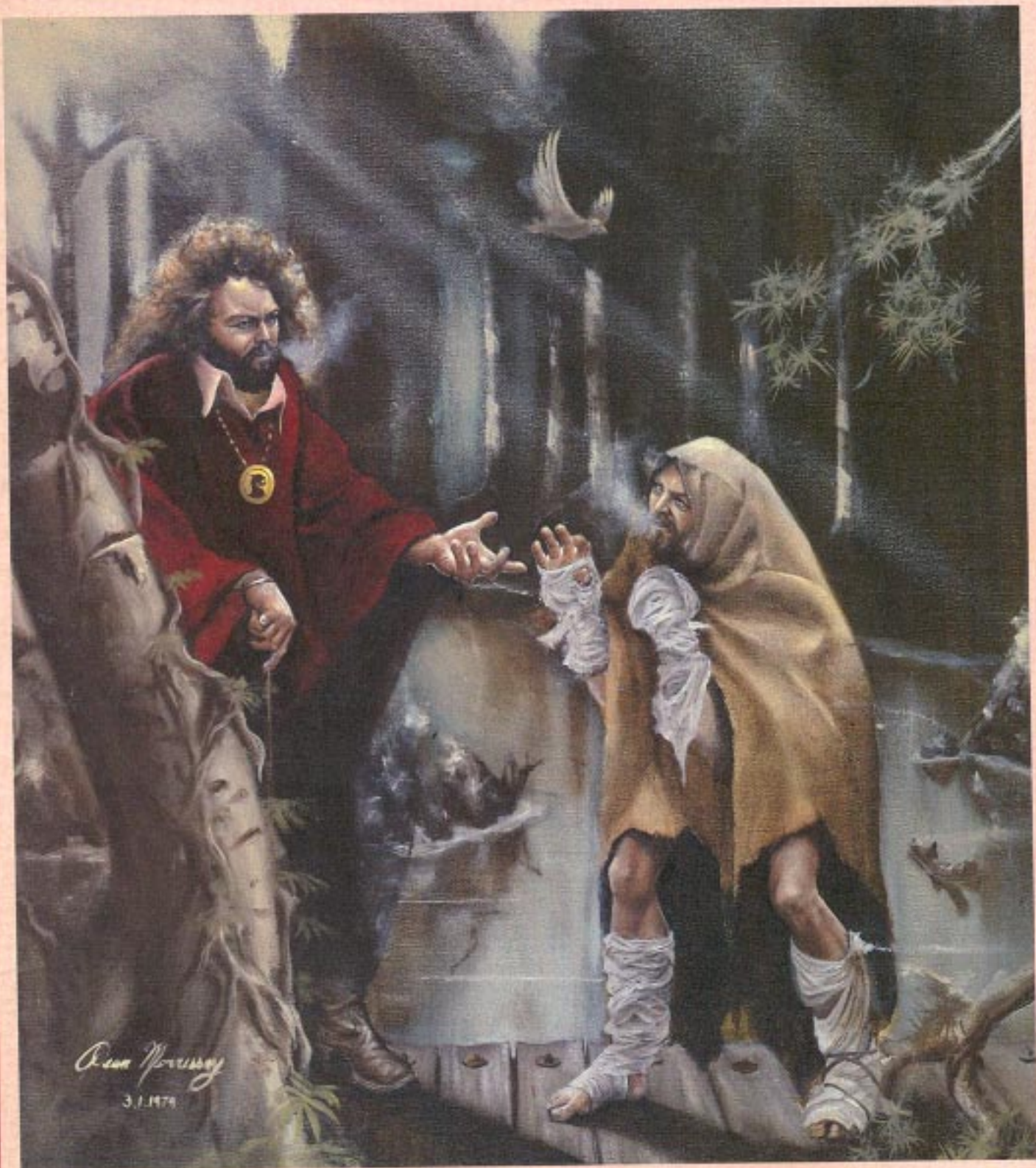


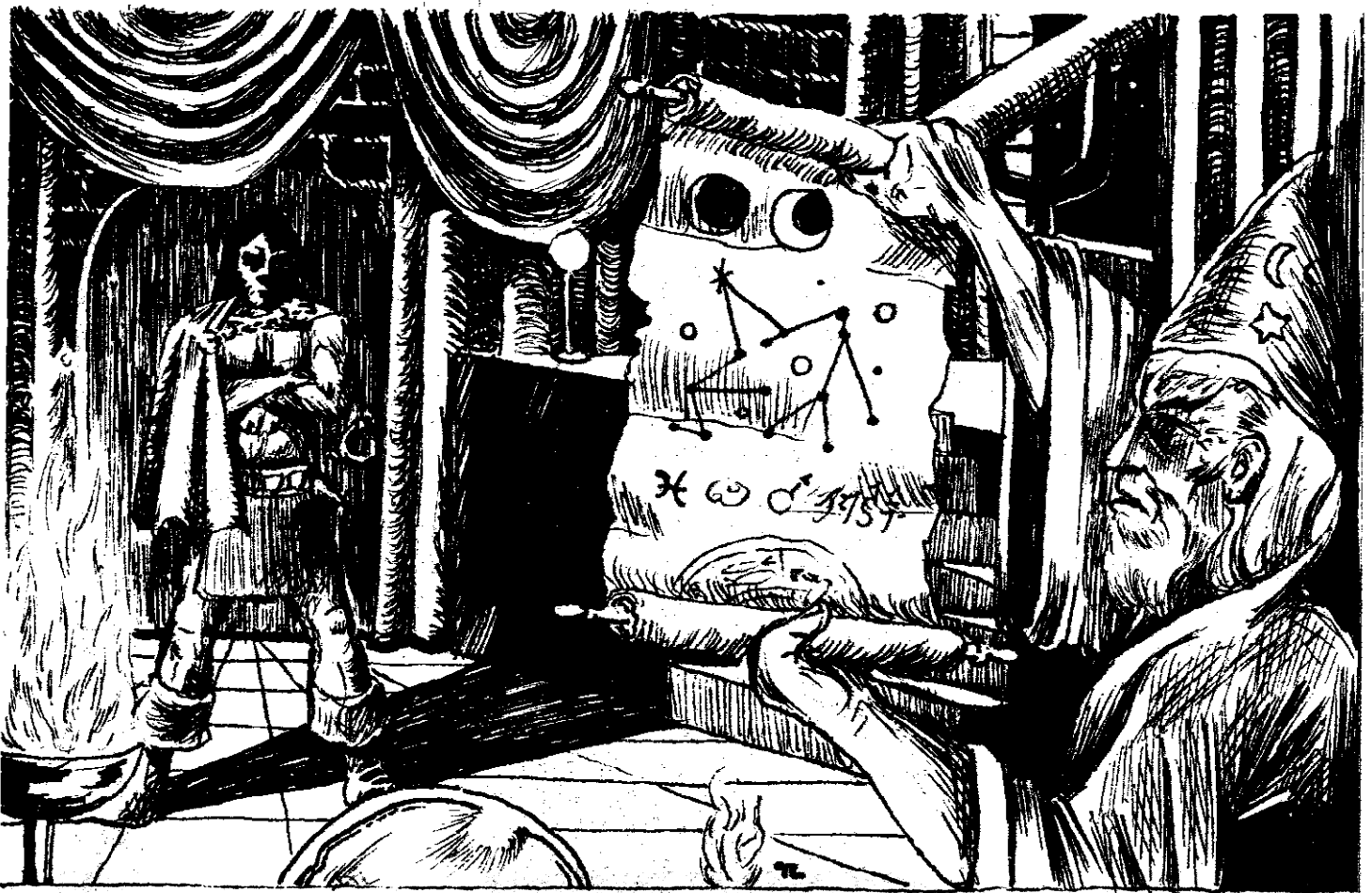
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# NPCs for hire: One who predicts...

by Roger E. Moore

Astrologers are persons adept at forecasting future events through the study of the influences of heavenly bodies on earthly affairs. They are quite knowledgeable about the science of astronomy as well as astrology, and may have a strong background in mathematics and physics as well. If they are included in an *AD&D* campaign, the DM should insure that there are changing celestial phenomena visible from the lands of the campaign. Such phenomena would include phases of the moon(s), eclipses, moving planets, meteors, comets, planetary oppositions and conjunctions, occultations, etc. It is not necessary for complete astrological and astronomical charts to be drawn out whenever a character wants his or her horoscope read, however. A simpler system for prediction is given below.

