



# Materia Prima

**Rulebook**

And the earth opened like a blossom at the first ray of the sun, and the unspeakable came forth. Glaring light and bitter cold. And within a blink of an eye it took all corruption from us and ascended to heaven ...

Gorgol III 12, 51

# Saga

Alka Sowa is the western part of the continent Istra, a huge country bordered by the Grey Sea in the west and the insuperable Burr Mounts in the east. In the south the vast expanse tapers towards the Widow's Cape and in the north the great Istrion River forms the border with the northern kingdoms.

The name Alka Sowa is said to have originally meant „Land of the Alkanes“ and to have been used only for the region around the Istrion estuary. The Alkanes are considered to have been the first settlers of the continent who brought not only their animals, plants and customs to Alka Sowa from that river delta, but also Alchemy. With its help they made the land their own. At first they only cultivated their fields and kept cattle. But soon they dammed rivers, dug mines, cleared forests and built cities.

Alchemy not only served as a science and instrument, it was also passion, ideology and religion. Today it is only known as the study of the properties of substances and their reactions. But the spectrum of Alchemy ranged from chemistry to physics and pharmacy. Alchemists were astronomers and doctors. They understood the structure of matter and possessed the power to transmute elements into other conditions. Some sources report experiments with living creatures that even produced abhorrent beings. These are, however, mostly old wives' tales told to naughty children.

The Alchemist's most important achievement was the Philosopher's Stone. Due to it their power seemed to grow immeasurably. It was itself an alchemical product and at the same time its most important tool. With its help they stabilized the transmuted compounds and made them permanent. Few knew how it was made, but Opus Magnum, the fundamental book of Alchemy, contained its formula. Today, only myths speak of the stone and the book.

It's because the former tribal leaders abused the power of the stone. They became powerful rulers whose lunacy and tyranny heralded the end of this first age. Then, at the zenith of their power, when Alchemy was even able to control the way beyond the earthly, knowledge and all its products were extinguished in a single moment. It was as if alchemy had never existed. Today this event is called the „Day of Dawn“. Many saw in it a punishment by the gods for the presumptuousness of men. They were all tired of striving for false truthfulness and its abominable consequences and sought their salvation in religion. And the ancient knowledge fell into oblivion.

All this is more than an era ago and yet one hears of adepts researching old recipes in libraries and druids experimenting with elements in secrecy. Some even call themselves Alchemists.



# Game Components

180 Element markers



7 Game board tiles



24 Homunculus cards



24 Homunculus figures



4 Alchemist cards



4 Alchemist figures



24 Equipment cards



24 Philosopher's Stone cards



4 Tower cards



4 Tower figures



20 Figure stands



10 Dice



12 Tower extension markers



4 Philosopher's Stone markers



3 Tower cards



8 Quest cards



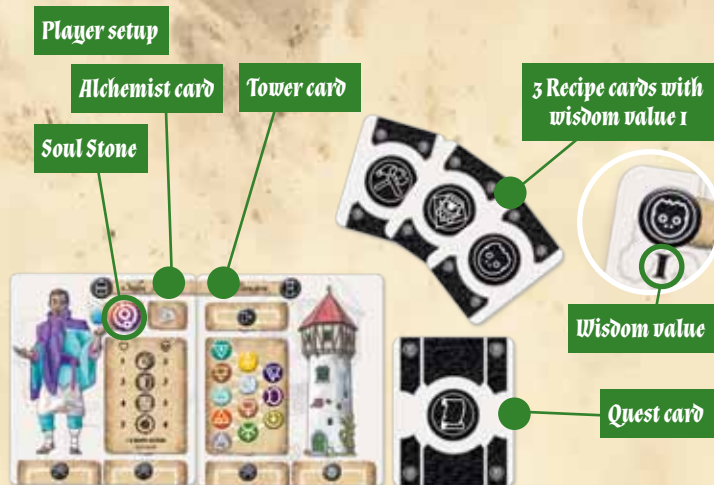
The distillation is the pure expression of a quality, the essence is the heart of a quality and the quintessence is a quality in its universal meaning.

