“I like to think that we Elvorix are the true descendants and rightful heirs to the Ancients. We honor them and their achievements by attempting to emulate them. We strive for a balanced society—one in which art, craft, philosophy, labor, theosophy, and politics all operate in tandem. Given time we will equal and perhaps even surpass the levels of learning and creativity the Ancients achieved. Our refinement, social grace, and wisdom are the greatest of Sentia. These things must be preserved and even improved upon, if civilization is to survive.”
—Rustica Bibulus, Elvorix scholar

*From interview notes for the volume “The Explorers,” by Matia Bibulus. Transcribed by Bura Bibulus Ven Proudheart, 88 AGC.*

**Elvorix Society**

The Elvorix are headed by a ruling council and a scholar-king. This government structure was founded by Elvora Bibulus, the priest who fooled King Vidaarus the Thirty-First and his warriors into leaving for the fabled island of Garigla.

Local administration falls under the authority of a *Houselord*. In descending order of prestige and authority, the administrative units include the Royal House, Noble Houses, Warrior Houses, Mercantile Houses, and Common Houses. Houses are generally named for their leaders; for example, House Sigurod is the Warrior House led by General Sigurod Gladius.

The principal occupations among the population are priest, scholar, soldier, merchant, farmer, and laborer. Farmers tend to crops of river-berries and various mosses, especially string-moss, which is a staple food, and barley-moss, from which potent kogg is brewed. Ylark cattle is raised for its meat and dairy, its use as a beast of burden and for riding, and its value as a sacrifice to the gods.
Metals like iron, copper, lead, silver, and gold are mined and smelted, although Elvorix smiths have so far been unable to create anything as strong or durable as the steel of the weapons that the Jaarl brought from Murmadon. Elvorix craftsmen and builders are capable, but originality and creativity are discouraged for fear of attracting divine attention. Masons build with stone and brick, but are unable to reproduce the splendid feats of architecture of the Ancients.

**Religion**

*Agaptus means well.*

—Elvorix saying

Elvorix priests have the dangerous job of channeling divine power and conciliating the unpredictable gods. Given the deities’ history of dangerous attention, the Elvorix try to pay just enough homage to the gods to keep them contented and placid, but not so much that the gods will want to visit in person. This means building them temples that show devotion, but not so nice that the gods will want to personally inhabit them.

Receiving divine benevolence can be as dangerous to the faithful as to their enemies. No one has forgotten the catastrophic Great Harvest of 225 BGC, when Atronia’s blessing caused the Elvorix granaries to overflow with the bounties of the land. Alas, the ensuing dirkus infestation, which in turn attracted packs of runnigum, triggered the appearance of roaming Marhn trolls. Almost equally well-known is the Naval Tragedy of 36 BGC, when the favor of Ilunus caused powerful winds to push back a flotilla of Vidaar raiders from the coast of southern Sentia, but also wrecked the Elvorix fishing fleet, dashed against the rocks.

The Elvorix pantheon includes sixteen or seventeen deities, depending on how you count the siblings of Agaptus, Lord of the Sky. Many of the archives destroyed during the Vidaarian Dynasty might have shed some light on who does what; as it is, it’s always a delicate business to get involved with gods. They can be easily offended when you, for example, confuse the patron deity of streams and rivers with the god of hygiene. Only a few are remembered with any certainty by name.
Some Known Gods of the Elvorix Pantheon

**Agaptus:** *Ruler Of The Sky And Stars.*

**Atronia:** *Tender To The Soil And Its Bounties Of Grain And Moss.*

**Gailus:** *Ruler Of The Great Herds Of Ylark That Wander Free Across The Plains.*

**Ilunus:** *God Of The Sea And Waves.*

**Kuldarus:** *Goddess Of The Underworld.*

**Prolyus:** *God Of War And Conquest.*

For more information about the Elvorix gods, see “The Nebulous Elvorix Pantheon” on page 248.

Because Agaptus in particular tends to accidentally (when in a good mood) or intentionally (when offended) singe his devotees when he appears, priests of the Lord of the Sky shave or even burn part or all of their hair away to give the appearance that they receive divine favor. Other lesser deities may impart a variety of marks on their followers.

