

The Baronial Dynamic

Baronage

The ceremonial heads of the barony

Seneschal

The legal representative of the barony

The baronage and the seneschal should work Together for the benefit of the populace they serve.

What is my job exactly?

The baronage:

You've been given the honor and responsibility of representing the king and queen as the ceremonial heads of your territory.

This responsibility includes:

- Executing the lawful commands of the Crown
- Maintaining an appearance and example of chivalry, courtesy, and virtue for the populace.
- Encouraging and supporting the officers of the barony
- Recognizing services and skills within the barony, presenting awards and tokens, and recommending the populace for kingdom awards to the Crown
- Representing the barony to the Crown
- Serving as an ambassador for the barony and kingdom at large
- Creating a court and guard
- Setting 'the tone' for the barony and events.

***As the visible leaders of your territory, your actions and attitudes are more visible and have greater influence.

Additional responsibilities include serving on the finance committee as one vote if you choose to do so.

The Seneschal:

As Seneschal you've been supported by the Baronage and populace and warranted by the kingdom seneschal as the legal representative of your territory.

This responsibility includes:

- Assuring that the baronage, officers, and populace comply with society rules and regulations
- Submitting reports
- Coordinating and supporting the other officers within your territory
- Participating as part of the financial committee
- Overseeing conflicts and aiding in resolutions within the territory
- Appointing and overseeing event stewards
- Running meetings (if that is the tradition of your territory)
- Working with the kingdom seneschal to facilitate the transition of the baronage through polling the populace.
- Serving as an ambassador for the barony and kingdom at large

Understand that there are additional responsibilities with both positions, this is just a general outline.

What isn't my job?

The baronage:

As ceremonial heads, you have lots of responsibilities, but there are a few that do not fall under your umbrella of responsibility.

- Appoint or remove officers (you can suspend an officer for a period of investigation, but only under extreme circumstances. Make sure this is a last resort.)
- Declare events official or unofficial.
- Hold the office of either Seneschal or Exchequer while serving as part of the baronage.
- Give armigerous awards, unless delegated by the Crown.
- Banish people.
- Set policy for the Barony.
- Require fealty of the populace or officers.
- Require baronial officers to report to you.
- Signing any modern paperwork or contracts on behalf of the barony.

Seneschal:

This is a much shorter list.

- Anything that is considered ceremonial duty.
- Speak for the Baronage without their knowledge/permission.
- Follow the orders of the Baronage.

*This does not mean that you should not listen to them and consider their wishes when making decisions.

Both you and the Baronage should be working together in as harmonious a fashion as possible for the benefit of the barony and all its officers and populace. This includes working as partners on baronial events (I.e duration, theme, location). The best path forward in the relationship between the baronage and the seneschal is compromise in what is best for the territory.

Dealing with the populace and handling conflicts as a team

This is by far the toughest part of the job, which is why it is imperative for the seneschal and baronage to have clear and open communication.

- Always try and be discrete when dealing with conflicts.
 - Gossip and finger pointing never make the situation better or easier.
 - Keep each other in the loop. You are not in this alone, try to remember that.
 - Though it is the seneschal's responsibility to handle conflicts, ideally you should work together to resolve such issues.
- Listen.
 - Most of the time people simply want to vent, allow them to do this, discreetly.
 - Suggest a resolution, a moderator, or taking some time off. This is after all a game and not everyone is going to get along.
- Be as transparent as possible.
 - I've always said, 'perception is reality', if someone believes something, regardless of whether or not it is true, for Them it is. Keeping the populace in the loop is important, as well as communicating with each other.
- Maintain the appearance of Neutrality
 - It is very important that you appear unbiased regarding any household, individual or group.

Baronial Transition Process - Kingdom of Caid - 2023

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Background

When a landed Baronage (B&B) near the end of their tenure, the kingdom has a process for this transition. The process detailed below are the steps and general timeline. Ideally, 9 - 12 months are left in the term when the announcement is made.

Purpose

Given the guidance above, Caid will follow the process detailed below to announce, recruit, poll the populace and invest the replacement B&Bs.

This document provides guidance to territorial seneschals and the B&Bs on the steps. The goal of this process is to streamline the process and for parties to have a clear understanding of the process and their respective roles.

