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Preface to the Second Release.

Welcome to the second release of Sorcery; a sword and sorcery epic where a party of fighters and spellcasters descend into a dungeon to battle its denizens for loot and glory!

Sorcery was originally written for the Commodore VIC 20. It was completed at the beginning of 1984, just as the VIC's short life was coming to an end. Accordingly Sorcery never did get a commercial release.

Sorcery belongs to a different era of gaming. In 1984 a game had to stand on its gameplay. Game designers didn't have the option of trying to cover up a lousy game by burying it under megabytes of artwork and animated cut scenes. Sorcery's graphics may be outdated and its sound non-existent, but I think you'll find you'll get more entertainment from Sorcery than you will from some of the overpriced, unoriginal bloatware at your local retail software store. (Did I mention Sorcery squeezes into 19.5Kb?)

Now emulation technology lets you enjoy old classics written for the VIC-20 on any modern personal computer. You can run Sorcery simply by downloading one of the free VIC emulators listed at the end of this manual (Page 30). If you choose PCVIC or V20 you can load and start Sorcery directly from a state file; No mucking around! If you're using another emulator you can load Sorcery by following the instructions in the appendix.

And of course, Sorcery is free (subject to the terms of this licence notice). I recognise there's absolutely no money to be made in old 8-bit software, but it'll be reward enough if some people are able to rediscover a program I put a lot of time and effort into crafting so long ago. If you enjoy Sorcery, drop me a line!

Brendan Jones.

E-mail: bj@kdef.com

Web: www.kdef.com/geek/vic

Credits.

- Designed and written with artwork by Brendan Jones.
- Playtested, original manual typesetting and cover design by Nigel Dunk.

Acknowledgments.

- The authors of the many VIC20 emulators for saving the VIC20 and its software from oblivion. (They're listed on Page 30.)
- Nikolaus Strater (nstrater@mcmail.com) for the VTR VIC-20 to PC tape loader. Nikolaus says the number of people wanting to use this program worldwide must be frighteningly small; perhaps 2-3. Make that 4!
- Jeff Minter (Author of Gridrunner) for starting the ball rolling by freeing up his own commercial VIC-20 software.

See Also.

If you like Sorcery then check out my other VIC-20 games at www.kdef.com/geek/vic. I particularly recommend “House of Demons.” For the last ten years I’ve been threatening to rewrite Sorcery for the modern PC, keeping the gameplay intact but expanding the locations, spells and monsters. It won’t happen any time too soon, but keep an eye out and a kind thought. Huh?

This Manual.

This electronic manual was recreated from the original 1984 manual, supplemented with a tutorial and screen shots. How about that? A VIC-20 game with an Adobe Acrobat manual! ☺

SORCERY



Sorcery takes one to six players (each with their own character) into dungeons in search of loot and glory. Characters may be saved at the end of a session and used again in future adventures.

The Quest.

Sorcery takes place in a village and a dungeon.

The village consists of an inn and a shop. In the inn you can recruit new characters to join your party, or say farewell to retiring ones. Once assembled you may go to the shop where each character may purchase weapons and armour. The group may also pool together to purchase food.

From the village you can see the ruins of the castle in the mountains. Once this castle was home to a great army that protected the lands. One night a horde of monsters lead by powerful supernatural beings laid siege to the castle. The army held out for a couple of weeks before being overrun. The monsters seized the castles treasures. Most of them the retreated into the wilderness, but some of the monsters descended into the dungeons to guard their new found riches.

The party may now leave the village and head to the dungeon. The dungeon is a large labyrinth with many passages. The outer passage runs around the perimeter of the dungeon. There are many smaller passages leading off into the dungeons dark interior. The party descends into the dungeon through one of four entrances. These entrances are also the only way of leaving the dungeon; Remember where they are, or your party could starve trying to find their way back out!

In the dungeon you'll find many different monsters, ranging from the commonplace to the supernatural. Each time a monster is fought and defeated the gold that is found is shared amongst the party's members. Choose the monsters you choose to fight with care. When

the party begins its members can only afford rudimentary weapons and no armour. Wolves and rats may not put up much of a fight, but some of the dungeon's more powerful denizens can kill a member with a single blow. If a member is slain then all their weapons and gold are lost.

Sorcery has two objectives. The first is ongoing; to develop your character. Periodically the party should leave the dungeon periodically to purchase better weapons and armour. Spellcasters can't wear armour and can only use limited weapons. They will however need to continually purchase aurora so they may cast spells. Additionally a member's characteristics can be improved by selectively drinking the various potions hidden in chests in the dungeon. Some of these effects are temporary. Others are permanent. Fully developed your characters will be a formidable force.

This brings us to the second objective; To find and slay those powerful supernatural beings who lead the attack on the castle so long ago. We won't tell you what it is, but we will caution you; You may have to play quite a few games before you come across one. When you do your party will have to summon all their resources to wear down their three-hundred plus "hits". It's very unlikely all your party's members will survive this battle, but with the right combination of sword and sorcery it can be done.

Characters.



Each character has associated with them a number of attributes. These determine their performance.

Attribute	Description
CLASS	<p>Fighter, Mage, Witch, Thief, Elf, Necromancer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fighters are the physically the strongest. They may use any weapons, but they cannot cast any spells.• Thieves are of slighter build than fighters, but what they lack in strength they make up for in agility. Thieves are particularly skilled at picking the locks of treasure chests. They may use all weapons.• Elves are slightly weaker than fighters. They may use all weapons and cast small spells.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mages and witches are physically average. They may only use crossbows, longbows and rapiers (a type of short sword). They may however cast a limited number of powerful spells. • Necromancers are sorcerers who have a strong affinity with magic. They hold a large reserve of aurora. Necromancers may only use the crossbolt and may not wear any armour.
STR	<p>Strength. Strength is an indicator of how much damage a character may do with a weapon. The higher this number, the stronger the character is. 20 is average.</p>
AUR	<p>Aurora. The characters reserve of magical power. The higher this number is, the more magic the character has in reserve. Each spells lessens the amount of available aurora. When this reaches zero no more spells may be cast. Aurora may be replenished at the village shop. Different character classes purchase aurora at different rates. For example, 10 pieces of gold will buy an elf more aurora than it will a mage. But elves can only cast weak spells and hold less aurora anyway. In a fierce battle aurora can be quickly exhausted. Accordingly it's a good idea for each character to carry a weapon they can switch to when the magic runs out. Infact it's always a good idea for any character to have a spare weapon, less their main one break during combat.</p>
HIT	<p>Hits. Hits indicate how much damage a character may take before they die. The higher this number is, the better. When this number becomes zero or less the character dies. During combat each blow from a monster will take away a certain number of hits. The stronger the monster, the larger this number will be. eg. A weak monster like a rat will only take away three (3) hits. A stronger monster like a troll will take away six (6) hits, and so on.</p> <p>During combat keep a close eye on the number of hits a character has remaining. If they drop below a certain level (say 5) then your character is only a blow or two away from dying. Under these circumstances it's prudent to flee the battle and tend to the characters wounds.</p> <p>Hits may only be replenished by drinking the rare potion #1. Magic casters may also cast a spell to heal themselves. They may not cast this spell on other characters. Unlike other games in this genre, lost hits are not easily replaced. The best strategy is to avoid losing them in the first place.</p>
AGL	<p>Agility. Agility indicates how fast a character may run, and how easily they may avoid a monster's weapon during combat. The higher this number, the more agile the character is. 20 is average.</p>
HEA	<p>Health. Health is own shown if the character is ill or dying. When a character becomes ill their hitpoints will start decreasing. To curtail this either have a spellcaster heal the sick character, or find and drink a healing potion.</p>

