch** - Describes what a Fetch is, why it is important and what form it often takes. It also covers What the Fetch provides the Shaman, Fetch and Discorporation, Fetches and Combat, and Capturing Spirits with the Fetch, all very nice and shiny
- **Benefits of Being a Shaman** - Describes the benefits a Shaman gets, including Discorporation, Expanded Charisma, Learning Spirit Magic, Second POW, Teaching Spirit Magic, Second Sight, Exorcism, Spirit Combat, Spirit Defence, Spirit Pacts, Increased Limit to Bound Spirits and Tribal/Cult Support. Shamans gain their first Ability for free, but must spend an ever-increasing number of Characteristic Points to gain further abilities. I'm not sure if I approve and would probably houserul this in some way.
- **Shamanic Abilities** - These are the extra Abilities a Shaman can get and include: Conceal Fetch, Cure Disease, Expanded presence, Hide Soul, Magic Attack, Magic Defence, Materialise Fetch, Possession, Power Within, Second Sight (Enhanced), Self Resurrection, Soul Expansion, Spell Barrage, Spell Extension, (Spirit) Affinity, Spirit Defence and Spirit Mastery, all very good Abilities, well thought out and very fitting for Shamans.
- **Disadvantages of Becoming a Shaman** - These are the downsides, including Obligations to Tribe or Cult, Visibility and Commitment, not really very many at all.
- **Taboos** - These rest the cost of the next Ability, so a Shaman with 3 abilities would expect the next to cost 4 Points, but taking a Taboo resets it to 1 Point, yippee! The taboos come from a table and are interesting and suitable, they include "Never let an animal sacred to the clan suffer needlessly", of which the "needlessly" is all-important and gets an Adventurer out of many a scrape.

Spirits and the Spirit World

These contain rules on, guess what?

- **Characteristics of Spirits** - Describes what Spirits are and what characteristics they have
- **Negotiating with Spirits** - Covers how to negotiate and bargain with Spirits
- **Bound Spirits** - What they are and where they can be bound
- **Spirit Combat** - Covers combat with Spirits, including Initiating Spirit Combat, Combatants, Spirit Combat Skill, Resolving Spirit Combat, Strike Rank, Spirit Combat Damage, Reaching 0 Magic Points, Hit Point Damage, Spiritual Armour, Attacking With Weapons and Spells, Spirit Combat Fumbles, Disengaging from Spirit Combat and Possession. All good stuff, with the exception of weapons with spells or enchantments being able to damage spirits, that is a cop-out as far as I am concerned and would never have it in my games. One of the Fumbles is Discorporation, so a corporeal Adventurer could become Discorporate with no easy way of getting back, fun, fun fun.
- **The Spirit World** - What it is, what it looks like, how to describe it, with a very pretty shamaness with what looks like tattooed stockings. This also includes Mapping the Middle World to the Spirit World, Regions of the Spirit World, Spirit Vortices, Runes & the Spirit World, finding Spirits, Extended Discorporation and Spirit Places. This is well thought out.
- **Spirit Cults** - Describes the format of a Spirit Cult, where worshippers follow a powerful local Spirit, what we used to call a Spirit Lord. they are worshipped at Shrines and have Lay Membership, Initiate Status, Shamans, with rules for Establishing a Spirit Shrine, with A Focus of Power, Shamand and Congregation. Again, good stuff that we have lacked in previous RuneQuest editions.
- **Sample Spirit Cults** - Two examples are provided, Black Fang Brotherhood and Oakfed. Interestingly, the Black Fang writeup has a section on Rune Priests that says they have Shamans instead, so this was clearly taken from the Rune Cults section and moved here without being cleared up.