Astrologers will accept employment for long terms only with Fighters, Rangers, Paladins, Thieves, and Assassins. They will consider offers for a length of time starting at one year minimum, preferring lifetime employment if at all possible. Prospective employers must have constructed a fortress or freehold in which the Astrologer may house himself or herself and all the necessary equipment. The standard monthly wage for an Astrologer is 200 g.p., though living space, study rooms, a library, and observatory areas must be offered initially as well. A minimum expenditure for the above items will run in the neighborhood of 20,000 g.p.

Any class of character may consult an Astrologer on a short-term basis for predictions or advice. Such short-term hiring cannot exceed a period of one week. Astrologers will charge a standard fee of 75 g.p.

per day for short-term employers. Most questions will take only 2-5 days to answer.

## Astrologer characteristics

**Strength:** d6 + 6

**Intelligence:** d4 + 14

**Wisdom:** d6 + 12

**Hit Dice:** 7d4, plus Constitution bonuses, if applicable.

**Dexterity:** 4d4 + 1

**Constitution:** 3d4 + 3

**Charisma:** 2d4 + 6

**Alignment:** Astrologers have the same range of alignments as Sages do (see the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, p. 32).

Astrologers wear no armor and will use a dagger or staff in combat, at the same odds to hit as a 7th-level Magic-User. The age of an Astrologer ranges between middle-age and venerable. Most Astrologers (80%) are human, the rest being dwarven, elven, half-elven, and/or some other race, as the Dungeon Master chooses.

Certain minor spells may be possessed by an Astrologer at the DM's discretion. Astrologers will only be able to cast *Read Magic*, *Light*, *Continual Light*, and *Darkness*, 15' Radius. Astrologers may cast these spells from scrolls if desired. Rather than a regular spell book, the references and tomes in a well-stocked Astrologer's library provide him or her with the information to cast the spell. Only an Astrologer may use these books in this way. These spells may be cast as often per day as a 7th-level Magic-User could cast them. Astrologers who have spell-casting ability will keep their powers a secret. Magical items that are not for the exclusive use of any other single character class may be used by Astrologers, and they may use magical daggers and staves [with bonuses to hit and damage, but no other magical powers].

**Horoscopes and predictions**

Astrologers make a living by charting the positions of the heavenly bodies and measuring the influence of each of them on the daily lives of characters. They produce diagrams showing the projected appearance of the heavens at certain times and use these diagrams (called horoscopes) to predict the future. The predictions that Astrologers make are frequently cryptic and vague and may only describe the forces that will be interacting, the magnitude of danger to certain parties, and hints about the nature of the opposition. Adventurers may consult an Astrologer to check out the effects of a particular undertaking and see if it will be difficult or easy to accomplish.

The accuracy of a prediction depends upon the scope of the subject matter, the person or persons about whom the prediction is being made, and the length of time into the future the prediction is made for. The further into the future the Astrologer is forecasting, the more general, hence more accurate, the prediction; the prediction also becomes more accurate with the greater number of people it concerns. Note that the more accurate an Astrologer's advice becomes, the more cryptic it will be as well. Symbolism will be heavily used in all predictions.

With any sort of precognition in AD&D, the Dungeon Master must use considerable discretion to maintain game balance. If players find they can hire an Astrologer and get completely accurate predictions about the future, easily understandable and in detail, they will become much too powerful. Making the advice subject to several interpretations, with the possibility that the advice is wrong altogether, keeps the game from becoming stale.

Only one prediction may be made from a single horoscope, and only one horoscope may be cast per week. Whatever free time an Astrologer has during that week will be used to putter around with astrological or astronomical projects, and no real work will get done by the Astrologer. Interruption of this "off-duty" time will anger the Astrologer and possibly reduce loyalty and reaction scores to the characters involved.

Predictions concerning the actions of other player characters must be carefully hand&d, and may be frequently inaccurate.

**Horoscope Accuracy**

Scope	Time of Prediction up to			
	1 week	1 month	1 year	over 1 year
Person	5%	15%	25%	35%
Group *	15%	25%	35%	45%
City**	25%	35%	45%	55%
Nation***	35%	45%	55%	65%

\* — Parties of up to 100 people, castles and inhabitants, very small tribes, and the like.

