

THE WEIGHT OF WHAT HOLDS

Field Notes from Terheia

A companion collection for *The Narrowing*

L Modulo

The documents contained herein were assembled from multiple institutional, personal, and field sources across Terheia. No editorial commentary has been added. No context has been provided. The reader will determine what these documents mean — or whether they are meant to mean anything at all.

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On the Celestial Correspondences

Arcanorium of the Prime Lens, Kaimawasu Campus // Second-Year Primer

You have completed your first year. You can name the five moons. You can recite their associated schools. You have passed the examination on seasonal measurement and fortnightly dating conventions. This document assumes that knowledge and builds upon it. If you cannot recall the difference between a fortnight of Namaris and a fortnight of Threnis, return to your first-year materials before proceeding.

What follows is not theology. The Arcanorium does not teach theology. What follows is observed correlation — documented, replicated, and unexplained.

The Five Moons and Their Schools

Saelura — luminous white-silver. Associated with the Divine school. Saelura is the brightest moon and the most culturally significant across all three ethos lineages. The Devout call her the First, claiming her light carries the memory of creation. The Rationalist position is that Saelura's luminosity correlates with heightened Divine attunement in controlled testing environments. The mechanism is unknown. The correlation is statistically robust. These two statements coexist without reconciliation, as they must.

Namaris — deep red. Associated with the Elemental school. Namaris rises during summer and carries cultural associations with unrest and bloodletting. Historical analysis confirms a measurable increase in Elemental spell potency during Namaris ascendancy, though whether this reflects genuine celestial influence or placebo-amplified performance remains contested. The military implications are not contested. Armies march under Namaris because their Elemental casters perform better under Namaris. Whether the moon causes this or merely correlates with it is an academic distinction that has never interested a general.

Orrivane — opal blue. Associated with the Psionic school. Orrivane governs fall and carries associations with dream-travel and prophecy. Psionic sensitivity increases measurably during Orrivane's prominence. Empathic readings sharpen. Telepathic range extends. The Reverie call this season the Dreaming Tide and conduct rites of memory and communion during its passage. The Arcanorium documents the phenomenon without endorsing the rites.

Velquor — grey-black. Associated with the Arcane school. Velquor appears only during shadow months — periods of atmospheric occlusion that occur irregularly within spring. Its association with secrecy and intellectual pursuit is cultural, not astronomical, though the timing of its visibility does coincide with documented spikes in Arcane perception accuracy. You will learn to calibrate your instruments to

Velquor cycles in your third year.

Threnis — violet-black. Associated with the Nature school. Threnis is the faintest moon, visible only during cataclysms or severe magical storms. Its association with ecological grief is both poetic and empirical: Nature casters report heightened sensitivity to environmental distress when Threnis is visible. This is the only moon whose appearance is itself diagnostic — if you can see Threnis, something has already gone wrong.

On the Calendar

Terheia's year consists of 350 days divided into five seasons of 60 days each, with each season named for its governing moon. The remaining days — the Unnamed — fall between Deep Winter and Summer, and are observed differently by each ethos. Time within seasons is measured in fortnights of 14 days. There are no months. There are no weeks. A date is expressed as season and fortnight number: the third fortnight of Namaris, the first fortnight of Saelura.

You will find that Devout-aligned texts use liturgical dating — referencing saints' days and feast cycles rather than fortnightly counts. The Arcanorium does not recognize liturgical dates in official documentation. When converting between systems, consult the appendix tables in your *Standard Reference for Institutional Correspondence*, second edition.

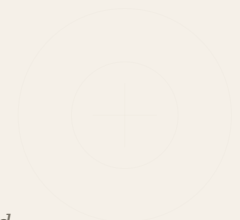
A Note on What We Do Not Know

The correlation between moons and magical schools has been documented for over four centuries. It has never been explained. Proposals include gravitational resonance, ambient magical field modulation, and — from sources this institution does not cite — divine intention. The honest position is that we do not know why the moons correspond to the schools. We know only that they do, reliably and measurably, and that any theory of magic which ignores this correspondence is incomplete.

You are being trained to observe, document, and withhold premature conclusions. This is the discipline. The moons are where it begins.

Compiled by the Faculty of Astronomical Correspondences, Kaimawasu Campus.
Approved for second-year distribution, fourth fortnight of Velquor.

Instrument note, handwritten in the margin of an archived copy, author unknown: Several technicians across at least two campuses have recorded, in informal correspondence, that all five attunement signatures exhibit a common resonance in the first moments of measurement — before diverging into school-specific patterns. The observation has been made independently, more than once, and has not been submitted for formal classification. It is mentioned here only because this document instructs students to observe, document, and withhold premature



conclusions. It seems worth noting that the institution has also observed, failed to document, and drawn no conclusions. — unsigned

Dispatch Regarding Jurisdictional Overlap

Azure Accord, Bureau of Interinstitutional Relations // To: Oathbound Crown, Ministry of Theological Oversight, Thornmere // Classification: Nonclassified

To the Honourable Minister of Theological Oversight, Thornmere Region,

The Azure Accord acknowledges receipt of your office's notification dated the second fortnight of Saelura regarding the reclassification of geological anomalies in the northern Thornmere basin as phenomena of theological origin. We write to register formal objection to this reclassification and to request the restoration of shared investigative access to the affected sites.

The anomalies in question — subsurface energy signatures, mineral discoloration patterns, and localized disruption of root networks — were first documented by Accord surveyors eleven fortnights prior to your office's involvement. Our geological and arcane assessment teams filed preliminary reports with the Bureau of Environmental Assessment, copies of which were transmitted to your office as a matter of interinstitutional courtesy. The decision to reclassify these findings as theological — and thereby transfer primary jurisdiction to the Oathbound Crown — was made without consultation and without reference to the existing body of Accord documentation.

We understand that the Crown's position rests on the detection of Divine-school signatures within the anomaly field. We do not dispute this detection. We note, however, that the presence of a Divine signature does not establish theological origin. Divine magic is a natural phenomenon governed by attunement, not by doctrine. The classification of a geological event as theological on the basis of a detected school signature is a categorical error — one that this office has raised in prior correspondence regarding the Erdmoor incident, the Kaenar survey, and no fewer than seven additional cases in the past six years.

