NO FEAR DOCUMENTATION

Atlantian Persona Challenge

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Research
- Your Project
- Next Steps
- Bibliography
- Myths & Mistakes
- Final Suggestions
- Resources

INTRODUCTION

WHY DO WE DOCUMENT?

To Show What We Know

This is your chance to communicate all the research you've done, and to show the judges your understanding of historical methods

To Show What We Did

Without documentation, judges may draw the wrong conclusions about how and why you made certain choices

For Fairer Judging

Judges don't always know everything - or anything - about your topic, and your documentation can get them up to speed

To Help Others

Your project may excite someone else to try your art, and your documentation can show them places to start researching, help them avoid mistakes, or show them a new way to do something

DOCUMENTATION PARTS

1 RESEARCH

2 YOUR PROJECT

3 NEXT STEPS

4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

RESEARCH

GUIDING QUESTIONS

WHO

WHAT

WHEN

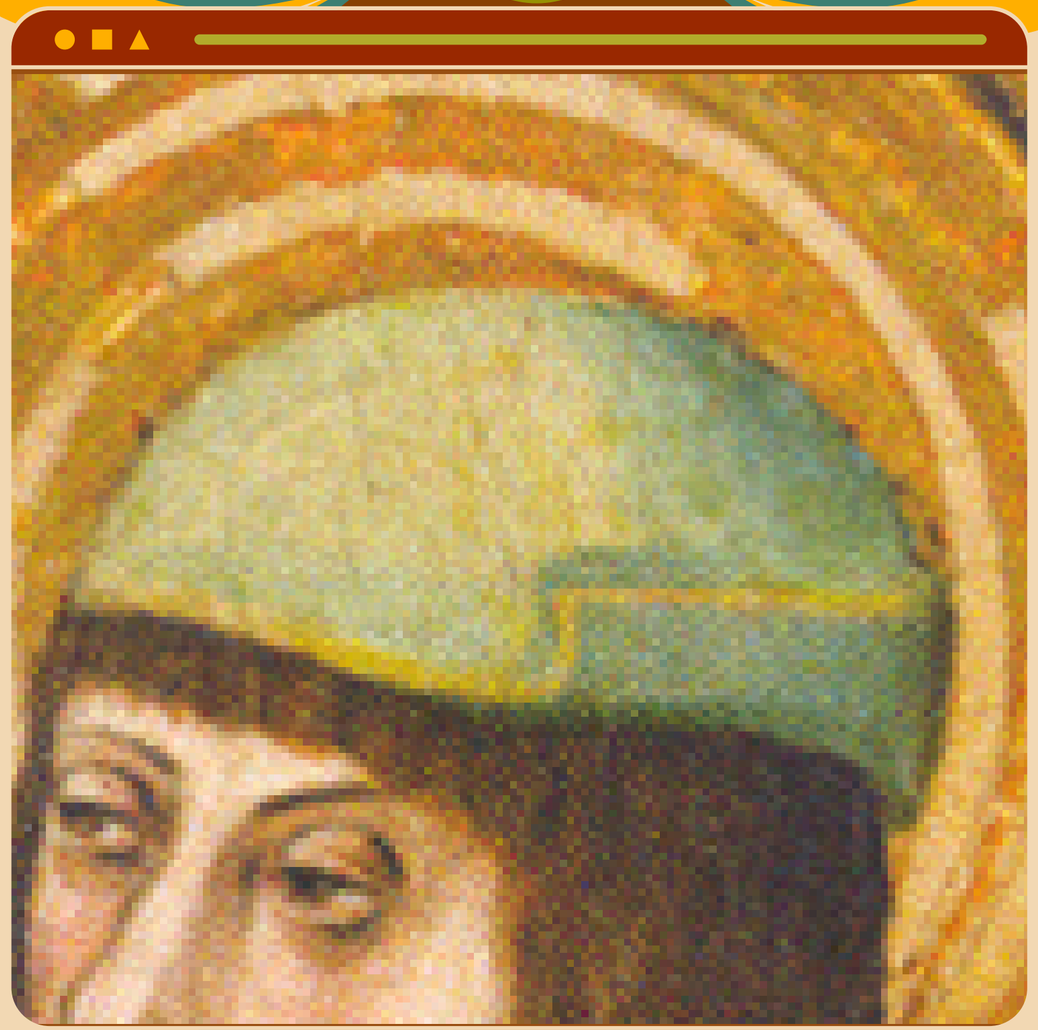
WHERE

WHY

HOW

WHO???

