

COREAN Adventures

THE TOWER OF ART



TALES OF
GOR
COREAN ROLEPLAYING



POSTMORTEM
STUDIOS



Postmortem Studios brings the Counter-Earth to life in the World of Gor roleplaying game.

In this introductory adventure, *The Tower of Art*, the adventurers will gain a mysterious sponsor working for one of Gor's great powers and recover an even more mysterious artefact. This will bring them into the fringes of a conflict between two alien intelligences.

This booklet also contains additional rules for skill specialities to further customise your characters.

Ta Sardar Gor!



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Tales of Gor

GOREAN ROLEPLAYING

FANTASTICAL ADVENTURES ON THE COUNTER-EARTH

Authorised and based on the Gorean books of John Norman

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Do not ask the stones or the trees how to live; they cannot tell you; they do not have tongues.

Do not ask the wise man how to live, for, if he knows, he will know he cannot tell you.

If you would learn how to live, do not ask the question.

Its answer is not in the question but in the answer, which is not in words.

Do not ask how to live, but, instead, proceed to do so.

Introduction

The Towers of Ar is the first adventure/supplement for Tales of Gor, the Gorean Roleplaying Game. As an introductory scenario this supplement presents a relatively simple and easy example of such an adventure, as well as resources and additional material to improve your games (and the value of this supplement).

This adventure is designed for a typical group of 4-6 starting characters. It has a variety of challenges for them to face in order to get players used to both the system and some of the aspects of Gor that new players may not be familiar with.

This supplement forms the model for future supplements. An adventure – with resources for the Games Master – along with additional rules, ideas and thoughts that can make games better for everyone.

Ta Sardar Gor!

POSTMORTEM STUDIOS

Postmortem Studios is an independent role-playing game company formed and run by James 'Grim' Desborough, with a reputation for tackling unusual, 'edgy' and adult gaming material. Postmortem Studios has published Tales of Gor, but this is far from the company's only game.

You can find more information at: postmortemstudios.wordpress.com You can support James, and his company, via Patreon (patreon.com/grimachu) gaining discounts on games and other material in the process.

We value your feedback and queries and suggestions can be sent to grim@postmort.demon.co.uk

The Tower of Ar OVERVIEW

Gor is in a period of great change. Ar – once a great imperial power – is still recovering from its occupation by the Cosian army. Cos, overextended and weakened, has lost a great deal of its own power and prestige. The Priest Kings have never been so distant from the affairs of men while the Kurii, plotting from their Steel Worlds in the River of Stones have never been so close.

Everything is in flux, everything is endangered. There are great opportunities and enormous threats. Much rests on the courage of men now, rather than the machinations and machinery of alien powers. Hopefully that will prove to be enough in the conflicts to come.

In the hurry to leave Ar the Cosians left a great many things behind. Treasures, slaves, people, documents and even artefacts.

Amongst those artefacts currently being held and logged in one of Ar's great cylinders is a strange golden sphere – presumed to be a decoration but, in fact, something far more dangerous and forbidden.

Withdrawn as they are the Priest Kings are still a force to be reckoned with and even without direct orders their agents work diligently to thwart the plots of the Kur. This golden sphere is thought to be an artefact of the Kurii and so it must be recovered, or destroyed, by the Priest King's agents.

The characters are about to find themselves recruited into the service of the Priest Kings, whether through loyalty to their world or a desire for coin. An association with the agents of the Priest Kings which may prove fruitful much further into the future, providing purpose and direction for the group.

Note: *This adventure, and many forthcoming adventures, will centre around operating as agents of the Priest Kings. This is one of the best ways to bring many different Gorean – and even Earth origin – characters together. Many of the forthcoming adventures will centre around or assume this as a concept but your own groups, even if they don't follow this model, should be able to be persuaded by silver or gold to participate. This adventure, the first in this loose series, will act as a recruitment into this life.*

Fort of the Initiates OPENING

You have been escorting Io of the Initiates for the last day, along the road from one temple-fort of the Initiates to the next. On such a well-travelled route and one so well patrolled by the forces of Ar you were unlikely to run into any trouble but it seems he desired the additional security and who are you to argue with coin?

He was strangely jovial for an Initiate and good company on the road, unhurried and friendly and now, as the next temple comes into sight, he seems almost regretful to be parting.

“Ah, this has been fun my friends. Our lives in the temples are so cloistered and set apart sometimes. It can cause us to feel aloof and apart from fine fellows such as yourself. It threatens our humility,” he chuckles. “I promised you a silver tarsk in payment, but one coin between so many fellows could cause strife. May I prevail upon you a little longer to escort me to the money-changer? I’ll break the coin into a hundred copper tarsks amongst you and see that you are fed amongst our number as befits road companions. What do you say?”

He will insist, with great politeness but greater stubbornness, that they accompany him into the temple in order to get their money and a meal.

The temple is a great square building, brightly lit with lamps at every window and illuminating a gleaming brass ring of huge size that hangs over the entrance. Before the entrance on the white-paved path there is a small village of tents. From it wafts the scent of cooking fires and wood-smoke and the cries of hawkers, preying on those who go on pilgrimages between the temples. Many beggars and salesmen rush towards you as you make your way up the road, trying to get your attention.

“Tasta! Sweet tasta! Only two tarsk bits!”

“My Master makes prayer strings from the hair of free women!” Proclaims a bald slave girl, obviously lying under her Master’s orders. “Only a tarsk bit!”