Some would consider Kuldarus the “forgotten” seventeenth god of the pantheon, but perhaps she is just omitted because of her “uncomely visage” or inauspicious nature. In truth, although a few scholars have made it their specialty to study her lore, it is difficult to obtain any material from oral tradition since most Elvorix prefer to avoid even saying her name, for fear of attracting her attention.

**You’re In The Army Now, Bucky:**

**Elvorix Ranks**

**Spearbucks:** Part-time, conscript levies usually raised by local Houselords among farmer, merchant, and laborer classes, equipped with spears. Along with Linebucks, they form the bulk of Elvorix forces.

**Linebucks:** The more enthusiastic and dedicated portion of part-time levies raised by local Houselords, equipped with short swords and round wooden buckler shields.
**Greybucks:** Experienced Linebucks formed into elite veteran units.

**Wildbucks:** Volunteer units of Vorix skirmishers. Small but brave and known for their pugnaciousness and hit-and-run tactics.

**Savagebucks:** Veteran elite units of Wildbucks.

**Captains:** Career veterans who have attracted their Houselord’s attention and received a promotion. Not necessarily an enviable position, since the upper echelons of Elvorix society try to avoid calling individual attention.

**Generals:** The relatively rare senior officers who lead entire Elvorix armies. Those who reach this rank make efforts to look innocuous and just competent enough to get by. They also surround themselves with advisors, sycophants, priests, specialists, and other attendants in the hopes that if the Lord of the Sky singles out somebody, it will be some poor fool among their entourage.

**Musicians:** Musicians are often found among the staff of generals and other dignitaries as a means of distracting the gods’ attention. They also provide the cadence for marching units.

**Standard Bearers:** Standard bearers also serve as lightning rods to distract divine attention, but they are essential to coordinate and regroup units on the battlefield, and serve as signal corps.

**Priests:** The battle clergy serve as support, distraction, last-resort weapon, and moral inspiration for Elvorix forces. Most of their magic consists of convincing the troops that the gods bless their endeavors while avoiding actual divine attention. They are masters at interpreting anything as an omen.

**Ylark Handlers:** Ylark are used on the battlefield as cavalry, beasts of burden, living weapons, and sacrifice to Agaptus. Linebucks tend to the poor beasts until those selected as sacrifice are set on fire by the battle priests and sent stampeding towards enemy lines in rage and agony.
People
The Elvorix are hardy, warm-blooded, fur-bearing, bipedal, placental mammals; like their cousins the Vidaar (but unlike the Jaarl or Kuld) they are equipped with opposable thumbs and four fingers.

With a gestation period of about five months, the does rarely bear more than one fawn at a time, giving birth to live young, whom they will nurse for three to six months. Metabolically, they are efficient omnivores who can gain sustenance from food of low energetic value, making them relatively resistant to starvation.

Their average life span is about sixty years but under good conditions can reach several decades more. Although Elvorix lineages are able to cross-breed (this author is one such example of mixed Elvorix and Vidaar blood), they have developed some distinctive characteristics. Overall Elvorix population is estimated at fourteen million.

Atronians: Elvorix from the southern regions of Sentia represent the oldest lineages in the land. Some of the more common fur colors include the “Atronian blue,” which isn’t blue really but a cool grey, typically quite soft and thick in texture, and a white or white-grey blend. These pale tones contribute to some of the difficulty in proving intermixing with the nearby Vidaar, who also tend towards pale fur.

Alborn: Elvorix whose blood lines have remained “pure” since the Great Deception and the departure of Elvora Bibulus and his warriors nearly 900 years ago refer to themselves as “Alborn.” They tend towards auburn colorings, ringstraked with lighter tans and whites. Other Alborn varieties include a darker chestnut color, and ruddier earthen tones. Those who sport such colors often claim to trace their lineage to Sentius himself, regardless of the state of their family tree. Conversely, those with impeccable ancestry but unfashionable coloring may help nature along with some discreetly purchased fur dye.
**Northerners:** The Elvorix from the northern regions, toward the cities of Syradon and Tsoria that have fallen to the gluttonous Kuld. Their fur tends to more mottled and marbled coloring, blends of browns, black, and greys, which are considered unattractive by Noble Elvorix. They often form the rank and file of the military front lines since they have lost their homelands, trade, and heritage.