Alchemical basic knowledge

# Game Preparation

Before the hunt for the Philosopher's Stone can begin, a few preparations must be made.

1. The seven-part Game Board is set up and the corresponding Town cards are laid out. The arrangement of the board tiles is reserved for the oldest player. The Town cards are placed next to the board.
2. The Tower extension markers are shuffled face-down and one marker is placed face up on each town card.
3. Each player chooses an Alchemist and a Tower with the corresponding figures and cards.
4. Each player receives a Soul Stone, which he places on the Alchemist card.



5. All players draw a Quest card face down. Only those Quests are available that are suitable for the number of players.
6. From the 3 different Recipe card decks (Homunculi, Equipment, Philosopher's Stone) all cards with the Wisdom value 1 are taken out and each player receives a face-down card from each recipe type (3 cards in total).
7. The remaining Recipe cards with the Wisdom value 1 are shuffled with the other cards according to their recipe type and placed next to the Game Board.
8. The players decide who starts (usually the youngest).
9. In clockwise order, the players place their Tower figures and their Alchemist figures on a hex on the game board. You only have to make sure that they are not placed on a Element hex, a Town or an opposing Tower.
10. Now the game can begin





# Goal of the Game

To end the game, an Alchemist must generate a Philosopher's Stone by transmutation, fulfill his secret quest, and ultimately possess a soul stone. However, the winner is the player who has collected the most wisdom value points after the final score (see End of Game on page 17).

## Philosopher's Stone

The central aim of the game is to create the Philosopher's Stone. Each Alchemist must search the towns for recipes to create it. A Philosopher's Stone is made from 3 recipes. All wisdom value numbers from 1 to 3 must be present when collecting the partial recipes.

However, the ingredients and requirements that are necessary for this can be very different. Some partial recipes require certain elements, others require the soul stone of an Alchemist.



## Secret Quest

Alchemy has a centuries-old tradition and its masters come from families, schools and guilds whose history is as old as the records that tell of them. An Alchemist is therefore not a blank sheet of paper. Some have a special alchemical codex, others act out of love or revenge, and there are those who have gone mad by the power of the Philosopher's Stone and want to plunge the world into chaos.

Every single biography results in a secret quest. However, this secret should be guarded, since the competitors will exploit every weakness.

The game can only be completed when the first one fulfills this quest with the help of the Philosopher's Stone and owns a soul stone at the end.

Everything rises and falls, the swing of the pendulum expresses itself in everything. The swing of the pendulum to the right is the measure of the swing to the left.

Verse XII der Tabula Alba 56, 7

# Elements

In the Alchemist's world everything revolves around the transmutation of things and living beings. But for everything they create, they need special ingredients. Some can be mined as elements (earth, water, air, fire, iron) directly on the game board, others are more valuable and must be fabricated from the simple elements.



This icon displays which element can be mined from the hex.

Higher-level elements can be transmuted in the alchemy tower (see Towers on page 11).

The Elements are divided into three levels, which differ not only in their value, but also in their power. The following plan shows all elements and their relationship to each other.



