

The High History of Myth Drannor

Here is an overview of what I could glean of the long history of Myth Drannor from Elminster. Most elven elders know it (whether their pride will let them admit all of its details or not), and many bards know most of the tale.

Beginnings

Myth Drannor is old—so old that no living being knows its beginnings. Originally it was an elven camp; a community of large, inhabited trees around clearwater drinking springs and pools. Later, it was an elven city—a place of needle-sharp spires of growing, hollowed-out wood, linked by slim, dangerous suspension spans that were either railless wooden arches or the even more precarious “running ropes.”

This city grew in size and might with the elven communities of the western Dragonreach, over some two thousand years, until humans first came to the north shores of The Sea of Fallen Stars.

At that time, the city was the seat of a kingdom of moon elves and wood elves ruled by a moon elven royal family called the Irithyl. The city was known as Cormanthor, and when men reached it, they called it The Towers of Song for the music made there.

Coronal (king) among the folk of Cormanthor in those days was one Eltargrim, a once-mighty warrior who had grown wise and gentle in his old age. He fostered knowledge, craft, and mastery of magic in his city, and foresaw that men were a foe too numerous and relentlessly ambitious and adaptable for his people to defeat or keep out of their lands—so he sought out the greatest wizards and wood-lords (whom some called rangers and druids) among them, and invited them to dwell together with him in his kingdom. So that all strength might be gathered, that none be excluded and made ene-

mies, and that the kingdom never become a prize to be fought over between elves and humans, Eltargrim invited the gnomes, the halflings, and even the dwarves to come to Cormanthor.

The Starym and other proud and powerful elven families were so angered at this that they rebelled and left the Elven Court, going west to the Thunder Peaks and beyond, but most Cormanthan elves welcomed their new neighbors. The city grew swiftly in size and might.

All of the peoples who came to it were accustomed to facing a common foe: the goblinkin, who bred like rabbits, and swept out of the Moonsea North every decade or so in vast hordes that swept south in a tide of brutal destruction, slaughtering or enslaving all in their path until they were driven aside or scattered by all the magic that could be mustered against them. Cormanthor offered for the first time a stronghold to shelter the weakest folk, where they could stand together—dwarf, elf, gnome, halfling, and man—shoulder to shoulder against the orc raiders.

It also gave the orcs a hated goal, something that must be smashed. They came down on the city in their thousands, and almost destroyed it: only the bravery of the human and dwarven stalwarts, fighting in the very streets of the invaded city, saved all from slaughter.

A sickened, horrified Eltargrim resolved that the blood of war would never come to the very streets of his city again. He sensed that the bold eagerness of human wizards could be mated to the sophisticated skill of elven mages, and produce something that might defend the city—a great work of magic that would surround and protect the city at all times.

For almost a dozen years the wizards experimented and then labored together, weaving spell upon spell, guided by hints

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and legends out the shadowy past of the elves of long ago, creating something splendid with a magical life of its own: a mythal.

Myth Drannor

When the mythal was laid, in the Year of Soaring Stars (261 DR), Cormanthor was re-named Myth Drannor, and its age of greatness truly began. Note that Elminster's claims to be variously "a little over" five hundred or six hundred years old ring a little hollow if he truly helped in the weaving of the mythal—but some quiet words from Laeral and Khelben Blackstaff lead me to believe that Elminster has from time to time fallen afoul of hostile magic and slept, or been imprisoned, while ages passed and he knew them not—so perhaps he counts only those years he's known, or perhaps he's something greater than an old, fussy wizard.

Men from the overcrowded lands of the Vilhon Reach came in numbers, seeking the riches of the Moonsea North (drawn by the obvious wealth and works in metals and gems of the dwarves who then held the Vast, or eastern shore of the Dragonreach).

Seeking to slow their destruction of the forest, Eltargrim invited them to Myth Drannor to trade and settle, and join in the growing greatness of The City of Might.

Over the decades and centuries that followed, Myth Drannor grew in beauty, happiness, and luxury to the greatest height known in all Faerun. The City of Bards, some called it, or the City of Song, or the City of Beauty.

Inventors and craftsmen were welcome in Myth Drannor as in all cities—but more than simply the makers of coins were revered. Bards, tellers-of-tales, artists, historians, alchemists, mages, and seekers after knowledge of all sorts were welcomed and encouraged.

Songs of lasting fame began to come out of Myth Drannor, and its wizards grew in might to rival the great human kingdom of magic, Netheril. This rivalry several times spilled over into open war—magical skirmishes known as the Crown against Scepter wars. (One of Myth Drannor's names was the City of Crowns, because many magical items crafted in the city took the form of crowns and diadems, whereas the sorcerers of Netheril tended to use scepters.)

Cloaked by the might of this magic, Myth Drannor easily destroyed horde after horde of orcs, and grew in fame and power. Its jewelers were matchless, and its musical instruments (made by elven artificers, notably the families Lharithlyn, Shraiee, and Tlanbourn) stood unsurpassed in all Faerun. Spectacles of dance and song, theatrical masques led by skilled bards, became frequent—and folk began to travel to Myth Drannor just to see these marvels.

Myth Drannor earned the name "the Towers of Beauty" among bards, and as the years passed and happiness reigned over all, the elves gave it the name "the City of Love," out of joy that the races of Faerun could live together in peace and contentment.