\*\* — Parties of up to 1,000 people, fiefdoms, small towns and cities, etc.

\*\*\* — Groups of persons over 1,000 in number.

For each point of Intelligence and Wisdom over 15 the Astrologer has, add 2% to the base accuracy of any predictions made.

If an Astrologer is questioned more than once about a particular prediction, he or she will repeat whatever advice was given before, even if it was wrong. The special comments made on the Clerical spell *Augury* in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* and on the psionic discipline *Precognition* in the *Players Handbook* may prove helpful to a DM in wording the prediction. A DM should feel free to adjust the accuracy of a prediction up or down by as much as 20%, depending upon the complexity of the prediction requested. A player may ask whether or not there will be any people alive on earth 100 years from now; unless the DM plans otherwise, the answer may be a simple yes. A question on whether or not everyone alive at that time will practice the worship of a particular god will be answered in more cryptic form ("Some shall pay that being his due.") A question, as to who will be king in 100 years might receive the reply, "The lambs will follow the blind lion," which could symbolically represent any one of a number of events or personages, supposing that the prediction was accurate.

Astrologers should be relatively rare in any campaign. They can be introduced to provide clues or suggestions to players to lead them toward a particular goal. Astrologers may be found only in large cities, where they will be part of an informal organization similar to a guild. Only one Astrologer may be hired out to a player character at any time.

# ...and one who seeks the perfect mix

by Roger and Georgia Moore

Alchemists are persons engaged in research and experimentation with matter; they are the chemists (and, to a lesser extent, the biochemists) of the magic-oriented universe. In general, Alchemists are experienced in compounding magical and exotic substances used in making potions, and are skilled at identifying magical potions as well. Many Alchemists have specialized areas of interest, somewhat in the manner that Sages specialize in their areas of knowledge.

Any Alchemist may manufacture potions for a Magic-User, and it is recommended that the rules for costs and time to make them as given in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, p. 116-117, be used for the sake of simplicity. The Dungeon Master should make up a list of the special ingredients necessary for each potion as the need arises. It should be remembered that the Alchemist is not going to be responsible for obtaining any of these materials, no matter how much he or she is paid! Arrangements should be made by the Magic-User to provide the necessary materials.

**Special Skills**

As previously mentioned, many Alchemists have special areas of

interest in their research. If not otherwise engaged in any activity for a player, the Alchemist will likely involve himself or herself in personal experimentation in a chosen field. Research costs money, however, and the Alchemist will doubtless expect some support from his patron, in the form of enough gold to purchase space and supplies the Alchemist believes necessary for his work. What support the Magic-User provides will, of course, affect that Alchemist's loyalty to the patron Magic-User.

The most common areas of alchemical research and study are listed below, with additional comments on special knowledge the Alchemists in that field will have as a result:

**Elemental Essences** — This field is devoted to the study of the four basic elements of the magical universe: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. Alchemists in this field attempt to discover the four fabled essences of each of the elements (something like trying to produce the modern elements in pure atomic form). An example of such an essence is *Phlogiston*, the essence of Fire. Researchers in this area of knowledge are particularly knowledgeable about the Elemental Planes and their inhabitants, and tend to be Neutral in alignment,

**Metallurgy** — This field involves the study of the refining of metals, in pure or compounded forms, to meet the needs of weapon-

