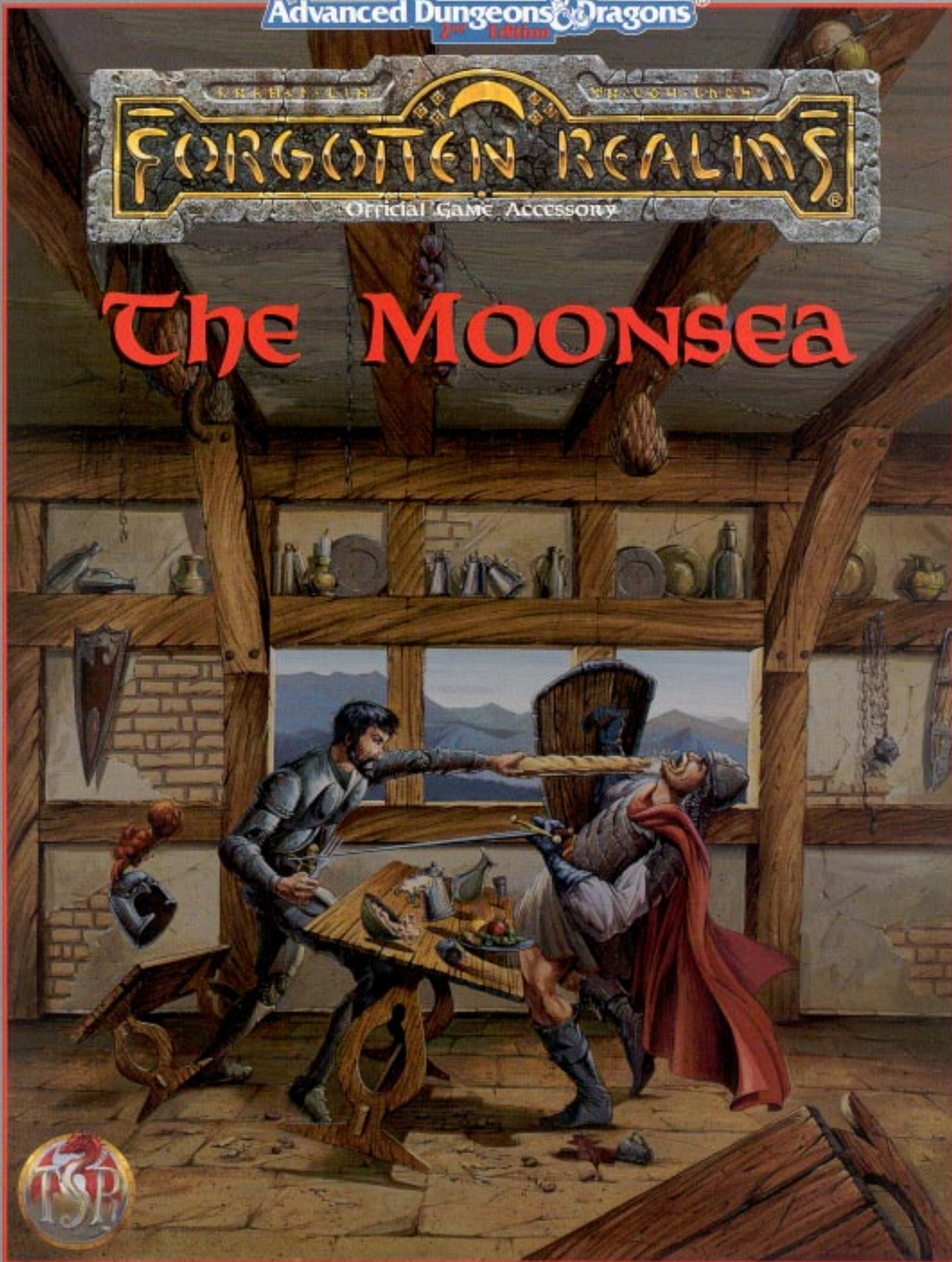


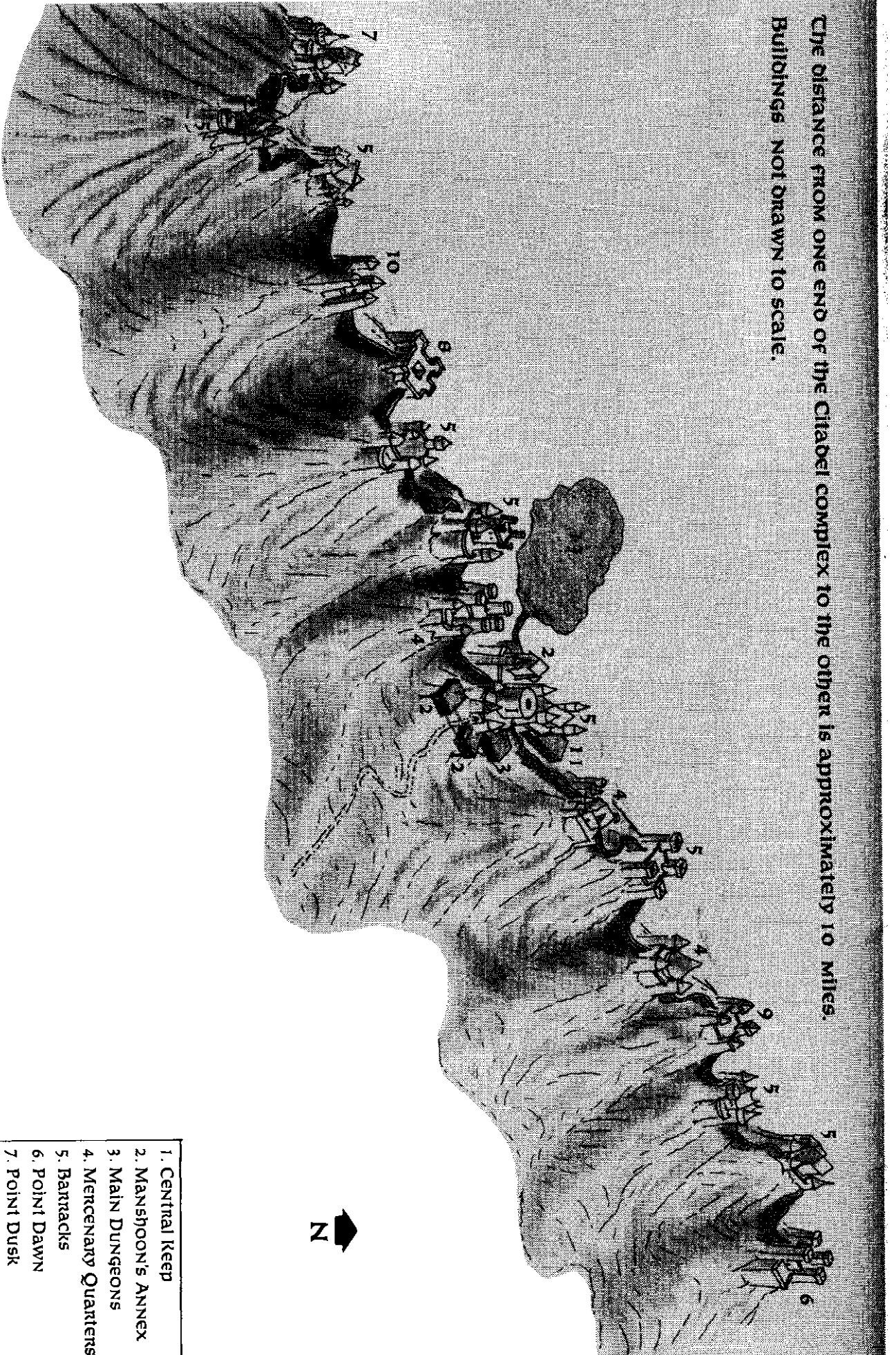
Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®]
2nd Edition

FORGOTTEN REALMS[®]
Official Game Accessory

The Moonsea



The distance from one end of the Citadel complex to the other is approximately 10 miles.
Buildings NOT drawn to scale



1. Central Keep
2. Manshoon's Annex
3. Main Dungeons
4. Mercenary Quarters
5. Barracks
6. Point Dawn
7. Point Dusk
8. Breachward Point
9. Bulwark Point
10. Raven Point
11. Sealed Dwarves
12. Burial Chambers
13. Unexplored

All forts contain barracks. Buildings marked "Barracks" are NOT forts.



The Moonsea Reference Guide

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INTRODUCTION

“Traveling from the Dalelands to the Moonsea is a bit like walking from a temperate, lush forest into a raging snowstorm: It’s unexpected, uncomfortable, and if you aren’t prepared for it, it could kill you.”

—Elminster of Shadowdale

The Moonsea, also known as the Sea of Dragons, lies nestled between Thar to the north and the Dalelands and Sembia to the south. These natural barriers prevent casual contact between the two opposing regions. The Moonsea is a cold, clear, deep lake the color of dark amethyst, with frequent storms and turbulent weather that mirrors its turbulent past and present. It is a place where unwary adventurers can either make a name for themselves or be buried under the dark, hungry waves.

The Moonsea’s shores harbor a list of cities whose fame (or notoriety) is well known throughout the Realms: Zhentil Keep, Hillsfar, Phlan, Melvaunt, and Mulmaster. Each city along the Moonsea’s shores brings with it its own unique contributions, helping to shape the overall character of the area.

If that is truly the case, then the cities have little good to offer. Since the Moonsea is a harsh place, the people themselves have become harsh in order to survive. Suspicion, greed, brutality, and political treachery have become the meat and drink of the region’s inhabitants.

But for every one city that still exists on the Moonsea’s coast there are three that were not so fortunate. The Moonsea is dotted with the ruins of cities and the tombs of the unfortunate men and women who built them and sought to dwell in them.

In addition to the dead cities, there are the ruined castles and towers of petty would-be rulers and mages who sought solitude in order to better work on their spells of power and conquest.

If things are thus, then why go to the Moonsea at all? The answer is simple: It is where legends and reputations are created and undone. If one wishes to make a name for oneself, one must take chances and face hardships. The Moonsea has risks and hardships to spare.

About This Book

The Moonsea Reference Guide is designed to be used for adventuring in a FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign. It, along with *The Moonsea Players’ Book*, supplements the information found in the FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting.

The first chapter covers the sea’s West Branch, the second chapter its North Coast, the third its South Coast, and the last chapter defines the Moonsea itself.





The Moonsea

The Moonsea is populated by a breed of strong, hearty frontiersmen and women. As a general lot they are suspicious, sullen, and dangerous folks who have been hardened by the forces of nature and evil that have plagued the region for centuries.

Though it is unfair to ascribe such unsavory traits to everyone simply by virtue of where they were born and live, it is prudent to mind one's back and purse when traveling the sea and its shores.

The manner in which strangers are treated, for example, does little to mend the reputations of the average Mooneye. "Mooneye" is a derogatory name given by outsiders to the unfortunates who inhabit this area. In turn, "foreigners" are viewed with a mixture of dour suspicion and wonderment (mainly about how to best make a profit from them).

To the Mooneyes, adventurers mean further disruption of an already chaotic life. If they can make a few gold coins off the newcomers, then fine. But on the whole, most citizens would much rather be left alone.

Brief History of The Moonsea Area

The Moonsea was once known as the Dragon Sea or Sea of Dragons due to the scores of dragons that would come to the sea to mate.

The water served as a natural barrier between the elven lands to the south and the north kingdoms of giants, ogres, and other monsters. The dark inhabitants of these darker lands, such as Thar, were prevented from sweeping down and eliminating their hated enemies by the wide waters of the Moonsea.

Nevertheless, the Moonsea's north and west coasts were infested with all manner of evil humanoids, giants, dragons, and beholders. The only significant human presence was, at that time, the barbarian nomads who wandered The Ride.

These barbarians, misunderstood by the rest of the peoples of Faerûn, have long been involved in foiling the machinations of Zhentil Keep, Thar, and other evil powers. Though their reasons were not altogether

altruistic, the barbarians nevertheless played a role in ensuring that the Moonsea coast was not fully under the thumb of evil factions.

Northkeep was the first truly civilized Moonsea human settlement. It was a large citadel that represented prosperity and order to the turbulent area. It was settled in the year 348 DR and quickly became an important trade area and jumping-off point for journeys into places such as the North lands.

Unfortunately, Northkeep was undone by its own popularity. The evil, inhuman forces known collectively as the Dark Alliance (spearheaded by the land of Thar) realized that Northkeep was a danger to their way of life.

The Alliance knew that Northkeep would be the first of many large settlements if it were allowed to prosper. They saw in Northkeep's strength the unstoppable approach of more humans, more civilization, and more laws, so the Alliance decided that something had to be done.

In the year 400 DR, the Year of the Blue Shield, it was. On a night later called the First Turnabout, the forces of the Dark Alliance swept down on the backs of black dragons and attacked Northkeep. What's more, a huge fleet of their black ships with ragged sails sacked and destroyed Northkeep.

After the attack, 40,000 humanoid priests, mages, and shamans stood on the shore of the Moonsea and chanted desperately to their gods. They must have been heard, because with a deafening crack, the city sank beneath the purple waves.

The First Turnabout was but the initiation of a long future of reversals in humankind's fortune. But rather than putting a damper on humankind's enthusiasm for colonization of the region, the First Turnabout inflamed it even more. It became a matter of pride. Pride, and something more—greed.

The entire Moonsea region was (and for the most part, still is) a veritable treasure-trove of resources waiting to be exploited. It is no secret that the land on the Moonsea's north coast is rich in mineral wealth. The sea teems with fish. The farmlands that border the Moonsea are fertile.

Humanity tried building more cities: Phlan, Yûlash, Hillsfar, Mulmaster, Sulasspryn, and others. It began to seem that as soon as cities and towns were erected, the Dark Alliance would reduce them to





smoldering ruins.

What to some was a fool's errand was to the Mooneyes an opportunity. These people, truly believing that they could tame the frontier, continued to wrestle with the land. Apparently they were (and are) oblivious to the futility of the task.

If humanity was to prevail, however, it would have to be without any help from the elves of the Elven Court. These were the same elves who had given permission for humans to settle in the Dalelands. The elves wanted nothing to do with the colonizing efforts, and repeated attempts to draw them into a military-economic partnership failed miserably.

The elves were far too busy dealing with the orc and ogre threats from north of the Moonsea to bother with the petty problems of a few humans. Ironically, those evil humanoid forces were factions that had split from the Dark Alliance. They were composed of restless beings tired of raiding the Moonsea coast and more interested in pursuing old racial hatreds.

The centuries passed. The Moonsea is now dotted with many cities, and it can be said that humankind

has, for now, won (ignoring the fact that many of the cities have been rebuilt countless times).

The most significant events in the Moonsea region have come about in the wake of the Time of Troubles, 1358 DR. Zhentil Keep, the most powerful and influential group in the area, had to switch tactics in the wake of the damage done during the Banedearth.

Zhentil Keep has, for the most part, eased up on plans of overt conquest. The group is now intent on rebuilding itself and using more discretion in its drive for power. The Keep is currently locked in contention with Hillsfar for trade dominance in the area, and this rivalry threatens the stability of the Moonsea's coasts.

It is now the Year of the Shield, 1367 DR. The average Mooneye has no choice but to wait and see what the powers that be have in store. This cold, wild, turbulent region has never known a decade's worth of peace, and everyone is sure that one will certainly not start now.





West Branch

The West Branch of the Moonsea is the most populated area and the one subject to the most contention. Hillsfar and Zhentil Keep have a stranglehold on the region, and they are locked in an uneasy courtship that could explode at any moment. The Citadel of the Raven houses a large garrison of disgruntled soldiers, most on punishment duty and all more than ready to jump at the first order to fight. Zhentilar have overrun Teshwave, leaving it an empty shell of its former power; Yúlash and Voonlar are but the Zhentilar's limp puppets. The only escape from the despair that is the West Branch is Elventree, an oasis of beauty and joy in this otherwise desperate area.

Hillsfar

Hillsfar is a powerful, walled city-state on the south coast of the Moon sea. It is run with an iron hand by Maalthiir, the First Lord of Hillsfar. He is an evil wizard who fears nothing. Ten years ago, Hillsfar was ruled by a council of humans, half-elves, and representatives of the Elven Court. Maalthiir overthrew the council and took power. His rule is backed by the Red Plumes, a former mercenary company that has grown to a 10,000-man fighting force.

The city is currently under a form of martial law, which forbids nonhuman races such as elves, dwarves, halflings, and even half-elves from entering the town or conducting business therein. This is, no doubt, a reflection of Maalthiir's paranoid racial distrust. Anyone found in the city who shows the least evidence of belonging to one of these races is rounded up and put into the Arena for some cruel and deadly sport.

There is only one entrance into Hillsfar: a single huge gate in the southeast section of the city. All citizens of Hillsfar are required to carry passes that enable them to come and go, though each arrival and departure is dutifully recorded by the Red Plumes acting as city guards.

Every visitor to Hillsfar is challenged by the Red Plumes, who demand to know the reason for entry. Names and descriptions of those given permission to enter are recorded in a huge book, called *The Strangers' Log*, that lies on a stone stand near the gate. The entry fee is 2 gp per person.

Each visitor is allowed to stay in Hillsfar for a specific time, "not exceeding the next occurrence of the lunar phase present at their arrival." In other words, if someone enters Hillsfar during the full moon, she or he had better be out by the time of the next full moon. Offenders, as well as unauthorized visitors, wind up in the Arena.

Weaponry must be peace bonded, and spell use (both wizardly and clerical) is carefully watched. Offenders' weapons are impounded permanently. If Maalthiir feels that there is too much spell use in the city, he will pass an edict ban-





ning all spell use (including magic from magical items) within city walls until the next sundown.

Thieves practicing their trade in Hillsfar are eventually approached by the Rogues' Guild and "persuaded" to join. Dues usually range from 30-50% of the rogue's haul. Those who refuse to join soon find themselves in the hands of the Red Plumes.

External Politics

Hillsfar is currently pursuing an expansionist policy in the Moonsea area. Maalthiir wants to annex surrounding cities and towns (such as Elventree) in order to increase his power and influence in the area.

Ironically, another group has its eyes on domination of the Moonsea and beyond—Zhentil Keep. It is the one thing that prevents the Red Plumes from sweeping over the coast and down into the Dales. This is a classic case of two powerful, evil factions who are hostile to each other, thereby canceling each other out and guaranteeing that the rest of the people will continue living free.

The fight between Zhentil Keep and Hillsfar is often bitter. The Red Plumes and the Zhentilar (Zhentil Keep's armed forces) often clash along their common border, especially over the ruins of Yûlash. Diplomatic envoys to Sembia have tried to persuade its government that the abundance of Red Plumes so far from the city is solely to protect trade routes. At present, the Overmaster of Sembia believes the envoys. This could change if the cautious and trusting Overmaster dies soon.

Internal Politics

All is not as well in Hillsfar as Maalthiir would like. He rules the city with an iron hand and has the complete loyalty of the Red Plumes, but there are several factions whose resentment of the evil mage's cruel policies is an open, festering wound.

Glinda Scatterstar (CG hf W13), master of the Mages' Guild of Hillsfar, sees Maalthiir as a ruining influence on the city. Rather than just making certain that Maalthiir doesn't crush them, the Guild's mission has now expanded to include actually overthrowing the cruel lord.

Glinda and her colleagues not only train new wizards in the arts of magic but also mold their minds to be rebellious to Maalthiir. The Guild has also suc-

ceeded in smuggling into Hillsfar a number of elves and half-elves, all of whom are proficient and loyal mages, warriors, and priests. The Guild trains and equips them, then sends them out of the city to spy on Red Plume activity beyond the walls.

If there is a "good" faction in Hillsfar, it's the Mages' Guild. Although self-preservation is always high on the Guild's agenda (and was in fact the original reason the organization was founded), the liberation of Hillsfar from Maalthiir's rule is increasingly viewed by all members as a necessity.

The Guild's current plan is to sit tight and await the shattering defeat of the Red Plumes by the Zhen-tarim. They are confident that this will happen, and they will do whatever must be done to ensure this. In the wake of such a defeat, the Guild plans to take advantage of the confusion and depletion of forces and attempt a coup.

Mordak Brelliar (CN hm W8), Maalthiir's apprentice, has embarked on another plan of action. Disguising himself and making his way through the ranks of the disenchanters, Mordak has managed to recruit a small but loyal band of followers who believe that, instead of fighting, Hillsfar and Zhentil Keep should ally themselves in the common causes of conquest and joint rule.

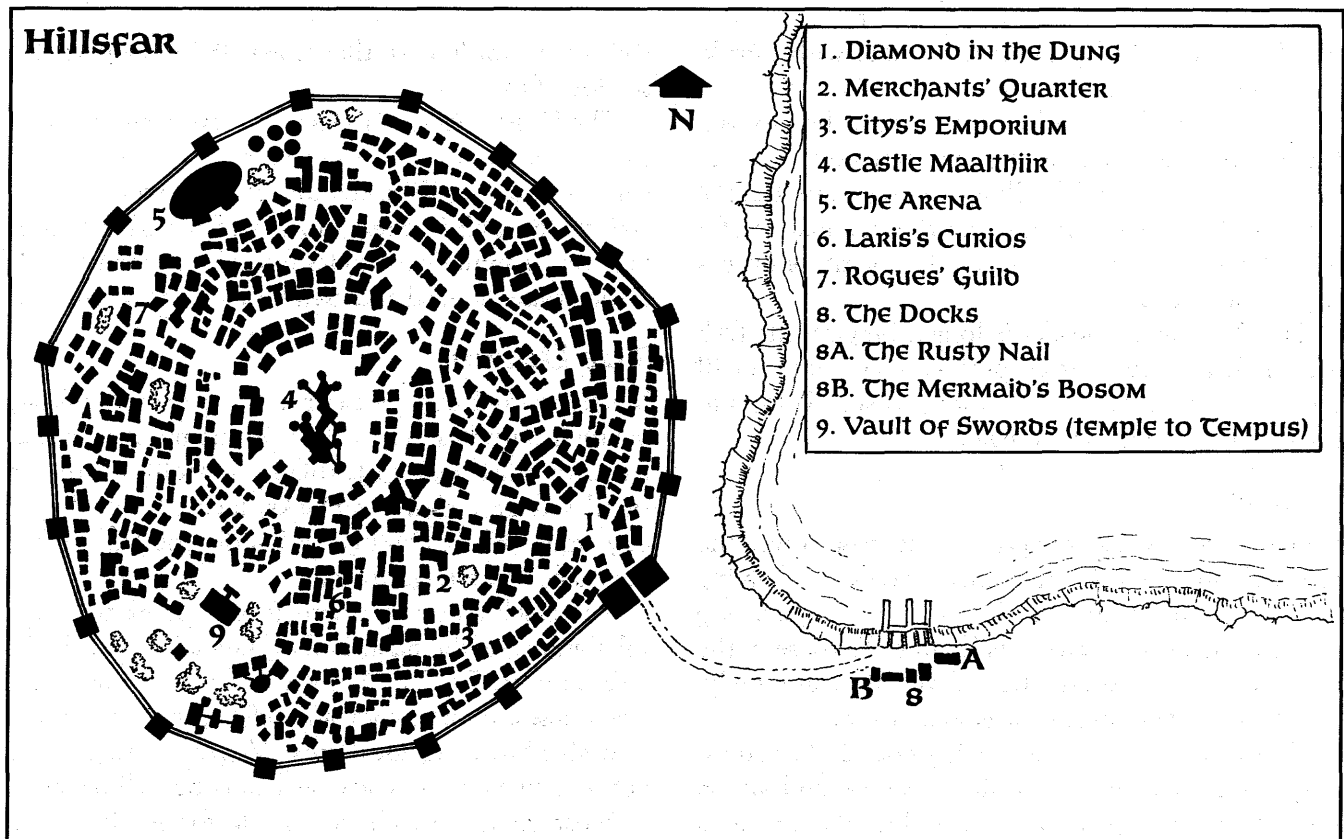
Together, these powers would be unstoppable—so Mordak believes. He insists that if Hillsfar and Zhentil Keep were allied, they could easily rule the entire Moonsea, the Dales, and even Sembia.

Naturally, Mordak insists that he, not Maalthiir, has the vision for such a bold undertaking as this. He therefore advocates the overthrow of his master by any means necessary.

Mordak's followers consist of about threescore mages, warriors, rogues, and Dualah (NE hf P5), a priestess of Umberlee whom Maalthiir appears to be interested in. Mordak intends to use Dualah as a means of getting information out of Maalthiir. Dualah knows nothing of this plan.

Maalthiir uses the Rogues' Guild for his personal spies in the city, but thus far the Rogues have not discovered the threats to Maalthiir's rule. Part of the reason for this is that the Guild head, a thin, rat-faced man named Swipe (N hm T18), works closely with the Red Plumes.

What Swipe does not know is that his Guild has



been infiltrated by a demihuman. Wingle Spewgold (NG gm W(I)10/T12), a daring gnomish spy, has used his illusionist spells to pass as an average human thief. His job is to inform for Glinda Scatterstar and the Mages' Guild.

Wingle will not reveal his presence to anyone unless he needs help. Though he jokes about paladins, rangers, and good clerics, he will nevertheless confide in such individuals if he can verify their identity.

Maalthiir

The First Lord of Hillsfar (N hm W15) rules the city with a ruthless iron hand and a shrewd merchant's mind. Although his own ethos appears neutral, his evil actions in the form of city policies are slanting his view toward the darkness. Maalthiir's major goals are the advancement of Hillsfar, the destruction of the Zhentarim, and the expansion of his own personal power—not necessarily in that order.

Maalthiir always travels with four hand-picked Red Plumes (AC 4, F7, 60 hp, splint armor, long swords) as his personal bodyguards. They are drawn from the

ranks of the Red Plumes' elite guards that dwell within Castle Maalthiir. When not traveling, the four guards are stationed at the doors of his quarters.

Wak Rathar (CE hm W11) is an old friend of Maalthiir's. He has license to roam where he wishes and do as he pleases. Wak has a sick sense of humor, and enjoys throwing people into the Arena for the sport of it. Needless to say, Wak's actions do not endear Maalthiir to the population any more than do his cruel edicts.

Mordak is trying his best to advise his lord to disassociate himself with Wak—not only to appear as a good counselor, but also because he fears Wak's power. He does not want to be on the receiving end of it when Maalthiir makes his own grab for power.

The Red Plumes

The Red Plumes are the volunteer military force of Hillsfar. They serve as city guard, enforcers, garrison troops, and expeditionary forces for the city. There are 10,000 soldiers in the Red Plumes, but most are found outside the city walls. They are easily recog-



nized in the town by their black hats with purple bands and gaudy red feathers.

The power of the Red Plumes within the city is a frightening thing. Any Red Plume can stop a citizen, search him and/or his dwelling, and seize anything of value as “evidence.” To disobey the commands of a Red Plume is to invite fines, imprisonment, or even a trip to the Arena.

The Red Plumes’ leader is Jorgen Berginblade (NE hm F12), a battle-scarred professional soldier of ill temper and cruel disposition. Jorgen is fiercely loyal to Maalthiir—as long as he is paid.

Trade

Everyone agrees that Maalthiir’s expertise serves the city well in one way: mercantile savvy. A thriving trade exists in Hillsfar, with raw materials entering the city and finished products leaving. To those in the merchant class, the cruelties of Maalthiir are grudgingly tolerated as long as the gold pours in.

Hillsfar is known for exporting fine cloth, exquisitely made fur garments, quality weapons and armor, intricately-carved gems, and a fiery local liquor called dragon’s breath. The city imports raw ores, grain, uncut gemstones, and untreated furs from all around the Moonsea.

Since adventuring bands are not welcome in Hillsfar, the traditional taverns and inns that cater to them are illegal. However, in recent days, a new business establishment with the dubious (but apt) name of Diamond in the Dung has begun to discreetly take clandestine adventuring bands and give them the fare and services they are accustomed to.

Titys’s Emporium is a general equipment shop that also does secret business with adventurers. Titys (NG hm T7) is an honest fence who pays good gold coin for any loot anyone wishes to sell.

One of the only truly legitimate magic shops in all of Faerûn is located in Hillsfar: Laris’s Curios. Laris charges high prices because he knows people will pay them. Laris sells (and buys) magical items, spell components, gems, and artwork. The establishment is guarded by two stone golems.

Most of the selling stalls for traders and merchants in Hillsfar are lumped together in the Merchants’ Quarter. It should come as no surprise, given Maal-

thiir’s mercantile bias, that this is the best-patrolled section of the city.

The Hillsfar Arena is a stone structure prominently located in the northwestern section of the town. It can hold up to 8,000 spectators. It is used for gladiatorial games, public executions, and lopsided battles between demihuman “undesirables” and monsters. It is sometimes flooded and used for mock naval battles.

The Docks

Maalthiir (and thus by extension the rest of Hillsfar) distrusts outsiders. Yet it is an economic reality that the city must deal with them. To facilitate this, a small village called the Docks, located outside the city walls, was established to handle the bulk of the sea traffic and foreign trade.

The Docks, a tiny settlement of no more than 200 inhabitants, is the main harbor/staging area for Hillsfar’s water traffic. The Docks is composed primarily of warehouses, trading company offices, drydocks, piers, and shipbuilding facilities. Visitors can choose between two inns: one average, and one well below.

Most visitors to Hillsfar settle for staying here; there are fewer restrictions than in the city proper and passes are not needed.

Temples

The Vault of Swords, dedicated to Tempus, is the only large temple in Hillsfar. There are smaller ones to Lliira and Chauntea, and shrines to Umberlee, Malar, and Torm.

The City

1. Diamond in the Dung. A large-sized inn with a stable attached at the rear, the Diamond clandestinely serves adventurers and sees to their every need. Run by Oswul Farnf (NG hm F1), a young mercenary who got out of the business extremely early in life, it’s a comfortable establishment with excellent food and clean rooms. A bed and a meal cost 8 gp, but Oswul sometimes takes equipment in trade.

2. Merchants’ Quarter. The Quarter boasts an extensive array of goods and services for sale, representing a splendid crosssection of Faerûn. Unfortunately, it is also heavily patrolled by Red Plumes. The Plumes



harass visitors and inflate the smallest infraction or discourtesy into an offense requiring an arrest or a beating. It's all to demonstrate to the merchants that the city is indeed looking out for their safety.

3. Tity's Emporium. Tity's Emporium is a well-stocked store that also does a secret, thriving business with adventurers. Tity (NG hm T7) is a tall, graying old man who serves as a fence. He is an excellent source of reliable rumors—especially about the activities of the Red Plumes. He will purchase anything the PCs bring to him, no questions asked.

4. Castle Maalthiir. Maalthiir's castle is also known as Vultureeroost. It is an imposing structure, a series of towers, spires, walls, and buildings. Vultureeroost houses Maalthiir and his 32 elite guards, and offers guest rooms for his friends and associates and quarters for his staff and servants.

Vast catacombs honeycomb the earth under the castle proper. In these subterranean chambers, Maalthiir

entertains special guests at lavish parties where less acceptable forms of leisure are practiced. Some say he was inspired by the Palace of Revels beneath the Tower of the Wyvern in Mulmaster.

The castle is almost impregnable; only one large gate accesses the structure. Besides the elite guards that dwell within, a barracks complex adjacent to the building houses an additional 1,000 Red Plumes.

5. The Arena. This huge oval structure is made of solid granite blocks. Underneath the Arena is a network of tunnels and catacombs that lead to cells, torture chambers, and ready rooms that house the prisoners and slaves who are being readied for combat. It has been said that the Arena catacombs are like a prison unto themselves.

However, a secret passageway exists between Castle Maalthiir's catacombs and the complex under the Arena. Maalthiir and his friends use it to pluck unfortunates from the Arena cells and bring them back to the castle for private entertainment.





The Arena is always garrisoned by 100 Red Plumes, mostly green troops, who act as catacomb guards. They also serve as crowd control during all city events.

6. Laris's Curios. This shop has the distinction of being one of the only true magic shops in all of Faerûn. It is run by Laris (LN hm F10), a short tempered, balding, rude man of about 45 years. He will mercilessly argue down any asking price for an item sold by adventurers, haranguing them incessantly until they agree to his terms.

Laris's shop is protected by two huge stone golems in the shape of gynosphinxes. Normally, they sit outside, appearing to all the world as twin statues. If anyone threatens him, Laris can mentally summon one or both of the golems thanks to a ring of golem control he wears on his left hand; it is a silver ring with a chunk of granite in place of a gemstone.

7. Rogues' Guild. Run by a thin, rat-faced man nicknamed Swipe (N hm T18), this is the only thieves' guild allowed in Hillsfar. The building housing the guild is a condemned former charnel house that was once used to store plague victims.

The building's interior still has the old walls and rooms, but it is rife with traps, pitfalls, and at least eight thief guards (levels 2-6). Each guard wears an odd wooden whistle that makes a chattering rat noise. These alert the others whenever there might be trouble.

The actual guild complex lies underground, and contains meeting rooms, dormitories, storerooms, and even a small cell area for hostages.

The Guild works closely with the Red Plumes, and is considered the eyes and ears of Maalthiir.

8. The Docks. This small hamlet houses no more than 200 inhabitants and is the main harbor and staging area for Hillsfar's water traffic. It is composed primarily of warehouses, trading company offices, drydocks, piers, and shipbuilding facilities. Two inns await the arrival of weary travelers.

One hundred Red Plumes stationed permanently in the Docks reside in a stone tower at the highest point in the village. The structure also doubles as a lighthouse.

The Red Plumes keep a wary eye on all travelers.

At least six members of the Rogues' Guild of Hillsfar also lurk in the Docks, acting as spies.

The Rusty Nail is the largest inn in the Docks. This adequately-run establishment is the only authorized lodging for adventurers. A bed and a meal run 6 gp a night. Ale is extra.

The Mermaid's Bosom is the worst dive that anyone (including most orcs and other dirty humanoids) can imagine. It is a large tavern, its floor slick with ale, blood, and saliva. Murder, mayhem, and robbery all happen here, and no one questions any of it. No Red Plumes darken its door; Maalthiir's fondest wish is that strangers and visitors come here and slaughter each other, saving the Red Plumes the trouble. If one must stay here, the fee is 3 gp a night.

9. Vault of Swords. This large complex is a temple devoted to Tempus. Its grand halls are decorated with bloodied armor and weapons that are notched, pocked and stained with use. It is run by Dounalis Guff (CN hm P18), a loud man who claims that salvation is found through death in battle. Guff also serves as the Red Plumes' chaplain.

Zhentil Keep

Northkeep may have been the first city established on the Moonsea, but Zhentil Keep has the distinction of being the first city established on the Moonsea still standing.

Over the centuries, Zhentil Keep changed from a small fortified city and caravan stop sitting atop a great mother lode of metal ore to a rotting, evil, degenerate city synonymous with evil. The corruption of the city was a direct and predictable result of the corruption of its leaders.

Zhentil Keep is home to the Zhentarim, also known as the Black Network. They are headed by Manshoon and the Zhentilar, which are the Keep's armed forces.

First Lord Chess (CN hm F3; formerly W3 and P3 of Leira) is a fat, vain fop who (allegedly) rules Zhentil Keep. However, clearly Manshoon wields the true power.



The Way It Used To Be

Zhentil Keep was once a huge, dark, stone city. Myriad multi-story buildings crowded together, turning the streets into dim urban valleys. Some thought that since Zhentil Keep was a city of evil, laws did not exist. Nothing could be further from the truth. Strong (albeit evil) law abided here.

The Zhentil Keep city watch, known as the Hands, kept a close eye on all of the citizenry. Dueling and the open display of unsheathed weapons were illegal. However, some of the Hands would look the other way—for a price.

The public places were also often watched by a group of spies known as *naug-orls*, or “devil worms.” Numbering at least 600 strong, the *naug-orls* would perform such heinous tasks as kidnappings and slayings, evidence-planting, eavesdropping, and other acts against those in the inns and taverns.

Not to be confused with the *naug-orls* are the *naug-adar*, which means “devil dogs.” The *naug-adar* were once minor mages of the Zhentarim. They were always

looking for trouble, real or imagined.

At night, rag-tag press gangs roamed the twisted, grimy alleys. Their prey is always the same: poor fools they could “recruit” into the Zhentilar or as crews for slave galleys. Citizens unfortunate enough to be caught in the streets of the Keep after dark were rarely heard from again.

Zhentil Keep’s corruption so permeated the town that even everyday activities in private homes were tainted with its touch. Few Zhentish citizens went to the inns and taverns, preferring to seek their individual solaces in private.

Recent Developments

Zhentil Keep once boasted some of the largest temples in all the Realms. Most of them were dedicated to Bane, Malar, and Loviatar. During the Time of Troubles, however, Bane was killed and Cyric the Dark Sun took his place. A vicious holy war erupted as the followers of Cyric, spurred on by the god himself, attempted to purge the Keep of all orthodox Banites.





This purging, known as the Banedeath, erupted in 1361 DR, the Year of Maidens. Besides the devastation and disruption of everyday life in the Keep, the Banedeath has driven Banite worship underground.

The Cyric/Bane Schism

The Circle of Darkness, a temple complex devoted to Cyric, was once one of the largest temples in the Realms. It was presided over by Xeno Mirrormane (NE hm P18). Xeno was single-handedly responsible for launching the Banedeath purge.

Fzoul Chembryl (LE hm P16) has a special relationship with the god Cyric, which includes mysterious sacrifices whispered of by many but witnessed by none. Fzoul has been allowed to live despite his once being the leader of the Black Altar, the temple complex devoted to Bane.

However, even though public Bane worship has been successfully purged, it retains devout adherents. These Banites dwell, work, and worship in secret complexes below the city streets, conducting their unspeakable rituals and plotting for the day when they will return to power.

Lately, there have been unconfirmed rumors that drow from the Underdark have joined the Banites and greatly supplemented their number.

The Hillsfar Situation

Despite the recent setbacks of Zhentil Keep, the Zhentarim continue in their war against Hillsfar for domination of the coast. Most of the action is concentrated around the ruined city of Yûlash, where armies from both sides are deeply entrenched.

The armed forces of Zhentil Keep are now located mostly in the Citadel of the Raven and Darkhold. Even Manshoon himself has left the Keep for the relative safety of the Citadel.

The Circle of Darkness

Recently, the temple complex of Cyric was destroyed in an act of divine retribution. Xeno Mirrormane perished in the ruin of the Keep, and Cyric's power has been reduced.

Hordes of dragons, humanoids, and giants now threaten the outskirts of Zhentil Keep. The Keep, a pale shadow of its former self, lies in ruin.

This reversal has done little to slow down the Zhentarim or the Zhentilar. Their being inherently flexible and scattered throughout the Moonsea has guaranteed that their power remains—though the Keep is gone.

CITADEL of The Raven

The Citadel of the Raven, located on the western edge of the Dragonspine Mountains, is a series of interconnected fortresses carved out of the mountains. Vaulting stone bridges and dozens of low, snaking walls and tunnels form the links. The entire complex is huge, stretching over a distance of ten miles.

The Citadel has existed as far back as even the most ancient elves can remember. Scholars suggest that the Citadel is irrefutable evidence that a grand human nation existed here long before recorded history. Some sages have further theorized that the barbarians of the Ride are the descendants of that once-great civilization.

Up until the 1250's, the Citadel was used as a refuge by human and half-orc bandits. These marauders were entirely wiped out when civilization advanced north. In the year 1276 DR, the Year of the Crumbling Keep, the powers at Zhentil Keep met with representatives of the other Moonsea cities and suggested that the Citadel be manned by a joint force. Zhentil envoys further suggested that the alliance rebuild the Citadel's defenses to protect the Moonsea's frontiers and merchant caravans. Since barbarians from the Ride were harassing caravans, and the ogres and orcs of the North had retaken Thar, the plan was eagerly accepted.

The cities of Hillsfar, Phlan, Mulmaster, Voonlar, Melvaunt, Thentia, Sulasspryn, Yûlash, and Zhentil Keep sent forces to repair and occupy the Citadel. Some of these cities, using the opportunity to purge themselves of unwanted, sent criminals, prisoners, and malcontents to man their forces.

Zhentil Keep, however, stacked the odds in its favor. Before suggesting the alliance the Keep had given Yûlash its independence, at least officially. Thus, when



Yûlash sent forces to the Citadel, they were in fact allied with the Zhentilar—outnumbering the rest of the cities' combined forces. Galauntar Hawkhelm, a powerful warrior from Hillsfar, was made Captain of the Citadel. This came as a surprise to no one.

Despite the inter-city intrigue regularly played out behind the stone walls of the Citadel, the forces managed to work together enough to keep the trade routes safe. Adventuring groups were soon attracted to the Citadel, as its fame and reputation as a hospitable place grew. Even companies of dwarves came to the Citadel to help reinforce its walls and supports.

Eighty years after the initial occupation, in 1355 DR, the Zhentarim rose up and attacked their allies within. This was carefully timed with a large, planned orc attack that caused the non-Zhentish forces to leave the Citadel undefended as they battled outside the Citadel's protective walls. The Zhentarim easily took control of the Citadel as the warriors outside were slaughtered. To this day, the Citadel of the Raven remains a prominent Zhentish military outpost as well as a prison for political prisoners.

Military Forces

The garrison currently comprises 2,000 men-at-arms (equipped with chain mail, light crossbows, and long swords), 200 horsemen (plate armor, medium lances, and long swords), and 50 commanders (plate armor, shields, and long swords). The Citadel can hold an additional 7,000 soldiers if needed.