“Alms for a veteran of the Delta Brigade!” The beggar is missing fingers, perhaps he tells the truth, perhaps not.

Once they enter the actual temple, there’s an immediate change.

The contrast between the exterior of the temple and its interior is marked. Once you pass through the gate and beneath a great brass ring suspended above it, you are in a great, roofed room with no walls. Pillars rise to the great tiled roof, simple and smooth and white. Lanterns hang from them on iron hooks, casting light and shadow in all directions. The marble floor is smooth beneath your feet and you can see everywhere. There are no walls here, no partitions.

In one area Initiates stand around a chalk board, discussing mathematics in hushed tones. In another tables stand in the open, laden with bread and other simple fare. Pilgrims and supplicants find space wherever they can, to offer their imprecations to the Priest Kings and here and there at the foot of the pillars, worthy beggars sit, quietly imploring those who pass them for alms.

He leads you across the echoing chamber, every person quiet and hushed in reverence of the temple, to a table that simply stands, a scale and coffers set upon it. There he sets about the process of turning his silver into copper.

There isn't a lot for the players to do while he is changing the money, but you could throw a little local colour in to make the temple a bit more interesting.

Local Colour: Roll a D6

1. An Initiate has touched a free women who came here to pray, on accident. She apologises profusely while he strips to the waist and scourges himself with a whip, imploring the Priest Kings to forgive him.
2. A pair of children have broken away from their parents – companioned Peasants – who are trying to catch and hush them before they cause too much disruption.
3. A single jard (a bird, somewhat like a small crow or a large starling) flits and flies amongst the pillars above everyone's heads as they strive to ignore it.
4. A slave girl, head down, striving to cover herself, skitters between the Initiates, searching for her Master amongst those who are praying while free women tut and scoff.

5. Several Initiates come together to lead a chant, a ‘round’ of spoken prayers said in musical tones and precise as clockwork. Beautiful, but somehow inhuman and almost mechanical.
6. The bar is struck for the ahn (an increment of time) and every Initiate ceases what they are doing and draws a circle in the air before them with their finger before resuming their tasks.

Once Io is done he will dole out the money and insist that they join him for a free meal at the cost of the temple. On the way to the tables he stops to drop a coin into the bowl of a blind beggar and exchanges a few whispered words before carrying on.

The Initiate in charge of the tables will frown at handing over food to people who don’t belong in the temple, but will provide small loaves of fresh sa-tarna bread and pats of butter. They will also be given a single, bitter, but edible tospit. It’s spartan fare, but it’s free.

After the meal Io will reach out, hold one of the character’s sleeves and – in a low whisper – will ask if they’d care to earn another silver tarsk, each.

Presumably, they do.

THE PROPOSAL

Io leads you out of the temple again, into the increasing darkness of the night. In the far distance you can barely make out a slight glow to the sky. The myriad lamps of Ar lighting up the clouds. Not far from the temple in a small stand of trees, the opposite side to the camp, Io stops, sits – not caring about soiling his white robe it seems – and gestures for you also to wait.

Not long after the blind beggar from inside comes walking – with surprising confidence – into the stand of trees. He is tall, rangy and thin. Mouse-brown hair hangs down, shielding his eyes, but his hair can’t hide the mass of scars and burns around his eyes, or the strange red gleam that reflects from his blank gaze in the light of the moons. He sits on a log, leaning on his walking staff.

“Can you be sure of these people Io?”

“Ela, Balbus, trust my judgement for once. We don’t have much choice.”

Io sighs, spreads his hands, and explains.

“Balbus and I exert the will of the Priest Kings, the true order within and without the order of Initiates. Yes, the Priest Kings are real, but they are not truly gods. They are something else, akin to, but not fully gods compared to us. They have need of men as men have need of them and these men, Balbus and I, have need of you. We have coin and we have favours and friends in every city and every place upon Gor. Favour you can earn, coin you can be paid. We need you to... fetch something, from Ar, for which we will pay you a silver tarsk. Each.”

If the players want to play hard-ball Io and Balbus may be willing to negotiate, up to doubling the payment, but that is the absolute maximum. Once – if – they agree on their honour it will be Balbus' turn to speak.

“When the Cosians occupied Ar they gathered and stored many treasures there, even though they shipped much of Ar’s wealth back to Cos. They left behind people, slaves, many of their settlers here were killed or enslaved in turn, again leaving much behind. Amongst these things is a trifle, a simple thing, a meaningless thing to Ar’s liberators and to Cos, but a meaningful thing to beasts and Priest Kings and so, to us.

In the Cylinder of Art, amongst the spoils of war there is a golden sphere that is more than it appears. It must be liberated or destroyed, but it must be liberated before it can be destroyed. That is what we need you to do.”

Here is the intelligence that Io and Balbus can offer.

- *That the golden sphere is about the size of two fists and not actually gold, but some other metal inlaid with intricate patterns of gold.*
- *That the golden sphere belonged to one of the Cosian settlers, a trader of curiosities named Cadmus of Telhar, a member of the merchant caste.*
- *That the Cylinder of Art houses many other curiosities and treasures. Those taken from the Cosians yes, but also others. The sphere may be hard to locate amongst the stock.*
- *That the Cylinder is protected by guardsmen but that it otherwise houses only scholars and slaves whose job it is to understand the things that are stored there.*

- *That tarn wire (a sharp cable strung to protect cities from flying tarns) is present but not in great amounts, they could infiltrate from the ground floor, or from the roof – by tarn.*
- *That the storage chamber in which the golden ball is being held is close to the top of the cylinder.*

They can't provide much but if the characters lack access to a tarn, they can get them access to a tarn rider with a cargo-carrying tarn and a tarn basket (which can carry five men and their gear). The rider will not wish to give his name but clearly owes this strange pair a favour of some gravity.



