

Echoes of Divinity: The Old Ways and Their Sacred Relics

As compiled by Royal Scholar Gorrin of the Royal Archives

Throughout the annals of our history, there have existed those among us who have wielded relics of unparalleled craft and mystery. The common folk whisper of these artifacts as gifts from the gods, while the clergy of varying orders debate their divine provenance. Yet, if we are to seek true understanding, we must set aside superstition and view these relics through the lens of reason and knowledge, as the Old Scholars once did.

The Legacy of the Old Ways

The Old Ways, as they are now called, were a practice known only to the ancients who came before our time. Their artisans and sages possessed a wisdom that has long since been lost to the passage of years. The few remnants of their craft stand as testaments to their mastery, and though they are often mistaken for crude magic, it is clear to any learned mind that these relics were wrought with purpose and design beyond the feeble conjurations of modern spellcasters.

The Old Ways, a system of faith and practice unique to these lands, present a theological structure unlike the conventional deific worship found elsewhere. Rather than worship centered on manifest gods, the practitioners of the Old Ways seek communion with fragmented voices—remnants of a divine presence perceived in relics, rituals, and sacred utterances. These remnants are believed to be the echoes of the gods, distorted and incomplete yet still carrying divine resonance.

The foundations of the Old Ways rest upon four principal tenets. First, that **relics serve as conduits of the divine**, embodying the last vestiges of the gods' will and power. Second, that **the gods speak only in fragments**, their voices diminished across time, requiring careful study and interpretation. Third, that **true wisdom is attained through devotion to the pursuit of lost knowledge**, necessitating both scholarly and spiritual dedication. Lastly, that **only those who undergo purification may perceive the divine**, a belief that reinforces the practice of fasting, contemplation, and ritualistic hardship.

Ancient texts, though rare and often fragmented, offer glimpses into the nature of the Old Ways. *The Canticles of Ash*, a tome retrieved from the ruins of a forgotten citadel, speaks of craftsmen who "sang to the bones of the world, and the world answered in kind." *The Testament of Eldaemar*, a surviving scroll attributed to a lost scholar, describes how relics were not merely shaped but *awakened*, as if their essence had been drawn from something beyond mortal understanding. *The Hymns of the Forge Lords* recount how entire mountain halls would resonate with sound and light as

relics were brought into being, a process described in reverent, almost religious tones, suggesting that the act of relic-making was seen not just as an art, but as a communion with forces greater than humanity itself.

The invocations of the Old Ways take many forms, though they invariably seek to engage with these lingering divine echoes. Priests and scholars recite sacred verses—texts preserved from antiquity, though their origins remain uncertain. Some locations are revered as places of heightened divine presence, where structured chants and vibratory hymns are performed, seemingly facilitating communion with the gods. The role of **sound, harmony, and resonance** in these ceremonies suggests an intricate understanding of sacred frequencies, though such interpretations remain speculative.

Foremost among the sacred elements of this faith are **divine relics**—objects revered for their perceived connection to the gods. These relics take many forms, ranging from intricately inscribed tablets to sacred implements that display inexplicable phenomena when handled by the devout. The precise nature of relics is subject to ongoing theological debate: some scholars assert that the gods imbue these objects with their lingering presence, while others propose that relics merely serve as amplifiers for existing divine will. The creation of these relics is beyond our grasp, as the sacred rites and materials of the Old Ways have either been forgotten or were perhaps never meant to be known by common men. What remains is their legacy—an enduring whisper of an age that has crumbled into dust, and yet, through their artifacts, still lingers in the corners of our world.

Pilgrimage and exploration remain central to the practice of the Old Ways, for the faithful believe that further divine knowledge lies undiscovered. Many embark on quests to sites where the gods are thought to have once dwelled, or where past revelations were uncovered. Others dedicate themselves to **ritual excavation**, approaching the recovery of lost relics as both a sacred duty and a scholarly pursuit. The legend of the **Voice of the Gods**, a fabled artifact said to grant true understanding of divine will, continues to inspire devoted seekers.

The faith is not monolithic; various sects interpret the Old Ways differently. The **Voicekeepers**, for example, believe the gods persist through lingering echoes, dedicating themselves to recording and preserving their fragmented words. The **Relic Tenders** focus on the preservation and function of divine artifacts, while the **Silent Order of Helm** guards knowledge they deem too dangerous for the uninitiated. There are also the **Oracles of the Shroud**, mystics who claim to receive direct communion through trance-like states and sacred rites.

The Old Ways shape the cultural and political fabric of these lands. Cities arise around sites of perceived divine significance, rulers seek prophecy before making grave decisions, and wars have been waged over the possession of relics or differing interpretations of divine will. The faith remains ever fluid, evolving with each newly discovered fragment of divine truth, though it is also fraught with discord, as each revelation has the potential to challenge prior understanding.

Thus, the Old Ways persist as both a study of faith and an enduring mystery. The gods do not reveal themselves fully, yet their influence lingers, compelling the faithful to seek, to listen, and to interpret. The pursuit of their voice is unending, for only through vigilance and devotion may one draw closer to the divine.

