

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®]

2nd Edition Official Game Accessory

Book of Artifacts



Incredible Magic for All Campaigns!

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Welcome to the big *Book of Artifacts!* Within these pages is one of the most amazing, diverse, and colorful collections of arcane magic ever assembled for use in AD&D® campaigns. Before getting started, though, it's time to clear up a few misconceptions:

"Artifacts are too powerful for a campaign."

Not true! *Artifact* does not mean *immensely powerful*. The *Herald of Mei Lung* is useful, but it can't blast anyone to ashes the way the *Axe of the Emperors* might. It's not the power, but the history and role-playing opportunities that really make the difference.

"All artifacts have horrible curses that keep them from being useful." All artifacts have *side effects* that reflect their nature, but not all side effects are curses. The fiend trapped in the *Acorn of Wo Mai* is definitely evil, and freeing him would be a bad thing. The truthfulness imposed by the *Crown of Law* isn't evil, although it may create difficulties for the player character. These side effects create opportunities for role-playing as characters are faced with the choices, changes, and dilemmas that great power brings. With prudence and good judgement, most artifacts can be used safely by PCs, but only by testing their mettle.

"Artifacts are just collections of random powers." It used to be that artifacts had very little definition—a bit of history, one or two powers, and a lot of fill-in-the-blanks that relied on random tables. In the *Book of Artifacts*, there are all types. Some still let the DM choose powers while others are completely defined. The majority of artifacts here have their major powers defined while the lesser powers are left for the DM to pick.

"Artifacts are all created by gods that shouldn't be involved in the campaign." No, many are the work of heroes from ages long past and a good number have their origins lost in time. The *Coin of Jisan the Bountiful* is tied to that goddess and may not be suitable for every campaign, but the same cannot be said of the *Machine*

of *Lum the Mad*. There are more than enough artifacts available that are free of the troublesome interference of gods.

"Artifacts are found only in the GREYHAWK® campaign." The first artifacts did appear in the GREYHAWK setting, and most of those are found in here, but the GREYHAWK world has no lock on artifacts. All the old favorites and many new ones appear in this book, suitable for any campaign. There are also artifacts designed for the FORGOTTEN REALMS®, DRAGONLANCE®, DARK SUN®, SPELLJAMMER®, RAVENLOFT®, and AL-QADIM™ settings.

"If the characters stumble across an artifact, it could ruin the campaign." Purely and simply, nobody ever "stumbles upon" an artifact. Artifacts are special, and no one just finds them lying around. There are no treasure tables for artifacts; they do not appear in random treasure piles. In fact, the only time characters can find an artifact is when the DM wants them to. It's assumed that the characters won't be given an artifact unless the DM is ready to deal with it.

"A character with an artifact will ruin the adventure." The artifact *is* the adventure, and is there because the adventure needs it. Artifacts are about stories, and characters find them because there is a special need. Throughout the *Book of Artifacts*, there are adventure suggestions built around the artifacts.

"Artifacts are nothing but a headache." Of course they are if the DM and players don't use them well. Give a character *Baba Yaga's Hut* without a little planning and thought, and disaster will certainly follow. With a little preparation, however, artifacts make for memorable adventures.

With all these misconceptions out of the way, it's clear that artifacts can be used in ways that won't unbalance the campaign, destroy player characters, muck up the world, or even ruin an adventure.

Now, doesn't that feel better?



Introduction

What's In Here?

The *Book of Artifacts* is a supplement for the core rules of the AD&D® 2nd Edition game. In other words, everything in this book is optional. This is not something every DM must have or a book every player should read. DM's who want to use the material here can, others don't have to. The *Book of Artifacts* is not a vital piece for every campaign.

As one might expect, the *Book of Artifacts* includes descriptions of artifacts for use in the game. These descriptions fill the better part of the book. Each description includes a history and advice for creating adventures that revolve around the artifact.

To aid the DM in using artifacts, there is also a chapter of general information about artifacts. In it the DM can find advice on creating new artifacts, building adventures around artifacts, getting artifacts out of a campaign, and how to repair a damaged campaign if an artifact gets out of hand.

Although not directly related to artifacts, two chapters dealing with the creation and recharging of magical items have also been included. These give detailed rules and guidelines to help the DM when player characters decide to make their own magical items. Now, when the PC mage wants to recharge a *wand of frost* or make a *potion of spider climbing*, the DM will be ready.

After all this comes a host of appendices. These cover tables for artifact powers, diagrams of the control panels for the *Machine of Lum the Mad* and the stops of *Heward's Mystical Organ*, listings of artifacts suitable to particular AD&D worlds, and more. The DM can use these to create and integrate his own artifacts into the campaign.