APPROACH ONE

THE CITY AND THE TOWER

One option to get into the tower is to infiltrate through the city. This is a much more dangerous prospect than flying in. Ar is a grand city, but it is paranoid and defensive and has been for some few years now. Strangers showing up will not be welcomed with open arms and will face additional challenges every step of the way to the tower, as well as having additional difficulties in scaling the tower and evading the guards.

The additional challenges that they will face by taking this route include:

THE GATE

You approach one of Ar's great gates in its outer wall but, while they will let travellers in after the setting of the sun these days, they are far more suspicious. Guards with crossbows look down from the upper wall, ready to open fire or drop stones at a moment's notice. People and wagons crowd and queue to get through the gate, with increasing impatience and argument.

It takes you a long time to get to the front, ushered into a narrow space where only a single wagon or a handful of people can pass through at once.

As you reach the front of the queue, guards move to challenge you.

Goreans carrying weapons is nothing unusual. More peculiar gear or obvious membership of the Caste of Assassins may cause more problems (the Black Caste is illegal within the bounds of Ar). Characters that are going to have issues should have their players made aware beforehand. This is the sort of thing Goreans should know.

Ultimately, however, it comes down to the whim of the guards and making a good enough impression upon them to get in. Goreans are distrustful of strangers, especially those of other cities and places. The guards are attentive, but have a lot on their plate, meaning that bluffing (or otherwise) charming their way past them has a basic difficulty of 10. Bribery won't help, but sob stories or other ways to try and convince them may reduce the difficulty by up to another 5, dropping it as low as 5. This is a good opportunity for players to stretch their role-playing legs and they should be rewarded for it.

Starting a fight here would be a manifestly stupid thing to do. If they leave they may still be able to commandeer a tarn or hide in a wagon.

If they do hide the guards roll 5D to try and detect them, hiding is a Stealth roll and hiding in a wagon would provide a +5 bonus. There may be other ways past the guards, players can come up with some truly crazy plans. The Games Master will have to improvise depending on these plans.

Gor has several walls, but the guards at the inner gates will only stare without doing anything. They're more there to secure the gates in case of attack and to reinforce the outer walls or catch transgressors – if needed. The players would need to have their characters do something truly flagrant to draw their attention.

THE STREETS

Ar is still busy at night, if quieter. It's not a city that ever truly sleeps and its inns, taverns and other facilities stay open late into the night. Periodically they disgorge bands of wandering drunkards, while legions of hawkers and slave girls try to tempt them back in to some other establishment. The Cylinder of Art isn't too far, but you will have to pass through these busy streets to get there.

Ar is a beautiful city though its more recent impoverishment means that, even now, it still bears the scars of its occupation. There are empty houses, smoke stains on white walls and a sense of pride, paranoia and suspicion that permeates the whole city.

Roll a D6 for a random encounter on the way to the Cylinder of Art:

- 1-2. A patrol of two guards, a swordsman and a crossbowman. Bluffing or otherwise getting past them with some other skill has a difficulty of 10, but they will be in the area ready to respond to any shenanigans even if they are bypassed.
- 3. A half naked slave girl, painted with the name of her Master's establishment and jingling from a coin-box around her neck, rushes up and kneels. She gives the patter she's been taught to convince them to come and partake (this could be baths, a tavern or an in for a place to stay).

- 4. A gaggle of half-drunk citizens (2d6) in jovial and friendly mood come along the road, offering to share paga and even asking them to join the party.
- 5. A gaggle of half-drunk citizens (2d6) in aggressive and beligerant mood come along the road. If they peg the characters for outsiders they will challenge them, but it won't take much (a show of force or intimidation against a difficulty of 12) to make them back off.
- 6. A cart comes rattling down the road at considerable speed, drawn by a tharlarian (a dinosaur-like lizard). The driver is in a hurry and not inclined to swerve or show concern for anyone in his way.

If they can make it through the street despite the temptations and potential problems they may encounter, they can make it to the tower. They will then need to get in through the tower and make their way to the upper floors. Details on the tower can be found in a later section.

APPROACH TWO THE SKY AND THE TOWER

If the players take the opportunity to travel in the basket of a draft tarn, their entry to the city will be a lot easier. It will also be a lot more rushed as it is a lot more obvious to onlookers and a lot more unusual.

With a few beats of its massive wings, the broad-bodied draft tarn takes to the air. The basket you are huddled in swings violently a moment, before settling into position, swung back slightly. Over its edge you can see the dark countryside below, sweeping past, barely visible and then – abruptly – the constellation of Ar's lamps and its gleaming white walls, a mirror of the night sky but below you. The tarnsman twists, turns, pulling on the great bird's straps, climbing higher until – with an abrupt thump, the basket – and the tarn – hit the roof of the tower.

"Quick! Get what you need before the alarm is raised and tarnsmen come!" He scans the sky with acute paranoia. You don't think he'll wait too long.