Sorcery

- **The Nature of Sorcery** - A description of Sorcery, with the fact that this is very much a bare-bones set of rules that will be expanded on with future supplements.
- **Sorcery Use** - Sorcerers use spells and techniques
- **Runes** - describes how Sorcerers are not attuned to Runes, but study them to master them, describes the different types of runes and what the Runes are, so includes Elemental Runes, Power Runes and Form Runes
- **Techniques** - Sorcerers use 6 techniques: Command, Combine, Separate, Summon, Dispel and Tap, each of which is briefly described, as is mastering New Runes or techniques, that says that a Sorcerer must have INT 13 to understand one rune and technique, with each extra rune of technique mastered requiring 1 INT.
- **Manipulating Spells** - A Sorcerer can manipulate spells up to Free INT, using Intensity, which can affect Spell Strength, Spell Range and Spell Cost.
- **Casting Spells** - Describes how a Sorcerer casts spells, including Spell Costs, Casting Time, Determining Success, Concentration, Spell Limits, Boosting Spells, Aborting a Spell, Incompatible Spells and Meditation or Ritual Practices, all very nice indeed.
- **Sympathetic Magic** - this gives bonuses for casting spells on a particular day, week or season, with Bonuses or Penalties for particular Runes on Particular Days/Weeks/Seasons, so casting a Water spell on Waterday/Sea Season gives a +15% Bonus, but casting a Fire spell on Waterday/Sea Season has a -25% Penalty, this is a nice touch. Places can be associated with Runes, with a Minor/Major/Great Runic Association, giving a +10%/+20%/+30% Bonus, so casting a Water spell on Waterday/Sea Season in a place with a Great runic Association to Water gives a +45% Bonus. Using special components associated with the Runes also gives a +10% or +20% Bonus, depending on the type of Component.
- **Learning Sorcery** - Limits Sorcery to the Read/Write skill, so no place for oral sorcery. This gives examples for learning Sorcery for Malkioni, Aeolianism, Lhankor Mhy and Lunars, each with its own slant on learning Sorcery.
- **Learning New Spells** - Learning is through a teacher or researching a grimoire. Being taught a spell takes a whole season of study. Learning through research takes a whole season, a Read/Write roll and an INTx3 roll, so the sorcerer could fail.
- **Memorising Spells** - Sorcerers can memorise spells up to their INT and can temporarily put a spell out of mind or bring it back into mind using the Meditate skill. Sorcerers can also enchant the spell into an object, that allows the Sorcerer to cast the spell without having it in mind, it also allows the Sorcerer to enchant more POW into the spell, to increase the base Strength/Range/Duration before being manipulated with Intensity.
- **Creating New Spells** - An Adventurer Sorcerer may attempt to create a new spell by researching for a season and rolling an INT roll, depending on what kind of spell is being created, from INTx4 for a modification of an existing known spell to INTx1 for a powerful or unique spell. If succeeded, the spell can be written down and taught to others, a critical gives a twist to the spell and a failure means the Adventurer may continue for

another season. No result is given for a Special or Fumble, but I would suggest a Fumble means the Adventurer cannot research that spell again, or creates a different, less powerful or more dangerous version of the spell.

- **Increasing Spell Casting Ability** - Through experience, training or research, but this takes up less room in the book than the header which it is under.
- **Sample Sorcery Spells** - Again, many old favourites and some new spells, far too many to go into in any detail. Interestingly enough, the Animate Dead spell has the Runes of Life and Death, but not Undeath, so a Humakti Sorcerer could use Animate Dead but a Vivamort Sorcerer couldn't.

Equipment & Wealth

This covers the main coins.

- **Standard of Living** - Wealth is measured not by coin but by Standard of Living and there are 4 types: Destitute, Poor, Free, Noble and Petty King. See what I did there? [Rant]That's what they do, they say 4 types and then have petty King as an extra one. Why? Why not have 5 types and say petty King is rare. [/Rant] The coin equivalent for 2 adults and 3 children is pitifully small, so a Free Household gets by on 60L a year, but a noble Household spends 200L a year. I can see why they do this, but come on. It also says that the actual cost of the household will be more, as you have to factor in extra costs.
- **Retinues** - Important people have followers and followers must be supported, sample followers are: Family Member, Bodyguard, Scribe, Servant and Tenant. Each are given a cost to support them, so a Bodyguard costs 60L a year, the same as a Free Household of 5 people, and a Servant costs 15-30L per year, the same as a Poor Household or half a Free Household, and I have no idea why they are so expensive.
- **The Hide of Land** - The equivalent of enough land to support one Free Household for a year and the land that an oxen team can plough in a year. Each hide produces a surplus of 80L, before tithes, or 64L after tithing to the Earth temple and her Spouse. Presumably this is in addition to the cost of supporting the Household. Multiple Hides gives examples of how a Noble or Priest can have people working Hides, splitting the surplus depending on the Manage Household skill, such people are Tenant Farmers, Slaves and Family Members. Flocks and Herds has rules for flocks of sheep and herds of cattle.
- **Typical Clan Orlanth and Ernalda Temple** - This gives a breakdown of such a temple, how many hides of land it owns, how many the clan owns and the incomes from hides and tithes. The figures seem very small, so new Gloranthan costs must be a lot less than old Gloranthan costs.
- **Temples** - This gives a general breakdown of what property a Temple has, but the example does it much better. It does have a section on Storing Treasure, which allows Adventurers to bank treasure at the local Temple and retrieve it later, but not at another