Monsters.

Attribute	Description
TYPE	<p>There are many types of monsters in Sorcery. We list some of the common ones here. As you explore the dungeon you'll find the rarer ones.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Giant Rats and Wolves. These agile creatures are accurate but don't do a lot of damage. Their hordes typically only contain a few pieces of gold.• Harpies are small leather-winged witch creatures. They're not skilled fighters, but they do pack a nasty bite.• Thye Tase are small vampire demons that originated in South East Asia. They put up a reasonable fight. Their tough skins act as a light armour.• Redcaps are ferocious dwarfs believed to have originated from Scandinavia. They're good fighters, wear armour and ferociously swing a small sword. They love precious things, and will fight with their lives to protect their possessions.• Bandit. Bandits who roam and rob travellers in the surrounding countryside seek shelter in the dungeon. They're reasonable fighters and wear a light armour. <p>Rumours have been circulating about other monsters in the dungeon, including a giant poisonous spider, a dragon and an Aztec demon.</p>
HIT	Hits. (See Characters.)
AGL	Agility. (See Characters.)
ARM	Armour. The lower this number, the better the monster's armour. 50 is average.
VUL	Vulnerability. The higher this number, the more vulnerable the monster is in combat from a counterattack. 50 is average.
ACC	Accuracy. The higher this number, the more likely the monster is to strike a character during combat.
STK	Strike. The number of hits that will be deducted from a character should the monster succeed in striking them during combat.

The characters' vulnerability, accuracy and strike are determined by the weapon they are using.

Tutorial.

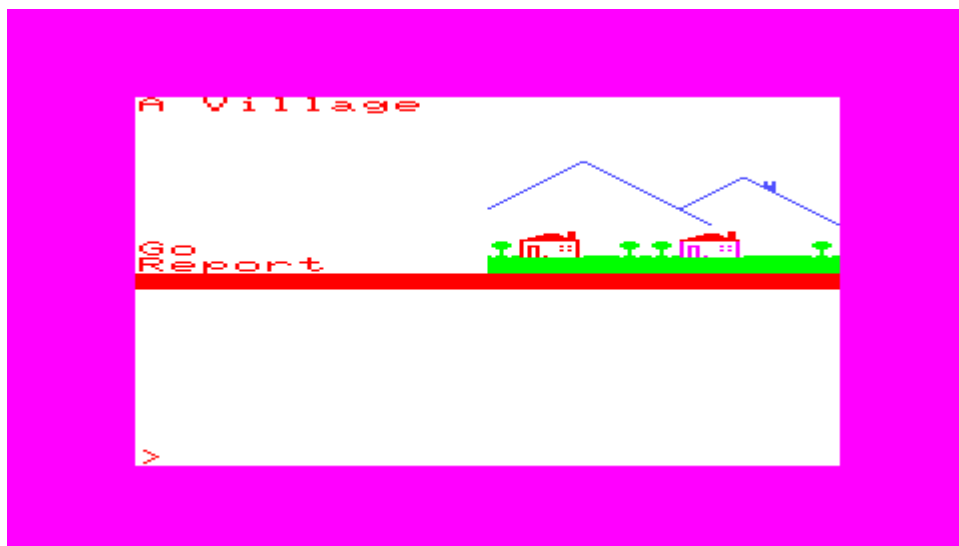
Sorcery begins with the title screen.



To start the game with a random dungeon press the [F1] key. You can select a permanent dungeon by pressing any other key; eg. “a” or “b”. This dungeon will contain the same passages and entrances every time you select it. Our favourite is the “b” dungeon; It has a dungeon entrance on the outer passage, making it easier to find your way out. There’s little point mapping random dungeons, but mapping a permanent dungeon can prove a good investment if you want to explore every nook and cranny.

Whether your dungeon is random or permanent, it’ll take about a minute to construct it on both a real VIC 20 or on a VIC emulator such as PCVIC running on a Pentium 60. If you’re using an emulator on a slower machine this may take slightly longer. The dungeon only needs to be generated once per game, so please be patient!

Your game will begin in a village.

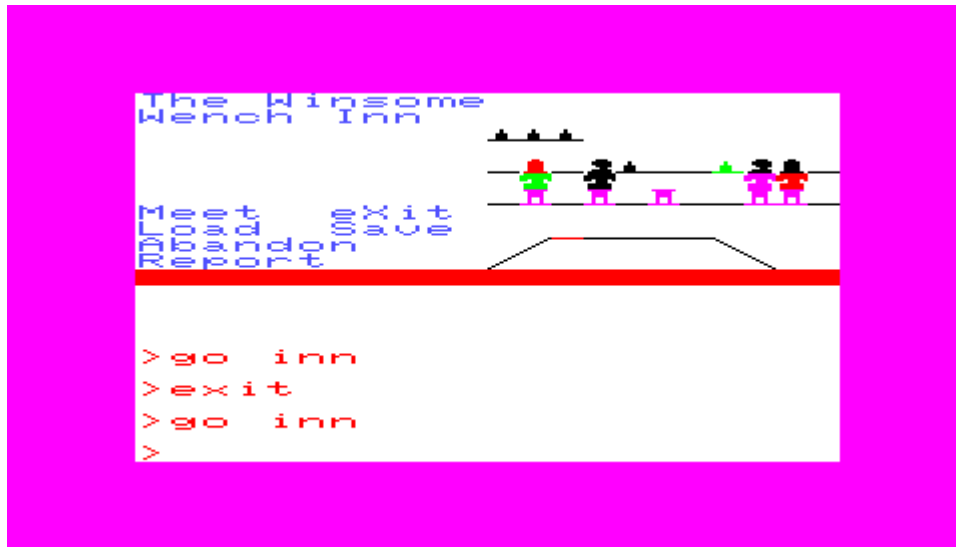


The screen is divided into four windows. The top left hand corner of the screen contains a description of the scene; eg. “A Village”. Beneath that another window displays the various commands you can issue from this screen; eg. “Go” or “Report”. The letter which invokes the command is capitalised. In this case pressing “g” will go somewhere, and “r” will generate a report on something.

