



## Alchemical Abilities

Alchemists distinguish between the technical art of **Alchemy** (an **Investigative Ability**) and the mystical or magical works, knowledges, or operations of alchemy: a set of **twelve General Abilities** called **Materia**.

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### Alchemy (Investigative Abilities (Technical))

This is an **Investigative Ability**, covering not just the technical knowledge of alembics, athanors, etc. but the theoretical study of the nature and elements of matter. It also covers the creation and identification of mundane compounds, tinctures, potions, metallic poisons, elixirs, etc. Each rating point of **Alchemy** unlocks **two** more **Materia** abilities (see table below).

Players can also spend **Alchemy** on **Materia** tests to produce magical alchemical effects: a spend of 1 Alchemy pool point adds +2 to the roll.

Learning Alchemy is just like gaining points in any other ability, EXCEPT that each 1 rating point of Alchemy costs 2 build or experience points.

The Alchemy ability is capped at 6.

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### Materia (General Abilities)

Alchemists produce alchemical effects by using (and combining) **Materia**, the true knowledge and virtue of metals and compounds. An alchemist learns the **Materia abilities** in a set sequence, from Salt to Gold, and only after the Alchemist reaches the prerequisite **Alchemy** rating level:

#### *Materia Abilities*

To add a new **Materia** ability *at any time*, the Alchemist must have:

1. Enough rating points in **Alchemy** to reach the desired **Materia**
2. At least **one** rating point in each earlier **Materia** ability

To add a new **Materia** ability *during the game*, the alchemist must have:

3. Used all earlier **Materia** abilities in a game session, but not necessarily the same game session
4. Access to an alchemical laboratory, metals, compounds, and equipment

For details of the specific **Materia** abilities, see below.

<i>Alchemy Rating</i>	<i>Materia</i>
1	Salt Litharge
2	Vitriol Colcothar
3	Sulfur Orpiment
4	Aes Cyprium Sericon
5	Lunar Caustic Quicksilver
6	Vermilion Gold

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## Alchemical Abilities At Character Generation

Buy **Alchemy** as normal with **Investigative** build points; each **Alchemy** rating point costs **2 build points**.

**Materia** are special **General Abilities** and their build points come from the pool of General build points.

**The first rating point in any Materia ability costs 5 build points**; after that, build points for that ability and for all other **Materia** abilities become rating points as normal.

However, **Materia** abilities bought at character creation must follow **Materia Ability** rules 1) and 2) above: the character must have a high enough **Alchemy** rating to unlock the given **Materia**, and she must have a rating in each earlier **Materia** ability.

## Alchemical Mechanics

To produce a magical effect with alchemy (a **working**), make a **Materia** test at the required Difficulty.

The alchemist must always spend at least 1 point from one **Materia** ability required.

The class of effect depends on the effect's nature; the terms refer to the quality of the quintessence used, not to the style or effect itself.

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## Supporting Abilities

Although the alchemist must always spend 1 point from the **Materia** governing the effect he wishes to create, he may spend points from other abilities, at the following ratios of spent pool points to effective points added to the **Materia** test die roll as follows:

- **Other Materia**: 1 pool point spent equals 1 effective point.
- **Alchemy**: 1 pool point spent equals 2 effective points.
- **Other Magical abilities**: 3 pool points spent equals 2 effective points.
- **Astrology, Occult Studies**: 2 pool points spent equals 1 effective point.
- **Health, Stability**: 4 pool points spent equals 1 effective point. Describe the specific debility, madness, or injury you court or cause yourself to prepare or complete the working. These points do not refresh until the end of the adventure.

### *Multiple Alchemists*

Multiple alchemists may participate in a working by spending 1 Alchemy pool point each, which does not add to the die. Each participating alchemist must also spend 1 point from the Materia governing the effect, which does add to the die.

### *Formulae*

Players may wish to create workings combining up to three Materia: e.g.

