# TEROCUEST GLORAITHA



Conversion Guidelines for Hero Wars and HeroQuest 1st Edition To HeroQuest 2nd Edition

HeroQuest Glorantha

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Conversion Guidelines
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# **OVERVIEW**

This document helps you use Hero Wars and HeroQuest 1e material with HeroQuest Glorantha.

As a rules-lite game, conversion between the editions is very straight-forward; the core mechanics of a simple contest are the same.

You will need *HeroQuest Glorantha* to make use of this conversion guide as we will focus only on the version difference. If you do have characters from earlier editions, you should be able to use the advice to convert characters, but there is no step-by-step process.

HeroQuest Glorantha focused on returning Glorantha to its ancient world roots. This trumps earlier information, but your Glorantha will vary.

The major setting change is to the Malkioni culture of Western Genertela. Older material drew on medieval Europe, and was anachronistic. In the Guide to Glorantha and HeroQuest Glorantha, we replaced that with something rooted more in the ancient world.

# **VERSIONS**

The first version of these rules *Hero Wars* was published in 2000 (ISBN 978-1-929052-01-1)

The second version *HeroQuest* was published in 2003 (ISBN 978-1-929052-12-7). We refer to this as *HeroQuest 1e* in the text to disambiguate.

The third version *HeroQuest: Core Rules* was published in 2009 (ISBN 978-0-977785-32-2). We refer to this as *HeroQuest 2e*.

HeroQuest Glorantha was published in 2015 (ISBN 978-1-943223-01-5). It is the version of the rules in HeroQuest 2e, presented for playing in Glorantha. Some sources refer to it as HeroQuest 2.1e..

Whilst the discussion uses HeroQuest Glorantha (HQG), the same system, without Glorantha, is defined in the HeroQuest 2e rules.

# **CORE RULES**

Mostly, you can just ignore rules text and adjudicate the contest with the rules in HeroQuest 2e or HeroQuest Glorantha. But here is some more detail to help understand the major differences.

# **ACTION POINT EXTENDED CONTESTS**

Hero Wars and HeroQuest 1e used an extended contest in which each contestant had a pool of Action Points (APs). A

PC used the pool attacking and defending. The pool was equal to the PC's ability rating, and any modifiers. Defeat or victory in an exchange resulted in the loss (or gain) of APs.

HeroQuest 2e and HeroQuest Glorantha dropped this in favor of a simple first-to-five sequence of simple contests. You can ignore references to APs in game text or NPC descriptions.

Hero Wars used edges, written as ^X i.e. ^1 or ^2, to depict the impact of equipment (or other advantage) on an extended contest. Handicaps are the reverse of edges. Handicaps and edges adjust the number of AP scored for or against a player. HeroQuest 1e dropped both. Ignore in game text or NPC stat blocks.

#### **AUGMENTS**

HeroQuest Glorantha and 2e use a single augment to speed up play. Hero Wars and HeroQuest 1e use older calculations which allow multiple augments, displaying these on NPC 'leader sheets'. View these numbers with some mistrust. They are 'inflated' for HeroQuest 2e or HeroQuest Glorantha. Use a resistance, Easy, Moderate etc. based on your judgment and/or the pass/fail cycle.

#### **ABILITY TESTS**

In HeroQuest 2e and HeroQuest Glorantha all contests are apposed, using a difficulty rating. Hero Wars allowed unopposed ability tests—a simple check of D20 under the ability. If a product mentions an ability test, set a difficulty level using the text for guidance.

#### **KEYWORDS**

HeroQuest 2e and HeroQuest Glorantha treat a keyword as a broad area of expertise, which can be raised, and a breakout ability as 'specialism' for the character within that competence. Hero Wars and HeroQuest 1e had them only as a template requiring breakout abilities for contests.

When reviewing stat blocks from earlier editions, or converting characters, group the abilities into keywords. Figure the rating as the lowest ability you add to the group. Give a modifier to breakout abilities to return them to their own level.

For example, Barntar the Bold has Sword Fighting 17 and Archery 19. The GM converts this to a Mercenary keyword at 17 with the Archery a breakout ability at +2.

Note that Barntar does not lose his sword fighting as any Mercenary knows how to fight with a sword.

**Note:** With the focus on resistances vs. opposition: you may not need to convert any stat blocks for NPCs.

Hero Wars keywords had abilities under keywords of Close Combat, Ranged Combat, or Mass Combat skill. These broad abilities are not used anymore. Treat the styles listed as skills.