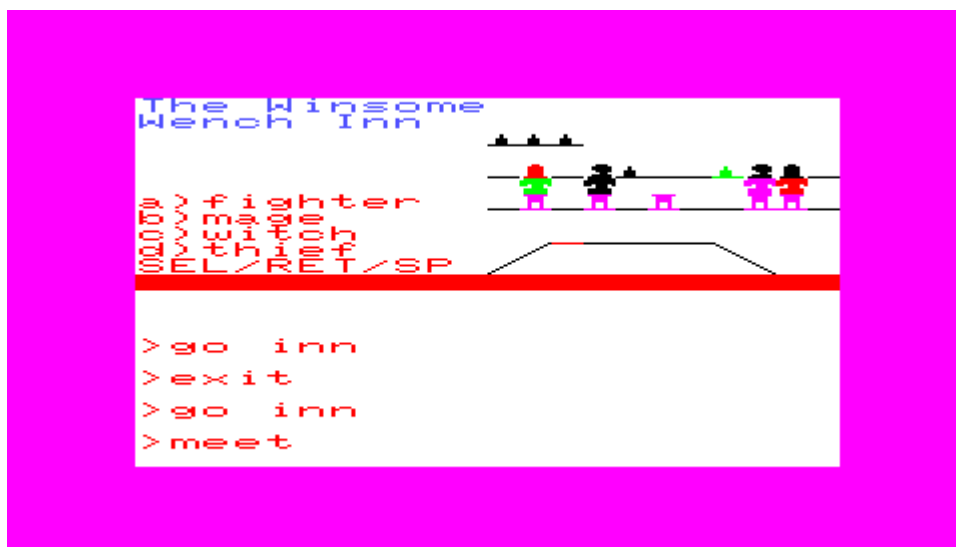
The top left window displays a picture of your location. Above you can see several houses in the village and the ruins of the castle in the mountains. The bottom window displays text. The results of commands and game events are described in this window.

Since our party is empty we begin by going to the shop and recruiting some members. Press “g” and you’ll be prompted with “Inn”, “Shop” or “Dungeons”. Press “i” for “Inn”.

The Inn.



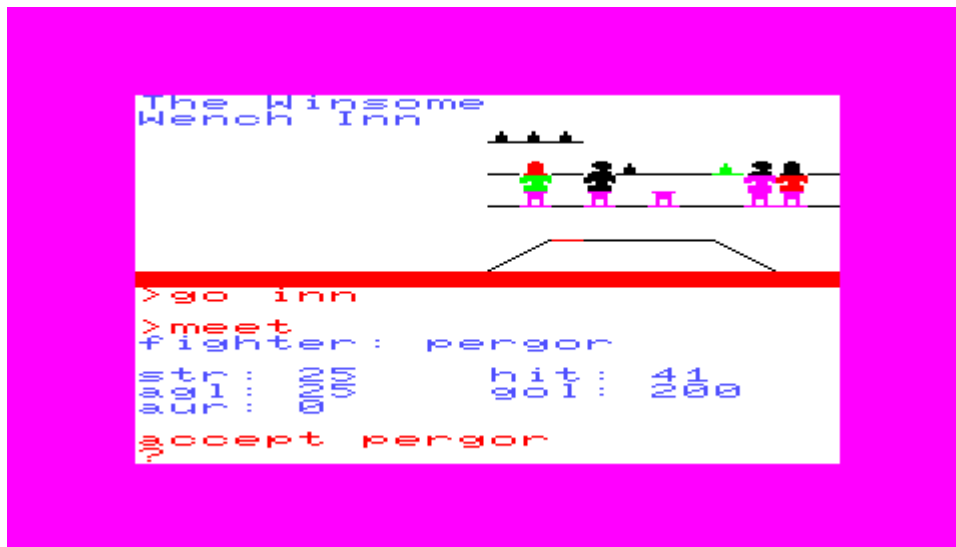
From the Inn you may meet and abandon party members. You may also save or load them individually on tape. We want to meet some new members, so we press “m” for “Meet”. We’re presented with a list of the various character classes.



Whenever the selection window says “SEL/RET/SP” it is asking you to make a selection. You may make a SElection by pressing the indicated letter; eg. “a” for fighter, “b” for a mage, etc.. You may press RETurn (Enter) to scroll through the entire list of options. Note

that while there are six characters classes, only four are shown in the selection window at a time. Pressing Enter will scroll to the last to classes, and then again back to the beginning. Pressing Space (the space bar) will either abort the command or select a default option (in this case “a” for fighter).

Having selected a fighter we’ll be asked for their name. You may enter your own name or the name of your own role playing character. For this tutorial we’ll use the author’s character; “Pergor”. (This name must be entered in lower case). Having typed the character’s name and pressed enter we’ll be presented with the attributes of our new character. If you’re happy with them press “y” to accept the character. If not, press “n” to reject them.



For this tutorial we’ll add one more character; “Lougaan”, the mage. A party may have up to six members, but this is a trade-off.¹ A small party will be capable of fighting on the weakest of monsters, which will yield only small amounts of gold. A larger party will be capable of fighting larger monsters. Even though these monsters horde more gold, that gold will have to be divided amongst all the parties members.

At a minimum we recommend your party contain a fighter, a mage and a thief. When you’re starting out the fighter will be your most powerful character. The mage can cast small spells to heal any characters that fall ill. The thief can open locked chests. Alternately you may decide to opt for a party entirely of spellcasters. The choice is up to you.

Report.

You can get reports on the party (group) or individual members by using the “Report” command. This is available on nearly every screen. Press “r” to invoke the report command. You’ll be asked to type “g” for “Group” or “m” for “Member”. You’ll then be

¹ Sorcery sucked up every byte of free memory. If you’re playing with only 16Kb of expansion memory you’re advised to give your last two characters short names (eg. one character long). If you’re playing with the full 24Kb you needn’t observe this restriction.