Temple, oh no, has to be this one, Guv, unless it is Issaries, as they know about that kind of thing.

- **Casting Spells** - Provides costs for a Temple's Priests for casting spells, costs are very low, 20L per Rune Point, plus 1L per additional magic Point spent, they must be raking it in. For Chalana Arroy, healing is free, but the healed person is expected to provide a gift dependant on status and the healing given. Preciously, it mentions that Resurrect normally costs the same as the ransom, but is different here, as it gives a cost of the next year's income, not very consistent.
- **Ransom** - If an Adventurer is captured, they can shout "Ransom" and they might not be killed, as they can pay a hefty ransom to their captives. Ransoms are either paid from their stored treasure, or by patrons or their cults. Having a Ransom paid by someone else incurs a life-debt that must be repaid.
- **The Market** - Cities are defined by having a permanent market, towns and villages have weekly or occasional Markets. The Issaries cult runs Markets.
- **Gifts** - An Adventurer may bribe people with Gifts, getting +1% to a single Loyalty roll for a 20L Gift, or a permanent +1% for a 50L Gift. So, giving 500L gets a permanent +10% Loyalty Bonus.
- **Price Lists of Goods and Services** - Has prices for commonly available goods, with sketch rules for calculating prices for dyed or special goods. This covers clothing, jewelry, winter cloaks, cosmetics, meat beasts, riding beasts, cavalry beasts and war beasts, slaves, riding gear, other animals, conveyances, tools, expedition gear, exotic goods, musical instruments, rooms in inns & residences, food, drink, short-term labour, sages & scribes and poets & heralds. It's all fairly comprehensive, but will take some getting used to.

Between Adventures

This covers experience and training. I'd have put it earlier in the book, perhaps with the Game System chapter, but I didn't write it.

- **Experience** - Adventurers get an experience check for using a skill in a stressful situation. Adventurers roll for Experience at the end of each season. Roll 1D100 and add the Skill category, if this is higher than the skill then Experience is gained, with rolls of 100 or more automatically succeeding. Success gives +1D6 to the skill, or +3 if the player doesn't feel lucky enough to roll 1D6. Even skills with a negative bonus can increase beyond 100% if the Adventurer rolls 100. If an Adventurer has not had the chance to adventure in that season, they can pick 4 skills and attempt Experience rolls for those.
- **Training** - An Adventurer trains with a teacher for a whole Season and gets 1D6-1 or +2 to the skill, but skills of 75% or more cannot be increased through Training. Presumably, an Adventurer Training can also get the Experience Between Adventures rolls as well. Cost of Training is given, for Common, Professional and Rare skills, for bands of 1-25, 26-50, 50-75 and 75-100, if the ability can be trained over 75%, contradicting the previous rule for no training if a skill is 75% or higher. Cult Skills are mentioned as being cheaper or free, but still require service to pay for them.
- **Research** - Any skill that can be improved by Training can instead be researched. This takes a Season, needs an Experience Roll and gives 1D6-2 or 1% increase.
- **Increasing Characteristics** - Adventurers can increase Characteristics, under certain circumstances. Species Maximum is given as the Maximum Rollable + Number of Dice rolled. POW can be increased after overcoming an opponent on the resistance table with less than a 95% chance, or through succeeding in a Worship ceremony if the High priest succeeds in Worship, or through Training. Increasing POW means taking the (Maximum (Maximum rolled + Minimum Rolled) - POW) x 5%, but this Species maximum is different from the one several paragraphs up. Succeeding gives you 1D3-1 or 1 POW increase. STR, CON, DEX and CHA can be trained or researched, INT and SIZ cannot be trained, researched or increased with Experience. Again, these use Maximum rollable + Minimum Rollable, not Maximum rollable + Number of Dice. At least try to be consistent, please. CHA can be increased automatically by having a flashy weapon, being promoted or being a successful leader, being an unsuccessful leader reduces CHA.
- **Sacred Time** - The last two weeks of the Glorantha year are special, a Sacred Time, and Adventurers can do certain things in that period: Worship, Perform Heroquest, Determine the Harvest, Determine Adventurer Income, Check for Aging, Make Family Rolls and Read the Omens. Rules are given for each of these and make sense, for bookkeeping purposes. If you have a clan-based farming community then the detailed Harvest rules would be interesting, if you are a roving band of Adventurers then they are not worth reading. They are interesting, though, and make sense. Of more use are the Occupation Income rules, as they can bring in some income. Adventurers with land

