

GLOSSARY: 13th century Knightly Life

Felinah Memo Hazara Khan-ad-Din

- A outrance** (See **Tournament**) A joust or tournament with sharp weapons.
- A plaisance** (See **Tournament**) A joust or tournament of peace fought with points and edges blunted.
- Armigerii** (See **Esquire**) One of many descriptions of a man-at-arms who was not a knight, and often translated as esquire or squire; specifically *armigeri* referred to one entitled to a coat of arms. See esquire for a more complete explanation.
- Aristocracy** The upper class of society, which by the mid 13th century included knights, as well as the titled nobility.
 Secular **titled nobility**, who had great influence at court, included **counts, earls and countesses**. There were never more than 25 earls/counts at any time between 1000 and 1300, and only 11 in 1300.
Knights (see **Knight**) achieved greater social status during the 13th century by taking on many distinctions previously reserved for the nobility, although they were never part of the nobility.
Baron was a social title whose definition varied over time. By the mid 13th century, a baron was a landowner who held at least a part of his land directly of the king (*a tenant-in-chief*) and whose heirs must pay the higher baron's relief when doing homage for their lands. The title, however, did not dictate specific legal functions or privileges, and did not denote a precise economic rank. Records indicate about 190 known and probable baronies in 1200, although in the mid 13th century, Henry III boasted that he could remember the names of his 250 baronies and their holders. About 100 of these included the magnates or "greater Barons", (nobles, and barons of the politically influential wealthy baronies), while the majority were held by knights, and even some by esquires or sergeants.
Magnates were the wealthiest and most influential men in the realm, and served as ministers on the king's council. There were about 100 magnates in mid 13th century England, including the secular nobles (although not the Earl of Oxford), archbishops and bishops, and the wealthiest barons and knights. A magnate's income was at least 5 times the average shire knight's, or perhaps 20 manors or more in the mid-13th century.
- Assart** Clear land not previously cultivated and put it under cultivation. Assarting peaked during the mid-13th century in response to population growth, and included fens, marshlands, moorlands, and other marginal lands, as well as lands released from jurisdiction of the Royal Forest ("disafforestation") by the king.
- Assize** (See **Courts**) Royal decrees covering specific topics, any fees covered by that ordinance and inquests concerning matters covering such decrees.
- Bailiff** (See **Officers, estate**) Often translated as "*serviens*" or an administrative "sergeant", an estate bailiff typically supervised multiple manors in one geographical area.
- Banneret** (See **Knight**) A wealthy knight able to afford a small retinue of knights and of enough influence locally and at Court to be granted the right to carry a gonfannon on the field.
- Baron** (See **Aristocracy**) In the mid 13th century, a baron was a significant landowner holding part of his land directly of the king (*a tenant-in-chief*); his heirs paid a baron's relief when doing homage to the king to assume possession of their lands.
- Behourd** (See **Tournament**) An informal tournament fought *a plaisance*, sometimes including, or even restricted to squires.
- Calendar** The medieval calendar was determined primarily by Church feast days. By the 13th century, the civil new year began on Jan. 1, but the Church's "Year of Grace" began on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation. Some of the days important in the manorial year are listed below.

Michaelmas	Sept. 29	Began the agricultural and fiscal year; harvest was finished and sheaves stored; ended autumn & began winter; began ploughing & sowing winter crop.
All Hallows	Nov. 1	Winter sowing should be done, begin feeding cattle with hay.
Martinmas	Nov. 11	Advent begins; slaughter beasts not fed across winter. Thresh and winnow sheaves, move measured corn to granary.
Christmas	Dec. 25	Ended winter, began spring; one of major church holidays.
New Year's (civil)	Jan. 1	Celebrated as part of 12 days of Christmas.
Epiphany	Jan. 6	End of year's greatest holiday; finish spring plowing.
Shrove Tuesday	before Lent	Spring planting should be done.
Annunciation	March 25	Lady Day; New Year's Day for Year of Grace
Easter, Hocktide	Moveable	Ended spring, began summer
May Day	May 1	Move cattle out to summer pasture, stop feeding corn to horses.
St. John's Day	June 24	Midsummer; sheep shearing, begin hay harvest
Lammas Day	Aug. 1	Move cattle to hay stubble, begin corn harvest.

Carucate A hide of land (about 120 acres) = 4 virgates = 8 oxgangs.

Chancellor (See **Officers, royal**) The administrative head of the office of the Chancery, which was responsible for all royal records. The chancery issued royal charters, letters and writs.

Constable (See **Officers, royal**) The constable of England maintained order in Court; the term was also used loosely for commanders of troops or squads of castle guards.

Coroner (See **Officers, royal**) A shire knight serving as a royal officer who investigated unnatural deaths and felonies in which deaths occurred.

Cottar/Bordar (See **Peasant**) The lowest rank of unfree peasant.

Courts

- **Manorial courts** were held each three or six weeks on the lord's manor to hear pleas concerning agricultural offenses, labor services, and assault, trespass and slander within the manor. The lord had jurisdiction, as well as rights to the fines and fees collected, although his steward typically presided. If more than one manor had a major presence in one village, the rights to different assizes or fees were divided among the manorial lords.