**Alchemist Characteristics**

**Strength:** 1d8 + 8

**Intelligence:** 1d6 + 12

**Wisdom:** 1d8 + 8

**Age:** Middle-aged to venerable.

**Constitution:** 2d4 + 8

**Dexterity:** 2d6 + 4

**Charisma:** 3d4 + 2

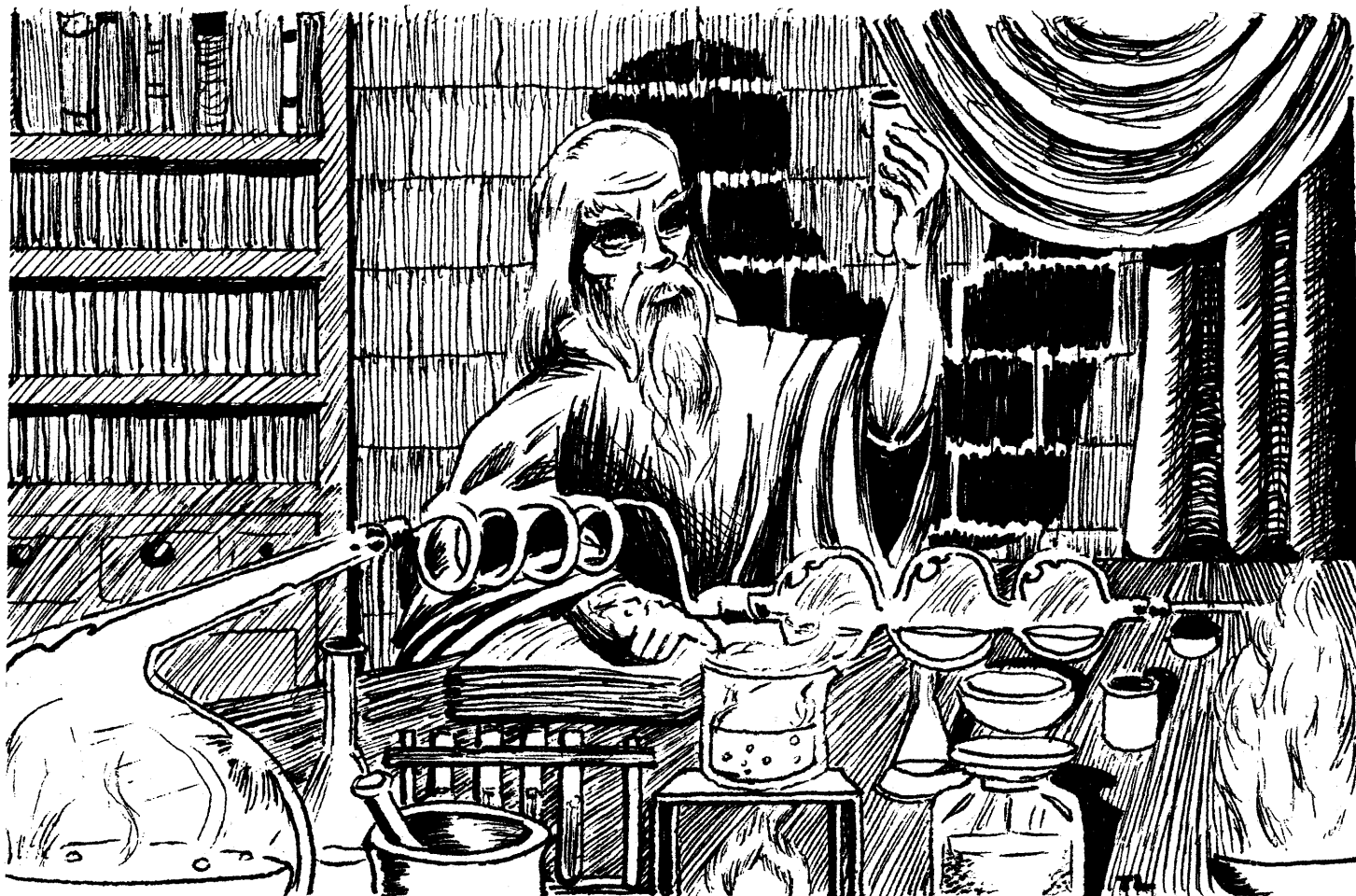
**Alignment;** (roll percentile score)

01-05 Lawful Good 31-45 Neutral Good 81-85 Chaotic Good

06-25 Lawful Neutral 46-65 True Neutral 86-95 Chaotic Neutral

26-30 Lawful Evil 66-80 Neutral Evil 96-00 Chaotic Evil

**Hit Points:** 10d4 plus constitution bonus, if applicable.



makers, armorers, builders, etc. Metallurgical Alchemists strive to discover or create the yellow "ultimate metal," *Orichalcum*, said to be light as air, yet so strong that it cannot be bent or scratched. These Alchemists are particularly knowledgeable about the manufacture of materials such as bronze, brass, high-grade steel, and other important substances.