They will have been seen flying into the tower and guards will begin to climb the floors and raise the alarm as they go. Start a timer for an hour when the players react to their landing and take their first action. This will be a real-life timer, so longer than it will take for things to happen in game, but it's a rough approximation of how long they have and adds time pressure and excitement to the game. Tell the players they have limited time and make the timer visible if you want to ramp up the tension

- **On the hour:** The tower's guards reach the level that the characters are on and begin their attack. Tarnsmen reach the tower and circle, threatening their escape route and taking pot-shots at anyone on the roof.

- **After five minutes:** The sound of an alarm bell being rung can be heard echoing up from the bottom of the tower.
- **After forty-five minutes:** Shouting and the sounds of rattling weapons can be heard from the lower floors.
- **After fifty minutes:** Everyone in the tower has hidden away and barred their doors.



The Cylinder of Art

The Cylinder of Art stands alone, apart from the other cylinders. No bridges connect to it though posts for tarn wire and perches for tarns stand out from its top. It is a newer tower, its stone still rough, giving it a dirtier look, but that just makes the lamp-light from its many windows stand out all the more. You estimate... perhaps fifty floors, three metres each floor, the tower's cylindrical shape rising fifty stories into the sky. It blots out the stars, but replaces them with its own, coloured light, filtered through curtains. Remarkable and beautiful.

The Cylinder of Art was thrown up after the Cosian's were ousted from Ar. It was built, in part, to house the spoils of war and in part to demonstrate – along with the rebuilding of the walls – that Ar was still a great and prideful city. It hasn't proven that useful since it was built and has become a sort of collecting hall for curiosities oddities and things with no particular home. There's still wealth stored here, but nothing that is considered a truly great treasure and some of the floors are now homes to members of the High Castes that cannot afford a place in the High Cylinders.

GROUND FLOOR - FLOOR ONE Entrance

The tower's entrance is a pair of iron-bound, double doors, flanked by lanterns. A pair of guardsmen are always on duty here and they know everyone that is supposed to come in and out. Without recognition or an ostraka (a particular clay token) they will not be allowed entrance without a fight or without finding another way in – and there are no windows on the ground floor.

Besides the main gate there are gates flat to the ground, with slopes for wagons to deliver and take things from the basement level of the tower. At night these are barred and secured. During the day the basement is busy and there are an additional two guards stationed here. At night it's closed and barred from the inside, but clear.



The Greeting Hall

Almost the entire lower floor is simply a fairly spartan, welcoming chamber. It forms an 'O' ring around a central light well which, in the day, allows sunlight to reach every floor from the roof on down to the basement. Hanging baskets of flowers are strung from iron hooks in the pillars around the well, as are ropes and baskets on pulleys which allow things to be lifted and dropped carefully from floor to floor. Stairs ascend to the right, clockwise, around the outside of the tower and descend in the opposite direction down to the basement and sub-basement.

Next to the stair, and next to it on every fifth floor, hangs an alarm bar. A great cylindrical, suspended bell with a wooden knocker, used to rouse guards in case of an attack or break in. You should start an hour timer, as though the characters had attacked from the roof, if one of these alarms gets set off.

BASEMENT

The basement houses a communal kitchen, barely used. There is a large bread oven, a pantry, a sizeable ice-box and a large cistern surrounded by many buckets. Nobody is here during the night, but in the day there are a handful of pot girls, a single male worker slave and a pair of guards at the horizontal gates.

The kitchen takes up less than half of the tower, the rest is intended for storage. While it has basic supplies intended in case of a siege (water, salted meat, pickled vegetables and so forth) it has little else. Deliveries sometimes come in the day, oddities and items from slave houses or found by patrols. They are sorted through here and carried or winched up to the scribes on the upper floors for investigation.

At night there is nobody here.

SUB BASEMENT

The sub-basement has more siege supplies – water, grain and hard biscuits – and it also houses the pot girls and the male slave from the kitchen when they are bedded down for the night. Four girls and one male worker slave. The slaves are housed in individual, locked cages. The key hangs on the wall, beneath two slave whips – one lighter, one heavier.

The slaves are clad in basic sack-cloth tunics and kept barefoot. Collared with iron rings marked 'Art' in Gorean. Their loyalty is to the tower and they will raise a fuss unless cowed into silence in some way (Difficulty 14) or their cages are opened and they are bound and gagged to prevent them raising the alarm.

LOWER FLOORS – FLOORS TWO TO TWENTY

The lower floors are mostly abandoned, empty, divided into quarters with common 'halls' around the central well. These rooms could be put to many different uses but, for the time being, stand empty.

Floor 2 houses the guards. There are sixteen beds, divided between the four chambers on this floor – four each. Each chamber also has a slave kennel with a general serving slave assigned to the guards within that chamber. Each chamber has two guards in it at present – currently asleep – along with their helms, clothing, shields and weapons – along with their slave. Each chamber also has a small kitchen and hearth for cooking, and a small cistern for water.

Eight guards are on duty at any time while eight rest. Two are on service at the gate, leaving six to wander the tower on patrol in pairs.

There is no regularity to their patrols so the Games Master is at liberty to throw some guards into the mix if the action slows down or they want to put a spanner in the works.

When the alarm is rung every guard will mobilise and form up, methodically making their way through the tower, clearing each floor until they find the interlopers and attack them. One guard will go to fetch tarnsmen, meaning that the players will be left to deal with fifteen guards, minus however many they have already dealt with.