- **Hundred courts** met every three weeks to hear minor criminal and civil cases, as well as offenses against the Assizes. The hundred court met at one of the shire manors and was presided over by the hundred's bailiff, a deputy of the county sheriff.

- **County (shire) courts** met twice a year at Easter and Michaelmas (Sept. 29) on one of the magnate manors of the shire to hear non-criminal cases; the sheriff and coroner had joint jurisdiction over county courts in the 13th century.

- Periodically, itinerant royal justices held a large royal **eyre** within each shire to hear more serious crimes, unexplained deaths, misconduct and negligence by officials and private disputes. Eyres were large formal courts presided over by the justices and attendance was required of all bishops, abbots, earls, barons and knights.

- **Assizes** referred to royal decrees covering specific topics concerned with manufacture, weights, measures, or arms, any fees covered by that decree and inquests concerning these decrees. A lord whose manor included a village was entitled to the fees and fines from the assize of bread and ale.

Knights were expected to serve as jurors on inquests for assizes, coroners inquests, eyres, county and hundred courts. The final appeal was to the **permanent royal court** at Winchester, or before the king himself. Independent **Forest courts** held by forest Wardens heard suits concerning "vert and venison" - lawsuits concerning living in or removing resources from the royal forest, or issues of poaching deer and boar.

Demesne Estate lands held by a lord that were managed and cultivated under his direct administration, through a combination of reeves, bailiffs, and perhaps a steward (see Estate, officers). Non-demesne lands were leased to peasants in return for labor services or rents in kind or cash, or held by knights or sergeants by military or other tenure.

Demesne farming (See also **Estate**) A form of estate management unique to England in the 13th and 14th centuries in which the lord managed the majority of his estate through his officers. This is in contrast to the more classic feudal system of leasing the lands out for fixed services and rents to peasants or creating tenures for knights or sergeants for fixed rents. In demesne farming, the lord's estate officers collected all monies, paid out the estate expenses and received a fixed salary; all profits went directly to the lord. The more traditional leasing system took the least effort on the lord's part and protected him from fraudulent officers. The heavy inflation of 1180 to 1220 caused the transition to demesne farming, since the landlords paid higher prices and so needed the benefit of higher profits.

Destrier Heavier horse suitable for and trained for war and tournament (no difference in 13th century), and used by knights wealthy enough to own them. Stallions were the most common destrier, and the best evidence indicates they typically stood 15 hands to 15h 2" (5' to 5'2", since 1 h = 4") at the withers (peak of the shoulder), weighing probably 1200 pounds, although some would have been more lightly built. This is certainly *not* the size of the large modern draught breeds that often stand 16h to 18h tall, *e.g.* Shire or Percheron. Medieval destriers were not well trained in quick turns or in charging at an isolated target, as in a joust, which could create difficulties; frequently, knights missed each other entirely. **1086** (Domesday book): a destrier cost £1, or the income from 1 hide of land, which could be half the knight's income for the year. **1180**: a destrier cost £5, or half the income from a larger knight's fee. **1220**: a destrier probably cost ≈ £10 - £20, or half the income from a middling knight's fee. **1280**: a destrier cost ≈ £40 - £50, or the yearly income from a poor-to-middling knight's fee.

Distraint Warrant from the king requiring all men holding land through military tenure (esquire and knightly rank) with income over a certain amount to be dubbed as knights and provide a knight's military service. Henry III distrained such men with incomes of £20 or more multiple times in the mid-13th century, and Edward I distrained such men with incomes of £40 or more in the late 13th century.

Escheator (See **Officers, royal**) A royal officer who administered the income and lands involved with the king's feudal incidents: relief, wardship and marriage (see **Feudal incidents**).

Esquires Non-knight men-at-arms, but the titles used for this station varied greatly. **Vallettus**, **armiger**, **scutifer**, **sergeant at arms**, and **serviens ad arma** all embraced *both* non-knights with wealth to support knighthood, and the far larger number of lesser men-at-arms. In 14th century, **vadlet** was the favored term to describe retainers of magnates. In the early 14th C, **vallettus** was the most common description of rank below knight and for the holder of a knight's fee who had not yet assumed knighthood; vallettus had long applied to the young son of a knight not yet dubbed, but once distraints and respites began, the word lost its connection with youth.

- In the Berkeley estate accounts from 1281 - 1321, social rank decreased from *milites* (knight) to *armigeri* (esquire in vernacular) to *valletti* to *garciones* (garçons, or serving men) to *pagetti* (pages), but the difference in rank below esquire was not strictly recognized socially.
- Different titles were also used in different sources: *serviens ad arma* in marshals' registers of feudal retinues, *scutifer* in wardrobe books of King's household and in pay rolls, and *vallettus* in horse inventories and letters of protection. The wages for such men were ≈ 1/2 that of a knight, and the service of two of these rank could substitute for the service of a knight.
- Official recognition of strict rank within this group occurred between 1322 and 1363:

- 1300-22: vallettus, armiger, scutifer and *serviens ad arma* all included non-knights with wealth to support knighthood and lesser men-at-arms; these had incomes as low as £5.
- 1363: A petition for sumptuary laws listed ranks in increasing order from serving men (**garcons**), to tradesmen (**gentz de Mestire**), to **vallettus**, to **esquires (armigerii)** with income <£100 to **esquires** with income >£200 to knights with income ≤ £133 1/3 to knights with incomes ≥ £300. By this time vallettus had fallen to a rank below esquire.

