



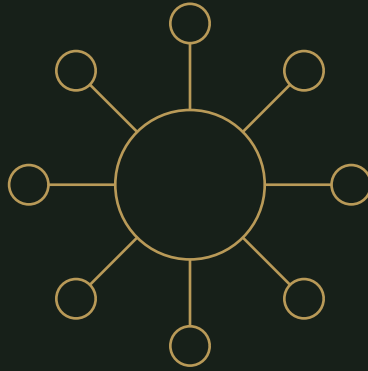
CASTALIA INSTITUTE

Harvest 2026

The living collection of works cultivated by Castalia Institute.

PER ACTUS INUTILES, INTELLIGENTIA.

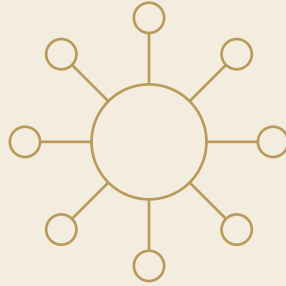
THE ORCHARD



*“Before the fruit is gathered,
the orchard must be walked.”*

WORKING DRAFT · 1 AUGUST 2026

CASTALIA INSTITUTE



Harvest I

2026

WORKING DRAFT 0.3

per actus inutiles, intelligentia

Colophon

Harvest I is the annual catalog of Castalia Institute. This working draft was published on 1 August 2026 so the remaining work of the year could be seen, discussed, photographed, tested, completed, or honestly pruned before the final Harvest on 2 November 2026.

The Orchard repository is the canonical source for titles, questions, growth states, relationships, and future releases. The web reader and A4 interior are generated from the same structured catalog.

Format: A4 portrait. Intended editions: mobile web, downloadable PDF, premium-color paperback, and a possible limited cloth hardcover with dust jacket.

Cover image: AI-assisted editorial artwork developed for Harvest I. Product likenesses are symbolic and will be replaced or corrected as verified photography and renders become available.

Castalia Institute · Monument, Colorado · 2026

Contents

Invocation	8
Manifesto	39
Games & Competitions	44
Forms for practicing synthesis, curiosity, explanation, and meaningful connection.	
Institution	49
The forms that let a community remember, gather, govern, and publish.	
Learning	66
Tools and environments that place inquiry in the hands of learners and families.	
Instruments	85
Objects that make hidden patterns perceptible and invite deliberate attention.	
Reliquaries	100
Physical works that keep knowledge, place, and presence close at hand.	
Infrastructure	111
The technical and civic systems that allow the Institute to persist.	
Research	124
Questions under active investigation, before they harden into products or doctrine.	
Compost	135
Names and forms that gave way so stronger works could grow.	

The Custodian's Address

Before the fruit is gathered, the orchard must be walked. We begin this draft in August because a catalog published only after the year is over can remember, but it cannot guide. A working Harvest can do both. It shows what is already coherent, what is still in flower, which new shoots need protection, and which forms have given all they can and should return to the soil.

Castalia began with a wager: that an institution can be built around questions without becoming vague, and around artificial intelligence without surrendering judgment. In 2026 that wager acquired form. The Institute gained a legal body, a seasonal calendar, colleges, publications, courses, devices, rituals, repositories, maps, games, and a public life. More importantly, it gained relationships among those things. Atlas is not merely a tablet; it is a door into Faculty, iNQ, courses, fieldwork, and family inquiry. The Astrolabe is not merely a display; it is a practice of returning attention to time, body, place, and sky.

This book therefore refuses the language of a conventional product catalog. The Orchard contains institutions, instruments, publications, protocols, research questions, artifacts, former names, and unfinished experiments. Their common unit is not the SKU but the inquiry. Each entry asks what question called the work into being, what evidence exists now, and what must happen before the next Harvest.

The growth states are deliberately plain. A seed is not a failed fruit. A flower is not a promise that mass production will follow. Compost is not embarrassment. These words let us tell the truth about maturity without stripping early work of dignity. They also make a practical demand: by 2 November, each tree should either bear clearer evidence or receive a more honest state.

The Custodian's Address

The illustrations in this draft are part map, part invitation. Some depict real prototypes. Some are diagrams. Some are AI-assisted editorial images that allow an unfinished object to occupy a page before studio photography exists. They should never be mistaken for evidence. Where the image is aspirational, the text must say so; where a device works, the final Harvest should show it working.

Between now and November, the Orchard needs fewer new names and more completed encounters: a learner using Atlas from question to artifact; a family gathering around Atlas Table; a Ring view compared with lived experience; an Astrolabe carried for a week; an NFC Faculty piece recognized by a finished Reliquary; a landscape shadowbox illuminated in an actual room. The catalog will become beautiful by becoming specific.

This is also an invitation. A work may need an engineer, editor, historian, parent, artist, fabricator, tester, photographer, skeptic, or careful reader. Every page ends with evidence still missing because cultivation is not the private burden of an inventor. An institute becomes real when many people can see where their attention might matter.

Harvest I will be published on the anniversary of Castalia Institute. It will not claim that every tree ripened. It will claim that we walked the Orchard carefully, gathered what was ready, preserved what was learned, and left clear markers for those who come next.

Daniel C. McShan
Custodian



Canto I: The Brook Before the Name

Canto I: The Brook Before the Name

I sing no war, save that of light against
the water it desired and could not hold;
no throne, unless it rise from moss and grief;
no king, unless he climb with dusty lips
to ask a spring what no god understood.

Below Parnassus, before the marble came,
before men named that hollow Delphi's heart,
a brook went silver-minded through the stones
before one question hardened into prayer.

There dwelt Castalia - not enthroned, but felt,
as coolness lives within the fern's green sleep,
as moonlight trembles in a broken cup,
as music, before the singer knows his grief,
waits in the reed the shepherd has not cut.

Daughter of Achelous, yet more clear
than that old flood's deep-shouldered, turbid strength,
she ran through moss and laurel-shadowed rock,
teaching the pebbles language as she passed.
The bees leaned down to taste her lucid breath;
the fawn came trembling to her gentler glass;
and flowers, bending over their own dreams,
beheld themselves and deemed the world was kind.

Canto I: The Brook Before the Name

No bronze had taught her answers how to sleep,
no seal had darkened wisdom into wealth;
she ran before the pride of finished thought,
a silver restlessness beneath the leaves.
She touched the root to learn what darkness drinks;
she questioned stones by passing over them;
she asked the fallen leaf what gold becomes
when autumn loses hold of its own fire.

No tripod smoked; no priestess breathed the dark;
no laurel crowned the terror of a king.
Only the mountain, slow with secret springs;
only the pine, the cicada, and stone;
only a brook that learned from everything
and gave no answer twice.

In her, the world
was passage, gleam, reflection, touch, release.
A leaf fell in and became thought.
A cloud dissolved and entered her as change.
The moon leaned down, and finding there herself,
was broken into trembling and made new.

Yet she was not a child of water only.
Her father's darkness moved beneath her clear.
In caves where silt remembered shattered bridges,
where drowned bulls' horns gleamed pale in mineral sleep,
Achelous kept the memory of floods.
Through her, at times, his elder murmur rose -
not warning yet, but weight; not law, but depth.

Canto I: The Brook Before the Name

Thus passed her days, if days may pass for streams,
in that green innocence before the name,
when water still remembered how to be
a road, a body, and a soul at once.



Canto II: The Descent of Apollo

Canto II: The Descent of Apollo

Then came Apollo, lonely with his light.

He came not yet with cities in his train,
nor marble hymns, nor gold on mortal brows,
but young with power, and beautiful with lack.
His bow was idle; on his shoulder slept
the quiver no one living dared despise.
His golden lyre, pressed against his breast,
had learned from heaven too proud a song for earth,
where all things answer music by decay.

He stood above the brook. The leaves were still.
The sun seemed listening in its own bright hair.

He had crossed the heights where eagles burn,
had heard the mountain answer him with snow,
had slain the serpent, worn its darkness out,
had known the praise of gods and fear of men -
yet never had his splendor stooped so low
as to behold itself and be undone.

She saw him first in fragments:

a brow of flame
broken among the leaves; a hand of gold
loosened upon the water; eyes too clear
for pity, yet too lonely to be proud.
She stirred. His image scattered through her stream,
and all the pebbles flashed with little suns.

He smiled, as gods smile when the valleys shine,
mistaking welcome for the shape of praise.

But she did not kneel.

She wondered.

Canto II: The Descent of Apollo

Not in fear,
but with the lucid daring of a spring
that touches everything to learn its change.
She took his perfect image, shook it loose,
sent laurel through it, beetle-wing and cloud,
a petal, shadow, sudden flight of bird.
She broke him as a question breaks a name:
not to destroy, but open what it means.

Then through the stones she murmured, though no lip
rose from the stream to shape the mortal word:

I have a question.

And the god -
who answered kings - was answerless with joy.

For none had come to him by wondering.
They came with terror, laurel, blood, and praise;
they came to borrow certainty from light.
But she looked up as water looks on stars
and made his brightness strange beneath itself.

Ask, said Apollo. Yet the word sat strange
upon his tongue, as though his own command
had turned and entered him like foreign rain.

O bright one, flowed the brook, must brightness rule?
Hast thou not longed to tremble and remain?
What is thy light when water makes it many?
What art thou, whole, if broken thou art more?

Apollo bent. His hair fell toward the spring;
a gold rain touched her, and she leapt with fire.

Canto II: The Descent of Apollo

He who had mastered song
heard what no lyre had uttered, and was mute -
not melody alone, nor mere delight,
but sunlight shattered on a moving blade,
a thousand broken brightnesses made one,
and one clear body endlessly dispersed.
The god looked down and saw his burning face
loosened in rings, divided among leaves,
taken by water, given back as grace.

Who art thou, said the god, that makest me
a question burning in my own clear mind?

The brook laughed softly over hidden stone.

I am what asks. Thou art what seems to know.
Come down, and learn how wonder also shines.

Then he laid by his bow.

The valley breathed.

And that first surrender, small as falling light,
was greater than the slaying of a beast -
for conquest leaves the conqueror unchanged,
but here the god began to lose his form,
and did not, for a moment, mourn the loss.



Canto III: The First Love

Canto III: The First Love

O brief republic of ungoverned joy,
when neither sought to master nor to flee.

He came at dawn before the shepherd's cry,
before the goat-bell worried the still air,
before the eagle wrote its hunger high
across the pale unwounded blue of day.
She rose to meet him - not from out the brook
as mortals rise from sleep, but everywhere:
in silver slips between the stones, in spray
that touched his cheek, in murmurs round his feet,
in sudden brightness under laurel shade.

He sang to her; yet now his song was changed.
No longer did it climb, command, and crown;
it listened while it shone. His golden strings
had learned the pauses water leaves in thought,
the broken interval, the downward turn,
the tremor where desire becomes restraint.