**Acids and Solvents** — Alchemists in this area of research can create and identify acidic substances with ease, even exotic sorts like Black Dragon acid. They search for the *Alkahest*, the ultimate solvent, so powerful that it will dissolve any material it is in contact with. A secondary line of investigation in this field deals with finding materials to neutralize acids and their effects.

**Transmutation** — This study seeks ways of permanently transforming one substance into a new substance, of different chemical and physical qualities. Students of this field are familiar with the manufacture of many compounds and mixtures. Alchemists in transmutational research work toward finding the *Philosopher's Stone*, rumored to be a red powder that can transform any base metal (e.g., lead, copper, etc.) it is mixed with into one thousand to one million times its weight in gold. If the *Philosopher's Stone* is impure in quality, then it transmutes the base metal it is mixed with into silver.

**Toxins and Antitoxins** — Much of the research that Assassins do when studying poisons is taken up in this field, but on an even deeper level. Evil-aligned Alchemists often work in this field, though some good-aligned ones do as well, researching various antidotes, antivenoms, and the like. There are two main thrusts to the research in this field; one goal is to discover the *Aqua Mortis*, the absolute poison, instantly fatal and completely undetectable. The other goal is to find the *Aqua Vitae*, the Elixir of Life, which will cure all diseases or ills and prolong life indefinitely. Some of these Alchemists will maintain close ties with an Assassins' Guild if they are doing poison research, while those working with antitoxins may be part of a major church or religious organization.

**Biogenesis** — This field parallels modern biochemistry in its scope,

though of course the methods are very different. These Alchemists use chemical and magical substances to produce new and different forms of life, and are the Alchemists that must be consulted when a Magic-User desires to create a Homonculus. Other abilities of students of biogenesis include the creation of certain magical monsters such as the Cockatrice and the Basilisk, and some Alchemists are able to make a Flesh Golem (though these characters are rare indeed). Work in biogenesis is geared to ultimately producing *spontaneous generation*, the creation of organic life from inorganic material.

It should be noted that the goal of each field is the attainment of an absolute — not possible in a technological universe but not necessarily impossible in a magical universe in which the existence of absolutes is a fundamental law. Any Alchemist will only rarely (5%) achieve his or her goal to find *Phlogiston*, *Orichalcum*, or whatever in his or her lifetime. An Alchemist in the hire of a player character will *never* achieve those goals, since his or her research will be constantly interrupted by requests from the Magic-User for new potions and other diversionary research. Dungeon Masters should consider, too, the possible effects of actually developing such "absolute" materials (in what container could the *Alkahest* be kept?), and any research that is not interrupted by the player character will be costly indeed. Dust from an Outer Plane, water from the sea of another world, an ointment used in an bygone age: These are some of the possible needs the Alchemist may envision for his/her research (and most leads may well prove false!)

#### Hiring an Alchemist

Alchemists may only be hired by Magic-Users of 7th level (Enchanter) or above. Other classes may consult Alchemists for answers to specific questions related to that Alchemist's field of expertise, but employment for long-term projects will not be taken. Nearly all Alchemists will be found in cities or large towns, and are part of a formal or semi-formal Brotherhood that provides support for alchemical studies. An advance of 10 to 100 gold pieces must be offered, with a

promise of at least a full year of employment and a well supplied laboratory as outlined on p. 116 of the *DMG*, before an Alchemist will seriously consider employment with the Magic-User. The usual monthly payment for an Alchemist runs between 30 to 120 g.p. to cover used materials, purchases of texts, etc. The minimum expenditure for the Alchemist's laboratory should be about 10,000 g.p.

**Consultation Abilities**

When consulted by any character for purposes of answering minor questions or identifying potions, Alchemists usually charge a fee of 100 to 150 g.p. per day. Potion identification will take as many hours as its experience point value divided by 100; potions with no experience-point value will take 2 hours to identify. Identification has a base 90% chance of being correct, with an additional 1% added for every point of Intelligence the Alchemist has over 10. Thus, an Alchemist with an Intelligence of 17 can identify potions with 97% accuracy, and could identify a *Potion of Longevity* in 5 hours (500/100 = 5). The same percentage chances for success may be applied to question asked of Alchemists in their fields of expertise, such as asking a toxin-studying Alchemist to identify a poisonous substance, or asking an elemental-essence Alchemist about Salamanders on the Plane of Fire. Dungeon Masters should make their own rulings on how long such questions would take to be answered; very involved or difficult questions may take 3-18 days to be answered, if they can be answered at all.