**Vorix:** The diminutive and often belittled strain of Sentians of very short stature. Born from every known rank in society at a rate of about one in ten live births, they do not breed true. They are, in general, more prone to arthritis, asthma, and heart failure, but tend to show bravery and resourcefulness. Because they suffer from disdain, derision, and abuse due their size, most of them tend to forsake their House and congregate in loose but loyal Vorix Clans.

“The Elvorix are weak, disorganized, and impractical. They’re also smug and self-satisfied about it. They act like there’s nothing better in the world than spending hour after hour talking about some dull, obscure topic, and then bragging to everyone afterwards that they did. Always going on about ‘the Ancients’ this and ‘the gods’ that. They spend so much time learning how to read and write that they barely know which end of a spear to point.”
—Ulf Long-Teeth, Vidaar Bondee

*From interview notes for the volume “The Explorers,” by Matia Bibulus. Transcribed by Bura Bibulus Ven Proudheart, 88 AGC.*

**Names**
Most Elvorix use the following naming convention:

[Title] [Personal name] [Occupation name] ix [City of origin] co
[Adopted city of residence]

Children’s occupation name is simply “Parvulus”; upon reaching adulthood, a doe or buck picks a profession and takes a new occupation name to indicate it.

Highborn Elvorix make more of a fuss about these conventions and favor fashionable names ending in –us or –a. Northerners tend to use harsher names with more consonants. Commoners usually go by their given name only, and sometimes add a nickname or “son of” or “daughter of” a parent to help distinguish them from other Elvorix with similar names, or connect themselves to a well-known parent’s reputation.
Vorix clan members are the exception; they have more attachment to clan than profession or House, reflected in their names:

[Title] [Personal name] [Clan name]

However, they are often called only by their personal names except in formal circumstances.

**Sample Names**

**Occupation names:** Aedituus (priest), Agrius (farmer), Bibulus (scholar), Gladius (soldier), Nummus (merchant), Parvulus (child), Usus (laborer).


**Vorix Clan Names:** Arrowflight, Deathsong, Proudheart, Quickstrike, Shadowstep, Two-Blades.

**Individuals of Note**

**Lord Maladros Bibulus ix Agapta co Agapta:** Scholar King of Agapta, Lord of the Elvorix.

**Seadros Bibulus ix Atronius:** Scribe to Lord Maladros.

**Homarus, son of Rogus:** Painter to Lord Maladros.

**General Sigurod Gladius:** General of the Northern Provincial Garrison.

For more details on individuals of note, see “Gamemaster Characters” on page 99.
Discretion as the Better Part of Valor?

“Wear too big a hat, put too many fancy titles before your name, and soon enough, the Lord of the Sky is going to notice you, and quite frankly, nobody needs that.”

—Elvorix proverb

Something one must understand about Sentia: blandness is cultivated among Elvorix political and religious leaders in order to avoid Agaptus’ attention, so mavericks and eccentrics are more common among the lower classes (to wit, the Wildbucks), and the leaders exemplify golden mediocrity. But the truly ambitious and crafty seem entirely innocuous; they are the advisors, clerks, assistants, and paper-pushers.

The lowly among the Elvorix are not necessarily in tune with the Highborn, especially those from areas where there has been a lot of mingling with returning Vidaar in the last 200 years. When you’re already unimportant and overlooked, you can afford a little more independence and eccentricity.

“Viewing Elvorix society is like looking at a reflection of our own, but through a distorted mirror. Clearly at one point the Elvorix had a society and a level of learning similar to what we Jaarl had before the Cataclysm. But it was destroyed, not by some outside catastrophe, but by their own short-sightedness and greed. Now they spend their time digging through the rubble of their former glory and pretending to be heirs to a lost civilization, when really in their own way they have fallen as far into barbarism and ignorance as their Vidaar cousins.”