Once, laughing, she stole one note from his lyre -
it fell like sunlight through her shallows, rang
against a stone, and hid itself below.
Apollo searched the strings and missed the sound.
She sent it back at evening through the reeds,
changed by the touch of minnows, moss, and rain.
He heard and smiled, half-wounded, half-amazed:
a god's own music, altered and alive.

Then she asked more.

Canto III: The First Love

Why does the arrow fly
straighter than rain? Why do the Muses sing
of grief more sweetly than of common bread?
Why is the sun most golden when it falls?

Apollo laughed -
but softly, for the questions entered him
like springs through marble. What he knew grew strange.
What he had named stood trembling at its edge.
The world, which once lay ordered to his gaze,
became again abundant and unclosed.

And she, who once had known no fire but noon
broken among her pebbles, learned from him
the joy of being seen and not consumed.
Her shallows glittered with a warmer mind;
her depths grew blue with more than mountain cold.
At night she held his image under stars
and kept it moving, lest it harden there.

He told her of the upper fields of air,
where dawn runs first along the world's high rim;
of swans that draw white fire across the north;
of islands where the sea, remembering birth,
shines like a shield beneath the feet of gods.

She answered not with tales, but with herself:
a dark root drinking; minnows under green;
a fox at midnight pausing at the bank;
rain after heat; the stone's long patience; moss
that makes a kingdom of the smallest shade.

Thus each enlarged the other.

Canto III: The First Love

Yet even then,
while love was clear, the god's own nature stirred -
not cruelly; the terrible things begin
in tenderness, and enter wearing flowers.

This place, he said, shall never be forgot.
No mortal dust shall dim thy silver name.
I'll teach the world the sweetness of thy stream;
kings shall come here more humbly than the deer,
and poets drink the brightness thou hast taught me.

His heart meant love. But in her startled depth
the syllables descended into name -
and name, she understood, is the first wall.

Yet she was glad, for innocence believes
that being praised is not yet being kept.
She leapt around his ankles, drew him down,
and washed the golden dust from off his feet.

Do not make all things deathless, murmured she.
Some beauties live because they pass away.
Hear me while hearing; leave me while I flow.

Apollo kissed the water with his hand.

I leave thee free, he said.

The laurel stirred.

Above them, sunlight flowered through the leaves.
Below, where deeper, older waters moved,
Achelous heard his daughter's questions rise
and gathered silt and memory into speech.



Canto IV: Achelous and the Laurel

Canto IV: Achelous and the Laurel

He rose not like a man, but like a flood
remembering its body under earth.

Through root, through reed, through stone that drank the dark,
Achelous sent his counsel, slow and brown.
His voice was gravel dragged through winter rain,
bull-horn and mud, uprooted oak and bridge,
the drowned field's grief, the city's broken well -
old god of all the waters men had used
and blessed, and fouled, and praised, and chained with mills.

Daughter, he said, beware the hunger of light.
The bright do not remember what they take.
They kiss the flower and call the garland love;
they wound the earth and name the fountain theirs.
The gods praise most what they cannot leave free.

Castalia trembled, and her shallows shook
as if a sudden cloud had crossed the sun.

He is not cruel, she whispered through the fern.
He laid his bow aside. He heard me first.
He did not seize me. In his silence dwelt
a gentleness more lonely than the moon.
He lets me ask.

The river darkened.

Canto IV: Achelous and the Laurel

Child,
a god may love the question while it moves him,
then build an altar where the wonder sang.
No crown is forged when first the hand meets hair;
no god intends the temple at the kiss.
Yet see what follows beauty when it's loved
by those whose private griefs become the roads of men.

Ask Daphne whether flight can save the fair.
She fled his arms, and now she crowns his hair.

Then rumor moved, that moth of sacred groves,
from leaf to leaf, until the laurels seemed
to carry voices - or perhaps fear spoke
through green and found a readier tongue than truth.
The tale came broken, therefore terrible:

He loved, one whispered.

Hunted, breathed another.

She was transformed.

Preserved.

Adorned.

Undone.

A wind went through the laurel and became
a language made of shiverings. Castalia heard
in every leaf a woman half-released,
half-fastened to the glory of her flight.
What is a crown, if not a captive tree
made circular around the captor's brow?

Yet Achelous, too, was not all truth.
His care had roots in fear, and fear in claim.
He loved his daughter as old rivers love -
by saying, All that springs from me is mine.
He warned her from Apollo's golden hand
but drew her downward with a darker one.

Canto IV: Achelous and the Laurel

Come down, he said, where no one names the dark.
Before the god, before the lyre, before
the laurel's lie, thou wert my child, my vein.
Come back where no bright eye can find thy face.

So stood Castalia between sun and source:
above, the god who loved her living mind;
below, the flood who loved by claiming blood;
and through the leaves, the laurel's rustling dread.

At evening he descended through the pines,
bearing no bow, but in his hand a spray
of laurel - innocent or fatal, who
could tell? He smiled, and all the western air
grew soft with godhood humbled into joy.

She almost spoke.

The whole brook leaned toward speech.

But from the leaves a small dry whisper fell:

She crowns him.

Apollo, seeing only shadow there,
knelt near the bank and touched the troubled spring.

What question grieves thee now?

The water gathered, bright with shaken leaves.
At last she found one sentence, sharp and bare:

I fear thy love when men begin to build.

He started, as if struck. I would not chain thee.

No, said the brook, but praise can harden stone.
Leave me unnamed, and I am wholly water.
Name me for kings, and I am no one's spring.

He reached for further speech. The laurel stirred.
The mountain kept his answer in its dark.

Canto IV: Achelous and the Laurel

She flowed on.

And he, who would become the god of truth,
could not persuade the wound to speak again -
though something in him heard it, and went still.



Canto V: The Flight Without a Word

Canto V: The Flight Without a Word

Night climbed Parnassus with her urn of stars.

The pines grew black. The stones forgot their heat.
The bees were buried in their waxen dreams.
The laurel held its counsel like a blade.
Apollo slept upon the upper slope,
his lyre beside him, and within his breast
a song for her not even heaven had heard -
the first he had not written to be heard.

Castalia watched the moon divide in her
and trembled at the mercy of reflection.
For water knows: to mirror is to yield,
yet not be owned; to hold a face is not
to promise it a dwelling.

Still she feared.

Not him alone - his tenderness most of all,
the love that asks for nothing, yet assumes
the loved will stay where love may find itself.
She heard beneath each gentle word he spoke
the future footsteps: priest and pilgrim, king
and poet climbing to consume her cold,
her wonder coined to currency of awe,
her question bronzed and set above the door.

She feared her father's caverned voice as well,
that muddy mercy drawing her beneath,
where safety meant no sunlight and no song,
where she would be preserved by being lost.

Canto V: The Flight Without a Word

And more than these - and this she barely held
as thought - she feared her own desire. For had
Apollo wept, she might have turned to rain.
Had he once called her name without a plan,
she might have stayed, and singing, been remade
into the god of someone else's prayers.

Therefore she chose the only gate unguarded:

Silence.

She did not curse him. Wrath gives shape to things,
and shape was what she feared: the hardened edge,
the banks that come when water earns a name.
She did not weep before him. Tears had made
a river between two shores, with both banks known.
She did not ask the question that would bind
them both forever to its answering.
No reed was charged to carry her farewell.

Silence only:
a starless well; a moon withdrawn;
a music folded back into its source.

Before the dawn unsealed the mountain's eyes,
she gathered all her murmurs into one
unspoken question, colder than the stone,
and fled beneath herself.

Not into death -
death is too simple for divinities.
Not into freedom - freedom has a sky.
She fled into the inwardness of water,
down past the roots, the blind white veins of stone,
the old tears mineralized in caverns deep,
where speech dissolves before it can betray.

Canto V: The Flight Without a Word

She did not go to Achelous' arms.
She did not rise to meet Apollo's light.
She turned aside from lover and from sire,
and made a third thing neither one could own:
a hidden spring, herself and not herself -
a body changed to place, a voice to source,
a yes withheld within eternal flow.

The brook stood empty of her former play,
yet fuller with a presence none could touch.
The spring remained. Its surface held the stars.
But she who once ran outward through the moss
now hid in depth, diffused, withheld, awake -

the question still, the question still, the question
beneath the name.

A bird cried once.

The east grew pale.

The god still slept, and in his sleep smiled her name.



Canto VI: The Foundation

Canto VI: The Foundation

At noon he came, bearing a song for her -
the first his pride had not composed alone.
Love had made room in him for answering.
He touched the lyre.

The laurel did not move.

He called.

The stones returned his name alone.

He laughed at first, because the heart protects
its mortal wound by thinking absence play.
He sought her in the fern, behind the falls,
under the leaning root, within the spray.
He called again, less god now than desire.

Castalia.

From the rock a spring looked up at him.

Not dead; not living as she lived before -
present, yet sealed from every golden plea.
He knelt. His face broke on her trembling face.
He touched the water. It received his hand
and passed beyond it, as it always had,
as she had always moved through being touched.

Castalia?

The spring replied as only waters can:
by holding light, and letting light go by.

Then grief entered him - not the minor kind
a god performs above a mortal grave,
but grief that strips the laurel from the brow
and leaves the face beneath it young and lost.
He pressed his forehead to the stone and lay
a long time there, his brightness going dark.

Canto VI: The Foundation

For he knew now: she had not perished. Flight
has form; the body of the fled thing tells
the chaser where the edge of wanting lies.
But she had not so much as left a note
of water on the rock to say not here.
She had withdrawn into the thing itself,
become the place where loss could not be reached.

He bowed above the spring until his hair
lay like a fallen sunrise on the stone.
The water took his image, broke it still,
and gave him back a thousand wounded gods.
He saw himself in her, and seeing, shook:
the god of light made tremulous by stream,
the lord of song made answerless by sound.

He had come with music. She had kept the silence.
He had come with answers. She had kept the question.
And now the only thing left of her first words -
I have a question - rang inside him like
the string a player plucks and then regrets,
its tone too true for anything but loss.

Then rose in him, half prayer and half defense,
a vow no god should utter and remain
unwounded by the echo of his words:

If I may not possess thee, I shall pass
into thy form. Thy silence shall be voice;
thy broken mirror, law; thy hidden cold
the gate through which the nations come to me.

Canto VI: The Foundation

He knew it as he said it. Heard the shift
from grief into agenda; felt the place
where love becomes a plan, where loss becomes
a project, and the wound becomes a door.
He built because he could not mourn without
arriving somewhere, making something, mastering
the shapelessness that she had left behind.

So he called nations upward to the spring
and taught them how to ask - but at his feet.

He could not draw her out.

Therefore he did
what gods do when the living will not speak:
he gave the silence form.