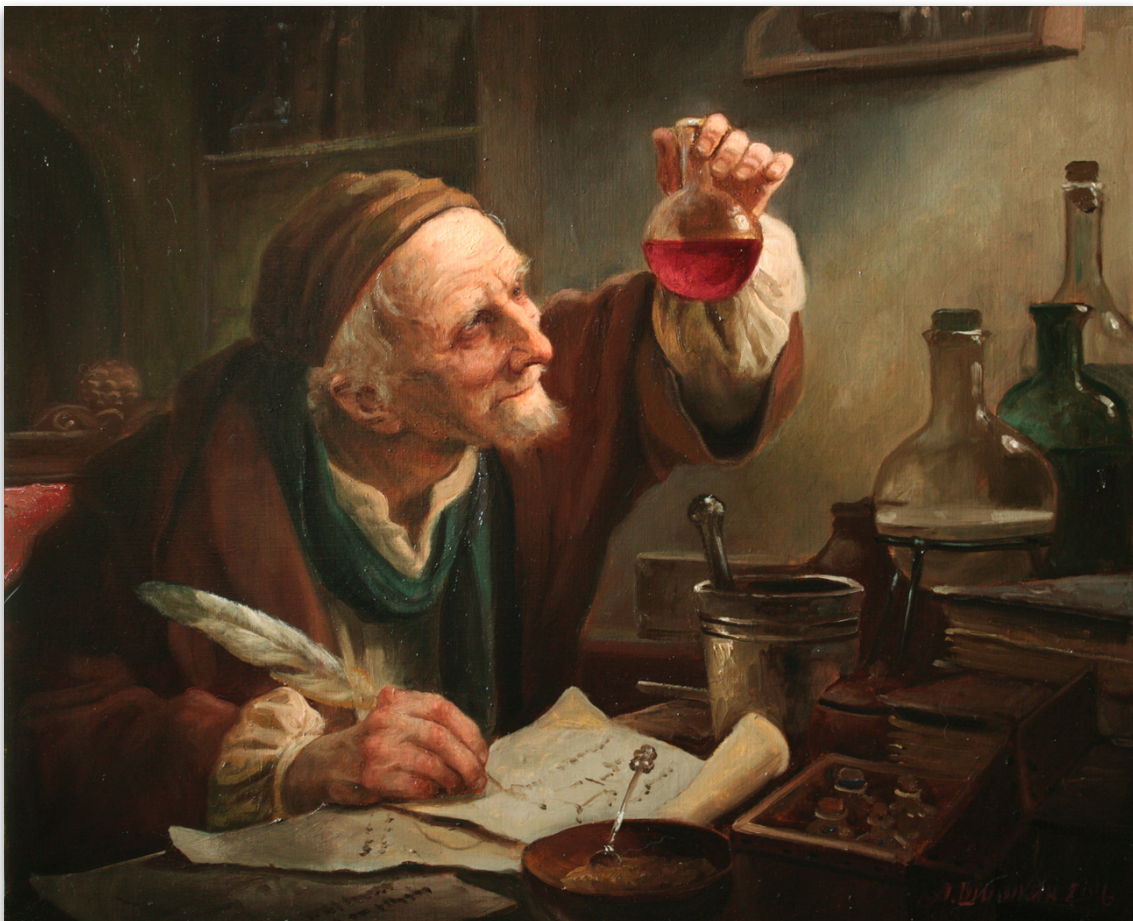
- a **Base** napalm equivalent using Sulfur + Orpiment;
- a **Volatile** lava- summoning using Sulfur + Salt;
- a **Fixed** mirror that reveals the true soul with Salt + Colcothar + Lunar Caustic.

If the player can justify it, both (or all three) Materia become “governing” for rules purposes.

Once a PC has created an alchemical effect with a Materia test, she (the player) can write down its combination of Materia and specific effect. Her character can then repeat that same working using the proven formula at -2 to Difficulty.

### *Artefacts*

An alchemist can permanently imbue an effect into a metal artefact (e.g., an always-lit Quicksilver Lamp) at +7 to Difficulty, or +4 to Difficulty with a 2-point spend of a Craft skill to make the artefact.



## Effects Of Alchemical Magic

In many cases, especially with **Base** workings, the spell either works or it doesn't: its effect is "enough to solve the immediate problem the alchemist set out to solve, or better than that if you rolled a 6."

Game-mechanical effects of workings will generally match the alchemist's result (the total of the die plus effective spends): at minimum, 1 Health, Stability, Athletics, etc. or Difficulty shift per 1 point of result.