Yet the gods grow restless, and all things change under their hands. Greatness is always hurled down in the end. So it was with Myth Drannor, as with all great cities.

The Dusk

Myth Drannor reached its height in the Year of the Bloody Tusk (661 DR). At the end of that year the ancient Lord Eltargrim died, and there was great mourning. The Dusk had begun—all at once, evil human wizards who had come to the city (from what is now Thay) used magic to slay and work intrigues, and the goblin kin rose again to attack the wooded verges of Myth Drannor. The embattled city found it necessary to

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elect a Captain, or warleader, to direct its defenses against the constant forays of orcs and the emboldened trolls, bugbears, gnolls, and flind.

Not even the exact year of Myth Drannor's fall is remembered: too many perished to keep the Roll of Years straight in the fledgling Dales. Elminster was off adventuring on other planes, as were many of his young and hungry-for-glory fellow mages.

It is clear that over six hundred years ago, sometime after the Year of the Lost Lance (712), a power in the far north (possibly an evil human archmage, more probably a great flind or orc shaman) summoned yugoloths in numbers to aid them in an assault on the rich human lands of the Dragonreach.

Whatever befell, the greatest of the yugoloths, the nycaloths Aulmpiter, Gaulguth, and Malimshaer, broke free of the mastery of their summoner and by brutal means emptied the flind and orc holds of every last individual, whipping them into a great Army of Darkness that swept south like a destroying wind. In their thousands they perished, in headlong attack upon every monster of the Moonsea North—and still, driven by the merciless nycaloths, they swept on.

Captain of Myth Drannor in that time was one Fflar. He was a man of mighty valor and skill in battle, yet quiet-spoken, and seldom seen. When word came to him that a horde more terrible than any known before was slaughtering its way through the beast-men (ogres) of Thar, the Captain roused the city to arms, and set a watchpost north of the city, at a place in the woods called Helmgrove (the exact location of that spot is now lost).

There the greatest warriors of the city gathered to await the coming of doom, in a company called the Shield of Myth Drannor. They did not wait long.

The Fall

The Army of Darkness came down upon them, and red war raged through the trees. In endless numbers the orcs, hobgoblins, and worse came, overwhelming even the most valiant warriors—until the Shield was no more, every warrior slain but a few who fled to bring warning.

South of Helmgrove there was a burned area of woods, the scar of a forest fire, where Myth Drannor mages were wont to hurl destructive spells in practice. At this Burnt Ridge many wizards of the city made their stand, and as the Army of Darkness advanced, fell magic struck them down in their hundreds.

Yet for every hundred who fell, another thousand still came on—and in the end the wizards, exhausted, fled the field, and the Army swept on.

Fflar had begun a hasty evacuation of the city, emptying it of those too weak to fight, or too brilliant to be risked. There was time only for each to snatch up what they could carry and run, ere the orcs and yugoloths were howling up against the last defenders of the city, the oldest warriors.

Fflar fought among them, wielding a great blade that burned with a blue fire in battle. Sages argue about the true name and powers of this magical sword, but strong and persistent legend holds that it lies in the city still, in Fflar's bony grasp, where he fell at last atop a mound of slain yugoloths; none of the dark army dared approach it.

The Army of Darkness lost thousands upon thousands that day—but they were still numerous enough to obliterate those few who held the city against them, and rampaged through its streets, burning, pillaging, looting, and slaying those too slow or stubborn to have fled.

Some of those loath to leave were archmages still bent upon their research—and

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when their towers were invaded, the magical explosions with which they defended themselves were fearsome, and their dying curses worse.

Yugoloths fled whimpering, some of their limbs turned to rubbery, slithering, uncontrollable things. Others shrieked ceaselessly, wracked by phantom pains that would not subside. Still others devoured what they could reach of their own bodies, howling in madness. Guardian golems and other fearsome sentinels tore orcs and yugoloths alike limb from limb—and more than one tower blew apart, raining down those who had invaded it in showers of gore. Much of the areas of widespread destruction seen in the ruins today were created in those terrible days when the last wizard-holds in the city were taken.

Yet in the end, Myth Drannor fell, and was ruined. What was left of the Army of Darkness broke up into small raiding bands, and hungrily pursued the fleeing folk of the city to the very coast of Sembia, hunting down and slaying many, ere the armymen of the coastal cities scattered or drove back the raiders.

The few survivors from The City of Beauty brought tales of terror with them—and Myth Drannor was left empty, to grow its own haunted reputation with the passing years.

Only the elves who dwelt in the woods nearby dared venture near the shattered city. They rose up in arms to rid their forest home of the many wandering bands of orcs, flind, gnolls, and bugbears who had been part of the Army of Darkness—and for two summers hunted them relentlessly, until all the woods were cleansed. This work took all the magic they had, and most of their best warrior blood.

The Guardianship of the Elves

Having paid such a high blood price for reclaiming their land, the elves were not eager to welcome intruders who might bring danger anew—and as human and halfling brigands grew more numerous, the elves closed the woods to those not of their kin, and swallowed up Myth Drannor behind a cloak of elven magic—and the seeking points of elven arrows. Myth Drannor became lost to men, and its legends grew.