We further note that the Crown's reclassification was accompanied by the deployment of a Liaison officer and military escort to the primary survey site, effectively restricting Accord personnel from accessing their own equipment and documentation. While we recognize the Crown's authority to secure sites under theological jurisdiction, we observe that this authority was exercised before the jurisdictional transfer was formally ratified — a procedural irregularity that this office is obligated to record.

The Accord does not seek confrontation. We seek accuracy. The phenomena in the northern Thornmere basin are not yet understood by any institution. To assign them prematurely to a single jurisdictional framework — whether theological or scientific — risks constraining the investigation to the perceptual tools of one school. The Accord's position, stated plainly: phenomena that resist single-school classification

require multi-institutional investigation. Anything less is not rigor. It is territory.

We request a joint review panel, composed of representatives from both the Accord and the Crown, empowered to assess the anomalies without predetermined jurisdictional assignment. We propose the first fortnight of Orrivane for preliminary meetings, location to be mutually agreed.

With institutional respect,

Verica Ostvane

Deputy Director, Bureau of Interinstitutional Relations
Azure Accord, Commonwealth of Mino

*Margin note, handwritten, unsigned: They will decline. They always decline. File this with the others and begin documenting the restricted-access period for the annual jurisdictional review.
— V.O.*

Hexe Bound Field Assessment

Ossuary Conclave // Practitioner Certification, Field Component

CANDIDATE IDENTIFICATION

Name: [REDACTED]

Conclave Registration: [REDACTED]

School: Divine (Necrotic Sub-Tradition)

Archetype: Hexe Bound

Certification Level: Adept → Master (Field Upgrade)

Section I: Bone Reading – Controlled Environment

The candidate was presented with three bone samples, origin unlabelled, and instructed to provide forensic assessment of each without ancillary information.

Sample A – Femur fragment, humanoid

Candidate identified the sample as belonging to an adult male, aged approximately forty to fifty years, deceased within the last two centuries. Cause of death assessed as blunt trauma to the cranium — consistent with mining accident. Candidate noted residual emotional signature: confusion, followed by rapid cessation. No fear. The candidate described this as a death that arrived before the dying person understood it had begun.

Assessment: ACCURATE. Sample sourced from Thornmere provincial ossuary, catalogued mining fatality, date of death confirmed within candidate's estimated range.

Sample B – Rib fragment, nonhumanoid

Candidate identified the sample as belonging to a large ungulate — likely a stag or draft animal. Deceased approximately four centuries prior. Cause of death assessed as exsanguination, deliberate. Candidate noted ritual layering in the death impression — the animal had been killed with intention, in a context of communal significance. The candidate described the emotional texture as calm and witnessed, unlike slaughter or predation.

Assessment: ACCURATE. Sample sourced from Reverie ancestral site, identified as ritual offering.

Sample C – [REDACTED]

Candidate's initial response was physiological distress — elevated pulse, pallor, withdrawal of hands from the sample. After stabilization (approximately forty seconds), the candidate reported the following: the sample carried multiple death

impressions layered atop one another in a pattern inconsistent with natural accumulation. The deaths were [REDACTED]. The candidate described the emotional texture as [REDACTED] and stated that the boundary between life and death in the sample was not a line but a gradient — as if something had dissolved the distinction over an extended period.

Assessment: [REDACTED]

Section II: Field Reading — Uncontrolled Site

The candidate was transported to [REDACTED] and instructed to perform a standard forensic reading of the surrounding terrain within a 200-pace radius.

The candidate knelt and placed both palms flat against exposed bedrock. Reading duration: eleven minutes. Upon completion, the candidate provided the following verbal report, transcribed without alteration:

"There are three layers. The surface layer is recent — within a generation. Accidental deaths, mostly. Mining injuries, a drowning, two children who fell. Ordinary. Below that, older — perhaps three centuries. These deaths carry resignation. People who knew the ground was dangerous and worked it anyway. Below that —"

[Candidate paused. Removed hands from bedrock. Requested water.]

"Below that, the reading changes. The deaths are not accumulated — they are incorporated. The boundary I am trained to read does not exist at that depth. There is no clean edge between life and death. There is a gradient. Something down there learned to use the dead without releasing them."

Candidate was debriefed under [REDACTED]. Field assessment recorded and sealed.

Examiner's Recommendation

The candidate demonstrates Master-level forensic capability. Bone reading is precise and emotionally disciplined. Field reading is exceptional — the candidate's identification of layered death patterns and boundary dissolution at depth exceeds the standard Master threshold.

Recommendation: **Certify at Master level.** Flag for advanced deployment consideration. Refer field reading transcript to [REDACTED] for cross-reference with [REDACTED].

Examiner: [REDACTED]

Division: *Ossuary Conclave, Field Certification*

Date: *Third fortnight of Velquor,* [REDACTED]

Testimony of Ganbaatar of the Rootbound

Transcribed by Linh Thi Hoa, Accord Liaison for Indigenous Documentation // Second Fortnight of Orrivane – Tsogtian Border Enclave

Translator's note: The following testimony was delivered orally in a mixture of Khangai dialect and Reverie ritual speech. Ganbaatar is an elder of a Rootbound enclave near the Tsogtian border — one of the few permanent Reverie settlements tolerated within Rationalist administrative territory. He agreed to speak on the condition that his words be recorded without editorial correction. I have honoured this condition. Where his meaning was unclear to me, I have indicated this rather than substituting my own interpretation.

You want to know about the schism. Everyone from the Accord wants to know about the schism. You write it down as if naming it will make it sit still.

The Wayfarers say the world forgets when you build on it. That permanence is a wound — you press a house into the earth and the earth stops speaking beneath it. They move. They carry their knowledge in their throats and their hands and they leave nothing behind that the rain cannot dissolve. This is their faith. I do not share it, but I understand it.

We — the Rootbound — say the world forgets when nothing endures. Memory needs an anchor. A grove planted by your grandmother's grandmother is not a wound in the earth. It is a conversation that has lasted long enough for the earth to answer back. We build. Not cities — we are not building cities. Stone rings. Living villages where the houses grow from the trees they were planted beside. Gardens that remember the hands that shaped them.