MIDDLE FLOORS – FLOORS TWENTY-ONE TO FORTY

The middle floors, like most of the rest of the floors, are divided up into quarters, each one a Gorean apartment. These ones are empty, never used, not even fitted with doors.

You can roll a dice to determine the contents of any room randomly:

- 1. A pallet of glazed clay tiles.
- 2. A handful of cut white blocks of stone.
- 3. A broken block of white stone.
- 4. A few jards – or other birds – roosting in the chamber, or a startled looking urt that scurries away the moment it is seen.
- 5-6. Nothing.

UPPER FLOORS – FLOORS FORTY- ONE TO FORTY- NINE

The upper floors are occupied by various members of the high castes who are not rich enough to live in a more prestigious tower. Their doors are locked and barred from the inside and most will not venture forth to deal with whatever is going on whether through indifference or self interest. Height is a sign of prestige which is why the upper floors are occupied while the lower remain empty. The occasional person who lives in these rooms may be met on the steps, alone or accompanied by a slave carrying their goods.

If you need to know who or what is in the rooms with more detail, roll randomly:

- 2. Initiate.
- 3. Warrior.
- 4. Scribe
- 5. Builder
- 6. Physician.
- 7. Merchant.
- 8-11. Vacant.
- 12. Assassin (disguised as another caste).

Any occupant has a free companion (roll again for caste if you need to) on a roll of 1-2 on a D6. Each apartment will house, in addition to its free citizen, 1d6-3 slaves.

This will just add a little colour and flavour should any of these apartments end up broken into or hostages be taken.

THE LIBRARY – FLOOR FIFTY

The library and the roof are much more important to the adventure and so will be described in more detail for you to describe to the players.

The floor opens up as you move from the stairs. This floor is a single chamber and – so high up – it should provide a magnificent view of the city below you. But it does not. It is shuttered, dimly lit and cluttered with shelves, crates, boxes and pallets – seemingly in utter chaos with dust hanging in the air. One quarter of the room seems to be an apartment or another storage chamber, its door closed. The rest is a higgledy-piggledy mess that makes no sense and doesn't appear to be in any kind of order to the untrained eye.

Searching the chamber is almost fruitless, but a roll of 19 or more will uncover the slave girl 'Rags', hiding beneath a pile of furs in terror of the interlopers. Threatening her mistress will do the same, making her emerge from hiding to plead for her Mistress' life.

Rags likes to 'play' amongst the finds and things here and, while her Mistress sleeps, she has been looking through the treasures. As an affectation she likes to wear the eyeglasses of a barbarian girl, thinking them exotic and wonderful but not really understanding what they are. She shouldn't be doing so, and her Mistress will admonish her, even in the middle of the heist, for wearing them.

Rags knows where the golden orb is, if anyone presumes to ask her, but is afraid to say where it is and her Mistress is unlikely to command her to speak. She must be persuaded one way or another, either by threats to her Mistress or to herself, or by some other means of persuasion.

Lady Aila's Chambers

Through the door you find yourselves in a spacious chamber that – like the room beyond – has been made much less spacious by clutter. Books, scrolls and ledgers lay on every surface and the kitchen is cluttered with bowls. It seems one slave is not enough to clean up after the free person who calls this place home.

If not awake and alarmed, Lady Aila is asleep in her bed in her night-robe. When awoken she will panic, scream and try to hide her face. She is a rather stout and doughty woman and will fight any potential captors until she is physically subdued. She will certainly try to raise the alarm if she can. She will resist – as much as possible – any attempt to make her tell where the golden orb is stored.

Recovering the Orb

The orb is somewhere in this clutter. The ledgers in Lady Aila's chambers reference where items are (or are supposed to be) and if mention of the orb can be found in those then the orb can be found more quickly.

A Composition roll against a difficulty of 21 is necessary to decode the ledgers.



When they are decoded, searching characters can then make a Senses roll against a difficulty of 16 to locate the orb – otherwise it is much more difficult, with a difficulty of 26 to try and find it.

Failed attempts to find the orb may turn up other items of interest (roll 2d6):

Incidental Finds:

- 2. Small black squares of glass with a note attached 'Forbidden, destroy by order of the initiates'.
- 3. Barbarian trinkets – jewellery in non-Gorean styles, eyeglasses, rings, watches etc (worth 1d6 full copper tarsks)
- 4. Amphorae of Cosian wine (cheap and unwieldy) worth a copper tarsk each.
- 5. A casket of slave chains and bindings.
- 6. Cosian statuary and decorations, damaged.
- 7. Items of barbarian slave clothing (bras, panties, t-shirts, jeans, other mysterious garments – mostly torn).

- 8. A box of assorted ostraka.
- 9. An empty chest.
- 10. Bundled Cosian-style robes from high castes.
- 11. Scrolls of Cosian writings.
- 12. A fine bottle of expensive Cosian wine worth 1 silver tarsk.

The Roof

From the roof of the tower a great swathe of Ar can be seen below.

Lamplights glitter, high towers stand against the sky in the far distance. Tarn perches, wire fastenings and pennant poles stand tall around the rim of the tower's roof – along with a spear, transfixing what remains of a body. The sign hung around its neck says, simply, thief. Overgrown or dying plants in pots and troughs litter the roof, here and there, and a single lamp lights a small altar to the Priest Kings and the city.

The roof of this tower is barely used. Aila comes up here sometimes to use the light to read by and Rags spends her few moments alone up here when she can for fresh air and sunshine.