Class of Effect	Difficulty
<b>Base: "Dungeon adventuring" style physical effect</b>	<b>4</b>
Base effect on pint-sized (+0) human-sized (+2) or room-sized (+4) amount of matter	
In combat or strenuous activity (+2 or take 2 rounds for +1), in laboratory conditions (-1)	
<b>Volatile: Magical effect changing inanimate, physical world</b>	<b>5</b>
Volatile effect on pint-sized (+0) human-sized (+2) or room-sized (+4) amount of matter	
Volatile effect on living matter, e.g., turning blood to fire, or air in lungs to water (+3)	
Make Volatile effect temporary (+2, automatically temporary on living matter)	
In combat (+2), other strenuous activity (+1), in laboratory conditions (+0)	
<b>Fixed: Magical effect changing ensouled or sapient matter: humans, spirits, demons, etc.</b>	<b>8</b>
Fixed effect on alchemist herself (-2)	
Fixed effect on crowd of rabble (+2) on multiple named PCs or NPCs (+2 per NPC); named PCs and NPCs make Difficulty 8 Stability or Health test to resist	
Fixed effect duration: permanent (+7), one month or adventure (+4), one day (+2), one scene (+0)	
In combat (+2), other strenuous activity (+1), in laboratory conditions (+0)	
<b>Awakened: Magical effect changing the macrocosmic world; dynasties, kingdoms, etc.; also a major alchemical opus such as the philosopher's stone, alkahest, resurrection, etc. Always requires three Workings, in three adventures.</b>	
First Awakened Working	<b>9</b>
Second Awakened Working	<b>11</b>
Third Awakened Working	<b>13</b>
<i>May also require specific actions (manoeuvring a marriage into being), special materials, further tests, etc. for Narrative reasons; must be performed under laboratory conditions; requires Alchemy 6, cannot spend Alchemy on test</i>	


## Materia

These abilities cover the magical uses of alchemy. They do not necessarily refer to the mundane substances of salt, lead, etc. but of the active quintessence of those substances both tinted into physical powders, elixirs, etc. (“material components”) and imbued within the alchemist herself. Both physical and inner quintessences are required, and a ritual act recapitulating the **Operation** in some form. Each Materia writeup includes the following:

<b>Name</b>	<i>Followed by a brief mundane chemical explication, <b>traditional alchemical iconography</b>, Classical Elements, and (the sign of the zodiac representing it)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	The stage of the Great Work represented by this Materia, and more generally the kind of magical effect it produces
<b>Base</b>	Standard “dungeon adventuring” effects possible with this Materia. Begins at Difficulty 4. Any alchemist with a rating in the corresponding Materia ability can use a Preparedness test (“I just happen to have the correct salve on me”) instead of a Materia test to create a Base effect, at +1 Difficulty.
<b>Volatile</b>	Other sample magical effects possible with this Materia, changing the physical, inanimate world. Begins at Difficulty 5
<b>Fixed</b>	Sample magical effects possible with this Materia, changing the ensouled or sapient world: humans, spirits, demons, etc. Begins at Difficulty 8 (Difficulty 6 if used on the alchemist herself). +R = take the result as a bonus, divided up how the alchemist wishes
<b>Awakened</b>	Sample magical effects possible with this Materia, changing the macrocosmic world: e.g., the affairs of kingdoms. A major alchemical Opus such as achieving the Philosopher’s Stone, the Alkahest, etc. is an Awakened work. Requires at least three tests (beginning at Difficulty 9, 11, and 13), and a successful Art-Making test that creates a Masterpiece. Performing an Awakened working requires Alchemy 6; Alchemy points cannot be spent on the Materia test for an Awakened working



# Alchemy 1

<b>Salt</b> 	<i>Not just sodium chloride, or even any electrically neutral ionic compound, but according to Paracelsus the actual matter of all earths and metals. White fish or salmon, frog, disc or pentacle, bees. Earth of Water (Aries)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	Solution, the dissolving of solid (or gas) into liquid.
<b>Base</b>	Purify food or water; preservative
<b>Volatile</b>	Transform solid to liquid
<b>Fixed</b>	Change made-up minds; +R to Sense Trouble pools
<b>Awakened</b>	Ossify then erode a bureaucracy or social structure (Church, state, etc.); Sal Sapientiae, the salt of wisdom, conveys knowledge of all languages including those of beasts and birds (+1 to all Academic abilities)