—Iva the Stubborn, Jaarl scholar

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Places

In the Cities
Agapta, the capital of the Elvorix Empire, is still full of marvels, though every year they fall deeper into disrepair. Other important cities still in Elvorix control include Atronia in the southern part of the Isle of Sentia, threatened by the Vidaar; and Prolyus on the Lycian Isthmus in the southeast, pinched between Vidaar and Jaarl forces. Cities of importance are generally named for a patron deity and boast a major temple to that god.

Elvorix cities are a mixture of grandiose, unequalled building feats of the Ancients, classic Post-Deception Restoration architecture, and partly repaired war damage from the recent years of conflict.
What you can find there:
Official buildings of the Administratum, the anonymous bureaucracy that makes the wheels of Agapta turn round.

Schools, academies, and libraries dedicated to preserving and restoring the fragments of knowledge saved from the destruction wrought under Vidaarian Dynasty rule.

Major temples to the patron deity, such as the Temple of Agaptus in Agapta.

Shops, merchant houses, workshops, markets, counting houses, warehouses, and other centers of trade and business.

Harbors and river-based or sea-based ship traffic.

Wonders of Ancient engineering like aqueducts, sewers, roads, bridges, and public buildings—when they still stand. They work marvelously until the day they collapse.

Mansions and palaces of the Highborn.

Dwellings of the common city folk.

Derelict tenements and slums where refugees from war-torn areas hide, at the periphery of cities.

Market day in the city. So many ways to get lost, noticed, rich, cheated, beaten up, or meet that special someone...

Things that can happen:

What's All This, Then? It's all too easy to get in trouble with the Town Watch. A shriek is heard in streets—“My coin purse!”—and now the town guards are looking to you; Captain Tera Gladius has just lost a thief in the streets that looks like one of the heroes.

What Is It About Sewers? There are rumors of strange goings-on under the streets, odd noises and unexplained disappearances at night. You hear there is a monster hidden in the sewer tunnels, with its cherished treasure. The question is whether the monster and the treasure are what you think.
I Want to Be Just Like You! The heroes stumble onto an orphan, a refugee from one of the war-torn areas, and the urchin develops hero-worship for one or more of them (perhaps for the wrong reasons). But now there is a whole band of such urchins, and the heroes’ new fan has pledged to find them all a new home…

Milk Run. Ylark milk has become a recent fad among sophisticated city dwellers, and it’s selling like mad today. Pavia Nummus has hired the heroes to fetch more barrels from the ice house where the ylark milk was stored last night and bring to her stand in the busy marketplace. The barrels must reach her before her current supplies run out—and intact, please! Don’t let a competitor steal them.

We’ve listed some story seeds in the forms of aspects in the “Things that can happen” section after each setting location. Aspects are explained more in “Aspects and Fate Points” on page 190.

Some of the story seeds are more detailed and fleshed; others are sketches or outlines you can adapt to your own story when you need to improvise a plot complication.

Elvora Bibulus Academy
The legendary Elvora Bibulus founded a school in Agaptus on the grounds of the Agaptan academy that had been burned by Vidaarus the First so many centuries earlier. In fact, he founded such academies throughout the land, but the one in Agapta is the most influential. A diploma from the Elvora Bibulus Academy guarantees a long and uneventful career in the middle ranks of the Administratum.

To excel academically, one must embrace conformity and stick close to the norm; students are reprimanded for doing anything too “noticeable” or “interesting,” which would run the risk of attracting divine attention.

Those who go against the grain may, for example, be sent away on long research expeditions…
What you can find there:
Amphitheaters filled with students coached to learn by rote the basics of administration, bureaucracy, literature, history, geography, arithmetic, architecture, divination, herbalism, and theology.

Entire walls of scroll cabinets, filled with rolls of brittle documents identified by colored tassels.

Copying rooms where one elderly scholar reads a text and groups of students copy them down.

Cubicles where artists-in-residence illustrate and illuminate particularly valuable scrolls, copying as exactly as possible an older manuscript.