Thus, in the Herder keyword in Thunder Rebels, the ability Ranged Combat (Sling or Archery) is listed. Replace these with separate Sling or Archery skills. (As an option, allow a player to keep Close Combat, Ranged Combat or Mass Combat as a broadly defined ability.)

Take any references to general Close Combat or similar abilities should as "any close combat ability".

## PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ABILITIES

Hero Wars distinguished physical from mental abilities. Later editions dropped this distinction and you can ignore it..

#### **RESISTANCES VS. OPPOSITION**

HeroQuest 2e and Glorantha drop the use of stat blocks for resistances, either for NPCs or 'the world'. Instead use a difficulty rating: Easy, Moderate, Hard etc. As such, you no longer need stat blocks or 'world resistance'. This simplifies GM's preparation, and reflects that, in HeroQuest, a contest contains multiple tasks.

For example, in a simple contest to 'Rob the Wealthy Merchant's House' the PC picks the 'key' ability they will use at a moment of crisis in the contest: lock picking, climbing, sword fighting, etc. HeroQuest Glorantha abstracts how 'hard' this is, and lets the PC choose an appropriate skill, instead of the GM preparing NPC stats or resistances for all the approaches a PC might try.

For this reason, you can ignore stat blocks for NPCs in the text of earlier publications. You can, if you wish, use them for guidance on setting the difficulty level.

## **CREATURES**

Ignore the groupings given to abilities and specific ability ratings. As you would treat any contest as having a resistance you do not need specific numbers. Instead use the abilities for color—how does the creature attack, how does it flee, how does it resist a blow etc.

You can ignore rules for poison, as presented for example in *Anaxial's Roster* or HeroQuest 1e. There are no special rules for poison in HeroQuest 2e. Poison is just color describing how an attack works. Use to aid in 'telling the story' when interpreting contest results.

You can ignore rules for creatures' Tapping. Treat this as a normal ability. The color is that it drains the victim. You may choose to apply the Consequences of Defeat to reflect the use of tapping.

# **MAGIC**

Magic represents the main change between versions.

Everyone in HeroQuest Glorantha has three runes with which they do magic. In supplements for prior editions NPCs won't have their three runes detailed. Whilst this is not needed for play, the GM can determine NPC's runes if they wish. Look at the NPC's cult affiliation and personality as described in their biography. In addition, use the principles described in HeroQuest Glorantha, for example most Orlanthi men have the

Air rune and most Orlanthi women have the Earth rune.

HeroQuest 1e restricted characters to using more than one 'world' of magic, at higher levels of competence. HeroQuest Glorantha removes all such restrictions. Ignore references to restrictions based on the three worlds theory.

#### **BASIC MAGIC**

There is no longer an idea of concentrating magic, as introduced in HeroQuest 1e. The 'world is made of everything'. A rune magician, spirit magician or sorcerer, can use magic from any of the three systems without restriction. A devotee or shaman may have restrictions on using magic from outside of their cult or tradition.

Ignore references to an 'alien world modifier' in earlier editions.

Secrets, an insight into the god's magic from reaching 1 Ld 2 in three abilities, no longer exist in HeroQuest Glorantha. Where an NPC knows a secret, treat it as a feat under an appropriate rune instead. Great Secrets are the objective of play, and no longer covered in cult descriptions.

HeroQuest 1e created the idea of Common Magic, a mix of spells, feats, charms and talents. Common Magic is no longer an explicit concept in HeroQuest Glorantha. If an NPC uses common magic, move the ability under the rune that seems closest to the common magic ability (spell, charm, or feat) or treat it as a standalone ability. Whilst Talents are not non-canonical, 'unique' abilities that do not follow the normal magic system rules are no longer emphasized in HeroQuest. You may wish to convert these to 'standard' magical abilities under a rune over having exceptions.

HeroQuest 1e introduced common religions. They are dropped in HeroQuest Glorantha. Convert common religions to rune magic, spirit magic or sorcery in HeroQuest Glorantha. Default to rune magic if it is otherwise unclear.

As an example, consider Lanbril, who is treated as a Common Religion in HeroQuest 1e. In HeroQuest Glorantha Lanbril has become a theist cult.

In HeroQuest 1e, Lanbril has the common magic of:

Face of Lanbril talents—Avoid Discovery, Cause Little Pain, Conceal Small Object, Confuse Onlooker, Confuse Victim, Darken Window, Face in the Crowd, Lose Pursuit, Silent Step, Unerring Throw.

but in the HeroQuest Glorantha product, *Pavis: Gateway to Adventure* this has been converted to be a rune cult with two divine affinities:

Disorder Rune Affinity I Lanbril practices his trade regardless of the consequences for others and delights in trickery and treachery. His cultists are known to use the Disorder Rune Affinity to: lie convincingly; to open locks; and to free themselves from bonds. Initiates strong in this rune are selfish, shameless and treacherous.