The Wayfarers call us proto-states. They say we will become what the Accord is — bureaucrats with gardens instead of academies. They say permanence corrupts. That eventually we will count our gardens and call the counting governance and call the governance necessary and then we will be lost.

[Translator's note: Ganbaatar paused here for approximately thirty seconds, looking toward the tree line. I did not interrupt.]

Maybe they are right. Maybe permanence does corrupt. But I have buried children in this ground. My wife's bones are beneath the elder oak at the eastern edge of the enclave. When I place my hands on that tree, I feel her. Not her voice — that is gone. But the shape she left in the soil. The roots grew around what she gave them.

The Wayfarers would say: that is exactly the danger. You have made a place sacred because your grief is in it. And now you will defend the place instead of carrying the grief. And defending the place will require walls, and walls require guards, and guards require someone to tell them who belongs inside.

I have no answer for this. I have only the tree. And beneath it, someone I loved.

Your Accord sends people to document us. Every few seasons, someone arrives with a notebook and careful questions. They want to understand how we govern ourselves without governance. How we resolve disputes without courts. How we educate children without curricula.

I will tell you what I tell them. We do not resolve disputes. We endure them until the people involved have changed enough that the dispute no longer fits. Sometimes this takes seasons. Sometimes it takes a generation. Your institutions find this intolerable. They want resolution — a verdict, a ruling, a file closed and shelved. We do not close files. We do not have files. We have each other, and the ground, and whatever patience the wind has left us.

The Devout are worse. They do not send documentarians — they send chaplains. The chaplains do not want to understand us. They want to correct us. They arrive with blessings we did not ask for and concern we did not invite. They look at our children playing in the dirt and see souls unclaimed. They look at our elders dying under open sky and see bodies unblessed.

I do not hate the chaplains. Hatred requires energy I would rather spend on the garden. But I will tell you this: a man who arrives to save you has already decided you are lost. And a man who has decided you are lost cannot hear you when you say the ground is fine, you are fine, the children know what they need to know, and the dead are where they belong.



You ask about magic. You always ask about magic. The Accord wants to know how we practice, whether we use scrolls, how our healers compare to your frameworks.

A scroll is a cage for a living thing. You catch a spell and you flatten it and you store it and you hand it to someone who did not grow it. That person tears the cage open and the spell does what it was shaped to do — but it does not know them. It does not know the ground beneath their feet or the wind in their lungs. It works. It does not listen.

Our healers do not use scrolls. They place their hands on you and they feel what is wrong. Not with instruments — with their hands. The body speaks, if you are patient enough to hear it. The body says: here is where the damage is, here is where the path needs to go, here is where I can accept help and here is where I need to be left alone.

Your Accord healers — they measure. They classify. They say: this contamination is of such-and-such school, this treatment protocol applies. And the treatment works, sometimes. But the body was not consulted. The body was diagnosed. There is a difference.

I am old enough to remember when a Rootbound healer and an Accord physician worked the same patient — a child, bitten by something venomous in the border marshes. The physician classified the venom and administered the correct antidote.



The healer held the child's hands and whispered the names of the marsh plants until the child stopped screaming. Both saved the child. The physician saved the body. The healer saved the child who lived in it.

[Translator's note: Ganbaatar declined to continue. He said the wind had changed and the conversation should end before the ground grew tired of listening. I thanked him and closed my notebook.]

Watch Commander's Log

Skrovian Border Garrison, Fourth Outpost // Saelura-Namaris Transition // Commander:
Torild Asvennsdottir

SAELURA-4 / DAY 3

Rotation complete. New conscripts arrived from Tverdetso — fourteen men, two women. Most have never seen the border. One asked where the enemy was. I told him the enemy was whoever crossed the line without papers. He asked what the line looked like. I showed him the cairns. He said they looked like regular rocks. I said that was the point.

SAELURA-4 / DAY 5

Morning inspection. Conscript Halvdan cannot maintain his kit. Third warning. His armour has not been oiled since he arrived and his sword edge is so dull it would bruise a cabbage. I assigned him to latrine duty. He asked if this was punishment. I said no, it was assignment to the one duty he could not make worse.

SAELURA-4 / DAY 8

Merchant convoy from the south. Twelve wagons, Facao markings. Papers in order. Cargo declared as textiles and spiced preserves. Inspection revealed three crates of undeclared scroll blanks — high-grade parchment treated for spell inscription. The convoy master claimed ignorance. I impounded the blanks and filed a contraband report with the provincial office. He will be fined. He will budget for the fine next time. This is how the border works.

SAELURA-4 / DAY 11

Chaplain Dreva conducted the twice-fortnight blessing. He recited the Oath of the Enduring Word for twenty minutes. The garrison stood in the cold. Two conscripts fainted — they had not eaten because the chaplain insisted on pre-blessing fasting. I have submitted a request to the chaplain to schedule blessings after the midday meal. He replied that the body's suffering opens the spirit to divine reception. I replied that the body's suffering opens the garrison to Bjerkish raiders. Request pending.

NAMARIS-1 / DAY 1

Season change. Namaris is visible at dusk — low on the horizon, deep red. The old soldiers spit when they see it. Superstition, but I will not correct it. Superstition keeps men awake on watch better than discipline does.

NAMARIS-1 / DAY 4

Psionic sweep conducted by the Crown operative attached to this garrison. I was not consulted beforehand. I was informed afterward. The operative reported no anomalies. I asked what constituted an anomaly in his assessment framework. He did not answer. I asked whether the sweep had included our own garrison personnel. He did not answer that either. I have noted the interaction in this log and will include it in my seasonal report to the provincial commander. The Crown's people do their work. I do

not pretend to understand it. I do not pretend to approve.

NAMARIS-1 / DAY 9

A family arrived at the border on foot. Man, woman, three children. No papers. No declared origin. The man spoke Flost dialect with a Bjerkish inflection — border-born, probably from one of the disputed villages. The woman carried a bundle that smelled of felwarrow and wet earth. Reverie. Or raised Reverie and married out of it. I processed them under the hardship provision and assigned them a transit marker for Tverdetso. Chaplain Dreva objected, citing the requirement for theological vetting of Reverie-affiliated persons. I reminded him that I command this garrison and he commands the spirits therein. He blessed them anyway, which I permitted because it cost nothing and the children were cold.