Besides the warriors there is a population of 300 artisans, armorers, cooks, servants, camp followers, smiths, and the like. These noncombatants act as a support staff for the garrisons.

The leader of the Citadel is Lord Kandar Milinal (LE hm F10). Kandar is brutally efficient and is unswervingly loyal to the Zhentarim. He is a strict disciplinarian who uses harsh laws and edicts to keep the men in line.

The Strifelord of the Citadel is Boruse Temlor (LE hm P10), a cold, remote cleric of Cyric. Boruse's only concern and biggest challenge is keeping the faith of Cyric thriving in this most remote of outposts. Boruse gets along passably well with Kandar, though the latter holds him in contempt for his lack of subtle machinations.

The third interesting personality is Ampherd Holt



(NE hm P8), cleric of Tempus. Ampherd is a wild-eyed priest who wanders the complex clad in blood-stained, battered plate armor, extolling the virtues of death by battle. Despite his unbalanced mind, he is a great favorite of the soldiers; oddly enough, they see Ampherd as their chaplain.

Kandar is leery of Ampherd; he does not trust someone who appears touched with permanent battle madness. Boruse hates Ampherd outright because the cleric is a loud, crude boor and because he represents a rival deity. Boruse is also jealous of Ampherd's popularity, something the violent war-priest doesn't even strive to gain (which irks Boruse even more).

Besides these three luminaries, the Citadel often plays host to Sememmon the Wizard. Lord Manshoo makes an entire wing available to Sememmon, for his use when he is in the area. Other Zhentarim (2d4+2), mostly mid-level members, reside here for one reason or another.

Adventuring companies do not come here (at least not intentionally). They are no longer welcome, and in fact are considered to be spies. However, mercenary companies hired by the Zhentarim often winter at the Citadel, where they train alongside the Zhentilar.

Most of the forces merely garrison the Citadel, engaged in various guard duties, drills, and maintenance. Each day at dawn, four patrols of ten horsemen each are sent in the four main compass directions, covering a ten-mile radius centered on the Citadel. Advance forces are also sent out when word of an approaching caravan is received, in order to "escort" it to the Citadel in safety.

Plots and Counterplots

When the cities of the Moonsea occupied the Citadel, intrigue boiled behind the scenes. Just because there is now only one city in control doesn't mean the intrigue has lessened.

Now, rather than each city spying on and outmaneuvering the others, various factions have sprung up within the Citadel walls. Most of them are emboldened by the recent disaster at Zhentil Keep.

However, most average soldiers and commanders belong to no group and have no aspirations beyond serving their tour of duty and getting back to someplace a little more civilized.

A group of approximately 200 soldiers and their commanders have taken Ampherd's wild words to heart. Inspired by his frenzied, rabid sermons about glory in battle and his exaggerated tales of even more glorious reward, this faction wishes to range outside and attack anyone and everyone—regardless of orders from the Black Network. *Why sit around in a fortress, they argue, when we have the numbers and the skill to take what we want?* Those who know of their existence call them the Raiders.

Another group, about 120 strong, has been swayed by Boruse and sees itself as part of Cyric's divine plan. Its members call themselves Cyric's Paladins, making a mockery of the word. This faction's members have no powers, either holy or unholy, and others in the Citadel maintain that these particular soldiers have been standing out on the cold parapets a bit too long.

The third faction is by far the most dangerous. It numbers about 400 and is growing faster than the others—far faster than anyone of any alliance anticipated. The leader of this unnamed and unrecognized faction is a charismatic, strong, young lieutenant called Fesric (NE hm F7).

Fesric argues that, in the wake of the disaster of Zhentil Keep, the garrison should split from the rest of the Zhentish forces and create its own destiny. Fesric offers no concrete plans, but plants the idea that they no longer need to subject themselves to the whims of the Zhentarim. After all, he argues, look what happened to Zhentil Keep!

Fesric is gaining followers because he appears reasonable and his arguments make sense to the soldiers. This faction has no clever name, no holy calling, no specific agenda; they simply think it is time to start their own city with the Citadel as their base.

Kandar is aware of all three factions but is not acting—yet. He believes that patience is the key, and he had decided to calmly wait for the more extreme cases to hang themselves with their own rash words and impulsive deeds.

However, Kandar knows that Fesric could become a major problem in the future. Fesric's popularity has saved him thus far; Kandar dares not act against the well-respected lieutenant . . . yet. Soon, however, the officer may suffer a fatal "accident."



Complex Description

1. Central Keep. This is the main fortress of the Citadel where caravans enter and are processed, new recruits are indoctrinated, and all other administrative functions are carried out. Stables and storehouses for the caravans are attached to the central area and are guarded by two soldiers at all times.

The Central Keep also contains the quarters of Kandar, Ampherd, Boruse, and Fesric. Each man has a suite of rooms, and there are always two commanders on guard at the main entries to each suite.

2. Mansboon's Annex. This series of comfortable rooms and well-equipped laboratories and workshops off the Central Keep are set aside for the wizard Manshoon's visits. The sole door into the Annex is guarded by a symbol of death, cast by Manshoon. It is automatically activated when he is away.

3. Main Dungeons. Located under the Central Keep, these subterranean cells can hold up to 100 political prisoners and soldiers with discipline problems. Ten guards are permanently stationed here.

4. Mercenary Wing. This small fortress houses mercenary companies that are wintering in the Citadel. This wing can house up to 100 soldiers and usually contains 2-10 visiting mercenaries at any given time.

5. Barracks Area. Twenty of these are scattered throughout the length of the complex. Each can hold 200 men and their gear. There are approximately 50 men housed in each one at present, and 15 men will be asleep here at any given time.

6. Point Dawn. The easternmost fortress in the chain, this dank, uncomfortable post holds about 500 soldiers.

7. Point Dusk. The westernmost fort on the chain, it can house 200 defenders. Many soldiers on disciplinary probation find themselves here. Some claim the ghost of Galauntar Hawkhehm, angered at the betrayal of the Zhentarim, haunts Point Dusk. They are right.

8. Breachward Point. This is a small fort that holds 150 soldiers. There are usually from 20-60 men here at any given time.

9. Bulwark Point. A fort that can hold 200 defenders, it shows evidence of dwarven workmanship. It is a favored assignment because of the spacious quarters and the structure's evident (and reassuring) sturdiness.

10. Raven Point. This area is so named because there are more carved raven statues on these battlements than on any other place in the Citadel. It is the oldest fort in the chain, and can hold 500 men.

11. Sealed Dwarves. This huge chamber was long ago sealed by the Zhentarim mages, the ultimate betrayal of the dwarven stonemasons who had come to the Citadel during the alliances. The grisly chamber contains the mummified corpses of 500 dwarves, still standing upright in full armor.

12. Burial Chambers. These huge caverns are at the lowest point in the Citadel and contain the bodies of the defenders. Galauntar Hawkhehm is buried here, but for some odd reason his grave marker is always found upside down—no matter how many times it is righted and secured in place.

13. The Unexplored. This maze of hewn stone chambers is the last remnant of old bandit strongholds. There are chambers with old loot, and in one is a hidden entry into the Underdark. It eventually leads to a duergar outpost five miles down.

Teshwave

Built near a series of small rapids on the River Tesh, Teshwave was once the most productive town in old Teshendale. That was before the Zhents swept down to pillage and destroy the town.

The Zhents have now completely taken over the area of Teshendale, and Teshwave—what's left of it, anyway—is used as the conquerors' headquarters, barracks, and stables.



Teshwave serves as a military base for Zhentil Keep's forces and a caravan launching point for expeditions to Daggerdale. The Black Network and the Zhentilar also use Teshwave as a bivouac area for mercenaries and their nonhuman armies—good-sized tribes of orcs, gnolls, and ogres—that trail the Keep's main force.

These nonhuman units aren't paid, but they are given gear, food, and permission to sack the surrounding areas and attack caravans at will. Small-to-medium groups of these mercenaries are always roaming within 10 miles of Teshwave at any given time, looking for likely targets.

There is no government in Teshwave; the only law is the whim of the Zhents. The garrison commander is the ultimate decision-maker, but even his commands are subject to change at any time.

Zhentilar Personalities

Guthbert Golthammer (CN hm F6) is the commander of the Zhentilar garrison in Teshwave. Guthbert is far more gifted in brawn than brains, and got this position through his father's influence. He is a crude, ill-mannered brute who delights in harassing and humiliating his men.

Needless to say, Guthbert hasn't earned the respect of any soldier. His men do his bidding only because they are trained to follow orders. Also, they fear his constant companion, Asdag.

Asdag (LE hm P6) is a tall, languid man with close-cropped hair. He is a devoted, loyal priest of Cyric. He is a follower of Fzoul Chembryl and a unflinching member of the Black Network. Asdag is Guthbert's adviser, finding it ridiculously easy to manipulate the slow-thinking man.

Asdag inspires fear and obedience. His devotion to his god gives him an ominous demeanor that the average soldier finds disconcerting. His personal presence also creates an air of evil power, an air carefully cultivated by his choice of clothing. He is always dressed in black robes, swathed in voluminous cloaks of scarlet.

The priest is the true power in Teshwave, a fact known to all but Guthbert. Asdag allows Guthbert to run the day-to-day business, but steps in to advise anything complex. He then skillfully makes it seem that Guthbert came up with the idea.

Guthbert considers Asdag his most trusted follower and gives him tremendous leeway to do what he pleases. Occasionally Asdag disguises small groups of soldiers as merchants and sends them on scout missions throughout Teshendale. These men try to befriend any likely caravans or merchant groups and guide them to Teshwave. There, the victims are captured and their merchandise confiscated.

The Armies of The Zhentilar

Currently 2,000 soldiers compose the Zhentilar garrison. From their headquarters in Teshwave, the soldiers coordinate the work at logging camps in the area and control the general vicinity.

The Zhentilar also have 300 orcs, goblins, and ogres assisting them. Their primary function is to launch raids on non-Zhentish caravans and minor settlements.

Locations

There are so few intact buildings in Teshwave that they all can be listed below. (DMs should place them within about 150 yards of each other.)

The Rapids. The Rapids is the last inn left standing in Teshwave, run by four citizens. These people are now little more than indentured servants, forced by the Zhentilar to cook, brew ale, and accommodate the customers.

Hallorfan Teshdale (CG hm) is a man in his late 60's and the original proprietor of The Rapids. Hallorfan is resigned to his fate; he is too old to fight back and he has nowhere else to go.

Tula Woodsbridge (NG hf R1) is a young woman with a secret: She is a Harper, here to assess the situation in Teshwave. She plays the role of the serving wench (and all it implies) but takes it all stoically, marking what debts will be repaid when the time comes. She will shower attention on any strangers who might be adventurers and who could take a message to the other Harpers.

Doryn No-Mouth (LG hm) is a mute young man of about 17, fair of face, who acts as stable boy and handyman. He's regularly taunted by the Zhentilar for his muteness, but he sees plenty. He can read and write—skills the Zhents do not know he possesses. Tula keeps a close eye on him.



Calla Ayetes (LG hf) is a stout young woman in her 20s with a pretty face and a quiet disposition. She helps Tula tend bar and is resigned to her fate.

Vergun's Caravan Stop. Vergun is an unscrupulous merchant who, through a series of bribes to the ruling powers, has been allowed to set up shop in Teshwave. His prices are exorbitant and his goods are shoddy. PCs can buy anything from the *Player's Handbook* Equipment section here at 50% markup.

The Pit. A ramshackle gambling den, festhall, and ale house, the Pit is run by off-duty soldiers and is a sought-after assignment. It is usually filled with Zhen-tilar, mercenaries, and nonhuman troops.

Shrine. This building is little more than a rough altar of stones and several canvas sheets set up as a shelter. Asdag, the Black Network priest of Cyric, conducts his services (some say sacrifices) here. The area radiates a *protection from good* 10' radius.

Manor House. This modestly-sized manor house is conspicuous: it is the largest and cleanest looking structure still standing. The manor was taken over by Guthbert Golthammer, the garrison commander. Asdag also lives here. The entry to the manor is always guarded by four Zhen-tilar commanders (F3, hp 24, AC 2 plate and shield, long sword).

The Lair. This is a series of walls and building remains clumped together to form a large group of lean-tos. This area is so named because it is where the nonhumans normally sleep.

YûLash

Once a large fortified city, Yulash (also known as Y'lash) served as a crossroads for centuries between Voonlar, Hillsfar, and points North. The city sits upon a wide stone-and-earth plateau, laid out in the shape of a war shield facing up.





Yûlash offers a commanding view for miles around, as well as an excellent tactical advantage to any defender. These two factors alone make Yûlash a much sought-after prize.

Ancient Yûlash

Legends say that Yûlash was a powerful city even before the beginning of Dalereckoning. It was once inhabited by powerful wizards and devout priests of forgotten gods.

The mountain Yûlash sits on is honeycombed with underground caverns, ornately-carved chambers, temples, and secret lairs, all remnants of ancient Yûlash. Many of them are supposed to be filled with treasures beyond imagination: exquisite gems, gold, and exotic and unique magical items.

All manner of underdwellers, from known species to as yet undiscovered ones, now live in these subterranean areas. The stories and rumors whisper that these things are foul, dark, and utterly corrupt.

Among the most dangerous features of this underground complex are the extradimensional gateways scattered throughout. These gateways lead to other planes and demiplanes of existence, possibly even to other worlds in the Prime Material Plane.

A powerful cult of those bygone days was that of the foul god Moander, one of whose temples is located below the city. The god was trapped in that temple by the elves of the south, who for years had struggled against the influence of Moander's cult. Not only did the elves imprison Moander, but they also burned the entire complex to the ground.

Once the elves retreated, the surviving humans (those who did not worship Moander) rebuilt Yûlash on the ruins of the old city.

Yûlash's Modern History

For centuries, Zhentil Keep controlled Yûlash. In 1275 DR the Zhentarim inexplicably granted Yûlash its independence and allowed the city to send troops to the allied forces in the Citadel of the Raven.

However, although Yûlash was officially a free city, it was still quite secure in the grip of Zhentil Keep. In fact, the "new" Yûlash militia was really fresh Zhentilar, wearing the colors of Yûlash. The Black Network, keeping themselves hidden behind the scenes, con-

tinued to pull the strings of the Yûlash governors.

In 1297 DR, the Year of the Singing Skull, the noble families of Yûlash began a bitter quarrel amongst themselves for the lordship of the city. Although Zhentil Keep was still ruling Yûlash, the internal bickering was an unexpected threat to the Zhentarim's security. However, the city's "free" status prevented the Zhentarim from sending large numbers of troops.

Thus, the Zhentarim backed certain noble families, especially those that could be easily manipulated. Hillsfar joined the fray and did likewise, and both powers gained considerable strength and influence in the city in a short period of time.

In 1337 DR, the Year of the Wandering Maiden, the Yûlashi nobles agreed to abolish the lordship and instead rule by council. This did little more than crystallize the factions, immediately weakening the new council. The city's security slowly crumbled as the council descended into petty bickering and political backstabbing.

In the Year of the Harp, 1355 DR, civil war broke out in Yûlash. Zhentil Keep immediately sent troops, claiming to offer the city protectorate status during the emergency. Hillsfar wasted no time and sent troops and Red Plumes, claiming that the Yûlash resistance had asked for their aid.

There is some speculation that Zhentil Keep used the city discord as an excuse to move in troops and trigger the war. If so, they grossly miscalculated Hillsfar's response.

For the next twelve years, Zhentil Keep and Hillsfar took sides in the Yûlash civil war, each claiming to be acting legitimately. The people of Yûlash either fled or joined one of the two sides.

Warfare battered the once-proud city to rubble, leaving less than half the original structures standing. Two groups of fortified buildings with stockades, sealed passages, and the like, were all that remained. The largest such defense complex was the city's main citadel, owned by Zhentil Keep.

In the last days of the war, the dark god Moander was accidentally released from its subterranean Yûlashi temple prison by the heroine Alias. The god made its way to the surface, smashed through Zhentil Keep's citadel headquarters within the city and stalked toward Westgate. The god's escape rocked the Zhentilar and sent all into chaos.



A Recent Break

This divine blasting of the central area, combined with subsequent raids by frost giants, scattered the Zhentish forces in Yûlash's citadel. When word of what had happened reached Hillsfar, an attack was immediately ordered.

Their response was swift and brutal: Hillsfar conquered the city, routed the Zhentilar, and completely destroyed the Zhent citadel headquarters (or what was left of it). The gutting of the citadel was more of a symbolic, psychological act than a military one; through it, Hillsfar declared dominance in Yûlash and caused the surviving Zhentish forces to flee the city.

These scattered forces regrouped and are now encamped within a few miles of Yûlash's crumbled walls. They are in a precarious position: close enough to the city to see what's going on, but also close enough to be warily observed by those within. Now these Zhentish forces await word from the Black Network on what they should do next.

The Zhentil Keep encampment consists of 40 mounted men-at-arms (equipped with full plate plus plate barding for their heavy warhorses, heavy lances, and long swords), 100 lightly armored guards (banded armor, long swords, and staff slings), and 28 archers. They are led by a mage named Szameril (LE hm W 10) who is assisted by Alisia (LE hf W8). Their clerical power consists of two clerics of Cyric: Panatos (LE hm P6) and Dyn (LE hm P6).

Zhentil Keep has not yet conceded the victory to Hillsfar. The Keep occasionally deploys minor forces to assist the encampment in petty harassment and skirmishes with the Hillsfar forces. These headaches effectively distract the Hillsfar garrison and keep the people within Yûlash uneasy.

The more stubborn Zhentilar commanders consider these "actions" wastes of time; they look upon Hillsfar and the Red Plumes with contempt. The common Zhentish joke is that the only thing the Red Plumes managed to do in Yûlash is to seal themselves up in a prison of rubble.

The Hillsfar garrison now stationed in Yûlash consists of 240 Red Plumes in 24 detachments, each led by a 6th-level fighter. Each Red Plume is equipped with a medium horse, splint mail, and long sword.

The Hillsfar troops are led by Haliator Mendara (LE hm F12), a seasoned warrior who condones looting (as long as it's the Red Plumes doing it). He is aided by two mages, Portia (LE hf W8) and Alyster (NE hm WS). Three priests of Tempus—Boryn (CN hm P5), Dahra (CN hf P5), and Zene (N hm P5)—supplement Haliator's staff.

The citizens who favor Zhentil Keep are called the Purge Yûlash faction, and their militia numbers 130. They surreptitiously carry out their vengeance in the form of political assassinations, petty sabotage, espionage, and stubborn, open resistance to Hillsfar's law in the city.

A number of Yûlashi citizens support the Hillsfar faction. They are called the Yûlash Rebellion and have a total militia of 240.

The two factions are further divided into about 20 subfactions and are usually at each other's throats as much as they are at their enemy's. Gang wars explode with regularity, despite Red Plume vigilance in quelling any intramural bloodshed. But since these small factions and subfactions are sincerely intent on killing each other, the Red Plumes occasionally leave them alone to do it.

Regardless of loyalties, most militia travel in bands of between 10 and 20 and are equipped with leather armor and short swords.

The Red Plumes have a standing order to summarily execute all looters. Naturally, the individual detachment commanders define "looter." More than a few people have been killed because they appeared to be planning to loot. Adventurers are always classified as looters, regardless of what they happen to be doing at any given time.

In essence, Yûlash is now a large walled ruin. Several score buildings still stand, all occupied by Hillsfar's forces. There are no inns for the weary traveler, no well-stocked equipment shops, no temples to speak of. Yûlash has ceased being a city, and become little more than a crossroads.

Yûlash Features

Several farms cower near the walls of Yûlash, but most crops have been plundered by the looting Red Plumes for the garrison troops. Whatever they manage to miss is sold to the citizens at highly inflated



prices. Most of the farmers sell their goods in temporary stalls located outside the city near the walls.

There is a single ale-house left in the city, appropriately renamed The Last Place. It does a thriving business, and is invariably crammed with Red Plumes, citizens, rabid faction members, an occasional out-of-town merchant, and yes, even a Black Network spy or two. Oddly, there is little violence at The Last Place; it seems that even the most vehement enemies by day recognize the neutral status of this place by night.

In keeping with policy established by Maalthiir in Hillsfar, the city has been purged of all nonhumans. The few demihumans still in the city work covertly as part of the Purge Yûlash faction. Many citizens know of these nonhumans' existence, but see them only rarely.

There is but one temple still standing, and it is devoted to Tempus. When the priests of Tempus are not advising Haliator, they can be found here.

One merchant shop remains standing and open for business: Coryn's All-Goods. This is the place to purchase and sell equipment. If Coryn does not have an item, he makes arrangements to find it.

It should come as no surprise that Coryn is the head of a fledgling rogues' guild, composed of people who flinch at the idea of hard work but crave a full purse nonetheless. The guild has no real power as yet; it is little more than a group of disgruntled Yûlashi bemoaning their fate. Nonetheless, Coryn is determined to build the guild into a force to be reckoned with.

Merchants and caravans that try to stop at Yûlash are in for a rude surprise. If they manage to elude the displaced Zhentil Keep siege forces, they are certain to be disheartened at the town's incapability to care for their needs after a long trip. Still, travelers are thankful for the shelter of the stone walls, and the Red Plumes don't discourage visitors—as long as they're human. Each traveler who wishes to sleep within the protection of the walls must pay 1 gp if on foot, 2 gp if mounted, and 5 gp if riding in a wagon.

Red Plumes also enjoy making extra coin by riding out of Yûlash and intercepting caravans on their way to the town. These soldiers explain that the Zhentilar

are lying in ambush, but for a nominal fee (usually 25 gp per wagon) the Red Plumes would be more than happy to ride as escort.

Caravans that decline the offer are immediately sacked by the very men who offered their services. All evidence of the battle (including the bodies, wagons, etc.) is obliterated.

The fees for allowing visitors to sleep within the protected areas and the caravan protection money are the city's only means of income.

YûLash's Future

Maalthiir is ruler of Hillsfar and, by extension, of Yûlash. He may be a cruel man, but he is a shrewd merchant with a fine financial sense. Maalthiir knows that Yûlash's economy must be revived.

Maalthiir plans to get rid of the Zhentilar that still crawl the roads by hiring mercenaries and adventuring bands to eliminate the Zhentil Keep forces. Maalthiir knows very well that most adventurers have either run afoul of Zhentil Keep and its agents or have heard of the atrocities committed there. But Maalthiir is betting on the general poverty and greed of adventurers and hopes to use this cheap source of manpower to remove the Zhentilar and clear the roads.

Once the roads are clear, Maalthiir plans on hand-picking groups of Hillsfar citizens to help rebuild Yûlash. The first project will be the construction of a full service caravan way station, including an inn, livery, and other places of business.

He will eventually hire adventuring groups (perhaps culled from the ranks of those who have had the most success against the Zhentilar) to explore the caverns and chambers under the city. Maalthiir will offer the groups 20% of whatever they find down there. Such groups must naturally first be licensed. Unauthorized groups that attempt to explore the ruins will be punished, and any wealth they find will be confiscated.

VOONLAR

Located northeast of Shadowdale at the junction of the roads from Shadowdale, Yûlash, and Teshwave is the small town of Voonlar. It is only slightly



larger than Shadowdale and is considered the latter's chief rival in the area.

Officially Voonlar is an independent town, but it is in fact a Zhentish puppet. Although there are no Zhentilar in Voonlar, the leader of the town is a direct agent of Zhentil Keep. Occasionally, the Zhents make a few "useful suggestions" about how to run things, and naturally, those suggestions are obeyed without question.

Voonlar is mainly a farming community, though the town proper is rather urban. Many farms—some quite prosperous—are to be found in the outlying areas of town.

The town is six centuries old, a fact that Voonlarians are quite proud of. It sprang up with the help of ambitious merchants and pioneers who saw the crossroads as a prime location to settle. This location has benefitted the town far more than its original founders could have imagined: Its southerly, landlocked location has made Voonlar a very unattractive strategic base. Because it is usually ignored by maurading bands, it has managed to remain more

or less intact—something that few Moonsea cities can claim.

The Ruler of Voonlar

Voonlar is governed by an elected sheriff known in the local dialect as a "bron" (possibly a corruption of the word "baron"). The annual elections are rigged by the Zhents to ensure that their man stays in office.

The current bron is Buorstag Hlammythyl (LE hm F8), an ex-mercenary, loyal follower of Cyric and devoted agent of Zhentil Keep. Buorstag is a greedy, aggressive man who runs the town his own way (as long as it doesn't interfere with the Zhentish agenda).

Buorstag extorts protection money and high taxes from the townsfolk, making him almost universally disliked. Occasionally he demands the same from visitors, especially lightly-defended caravans. The amount of the extortion varies according to the apparent wealth of the caravan, the current local economy, and Buorstag's mood on any given day.





Defenses

Bron Buorstag has six deputies (AC 5, F2, hp 12, chain mail, club, short sword) who help him police the town. In addition, the town also can muster a militia of 50 pikemen and 20 archers. He has given the deputies standing orders to keep an eye on all newcomers into Voonlar, especially if those newcomers are not merchants.

Buorstag harbors a special hatred for Harpers; he believes they organize the sporadic raids from Shadowdale. Revealed Harpers are executed in the public square, and Buorstag makes sure he has a list of trumped-up charges handy just in case he is called on to justify the executions.

In response to the raids, Buorstag built a small, squat tower. It serves as a defense post, observation platform, temporary barracks, and brig for the bron's special prisoners.

Temples

Two major temples exist in Voonlar: the Dark God Reformed (dedicated to Cyric) and the Bounty of the Goddess (devoted to Chauntea). Both are located at the crossroads in the center of town.

The Dark God Reformed is an imposing building of black stone, more like a small fort than a temple. It is often the target of the raids from Shadowdale.

The temple to Cyric is run by Gormstadd the Rerisen (LE hm P14). He is served by 14 lesser priests (levels 1-5) and an elite guard of warriors (AC 4, F4, hp 36, chain and shield, long swords, short bows). Gormstadd has a 10,000 gp bounty on the head of Mourngrym Amcathra, Lord of Shadowdale.

Gormstadd is a brawny man with a small, narrow face and eyes that gleam like two shards of flint. Haughty, arrogant, and disdainful of the common rabble, he spends his days nursing his great hatred of Chauntea, the Harpers, and Shadowdale, concocting numerous plans to make them all suffer.

Buorstag and Gormstadd are very good friends. The two meet for dinner, wine, and chess at least twice a week. Little in Voonlar escapes their notice.

The Bounty of the Goddess is the more popular and beautiful of the two temples, boasting lush gardens and attractive outbuildings. Since farming and animal husbandry are major parts of life in Voonlar,

this comes as no surprise.

This temple is run by Lady Shrae of the Goddess (CG hf P12), an attractive, pleasant woman in her middle years. Lady Shrae supervises 14 lesser priests (levels 1-5) and a temple guard comprising 20 warriors (AC 8, F2, hp 18, leather armor, slings, clubs, short swords).

Lady Shrae is on good terms with her counterpart in Shadowdale, Glamerie Windbough (NG hf P9). The two priestesses coordinate matters of spiritual and temporal nature. In particular, Glamerie often warns Shrae of any imminent attacks on Voonlar by Shadowdale-based groups. This enables Shrae to provide whatever support she can without revealing the extent of her involvement.

Shrae often aids good adventurers by hiding them in the temple and smuggling them out of danger. She also provides healing, if necessary.

Buorstag and Gormstadd hate Lady Shrae. They would like nothing better than to see the Bounty of the Goddess leveled and Shrae's head mounted on one of the spiky battlements of the Dark God Reformed. However, it is clear that Chauntea's hand is on Shrae, and an unprovoked attack on the priestess or the temple would escalate matters too far.

This, plus the destruction of Zhentil Keep, has forced the two men to put aside the matter for now. All that they can do at present is watch Shrae carefully and hope to someday soon find a reason to attack her and her faithful.

Shrines to Lathander and Tempus lie on the outskirts of town. Many raiders who attack Voonlar leave a bloodied gauntlet, helm, or other trophy wrenched from a Voonlar defender in the shrine to Tempus as an offering to the dark god.

This practice infuriates Buorstag, who is powerless to stop it. Even though this is only a shrine and not a full temple, the bron does not dare tamper with the offerings—regardless of how much they mock Voonlar's military prowess. Buorstag knows if he removed the items, Tempus would weaken Voonlar's defenders and render them incapable of conducting warfare.

Trade

Voonlar boasts several inns, taverns, and trading establishments. Prices are steep (30% markup on



list prices of all equipment and services found in the *Player's Handbook* or *Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue*).

By far the most influential establishment is the Shield Trading Company, a small merchant house that serves the Dalelands and the Moonsea areas. The Shield has a good reputation and has somehow managed to steer clear of Zhentish influences.

Many caravans begin and end at the Shield Trading Company. Adventurers who are trying to keep a low profile, disguised as merchants or acting as caravan guards, are often seen at the Shield.

The most favored inn in Voonlar is the Sign of the Shield, owned by the Shield Trading Company. It has excellent accommodations, fine food, and clean stable facilities. Room and board includes one evening meal and runs 4 gp a night.

Another inn, the Swords' Meet, is known for its unique, strong, home-brewed ale (nicknamed Night, as in "dark as") and as a place frequented by Zhents and their allies. The Swords' Meet has good food and accommodations (5 gp a night) as well as stables. The place is almost always full, and Gormstadd can sometimes be seen here, stepping down to drink amongst the common folk when the mood takes him.

Voonlar boasts numerous smithies, artisans, and such. Just about anything an adventuring party might want or need can be found here.

The People

The average resident of Voonlar is resigned to being led by a corrupt leader who supports evil causes. In fact, many citizens see Dalesmen as disruptive rogues and thieves who seem intent on ruining the peaceful life of their town. Voonlarans look down on Shadowdale in particular, dismissing it as a small village of simpletons.

In general, however, the citizens treat outsiders (especially those who look as if they have anything to sell or money to spend) with wary detachment. Any newcomer from obviously nonhuman stock, however, will be subjected to mean-spirited jests, racial slurs, and open contempt. Even children are encouraged to practice open bigotry.

The Hillsfar Factor

Hillsfar, flush from its victory in Yûlash, is now turning its eyes to Voonlar. Maalthiir, the merchant mage, covets the crossroads as well as the Shield Trading Company. He will first try to win the town and the merchants with normal monetary incentives. If they resist, more magical means of persuasion might become necessary. Adventurers should look for an increase in Hillsfar spies in Voonlar (they could find themselves being hired as spies, as well).

Elventree

Elventree is a sylvan community established in 702 DR, the Year of the Dawn Rose, six years after the fall of Myth Drannor. This ancient settlement, a traditional meeting place for humans and elves, soon became a haven for half-elves, rangers, artists, and druids. It should come as no surprise to anyone that the community also soon became a Harper outpost.

Elventree is not a typical Moonsea community. It is built in the traditional elven style of working in concert with nature. There are no cleared common grounds (other than natural clearings) or any large buildings. All structures in Elventree are located in either natural caverns or hollowed-out trees. There are no roads to speak of, only shady forest paths and almost-invisible trails that wind through the town. Elventree blends into the surrounding forest, and this has kept it safe for centuries.

Leadership

Elventree has no leadership, no council, and no overlord. However, the community is not lawless. The citizens follow a moral code of ethics not unlike those of the Harpers, the elves, and the nature gods. These soul-laws are binding and require that all residents exist in harmony with nature and take no more than what they need to live.

Defenses

The citizens of Elventree are not oblivious to the dangers around them. In the past, elves made too many enemies for the town to be completely safe from the



outside world. Most of these enemies would be content merely to destroy something built by the elves, and Elventree certainly meets that criteria.

In times of trouble, every able-bodied citizen of Elventree comes to its defense. Since most of the citizens know their way around the upper branches of the trees as if they were forest paths, a large group of defenders can move swiftly and silently through the boughs. This gives them the ability to harass the enemy while the latter cannot see them—or easily defend themselves. Defenders of Elventree surprise opponents on 1-5 on 1d6, and attacks against them are made at -4 as long as they keep to the trees.

Anyone defending Elventree is supplemented by a local contingent of Harpers, the clergy, and the several strong mages who have made their homes here.

The most powerful of the mages is Hilrad the Patient (NG hm W14), an avowed nature lover and amateur sage. Hilrad usually welcomes newcomers, gets information from them, and politely answers their endless questions (which explains his sobriquet “the Patient”). Hilrad is a good guide to Elventree. He has no apprentices, and although he sells no spells he is always willing to swap them with a friendly traveler.

Temples

Elventree’s largest temple is the Halls of the Unicorn, set within the hollowed-out trunks of huge fallen trees. This temple to Mielikki is run by High Priest Chandlar Hummerspoon (NG hem P12), and five followers, all fifth-level druids.

The temple of Mystra is a great cairn, hollowed out and pitch-black. Every manifestation of magic (schools; wild magic) known to the Realms exists here in the form of energy that constantly flickers within the cairn.

The temple is tended by a mysterious wizard (LG hm W17) known simply as the Sentinel. The wizard wears a mask at all times, which also serves to muffle his voice. There are no clergy in the temple per se, though visiting priests of Mystra stay in the temple and tend to any clerical duties that the wizard himself cannot perform. Enough clergy visit the temple to make this a practical, workable solution.

The temple’s interior, plus the area within a 15-foot



radius of the temple, is a place of great power. Priests of Mystra and spellcasters who worship her as their primary deity can cast spells here for full maximum duration, damage, or extent of effect. The caster chooses which of these bonuses will apply.

Even a mage with evil alignment will be allowed to worship here, but the Sentinel, who seems mysteriously able to know the alignments of all who enter the temple or its grounds, will keep a close eye on such individuals.

In addition to these two temples, there are shrines to Chauntea, Silvanus, Eldath, Corellon Larethian, and Rillifane Rallathil (elven god of wilderness). The shrines are located in recesses halfway up some of the tallest trees in the woods.

Trade

Elventree may seem very primeval, but that does not mean that there is not a thriving trade here. Elventree boasts some of the finest bowyers and fletchers in the Moonsea/Dalelands region. Besides bows and arrows, Elventree is noted for its wood carvings, herbs, medicinal plants, exotic fruit, and tapestries. In return, Elventree imports swords, armor, parchment, wine, and seafood.

Caravans do not stop here as a rule. This is mainly because there are no trading houses or merchant areas in the town. Most trade is done by native human and half-elf trading parties that leave Elventree laden with local products and return with all the items needed or wanted by the community.

Occasionally, however, a caravan does come to Elventree. A few merchants know how to find the town, and they come here to take advantage of the city's restful ambiance and rejuvenating spirit. These merchants are welcomed as friends and treated with great hospitality for as long as they stay.

Most of these caravans contain basic staples, and the citizens are encouraged to purchase directly from the merchant. Buying days are treated as festivals, with the town coming out to hear of the outside world and to purchase necessary items.

The best place within Elventree to obtain goods is the Gold Cave, an establishment set up inside a natural cave. The cave was so named because this is the one place where most gold changes hands. The cave

itself contains no gold ore.

The Gold Cave is run by Amaryl Sweetwater, a half-elf of wood elf stock. She is a former adventurer who stumbled upon Elventree and decided to stay. She is a tough businesswoman, quick to anger and slow to cool down. Her inventory is fairly limited, but she knows what adventurers need and she carries all the basics of travel.

The finest inn in Elventree is the Swaying Bough, an inn built high in the branches of a giant oak tree. If the customer doesn't look around too closely, he will think he is in a normal inn on the ground. Only the "roof" and "walls" made of leaves and limbs, as well as the gentle swaying motion of the tree during high winds, would convince the customer otherwise.

The proprietor, Emric, welcomes all to his inn. In the evenings, locals come to the Swaying Bough to eat, drink, and spend time with their fellow citizens.

The Elves

A community of 200 elves, including women and children, calls Elventree home. These elves, mostly of wood elf stock, maintain close contact with others of their kind throughout Faerûn, and are looked upon as representatives of the Elven Court.

The elves are friendly, but though they are active in the daily life of the town, they keep to themselves otherwise. Many are content to sing the old songs, tell the old tales, and carve things of beauty. On warm summer nights the air is filled with their clear voices, singing of the splendor of ancient Myth Drannor.

The Listening Tree

A giant, ancient oak tree stands in the precise center of the settlement. The tree's branches have been so pruned, and the leaves made to grow in such a way, that it serves as an amphitheater for the people.

The audience sits in the numerous branches and nooks of the tree that radiate from the main trunk. The performers are positioned on an especially large branch three-quarters of the way up the tree. Illumination for the concerts comes from thousands of globes hung on the branches and lit by *continual light* spells. The acoustics here are perfect. Many bardic and storytelling performances are held in the Listening Tree, and it is a favorite spot for Harpers as well.



The tree is also used for any meetings that require the entire community's participation.

The Harpers

In a tangled ravine stands a small, sharp-peaked field-stone hut. Its roof is covered with mosses and flowers, and beside it stands a carved stone harp. This is a Harper base called the House of the Harp, a rest stop for Harpers traveling in the area. Local Harpers also use it for quiet contemplation and meditation.

This stone building is merely the outporch leading into a large, dry cave-home, which stretches into a series of underground passages and storerooms. These passages link up with other caves in Elventree, creating a vast below-ground network.

The House is watched over by Shalaer, the ghost of a half-elf bard. She has the power to summon the half-dozen Harpers who live nearby, should she need to do so. They will answer her call in 1d4+1 rounds. Everyone knows of Shalaer's existence, and they leave her completely alone. Anyone who's asked will

strongly advise visitors to do so as well.

Several *wands of magic missiles* and *wands of lightning* have been installed in the walls of the major chambers and corridors beneath the House of the Harp. These wands can be activated by Shalaer with a simple word. She will set off the wands if anyone ventures into the chambers unannounced or uninvited.

The inner chambers of the House have all the benefits of a Harper refuge (see *FOR4 Code of the Harpers* pp 93-95), plus also function as a temple of Mystra in terms of spellcasting benefits.

Herald of Elventree

The office of the Herald is also known as Moonsilver, and it is located in Elventree. The current officeholder is Elanil Elassidil (CG ef B8), an elven maiden with a quick wit and a quicker temper. Nothing goes on in Elventree without her knowledge, but she is reluctant to speak to strangers. However, she has a reputation for honesty, and anything she does say can be taken for truth.





North Coast

This is a dreaded destination for anyone who prefers beauty to despair. Melvaunt, the Moonsea's largest industrial city, is known for its black, polluted skies and high-quality goods. Phlan continues to rise like a phoenix from its own ashes after each defeat. It is once again on its way to becoming a permanent city, but it currently resembles a huge construction site. Thentia, while the most liberal and tolerant city, is little more than a rest stop. Travelers must pass the hordes of orcs, goblins, and other creatures that live in the wild lands outside Thentia to get there. Hulburg and Sulasspryn are ruined shells, testament to the fragility of even the most powerful cities. The most mysterious place in the Moonsea—the Sorcerer's Isle—lies in this region. It is a tantalizing puzzle for both the learned and the foolhardy throughout the Moonsea.

Melvaunt

Under a cover of billowing smelting smoke, protected behind high walls, lies the city of Melvaunt. This depressing town, with its cobbled streets and slate-roofed stone houses, is crowded, noisy, smelly, and utterly lacking in vegetation. Melvaunt is nevertheless a prominent player in the Moonsea's political landscape.

The city specializes in weapons, armor, and other metal implements. Melvaunt boasts more skilled metalsmiths than in any other city of comparable size. Melvaunt's population of almost 40,000 souls also includes about 10,000 merchants, miners, and seafarers.

Though a major industrial power, Melvaunt is also known for its small but highly efficient navy. Whether for trade or defense, the Melvaunt vessels fulfill their role admirably.

Melvaunt is a city of intrigue, with three major families each seeking to dominate the ruling council. Small skirmishes between family factions are commonplace, and usually no one interferes with them. Melvaunt has also been fighting off the forces of Zhentil Keep ever since the Zhentarim took over the Citadel of the Raven. Melvaunt, unfortunately, has become the easternmost prize of Zhentilar expansion.

The Three Families

Each of the three clans seeks to rule the city and control its trade and industry. The first and foremost family is the Nanthers, followed by Leiyraghons. The last, and weakest, is the Bruils.

While all three families contribute equally to the uneasiness of Melvaunt's political scene, it is the Nanther clan that has begun to emerge as the driving force in the city. The Nanther family boasts of a weak claim to the rulership





of Shadowdale. But the joke is that when one of their young lords (supported by mercenaries and armies of Zhentil Keep) attempted to make good his claim, he was soundly defeated. That particular branch of the family was banished from Melvaunt, and the young lord was put to death for daring to consort with Zhentil Keep.

It is in fact Zhentil Keep which, inadvertently, keeps the three families in line. The families hate Zhentil Keep far more than they hate each other, and this hatred forces them to deal with one another in an uneasy alliance against the Zhentish forces in Melvaunt. Their preoccupation with the Zhentilar keeps them out of city business, thus making Melvaunt strong, prosperous, and better able to defend itself from the Keep's incursions.

However, some wonder if the recent destruction of Zhentil Keep will put an end to this alliance of hate. With the major thorn no longer in their sides, the suspicion is that these noble families may fall upon each other with renewed violence. If this happens, many fear that Melvaunt will quickly destroy itself from within.

The Council of Lords

Government is administered by the Council of Lords, made up of Melvaunt's wealthiest merchants. A new member joins the Council by either replacing an old lord or creating a new seat, which costs 2,000,000 gp. Once a seat is created, it is never removed.