It is unguarded, The Cylinder of Art not being considered fantastically important to defend. As one can tell from the impaled thief, interlopers still aren't, however, welcomed.

The Artefact and The Conclusion

The sphere will mean little or nothing to anyone of Gorean origin, but to those of Earthly origin a Scholar roll of 7 or more will recognise the circuit-like patterns on the surface as being such. To anyone else it is simply a golden-coloured orb, a trinket with remarkably precise but meaningless engravings.

Should Io and Balbus get to examine it they will come to the conclusion that it does need to be destroyed rather than kept or returned to the increasingly distant Priest Kings. A heavy axe or sword blow would be sufficient to break it, but will also release a powerful electrical discharge. This does 5D6 of damage to whoever struck the blow (an axe with a wooden haft, or a stone, will reduce this to 2D6+2.

If pressed they will say only that it is *“An evil thing, made by beasts, a forbidden machine.”*

At the conclusion – with the return of the orb – Io and Balbus will pay up and then be on their way, with Io offering the following:

Io vanishes his coin purse into his robes. “You are known to agents of Priest Kings now, friends, and have shown yourselves reliable. There will always be need of men like you to protect our world. Perhaps we'll find you in the future. There will always be gold and glory for those willing to step up. Be well friends. Be well.”





*He helps Balbus to his feet as well and
the blind man turns his scarred eyes
towards you, briefly gleaming red in the
darkness. “Yes, the Priest Kings see you
and approve. May you be blessed.”*

*The pair walk away into the darkness,
towards the temple, leaving you alone.*

Game Statistics

Io, Agent of the Priest

Kings

Io is a rangy man with a lean, muscular body and an ingratiating, friendly manner. He has something of a twinkle in his eye and a mischievous smile that suggests he knows something other people don't. His freshly shaven head has scratches upon its pate and there is dirt under his nails. His white robe is a little grubby, but the brass circle he wears around his neck gleams as though new.

Io is a far-travelling agent of the priest kings who adopts many guises and names in his work for them. He reports to Samos of Port Kar when he can but is otherwise a spymaster and operative all of his own. For some years now he has worked mostly independently, trying to do what he thinks is right, gleaned from his years of service.

Agility 3D

Acrobatics 3D+2, Athletics 3D+1, Blades 3D+2, Clubs 3D+1, Escapology 3D+1, Evade 3D+1, Fistfight 3D+1, Stealth 3D+2, Throwing 3D+1

Dexterity 3D

Care 3D+1, Burglary 3D+2, Rope Work 3D+2, Sleight of Hand 4D

Body 3D

Run 3D+1, Swimming 3D+1

Reason 4D

Philosophy 4D+1, Culture 4D+1, Initiative 4D+1, Senses 4D+1, Trading 4D+1, Scholar 5D

Arts 2D

Aesthetics 2D+1

Charm 3D

Bluff 5D+1, Convince 5D+1

Health: 31

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 9

Gear: Io carries a concealed dagger and two purses, an obvious one with a dozen copper tarsks and 22 tarsk bits. The other – hidden one – with ten (or more) full silver tarsks.

Balbus, Agent of the Priest Kings

Unkempt and ragged, Balbus is a mess the kind of man rare on Gor, a cripple to be pitied. His eyes stare blindly ahead of him through a mess of scars and he feels his way forward with a staff. A long beard, tufty and wild, hangs from his chin and he dresses in tattered rags. A picture of misery, but seemingly impassive and enduring.

Balbus is an agent of the Priest Kings. Though truly blind his beggar routine is a cover. Unnoticed he can move from village to city, from temple to fortress, beneath the notice and bother of most in the world. He may not see but through him – through strange and terrifying means – the Priest Kings can see. What he has seen has brought the Flame Death to more than one enemy, even since the Priest Kings withdrew.

Agility: 3D

Escapology 4D, Evade 5D, Fistfight 4D, Stealth 6D

Dexterity: 3D

Body: 2D

Fitness: 3D, Endurance: 4D, Run: 3D, Survival (urban) 4D, Swimming: 3D

Reason: 4D+2

Senses: 7D+2, Trading: 5D+2

Arts: 2D+2

Charm: 3D+1

Bluff: 6D+1, Charisma: 5D+1, Convince: 5D+1, Intimidation: 4D+1, Will: 5D+1

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Movement: 9

Health: 31

Gear: Balbus carries a peasant staff and a begging bowl. At any given time he may have 3d6 tarsk bits on him (roll this as though it were a skill, he may have been lucky or unlucky).

Guardsmen of Ar

These guardsmen are hardly the crack troops of Ar but however lowly their station the men of Ar will do their duty and fight with honour.

The guards are used to fighting and working together. They should operate tactically and in support of one another in any battles. They're not fools to go blindly charging in.

Agility: 3D

Athletics 5D, Blades 6D, Evade 5D, Fistfight 5D

Dexterity: 3D

Care 4D, Crossbow 4D

Body: 3D+2

Fitness 4D+2, Run 5D+2

Reason: 3D

Initiative 5D, Senses 5D

Arts: 2D

Charm: 3D

Bluff 5D, Command 5D, Intimidation 5D, Slave Handling 4D, Will 5D

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Short Sword: 3D+2

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Light Crossbow: Effective

Range: 100 ft. Damage: 4D+2

Movement: 15

Health: 36

Armor: Helmet 1

Rags the Slave Girl

The slave girl has a certain charm, but she'll never be sold from the centre stage. Sheer blue silk clings to her slender form, her long hair hanging down and draping over her slender curves. Her fingers and cheeks are smudged with ink. Perched on her nose is a strange apparatus of glass and wire – lenses of some kind. She stares at you in fear and concern and shrinks back, trying to make herself look small.

