

BARBARIANS of LEMURIA

a sword and sorcery roleplaying game
by Simon Washbourne

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Barbarians of Lemuria
© Simon Washbourne
Mythic Edition version 2.6

Writing

Simon Washbourne

Cover art

Peter Frain

Interior artwork

Peter Frain, Jenna Fowler, John Blaszczyk
and Glynn Seal

Cartography

Map of Lemuria – Robert Altbauer
www.fantasy-map.net

Interior cartography – Glynn Seal
www.monkeyblooddesign.co.uk

Kickstarter, production and graphic design

Phil Garrad

Editing and layout

Nick Riggs

Playtesters

Alison Richards, Ian Greenwood, Mike Richards,
Paul Simonet, Nigel Uzzell, Janine Uzzell,
Robert Irwin, Annette Washbourne

Kickstarter-backer proofreaders

Anthony Lewis, K Peterson, Chris Clouser,
Alex Woodrow

Cults and Organisations

Alex Hanna, *The Arena of Thorns*
Camilla Chalcraft, *The Daughters of Degara*
Alexander Graeme Hunt, *The Brotherhood of the
Purple Turalon*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING LEMURIA

"It is a savage age of sorcery and bloodshed, where strong men and beautiful women, warlords, priests, magicians and gladiators battle to carve a bloody path leading to the Throne of Lemuria. It is an age of heroic legends and valiant sagas too. And this is one of them..."

The Crimson Edda

Sword and Sorcery

The sword-and-sorcery genre is a sub-genre of fantasy generally characterized by sword-wielding heroes engaged in violent and exciting battles. The stories focus mainly on personal conflicts rather than world-endangering matters. The protagonists are much more stereotypical than in other types of fantasy – the heroes are all usually footloose wanderers and mercenaries who actively seek out fortune and adventure, finding mundane work deathly dull. The best sword-and-sorcery fiction is distinct from the fantasy of Tolkien and his imitators – it explores the human experience from a different, darker point of view.

A common archetype of sword-and-sorcery heroes is the

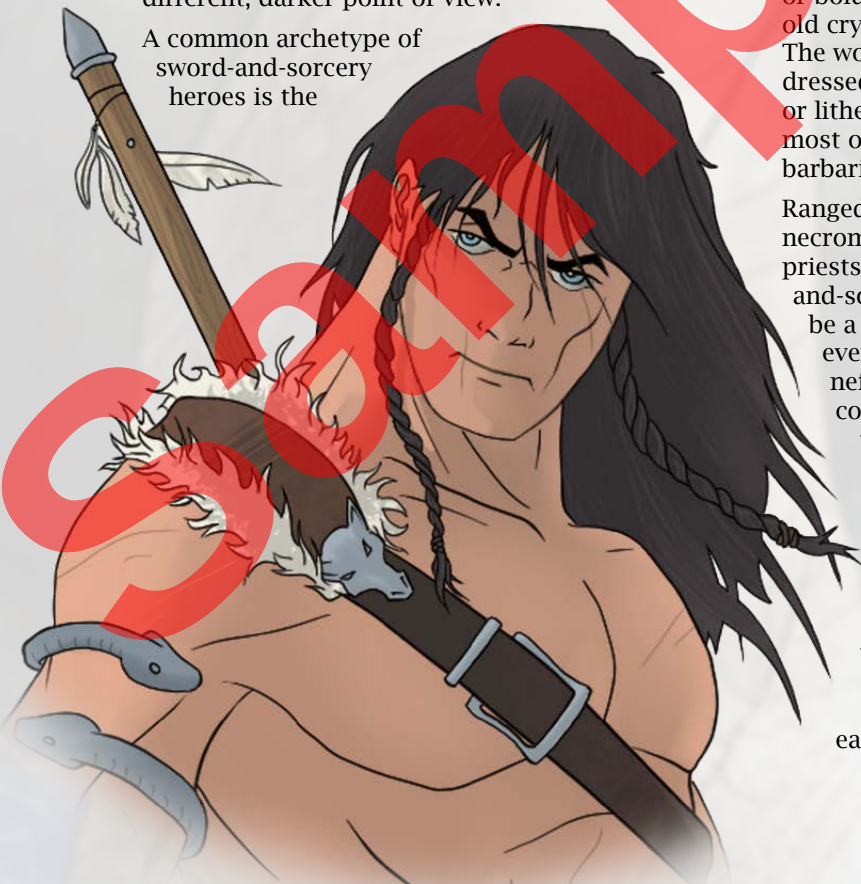
muscle-bound barbarian, often from some rugged backwater – the “Frozen Wastes”, or the “Northern Mountains”. The hero usually ventures forth from his wild abode to seek his fortune in more civilized lands, where his rugged looks earn him admiration from the (typically) scantily-clad women, and his mighty blade earns him a few coins – and perhaps more than a few enemies.