The Nature of Relics

Relics are unlike the enchanted trinkets crafted by present-day sorcerers and artificers. While our own crude enchantments require frequent reinforcement and tend to degrade with time, relics endure for centuries, their potency unyielding despite age and misuse. Many of them seem impervious to rust, decay, or even the passing of time itself, as though bound by forces that defy nature's relentless grasp.

In the DnD game, all magical items will be referred to as relics.

Several defining traits separate relics from lesser enchanted objects. Unlike the spell-forged weapons of modern magi, relics do not require replenishment of their energies through rites or rituals. Some remain dormant for years, only to awaken when touched by the worthy or the desperate. Others display properties that cannot be replicated by modern spellcraft—emitting light without flame, whispering with unseen voices, or mending their own fractures over time. More curiously, not all who wield a relic may benefit from its gifts. Some seem to demand a specific will, bloodline, or trial before their true potential can be unlocked, as if they retain some form of judgment or awareness of their own.

Many scholars have attempted to unlock the secret of relics through mundane study and magical examination, yet most have failed to glean more than surface-level truths. If the Old Ways had a method of crafting these wonders, it is buried beneath centuries of ignorance and misinterpretation. However, there are still those who attempt to walk in the footsteps of the ancients. Though the true methods of the Old Ways remain lost, relics can still be created today, albeit with diminished potency. These modern creations pale in comparison to those forged in ages past, but they remain useful and sought after. The difference lies not only in the loss of knowledge but in the scarcity of the materials once used. Relics of the Old Ways were often wrought from substances unknown to us now—metals that refuse to tarnish, stones that hum with unseen energy, or woven threads that glimmer in darkness. Modern craftsmen must rely on what little remains of these rare components, often scavenged from broken relics or the depths of long-sealed ruins. In some cases, lesser substitutes are found, but these can never fully replicate the wonders of their predecessors.

Relic Classifications

Though many relics are unique in their function, they can be categorized into broader types. There are those relics that remain unresponsive to touch or command, believed to require either a forgotten incantation, a proper wielder, or some esoteric condition to be met before they may awaken once more. Others seem attuned to a single user, rejecting all others, binding themselves upon first contact or demanding lineage, faith, or strength of will. Some relics are not beneficent but instead twist and corrupt those who bear them, demanding sacrifices of blood or mind. The existence of these volatile relics suggests that the artisans of the Old Ways did not only create wonders, but also horrors.

While relics are often revered for their power, history also warns of their terrible potential for destruction. There are many myths and recorded accounts of entire cities and peoples being wiped from existence due to the misuse or unchecked influence of a relic. The *Chronicles of Ylthmar* tell of a relic known as the **Veil of Black Fire**, which, when unleashed, consumed an entire kingdom in an inextinguishable blaze, leaving only shadowed ruins in its wake. Another grim tale speaks of the *Harrowing of Eldren's Gate*, where a relic designed to preserve life twisted upon itself and rendered all who dwelled there into motionless statues, their bodies eternally frozen in time. In some instances, these catastrophic events are attributed to relics losing control, while in others, it is said that those who sought to wield their power were undone by their own arrogance.

Such accounts serve as stark warnings. Many believe that relics possess a will of their own, a remnant of their creator's intent or something far more enigmatic. Some relics seem to whisper to those who bear them, luring them toward unknown ends. Others have been known to change hands through means that defy reason, slipping from their wielders only to be found by another at a fated moment. The unpredictability of these artifacts is what makes them both coveted and feared.

Theories and Interpretations

Many theories attempt to explain the origins and nature of relics, yet no single explanation suffices. Some hold that the relics were forged by a forgotten race, one that walked this land before even the first kings of [Norvostra](#). Others claim they were crafted by deities who abandoned our world, leaving only their tools behind. A few whisper that relics are not made at all, but *grown*, birthed from the very essence of the world itself.

One of the most prevalent theories concerns the price of their creation. While our modern enchantments require effort, relics seem to demand more—something beyond simple craftsmanship. There are records of those who have attempted to replicate relics through artifice and spellwork, but these creations pale in comparison to even the weakest of true relics. Could it be that the artisans of the Old Ways paid a price that we are no longer willing—or able—to meet?

On the Fear and Reverence of Relics

While some seek relics for their power, others fear them. Many ancient tomes warn of relics that bring not fortune, but ruin. There are tales of rulers who built their empires upon the strength of a relic, only to have their kingdoms crumble when the relic turned against them. Some relics seem to possess an eerie will of their own, choosing when and how they function, while others remain cursed with unknown consequences for their wielders. It is this unpredictability that has led to the superstitions surrounding relics. Many villages and temples hold relics within shrines, offering prayers and tributes to what they do not understand. Others go so far as to entomb relics within stone, fearing their use altogether.

If we are to truly understand the Old Ways, we must move beyond mere reverence and superstition. The study of relics must be approached with both caution and determination. Each recovered relic brings us closer to understanding the civilization that once wielded them, and perhaps, in time, we may reclaim the knowledge that has been lost to the ages. But caution is

paramount. There are relics that should not be touched, let alone wielded. Until we understand their true nature, we remain children grasping in the dark, tampering with forces beyond our comprehension. We may yet uncover the wisdom of the ancients—or we may repeat their downfall.

For now, we must search. We must learn. And we must remember: *not all that is forgotten is meant to be found.*

End of Treatise.

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