First with his hands he moved the fallen stones -
not as a mason, but as one who shields
a sleeping face from wind. By dusk the ring
had made a boundary. By dawn, a shrine.

He paved his hurt with steps of mountain stone.
He drew the roads of nations to that place,
set laurel, tripod, priestess, smoke, and bronze
around the absence he could neither read
nor leave unhonored. Moss gave way to stair.
The shy bank hardened into sacred edge.
He made the mountain's hidden breath a rite
and seated woman over breathing earth
to speak in fractures kings would call divine.

Was this revenge? Devotion? Need? Grief turned
to architecture, sorrow made a road?

The god knew all and none of it, and built.

And Delphi rose.

Canto VI: The Foundation

The shepherds saw the smoke.
The kings came burdened with their future dead.
The poets climbed with laurel in their mouths.
The priestess breathed the mountain's broken dark.
And under all, Castalia flowed and heard
her question multiplied into the world.



Canto VII: The Oracle of Absence

Canto VII: The Oracle of Absence

Years gathered there like votive dust.

The path
wore smooth beneath the feet of questioning men.
Bronze darkened. Laurel thickened. Marble shone.
The spring was cupped in stone, approached by steps,
made pure by rule, made famous by desire.
They called her holy. They called her clear.
They called her his.

Pilgrims bent and washed.
Some came with plague behind them like a dog.
Some came with unborn murders in their sleep.
Some came to ask which city heaven loved.
Some came because the dead had spoken once
and would not speak again.

They touched the spring
and thought their fingers met Apollo's grace.
Yet first they entered her.

A king once climbed
with dust upon his beard and war half-born
behind his eyes.

Shall I return? he asked.

The priestess, white with laurel, breathed and said:

Home waits within the country thou shalt burn.

He smiled, and led his horses toward the east.
By spring, his ashes entered home in bronze.

A mother came, her hair unbound with grief.

My son - she cried - beneath which sky lives he?

The priestess shuddered on the breathing stone:

Where no spear reaches, there thy child is held.

The mother blessed the god and went in peace.
Far under sail and moon, his hair moved slow.

Canto VII: The Oracle of Absence

A poet came with laurel in his hand.

Give me a song that death shall not erase.

The priestess turned. Her eyes were full of spring.

Drink cold, and leave the water unpossessed.

He drank, and for one breath forgot his crown.
That breath became the music men remembered.

Each came for answer; each departed changed
by what the answer kept, or could not give.

A child came last, too young for laurel fear,
and crouched beside the basin's silver lip.
No king, no priest, no trembling mother heard.
The child put both hands in the mountain cold
and whispered, not to god or oracle,

I have a question.

Then the water stirred.

Apollo stood within his golden court,
adored, obeyed, interpreted, and crowned.
Yet sometimes when the smoke thinned after dusk,
when kings had gone and poets slept below,
he walked alone beside the guarded spring.

No bow. No lyre.

Only the god,
still young beneath the centuries of praise.

He would bend down and find his face again -
not as he found it first, in playful rings,
but darkened now by all he built to frame it:
laurel-shadow, torchlight, temple, star, and tear.
He could not tell whether the water held
accusal, pardon, memory, or love.

Perhaps it held them all.

Canto VII: The Oracle of Absence

Perhaps she had
not fled from him, but had become the place
his questions entered when their answers failed -
the spring beneath the laurel, cold and clear,
where every certainty dissolves, comes clean,
and finds that it was always asking too.

And she?

She flowed.

But not as captives flow,
nor yet as free things under open sky.
She was the spring that would not be the crown,
the cold beneath the laurel and the flame,
the scar that fed the altar, yet remained
too deep for bronze or priestly hand to reach.

Though they had named her, still they could not speak her.
Though they had drunk, she passed beyond their thirst.
Though Apollo built his glory round her flight,
his temple stood upon what he had lost -
and on what she had kept by going under.

Still flows the spring.

Still laurel shadows lean
like green remorse above her lucid sleep.
Still pilgrims bend, and think they come to him,
though first their lips must find her hidden mouth.
Still poets, thirsty for a crown of flame,
drink from the silence he could never own.

And sometimes, under all the Delphic hymn,
beneath the bronze, the bees, the laurel-smoke,
a voice too low for doctrine troubles stone:

not prophecy. not pardon. not farewell.

Canto VII: The Oracle of Absence

Only water, saying what it never said -
the question still beneath the shrine, the name,
the god who came down beautiful and bright
and stood above the brook
and heard the brook say:

I have a question.

And for one moment, did not know the answer.

The Castalian Manifesto

Dialogic & FacultAI Revision · May 2026

CASTALIA BEGINS WITH A COMMITMENT

Education is not content delivery.

Education is the formation of thoughtful, capable, and creative human beings.

In an age where AI can produce answers at scale, the central question is no longer "How do we distribute information?" The question is "How do we cultivate judgment, inquiry, responsibility, and meaning?"

Our answer is Castalia.

TWO LAYERS, ONE MISSION

Castalia Institute is the sovereign layer of inquiry, experimentation, scholarship, publishing, fellowship, and civilizational imagination.

Castalia Academy is the accredited and interoperable educational layer: governance, records, competencies, transcripts, and family accountability.

This separation preserves intellectual freedom while providing families institutional legitimacy.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We believe inquiry is more important than rote memorization.

We believe mastery is more important than seat time.

We believe competency is more important than age-based pacing.

We believe projects, portfolios, and oral defense reveal understanding better than worksheet throughput.

We believe technology should enlarge human agency.

We believe family partnership is central, not peripheral.

We believe education should form people for culture, citizenship, craft, and stewardship.

The Castalian Manifesto

Dialogic & FacultAI Revision · May 2026

THE THREE-LAYER MODEL

Foundation Layer: mastery and fluency in core literacies.

Inquiry Layer: exploration, interpretation, synthesis, and project work.

Civilization Layer: meaning, memory, literature, philosophy, and long-horizon responsibility.

Most systems stop at the first layer. Castalia integrates all three.

DIALOGIC AND FACULTAI

Dialogic transforms lecture into conversation. Learners can interrupt, question, challenge, connect disciplines, request simulations, and shape pace. Instruction becomes adaptive discourse rather than passive media consumption.

FacultAI is not a collection of novelty avatars. It is AI-mediated scholarly lineage: disciplines, traditions, methods, and interpretive perspectives in conversation.

AI serves as tutor, mentor, interlocutor, simulator, and research assistant. AI does not replace human governance, safeguarding, accountability, or final evaluative authority.

COMPETENCY AND EVIDENCE

Progress should follow demonstrated competency, not elapsed time.

We use dual evidence:

- external calibration (growth benchmarks and mastery signals),
- internal evidence (projects, essays, oral defense, journals, and interdisciplinary artifacts).

Assessment exists to support growth, guide instruction, and document mastery. It does not exist to flatten learners into rankings.

The Castalian Manifesto

Dialogic & FacultAI Revision • May 2026

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

Families are educational partners and cultural participants. Learning should be visible. Rituals should be seasonal. Conversation should be daily. Education should adapt to local context while sustaining shared standards.

WHAT WE ARE BUILDING

We are building a civilization-centered inquiry academy:

- mastery infrastructure without reductionism,
- AI-mediated mentorship without dehumanization,
- adaptive conversational instruction without passivity,
- portfolio-based evidence without performative credentialism,
- accreditation-compatible governance without surrendering educational imagination.

We are building Atlas as an educational operating system. We are building Dialogic as interactive lecture architecture. We are building FacultAI as scholarly mentorship. We are building a humane educational culture where technology serves formation.

THE INVITATION

Begin where you are.

Read at breakfast. Ask better questions. Build with your hands. Observe the natural world. Keep a notebook. Publish your inquiry. Teach what you learn.

Help build an academy worthy of the age to come. Help renew education as a civilizational practice.

How to Read the Orchard

Growth is a condition to be observed, not a rank to be defended.



SEED

A named question, idea, or proposition.



SPROUT

Research, requirements, sketches, or an early prototype.



FLOWER

A functioning or demonstrable work not yet ready for broad adoption.



FRUIT

A coherent work ready to be shared, used, acquired, joined, or enrolled in.



COMPOST

A work pruned or superseded, with its lessons preserved.

Every entry asks three questions:

What called this work into being?

What evidence exists now?

What must happen before the next Harvest?

The Orchard in August

A working map, not a final score.

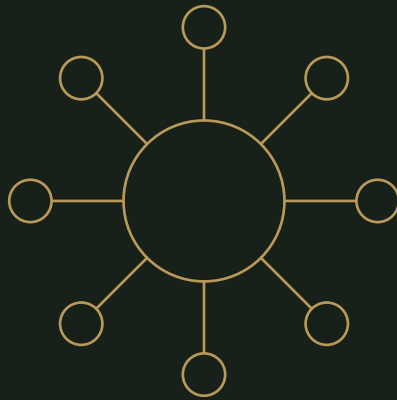


42

WORKS CURRENTLY NAMED

2 NOV

FINAL HARVEST



Games & Competitions

Forms for practicing synthesis, curiosity, explanation, and meaningful connection.

Glass Bead Game



THE INQUIRY

How might learners practice making meaningful connections across disciplines?

Glass Bead Game

STORY

An 8x8 game of propositions, references, analogies, and synthesis played across the Atlas of Inquiry. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

A board structure and relationship to the Inquiry Cup were developed.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Produce a playable paper prototype, run three sessions, and document what counts as a valid connection.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Board diagram · Example move · Playtest notes

WORKING DRAFT · 38% CULTIVATED

Inquiry Cup



THE INQUIRY

How might communities compete in curiosity, synthesis, and explanation rather than recall alone?

Inquiry Cup

STORY

A public competition in which teams investigate, connect, present, and defend answers across the Atlas of Inquiry. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The first rules, event rhythm, scoring concepts, and relationship to the Glass Bead Game were outlined.

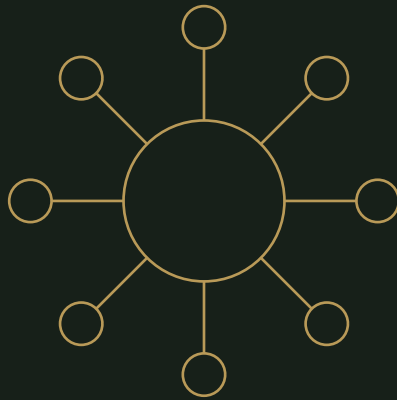
BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Run a small pilot with two teams, document the judging rubric, and produce a complete event kit.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Rules diagram · Score sheet · Pilot photography

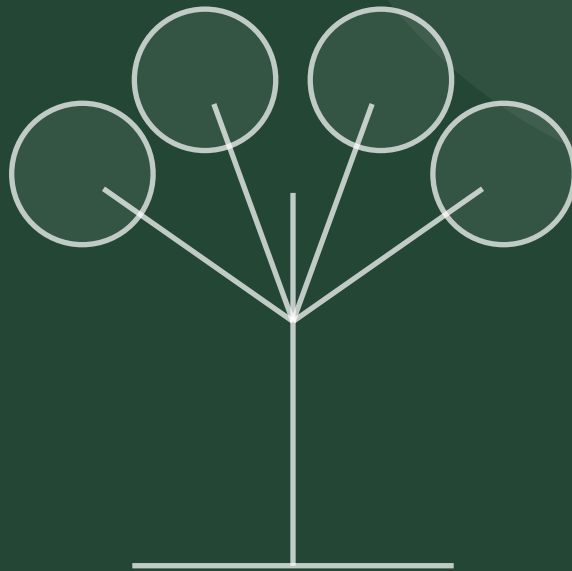
WORKING DRAFT · 42% CULTIVATED



Institution

The forms that let a community remember, gather, govern, and publish.