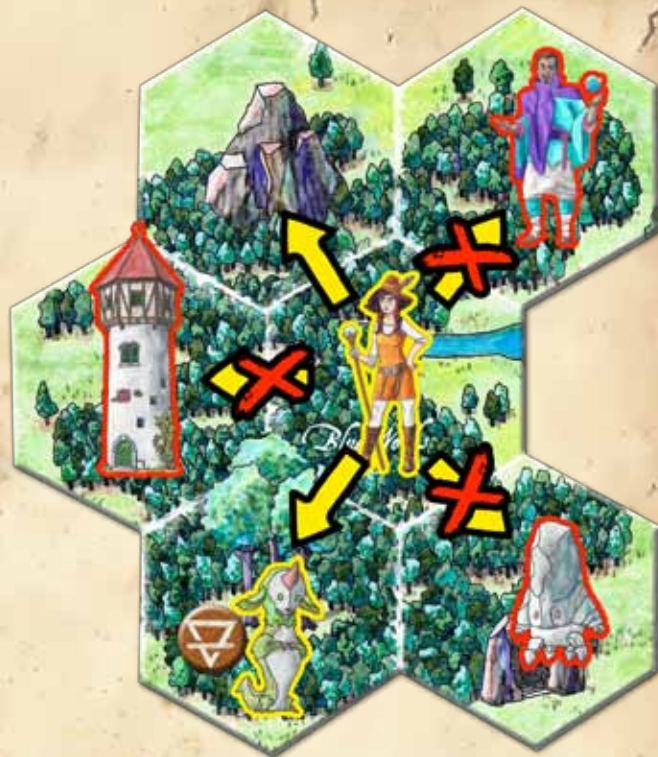




# Player Turn

Each Alchemist usually has 3 actions in one turn, which he can invest at will. He can move, mine or discard elements and fight. It doesn't matter which actions he performs in one turn and in which order he does it. If he is satisfied with less than his available actions, he can stop his turn at any time and it's the next player's turn.

In addition to the four basic actions, there are other possible actions in the Alchemist tower and in the towns (see Towers on page 11 and Game Board on page 13).



## Move

The game board is divided into hexagonal fields. Each figure (Alchemist or Homunculus) can move to any adjoining hex with one action. There are no natural boundaries on the board. The only restriction is that a hex on which another player's Alchemist or Homunculus is standing may neither be crossed nor designated as a target. A player's tower hex may not be entered either. A player's Alchemist and his Homunculi may share a hex.



Every atom, every planet, every galaxy longs for its very own purpose, the whole universe strives for transmutation.

Togal the Wise

# Player Turn

## Mine

On the map there are element hexes where elements (iron, fire, water, air and earth) can be mined. These hexes are marked with a corresponding icon. As soon as a figure (Alchemist or Homunculus) is standing on one of these hexes, he can use an action to mine a unit of the respective element. The mined elements are placed either on the Alchemist card or on the homunculus card. However, you have to pay attention to how many elements a figure can carry.



## Discard

Within one action a figure can discard as many elements as it carries with it on the hex on which it stands. These remain there and can be resumed by mining them again. Discarded elements have to be „mined“ again with an action in order to pick them up, just as if they were mined from the element hexes.

## Fight

All Alchemists and homunculi usually have both an attack and a defense value. If there is an opposing Alchemist or homunculus in an adjoining hex, a figure can attack it with an action. It can attack as often as it has free actions in the current turn. If there are several figures of a player in one hex, the attacker may choose whom to attack.



**Example:**  
Vitrudes attacks with an attack value of 3 and Seilon has a defense value of 3.







As soon as an attack is initiated, the following 3 steps must be completed.

1. A figure (Alchemist or Homunculus) attacks an adjoining figure. In an attack, both the attack value of a figure and the dice result must be taken into account. For the attack, as many dice as the attack value specifies are used. The die numbers are added and the result is the strength of the attack roll.



**Example:** The strength of Vitrudes' attack roll is 4.

2. The attacked figure has the possibility to defend itself against an attack. The dice are rolled with the number of dice that the defensive value of the figure specifies. The die numbers are added and the result is the strength of the defense roll. If the strength of the defense roll is higher than or equal to the strength of the attack roll, the attack is repelled and nothing else happens. If the strength of the defense roll is lower, it continues with step 3.



**Example:** The strength of Seilon's defensive roll is only 3 and he is defeated.

**Example:** Seilon is placed on his tower hex, Vitrudes receives as many elements as he can carry, and the remaining elements, as well as Seilon's soul stone, fall on the attacked figures's hex.



3. As soon as the attack is successful and cannot be repelled, the opponent's figure is considered as defeated.

A defeated **homunculus** is removed from the game board and all its elements become the property of the attacker.

A defeated **Alchemist** is placed back on his Tower hex and one of his soul stones as well as all his carried-along elements become the property of the attacker.

In both cases, the attacker decides which elements he keeps according to his maximum capacity. The others fall on the field of the attacked figure. If the attacker is an Alchemist, he **must** pick up the soul stone. If the attacker is a homunculus, the soul stone falls on the hex of the attacked.