The Elven Court slowly grew strong again, and held its own as men pushed past, settling the Dales and then the Moonsea shores. Their numbers and ready-armed hold on the territory between the lawless northern wastes and the Elven Court woods (plus the emptying of orc holds that had created the Army of Darkness) ensured that so great a horde would never come south again—and never bring war to Myth Drannor.

So it was, and for many years none but elves were welcome in what had become known as the Woods of Cormanthyr. The elves kept Myth Drannor out of the hands of all but dragons seeking lairs (whom they deemed fitting guardians). The elves themselves stayed out of the ruins, holding them sacred to the memory of the time when the races dwelt together in peace—and beasts left behind by the Army, or who had been freed from the cages of collectors and experimenting wizards, or who had come to the ruins through no-longer-guarded *gates* from elsewhere, all made entry to the city deadly to the few bold adventurers who used magic to elude the elven guard and reach the city.

Their fates added to the fell reputation of the ruined city, and kept the treasure hunts few. It seemed that Myth Drannor would

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sleep forever cloaked in the forest, until less than twenty winters ago, when the elves of the Elven Court decided that the human hold on the region, with the gathering evils in Zhentil Keep, Mulmaster, Vaasa, and Scardale, and the soaring population and hunger for wood (as a fuel and building material) of rich Sembia, made their own survival ultimately impossible—and The Flight of the Elves began.

The Retreat

In the Year of Moonfall (1344 DR), the High Council of wise and elder elves, who ruled the Elven Court, reached the fateful decision to abandon their woodland realm after over five hundred summers of deliberation—and began to empty their realm, sending their people to fabled Evermeet, the island realm and refuge of the elves.

The communities of the Tangletrees and Semberhome were emptied first, and the elves went quietly, using the ancient *gates* they knew to be in Myth Drannor to reach Ardeepforest (whose own moon elven folk had already taken ship west to Evermeet) and Undermountain beneath Waterdeep, where Mirt the Moneylender is now known to have quietly made his ships available by night, to let the elves slip quietly out of Faerun to Mintarn and other harbors off the Sword Coast, where the ships of Evermeet met them, and took them on to a new life, free of the aggressiveness of humankind.

Some few elves remained behind, both to hide many of the disappearances and to continue to guard the realm as the fleeing elves traveled. These included the wise and urbane elven ambassador to the Dragonreach courts, Luvon Greencloak, and war bands (such as the one led by Alok Silverspear) skilled in archery and forest fighting.

Some elves who loved Faerun too much to

leave it still dwell in the Elvenwood (the forest from the Thunder Peaks eastward to the Dragonreach, once ruled by the Elven Court), or have taken *gates* (some of which are spoken of in the novel *Elfshadow*) to join the elven realm of Evereska, which is in need of warriors against the evils around it, and to help it hold its new colony in the Greycloak Hills.

Yet the cloak of elven might that so long kept the world away from fabled Myth Drannor is gone—and the world has begun to realize it. The Time of the Seizing is upon us, when the riches of Myth Drannor—gems and coins enough to buy several kingdoms, to be sure, but above all magic to rule all Faerun, were it all to fall into one hand skilled enough to wield it—will be taken from the slumbering ruins, and the face of Faerun will be changed forever.

The Seizing

The most daring (or desperate) adventurers have always hungered for the riches of Myth Drannor, and over the years, there has been no shortage of wealthy sponsors in Sembia, and evil mages in Zhentil Keep, Mulmaster, Calaunt, Westgate, and Thay—as well as lone wizards in keeps and towers all across Faerun—to goad or spur them on. Myth Drannor has been invaded again and again . . . and has dealt swift, cruel deaths to most visitors.

When the agents of the High Imperceptor succeeded in opening a *gate* in Myth Drannor (see the chapter on “The Baatezu” in this sourcebook), powerful folk all over the Dragonreach soon knew of it—and the race to seize the gold of Myth Drannor was on. Folk have come to call it “The Seizing,” as they wait to see what power—and new terror—will come out of Myth Drannor.

These days, every hedge-wizard of the Inner Sea Realms, and every landless sword-swinging seeking to carve out fortune and fame, seems to have a stab at Myth Drannor.

Almost every tenday, despite the avowed guardianship of the Knights of Myth Drannor, an adventuring band plunges into the ruins—most never to be seen again, although a lucky few have escaped with their lives, or even treasure: the Myth Drannan magic whispered of in all those legends does exist!

A partial list of those who have gone to Myth Drannor follows. Beginning in the Year of the Worm, we know that the Company of the Black Buckler (a mercenary band usually found guarding caravans or the persons of rich merchants in Sembia) went in, at the behest of a mysterious ring of investors based in Selgaunt. They’ve not been seen since.

A bare tenday after the Bucklers rode into the woods, a nameless band of thieves and hireswords from Westgate landed at Yhaunn, and set out across country into the

woods, followed shortly by a wizard-led band from Hillsfar. There is a strong possibility that these two groups encountered each other and fought (or one ambushed the other, with the same bloody results).