grants can use them to gain more income. Aging Adventurers roll to see if they lose Characteristics, some people love the idea, some people hate the idea, I wouldn't use this in my campaigns, as I am not keen on the aged hero creaking at the bones, mainly because I am aging and creaking at the bones. Family Rolls are made to see if the Adventurer has children, whether the Family's children survive and to see if family members die, get blessings or progress in cults. All very well, but a bit bleak. I couldn't see anywhere what happens to female Adventurers who have sex, can they get pregnant, if so, do they roll at the start of the year or the end of the year?

Sheets

Three Sheets are given, a Character Sheet, Family Sheet and Adventurer Background Worksheet. They have loads of whitespace, loads of pretty pictures and could have a lot more information in a smaller space, but that is true of most official Character Sheets.

- **Character Sheet** - This is split over two pages, the first with Hit Point, Runes, Characteristics, Passions, Weapons, Cults, Spirit Combat, Magic, Hit Point Tracker, Magic Point Tracker, Combat Notes and Magic Notes. Do people still use Trackers? I thought most people just had a box that they keep writing things in and crossing out. Ho hum, could be fit on half a page. The second page has skills and, bizarrely, a list of various weapons. Why have weapons here at all, if you have weapons on the first page? Makes no sense to me. Also, who has that many weapons? Would be better having that blank and letting the Player fill in what Weapons they need. It also has Additional Magic, Notes, Gear, Treasure and Magic Items, with coins at the bottom. All Ok, I suppose, except for the Weapons, but could be squeezed onto half a page with better layout.
- **Family** - Lists all important family members, including one grandfather, one grandmother, one father and one mother. I know that only one grandparent is considered important, but surely there is room for both father's parents and mother's parents? There is room for 12 Aunts/Uncles and 12 Siblings, 2 Spouses and 6 Children, all helpfully with tickboxes for Male/Female/Dead. One line for Famous Ancestors and Clan & Tribal Leaders doesn't give much room. Holdings allows you to list how much land you have, what your income is and so on. Useful for Sacred Time stuff, I suppose. Finally, there is a section for Mount/Elemental Ally, why isn't this on the main character sheet? Presumably because they stuck too many weapons in.
- **Adventurer Background Worksheet** - Contains places for the important events in Character Generation and is a handy little reminder of what made the Adventurer.

Appendix - Conversion Guide

My first reaction would be to say “Appendix, come on guys, it’s just a chapter”, but I can see why it’s an Appendix, as it only relates to people who know about or have earlier versions.

My second reaction is that this only covers RQ2 and RQ3, not later versions. I can see why they have done this, as RQ2 and RQ3 are very similar to RQG, whereas RQ4, 5 and 6 are quite different and would need a lot more conversion. It also airbrushes them out of the picture and saves explaining why there is an RQ4/5/6 when the Copyright says that this is Fourth Edition RuneQuest. Oh what a tangled web we weave ...