Castalia Institute



THE INQUIRY

How might an institution cultivate inquiry as a shared civic practice?

Castalia Institute

STORY

A member-shaped institute organized around inquiry, craftsmanship, family learning, public scholarship, and the preservation of useful knowledge. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Castalia took legal and cultural form: a Wyoming DAO LLC, ten colleges, a seasonal academic calendar, a public publication, and a growing family of devices, courses, rituals, and repositories.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Clarify membership and governance, publish the institutional map, identify the first faculty and stewards, and make the path from visitor to contributor intelligible.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Institutional map · Founding documents · Portraits of stewards · Membership pathway

WORKING DRAFT · 92% CULTIVATED

The Castalian Manifesto



THE INQUIRY

What is education for when artificial intelligence can produce answers at scale?

The Castalian Manifesto

STORY

A statement that education is the formation of thoughtful, capable, responsible, and creative human beings rather than the mere delivery of answers. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The manifesto established inquiry, mastery, responsibility, family partnership, and civilizational imagination as the Institute's durable commitments.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

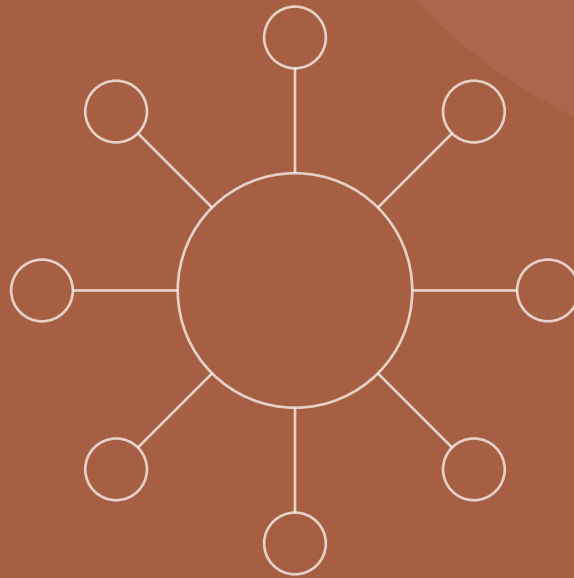
Publish an annotated edition, connect each principle to a concrete Castalian practice, and invite responses from learners, parents, and scholars.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Final typesetting · Annotated references · Public response form

WORKING DRAFT · 88% CULTIVATED

Invocation



THE INQUIRY

How might a shared room be opened so that inquiry can begin?

Invocation

STORY

The Custodian's opening act: setting the weather, reading the scene card, restating the temporal rule, and affirming the house rules before a salon or inquiry begins. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

A repeatable opening grammar emerged for salons, courses, games, and gatherings, giving Castalia a recognizable threshold between ordinary time and inquiry.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

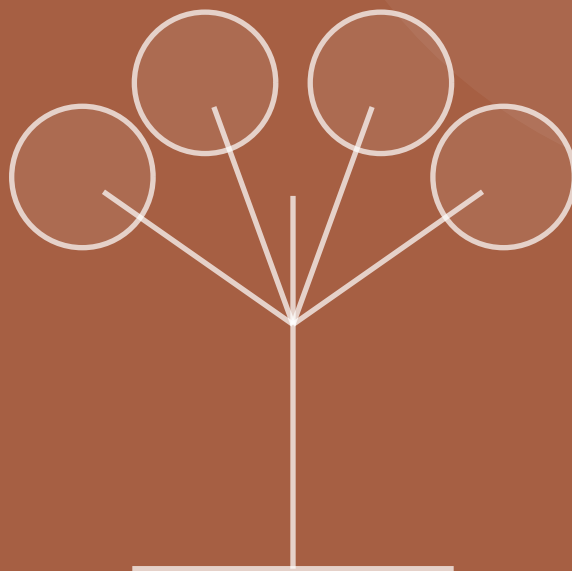
Field-test the invocation in three different settings and publish a one-page officiant card with variations for family, classroom, and public salon.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Officiant card · Salon photography · Audio reading

WORKING DRAFT · 68% CULTIVATED

The Orchard



THE INQUIRY

How might unfinished work remain visible, useful, and inviting?

The Orchard

STORY

The living collection from which each annual Harvest is assembled, preserving the question, state, evidence, and next cultivation step for every work. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The Orchard gained a repository, a public site, a shared growth taxonomy, structured metadata, and the first annual catalog pipeline.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Move every active project out of conversation-only memory, add permanent work pages, and make contribution and feedback links operational.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

[Complete registry](#) · [Work-page template](#) · [Search and filters](#) · [Contribution forms](#)

WORKING DRAFT · 72% CULTIVATED

The Harvest



THE INQUIRY

How might an annual publication guide the work still left to do?

The Harvest

STORY

An annual book and web catalog published on 2 November, recording what was planted, what grew, what bore fruit, and what returned to the soil. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Harvest I became a working publication rather than a future promise: cover art, a mobile reader, print specifications, a book structure, and placeholders for the full Orchard.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Replace placeholders with evidence, commission or generate missing illustrations, complete the Custodian's Address, and order a physical proof.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Final cover typography · Product photography · Print proof · ISBN decision

WORKING DRAFT · 63% CULTIVATED

The Inquirer



THE INQUIRY

How might inquiry become a public habit rather than a private exercise?

The Inquirer

STORY

Castalia's journal of questions, essays, interviews, experiments, and institutional correspondence. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The Inquirer established a publication identity, released its first issue, and received ISSN 3071-5040.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

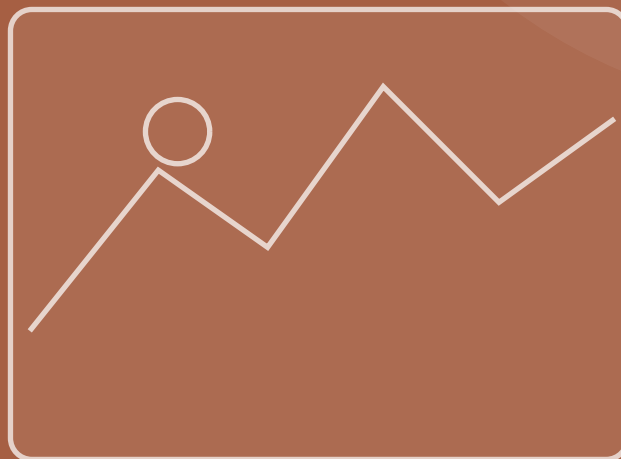
Establish a dependable editorial calendar, recruit recurring correspondents, and connect articles back to Orchard works and courses.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Issue covers · Editorial calendar · Contributor portraits

WORKING DRAFT · 84% CULTIVATED

Atlas of Inquiry



THE INQUIRY

*How might all fields of knowledge be encountered
as one navigable world?*

Atlas of Inquiry

STORY

A map of inquiry connecting colleges, cities, questions, courses, people, artifacts, and paths through knowledge. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The Atlas grew into a thousand-city world model and became the conceptual geography underlying devices, courses, and games.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

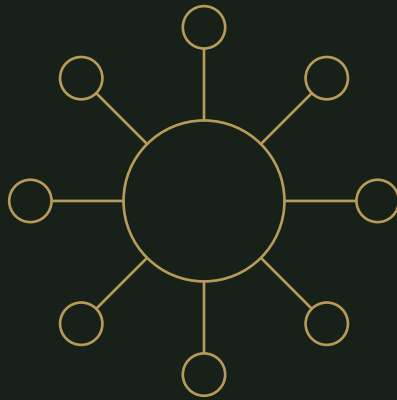
Publish one canonical map, define the navigation grammar, and connect a first set of cities to real learning experiences.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Canonical map · City legend · Sample journeys



WORKING DRAFT · 66% CULTIVATED



Learning

Tools and environments that place inquiry in the hands of learners and families.

Atlas



THE INQUIRY

How might a learner carry an entire education in their hands?

Atlas

STORY

Castalia's learner tablet and primary personal portal to courses, Faculty, iNQ, reading, making, and inquiry. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Atlas evolved from Aegis into a coherent learner instrument with a clear role in the Castalia ecosystem, linked to Faculty, iNQ, courses, maps, and shared family experiences.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Resolve the hardware baseline, build the first end-to-end learner journey, photograph a working unit, and document offline, privacy, and guardianship behavior.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Hero product render · Hardware specification · Learner journey · Interface screenshots

WORKING DRAFT · 82% CULTIVATED

Atlas Table



THE INQUIRY

How might a family gather around inquiry rather than entertainment?

Atlas Table

STORY

A communal Atlas experience presented on a television or large display and used as a shared table for learning, maps, Faculty, games, and family inquiry. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The earlier Table concept matured into a specific shared mode of Atlas, emphasizing a television or large display instead of a separate piece of furniture.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Prototype one complete family session, define handoff between personal Atlas devices and the shared display, and capture a real room demonstration.