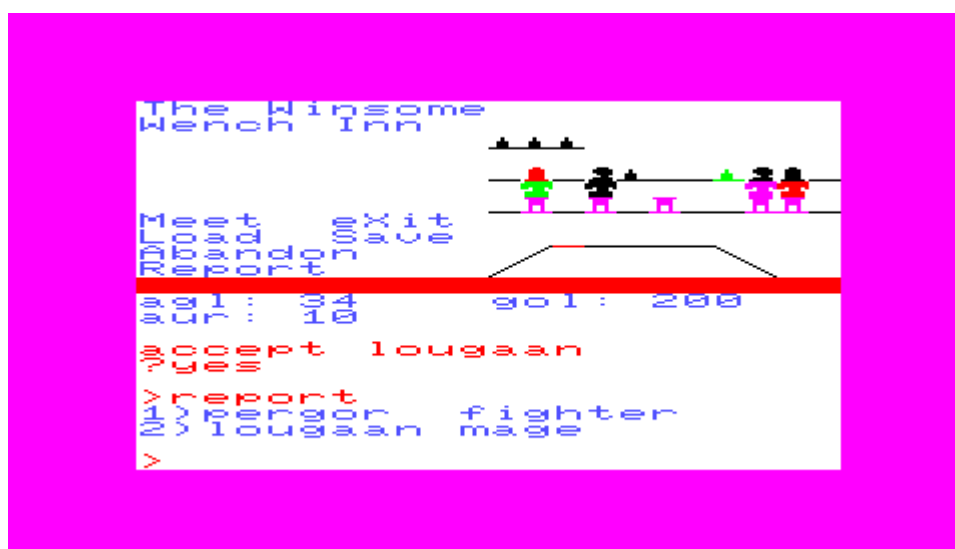
asked to type “s” for “Status” or “i” for “Inventory.” For groups “status” lists the group members and their classes. eg. “Pergor - fighter”. For members “status” lists their attributes; eg. strength, agility, etc.. For groups “inventory” shows possessions shared amongst the group. These include food, potions and any magical items. For members “inventory” shows their personal possessions; weapons, armour and any magical aurora.

The Inn: Managing a Party.

In the Inn the “a” command will “Abandon” a member. You may do this if the character needs a rest or if they aren’t suited to the group. To abandon a member press “a”. You’ll then be prompted with the list of members. Press the letter corresponding to the member to be abandoned. You’ll then be asked “sure?”. If you are press “y” and the member will be gone forever. If not, press “n” and they’ll remain with the group.

Members may be saved on tape before they are abandoned. Do this by typing the “s” key to invoke the “Save” command. One member is saved at a time. You can keep your characters on tape to develop them over time. This is a good idea, because a character generally takes quite a few games before they are fully developed. You can also play tournaments where each player brings say 2 of their favourite characters on tape. To load a character from tape press the “l” key to invoke the “Load” command. (Note: If you’re running Sorcery on a VIC 20 emulator you may not be able to load and save tape files. In this case we recommend you consult your emulator documentation to learn how to save and restore system snapshots² of the entire program. You can treat these as saved games.)

When you’re finishing putting together your party do a group report to check that everything is in order. Press “r” for report, “g” for group and “s” for status.

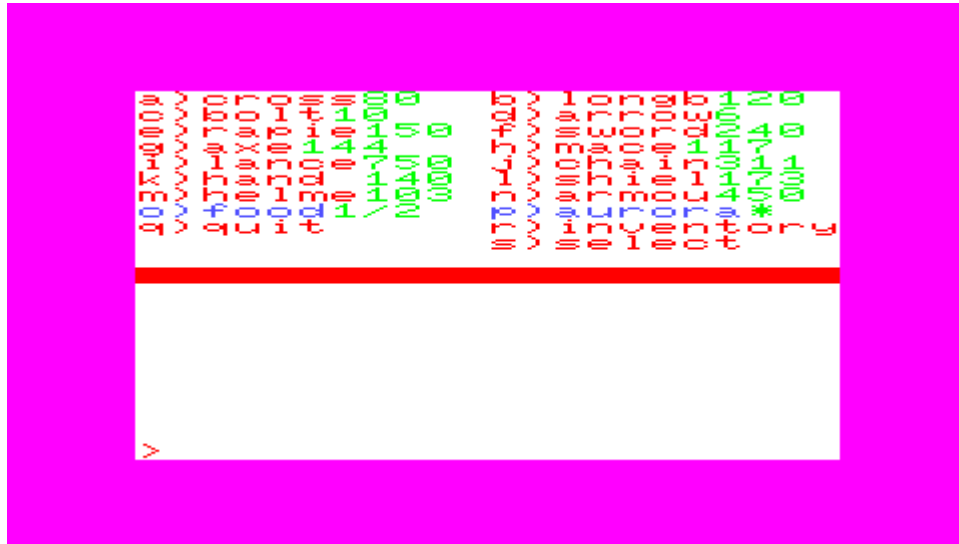


You’re now ready to equip our party. Press the “x” key to “eXit” the Inn. You’ll find yourself back at the village. Now press “g” for “Go” and “s” for Shop.

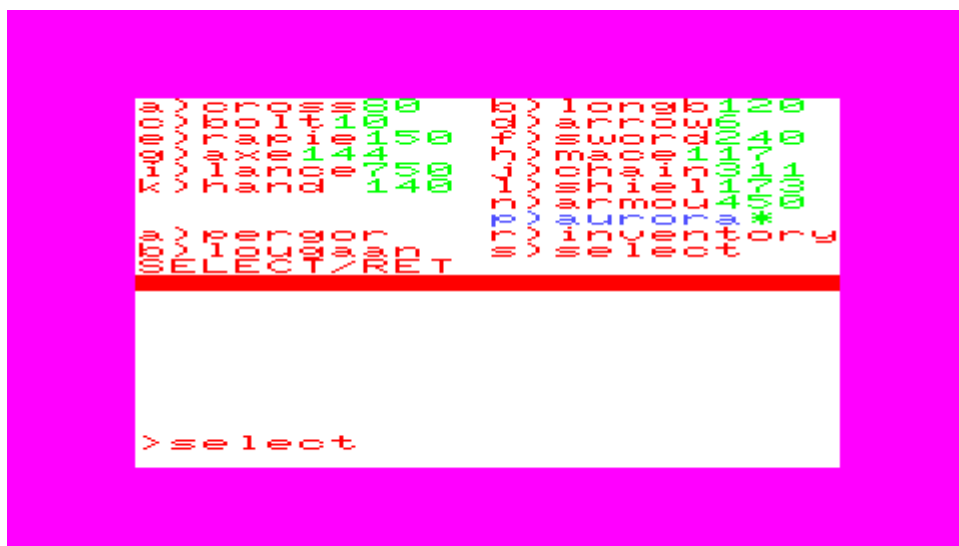
² When we say “snapshot” here we’re talking about a file that saves the emulated VICs complete state; it’s memory and registers. Don’t confuse this with the a “screen capture”, which only saves the screen picture.