The seats of members who die are filled by a vote from the other lords. All candidates must be merchants and must have demonstrated loyalty to Melvaunt in the following ways:

- They must not be known to have caused the death of any Lord of Melvaunt.
- They must not be known to have engaged in an alliance with any of Melvaunt's enemies, especially Zhentil Keep or Mulmaster.
- They must show their support for the Council by a cash gift of no less than 100,000 gp or the equivalent in trade bars.

Currently, the 21 seats on the Council are filled with eight Leiyraghons, seven Nanthers, and six Bruils. The titular ruler of the Council is Lord Envoy Dundeld Nanther (LN hm F6). Dundeld is growing

old, however, and all three families are intent on putting one of their own in the seat.

The Lord Chancellor, who acts as chairman and treasurer of the Council, is the old, bearded Ghunduilith Leiyraghon (NG hm F8), a wise, wary man.

The Lord of the Keys is responsible for the armed forces, police, and defense. This seat is occupied by Halmuth Bruil, a sadistic monster of a man (NE hm F11 St 18/32).

The Lord of the Waves, who is responsible for Melvaunt's navy, is Meldonder Nurian (LN hm W11). He is an imposing young wizard whose long, flowing hair has turned prematurely white.

Those four Lords hold the true power in the city, since all other Lords are busy merchants who are preoccupied with their own careers and wealth.

The Council meets monthly and governs with a light touch. The group is reluctant to intervene in the personal and business affairs of most of its members.

Taxes, Taxes, Taxes!

The city of Melvaunt makes a small fortune in taxes levied against citizens and visitors alike. Every transaction in Melvaunt, no matter how large or small, includes a 1-cp trade tax collected by the vendor and paid nightly to the Treasury Hall.

Every wagon, sledge, or other means of land-based transport (including pack animals) is subject to a 1-cp gate tax. This is collected by the gate guards and taken to the Treasury by a 16-man guard escort at the end of each eight-hour shift.

Ships sailing into Melvaunt harbor are levied a 1-gp dock tax. This pays for the ship's docking space and any temporary warehouse space it requires, and ensures freedom from "sick wait" (quarantine). Quarantine is ordered if the money is not immediately paid to the ship inspection party, which boards each ship as it enters the harbor.

Ships that winter in Melvaunt must pay a 5-gp wintering tax for each month they remain in the city harbor. Melvaunt's ships are exempt from both dock and wintering taxes.

The city makes quite a bit of additional money by confiscating the property of those who are expelled, executed, or accused as traitors in absentia.



Defense

Melvaunt maintains a standing army of 5,000 men-at-arms (AC 3, F1, hp 10, plate armor, halberds, clubs, long swords). These soldiers are responsible for maintaining all aspects of the city's security. This enormous job includes patrolling all land a day's ride from the city, guarding the city gates and public buildings, acting as bodyguards for the Lords, and maintaining general law and order.

The current general of the army is Lord Abarel Stendale (NG hm F10), a tough but upright soldier who is a tactical genius. It should be noted that his "Lord" title has nothing to do with the Council; it is merely an honorific show of respect.

Melvaunt's navy consists of twelve ships: two small, fast coastboats, one old, large heavy warship (the Thunderer), two middle-aged, smaller cruisers (the Dawn Warrior and the Dusk Smasher), and seven newly built, fast ravens. Another four ravens under construction in the dockyards.

Inspection parties board vessels at any time of the day or night, regardless of weather conditions. Most boarding parties are made up of six men-at-arms, two officials, and a low-level mage. The groups are equipped with flame-producing magical items, which are used to torch vessels that refuse to cooperate.

Trade

Melvaunt is a merchant's city through and through. The city's main industries are smelting ore and exporting all manner of metal items. Caravan traffic is constantly entering and leaving, and ships with bulging holds line up to unload their cargo. "If it's not in Melvaunt, you don't need it" is a common phrase, and it is no exaggeration. Unfortunately, this also includes slaves.

Melvaunt is known for its thriving and lucrative slave trade. Flesh-traders journey from the farthest reaches of the Moonsea to buy and sell. A number of businesses have prospered by shipping captives south to the Pirate Isles and the Old Empires.

The slave trade is an evil that, for the most part, is ignored by the citizenry. It is rumored that very powerful wizards control some aspects of the trade, and because of this, few are brave enough to dig very deeply into the situation. The Council of Lords and

the standing army turn a blind eye to this business, as long as the city's people aren't enslaved and a healthy portion of the profits finds its way into proper hands.

Melvaunt is filled with alehouses, inns, and taverns, most of which provide satisfactory service. In the center of Melvaunt is a large, open market. During late spring and summer, the Market is crammed with food vendors' stalls and merchant areas where all manner of goods can be had for very decent prices. During the late fall and winter months, the Market is used as a horse-trading facility, a caravan assembly area, and a packing and loading zone.

For those who prefer to do business with a more permanent establishment, there is no better place than Hermuk's Allgoods. Hermuk has a reputation as a fair man with fair prices.

Temples

There are three large temples in Melvaunt. The Purple Portals is devoted to Gond the Wonderbringer. Its clergy has the unique responsibility of researching and developing new processing and packaging methods for merchants. They will sell their ideas to anyone (regardless of who gave them the commission) if the price is right. Since every invention that comes from the Purple Portals ultimately helps improve the quality of life for everyone, this temple is well-thought of by all.

The Hall of Laughter is a temple of Lliira, goddess of revelry. The light, airy building has the distinction of being the newest place of worship in Melvaunt and the first one dedicated to Lliira in the whole of the Moonsea North area.

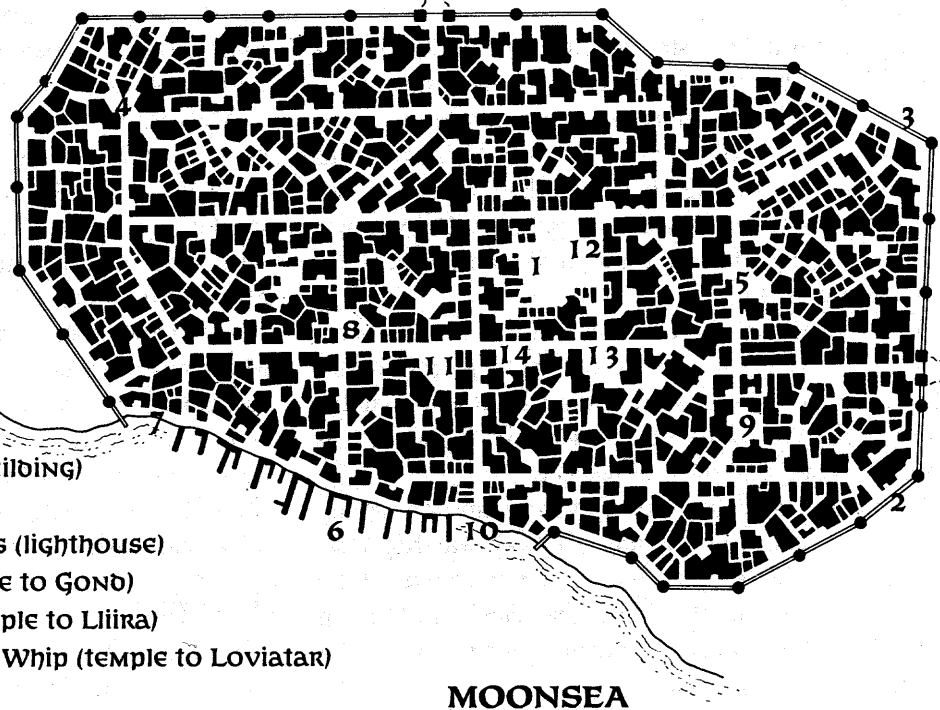
The last of the three large temples is hardly a laughing matter. The Resting Place of the Whip, temple of Loviatar, is a labyrinthine complex of interconnected houses near the east docks. It is a dark, foreboding place, dimly lit and filled with the pungent odor of incense and the chilling tones of chants. Few are seen entering or leaving, but Loviatar has a large following here—if the offerings left at the temple are any indication of the townspeople's devotion.

There are also shrines to Tempus, Tymora, and the quasi-power Sharess, the goddess of hedonism and lust.



Melvaunt

1. Marketplace
2. Leiyragon Manor
3. Nanther Keep
4. Bruilhaven
5. Asberyth (Government building)
6. Shipyards
7. Docks/ Finger of the Gods (lighthouse)
8. The Purple Portals (temple to Gond)
9. The Hall of Laughter (temple to Liira)
10. The Resting Place of the Whip (temple to Loviatar)
11. The Breakwater
12. The Livestock Pen (slave market)
13. Hermuk's Allgoods
14. Blackalbuck's Swap Shop



Harper Influence

Generally, Harpers travel here but do not stay long. There is one resident Harper, however: Ulblyn Blackalbuck, a merchant-trader, who runs the Blackalbuck Sales & Swap Shop. Ulblyn maintains a low profile, and he will not reveal his identity to anyone except another Harper.

Ulblyn abhors the Melvaunt slave trade and would very much like to see it shut down. He uses his position as a respected merchant to speak out against the cruelty of the slave market in order to inspire moral outrage. Many citizens share his feeling, but at present the trade is so ingrained in Melvaunt's economy that it seems impossible to stop it.

Secretly, he leads small raiding parties to free slaves, whenever it can be done safely and without arousing too much suspicion. He's always looking for a few adventurers to help him out with his "evening chores," as he puts it.

He is moving very cautiously these days, however. The local law has begun to watch Ulblyn closely, ever

since a recent incident resulted in the disappearance of 20 slaves.

What Does The Future Hold?

With Zhentil Keep a shattered ruin and its army scattered, Melvaunt's biggest concern lies with the North kingdom of Thar, under the control of the ogres. Adventurers may be hired to scout out the north.

The City

1. Center Market. This large area is the heart of Melvaunt. Busy year round, it is always patrolled by 16 men-at-arms

2. Leiyragon Manor. A sprawling castle, this is the ancestral seat of the powerful Leiyragon family. There are always 24 privately hired men-at-arms on guard here, alert for possible attacks from the other noble families. Occasionally the family opens the grounds to the public for local tourneys and other civic displays of their power.





3. Nanther Keep. This small castle-fortress houses the Nanther family. It is guarded by 20 private men-at-arms. The Keep has a beautiful garden of exotic flowers, some of which are supposedly used as spell components.

4. Bruilhaven. Ivy covers this brick mansion, which is the home of the Bruil clan. Its elegant lines and tastefully lavish furnishings belie the base attitudes of the family and their obsession for power. Bruilhaven is staffed with 15 men-at-arms at all times.

5. Asberyth. This large, official-looking edifice holds all city government offices and the chambers for the Council's monthly sessions. There are always 24 city men-at-arms on guard.

6. Shipyards. All Melvaunt's Moonsea-going vessels are built and repaired here. This is also where Inspection headquarters is found, and every party that checks incoming vessels is based here. Thirty city soldiers are on guard duty here 24 hours a day.

7. Melvaunt Docks/Finger of the Gods. Piers and warehouses stretch the length of the dock area. This is the primary loading and unloading point of all sea traffic. A 120' cast-iron lighthouse with a *continual light* spell on the lens guides ships safely into the harbor. The lighthouse keeper is Jered Wavetamer (CG hm F5), an old, well-respected sea captain. He is an excellent source of stories and rumors, and he loves company any time of the day or night.

8. The Temple of Gond. Also known as the Purple Portals, the temple of Gond the Wonderbringer attracts many technical-minded gnomes on pilgrimages. It is run by the High Artificer Hlessen Muragh (N hm P12), who oversees eight subordinate priests (levels 2-6). The temple also houses an impressive laboratory and workshop facilities for the creation and modification of specialized machinery.

9. Temple of Lliira. Nicknamed the Hall of Laughter, this is the temple of Lliira, Mistress of Joy. It was established by Shandar Lyrintar (CG hf P9), formerly of the Hillsfar church. Shandar is aided by seven

underpriests (levels 1-4).

Shandar's title is Lady Joyworker, or the Laughing Lady. She stands over six feet tall and has rich, red hair. Shandar is a beautiful, good-humored woman and a fine singer.

Many of the city's most enjoyable parties happen here, and there is usually one every fortnight or so.

10. The Temple of Loviatar. The Resting Place of the Whip is the locals' name for the Temple of Loviatar, Mistress of Pain. It is presided over by High Whipmistress Suzildara Sharranen (LE hf P14), a slim, dark-haired woman with eyes of cold blue steel. She is aided by 16 submissive priests (levels 1-7).

The Resting Place has few followers, but there is talk that it is allied with a Banite faction loyal to the High Imperceptor of Bane (who has no connections with Zhentil Keep).

11. The Breakwater. This multi-story inn is most favored by adventurers. The Breakwater has excellent seafood and the finest wines available. The rooms are large and comfortable, and the proprietors will make all arrangements for livery, laundry, and weapons and armor repairing services.

12. The Livestock Pen. A cruel joke of a name for the slave pens. There are always 12 city men-at-arms on duty here to make sure slaves don't escape and to protect the slave merchants from being robbed of their property. The watch was recently increased to 24 guards, due to the recent escape of a large shipment of new slaves.

13. Hermuk's Allgoods. This is Melvaunt's best-known merchant establishment. Hermuk (CN hm T7) sells almost anything an adventurer would need, and more; he deals heavily in the black market and is able to obtain all manner of exotic items.

14. Blackalbuck's Sales and Swap Shop. This is a well-stocked store specializing in new and used goods. Ulblyn Blackalbuck (CN hgm B6), proprietor, is also willing to trade equipment for items or information of comparable value. Ulblyn is the chief Harper contact in the city.



Phlan

The city of Phlan stands as a testament to the stubbornness of the humans who populate the Moonsea's coast. The city has been ruined countless times over the centuries by war, invasions, and dragon strikes, only to be rebuilt time and again.

Phlan is situated at the mouth of the Stojanow River, and serves as an excellent stopover for ships and caravans throughout the North. Gems and other treasures come down from Thar and Glister, and Phlan is an ideal shipping location for goods throughout the rest of the Moonsea.

The North coast of the Moonsea is where humanity struggles most to gain a foothold on the land. Ogres, dragons, and giants make the coast a dangerous place, and the feeling is that the more cities that are established the stronger the region will be. Hence, the great drive to rebuild Phlan as swiftly as possible.

The Distant Past

The city of Phlan is over 1,000 years old. It was founded in the year 367 DR, just over a decade after the founding of Northkeep. While Northkeep was destroyed and ultimately sunk beneath the waves during the First Turnabout, Phlan was merely leveled. The stubborn survivors shook off the dust and grimly applied themselves to the task of remaking the city.

And so the cycle endlessly repeated through the centuries; siege, destruction, and restoration. In earlier times, new buildings in Phlan were simply built atop old buildings, pushing debris and rubble farther down. This sealed off and buried old, forgotten chambers that were at one time on ground level. In some cases, bizarre creatures and small fortunes were sealed up in these rooms as well, waiting for the day when they would be discovered and released.

Because of these hidden evils, Phlan was eventually divided into two parts: Civilized Phlan and Old Phlan.

Civilized Phlan, surrounded by thick stone walls, was the part of the city that the people reclaimed and rebuilt. Old Phlan was the part of the city that was crawling with monsters and unexplored chambers. Clearing crews and builders dared not set foot there.

Recent History

In the year 1306 DR, the Year of Thunder, a dragon invasion known as the Dragon Run swept down from the North. During their attack, Phlan was once again reduced to ruins.

This occurred at the same time as the Moonsea war, which pitted Mulmaster against an alliance of the other Moonsea cities. Because of this war, no one came to Phlan's aid to stop yet another round of destruction.

The city was rebuilding slowly from the effects of the Dragon Run setback when, in the Year 1347 DR (the Year of the Bright Blade), another disaster struck.

A parasitic creature named Tyranthraxus the Great Possessor, Lord of the Ruins, corrupted the body of a bronze dragon and used this majestic creature as a host. Tyranthraxus then took up residence in Valjevo Castle in Old Phlan and claimed the Pool of Radiance, which lay underneath the castle, as its own.

A small group of adventurers finally defeated Tyranthraxus, whose spirit leaped into the pool, drained it of its energy, and fled the city.

Phlan was subjected to a further indignity ten years later. The evil god Bane, in an attempt to increase his own power, tried to draw a group of cities into the nether regions. The unfortunate city of Phlan was one of the victims, and once again there was war in the streets as the citizens battled creatures of darkness.

Bane was foiled by the same heroes who defeated Tyranthraxus, and the cities were returned. The following year, Bane was presumed destroyed in the Time of Troubles, and Cyric took over the Bane's areas of influence.

Phlan Today

Cyric the Dark Sun may have inherited the mantle of Bane, but he seems not to have inherited interest in Bane's pet project of stealing cities. Even the idea of revenge on Phlan is beneath Cyric's notice.

The new dark god feels that Phlan's dogged resistance to defeat and its wise choice of heroes were responsible for the Bane's failure. Thus, Cyric feels he owes Phlan more gratitude than hatred. At least for the present, there will be no special recriminations against Phlan.



Reconstruction of Phlan now proceeds at great speed. Companies of dwarf and gnome workers are making excellent progress in clearing away the debris and erecting new buildings. Arrested prisoners and convicted felons are put to work clearing the rubble alongside hired groups.

Artisans and craftspeople from all over the Moonsea have been called in to put their skills to work in the rebuilding. Sculptors, painters, landscapers, and other specialized professions are in especially high demand. Anyone with just about any kind of skill can make good money in Phlan.

Despite this progress, much of Phlan still lies in ruins. Part of the reason for this is that new lairs and secret chambers are discovered every so often, and some still contain monstrosities—and fortunes. Most workers are unwilling to risk the horrors of what may lurk below, even when promised part of whatever riches may also be there.

Many of these workmen demand protection before they will report to the construction sites, and the Council of Ten is willing to hire reputable adventurers as well as beginners to help with guard duties and scouting.

Looting the ruins is not illegal. In fact, people are encouraged to go into the ruins and look around, as long as they report what they see to the Council of Ten. Those who fail to comply are put to work in the rubble-clearing crews.

The Council of Ten

The Council of Ten is the ruling body in Phlan. They are all judges and have full judicial powers. Each member of the Council is able to dispense summary law whenever called upon to do so.

The head of the Council is called Number One and acts as mayor. Council elections are commonplace, as the jittery citizens call for “no confidence” votes whenever there’s a slight setback, an ill omen, or a charismatic new hero who arrives on the scene.

Defenses

Phlan has a small, strong militia that doubles as the city guard (AC 5, F2, hp 15, chain mail, clubs, short swords, spears, short bows). Due to the troubles the city has been through, manpower is understandably

short. As a result, Phlan’s militia has more females than that of any other city in the Moonsea or Dalelands areas. Militia strength runs at about 120.

The city walls are still Phlan’s best defense; six guards always stand at the gate. The gates are shut at night and not opened unless a positive identification can be made.

The dwarves who have come into Phlan to do stonework have also volunteered their services as defenders, if the need arises. These dwarves (AC 4, F3, hp 27, chain mail, hammers, short swords) number about 100, and are led by Deryk Stoneshaper (LG dm F7).

Temples

Phlan currently has only one temple in operation: the Waiting. This place of worship is devoted to Tyr, god of justice. There is also an abandoned, looted temple of Bane at the edge of town. Neither Cyric nor the die-hard old Banites have seen fit to reclaim it.

Trade

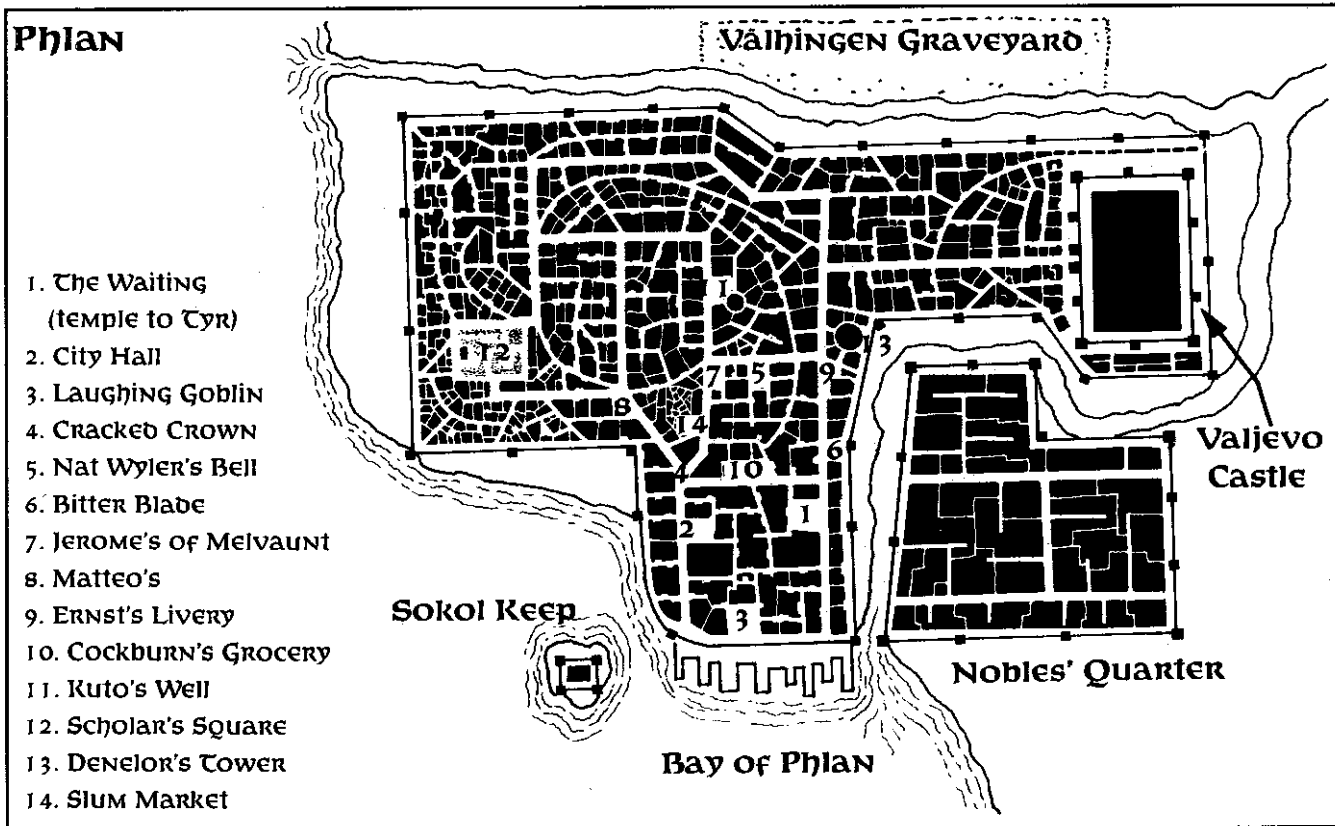
Phlan boasts a number of outfitters, including Ian Cockburn’s Grocery, Matteo the Weaponsmith, Ernst’s Livery, and Jerome of Melvaunt. Jerome is a fence—but a dishonest one.

The Slum Market is a place where, as the Phlan saying goes, “You’re more than likely never to see the same merchant two days in a row.” Unbelievable bargains for items of dubious quality can be found here. It is also a favored place of pickpockets.

Four inns operate in the city, but the best known (and the best in quality) is the Laughing Goblin. The others include the Cracked Crown (quiet), Nat Wyler’s Bell (a dive located in the slums), and the Bitter Blade. The Blade caters to much of the visiting sea traffic and is also a haven for the city’s malcontents.

The Welcomers

The thieves’ guild of Phlan has adopted the sarcastic name of “the Welcomers” or “the Welcoming Committee.” It operates overtly (but without the sanction of the town), so many locals know the members’ identities. Thus the guild targets visitors almost exclusively, leading to its questionably clever name.



The Welcomers are best known for cutting off their left ears as a sign of loyalty and identification. The guild is about 53 members strong, and the only reason it is allowed to exist at all is that its members' services as scouts and defenders have served the town well during past crises.

As a result of the Welcomers' unique identifying mark, there is good work in Phlan for anyone with *regeneration* spells. Former Welcomers and those thieves who wish to be a bit more inconspicuous are always willing to pay good money for those services.

Valjevo Castle

Majestic, crumbling remains are all that remain of this imposing granite and marble castle, once one of the largest structures in the Realms. The turrets of the castle rose over 100 feet, and even as a ruin they are among the tallest.

Far underground lies the Pool of Radiance. It was at one time the power source of Tyranthraxus, but is now just a normal (nonmagical) pool of water.

There is talk of restoring Valjevo Castle to its old grandeur, but most citizens feel it is an indulgence that should not be considered until the city is back on its feet. They argue that the damage to the castle is so great that it will take enormous manpower and expense to restore it.

The Council of Ten bowed to public pressure and shelved plans for Valjevo's restoration. However, behind the scenes they are negotiating with some local druids to restore the courtyard gardens from their current poisonous state into a place filled with roses, unusual herbs, and healthy greenery.

The druids are interested because they believe some of these herbs could have some as yet unknown magical properties. The Council has promised to give all undesirable plant life to the druids in exchange for their services.

Sokol Keep

When Phlan fell to the dragon army 50 years ago, Sokol Keep (a small fort located on Thorn Island)





was one of the last places to fall. Here, Ferran Martinez, Councilman and priest of Tyr, hid with many retreating citizens, all of whom eventually perished.

Workers have just begun restoring the Keep. There is even talk of placing a beacon, like a lighthouse, atop the Keep for ships entering the Bay of Phlan. But rumors of ghosts and other supernatural beings keep many workers away, and progress is slow.

Valhingen Graveyard

This huge cemetery was haunted by a vampire and a plethora of undead for many years. Unfortunately, even though the vampire himself was destroyed, most citizens insist that new, more terrible undead have since taken up residence. However, no one has actually seen anything here—at least not yet.

Valhingen Graveyard is a terrifying piece of unholy ground. Citizens who are unfortunate enough to be walking past Valhingen at dusk usually keep an uneasy eye on the northwest section of the burial grounds. Even though they cannot always see it, they feel tremendous evil there still. Adventurers are always welcome to explore it at their own risk.

The most recent development in Valhingen is that a ghost of one of the evil clerics of Bane now haunts this graveyard and has brought with it more undead. Ghouls have also dug tunnels under the graves, making the ground above unstable.

Denlor's Tower

This tower is occupied by a wizard who calls herself Rowena (LE hf W 11). Looking for a quiet place to do her research, she visited Phlan and was immediately attracted to the tower. Slowly, she ingratiated herself into the townsfolk's good graces by lending a hand with the town's cleanup and repairs.

When the time was right, Rowena appealed to the Council of Ten to let her have the tower. In return she asked to be solely responsible for its repair and restoration. The Council, realizing that a powerful wizard as a citizen was an asset, agreed.

No one realizes Rowena is a Red Wizard of Thay, sent to the North Coast of the Moonsea to spy and report. Her mission is long-term and she can take as much time as she needs. Rowena intends to do just that.

Phlan's Future

Phlan is seeing yet another tremendous economic boom. As a result of its desire for a quick recovery, it is also rapidly becoming one of the most widely integrated and racially-tolerant cities on the Moonsea. Unlike in Hillsfar, all demihumans are welcome to work and live here in peace.

Phlan needs settlers, merchants, artisans, and adventurers. Already work has begun on the Kuto's Well and Scholar's Square sections of the city. Podol Plaza and the Textile Quarter will follow.

The disturbance in the Valhingen Graveyard and Rowena's ongoing mischief are sure to keep adventurers occupied for some time to come.

The City

1. Temple of Tyr (the Waiting). This is the only temple in operation in Phlan. It is a beautiful building of white marble, adorned with a repeating balance scales motif. It is run by Holondos Stimpier (LG hm P12) and six subpriests (levels 2-5). It is dedicated to Tyr, god of Justice. Tyr worship is enjoying a great surge in popularity, as many see Phlan's success as a sign that the god watches over them.

Consecrated burial vaults lie underneath the temple. They are available for the interment of any adventurer who either dies in Tyr's service or is of Lawful Good alignment. The entire vault area is under a permanent *protection from evil* spell, and persons buried here will never rise again as an undead, regardless of how they died. This protection is not common knowledge.

2. City Hall. This newly restored granite building is the seat of government for the Council of Ten, the ten judges that are the ruling body of Phlan. All governmental businesses are also found here.

3. The Laughing Goblin. The Goblin is acknowledged as the best inn in Phlan. Room, ale, and dinner cost 7 gp, 2 gp more if there is a horse to be stabled. Most visitors to the town, as well as most local VIPs, eventually pass through the Goblin's doors. It is a booming, raucous place, run by Boradak Goblincicker (NG dm F5). He is an excellent host who tends to get just as rowdy as his clientele when he sits with them and partakes of a few ales.



4. The Cracked Crown. So named for the cracked bronze crown that hangs over the front door, the Crown is a more elegant place than the Laughing Goblin. The Crown is owned and run by Robyrtah Greensash (CG hf T6), a retired thief who wanted to get away from it all and run a nice place. No one knows where she came from, and as yet, no one has dared to ask.

The Crown is a quiet inn. Many adventurers and laborers find it too quiet and stay away. But as more scholarly, learned folk come to Phlan, the Crown will get busier. A good dinner, ale, and a bed cost 10 gp.

5. Nat Wyler's Bell. This small inn is little more than an ale-soaked dive with a large common sleeping room above it. People with few coins in their pockets can gorge on bland food, drown in cheap ale, then stagger upstairs to sleep it off.

The biggest attraction in Wyler's Bell is Old Nat himself—even though he's been dead for 20 years.

His body—a masterpiece of mortuary art—occupies a prominent place behind the bar, and his hands clutch a large bronze bell. The new owner is a mischievous gnome named Gnahac Gnarlnose (NG gm F5/W(I)5).

6. The Bitter Blade. The Blade is a small inn that serves mostly sailors. It is also a meeting place for those who wish to see Phlan take a different course for the future (which could mean almost anything). Food, drink, and a room cost 6 gp per night.

The Blade is run by Alrem Lorath (LN 1/2Em F5), a half-elf who disapproves of the current Lords and wishes for one absolute ruler. Every other fortnight Alrem hosts a semi-secret meeting of locals who want to do something about it, but these meetings consist of much talk and little action.

Lately the idea of hiring some out-of-towners to harass the lordships has been bandied about, but no one's found a group willing to take on the job (yet).



7. Jerome's of Melvaunt. Jerome (CN hm T8) is a former thief who came to Phlan thirteen years ago when he became too well-known in Melvaunt. Jerome buys and sells general wares, but if visitors gain his trust, his reputation as a fence comes to light.

All equipment sold here has a 10% markup from price lists found in the *Player's Handbook* and a 20% markup on prices found in *Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue*. He has also begun fencing stolen goods and may try to sell stolen items to adventurers. Anything he doesn't have he can get in 1d6 days.

8. Matteo's. Matteo is a half-elf who has worked with metal all his life. He is large for an elf; he towers almost six feet and has sinewy muscles and long, reddish-black hair that is shaved on the sides and falls in a mohawklike tail behind him.

His weapons are of excellent quality and his services are much sought-after by soldiers and adventurers. Matteo's prices are high, but the workmanship of his blades is unmatched anywhere in the Moonsea. He will also do repair work, but only on weapons of the highest caliber.

9. Ernst's Livery. Ernst (N hm P4) runs a respectable stable near the center of town. Stabling rates run 3 gp per night for regular mounts, up to 10 gp a night for exotic mounts such as pegasi, griffins, or hippogriffs.

Ernst was once a druid of Eldath who strayed from the path of righteousness. Although he was forgiven by Eldath long ago (and can still cast spells), he deems himself unworthy for service in the clergy. Only in a dire emergency—or when an animal is being abused—will he cast a spell.

10. Cockburn's Grocery. Cockburn the grocer is a pleasant human in his 50s who always has a wide smile (some say too wide) and a good word for his customers. His shop is always well provisioned, and his prices are fair.

Cockburn's wife is missing, supposedly lost in the Valhingen Graveyard. He makes an outward show of grief, but hides a dark secret: Cockburn killed her himself.

He is under the influence of an odd artifact he found buried in his dirt cellar. The power from it has

overtaken him, and he kills to satisfy its bloodlust. Adventurers, Cockburn feels, are an excellent source of fresh blood.

11. Kuto's Well. This dried-out well leads to a subterranean complex, and this secret tunnel was instrumental in the defeat of Tyranthraxus during the Pool of Radiance events. Nowadays, a routine guard is posted there to make sure that nothing goes into it—or comes out.

12. Scholar's Square. This area of town was the center of learning in Phlan. Libraries, trade and religious schools, sage houses, and other structures of learning could be found here. Now most of the buildings are entirely reduced to rubble, except for one long, low edifice that had served as the city's library. Occasionally an intact book or scroll is found among the debris.

13. Denelor's Tower. This gray-brown structure is the largest and most impressive of the old Phlan towers. It is considered a city historical site (for no other reason than it managed to survive this long) and locals will point to it as a splendid example of Phlan's commitment to the restoration of the city.

14. Slum Market. This dizzying maze of stalls, booths, and tents always teems with people, because it is the place to find cheap wares, exotic merchandise, and items not normally found in more respectable establishments. There is a 25% likelihood per turn that a visitor will suffer a pickpocket attempt by a thief (2d6-1 level).

Thentia

Southeast of Melvaunt lies the slightly smaller city of Thentia. It is the most militarily weak—yet the most fiercely independent and open—city on the Moonsea. Its liberal governmental policies and extreme social tolerance make it a stronger trade center than its larger neighbor.

Thentia was founded in the Year of the Black Fist, 800 DR, by the old families of Swifthands, Khodolis,



and Birneir. These families and their lands are still very much part of the day-to-day life in Thentia.

Government

Thentia is ruled by a Watchlord, who is elected by the local nobles. The current watchlord is Gelduth Blackturret (LN hm F9). The Watchlord's duties include overseeing the city guards and serving as municipal judge.

The position of Watchlord is largely symbolic, and the power wielded by Gelduth is minimal and discreet. The Watchlord's term is one year, and re-elections are a common occurrence.

Gelduth's most important function is handing out trade decrees, which are fair and straightforward laws of contracts and standards that must be followed by all who trade in Thentia.

Anyone caught cheating, swindling, or breaking contracts is immediately arrested. News spreads fast, and all lawbreakers are held in such contempt that the damage done to their reputation is worse than the punishment for their crime.

The true power in Thentia is in the hands of the old families. In addition to the ancient clans of the Swifthands, Khodolis, and Birnier, there are the Mamarathen and the Casplardann. These families are the nobility of Thentia, wielding considerable economic influence—a handy thing in a city devoted to trade.

Defenses

Thentia is not a strong city, but it does have some effective defenses. The only military force worth mentioning is the Riders of Thentia. This group, a force of 60 soldiers (scale mail, medium lances and short swords), ride rothé as their mounts of choice. Rothé are mid-sized musk oxen that are very sure-footed on the rocky slopes surrounding the city.

The Warders, or city watchmen, comprise eight men in leather armor with clubs and short swords. They are the only police in town.

What really keeps the town safe is the large number of mages who have made their homes in the area. Many came here from different parts of the Moonsea to find peace and to distance themselves from organizations such as the Cloaks of Mulmaster and the War Wizards of Cormyr. Their powerful presence instills fear in any would-be conquerors and keeps Thentia at

peace with its neighbors.

The list of wizards who live in Thentia includes Phourkon One-Eye (NG hm W21), Flammuldinath "Firefingers" Thuldoum (CG hm W 18), Rilitar Shadowewater (CG em W 15), and the mysterious mage known only as Scattercloak (CN ? hm? W 16?). Most live quiet, hermitlike lives, and their privacy is usually respected by the locals.

Thentia has no navy, despite the city's heavy water trade. Talk of building a navy has been bandied about by the Watchlord and the noble families for years, but nothing has come of it so far. No one is in a big hurry to build a navy because the wizards' passive protection carries over to Thentian ships. At this point, there is no real military threat to the town from the sea, and the money seems better spent elsewhere.

Temples

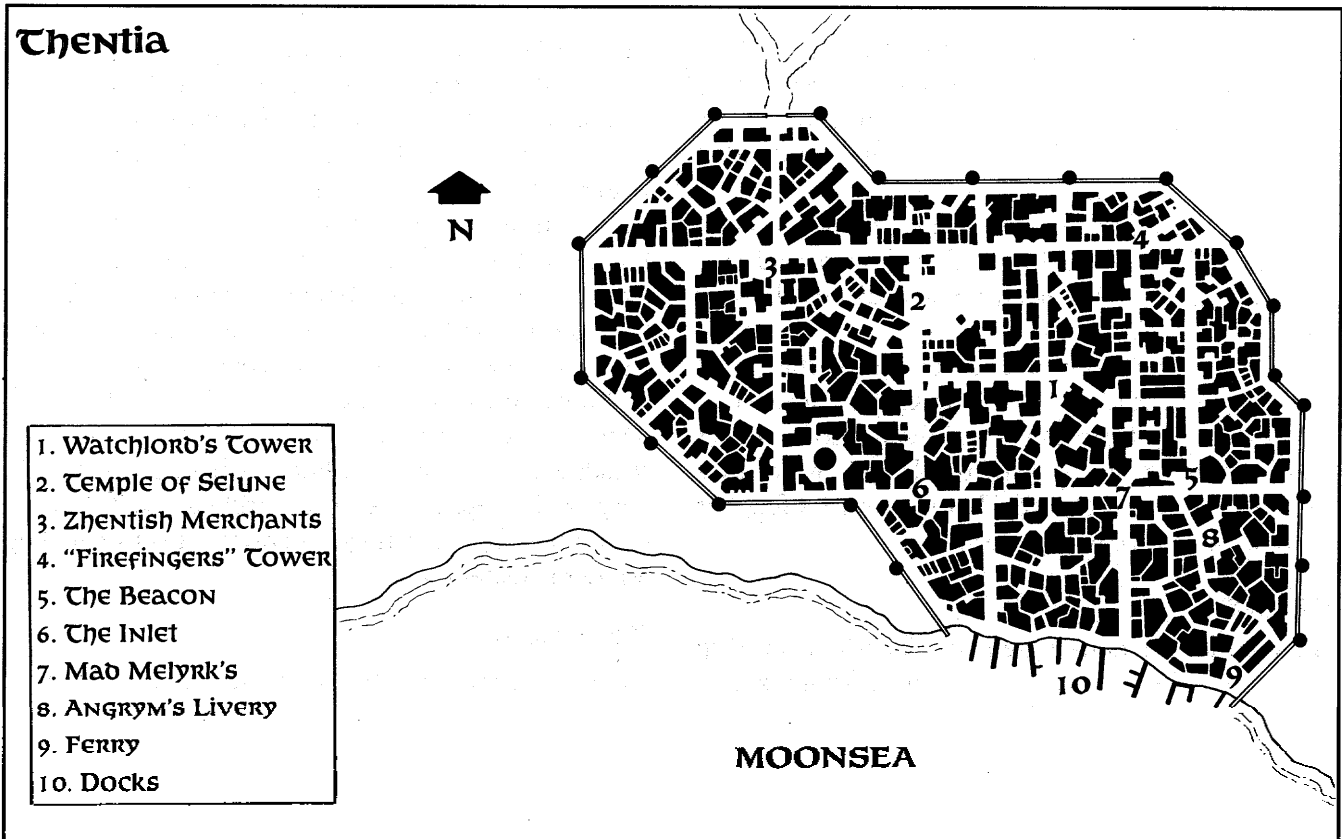
There is only one major temple in Thentia: the House of the Moon, dedicated to Selûne. The large, beautifully ornate structure can accommodate the ever-growing group of followers the temple has recently been blessed with. To the Thentians, even the Moonsea is a sacred place of Selûne, and her worship is currently enjoying a burst of popularity.

The House of the Moon is presided over by Sureene Aumratha (CG hf P12), six priests (levels 2-5), and 28 priestesses (levels 1-7).

The faithful make offerings of silver (the moon metal), and it is said that Sureene is the wealthiest woman in the city. She is a shrewd businesswoman, wisely investing the offerings in shipbuilding and caravans.

Sureene also has two deputies, Jannatha Goldenshield (CG hf W 10) and Baerimel Dunnath (CG hf W9). They are sorceresses trained by the mage Firefingers. They are sisters as well, and are very short and slim. They enjoy playing tricks on people, such as wandering into adventurer's camps disguised as waifs, to see what sort of treatment they get.

Recently there have been numerous reports of people sighting Selûne. Some claim the goddess is seen gliding above the waves of the Moonsea. But by far the oddest reports have been from sailors who, in defending her name in tavern brawls, sometimes find their daggers (or other bladed weapons) glowing with a soft, pale, violet light.



There is also a strong superstition, taken seriously by the sailors who pass through Thentia, that those who mock Selune while aboard ship never complete their voyages.

Waukeen, goddess of trade, had a temple in Thentia, but a mysterious explosion leveled it in the year 1345 DR. The Zhentarim were accused of the crime, but no proof was ever found.

They were indeed responsible for the explosion, and they attempted to loot the temple afterwards. But there was so much treasure that they were unable to carry it all out of the city. Two stashes of gold, about 8,000 gp each, are hidden in two hollowed-out spires atop the house of Abrix Myll and Oryk Kalain, Zhentish merchants who live and work in Thentia.

The spires are watched constantly, as the money is used to fund Zhentarim activity in Thentia. An alarm system of trip-strings and bells will alert the merchants if anyone climbs on the roofs.

Aside from the temple, there are shrines to Tempus, Tyr, Chauntea, Umberlee, and Lliira.

The Bright Sword

Thentia was once home to a strange cult that venerated a magic sword. While the history of the Cult of the Bright Sword is all but forgotten, there are still followers who believe.