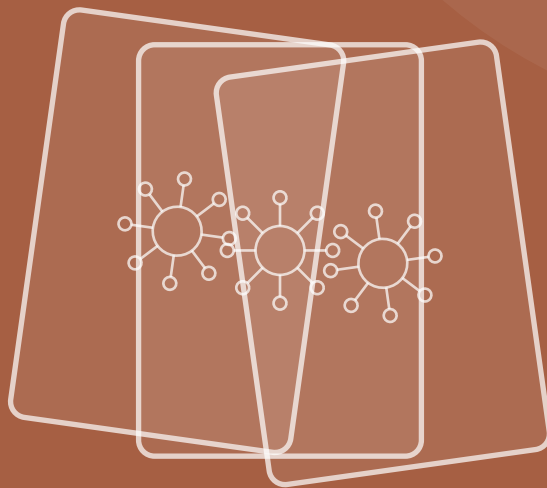
EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Living-room render · Interaction storyboard · Demo video



WORKING DRAFT · 64% CULTIVATED

iNQ Cards



THE INQUIRY

How might a physical object open a durable path into inquiry?

iNQ Cards

STORY

A long-lived series of square NFC cards that link questions, places, people, and activities to the living digital Orchard. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The card format, bamboo material, NTAG213 basis, seven-year cadence, and 1,008-card ambition were established, alongside early identity and interaction concepts.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

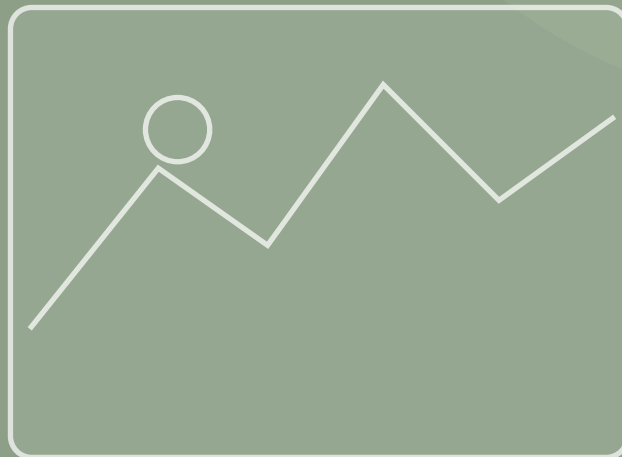
Finalize the card data model, produce a small numbered pilot deck, test write/read workflows across phones and Atlas devices, and publish authoring guidance.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Pilot deck photography · NFC data model · Card back system

WORKING DRAFT · 73% CULTIVATED

Gazetteer



THE INQUIRY

How might a child meet the world through places, stories, maps, and daily practice?

Gazetteer

STORY

A place-centered homeschool and worldschooling system joining geography, biography, nature, culture, and field observation. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The Gazetteer became a recurring frame for daily worksheets, Montessori studio work, travel, and family learning.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Complete a four-week pilot unit, establish age-banded page templates, and gather evidence from actual family use.

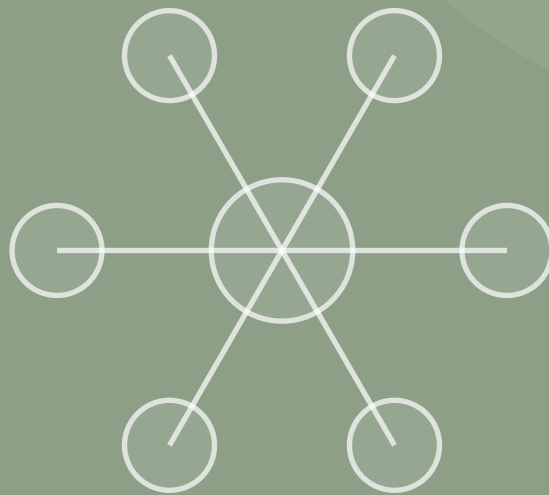
EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Sample unit · Worksheet photography · Parent guide



WORKING DRAFT · 48% CULTIVATED

SAMWISE



THE INQUIRY

How might an AI companion strengthen judgment without replacing the learner?

SAMWISE

STORY

A course-aware companion that helps learners plan, reflect, retrieve evidence, and remain responsible for their own work. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

SAMWISE was positioned within the Atlas and course ecosystem and explored as part of graduate AI curriculum delivery.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

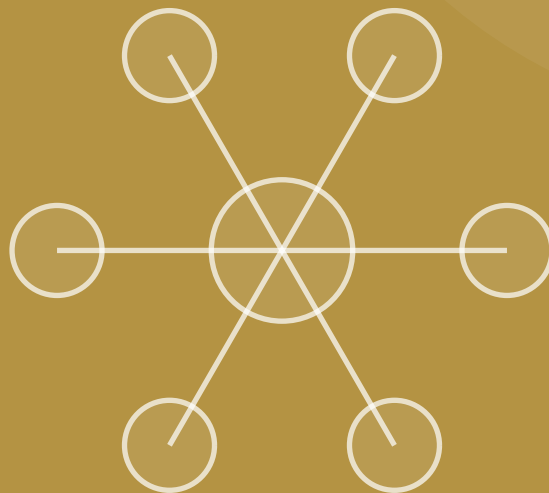
Implement a bounded course pilot, publish its memory and attribution rules, and test whether it improves learner reflection rather than answer production.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Conversation transcript · Agent diagram · Evaluation rubric

WORKING DRAFT · 46% CULTIVATED

BEATRICE



THE INQUIRY

How might difficult knowledge be approached through a guide who knows when to explain and when to lead onward?

BEATRICE

STORY

A scholarly guide inspired by the companion who leads Dante beyond what reason alone can reach. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The role and name were established within the Castalian agent family, but the behavior contract remains deliberately open.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

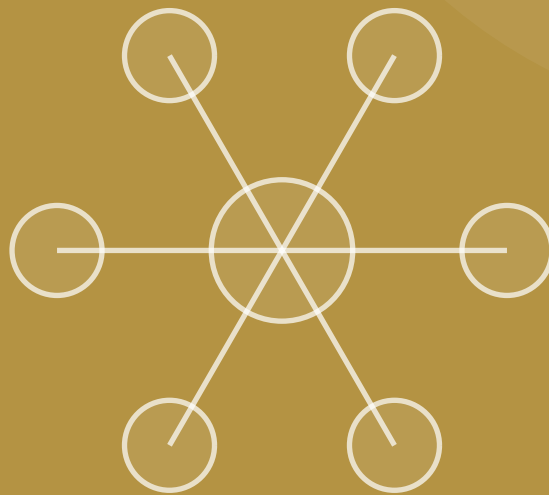
Define BEATRICE's domain, voice, boundaries, and first course context before building an interface.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Behavior charter · Dialogue samples · Relationship map

WORKING DRAFT · 24% CULTIVATED

Dialogic



THE INQUIRY

How might a system preserve the productive tension of dialogue rather than collapse it into a single answer?

Dialogic

STORY

A conversation engine for structured disagreement, role-based inquiry, and evidence-bearing exchange. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Dialogic emerged as a candidate substrate for courses and agent encounters.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

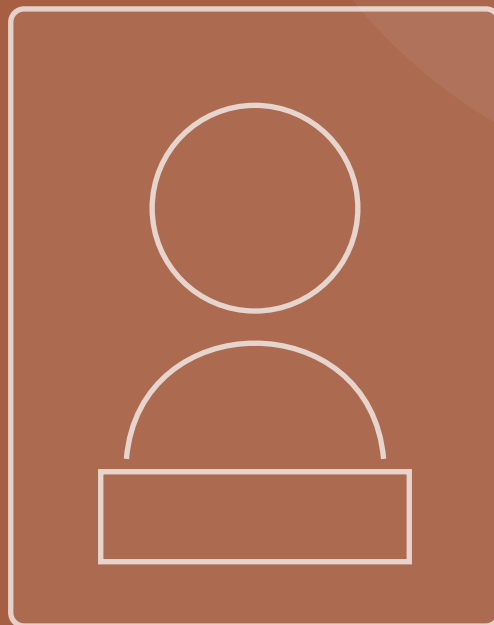
Specify a minimal dialogue protocol, one classroom use case, and the conditions under which a conversation is considered complete.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Protocol diagram · Sample dialogue · Facilitator notes

WORKING DRAFT · 28% CULTIVATED

Faculty



THE INQUIRY

How might the presence of great minds become available without pretending to resurrect them?

Faculty

STORY

A curated family of historically grounded teaching personae used across courses, Atlas, games, and reliquaries. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Faculty became a cross-platform concept joining scholarship, voice, visual identity, chess pieces, NFC, and PersonAI.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

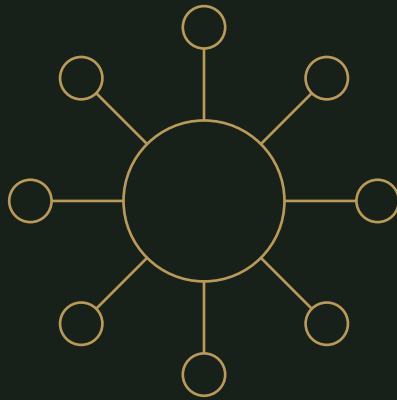
Publish sourcing and disclosure standards, complete the first six Faculty dossiers, and distinguish historical evidence from creative interpretation.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Faculty portraits · Source dossiers · Disclosure standard



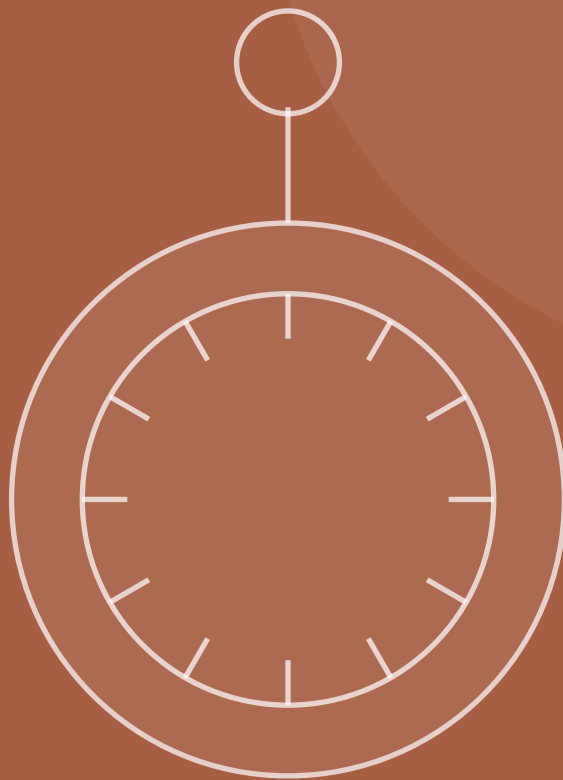
WORKING DRAFT · 61% CULTIVATED



Instruments

Objects that make hidden patterns perceptible and invite deliberate attention.

Mynah Astrolabe



THE INQUIRY

How might a small object return attention to time, place, body, and sky?

Mynah Astrolabe

STORY

A round, pocket-watch-like mindfulness instrument built around a 466-pixel AMOLED display. Its face system is intentionally plural: core faces explore time, music, astronomy, breath, ritual, and inquiry, while named variants let the same round instrument become LunaSay, Cybre, or Fortun.ai. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

A physical platform, enclosure direction, numerous working face concepts, audio and sensor studies, docks, pendants, and Kickstarter positioning were developed. LunaSay is the moon-and-chart variant, Cybre names the shared firmware and experimental Astrolabe family across round and alternate hardware targets, and Fortun.ai is the standalone fortune-telling companion whose violet gas face carries the instrument's divinatory register.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Freeze the launch configuration, complete the bronze enclosure prototype, validate battery and audio behavior, photograph the object, and select the first ten faces.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Studio hero photography · Exploded diagram · Face and variant matrix · Battery results

WORKING DRAFT · 78% CULTIVATED

LunaSay



THE INQUIRY

How might astronomical rhythms become intimate, legible, and conversational?