<b>Litharge</b>	<i>Technically a crystalline form of lead oxide. Lead connects to Saturn, melancholia, the raven, and the scythe symbol; caput corvo (crow's head). Earth of Earth (Taurus)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	Coagulation, the solidifying of a fluid. <i>Solve et coagula</i> (dissolve then congeal) is the rhythm of all alchemy.
<b>Base</b>	Darkness bomb; slowfoot resin (Difficulty 8 Athletics test and at least 2 rounds to extract feet from); xerion (a powder to stop a bleeding wound, restore 1 Health)
<b>Volatile</b>	Transform a liquid to a solid
<b>Fixed</b>	Summon Earth elementals, divide test result up into Scuffling (damage +1 per Earth spent), Health and Athletics pools — spending 1 Litharge refills one pool for all earth elementals summoned; suspended animation
<b>Awakened</b>	Pull together a loose empire into a centralised state; freeze time in a chamber; <i>Cronus' Knife</i> (blade that kills anyone with flowing blood whom it stabs)

# Alchemy 2

<b>Vitriol</b>	<i>The former name for a sulfate; sulfuric acid is "spirit of vitriol." Glass, cobra or viper, eagle, the black sprite. Fire of Water (Gemini)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	Sublimation, the evaporation of a liquid.
<b>Base</b>	Strong acid (burn through locks, chains, mortar, etc.); soundless steps
<b>Volatile</b>	transform a liquid to a gas; dry out a solid
<b>Fixed</b>	Levitation; breathe water; take gaseous form (+Litharge)
<b>Awakened</b>	Exalt a figure to king or bishop; Flying Ointment (not just flight through the air, but intuitive flight and communion with airy spirits be they demonic or angelic)

<b>Colcothar</b>	<i>Ferric oxide, hematite. Iron connects to Mars, cholera, the sword. The hag of the wood, the bleeding stone, the tortoise, the peacock. Earth of Fire (Cancer)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	Fixation, the conversion of spirit to matter.
<b>Base</b>	Seal or hold fast (superglue, hold portal, etc.); fiery sword (+1 to damage)
<b>Volatile</b>	Transform a gas to a solid; freezing
<b>Fixed</b>	Hold person; +R to Stability pools; spider climb
<b>Awakened</b>	Resolve a battle or a war; the Sword Unvanquishable




# Alchemy 3

<b>Sulfur</b>	<i>Not just the yellow powdery element, sulfur is the hot, dry, active nature of metals and the soul of matter. Leo rubeus (Red lion). Fire of Earth (Leo)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	Calcination, the conversion into a calx (powder or metal) by the action of intense heat, the expulsion of volatile substance from matter.
<b>Base</b>	Firestarter; fireball (use Shooting or Scuffling to cast; +1 per point in result and per round spent; spend 3 roll 3 = +6 fireball if alchemist takes 6 rounds to cast)
<b>Volatile</b>	Transform a solid into gas usually with explosive effect (damage as fireball, doubled within 3 yards); make matter fireproof
<b>Fixed</b>	+R to Scuffling or Weapons pools; contact the Devil or demons; summon Salamanders (Fire elementals, earth elementals above; damage +1 per Fire spent)
<b>Awakened</b>	Awaken a sleeping king (+Litharge); Gehennical Fire

<b>Orpiment</b>	<i>From auri-pigmentum, "golden pigment" of arsenic trisulfide. Sweat or tears, phlegm, wheat, yellow swan. Water of Air (Virgo)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	Distillation, the thickening of liquid from air or thinner liquid; also the Citrinitas, or xenosis, ie yellowing.
<b>Base</b>	Tear gas; poison gas (+2 Difficulty); reassemble a burnt document; make brandy or whisky from wine or grain mash
<b>Volatile</b>	Transform a gas into a liquid; shrink or compress matter
<b>Fixed</b>	Get someone really drunk; fall as gently as the dew; summon Sylphs (Air elementals, as earth elementals above; damage +1 per Air spent)
<b>Awakened</b>	Create a fanatical movement; <i>Palingenesis</i> (restoring life to burnt plants)





