

# Alchemical symbol for retort

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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

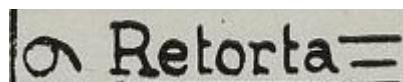


Figure 1. De Rosemont (1932). This 20th-century illustration is representative of the simplest forms found in earlier accounts.

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igne bulliente vapore tenus evoca humoris binas partes tertias ▽ ab ☽ separa et Retortae reinfunde abstrahē iterum ut prius ac ▽ iterum ab ☽ separa quam iterato ^retortae^? ◊ae infunde et hoc <89v> repete quousque nil ☽i cum ▽ ascenderit tum omnia Misce iterum i.e. ☽ et ▽ et in ◊am positam cuncta age ut prius hoc 3° repete.

Post 3am vicem ▽ omni sine ☽ in ◊a infusâ Calefac ac infrigidari permitte tum Collostrum supranatans collige cumque sufficientem habueris quantitatem distilla Δe Arenae forti & ☽ rectifica.

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.

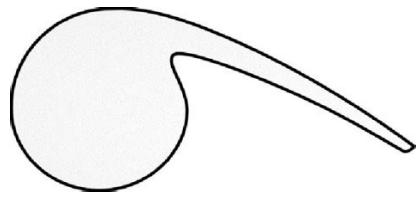


Figure 3. Rasmussen (2019). A typical modern diagram of a retort posted on GitHub with the comment that the representative glyph should be recognizable from this canonical shape.



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 à travers les âges*, 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.