Once an Alchemist has spent more than one day researching a topic for a player character, he or she will need two days of rest for every seven spent in the laboratory, during which time the Alchemist will do no productive Alchemical research. Loyalty to the player character may drop if the Magic-User disrupts this off-duty time frequently.

**Non-Human or Part-Human Alchemists**

Humans, elves, and half-elves only may become Alchemists. These are also the only races that may use magic; hence the limitation. If a Magic-User attempts to hire an Alchemist of a different race than his

or her own, then some resistance and prejudice may be encountered. These problems may be overcome given time or favorable treatment.


**Final Notes**

For the creation of homonculi, it is suggested that Pseudo-Dragon venom and Gargoyle blood be among the required ingredients, as well as the Magic-User's own blood, since these items bear some relationship to a Homonculous's poisonous bite and appearance. Costs and time for making a Homonculous are outlined in the *Monster Manual*.

Alchemists may engage in hand-to-hand combat using either a dagger or a club (symbolic of the pestle used in the alchemical trade), at the same "to hit" odds as a 10th-level Magic-User. They wear no armor and may use oil.

Formulas for manufacturing cockatrices may be found in L. Sprague de Camp's book, *The Ancient Engineers*, Chapter 9, "The European Engineers." Additional notes appear in *The Worm Ouroborous*, by E. R. Eddison, "Conjuring in the Iron Tower." Note that de Camp's book refers to the cockatrice as a "basilisk," and tells of an alchemical way of making gold from burnt "basilisk" parts.

At the Dungeon Master's option, cloning may be performed by biogenesis-studying Alchemists; this should be considered a very powerful (and very rarely performed) ability that will entail expenditures of 100,000 g.p. or more. Making Flesh Golems should be handled in a similar way. The *Manual of Golems* can be handled and used by Alchemists only if it discusses creating Flesh Golems; all other golem-making manuals cause 6-36 points damage to the reading Alchemist.

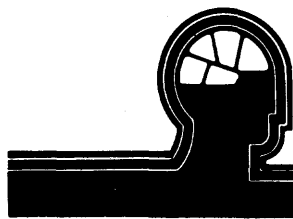
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# THE TRIBES OF CRANE

*You, task chief of the Leopard people wandering tribe of crane, sit in your great wagon awaiting news from your swift searching outriders. Suddenly hoot beats approach. The outriders leap from their mounts to your wagon flushed with excitement for they know full well the meaning of their news. But one sector to the North the great merchant caravan of the Impala people has been spotted. The order is given, "To arms... to arms!" You snap your orders, "Gather my captains of hundreds. Let all know the tactic will be enfilade right. Now my arms, my mount." You heard that Kate, chief of the Impala people, has chosen a stand and defend tactic twice before; will he again? You know also that the Impala people are fine warriors as are all the people of the many tribes. This will be no raid of the strong on the weak, but rather a mighty clash of the TRIBES OF CRANE...*

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Tell them you saw it in *Dragon* magazine. The **Tribes of Crane** is a unique correspondence game, allowing for interaction between players and the fantasy world of Crane and each other through a continuous game that may be entered at any time.

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Cities dot the continents of Crane providing centers of trade and homes for the powerful Shamans and KingLords.

The creatures of Crane are as varied as its geography. Cattle, goats, and the caribou are the mainstay of the tribes, depending on the geography. But horses and the great mancarrying war hawks are important to the fierce warriors. Many undomesticated creatures also inhabit Crane such as the Euparkeria, a huge bipedal lizard that feeds on cattle in the grasslands of Crane.

Interaction between players is very common. Alliance, trade, and combat are always possible. Combat is determined in part by a comparison of tactics used by the antagonists, the relative number of warriors, and the geography.

The game's objective is to increase the relative strength and prosperity of your tribe which is measured by different criteria, depending upon the type of tribe, and thus obtain points. Players try to obtain high average points per turn thus placing new players on a par with those who have been playing longer.

The **Tribes of Crane** may be entered for \$10.50 which includes the first two turns, set up turn, a rule book and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, turns are \$3.50 each. A rule book may be purchased for \$3.50.