The vaults deep underground where the rarest and most valuable original scrolls are kept hidden.

Copies of the latest bestsellers, such as Nyllo Bibulus ix Atronia co Agapta’s *They Came From the Deeps: The Jaarl Invasion and What It Means To You*, and Tera Bibulus’ *Compendium of Agaptan Gods: Their Roles and History in Sentia and Its Surrounding Provinces*. 
Things that can happen:

A Contract Is A Contract, And The Rules Are The Rules. Buried among the paperwork in the Academy’s library is a prestigious marriage contract. A few years ago, Old King Baseros and General Vidaarus the Ninetieth had agreed to unite their families through a marriage alliance shortly before the disaster now called Orvas’ Folly; unfortunately, a lot of the principals died at the battle or since then. Nevertheless, after much arguing, scholars have reached a consensus of sorts: this was a sacred oath and the contract must be honored, which means finding marriageable candidates of each family line and getting them blissfully united. If not, the school will legally change hands to General Vidaarus, who is coincidentally looking for space to build an elaborate obstacle course for new recruits.

It’s My Own Design. One of the scholars, Marinax Bibulus, has taken the duty to preserve and reconstruct archives far too much to heart; by cross-referencing several sources and filling in the blanks, Marinax has produced actual original thought and even invention… The heroes are hired to keep watch on him while he finishes his current project without letting any catastrophes unfold, then whisk him away to a less prominent location with fewer bystanders.

Oh, That Old Thing? Who knows what marvels of Ancient knowledge have yet to be rediscovered among the dusty scrolls curated by fusty old Nilf Bibulus the Elder? The recipe for an indelible dye or a super glue, the detailed map of a lost city, the schematics for a better type of ship, the secrets to celestial mechanics…

Heretical Knowledge. A long-lost, rediscovered manuscript gives the names and domains of the entire Elvorix pantheon. There are many surprises, and every sect is likely to cry heresy. On the plus side, the manuscript also provides the locations of temples long-forgotten where daring heroes might seek divine help.
Temple of Agaptus
The temple of Agaptus was badly damaged at the onset of the Great Catastrophe, and to this day no one has had the courage to rebuild it. The god left in a decidedly bad mood, and nobody wants to attract his attention, so the priesthood is dragging its collective feet about it. Damned if one does, damned if one doesn’t: if Agaptus is not satisfied with the result, things will get ugly, but if he’s pleased, he might decide to visit more often. So the thing to do, it was decided, is to look busy and make a convincing show of working on the repairs—without finishing. Eventually, Agaptus may figure it out...

Until then, the half-ruined temple is used for devotions and rituals. Like all Elvorix temples, it is decorated in garish, eye-stabbing colors and bathed in fumes of putrid incense to make sure Agaptus doesn’t feel like visiting too often. As a result, no one but the clergy feels much like visiting either.
What you can find there:
Untidy piles of stone, timbers, bricks, pitch, and other building materials, slowly degraded by the elements.

Detour signs, scaffolding, pulleys, and all the signs of a major construction site—well-worn and discolored by time.

Barricaded, rickety wings of the temple, barely standing.

Foul-smelling fumes, discordant singing, hideous murals depicting scenes of Elvorix history.

A priesthood where success is based on attracting as little attention as possible and appearing mediocre and forgettable.

The secret passion of a few intellectuals for knowledge and books, disguised as blandness.

Things that can happen:
Still Working On It! The priesthood of Agaptus must find a way to prolong the rebuilding of the temple without angering the god any further. Guess who the task gets delegated to? The heroes must find a solution; will they sabotage the rebuilding and risk getting caught? Will they go questing for rare or even nonexistent materials in the perilous lands of Agaptus?

Uh, Skip A Bit, Brother... One of the younger clerics and member of the royal family is showing dangerous religious zeal for the cult of Agaptus: Sibili Bibulus ix Agapta wants to propitiate the god and gain divine forgiveness for the events of the Great Catastrophe. Barring this, Sibili claims, ice will eventually cover all of Sentia—and unfortunately, people are beginning to listen. Someone has to babysit this troublemaker and make sure nothing interesting happens.