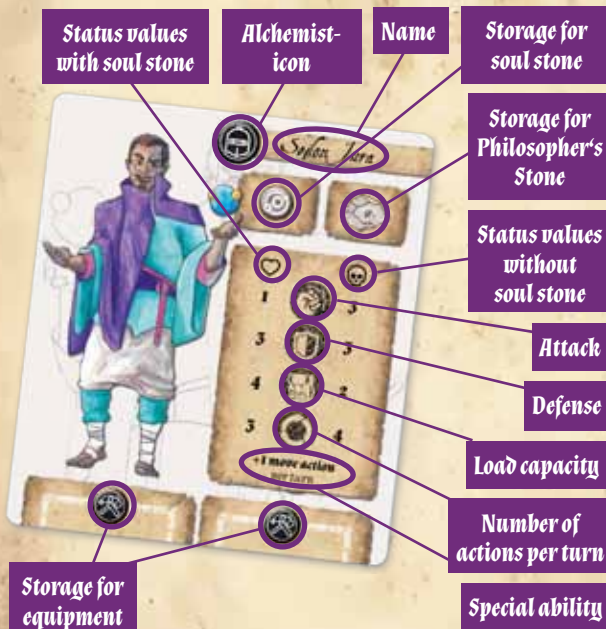
If an Alchemist loses his last soul stone, he does not simply vanish, he continues to exist as a soulless being and has the possibility to recapture his soul stone (see Life and Death on page 10).

Secretly, in magic rings,  
the darkness, where no gaze could see,  
where I saw nothing of things  
and sent nothing radiating me  
than that guiding light that burned in your heart!

Verse IX of Draura 11, 45

# Alchemists

Each Alchemist has its own figure and Alchemist card. The figure marks the current location on the board. The Alchemist card shows an Alchemist's name and characteristics. The properties are divided into two columns (see Life and Death on page 10). The side with the heart shows the status values he has when he owns at least one soul stone, the side with the skull shows the values when he has lost his last soul stone.



## Life and Death

As soon as an Alchemist loses his last soul stone in battle, the following rules apply to him.

1. His status values change. Now the values beneath the skull apply.
2. He becomes stronger, but cannot win the game without a soul stone.

If an Alchemist gets back a soul stone in battle or by transmutation, the status values beneath the heart symbol apply again.

NOTE: Even if an Alchemist loses his soul, there are no consequences for his homunculi. Even objects are not affected and can be used without a soul stone.





**Example:** With this equipment card a new soul stone can be transmuted.



**Example:** This recipe card for the Philosopher's Stone requires a soul stone for transmutation.

## Tower



### Soul Stone

Every Alchemist has a soul (soul stone), which he can lose in a battle (see Fight on page 7 and 8). A soul stone is a special element that can only be carried by an Alchemist. It may not be taken up by a homunculus.

When an Alchemist attains a second or even a third soul, these function like an extra life. They do not occupy any space in the inventory. In every lost battle an Alchemist has to give up a soul, but only when he doesn't have one anymore, he is considered as defeated and becomes a soulless being.

Soul stones may be discarded on any hex except a tower hex. They may also be used for transmutations, even if this means that the respective Alchemist becomes a soulless being.

An Alchemist's tower, placed at the beginning of the game, offers him not only a roof over his head, but is also his fortification and storage house. Once an Alchemist or one of his homunculi is in his tower, he cannot be attacked. In addition, a foreign Alchemist cannot enter the tower hex even in his absence. The tower also serves as a storage facility. Since each figure can only carry a certain amount of element units, it's good to know that you can safely unload them in the tower and thus prevent other Alchemists from accessing them.

With only one action an Alchemist or homunculus can discard or pick up as many elements as he wants. As soon as elements are unloaded in the tower, they must be placed on the tower card.

And even if one found the Philosopher's Stone by causing transmutation, he would never be able to produce it, unless he already carried it within him.