NAMARIS-1 / DAY 13

Conscript Halvdan has improved. His armour is oiled. His sword has an edge. He asked me today what happens to the scroll blanks we confiscate. I told him they are shipped to the provincial capital for destruction. He asked why we destroy them instead of using them. I told him that is a question for people who make policy, and that people who make policy do not stand in the cold. He seemed to understand.

NAMARIS-2 / DAY 2

Received orders from provincial command regarding increased patrols along the eastern ridge. Intelligence suggests Bjerkish scout activity — small parties, no engagement, mapping our rotation schedules. I have staggered patrol times and altered the route pattern. The Bjerkish are not subtle about their scouting. They want us to know they are watching. This is diplomacy conducted in boot prints.

NAMARIS-2 / DAY 6

A Reverie wanderer arrived at the gate carrying a staff carved with symbols I did not recognize and a satchel that smelled strongly of felwarrow. She requested passage through our territory to reach the Tsogtian border. Papers: none. Affiliation: Wayfarer. She said she had been walking for three fortnights and that the ground was uneasy. I asked her what that meant. She placed her hand on the garrison wall and was quiet for a long time. Then she said the stone remembered soldiers. I granted her a transit marker and watched her leave through the eastern gate. She did not look back. Chaplain Dreva was not informed.

NAMARIS-2 / DAY 10

Subsurface tremor during the night watch. Minor — rattled the cups in the mess hall, woke three conscripts. No structural damage. The geological survey office in Tverdetso was notified per standard protocol. Their response: noted, no action required. The old miners in the nearest settlement say the mountain has been restless this season. They say it in the way people say things they have said before and been ignored before and will say again.

NAMARIS-2 / DAY 14

End of fortnight. Garrison strength: forty-two, including the Crown operative who does not report to me. Morale: adequate. Supply: adequate. Weather: deteriorating.

Conscript Halvdan volunteered for the dawn patrol without being asked. I have noted this. A soldier who volunteers is either improving or trying to impress someone. In Halvdan's case, I believe it is the former. The border is quiet. The border is always quiet until it is not.

Log continues. Subsequent entries filed with Skrovian Provincial Command, Tverdetso.

Geological Survey: Northern Thornmere Basin

Arcanorium Bureau of Environmental Assessment // Cartographic Division, Second Expedition
// Classification: Routine – No Action Required

Site Overview

The northern Thornmere basin comprises approximately 340 square miles of montane terrain, primarily granite and metamorphic bedrock overlaid with thin alluvial soils. The region's mining history is well-documented: silver, copper, and iron extraction from the first through third seams was active for approximately two centuries before economic decline led to gradual abandonment. Several former mining settlements persist as subsistence communities.

Standard Measurements

PARAMETER	READING	EXPECTED	STATUS
Ambient magical density	4.2 tu/m ³	2.0–6.0 tu/m ³	Normal
Elemental resonance	0.8 (low)	0.5–2.0	Normal
Divine signature trace	1.4	0.0–1.0	Elevated*
Nature signature trace	1.7	0.5–2.5	Normal
Psionic background	0.3	0.1–0.5	Normal
Arcane background	0.6	0.2–0.8	Normal
Subsurface conductivity	Anomalous	Stable	See note

**Divine signature trace marginally elevated but within expanded range for regions with historical Kiwamist shrine activity. Thornmere basin contains three documented shrine sites, all disused. No further investigation recommended.*

Note on Subsurface Conductivity

Standard subsurface conductivity testing returned inconsistent results at depths exceeding the third seam. Readings oscillated between baseline and approximately 340% of expected values on an irregular cycle of roughly eleven minutes. The oscillation pattern did not correlate with any known geological, tidal, or celestial variable.

The survey team conducted three independent measurements over two days. All three produced the same oscillation pattern. Equipment was inspected and recalibrated between measurements. No instrument fault was identified.

The team's geological specialist noted that the eleven-minute cycle is unusual but not unprecedented — similar periodicity has been observed in regions with deep thermal venting. However, no thermal venting was detected at the Thornmere site.

The specialist's assessment: "The readings are anomalous but not alarming. They suggest a subsurface energy source of unknown character operating at significant depth. Without bore-hole access, further characterization is not possible."

The third seam was sealed two generations ago following a series of cave-ins. Local residents report that the seam was sealed permanently on the orders of the mine operators, though no official documentation of this order was found in provincial archives. One resident stated that his grandfather, a miner, had claimed the mountain "breathed" at depth, and that the breathing accelerated before cave-ins.

This anecdotal report is included for completeness. It was not incorporated into the formal survey assessment.

Additional Local Observations (Unverified)

During the survey period, the team encountered several residents who volunteered observations not solicited by the survey protocol. These are recorded here per the Bureau's policy on incidental field data, which requires inclusion in the file regardless of assessed credibility.

A farmer operating land approximately two miles southeast of the primary survey site reported that spiral patterns had appeared in his frost during the previous Deep Winter. The patterns were regular and geometrically consistent across multiple mornings. He described them as resembling the grain of cut wood, but rendered in ice. He had not reported this to any authority because, in his words, frost does odd things and nobody pays him to catalogue it.

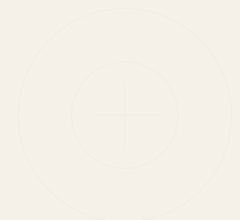
A woman identified as the settlement's herbalist reported that felwarrow moss in the basin had begun growing in patterns she had not observed in forty years of harvest. Normally random in distribution, the moss had, over the past three seasons, begun clustering in circular formations around exposed bedrock. She attributed this to changes in subsurface moisture. She also noted that the moss harvested from these circular formations produced stronger reactions in her compounds than moss gathered elsewhere — though she acknowledged she had not measured this systematically.

A third resident, a former miner's son, stated that his dog refused to cross certain patches of ground near the sealed third seam. The dog showed no distress — it simply stopped, sat down, and waited to be led around. He said the dog had been doing this for approximately one year.

These observations are recorded without assessment. None meets the threshold for formal investigation under current Bureau guidelines.

Recommendation

No action required. The subsurface anomaly is noted for the record and may warrant follow-up measurement in subsequent survey cycles. The elevated Divine



trace is consistent with residual shrine activity and does not indicate active phenomena.