I’m Averting My Eyes, O Lord! Agaptus appears to the unlucky heroes and gives them a message they must carry very exactly; alas, it came out a little garbled through the mask the god was wearing to avoid smelling the foul incense. Why them? How do they fulfill his divine will? Or is it some other god posing as Agaptus, out to recruit a new following?

Divine Conciliation. Misfiled in the temple archives is a very nice BGC-era scroll that details a ritual for appeasing the wrath of Agaptus. That’s good, right?
Out in the Country

In addition to interview transcriptions I also cite the “descriptions” of a seemingly non-aggressive Kuld being studied at the Bibulus Academy. Referred to as “Mossback” by scholars here, the creature has learned to understand Elvorish. Its replies are listed as descriptions of the smells it emitted when asked questions about the various races.

—“Mossback,” Kuld research subject

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Small Town

Examples of small Elvorix towns vary from the coastal town of Sorilyia, the frontier town of Snareham; to Gowanna, proudly resisting invasion on the Lycian Peninsula; and sadly, to the cities of Syradon and Tsoria in the north, both now fallen to the Kuld.

These towns are well-built, if not equal to the marvels of the Ancients, as comfortable and sensible as they can be given the decades of warfare, the rapid cooling of the climate, and the whims of meddlesome deities. They are typically surrounded by farms where mosses and berries are cultivated and ylark are raised. Coastal towns will also boast small fishing fleets and a modest harbor.
What you can find there:
Fortifications, more or less well-tended depending on how frequent invasions are in the region.

City hall, with its large but quiet administrative bureaucracy.

The Town Watch building, with space for mustering, ylark stables, watch towers, and barracks.

Shops, usually with the owners’ living quarters in the back or on the upper floors.

A central plaza, park, or assembly area for speeches.

Market day once or twice a week.

Fire brigade hall, situated midway between the town center and the temple.

A small local temple set well away to the outside edge of town, far from anything valuable.

The estates of one or more Houselords, depending on how important the town is and how quiet or dangerous the surroundings are.

Things that can happen:

**Congratulations on Your Wedding Day!** Thanks to an arranged marriage between two Houses, agreed upon over a decade ago, one of the heroes gets blessed, lured, or roped (depending on who you ask) into matrimony. Surely nothing bad could happen on such an auspicious day! Will the hero manage to escape this fate without creating disaster between the Houses and alienating the entire clan? Will the hero unexpectedly fall in love with the spouse-to-be?

**The Seven Savagebucks.** A village of farmers hires the heroes to combat Vidaar bandits who have threatened to return after the string-moss harvest to steal their crops.

**Recovery Mission.** The Shimmering Stone of Gailus, which tells where the wild ylark herds will migrate this year, must be recovered from Bluemossford, a village that fell to the Kuld some time ago. Once they had eaten everything they could swallow, the blubbers probably moved on so the trip should be relatively safe, right? Did we mention that this is really, really important?
Frontier Village

Out in the cold, on the edge of ever-advancing tundra, the inhabitants are more hardened but also take their responsibilities seriously. If they have refused to move to warmer climes and safer towns, it’s because something keeps them here: ties to their ancestral lands or their community, duty to protect the rest of Agaptus from invaders, or love for family members or friends who refuse to leave.

Life used to be decent here, but now it’s harsh and only the stubborn and the brave make it. The growing season is very short and grows shorter every year, so spring and summer mean a few months of back-breaking work and vigilance. The long winter months are spent teaching the fawns, crafting goods that will be needed next harvest, repairing weapons and equipment, and telling stories.

Paradoxically, winter can also be the best time to visit friends in neighboring villages; although snow covers the roads, in fair weather skis, snowshoes, sleds, and ylark-pulled sleighs make for quicker travel. But beware storms and avalanches in the high mountain passes.

What you can find there:
Rudimentary accommodations by Elvorix standards, but well-insulated.

Caches of food and equipment in caves or underground warehouses.

Rugged, stoic inhabitants.

