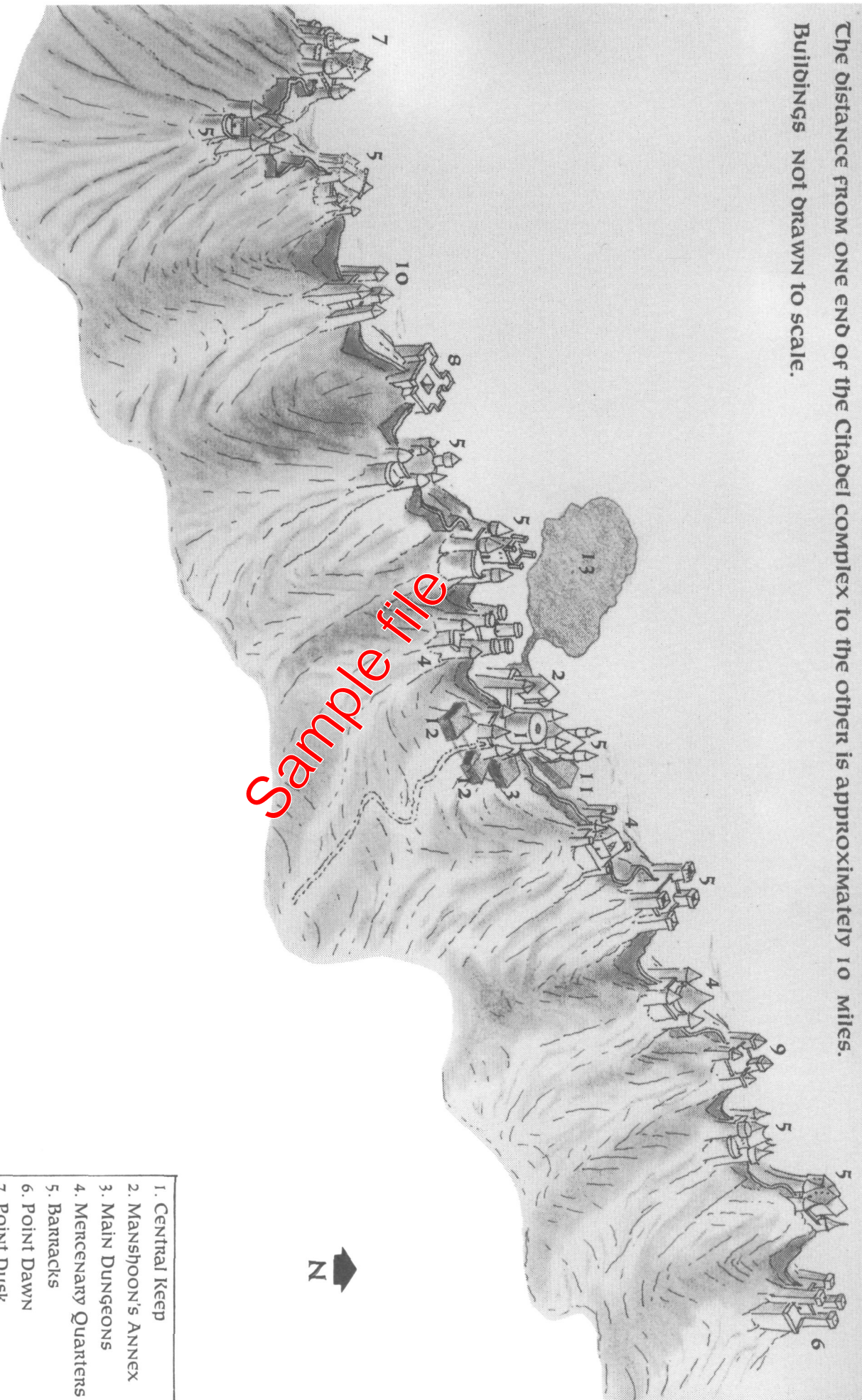


The distance from one end of the Citadel complex to the other is approximately 10 miles.  
Buildings NOT drawn to scale.



- |     |                    |
|-----|--------------------|
| 1.  | Central Keep       |
| 2.  | Manshooon'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 human kind

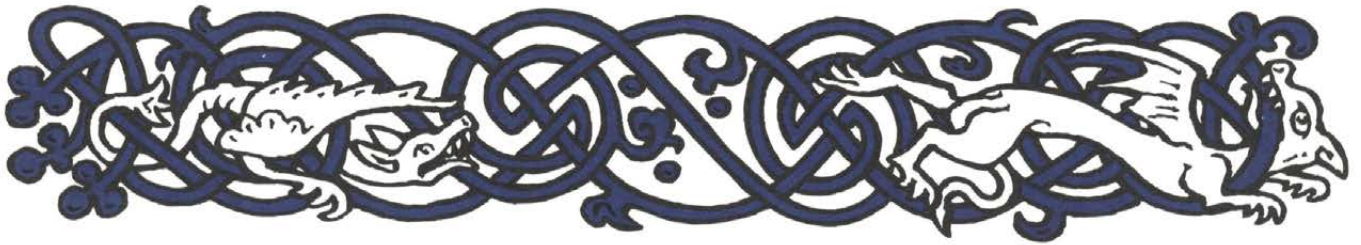
has, for now, won (ignoring the fact that many of the cities have been rebuilt countless times).

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

**T**he 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; Yûlash 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

**H**illsfar is a powerful, walled city-state on the southern coast of the Moonsea. 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-