Then the floodgates opened, and Myth Drannor swallowed up these in quick succession: the Men of the Scarlet Scimitar (an able and sinister group of magic-laden adventurers from Calimshan); the Women of the Wind (an all-female adventuring group out of Impiltur); the Blue Fist (a boisterous, fun-loving group of aging warriors, formerly of the Sword Coast and late of Westgate); the Company of the Purple Cloak (a large and well-appointed group of male warriors and female wizards who are widely—and, Elminster says, correctly—rumored in Saerloon, where they first appeared together, to be agents of the Cult of the Dragon); the Glass Goblet (a group of bored but well-heeled younger sons of the Waterdhavian nobility); the Vengeful Blade (an evil, ruthless band of Thavian ex-slavers and renegades from Aglarond known for their successful tomb-thefts and brigand raids in lawless Tethyr—some of this group escaped Myth Drannor’s perils, and told the world of the baatezu and other waiting dangers); and the Company of Cathlander (a band of seasoned adventurers named for its sponsor, a wizard of the Vilhon Reach).

More adventurers converge on Myth Drannor every today, and many have doubtless escaped this list:

The Encircling Wood

The forest around Myth Drannor is a dim, eerie place of huge trees, tangled vines, and deep shade, studded with thickets of undergrowth wherever a forest giant has fallen, to admit sunlight to the forest floor.

The ground is damp. Many small springs rise in the area, running across the rocky, root-strewn forest floor in little rills, to join the plentiful streams. In all cases, the water is cold, clear, and safe to drink. The forest life is abundant, and the trees around Myth Drannor are mainly oak, maple, blueleaf, duskwood, shadowtop, silverbark, and weirwood (see the end of this chapter for more on these trees). The land rises and falls in small hillocks and moss-cloaked rocky outcrops, and this, plus the deep gloom, limits vision to 90' or less in most places.

This vast woodland has always been dangerous to those not friendly to, and wise in the way of, forests—but since the elven Retreat, many monsters have come into it (or out of Myth Drannor!), or bred unchecked, to make it more deadly.

The worst perils of the Elvenwood are the brigands, adventuring bands, and raiding bands of orcs, bugbears, and the like who have been drawn to Myth Drannor. Unwary folk eager to reach Myth Drannor, and sorely wounded survivors fleeing out have alike run afoul of brigand traps and ambushes. (Parties too weak to go on may receive unlooked-for aid in the form of NPC reinforcements: frightened survivors of adventuring bands who have tried their luck in Myth Drannor, and found it bad.)

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Trees of the Elvenwood

From end to end of its vast territory, the Elvenwood holds almost all deciduous and coniferous varieties of trees known in the northern Realms. Of the sorts plentiful around Myth Drannor, a few species deserve note. If a band of adventurers can get certain types of cut timber to a town on a caravan-road, they can typically sell them for 4 to 9 gp/log (depending on type, size, condition, and current demand). That price can go up by 6 gp or more if the PCs get them to a large city and sell them directly to a woodcarver or fine carpenter.

Blueleaf trees grow together in thick stands. They may reach 40' in height, but their trunks are rarely more than eight inches in diameter. These delicate needle-like trees are supple, bending rather than breaking in high winds and under heavy ice. When used as firewood, they yield beautiful blue flames. Their sap and crushed leaves (which are of a vivid gleaming hue we might call "electric blue") yield a dye of the same color that is much used in making cloaks in the North.

Duskwood trees grow straight and tall, reaching 60' in height. Their trunks are dark, smooth, and bare; all of their tiny branches are in a crown at the top of each tree. Their name comes from the dark, eerie

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appearance of stands of duskwoods.

Under their black bark is smoky grey wood that is as hard as iron, and resistant to fire (smoldering rather than blazing, so that they survive many forest fires and the axes of woodcutters seeking firewood). Most mast spars and building beams in the Dragonreach lands are duskwood.

Shadowtop trees are the soaring giants of Faerunian forests. In warm, damp climes, they can grow two feet a year, reaching 90' or more with massive pleat-ridged trunks flaring up to 20' in diameter at the base. The tree's name comes from the dense clusters of feathery, irregular leaves at its top; it typically has few or no lower branches. Shadowtop leaves are copper-colored underneath, and dark green on top (fading to copper in fall).

The wood is tough, but tends to split down its length under stress, into a splayed mass of fibers. This makes it useless for carving or structural work, but valuable in rope-making (the fibers are very strong). Shadowwood burns slowly (it usually won't ignite unless added to an already-blazing fire of other woods) but cleanly, with little smoke and a very hot fire. This makes it ideal for cooking. Five wagons are typically required to carry off a felled, sectioned shadowtop; if a woodcutter has fewer, a large remnant is left behind for later trips. By tradition, travelers can usually cut enough for one night's fire from this without earning anyone's anger.

Silverbark trees flourish in wet ground such as the deeper ravines in the woods near Myth Drannor. They have thin trunks three to four inches in diameter, are straight, and seldom grow more than a dozen feet tall—serving the poor as poles, staves, and (with whittled points hardened in a slow fire) spears or battle-stakes.

Silverbark is plentiful and grows in thickets. Its silvery bark crumbles and pulls loose

easily; an exposed tree dries out thoroughly, becoming brittle and weak, unsuitable for lance shafts, fence rails, or building work, within a year. Its large, oval, pointed-tipped leaves are deep red (purple at the roots), waxy, and durable; they are sometimes used to wrap small game, or to carry twigs.

Weirwood is rare and highly prized—and are actively protected by dryads, hamadryads, treants, druids, and rangers. They closely resemble oaks in appearance, and if undisturbed grow into huge, many-branched forest giants.