Survey Lead: Fenra Kisunen, Cartographic Division
Filed: Second fortnight of Threnis
Review Status: APPROVED – NO FOLLOW-UP SCHEDULED

On the Rites of Passing

Archive of Cultural Practices, Osaban Union // A Comparative Notation

Archivist's note: The following descriptions were compiled from direct observation, practitioner interviews, and institutional documentation. They represent standard practice as observed in the current era. Regional and local variation is significant and should not be assumed absent.

The Devout Rite: Kiwamist Tradition

The body is washed by clergy — never by family. Washing is performed with sanctified water drawn during Saelura's peak luminosity. The deceased is wrapped in undyed cloth, stitched closed with thread blessed by a Cardinal or their appointed representative. The face is covered last. The final stitch passes through the cloth above the mouth — a symbolic sealing of the breath, returning it to Kirarai.

The body is interred before sunset on the day of death, or — if death occurs at night — before the following sunset. Speed is doctrinal: the soul departs at death, and the body, emptied, belongs to the earth. To delay burial is to delay the earth's claim, which is an act of pride.

A Cleric recites the Verses of Return — a liturgical text that acknowledges the deceased's obedience and commends them to Kirarai's judgment. The congregation responds antiphonally. Mourning is permitted for three days. After three days, grief must become gratitude. Prolonged mourning is interpreted as doubt — a suggestion that the deceased's faith was insufficient for a favourable judgment, or worse, that the mourner questions the judgment itself.

The Tadesokean Dissent: Necrotic Reading

Among the Tadesokean Dissenters, the body is not an emptied vessel but a text. A Necrotic practitioner — where one is available, which is rarely — places their hands upon the chest of the deceased and reads the passage: the accumulation of experience that dying leaves in bone and tissue. This is not communion with a spirit. It is forensic attention to what death did to the body and what the body recorded in the process.

The reading is spoken aloud to the gathered community. The practitioner describes what they perceive: the emotional texture of the death, the final sensations, the boundary-crossing. This is intended as witness, not comfort. The Dissenters believe that death unwitnessed is death wasted — that the passage from life carries information the living need and that refusing to read it is a form of institutional cowardice.

The orthodox Kiwamist position is that this practice is desecration. The Dissenters' position is that covering the body's testimony with blessed cloth and hurrying it into the ground is the true desecration — a refusal to hear what death has to say.

The Reverie Rite: Returning

The body is placed directly on open ground — soil, moss, leaf-litter. No preparation is performed. No washing, no wrapping. The body is positioned as it was found, or as it fell. The community gathers in a circle around the body. No one speaks. Hands are placed flat on the earth.

The Reverie practice no rite of address to the dead. They address the ground. The elders listen — through touch, through root-sense, through whatever faculty their Nature attunement provides — until they perceive that the earth has accepted the presence. This may take minutes or hours. When the elder rises, the community rises. The body is left where it lies.

Decomposition is not an indignity. It is participation. The body returns to the system that produced it. To interfere with this process — to embalm, to entomb, to preserve — is to interrupt a conversation between the dead and the living world.

Wayfarers leave the site and do not return. Rootbound plant something — a seed, a cutting — beside the body. The difference is the schism in miniature.

The Rationalist Rite: Disposition

There is no Rationalist rite of passing, strictly speaking. There is a procedure. The body is examined by a medical professional, cause of death recorded, and the deceased's contributions logged in the institutional record. Cremation is standard in urban centres. Rural populations bury their dead in municipal plots.

Families may hold private gatherings. The state does not prescribe their content. Some families observe folk religious traditions — the majority of Rationalist citizens practice folk religion privately despite the institutional emphasis on empiricism. The state's position is that private grief is private. Public grief is discouraged as unproductive, though not formally prohibited.

The Arcanorium archives the magical signature of deceased casters. This is presented as scientific preservation. Critics note that it also provides the Accord with a comprehensive registry of every caster who has ever lived and died within Rationalist territory — a database whose uses extend well beyond memorial.

Archivist's Observation

The four traditions described above disagree on nearly everything — the nature of the body after death, the obligations of the living, the meaning of grief, and the proper relationship between individual loss and institutional response. They share one assumption: that death is an event whose management reveals what a society

truly believes, regardless of what it claims to believe.

The Devout manage death through speed and obedience — bury quickly, grieve briefly, return to faith. The Dissenters manage it through witness — read what death did, speak it aloud, refuse to look away. The Reverie manage it through surrender — place the body on the earth and wait for the earth to speak. The Rationalists manage it through procedure — record, cremate, archive, move on.

Each tradition believes the others are avoiding something. They are probably all correct.

Proceedings of the Joint Jurisdictional Tribunal

Case Reference: Withheld // Joint Session: Azure Accord Bureau of Magical Oversight and Oathbound Crown Ministry of Theological Discipline

The following is an excerpt from the proceedings of a joint tribunal convened to adjudicate a jurisdictional dispute regarding the treatment and classification of a Nature-school healer operating within Devout-administered territory. Names of the accused and presiding officials have been withheld per interinstitutional confidentiality agreements.

CROWN ADVOCATE

The accused practiced unsanctioned healing within the borders of a sovereign Devout state. The practice involved direct somatic contact with patients — a method not recognized by any licensed medical institution within this jurisdiction. The accused held no Crown medical certification, no shrine blessing, and no letter of ecclesiastical permission.

ACCORD REPRESENTATIVE

The accused held valid Arcanorium credentials recognizing Nature-school healing proficiency at the Adept level. These credentials are recognized by all signatory states of the Azure Accord, which includes the state in question through the Treaty of Gardurna.

CROWN ADVOCATE

The Treaty of Gardurna recognizes Accord credentials for *research and documentation purposes*. It does not extend clinical authority. The accused was not documenting. The accused was treating patients — with her hands — in a method that has not been validated by any peer-reviewed body.

ACCORD REPRESENTATIVE

The method has been validated. The Accord's Bureau of Therapeutic Assessment has published four studies confirming the efficacy of somatic healing techniques in contamination cases. The studies are available in the public archive.