Estate The combination of **manors** held by a knight or noble, initially by military tenure, and later in return for cash. The large estates of magnates were called **honours**.

- **Manors** were an administrative unit of properties. A classic feudal manor might include primarily arable land, meadow and woods, a manor house for the lord, peasant farms and a village. The presence of a village gave the lord the right to a manorial court, which provided a substantial source of income from fees and fines. In the 13th century, manors came in many varieties. Cash manors provided rents or income from sales of resources – a cash manor might consist of farms with no village, or the rights to timber sales or mines in one area, or any other properties. Most manors did not include villages, especially those of shire knights. The value of manors varied, but on average, ranged from £10 - £30 per year.

- **Estate value** depended primarily on the number of manors; based on surveys of Gloucestershire in the 14th century and Glover's Roll of armigerous knights and nobles in 1250, one might estimate that of the *landed* knightly and noble families of England:
 - ≈ 25% were *poor or rustic knights* who held only one manor, which probably provided £20 to £40 per year – not usually enough alone to support the expected knightly life-style.
 - ≈ 40-45% were *average shire knights* who held 2 – 4 manors, providing perhaps £50 - £80 per year; with care, this could support a reasonable local knightly life-style.
 - ≈ 15 – 20% were *well-to-do shire knights*, who held 5 – 9 manors, providing perhaps £100 - £200 per year; these knights could support their life-style easily within their shire.
 - ≈ 8% were *bannerets* and many of the non-magnate barons; these held 10 – 15 manors, which provided perhaps £200 to £400/year, which was enough to retain a small retinue; the wealthier or more politically active had some influence at Court.
 - ≈ 8% were *magnates* who held over 20 manors, probably providing at least £400 per year – at least 5 times the income of an average shire knight; this group included the nobles, and the wealthier barons, and numbered about 100 in the mid 13th century.
 In contrast, a *sergeant's tenure* typically provided about £10 to £15 per year, and a skilled worker received probably about £3 to £4 per year in salary.

Estate, officers Estate officers were modeled after the royal household (see **Officers, royal**) and had similar duties within their more limited estates. The largest magnate estates (**honours**) required a complete managerial staff (steward, receiver, bailiffs, reeves); moderate to large estates might have steward, bailiffs and reeves; knights' estates would have a bailiff to supervise their manorial reeves; the poorest knights might have only a reeve. Upper-level management (steward, receiver, bailiff) were often sergeants, while villains filled the lower offices on each manor in exchange for relief of some or all of their labor services and rent.

- *Upper management, usually held by sergeants, or even knights on magnate estates.*

Steward: The steward administered the day-to-day management of the entire estate. Knowledge of husbandry was paramount in his qualification, although by the later 13th century, stewards were well versed in law, and the great majority were lawyers. The steward instructed and supervised the bailiffs of the various manorial groups, presided over manorial courts (see also **Courts**), and accompanied the auditors each Michaelmas to inspect reeves' accounts on the individual manors. On the largest estates, which had receivers, the steward accepted liveries in kind, while the receiver handled liveries in cash. He visited all of the manors twice or three times yearly to inquire into rights, rents, services and husbandry. In most areas, he spoke for the lord, but needed a warrant from the lord for dismissing a free officer directly appointed by the lord, dowering a woman, freeing or exchanging a male villein, or accepting homage.

Receiver: On the very large magnate honours, the receiver was responsible for all liveries in cash, and for dispensing monies to the various household offices.

Bailiff: He typically administered multiple manors in one geographical area on moderate or large estates. Small estates of one or two manors might have only a reeve on each manor, but no bailiff. A bailiff was appointed by the lord, and received clothing and wages directly from him; his term was terminated at the lord's will. The bailiff's principle duties included supervision of work and workers on the manors and collection of data for the accounts. His duties overlapped with those of the reeve, but he was more responsible for supervision, while the reeve did the moment-to-moment overseer work on the manor. He was expected to be a good husbandman and to have some legal training. He was jointly responsible with each reeve for accounting of services from customary tenants due, rendered or commuted into cash payment. The bailiff received the tallies from the reeve and translated them into the estate account; he was more responsible than the reeve for accuracy of his accounts because he was more educated. He also had to know the necessary qualifications and terms of labor for each other manor office and what practices of each office were profitable or not.

• *Villein officers: The highest ranking villein offices were the reeve, hayward and beadle.*

Reeve: Most commonly an unfree villein elected by the village community, the reeve supervised the daily work and workers in his manor. Although a reeve was not paid for his work by the lord, he was usually excused his normal rent and labor services. He was responsible for the health of the animals, the ploughing, security of the harvest and repair of the buildings. He tallied the reports of the hayward, dairymaid, cowherd and others, and rendered them in weekly tallies for the bailiff. He was jointly responsible with the bailiff for accounting of the labor services of the peasants and any cash if they commuted their services.