The Shop.

In the shop characters can purchase weapons, armour or aurora for themselves, or food for the group.



Select each character in turn by pressing the “s” key to invoke the “Select” command. For example, to select Pergor we’ll press “s” for select, “m” for member and “a” to choose Pergor from the party list. Pergor will then be selected. (The group has a shared inventory of food, potions and magical items. Instead of selecting an individual member you could have pressed “s” for select, “g” for group and “r” to see the inventory.)



You may then buy weapons, armour and aurora for the selected character. Any food the character buys will be placed in the group inventory. To see how much gold a character has press “r” to see the inventory. Each character begins with 200 pieces of gold. The price of each item is the number listed alongside each item. A Rapier is only 150 pieces of gold;

within Pergor's price range. Pressing "e" (the letter used to label the option) will purchase a rapier and place it in Pergor's inventory.

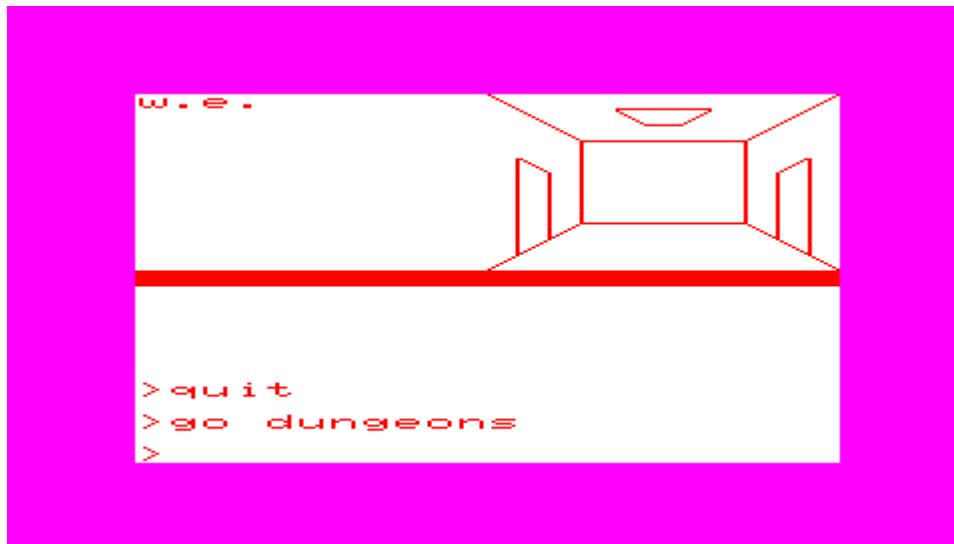
Selecting Lougaan you can equip her with a crossbow (option "a") and crossbow bolts (option "c"). Since a bolts are lost as they are fired we recommend you stock up. They're cheap, so buy say 200 of them. (Running out of ammunition in the midst of battle can be a distinct health hazard.) Since Lougaan is a mage we'll need to purchase aurora for her. Press "r" to see how much aurora is in her inventory. You can purchase additional aurora by pressing the "p" option for "Aurora". You'll be prompted for the amount of gold you wish to convert to aurora. Spellcasters begin with 10 aurora. Mages can hold upto 60 aurora. Spending 63 pieces of gold will take a mage to their maximum. (These figures will vary for other spellcasters.)

The party will begin with 50 pieces of food. Any food a character purchased is placed in the party's supplied. Stock up! If you starve to death in the dungeons the monsters won't.

When you've finished equipping the party press "q" to "Quit" and return to the Village.

The Dungeon.

It's time to enter the dungeon. Press "g" for "Go" and "d" for "Dungeon". You'll be asked which dungeon entrance you wish to use; press "1", "2", "3" or "4".



In the top right hand window is shown the dungeon view which always looks north. In the roof we can see the entrance through which we descended into the dungeon. We can leave the dungeon by using the "x" command to "eXit". We can see two doors heading west and east. There is no northern door. There is no southern door (which would not be visible anyway). In the top left hand corner is listed the direction of the doors leaving the room; "n" for north, "s" for south, "w" for west and "e" for east. You may leave the room in the given direction by pressing "n", "s", "w" or "e".

As you explore the dungeon you'll find monsters and chests containing potions and various other items. Attack and defeat monsters to gather riches. Periodically return to the village to buy new weapons and armour and to replenish aurora and food. The better equipped you are the more powerful the monsters you may tackle.

Within the dungeon the following commands apply:

Dungeon Key.	Command.
n	North.
s	South.
e	East.
w	West.
x	Exit. You may only exit a room when an entrance is visible in the roof (as shown in the above picture).
q	Quit. On selecting Quit you'll be asked if you are sure. If you answer "y" then the game is restarted. The dungeon and the party will be lost. (You can however save the party's characters from tape or a saved game.)
c	Cast Spell. This will ask you who shall cast the spell, and then which spell they shall cast. If the character has inadequate aurora or the spell just happens to fail it will say "Nothing happens." Not all characters can cast all spells. If a spellcaster's class is not adequately skilled it will say "They fail." If the spell succeeds the results of the spell will be described in the text window. If it is a healing spell for another character you'll be asked which character is to be healed. (Remember some healing spells only work for the spellcaster casting the spell.) Some spells only work during combat.
o	Open Chest. If there is more than one character you'll be asked which character will attempt to open the chest. Any character may use the contents of a chest, regardless of who opened it. Chests may contain potions, food, magical items and occasionally, nothing. Locked chests may be opened by thieves or spellcasters casting the appropriate spell. Some chests are bobby trapped. Have a spellcaster with adequate aurora on hand to heal any injuries.
u	Use Object. This command asks who will use the object, and then what object they shall use. The objects are from the group inventory, which includes potions and magical items. The affects of a using an object may not be immediately apparent.
a	Attack. Attack the monster in the room (if they haven't attacked you already).
r	Report. See "Report." on Page 14.

Table 1. Dungeon Commands.

characters while the weakest find a way for the party to withdraw. The party fights and withdraws as a whole, so when a character successfully withdraws the rest of the party follows them.

Pergor and Lougaan are either brave or don't know any better; Goblins are rumoured to be very fond of gold; They'll stand their ground and fight.