## Alchemy 4

<i>Aes Cyprium</i>	<i>"Cyprian brass," also just copper. Copper connects to Venus, blood, the cup. Griffon. Water of Earth (Libra)</i>
<i>Operation</i>	Conjunction, the joining of two substances
<i>Base</i> 	tame animals of any kind
<i>Volatile</i>	blend two materials; attract lightning
<i>Fixed</i>	become beautiful; engender lust; summon Undines (Water elementals, as earth elementals, above; damage +1 per Water spent)
<i>Awakened</i>	Unify two houses or nations, often used to set up the <i>Chemical Marriage</i> (a marriage of matter and spirit) ; Chimera (joining of two beasts)

<i>Sericon</i>	<i>Antimony, which when reduced with iron crystallizes into a star-pattern. Thus star, pentagram, spider; lupus pullus (gray wolf) or leo viridis (green lion). Black King. Air of Earth (Scorpio)</i>
<i>Operation</i>	Putrefaction, the decomposition of a substance or oxidation of a metal; also the Nigredo, or blackening, or melanosis
<i>Base</i>	+R damage bonus to weapons, lasts until end of scene
<i>Volatile</i>	Rust metal; decompose organic matter; cause a metal to reflect gravity (+Sulfur)
<i>Fixed</i>	Speak with dead; kill; imprison a soul (+Aes Cyprium+Litharge; +2 to Difficulty)
<i>Awakened</i>	Subvert and destroy a great house; call a comet to change the stars; Vampirism (+Aes Cyprium)

## Alchemy 5

<b>Lunar</b> <b>Caustic</b>	<i>Silver nitrate, also called lapis infernalis. Silver connects to the Moon, dog, milk, dove, mirror. White Queen; white rose, lily. Water of Water (Sagittarius)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	Ablution, washing substance clean and pure; the Albedo, or whitening, or leukosis.
<b>Base</b> 	Counterfeit silver; healing potion (+R to Health pools), weapon- salve (a healing potion applied to the weapon that did the damage to cure the wound, cures it completely, R uses); fulminating silver (explosive metal, +R damage, goes off when struck or stepped on; +2 Difficulty)
<b>Volatile</b>	Purify matter; amplify light; Argent-vive (living silver) adds +3 per point spent in workings governed by earlier Materia (+3 Difficulty; convert excess points of result into pool points in Argent-Vive i.e Quicksilver)
<b>Fixed</b>	Sleep; reanimate the dead (either one NPC or zombies as earth elementals above; damage +0); +R to Shooting pools; invisibility (+2 to Difficulty to spot including Hit Location for every 1 Health lost by user, max +6)
<b>Awakened</b>	Purify (or reveal) affairs of state; paint a living painting (with Art-Making or Art); Alkahest (+Salt); White Stone (creates and fulfills desires and illusions, transmutes metals to silver)

<b>Quicksilver</b> 	<i>Not mere metallic mercury, but philosopher's mercury or mercurius nostrum, "our mercury," the spirit of all matter; cold, wet, reactive. Clouds, fog. Rebis the Hermaphrodite, Cupid, Melusine, pelican, mermaid, cervus fugitivus (questing deer). Air of Water (Capricorn)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	Cibation, the nutrition of matter to increase it; also Fermentation, the implantation of life in matter.
<b>Base</b>	Make surfaces super-slick; create light; perfect mirrors to see around corners; make beer
<b>Volatile</b>	Expand or increase matter; animate statues
<b>Fixed</b>	Engender love; shape-shift; clairvoyance
<b>Awakened</b>	Change or adapt an institution; Homunculus (+Sericon); Moonchild (+Lunar Caustic +Sulfur)

# Alchemy 6

<b>Vermilion</b>	<i>Mercuric sulphide, or cinnabar. The Red King, also phoenix, ouroboros, red dragon, red rose. Unifies all elements: Fire + Water + Earth + Air (Aquarius)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	Multiplication, the increase in number and power; also the Rubedo, or reddening, or iosis.
<b>Base</b>	+R as Armor rating to flesh or clothing
<b>Volatile</b>	Multiply matter or increase its power
<b>Fixed</b>	+R to Preparedness or Athletics pools; +(R/3, round down) Magic pool points; cure poisons; contact angels; giant strength (lift up to R x 100 lbs.)
<b>Awakened</b>	Chemical Marriage (+Quicksilver +Lunar Caustic) creates the environment for the new golden age; Philosopher's Stone (+Quicksilver +Sulfur; changes base metals to gold, resurrects the dead, heals all wounds)