This bright sword is said to fly through the underpassages of the city at night, attacking those who've somehow offended it. The weapon, it is said, particularly attacks those who carry magical items of great value and/or power. The believers further swear that the sword has spies who are always on the lookout for new items brought in by strangers and adventurers.

The Bright Sword is real. It is called Beirmoura and was forged long ago by a wizard who sought to defeat the rising kingdom of Netheril by creating a series of wizard-slashing swords.

Beirmoura is an intelligent *long sword* +4 of CN alignment, AC -2, 62 hp, THAC0 10, Intelligence of 17, Ego of 19. It flies at a rate of 6 and can *detect invisibility* 10' radius with ESP, three times a day. The ESP has a range of 30 yards and lasts for one round.



The sword reflects magic 100% of the time. It is immune to heat, fire, and electricity. Magic missiles heal damage done to the sword, and “extra” hit points gained boost the sword’s base hit points. Cold-based attacks add +2 to each die of damage.

Beimoura speaks common, dwarvish, elvish, ogre, orc, and troll, is telepathic, and is able to read languages and magic. The sword can also cast spells as an 11th-level wizard.

Elminster of Shadowdale is not sure if the sword harbors an evil entity—such as an Outer Planes creature or the soul of a wizard—or if there is some darker power behind it. Either way, the Bright Sword flies through the underbelly of Thentia, and its few but loyal followers revere its powers.

Trade

Taxes are low or nonexistent in Thentia. Each ship entering the harbor must pay a 1-gp docking tax, and every winter resident of Thentia—including visitors—must pay a 5-gp wintering tax.

This low-tax environment has allowed business to flourish. The finely-tuned system could easily go awry if Thentia introduced additional taxes or businesses began to somehow lose money.

Thentia possesses a variety of inns, ale-houses, and markets. Most accommodations are comfortable and reasonably priced, and adventurers are usually welcome anywhere.

A ferry service operates between Thentia, Melvaunt, and Hillsfar. The service runs light wave-runner boats to and from these cities.

The Zhentarim

Despite the destruction of Zhentil Keep, the Zhentarim are still quite strong in the town. This comes as a relief to Beldergast and Amthrud, two Zhentarim merchant/spies in Thentia.

Beldergast is a cloth merchant, while Amthrud specializes in maps and charts. Both merchants have entourages of three 5th-level wizards and a half dozen men-at-arms (AC 5, F3, hp 20, chainmail, long swords). Though they run legitimate businesses, they are, first and foremost, spies for Zhentil Keep.

The merchants see the destruction of Zhentil Keep as a setback, naturally, but they are still loyal to the

cause. About once a month a representative of the Keep visits the merchants and gets their report.

The powers that control the Zhentarim realize that the only way to break Thentia is to ruin its economy. Beldergast and Amthrud’s mission is to uncover ways the Zhentarim can do this quickly and effectively. Recently, the Zhents have put pressure on the two spies to develop a plan. Unfortunately for the Zhents (and ultimately for the spies as well), they have not yet come up with a viable means of doing so.

There are a few Thentian citizens who have deduced the true profession of Beldergast and Amthrud; Melryk is one who knows what’s going on. He keeps a close eye on the two, waiting to see if they are contented cogs in a huge Zhentish wheel or if they aspire to greater power.

Thieves

Despite the relaxed attitude of the average Thentian citizen, one thing not tolerated is the parasitic practices of thieves, who drain away profits. As a result, there is no operating thieves’ guild in Thentia.

The only thieving type who was ever tolerated was Lady Yalaith Oruboryl. She would bring amorous suitors into bedrooms at parties, drug them, empty their pockets, and toss the loot to an accomplice below. The lady would rejoin the party for awhile, then slip away. Her escapades were the stuff of legend, and it was a status symbol among the high society of Thentia to be present at a party during one of her “dates.”

Sadly, the Lady Thief of the Parties died five years ago at the ripe old age of 94. Today, Thentians have adopted a secret signal to honor Yalaith, which they use to identify each other when traveling abroad: flipping a coin down on a table using two fingers of the left hand.

The Surrounding Environs

The area around the town is infested with orcs, goblins, and kobolds. Many of them are part of wandering war-bands from Thar. What few roads lead into Thentia are little more than graveled trails.

The ruins of several old Moonsea cities lie to the east. Besides the usual humanoids, reports say dragons and beholders either make lairs in the ruins or root around for treasures and artifacts. If adventurers wish



to explore those ruins, they will not be stopped, but they won't be sponsored or hired for the job, either.

The City

1. Watchlord's Tower. A single black tower rising from the roof of this small keep gives the dwelling its name. The current Watchlord, Gelduth Blackturret, lives here. The tower boasts a force of 10 Warders (7th-level fighters).

2. Temple of Selûne. This splendid temple complex is made of white marble and alabaster with silver trim. The sanctuary's domed, vaulted ceiling is painted a deep midnight blue with dramatic renderings of the various lunar phases.

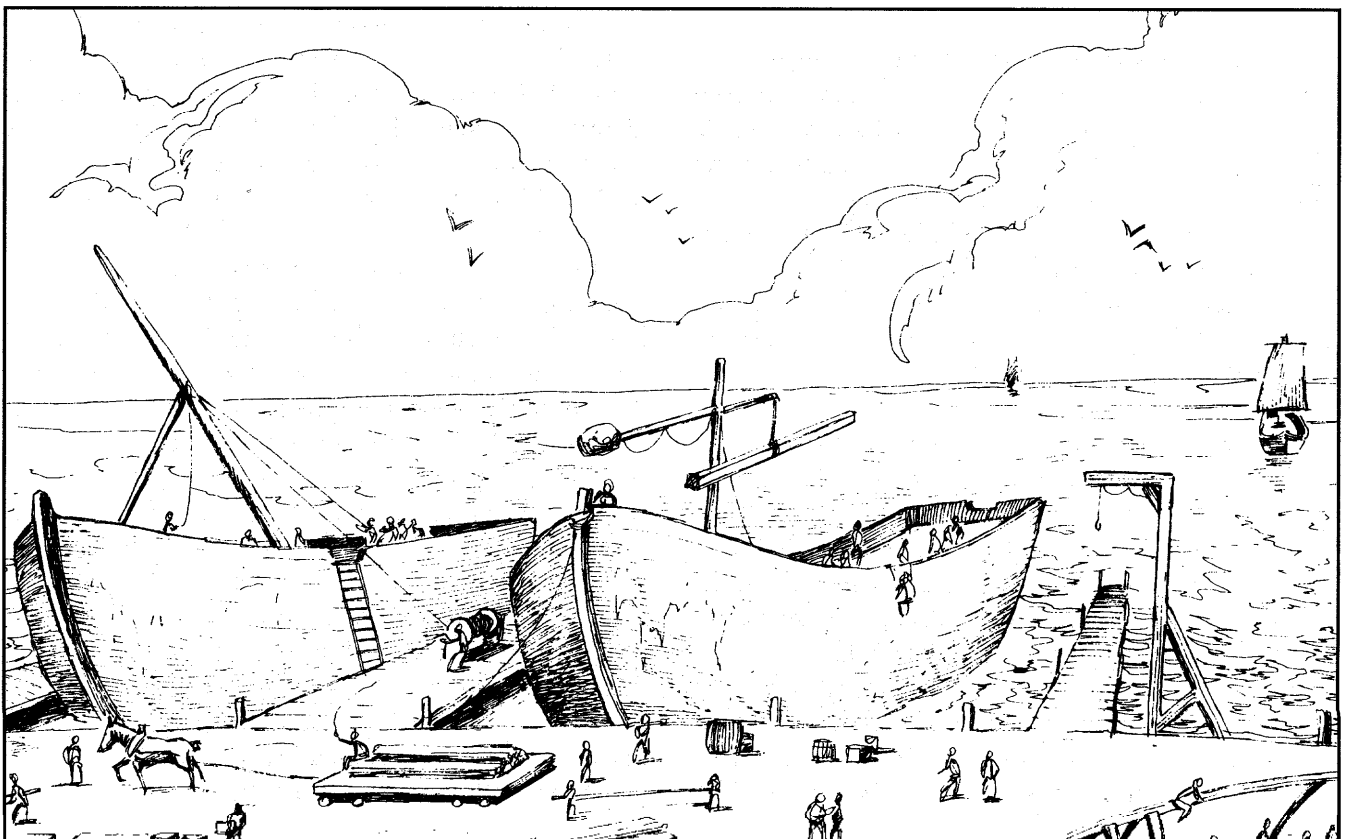
3. Zhentish Merchant Quarters. The four corners of this elaborate building each sport an ornate spire. This is the house of Abrix Myll (LE hm F3), and Oryk Kalain (LE hm T6), two Zhentish merchants who specialize in spices and perfumes. Two stashes of gold (about 8,000 gp

each) are hidden in the two hollow spires at the north-east and southwest corners of the building.

The treasure hoards are protected by hunting spiders, which are fed by the merchants in the houses below. (Hunting spiders are fully detailed under "Spider, Subterranean" in FOR2 *Drow of the Underdark*.) Besides the two merchants, the house holds 12 servants and 10 mercenaries (disguised Zhentarim).

4. "Firefingers" Tower. This spiraling tower is painted in hues of red, yellow, and orange, heralding the house of Flammuldinath "Firefingers" Thuldoum (CG hm W18). Thuldoum delights in occasionally altering the tower's colors to amuse himself and the townsfolk. All tower entrances are *wizard locked* at the 18th level of spell ability, and guards and wards has been cast inside.

5. The Beacon. This is a comfortable, boisterous inn with cozy, sound-proofed rooms that ensure a good night's sleep. It is run by Moavar (CG hm W5), a wiz-





ard who once served as a ship's mage. His tales of the sea are long, plentiful, and sometimes even true! The Beacon caters mostly to travelers and adventurers, and is most often filled to capacity.

Atop the roof is a small globe with a continual light spell cast upon it, which shines like a small beacon and gives the inn its name. Room, meal, and drink for an evening cost 8gp.

6. The Inlet. The Inlet is frequented by those whose idea of a good evening means less rowdiness and more inner contemplation. The favorite of scholars and merchants, it is also a frequent haunt of the Zhentish merchants. Rooms are opulent and sound-proofed with thick carpets, heavy drapes, and tapestries. Meal, drink, and a bed cost 10 gp per night.

The Inlet is run by Thud, a male minotaur (N F10). Despite his brutish appearance, Thud is quite soft-spoken and extremely well-read. If anyone dares to raise a ruckus in his establishment, he takes them outside, gives them a stern lecture on the virtues of politeness, then beats them senseless.

7. Mad Melyrk's. If one wishes to find a bargain, this is the place to look. Melyrk features new and used equipment for sale, purchase, or trade. No reasonable offer is refused, but Melyrk is fond of haggling for the sport of it. No weapons or armor is for sale here.

Melyrk Rubyripper (CG gm F5/W7(I)) is an energetic gnome with a wicked gleam in his eye and a love of haggling and bargains. Despite his eccentric manner, Melyrk is able to accurately appraise an item's value/wear 95% of the time.

8. Angrym's Livery. Angrym's Livery is one of the finest places for the acquisition of animals. This should come as little surprise, since Angrym is a ranger (CG hm R7) and a fine judge of horseflesh. Angrym's also stables mounts, including feeding, grooming, and shoeing, if needed. Angrym's even accepts more exotic mounts such as griffins, pegasi, or hippogriffs.

Besides the large stable and barn complex, the livery contains a smithy, a fenced-in corral, and a spacious office for business transactions. The office contains a small back room that is often used by rangers and/or Harpers who are passing through town.

9. Ferry. The facility comprises several docks, a small office, a comfortable but slightly damp waiting area, and two small warehouses. The service is run by Kaulyx Raemootha (CG hf F7), a fiery-tempered merchant who was once a Watchlord.

The light wave-runner boats that serve as ferries leave at sunrise, midmorning, midday, midafternoon, and sunset. In the winter, this schedule is cut to midmorning and midafternoon.

10. Docks. This is the main docking area of Thentia, patrolled by at least 20 Warders at all times. Not only does the ferry originate here, but the Docks is also the hub of commerce in the city. The Docks hums with activity at all hours of the day and night.

Hulburg

Hulburg was once a proud city on par with the likes of old Phlan. Sadly, though, it has been reduced to rubble thanks to numerous assaults by humanoids, dragons, and neighboring cities.

Hulburg was founded in the Year of the Cold Claws, 940 DR, as a base for human forces fighting giants and humanoids in Thar. The city grew quickly and soon huge walls, barracks, training grounds, and dock facilities sprang up. Eventually soldiers' families and others moved in.

Unfortunately, Hulburg was sacked by an unexpected giant attack in the Year of the Bloody Fields, DR 1110. Although the citizens rebuilt, Hulburg never quite returned to its former glory. In the Year of Thunder, 1306 DR, it was again pounded into rubble, completely defeated this time by the city of Mulmaster during the Moonsea War. Yet again, the city was restored to its former glory by its seemingly tireless inhabitants.

Finally, in the Year of the Bright Blade, 1347 DR, Zhentil Keep decimated the town with an onslaught of Zhentish forces combined with a horde of orcs. This final battle put Hulburg to death once and for all. A few people (descendants of the original residents) are still in the area, mostly in the outlying lands least affected by the attacks. Understandably, they are a suspicious and unfriendly lot.



For the most part, Hulburg has remained a tantalizing ruin for the last 20 years. It attracts monsters, brigands, and adventurers from all over the Moonsea.

Local Inhabitants

A small, battered keep lies due west of Hulburg. This is the ancestral home of the Clan Hulmaster, a family that claims descent from the original founder of the town.

Hulmaster Keep houses Lord Agryl Hulmaster, a bitter old man who has seen his former glory turn to dust, his two sons, Angmar and Luren, and a daughter, Amali. All three children are sullen, drab, dull, and appear terminally bored. While none of them is ugly, neither are they the least bit attractive. Their personalities are practically nonexistent.

Part of Lord Agryl's bitterness is due to the fact that the fortunes of the Hulmasters have declined greatly in the last few years. The family subsists on their ever-dwindling fortune, purchasing what they need from caravans that pass by. While they are not going hungry, the family has still taken quite a fall from noble status.

Strangers who come to the castle looking for hospitality will find it given, but grudgingly. They will be allowed to stay in some of the drafty old castle's dusty, run-down rooms.

If any visitors are obviously well-off, in their 20s or early 30s, or have a Charisma of at least 14, there will be complications: Agryl will approach them with a surprising offer. He wants to marry off his children to take advantage of the in-laws, and he will immediately begin negotiations. Since he refuses to allow his children to go to other cities and there are not many mates to be found in the ruins, he will play matchmaker to the hilt.

He will eventually become insistent about it, and the smaller the party, the more obnoxious Agryl will be. The children don't seem to mind their father's interference; they actually appear to be amused by it.

The Ruins

The ruins are windswept, desolate stretches of rubble, strewn floors, devoid of any wildlife. An occasional building still stands. The wind off the sea whistles

through the rocks, producing mournful, eerie sounds.

The ruins are dotted with statuary that has remained intact. The statues depict men and women of all races in various positions: fighting, fleeing, or screaming. No one knows how the statues got there, who made them, or what they mean.

The City

1. Hulmaster Keep. This smallish, depressing building is the only sign of life in the whole city of Hulmaster. Lord Agryl Hulmaster (CN hm F14) and his three children—sons Angmar and Luren (CN hm F5) and daughter Amali (CN hf F6)—live here. The castle also houses 12 men-at-arms (AC 5, F2, hp 14, chainmail, long sword).

2. The Fastness. This centrally-located structure is one of the only buildings still standing. The Fastness once served as the main fort for the city's defense, but it is now vine-covered and collapsing. Inside, the ground is strewn with skeletons of its defenders. Something worse is also found here: a young watcher (beholder-kin abomination), who is responsible for the statues in the ruins.

Watcher (1): INT Semi; AL N; AC 7; MV F16 (A); HD 3+3; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18; SA magic; SD magic; SZ L; ML Average; XP 420.

3. Lighthouse. The remains of a once-beautiful lighthouse still jut out into the bay. It is still possible to climb to the top, as the only intact section of the lighthouse wall contains the stairs.

However, the vibrations from more than two adventurers in armor climbing the stairs may cause the entire thing to collapse. Each player must roll two Ability Checks using Dexterity for any character ascending, and two again for descending. Failure means there is a cumulative 5% chance that the lighthouse collapses, causing 10d10 points of damage to all who are either inside or within 10 feet of it. A save versus petrification halves the damage.

At the top of the lighthouse drifts a haunt, the spirit of an old captain of the guard. It will attempt to possess a victim and defend the ruins against all



intruders. If it succeeds, the possessed person will immediately turn on the party and attack.

Spirit (1): INT High; AL LE; AC 0; MV 9; HD 10; hp 56; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg age 10-40 years; SA magic jar; SD struck only by silver or magical weapons; SZ M; ML Special; XP 7,000.

4. The Blasted Gate. This is all that remains of the city's main gate. An archway and a small gatehouse attached to it are still recognizable. Inside the gatehouse, underneath the rubble on the floor, is a trap door leading to a subterranean complex.

5. Old Docks. The smell of rotted wood fills the air, and footing is treacherous on the remains of these ancient-looking docks. If a PC walks on any dock, a Dexterity check must be rolled every other round. Failure means the PC falls into the water.

PCs who fall in run the risk of alerting a nearby community of scraggs (sea trolls) that dwell off the shore. The scraggs will wait until the PCs settle down

or make camp, then attack in a band of 18 raiders. They will attempt to take hostages rather than kill anyone outright, and all PCs reduced to 0 hp will be taken. Such prisoners will be fed a special seaweed that acts as a potion of water-breathing for 24 hours. The scraggs will feed on any dead warrior on the spot.

Sea Scraggs (18): INT Low; AL CE; AC 2; MV 3, Sw 12; HD 6+12; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/9-16; SA Elemental spells; SD regeneration; SZ L; ML Champion; XP 1,400.

6. The Wreck of the Reaver. The *Reaver* is a blackened, smashed hulk of a large sailing vessel beached close to the city. It unwittingly sailed into the harbor during a dragon raid while carrying a battalion of mercenaries to Hulburg. The *Reaver* was attacked and the ship roared out of control and crashed into the shore, killing all within.

The 48 mercenaries that were aboard are now lacedons (sea ghouls), still living in the shattered hull of the ship. They have accumulated quite a haul of trea-



sure, the only creatures in the ruins that have managed to do so. Groups of lacedons prowl about the ruins at night. They also attack sahuagin in the shallow water.

Lacedons (10-20): INT Low; AL CE; AC 6; MV Sw 9; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML Steady; XP 175.

Under Hulburg

A. The Vault of the Dead. This subterranean vault can be reached via the trap door in the blasted gatehouse. The vault is a huge, cavernous pit filled with thousands of skeletons—a mass burial of all the fallen from all of Hulburg’s past battles. The pit is 145 feet deep, and 100 feet of that is filled with the dead.

A successful Ability Check against either Intelligence or Wisdom will reveal a natural path of handholds and footholds along the northwest wall that PCs can use to descend into the pit.

The grisly path actually leads the PCs under the bodies, continues downward for another 45 feet, then opens into the pit wall, revealing a dank chamber at the opposite side of which a large door sways on its rusted hinges.

B. Lich Chamber. This is the resting place of the lich Aesperus. He was a wizard and a defender of Hulburg, who was struck unconscious in battle and accidentally buried alive under a mass of dead.

Aesperus survived his ordeal, but with a price: He became a lich in the process. He has remained here for the last five centuries, his mind gone, planning his revenge on the upper world.

Aesperus intends to revive the thousands of remains in the pit, send them boiling upward onto the surface, and march them across the North coast to lay waste to everything in their path.

Lich (1): INT Supra-genius; AL CE; AC 0; MV 6; HD 11+; hp 116; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA magic; SD cold touch, paralysis; SD: + 1 or better magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML Fanatic; XP 8,000.

Sulasspryn

Sulasspryn is another of the unfortunate cities that did not survive the harsh life of the Moonsea. It was brutally and repeatedly attacked by orcs, dragons, beholders, pirates, and ambitious Moonsea lords.

Like Hulburg, Sulasspryn was a powerful city on par with Phlan. It originated as the stronghold of a retired half-elven adventurer named Sulass Drowsbane. As time went on, people settled around the stronghold, merchants set up businesses, and caravan routes were established. It was incorporated as a city in the Year of the Haunting Harpy, 974 DR.

Sulasspryn grew in the following decades, with first Sulass and then his son Galadyl ruling the city as Lord. As decades stretched into centuries, the reins of government were handed down to each succeeding generation’s firstborn male heir.

Like other cities on the Moonsea’s coasts (especially the North coast), Sulasspryn had its share of raids, invasions, and dragon migrations. Still, it weathered all of them. This might be because the city was ruled under one man rather than a council, making swift and daring action possible.

In the Year of Thunder, 1306 DR, Sulasspryn suffered heavy damage from the same forces that ultimately destroyed Hulburg. Yet once again, the city managed to survive. Enough buildings and able-bodied folk were left to make rebuilding feasible.

A year later, the Year of the Mace, the city suddenly and inexplicably collapsed on itself, dropping into a large sinkhole. Whatever buildings did not fall into the ground crumbled in heaps of rubble. An entire city—and 7,500 people—were crushed in less than ten minutes.

Needless to say, because of this bizarre occurrence, the city was an utter ruin. Sulasspryn was promptly abandoned for all time.

What Really Happened

The clan name provides a hint as to what happened. Sulass Drowsbane earned his moniker because of his repeated successes against the drow in a number of underground expeditions. Drow, however, are long-lived, and have even longer memories.

Once the drow spies saw the devastation wreaked



upon the city in 1306 DR, they began making their preparations. But they decided to let the citizens waste their time and energy in rebuilding before the drow would tear it down.

The drow tunneled under the city with their slaves, then invoked the power of Lolth against the surface dwellers. The city disappeared in a thunderous cloud of dirt and dust.

For a while it appeared as if the Drowsbane family would rise and avenge the town. But sadly, most of their clan was killed, and too few survived to carry on the hate. Today members of the Drowsbane clan are scattered throughout the Realms. None have seen fit to reclaim their legacy, and none are interested in staking such a claim anytime in the future.

The Underdark's Presence Now

The vengeance of the drow upon clan Drowsbane and the city of Sulasspryn continues. The drow have overtaken the ruins and use them as a base from which they launch nightly forays for slaves.

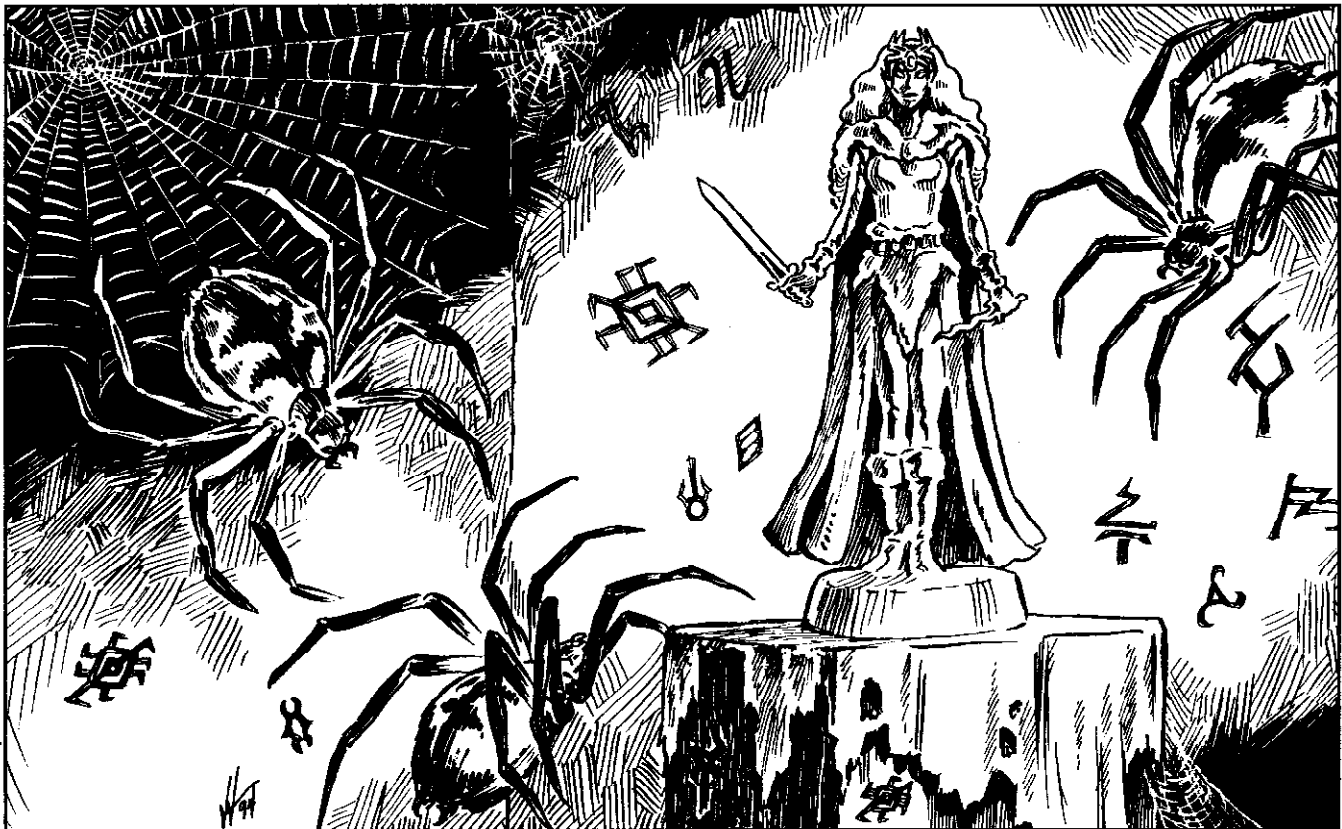
During the day, the ruins seem desolate, wind-swept piles of rock and rotting wood. Anyone wandering around the ruins of Sulasspryn will soon notice that the place is infested with all manner of spiders. They scurry about everywhere, feeding and building their webs.

It is only at night that the ruins come alive. Patrols of drow, their summoned servants from the Abyss, hideous spiders of all types, and other indigenous subterranean creatures that have found their way to the surface will move about in hideous frenzies.

The drow forces (House Mizzrym) usually consist of six war bands of ten drow each. Normal composition of a war band is eight 3rd-level fighters, a 5/5th-level fighter/mage, and a 6/6th-level fighter/priestess.

The entire force is controlled by Azanza Mizzrym (CE of P9), a drow priestess of Lolth. She has a great deal of cunning and knowledge about the surface world, and she is gifted with good diplomatic skills. The latter serve her in good stead with the other subterranean races that wander the ruins.

Her reputation for sudden, mindless cruelty, how-





ever, overshadows everything else. Revenge—above all—is her driving force.

Azanza's mother was killed by Sulass Drowsbane, and she wants to see every Drowsbane heir slain or enslaved. Any and all surface-dwellers who get in her way are merely bonuses, in her opinion, who whet her bloodlust for the eventual annihilation of the last of the Drowsbane family.

Drowsbane Heirs

There are six known Drowsbanes still alive in Faerûn. They live in the High Dale, Waterdeep, the Living City of Ravens Bluff, Mulmaster, Arabel, and Tantras (home to the youngest). All have low profiles and may not even be aware of their past. A reliable sage could make the facts known to them, as a hook.

In a Moonsea campaign, it would be a good idea for a player to create a Drowsbane PC. He or she wouldn't be a mover and shaker yet, however.

The City Ruins

1. Ruined Temple. This white marble ruin was formerly a temple of Selûne. In mockery of the goddess, however, the interior has been grotesquely defiled and an altar to Lolth has been set up inside. The entire building radiates a protection from good spell and is guarded at all times by four drow priestesses (AC 0, F4/P4, hp 27) and 1d4 giant spiders.

Selûne, however, is not one to take the desecration of her temple so lightly. During the three nights of the full moon, the temple is bathed in such strong moonlight that the drow and their disgusting spiders must retreat down below.

Giant Spiders (1-4): INT Low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, Wb 12; HD 4+4; hp 27; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA Type F poison; SD nil; SZ L; ML Elite; XP 800.

2. Ruined Keep Tower. This 35-foot crumbling tower is all that remains of the Drowsbane castle. The tower's interior has three relatively intact but empty floors and a platform at the top. The third floor's outer walls are badly crumbled and unstable, and a huge gap faces the ocean.

On the third floor lies a huge mass of phosphores-

cent fungi, which is kept under a heavy tarpaulin during daylight hours. At night, the drow remove the tarp and the fungi glow with such brightness that from the water the tower appears to be a lighthouse.

Unwary ships that steer toward the light run aground, enabling the drow to steal the cargo and murder or enslave the crew.

3. The Old Well. A stone ring and a hole descending into the dirt is all that remains of the central square's town well. The well shaft goes down 140 feet to a sandy bottom. A secret door due east leads to a tunnel seven feet wide and six feet high. The tunnel slopes gently downward for 100 feet, stopping at a drow outpost where Azanza Mizzrym runs her affairs. She is always guarded by one drow warrior.

From this checkpoint the tunnel continues downward to the main branch that eventually leads to Menzoberranzan.

4. The Wreck of the SeaElf. This is the most recent victim of the drow's treachery. The battered hull and smashed rigging shows that it was once a splendid vessel filled with treasure. It now holds empty chests and the rotting corpses of 38 sailors.

5. Ruined Granary. One of the most intact structures still standing in Sulasspryn, this 100' by 80' building is one giant room. It is filled with more spiderwebs that anyone ever thought possible.

The drow's spider allies live here, and drow spells have made the entire building fire resistant. At any given time during the day, there are 48 large spiders, 24 huge spiders, and 12 giant spiders lurking, hiding, and spinning here. At night, the numbers are quartered. The drow feed them live prisoners.

Large Spiders (1-48): INT Non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, Wb 15; HD 1+1; hp 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA Type A poison, onset 15 min.; SD nil; SZ S; ML Unsteady; XP 175.

Huge Spiders (1-24): INT Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA Type A poison onset 15 min.; SD nil; SZ M; ML Average; XP 270.



The Sorcerer's Isle

One of the most unusual structures in the Moonsea can be found on the Sorcerer's Isle, a small island in the middle of the Stojanow River. In the precise center of the island rises a silver pyramid, 90 feet at its base and 120 feet high.

History of The Isle

As its name implies, the Sorcerer's Isle was an island once used by sorcerers in their research and studies. The island, cut off from the rest of civilization, was an ideal place for quiet contemplation and research.

The island is covered in grass and a few trees. There is but one structure, the pyramid. It once served as a school, laboratory facilities, and dormitories for wizards of all schools and levels.

Its origin is shrouded in mystery, but it is known to have existed even before the beginning of Dalereckoning. Some say it is the last vestige of a powerful human empire that existed in the North thousands of years ago. Others say that the pyramid marks the farthest point of expansion of a great southern kingdom, since the pyramid shape is more common in the Empires of the Sands than in the rest of Faerûn.

No one knows what became of the wizards that first used the pyramid. Some say they abandoned it voluntarily and scattered themselves to the four corners of Toril when the old kingdom fell. Others say that a gate to the Outer Planes was opened by an inexperienced apprentice, and someone (or something) wandered in and took all the mages away.

Forty years ago, a mad wizard named Yarash moved into the pyramid in order to experiment with creating new marine life. Unfortunately, Yarash's experiments also generated a great amount of poisonous waste. This magical poison created monstrous mutations in the water creatures and the plant life along the riverbanks. In a few short years the area was filled with bizarre, fast-growing plants and strange, unnatural animals.

Before long, the corpses of these pitiful creatures began to wash up in Phlan and in other cities downriver. Yarash was stopped and the bizarre creatures

were found and killed. The wizard disappeared, and the pyramid has remained vacant ever since.

Now the river and its banks seem to have recovered, but occasionally a horribly deformed plant or animal floats downstream.

Interior Features

Access to the pyramid is gained by stepping on a teleport platform, which activates as soon as one or more persons stand on it and remain still.

The platform sends the traveler into a corridor with many doorways along each side. At the end of the corridor is another teleport platform, which sends the explorer up one level to another corridor with more doorways. This is repeated a third time, but at the end of the third corridor is a flight of stairs. At the top is a door that opens into a study, located inside the pyramid's apex.

Behind the doors are numerous laboratories, libraries, storerooms, dormitories, workshops, private studies, and specimen tanks and cages. The apex study was the domain of Yarash. There adventurers will find spell components, old books, spell scrolls, and other wizard-related items.

This is not a common ruin that can be casually inspected by just anyone, however. If the location of the access teleporter is unknown (on a small platform in the middle of the east wall), then there is no way for a looter to get in.

Local Creatures

When Yarash was slain, the heroes responsible for his death stopped the flow of poison into the Stojanow. This brought back the local fish and wildlife and the creatures that feed off them.

Even though the majority of Yarash's creations were destroyed, some of them still exist. A DM should treat them as corrupted versions of giant frogs, lizard men, and sahuagin.

Recently, a tribe of lizard men have been making regular visits to the pyramid, in order to study/worship/break in. Tales in the lizard men tribes describe the shiny place into which some of their number disappeared, never to be seen again. Only now has this shy tribe summoned the curiosity and the nerve to approach the object and try to understand it.



South Coast

The South Coast of the Moonsea is a welcome change after the desolation of the North Coast. If a traveler stops anywhere in the Moonsea for rest and rejuvenation, let Elmwood be his or her destination. It is a beautiful, pastoral city blessed by its lack of excitement and political intrigue. Mulmaster, however, is the opposite—sprawling, dirty, and filled with danger for those who aren't paying attention. Ironfang sits in judgment above the White River—foreboding, mysterious, and completely inaccessible.

Elmwood

Few places in the Moonsea can be considered peaceful and serene, but the ancient village of Elmwood is one of them. Elmwood is a farming community that supplements its income with a little fishing and woodcarving. Its location near the Dales and the former Elven Court has resulted in quite a bit of Dales blood and moon elf blood in the villagers, who have fond relationships with both of those communities.

The old Moonsea saying “like an Elmwood watch” means a task so simple that it practically performs itself. This bit of lore bears testament to the reality that very little happens here.

History

The village of Elmwood was established in the Year of the Screeching Vole, 163 DR, as a small waystation for ship traffic to and from the River Lis. Even back then it was a place of tranquility, where humans and elves could meet and interact on even terms.

Elmwood managed to miss its share of dragon attacks and sacking armies, but it never grew into a town or city. The main reason for this was its lack of the natural resources most cities were founded to exploit: iron, gold, marble, granite, silver, and copper.

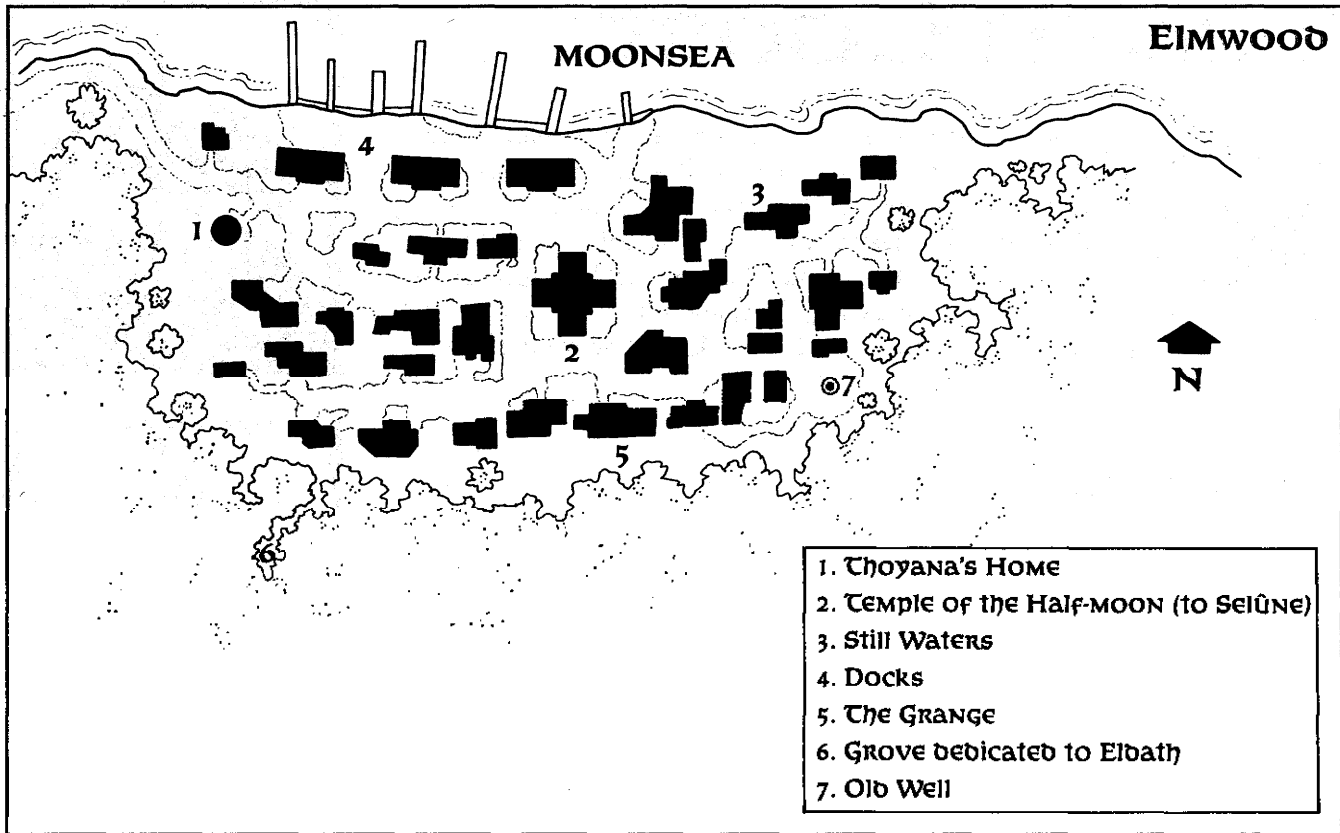
Today, Elmwood does much of what it has always done: farming, fishing, and ferrying. Gods die, cities rise and fall, and Elmwood remains an oasis of calm in the midst of turmoil.

Elmwood Today

This village is very quiet. Its inhabitants go about their business, for the most part, in friendly isolation, and an air of civility permeates the place.

Thoyana Jorgadaul serves as the village's ruler and only constable. This calm, pipe-smoking dwarf woman with a gray braided beard tolerates no troublemakers in her village. She normally wanders the town clad in no armor but with a club and a short sword both tucked in her belt.





When she's not minding the affairs of the town, Thoyana can be found at the Still Waters, a two-story inn with a stable in the back for travelers' mounts.

Thoyana is an ex-adventurer who retired to Elmwood 24 years ago when she contracted a respiratory disease through contact with some subterranean fungi. Thanks to this, Thoyana hates mushrooms with a passion. The best way to insult her is to offer her one.

Trade

The Docks is a series of wooden docks and piers, where numerous fishing boats and small craft moor. Thoyana frequents this place, and she openly eyes—even questions—each stranger who disembarks. This makes some people uncomfortable, but Thoyana does not care and the villagers don't mind; the strong swordswoman has kept the peace her way for over two decades, and they have no intention of changing it now.

There are always a few souls here, repairing nets,

maintaining boats, and exchanging gossip. If an adventurer wants the local scuttlebutt, the Docks is the place to find it.

Near the center of Elmwood is the town's merchant area: the Grange, run by Tayrom Onetry. It stocks every nonweapon, nonarmor item anyone could want. If Tayrom does not have the item in question, he will special order it.

Tayrom is called Onetry because 11 years ago, at age 22, he hooked up with a band of explorers and made his way to the Living City, Ravens Bluff. On the way a band of kobolds beat the travelers senseless and robbed them blind—all except Tayrom. He took one look at the little homed dog-men and ran screaming back to the safety of Elmwood. It was his first and last attempt at adventuring.

Tayrom enjoys relating the tale, though he makes a point to mention that he slew several of the beasts before he ran. Thoyana and others, however, notice that the number of kobolds he slew gets larger and larger with each telling.



Temples

The only sign of the gods in Elmwood is the Temple of the Half-moon, dedicated to Selûne.

The City

1. Home of Thoyana Jorgadaul. This squat stone tower is home to Thoyana Jorgadaul (NG df F8).

If Thoyana needs to get rough, she has *chainmail +4*, *dwarven thrower*, *gauntlets of ogre power*, and a *helm of brilliance* (three diamonds, seven rubies, 14 fire opals, and 24 opals remaining). Thoyana keeps these items in a small chest here in her house.

Adjacent to her house is a constabulary with two cells (usually empty). It can be entered from a side door.

2. The Temple of the Half-moon. This comfortable, silvery temple is run by Alamarayne Moonray (CG hef FS/P5), a half-elf woman of moon elf stock.

Alamarayne is a beauty, but she does not flaunt this. She has a mischievous streak and a clear, pure laugh, like liquid moonlight. Alamarayne has become good friends with Thoyana, and the two meet once a week at the Still Waters for dinner, conversation, and a game of chess.

3. Still Waters. This inn is run by master brewer Enrad Daleborn (his grandfather, he points out, came from Shadowdale), a friendly, honest man of plain looks. His ale is much sought after in the area and a favorite of river ferry crews.

