

ARCHAEOLOGIST'S TOOLS

By Ranikirn

8 new tools to study and handle historical artifacts





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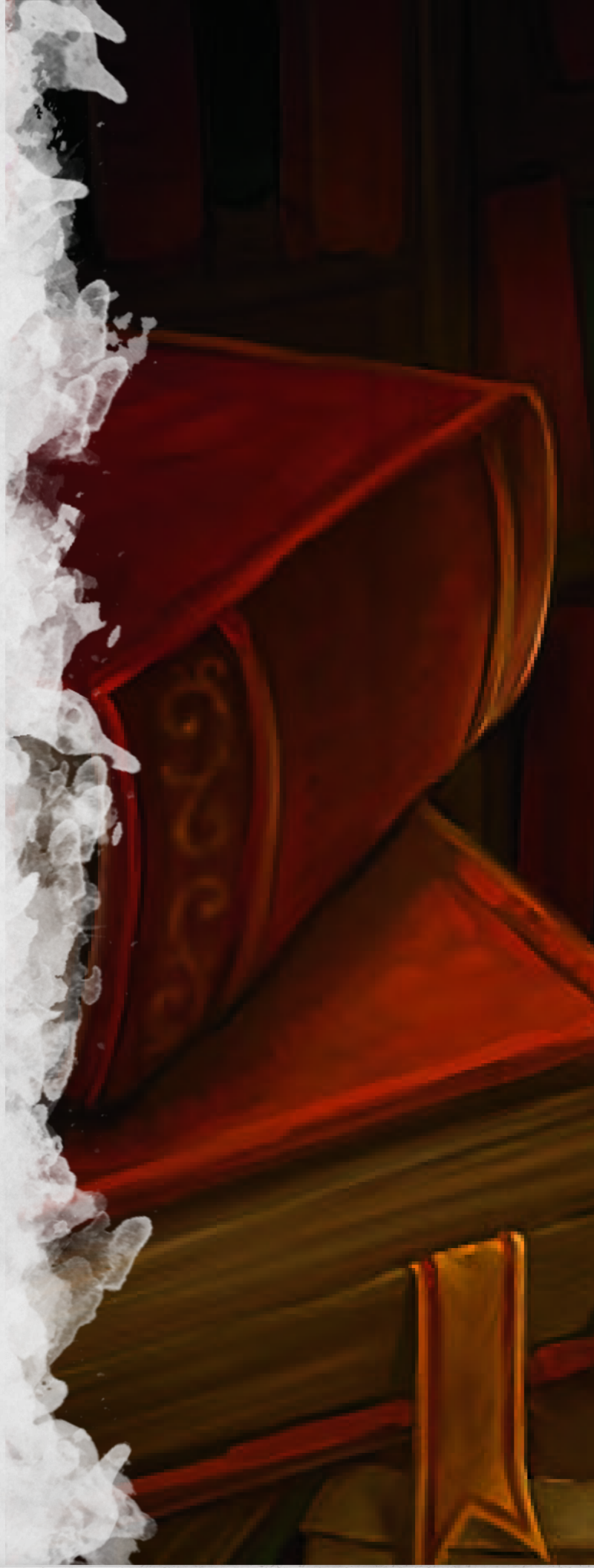
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Credits	
2 Preface	
3 Archaeologist Tools	
4 Historical Artifacts, Special Properties	
6 Character Background	
7 Changelog	

CONTENTS

• Credits.....	3
• Preface.....	3
• Archaeologist tools.....	4
• Historical artifacts.....	5
• Special Properties.....	6
• Character Background.....	7
• Changelog.....	8



PREFACE

One of my campaigns puts players in the role of a group of archaeologists and explorers in an advanced world that has an eye on the past. This system was developed to be simple and at the same time useful for players to step into the shoes of an archaeologist delving in dungeons full of secrets, enigmas and forgotten or never discovered stories. I'm thankful to my D&D group for testing and helping me to improve this system.