Sword-and-sorcery protagonists are often more interested in pragmatic concerns of survival rather than questions of good or evil. In fact, many of the most famous sword-and-sorcery characters, like Elric and Kane, are really anti-heroes, dealing with corrupting supernatural forces and suffering the tragic consequences of their lust for power.

Sword and sorcery traditionally has a strongly masculine bias, although some more recent forms of the genre include warrior women who are every bit as capable as the men, like Red Sonja and Jirel of Joiry. The heroes are tough gladiators who fight for the thrill of the crowds, bawdy pirates with an eye for treasure and a yearning for adventure, or bold tomb robbers risking their lives in musty old crypts full of traps and monstrous guardians. The women, typically, are voluptuous barely-dressed beauties awaiting rescue from evil priests, or lithe adventuresses as capable in a fight as most ordinary men, and just as ready to crack a barbarian's skull as bed him.

Ranged against the heroes are the bad guys. Evil necromancers, insane sorcerers and demented priests feature strongly in the plots of sword-and-sorcery tales. Sometimes the antagonist will be a lily-livered noble or cunning assassin, but even they often have a magician behind their nefarious plans. These powerful men have been corrupted by the supernatural forces that are the source of their arcane powers, and are thoroughly evil. They are also still human (usually), and are very vulnerable to a good sword blow. Their magic is often very powerful, but limited by the complex rituals required to use it.

The main characters are rarely out to save the world from the minions of evil – they simply look out for themselves (although this usually means, in their own down-to-earth way, they “do the right thing” in the end).



They are not heartless – they tend to stand up for those weaker than themselves and put down those who push others around. They are never inherently evil – that is the role of the villains.

Heroes are always eager for adventure, which comes their way often, especially if there is a fortune to be made. Fortunes often fall into their hands, but the wealth is quickly lost again through gambling, drinking, wenching, theft, foolishness, or any number of other ways. Heroes never dwell on their misfortunes for long, though. As long as they have a good sword in their fists, food in their bellies, and a few coins in their pouches, they are generally satisfied and ready for action.

Heroes are, first-and-foremost, wanderers, and when times are hard will seek employment as soldiers, mercenaries, sailors or caravan guards to get by, often rising rapidly to higher positions as a result of their prowess. When nothing else is available they will frequently turn their hands to other, less honest, work. They will often be found turning to a life of thievery or piracy to make a few coins, although they do tend to prefer proper work when they can get it. However, heroes can only stand their jobs for so long, and sooner or later the yearning for adventure will come over them. Luckily, it's never far away...

Barbarians of Lemuria

Barbarians of Lemuria is a heroic role-playing game (RPG) set firmly in the sword-and-sorcery genre. Lemuria is a post-apocalyptic world of thousands of years into the future and unrecognisable to anyone today. It has returned to an almost prehistoric state – a land of steaming jungles, vast untamed wildernesses, horror-filled swamplands, and sun-baked deserts. Massive man-eating beasts roam the unexplored regions of Lemuria and beyond, from island-sized sea serpents capable of sinking war-galleys, to the huge jungle-dwelling dinosaurs that can swallow a man whole.

Central to this harsh world are sprawling cities that teem with merchants, craftsmen, sailors and cutpurses. All types of people ply their trades in the squares, plazas, bazaars and dock-sides under the shadows of the city walls. Great palaces, temples and towers have been built to house nobles, soldiers, priests and wizards, who safeguard those within the city walls from the dangers without.

Scattered around the untamed regions are the ancient ruins of temples, cities, tombs and palaces. These haunted structures lie toppled and cracked, choked with weeds and undergrowth, untouched and awaiting discovery. Vast treasures perhaps remain within their shadowed halls and silent corridors.

It is a place of saga and legend, epic and myth. Hrangarth the Blade-Bearer and his descendents created many of these sagas by their deeds and adventures. However, Lemuria is a mighty continent, and there are plenty more adventures to be had, and legends to be created!

Role Playing

Role playing means different things to different people – some see it as a tactical wargame, with the backdrop being perhaps a fantasy dungeon to be looted, whereas others see it as more of a freeform or improvisational storytelling exercise. *Barbarians of Lemuria* is somewhere between the two. It certainly bears most of the more traditional RPG influences.