The serving girl, Elenawen, aspires to become an acolyte of Selûne. She is a serious-minded woman with a merry heart; until she enters Selûne's service, she will enjoy flirting with the handsome human and half-elf men who wander in.

4. The Docks. The Docks is definitely the busiest part of Elmwood. A few merchant ships occasionally stop here to trade for the exquisite woodcarvings that Elmwood is known for.

A ferry travels down the River Lis from Elmwood and stops in Yrathon. Boats leave at dawn, noon, and dusk. Sailing ships anchor here as well. In fact, larger ships that cannot navigate the Lis stop here, offload their cargo and passengers, and pick up

freight for the return trip. Crews transfer the debarked cargo onto the ferries that regularly traverse the Lis.

A set of three warehouses rounds out the dock area. They are sturdy structures, built of oak and brick, and their only doors (all easily wide enough to accommodate two large wagons side by side) face toward the village where Thoyana "can keep an eye on 'em!"

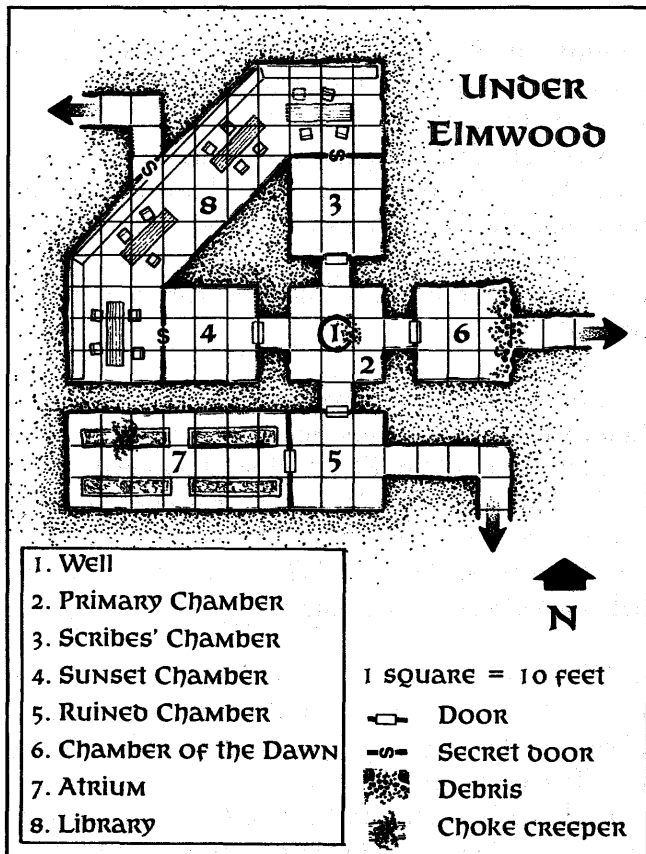
5. The Grange. This wood and stone building is Elmwood's trading emporium. It is overseen by Tayrom Onetry (CG hm F1). Tayrom stocks everything in the Equipment section of the *Player's Handbook* except arms and armor. In 3d6 days he can have anything from *Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue* delivered directly to the buyer.

6. The Grove. Hidden amidst a large copse to the south of Elmwood is a druid's grove dedicated to Eldath, Goddess of the Singing Waters, and tended by Ezril Treewarder (N hm D5).

Ezril is a bald man in his late 40's, with piercing eyes and a strong love of nature. He does not hold ser vices, but he is a strong spiritual force in the community. In return for his giving advice and helping raise animals and tend crops, all Ezril asks is that the farmers respect the land by not overfarming, overhunting, or overfishing the area. The villagers repay him with food, drink, and material comforts for his small stone house near the grove.

Ezril rarely comes into the village, preferring the company of the trees and the wildlife. He is often seen in the company of a wolf and a brown bear, and has no compunctions about bringing them into Elmwood—even into the Still Waters—when the mood for human company strikes him.

7. The Old Well. This is an old stone ring with several boards nailed across it as a lid. The well has long since dried out. Anyone who inspects the inside of this well closely (which means rappelling down into it) will see that one of the walls of the well has collapsed, revealing a passageway.



Under Elmwood

The following is a small dungeon-crawl that can serve either as a launch for a full-fledged dungeon adventure or to whet the adventurers' appetites for further exploration of the Moonsea. The arrows point to the three places where the DM's own dungeon may start.

1. The Well. The well shaft drops down 80 feet onto a muddy bottom that is half-covered in debris. The debris comes from a collapsed portion of the shaft's eastern wall, leaving a hole five feet in diameter.

2. Primary Chamber. The ten-foot-diameter stone shaft of the well drops from the ceiling and touches the floor of this room. The air is clammy and musty, and the floor is covered with a faded tile mosaic of elf cavalry and archers routing orcs and goblins. Around the shaft are some faded, arcane symbols. A *spellcraft* proficiency check at a -2 penalty shows that the symbols were some manner of gate to the Elemental Plane of Water.

Four slightly warped cedar doors stand at the cardi-

nal compass points, held together with verdigrised bronze bands. The eastern door is stuck, and can be released only with a successful open doors roll.

3. Scribes' Chamber. This abandoned chamber is littered with the remains of quills, shattered ink pots long since dried out, and reams of parchment crumpled into a very large oval wad. Loose pages are scattered everywhere, but few written works remain. The room stinks of waste. On the north wall is a symbol of Oghma carved in relief.

The stench's source is the room's occupants, two owlbears. They wandered in from the surface via a subterranean tunnel and decided to use the room as a nesting area. The mated pair has a clutch of six eggs in the nest. They have no treasure, though the eggs are worth 2,000 sp each to the right buyer.

Pressing the stone symbol of Oghma opens a secret door. The door scrapes and shrieks as it opens, and a blast of stale cold air assaults the PCs.

Owlbears (2): INT Low; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; SA Hug (2d8 points of damage); SD nil; SZ L; ML Steady; XP 420.

4. Sunset Chamber. Once-beautiful murals decorate the walls of this chamber, but they have been defaced. The west wall is filled with a huge painting of a red-orange setting sun. Lying on the floor is a large white stone disk. If the white disk is placed over the sun painting, a secret door on the west wall opens.

The room contains a group of ghosts, which are the animated bodies of the elves who lived here a millennium ago. The ghosts, anxious for more food but unwilling to cross the owlbears, tore the hole in the well shaft but have yet to exploit it. Their hoard consists of 53 gp from the heyday of Myth Drannor, a *cloak of elvenkind*, *boots of elvenkind*, *long sword + 1 flametongue*, and a crystal vial containing three doses of *elixir of health*.

Ghosts (12): INT Very; AL CE; AC 4; MV 15; HD 4; hp 32; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; SA paralysis, carrion stench; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells. SZ M; ML Elite; XP 650.



5. Ruined Chamber. Cold, bare stone walls and floors are all that's left here, and clues to the purpose of this room have long since been eradicated by time and predators. The owlbears entered this complex from a tunnel east of this room. It is now completely empty.

6. Chamber of the Dawn. The walls of this square chamber are painted with sunrise scenes, but they have been badly vandalized. The entire eastern wall is rubble, and behind the pile seems to be a hole or doorway. It will take one PC 90 minutes to clear a passageway, which gives access to an eastern tunnel.

7. Atrium. This spacious room has a cool, white marble floor and a metal latticework ceiling. If the PCs look up, they can see rocks, soil, tree roots, and sunlight (or stars, depending on the time of day). This entire complex was once on the surface; PCs who roll a successful Intelligence or Wisdom check figure this out. A dwarf, gnome, or halfling realizes

that it would take such a structure about 1,200 years to sink into the ground.

The room contains several long marble troughs, apparently some kind of huge planters, once filled with exotic plants. All that remain in the planters are massive amounts of withered, brown weeds and scrub. Toward the northwest corner of the room a tangled mass of vines droops over the side of one planter. They seem to have miraculously survived and thrived in this room.

This is the parent vine of a choke creeper. It will attempt to grab a PC when his compatriots are not looking. The plant will drag the PC into the trough and attempt to strangle him or her. The 32 vines on the creeper have 10 hit points each, not counting the 100 points of the parent plant. Four vines will attack one PC.

Searching the parent's trough reveals several scattered human and elven bones, plus a *wand of lightning*, *ring of regeneration*, *ring of water walking*, a *short sword* +3 *frostbrand*, and a *shield* +1.





Choke Creeper (1): INT Non; AL N; AC 6 (vine) 5 (stalk); MV 1/2; HD 25; hp 100; THAC0 7; #AT 32; Dmg 1-4; SA strangulation; SD immune to torch fire; SZ G; ML Elite; XP 18,000.

8. Library. The shelves in this low-ceiling, dark room are full of books, scrolls, and loose pages. Several long, rickety tables with rotten wooden chairs run down the center of the room.

The books here are written in Thorass (Auld Common) and Espruar (moon elf alphabet), and cover a wide range of topics. Reading six or more of these books for a month of game time gives the PC one slot in Ancient History. There are no spells written in any of the books.

Each PC has a cumulative 1% chance per turn of noticing a book titled *What Lies Beyond*. Removing the book from the shelf causes a portion of shelving to swing toward the PC, revealing the northwest tunnel. Just inside the doorway of the secret chamber is an old spell book with only one spell still legible.

EyeFire

(Evocation)

Range: 20 yards +5 yards per level

Components: V, S

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 5

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: 1/2

This dramatic fifth-level spell causes the caster's eyes to glow a fearsome, bright emerald green. The caster's entire countenance takes on such a frightening aspect that every PC must make an immediate Morale check or run away in terror.

One round after the spell is cast, the wizard can discharge bolts of crackling green energy at opponents, causing 1d8 points of damage per level of the caster. The area of effect is wherever the caster can see, with a 90 degree field of vision.

Spell duration is one round per three levels of the caster. Magical items on victims who fail their save must save versus magical fire or be destroyed.

Mulmaster

Nestled in the northernmost spur of the Earthspur Mountains, Mulmaster is a cold, windswept city on the southeastern coast. This huge, bustling center of commerce, industry, and intrigue is exceeded only by Hillsfar in pure strength. Merchants have aptly nicknamed Mulmaster the "City of Danger."

The landscape outside Mulmaster is made up of barren rock, with no vegetation to be seen. There are no farms associated with the city. Mulmaster is the final stop on the North Road; proceeding south on the road takes travelers to Maskyr's Eye.

The city was founded in the year 934 DR, the Year of Fell Wizardry, as a trading fortress between the Moonsea, the River Lis, and the Dragon Reach. Its location enabled it to escape most of the destruction that the other Moonsea towns and cities suffered. But Mulmaster remained in the middle of strife anyway, mostly because it was always eager to expand and increase its power.

Mulmaster's most recent attempt to seize power occurred in the Year of Thunder, DR 1306, in the Moonsea War. But Sembia, Hillsfar, Phlan, Melvaunt, and Zhentil Keep allied to put down Mulmaster's attempt to control the River Lis. In the Year of the Bow, 1354 DR, Mulmaster's fleet was destroyed in a large naval battle with the ships of Zhentil Keep.

The High Blade of Mulmaster

The first High Blade took power in the Year of the Wandering Wurm, 13 17 DR. The current High Blade, Selfaril (NE hm F20), took power in the Year of the Spear—1348 DR—by killing his predecessor.

Selfaril is a clever, dangerous, wily ruler who will do anything to make his city the mightiest in the Realms and to keep himself at its helm. He maintains his position by killing or discrediting any and all potential rivals.

Recently, Selfaril has wed the First Princess of Thay, the Tharchioness of Eltabbar. This marriage cements an alliance between Mulmaster and Thay and draws the Red Wizards into the Moonsea's political landscape. This brings Thayvian magic to Selfaril's fingertips for use in his own secret agendas.



The Blades

There is a puppet ruling council, and the 16 nobles who compose it are known as The Blades. They meet once a month, on the evening of the first day of the waxing moon.

The Blades and their families dwell in the luxurious complex known as the Tower of the Blades. Blades are paid 10,000 gp a year from taxes. Each Blade has a retinue of 35 bodyguards as well as the normal noble privilege of 19 soldiers and two Cloaks as an honor guard.

The Brotherhood of The Cloak

Magic is a force too powerful and too unpredictable to be allowed in Mulmaster without strict supervision.

Mulmaster's mages' guild, called the Brotherhood of the Cloak (or the Cloaks for short), has mandatory membership. Any mage of fourth level or higher is automatically recruited into the guild, and those who refuse are run out of town. Non-Cloak mages who cast spells and are caught by the guild suffer torture, maiming, or even death. The only mages immune to this law are diplomatic attachés or royal court wizards. Hence, Thay has many Red Wizards that "advise" the tharchioness.

There are over 200 Cloaks in Mulmaster, and 29 of them are 12th level or higher. The guild is responsible for supporting the High Blade (the office, if not the individual within). The Senior Cloak is Thurndan Tallwand (CE hm W17), a white-bearded, distinguished, but very cruel gentleman.

The Cloaks have a guild hall called the Tower of Arcane Might. Breaking into the Tower (or out of it, for that matter) is a nearly impossible task due to the many magical wards and defenses hidden throughout the tower.

Defenses

Mulmaster has high stone walls with a single gate that is guarded by South Road Keep, an ancient castle dating back to the city's origins.

The army of Mulmaster consists of around 6,000 well-trained soldiers (levels 1-4, scale mail, short bows, spears, broad swords, daggers, and war hammers) who each serve for one 6-year hitch. Ten percent of the 6,000-man army is fourth level or

higher, and ten percent of that number (the officers) are 8th level or higher.

They are recruited from Mulmaster and the overcrowded cities of the Vilhon Reach. The soldiers serve as city guard, land patrols, marines on ships, and diplomatic envoys. Their loyalties are periodically examined by the Cloaks' mind-probing magics.

Additionally a group of elite agents known as the Hawks wanders the Realms engaging in covert operations to further Mulmaster's interests. Its members are of many classes and levels. All hold the rank of at least strikewhip.

Mulmaster's navy, recently crushed by Zhentil Keep, is in the process of rebuilding. It is planned to be back to full strength in late 1368.

Temples

Mulmaster is jammed with temples and shrines. The most significant ones have Archpriests who draw a 7,000-gp salary from the city treasury.

The strongest temple is the Black Lord's Altar, led by the Master Strifelord of Cyric, Szchulan Darkoon (LE hm P19). He is formerly an orthodox Banite, but now serves the Prince of Lies with great devotion. He is served in turn by 22 clerics (levels 1-10).

The High House of Hurting, dedicated to Loviatar, is the second largest temple in the city. It is run by Whipmistress Milauteera Argauthiir (LE hf P9), assisted by 24 priestesses (levels 2-7). Milauteera is rumored to have drow blood (from her paternal grandmother).

Tempus is represented by the High Hall of Swords, with High Priest-Captain Ghallas "Foesmiter" Kheinstar (CN hm P14), and 16 war-priests (levels 2-8).

Catering almost exclusively to the Cloaks is the Tower of Mysteries, the temple of Azuth. It is run by High Priest Ghondomeir Hazathal (LN hm P11/W11 dual class), and has 16 priests (levels 1-7).

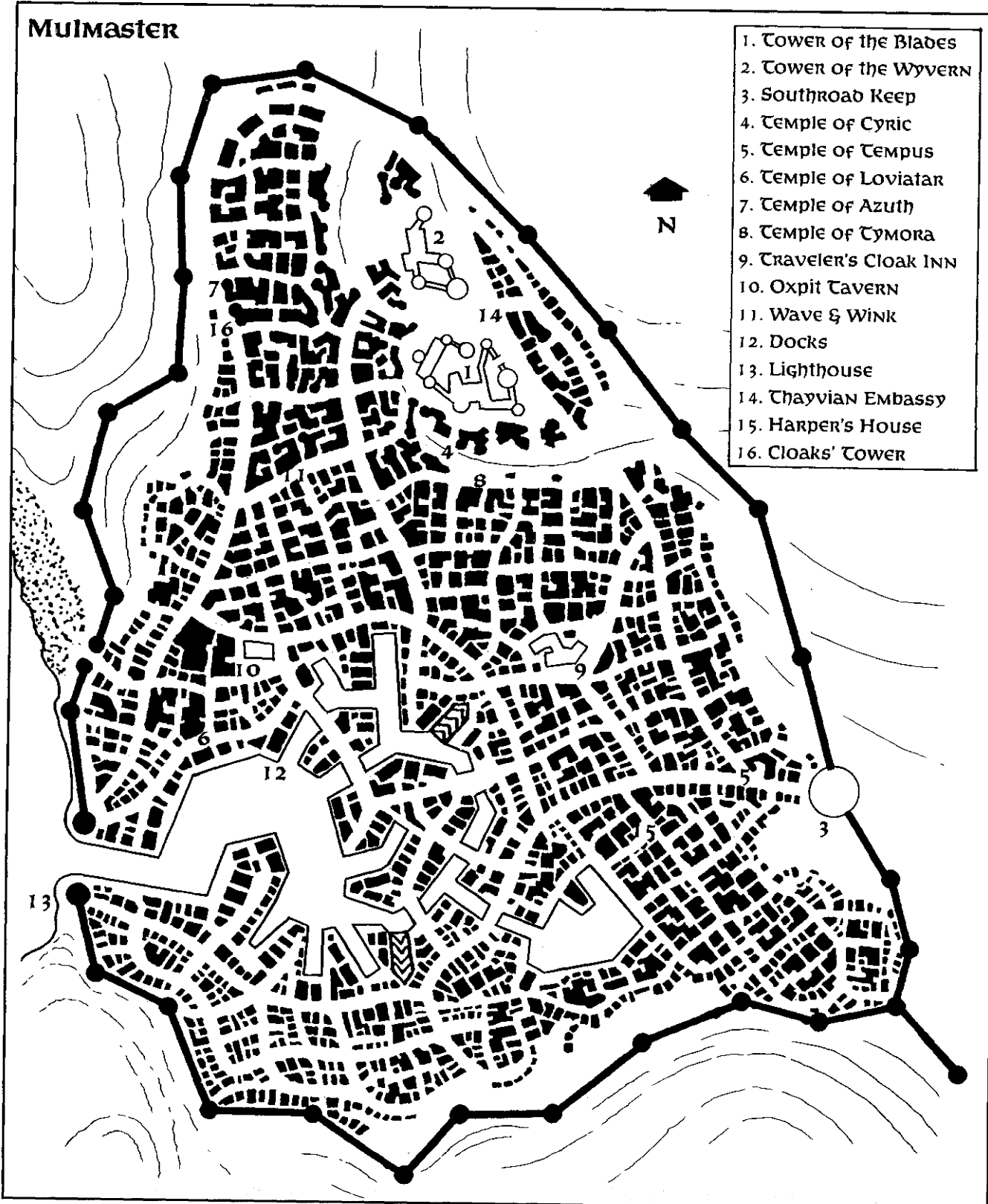
The smallest major temple belongs to Tymora: the Gate of Good Fortune, led by the Hand of the Lady Naneetha Danchul (CG hf P11), with nine priests (levels 1-6) to aid her.

The House Built on Gold was the temple to Waukeen, goddess of commerce, but it was abandoned after the apparent death of the deity. The Tharchioness has asked her husband, the High Blade, to reopen the temple as a place to worship the Thayvian pantheon,



Mulmaster

- 1. Tower of the Blades
- 2. Tower of the Wyvern
- 3. Southroad Keep
- 4. Temple of Cyric
- 5. Temple of Tempus
- 6. Temple of Loviatar
- 7. Temple of Azuth
- 8. Temple of Tymora
- 9. Traveler's Cloak INN
- 10. Oxpit Tavern
- 11. Wave & Wink
- 12. Docks
- 13. Lighthouse
- 14. Thayvian Embassy
- 15. Harper's House
- 16. Cloaks' Tower





and Selfaril is considering the matter.

In addition, there are shrines to Lathander, Malar, Mask, Talos, and Umberlee.

Trade

Mulmaster exports arms, armor, ships, and jewelry. It imports foodstuffs, cloth, liquor, and luxury items. Mulmaster has a good-size fishing fleet, which is well protected by the navy.

There are numerous equipment shops and general product emporiums in Mulmaster. Several trading companies send regular caravans (always well guarded, often by adventurers and other paid professionals) south to Maskyr's Eye, Calaunt, Tantras, and other points in that direction.

Mulmaster also boasts of many taverns and dance-houses. The Traveler's Cloak Inn is the largest and warmest Mulmaster has to offer, and the Oxpit Tavern serves hearty ale and hefty portions of roast ox. The bawdy Wave and Wink is the best known of them all. It entertains clientele from all walks of life and is the perfect place for a noisy dance party.

Taxes are an unfortunate fact of life for Mulmaster's citizens. Nobles and temples must pay an annual entitlement tax of 100 gp to the treasury. Merchants pay a monthly caravan tax of 10 gp per caravan they sponsor, cosponsor or use to transport goods, and a ship tax of 20 gp per month for each ship they operate or hire. Merchants are also required to pay a mercantile tax of 5 gp a month and collect a sales tax of 1 cp per transaction payable to the treasury.

There are over 11,000 citizen merchants, and they in turn have nearly 100,000 employees and dependents. The employees pay a head tax of one sp per person in their families.

A Harper Influence

A city like Mulmaster bears close scrutiny from any who want stability in the Moonsea—and indeed, in all of the Realms. Chesslyn Onaubra (CG hf F9) is a guard in the Gate of Good Fortune (the temple to Tymora), but she is also a Harper agent.

Chesslyn is here to keep an eye on the doings of the city, and she is especially wary of the Cloaks. In

fact, her most prized possession is an *amulet of non-detection*, which she uses to escape the routine probing spells of the Cloaks. Chesslyn will only reveal her identity to other Harpers who have first revealed theirs to her.

Chesslyn specializes in the long sword, and can in fact hurl one up to 50 feet (at THAC0 12), causing 1d6+1 points of damage. This form of attack has surprised many opponents who previously dismissed her as a simple temple guard.

Other Features of Mulmaster

The South Road Keep is not only the oldest building in the city, but it also houses the city's constabulary. Prisoners are held below the keep in small underground cells. The keep is traditionally staffed with 100 soldiers, some acting as prison guards.

The docks of Mulmaster are typical for a city of this size. They are active every hour of the day and night, constantly filled with colorful, smelly cargo and sailors. There are a few cheap taverns here, but they cater mostly to the seafaring crowd.

The Thayvians have a full embassy in Mulmaster, thanks to the Tharchioness. She can sometimes be seen visiting the embassy, making public her patronage and commitment to it. On the days when the Tharchioness makes her way to the embassy, her retinue of bodyguards, Cloaks, and other personal servants looks much like a small parade descending on the streets of Mulmaster.

Mulmaster has several courtyards where dueling is legal, as long as it is overseen by a Cloak and two soldiers. Arrangements (including hiring seconds, if needed) can be made within 1d3 days.

The City

1. Tower of the Blades. This huge complex houses all sixteen Mulmaster nobles, with their families and servants, and 610 bodyguards, 304 soldiers, and 32 Cloaks. The complex's entrances are always guarded with a six-man force, and each noble's wing of the complex is protected by various *warding* spells.

2. Tower of the Wyvern. This is Selfaril's residence, and also houses his wife (the Tharchioness), servants, 200 bodyguards, 100 soldiers, and four



Cloaks. The structure itself is made from the finest marble and decorated with beautiful stained-glass windows. The most spectacular of these is the one on the house's tallest tower—a breathtaking image of a wyvern.

The Palace of Revels, a luxurious complex beneath the Tower of the Wyvern, is a place of relaxation, feasting, and other activities of a more private nature.

3. Southroad Keep. This small, squat keep is the oldest building in the city. It serves as the constabulary headquarters, information center, tax collection center, visitors' registration, courthouse, and prison. The prison section consists of underground dungeons, with both group lockups and individual cells.

The keep is staffed by 100 soldiers at all times, and can accommodate another 500 if necessary. The gatehouse is capable of sealing off the city's south gate in the event of a siege.

4. Temple of Cyric. This black, spiny building with its red- and violet-lit windows is a horror to behold. It is a huge temple, guarded with a continuous *protection from good* spell.

Those who are faithful to Cyric are allowed burial under the temple, but none of the deceased person's friends or family are allowed to enter there. That is because after the funeral services, the body is not placed in a sarcophagus or on a shelf hewn from rock. What truly lies under the temple is a huge, festering pit of corpses, animated at Cyric's whim to serve his dark purposes.

5. Temple of Tempus. Resembling more a fortress than a house of worship, this grim granite building's exterior is decorated with rusted battered shields, sun-dered armor, and cracked weapons. The heads of cow-ards in various stages of decomposition are mounted on spikes on the battlements.

6. Temple of Loviatar. The smell of leather and blood hangs in the air of this large temple. It has many rooms, and most of them might easily be mis-taken for torture chambers. The main sanctuary hall has no pews and nothing at all of comfort. The wor-

ship rites carried on here are secret and mysterious, but their noise carries far.

7. Temple of Azuth. Magic radiates powerfully from this sky-blue building. Inside the airy halls and cham-bers are numerous libraries and workshops. The name of Midnight is strictly forbidden anywhere within the temple environs.

8. Temple of Tymora. This large violet temple com-prises two large chambers. The first is the main wor-ship sanctuary. It is always bathed in a soothing purple light, and is a place for calm reflection.

The second room is a huge casino where the "holy rites of Tymora" are carried out in the form of a multitude of games of chance. All house proceeds go to the upkeep of the temple, the clergy's living expenses, and the care of the needy, deserving, or the just plain lucky. The fortunes found in the casino are safe under the watchful eyes of four stern-faced clay golems.

9. Travelers' Cloak Inn. In a city of chill winds, damp air, and cold sea water, the Travelers' Cloak is a welcome escape. Each room has its own small fire-place, perfect for warding off the cold Mulmaster nights. Dinner, drink, and room cost 12 gp, 15 gp if a mount needs to be stabled.

The inn is run by Dela (LN hf F2), a pretty widow with a keen business sense and a friendly word for each one of her guests.

10. Oxpit Tavern. A popular tavern, wellknown for its ale and roasted ox, the Oxpit is the site of many spontaneous games of chance, singalongs, and brawls. Room and meal runs 7 gp (ale extra). The proprietor, Cyril, is a tall, thin man with a boisterous laugh who is not opposed to sharing an ale (and information) with friendly travelers who are willing to spend time and money at his establishment.

11. The Wave and Wink. The best known dance hall in Mulmaster, it is an ideal place for people from all walks of life to meet and mingle. It has a reputa-tion for good, rowdy entertainment, and many locals consider an evening at the W&W a fine way to go



out on the town. The cover charge is a mere 2 sp. The W&W serves light foods, but its wide selection of ales and wines is the biggest draw.

12. The Docks. Mulmaster's docks are a labyrinthine assembly of piers and dead ends, with warships at each spur ready to repel invaders. Numerous taverns and inns await the sailor or traveler who wishes a cheap place to rest his or her head.

The docks are favorite haunts of muggers, con-men, press gangs, and other unsavories. Base chance of an encounter is 25% per turn in daylight, 75% per turn at night.

13. Lighthouse. This large stone and cast-iron lighthouse towers 150 feet above Mulmaster's harbor. The Cloaks arranged for a *continual light* to shine from the lens, guaranteeing a permanent beacon for ships.

The lighthouse is run by Dryn Stonewatch (LN dm F7), and his four nephews. The facility is visited every day by a Cloak, who checks on the condition of the light. A small barracks with 36 soldiers in residence is located 50 yards away from the lighthouse.

14. Thayvian Embassy. This red sandstone building is decorated with fire opals and wrought-iron sculptures of imps and gargoyles. The interior smells of incense and is decorated in exotic carpets and tapestries from Calimshan, Amn, and Zakhara.

The embassy is staffed with a dozen wizards (levels 2-11) in full red-robed regalia, and is overseen by Conjuremaster Ahryn Firefinger (LE hm W14(C)), a deceptively jolly individual. The embassy also holds 24 men-at-arms (AC 4, F3, hp 27, chain and shield, long swords) and two iron golems. All of the windows and roof entries are trapped with symbol of death, and the front and back doors are *wizard locked* at the 16th level of spell ability.

15. Harper's House. This is the home of Chesslyn Onaubra (CG hf F9), a guard in the Gate of Good Fortune (the temple to Tymora) and secretly a Harper agent. It is a modest wood and brick house, with a spare bedroom for guests. Chesslyn doesn't make friends easily, and anyone fortunate enough to be invited into this comfortable, well-appointed home

knows he or she has been accepted.

16. Cloaks' Tower. This massive stone tower complex houses the mage group known as the Brotherhood of the Cloaks of Mulmaster. It is modestly referred to as the Tower of Arcane Might and has libraries, dormitories, laboratories, and vast storehouses of gold and magical items. The Tower is protected by eight golems (two of each of the four major types), plus numerous defensive spells.

Ironfang Keep

Ironfang Keep, made of the blackest basalt, is located in the northernmost edge of the Earthspine Mountains. It is an ominous, forbidding keep, and its strange, eerie look is heightened by the fact that it has no windows. The keep stands on the cliffs of the White River, where the water cascades into the Moonsea in the form of beautiful falls.

Not even the wisest sages in the Realms know who built it or when, but it was around before Dalereckoning started. The eldest elf alive recalls his grandfather speaking of this place.

Ironfang is so named because of the large deposits of iron to be found in the surrounding mountains. None of these deposits have been mined, since no one dares go near the place—let alone set up a permanent mining settlement in its very shadow.

Ironfang Keep is reputed to be the home of either a family, school, or community of powerful mages and archmages. These wizards are supposedly so powerful that even the Cloaks and the Red Wizards dare not disturb them. No one has ever seen them, but there is evidence of residents in the keep. Occasionally a caravan will deposit cargo at the Keep's main gate, but the drivers who stop there know nothing.

Such powerful wizards as Elminster of Shadowdale and Khelben Blackstaff of Waterdeep are as unknowing as everyone else. They simply shake their heads when asked about the Keep. Queries to the gods, even those such as Deneir, yield no information.

History, however, is replete with accounts of petty nobles and barons sending parties of adventurers to Ironfang in order to divine its secrets. Most of the



time the adventurers do return—their dead remains neatly stacked at their patron's door.

In 1288 DR, the Year of the Roaring Horn, Mulmaster sent out an expeditionary force to get answers, loot, or both. The only result was to stir up the local gnoll populations around Mulmaster, causing numerous raids and invasions until 1338 DR, the Year of the Wanderer. That year the last ruler who ordered the expeditionary force finally died.

Getting There Is Half The Fun?

No one has approached Ironfang since the Time of Troubles. If they did, they would find that two odd, concentric circular zones surround the Keep. These cannot be seen or detected by a *detect magic* spell.

The first is a magic dead zone 400 feet wide, beginning 700 feet from the keep and surrounding its environs. Within this circle no magic works, magical items shut down, and spell effects end. Even summoned creatures are flung back to their point of origin (regardless of whether they are natural animals or outer planes creatures).

Moving through the dead zone toward the keep, a traveler enters a 200-foot-wide wild magic zone. As the name implies, magic goes crazy in this area. Spells have bizarre and unusual effects, magical items work in erratic and unpredictable ways, and charmed or summoned creatures will act strangely or flee outright.

The last 100 feet surrounding the castle environs proper is a zone where magic works normally again. The only unusual feature of the normal zone is the massive *reverse gravity* spell that affects the air above. Winged creatures that approach within the normal environs will suddenly drop to the ground and take falling damage. Naturally, any riders also take damage.

The zones make it impossible to approach the keep via any magical means of motion. Even spellcasters using *polymorph self* or druids using shape-changing abilities find themselves unceremoniously returned to their normal shapes and plummeted earthward.

Even *wish* and *limited wish* are useless as means of gaining access. Magical items are equally ineffective; even artifacts cannot be used to gain entry. These two

fields also make it impossible to use astral or ethereal travel to access the castle. Rumor has it that the two fields cause a certain psionic interference that prevents entry via mental powers.

If PCs want to approach the keep, they must walk. There are no exceptions. Even when they get there, however, there is no easy way inside.

The castle's basalt walls appear immune to damage as well. Spells that normally cause structural damage do not seem to even scratch the stone. Pounding on the walls with weapons is futile. They are impervious even to iron spikes.

The walls are also slick, actually exuding some odorless, slightly viscous liquid. Scaling the walls is impossible, and there are no materials about to build a ladder, ramp, or any other sort of makeshift climbing tool. Grappling hooks hurled at the parapets slide off and fall to the ground.

There is a single entrance to the keep: a stone archway with an iron door set into it. The door has a keyhole and a handle, and no trace of rust mars the iron. A *detect magic* spell reveals that the door is magic, though there is no indication of the type of magic present.

When the door is touched, everyone within 50 feet of it is instantly *teleported* with no saving throw, as a *magic mouth* roars "Thus be it with all who intrude! Let your fate be decided elsewhere!"

The destination of the teleport varies. Rumors indicate that teleported parties have wound up in Waterdeep, the Moonshaes, Silvermoon, Ravens Bluff, Mulhorand, Thay, Zakhara, and Kara-Tur, among other places. Legend states that one person has actually penetrated the keep, but was found wandering across the wild lands of Thar. He was completely mad, and all he could mutter was the word "green."

There seems to be a pattern to the teleportations, however. Most victims materialize either in the vicinity of powerful wizards or wizard groups, or in a location escapable only by fighting a large group of beings (barbarians, orcs, lizard men, goblins, giants).

Whatever the agenda of the Wizards of Ironfang Keep, they seem most anxious to be left alone and to leave others alone as well. Persons going to the Keep do so at their own peril.



The Moonsea Proper

The purple waves of the Moonsea itself are no haven from the dangers of land. The Isle of Maos, under a powerful spell, rises from the water to tantalize adventurers. Roving ships full of angry, greedy, vengeful pirates ply the seas in search of travelers and treasure. Strange cities and even stranger creatures are said to dwell on the bottom of the Moonsea, and even the bravest sailor will be quick to say that the surest way to die is to encounter them for yourself.

Above The Waves

The Moonsea contains no known islands. However, there are stories of sunken islands that rise on certain nights of the year and sink again at dawn. These islands are rumored to house odd creatures, fantastic treasures, and lost secrets of magic. The most interesting of these islands are detailed below.

The Island of Maos

Every Shieldmeet (which occurs once in four years), when the moon has risen and cleared the horizon, the island of Maos rises to the surface of the Moonsea. There are no written records of Maos, but sages who have heard of its existence feel that it may have been part of some great ancient human kingdom at least two thousand years before the beginning of Dalereckoning.

The island's watery resting place is located 40 miles due south of Phlan. It takes just five minutes to rise, causing a great plunge of water and huge, churning waves of foam. When it is risen, the surface of the island glistens with wet slime and strands of aquatic plant life. Fish and other small sea creatures flop helplessly, suffocating in the fresh air. The island is a perfect circle, exactly 240 feet in diameter.

The most prominent structure on Maos is a 225-foot-tall spire made of glistening black and green rock. It is a temple of some sort, but the deity's identity is unknown. A circular black building with no roof appears to be an observatory. Its interior is heavily marked with odd symbols, and small stones jut from the floor.

There are also several two- and three-story dwellings still standing, but they are bare and empty. The island also has a labyrinthine network of caverns just below its surface. These are accessed from one of the three-story structures, as well as from a secret passage under the altar in the temple.

There are numerous creatures that use the island as a lair, and this changes by the year. Lacedons, kuo-toa, merrow, and scrag are all known to lurk in





the buildings at different times. Giant octopi, giant crabs, and lampreys have also been seen there.

The island's deadliest feature is an area effect that negates all clerical magic, including clerical magical items. This reinforces the suspicion that the island is under some ancient deity's curse.

There is no evidence to explain the cause of Maos' sinking, but magic is the safest explanation. Those who study this phenomenon believe that it is perhaps a curse invoked by long-ago priests, or even direct divine intervention.

Maos remains on the surface until the first rays of the new dawn strike it. Then it sinks, taking two minutes for all but the highest towers to be covered by the waves. Any ships within 100 yards of the sinking island are sucked down along with it.

Pirates

What's a sea without pirates? The Moonsea has its share of pirates and brigands, and many have exciting (albeit short) careers. Still, a few pirates have managed to stay alive long enough to carve out a reputation for themselves.

Illandra Wavemistress

Illandra Wavemistress (CN hef FB/W7/T12) is half sea elf, half human with deeply tanned skin and long, greenish-black hair. Her favorite garb consists of a sea-green tunic, matching leggings, and a deep aqua hooded cape. Thanks to her sea-elf blood, she can breathe underwater.

Illandra's ship is the *Mingledblood*. The *Mingledblood* is armed with a light catapult, a pair of ballistae, and a scorpion. She's a fast sloop with bright red sails and a crew of 40, most of them being of half-elf stock. Her crew ranges from first- to fifth-level fighters of human, elf, and half-elf extraction, with half of them at first level. They are armed with leather armor, cutlasses, and slings.

Illandra is a fierce, charismatic, brilliant leader and expert sailor. Though not cruel, she has a special hatred of Hillsfar and its racist policies. She and her crew delight in attacking ships of that city, and consider it good sport. Illandra was ostracized from

Hillsfar because of her heritage, and she gathered together some like-minded folk and decided to strike back at the societies that rejected them.

Veris

The bald-headed, battlescarred, one-eyed man known simply as Veris (CE hm F12) is a follower of Cyric who remains loyal to Zhentil Keep (or what's left of it).

His ship, the *Purple Star*, is a galleon fitted with two medium catapults and one ballista. It has a crew of 80 third-level fighters in leather armor, armed with longbows and sheaf arrows.

Veris is a cruel man who enjoys playing deadly jokes on his prisoners. Many times, he forces everyone off a captured vessel, loots it, then tells them that they can board again and leave. Once the victims are back on board, Veris orders the ship pelted with arrows coated with flaming pitch, then lets his crew take practice shots at the terrified passengers leaping into the cold waters. His crew members are known throughout the Moonsea as excellent archers.

Burak The Mongrel

Burak is an overglorified half-orc brigand (NE hom F5/T7) who decided to round up other humanoids and try his hand at piracy.

Burak's ship is the *Flotsam*, a reeking, rat-infested hulk crammed with 70 kobolds, orcs, goblins, gnolls, half-orcs, ogres, ogrillons, and even a few especially depraved half-elves.

The *Flotsam* and its crew have no real tactics. Their ship waylays slow merchant ships, overcomes the crew with sheer numbers, takes the cargo, and burns the ship. Burak has a reputation for quick, deadly action, and he is not loved or even admired by those who sail with him. They are there for the money, period. Because of this, these pathetic creatures are merciless to their victims. Burak has an ace up his sleeve as well: a half-orc shaman of 6th level who can summon *flame strike* against targets.

He particularly delights in attacking slave ships. He gives the cargo to his cruel and depraved crew, who are allowed to use them in any way they please. No slave taken aboard the *Flotsam* has ever appeared on land again.



Under The Moonsea

The Moonsea is home to many creatures who are not mentioned in polite company, although the sailors who live on the waves are well aware of what lies below. The legendary city of Northkeep lies in watery ruins, and it is said that it is now the dwelling place of the Moonsea's less welcome inhabitants.

The Bell in The Depths

The Bell is one of the best-known areas of the Moonsea. It is the remains of the sunken city of Northkeep, the first human settlement in the Moonsea.

On foggy nights, the bells of the submerged, still intact citadels, toll for the dead city and can be heard as far as Hillsfar. Mariners say the area is haunted, and you will find no one to dispute it.

Northkeep sank when 40,000 inhuman mages, priests and shamans gathered on the northern shore

of the Moonsea and chanted to their gods. The gods answered and sank Northkeep, but also destroyed the throng of humanoid spellcasters who dared disturb the divine slumber.

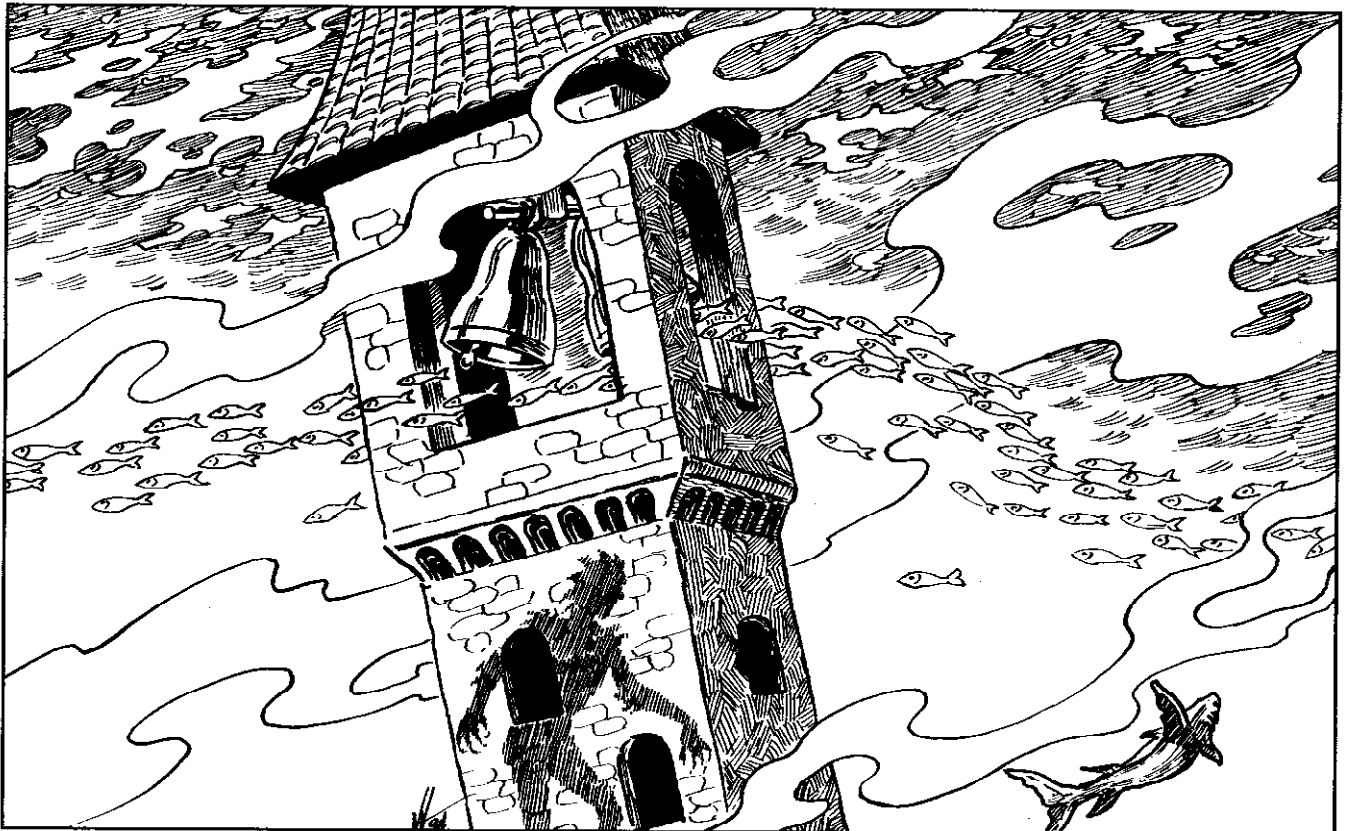
There are some who say that the city will rise again and that it is still blessed by Selûne. Many dismiss this, but the tolling bells are a reminder that something is indeed still going on under the waves.