CROWN ADVOCATE

The Crown does not recognize the Bureau of Therapeutic Assessment as a competent body for evaluating healing practices within Devout territory. Healing authority flows from divine sanction. The Accord's Bureau possesses expertise. It does not possess sanction.

PRESIDING ARBITER

Let us be precise. The accused treated how many patients?

ACCORD REPRESENTATIVE

Fourteen. All contamination cases. All survived.

CROWN ADVOCATE

Survival is not the metric at issue. The metric is authority. Fourteen patients received treatment from an unlicensed practitioner operating outside her jurisdiction. That all fourteen survived does not retroactively authorize the treatment. It merely means the violation was successful.

PRESIDING ARBITER

And the Crown's licensed practitioners — how many contamination patients did they treat during the same period?

CROWN ADVOCATE

[Pause.] The Crown's medical staff treated the patients according to sanctioned protocol.

PRESIDING ARBITER

How many survived?

CROWN ADVOCATE

That information is subject to theological confidentiality.

ACCORD REPRESENTATIVE

Six. Six survived out of twenty-two treated. The information is in our filing, paragraph forty-one.

CROWN ADVOCATE

The Accord's filing contains unverified data sourced from —

PRESIDING ARBITER

The data was sourced from the Crown's own provincial health office. It was transmitted to the Accord under the interinstitutional transparency provision of the Gardurna Treaty, Article Twelve. I have read it. Proceed.

CROWN ADVOCATE

The Crown does not dispute the mortality figures. The Crown disputes their relevance to this proceeding. The question before this tribunal is not whether the accused's methods are effective. The question is whether the accused had authority to employ them. Efficacy does not confer jurisdiction. A thief who steals medicine and saves a life is still a thief.

ACCORD REPRESENTATIVE

The accused is not a thief. The accused is a licensed healer who treated dying patients in the absence of adequate institutional response. The Crown's medical staff were present. They were treating patients. They were losing patients. The accused offered to assist. She was refused. She treated patients independently, outside the Crown's facility, on ground that was not under Crown medical jurisdiction.

CROWN ADVOCATE

All ground within a sovereign Devout state is under Crown theological jurisdiction. There is no ground outside it.

ACCORD REPRESENTATIVE

There is, however, ground outside your medical facility. The accused treated patients on a public road. She did not enter the Crown's clinic. She did not countermand Crown orders. She knelt in the dirt and placed her hands on people who were dying. If the Crown's position is that kneeling in the dirt constitutes a jurisdictional violation, we would appreciate that position being stated plainly for the record.

CROWN ADVOCATE

[Silence.]

PRESIDING ARBITER

The Crown Advocate may respond or decline. The record will note the pause either way.

CROWN ADVOCATE

The Crown's position is that all healing practice within Devout territory requires ecclesiastical authorization. The location of the practice — clinic, road, field, or rooftop — is immaterial. The principle is not spatial. It is theological.

PRESIDING ARBITER

Noted. The tribunal will recess for deliberation.

Transcript excerpt ends. The tribunal's ruling is filed separately under joint seal. Public summary: the accused was fined for practicing without Crown certification and released without imprisonment. The Crown's motion to bar the accused from Devout territory was denied. The Accord's motion to establish mutual credential recognition for emergency healing was tabled for further review.

The further review has not yet occurred. It has been tabled for eleven fortnights.

Manifest of Goods

Fjeran–Osaban Trade Corridor // Fourth Fortnight of Saelura // Convoy FO-412 // Gardurna Trade Commission

ITEM	QTY	ORIGIN	DEST.	DUTY	NOTES
Felwarrow moss (dried)	40 bales	Fjer	Osabo	Exempt*	Medicinal
Iron ingots (standard)	220 units	Fjer	Osabo	4.2 cr/u	
Scroll blanks (Gr. II)	60 sheets	Fjer	Osabo	11 cr/sh	Licensed
Salted fish (barrel)	35 barrels	Fjer	Osabo	1.8 cr/b	
Woven textiles	18 bolts	Fjer	Osabo	2.5 cr/b	
Ceramic ware (glazed)	6 crates	Fjer	Osabo	3.0 cr/cr	
Recording crystals	4 units	Osabo	Fjer	22 cr/u	Arcane-cert.
Optical instruments	2 units	Osabo	Fjer	45 cr/u	Academic
Medical compounds	12 cases	Osabo	Fjer	Exempt*	Medicinal
Paper (archival grade)	30 reams	Osabo	Fjer	5.5 cr/r	

**Medicinal goods classified under Gardurna Accord Provision 7(c) are exempt from standard duty. Exemption requires verification by a licensed Apothecarist or Accord-certified medical officer at both points of origin and destination.*

Convoy Master's Declaration

I, Jormund Helstavnen, master of convoy FO-412, declare that the above manifest is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. All goods were inspected at the Gardurna checkpoint and cleared by Trade Commission Inspector Osa Veldring. No contraband was identified. No undeclared magical materials were detected during the standard arcane sweep.

Signed: J. Helstavnen, Convoy Master, Fjeran Merchant Guild
 Witnessed: O. Veldring, Trade Commission

Margin note, different hand: Felwarrow shipments have tripled this season. Third convoy this fortnight claiming medicinal exemption. Either Osabo is experiencing an epidemic nobody has reported, or someone is stockpiling. Flag for review. — O.V.

Correspondence from the Alchemists' Hall

Kaimawasu Chapter // To: Arcanorium Bureau of Material Licensing // Re: Supply Constraints and Institutional Interference

To the Bureau of Material Licensing, Arcanorium of the Prime Lens,

This letter constitutes the Kaimawasu Chapter's third formal complaint regarding the Bureau's revised licensing framework for alchemical reagents classified under Tier III sensitivity. We have received your office's response to our second complaint and find it insufficient. We write again not because we expect a different outcome but because the Guild's charter requires us to exhaust formal channels before pursuing arbitration.

The facts are as follows. Eighteen fortnights ago, the Bureau reclassified felwarrow moss — a staple medicinal reagent used in contamination treatment, fever reduction, and wound care — from Tier II (standard guild license) to Tier III (restricted, requiring individual dispensation per transaction). The Bureau's stated justification was that felwarrow compounds interact with magical signatures in ways that require enhanced oversight. The practical consequence is that every Apothocarist, herbalist, and field healer in Rationalist territory now requires Bureau approval for each purchase of a material they have been using without incident for generations.