Illusion Rune Affinity: Lanbril masks his crimes and his actions with falsehood, concealment, and tricks. His cultists are known to use the Illusion Rune for a variety of criminal purposes, including: to lie convincingly; to block magical attempts to determine who committing a crime (including by divination); to move unseen and unheard; to blend in with one's surroundings; to conceal items; to disguise oneself; to appear exceedingly ordinary and forgettable; to mimic the voice of others; to feign one's own death. Other uses of this power is to manufacture magical dusts whose varying enchantments may cause the inhaler to sneeze uncontrollably, sleep, block any scent trail which might exist or that stink so badly even humans can track it by scent; or powders that may explode and create thick opaque clouds of smoke. Initiates strong in this rune are deceitful, indirect, and manipulative.

HeroQuest Glorantha drops Misapplied Worship. A player character worship Glorantha's deities in different ways without penalty.

Ignore all references from Hero Wars or HeroQuest to magic having penalties for 'inherently difficult magic'—this is no longer used. Some GMs may wish to keep the idea that some magic is difficult in Glorantha (mind control, polymorph or invisibility); in which case use a higher resistance for those abilities.

Ignore all references to resistances for magic as an active ability in prior editions. The GM should set a difficulty rating based on their feeling of the story needs.

# RITUAL MAGIC

Ritual Magic does not use special rules in HeroQuest Glorantha. Rituals exist, an attempt to obtain community support for magic would involve a ritual for example, but rituals use the existing contest mechanics.

## **RUNE MAGIC**

Rune Magic was theism in previous editions. Two differences need addressing.

First, in earlier additions theism provided affinities—groups of feats derived from an area of the god's mythology. An initiate could not use an affinity directly, but as an augment, or by improvising a feat.

When using rune magic, a divine rune affinity is any rune the initiate shares with their god. The initiate uses their divine rune affinity to work magic directly.

Conversion requires mapping the feats in the affinities to an appropriate rune and treating them as examples of the typical things that a character could do with that rune.

For a devotee, look for the lowest feat that maps to the new divine rune affinity and treat that as the rating; treat other named feats as breakout abilities. Some devotee NPCs or PCs may be better treated as initiates under the new rules; they have direct access to magic.

For example, Kulbrast the Lucky is a devotee of the Orlanth cult who has the feats of Sunset Leap at 12 L and Guided Teleport at 15 L. The GM converts this to a Movement rune affinity at 12 L with a breakout ability of Guided Teleport at +3.

Note that Kulbrast does not lose Sunset Leap, but any rune magician can do that now.

(In HeroQuest Glorantha, rune magic 'Feats' are closer to hero-forming as described in Hero Wars. A devotee incarnates the mythical actions of their deity.)

Earlier editions placed considerable emphasis on joining a sub-cult of the god, which represented a specialization of the god's magic. In HeroQuest Glorantha we take a simpler approach, and initiates are associated with the god, not one of the deity's sub-cults. Where an earlier edition sub-cult offered specialized affinities, in HeroQuest Glorantha membership of a sub-cult provides knowledge of additional magic under one of the god's runes.

Some gods in Hero Wars had aspects, because they could be approached in different guises. Aspects in HeroQuest Glorantha have become initiating to the god through different runes, representing their different aspects.

For example, in the Hero Wars supplement Thunder Rebels worshippers joined Orlanth through as aspect of the god: Adventurous, Thunderous or Rex, they picked one of the subcults of that aspect such as Finovan, who offered raiding magic, or Vingkot who offered magic against the trolls.

In HeroQuest Glorantha worshippers join Orlanth Adventurous if they initiate through their Movement Rune. Orlanth Thunderous through the Air rune, and Orlanth Rex through the Mastery rune.

The magic gained from divine rune affinities is the equivalent of the magic available from various sub-cults.

Always strive for simplification, ignoring sub-cults in favor of the deity's main cult.

Reserve sub-cults for specialist use of the divine affinities, or consider that an NPC or PC is a member of the sub-cult as well as the main cult if it seems appropriate to their conception, such as if they are a devotee.

#### SPIRIT MAGIC

Spirit Magic was animism in previous editions. A spirit magician requires the Spirt Rune. When determining NPCs or PCs runes, include the spirit rune if they are an animist.

The levels of sprit magicians have changed their names. A spiritist is a spirit worshipper and a practitioner is a member of a spirit society.