Weirwood is resilient and durable, giving a warm, clear sound to lutes, harps, and other musical instruments made of it. Only magical fire can ignite or burn weirwood; it can be tossed into blazing buildings and emerge unharmed. Any magical radiance that comes into contact with weirwood evokes a faint *faerie fire*-like glow, that emanates from the wood for 1d4 + 1 rounds.

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Since the withdrawal of the elves from the woods surrounding Myth Drannor, the ruined city has lain open for exploration—for those who can fight off erinyes and worse, that is! Winged baatezu have made even flying over the city perilous—and brought almost certain death to those who come armed only with swords and a few spells, hoping to find the riches of the city unguarded.

Elminster is not one of those. Since the destruction of the main *gate* linking Myth Drannor to Avernus in the Nine Hells, the baatezu have grown far fewer. This heroic feat was accomplished by the Knights of Myth Drannor (see the *Cyclopedia of the Realms*, in the original FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Set; the *gate* was created by priests of Bane). No sooner were they done, then another evil power, Tyranthraxus, established itself in the ruins (see module FRC2, *Curse of the Azure Bonds*). Since its overthrow, the Old Mage has made several flying visits to ruined Myth Drannor.

He reports that the ruins are hardly any less dangerous than when they were overrun by baatezu. "Ye can scarce stroll forty paces without happening on another brig-and-ambush—oh, excuse me; I believe ye'd call them 'adventurers.' Whate'er ye call them, the very air stinks of their greed."

Yet, as a guide to those interested in visiting the ruins, Elminster has agreed to provide a brief overview of what visitors will find of the city today. (Important buildings described here are shown in more detail on the cardsheets of this boxed set.)

In winter, the ruins are warmer than the rest of the Dalelands (thanks to the mythal, which keeps things above freezing). As a result, trees and brush grow much faster than in the forest around, death by exposure is unknown, and the temperature differences keep the edges of the ruin shrouded in concealing mists. Snowfall in the ruins melts as

it lands, and runs into a thousand flower-bowls, fountains, and depressions—where inhabitants can readily drink it.

In summer, the trees and gardens that have flourished in Myth Drannor since its founding run riot, bursting roofs and walls with their growth. Season after season, this growth has gone on, reducing much of the city to rubble. Young shadowtop trees are everywhere, rising up from a tangle of gooseberry bushes, rockclinger vines, and shrubs.

Elminster warns explorers that Myth Drannor is linked to other locations in Faerun by almost a thousand permanent *gates*. Some of the best-known of these are described elsewhere in this book, but even when Myth Drannor's pride was at its height, no being knew where all of these portals were or where they led to. The ruin of the city has left some of them "in the open," invisible snares waiting to whisk the unsuspecting traveler elsewhere.

The Cityscape

Myth Drannor, seen from the air, is roughly the shape of an axe-head, with the flaring blade to the west, and the narrow back running to the southeast. At the western edge of the city is a large, lush rolling meadow (magic keeps trees from growing over this area) known as "the Westfields." It was once a visitors' camping area and paddock, and a livestock pasture for city-owned beasts. To the north of it is a small glade, the Burial Glen, a cemetery.

Through the center of the city, where the axe-handle would be, runs a stream. Two small streams join just north of the city, and (thanks to Tilver's Dam, built by the famous human engineer for whom Tilverton and Tilver's Gap are named) widen into an ornamental lake south of the city, known as Glyrryl's Pool (for the half-elven mage whose

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magic sculpted it). To the east of the pool, along the southern edge of the city, lies another open field, "the Meadow," once used for strolling, picnics, and games. Today, Elminster warns, much of this open space is a magic-dead area.

North of the pool is a great area of destruction, where not a building still stands, and the land is covered with hills: heaps of stone rubble. Here, much of the central city was destroyed when Myth Drannor was overrun by the nycaloth-led armies of evil. The heroes of the city made their last stand in this area, and the slaughter was great. Much magic was hurled, and it laid waste to this area. Mimics like to take stony shapes and lurk here, to prey on passing creatures.

Rising above this tumbled desolation of sliding stone rubble to the northwest are the dark, unbreached walls of Castle Cormanthor, the citadel around which the city was built. This many-spired castle still looks like the beautiful elven stronghold it once was, but for many years it has housed a clan of gargoyles. In recent times, when baatezu were let into the city through *gates*, cornugons slew the leaders of this winged tribe, and assumed control. Their brutal rule enabled some of the gargoyles to survive the whims of the baatezu (who liked to tear apart or devour alive gargoyles they caught), and over forty of the fell creatures still lair here, flying over the ruins to hunt.