We do not dispute that felwarrow interacts with magical signatures. This interaction is why it works. It is also why we have spent four centuries developing preparation techniques that are safe, effective, and well-documented. The Bureau's concern — that felwarrow compounds could be weaponized or misused — is theoretically valid and practically absurd. Felwarrow moss grows on every damp rock face north of the Thornmere basin. A child could gather it. The Bureau's licensing framework does not prevent misuse. It prevents convenience.

The result: our chapter's healers now wait an average of four days for dispensation approval before they can restock their most basic field compound. Four days. In the context of contamination treatment — where early intervention determines whether a patient recovers or deteriorates — four days is not a bureaucratic inconvenience. It is a clinical outcome.

We have been told, informally, that the reclassification was prompted by a request from the Accord's Bureau of Therapeutic Assessment — the same office that has spent three years attempting to standardize Nature-school healing practices into reproducible treatment protocols. We have further been told, informally, that the reclassification serves the Assessment Bureau's research agenda by funnelling all felwarrow transactions through a centralized tracking system, thereby generating data on usage patterns, quantities, and practitioner identities.

If this is true — and we note that your office has neither confirmed nor denied it — then the reclassification is not a safety measure. It is a research instrument disguised as regulation. Our healers are not being protected. They are being studied.

The Alchemists' Hall does not object to research. We object to research that impedes the practice it claims to serve. We object to being made slower in order to be made legible.

We request the immediate restoration of felwarrow moss to Tier II classification, or — failing that — the establishment of a standing dispensation for licensed Guild members operating in field conditions. We further request a formal response from the Bureau of Therapeutic Assessment clarifying whether the reclassification was initiated at their request and for what purpose.

With professional regards that are, at this point, somewhat strained,

Etsuko Minamura

Guildmaster, Alchemists' Hall, Kaimawasu Chapter
Commonwealth of Mino

Attached to the file copy, unsigned, on Bureau letterhead: Complaint acknowledged. Referred to the Standing Committee on Reagent Classification. Committee next convenes third fortnight of Namaris. Dispensation request forwarded to Therapeutic Assessment for comment. No timeline for response.

Second attachment, handwritten on a separate slip of paper, found folded into the file: Etsuko — I sympathize. My hands are bound. The Assessment Bureau has the Deputy Director's ear and I have a stack of complaints I cannot act on. Keep filing. The record matters even when the process does not. — F.K.

Public Notice

Provincial Office, Oathbound Crown, Kingdom of Hul Guo // For Display: All Settlement Centres, Market Squares, Shrine Boards

REGARDING UNLICENSED HEALING PRACTICES

By order of the Provincial Minister of Theological Oversight, the following notice is issued to all residents of the Hulei administrative district and surrounding settlements.

It has come to the attention of this office that unlicensed healing practitioners have been operating within the district's borders. These practitioners — typically itinerant, unaffiliated with any recognized guild or shrine — have been offering treatment for various ailments using methods not sanctioned by the Oathbound Crown's Bureau of Medical Theology.

Residents are reminded of the following:

First: All healing practice within the Kingdom of Hul Guo requires ecclesiastical authorization. This authorization is granted only to practitioners trained and certified through Crown-recognized institutions. Authorization may be verified by requesting the practitioner's Crown Medical Seal, which bears the insignia of the relevant shrine and the signature of the issuing Cardinal or their appointed deputy.

Second: The use of organic compounds — including but not limited to felwarrow-derived preparations, root-based tinctures, and animal-sourced remedies — is permitted only when prescribed by a licensed practitioner operating under Crown authority. Self-administration of such compounds is discouraged. Administration by unlicensed persons is prohibited.

Third: Somatic healing techniques — practices involving direct physical contact between practitioner and patient for the purpose of magical or quasi-magical treatment — are classified as **unverified methods** under Crown Medical Theology Directive 7. Residents who have received such treatment should report to their local shrine for spiritual assessment at their earliest convenience. This assessment is offered without charge and carries no implication of wrongdoing on the part of the patient.

Fourth: Residents who are aware of unlicensed practitioners operating within the district are encouraged to report this information to the Provincial Office or to their local shrine. Reports may be made anonymously. The Crown's interest is in the safety of its faithful, not in the punishment of those who sought help in good faith.



The Crown provides. The Crown protects. Trust in the institutions that have guarded your ancestors and will guard your children.

By the authority of the Provincial Minister
Kingdom of Hul Guo, Oathbound Crown
Third fortnight of Orrivane

Found posted in the market square of a settlement along the Hulei-Yangzhou road. The lower-left corner had been torn away. Beneath the tear, in pencil, someone had written: She healed my daughter when the shrine healer said to pray harder. Report that.

On Common Substrate in Attunement Signatures

Bureau of Theoretical Classification, Arcanorium of the Prime Lens, Kaimawasu Campus // Proposal for Classification Review // Submitted: Fourth Fortnight of Velquor

SUBMITTING PARTY

Velira Osteen, Instrument Technician, Second Year

Bureau of Theoretical Classification, Kaimawasu Campus

SUBJECT

Proposal for formal investigation of a shared resonance substrate across all five magical school attunement signatures

Observation

Over the course of fourteen months of instrument calibration and attunement testing across the Kaimawasu and Ondrevane campus facilities, I have observed — and confirmed through review of instrument logs maintained by four other technicians — that all five magical school attunement signatures exhibit a common resonance pattern in the initial phase of measurement. This pattern, which I will call the root resonance for purposes of this proposal, is consistent across school, subject, attunement level, and testing environment. It precedes the divergence into school-specific signatures by approximately three seconds of measurement time and is present in every clean attunement reading I have examined.

The root resonance is not documented in current attunement classification literature. It does not appear in the standard reference materials for second- or third-year students. It is not included in the instrument calibration protocols I was trained under. When I raised it informally with my supervising technician, she confirmed she had seen it and said it had been noted before. She did not know whether it had been submitted for review. She suggested I submit it myself if I thought it was significant.