The best way to approach this material is to skip around. DM's are encouraged to read through the chapter on artifacts first. The artifact descriptions can be read in any order desired or not read at all. The information on magical items can be read when needed; none of the rules there is needed to use any artifact in a campaign.

What is an Artifact?

Since this book is about artifacts, it helps to have a clear idea of just what an artifact is and isn't. It's not what a lot of people expect.

One occasional point of confusion is that there are two different names for the same thing—artifact and relic. *Artifacts* are powerful magical items that have wizard, priest, or other powers and are made by gods, liches, wizards, and other spellcasters. *Relics* are powerful magical items that have wizard, priest, or other powers, are made by gods and priests, and have some holy importance to a particular temple. Otherwise, the two types are identical. Throughout this book, the term "artifact" refers to both artifacts and relics. "Relic" refers only to that group of artifacts that have holy significance.

A common assumption is that an artifact is any ultra-powerful magical device. This is not true. A *staff of the magi* is considered by many to be an ultra-powerful device, but it is not an artifact. Indeed, many artifacts have fewer powers than this staff. While most artifacts are potent (because the DM wants them to be memorable), sheer power is not a defining quality. An artifact must have three properties: it must be unique, it must have a history, and it must be important to the adventure.

Unique. Artifacts are one-of-a-kind items, and that's part of what makes them valuable. There's only one *Talisman of Al-Akbar*. If there were more, they wouldn't be as special. In most campaigns, this means there's only one in the entire world. In those campaigns that cross to different worlds (as a SPELLJAMMER® game would), it means there's only one in *all* the worlds and planes. This also means that characters who are brought from one DM's campaign to another cannot bring artifacts with them. The DM gets to keep those toys.

History. One of the most important features of every artifact is that it has baggage. Someone or something made it, used it, and eventually man-



aged to lose it. The history should explain or at least hint at the reason the artifact exists and what it was originally used for. The tale may also tell what has happened to the artifact since it was made, particularly the great or wondrous fates of successive owners. Histories are important. They provide something for the player characters to research and a means for the DM to give clues about the item's vast powers. A colorful if not wholly accurate description of the terrible fate that met the last owner of the *Crystal of the Ebon Flame* is certain to make the player characters cautious, should they ever find the same device.

Story. This is the most curious qualifier for an artifact since it doesn't really affect the powers of the item or any other aspect of the game rules. It does affect how the DM uses an artifact and the information players might gain.

Purely and simply, artifacts exist to tell stories. Characters don't just "find" an artifact. They

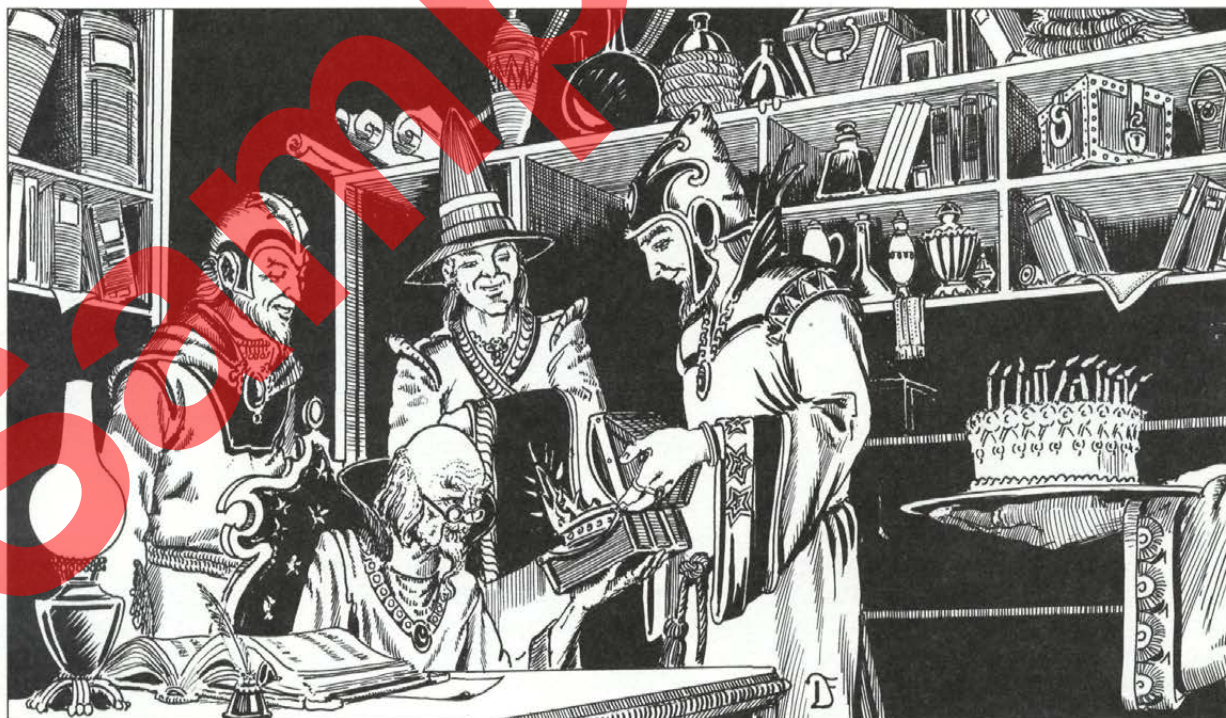
discover it because the DM put it there as part of a specific adventure. The minute an artifact turns up, smart players will know the DM has a special adventure in mind for their characters.

