

PoP Advanced Questionnaire
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Barony of Altavia, Caid
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(Revised with additions from Baron Timotheus Zacharia von Schloss Zwilling
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Congratulations! You know who, what, where, and when your persona is, and have a good general idea of your persona's world. This more detailed questionnaire builds on that information and those ideas, to aid in further development and augmentation of a basic persona concept into that persona as a complete person. It is now time to fully "flesh out" your persona and give it a complete personality and history, and start thinking about all those little details of everyday life that your persona would be familiar with.

Not everyone wants to have a fully detailed persona, nor is it a requirement of the SCA to have one. PoP has a policy of encouraging all SCA members to enjoy doing persona to the extent that they wish to, be it merely by persona name alone, on up through all the development levels up to a "real" person, with a life history and full detailed knowledge of all the day-to-day activities and outside factors in that life, capable of functioning in interactions. This questionnaire can be useful for people who just want to swap "persona stories," or for those who wish to carry their persona in a more naturalistic manner, in which details of life are included in conversations, as they are done in everyday real life interactions.

Your persona may be a reflection of what you do in your real world life, or it may reflect your activities in your respective barony/kingdom. Or, your persona may be totally unlike you in ethnic background, occupation, thoughts, outlook on life, spirituality, or appearance. Decide which aspects of yourself (or not) will be carried over into the persona. These, too, are concepts that can be addressed as you look through this questionnaire.

Below are a number of image-provoking exercises to help you see what details you are missing. You can come up with an infinite number of your own based on this format. You can adapt daily real life experiences and see how your persona would see and experience them. You can alter SCA experiences the same way. You can also get ideas of scenarios that you would not usually experience from books, magazines, movies, etc., even those with contemporary settings. Just alter the timeframe and see how it would work with your persona.

Read through the questions below and consider your answer. You may find that you have already addressed some of these issues in your earlier thinking about your persona. Occasional questions may seem surprisingly difficult, requiring some real time and thinking on your part. You may discover that a question causes you to have to do more research on, or even change, some already-developed aspect of your persona. The key at this level is ever-increasing amounts of research. Nothing can substitute for it.

This is not a test, nor is it meant to intimidate. There is no time limit, no need to address questions in any particular order. Use it as the working tool it is to delve into your persona, research it, develop it, understand it, and then use it, be it. And don't forget to have fun!

1. Where did you sleep last night (or perhaps during the day)? Did you sleep in your usual place of rest or were you elsewhere? Did you sleep outside or inside? If inside, in what manner of abode did you sleep? Were you sleeping in a fancy bed, or a small cot, on the packed earth in a hut, or under a tree outside? Were you warm enough or cool enough where you slept? Were you comfortable? Is your occupation related to where you slept? Did you sleep straight through night, or where you wakened for duties, prayer, care of a child or ill person, or because of something alarming? Was where you were sleeping quiet or noisy? Are you a person who is guarded during sleep? Did you sleep alone, or did you share your place of rest with a child, a spouse, a lover?
2. What are your surrounding upon arising? Based on the information in the previous question, address whether you are inside or outside, what you see around you. If you are inside, is it an actual bedroom or an open part of a larger edifice? Is there a fireplace or firepit? Do you rebuild the fire yourself or does someone else do it for you? If you slept outside, did it rain or snow on you?
3. Do you put on additional clothing upon arising or proceed through your day in the same clothing you slept in? Do you have assistance in getting dressed? If you bathe, is it in a tub or out of a basin? Is the water pumped from a well by you or brought to you by someone else? Is the water heated? Do you use some kind of soap? Do you apply cosmetics or does someone else aid you? DO you style your hair or wear it a certain way, and does someone help you? Or do you not bother with any form of ablution upon arising?
4. Do you eat a breakfast If so, what? Does it consist of last night's leftovers, or is it prepared afresh? Is the meal hot or cold? Do you prepare the meal or does someone else do it for you? Are you served? What types of plates, bowls, and utensils do you use? Do you have fine linen napkins, coarser cloth rags, or your own sleeve to wipe your hand and mouth on?
5. If you are inside, what do you see in the other rooms of your abode, or in the other sections of a one-room dwelling? What kind of furniture is there? Is it finely made and fancy? Is it the product of local craftsmen or imported? Is it roughhewn? Did you make any of the furniture yourself?

Is the kitchen a separate room? Do you prepare food there yourself, or does your spouse, or do the servants? Is there a separate dining area? Is there a room where the family gathers? Or does the dwelling consist of one room with a fireplace at one side that serves for both heating and the preparation of meals? Or do you have a great hall with a firepit?

6. Step outside your abode. Is it in a city, a town or village, on agricultural land, or off in a wood, swamp, desert, or mountain? Are you near any kind of open water, be it a brook, stream, river, pond, lake, or sea? Are there any kind of streets, roads, or paths near your dwelling? How many other edifices are near you? Are there other dwellings? What kind? Are there places of worship, market areas, planted fields? Do you hear or see family members, neighbors, workers, or members of any kind of religious? Do you hear or see horses, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, or any other livestock? Are you aware of any wildlife?