Kalda the Seer 77, 12

# Tower

## Tower extension

Each tower can be improved with a tower extension, which can be bought in the towns. The extensions help to transmute or grant one free element per turn, which can be stored directly in the tower. A player may have more than one tower extension. However, only one extension may be active per turn.



## Equip

In the tower you can pick up or drop as many elements as an Alchemist or a homunculus can carry with one equip action. Once an Alchemist performs a conversion or transmutation, he does not need to perform an additional equip action. Equipment that is moved between the Alchemist and the tower must also be swapped with an equip action.

Example: Vitruvius discards 2 Elements in the Tower with one action.







### Convert

The action of element conversion is a form of transmutation. Alchemists are only able to produce mercury from water and iron in their own laboratory. A conversion is only possible if the Alchemist has the necessary source elements. It doesn't matter whether the source elements are placed on the Alchemist card or on the tower card as long as the Alchemist figure is placed on the tower hex.

**Example:** Seilon converts gold. He needs 1 air, 2 fire and 1 iron element. Each conversion is an action.



**Example:**  
 Action 1: water and fire to copper  
 Action 2: iron and fire to mercury  
 Action 3: copper and mercury to gold

### Transmute

An Alchemist stumbles over recipes for equipment or homunculi again and again. In order to carry out a transmutation according to these recipes he needs all the elements shown on them. He must use an action to create the item or homunculus.

- Equipment cards must be equipped immediately on the Alchemist card or stored on the tower card.
- Partial recipes of the Philosopher's Stone must be stored on the tower card.
- Homunculi cards are placed next to the Alchemist card and the matching homunculi figure is positioned on the tower hex.



**Example:** Seilon transmutes a shovel from 1 copper and 1 mercury.

**NOTE:** As soon as an Alchemist performs a conversion or transmutation, he can move as many elements as he wants between the Alchemist card and the tower card without having to perform an additional action.

Verse III of Orata 45, 23

## 13



# Towns

In Alka Sowa there are towns whose chronicles and stories are as old as the continent itself. On their markets tower extensions can be bought and in their libraries old recipes can be researched. But not every town offers all kinds of recipes. Which ones (equipment, homunculus, Philosopher's Stone) can be purchased in a town, can be found on the corresponding town card.



**Example:** Sejlón researches a recipe for an equipment card in Hammerbreach

## Research

In every town, there are libraries and bookshops where an Alchemist can research recipes for homunculi, equipment and the Philosopher's Stone. The recipe research costs one action and can only be done by Alchemists. The player draws a card from the corresponding deck.



**Example:** Sejlón buys a tower extension in Hammerbreach

## Purchase

In every town, there are markets and craftsmen. They offer a variety of goods that help Alchemists improve their towers and laboratories. On each town card, there is a tower extension marker, which can be bought with an action. To do this the Alchemist needs the required element in his inventory. The Alchemist then hands it in with the purchase action and may place the tower extension marker directly in the corresponding field on his tower card. The effect of the tower extension comes into effect with the next player's turn. As soon as a tower extension marker has been purchased, a new one must be drawn face down and placed on the town card.



Alchemy distinguishes three stages of transmutation:

1. The Nigredo is the most original form of all elements.
2. The Albedo is an unstable unconfirmed state of the elements.
3. The Rubedo is the purest form that an element can acquire.

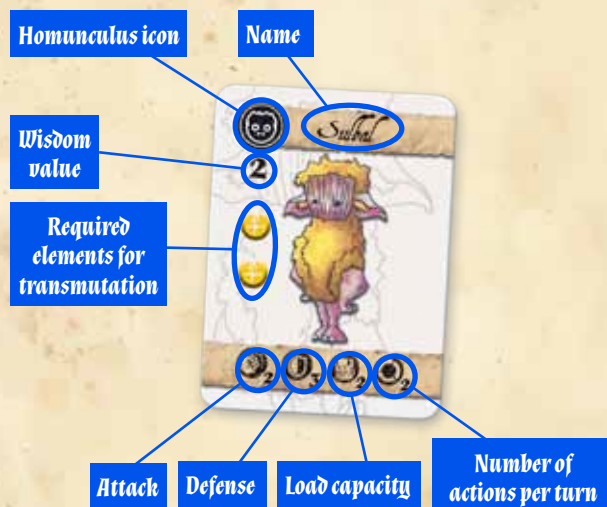
Alchemical basic knowledge

# Homunculi

Every Alchemist is able to create smaller or larger helpers with the help of transmutation. These are called homunculi. Therefore he needs a homunculus card and the element units indicated on it. Once a homunculus has been created, the homunculus card must be placed next to the Alchemist card. The homunculus figure is placed on the tower hex and as soon as it's the player's turn again, he can control the homunculus like any other figure according to its action number.