Hayward: He was responsible for the manorial woods, meadow, and corn, as well as summoning the customary labor to the fields and supervising ploughing, sowing and harvesting. The hayward reported to the reeve and had to strike tallies with him for works as they were discharged.

Dairymaid was responsible for milk, butter, cheese, any fowl and smaller animals and the winnowing.

Other positions included **cowherd, shepherd, swine-man, ploughman, smith** and **carter**.

Eyre (See **Courts**) Formal courts held by traveling royal justices to hear more serious suits.

Feudal incidents included *inheritance of land, marriage, and wardship*. A lord's control the feudal incidents of his tenants were crucial in establishing and maintaining his lordship over those tenants. Kings exercised royal lordship over tenants-in-chief (those who held lands directly from the king), who included the most powerful tenants – the greater Barons (titled nobles and the wealthiest of the non-noble barons). Royal determination to preserve feudal authority after the Magna Carta resulted in stronger royal control over the feudal incidents of these powerful families in the 13th and early 14th centuries than at any other medieval period. Feudal incidents provided income and a means of rewarding service (patronage) to Henry III, who had virtually no lands left to bestow by the middle of his reign. 13th century royal officials called **escheators** (see **Officers, royal**) were established to closely monitor the inheritance of lands, the deaths and widows of the tenants-in-chief to the king.

Inheritance: When a tenant died, his lands (and their profits) reverted to the lord until the heir did homage and paid the lord a **relief** (sum of money) to take possession of his lands. When a tenant-in-chief died, the heir had to travel in person to the king, swear homage and pay a *relief* to gain seisin (lordship) over his inheritance. The amount of the *relief* owed depended on rank (earl > baron > knight) and was dictated in the Magna Carta. The *subescheator* of the shire took possession of (*escheated*) the lands upon the death of a tenant-in-chief, and supervised the land (and collected all profits) until the relief had been paid in

person; this reinforced recognition of the king's lordship over the lands as well as providing income, or a source of patronage.

- In the 13th century, upon the death of a tenant, the estate passed to the eldest son (*primogeniture*); in families with no son, the land was divided equally between the surviving daughters of the landholder, even daughters of different wives. For example, the estate of a knight who had one daughter by each of three wives, but no sons, would be divided equally between the three daughters. In the larger estates of knights banneret and magnates, however, *premortem gifts* to younger sons and daughters ensured their economic support.

- A *widow* received a dower of at least 1/3 of the estate upon the death of her husband, and controlled those lands until her death, regardless of subsequent marriages. Thus, some long-lived noble women became very wealthy and politically powerful. Upon her death, a widow's dower lands rejoined those of family estate.

Marriage: The lord had the right to *consent* to each of the marriages of female heirs and widows, and the right to *arrange* marriages of female wards (see **Wardship**, below), since such marriages effectively determined who became a tenant of that lord; for tenants-in-chief, this right belonged to the king. During Henry III's reign in the 13th century, royal consent was typically obtained in the form of a fine paid to the king; a lord's consent could be obtained in a similar manner.

- Marriage required *free consent* by both partners; the canonical age of consent for boys was 14 and for girls was 12 (although the age of majority for men was 21, and for girls was 14). Marriage contracts (betrothals) arranged in childhood contained a fine to be paid if either partner refused the marriage upon reaching the age of consent. Similarly, a guardian received financial compensation if a ward refused marriage of economic benefit to the guardian, or if a ward married without permission of the guardian; widows could also pay their feudal lord for the right to refuse a particular marriage.

- Feudal aristocrats generally arranged marriages of their sons and daughters to protect and acquire land, especially lands close geographically that rounded out an estate. Social status within the ranks of the aristocracy was not a rigid barrier, and heiresses of portions of baronies were known to marry shire knights; however, knights tended to marry into knightly families, barons into baronial families and magnates into magnate families. Betrothals were often arranged in childhood, but the median age of marriage for heiresses was in the early 20s.

- The daughter of major landholder usually received a marriage portion of her family's estate as a dowry. A woman's lands, dowry or inheritance, merged with those of her husband to form a single estate. If, however, a woman or her heirs failed to have children within three generations, any dowry lands reverted to the original family.

- Remarriage was common for both men and women. Widows were economically attractive partners, although barons often remarried younger women (which created difficulties for their heirs, since the widow was often of an age with the heir and so might retain control of her dower throughout his lifetime).

Wardship: If the heirs of a tenant were minors upon his death, the heirs became wards of the lord, and the supervision and profits of their lands reverted to the lord until their majority. The age of majority (including for inheritance) was 21 for men. The age of majority for women was 14, but a woman's majority for *inheritance* was dictated by marriage, regardless of age. So, a female heiress remained a ward her lord until she married. The king insisted on the right of wardship of any minor heirs even if only a minor portion of their estate was held directly of the king. The king could sell or give profitable wardships to his lords, and a mother who wished guardianship of her minor children had to purchase their wardship from the king.

Forest, royal Land under the jurisdiction of Forest Law, including about 1/5 of England in the mid-13th century, which fell to 1/7 by 1334. Much of the royal Forest was wooded, but moorlands, wetlands and other areas could fall under Forest law, as well. Villages and manors within the Forest required licenses from the king, and had to obey Forest as well as Common Law. The inhabitants in the Forest could not build ditches, hedges or fences that might interfere with hunting deer or boar, even to protect their crops.

