

= Swords and Sorcery (video game) =

Swords and Sorcery is a fantasy role playing video game developed and published by Personal Software Services . It was released exclusively in the United Kingdom for the ZX Spectrum in 1985 and the Amstrad CPC in 1986 . The game contains elements of dungeon crawling and revolves around a customisable player @-@ character navigating through catacombs in order to secure a large wealth of treasure , whilst simultaneously collecting seven pieces of sacred armour .

The game was released with dedicated t @-@ shirts , badges and posters . It suffered from several delays throughout 1985 due to the complexity of programming . Swords and Sorcery received positive reviews from critics upon release ; prominent praise included the graphics , colours , animation and its menu interface . It also won the " Game of the Month " award from Computer and Video Games in January 1986 .

= = Gameplay = =

Swords and Sorcery is presented in a first person top @-@ down perspective and contains elements of dungeon crawling , a common trait of role playing video games . The game is set in a fictional land called Zob , in which he main objective is to explore its catacombs and discover a large wealth of treasure , alongside collecting seven pieces of sacred Zob armour . The game begins with allowing the player to choose their player @-@ character ; the default protagonist is called Flubbit the Dull , however there is an option to allow the player to create and personalise their own character . Once a character has been created , a 14 in @-@ game day training scheme will commence which gives the player an opportunity to improve their abilities such as lock picking , sword fighting and thieving . An in @-@ game armoury is also accessible at any time , which includes utilities such as body armour and various weaponry . The form of currency in the game is dragon 's teeth , which can be used to purchase items and equipment .

Movement through the catacombs is controlled by command inputs and keywords , which is referred to in @-@ game as MIDAS . For example , entering in the word " hit " will bring down a menu which will display various forms of attacking techniques . The left side of the screen displays an animated first person perspective of the respective tunnel or room the player is in , whereas the right side of the interface displays a general top @-@ down view of the catacombs . The bottom of the screen features a command box and announces available options or hints to the player ; flashing arrows indicate where movement is possible throughout the catacombs . During the game , enemies such as gargoyles , catmen and warriors will appear at random and attack the player if confronted . Magic spells such as poison and fire are able to defeat enemies , alongside weaponry such as swords and axes . The player @-@ character has both a health and magic bar , which will slowly deplete once attacked by an enemy or by using magic spells , respectively . Items in the game include treasure and artefacts which may have a chance of giving the player negative effects , such as draining life and paralysing movement .

= = Background = =

Personal Software Services was founded in Coventry , England , by Gary Mays and Richard Cockayne in November 1981 . The company was known for creating games that revolved around historic war battles and conflicts , such as Theatre Europe , Bismarck and Falklands ' 82 . The company had a partnership with French video game developer ERE Informatique , and published localised versions of their products to the United Kingdom . The Strategic Wargames series was conceptualised by software designer Alan Steel in 1984 . During development of these titles , Steel would often research the topic of the upcoming game and pass on the findings to other associates in Coventry and London . Some games of the series were met with controversy upon release , such as Theatre Europe . In 1983 , the company received recognition for being " one of the top software houses " in the United Kingdom , and was a finalist for BBC Radio 4 's New Business Enterprise Award for that year .

In 1986 , Cockayne took a decision to alter their products for release on 16 @-@ bit consoles , as he found that smaller 8 @-@ bit consoles , such as the ZX Spectrum , lacked the processing power for larger strategy games . The decision was falsely interpreted as " pulling out " from the Spectrum market by video game journalist Phillipa Irving . Following years of successful sales throughout the mid 1980s , Personal Software Services experienced financial difficulties , in what Cockayne admitted in a retrospective interview that " he took his eye off the ball " . The company was acquired by Mirrorsoft in February 1987 , and was later dispossessed by the company due to strains of debt .

The game was announced in summer of 1984 , but was delayed several times for over a year . Before its announcement , Swords and Sorcery had been in development from nearly two years prior to 1985 . PSS explained the delays as due to game 's complexity that required a lot programming man @-@ hours . The game was PSS 's biggest launch to date . Upon release , Swords and Sorcery came with t @-@ shirts , badges and posters .

= = Reception = =

The game received positive reviews upon release . Rachael Smith of Your Sinclair praised the imaginative atmosphere the game offered , stating that developers drew the players into a " convincing world " and speculated that the game would become a " cult of sorts " . Philippa Irving of Crash praised the presentation as " super " and the graphics as " rare for this type of game " , adding that it also offered " brilliant " animation which shows the detail in the " best way possible " . Gary Rook of Sinclair User opinionated that Swords and Sorcery was aimed at " Rambo @-@ style " dungeon explorers . Regarding the graphics , Rook stated that they were " not staggering " , but felt that they served a purpose and would have been " deadly dull " if the game was text @-@ based only .

A reviewer of ZX Computing called it the best Dungeons and Dragons version " ever produced on a computer " , and stated that it was " worth the wait " . A reviewer of Computer and Video Games stated that the game was " unique " and could not be classified . However , the reviewer did criticise the speed of in @-@ game combat , calling it " frustrating " at times . Despite this , Computer and Video Games awarded it their " Game of the Month " award for January 1986 . Robert Fripp of German magazine Aktueller Software Markt concluded that the game presented a " successful " adventure . Bob Wade of Amstrad Action praised the game 's presentation , depth and atmosphere but criticized initial complexity and required time commitment . Computer Gamer received the game highly positively , calling it complex , difficult and immersive , giving particularly high points to atmosphere .

In a later retrospect of role @-@ playing games , Advanced Computer Entertainment noted that common criticism of the game was similar to " exploring a car park " , however the reviewer praised the game 's ability to portray a " complex " world .