TOOLS AND SKILLS TOGETHER

Tools have more specific applications than skills. The History skill applies to any event in the past. A tool such as a forgery kit is used to make fake objects and little else. Thus, why would a character who has the opportunity to acquire one or the other want to gain a tool proficiency instead of proficiency in a skill? To make tool proficiencies more attractive choices for the characters, you can use the methods outlined below.

Advantage. If the use of a tool and the use of a skill both apply to a check, and a character is proficient with the tool and the skill, consider allowing the character to make the check with advantage. This simple benefit can go a long way toward encouraging players to pick up tool proficiencies. In the tool descriptions that follow, this benefit is often expressed as additional insight (or something similar), which translates into an increased chance that the check will be a success.

Added Benefit. In addition, consider giving characters who have both a relevant skill and a relevant tool proficiency an added benefit on a successful check. This benefit might be in the form of more detailed information or could simulate the effect of a different sort of successful check. For example, a character proficient with mason's tools makes a successful Wisdom (Perception) check to find a secret door in a stone wall. Not only does the character notice the door's presence, but you decide that the tool proficiency entitles the character to an automatic success on an Intelligence (Investigation) check to determine how to open the door.

TOOL DESCRIPTIONS

Components. The first paragraph in each description gives details on what a set of supplies or tools is made up of. A character who is proficient with a tool knows how to use all of its component parts.

Skills. Every tool potentially provides advantage on a check when used in conjunction with certain skills, provided a character is proficient with the tool and the skill. As DM, you can allow a character to make a check using the indicated skill with advantage. With respect to skills, the system is mildly abstract in terms of what a tool proficiency represents; essentially, it assumes that a character who has proficiency with a tool also has learned about facets of the trade or profession that are not necessarily associated with the use of the tool. In addition, you can consider giving a character extra information or an added benefit on a skill check. The text provides some examples and ideas when this opportunity is relevant.

Special Use. Proficiency with a tool usually brings with it a particular benefit in the form of a special use, as described in this paragraph.

Sample DCs. A table at the end of each section lists activities that a tool can be used to perform, and suggested DCs for the necessary ability checks.

ARCHAEOLOGIST TOOLS

Using archaeologist's tools, a character gains many advantages when treating, inspecting and identifying ancient artifacts. When a character gains proficiency in archaeologist's tools must choose one sub-category, however all sub-categories can be obtained over time.

Components. Archaeologist tools consist of a trowel, hand brush, magnifying glass, book, ink and a set of brushes. Based on the type of studies the kit extends with following objects:

- **Speleologist.** Full body work harness and 10 pitons;
- **Conservator-restorer.** argil, calipers and scrapers;
- **Geologist.** Miner's pick and helmet;
- **Scribe.** Book of history and languages;
- **Theologian.** Prayer book and a holy symbol;
- **Paleontologist.** Small mallet, Volo's Guide to Monster;
- **Numismatics.** A small container with 10 coin slots, magnifying glasses;
- **Hoplologist.** Book of weapons history, old rusty dagger;

History. You can determine the age and origin of objects, even if you have only a few pieces remaining from the original.

Investigation. When you inspect dungeons or ancient ruins using your tools, proficiency in this kit gives you more clues about past excavations and how long someone has not stepped there.

Preservation. You protect a tiny or small delicate object. The object AC gains +2 bonus and 10 + 2 more hp dice as temporary hit points for 8 hours (see chapter *Objects* in the DMG page 246). Also, it gains resistance to fire and cold damage.