Forester (See **Officers, royal**) Usually a shire knight, a forester worked under the Warden of a particular forest in supervising the forest and administering forest law.

Freeman (*liberii hominess*, see **Peasant**) Highest rank of peasant.

Garcon Serving man attending knights at a tournament, or the free servants in a manor house.

Hastilude (See **Tournament**) From *hastiludia*, or “spear-play”, this term encompassed all martial games and all types of tournaments, jousts, behourds, round tables, etc., and was the most common term used for this type of activity from 1100-1400. By 1300, tournaments (melees) were distinguished from hastiludes, which still encompassed all other forms.

Hayward (See **Estate, officers**) Villein on a manor who supervised the woods, meadows and corn.

Hide (Carucate) Typically 120 acres, or 4 virgates, or 8 oxgangs; the acreage varied somewhat.

Horse See **destrier** (war horse), rouncy (heavier riding horse), palfrey (lighter riding horse) and sumpter (pack horse).

Inheritance (See **Feudal incidents**)

Joust (See **Tournament**) A contest with lance and shield between two individuals.

Knight In the medieval period, a knight was a professional mounted warrior who provided military service with relatively high quality arms, armor and horse, in return for land – a knight’s fee held by military tenure. In England, the profession began to emerge as a social class during the 12th century, as knights began to be expected to provide their own arms, armor (“dubbing”) and horses, and the chivalry and courtesy expected of nobles began to be applied to them; this was aided by the medieval romances that emerged at this time, as well. By the end of the 12th century, knights were aware of themselves as a social class filling the lowest rank of the aristocracy, and across the 13th century, increased their lifestyle to fit more clearly with the nobility. The increased expense of this lifestyle combined with the severe inflation of 1180 - 1220 drove the less affluent professional fighting men out of the ranks of knighthood and focused knighthood on an economic basis. By the 13th century, knights were recognized as members of the aristocracy, but civil obligations combined with the more noble lifestyle led many of historically knightly families to decline knighthood. Additionally, knights increasingly chose administrative careers (“Holy Mary’s knights”) rather than active military service (“strenuous knights”); of the roughly 1500 knights in the mid 13th century, only about 500 actively fought on campaigns. This led John, Henry III and Edward I to issue distrains of knighthood (see **Distrains** and **Respites**).

Banneret A wealthy knight (or baron) able to afford a small retinue of knights and of enough influence locally and at Court to be granted the right to carry a gonfannon on the field. During the 12th century, only nobles had this right. Banneret was used as a *description* during the 13th century, but became an official rank in the 14th century.

Shire knight: A knight of insufficient wealth to be politically influential at Court, but one who could support a knightly lifestyle in his shire. In the 13th century, these knights provided the administrative infrastructure of the shire, serving as jurors, forester, subescheators, coroners and sheriffs.

Rustic knight: A derogatory term indicating a poor knight; this term was also used for knights who were not active fighters (also called Holy Mary’s knights) in contrast to strenuous knights, who fought in tournaments and on campaign.

Knight’s fee (See **Estate**) The land held by a knight in return for military service; a knight’s fee might contain one manor or several pieces of different manors. Wealthier knights held multiple knight’s fees, often measured in fractions.

1086 (Domesday book): Many knights held fiefs of only 1 - 2 hides (120 – 240 acres), and typically derived £1 income per hide per year.

Later 12th century: a large knight's fee was 4 - 7 hides (480 - 840 acres), providing about £11 income per year, while a small fee was 2 - 3 hides (240 - 360 acres), providing \approx £6 $\frac{2}{3}$ income per year. A magnate who subtenanted knights out of his demesne lands typically owed one knight's service per 5 hides; the knight tenant got only 2 or 3 hides of that; the remaining land was retained as part of the lord's demesne for his profit.

Early 13th century: the definition shifted to an economic base, so by the mid-13th century, a knight's fee was typically 20 librates, or the land that provided £20 income per year. In reality, by the mid-13th century, a yearly income of over £40 was required to maintain the knightly lifestyle for an average shire knight. £20 - £40/year income created a poor knight.

Knightly obligations By the mid-13th century, the crown expected knights (and other free landowners to a lesser extent) to provide judicial, administrative and military service at low cost to the crown. So knights were expected to serve as knights on royal campaigns; as sheriffs, coroners, subsheriffs, and foresters; to serve on royal courts as jurors, and as members of inquests and commissions. These administrative posts did not provide salaries, although the offices did have rights to a certain fraction of the fees and fines they collected; this led to the temptation to extort unreported monies.

Magnate (See **Aristocracy**) A wealthy noble or very wealthy knight of significant influence in Court; there were about 100 magnates in England in 1250 out of a population of about 3,000,000.

Marriage (See **Feudal incidents**)

Marshal (See **Officers, royal**) The Marshal of England was the commander-in-field in English armies.