- What person would have made or used this item?
- What was their socio-economic status?



WHAT???

- Type of item (eg. what did you make?)
- Is the piece common for the time period/place?
- Are there extant items? (Pictures!!)
- What materials were used in original?

WHEN???

- Century
- Year, if possible
- A tiny bit of historic context - major figures, major events of note

WHERE???

- Country/region of origin
- Is it specific to a certain place?
- If referencing an extant object, is it from a specific place?

WHY???

- What was the item originally used for?
- Why did you want to make it?

HOW???

- Materials used in period
- Tools used in period
- Process used in period

TIPS AND TRICKS

Write the Research section first!

Then you can focus on the process of making the item, and possibly notice info you left out or forgot

If you're referencing extant items

Include photos in the documentation or in an appendix at the back

Use footnotes or end notes

So your judges/readers can find info as easily as possible

YOUR PROJECT

HISTORICAL WORK

- Historical Information
  - Materials used in period
  - Tools used in period
  - Process used in period

YOUR WORK

- Focus on your process
  - step by step
  - was/how was it different from period?
- Materials & techniques
  - different from period?
  - how?
  - why?

TIPS AND TRICKS

Explain your choices

Judges want to know that you understand period methods, and that your choices to deviate from them are informed and purposeful

Safety and expense are valid

No reasonable person expects you to endanger or bankrupt yourself to recreate an item

Take us with you

Above all, your reader wants to follow and understand the journey you took to make this item

NEXT STEPS

AKA ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Explain what you learned
- Explain challenges or problems
- Give your solutions, if any
- What would you do differently next time?

TIPS AND TRICKS

Next step plans show growth

You have learned from the process and
know how to improve for next time

Mentioning problems opens the door for help

Judges may be able to suggest solutions or directions
for helpful research

Or saves time

Judges know you know how to fix problems, so you
they don't need to discuss that in the judging process

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AKA WORKS CITED

- List sources, both online and print
- Use a consistent format
  - AT LEAST list:
    - author
    - title
    - date of publication
    - URL

TIPS AND TRICKS

Track sources as you go

So you don't have to find them again later

If you use online sources

be sure to list the URL or stable URL so others can locate it

Format doesn't matter

Consistency does

MYTHS & MISTAKES

MISTAKE: STUNT DOCUMENTATION

- Try to build the habit of researching first, then creating the item
- Making a thing and then searching for proof that it existed leads to a poor understanding of the historical context of that item

EXAMPLE

I have 12 yards of modern Chinese brocade in my fabric stash. I don't want to buy more fabric for a project, so I make a Viking outfit from this material.

I decide to enter the outfit in an A&S competition. I spend hours looking for any evidence that the Vikings any kind of brocade for any purpose. I'm surprised when the judges mark me down for it.

MISTAKE: CONTEXT MIXING

- In general, research should focus on the specific historical context of an item

- Try to avoid mixing places and time periods in one item unless there is evidence it was done that way

EXAMPLE

Spain had plaid bias cut gowns in the 14th century. This is not support for making a 16th century Russian jacket in tartan plaid.

In other words, just because it's "period" **somewhere** does not mean it's "period" **everywhere**.