<b>Gold</b>	<i>Gold, the perfect metal of the Sun, hence of the phoenix and the Golden Fleece. Leo aureus (golden lion), aquila aureus (golden eagle). Fire of Fire (Pisces)</i>
<b>Operation</b>	Projection, the extension of the power of gold into other metals and materials.
<b>Base</b>	Make false gold; change 1 die result by 1
<b>Volatile</b>	<i>Aurum-vive</i> (living gold) adds +3 per point spent in workings governed by earlier Materia (+2 Difficulty; convert excess points of result into pool points in <i>Aurum-Vive</i> )
<b>Fixed</b>	Change heart; Phoenix Pool (put R points in pool, spend to change any die roll on a 1 for 1 basis, lasts until pool exhausted or end of adventure, can only be cast once per adventure); immunity to magic (may involve contests of Result vs. Magic result)
<b>Awakened</b>	Create the new Golden Age somewhere on Earth; Aurum Potabile or Red Elixir (perfects human self; drinker becomes immortal, annoyingly perfect, and hopefully benevolent NPC)



## *Appendix: Glossary of Alchemical Equipment and Terms*

The well-stocked alchemist keeps plenty of gear around to impress the occasional visiting viscount as much as to investigate the realms of matter, and is apt to use names and terms of appropriate expertise for similar purposes.

- **Adopter:** A widened tube placed over the neck of the retort to cool or condense the effluent.
- **Alembic:** A vessel below a long spout for distillation of liquid or gas, placed over the opening of a second vessel, the cucurbit.
- **Alkahest:** the Universal Solvent
- **Aludel:** A pear-shaped vessel open at both ends, for condensation of vapour.
- **Assay Balances:** Precision scales for measuring matter.
- **Athamor:** The great furnace for calcination and other regulated heating of matter; becomes a symbol of the Great Work. Also philosophical Egg.
  
- **Bell Jar:** Or *bell flask*; a flask open at the bottom or vaulted & bent at the top, for collecting gases.
- **Bellows:** Used to intensify fire, and to blow air over calcinating matter.
- **Blowpipe:** A tube to direct the alchemist's breath or bellows to a specific place in a working.
- **Boiling-Glass:** Also called a Moors-head, this large glass vessel has a number of tubes or pipettes that can be sealed or attached to alembics for distillation.
- **Brazier:** A metal vessel that can hold a flame and fuel.
  
- **Calcinator:** Small, very hot oven or furnace for rapidly reducing matter to ash.
- **Crucible:** A small earthenware vessel for melting or fusing metal.
- **Cupel:** Small porcelain or bone-ash (nonreactive) cup, primarily for assaying metals or mixing small doses of elixir.
  
- **Descensory:** Or descending furnace; a furnace designed to be fired on top so that the product flows down to a receiver.
- **Draught:** Dose of liquid medicine or preparation.
- **Drop:** Unit of measure of volume, once from a dropper.
  
- **Elixir:** a hydro-alcoholic solution of at least one active medical ingredient
  
- **Flask:** A usually metal or glass container that can be sealed.
  
- **Matrass:** A flask with a round bottom and long upright neck.
- **Mortar and Pestle:** Useful for powdering things.
  
- **Pelican:** Two-chambered vessel with two arms joined at the top; when heated, provides a constant recirculation of sublimation and distillation.
- **Philosophical Egg:** The element-perfecting catalyst.
  
- **Retort:** A one-piece alembic-cucurbit combination; or just a flask with a long downspout.
  
- **Sal Sapientia:** emergent self-sovereign embodied intelligence, a ubiquitous life-spirit.
- **Salve:** unctuous adhesive substance for application to wounds or sores, usually soothing.
- **Sand Bath:** Also *balneum siccum*; a large container of sand, which when heated provides even warmth to all sides of a vessel placed inside it. A water-bath is a *balneum mariae*.
- **Spirit Lamp:** A thick vessel that holds alcohol and a wick, useful for burning things or boiling liquids set on a tripod above the lamp.

- **Tincture:** an extract of plant or animal material dissolved in ethanol
- **Worm:** A coiled tube set inside a larger vessel; the longer tube increases surface area and speed of distillation.