Is it sunny outside, or is it raining, snowing, cloudy, foggy? What time of day is it? How hot or cold is it? Do you have a reason to go out into the day for any length of time?

7. What do you do with your morning hours? Do you labor at some repetitive physical task, produce a production for sale, tend to importation paperwork, or amuse yourself with some creative endeavor? Whatever it is you do, are you doing it alone or with other people? Are they doing the same thing? Do you have interaction with them? Is what you are doing required for your actual livelihood? Is it something you enjoy doing?

Are you in the same location as where you slept and had breakfast? If not, did you have to travel some distance via horse, cart, or carriage to arrive at this destination? Or was it a short enough distance to walk? Do you have a choice of transportation modes?

8. Do you stop for a meal later in the morning or early afternoon? Think back on the questions relating to your breakfast and apply them there as well. Do you take your midday meal in the same place as you spent the morning; in the same place you had your morning meal?
9. What do you do with your afternoon hours? Are you busy at the same tasks you did in the morning, or do you do something else or something additional? Are you in the same place you were for the morning and for midday meal? If not, how did you get from one place to another?
10. How do you end your day of activities? Do you have a later meal at home or outside? What do you eat? DO you go home? DO you have outside duties in the evening, or do you go out for pleasure? What do you do, where do you do it, and how do you get there? Who are you with in the evenings? Are all your evenings the same? Do you have a round of chores you do at home in the evenings?
11. Do you follow a particular religion? Is it the predominant accepted religion of the area you are in, or must you take some care in the practice or hide it? Does your religion involve a building like a church, an outside edifice such as a dolmen, or no particular site? Are there regularly-scheduled rites for your religion, or is your religious activity private? Can you perform your ceremonies openly? Are there any symbols or style of dress for your faith? Can you wear them openly? Does your religion include financial support of the institutions itself, charities, etc.?
12. If you are ill, to whom do you go? Do you seek out a trained physician or go to the wise woman in the village?
13. From whence did the food for your meals come? Did you grow the grain and raise the animals yourself? Did they come from your lands, grown by servants and hired laborers? Did you or a hired hunter produce game from the land? Do you import any of your foods? If so, from where, and how do you obtain them? Similarly, do you drink water from a well and local beers, or do you import fine wines and other beverages? Can you afford to purchase non-vital foods, such as sweets?
14. Do you produce your own clothing from raw newly-shorn wool or beaten flax? Or do you purchase fabric and make your clothing from there? Do you purchase the finished garment? Do you have your clothing tailored especially for you? Do you import your fabrics? Do you have a great deal of ornamentation on your garb? Do you wear much in the way of jewelry?

15. What language do you speak in everyday interaction? Do you speak the same language in the home or with elderly relatives? DO you speak the same language in your religion? What is the language of the ruling body in the land? What language do you think in? What language do you dream in?
16. Are you literate? Can you read simple writings? Can you read complicated writings? Can you yourself write? Can you read or write another language? Can you do math in your head? Can you write numbers?
17. Have you had any experience with military training, whether it was tutorage under a master or time spent in an army? What did you do? What did you learn? Are you presently involved in a military body, or are you martial but not connected with a particular army or group? What weapons are you expert at? Do you have strategy and tactics ability? What weaponry and armory do you have access to? What weaponry and armory do you personally own? What fighting or defense skills have you learned outside of formal training?
18. Have you ever seen actual combat? Have you ever been in armed combat? Have you ever planned armed combat? How many people have you killed as part of a military action? Were you under orders to kill? How did it make you feel??

Have you ever been in a personal unarmed fight with another person? Man or woman? Why? Who won? Have you ever been in a personal armed fight with another person? How were you armed? Who won? Have you ever killed a person in a non-Military interaction? Why did you take this action and by what means? How did it make you feel?

Do you have any physical scars as a result of accidents? Do you have any physical scars as a result of military combat? Do you have any physical scars as a result of personal combat?

19. How likely would it be that you would sit on a hill one fine sunny day in an unthreatening location” If such were feasible, why would you be there and what would you be thinking about?
20. How likely would it be that you would be sitting at a lone campfire on a cold night in a location new to you? If such were feasible, why would you be here and what would you be thinking about?
21. What manner of coinage is used where you usually live? Do you have much money? Do you have enough money to store? What other kinds of coinage would you handle during a typical day? What other kinds of coinage have you handled in your lifetime?
22. If you wanted to send a message to a friend some distance off, how would you have it done? Would you hire a special messenger, send the message with someone going that way, go there yourself, or how? How would messages get to you from friends, business associates, etc.?
23. Would you consider yourself a cheerful person, or are you unhappy or moody? Do you smile a lot, frown a lot, glower a lot? Do you have a temper, or are you easy-going? Do you take offense easily? Do you have charisma that can be used on others? Are you easily affected by others’ charisma? Does the station of another person affect you? Would others consider you a “joiner” or a “loner”? Are you happier with the company of another person, a horse or other animal companion, or all by yourself?