We no longer distinguish the names of charm and fetish to represent augment vs. act usage.

Spirit magic is in a charm but the ability to use it directly comes from membership of a spirit society. Treat fetishes as direct abilities for a charm possessed by a member of a spirit society.

A spirit ally is now called a spirit companion.

A charm has a taboo that the animist must follow, again when converting NPCs and PCs consider that they will have taboos that they have to observe.

In earlier versions a charm/fetish took its rating from the spirit bound within it. Binding a spirit required a contest, so a more powerful spirit was harder to bind.

HeroQuest Glorantha treats a charm as a breakout ability from your Spirit Rune—your ability to use the charm defines of its power, not the strength of the bound spirit which is not recorded. When converting NPCs or PCs find their lowest rated charm or fetish, subtract one and make that the Spirit Rune's rating. Treat fetishes or charms as breakout abilities with a modifier of the difference of their rating to the Spirit Rune. (Note that because you cannot improvise charms, we need to record all of them; so we must treat them as at least a +1 breakout.)

For example, Braggi is a practitioner of Kolat who has the Breath Friend fetish at 5<sup>1</sup> and the Uncle Frost fetish at 8<sup>1</sup>. The GM converts this to a Spirit Rune at 4<sup>1</sup>. For charms the GM records Throw with Wind +1 and Change Direction of Wind +1 for Breath Friend; Coat with Frost +3 and Sudden Chill + 3 for Uncle Frost. The GM adds taboos of Never Commit Adultery and Must Tend Oak Trees.

In Hero Wars, "talent" referred to an innate ability gained when an animist integrated a spirit. In HeroQuest 1e, it referred to a common magic ability. Talent is no longer used in HeroQuest Glorantha. Integrated spirits should be converted into charms.

# Spirits

Spirits no longer have a Might rating so ignore Hero Wars references to Might. A listed Might should be taken as a guide to the contest resistance, and references to Might should be read as an appropriate ability.

Spirit combat is treated the same as other contests in HeroQuest Glorantha.

## **SORCERY**

Wizardry is now Sorcery in HeroQuest Glorantha. Drop the distinction between wizard and sorcerer. An NPC or PC who practices sorcery will have the Law rune and their grimiores will be a breakout from that.

Churches and Saintly Orders no longer exist as defined in HeroQuest 1e. Saints are called Ascended Masters, but provide no direct magical benefit from worship and do not have cults.

Liturgists and Orderlies do not exist as a career paths, nor Scriptures (and the associated Blessings and Cursings), Formularies, and Talismans. The Invisible God does not grant miracles. PCs who are liturgists or orderlies should either be converted to use a grimoire instead, or drop their magic altogether. Scriptures and formularies may be translated into a grimoire.

Ignore references to the Saint's Plane and Portals of Power with reference to how Sorcery works.

Although Westerners venerate the Invisible God, guided by

a wizard priest of their temple, most worshippers have a few charms or spells to augment their abilities with and no direct magic. Rarely a westerner might have a charm or spell as a breakout ability, which they can use directly. Drop magic for non-wizard NPCs or PCs, or treat it as a stand-alone ability if appropriate to the character conception.

Adepts no longer exist as described in HeroQuest 1e. Grimiores are the means to use Sorcery in HeroQuest Glorantha. In HeroQuest 1e an adept could use any spell within a grimiore at their Use Grimiore ability. Now their grimiore is a breakout from the Law rune, and spells are separate breakout abilities that must be learned. Determine what spells an NPC or PC knows. Treat spells known from Talismans as the spells the sorcerer knows from a grimiore. Grimiores have one rune and the four sorcerous techniques: summon/dismiss, command, combine/separate, and tap. Rewrite grimiores by picking the rune most associated with the activity they were focused on.

For example, the GM wishes to convert the Ship of Life church from HeroQuest 1e to HeroQuest Glorantha. She decides that making Navigationalism, a Malkioni philosophy, is an appropriate conversion for the church. She decides that she will convert the scripture of the church into a grimiore, the Infinite Sea Wisdom grimiore. As the Navigationalism philosophy is based around boating, she decides that the Water rune is the most appropriate rune for the grimiore. She takes inspiration for some spells in the grimiore from the write up of the movement's founder Eliavar, who she decides created a philosophy of brotherhood. Members of the Navigationalist movement consider themselves part of a 'ship' under a teacher or 'captain'. They owe loyalty to their 'ship-mates' first and foremost. The world is a sea of troubles that threatens to capsize the 'ship' if the 'crew' do not work together. The ship may be any community, and the meaning of ship may be figurative not literal.