Medieval period: From the time of Charlemagne (9th century) to the beginning of the Renaissance. In England, Anglo-Saxons dominated the **early medieval period**, which ended with the Norman conquest in 1066. The **high medieval period** extended from the conquest to \approx 1300 – for some historians, the high medieval period ends with Henry III's reign in 1272, but for others, it extends through Edward I's reign to 1307. The **late medieval period** extended from this time to the end of the Richard III's reign in 1485, or \approx 1500. The dates for the medieval periods differ somewhat by location – the Renaissance started much earlier in Italy.

Money In medieval England, 1 pound (silver) (£) = 20 shillings (s.) = 240 pence (d.); therefore 12 pence = 1 shilling. Half pence could also be used; in the later middle ages, a farthing = $\frac{1}{4}$ pence. Larger amounts were often recorded in marks (gold): 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ marks = 1 pound, so 1 mark = $\frac{2}{3}$ pound or 13 s. $\frac{4}{3}$ d.

Nobility (See **Aristocracy**) Titled secular nobility included the earls, counts and countesses.

Officers, royal These originated as divisions of the royal Household (400 – 700 men), including the Chamber, Chancery, Exchequer, Privy Seal, Wardrobe, and Courts of Law (see also Courts). The five principal officers of State included the Chamberlain, Chancellor, Treasurer and Keeper of the Privy Seal. Magnate households modeled their officers and servants on the royal household, often having a steward, receiver, bailiffs, constable, and marshal.

Chancellor: The administrative head of the office of the **Chancery**, which was responsible for all royal records. The chancery issued royal charters, letters and writs.

Constable: ("count of the stables") The constable of England was responsible for maintaining order in neighborhood of court and protecting King's person and household; the constable of England wasn't superior to the marshal of England, although this differed on the continent. The term was also used loosely for commanders of troops or squads of castle guards; in 1196, "constable" referred to the commander of unit (500) of Welsh infantry or an officer in charge of castle guard of 10 knights.

Escheator: An officer who administered the king's feudal incidents of relief, wardship and marriage, when due from any tenant-in-chief who held any amount of land directly of the king, including earls, counts, countesses and barons (lesser as well as greater). The escheator took possession of a lord's lands immediately upon the death of the tenant, administering the land and collecting the proceeds for the royal coffers until the heir paid his relief (see **Feudal incidents**) and swore homage in person to the king. If the heir was under 21 years of age, he or she became a ward of the king, and remained so until a male ward turned 21, or until a female ward married. If the king did not choose to sell or trade the wardship to another lord, the escheator retained possession of the lands until the wardship ended. The escheator also received the fines due the king when any lord married the widow of a tenant, or a female ward. Two Escheators supervised England for the king (two of his royal bailiffs), and subescheators supervised each county or shire.

Exchequer: The financial office that received all monies and dispensed funds to household departments and other offices.

Justices: Royal justices sat at the central royal courts at Winchester, while itinerant justices held eyres in various shires at irregular intervals. Two royal justices (bailiffs of the King) administered the royal Forest; one for northern England and one for Southern.

Marshal: ("horse servant") The Marshal of England was the commander-in-field in English armies by the 1100s; and the title officially changed to "Earl Marshal" by a grant in 1386. "Marshals of the camp" were subordinate to the Marshal and preceded the army on march to choose the site of camp and allocate various nobles places to pitch their pavilions.

Steward: Overall administration of the royal Household and all its departments.

Royal officers in shires; these positions were often held by knights:

Coroner: Established during Richard I's reign as a check on the power of sheriffs, the office was finally well-defined by the mid 13th century. By this time, coroners were knights who lived in the shire and who investigated unnatural deaths or felonies in which deaths occurred. Typically, four coroners were appointed per county. They sat as colleagues of the sheriff at county courts and occasionally took the sheriff's place at court. Once appointed, a coroner served for life, unless he was unable to fulfill his position, or he was dismissed. Since the office did not include a salary, knights with a comfortable income were usually chosen, and not all the fines and fees collected reached the king. Medieval communities were required to report finding any body to the coroner, or the community was fined. The coroner examined the body and reported the number, length, breadth and depth of the wounds, as well as the type of weapon used. Theoretically, the body could not be buried until the coroner's inquest had been held. At the inquest, the coroner gave one of three verdicts: felony, misadventure or natural death.

Subescheator: (See **Escheator**, above) A shire officer who administered the king's feudal incidents of relief, wardship and marriage, when due from any tenant-in-chief within the shire. He reported to one of the two Escheators in England.

Forester: Shire foresters, typically shire knights, served on Forest courts and administered the forest under the Warden.

Sheriff: ("Shire reeve") The sheriff directly represented the king's authority in each shire or county, administering royal justice and presiding over the hundred and county courts, which also gave him the income from the fines and fees collected at those courts. In the 11th and 12th centuries, and even during the reign of John (d. 1216), sheriffs were very powerful, and the position was held by lords most favored by the king ("curiales"). But the introduction of coroners in the 13th century and the decline of the independence of the position under Henry III was accompanied by an increase in routine duties and

responsibilities deriving from various assizes. By the mid 13th century, sheriffs were no longer magnates, but often knights of local influence who did not enjoy the king's closest confidence or favor, but who were professional administrators. The sheriff paid a fixed farm to the Exchequer each year for his county, which included the sheriff's aid, the expected proceeds from the county and hundred courts and the expected proceeds from any royal demesne manors in the county; the sheriff kept any difference between that farm and the real income. The inflation of 1180 - 1220 made the position very lucrative, so Henry III imposed an extra increment to pass more of the profits on to the king, and began to demand records of all accounts received.