To the south, across a still clear flagstone-paved street from the Castle rises a much smaller, domed building. It is the Speculum, a hall where wizards once demonstrated new spells, took on apprentices, came seeking apprenticeship, and purchased (or advertised their need for) exotic spell components. Now choked with rubble from its collapsed ceiling, this dust-choked ruin is notable as the site of a "safehold," or hidden extra-dimensional apartment, believed to have been established by the archmage

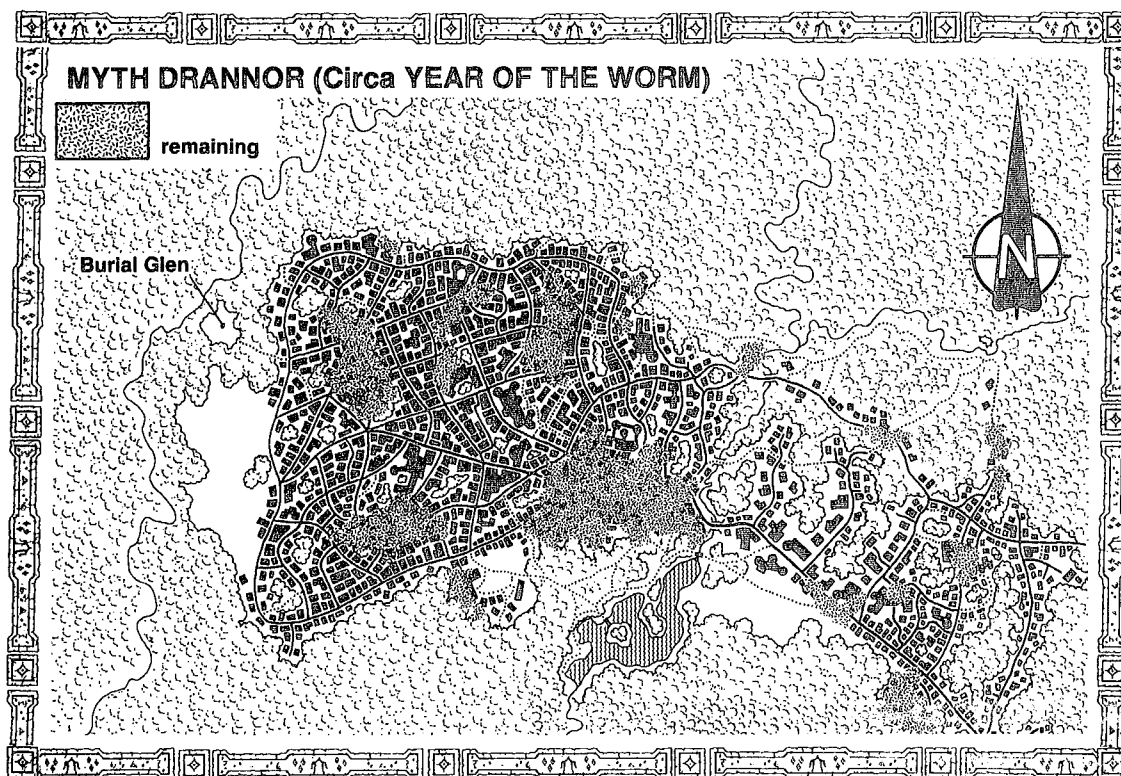
Alaghlar of the Horns. There is a hole in the flagstone floor of the Speculum's vast central hall; if one inserts the correct magical key, the portal entrance to this hidey-hole appears in midair nearby.

South of the Speculum, across another street, stands a building almost as large as the Castle. From the air, it is roughly triangular in shape, and is massively built (by long-ago dwarven master craftsmen) of stone with arched windows and gargoyle-like rainspout figures. This is Tyrintar's Hall, a large banquet hall and meeting-house named for the first captain of the city, a paladin whose fame as a noble battle-hero was once known across Faerun. Its huge central hall is said to retain traces of its former greatness—but the jewelled guests who sit at the long tables are now undead! Multi-layered spells were laid in the hall to provide background and dance music (for use when musicians were scarce), and to link this with lighting that continuously altered to suit the tempo and mood of the music. From time to time, something triggers this old magic, and the eerie lights and sounds of long-ago merriment spill out of the hall once again. It is said that casting a *legend lore* spell here can be an overwhelming experience for all but the most powerful archmages.

To the west of the hall, beyond a largely-intact block of tall, many-balconied apartments and private homes (most rise four floors above the street, and retain fragments of their once-spectacular painted glass windows and lifelike exterior relief carvings), is another sprawling building, consisting of four wings linking turrets to a central core. This is the Irithlimum, once a fabled school of wizardry.

Apprentices by the dozens perished here, in the titanic battle in which Myth Drannor fell. The roof erupted into fragments in several places; fires raged in some corridors,

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and some chambers collapsed entirely, but the outer walls stand largely intact, and many mages dream of unearthing mighty elder magics here. They'll find it largely stripped bare, but even the Phaerimm haven't finished exploring the many underground rooms of the Irithlium. They are hampered by monster attacks, for in the final battle for Myth Drannor a fell magic of awesome power was worked by the attackers, creating a large magic-dead area that still envelops the entire school today.

North and east of the Castle, on the edge of the city, stands a fortress with a large tower at its south end, a huge central block, and a long wing extending due north. This was a temple to Oghma, the House of Song, and it appears largely intact. It is said to include libraries of written music and the lyrics of ballads, as well as hidden rooms crammed with long-lost magical instruments. From time to time, at night, haunt-

ingly mournful music is heard coming from this fortress, but its cause is unknown.

South of the House of Song and east of the Castle, on the northern edge of the large field of broken rubble, stands a small, square keep, of stout, olden design: one of the few buildings in the city to have crenellations, arrow-slits, and a portcullis. This was originally a fortress built by the dwarves as a storehouse, in the days when orcs roamed the area in numbers, and the city was not yet strong.