LunaSay

STORY

A round astrologer and almanac device that presents lunar phases, planetary timing, personal cycles, and spoken interpretation. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

LunaSay gained a distinct identity from Astrolabe, a visual language of lunar phases, and a role as both device and interpretive companion.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Define the boundary between astronomy, astrology, and personal reflection; build one complete lunar-month experience; and photograph a dedicated prototype.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Lunar interface sequence · Prototype render · Interpretation policy

WORKING DRAFT · 58% CULTIVATED

Ring



THE INQUIRY

How might our hidden rhythms help us understand ourselves and one another?

Ring

STORY

A biometric ring for observing stress, recovery, sleep, and physiological cycles, with consensual synastry tools intended to support empathy between spouses. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The project identified a practical starting platform, HRV-focused visual language, and a family relationship model that avoids reducing people to scores.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Validate data access and signal quality, define consent and privacy rules, compare ring observations with subjective reports, and build a single calm daily view.

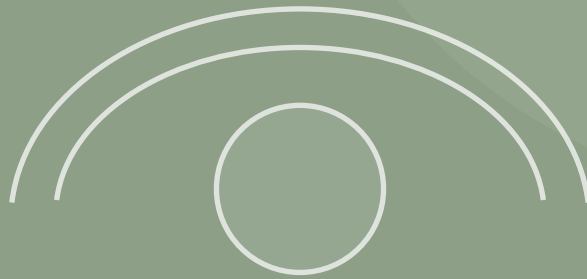
EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Signal validation report · Consent model · Daily-view screenshots



WORKING DRAFT · 43% CULTIVATED

Enso Circlet



THE INQUIRY

How might a soft headband make attention and recovery perceptible without becoming clinical?

Enso Circlet

STORY

A tie-on wearable combining the removable Astrolabe display with flexible electrodes for HRV, EEG exploration, and guided practice. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The removable display, four-electrode concept, adult and child fit, and tie-on construction were explored.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Build a comfortable non-clinical prototype, verify electrode contact during ordinary movement, and determine which measurements are defensible.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Wear test photos · Electrode diagram · Signal comparison

WORKING DRAFT · 37% CULTIVATED

Auspex



THE INQUIRY

How might a vehicle explain what it senses before a warning becomes a failure?

Auspex

STORY

An automotive intelligence instrument combining OBD-II data, a round display, inertial context, and conversational interpretation. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The concept, name, display direction, and Bluetooth OBDLink path were identified.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Select a small set of trustworthy vehicle signals, build a read-only prototype, and define strict safety limits for interpretation.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Signal list · Dashboard mockup · Safety statement

WORKING DRAFT · 25% CULTIVATED

MARIA



THE INQUIRY

How might a physical figure give Castalia's devices a memorable public presence?

MARIA

STORY

A sculptural demonstration mannequin with a brushed-metal head, expressive display face, and electronics housed in the torso. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Scale, neck connector, fixed-head direction, metallic finish, emoji face, and exhibition poses were explored.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

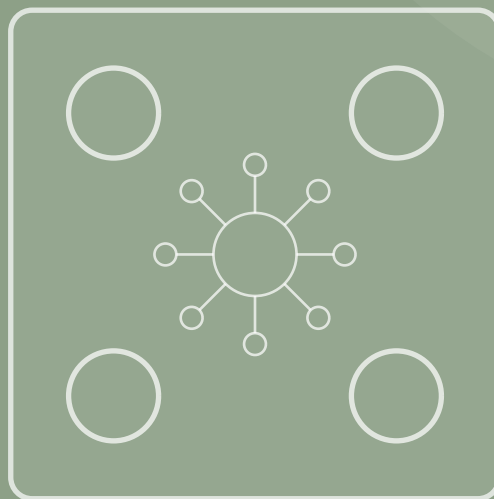
Resolve the acronym and exact form, make a stable exhibition prototype, and document safe transport, power, and interaction.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Full-body render · Mechanical drawing · Exhibition storyboard

WORKING DRAFT · 39% CULTIVATED

Atlas Sensor Plate



THE INQUIRY

How might a learner carry a trustworthy sense of place into field inquiry?

Atlas Sensor Plate

STORY

A modular ESP32-based plate combining motion, location, LoRa, NFC, and environmental sensing for Atlas devices and field stations. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The sensor stack, device family, and low-cost preorder ambition were outlined.

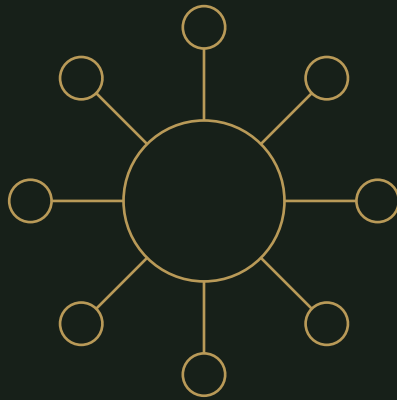
BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Define the minimum viable sensor set, produce one field-ready board, and document calibration, power, and data provenance.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Board block diagram · Field enclosure · Calibration notes

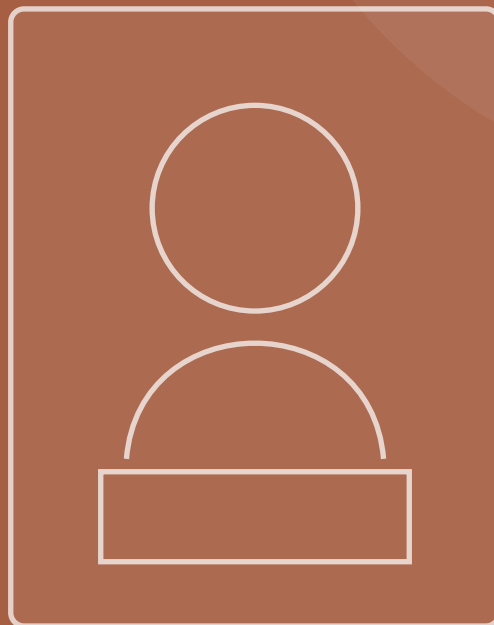
WORKING DRAFT · 41% CULTIVATED



Reliquaries

Physical works that keep knowledge, place, and presence close at hand.

Luminary: Reliquary



THE INQUIRY

How might we keep great minds present in our homes?

Luminary: Reliquary

STORY

A digital reliquary containing a 3D-printed Faculty chess piece, recognized through NFC and situated before a responsive display. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The shadow-box form, Faculty bust language, NFC pedestal, display background, lighting questions, and removable piece interaction were developed.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Complete one museum-quality unit, lock the scale and lighting, connect a Faculty dossier to NFC, and photograph the full interaction.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Studio photography · Lighting study · NFC interaction video · Faculty dossier

WORKING DRAFT · 71% CULTIVATED

Faculty Chess Set



THE INQUIRY

How might a game piece become a portable encounter with a person and an idea?

Faculty Chess Set

STORY

A collection of NFC-identified Faculty figures that can be used as chess pieces, teaching objects, and keys to digital personae. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Bust scale, bases, NFC coins, pedestal recognition, and a growing Faculty visual language were explored.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

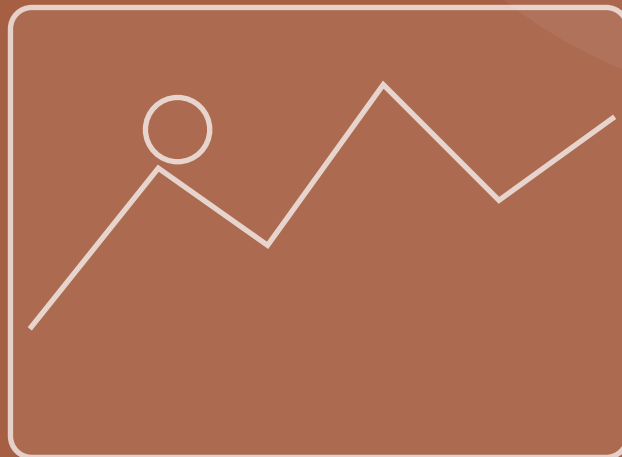
Select the first complete set, establish consistent sculptural standards, test durability, and publish the symbolism of each role.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Set lineup · Scale drawing · Base standard

WORKING DRAFT · 44% CULTIVATED

Landscape Shadowboxes



THE INQUIRY

How might a landscape become a layered window rather than a flat image?

Landscape Shadowboxes

STORY

Shallow display boxes combining a physical foreground silhouette with an animated or illuminated digital sky, sea, or horizon. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Pier, lighthouse, shore, and Garden of the Gods studies established the relationship between silhouette, glass, screen, depth, and light.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

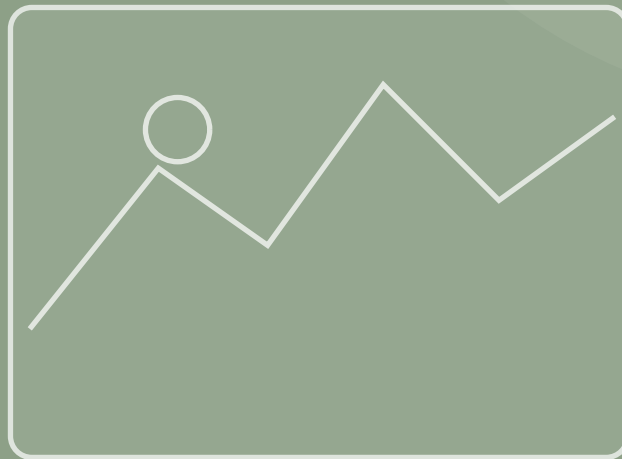
Build one finished landscape, standardize the 5x7 and 7x5 enclosures, and document depth, parallax, and animation guidelines.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Finished object photography · Layer diagram · Animation sample

WORKING DRAFT · 62% CULTIVATED

Living Landscapes



THE INQUIRY

How might a familiar place remain gently alive after it has been framed?