 ${\it \#}$  Infinite Seas Grimoire: this grimoires contains spells that relate to navigationalism. Spells include:

#III Blood Brothers: combines Water with Harmony to conduct a ritual that binds two or more together in a ritual of mingling blood, that assists brothers when working together and hinders any who would betray their brothers.

Mavigate: a ritual that commands water to 'find a way' and find the route to a person, place, or thing. The 'path' appears as a shimmering trail of vapor in the air.

**#6** Breathe Water: separates Air from Water to allow the target to breathe water.

## **MYSTICISM**

Mystic Magic from Hero Wars does not exist in later editions. Mysticism is an approach to worship whose effects are usually described by one of the existing magical systems.

Illumination is detailed in HeroQuest Glorantha p.202 as a cosmic insight. Various mystical schools or philosophies train disciples to achieve Illumination. The schools themselves offer no magic, existing only to teach a disciple the path to Illumination. Most schools combine mysticism with the worship of existing deities and portray Illumination as a deeper insight into their own beliefs.

Illuminates of some traditions, such as Larnstings or Dragonspeakers may gain magical insight once illuminated that allows them to use their runes to create new magical effects. They rarely do so because of the spiritual pollution entangling themselves with the middle world causes. Such magic is beyond the scope of these notes.

## **CREATURES**

Do not worry about trying to systematize the innate magical abilities possessed by creatures in books such as *Anaxial's Roster*. The magic systems in HeroQuest Glorantha reflect the approaches used by mainstream cultures in dealing with otherworld entities, but they are not the only routes to magic in Glorantha. Instead focus on describing what the PCs see when creatures use their magical abilities. An advantage of the move away from stat blocks for creatures is that it is no longer necessary to define them in the same rules terms.

#### **GUARDIAN BEINGS**

Guardian Beings (or Wyters) are the personification of the Magic rating of the community in HeroQuest Glorantha. Not all community's magic ratings represent a guardian or wyter, but established entities such as clan, town, or city will have a guardian.

Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes gives explicit rules for determining the magical abilities of Sartarite clan wyters. These can be thought of as specific abilities that the wyter has, that give a commensurate bonus to the community's magic rating when used by the PCs.

Where a GM has centered the campaign around a community, it may be appropriate to detail any guardian's specific abilities, by a mechanism similar to the clan generator in Sartar: Kingdom of Heroes.

#### OTHERWORLD BARRIER

Earlier versions of the rules gave a resistance to crossing the barrier to the Otherworld when beginning a HeroQuest. This meant any adventure could come to a halt because the PC's botched the roll to pass the barrier.

Notionally crossing the barrier is still hard, and requires the support of the community, but the GM should set the resistance as for other contests, an auto-success if failure is not interesting and a harder resistance if the story has an interesting branch on failure.

# **OTHER**

## **DISEASE**

*Anaxial's Roster* discusses how disease works in Glorantha. A host is possessed by a disease spirit and can then infect others. This remains true, but you can ignore the special mechanics given in Hero Wars.

Possession by the spirit is a contest. Defeat in spirit combat indicates that the PC is now a carrier. The carrier can now infect others who fail in a contest against the disease. Trigger the contest if someone is in close proximity to the carrier, and fails to observe good hygiene etc. Both the carrier and subsequent victims suffer penalties from the illness as per the Consequences of Defeat.

Note that although it is not explicitly stated in discussion of disease spirit in *Anaxial's Roster*, a spirit may be bound by a shaman into a well or similar inanimate host and all those that come into contact with the source risk infection.

# **SUMMARY**

Although there are changes to how magic works, these changes are less significant than they might seem. Few Wizardry or Animist cults were presented in published material. Most of the published material uses Theist magic, where versions of the most common cults already exist for HeroQuest Glorantha, or the conversion is straight forward.

In addition, the mechanical simplicity of the game system means that little conversion is needed in most cases—the GM just sets a resistance and runs the contest according the the HeroQuest Glorantha rules. Most of the need for detailed definition of cults etc. comes from Player Characters and not Non-Player Characters.

Finally, the major goal of HeroQuest Glorantha was to eliminate 'special case' rules and simplify the game. Broadly, ignore special case rules from older editions. Resolve everything using the standard mechanics. The special case rules might inform the GM when setting a resistance or providing color to their narration, but otherwise have no effect.

# **GETTING HELP**

Have any questions? Need help with a conversion question. The people at BRP Central are always happy to lend a helping hand.

Check them out at:

https://basicroleplaying.org/forum/51-HeroQuest/

And don't forget to visit the HeroQuest section of our website: <u>https://www.chaosium.com/heroquest/</u>



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