Later, it was named the Onaglym, or House of Gems, and was used by the gemcutters of the city, who brought their wares to this spell-guarded place. Here the gems were graded and safe-stored for later sale to visitors. The whispers of Dale Reatmsiore have no doubt increased the riches to be found within these walls over the years, but it is certain that several caravan-loads of gems still lie in its storage cellars, guarded

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by the ghosts of the dead.

The dwarves built many pumps so that their fortress could draw deep water from sources that surface besiegers could not poison or cut off. In the final hours before the army of evil swept through the city, a gemwarden who did not live to see the next dawn opened the pumps, so that the cellars flooded, and the gems he was sworn to defend could not easily pass into the hands of pillagers.

The street that curves along the southwestern side of Castle Cormanthor, between it and the Speculum, was known as the Street of the Evening Star. Today, its path is clear: from the great heaps of rubble that swallow one end of it, in the destroyed area at the center of the city, to a much smaller band of destruction at its northern end. A still-splendid building rises on the other side of that rubble, its empty windows still staring down the length of the street.

This is Shaundakul's Throne, the chief remaining temple of a demipower once worshipped by men in the Moonsea North. Shaundakul, Rider of the Winds, is detailed elsewhere in this sourcebook. His temple consists of two towers linked by walls forming an enclosed courtyard, to a large central building containing an undercroft where the clergy lived, and a huge dais (the throne itself), open to the sky, where the demigod was worshipped. Here some very dangerous beings known as "windghosts," servants of the god, still guard their Master's place of veneration—and seem able, Elminster warns, to move a magic-dead area about to encompass intruders, and render them easy prey.

Along the northern edge of the Throne runs a long, winding street, that continues on around the northern and western edge of the city. This is Eldansyr's Ride, and at the northwestern end of the city, two large buildings stand on its northern side. The

easternmost of these is Ildrannath's Tower, once home to an elite band of warrior-maidens, who led many expeditions into the unexplored Moonsea North, and rode guard for many caravans. Ildrannath was the portly, fatherly, bear-like man who founded the band and trained its members: his fate is unknown, but as "the Bear," he lives on around fires in many minstrel ballads. The Tower's reputation as an armory led to its being broken into and pillaged long ago, but it remains a stout, largely habitable structure today—and no doubt, Elminster warns in a dry tone, has some inhabitants.

To the west of Ildrannath's Tower, five buildings down at the extreme northwesternmost extent of the city, is a temple to Labelas Enoreth (detailed in DMGR4, *Monster Mythology*). In recent days, it was taken over by Tyranthraxus, the Possessing Spirit, who established the Pool of Radiance there after fleeing Phlan. (If the DM desires, Tyranthraxus or some of his servant creatures may yet lurk in the temple; he and the building are both detailed in module FRC2, *Curse of the Azure Bonds*.) A tunnel links the temple with a shrinelike tomb in the center of the Burial Glen, the Warrior's Gate.

The Warrior's Gate is cross-shaped, with four square wings radiating west, south, east, and north. It has two entry doors, to the east and west; each has the words "Only the Brave" and the images of two crossed swords above its arch.

The tomb rises in sweeping curves to a central pinnacle 100' up in the air. Witch-fire (intermittent, harmless *faerie fire*) dances about its peak, making an eerie landmark at night.

Around the gate (which, despite its name, contains no magical *gate* at all) stand a dozen tombs large enough to house a band or family, as well as many smaller crypts, monuments, and markers. Magic keeps the overgrowth at bay here, but has not

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stopped undead from lurking. Elminster warns that magical traps still guard many of the tombs—and created some of the undead, from tomb robbers who were alive when they arrived in the Glen!

Crypts in the Burial Glen represent all sorts of architecture, from domed, pillared mausoleums to barrow-like mounds of carved (now cracked) stone. Smaller tombs take the form of caskets surmounted by statues depicting the fallen. Most of these stone forms have been vandalized by the baatezu, who still delight in crushing humans they meet in the ruins by flying over them and dropping a stone statue from aloft.

The older, western part of the city and its later, eastern neighborhoods are linked by several arched, carved bridges over the stream that divides the two areas. The southernmost of these, which stands just east of the central area of rubble, is rumored to cast spells at those who cross over it.

The eastern end of Myth Drannor was always more forested and parklike than the older, built-up western part of the city. Known as Dlarbraddath (named for the gardener who laid it out, a being said to have an elven mother and a dwarven father!), this neighborhood has been largely reclaimed by the forest. Many of the buildings here are roofless shells, with trees growing up through them. The monsters known as ropers (perhaps escaped from captivity in the stronghold of the Guild of Naturalists, described hereafter) are numerous in this area.

The largest structure in Dlarbraddath was known as the Six Tyryl Towers. They were largely destroyed in the downfall of Myth Drannor, when the young apprentice wizards who dwelt there fought against the army of evil, and met brutal ends.

The Towers stood north of the Street of

Song (the main street of Myth Drannor, that ran from "Sixstar," a six-way intersection just east of the Westfields, right across the city in a winding southeasterly course, to ultimately become the road south to Sembia), at the eastern end of the Meadow. The two westernmost Towers still rise above the rubble at the eastern end of the Meadow, but they are separated from the easternmost pair of surviving towers by devastation: the center of the building was blown apart in the city's final battle. The Six Tyryl Towers was then a newly-established school of wizardry, and some of the magic used against its wizards, Elminster warns, created a magic-dead area nearby.

