

CHARACTER CONJURING



This issue our new regular feature expands upon an existing non-player character class . . .

The Alchemist

by Tony Chamberlain

The alchemist is probably the most powerful and interesting of the non-player hireling characters used in *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, since he has the innate ability of producing magical items under the guidance of a magic user. His services may often be called upon by player characters, especially magic users, to identify or construct magical items, and a clear understanding of his powers are essential. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* gives brief details of the alchemist, which are expanded below.

ALCHEMY

Alchemy is based on the belief that the universe is a unity and is founded on the existence of First Matter. Alchemists believe that the characteristics of an object can be stripped away to reduce it to First Matter, to which other characteristics can be added. The four elements of fire, air, water and earth are the initial development of First Matter and the difference between

materials is caused by the differing proportions in which the four elements are combined in them. This theory is the heart of alchemy since it allows the possibility of transmutation by heating, cooling, vaporising or other treatments. No clear distinction is drawn between animate or inanimate, and research continues on parallel chemical and mystical lines; the supreme goal being to make the Philosopher's Stone, which has the power of turning all things to gold. Alchemical operations are slow and taxing and might be repeated hundreds of times. In the course of this long toil, it is expected that the chemical development of the material will be accompanied by a corresponding spiritual development in the Alchemist.



CHARACTER ABILITY, RACE AND LEVEL

The NPC alchemist is thus a powerful figure, since he combines certain of the skills of a cleric and magic user with his main interest of chemistry. All things pertaining to the four elements are his speciality and like the druid, the alchemist's alignment must be absolute neutrality. He strongly resembles the magic user in terms of intelligence and dexterity, but is limited to six special levels of ability. Martial arts are totally foreign to alchemy and restrictions on hit dice, armour and weapons as for MU's will apply. The level and race of an available alchemist is determined by rolling percentage dice:

Die Roll	Level	Race	Die Roll
01 - 09	1	human	01 - 70
10 - 30	2	½ elf	71 - 85
31 - 60	3	½ orc	86 - 00
61 - 80	4		
81 - 95	5		
96 - 00	6		

Other characteristics may be taken from the DMG.

Note: Alchemists of ability level greater than 2 will only be found in large towns or cities.

Alchemists may perform simple services, such as the *detect* dweomers, for a stated fee, if not otherwise engaged: More likely, they will enter into a contract with a magic user or cleric for a number of years, at a rate of 300gp per month, minimum.



SPELL CASTING

Alchemists have a limited spell casting ability, as shown below. Spell details are as detailed in the *Players Handbook*.

Alchemist's level:

- 1: *protect from evil, detect magic, detect invisible, detect illusion, pyrotechnics, detect good/evil*
- 2: *know alignment, slow poison, stinking cloud*
- 3: *fools gold, conjure elemental*
- 4: *enchant a weapon, legend lore*
- 5: *transmute rock to mud, true seeing*
- 6: *enchant an item, stone to flesh*

Spells may be cast only if the alchemist is of an equal or higher level than the level of spell, according to the above table. One spell only may be cast per day, except those involving the four

elements (*pyrotechnics, conjure elemental*) which may be cast at will (but not concurrently).

Alchemists will certainly be sought out to cast information type spells. These must be charged for at the rates shown below. *Note, Alchemists cannot cast spells unless within their laboratory.*

Spell	Value in gp
<i>Detect good/evil</i>	50
<i>Detect illusion</i>	150
<i>Detect invisible</i>	250
<i>Detect magic</i>	150
<i>Enchant an item</i>	1,000 per day
<i>Enchant a weapon</i>	1,000
<i>Fools gold</i>	200
<i>Identify</i>	100
<i>Know alignment</i>	250
<i>Legend lore</i>	150 per day
<i>Protect from evil</i>	200
<i>Slow poison</i>	200
<i>Stone to flesh</i>	2,000
<i>Transmute rock to mud</i>	1,500
<i>True seeing</i>	1,600



FABRICATION OF MAGICAL ITEMS

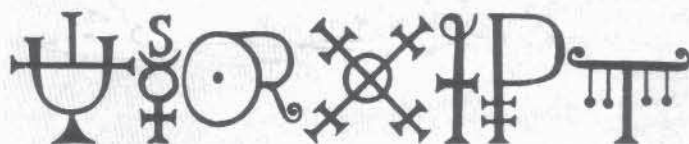
A well equipped laboratory is essential for the production of magical items, including potions. Not only must suitable raw materials be available but also the apparatus for compounding them. A list of the more essential apparatus is given below and



the maximum number of any given item, which may be present at one time, is given. Also shown is the percentage time-reduction-factor for each piece of equipment, since the help of an alchemist in fabricating a magical item can result in the time taken being reduced by up to 50%. Depending on the funds available to the character hiring the alchemist, a suitable selection of items may be made and the time-reduction-factors totalled. Totals above 50% count as 50%. This factor is then applied to the particular work in hand to give the completion date. Equipment becomes the property of the Alchemist upon completion of the hire period. Magical items which may be fabricated include Golems.

Whilst the alchemist may cast, and therefore, charge fees for certain spells in the course of fabricating a magical item, a magic user (or cleric) of sufficiently high level of ability, must supervise operations if the operation is to succeed. The magic user may be absent for short periods (1 - 4 days) without jeopardising the work.

Laboratory equipment	Cost (gp)	% Adjust	Max. No.
Furnace, calcination, brick	200	12	1
Furnace, athanor, brick	150	10	1
Furnace, solutory, brick	30	5	1
Furnace, descensory, brick	150	10	1
Pelican still, glass	20	5	2
Curcubit, glass	10	2	10
Solen, glass	5	1	10
Alembic, glass	30	1	10
Aludel, clay	10	2	3
Thurible, brass	50	2	5
Cupel, iron	5	1	10
Crucible, iron	4	1	10
Bellows, leather	4	2	3
Bot-bar-bot, clay	15	2	2
Sublimatory, glass	40	5	1
Mortar & Pestle, clay	1	1	2
Vase of Hermes, glass	40	4	2
Flasks, glass	2	½	20
Beakers, glass	2	½	20



LABORATORY EXPLOSIONS

Alchemy is a hazardous profession and explosions are common. Every month, alchemists must save versus spell or suffer an explosion (treat as MU on "save" tables). Explosion magnitude is obtained with % dice:

Explosion Magnitude	Die Roll	Save Throw Adjust
1 negligible	01 - 40	+10
2 small	41 - 60	+2
3 medium	61 - 80	0
4 large	81 - 99	-4
5 catastrophic	00	-10

Each item in the laboratory, including finished items, must be saved for (treat as *fireball*) and spells in progress when the explosion occurs will be spoiled.

Persons present in the laboratory must save versus "breath weapon" or suffer damage from the explosion. Persons failing to save suffer 1d4 damage per level of explosion magnitude, i.e. in a "large" laboratory explosion, damage taken would be 4d4 per person.