Homunculi have special abilities that help the Alchemist achieve his goal of attaining the Philosopher's Stone. However, an Alchemist is not able to control an infinite number of homunculi. Therefore, the maximum number for each is limited to 3. As with the elements, there are three levels of homunculi that define their value and power. Unlike an Alchemist, a homunculus has limited possibilities to act. Not every homunculus can fight for example. They also differ in terms of the number of their actions and the extent of their capacity. Which abilities such a helper possesses can be taken from his homunculus card. Furthermore homunculi are not able to perform transmute, purchase or research actions.

NOTE: An Alchemist may never have more than 3 homunculi on the game board. If an Alchemist transmutes a fourth, he must resolve an active homunculus of his choice.



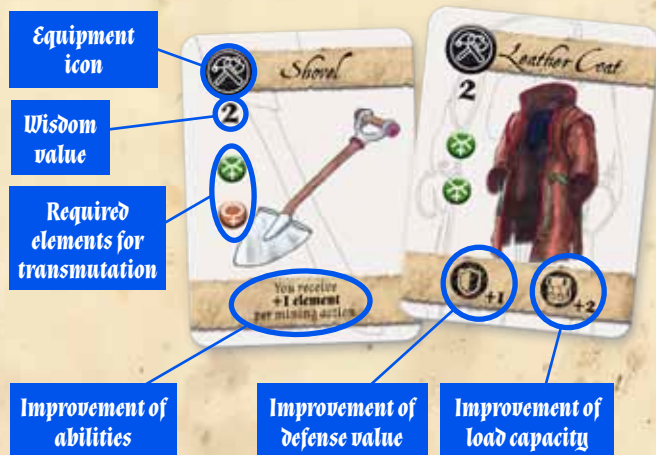
NOTE: An Alchemist cannot exchange elements with his homunculus, hand them over to him, nor take them away from him. A transfer must always be done by discarding and mining or via the tower.



# Equipment

Using transmutation, any Alchemist can generate equipment that gives him various advantages. However, he can carry a maximum of 2 items. Weapons increase the attack value, shields and armor improve the defense value and enchanted jewelry grants special abilities. As with elements and homunculi, there are 3 different levels of equipment that define their value and power.

To make equipment you need an equipment card and the elements indicated on it. When an item is made, it must either be equipped immediately or stored in the tower. Equipment can be stored in the tower without any limitation.



# Philosopher's Stone

The Philosopher's Stone is the purest form of Alchemy and its production is the master discipline of every Alchemist. In order to transmute such a stone, an Alchemist must first search for recipes in the towns. A Philosopher's Stone is made from 3 partial recipes. When collecting the partial recipes, all wisdom value numbers from 1 to 3 must be present. Each Alchemist can only transmute one of the three partial recipes and as a result only one stone. As soon as a partial recipe has been transmuted, it must be uncovered and stored in the corresponding field on the tower card. When an Alchemist has transmuted all 3 recipes, he receives a Philosopher's Stone marker, which he can place on his Alchemist card.



NOTE: Unlike a soul stone, the Philosopher's Stone cannot be taken from an Alchemist in a fighting action.

Like leg dislocation, like blood dislocation,  
so limb dislocation:  
Leg to leg, blood to blood,  
limb to limb, as glued they shall be!

Verse VI of Tabula Alba 19, 4

# End of the Game

The game ends immediately when the first player with a soul stone and a Philosopher's Stone completes his secret quest. The winner is the player who received the most wisdom value after counting the points.