In the ruined Towers themselves, some quirk of magic (possibly a powerful magical curse) has created many of the monsters known as "wizshades" (detailed in Volume 7 of the *Monstrous Compendium*), both from the unfortunate students of the school, and from adventurer-archmages who have come to the Towers since.

They are often encountered in the building, sometimes accompanied by harmless but frightening phantom images of other wizards of the school, and by at least two deranged former teachers at the school, who live on as the rare undead known as le-bendtod (detailed in module RA2, *Ship of Horror*), and defend the Towers against all intruders with their spells. A recent explorer's tale making the rounds of Dale taverns tells of a beholder seen spinning through the air as it was hurled out of the school by a spell that lashed it with crawling, encircling lightnings—and when out in the open air above the Meadow, it was struck by a *meteor swarm*, and destroyed!

Northeast of the rubble of the ruined center of the Towers is another area of devastation, where a street is blocked by heaped rubble from many collapsed buildings. The large building on the western edge of this

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area, its entire eastern face torn off so that it stands open to the elements, was the Hall of the Guild of Naturalists.

Now a stirge-haunted, pillaged ruin, its high-beamed central hall contains a lone, massive stone seat that once hid a shaft leading down to the stronghold of the Naturalists, below. The throne has been shoved aside to reveal the way down. The subterranean complex beneath, known as "The Halls of the Beast-Tamers," is detailed in the *DM's Sourcebook of the Realms*, from the original boxed Campaign Set. It is known to have permanent *gates* linking it with the vast dungeon known as Undermountain, far away across Faerun, beneath the fabled Sword Coast port city of Waterdeep. Powerful beings come to, or escape from, ruined Myth Drannor through this portal; according to Elminster, there is mounting evidence that organized drow and orc bands are presently using this route to plunder the ruins.

North of the city proper (but inside the mythal) is a small, beautiful woodland glade, whose floor consists of a cracked circular bowl of steps rising up in concentric rings from a central pool. It lies on the north side of the eastern stream, just across its flow from where three winding paths through the woods from the city meet.

Known as Lovers' Glade, this was an open-air temple to Sune, Goddess of Love. By her will, no predators (carnivorous or hunting creatures with an intelligence of less than 14) will enter the glade in darkness, making it a relatively safe place to sleep. The Glade is eerily lit by several *dancing lights* and *faerie fire* spells, because of the mythal's power to augment magics that illuminate but do not deal damage, such as *dancing lights* and *faerie fire*. When cast, these last until dispelled by *dispel magic* or the will of the caster, or until one year has passed per complete year of the caster's age.

The water of the pool is said to be safe to drink, but also harbors some sort of aquatic guardian creature: a spectator, according to some accounts. It guards the treasure at the bottom of the pool, thrown in over the years as offerings to Sune Firehair: gems and magical items, that, so the tales go, lie in a layer several feet deep at the bottom of the pool's 20' diameter, 90' deep shaft.

What The Visitor Hears and Sees

Even in ruin, Myth Drannor is beautiful. Cracked spires still soar smoothly into the air, and empty windows frame many a tree growing inside a building. Shrubs grow in clumps among broken pillars and tumbled rubble; bold merchants have been known to seize any carved stonework small enough to carry, to sell as "spell-touched statuary from lost Myth Drannor" for high prices; folk in the Dales believe that possessing such a relic brings luck—and in Calimshan and Tashluta, such items are (falsely) believed to hold part of the magical power of the mythal, that a wizard skilled enough can unleash to his own ends.

Although birds can be heard calling in the forest all around the ruins, an eerie, watching, waiting silence hangs over the city itself. The mythal repels small, unintelligent insects. Birds and forest creatures alike have learned not to signal their whereabouts too loudly, for many powerful predators lurk in Myth Drannor, and death can come swiftly. Shattered towers and high balconies provide good lookout areas for hunting creatures—and somewhere in Myth Drannor is a source of a constant stream of new monsters (most of whom wind up as food for the established powers in Myth Drannor).

Some new arrivals come through *gates*, all

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over the ruins, but a hidden, extra-dimensional safehold (like the one known to be located in the Speculum, thought to be one of many) exists somewhere in the older, western part of the city, where a deepspawn is housed. These fell monsters (described in the sourcebook FR11, *Dwarves Deep*) spontaneously generate and give birth to many different monsters that they've encountered in the past, from trolls and orcs to behir and hydras.

The haunting beauty of the ruins is even greater at night, when moonlight causes magically-treated spires and roofs to glow with a soft, blue-white radiance, and witch-fire plays around the turrets, peaks, and pinnacles of the grandest homes.

As Elminster has admitted, "When I look upon Myth Drannor, my heart sobs." Many a bard who never knew the living City of Song has been moved to mourn for it, in laments heard all over Faerun, and folk say you can always tell the singers who really have seen lost Myth Drannor by the sadness and eerie longing that creeps into their voices.

There is an old Dale saying: "We shall watch guard, until Myth Drannor stands proud again!" Although many folk from other parts of Faerun have picked up part of the phrase, saying "Until Myth Drannor stands proud," and meaning "never" to folk in the Dales it is a fierce, deep promise that Myth Drannor *will* rise again. Harpers, the Knights of Myth Drannor, and Elminster (among others) are working hard to make sure that it won't soon rise again as a bastion of evil!