ARCHAEOLOGIST TOOLS

Activity	Studies	DC
The harness give you a +2 Strength bonus only to calculate carried weight	Speleologist	10
By studying the surrounding environment, you gain +2 in Survival for 1 minute	Speleologist	20
Identify a curse in a non-magical object	Theologian	15
Eliminate a curse from a non-magical object	Theologian	20
Forge a certificate to attest the authenticity of a historical artifact (you have advantage on the roll if you are proficient with forgery kit)	Scribe	15
Interpret code or damaged scripts	Scribe	20
After a long rest you can write a story so evocative and moving that it converts the effects of bardic exhibition (1d10) into a writing. (you have advantage on the roll if you are proficient in any musical instrument)	Scribe	20
You can determine the value of an ancient art object (you have advantage on the roll if you are proficient with painter's or potter's supplies)	Conservator-restorer	10
Repairing a non-magical artifact	Conservator-restorer	15
You can determine the value of precious stones (you have advantage on the roll if you are proficient with painter's or jeweler's tools)	Geologist	15
Find a weak point in a rocky wall (you have advantage on the roll if you are proficient with jewelry kit)	Geologist	20
Deduce which creatures inhabit a place you are exploring	Paleontologist	15
By studying bones of a creature you can obtain some information chosen from: strength, constitution, dexterity, skill, resistance or immunity	Paleontologist	20
By studying your enemy fight stance you can determine his fighting style, choose one from: how many attacks he can do in one turn, his next attack or any weapon reaction such as "parry"	Hoplologist	10
You can date back to the manufacture of old weapons, how old it is and what race made it (you have advantage on the roll if you are proficient with smith's tools)	Hoplologist	15
When you search for coins using your archaeologists tools, your investigation check gain a +1 if you succeed on the DC	Numismatics	10
You can date back to the manufacture of old coins, how old it is and what race made it. Also you can identify fake coins	Numismatics	15

ARTIFACTS

The following chapter allows DMs to create artifacts with properties that allow defining their value and synergize with archaeologist's tools. A geologist who inspects an obsidian chisel has advantage on the ability check to determine his creation date. A conservator-restorer with careful inspection can establish the value of the Ring of Chalices.

PROPERTIES

Each artifact has a monetary value determined by 5 factors:

- **Relative Dating**
- **Condition**
- **Manufacture**
- **Material**
- **Rarity**

The DM can randomly determine them by rolling 5d10. The total monetary value is calculated by multiplying 5 by the value of each factor (except the rarity that acts as a multiplier) and by summing the results.

Example. The Ring of Chalices has the values 7-4-4-7-4 for a total of $(35 + 20 + 20 + 35) * 4$, 440 gold coins. Furthermore, DM can reward players by giving them additional experience based on the rarity of the artifact:

Rarity	Experience
1 to 5	100xp x rarity
6 to 9	200xp x rarity
10	3000xp



EXAMPLES

The following artifacts are an example of what the previous paragraph has outlined. Each artifact has a story to contextualize it and properties (sorted as in the paragraph *Properties*) next to the name.

OBSIDIAN CHISEL (6-5-7-4-1)

This 20-foot-long and 10kg heavy chisel was shape from an obsidian block and decorated with tribal signs. Stone giants used similar chisels in their artistic creations for which they are renowned. Walls and pillars have been decorated with these giant tools.

RING OF CHALICES (7-4-4-7-4)

A white gold ring decorated with small gems and belonged to a faithful servant of a king. The story tells that this ring was forged by the king himself for his taster that managed to survive against many attempts at poisoning the king. Legends wish the servant died after the 25th attempt and the ring was buried with him.

RED MOON PAINT (4-5-6-2-3)

A very well made paint of a Red Moon made by an ancient artisan and mage named Dalti who used to famously paint and create grand works of art with his own blood, but was found ripped in half in his own chambers while working on his magnum opus, a painting of a large roc named Bururu.

EXARCH ARMOR (6-7-8-8-8)

The legend says that this breastplate armor was forged by a solar for his champion on the material plane. The armor is made of an unknown ferrous material and some adamantine parts that make it incredibly durable, light and beautiful. (this armor weighs as much as a scale mail, but has AC 18 as a plate armor)

COUNT ZANDER PORTRAIT (4-5-8-8-5)

Once a noble member of the Virperios family, Count Zander was transformed into a vampire by his beloved after his refusal due to the discovery of her true nature. Count Zander's hatred spilled over women, many were tortured, killed or turned into macabre sculptures.