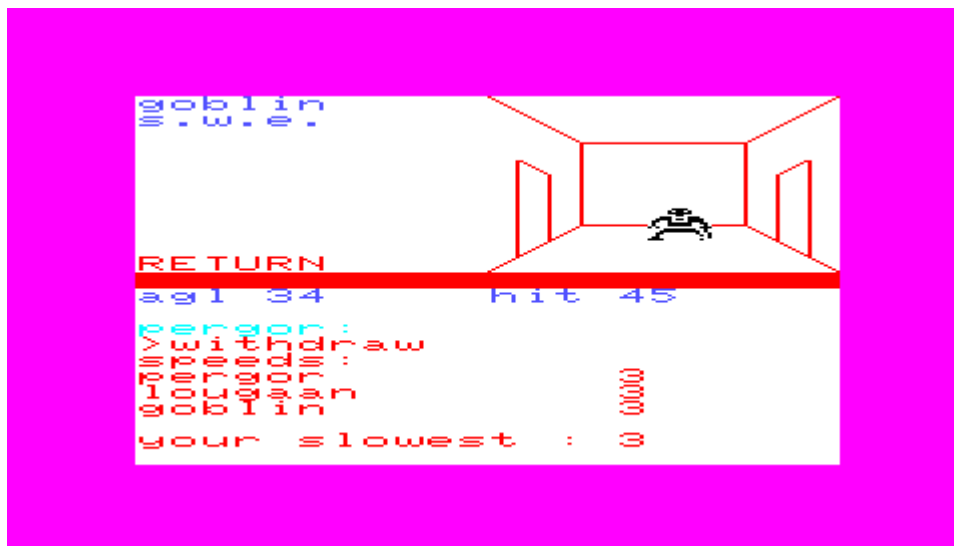
Pergor presses "f" for "fight." You'll be prompted with a list of weapons he may use. While the whole list is there, he may only use weapons that he purchased from the shop. Since the Rapier is option "e", you may press "e" to fight with the Rapier. (You don't have to scroll through the entire list; You can press "e" from any page in the weapon list.) If you change your mind you may skip back to the start of your round (eg. to pick withdraw) by pressing the spacebar.



Sorcery's combat model is reasonably detailed. When a character attacks a monster (and vice versa) the accuracy of the weapon and the agility of the attacker and attackee is used to calculate whether or not the strike is successful. If it is the strike of the weapon and strength of the attacker is used to calculate how much damage is done. The damage can be reduced or avoided entirely based on the armour and agility of the attackee. Some weapons leave the attacker vulnerable to counterattack. Should this happen the attackee will get a half strike back at the attacker.

These calculations take place within the program. What you'll see is a blow by blow narrative of the combat. Press the Return (Enter) key to step through the description of the battle. In this example we can see Pergor missed his first strike and the Goblin struck back with a full blow. (I told you the Goblin was good!)

At the end of each combat round the characters hits and monster's attributes are displayed. If you want more detail on your characters other attributes press the "r" key for the "Report" command.



The word “RETURN” appearing in the option window tells you to press the Return (Enter) key to continue. In this case the party has escaped.

Combat ends when either the monster is slain, all members of the party are slain or the party successfully withdraws. If the monster is slain the spoils will be evenly shared amongst the members of the party. Any remaining pieces of gold that cannot be evenly distributed are laid as a tribute to the member’s respective deities.

Combat Key.	Command.
f	Fight. You’ll be asked to select a weapon to attack with. eg. “e” for a rapier, “g” for an axe. If you change your mind press the space bar to abort.
c	Cast Spell. See the “Table 1” on Page 18. Note that some spells only work during combat.
w	Withdraw. Attempt to flee the battle. If you’re not successful you may try repeatedly. If one member of the party succeeds in withdrawing then all other members will follow,
r	Report. See “Report.” on Page 14.

Table 2. Combat Commands.

The End Game.

Sorcery never “ends” like a conventional game, but when you meet, battle and defeat the most powerful creature you’re deemed to have “won”. (Of course, the other goal is to develop your characters, but in order to defeat this creature your characters must be fully developed anyway).

This is one of the creatures who lead the attack on the castle so long ago. We won't ruin the surprise by revealing to you what it is, but we can say it's a supernatural creature, it's very powerful and carries over three-hundred hits and strikes for twenty hits a blow. When you find a creature with these statistics, you've found the end game creature.

Good luck!

Appendix: Tables.

Character Classes.

Class	Strength	Agility	Hits	Initial Aurora	Maximum Aurora
Fighter	25 → 35	25 → 35	40 → 60	0	0
Mage	20 → 30	20 → 35	30 → 45	10	60
Witch	16 → 27	30 → 38	30 → 40	10	50
Thief	16 → 25	16 → 30	30 → 38	0	0
Elf	20 → 26	30 → 35	30 → 38	10	20
Necromancer	20 → 26	30 → 40	35 → 40	10	110

Table 3. Character Classes.

Spells.

These spells are listed from strongest to weakest. Only necromancers may cast the strongest spells.

Incantation	Translation	Reliability	Aurora	Combat?
Goe	Wrath of God. Completely obliterates enemy. May backfire on party.	80 %	52	YES
Boroot	Change. Teleport to a random dungeon location.	80 %	15	-
Proge	Darkness. Severely reduces the monster's accuracy.	90 %	20	YES
Tilcee	Energy. A plasma bolt strikes for 10 hits.	80 %	11	YES
Fenfen	Cold. Impairs the monster's agility.	90 %	18	YES
Salp	Fear. Reduces the monster's accuracy.	70 %	15	YES
Dale	Firestorm. Engulfs the monster in a temporary firestorm, striking for 15 hits.	55 %	13	YES
Vale	Blizzard Storm. Showers the monster with a temporary blizzard, reducing their agility.	80 %	12	YES
Pullen	Weary. Tire a monster, reducing the strength of their strike rating.	75 %	20	YES

Gad	Heat Flash. Generate a heat flash, striking for 4 hits.	60 %	5	YES
Orp	Heal Wounds. Heals the spellcaster for 30 hits.	70 %	21	-
Bioc	Heal Illness. Heal a poisoned or otherwise ill character.	80 %	10	-
Koast	Reveal. Unlock a chest.	70 %	5	-

Table 4. Spells.

Weapons.

Weapon	Vulnerability	Accuracy	Strike (Hits)	Cost
Crossbow (needs bolts)	15	70	4	80
Bolts (in quantities of 35)	-	-	-	10
Longbow (needs arrows)	10	60	3	140
Arrows (in quantities of 20)	-	-	-	10
Rapier (Short sword)	25	45	7	160
Sword	15	40	8	220
Axe	30	30	12	150
Mace	40	30	13	200
Lance	7	30	15	360

Table 5. Weapons.

- A Vulnerability of 0 is completely safe, 100 is completely unsafe.
- An Accuracy of 0 is poor, 100 is good.
- Strike is the number of hits a blow from the weapon takes from the attackee.
- Cost is the cost of the weapon in gold pieces.

