

THE HYBORIAN PAGE

© MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 625 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

THE WORLD OF CONAN

Conan the Barbarian is the most famous creation of Robert E. Howard (1906-1936), one of the greatest writers of weird fantasy who ever lived. A perfectionist, Howard invented a whole world—an entire eon, as it were—in which his Cimmerian hero could live, and fight, and conquer. This world was the earth of 12,000 years ago—between the legendary sinking of ancient Atlantis and the beginnings of written history—a world in which man still struggled for dominance over the twin terrors of sword and sorcery. A brief outline of that world follows:

To understand the earth as it was in the time of Conan, we must first go back even further—to a time 20,000 years gone. Then, the major kingdoms on the main continent were now-forgotten lands such as Valusia and Grondar, while the barbarians of the great island called Atlantis gradually rose to become a powerful nation themselves—even establishing a foothold on the mainland.

But then, the Cataclysm rocked the earth! Atlantis and its eastern counterpart Lemuria both sank beneath towering waves—and the face of the whole planet was changed! The world sank back, back into savage barbarism once more—then slowly began anew its long, painful climb towards civilization.

In the far North, a tribe known as the Hyborians grew stronger than their neighbors, and gradually spread over the main continent until they had conquered and settled much of it. It is from them that the period derives its name: The Hyborian Age. Over the centuries, new kingdoms rose on the ashes of the old: Nemedias, Zamora, Brythunia, Zingara, and—most powerful of all—Aquilonia.

Of course, even then, there were other kingdoms and traditions as well. In the north were such still-barbarian strongholds as Vanaheim, Aesgaard, Hyperborea, and Cimmeria—the latter being the fierce, frozen birthplace of Conan himself. In the south dwelt the mysterious Stygians (ancestors of the Egyptian pharaohs) and the vital black kingdoms such as Kush—while, to the east, descendants of the ancient Lemurians set up a great empire as the Hyrkansians.

This, then, is the untamed world of Conan—a world now forgotten, but where once a planet stood at the crossroads between the way of civilization and the way of savagery and black magic—a world where a mighty-thewed barbarian could hold the destiny of mankind in his great, grim hands.

NEXT LAIR OF THE BEAST-MEN!

Below is a map of the world in Conan's day, based upon a chart given to us by Glenn Lord, literary executor of the Howard estate and one of the Cimmerian's greatest admirers. Though later cataclysms once more changed the face of the globe several centuries after Conan's time, the northern lands stand where do the Scandanavian nations of today—Nemedias and Aquilonia occupy the land where now Germany and France exist—and the east-west path of the River Styx roughly parallels the northernmost shores of today's Africa.