MYTH: DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

- Each competition or display has its own requirements
- You **can** enter even if you don't have documentation - it's usually worth points, but you can get feedback even without it

- Most importantly, documentation does not make you an artist/artisan, and the lack of it does not mean you aren't a "real" artist/artisan.
- It is perfectly acceptable to focus on making things rather than writing documentation - and there are other ways to communicate your knowledge

MYTH: DOCUMENTATION HAS TO BE A MASTER'S THESIS

- Unless your project is a research paper, it doesn't need to be long
- Documentation can be as short as a 3x5 index card
- You can use bullet points, step by step instructions, or any other writing format that works

- EZ Docs is acceptable (unless otherwise stated in the event description)
- Too much information means judges spend more time reading and less time discussing with you
- Also, too much documentation may mean your focus is too broad or you're trying to do too much in one project

MYTH: DOCUMENTATION HAS TO BE WRITTEN

- There is no set reuirement that documentation has to be a paper
- Video docs are a great option both for virtual events and live events
- If possible, consider an iPad or tablet with a gallery of process images

- There is also no requirement that **you** write your documentation - you can dictate to someone
- QR codes can link a splashy graphic to an online version of your work - this is great for longer documentation that may be burdensome to read
- You could even record an audio narration of your documentation
- The eSCA opens up a lot of creative ways to document and present your research

FINAL SUGGESTIONS

DOCUMENTATION TIPS

Use the EZ Docs sheet to write an abstract

A short overview of your project is great for casual browsers
and to give judges a starting snapshot of your project

Make a table of contents

This helps direct people to specific parts
of your documentation

Photos and images are AMAZING

Think about including photos of your own process
as well as extant items that inspired you

DOCUMENTATION TIPS

PROOFREAD

Once you're done with your documentation, put it away for a day or two, then look at it fresh.

Ask a friend to read it

They may catch errors or ask questions that will help clarify your work

Bring your sources with you

For quick reference, or if you don't have formal written documentation

ON JUDGING

Know what you want

If you want only written feedback, tell us. If you're more interested in verbal feedback, tell us! We are happy to tailor the experience, as long as you communicate your needs.

Know the criteria

Check your kingdom MOAS website or the competition website for the judging criteria, and read it over

Ask someone to pre-vet your scoresheet

If you have anxiety or discomfort around the scoresheet, most Peers and other experienced A&S competitors will be happy to read it and distill the feedback with you

RESOURCES

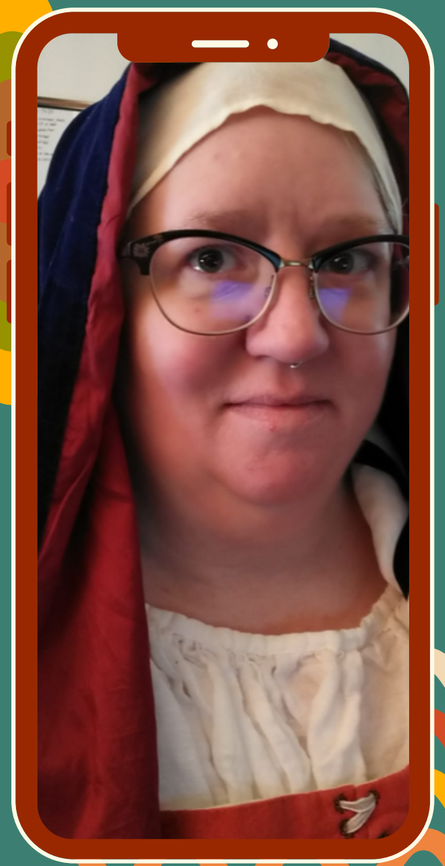
DOCUMENTATION HELP

- Studiolo Peryn has a 21 page guide to documentation - perfect for folks who like a lot of structure
  https://studioloperyn.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/documentation.pdf

- Mistress Eithni's Documentation guides are some of the best on the SCA internet https://eithni.com/research/documentation/

- Karen Larsdatter's EZ Docs sheet is a great place to start - it's almost universally accepted across Atlantia
  http://www.larsdatter.com/ezdoc/

CONTACT ME



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