**Example:** Player 1 completes his quest and ends the game.

Elements	4
Homunculi	3
Philosopher's Stone	6
Stone Set	5
Soul Stone	3
Secret Quest	9
Wisdom value	30



**Example:** Player 2 receives the following points for his progress.

Elements	6
Homunculi	5
Philosopher's Stone	3
Equipment	5
Soul Stone	6
Wisdom value	25

## Wisdom value

Every Alchemist strives in his life for perfection and the deepest insight into the secrets of Alchemy. This insight is expressed in the wisdom value points. Alchemists receive these through the conversion of elements, the transmutation of equipment and homunculi, the possession of a soul stone and the achievement of one's secret quest. The greatest insight into Alchemy, however, is provided by the creation of the Philosopher's Stone, for which one also receives the most wisdom value points. The wisdom value points are added up at the end of the game. For example, if a player loses a homunculus in the course of the game, it will not be counted at the end.

## Scoring points

The table shows what you get points for.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Elements	-	-	2
Homunculi	1	2	3
Equipment	1	2	3
Philosopher's Stone	1	2	3
Philosopher's Stone Set	-	-	+5
Soul stone	-	-	+3
Tower extension	-	-	+2
Secret Quest	-	-	+9





## Secret Quest

### **Tyrant**

Transmute 3 homunculi and place them in 3 different towns! The mission is accomplished as soon as the third homunculus moves to last open town hex.

### **Armory Master**

Transmute 4 equipment items (minimum level 2) and bring 2 of them to Blackholm! The mission is accomplished as soon as the Alchemist moves to the Blackholm town hex with two equipped weapons.

### **Spender**

Drop 3 level 3 Elements in front of the tower, which is farthest from your own tower! The mission is accomplished as soon as the Alchemist or the player's homunculus has discarded the 3 elements in a hex adjacent to the opponents tower.

### **Soulreaper**

Go with 3 soul stones to Windshire! The mission is accomplished as soon as the Alchemist with three soul stones moves to the Windshire town hex.

### **Pacifist**

Transmute a Philosopher's Stone without fighting and win the game by climbing any air shrine! The player must not engage in any fight with any Alchemist or homunculus throughout the entire game. The mission is accomplished as soon as the Alchemist moves into an air mining hex with a soul stone.

### **Magnate**

Transmute 3 elements of gold and bring them to Hammerbreach! The mission is accomplished as soon as the Alchemist or a player's homunculus has discarded the 3 elements in Hammerbreach town hex.

### **Lord of Hellfire**

Burn down the city of Windshire, by placing 9 Elements of Fire in it! The mission is accomplished as soon as the Alchemist or a player's homunculus has discarded the 9 elements in Windshire town hex.

### **Homekeeper**

Place at least 2 homunculi around your tower and keep them until your next turn. The mission is accomplished as soon as the player's turn comes again and 2 homunculi have survived on a hex adjacent to his tower.

### **Cultist**

Transmute 3 homunculi and meet them in the earthshrine at the Blue Woods! The mission is accomplished as soon as the Alchemist and three homunculi are standing in the earth mining hex at the end of a turn.

### **Bodyguard**

Drop 2 soul stones in front of the tower, which is farthest from your own tower! The mission is accomplished as soon as the Alchemist discards 2 soul stone markers in a hex adjoining to the opponents tower.

## Actions

Moving | Move to an adjoining hex!

Mining | Get elements from a mine!

Discarding | Drop elements on your hex!

Fighting | Attack on an adjoining hex!

Converting | Convert elements in the tower!

Transmuting | Create homunculi or equipment in the tower!

Equip | Exchange elements and equipment in the tower!

Researchin | Acquire a new recipe in a town!

Purchase | Get an extension marker for your tower!

## Icons



Number of dice on an attack roll



Number of dice on a defensive roll



Number of elements a figure can carry



Number of actions to be performed per turn

## Elements



*Water*



*Sulfur*



*Earth*



*Aqua Regia*



*Glass*



*Air*



*Platinum*



*Copper*



*Fire*



*Gold*



*Mercury*



*Iron*