24. Do you go to the local inns? When do you go to a tavern, is it to have a good time in company with others you know? Do you go to have a good time and meet others? Do you go to get information, sell information, or make more legitimate business deals? Do you like to get into brawls? Do you tend to get drunk? Or are you a homebody? Is it because you prefer staying at home or because you have no money to spend at an inn? If you don't have the money to stop in at a tavern but go there anyway from whence do you get the money to cover the expenses for the evening?
25. Do you gamble? For fun, or profit? What type of gambling? Bets, games of chance, horse racing, other? Are you good at it? Do you cheat? Do you make a living at it?
26. Are you in charge of a household? Is it a small family or manor farm, a house in a village or city, a manor house, a castle? Do you do the work of the household, or supervise servants? Who helps you with the work, servants, family members (children, senior members, unmarried women, others)? Do you have tenants that you deal with or supervise? Do you own the house, are you a tenant, or do you control the activities of someone else's household?
27. How many people do you feed, how many times a day? Are all meals at the table, or do you pack food for members to consume in the fields or while traveling? Do you have a chef, cook, kitchen crew? Do you or they: bake, brew, grow herbs or vegetables in a kitchen garden, tend to and butcher chickens, pigs, or other small food animals?
28. What else do you produce for the household: Daily, weekly, monthly, yearly? Do you spin, weave, make candles? If not who does? Do you buy those and other household needs? From a local market, growers, traveling sales folks?
29. Do you entertain? Dinner parties, balls, meetings, fighting groups, visiting royalty, foreign visitors? Who helps with the added work? Do the guests stay overnight, or longer? Where do you house them? How do you pay for the extra expenses, where do you get the extra food? How provides the entertainment: music, plays, costumes, food subtleties?
30. Does your household have an attached shop, farmland, or other production facility? Do you oversee those activities, do you work with, or are you married to, the person who does? Does your household have children, apprentices, squires, fosterlings, extended family members? What responsibilities do you have to these people? Are you responsible for educating them? Are you responsible for supervising them? What responsibilities do they have to you? What work do they contribute to your household? What income do they contribute to the household?
31. Do you control household expenses? Keep the household goods under lock and key, keep the keys yourself? Do you keep books, if not, does someone else? Do you spend your whole day dealing with the household? If not, what else do you do?
32. Does your household have a chapel or other religious site or shrine? Are you responsible for the religious activities and education in the household? How often does the household attend religious activities?
33. Do you tend to ill members of the household? Do you have a still room? Do you make medicinals? Do you buy them and keep them handy? Do you make charms? Are any of these handed down through the family?

34. Does your household travel from one house to another over the year? Are you responsible for the moves? Are you responsible for the other house(s), or do you stay with the one house and keep that when the householders are elsewhere?
35. Do you have roads or trails? Is the "road" a wide flat dirt road, dirt with a little wood chips , gravel added to keep down the mud? Is it actually paved? Is it well kept up? Is it dealt with by the local fief or by one of the higher Lords? How often does the weather cause the road to need fixing? Do you travel the roads or the back trails? Are there special road taverns?
36. What is the weather like? Is it warm, cold, windy, rainy? Do you have to deal with snow? How often do you need to be out in it? Does the weather interfere with what you do on a daily basis? What precautions do you take to deal with the weather?

The following are quickie questions that you probably answered back while doing Intermediate-level work. However, this time, think of why you answer the query the way you do.

What is your favorite color? What is your favorite season? What is your favorite time of day? What is your favorite weather? What is your favorite food? What is your favorite beverage? With whom would you most like to spend time? What skill of yours are you the most proud of? What physical attribute of yourself do you like the best? What do people like best about you? What always makes you laugh? Do you have people you consider to be true friends?

What is your least favorite color? What is your least favorite season? What is your least favorite time of day? What is your least favorite weather? What is your least favorite food? What is your least favorite beverage? With whom would you least like to spend time? What skill of yours are you the least proud of? What physical attribute of yourself do you like the least? What do people like least about you? What always makes you unhappy or sorrowful? Do you have people you consider to be true enemies?

As noted earlier, these are just a few of the myriad possible exercises that develop knowledge and small-detail awareness. Adapt almost any scenario from any other source to a medieval (or Renaissance) format and apply your persona information to it. As you address more and more detail and discover more and more facts, you will discover your persona is developing into a person. And like your own continued acquisition of knowledge and detailed experience in your own real world life, your persona will continue to gain knowledge and experience on its own path of development.

Questions? Want to schedule a Persona Workshop Class?

Contact Timotheus at ChiefTimotheus@gmail.com