Small but vigilant militia and scout units watching for enemy advances and ready to bring the alarm to neighboring villages.

Fire-tower and bell, used to send warnings.

Things that can happen:
Winter Games. The village holds annual games and neighbors come from all over the region to compete in cooking, singing, story-telling, wrestling, archery, sled races, and ylark fights.

Fire! When you live so close to the edge of destitution, a fire is even deadlier than usual. The village resources are devastated and the survivors will face starvation. Only the heroes can help the surviving villagers. Will they bring food back? Get help from distant hamlets? Organize the refugees to move to a new spot?
**Night Hauntings.** Strange lights are sometimes seen and noises heard at night around the village. Is it enemy scout activity, an illicit romance between a villager and a Vidaar from across the lines, or something more mysterious?

**Blessing the Newborn.** The village is too small to have its own priest. Upon discovering that one of the heroes is one, the villagers are insistent that the fawn who was just born last night should receive a proper blessing.

**Ylark Farm**
Elvorix use the mighty ylark for their milk and meat, as beasts of burden and riding animals, and as fiery sacrifices to Agaptus, Lord of the Sky. The portions of the countryside that still have a temperate enough climate to support agriculture are dotted with ylark farms. Naturally, in recent decades farmers have tried to develop hardier breeds that can withstand colder conditions. The closer to a disputed border such farms are, the more heavily they are defended by the local militia or levies, since Vidaar make heavy use of ylark meat and dairy products and Kuld are fond of devouring the beasts whole.

**What you can find there:**
Pasture land, often enclosed by low walls of piled up stones to prevent the cattle from straying too far.

Stables to keep the ylark at night in summer and pretty much all the time in winter.

Fodder storage.

Piles of ylark manure, collected to trade to neighboring farmers for forage.

Farm house and other farm buildings arranged to provide modest defense in case of attack.

A bell tower to ring for alarm or to call in the animals.
Things that can happen:

**Cattle Drive.** The farm was raided by the Kuld while the ylark were out on the pasture; now the surviving Elvorix must round up the cattle and drive it to some refuge such as a neighboring farm or town, or some caves that can offer shelter during the cold months, before winter sets in.

**Border Traffic.** Someone in the village is stealing ylark milk to trade across the border into Vidaar-occupied territory. Even though they were conquered, the people on the other side are still family—how could the thief refuse to help them?

**Prize Animal.** The farm has been breeding a particularly excellent or useful type of ylark, one that is amazingly frugal and resistant to cold and expected to make the fortune of the House. But according to the local priest, the animal also bears markings that designate it as a necessary sacrifice to Agaptus—nay, one that it would be dangerous to refuse to the god. Now everyone wants the beast!

**Rural Shrine**

Small shrines to Agaptus or one of the other gods can be found dotting the landscape in the most unexpected places, usually some place that was struck by ill fortune at some point, leaving the inhabitants eager to propitiate the deities and avert further bad luck. Some are old enough to go back to the Ancient themselves, other may have cropped up in recent years. They are lavishly tended when the locals feel the need to appease the gods, modestly when all they want to avoid divine notice, but never completely abandoned as long as there are still Elvorix living or passing nearby.

**What you can find there:**

Piles of stones forming an altar, in various states of repair.

Signs of burning, lightning strikes, avalanche, flooding, and other disasters.

Offerings to the god the shrine honors.

Pilgrims furtively offering devotions, then hurrying away.
Things that can happen:

**Sacrifice—or Else.** Things go from bad to worse for the traveling heroes, disaster follows calamity, until they come to an untended roadside altar. Will restoring the altar to its former glory appease the god? Will the god continue to pay attention to the heroes?

**Wrong God! Wrong God!** Sacrifices were made, but unfortunately, the wrong god was invoked. The angry deity left some mark of displeasure, which must now be correctly interpreted and the right sacrifice must be made to avoid further anger.

**But I Need It!** Someone left an offering to the gods at a roadside shrine and it is exactly what the heroes badly need right now. A moral dilemma, to be sure.

“**Pray to one if needful, but donate to all alike.**”

—Elvorix proverb