SPECIAL PROPERTIES

d20	Special Property
1	The artifact has a carved signature of the author (rarity +1)
2	Touching the artifact activates a trap. A magic stone ball falls from the ceiling and magically chases whoever holds the stolen object
3	One of the tools used to create the artifact is found along with it (rarity +1)
4	The artifact is cursed: as the curse is activated, the target's hands detach from their wrists and scuttle away, and new hands grow in their place. For the rest of the day, every time they take an object, the same thing happens. The hands remain animate until destroyed, and will do their best to make terrible mischief.
5	The artifact is actually fake, the original is well hidden in the same room
6	The artifact has been magically preserved over centuries (condition = 10)
7	"Roger was here" written with acrylics on the artifact. Someone enjoys exploring ancient ruins only to leave his signature on ancient artifacts.
8	The artifact has a hidden map carved on it
9	The artifact has a minor beneficial property (DMG 219)
10	The artifact is wrapped in a golden fleece
11	The artifact is found on an altar with various inscribed runes. A scribe or theologian could understand writings that tell the story of creation of the object. Ability check to forge a certificate gets a +5 bonus (scribe activity)
12	The artifact has become the home of a small creature like imp, fairy dragon, quicklings or something else. The creature will try to take it back as soon as it gets the chance.
13	The symbol of a deity is carved on the artifact
14	The artifact is in pieces. A restorer could fix it to a condition equal to half of the ability check result on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) (max 10)
15	The artifact has a minor detrimental property (DMG 220)
16	The artifact has a special dye or component that makes it shine when under moonlight
17	The artifact is protected by a ghost, who is willing to leave it only if the party helps him with a task
18	A trap is activated when the artifact is taken. Poisonous gas comes out of a hole under the artifact
19	The artifact has a hidden bent scroll that provides practical indications on the construction of it
20	The artifact conceals a secret compartment in which an ancient coin is kept.



CHARACTER BACKGROUND

ARCHAEOLOGIST

An archaeologist learns about the long lost and fallen cultures of the past by studying their remains their bones, their ruins, their surviving masterworks, and their tombs. Those who practice archaeology travel to the far corners of the world to root through crumbled cities and lost dungeons, digging in search of artifacts that might tell the stories of monarchs and high priests, wars and cataclysms.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Cartographer's tools, navigator's tools or archaeologist's tools

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A wooden case containing a map to a ruin or dungeon, a bullseye lantern, a miner's pick, a set of traveler's clothes, a shovel, a two-person tent, a trinket recovered from a dig site, and a pouch containing 25 gp

DUST DIGGER

Prior to becoming an adventurer, you spent most of your young life crawling around in the dust, pilfering relics of questionable value from crypts and ruins. Though you managed to sell a few of your discoveries and earn enough coin to buy proper adventuring gear, you have held onto an item that has great emotional value to you. Roll on the Signature Item table to see what you have, or choose an item from the table.

SIGNATURE ITEM

d8	Loot
1	10-foot pole
2	Crowbar
3	Hat
4	Hooded lantern
5	Medallion
6	Shovel
7	Sledgehammer
8	Whip

FEATURE: HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

When you enter a ruin or dungeon, you can correctly ascertain its original purpose and determine its builders, whether those were dwarves, elves, humans, yuan-ti, or some other known race. In addition, you can determine the monetary value of art objects more than a century old.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Few archaeologists can resist the lure of an unexplored ruin or dungeon, particularly if such a site is the source of legends or is rumored to contain the treasures and relics of wizards, warlords, or royalty. Some archaeologists plunder for wealth or fame, while others consider it their calling to illuminate the past or keep the world's greatest treasures from falling into the wrong hands. Whatever their motivations, archaeologists combine the qualities of a scrappy historian with the self-made heroism of a treasure-hunting scoundrel.