Armour.

Armour	Protection	New Agility	Cost
Chain Mail.	80 %	75 %	311
Wrist shield.	60 %	85 %	140
Shield	55 %	80 %	173
Helmet	90 %	90 %	103
Armour (Plate Mail)	40 %	70 %	450

Table 6. Armour.

- A Protection of 0 % gives complete protection. 100% gives no protection. Protection is cumulative. For example, wearing Chain Mail (80%) and a Helmet (90%) offers 72% protection.
- Each piece of armour worn weighs down and thus reduces the agility of the wearer. For example, if a character with an agility of 30 wears chain mail (which reduces agility to 75%) then their new agility is 22 (rounded down). This reduction on agility is also cumulative. In practice you'll find the decrease in agility is more than compensated for by the increasing protection.

Special Objects.

Object.	Description.
Potion #1	Heals the drinker to the maximum hitpoints for their class.
Potion #2	Temporarily increases strength of the drinker.
Potion #3	Delays poison for 100 moves. You'll still need to cure them with either the antidote or by having a spellcaster cast "Bioc" upon them.
Potion #4	Temporarily increases the agility of the drinker.
Potion #5	Heals the drinker to the maximum hitpoints for their class.
Potion #6	Poison antidote.
Potion #7	Poison antidote.
Potion #8	Heals the drinker to the maximum hitpoints for their class.

Appendix: Sorcery and the VIC 20.

The Altair may have been the first microcomputer, and the Apple][may have been the first home microcomputer. But the Commodore VIC 20 was the first *affordable* home microcomputer.

With a scant 3.5Kb of user memory and 176 by 184 pel graphics the VIC is a primitive machine by today's standards. But it had good colour, great sound and could be easily upgraded upto a quite respectable 19.5Kb. Around the world thousands of programmers cut their teeth on the VIC 20 (including the author). What followed was an explosion of software.

The VIC debuted in June 1980, selling over a million units over its short lifetime. By late 1982 Commodore announced its successor; the popular Commodore 64. The '64 was a much more capable machine. The '64 came with 64Kb of memory and hardware-support for graphical sprites. Initially however the '64 was an expensive machine, and with price cuts sales of the VIC continued. Eventually the price of the '64 dropped, and it was over for the VIC. By Mid-1984 the VIC's demise was a fait accompli.

This wasn't a good time for the VIC. It was remembered it as a "joke" computer, with its 22 by 23 character screen and 3.5Kb of RAM. Revisionists conveniently forgot that at the time there was nothing else, and that within the confines of that 3.5Kb of RAM we made magic happen.

The Road to Sorcery.

My first proper game for the VIC 20 was "UFO Escapers." Even though I had the 16Kb RAM expansion module, I wrote UFO Escapers to fit within 3Kb. At the time there was precious little in the way of development tools, so I wrote it out on paper and assembled it *by hand*. Everything, even the bit-mapped graphics were done this way. The result was a cool little game that aced a BASIC implementation a friend had written for his Apple][. "VIC Invaders" soon followed. I then set about writing development tools (an assembler and pseudo-Pascal compiler called "UPL"), a host of adventures and a few more arcade games.

My first adventure was "Marsh Castle;" written in Mid-1992 shortly after I got my VIC. It was a text adventure that consisted of a traditional "Scott Adams"³ adventure in a village, and a hack-and-slash in a maze in a nearby castle. From there I went on to write a spate of text adventures. "Fatman #5" and "Spyflight #6" I was particularly proud of (but overlooked adding a save game facility!) At the end of 1983 I'd completed my first year at University. Looking to go one better I wrote "The Adventure Compiler" system. This

³ Whatever happened to Scott Adams? Scott Adams of Dilbert Fame (a different person) says he gets a lot of fan mail asking him if he is his namesake? (He isn't.)

machine language library did much of the work in managing an adventure. From this emerged “The House of Demons”; a horror adventure that reads like a novel.

Every Friday night sixteen or eighteen students from the local university would meet at a friend’s house for all-night cards and “Dungeon and Dragons”. Looking for a new challenge, I decided to capture fantasy role playing on a microcomputer. From this Sorcery was born. At this stage the VIC was still going strong (as far as we in Australia knew), so what better to implement it upon than a VIC?

My goal in Sorcery was to perfect the gameplay. I wanted a game that’d keep you interested by continually surprising you with something new. I also wanted a fair fight between monsters and humans. And I had to do it in 19.5Kb. I opted to write the windowing system in machine language, with the game core in BASIC. (I would have rather developed the whole thing in UPL or even assembler, but there wasn’t room to keep the development tools and the game in memory at once.)

Sorcery was extensively playtested to get the balance right. I also hunted for ways the gameplay might be exploited, plugging up potential cheats. (This is a substantial difference from today’s games, where cheats are considered a game feature.) During development I received a lot of assistance from my neighbour, Nigel Dunk. Nigel spent countless hours playtesting the game and making suggestions, not to mention typesetting the original manual. The result was a game that while crammed into 19.5Kb, offered plenty of playability.

I considered doing a sequel; It would have been awesome; greatly expanded with many outdoor settings and enhanced magic and combat, and written entirely in assembler to keep it within 19.5Kb. There’s always room for improvement too; combat would have been easier on the keyboard if you were able to preselect a weapon for combat. I’d also got Nigel’s and my VIC communicating with a few wires (no electronics!) hooking up their user ports. I was playing multiplayer games on our University’s DEC KL-10 mainframe, so it seemed natural to extend the concept to the VIC. Even today it’d make a cool demo just to see how much you can squeeze into such a small space.

Sorcery and the UPL compiler were ready for marketing early 1984, but by then the VIC’s days were numbered. A publisher did look at them and suggested I try my hand on the Commodore 64. Well, no thanks. I had no problem with the many improvements the ’64 offered, but its complete incompatibility with the VIC was a bitter pill to swallow. I concentrated on my computer science degree. Sorcery, UPL and my other games gathered dust under the house. They were given the occasional respite for nostalgic purposes, until my VIC’s RF modulator (the second one) failed.

Nostalgia.

Fourteen years later looking through Saturday’s paper for a new-beaut Pentium II an ad for a second-hand VIC caught my eye. It was \$15. I was really only after the RF modulator, but it came with a disk drive and dot-matrix printer. How could you go wrong?

Loading up my old software it occurred to me I could write a VIC emulator to play them on a PC (purely for nostalgia and a technical challenge). That night I looked on the Internet to see if there were any VIC fan pages, only to find not one but *five* different VIC emulators. I even found a program called VTR by Nikolaus Strater (only written in October 1997!) that loads VIC tapes onto a PC via the Soundblaster! Within a couple of days I had the best of my original software running successfully on my PC.