Warden: Each separate forest within the royal Forest was administered by a Warden.

Oxgang 1/2 virgate, or about 15 acres. A hide (≈120 acres) = 4 virgates = 8 oxgangs.

Palfrey Palfreys were lighter riding horses than rouncies; they were not suitable for tournaments or war, and smaller palfries were suitable for ladies.

Park, deer Usually about 100 – 200 acres of woodland or a combination of open land and woodland enclosed by a ditch and palisade and stocked with fallow, roe and red deer. Fallow deer were the most common, since they are less inclined to jump. Parks were typically built by earls, counts and wealthier knights to indulge their love of the sport, since hunting in royal forests required royal permission. Park building reached its maximum in the 13th century, and there were hundreds of such parks by 1250. The hunting park was guarded and administered by the lords manorial foresters. Court records indicate that knights frequently poached in local deer parks of the magnates, barons and bannerets, just as titled nobles frequently poached in the royal forests. In contrast, some magnates created **chases** on their estates. A **chase** was unenclosed demesne land of up to 40 square miles on which the lord reserved the right to hunt deer, wolf and boar.

Peasant Those who worked the land. In 1086, the five ranks of peasants in descending order were freemen, sokemen, villeins, bordars/cottars, and slaves; the first three were free. By 1170, slaves had disappeared, but villeins had become unfree, leaving only freemen and sokemen as free peasants. Social status among peasants derived primarily from being free, but also from having the least labor services owed the lord.

Freemen typically held their land in return for cash rents, which gave them the greatest status. This category also included tradesmen, burgesses and other non-aristocratic free workers.

Sokemen (or socmen) held land in socage, or in return for specific customary labor service to the lord. This did not give them as much freedom to simply pay their "farm" or rent in cash, and was considered a poorer social status because of the required labor. This tenure also gave the lord the right to tax their land with specific additional aids.

Villeins were unfree, but had rights to cultivate a certain amount of land in return for labor services to the lord. In 1250, a half-virgate villein owed 150 day's service to the lord, which was valued at 12 s. 6 d.

By 1279, the ranks of peasant villagers were described by at least 20 different names, and economic status became the basis for social status. By 1300, a rich villein was more important in the village than a poor freeman. For reference, a sokeman holding 2 virgates (1/2 hide) was considered fairly well-off, so the homesteaders in the Old West who received "64 acres and a mule" in return for working the land were wealthy peasants by medieval standards.

Cottar/Bordar The lowest rank of unfree peasant, cottars performed labor services in return for a hut and specified amounts of grain; they did not have rights to farm any land.

Prices	1100	1180	1250
Knight's campaign wages per day	6 d.	1 s.	2-3 s.
Mounted sergeant's campaign wages per day	3 d.	6 d.	1-1.5 s.
Infantryman's campaign wages per day		1.5.	2-3 d.
Skilled worker's wages per day		1 d.	2.5 - 3 d.
Rent on 1/2 virgate = 150 day's labor service		4s.	12s. 6 d.
Corn, price per measure		≈ 8 d.	2 - 4 s.
Warhorse	≈ £ 1	≈ £5	≈ £ 30 - 40

Primogeniture 13th century English law dictated that the estate be passed to the eldest son, who paid relief to his lord to acquire possession (see **Feudal incidents – relief**). In the larger estates of knights banneret and magnates, the sisters and younger brothers often received a *premortem* gift of land or rights to other sources of income from the tenant.

Receiver (See **Estate, officer**) The manorial officer who accepted livery of cash and gave allowances to various departments.

Reeve (See **Estate, officer**) The day-to-day supervisor on a manor, typically an unfree villein.

Relief (See **Feudal incidents – inheritance**)

Respice Fine paid by men of knightly families to king, beginning in the 13th century, to avoid being required to become a knight and provide a knight's military service. In the mid 13th century, a typical respice was 1/2 mark gold (or ≈ £7).

Rouncy A riding horse smaller than a destrier, but of good enough quality to be ridden into battle. A rouncy was the typical mount of esquires, sergeants, and poorer knights. In the mid to late 13th century, a rouncy cost ≈ £5 when a destrier cost £30 to £40.

Round Table (See **Tournament**) A stylized tournament *a plaisance* with an Arthurian theme, much pageantry, feasting and largesse.

Scutage Fine paid by a knight not to have to serve in a particular campaign (usually overseas or in Wales).

Scutifer (See **Esquire**) Originally meaning shield bearer, this was a military term for non-knight men-at-arms, The term was not often used after 1350.

Seneschal (See **Officers, royal** and **Estate, officers**) From "old servant", in England this position was commonly called Steward.