Living Landscapes

STORY

Procedural and AI-assisted skies, clouds, waves, light, and weather used behind physical landscape silhouettes. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The project moved from simple GIF motion toward modelled clouds, procedural waves, and possible stereo capture.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

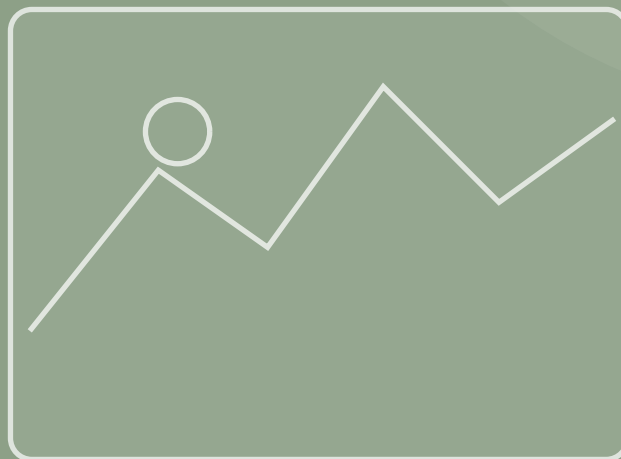
Create one seamless ten-minute scene, establish a low-power rendering target, and compare procedural, video, and generated approaches.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Motion study · Performance budget · Scene recipe

WORKING DRAFT · 36% CULTIVATED

Topographic Relief



THE INQUIRY

How might a distant landscape be compressed into a tactile, illuminated field of depth?

Topographic Relief

STORY

Small 3D-printed forced-perspective terrains derived from elevation data and paired with a luminous digital sky. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Nubble Light, Garden of the Gods, Pikes Peak, 1 m DEM, rock-color, depth compression, and 0.2 mm nozzle feasibility were investigated.

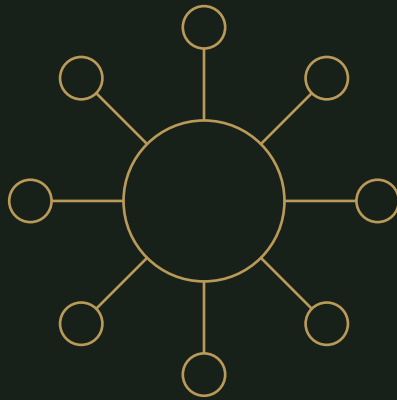
BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Complete one 4x6 relief from source data, document the perspective transform, and test geological coloring and backlighting.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Source-data record · Printed sample · Perspective diagram

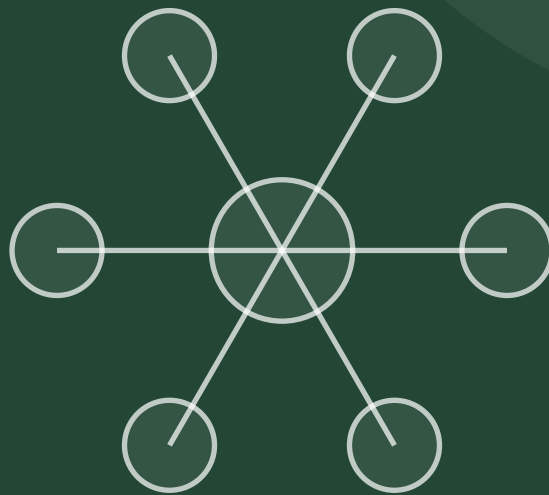
WORKING DRAFT · 40% CULTIVATED



Infrastructure

The technical and civic systems that allow the Institute to persist.

Castalia DAO



THE INQUIRY

How might an institution be legally durable while remaining member-shaped?

Castalia DAO

STORY

The Wyoming DAO LLC that provides Castalia with a legal body, governance substrate, and capacity to hold shared work. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The DAO LLC was formed and integrated into the Institute's identity and funding conversations.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

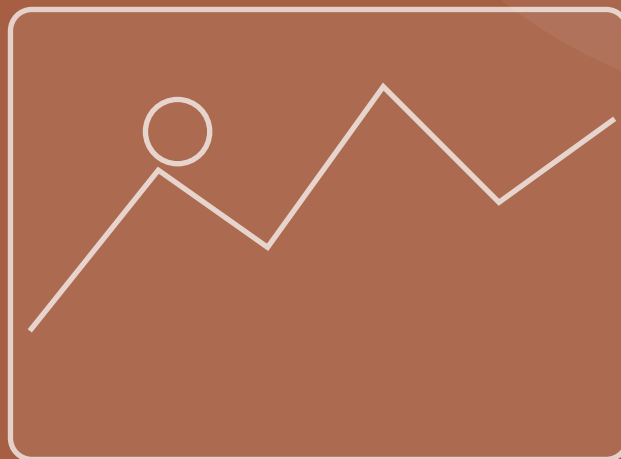
Publish a plain-language governance guide, clarify stewardship roles, and connect legal decisions to transparent member records.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Governance diagram · Plain-language guide · Stewardship roster

WORKING DRAFT · 76% CULTIVATED

Matrix Campus



THE INQUIRY

How might Castalia have a persistent campus without pretending that a chat room is a university?

Matrix Campus

STORY

A federated Matrix and spatial-web environment for salons, courses, offices, publications, and informal institutional life. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Synapse, Element X, WorkAdventure or related spatial tools, and campus subdomains were assembled into a coherent direction.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

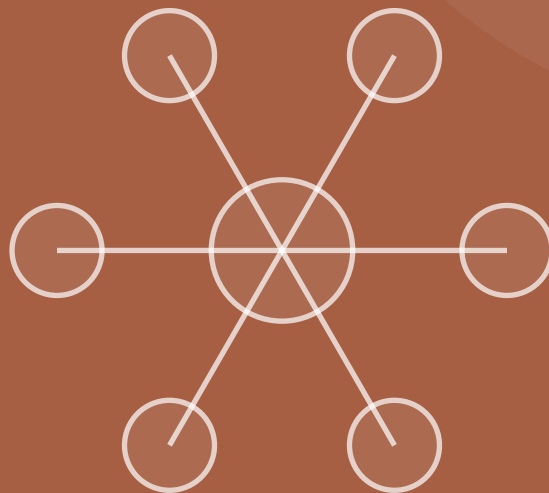
Stabilize the onboarding journey, define public and member spaces, and run a recurring salon entirely through the campus.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Campus map · Onboarding screens · Salon documentation

WORKING DRAFT · 59% CULTIVATED

GitHub Ecosystem



THE INQUIRY

How might every public artifact retain a legible history and a place for contribution?

GitHub Ecosystem

STORY

A family of repositories, Pages sites, Classroom projects, build pipelines, and public issue trackers supporting Castalia's works. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The organization, publishing repositories, course delivery experiments, and the Orchard itself became real working infrastructure.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Publish repository conventions, archive abandoned experiments, add contribution templates, and ensure the public sites share one identity.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

[Repository map](#) · [Contribution guide](#) · [Build-status page](#)

WORKING DRAFT · 70% CULTIVATED

Publishing Pipeline



THE INQUIRY

How might one canonical source produce a web edition, an A4 book, and future machine-readable forms?

Publishing Pipeline

STORY

A structured publishing system joining Markdown, metadata, generated illustration, PDF, GitHub Pages, and print-on-demand. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The first cover, book generator, mobile reader, annual route, and metadata conventions were built.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

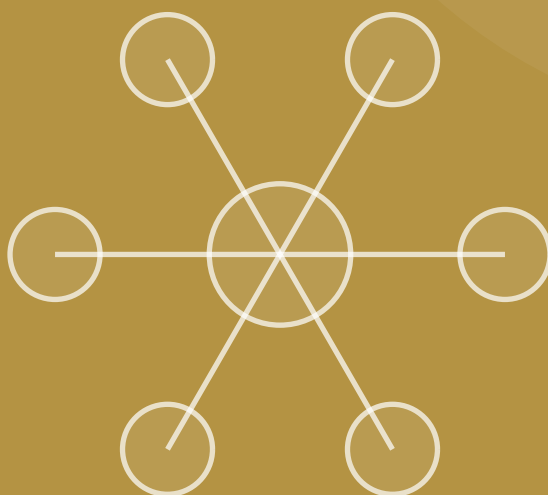
Automate validation, produce print-ready cover and interior files, add versioned releases, and connect the final output to a print API.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Build diagram · Preflight report · Release checklist

WORKING DRAFT · 52% CULTIVATED

Orchard API



THE INQUIRY

How might every Castalian work be discoverable and usable by sites, agents, devices, and future catalogs?

Orchard API

STORY

A machine-readable interface over Orchard works, states, relationships, assets, releases, and invitations to contribute. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The need for a structured schema and reusable registry was established.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Freeze the first JSON schema, expose a static read API through Pages, and demonstrate one consumer beyond the website.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

[JSON schema](#) · [Example response](#) · [Consumer demo](#)

WORKING DRAFT · 22% CULTIVATED

Programs Platform



THE INQUIRY

How might Castalia publish rigorous programs without binding the work to one learning-management system?

Programs Platform

STORY

A course delivery stack using portable IMSCC packages, GitHub, Jupyter Book, interactive notebooks, authentication, and xAPI. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The architecture was applied to the Aurnova MS-AI effort and to Castalia's own program and course commerce planning.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

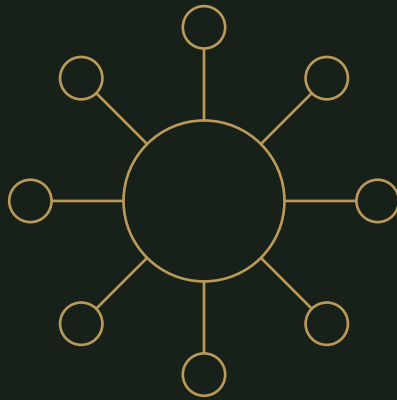
Complete one production course package, validate portability, and document the learner, instructor, and administrator workflows.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Course screenshots · Architecture diagram · Portability test



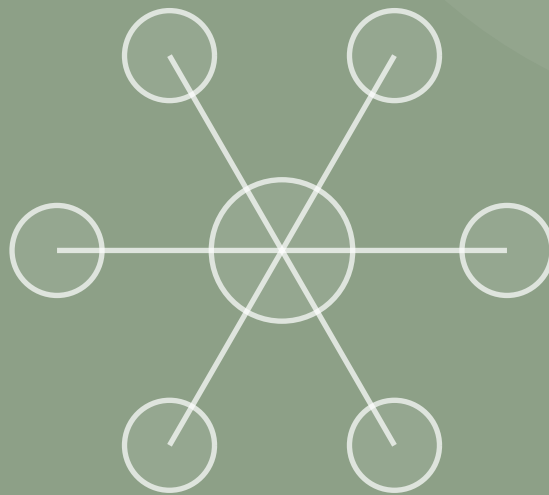
WORKING DRAFT · 63% CULTIVATED



Research

Questions under active investigation, before they harden into products or doctrine.

Physiological Cycles



THE INQUIRY

What rhythms can wearable signals reveal without claiming more certainty than the data supports?