A race of sea elves called marel makes their home next to the ruins, and their unfriendliness makes it difficult to explore Northkeep's remains.

Undersea Races/Ecology

The Moonsea is stocked with a large variety of fish and crustaceans. The plentiful marine life supports the coastal cities as well as the large number of creatures that dwell in the sea itself. There are numerous schools of giant pike, giant gar, and lampreys. No whales or dolphins live in the Moonsea.

Though dragons no longer spawn in the Moonsea, reports of a huge dragon turtle that makes its home in





the westernmost spur of the Moonsea have been confirmed.

A large colony of scraggs (sea trolls) exists off the coast of Hulburg. This colony consists of approximately 60 adults and half that number of young. A colony of 120 merrows (sea ogres) lives seven miles west of the scrag settlement. The merrows often compete with the scraggs for living space and food.

However, the worst race that dwells under the waves lives next to the sunken ruins of Northkeep. The marelts are a race of sea elves, but they are unlike any encountered before by even the most experienced mariner. They are often called "sea drow," though they are most definitely not aquatic drow.

Marelts are full elves, with pale white skin, long blackish-green hair, and eyes that glow an eerie phosphorescent green. They possess the usual elven racial abilities, such as infravision and resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells.

But the hearts of the marelts are blacker than the blackest depths of the Moonsea. A more foul race of corrupt, evil elves has never existed. They worship Umberlee, and there are reports of horrendous rites under the waves in her honor.

The marelts number around 2,000, including 500 children. They dwell in elaborate houses carved from a species of hardy, cold-dwelling coral. The marelts have mages and priests, and are led by an elf king and queen, Uhlmor (CE em W15) and Oaleah (CE ef F7/W11).

When encountered, marelts usually are found in bands of eight (their sacred number), including six warriors (levels 1-4), a mage (levels 5-7), and a priest (levels 6-8). Marelts wear a peculiar form of shell armor, which acts like chainmail (AC 5). They wield tridents, long swords, spears, and nets.

The sunken ruins of Northkeep are considered the marelts' territory. The few scholars who know of their existence say that they used to be normal aquatic elves, but as a race they refused to help the city of Northkeep. When the city was sunk, the gods transformed the marelts into foul-spirited guardians of the ruins, and such as been their lot since.

Marelts love to silently board ships at night, slaughter half the crew, steal some valuables, and leave. The survivors awaken to find mysterious wet footprints in

their rooms and comrades lying in the hammocks next to theirs with slit throats.

Despite their evil natures, marelts do not ally themselves with other evil aquatic races. They wish to be left alone. Marelts hate surface elves as much as they hate marine races. The sound of the Bell in the Depths is also anathema to them, since it is a reminder of their failure to act as a race. The bell, however, cannot be stopped from ringing.

Two magical gates are known to exist in Mareliar, the city of the evil elves. One gate leads to the Elemental Plane of Water, and the other leads to the Abyss—to the layer where Umberlee dwells.

The Moonsea is home to a unique brand of seaweed called salt ivy. This water plant comes in 1d8 clumps of green strands that measure 10+4d10 feet in length. Salt ivy is a navigational hazard known to slow ships to a crawl. Removing the ivy from a ship's hull takes a number of rounds equal to the length of the strands times the number of clumps. The plant is used as a spell component for certain water-based spells.



The Moonsea Player's Guide

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Introduction

"The Moonsea is a cold, unforgiving, turbulent body of water that'll pull you under and end your life if you make the slightest mistake. But that's fine, since her people are precisely the same way!"

—Elminster of Shadowdale

"All things being equal, I'd much rather be stuck for six months mapping the sewers of Ravens Bluff than spend a single season on the Moonsea."

—Mendryll Belarod, bard

"Master the sea, or be mustered by it."

—Moonsea sailor's saying

Welcome to this humble guide to the Moonsea, also called the Sea of Dragons, Dragonsea, Umberlee's Last Laugh, and Damned Awful Stretch of Water. Within these pages you will find a guided tour of the Moonsea and her coastal cities, courtesy of the bard Mendryll Belarod (also known as Mendryll the Half-elven).

Mendryll is traveling on board the vessel *Devawing*, which winters in Tantras. He provides a running narrative on the cities of the Moonsea, including advice on places to stay, people to avoid, and legends to heed.

So, open this book and be prepared for the biting wind, the sea spray, and the slip of the dagger. The Moonsea has them all, and will either make you very rich and famous or very, very dead.

About This Book

The *Moonsea Players' Book* is a companion to *The Moonsea Reference Book* and contains all the information the players are allowed to see. If a player character was born in the Moonsea region, this information is common knowledge to him or her. Otherwise, PCs can learn information through research, sages, guides, tavern talk, etc.

The first chapter covers the sea's West Branch, the second chapter its North Coast, the third its South Coast, and the last chapter defines the Moonsea itself.

The information presented herein supplements that provided by the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting. However, it may not all be accurate; in some cases it will be incomplete. After all, not all rumors and legends are true!





West Branch

"There are three good reasons to stay clear of this branch of the sea: Zhentil Keep, Yûlash, and the Citadel of the Raven. If you truly want to commit suicide, surely there are easier ways than visiting these places."

-Mendryll Belarod

The ship that I took, the *Devawing*, flies the colors of the city of Tantras. It was a comfortable ship—a smartly-rigged caravel—and my quarters were small but clean. In addition to the captain, there were about 30 sailors on board. Most are career seamen who have few ties to family or loves anywhere in the Moonsea. After a brief bout with seasickness (which highly amused the the sailors on board!) I gained my sea legs. We began our journey at Hillsfar and headed west. I will begin my journal with a description of the region, then report on the individual places.

The West Branch of the Moonsea extends west from Elventree, turns north, and ends at Zhentil Keep. Many mapmakers and sages also include the inland cities of Voonlar and Teshwave that lie to the west, Yûlash inland south, and the Citadel of the Raven inland north, which is tucked away behind the Dragonspine Mountains.

This section of the Moonsea coast contains great amounts of farmland. The southeastern edge of this area borders on the Dalelands and Cormanthor, the ancestral home of the Elven Court, and the northern edge borders the wild lands of the Ride.

It's a good thing I wasn't looking for a relaxing journey, because the West Branch is a place of much strife. With Hillsfar's expansion, Zhentil Keep's downfall and the subsequent giant invasions, and the struggles over Yûlash, the Moonsea's smallest farming community can be a beehive of activity. Even though this spur of the Moonsea borders some truly civilized places, it is nevertheless a great danger to travel through here lightly armed or with only a small retinue.

Even though Zhentil Keep's back has been broken, Cyric is still a powerful god. The Zhentilar and the Zhentarim are still very viable forces in the Realms. If the Zhents were a body and Zhentil Keep its head, then that head has been severed. Unfortunately, this means that we now have a lot of brainless Zhents running around on their intact legs, still quite capable of swinging a sword with their intact hands.

Hillsfar's victory over Zhentil Keep in Yûlash simply means that one faction of evil men beat another faction of evil men for a piece of ruined land and a city full of rubble. I'm sure, too, that I will see more Red Plumes dotting the landscape in future days.





Hillsfar

"Zhentil Keep? Hillsfar? Who can tell which is the lesser of two evils?"

—Moonsea saying

The walled city of Hillsfar, situated at the junction of three roads, is now the strongest city in the Moonsea since the destruction of Zhentil Keep. This is not a comfort to right-thinking souls.

Our ship landed at a small village known simply as "The Docks." We soon realized that this was not a separate village, but was actually part of Hillsfar. This was apparent from the considerable water traffic we ran into there.

One of the old salts on the *Devawing* pointed to my ears (the only physical characteristic I possess that shows my elven heritage) and told me, "If you want to walk five paces into the street and live, you better do something about them ears!"

That is how I learned that Hillsfar welcomes only humans; dwarves, halflings, gnomes, and elves (and any combination thereof) are forbidden. Anyone who seems in any way different is usually thrown into the Arena for the amusement of the local toughs. (I shall talk more of *that* pleasant place in a moment).

I used a spell to alter my appearance, signed the city's visitor log book (paying two gold coins for that dubious privilege), then set out to wander the city.

Although Hillsfar has the feel of an active, bustling city, it is a place of drably dressed folk with no imaginations and little tolerance for anything not human-wrought. There is very little singing and laughter in Hillsfar, and what enjoyment the population seems to get comes from tormenting out-of-towners and harassing anyone perceived as weak or defenseless.

I also found Hillsfar to be a city of inconvenience. All weapons had to be peace bonded, and shows of magic were frowned upon. Even the harmless spells I cast during my performances were unwelcome!

The city is run by a First Lord by the name of Maalthiir, who supposedly dabbles in sorcery and economics. He lives in a large castle called Vultureroost. Evocative name, no?

Hillsfar even has an organized thieves' guild, called

Hillsfar

Hillsfar is a large city surrounded by an imposing brown stone wall. It is run by an ambitious, ruthless leader who despises all who are not human.

Population: There are 60,000 permanent residents, but the population rises to about 90,000 in the summer months.

Inns: Inns that cater to adventurers' needs are forbidden. However, the Diamond in the Dung is an establishment that secretly does so. A room plus meal cost 5 gp per night.

Taverns: The Rats' Nest is a noted Red Plume haunt. The Bugbear's Cave is known for bad food and good gossip.

Supplies: There is a full range of supply shops in the city. Tity's Emporium has everything an adventurer could use, and Tity's is a fairly reliable fence.

Watch: The Red Plumes patrol the city. They have the power to dispense justice as they see fit.

Temples: The Vault of Swords (Tempus), the House of Happiness (Lliira), Lasholme (Chauntea), and small but well-kept shrines to Umberlee, Malar, and Torm.

Other: Laris's Curios is one of the only true magic shops in the Realms. Laris's sells and buys magic items, spell components, and artwork.

the Rogues' Guild of Hillsfar. But don't be fooled: the Guild is actually a sanctioned spy network for Maalthiir. I thought the whole idea of a "rogue" was someone who worked against the law, not for it.

The Red Plumes are Hillsfar's very nasty troops. I'm told there are over 8,000 of them, but most are scattered gods-know-where in order to conquer the Moonsea coast.

The people of Hillsfar have a strange definition of entertainment. Evidence of this is that fact that one of the most popular attractions is the Hillsfar Arena.

The Arena is the site of very bloody gladiator games, public executions, and fights between what they call demihumans and monsters captured outside of town. To me, not all the monsters are on the floor of the Arena; it is the citizenry of Hillsfar who are "demi" human!

One of the more intriguing beings who fights in the arena is Taurus, a minotaur great of muscle and small





of brain. He has achieved a measure of fame and is considered a mascot of sorts for the Red Plumes. I have seen him drinking at the Rat's Nest with the other rats . . . er, Red Plumes.

Maalthiir, the ruler of the city, has surrounded himself with some strange associates. A bizarre wizard named Wak enjoys waylaying unsuspecting visitors and dropping them into the Arena for fun.

Mordak Brelliar is a wizard and Maalthiir's apprentice. It is said that Mordak is a schemer and plotter, and there are whispers that he sometimes acts contrary to Maalthiir's wishes.

Rumor also has it that Maalthiir is romantically involved with Dualah, a priestess who tends the shrine of Umberlee the Bitch Queen. Does this man know how to choose friends, or what?

I've heard rumors that there is resistance to Maalthiir's rule, particularly regarding Glinda Scatterstar, head of the Mage's Guild of Hillsfar. According to the talk, people are glad to see the Guild concentrating less on covering its own posterior and thinking more about how to put down Maalthiir for good.

Ever since Hillsfar yanked Yúlash from the grip of the Zhentilar and the news arrived about the destruction of Zhentil Keep, most of the citizenry of Hillsfar (especially those Red Plumes) have become insufferable blowhards. They think that Maalthiir's edicts for the city have been vindicated by the gods because of the defeats the Black Network suffered. Fools! The Keep was destroyed, yet the Network lives. Yúlash is scarcely a prize to be bragged about; there are hardly two stones left atop each other in that town!

The city seems to have it in for adventurers. Now, I'll admit, I consider the name "adventurers" to be rather silly, a name that perhaps a child would use. But still, to forbid the establishments from serving people of that ilk? Really, now.

Do you want to know where to go in Hillsfar for a good time? The Docks, my friend. Oh, the Docks isn't Hillsfar's harbor. In fact, Hillsfar proper has no harbor. I'll wager you didn't know that, eh?

The Docks is the small village where the *Devawing* dropped anchor. It is a vibrant, noisy, salty, rough-and-tumble place, alive with the accents of a dozen



tongues spoken by the vast collection of sailors and foreign merchants who come here. Hillsfar's soul is not in the city, it is here in the Docks, friend.

Oh yes. Far be it from Maalthiir and his racist merchants to soil their hands and their pure city with filthy docks and the filthy foreigners they attract. Put the Docks in a small village downwind from and outside the city walls. There you go.

Keep away from the Rusty Nail Inn. . . . I swear, that's what they use to prepare their food. Go to the Mermaid's Bosom, but go with friends who know how to hold their liquor and/or know how to fight.

Don't sleep in the Docks. Go into Hillsfar itself and head for the Diamond in the Dung. Apt name for a fine inn that will serve the likes of us!

Zhentil Keep

Once our ship left the ever-so-pleasant regions of Hillsfar, we made for a northwesterly direction and decided to see for ourselves what had happened to Zhentil Keep.

We managed to dock the *Devawing* in the northern section of the Keep and disembark. Zhentil Keep is a misnomer, since it is hardly a keep but a full-fledged city. Well, it was until a while ago, anyway.

Before I continue, I must explain the differences between *Zhentil Keep*, the *Zhentarim*, and the *Zhentilar*. Zhentil Keep is the great city from which all of the above groups sprang forth. Everyone considers Zhentil Keep home and headquarters.

The *Zhentarim*, also known as the Black Network, is an organization of mages, priests, thieves, and fighters. They are the true rulers of Zhentil Keep.

The *Zhentilar* are the city's soldiers, and they take orders from the *Zhentarim*. Total *Zhentilar* strength numbers around 20,000, but only about 5,000 *Zhentilar* reside in the Keep proper.

Alas, that number has been greatly diminished due to current developments. The rest are scattered in the Citadel of the Raven and all along the Long Road. It seems their main purpose in life is cutting off Yûlash from Hillsfar supply lines.

The terms *Zhents* and *Zhentish* apply to the average

citizen of the Keep and anything that originates from them. Travelers are advised not to use the wrong term with the wrong people.

Recently the central section of the city, situated around the Black Altar, was annihilated by divine vengeance. As I passed through the place, I saw for myself what was left of the incinerated temple and the surrounding city buildings.

To make matters worse, it appears that hordes of frost giants are closing in on the city from the north. They are wearing down the citizens.

As a result, the surviving portions of Zhentil Keep are in disarray, and no one knows which buildings will be standing tomorrow. Conflicting reports come from the Keep on a regular basis. The only inn we found open was the Hero's Rest, close to the harbor district. As of this writing, it still stands. Who knows what has become of it?

There are thousands of people still living in this shattered ruin, but the exact number is unknown. Chaos rules, and the *Zhentilar* are not always around to enforce what little law is left.

Trade and commerce have ground to a halt, at least from what I could see. Stores that are still standing are not open regularly, and even the most basic necessities are becoming hard to find.

There is strong talk that the survivors may abandon the city. Certainly, the frost giants are an incentive for even the most stubborn city-bred fool to get off his behind and run.

Believe it or not, there is even talk that the fat, foppish Lord Chess wishes to hire adventurers to deal with the frost giants and clear escape routes for the fleeing citizens. It is supremely ironic that a place like Zhentil Keep would find itself in the position of asking for help from the sort of people who would love to see the city fall.

But if the frost giants win, they may very well keep going down the coast. Then we would see some impressive destruction in their wake.

I must warn you: Though Zhentil Keep is a weakened, crumbling ruin, the Black Network and the *Zhentilar* remain powerful influences in the Realms. Because of these evils, Zhentil Keep will remain a player on the stage that is Moonsea politics. But perhaps its minions will not strut so much now.



Citadel of The Raven

Orgil, the captain of the *Devawing*, informed me that the vessel had to remain at Zhentil Keep for an indefinite period of time. Since the thought of spending another second at Zhentil Keep made my stomach lurch, I decided to take the opportunity to strike out on my own. I chose to go west.

With some modest “luck” at cards, I managed to secure a mount and ride the Zhentilar Trail to the Citadel of the Raven. Interestingly enough, I was not bothered once on my journey.

Three-quarters of the way to the Citadel I happened upon a caravan going the same way. I kept pleasant company with the merchants and managed to find out a bit about the Keep.

The Citadel is not one but many fortresses, linked together by tunnels and bridges along the Dragon-spine Mountain range. To the east of the Citadel lies the Ride, and the Border Forest looms in the west. Beyond that is Anauroch, the Great Desert.

At one time the Citadel was occupied by the armies of many Moonsea cities in an alliance. At some point Zhentil Keep broke the alliance, attacked the others, and took over the entire Citadel.

The Citadel of the Raven is not a city where people come and go, do a little business or stay in some nice inn. It is a military installation that belongs to the Zhentilar. It is staffed with over 2,200 soldiers, plus an additional 300 non-combatants such as cooks, servants, and what the genteel folk in the big cities call “hard-currency girls.”

I decided to leave the caravan and ride alone to the gates of the Central Keep, which provides access to the entire Citadel. The Zhentilar did not take too kindly to the approach of a solitary rider, and it’s my guess they’d feel the same way about a band of adventurers. I suppose I should have stayed with the caravan; these days, only caravans and Zhentilar troops are welcomed in the Citadel. Fortunately, the Central Keep has modest facilities to house weary travelers for a night or two.

I did manage to get in, but it was solely by virtue of my superior musicianship. A post at the Citadel is a

lonely one, and not a tour of duty that most men volunteer for. Just a few verses from one song in my vast repertoire (and not one of my best pieces, mind you) were sufficient to convince the sergeant on duty that I was harmless and persuade him to allow me in.

The sergeant told me that Lord Kandar Milinal, the Citadel commander, is an unswerving devotee of Cyric and a fanatic for discipline. That doesn’t make a soldier’s assignment here any easier; I can see why even a small diversion such as a bard at the gate would hold such appeal.

A pair of priests here make life truly interesting: Boruse Templor and Ampherd Holt. Boruse, the Strife-lord of the Citadel, is a cold man with a single-minded devotion to Cyric. Ampherd is a crazed holy man of Tempus who, the rumors say, wanders the halls of the Citadel in bloody armor. Soldiers swear they’ve heard him clanking along, spouting militaristic platitudes. Never a dull moment when those two are around!

Lord Manshoon of the Black Network has rooms in the Citadel, but he was not around when I was there.

These days, the residents of the Citadel are embroiled in endless plots and counterplots. There exist several political factions, each with its own idea for the future of the Citadel. There is talk that some even want to split away from the Zhentarim because of what happened to Zhentil Keep.

I was able to do some research on the Citadel, and I discovered that there may exist vast underground tunnel complexes that have not seen lantern light in centuries. Since the Citadel is rumored to have been a sort of bandit stronghold in ancient times, there could very well be vast storerooms full of loot waiting to be picked up.

Of course, there might be a *slight* problem in trying to explore these areas; the commander will not be too keen on allowing a group of strangers to delve into the heart of the fortress.

Incidentally, even though the Citadel no longer welcomes independent adventurers, it does occasionally hire mercenary groups for scout missions, among other things. The commander, however, believes he is smart enough to distinguish between the two.

It is rumored that one small keep within the Citadel, Point Dusk, is haunted. Be warned.





Teshwave

Once the largest town in Teshendale, Teshwave is now little more than a garrison for Zhentilar forces. Most of the buildings have been leveled.

Population: There are approximately 50 people left in this town. In addition, there are 2,000 Zhentilar troops and 300 humanoid troops – mostly ogres, orcs, and goblins.

Inn: Only one inn remains: The Rapids. Room and board is 6 gp a night. A beautiful barmaid named Tula works here.

Supplies: Vergun's Caravan Shop is the only store in town. Vergun charges full price plus an extra half for all goods.

Watch: The entire perimeter of the town is heavily patrolled by Zhentilar troops in six-man formations.

Temples: A makeshift sanctuary devoted to Cyric is the only thing left.

Other: The Pit is a combination ale-house, festhall, and casino. It is always full, and it always smells.

Teshwave

I was glad to finally put the somber Citadel of the Raven behind me. I rode southwest, back to Zhentil Keep by the Teshnost Trail, to the small town of Teshwave. Perhaps this town may sound a little more familiar by its old name: Teshendale. Teshwave was the largest, most prosperous town in old Teshendale.

I did not get very close to the town before some Zhentilar challenged me. Unlike the lonely soldiers in the Citadel, these lunatics seemed determined to take me to their commander for questioning.

Teshwave has turned from a healthy, prosperous Dalelands settlement to a drab, ruined garrison town. Its soul has been torn out by the Zhentish occupation. In fact, with the destruction of the Keep, the occupying forces seem more determined than ever to keep their stranglehold on Teshwave.

The Zhentilar have completely ruined the town physically, too. When they swept down and captured Teshwave, they didn't think it important to leave many buildings standing. There is still an inn, a caravan staging area, a shrine to Cyric, and a few houses,

but most of them look as if a strong wind would topple them. Sadly, all else has been destroyed.

The town is now used as a garrison for Zhentil Keep forces and a launching point for caravans. Mercenaries and nonhuman forces also use Teshwave as a camping area. A tip: Riding past the stench and chaos of their camps after hours is definitely not a good idea, especially for a lone rider or a small group.

The garrison commander and de facto leader of the town is Guthbert Golthammer, a human warrior with great arms skill and little mental skill. However, the real power in town is a man named Asdag. He is a priest of Cyric, and he is as clever as he is frightening.

I met Asdag and Guthbert at the same time. As I mentioned earlier, the overenthusiastic Zhentilar troops all but arrested me and took me to the largest, most (very well, the only) opulent house in the town. Apparently, Asdag and Guthbert use it as their quarters and interrogation office.

Guthbert asked the questions, but it was clear that Asdag was in charge. Interestingly, though, Guthbert seemed completely oblivious to where the true power lay. It was as if Asdag had lulled Guthbert into feelings of security and confidence, convincing him that he was more than he really was.

They interrogated me for I don't know how long. Their main concern seemed to be the threat of some anticipated attack, and I think they believed me to be some sort of scout. Eventually they released me since, in the course of their questioning, it finally became clear to them that I was harmless. I even had to play for them to prove I was really a bard! How base.

The streets of Teshwave were eerily empty and quiet. Teshwave has approximately 50 native citizens left, and they are unable to leave because they have nowhere else to go. The fight has gone out of the people; they accept their lot like dumb sheep. If there is a resistance here, I could not find it. I'll wager you'll find Zhentish steel in your back before you find anyone here with fire in his belly.

To make matters worse, the Zhentilar launch regular attacks on surrounding areas from Teshwave. The populace is always on edge, waiting for the next assault. It grieves me to see this town used in such a manner. Maybe someday some heroes will free it.



Yûlash

"Seeing Zhentil Keep and Hillsfar fight over Yûlash is like seeing an ogre and a troll fight over a deer. You wish that they'd both just kill each other and let the deer escape unhurt."

– Kel the Perpetually Unfortunate

From Teshwave I rode in a southeasterly direction on Bowshaft Way to the city of Yûlash. I heard there had been battles between Hillsfar and Zhentil Keep around Yûlash and wanted to take a look.

The recent setbacks at Zhentil Keep had caught the Zhentish forces off-guard. The Hillsfar forces were able to beat back the Zhentilar and take the entire town.

Now the Red Plumes of Hillsfar dominate and control Yûlash. What is left of Yûlash to control? Not very much, I must say. Most of the city has been pounded into rubble, and anyone with half a brain has long since left.

Still, Yûlash is located at a crossroads, a very important strategic consideration. But the crossroads appears to be the only thing that isn't ruined.

The surviving Zhentarim have retreated outside the city and set up camp, where they hope to harass any caravans that dare attempt to enter Yûlash.

I took the time to wander around. Honestly, I have seen ancient elven ruins in better shape than this town. Everywhere you look there are shells of buildings or heaps of rubble. The smoke of countless fires still hangs in the air.

While people are not starving in the streets, it is clear that the city is suffering from shortages. Prices are high and quality is low. I suspect the Zhentilar who are encamped outside the city are more successful at their interception of trade caravans than the Hillsfar victors care to let on.

However, it seems the citizenry has not given up in its struggle. There are two major factions in Yûlash: One supports Hillsfar, the other supports Zhentil Keep. Even though the Zhentilar are gone from the city, that faction keeps the struggle alive with assassinations, sabotage, and other subterfuge.

Hillsfar wants to see Yûlash thrive, and economic

Yûlash

Yûlash is nothing more than a walled ruin under Hillsfar control. About a score or so buildings still stand.

Population: Current population is 1,700, all human.

Inns: There are no inns left in Yûlash.

Taverns: The Last Place is the only tavern in town. The food and drink are good, and it's always crowded.

Supplies: There is only one store: Coryn's All-Goods. It is said that Coryn fences stolen goods.

Watch: The city is patrolled by Red Plumes in squads of six.

Temples: The only temple in town is devoted to Tempus. Considering all the fighting that has taken place here, this is hardly surprising.

recovery is a priority. But as in Hillsfar, all nonhumans have been purged from Yûlash. Things like that make one realize that no matter whether Zhentil Keep or Hillsfar won, the victor was the wrong side.

Maalthiir is said to be hiring groups to clear out the remaining Zhentilar and to explore the ruins under the city. It is rumored that mad gods and their foul treasures still lie waiting to be discovered.

I have heard that Maalthiir is trying to encourage businesses to come back into Yûlash. Perhaps adventurers who were retiring or wanting to open an inn or business would be interested? In fact, inns, general stores, liveries/stables, and food markets are the most sought-after enterprises.

Incidentally, uninvited parties that explore the ruins under Yûlash are killed as looters, if caught. The Red Plumes are very much in favor of the kill-first-ask-questions-later form of control.

Though it may seem that Yûlash is finally at peace, this is far from true. The Zhentilar have not given up entirely. The anger and animosity between the different factions constantly threaten to erupt into violence, and the whispers of dark gods lurking underground fill the people with fear.

Now there is an opportunity for some enterprising adventurers who wish to go into business for themselves! Sponsor (and protect) caravans into Yûlash, then set up a business in the city proper!





Voonlar

Rather than return to Zhentil Keep from Yúlash, I decided that I had had enough of Zhentilar for a while. Instead, I rode farther southwest to Voonlar.

Imagine my surprise (and disgust) when I arrived at Voonlar and discovered it to be yet another Zhent-occupied town. Located at the junction of the roads from Shadowdale, Yúlash, and Teshwave, Voonlar is only slightly larger than Shadowdale itself, and is considered the latter's chief rival in the area.

There are no Zhentilar in Voonlar, but it is clear that the local bron is a member of the Zhentarim. The bron is named Buorstag Hlammythyl, a greedy Zhentish lapdog. I am convinced the annual election for bron is tampered with by the Zhentarim.

If you must deal in this Zhentish-controlled town, work with the Shield Trading Company. They may even have some employment for honest folk, and you can be sure they need all the help they can get.

I didn't see any organized resistance in Voonlar to

Voonlar

Voonlar is a small, quiet town. It is in fact controlled by the Zhentarim.

Population: Voonlar has 1,900 citizens.

Inns: The Sign of the Shield is an excellent inn with fine food, drink, beds, and a stable. A room and food are 4 gp a night. The Swords Meet is another fine inn. Rooms and a meal are 3 gp a night.

Taverns: Voonlar's most popular tavern is the Boring Pig. It offers decent food, good conversation, and (chances are) a good card game in progress.

Supplies: The Shield Trading Company is an honest merchant house free of Zhentish influence.

Watch: There are six deputies on duty, and the town can muster 70 militiamen.

Temples: Two sanctuaries pay respect to the Dark God Reformed (Cyric) and the Bounty of the Goddess (Chauntea).

the puppet rulers. But then again, my calling in life is not to seek out rebels and offer them aid. I am a bard and I do not star in tales. I merely relate them.



Elventree

"Blink, and you'll miss it."

—Malraz Alizar, illusionist

I returned to Zhentil Keep from my experiences in Voonlar to discover it would be another two days before the *Devawing* was scheduled to make sail. However, the captain informed me that we would use the extra time to return to Hillsfar and pick up some cargo bound for Melvaunt.

When we reached Hillsfar, we encountered trouble. It seems the Hillsfar navy was going out on a sortie, and the docks' security was tightened to the point of rampant paranoia. Our ship could not leave dock until the navy returned. Apparently, this is a common nuisance for ship captains who come to Hillsfar.

I simply accepted it as fate, hired a horse, and rode east down Elua's Ride to Elventree. Being at least partially blessed with elven blood, I wanted to see this place for myself and perhaps revive the artistic spirit within me.

Elventree is a Moonsea community like no other. This is less a town and more a forest hamlet. It is a perfect place to heal body, mind, and soul. The air is sweet with the fragrance of pine, flowers, and fertile earth, and all who come here seeking beauty and health are welcomed. Those seeking glory, power, and fortunes are shown the way out.

I was not disappointed with what I found.

Elventree is a place of tranquility and beauty where visitors may research magic, old stories, or songs. Its people are so peaceful and tolerant, I found it hard to believe that this place is considered part of the cursed Moonsea. It is a community of humans, elves, and mixed bloods like myself, engaged in such honorable occupations as artisan, ranger, and nature priest.

In keeping with the elven philosophy of working with nature, all of the buildings are located either in natural caves or atop or inside large trees. Elventree is so well concealed within its natural setting, I was told, that it is possible for someone who knows naught of Elventree's existence to actually ride right past it.

There is no town leader, as in most human communities. Everyone lives in a manner that is consistent

Elventree

Elventree is a community of elves, humans, and half-elves living in harmony with nature.

Population: There is a total population of 900 souls, including elves, half-elves, and humans.

Inns: Located up in a large tree, the Swaying Bough is the best place. Food and room are 3 gp.

Taverns: The Tree Spirits is a fine tavern, despite its awful pun name.

Supplies: The Gold Cave is the town's main trading emporium. Regular equipment plus hard-to-get items of elven manufacture are found here.

Watch: The town has no organized watch.

Temples: The two temples here are the Halls of the Unicorn (Meilikki) and the Temple of Mystra. The latter is tended by a mysterious wizard. There are also shrines to Chauntea, Silvanus, Eldath, Corellon Larethian, and Rillifane Rallathil.

Other: The Listening Tree is an amphitheater made from a large tree. Performances take place there almost every night.

with the Harper code. Speaking of the Harpers, several live nearby. I'm told they keep a careful watch over the community.

An amazing structure called the Listening Tree is the most wondrous place I have seen in this region. It is a giant, ancient oak that has been pruned and worked in such a way that it is a natural amphitheater. The acoustics are perfect; I know, because I performed there.

The Temple of Mystra is an odd place, a cave where magic works at its fullest potential. It is tended by a mysterious, masked wizard, the identity of whom no one seems to know. Personally, I think it's Elminster moonlighting, but I could be wrong.

I stayed in a wonderful inn called the Swaying Bough. It is nestled in the branches of a huge tree; actually, it *is* the tree, but you can't tell it when you stay there. The leaves and branches created the walls and roof in each room, and the sensation of serenity and peace that overtook me while I was there is difficult to describe. If you go there, be sure to stay in the inn in the tree.

It was with a great sense of reluctance that I had to leave Elventree.



North Coast

"Dislike the North Coast? Just because it's damned cold and filled with orcs and giants as far as the eye can see? They come down from the North like clockwork and knock down the coastal cities, which then proceed to rebuild—until the overgrown swine attack again. Why should I dislike it?"

—Mendryll Belarod



Ce set sail from Hillsfar north-northeast to Melvaunt, crossing the Moonsea at one of its widest and deepest points. The waves were rough and a cold, biting wind blew down from Thar. I was quite glad I remembered to bring my heavy cloak while on this leg of the journey.

On one particularly dismal night as I walked the decks, I heard an eerie noise: the mournful tolling of large bells, the kind one would find in a tower in some large city. I have often heard carillons ringing out anthems of their towns, but this lacked any of the soothing musical quality evinced by that kind of chime. The bells rang in perfect time, sounding out notes as if they were tolling the midnight hour—except they tolled threescore times. It disturbed me so much that I made a warding gesture to Oghma and quickly went below decks.

The North Coast of the Moonsea is a rough, harsh place bordered by the ogre kingdom of Thar, the West Galena Mountains, and the nation of Vaasa. The North has been defined as everything from Phlan (including the Sorcerer's Isle upriver on the Stojanow) to Sulasspryn.

Farming is not widely practiced here. The people—as harsh, cold, and tough as the climate—engage in mining, trading, and fishing.

The North Coast has taken the brunt of abuse from nonhuman forces. Whether it be flights of dragons, humanoid invasions, or even the predations of troops or thieves from their fellow Moonsea cities, the North Coast cities have endured more than their share of woe. The cities are routinely knocked down by the opposition, only to be rebuilt by the stubborn, determined Mooneyes.

"Mooneye" is a slang term for Moonsea folk. The Moonsea folk in general tend to be a suspicious, unfriendly, morally corrupt lot, and the term is evocative of the look they give strangers. However, never call them "Mooneyes" to their faces unless you desire a burial at sea.

I will say this much for the North Coast: It is not dull. If stories and songs are made from dangerous deeds, then there is enough material here to keep six talented minstrels (such as myself) occupied for an elf's lifetime. In the North you find your fortune, or you find your death.



Melvaunt

"Of course I'm sure that we're approaching Melvaunt. I'd know that smell anywhere!"

—Orgil, Captain of the Devawing

After the fresh scent of Elventree and the bracing smell of the sea, my arrival in Melvaunt was quite a shock to the nose, among other things.

The first glimpse I had of this depressing town was the gray-brown cloud that hangs heavily above it. From sea, it looked like some sinister entity cradling the town in its filthy arms.

It stinks here, friends, and it's grimy. Even in the coldest winter (and believe you me, winters here get quite cold), the stench of smelting ores, refineries, tanners, and too many folks in one place hangs in the air. The unrelenting clanging of anvils and booming of the refineries fill the ears at all times.

The city is known for its weaponry and armor, which is a relief. After all, if the place is going to stink so much, it better well be for a good reason.

Its overpowering stench aside, Melvaunt is a bustling place of commerce. A common saying is "If it's not in Melvaunt, you don't need it."

When our ship sailed into Melvaunt's harbor, we were immediately intercepted by a Melvauntian Raven class ship. A customs party came on board, collected the usual taxes, and informed us of the local laws and regulations.

Captain Orgil told me that ships that do not pay the dock tax are put on "sick wait," which is another term for "quarantine." These people are not fools; they've certainly learned how to get money out of visitors and travelers.

Melvaunt is best known for its slave trade, which is to me an abomination of the highest order. These people sell slaves for shipment to the southern lands such as the Pirate Islands and the Old Empires. Personally, I have no faith in paladins or priests of Tyr, but I found myself wishing for a large contingent of both to wipe these slavers from the face of Toril. So much for me being a dispassionate observer.

I'm not a very religious man, though I have been known to whisper a prayer to Tymora when I'm about

Melvaunt

Melvaunt is a large trading city that specializes in the manufacture of arms and armor. It is the strongest city on the North Coast.

Population. Melvaunt boasts a population of 50,000, which swells to 75,000 in the warm months.

Inns. The city has a large number of inns, but one of the finest is the Breakwater. It costs 6 gp for bed, bath, food, and drink. The Breakwater specializes in seafood and decent local wines.

Taverns. There are numerous taverns, especially around the docks. The most popular is Umberlee's Bosom, a rough, rowdy place near the docks.

Supplies. In addition to a central marketplace, there are many businesses in Melvaunt. Hermuk's Allgoods is one of the best.

Watch. Melvaunt's standing army of 5,000 men also act as city watch. They patrol in groups of five.

Temples. The three largest temples are the Purple Portals (Gond), the Hall of Laughter (Lliira), and the Resting Place of the Whip (Loviatar). There are also shrines to Tempus, Tymora, and Shares.

to toss the dice or murmur a few quick words to Hanali Celanil to win a maiden's heart. But the religious scene in Melvaunt was rather interesting.

The Purple Portals, the temple of Gond the Wonderbringer, is a very popular establishment. This is, however, no surprise in a city that manufactures things. I even saw groups of gnomes making pilgrimages to the temple, which I found delightful. No one can throw a party or make a joke like a gnome can, and this gray, depressing city needs a good laugh.

Others must feel as I do, since the next largest temple is the Halls of Laughter, devoted to Lliira, goddess of happiness. In fact, this temple is the first establishment of Lliira worship in the North Coast.

The strangest temple in this town is the Resting Place of the Whip, devoted to Loviatar, Mistress of Pain. I have heard this temple is allying itself with either Cyric's priests or the die-hard Banites, but I am not sure which. Whichever it is, it doesn't sound good. And it is most puzzling—since life seems tough enough in Melvaunt, why worship a goddess of pain as well?

Rumor says there are Harper agents in Melvaunt,



but I saw none while I was there. It would not surprise me if there were, and it would be most gratifying if they were there to put an end to the slave trade. Personally, I have no interest in joining the Harpers, but I would gladly back them if they were to clean this city of its scourge.

It is said that in the winter months, the citizens of Waterdeep pass the time and amuse themselves by gossiping and making secret little plans and plots. Well, I can say that the Waterdhavians have nothing on the citizens of Melvaunt.

There are three powerful families in the city. The Leiyraghons, the Nanthers, and the Bruils. Each tries to control the Council of Lords, which governs Melvaunt. The three families are united only in their hatred of Zhentil Keep. Now that the Keep has been destroyed, will the families fall upon each other?

These clans constantly plot against each other for control, and many who aspire to become major forces in the city seek to ally themselves with one of the three large families. Like puppies rooting around the

legs of the fat lord who sits at his table and eats, the would-be powermongers hope to catch some scraps from whichever of the three feuding families they are allied to.

The thing that must be remembered here, however, is that the rivalries are all maintained with great subtlety. Each snub, careless reference, or offhanded joke carries enormous weight. Many times a single word has several layers of meaning. Ah, these Melvauntians are wordsmiths as well as weaponsmiths!

The watchword is intrigue. No one wants open confrontation, for the lessons of Yúlash are fresh in their minds. Instead, wars are waged at private dinners, fancy balls, and temple services. All very fascinating, I tell you.

With Zhentil Keep now gone, it will be interesting to see what happens in Melvaunt. Some say that Thar is looming as another threat, and that adventuring parties are being hired to scout out the north areas. Apparently, there is more than one way to make money in Melvaunt.





Phlan

"Next time the city is rebuilt, I think the natives should just knock the buildings right down again and save the next invaders the trouble."

— Orgil, Captain of the Devawing

Once our ship left the smoky, pungent city of Melvaunt, we set a westerly course. The next mission: delivering building materials and artisans to Phlan.

I had the opportunity to talk to one of the artisans, a mason by the name of Hape. He told me that due to the recent collapse of Zhentil Keep, Phlan was undergoing a building frenzy. Everyone was anxious not only to rebuild Phlan's walls and structures but also to fill the power vacuum left by the Keep's destruction.

According to this fellow, a governing body called the Council of Ten rules Phlan. It is providing incentives for people to move into the city and settle down. I suppose they think this is the quickest way to rebuild and repopulate.

Hape also told me that the Council is looking for adventurers who would be willing to help reclaim those parts of the city not yet under control. You'd have to pay me quite a bit to take on that job, I'll say!

Phlan is an old city that was once on par with Zhentil Keep, Hillsfar, and Mulmaster. Those of us who wield harps and wander the Realms call Phlan the "Spittoon of the North" because it seems like the city is repeatedly bombarded with the worst things the worst folks can throw at it.