As befits the unique nature of artifacts, adventures built around them can't be ordinary ones. The DM should make every effort to create a memorable challenge for the players. With their histories, artifacts have the tools to make good stories, but it is up to the DM to finish the job.

So there it is. Artifacts are unique and colorful magical items that provide adventure tools for the DM. They don't have to be powerful items, although, because of their histories, most are.

One last point—artifacts are **optional!** No DM must include artifacts in a campaign. Even if they are used, no DM has to use every artifact listed in this book. DMs can always pick and choose those liked best and declare that the rest do not exist in the campaign.

More importantly, no player has the right to tell any DM that an artifact must exist in the





Introduction

campaign. In a normal group, with only one DM, this is seldom a problem. It is important to remember this, however, for those groups where several DMs may be running the same player characters at different times. If Martha is DMing and introduces the *Sword of Kas* for an adventure, players should not insist that John let them use the *Sword of Kas* when he is DMing the same characters in a later adventure. If it is necessary, remember that artifacts always have an amazing ability to vanish unexpectedly, only to reappear innocently at some later date.

Creating Artifacts

The artifacts described in this book are not the only artifacts that can be used in a campaign. Artifacts, with their detailed histories and powerful effects, are personal things, so it makes sense that the DM should create artifacts unique to an individual campaign. In fact, that's just what the DM should do. Every campaign should have artifacts that are truly unique to it, thereby ensuring that the DM's world is different from every other campaign out there.

Great idea, the DM may say, but how do I do it?

Don't worry. It's really not that hard. By following a few simple guidelines, DMs discover that artifacts practically create themselves. This section provides a step-by-step example of the whole process.

Guideline #1: Artifacts Cheat

Artifacts are about wonder—not power like many players think. Artifacts are the highest of all magic in a normal campaign, so they have to be surprising, awe-inspiring, and unpredictable; in other words, all the things that make the world wondrous. Artifacts can't be ho-hum devices bound by the standard rules of magical devices—the dreary realities of charges, command words, and the like. Artifacts exist to break the rules.

By the strict game rules, nobody could build the *Machine of Lum the Mad*—but Lum did. By the game rules, no one would make the *Rod of Seven Parts*—but it was made. The pseudo-scientific *Apparatus* doesn't conform to the rules for spells and magical devices—but it doesn't matter. It's the effect that is important, the feel of wonder and mystery that is added to the campaign.

When creating an artifact, consider first the effect. A good idea is to choose something that is impossible by normal spells and magical items. This makes the artifact special and desirable. The effect doesn't have to be all-powerful, only impossible by the current rules. Make that the principal effect of the artifact.

This artifact makes a wizard's spells permanent, so he never has to memorize spells.

That's pretty powerful and impossible, and it's a good example for an artifact's effect. So, where does one go next?

Guideline #2: Artifacts are born, not made

Any wizards or priests worth half their salt can make a magical item. They get a bunch of materials, research a few spells, lock themselves away in a tower or cellar, and *poof-bingo-bango!*—there's a magical item. While the materials and steps needed may be a mystery, the process itself is not mysterious. Everyone knows spellcasters make magical items, so no one is surprised when Jalarko the Magnificent comes out of his tower waving a *long sword +1*.

Artifacts, though, are not just *things*. They quickly take on a life of their own. It's better to imagine an artifact as being born rather than built. Birth implies mystery and strangeness, wonder beyond a mere manufacturing process.

As much as characters might like to, nobody in the present history of a campaign "makes" artifacts. Artifacts always come from times more distant, a few centuries to a few millennia in the