The Players

In *Barbarians of Lemuria*, the players create characters (the term is used interchangeably with PCs and Heroes throughout these rules) who, like the characters in a sword-and-sorcery novel, will travel around the land breaking into antediluvian crypts, fighting monsters, discovering great hoards of treasure (and losing it again), and generally living a life of bold adventure.

The character is a player's alter ego in the game. He can be a brawny barbarian or a deft thief. She can be a dispossessed noble or a swashbuckling pirate. The players decide these things when they create their characters.

The players will create characters who, for whatever reason, will team up together to make their fortunes. Each player will decide the actions of his own character during the adventure and, where there is some doubt about whether the character could succeed or not, will roll dice to determine the outcome of events.

The Game Master

One player does not create a character – he creates everything else though! He is the *Game Master* or *GM*. The GM has to present the world to the other players and describe events for them. He also has to play the roles of all the other characters (*non-player characters*, or *NPCs*) that the Heroes interact with in the course of their adventures. Luckily, to help the GM there is a wealth of information about the land of Lemuria here in these rules, with several adventures and a handy adventure generator near the end of this book.

As mentioned earlier, these rules tend more towards telling a good story than towards a wargame, with all the minutiae of detail that wargames often entail. So there will not be rules

for everything. If a player wants his character to do something for which there is no rule, the GM makes a judgement, using the Task Roll table if needed. Very often you will not want to stop the action to look up a rule – there is no problem with this. The game is about heroic action, not stodgy detail. You could quite easily play *Barbarians of Lemuria* without ever needing to roll the dice, albeit very rarely.

Key Terms

- Action:** Any activity by a player character that requires a dice roll.
- Advancement Points:** Points awarded by the GM that can be used to improve your character at the end of a Saga.
- Adventure:** A single quest or mission that the characters engage in. Each single adventure makes up a part of a much larger story arc, called a Saga.
- Arcane Power:** Used to determine how powerful a magician is, and the level of spells he can cast.
- Attributes:** These are the four traits that define a character in *Barbarians of Lemuria*. They are *strength, agility, mind, and appeal*.
- Attack Roll:** This is a specific type of Task Roll made when you strike or shoot at your opponent during combat.
- Bonus Die:** An extra die that is rolled along with the Task Roll or Attack Roll – the lowest die result is discarded. On a regular roll adding two d6 together, (2d6) a *bonus die* would let you roll three dice and keep the best two. Having two *bonus dice* would mean you roll two extra dice (four dice in total) and discard the lowest two, etc.

- Boons:** Special benefits that the character has. A Hero has one *boon*, plus one more by taking a *flaw*, up to a total of three to begin with.
- Calamitous Failure:** This is when things go badly wrong. When you roll two ones on a Task Roll, you can choose to convert your failure into a Calamitous Failure and be awarded a bonus Hero Point for later use.

Careers: Past or present vocations that the character has engaged in. A career is used to add a modifier to any Task Roll that isn't in combat.

Combat Abilities: Scores that rate how good a character is in various means of combat. Two of the combat abilities – *melee* and *ranged* – are used to add to Attack Rolls, *initiative* is used to determine the order of combat, and *defence* is used as a modifier when opponents are attacking you.

Craft Points: Used in alchemy to gauge how long it takes to make a potion or a device.

Damage Roll: This is made when you've hit your opponent in combat, to determine how badly you injured them.

Fate Points: Used by priests and druids to determine their devotion to their gods.

Flaws: These are special challenges that the character must face. Characters usually have one *flaw* if they have two *boons*, or two *flaws* if they have three *boons*. However, if you wish, you may begin with as many as three *flaws* (the third one is just for fun – you get no *boon* for it).

Hero Points: An in-game currency that represents the luck and determination of sword-and-sorcery heroes. You spend Hero Points to make good things happen.

Krongar the Barbarian

ATTRIBUTE	SCORE
Strength	3
Agility	1
Mind	0
Appeal	0

COMBAT ABILITIES	SCORE
Initiative	1
Melee	2
Ranged	0
Defence	1

WEAPONS	DAMAGE
Valgardian Sword	d6+3
Spear	d6+3

CAREERS	SCORE
Barbarian	2 1st
Gladiator	0 2nd
Thief	1 3rd
Soldier	1 4th

BOONS and FLAWS

Boons: Marked by the Gods: The gods favour Krongar. He has an extra Hero Point.

Flaws: Distrust of Sorcery: Krongar will not use sorcerous powers or items. When dealing with wizards and alchemists, he rolls a penalty die.

Fate Dice: d6 = 6, d6L = 11