

Overview for a study of UNPERSON#54's encyclopaedical work

Everyone is born with a soul, but the acquisition process is still not understood. Due to the Church of Thess' 12th edict experimentation on prenatal children is not allowed, but observation of premature births and the low survival rate of thusly born children allows us to assume the acquisition of a soul takes place at least two months before birth, if not earlier.¹ However, according to Ratis' Law we should make this assumption with caution, as the observations could also be explained if the process of birth itself imbues the child with a soul. Since we couldn't test either hypothesis, the distinction is ultimately irrelevant in the scope of this text. Unless the Church of Thess retracts their just and moral edict, we won't be able to ascertain the exact time of imbuelement. Still, the edict does allow for postnatal observations and consensual experimentation, and we were thus able to test some of the claims of UNPERSON#54's encyclopaedical work.

The crystallised² human soul weighs 9/35th of an ounce, with deviations on par of 1/140th ounce, and is harder than any natural material available.³ While the exact processes used by UNPERSON#54 were not replicated, we nevertheless were able to develop morally justifiable methods that approximated the results and verified the majority of UNPERSON#54's claims. Of particular note were the following points:

- souls in general can only be worked while the crystallisation process is still ongoing;⁴
- souls can't be split, at least not by the methods we used;⁵⁶
- souls can't be permanently merged, at least not by the methods we used;⁷
- unless crystallisation is enforced, souls "evaporate" and can't be detected, gathered, or induced to precipitate within the same day.⁸

We found evaporation is either dependant on sunlight directly or indirectly since even the souls of those unfortunate to die in caves and cellars could not be induced to crystallised once the sun had set. Merging and splitting had been attempted, but with only temporary successes. The merged souls split as night broke, with disastrous results to the surroundings, and the split soul underwent spontaneous evaporation.

Since the fusion and fission of souls soon showed itself to expand far beyond the scope of our research assignment, we felt justified in leaving these issues to be explored by another, more practically inclined research group, and instead focussed on further evaluation of UNPERSON#54's claims.

Overall we come to the conclusion that of the claims we were able to test, all could be verified to the best of our abilities. We do note, however, that this does not make the work as a whole trustworthy; by the very nature of how the knowledge described was acquired, it is morally and ethically reprehensible.⁹ We would sleep lighter had we not known about how this knowledge was acquired, but by the same token since we now have it, not using it would amount to dishonouring the many, *many* people who died for it. We would rather have them not died at all for this, but the only choice we are able to make is to let them have died in vain, or not.

¹ See: “An Analysis of Births and Death in Thessal, AC 1210–1345” by Brother Haran of Thess, of the Church of Thess, AC 1402

² “Crystallisation” is the term chosen for this text. Precipitation, solidification, and ossification are equally apt descriptors for this still not understood process, and therefore “crystallisation” ought to be taken as an abstraction of the involved process.

³ See: “An overview of the artificers’ tools, subsection ‘Necromancy’” by Arkus Romiedel, of the Unholy Order of Thuss.

⁴ See section: Methods, subsection: Soul Crystallisation

⁵ See section: Methods, subsection: Soul Splitting

⁶ See Addendum 3: Incident reports on soul splitting

⁷ See section: Discussion, subsection: Military applications

⁸ Same as “Crystallisation” before, “Evaporation” is only a term we use to describe the phenomenon; we don’t understand it yet.

⁹ See Addendum 6: Turnover and suicide rate in research personnel over the course of this study