Phlan has been attacked by giants, dragons, Zhen-tarim, orcs, and a spirit called Tyranthraxus. Even the dark god Bane himself uprooted Phlan (along with some other cities) and placed it in a shadowy realm for a while. Suffice to say, life in Phlan has not been easy. Nor has it been dull.

This is a city in the process of rebirth. Anticipation is in the air, accompanied by a mood of hope that grows larger with every business that opens and every building whose repairs are complete.

Unfortunately, a lot of people ascribe this new glory to Tyr, who is a tad too rigid for me. The town seems to be in the throes of a Tyr revival, and there is nothing so annoying as new converts, regardless of

Phlan

Phlan is an ancient city that has been constantly rebuilt in the face of repeated attacks. The city is currently undergoing yet another revival.

Population. The rapidly-growing population is about 4,000 souls at this writing.

Inns. Inns include the Laughing Goblin, the Cracked Crown (a quiet place), Nat Wyler's Bell (a dive located in the slums), and the Bitter Blade, a place near the docks. The Laughing Goblin is the best inn of them all.

Taverns. At present, the only tavern in operation is the Pool of Radiance, a recently-opened establishment.

Supplies. These include Ian Cockbum's Grocery, Matteo the Weaponsmith, Ernst's Livery, and Jerome of Melvaunt. Jerome is a fence, and quite reliable. There is also a Slum Market, with stalls that change every day.

Watch. The city militia, underequipped and under-trained, patrols the city in groups of four. The slums are generally avoided.

Temples. Only one: the Waiting, devoted to Tyr.

what they have been converted to (a religion, a philosophy, a political system, or a meat-free diet).

The city of Phlan today is divided into two sections. The self-explanatory Civilized Phlan is relatively safe and normal. Old Phlan contains numerous ruined areas that are dangerous to explore at night. Some have been cleaned out, but none are rebuilt.

There are some interesting sites to visit in Phlan, if a visitor so chooses. Old Sokol Keep is a beautiful building on the harbor, being restored as a watchtower. The Valhingen Graveyard is a huge necropolis that was recently freed from a vampire's control, but locals claim other things have moved in.

A rather attractive sorceress named Rowena, who has moved into Denlor's Tower, has become Phlan's premier spellcaster. She enjoys meeting adventurers, and it is said she amuses herself by sending them into the ruins to fetch odd items for a hefty reward.

So, despite the sight of happy workmen running around laying bricks and waving holy symbols of Tyr all over town, Phlan is a fun place to be. Come to Phlan, rebuild a city, and make a name for yourself.





Thentia

"Thentia wants to be more like Melvaunt? All they have to do is bathe a lot less and foul the air a little more."

—Hape the Mason

We departed Phlan abruptly (which interfered annoyingly with my time with the lovely Rowena; we were . . . discussing magic), and doubled back, heading east for Thentia. Orgil suggested that we bypass Melvaunt completely this time, and no one had it in them to disagree.

I was pleasantly surprised with Thentia. It is a little smaller in size than Melvaunt and not nearly as foul-smelling. Thentia is accountable to no power group or government except what they put in place themselves; it is a trader's city and a place that fiercely guards its independence. I appreciate and admire that, as it also happens to mirror my own way of thinking.

The citizens are friendly and seem genuinely content with their lives. Interestingly, the people's fierce independent streak has brought about a very liberal way of thinking in Thentia, which is rare in other Moonsea cities. The average Thentian is very tolerant of new ideas and philosophies, and many will try anything new at least once. They jealously guard their privacy (as well as yours, if you need them to).

The city is ruled with a light hand by the Watchlord named Gelduth Blackturret. The position is more symbolic than anything. The Watchlord's main job is to make sure the city is well-patrolled and that all merchant contracts and dealings are fair and abide by the laws.

The true power is in the hands of the old families, with names like the Swifthands, the Khodolises, the Birniers, the Mamarrathens, and the Casplardanns. These noble clans are very influential in the city's economy. For a city whose business is business, this makes them most powerful indeed. They are fairly low-key, though, preferring to wield power behind the scenes rather than in public forums.

Thentia is militarily weak; it doesn't even have a decent navy to protect its interests. Why hasn't it been overrun, then? A simple reason: Thentia is home to a group of powerful wizards. But they are not

Thentia

Thentia is a large city devoted to trade. It is militarily weak but well protected by some resident wizards who cherish their peace.

Population. Thentia has a population of 40,000, which swells to 55,000 in the summer.

Inns. The Beacon is the best-known inn, and the Inlet is a place best suited for peace and quiet.

Taverns. Though there are many, The Bullroarer (like its namesake) is a loud place and the most fun of them all.

Supplies. Mad Melyrk's is the place to find new and used merchandise, while Angrym's Livery not only sells animals but stables them as well.

Watch. The Warders are the city watchmen who patrol in groups of eight.

Temples. The only Temple is the House of the Moon, dedicated to Selúne. Aside from the temple, there are shrines to Tempus, Tyr, Chauntea, Umberlee, and Lliira.

Other. A ferry service operates between Thentia, Melvaunt, and Hillsfar.

in alliance with each other, oddly enough. Each simply came to Thentia of their own volition for some quiet and some respite from the competing wizard power groups. A sort of wizard retreat, as it were.

There are many regular, popular festivals, and they are usually filled with flash and thunder. Some say the citizens are merely celebrating their freedom.

But I am not fooled. Those wizards know that the spies of at least four other Moonsea cities lurk here; the fireworks are public displays of their powers, ostensibly to entertain the masses. And what better way to show that magic defends this city than to have the city's mages so prominently displayed?

As a result, these wizards successfully keep invaders, as well as intrusive mages such as the Red Wizards of Thay, at bay.

The city does have a regular defense organization, called the Riders of Thentia. It consists of only 60 troops, and they ride strange, sure-footed musk oxen called rothé as they patrol the city. I suppose that the surrounding terrain makes such mounts necessary, but personally I cannot help bursting out in laughter whenever I see them.





Of all the shops in Thentia, I found one that is head and shoulders above the rest (even though its owner isn't). I speak of Mad Melyrk's, run by the gnome Melyrk Rubyripper. Melyrk is a delightful eccentric who has elevated haggling to an art form.

Melyrk offers new and used goods to sell, buy, or trade. His keen eyes make him an expert appraiser. A most trustworthy merchant, he was a joy to watch as he scrambled around, speaking in his rapid, nasal tones as he cut deal after deal.

A good horse can be obtained at Angrym's Livery. Angrym is a ranger and an excellent judge of horseflesh. He also stables mounts for a fee, and no mount is too exotic. When I visited his establishment, I saw two griffons, a hippogriff, three pegasi, and, of all things, a unicorn. The unicorn left the next day without its rider, but I'll explain why later.

After the hustle and bustle of the crowds, a good place to relax is the Inlet, a quiet inn of good repute. I decided to go there, shunning the rowdiness of The Bullroarer or the Beacon Inn.

The Inlet is a place for quiet, intelligent conversation. Many merchants frequent it. I met three people at the Inlet that are worthy of note. Two of them were human men calling themselves Saradar and Tyllmin. For some reason, I felt compelled not to trust them. I am unsure, but I believe they are agents of either Hillsfar, Mulmaster, or the Zhentarim.

The other person of note was an elf maiden by the name of Elaesse Loridiel. I mention her because it was good to see that nonhumans were welcome around here. Unfortunately, Elaesse is rather mad at me, and I believe wishes my head on a platter.

You see, we met in the Inlet, and we got along well. Very well. Extremely well. Unfortunately, the next morning when she went to Angrym's Livery to check on her unicorn, she was informed that the steed had bolted away in disgust earlier that morning. Naturally, Elaesse blames me. I cannot imagine why.

I hired a mount and rode east out of the city in hopes of getting away from my problems. I did, but found others to vex me.





Hulburg

"Hulburg had the right idea: fall down and stay down!"

-Ogril Captain of the Devawing

I had been told that the way from Thentia to Hulburg would be rough going, and it was true. The terrain is bad, and there are only small, hard-to-see trails to guide you. Raids from Thar to the immediate north make travel even more difficult.

At that point, however, I was more than willing to brave bands of slaving, unwashed humanoids rather than an angry elven sorceress. Besides, a solitary rider sneaking well and covering his tracks can slip past orc patrols with ease. I'd hoped, anyway.

I passed several ruins east of Thentia, but I didn't stop at any of them. I very much wanted to see the ruined city of Hulburg.

Hulburg was built over fourteen centuries ago. At its peak it rivaled Phlan and Hillsfar in strength and beauty. However, like most cities in the North, it was pounded repeatedly by all manner of foes until, in the Year of the Bright Blade, Zhentil Keep slit the city's throat once and for all.

I arrived at Hulburg on a gray afternoon and immediately began to think that facing an angry elf wizard was preferable to confronting what lay before my eyes. Hulburg is a desolate place, my friends.

The outskirts of the town are laced with beached shipwrecks that look like the carcasses of dead sea animals and rotting docks that reminded me of huge rib bones sticking out into the silent bay. A cold wind whistled through the rubble strewn everywhere.

The biggest shipwreck is called the *Reaver*, and I am convinced that something dwells in its rotted hulk. It smelled like an open grave, and there was an eerie feel to the place I didn't like. I left quickly.

I could tell that Hulburg had once been beautiful; many of the ruins held remnants of paintings, mosaics, and now-wild gardens filled with strange plants. The city feels dead; that's the only way I can describe what I saw there. It was not a comfortable feeling.

Everywhere I turned I saw statues tossed indiscriminately throughout the ruins. Strangely, all of the statues seem to be rather new compared to the town.

They represent humanoids of all races, ages, and walks of life, and many of them had looks of surprise on their faces. I thought I knew what created them, but I kept pushing the idea away.

The old Hulburg lighthouse still stands, and I could swear that I saw a glowing figure atop it. Slowly it began to dawn on me that this was all that was left of Hulburg—the dead.

However, I was surprised to learn that people still live in the area. Quiet, sullen folk who cannot even spell *hospitality* let alone practice it, these pathetic humans eke out a meager living fishing, hunting, and tending small gardens for produce to sell.

A small, battered keep that lies west of Hulburg proper is the reason these folks have remained. The keep is the ancestral home of Clan Hulmaster, founders of Hulburg. Hoping for some civilized company and the chance to sing for supper and a bed, I headed toward Hulmaster Keep.

Lord Agryl Hulmaster is the old, broken-down master of the keep. He has three offspring: two sons named Angmar and Luren, and a daughter named Amali. All are humans in their twenties.

Agryl, anxious to keep the family line alive, has apparently been trying his best to marry off all three. Upon meeting them, I instantly recognized his difficulty: all the Hulmaster children have faces not unlike horse's posteriors and personalities to match.

Agryl tried to foist Amali on me. He was most insistent, to the point of summoning his men-at-arms to restrain me. I easily escaped and decided to take a chance in the ruins. The food was awful, anyway.

Night in the ruins was as bad as night in Hulmaster Keep. It was fortunate that I had made a bed behind some beach rocks. I was hidden when I saw what dwelled within the wreck of the *Reaver*: a pack of sea ghouls. A little later I saw scraggs, or sea trolls, emerge from the water and prowl around for food.

It soon became abundantly clear that this entire area was cursed and a very, very dangerous place to be. I mounted my steed and rode away as if the very hordes of the Abyss were chasing me.

I know there are places in those ruins that would probably yield fabulous riches. However, let someone else risk the stones of Hulburg. After what I saw, I am quite content to stay away and pursue my craft.



Sulasspryn

"If you don't think the earth eats, then visit Sulasspryn. You will see how a city can be swallowed up."

-Dragalor Goldbeard, dwarf warrior

Riding through the cold night, fleeing Hulburg, I continued eastward. After resting in a small cave, I resumed my journey and around midday came upon Sulasspryn. Or what was left of it, anyway.

The city, I had been told, was founded over a millennium ago by Sulass Drowsbane, who retired to this place and built himself a keep. People eventually settled around the structure and soon a city was born, ruled by the senior male of the Drowsbane clan.

Like Hulburg, Sulasspryn was repeatedly battered by the worst the North had to offer. Unlike Hulburg, however, it survived the worst threats and was actually on its way to rebuilding.

But in the Year of the Mace the city suddenly and inexplicably collapsed on itself. Many portions even appeared to have been literally swallowed by the earth. Thousands of people died in minutes. The city was utterly ruined and consequently abandoned. And so it lies here, a desolate ruin shrouded in mystery, avoided even by adventurers.

Still, my curiosity gnawed at me, and I decided to investigate what I could. Perhaps a song could be made from this yet.

The ruined keep's tower still stands, as do an abandoned temple and an old granary. In the shallow harbor lies the wreck of the *SeaElf*. There are also many large cracks and holes, and much loose ground everywhere. I would suggest caution to anyone who comes here.

The tower looked unstable, so I decided not to approach it. The *SeaElf* appeared to have been wrecked not more than two months ago, and it was filled with the remains of sailors. Fighting back the nausea I felt, I investigated the dead. It seems that most of them did not die as a result of the shipwreck. Most were slaughtered where they stood, by opponents wielding blades. I didn't stay there long.

The abandoned granary was covered with such a mass of spider webs that exploration was impossible. Even worse, the webs defied burning. (Perhaps a result

of the damp sea air?) I didn't see any spiders, though.

The temple appears to have been dedicated to Selûne, but it has been defiled and taken over by something I could not identify. An ice-cold terror gripped me and prevented me from entering. Whatever is in there may very well explain what happened to the city.

As I was riding west, back in the direction of Hulburg, I spied, of all things, the *Devawing* at full sail. Using my magic I caught the ship's attention, and was soon back on board, my hired horse safely in the belowdecks cargo hold.

Captain Orgil explained that the ship had to make a delivery to Hulburg, and when he heard that someone resembling me had ridden east, he decided to sail in that direction for a bit to see if it were me. Hmm.

I related my tale of the findings in Sulasspryn to the captain. Though he believed me, he expressed doubt that anyone would send an expedition to the ruins to clean them out. Sulasspryn, he explained, was too isolated and too hard to reach for a group to invest all that time in trying to fight draw. Orgil seemed to think that most people would let the matter drop. Most intelligent people, anyway.

As we turned southwest toward Elmwood, I was determined to somehow call this situation to the attention of the right people. Perchance an inspiring song or tale would do the trick. I immediately set to composing one.

The Sorcerer's Isle

During my earlier stay in Phlan, I had the opportunity to visit some of the outlying sites. On one such voyage I took a small march along the banks of the Stojanov River (which a decade ago was a foul waterway, but has since made a full recovery), to the mysterious Sorcerer's Isle.

Before leaving for the Isle, I managed to find some old local history books that dealt with it. That, plus some well-chosen uses of *legend lore* by yours truly, enabled me to piece together some things about the Isle. What I found surprised me and made me even more curious to explore this place.





The Isle was apparently used as a school and retreat for wizards long ago. The exact era of such a use is unknown, but it predates Dalereckoning.

It is rumored that the pyramid holds numerous magical treasures, including new spells and the like. According to the locals in Phlan, the last occupant of the pyramid was an evil wizard named Yarash, who was slain by some local adventurers. Whatever he found in there, it certainly did not help him survive—unless, of course, he didn't explore the entire pyramid. I was anxious to see it for myself.

The Isle, I discovered when I finally got there, is a grassy patch in the middle of the Stojanow River. I wound up swimming across, which I was not terribly happy about. I had to leave my harp behind lest it get wet, and I hate to leave my harp anywhere.

As I swam the Stojanow, I was surprised by a lizard man who leaped out of the water and attacked me. It was not the fact that a lizard man tried to kill me that was so surprising; it was the nature of the lizard man himself that startled me.

This particular lizard man had not two but four arms, and no eye sockets. The creature did have an eye, but it was located at the base of the throat. It did not hiss, as its kind is wont to do, but rather gave a loud grating croak.

Even though I am not experienced in water combat, I nevertheless managed to draw my sword and pierce the thing's heart. Even its blood seemed corrupted; it stained the water with viscous green clots. Then the pitiful, deformed creature immediately disappeared under the waves.

Shaken and confused, I resumed my swim, but I was more cautious from that point on. It was with relief that I reached the shore of the island.

There is but one structure on Sorcerer's Isle: a large silver pyramid in the exact center of the island. The pyramid has smooth sides and no visible doors or windows. However, there was a platform, which I foolishly decided to step on. After a moment's disorientation, I found myself inside the structure.

It was only then that common sense kicked in and I realized that I was exploring some odd magical structure alone. I could not find an exit, but fortunately, one spell in my repertoire won me my freedom. I can-

not tell you what spell, for even now I can't be sure which one I used. Something inside the pyramid completely disoriented and confused me; it was by pure luck that I managed to get out.

I quickly swam back across the Stojanow, encountering no resistance on the way. I retrieved my harp and set about exploring the banks of the river.

The pyramid remains a mystery still, but certain developments are cause for concern. When I was on the banks of the river, I am almost certain that I saw a couple of Cloaks (members of Mulmaster's wizards' guild) nosing around the pyramid. They were followed by several red-robed wizards who spoke with thick accents. Methinks that certain wizardly power groups found out about the pyramid and decided to investigate it. Is an occupation in the future?

But how did they find out about it? Did they go to Phlan? Does either or both sides have spies in that city? Ah well. I do not wish to dwell on it. This is a matter for the clerics of Tyr to solve.

Whatever the pyramid's secrets are, we can all be sure that it will be the source of contention again, sooner if not later.





South Coast

"Such a contradiction! We have Elmwood, a place of peace and quiet, to the west. Mulmaster, a city of danger and treachery, to the east. Gods save us from the confusion that is the Moonsea!"

—Elminster of Shadowdale



fter the *Devawing* picked me up east of Hulburg we made for Elmwood, which guards the mouth of the River Lis. The South Coast is the smallest of the Moonsea's three regions. Within it flows the River Lis, a dividing line separating the two radically different natures of the western and eastern halves of the coast.

Elmwood is a town of peace and dignity, surrounded by fertile, rolling farm lands. Beyond its tranquil borders to the south lie the forests of the former Elven Court, called Cormanthor, and the heart of the Western Heartlands, the Dalelands. This is a place of blissful quiet, a holdover from the times when humans and elves worked together.

To Elmwood's east lie the Earthspur Mountains, and within their northernmost spurs crouch Mulmaster, called the City of Danger, and Ironfang Keep. This area is much harsher and forbidding, with scheming Mulmasterites and mysterious denizens of Ironfang Keep both ready to challenge the most intrepid traveler. Here, even the smallest mistake can be your last. Tread lightly.

The River Lis winds south, leading to Yraphon, Calaunt, Tantras, Ravens Bluff, and Scardale. It empties into the Dragon Reach, which in turn leads to the Sea of Fallen Stars.

The Lis is deep enough for most large vessels. Nevertheless many mariners who can afford to do so will take the ferries from Elmwood to points south, especially in winter.

This area of the Moonsea provides a very militarily strategic position, since it controls entry and exit into the sea. Cities like Mulmaster have attempted to control it, but to no avail. It seems that all of the cities feel that no one city should control the waterway.

Another interesting thing about this area of the Moonsea is that it has managed to avoid most of the ravages that affected the other cities, especially those on the North Coast. Geography probably played a part in this. However, it seems that the people are more than willing to stir up their own troubles (at least in Mulmaster's case).

The other welcome feature of the South Coast is its warmer, more tranquil climate. The winds do not blow quite as hard and the storms are not as frequent or as long-lasting as in other places along the Moonsea.





Elmwood

“Elmwood is a shelter from the harsh rigors of the Moonsea. It brings healing to the spirit and rest for the body. And the serving girls are pretty and friendly!”

—Verse from local drinking song

The *Devawing* put in at Elmwood to restock supplies and pick up some cargo that had come upriver from Calaunt. The layover gave me a chance to explore this lovely little village.

Situated just west of the mouth of the River Lis, Elmwood is a small farming community that seems to have escaped most of the trials and tribulations so common among Moonsea settlements.

The community is most ancient, established back in the Year of the Screeching Vole (163 DR). However, it never grew into a city because it lacked the exploitable natural resources for which people came to the Moonsea: iron ore, gold, gems, marble, granite, and other valuable minerals.

The village supports itself by fishing, farming, and running a ferry down the River Lis to the Dragon Reach, specifically to Calaunt and Harrowdale. I am not certain, but I think Elmwood is protected either by the various gods of nature or by the Harpers.

There are three individuals of note in Elmwood. The first is Ezril Treewarder, a druid who has a small grove south of town. Ezril travels with a brown bear and a wolf, and he's even taken them into the village's only inn with him. What a sight that was!

The second is Alamarayne Moonray, a half-elf woman of moon elf stock. She is the priestess of the temple of Selûne. Beautiful and wise (but with a mischievous streak), she spent a few pleasant evenings with me exploring the effect of moonlight on romantic situations. A most adept researcher, I must say.

The third and most important individual is Thoyana Jorgadaul, a female dwarf adventurer, retired. With her piercing gray eyes and braided beard, Thoyana cuts quite an intimidating figure. Fortunately, I had no reason to raise her ire, but I could tell that, when it comes to the town, she allows little leeway.

She is the undisputed leader of the village and is also in charge of enforcing the law. In fact, she is the

Elmwood

This lovely hamlet is one of the few quiet havens in the otherwise tension-filled areas of the Moonsea. It is a lush farming community that, fortunately, has escaped exploitation from the opportunists and military powers who have decimated other parts of this land.

Population. Elmwood citizenry numbers about 500 humans and half-elves.

Inns. The Still Waters is the only inn. It provides a comfortable bed, bath, food, and drink for 3 gp a night (5 gp if a horse needs to be stabled).

Taverns. None.

Supplies. The Grange is an all-in-one store that has everything. What it doesn't have can be ordered.

Watch. Thoyana Jorgadaul is the law in town. She watches the whole town herself.

Temples. The only temple is the Chapel of the Half Moon, dedicated to Selûne. There is a druid grove devoted to Eldath, but no services are held.

Other. A ferry service travels to Calaunt and Harrowdale.

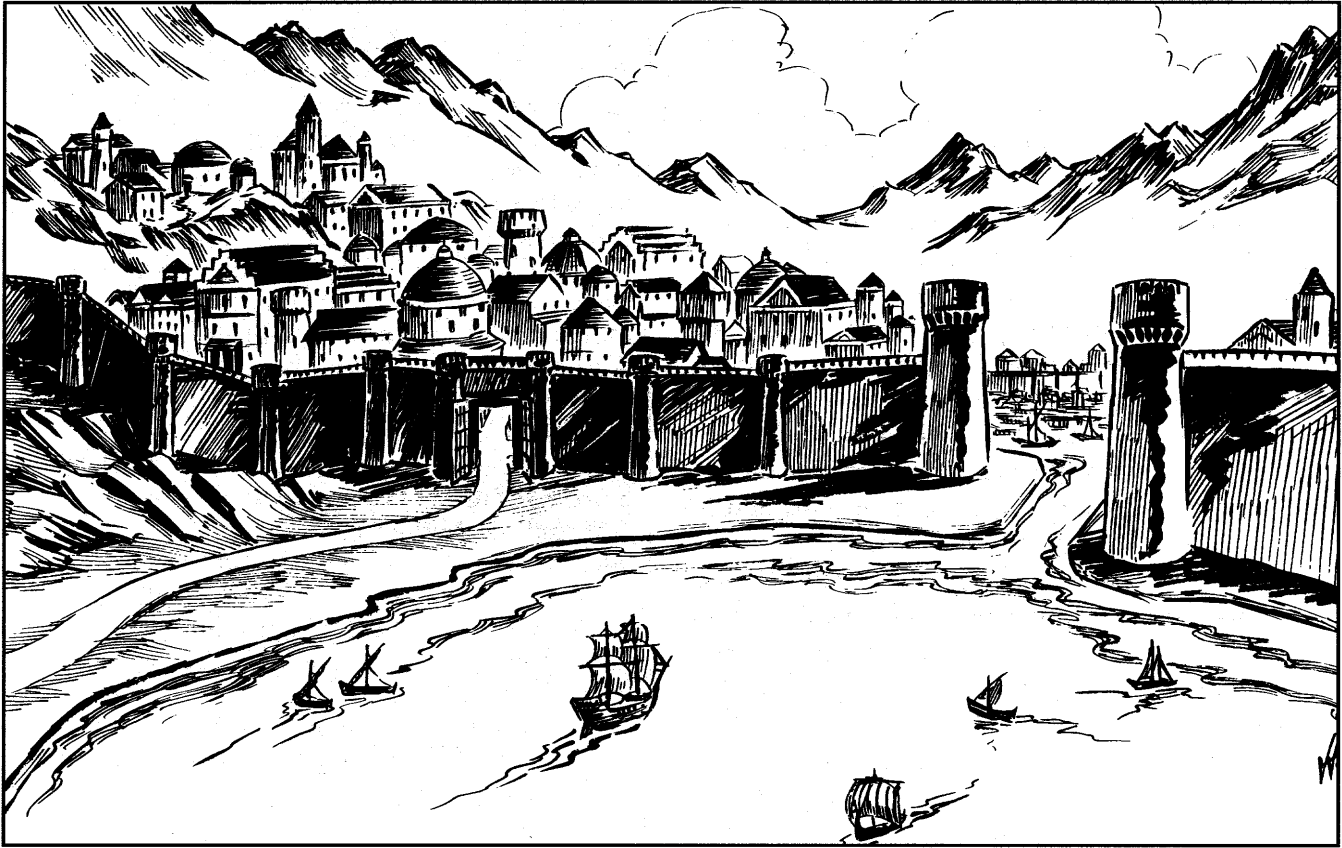
law. When I got off the *Devawing*, she followed me around. She got friendlier only after Alamarayne spoke on my behalf and I amused her dwarven humor with a few of my bawdier drinking songs.

Thoyana, Alamarayne, and Ezril are close friends, and they meet once a week as an informal council to discuss the running of the village. Everyone in the village seems to be quite content with this form of government, since these three individuals obviously make the good of the town their highest priority.

I sense that there are still some things to accomplish around Elmwood. Rumors of ancient elven ruins abound, and I'm sure Ezril knows more about this than he's letting on. But, frankly, I was so intent on having a relaxing time in this leisurely place that I didn't dig too deeply into local politics.

Besides the rumored ruins to the southwest, something else of interest has arisen. There is an old well in the southeast corner of town. Apparently, it used to be the main source of water for Elmwood, until the druid allowed a nearby stream to be used.

The well has a lid made of wooden planking, which is there to keep children (or idiots) from falling in. I was taking a walk one fine evening when I



chanced to pass the well. Everyone knows that the ears of the half-elf are not only cute, they are also quite acute.

I heard scrabbling down in that well, good people. As I crept closer, I caught a whiff of something down there, and it smelled dead. Now, whenever someone puts the words "something moving down there" and "something's dead down there" together, there are only a few possibilities, none of which I wanted to explore.

Oh, I had intended to tell Thoyana and Alamarayne about it, but the former annoyed me again and the latter stood me up. Ezril was nowhere to be found, perhaps he was out hugging a tree. Fine. Let them find out for themselves. Just because I carry a harp, it doesn't mean I'm a Harper, you follow?

If you are so determined to get killed, open the well and be my guest, friend. Just make sure you spell your name clearly for me so I can get it right when I compose my dirge that begins "These are people (or fools) who died in the well."

Mulmaster

"Why are ye so happy that Zhentil Keep is undone? Now Mulmaster will rise to fill the vacancy. Believe me, that is scarcely cause for celebration!"

—Elminster of Shadowdale

After leaving the calm of Elmwood, we made for Mulmaster to the east. The journey was uneventful, and this fact served to continue the pleasant mood we had picked up from our Elmwood visit.

Said pleasant mood was shattered when our ship sailed into Mulmaster Bay. Our eyes beheld a sprawling, walled city nestled in a small valley in the Earthspur Mountains and our noses were assaulted by the stink of ore smelting. It was worse when we docked, ever under the watchful eye of Mulman naval vessels. They seemed to be hoping for any untoward move on our part.

Mulmaster is nicknamed "City of Danger," and indeed it is. As a thriving center of commerce, indus-



try, and intrigue, it is one of the three most powerful cities in the Moonsea.

The city is surrounded by rocky, barren land. Though not as bad as Melvaunt, the air smells of industrial activity such as smelting, refining, and the like. A thin, acrid gray cloud hangs over the grimy city, stinging the eyes and burning the nostrils.

The city stinks of iron smelting and smelts (yes, the fish). In fact, one of the nicer delicacies you can get from the street vendors is *tugen* or "smelt on a skewer." It tastes quite delicious and is the basis of a Mulman colloquialism, "stuck like a tugen." That pleasant phrase means the person is trapped in a relatively unpleasant situation, cannot get out, and is being roasted, either figuratively or literally.

Mulmaster is blasted cold. I suspect it must be due to the city's location in mountainous, bare shore terrain. Some boring sage who was flirting (unsuccessfully) with a half-elf maid at the Wave and Wink told me that the mountains create a wind tunnel. The winds from the Moonsea roar through the pass and make things far colder than they have a right to be.

I found the people of Mulmaster to be a hard-nosed, stubborn folk. They are constantly alert for any weaknesses in others, and their minds are always scheming to further their own positions. Mulmans are not foolish or reckless, mind you; they are single-minded, driven, ambitious, amoral folk.

It came as no surprise to learn that dueling is legal, and even encouraged. By custom, each duel must be attended by the watch and at least one Cloak.

The Cloaks are the only wizards' guild allowed in Mulmaster. In fact, all nonpriestly spellcasters who show a certain degree of proficiency are automatically "offered" membership. If they refuse, the poor fools are either killed, exiled, jailed, or maimed.

The city is ruled by High Blade Selfaril who took power by killing his predecessor in the Year of the Spear 1348 DR. Selfaril is a clever, conniving warrior who does his best to keep his city on top of the heap.

Recently, Selfaril wed the First Princess of Thay, the Tharchioness of Eltabbar. It strikes me as a marriage of convenience that creates an alliance between Mulmaster and Thay. This joining should concern all folk who value freedom and peace.

Mulmaster

This large city is built into the very spine of the mountains to the south. It is a naturally-protected fort, filled with both troops and the deadly Cloaks.

Population. Mulmaster has a population of about 67,000 people, which swells to 100,000 in the summer months.

Inns. The Traveler's Cloak Inn is by far the nicest place to stay. Food, drink, and bed cost 5 gp a night. Other inns include the Black Blade and Bloody Boar (rowdy), the Flying Bed (quiet), and the Leaning Boot (a dive).

Taverns. The Oxpit Tavern (the most well-known) has the best food. The Boring Pig is dull, the Smashed Plate is loud, and the Ghouls' Bees is clean.

Supplies. Mulmaster has fully equipped shops offering a broad range of goods and services.

Watch. Mulmaster's army doubles as city guard.

Temples. Black Lord's Altar (Cyrlic), High House of Hurting (Loviatar), High Hall of Swords (Tempus), Tower of Mysteries (Azuth), Gate of Good Fortune (Tymora). There are shrines to Lathander, Malar, Mask, Talos, and Umberlee, the last enforced by the Temple of Cyrlic.

Besides the High Blade there is also a group of sixteen Blades, or nobles, who are the ruling body. Even then, people say that the Cloaks are in fact the true power behind the scenes.

Interestingly enough, the only wizards exempt from the Cloaks' forced membership are diplomatically-attached wizards and members of the royal court. As a result, numerous Red Wizards of Thay (all supposedly part of the Thayvian embassy) wander the streets and use magic with impunity.

The armed forces of Mulmaster comprise a well-trained and well-equipped army of about 6,000 men. A special group within the army called the Hawks works as an independent unit that travels the Realms committing murder, espionage, and sabotage in order to further the interests of Mulmaster.

Mulmaster is a very religious city. In fact, it has five archpriests on the city payroll, one from each of the five largest temples in town. Besides the five temples, there are shrines to Lathander, Malar, Mask, Talos, and Umberlee. The worship of Mystra is forbidden by order of the Cloaks.



The House Built on Gold—the temple to Waukeen, goddess of commerce—was abandoned after her apparent death. But the Tharchioness is trying hard to persuade her husband to allow her to reopen the temple as a place to worship the Thayvian gods. Self-aril is considering the matter, though both the Strife-lord and the Cloaks oppose the idea.

Mulmaster is an expansionist city that will no doubt take advantage of the power vacuum of the loss of Zhentil Keep. However, Mulmaster has been repeatedly repelled by other Moonsea cities in its attempts to grab power. The latest try came during the Year of the Bow, 1354 DR, when Mulmaster's "New Fleet" was destroyed in a large naval battle with the ships of Zhentil Keep. Even as I write this, Mulmaster's navy is being rebuilt. I see trouble ahead.

I am positive that there are Harper agents in Mulmaster, but I could not find them.

The social life in Mulmaster is interesting. With so many folks, there are scores of inns and taverns to frequent. The docks are a wild, rowdy place where Mulmasterites vent their aggressions and exercise their ambitions on each other and the poor unknowing fools who step off the boats. Avoid those foggy, shadowy piers at night unless your tongue, eyes, and sword are sharp.

The city boasts a great number of dance halls, which are some of the more interesting night spots in Mulmaster. One of the current favorites is the Wave and Wink, a fun, rowdy establishment. Surprisingly enough, people from all walks of life and social standing meet at the Wave and Wink to talk, dance, flirt, and perhaps find some interesting company with whom to spend an evening.

I personally spent a lot of time at the Wave and Wink, where I was prevailed upon to play much of my repertoire (at least the tunes that could be danced to; the dirge called "Mordrym and his Lost Wife" would not have been well received!).

The upper social classes have their own parties, and a friendly ale-mate at the W&W told me where: a complex called the Palace of Revels underneath the High Blade's residence (the Tower of the Wyvern). Feeling a bit full of myself, I decided to find this place and crash a party there. So, dressed in my finest garb, I snuck into the Tower and made my way down to the

Palace. The plan was to remain unseen until I had a good idea of what I was getting into.

Discretion was a wise move on my part. As I watched from the shadows, many of the city's most influential people danced, ate, and drank as guests at a normal party would.

As time progressed, however, the people began indulging in a few things that would cause a drow priestess to recoil in disgust. I shall not say what I saw; suffice to say the entire female staff of Loviatar's High House of Hurting was in attendance as "special" guests. I fled back to the W&W and proceeded to drink myself into a blind stupor to erase what I saw from my memory.

Mulmaster has no thieves' guild. Whenever independent thieves achieve a certain level of notoriety, they are hunted down and either imprisoned, killed, or exiled.

By the way, avoid South Road Keep. It is the oldest and southernmost building in Mulmaster. It is used as a headquarters for the army as well as a constabulary. Prisoners, including wizards in noncompliance with the Cloaks and a few notorious thieves, are kept in cells in its subterranean dungeons. The Keep guards the only gate leading out of the city, on the North Road to Maskyr's Eye.

After three nights in Mulmaster, the captain of the *Devawing* informed me that the ship was making for Ravens Bluff, the Living City. I had no intention of going so far south at the time, so we parted company amiably.

Once it became known that I was not "with" anyone, I became the prey of the various and sundry con artists, bullies, and other opportunists who crawled out of the woodwork. A glib tongue, a sharp sword, and a well-cast spell or two got me clear, but I caught the unwanted attention of the Cloaks.

I had cast a spell, and such activity is illegal if you're not a Cloak. I decided it would be best to leave the city . . . fast.

If you wish to stay, know that the remnants of Waukeen's clergy want to know how her temple was destroyed and are willing to pay a group to delve into the wreckage. Also, I could swear I saw some young women chained in the House of Revels, and I think I recognized some as daughters reported missing from important Dalelands families.



MOONSEA Miscellany

"If you spend all your time worrying about whether or not certain rumors are true, you will never have time to leave your house in order to find out for yourself."

— Graffito on the latrine behind the Wave and Wink

Throughout my travels I saw many interesting and strange things that defy definition. The number of tall tales and wild-eyed stories that the sailors amused themselves with during the voyage were hard to swallow, although they swore them to be true. I will simply relate the stories to you here, and let whoever reads my missive decide for themselves what to believe.

Myths, Rumors, and Legends of The Moonsea

While the Moonsea itself has no islands of its own, there is talk of a mysterious island called Maos. The mariners say it rises to the surface of the purple waves of the Moonsea once every four years, on Shieldmeet at dusk. The island supposedly appears when the last rays of the setting sun fade, and stays on the surface for a set period of time. However, no one agrees on how long it remains. The guesses are:

- The island sinks once it has claimed a certain number of victims.
- The island sinks when the first rays of the next rising sun strike its slimy, blackish-green towers.
- The island sinks when a certain amount of treasure is taken from its vaults.
- The island sinks when priests of specific good-aligned deities set foot on its tainted ground.

Whatever the reason, the island is nevertheless known as a place of fabulous wealth. There is talk of vast treasure vaults deep within the island's structures, ancient libraries containing long-forgotten spells, and storehouses with ancient artifacts and sentient swords.

I was unable to find any information about what Maos is or was. Some sages claim that it was an ancient city of learning, but they have no proof. Many of them suggest that it was the home of an ancient human kingdom that predated the elves. Elminster of Shadowdale's only words on the matter





were, "Why seek knowledge about dead, sunken cities when there are so many living, dry cities with just as much to do in them?" A big help he was!

Mariners also claim that the island is guarded by numerous sea-creatures, including the animated bodies of past victims. There is also supposed to be some great curse on the island, known only as "The Curse of Godly Silence." I found no one who could—or would—tell me more about this.

The only thing known with certainty about Maos is that it rises fast and sinks fast. Many old salts' tales are told of it dragging with it hapless ships that mistakenly sail too close to its deadly perimeter.

Sea Drow?

I had never heard of such beings, but that's what the superstitious mariners call them. Accounts vary widely, but there is a common thread in many of the stories that lend credence to the rumors.

Mariners claim that on certain moonless nights, usually when ships are becalmed, dozens of lithe, pale, human-shaped figures swarm out of the water and steal aboard the ships. They take cargo and slaves down to the briny depths.

These intruders are described as slim, graceful humanoids with long hair resembling wet seaweed. They can see in the dark and are resistant to spells that charm the mind.

These "sea drow" are also known for being quite cruel. Sometimes, it is said, they sneak on board ships and kill all but a few people. They then slip silently back into the sea, leaving the horribly mutilated corpses to frighten the terrified survivors even further.

Whether they are drow or not, they seem like elves by virtue of description and nature. It remains to be seen just how much truth there is in all this.

The "sea drow" are usually found in the general area of the Bell of the Depths.

The Bell of The Depths

Unlike some of these other rumors and legends, the Bell of the Depths is quite real. When the city of Northkeep was sunk during the First Turnabout, the last trace of its buildings as it sank beneath the waves was their towers, their bells still tolling, as the entire city bucked and pitched into the sea.

On many a clear, quiet night the bells can be heard tolling. People as far away as Hillsfar swear they have heard their eerie sound.

Many sailors and Mooneyes have different ideas of why the bells toll. Some say that if someone hears the bells toll a different rhythm from what his comrades hear, that person is marked for death. She or he will pass away before the next phase of the moon. Others say that Northkeep will rise again when the bells completely cease tolling.

When the nonhuman gods sank Northkeep, they also slaughtered all 40,000 supplicants for daring to wake them. All of the dead tumbled into the sea, making their graves with the dead of Northkeep. Many think the bells are rung by the cursed forms of the nonhuman priests, shamans, and witch doctors who chanted to their gods and sunk the city.

Superstition says it is good luck to begin exploration of the sunken ruins of Northkeep as the bells begin tolling.

Myself, I find it difficult to believe these wild stories, but quite a few people swear to their veracity. I hope I can learn for myself someday whether the stories are true.