Proposed Interpretation

The presence of a shared root resonance across all five school signatures suggests one of three possibilities. First: the root resonance is an instrument artifact — a product of the measurement process rather than a feature of attunement itself. This would require the same artifact to appear consistently across different instrument sets, different operators, and different testing environments, which seems unlikely but cannot be excluded without controlled testing.

Second: the root resonance reflects a shared environmental factor — ambient magical field conditions present at all testing sites. This possibility is worth investigating but does not explain why the resonance precedes and then separates

into the same five school-specific patterns in every recorded instance.

Third: the root resonance is a genuine feature of attunement — a common substrate from which all five school signatures diverge. If this interpretation is correct, the current classification of the five schools as independent phenomena may require revision. The schools may instead be differentiated expressions of a single underlying system. The classification framework built on their independence would, in this case, be accurate as a description of the differentiated forms and incomplete as a description of what those forms share.

Request

I am requesting that the Bureau of Theoretical Classification authorize a formal investigation of the root resonance observation: controlled testing across a larger subject pool, review of historical instrument logs for prior occurrences, and assessment of whether the observation warrants revision to attunement classification standards. I am not claiming to have demonstrated the third interpretation. I am claiming that the observation is real, that it has been independently confirmed, and that it has not been formally examined. If the examination concludes the root resonance is an artifact, I will accept that conclusion. If it concludes otherwise, the classification literature should reflect what the instruments have been showing us.

Respectfully submitted,

Velira Osteen

Instrument Technician, Bureau of Theoretical Classification
Arcanorium of the Prime Lens, Kaimawasu Campus

Bureau Response, stamped: **PROPOSAL DECLINED**. *The observation described does not meet the threshold for formal classification review. Attunement signatures are well-characterized across existing institutional literature. The proposed 'root resonance' is most consistent with Instrument Artifact Class III — cross-signature bleed during the calibration window. Resubmit with controlled testing data excluding the initial calibration phase. No further action at this time.*

Margin note, different hand, added later — ink faded, date unclear: This proposal was filed the same fortnight as the third Kaenar anomaly reading. That reading produced an attunement signature our instruments could not classify — all five school patterns present simultaneously, then resolving to none. The instrument log noted it as equipment fault and recalibrated. I was the technician on shift. I recalibrated because that was the protocol. I have been thinking about this for a long time. Velira submitted her proposal fourteen days before the Kaenar reading. I do not know if she knew. I do not know if it would have changed the Bureau's response. I am recording it here because the file felt incomplete without it. — unsigned

Glossary

Selected Terms

Adept

The second phase of magical mastery, following Novice.

Airship

Rare aerial transport relying on gravity-altered stones and buoyant gas bladders. Symbol of wealth, not logistics.

Ambient ability

Low-level magical capabilities available to all attuned practitioners of a given school.

Apothecarist

A Nature-school practitioner specializing in organic healing compounds and somatic treatment.

Arcanorium of the Prime Lens

The primary educational and research institution of the Rationalist ethos.

Arcane overlay

A perceptual mode in which Arcane casters see the world through its mathematical substrate.

Azure Accord

The Rationalist institutional arm for investigation, classification, and documentation of magical phenomena.

Bone reading

A Necrotic-tradition forensic technique: perceiving death impressions in organic and geological material.

Cooldown

Mandatory recovery period between spell uses. A fundamental constraint on magical application.

Devout

Ethos lineage organized around divine hierarchy, obedience, and revealed truth.

Echo Portal

Ancient fixed gateway for instant travel. Cannot be newly constructed or relocated.

Eldritch Architects

Arcane-school guild specializing in structural analysis of magical phenomena.

Ethos

The governing framework of tolerated behaviour. Not professed belief but practiced constraint.

Felwarrow

Organic moss whose properties interact with magical signatures. Recently reclassified as restricted.

Fortnight

Fourteen-day period. The standard unit of time in Terheia.

Guru

Fourth and highest phase of magical mastery.

Hexe Bound

Crown-sanctioned Necrotic archetype specializing in forensic death-impression reading.

Kiwamism

Organized religion centred on Kirarai. Theological foundation of the Devout.

Ministry of Reclamation

Devout institution managing ideological deviation. Produces Wandered Minds.

Namaris

The deep red moon. Elemental school. Summer. Unrest and bloodletting.

Necrotic

Heterodox sub-tradition within Divine magic concerning death, decay, and the boundary.

Oathbound Crown

Devout institutional arm for theological jurisdiction and military enforcement.

Oathbreaker

An individual who changes worldview or faith. Carries structural consequences.

Orrivane

The opal blue moon. Psionic school. Fall. Dream-travel and prophecy.

Ossuary Conclave

Guild overseeing Necrotic-tradition practitioners under Crown authority.

Rationalist

Ethos lineage organized around empirical truth, debate, and institutional meritocracy.

Recording crystal

Crystalline storage medium for Arcane overlay data.

Reverie (Verdant Reverie)

Ethos lineage organized around experiential truth and ecological resonance.

Rootbound

Reverie faction establishing semi-permanent settlements. Memory requires anchors.

Saelura

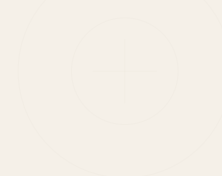
The luminous white-silver moon. Divine school. Winter. Memory of creation.

Scroll

Prepared parchment binding a single spell for finite use.

Somatic reading

Nature-school technique: perceiving patient state through direct physical contact.

**Speakers of the Reverie**

Nature-school guild associated with Reverie healing and empathic practice.

Tadesokean Dissenters

Heretical sect within Divine practice. Death as navigable process. ~22,000 adherents.

Threnis

The violet-black moon. Nature school. Deep Winter. If visible, something has gone wrong.

Velquor

The grey-black moon. Arcane school. Spring. Shadow months.

Wandered Minds

Survivors of the Ministry of Reclamation who lose certainty, memory, or identity.

Wayfarer

Reverie faction practicing nomadism. Permanence corrupts truth.

*These documents were assembled from sources that do not agree with one another.
This is not an error. It is the condition.*

The Weight of What Holds: Field Notes from Terheia

*A companion collection for The Narrowing series
Beginning with Those We Count*

The world of Terheia was built by L. Modulo.

*The institutions described in these documents do not speak for their author.
The people trapped inside them do.*

Free companion – not for resale