

Alchemical symbol for retort

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2025 November 07

This is an addendum to [L2/25-125R](#) *Follow-up revised designs of the alchemical symbols*. In response to that proposal, Andreas Stötzner submitted *On revision of 1F76D ALCHEMICAL SYMBOL FOR RETORT* to the SEW and UTC. Specifically, Stötzner objected that the proposed glyph for 1F76D, which had been copied from Starkey *et al.* (2004), was not representative of historical texts. The historical texts Stötzner presented were symbol lists from the 17th and 18th centuries, for example Figure 5; the only examples in running text remain those from Starkey *et al.* (Figure 2). A representative glyph was worked out in GitHub discussion that is close to the one proposed by Stötzner (Figure 4) as well as to a 20th-century source (Figure 1) and to diagrams of actual retorts (Figure 3).

Changes in representative glyphs

| Character | 2009 glyph | Current glyph | Proposed glyph |
|---------------------|------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1F76D <i>retort</i> | ℄ | ℄ | ℄ |

Figures

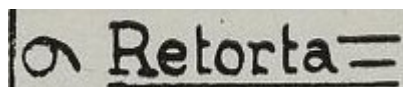


Figure 1. De Rosemont (1932). This 20th-century illustration is representative of the simplest forms found in earlier accounts.

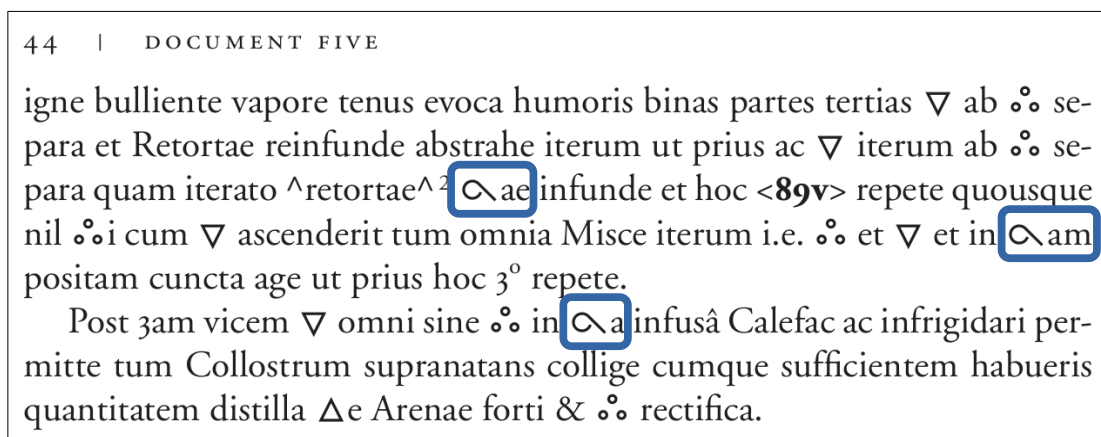


Figure 2. Starkey (2004: 44). A simple modern design. Objections to this glyph are that the descending line should not be straight and that the curve should be closed at the bottom.

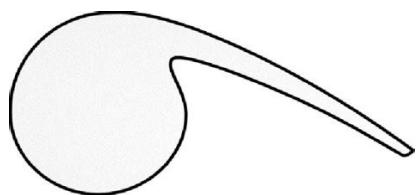


Figure 3. Rasmussen (2019). A typical modern diagram of a retort posted on GitHub with the comment that the representative glyph should be recognizable from this canonical shape.



Figure 4. Representative glyph proposed by Stötzner.



Figure 5. Ernesti (1733: 44). One of the historical examples provided by Stötzner, and the one closest to his proposed glyph.

References

- Louis Reutter de Rosemont (1932) *Histoire de la pharmacie a travers les ages*, vol II: 4 plates after p. 260 and 2 plates after p. 268.
- S. C. Rasmussen (2019) From Aqua Vitae to E85: The History of Ethanol as a Fuel. *Substantia* 3(2) Suppl. 1: 43–55, Firenze University Press.
- George Starkey, William Newman & Lawrence Principe (2004) *Alchemical Laboratory Notebooks and Correspondence*. University of Chicago Press.