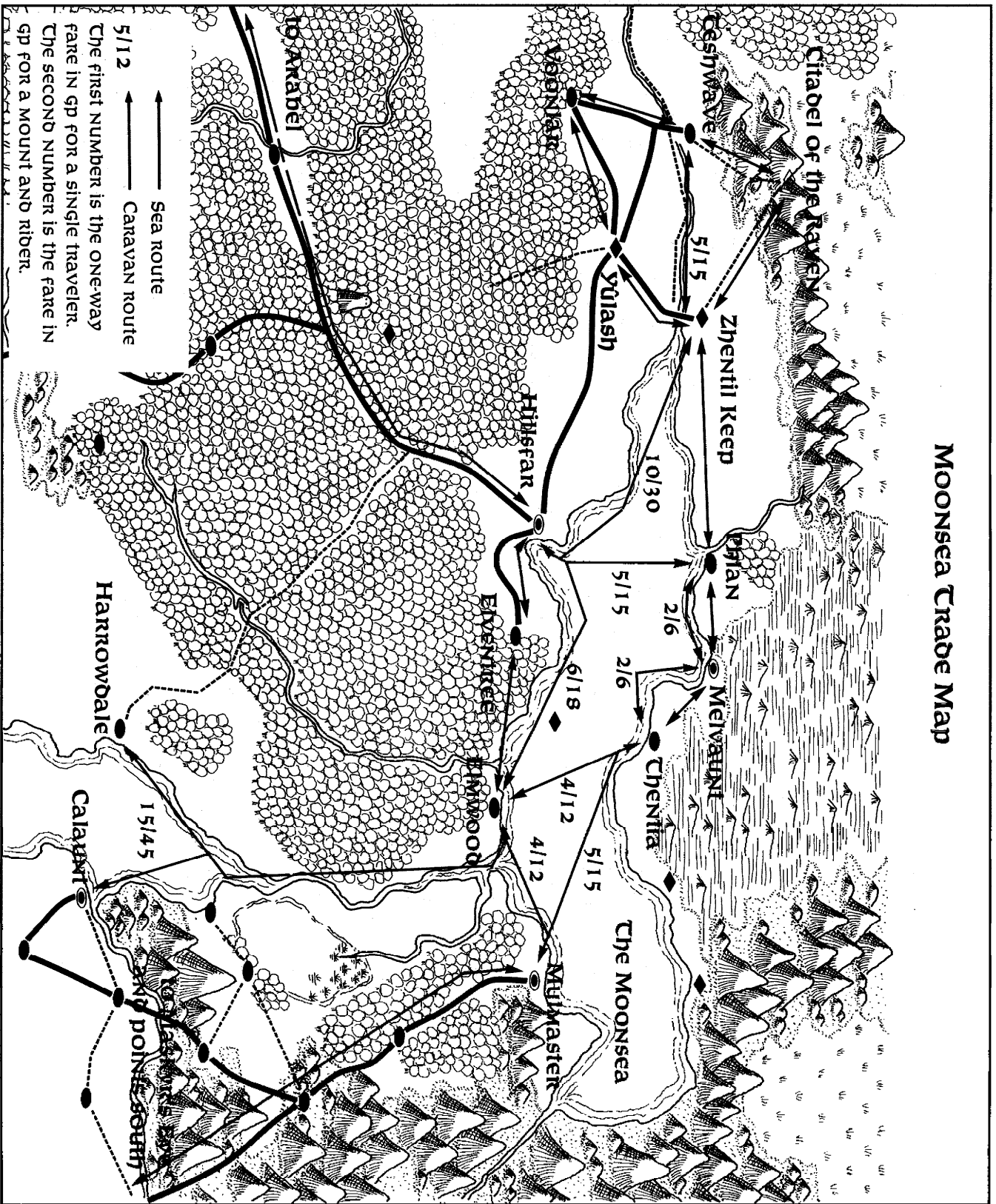
Ironfang Keep

This mysterious fortress can be found in the Earthspur Mountains. Its true nature remains awash in speculation.

What is known is that the keep is occupied by wizards of great power; no one knows who they are or why they are there. All that is known is that anyone who dares explore Ironfang Keep either never returns,



MOONSEA Trade Map





is found dead, or goes mad. One survivor last seen walking toward the keep was found weeks later, wandering the desert wastelands of Anauroch. The only word he could say was “green.”

Some foolish, ill-informed folk who fear magic claim that Ironfang Keep is where Elminster of Shadowdale, Khelben Blackstaff of Waterdeep, Lady Alustriell of Silverymoon, the Red Wizards of Thay, and other high mages gather. These people claim that these wizards determine the fate of the Realms, controlling every event that happens. I’m not sure that wizards of such power care about the fate of a few Mooneyes, but it would be wise to steer clear of the keep, just in case.

The Sorcerers’ Isle

Some say that this ancient structure was built by wizards and sages from the Old Kingdoms, since its pyramid shape is a form of architecture more commonly found in such lands.

In any case, the Sorcerer’s Isle seems to have been designed as a place of solitude for wizards to study, perform research, and cast spells.

Certain sages say that the builders of Ironfang Keep and the Sorcerers’ Isle are one and the same. They go on to speculate that both structures are power points of a triangle, but the third point has been hidden. They claim the third point either goes downward into the elven forests of Cormanthor or upward into Vaasa. No one has ever been able to prove this theory, and personally, I think it is a bit far-fetched.

Whether this is true or not, many explorers and travelers claim to have seen great numbers of wizards from Zhentil Keep and Thay, and the Cloaks of Mulmaster, exploring the structure at different times.

It is thought that perhaps one of those wizard power groups intends to claim the Isle as its own. Since there are several in contention for it, one can only guess at the massive magical struggle that may ensue. Of course, nearby Phlan may suffer greatly from such a battle and would require adventurers to protect the still-recovering city.

“The Orc Fortress”

Located south of the Dragonspine Mountains, this abandoned fortress is supposedly an outpost of Thar. Although it has a real name, it has long since been lost. It is rumored to be under the watchful eye of the orc gods (especially Grumsh), who protect its secrets with a horrid collection of outer planes denizens and undead.

The Floating Dragon

Mariners who sail near Zhentil Keep talk of a large dragonlike creature with a shell on its back. This beast has apparently become bolder since the setbacks suffered by Zhentil Keep.

It is claimed that the dragon-beast, which apparently breathes steam, has a lair in the cliffs on the north shore of the Moonsea. Its cave is rumored to be but a day’s ride east of Zhentil Keep. The lair is supposedly filled with treasures from sunken vessels.

Power Groups

“Kill a lone enemy, and bury your troubles; kill a member of a group, and look over your shoulder for the rest of your life.”

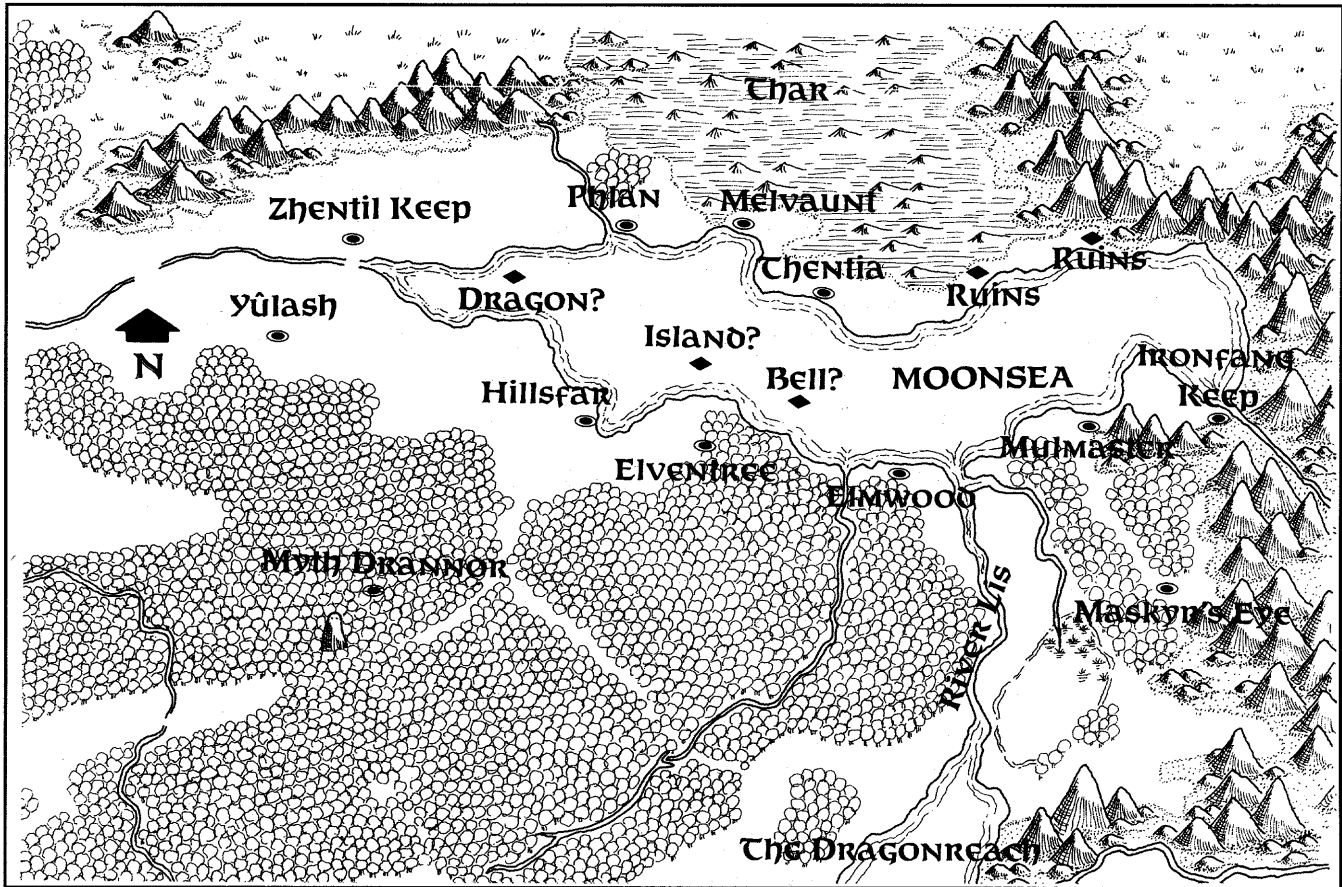
— Selwyn Brokeshield, one day before his untimely death

The military, political, and supernatural factions of the Moonsea are as varied and inhospitable as the terrain itself. If petty squabbling, hallway intrigue, and general mistrust among and within these groups were to evaporate, this region might well be a powerful force in the Realms.

The Zhentilar

The armed forces of Zhentil Keep are in disarray due to the Keep’s recent setbacks. However, in individual forces they are still a viable enemy to be reckoned with. They can be found everywhere from the Citadel of the Raven to Yúlash.

Zhentilar patrols encountered in the vicinity of



Zhentil Keep are lean and leaderless, looking to snatch what they can to survive. Morale and discipline have broken down completely, and it is every man for himself. Expect to be robbed—or worse. If you are unfortunate enough to be of any kind of non-human extraction, be very, very careful if you encounter any of these soldiers.

Zhentilar forces in places like the Citadel of the Raven, Teshwave, and outside of Yúlash are still very disciplined. In general, they will adhere to their military goals and missions and not bother you. But they will consider it a challenge if you provoke them either by actions or by a declaration of allegiance to their hated rivals (Hillsfar, Harpers, Mulmaster, etc).

Red Plumes

The Red Plumes of Hillsfar can be found everywhere from Hillsfar proper to Yúlash, which they occupy. Scout patrols are occasionally seen in the vicinities of Teshwave and Voonlar.

The Red Plumes can be bribed, but it usually takes at least 5 gp per soldier for a typical five-man patrol. If you show the colors of Zhentil Keep or Mulmaster, expect to be attacked and captured. If you are unlucky enough to have this fate, you will most likely wind up fighting to the death in the Hillsfar Arena. I have recently heard rumors that some of the more depraved Plumes will sell captives as slaves.

Mulmans

The highly disciplined patrols of Mulmaster should not pose much of a threat as long as you make no aggressive moves toward them and do not declare your allegiance to Hillsfar or Zhentil Keep. The Mulmaster armies travel in groups of six, usually accompanied by a Cloak of the minimum level of magical skill found in the guild.

Mulman patrols can be found anywhere, from just east of Elmwood to just west of Ironfang Keep. They also patrol the North Road up to the halfway point between Mulmaster and Maskyr's Eye.





The Mages' Guild of Hillsfar

This group is trying to bring down Maalthiir, lord of Hillsfar. The Guild is always looking for new members, or at the very least perhaps people willing to do a favor or two for them. They are willing to pay well.

The Guild members will not make any hostile gestures toward you, unless of course you happen to work for Maalthiir. Guild members recognize each other by special hand signs. They usually travel in pairs, especially at night.

Nonhumans

The Kingdom of Thar, under control of the beastmen (ogres), sends raiders south and southwest to the north coast. The raiding parties usually consist of a dozen orcs and up to a half dozen ogres. They are all mounted on rugged steeds, riding anywhere from Zhentil Keep to Sulasspryn.

If you meet them, they might let you go if you bribe each raider with a dozen gp (minimum). Any less constitutes an insult and will be dealt with as such.

Besides the vast assortment of humanoids, the monsters normally encountered in the Moonsea area includes red, green, and blue dragons, wolves (including worgs), gryphons, manticores, bugbears, and most species of spiders. Don't forget about the sea creatures—scraggs and sea drow—that pose an eternal threat on the ocean waves and in some coastal areas.

Trade

Each city has its own specialty, and anything can be found in the Moonsea.

Mulmaster exports ships, weapons, armor, and jewelry. It imports produce, textiles, liquor, and wood.

Hillsfar exports cloth, furs, arms and armor, gems, and a fiery liquor called Dragon's Breath. It imports raw gemstones, ore, and untreated pelts.

Phlan frantically imports all manner of goods, and is currently exporting nothing.

Elvtree exports wood crafts, herbs, bows and arrows, fruits, and tapestries. It imports metal goods, parchment, wine, and seafood.

Melvaunt exports metal goods and slaves and imports ore and produce.

Thentia exports boats and seafood and imports wood, metal goods, and produce.

Other Map Features

If you look at the huge map of the Moonsea that the Mulmasterite cartographers have painstakingly prepared, you will notice a few sites that perchance you have never heard of. Now, I cannot tell you too much about all of them, but let me mention a few to whet your appetite.

The Maidens' Loss

This is a site where two elf maidens disappeared years ago. It is said that sometimes, on nights when the full moon turns night into silvery day, that their spirits wander the site and will answer one question posed by someone who follows Good.

Abarat's Folly

A tower made of pure ivory, this structure was constructed with spells cast by Abarat, an elf wizard. Not only is the tower incomplete, but the rooms are rumored to lead to other planes. This is supposedly a result of the unstable magics used to build the seemingly unimpenetrable tower.

The Lone Tower

This tall granite tower was built to protect the Moonsea against Thar. Years ago it was a scene of a great slaughter between the humans of Thar and beings from the north.

There is a round field, called the Giant's Cairn, surrounding the Tower. The barren stretch is dotted with great burial mounds capped with stones. I have been told that some inscriptions on the stones are curses that summon giants, but that sounds too far-fetched to be true. Many of Thar's humanoids who died at the Lone Tower are said to be buried at the Giants' Cairn.

Shipwreck Graveyard

Beware this place: It is infested with sea-going undead that are protecting something of great value. No one knows what that is—most believe it is a grand treasure. Greedy mortals who venture there fall victim to undead press gangs.



Point Moonsea

This is a noted spot where Mooneye couples traditionally seal their betrothal. (What do they do? Exchange sullen looks? Ah well.) Actually, it is a lovely spot, very appropriate for whatever affectionate feelings any Mooneyes might share.

There is a Moonsea legend that says couples who come here and exchange their vows on the first night of Selûne's feast day will have no strife or unhappiness in their union. If such a thing were only true. . . .

The Ruined Orc City

The true name of this place has been long forgotten, and it's easy to understand why no one wants to remember this place: The ruins are infested with giant specimens of all types of vermin. Legend has it that when the city's name is finally discovered, the inhabitants' remains will rise from the dead, form into an army, and march on Thentia.

Seawave Ruins

Thentia had created a colony of sturdy people to expand the area of the city. After a few unsuccessful years and more than one attempted invasion, all that is left are the ruins. The colony was finally destroyed by the orcs of the ruined orc city.

Point Iron

This small iron mine was a very profitable enterprise up until about a century ago. It was run by dwarves, which explains the profits. Now, however, duergar control it. Some say there is a small vein of gold here, but none have ever found it.

Fort Dalton

During one of the many dragon migrations, Fort Dalton was blasted into rubble. A cult of some forbidden god or other now dwells there, or so the story goes.

The Lis Ruins

This pitiful pile of rubble is all that's left of the last and southernmost Moonsea city to be destroyed. The city was supposed to be a gateway to the River Lis, but it was reduced to ruins 100 years ago by the Flying Plague (a horde of perytons, harpies, and manticores).

What to Do, What to Do?

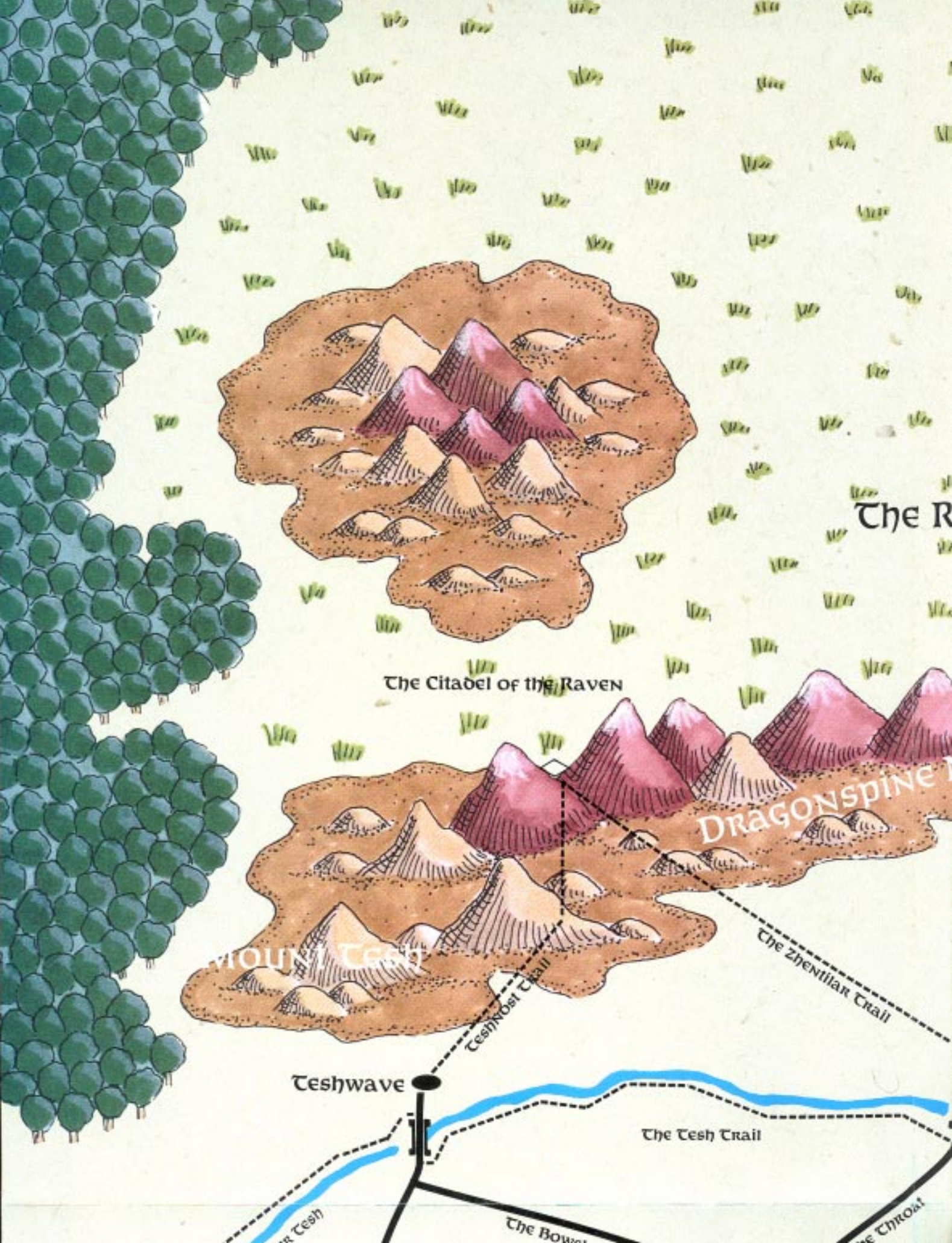
Very well, you've seen what a bad place the Moonsea is. So, you must be wondering why you should bother going there, eh? Well, aside from the trading and natural resources, consider the following:

- It is said that not all things are as quiet in Elmwood as one might think. Ruins to the southeast boast of treasures most exotic, guarded by creatures even more so.
- There has been a rash of "disappearances" in the northern Dalelands. The victims range in age from thirteen to nineteen years old, and both males and females have been captured. Many of the culprits were seen heading toward the far western edge of the Moonsea. The word "godson" has been heard, but no one has yet made any connection.
- There is rumored to be a secret pirate harbor along the rocky northern coast of the Moonsea, between Zhentil Keep and Phlan. Carved from the cliffsides, it supposedly houses pirate ships, prisoners (many from rich families), loot from raided vessels, and the usual expected pirate treasure. Unfortunately, the base is also guarded by some huge sea creature.

Farewell

Thus ends my tour of the Moonsea, a rugged, harsh, violent, cold place with like-minded people. Keep your wits, eyes, and swords ready, and you will survive, maybe even prosper. Falter, and you will lose your life. Till swords part!

—Mendryll Belarod the Half-Elven



The R

The Citadel of the Raven

Dragonspine

Violent Tesh

The Zhentilar Trail

Teshmost Trail

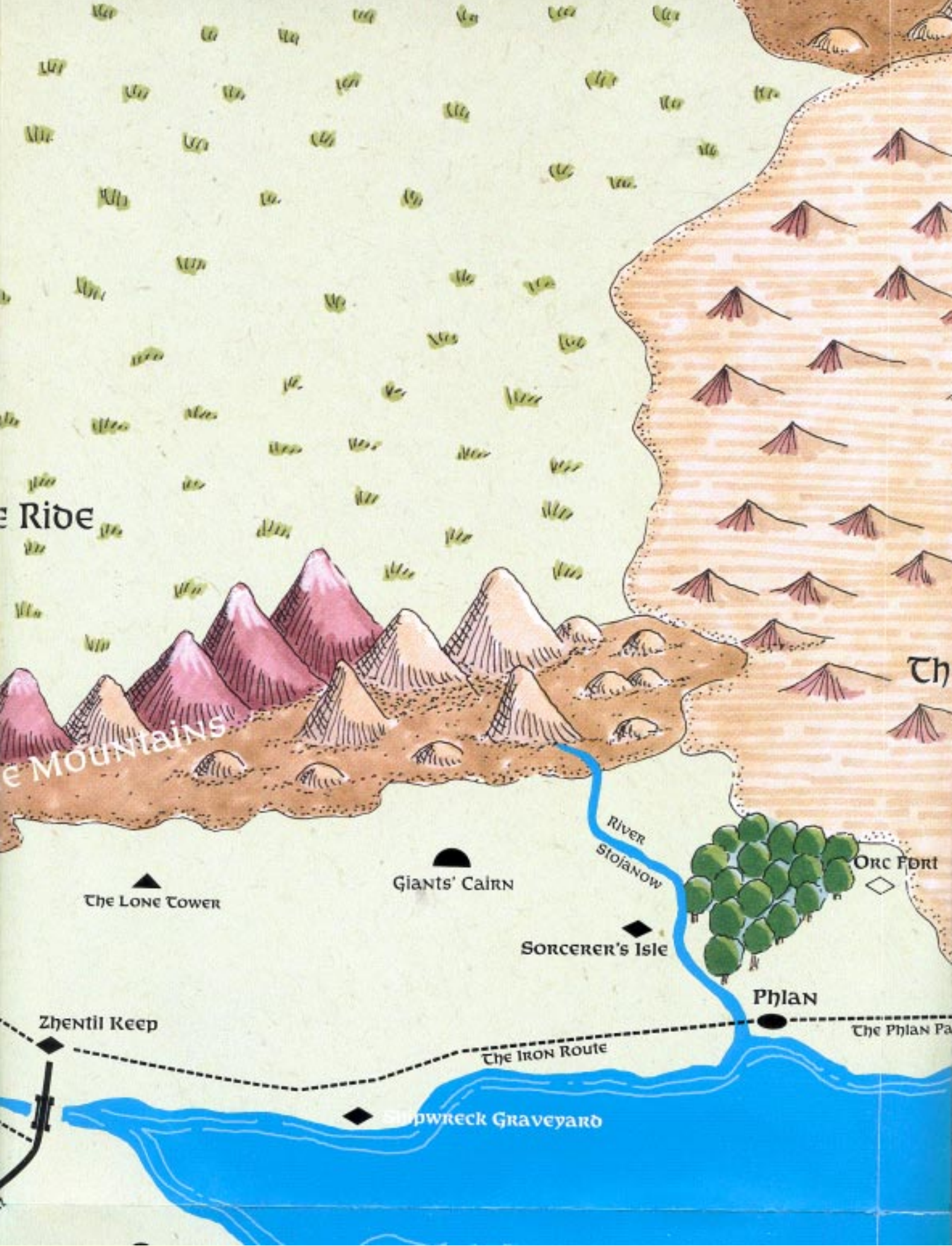
Teshwave

The Tesh Trail

The Bowel

The Throat

er Tesh



e Ride

The Mountains

The Lone Tower

Giants' Cairn

Sorcerer's Isle

Zhentil Keep

The Iron Route

Shipwreck Graveyard

Phlan

Orc Fort

The Phlan Pa

Th

Glister

The Great Gray Land of Char

rc Fort

the Phlan Path

Melvaunt

Point Moonsea

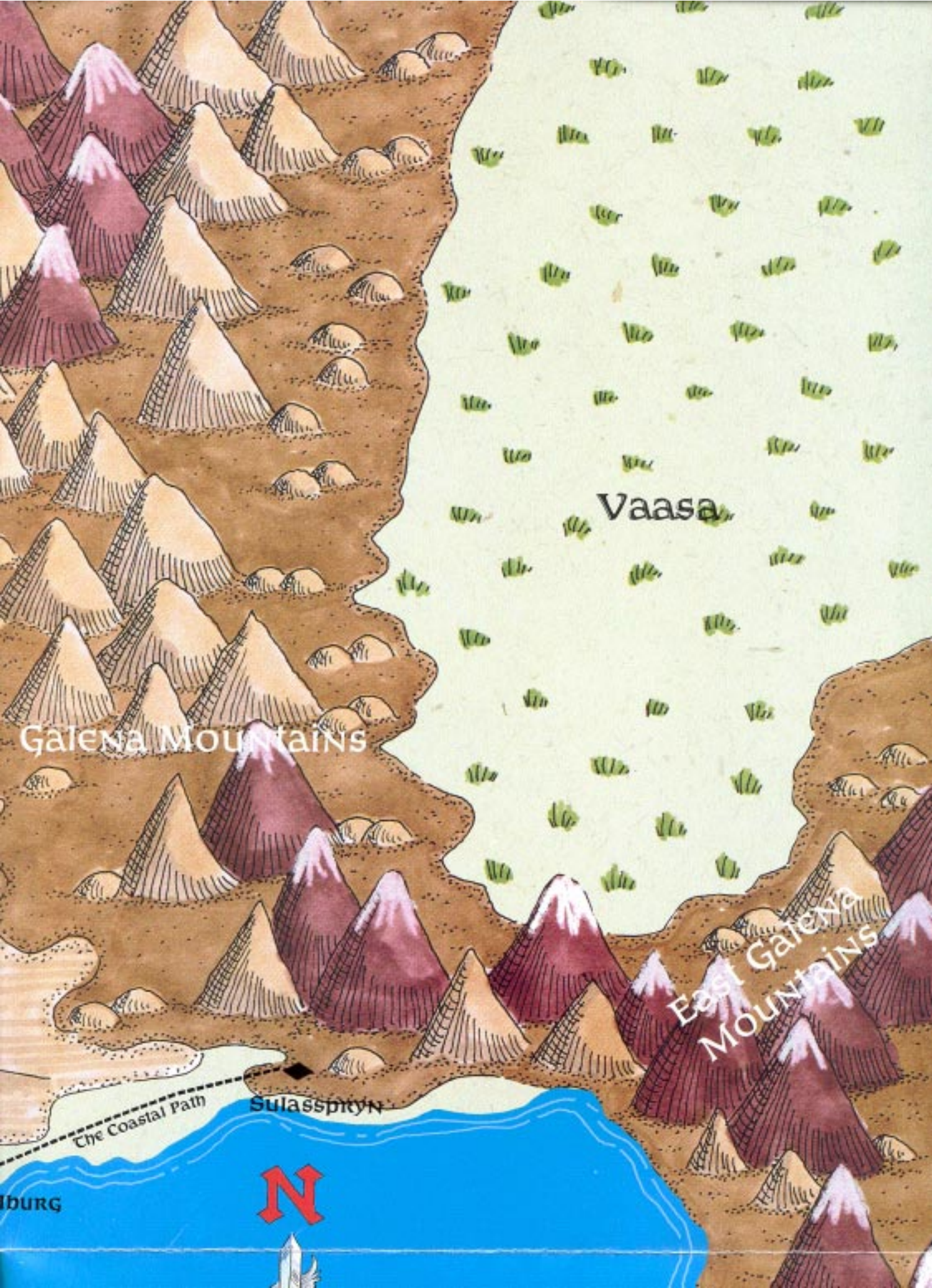
Chentia

Sword Trail

The Ruined Trail

Hulbur





Galena Mountains

Vaasa

East Galena
Mountains

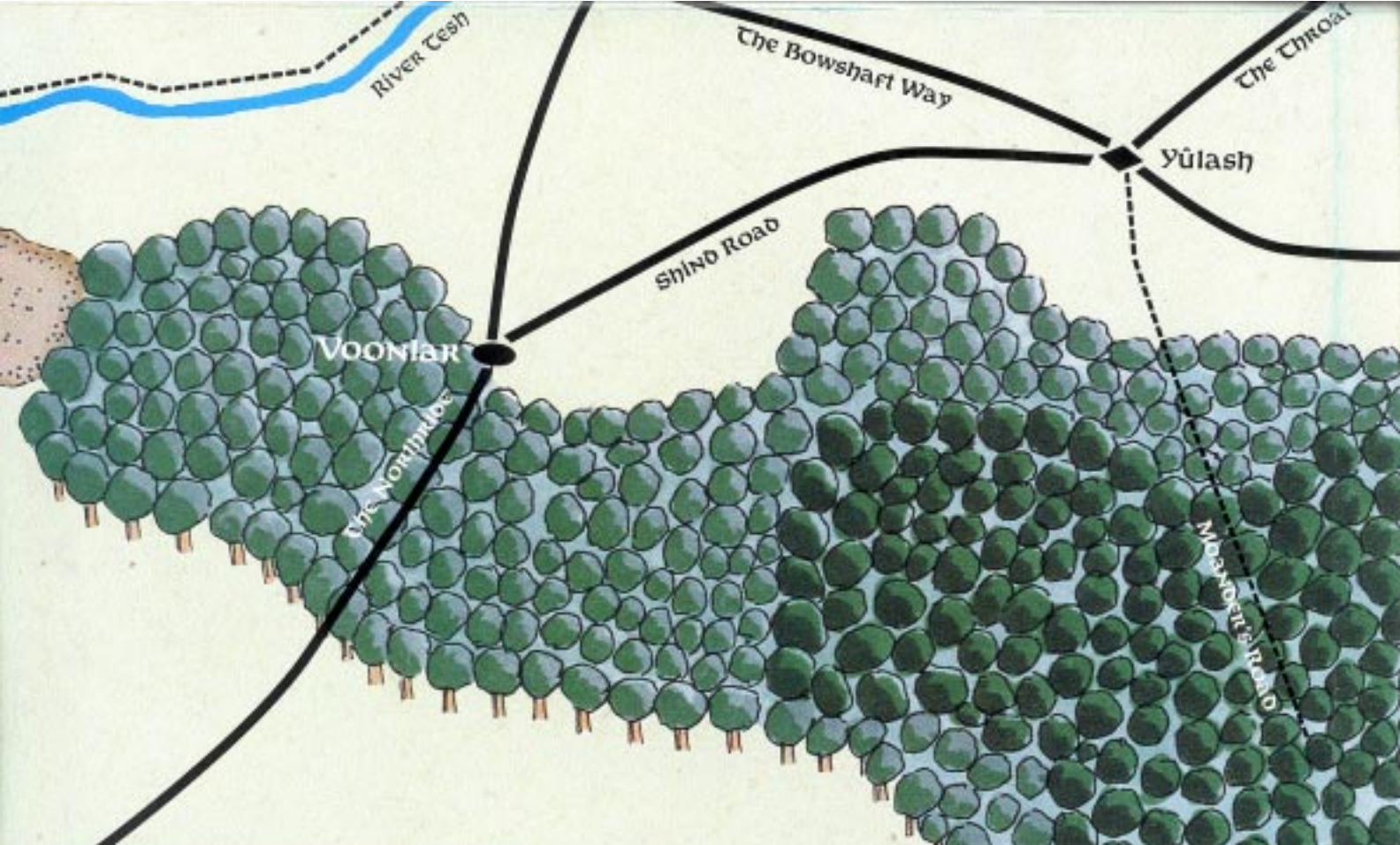
Sulasspityn

The Coastal Path

BURG

N





One inch = 15 miles



MOUNTAINS (High)



MOUNTAINS (Medium)



MOUNTAINS (Low)



FOOTHILLS



ROLLING HILLS



BARREN



VOLCANO



DESERT (SAND)



DESERT (ROCKY)



PLAINS & GRASSLANDS



CLEAR



FOREST (HEAVY)



FOREST (MEDIUM)



FOREST (LIGHT)



JUNGLE (HEAVY)



JUNGLE (MEDIUM)



SWAMP



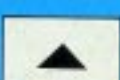
MARSH



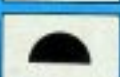
SEA
LAKE
RIVER



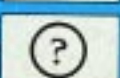
FALLS LINE



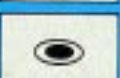
MINOR RUINS



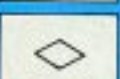
LANDMARK



MYSTERY
LOCATION



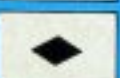
CITY



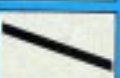
CASTLE/KEEP
FORT



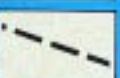
TOWN OR
IMPORTANT
VILLAGE



RUINS



ROADS



TRAILS



BRIDGE

147-400007-14

The Maidens' Loss

Elven Watch Tower

The Moon

Isle of Moas

Abarat's Folly

Hillsfar

Elua's L

EIVEN

The Moonsea Ride

Elua's Ride

Elven Ruins

Myth DRANNOR

EIVEN C

CORMANTHOR

Hairax's Path



MOONSEA

Chentia

The Ruined City

Ruined Orc City
(Gazzeth)

Seawave Ruins

The Bell in the Depths
(Northkeep)

Elua's Lighthouse

Elventree

EIMWOOD

Dalton's Lighthouse

Lis Ruins

Fort Dalton

EN-COURT

Mash

River Dualhaspek

(The Elvenflow)

The Lis Path

River Lis





POINT IRON

IRONFANG KEEP

Mulmaster

White River

Whitethouse

Fort Dalton

River Dalton

Maskyr's Trail

River Lis

Maskyr's Eye

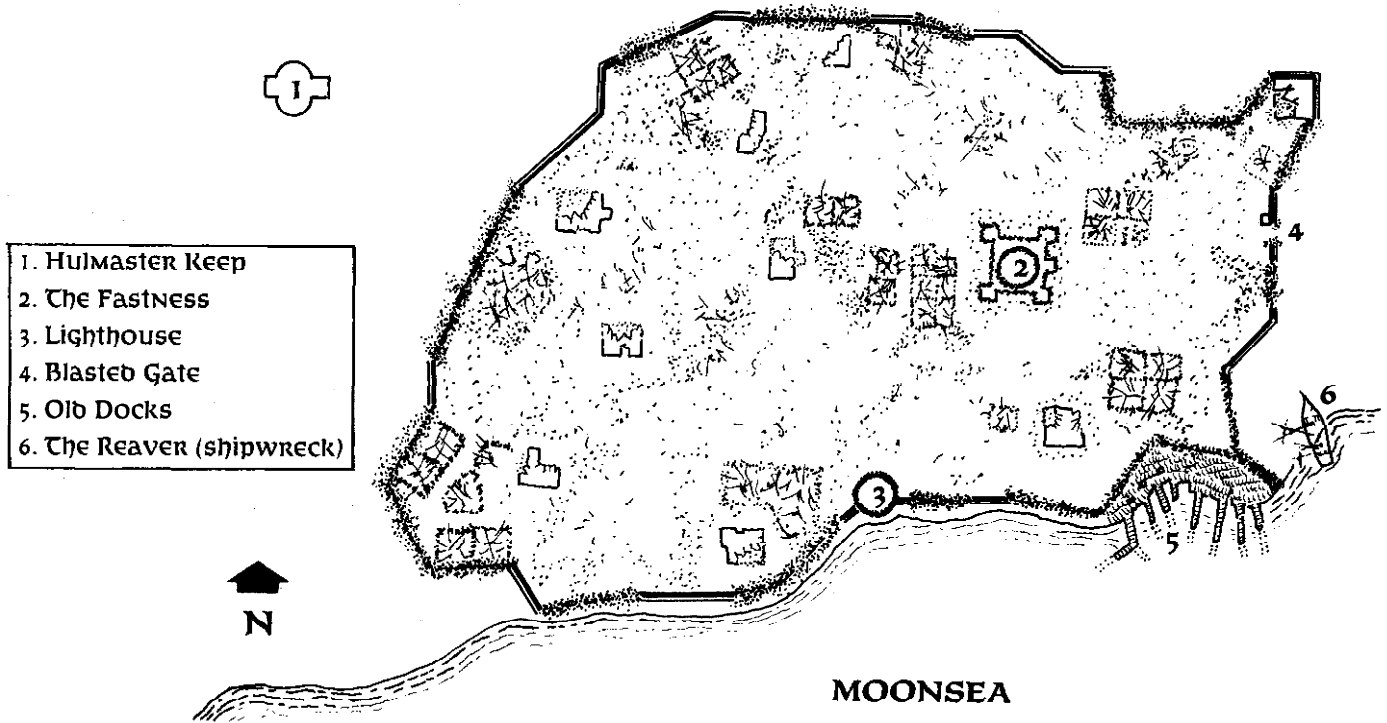
Earthspur Mountains

Beluar's HUNT

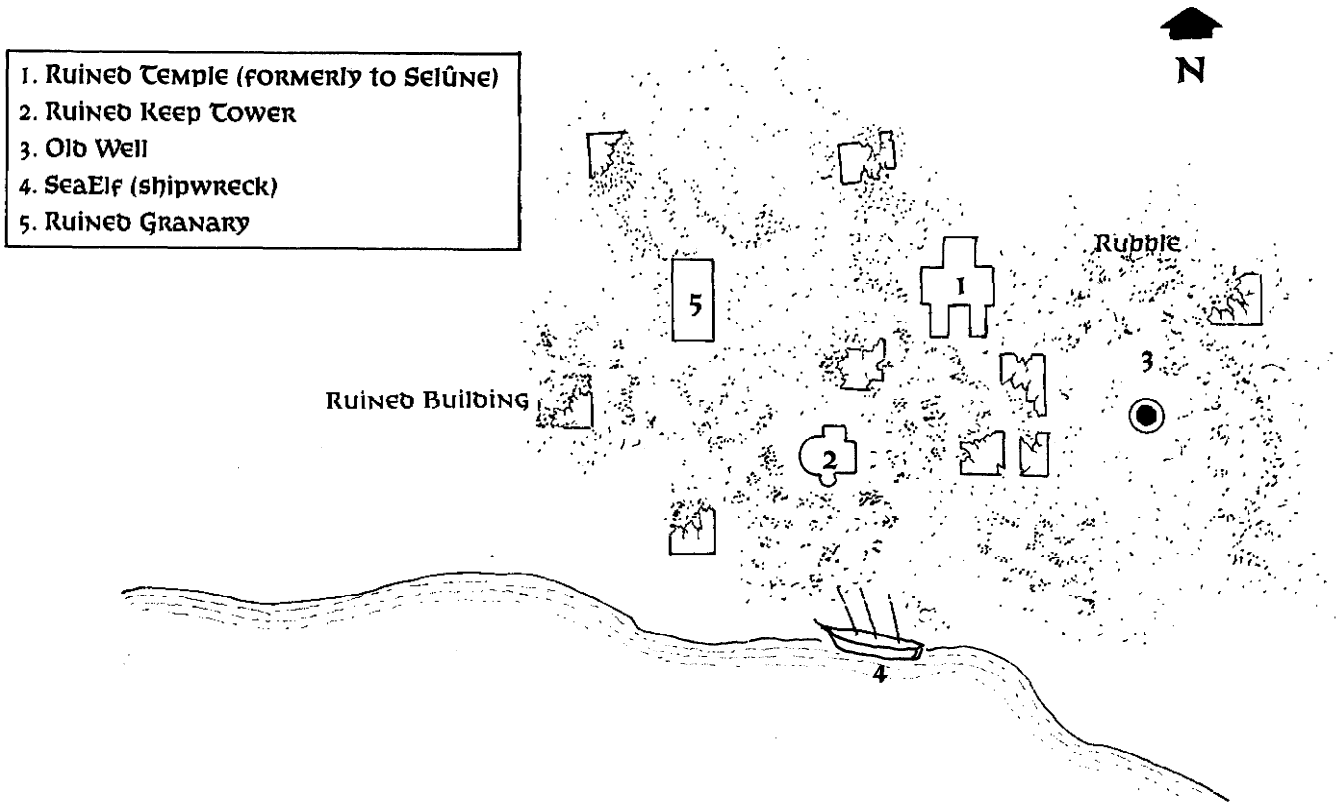
Kurth

The Hooded Forest

Hulburg



Sulasspryn





The MOONSEA

by JOHN TERRA

Its waters are the deep purple of the most precious amethyst; its shores hold some of the most dangerous locations in Faerûn. It is the Moonsea, home to Zhentil Keep, the Citadel of the Raven, and thousands of ordinary folk who merely want to make an honest living.

Hark to the words of Melandryll Belarod, the bard whose writings form the bulk of this material. He has experienced firsthand the horrors of ruined Hulburg, the desolation of Sulasspryn, and the stench of Mulmaster. His travels aboard the *Devawing* have produced this chronicle of the towns and people of the Moonsea, including both havens and dangers. Belarod knows of the Citadel of the Raven, a ten-mile-long series of fortresses and barracks, site of a terrifying betrayal. He also has evaded the Zhentilar, the crack forces garrisoned at Zhentil Keep.

In this product are a 64-page *Reference Guide* for the Dungeon Master, a 32-page *Player's Guide*, and a four-color poster map of the Moonsea region.

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