Rags was once a member of the Caste of Scribes from Cos. Knocked senseless by a man who would have otherwise been her suitor, during the occupation, she was stripped and enslaved and eventually bought by Lady Aila who was jealous of her when she was a free woman. Rags is bored, listless and longing to be owned by a man as she was before Lady Aila bought her. She is terrified of Aila, but if claimed by a strong Master instead will work hard to please him and will tell him all he needs to know.

Agility 2D

Dexterity 4D

Care 5D+2, Sleight of Hand 4D+2

Body 3D

Reason 3D

Philosophy 5D, Culture 5D, Kaissa 4D, Navigation 3D+2, Scholar 5D

Arts 3D

Aesthetics 3D+1, Composition 6D+1, Poetry 3D+2

Charm 4D

Speaking 4D+2

Health: 31

Movement: 9

Power Damage Bonus: 2D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 3D

Lady Aila Decimus, the Scribe

Aila is a heavyset woman with a peasant's build rather than what you might expect of a high caste woman. Her dignity is barely preserved by her thin, inner robe. She is clearly terrified to see you and nervously chewing on the inside of her cheek as she tries to cover her modesty.

Aila likes to eat and likes to read. A combination that has led to a rare – for Gor – case of portliness. She is content to be unattractive to men and believes herself disinterested in them. She refers to her (relative) corpulence as her 'last veil'. She is fascinated by the strange and esoteric, but also lazy, which has led to her virtual exile here, sorting through the strange and the leftovers.

Agility 2D

Dexterity 3D

Care 3D+2, Sleight of Hand 3D+2

Body 2D

Reason 5D

Philosophy 7D, Culture 7D, Kaissa 6D, Navigation 5D+2, Scholar 8D

Arts 4D

Aesthetics 4D+1, Composition 7D+1, Poetry 4D+2

Charm 2D

Speaking 2D+2

Health: 27

Movement: 6

Power Damage Bonus: 1D

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 2D

Tarns & Tarnsmen

With bone-chilling shrieks a pair of tarns circle the tower, the men on their backs twisting in the saddles to bring their crossbows to bear with one arm.

Tarnsmen are prideful and will seek to pursue rather than find additional aid. They will try to spare the draft tarn if they can, seeking to take out the pilot or pepper the basket with bolts, rather than to bring down the beast.

Agility: 4D

Coordination 6D, Acrobatics 5D, Athletics 6D, Blades 7D, Evade 6D, Fistfight 5D, Spears 7D, Stealth 6D, Tarn Riding 7D

Dexterity: 4D

Care 7D, Crossbow 7D, Rope Work 6D

Body: 3D+2

Fitness 6D+2, Endurance 6D+2, Run 4D+2, Survival 4D+2

Reason: 3D

Healing 4D, Initiative 6D, Kaissa 4D, Navigation 4D, Senses 6D

Arts 2D

Charm: 3D

Confidence 5D, Command 5D, Intimidation 6D, Slave Handling 4D, Will 6D

Power Damage Bonus: 3D

Shortsword: 4D+2

Accuracy Damage Bonus: 4D

Light Crossbow: Effective Range: 100 ft. Damage: 6D+2

Movement: 12

Health: 43

Armor: Helmet 1

War Tarns

War tarns are bred for battle and a vicious, heavily muscled and capable of carrying five men on a rope hanging from their claws, as well as their rider and his equipment.

Scale: 5

Agility: 6D

Evade 9D, Fistfight 9D, Stealth 7D

Dexterity: 2D

Body: 6D+2

Fitness 7D+2, Endurance 7D+2, Fly 13D, Survival 7D

Reason: 2D

Initiative 4D, Senses 4D

Arts: 1D

Charm: 2D

Confidence 3D, Intimidation 4D, Will 4D

Movement: 39

Power Bonus: 4D (Claws 5D, Beak 6D)

Armor: +5

Health: 50

Specialities

As an optional rule you can allow characters to become more individual and more specialised, to become true masters in more narrow fields of expertise. This is accomplished by allowing characters to have ‘Specialities’, special descriptors under or next to their existing skills that provide a bonus, additional dice when what they’re doing meets that description.

Qualifying for Specialities is simple enough, the total value of a Skill must be at least 5D to qualify.

Buying a Speciality costs 5 experience and provides +1D when rolling that skill where the Speciality is appropriate. Similar specialities – and even identical ones – can exist connected to different skills. Only the highest one applies.

You can buy more than one speciality under each skill, each time that skill rises by another 1D (So one at 5D, one at 6D and so on...)

This is by no means an exhaustive list of possible Specialities, but it is a good starting point and guide.

Acrobatics: Jumping, Landing, Parkour, Tumbling.

Aesthetics: Critique, Folk Art.

Animal Handling: Breed Animals, Calm Animal, Command Draft Animals, Command Predators, Tame, Train Animals.

Art: Fine Art, Mosaic, Sculpture.

Athletics: Climbing, Jumping, Marathon, Throwing.

Blades: Dagger, Great Sword, Axe, Hatchet, Knife, Long Sword, Short Sword

Bluff: False Front, Hide Emotion, Lie.