- **Converting RuneQuest Adventurers** - Very rough guidelines, broken down below.
- **Skills** - Keep as they are or use whichever favours the Adventurer.
- **Background** - Either roll up a Background, ignoring any skills added, or ignore and let it come out through play. Handwave RQ2 Backgrounds and RQ3 Nationalities, just use Homelands.
- **Cults** - Use pretty much as they are, if a spell does not exist then ignore it (Better to keep the spell, in my opinion).
- **Runes** - Make them up by allocating 10 points per year over 16, Runemasters must have the correct runes to keep their position.
- **Characteristics** - As before, but RQ2 INT and SIZ have a conversion. Skill Category Modifiers - Use the RQG versions.
- **Derived Characteristics** - Use RQG ones.
- **Skills** - If the Skill is not present in RQG then lose it (by the way, this is a really bad idea, as I guess many will reappear in the Gods of Glorantha book), if the Base chance in RQ2/3 is higher than in RQG then add the difference to the skill (Why? Just keep the skill the same, that’s what I say).
- **Combat Skills** - Use the higher of attack/parry, as these are combined in RQG. Spirit Magic - Adventurers now begin with 5 points, so presumably any RQ2/3 Adventurers with less than 5 points get bumped up. Drop or Convert spells that don’t exist, but also says that many spells will come back with Gods of Glorantha, so Adventurers can then revert back (I say just keep the spell, as it’s easier).
- **Cults** - God of Glorantha will have a lot of the same cults, so just keep them.
- **Rune Point** - Total all POW spent on Rune/Divine spells and that is your Rune Points, if you don’t have any, then get 3 points for an inexperienced Adventurer and 6 for an experienced one, 9 for a Runemaster.
- **Rune Spells** - Beginning Adventurers should know at least 3 Special spells, any spells already known are kept, Adventurers know all Common Rune Spells, keep spells that are now missing as they will come back.
- **Sorcery** - A bit more difficult, every 20% in Intensity/Duration/range/multispell gives mastery of one technique or rune.
- **Equipment** - Either replace them with equivalents, lose them or just keep them.

- **Wealth** - prices are lower, so divide RQ2 Lunars by 2 and RQ3 by 3, divide treasure gained by 10.
- **Combat** - use RQG equivalents.
- **Magic Items** - These work fundamentally the same.

This whole Appendix is cluttered and badly organised, just confusing, I think. It would be better saying “use the RQG equivalent, or keep the skill/spell from before, unless it is in certain lists, in which case it is converted or dropped”.

Summary

So, that's it. 449 pages of RuneQuest and Gloranthan goodies.

What did I think of it? I actually liked it, in fact I like it better than I thought I would. This is the first edition that I would seriously think of using instead of RQ3.

The artwork is stupendously good. Normally, I flick over the artwork as inconsequential, but this is atmospheric and evocative. I could relate to all the artwork and place it in Glorantha. The maps are OK, but nowhere near as good as the illustrations.

Whilst the layout, in general is good, there were some sections that were confusing, with headings that seemed to flow from previous ones and confused me when reading. The Appendix should be surgically removed, reformatted and made available as a download. There were inconsistencies, with Species Maximum Characteristics calculated and used in two different ways. Training was inconsistent with its "No training for skills above 75%, except for those where it is allowed". That either shows a lack of care, or, I would expect, people going word-blind after checking everything.

The rules are generally very good and, dare I say it, better than RQ3. They are what RQ2 moving to RQ3 should have been.

Do I love the Character Generation? Yes, the way of working out a Grandparent/Parent's life fixes the Adventurer into Glorantha. Homelands seem to work OK, as do Professions. Rolling Characteristics gives a number of options to not roll up someone unplayable.

Do I love the Skills? No, having seen what Revolution is doing, I would never go back to RQG's style of skills, I prefer a short list of Skills and traits hanging off them. Bit, they work as skills, in a very general way.

Do I love the Magic? Yes, actually. Spirit Magic would be better named Common Magic, but I can see why they didn't. The way Spirit Magic works is nice and easy. Rune Magic is vastly improved, from systems that were not broken anyway. It is bedded nicely into Glorantha. Sorcery looks better, but I probably wouldn't play a Sorcerer, so it's hard to say. Enchantments are good, missing some things from RQ3, but they are easy to put back in.

Do I love the Game System? Well, it's OK, it has kept enough RQ3 to make me happy but has left some old rubbish in there as well.

What do I particularly like about RQG? The artwork, passions, reputation, rune points, shamans, boosting spells based on time/place and runes.

What is it missing? Hero Points, to allow the rerolling of bad dice, now my players have used them I doubt they would go back to not using them, no problem, I'll just include them.