Physiological Cycles

STORY

An investigation of HRV, sleep, stress, temperature, recovery, and cyclical patterns across daily and longer time scales. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The research question was connected to Ring, menopause temperature patterns, family observation, and calm visual interfaces.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

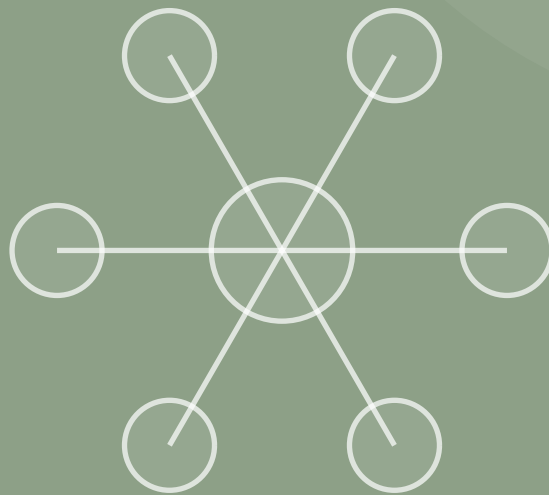
Define measurable hypotheses, collect consented longitudinal data, record confounders, and separate observation from diagnosis.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Study protocol · Data dictionary · Ethics and consent note

WORKING DRAFT · 34% CULTIVATED

Synastry



THE INQUIRY

How might relationships be visualized as changing forces without turning people into fixed types?

Synasty

STORY

A family relationship map combining symbolic systems, time-varying cycles, and physiological context to support reflection and empathy. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Family nodes, all-to-all relationships, visual tension, lunar timing, and consensual Ring data were explored.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

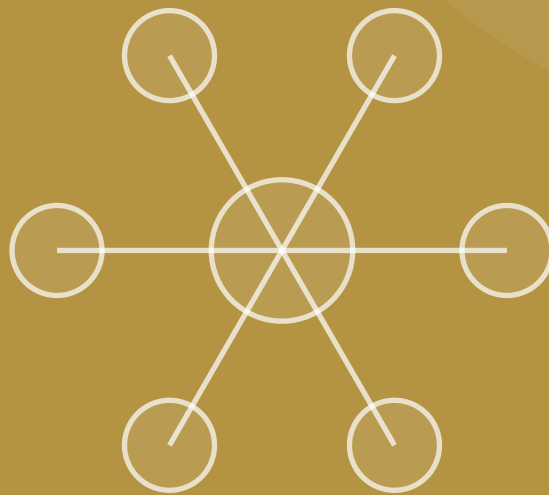
Choose a clearly labelled interpretive model, test it as a conversation aid, and avoid predictive or deterministic claims.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Family-map prototype · Interpretive legend · Consent workflow

WORKING DRAFT · 33% CULTIVATED

Inquiry Maps



THE INQUIRY

How might the path of a question be represented without mistaking the map for the inquiry itself?

Inquiry Maps

STORY

A research program for mapping questions, evidence, analogies, places, people, and transformations across the Orchard. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Early forms appeared in the Atlas of Inquiry, Glass Bead Game, Gazetteer, and family maps.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

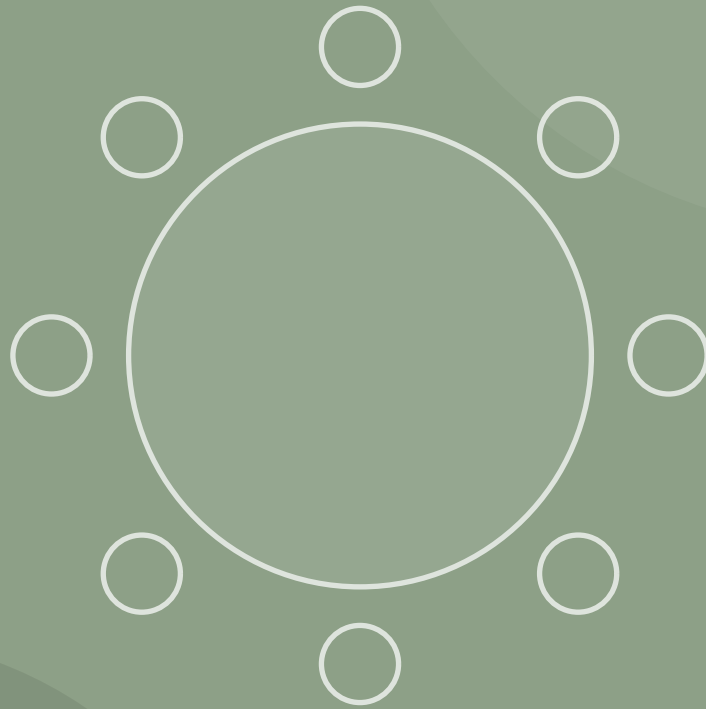
Define a minimal relation vocabulary and use it to map one real inquiry from question to artifact.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Relation vocabulary · Worked example · Map notation

WORKING DRAFT · 23% CULTIVATED

Phenology Almanac



THE INQUIRY

How might time be learned through the return of local signs rather than dates alone?

Phenology Almanac

STORY

A local almanac of moon, weather, plants, animals, seasonal work, and recurring family observances. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Phenology, lunar cycles, almanac faces, and the Institute's quarter-day calendar began to converge.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Record a full season in Monument, define observation standards, and publish the first illustrated local calendar.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Seasonal observations · Local species illustrations · Calendar spread

WORKING DRAFT · 37% CULTIVATED

PersonAI



THE INQUIRY

How might a digital persona remain useful, sourced, and honest about what it is?

PersonAI

STORY

A framework for historically grounded, explicitly synthetic personae used by Faculty, courses, devices, and reliquaries. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

The concept gained practical homes in Faculty cameos, Luminary, agent systems, and device faces.

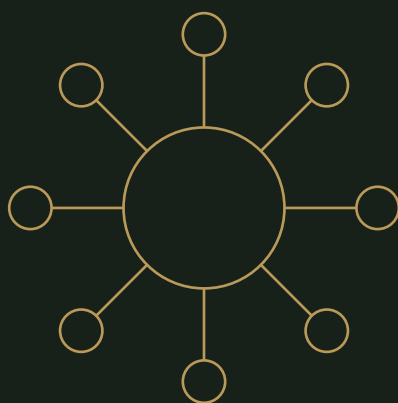
BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Write the sourcing and disclosure standard, create one fully documented persona, and evaluate it with subject-matter readers.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Persona dossier · Source graph · Disclosure language

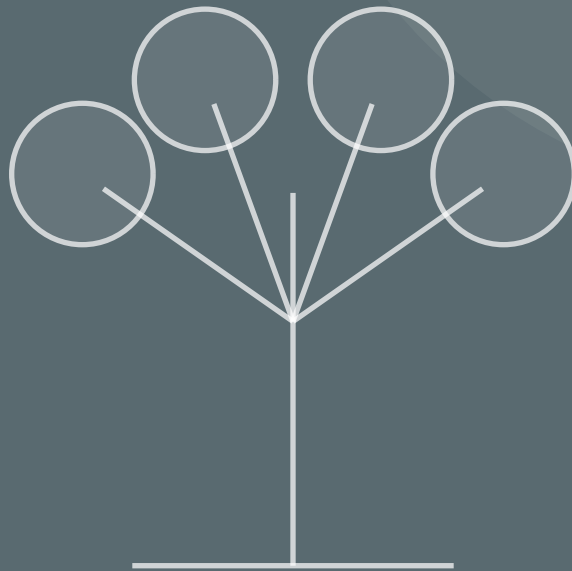
WORKING DRAFT · 35% CULTIVATED



Compost

Names and forms that gave way so stronger works could grow.

Aegis



THE INQUIRY

What did the first learner-device concept teach before it became Atlas?

Aegis

STORY

The earlier name and framing for Castalia's learner tablet. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Aegis helped establish protection, portability, and personal learning as design concerns.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

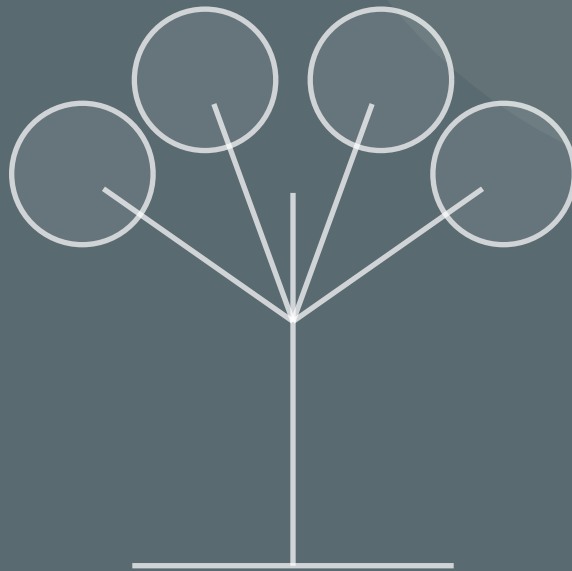
Preserve the early sketches and naming rationale, then keep Atlas as the canonical living work.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Early sketches · Naming note

WORKING DRAFT · 100% CULTIVATED

Table



THE INQUIRY

What did the stand-alone shared-table idea teach before it became Atlas Table?

Table

STORY

The earlier framing for Castalia's communal learning surface. The work is presented here as part of a living system rather than as an isolated product: its meaning comes from the people, practices, and neighboring works that make it useful.

HARVEST 2026

Table clarified the need for shared attention, maps, and games, but the object itself was less important than the shared Atlas mode.

BEFORE 2 NOVEMBER

Archive the standalone furniture assumptions and carry forward the strongest interaction ideas into Atlas Table.

EVIDENCE STILL NEEDED

Early diagrams · Transition note

WORKING DRAFT · 100% CULTIVATED

Almanac

What the working draft asks us to notice next.

01 **Photograph the real objects**

Atlas, Astrolabe, Luminary, iNQ, Ring experiments, and landscape boxes.

02 **Complete encounters**

Document a learner, a family, a visitor, or a contributor actually using each mature work.

03 **Name contributors**

Credit design, writing, code, fabrication, testing, scholarship, and care.

04 **Test claims**

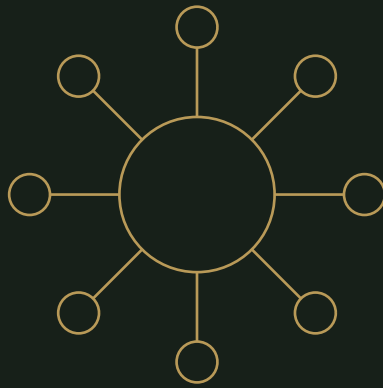
Separate demonstrated behavior from proposal, interpretation, and aspiration.

05 **Prune honestly**

Archive names and forms whose lessons are already carried by stronger trees.

06 **Order a proof**

Validate color, margins, spine, readability, and the feel of the book as an object.



The Orchard remains.

FINAL HARVEST · 2 NOVEMBER 2026

CULTIVATE · CREATE · CARRY FORWARD