d8	Personality Traits
1	I love a good puzzle or mystery.
2	I'm a pack rat who never throws anything away.
3	Fame is more important to me than money.
4	I have no qualms about stealing from the dead.
5	I'm happier in a dusty old tomb than I am in the centers of civilization.
6	Traps don't make me nervous. Idiots who trigger traps make me nervous.
7	I might fail, but I will never give up.
8	You might think I'm a scholar, but I love a good brawl. These fists were made for punching.

d6	Ideal
1	Preservation. That artifact belongs in a museum. (Good)
2	Greed. I won't risk my life for nothing. I expect some kind of payment. (Any)
3	Death Wish. Nothing is more exhilarating than a narrow escape from the jaws of death. (Chaotic)
4	Dignity. The dead and their belongings deserve to be treated with respect. (Lawful)
5	Immortality. All my exploring is part of a plan to find the secret of everlasting life. (Any)
6	Danger. With every great discovery comes grave danger. The two walk hand in hand. (Any)

d6	Bond
1	Ever since I was a child, I've heard stories about a lost city. I aim to find it, learn its secrets, and earn my place in the history books.
2	I want to find my mentor, who disappeared on an expedition some time ago.
3	I have a friendly rival. Only one of us can be the best, and I aim to prove it's me.
4	I won't sell an art object or other treasure that has historical significance or is one of a kind.
5	I'm secretly in love with the wealthy patron who sponsors my archaeological exploits.
6	I hope to bring prestige to a library, a museum, or a university.

d8	Flaw
1	I have a secret fear of some common wild animal and in my work, I see them everywhere.
2	I can't leave a room without searching it for secret doors.
3	When I'm not exploring dungeons or ruins, I get jittery and impatient.
4	I have no time for friends or family. I spend every waking moment thinking about and preparing for my next expedition.
5	When given the choice of going left or right, I always go left.
6	I can't sleep except in total darkness.

NPC

THE ARCHAEOLOGIST

ARCHAEOLOGIST

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 44

Speed 30 feet

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12(+1)	14(+2)	12(+1)	16(+3)	12(+1)	12(+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Int +5

Skills Acrobatics +4, Investigate +5, History +5

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Preservation the archaeologist protects a tiny or small delicate object. The object AC gain +2 bonus and 10 + 2 more hp dice as temporary hit points for 8 hours (see chapter *Objects* in the DMG page 246). Also it gains resistance to fire and cold damage.

Historical Knowledge When the archaeologist enters a ruin or dungeon, he can correctly ascertain its original purpose and determine its builders, whether those were dwarves, elves, humans, yuan-ti, or some other known race. In addition, the archaeologist can determine the monetary value of art objects more than a century old.

Actions

Multiattack. The Archaeologist makes two melee attack with his dagger.

Dagger. *Attack Style:* +4 to hit, 5ft, one target. *Hit:* 1d4+2

NUMISMATICS

Numismatics is the science concerned with the study and description of coins as well as with historical, artistic and economic matters related to them. Numismatics and the coins it studies therefore constitute an open book on the history of the world. Numismatic studies permit us to document and understand human history even in the absence of written texts, through the effigies, images, brief inscriptions and symbols printed on coins, which both characterize human evolution and serve as the foundation of our modern civilization:

[Numismatics on DMS Guild](#)



CHANGELOG V.1.5

- **21/4** v1
- Special Properties (new)
- New artifacts examples
- Numismatics & Hoplologist (new)
- Various text corrections
- **25/4** v1.2
- Archaeologist NPC
- Preservation also give resistance to fire and cold damage.
- **9/5** v.1.3
- Graphic restyle
- **15/5** v.1.4
- Minor corrections
- **27/6** v.1.5
- Text corrections