“Retrocomputing” has turned out to be one of the Internet’s best kept secrets. Perfectly good software written for now obsolete hardware has been given a new lease of life. But why would anyone want to play ancient software written for obsolete platforms when the latest computer technology is so much more powerful? There are two reasons. Nostalgia, and the fact the PC has had no new games for some years now. Think about it; Game companies simply keep writing the same games over and over. The only games out there are DOOM, Command and Conquer, F-16 and Grand Prix. If you’ve played one in a genre you’ve played them all. To quote the author of the PCVIC emulator:

“I wrote this emulator because I want to play some good action games but find them missing from the modern games scene. The games I do find there seem to be taken from a much too limited set of ideas. Also, it appears that needless embellishments, rather than the games themselves, absorb most of the designing effort.”

Boris van Schooten, author of the PCVIC emulator.

Retrogames are an opportunity to explore games from an era when the most important thing about a game was gameplay. “Modern” Game companies would be well advised to think more about that and less about using their million-dollar budgets to fill up a CD-ROM with megabytes of artwork and animated cut scenes. Retrogames aren’t just confined to the VIC; emulators written for the Apple and Commodore 64 are reopening whole libraries of forgotten software. You have to wonder: In ten years people will be running Pentium emulators and getting nostalgic for Intel and Windows? ☺

Emulators and the Internet have made retrogaming possible.

Appendix: Emulators.

At the time of writing the following VIC 20 emulators were available. Currently we recommend PCVIC.

Emulator.	Description.
PCVIC 1.14	<p>Author: B.W. van Schooten. Platform: DOS.</p> <p>PCVIC is my favourite emulator, because it's fast! It is a little rough around the edges. For example, to load a BASIC program you must tell PCVIC first to load it, and then to "undelete" it. Fortunately PCVIC supports a snapshot format called "PCV" which saves a lot of this mucking around.</p> <p>To run Sorcery with PCVIC all you need type at the DOS prompt is PCVIC SORCERY.PCV. PCVIC lacks tape and disk support, so there's no point trying to "save" a character in the Inn. Rather use its snapshot facility to save and restore the entire game. This has the advantage that you can save anywhere; not just in the Inn. To save a snapshot type [Escape] [I] [S] and specify a filename. To restore type [Escape][I][U] and the name of the saved filename.</p> <p>wwwhome.cs.utwente.nl/~schooten/software/vic-20/pcvic.html</p>
V20	<p>Author: Lance Ewing. Platform: DOS.</p> <p>Good! Generally easy to use and better file loading interface than PCVIC, but slower. However you'll need to rename any BASIC files .bin in order for V20 to see them. Debug mode could be better done; the seemingly innocuous -b command and not -q will return you to the emulator.</p> <p>A Sorcery snapshot ("state file") has been provided for V20 so it is ready to run. Start V20 and use the "load state file" option in the "machine" pulldown to load it. You can also save your game in your own state files.</p> <p>crash.ihug.co.nz/~be/vic.htm</p>
Pfau Zeh	<p>Author: Arne Bockholdt. Platform: Linux, Win32.</p> <p>Pfau Zeh is a relatively new arrival on the VIC emulation scene. It has a nice interface, but the Win32 version is very slow on my Pentium 60. Arne recommends you run this on a high-end system with a fast video card.</p> <p>Warning: At the time of writing Pfau Zeh does not include support to load binary programs such as Sorcery's SORCLIB.BIN. While you can</p>

	<p>hack around this it would be much easier to use an emulator that does support binary programs such as PCVIC or V20.</p> <p>stud.fbi.fh-darmstadt.de/~bockhold/pfauzeh.html</p>
VICE 0.14.2	<p>Author: André Fachat and a cast of many. Platform: Unix, DOS, Amiga, others.</p> <p>VICE was originally just a Commodore 64 emulator, but has since had support added for the VIC-20 and PET. One of VICE's nicest features is it's integrated file support; it can simulate a tape or disk drive attached to the emulated machine. Although VICE has been ported to DOS it currently doesn't run under Win95.</p> <p>www.tu-chemnitz.de/~fachat/vice/vice.html</p>
VIC-20 1.1	<p>Author: Paul Robson. Platform: DOS.</p> <p>members.aol.com/autismuk/emu.html</p>
VIC-EMU	<p>Author: Pieter van Leuven. Platform: Amiga.</p> <p>ftp.funet.fi/pub/cbm/crossplatform/emulators/Amiga/vicV0.65.lha</p>

Loading Sorcery.

If you're using a snapshot image for a particular emulator then starting Sorcery is very easy. For example:

PCVIC SORCERY.PCV

This will take you directly to the Sorcery title screen, as shown on Page 11.

To run Sorcery with Lance Ewing's V20 start it thus:

v20

Then select "load state file" from the "machine" pulldown. Select the file **SORCERY.V20**. This will start Sorcery and take you directly to the title screen, as shown on Page 11.

For other emulators you must perform the load manually. (The 1984 Release of Sorcery loaded directly from tape, configuring and loading these files automatically. Unfortunately most emulators are unable to simulate disk or tape, and so you must do each step yourself. If this looks like too much work then why not grab the PCVIC emulator?) If you take a snapshot at the end of this process (step 8) then you'll only need to perform this manual load once.

1. Configure the emulator for 16Kb or preferably 24Kb of expansion memory. Instruct the emulator to reset itself so BASIC can see the extra memory you have just allocated.
2. Instruct the emulator to load the binary file SORCLIB.BIN beginning at \$1200. (This machine code library contains the Windowing routines used by Sorcery.)
3. Relocate BASIC to begin at \$1CAC. Do this by typing the following BASIC commands:
`POKE 43, 172: POKE 44, 28`
4. If you're running an emulator other than PCVIC, type the BASIC command **NEW**.
5. Load the BASIC file SORCERY.BAS beginning at \$1CAC. (Some emulators may require you to rename this file SORCERY.BIN.)
6. If you're running PCVIC, instruct the emulator to "undelete" the BASIC program.
7. To confirm the program has been loaded type the BASIC command **LIST**. You should see the program listed before you. If you do then everything is working. Press your emulator's RUNSTOP key to halt the listing. If not then something is wrong.
8. Instruct the emulator to save this system program image in a binary snapshot file. To play Sorcery subsequently you can simply load the snapshot file, rather than having to repeat steps 1-7 every time you want to play.
9. Type the BASIC command **RUN**. You should see the Sorcery title screen. Press a key to generate a dungeon; This'll take a minute or so. If you aren't interrupted by a BASIC error then everything is working. Welcome to the World of Sorcery!



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