

Barbarians of Lemuria

Barbarians of Lemuria

Sword & Sorcery
Role-playing Game

“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



Acknowledgments

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Influences

Lin Carter: Thongor of Lemuria

Robert. E. Howard: Conan the Barbarian, King Kull & Bran Mac Morn

John Jakes: Brak the Barbarian

C.L Moore: Jirel of Joiry

Michael Moorcock: Elric of Melnibone

Fritz Leiber: Fafhrd & The Grey Mouser

Clark Ashton Smith: The Zothique Cycle
and very many others

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Barbarians of Lemuria

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author's note

I first read Lin Carter's Thongor books when I found them in my local library, at the age of 12 or 13. I was enthralled by them at the time and read them several times before moving onto other things (like playing lots of D&D). It wasn't until about ten years later that I found a few Thongor books in a secondhand bookshop and re-read them. I immediately decided that I must run a role playing game set in Lemuria and went about tracking down the rest of the books. I then wrote the first draft of what was to become the game you have bought right here.

The first draft was just a few hand-written notes, scribbles and ideas on a few scraps of paper. The careers system came to me partly because Thongor had a number of careers throughout his adventuring life and partly due to laziness; I just couldn't be bothered to write out a list of all the possible skills that a sword & sorcery character might need. The careers system has become one of the crucial elements of what makes Barbarians of Lemuria such a good game for sword & sorcery role-playing.

We played BoL, as it has become known, over many sessions; refining the rules and so on over time, but honestly, it didn't really need much work. Perhaps this is because my players were used to my more freeform style of gaming or again, because I was too lazy to write anything down or because the core mechanic is so straightforward.

Anyway, more years went by and I moved around a bit and in the process lost, sold or otherwise disposed of my Thongor books. So, when I rediscovered the rules in a box in the spare room of my parent's house, I immediately saw the potential and set about tidying them up and put them online at 1km1kt (where there are many other good free games). Over the years, I had emails from people who liked BoL, prompting me to look at a fuller/more complete version. It took a while because I had to track down all the books again. Then I had the idea of obtaining the license (it is based on Lin Carter's Thongor). This fell through however and I lost interest in further work on it.

However, a year or so later, again largely due to the amount of feedback I was getting from people who played/liked it and wanted the gaps "filled in", I decided to re-write it and make up my own version of Lemuria. It is still similar to the Lemuria that Thongor's adventures take place in, but has begun to evolve away from those roots. The pdf went on sale in November and has outsold any of my other games in just 5 months (most of them have been on sale a couple of years or more). The printed version (via LULU) has sold well, Leisure Games in London have re-ordered three times and it is one of their current bestsellers.

The reason for this revised version is that there were some criticisms (some of it quite justified) about the standard of the artwork in the original. I would like to say here that most of the offending pieces were my own drawings, so they have all been removed. Luckily, the French version of BoL had some good artwork drawn by John Grumph and when his artwork was made available to me, I jumped at the chance. I love Gill Pearce's full-colour map of Lemuria (John's French version is good too), Keith Vaughn's weapons and Matthew Vasey's cities of Satarla and Zalut, so they stay. Matthew's versions of Krongar and co were all great, but for uniformity of style, I stuck with "Le Grumph".

Anyway, I hope this version appeals because I believe that at its heart Barbarians of Lemuria is a great game for sword & sorcery role-playing.

Simon Washbourne 12/04/2009

Addendum:

Since I wrote the above, I have reached an agreement with Cubicle 7 to market, publish and distribute Barbarians of Lemuria – and this book is the result of that agreement. I have added some things - a new adventure and a few adventure seeds based in Satarla and Zalut, a new career and a few other bits and pieces. One of the things that there were complaints about in earlier editions were the armour rules, so I have included my own favourite of the optional armour rules from the earlier books. If you prefer the old armour rules, please carry on using them – after all, BoL is your game!

15/09/2009



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Introduction

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The age of the sorcerer-kings

Half a million years ago, mankind arose from the depths of barbarism to the heights of civilization. There was a time of great strife in which wars were fought across the entire world with sorcery and magic; where great machines could unleash devastation across entire continents. But these "Sorcerer-Kings" were not satisfied; once they had mastered their own world, they wanted to master the entire universe and so become Gods.

But men were not supposed to be Gods; the Sorcerer-Kings could not control the forces they thought they had mastered and in their arrogance and ignorance set free the Dark Lord, Hadron who for untold millennia had been building his power in the Void, biding his time for this moment.

Hadron was loosed to wreak havoc across the Earth; and he did so with great fury! He toppled the mightiest cities of the Sorcerer-Kings; he caused the sea to boil and rage, reclaiming land that it once owned; whole mountain ranges were levelled just as new ones had been thrust violently from the earth. There was nothing the Sorcerer-Kings could do – their magic had lost its power and the evil might of Hadron was too great.

The age of darkness

There followed the Age of Darkness; the Earth still trembled and bucked against Hadron's power; fires still came spouting from the land pouring blackness into the heavens; forests still withered and died and there was a great coldness across the lands.

From the dark places came new threats; lurking horrors, carnivorous beasts, ferocious monsters and cruel twisted half-men. Some of these were undoubtedly minions of the Dark Lord; others

were the results of the vile necromancy of the Sorcerer-Kings, who had been forced into hiding. This was a barbaric time, where the blade of a warrior ruled and where terror and death were constant companions. Yet somehow mankind found a way to survive and then to fight back against the Dark Lord.

It began with the Hero Hranganth, the First Blade-Bearer.

The forging of the orb-blade

Whilst the Dark Lord ruled the land, man would continue to struggle to rebuild. Despising the Sorcerer King's great evil, the Gods of Lemuria devised a plan that led to the creation of the Orb-Blade; forged by Yrslak from the Star-Orb that Sa'tel sent crashing to the earth as a portent of change. The Gods gave the blade to Hranganth (called the Blade-Bearer), creating the first Hero of Lemuria.

With the celebrated blade, Hranganth fought his way into legend, slaying foul beasts, nightmare creatures and the minions of the Dark Lord himself. He led brave warriors across the mountains and into Lemuria to build the first great city of Ygddar. Hadron was sent back to the Void and so the light came back to the Land.