Process

Step 1 - Announcement

1. The local Baronage and Seneschal formally inform the Crown and the Kingdom Seneschal about their desire to find replacements and their requested end date of their term.
2. Once the Crown has accepted the B&B request, the Baronial Seneschal works with the B&Bs and Kingdom Seneschal to determine the timeline for the following:
 - Announcement / Call for letters of intent (usually during court at a locally sponsored event)
 - Polling
 - Heirs announcement (ideally plan for six month transition period from this announcement)
 - Investiture (usually at the local anniversary event)
3. Once the timeline is approved by the Kingdom Seneschal, the B&B announce a call for letters of intent and the deadline for submission (ideally a four week window). This announcement should be done both:
 - In court
 - In the territorial newsletter
 - NOTE: The announcement that the B&B are stepping down and the call for letters of intent can be two separate steps.
4. At the end of the letters of intent submission deadline, candidates and their letters of intent are reviewed by the B&B, Baronial Seneschal, Kingdom Seneschal and the Crown.

- Candidates can be removed from consideration prior to polling the Barony. The Baronial Seneschal and/or B&B should contact the ones not moving forward after the formal review with the Crown.

Step 2 - Polling

5. Corpora requires that current paid members of the local area are polled for their opinion on the candidate(s). The poll is not a vote. It is a tool to assess the opinions of the people in the local Barony on the candidates so that the Crown can make an informed selection at the end of the process. This should be made clear in the polling.
6. Polling can be performed either by direct mailing or online and should have a one month deadline for responses. At this time, the Kingdom prefers online polling given the robust reporting and instant feedback it provides. A discussion should be held between the Baronial Seneschal and the Kingdom Seneschal to determine what method works best for the area.
 - Mail/Electronic/Combo
 - Mail - The Kingdom Seneschal must request preprinted labels from Society
 - Need to provide current ZIP Code list to Society
 - Labels must be used/destroyed 10 days after receipt
 - Electronic - A Google Form housed on the Kingdom Google drive and posted on the Baronial page and other official baronial channels. The form is created by the Kingdom Seneschal.
7. Poll content
 - Modern Name
 - SCA Name
 - Membership #
 - Mailing Address and/or Zip code
 - Candidates
 - Single candidate(s) - Yes or No
 - Multiple candidate(s) - Select the preferred choice
 - Short Answer box (if they want to share some words) - Their response will not be shared with the populace.

Step 3 - Review of Polling / Determining Heirs

8. Review of polling
 - The Kingdom Seneschal and the Crown review the polling letters and overall results to determine the baronial heirs. The polling feedback is not shared with the local officers.
 - The current B&Bs opinions on the candidates are encouraged; however, the final decision rests with the Crown.
9. The Kingdom Seneschal and the Crown schedule a meeting with current B&Bs and Baronial Seneschal to discuss results and inform them of the selection of heirs.

Step 4 - Informing Heirs / Investiture

10. One of the more delicate steps in the process is Informing of Heirs and, if applicable, the other candidates for the position.
 - One set of candidates - The Kingdom Seneschal will work with the Baronial Seneschal to schedule a meeting with the current B&Bs, the Crown and the selected candidates to inform them of the results.
 - Multiple candidates - The Kingdom Seneschal will work with the Baronial Seneschal to schedule a meeting with the selected candidates, along with the others. The best timing of the different calls will be determined.
11. Informing of populace - The current B&Bs inform the populace of the decision, usually at a local event. Some baronies have a ceremony - please check with the local herald. The Crown should be invited to the event but is not required to be in attendance.
12. Investiture of Heirs - Heirs are invested by the Crown at an official event - usually the baronial anniversary.

ADDENDUM

- Sample Announcement
 - <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc2SFOrRwK2TJk6wI0Jxn5WlivVfcuuhg3jZeke51GFcYiaqw/viewform>

- Sample FB Post:

"Greetings to Altavia! Your Seneschal sends you warm and cozy greetings on this chilly morning, but I have also come to bear a message:

As many of you probably know, our baronial leadership will be changing soon. As part of that process, we conduct a polling of the populace to determine the level of confidence in the chosen baronial heirs. Please use this polling form to cast your vote in this process.

You may only vote once, and must have an active membership with the SCA to have your vote counted. These results will go directly to the Kingdom Seneschal and the Caid Royals. If you have any questions about this process, you may contact me at seneschal@sca-altavia.org, or you can contact the kingdom seneschal at seneschal@sca-caid.org.

This polling process will begin Saturday, October 29th (today), and will run for 4 weeks until closing on Saturday, November 26th. The new heirs will be announced at our Yule celebration on Saturday, December 10th.

YIS, Sibylla de Haze