Bow: Longbow, Mounted Archery, Pani Longbow, Peasant Bow, Shortbow, Trick Shot.

Burglary: Case the Site, Knot-Retying, Pick Locks, Search for Valuables.

Care: Gentle Touch, Precise Movement, Steady Hands.

Charisma: Attract, Charm, Fast Friends, Interest.

Clubs: Break Down, Cudgel, Knock Out, Mace, Sap, Shield Breaking, Staff.

Command: Chain of Command, Create Fear, Create Loyalty, Inspiration, Tactics.

Composition: History, Interpretation, Literature, Mythology, Note Taking, Poetry, Reporting, Speed Reading.

Confidence: Bravery, Fast Talk, Infectious Confidence.

Convince: Befuddle, Commanding Presence, Lie, Pressure.

Coordination: Balance, Body Awareness, Multitask, Off-Handedness.

Craft: Bowmaking, Branding, Carpenter, Cobbling, Cooper, Embroidery, Glassblowing, Leatherworking, Mechanical Devices, Metalworker, Papermaking, Pottery, Scrimshaw, Sewing, Tapestry, Tattooing, Weaponsmithing, Weaving.

Crossbow: Mounted Shot, Pistol Crossbow, Reloading, Repair, Trick Shot.

Culture: Barbarian, Caste Culture (by Caste), Civilised Gor, High Caste, Jungle Culture, Low Caste, Port Kar, Red Savage, Tahari, Torvaldsland.

Draft Beast: Barge, Cart, Chariot, Ploughing, Wagon.

Endurance: Determination, Ignore Pain, Keep Going, Resist Torture.

Escapology: Chains, Cuffs, Fake Binding, Gags, Ropes, Yokes.

Evade: Close Combat Evade, Ranged Evade.

Fistfight: Boxing, Break, Choking, Fists, Holds, Kicking, Knock Out, Pani Arts, Wrestling.

Fitness: Body Confidence, Health, Strength.

Healing: Apothecary, Diagnosis, Disease, First Aid, Surgery.

Initiative: Instinct, Reactions, Reflexes, Situational Awareness, Sixth Sense.

Intimidation: Air of Danger, Cruel Mien, Force of Personality, Frigid, Icy Stare, Physical Intimidation, Threats.

Kaissa: Aggressive Kaissa, Art of the Game, Bluffing Kaissa, Defensive Kaissa, Kaissa Codes, Kaissa History, Positional Kaissa, Tactical Kaissa.

Music: Brass, Percussion, Stringed, Vocal, Woodwind.

Navigation: Cartography, Direction Sense, Landmarks, Natural Signs, Stars.

Philosophy: Lateral Thinking, Logic, Objectivity, Pattern Recognition, Rational Being, Reason, General Knowledge.

Pleasure: Accessories, Allure, Body Pleasure, Exotic Practice, Forced Orgasm, Oral Pleasure, Orgasm Control, Please Men, Please Women, Sexual Touch, Whip of the Furs.

Poetry: Classical Recitation, Emotional Poetry, Epic Poetry, Poet's Performance, Technical Poetry.

Riding: Kaiila, Line and Tack, Racing, Spur the Beast, Tharlarion, Verbal Commands.

Rope Work: Binding, Personal Knot, Rigging, Tack.

Run: Burst of Speed, Catch Up, Fast Start, Jog, Leave Behind, Run, Sprint.

Sailing: Bailing, Keep Afloat, Quick Repair, Ramming Speed, Rig for Manoeuvrability, Rig for Speed, Sea Legs, Ship Maintenance, Walk the Rigging.

Scholar: Ancient Gorean, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Geometry, Grammar, History, Logic, Music Theory, Rhetoric.

Senses: Eagle Eyes, Eavesdrop, Hearing, Search, Sight, Smell, Sophisticated Palette, Taste, Touch.

Singing: Ballads, Choral Songs, Drinking Songs, Folk Songs, Slave Songs, Work Songs.

Slave Handling: Female Slaves, Male Slaves, Pleasure Training, Slave Breaking, Slave Intimidation, Slave Legalities, Slave Training, Work Training.

Sleight of Hand: Coin Tricks, Hidden Knives, Pickpocket, Stage Magic

Speaking: Boost Morale, Command Your Lessers, Convey Emotion, Convey Information, Erudition, Make a Case, Petition Your Betters, Public Oration, Rabble Rouse.

Spears: Javelin, Lance, Long Spear, Mounted Spear, Pike, Set Spear, Short Spear, Thrown Spear

Stealth: Best Approach, Move Silently, Move Unseen, Timing.

Survival: Foraging, Hunting, Natural Remedy, Survival Desert, Survival Jungle, Survival Ocean, Survival Temperate, Survival Tundra, Survival Urban, Tracking, Water Finding.

Swimming: Deep Diving, Diving, Endurance, Lake Swimming, Ocean Swimming, Pool Swimming, River Swimming, Speed.

Tarn Riding: Ascent, Descent, Draft Tarn, Racing Tarn, Speed, Tarn-Bond, War Tarn.

Throwing: Darts, Distraction, Javelins, Knives, Rocks, Slings,

Spears, Stunning Blow

Trading: Bargain, Coin-Clipping, Haggle, Investment, Valuation, Weights & Measures.

Whips: Beast Control, Entangling, Knife Whip, Slave Punishment

Will: Fear Not, Sense of Purpose, Stubbornness, Unshakable Honour