Sergeant, serjeant, serviens (See **Esquire** and **Estate, officers**) Sergeant (*serviens*) was originally a military title, and in war simply meant soldier, while *serviens ad arma* meant a mounted soldier. Often this meant man-at-arms of rather lower rank attendant upon or serving in place of a knight. Two sergeants were typically worth one knight in salary or military service. On estates, bailiffs were often called *serviens*, and often held a sergeant's tenure (see sergeant's tenure).

Sergeant's tenure The land held by a tenant in serjeantry, or tenure held by a specified service less than providing a fully armored knight's service. The terms of a sergeant's tenure was specified in each grant because the specific service varied widely, although it was typically worth ≈ 1/2 of a knight's fee. Service was usually rendered personally to the lord, and not to king through the chain of homage. Examples include keeping a hawk or hound for the king; providing table cloths for a specific annual feast; providing the king with a meal of roast pork when he hunted in that area; military service of 40 days at expense of sergeant, probably mounted (at least by early 13th century) but with less armor than a knight (capelet instead of great helm, haubergeon instead of hauberk). Sergeants could serve directly or typically could serve by proxy, and by the 13th century, many had commuted their service obligation to cash rent.

- Sheriff** (See **Officers, royal**) The sheriff directly represented the king's authority in each shire or county, administering royal justice and presiding over the hundred and county courts. Through the reign of John (d. 1216), sheriffs were very powerful, and were lords most favored by the king ("curiales"). The prestige of the position declined under Henry III, and by the mid 13th century, sheriffs were often shire knights.
- Sokeman** (See **Peasant**) The lowest rank of free peasant, lower in social rank than a freeman (*liberi homini*) because they owed customary service for their land.
- Squire** See **Esquire**.
- Steward** (See **Estate, officers** or **Officers, royal**) Only large estates required a steward, who supervised all the manors of the estate, and might supervise the lord's household.
- Sumpter horse** Pack horse
- Tally** A wooden record used for agricultural harvests, income, etc. Tally sticks were typically 6 – 8" long and approximately square in cross-section. Notches of different sizes and shapes made across the width of opposite faces of the tally recorded pence, shillings, pounds and 20-pound amounts. The tally could be split vertically into stock and foil (a physical receipt).
- Tenant** A freeman who held land of a lord, or directly from the king (tenant-in-chief). Knights were tenants who held military tenures, as did some sergeants. Freemen were tenants who paid cash rents or a combination of cash and labor services; villains held land in return for labor services. (See also **Tournament** – tenant referred to a member of the home team.)
- Time** In the 13th century, dawn to dusk was divided into 12 even hours, as was dusk to dawn. Dawn was the first hour of the day and dusk the last or twelfth hour of the day; noon was the sixth hour of the day, half-way between dawn and dusk when the sun stood at its height, while midnight was half-way between dusk and dawn. As with a sundial, a summer day-time hour was longer than a summer night-time hour or a winter day-time hour.
- Virtually everyone in 13th century England relied on church bells to toll the hours. The seven canonical hours originally were rung at sunrise (prime, or first hour, mid-morning (tierce, or third hour), noon (sext or sixth hour), mid-afternoon (nones or ninth hour), about an hour before sunset (vespers or last office of the day), about an hour after full dark (compline, the office between vespers and matins), and at midnight (matins). During the 12th century, with the great increase in monastic houses, the timing of the canonical hours changed. Since fasts traditionally lasted until nones, by the 13th century in England, nones moved backwards to noon (or when the sun at its height), which pushed back prime to before sunrise. So tierce was now rung at sunrise, sext at midmorning, and nones at noon (thus the name). Vespers, compline and matins remained at their original times.
 - Mechanical clocks became popular in the 14th century, introducing the concept of equal hours all year long. These were accepted in Germany by about 1330, but not in England until about 1370.
- Tournament** Although "tournament" is now used to include all types of jousts, melees, and other spectator martial activities, the medieval collective term was *hastilude*, not tournament. A medieval tournament was a melee between two teams of knights and the most dangerous of the hastiludes. A large tract of land, often between towns, was designated as the field, and combat could occur anywhere but in designated *recets* or *listes* (safe zones). The knights divided into two teams, often by geography or political alliance, and fought under the banner of their leader. The sides initially charged each other with couched lances until the lances were broken, then switched to swords, although maces and other hand weapons were sometimes used. Tournaments lost popularity during the later 13th century in favor of jousts that better displayed individual prowess and were less cumbersome and expensive to put on. The Dunstable tournament of 1342 is last recorded tournament (melee) in England.

Hastilude: (hastiludia = “spear-play”) This term originally encompassed all martial games and all types of tournaments, jousts, behourds, round tables, etc., and was the most common term used from 1100-1400 when referring to these events. By 1300, writers distinguished between tournaments (melees), and all others forms of martial games, which were still grouped under the term “hastilude”.

Joust: A contest with couched lance and shield between two individuals. By the mid-13th century, informal jousts occurred prior to many tournaments. Jousts were preferred by knights wishing individual attention, and by administrators hoping for less destruction. Knights typically rode from opposite ends of the lists with no barrier. Knights did not yet train jousting destriers separately from warhorses, so combatants often completely missed each other. Occasionally, a challenger could still find himself facing more than one opponent at the same time, although this was frowned upon. One method used by poorer riders was to run full speed at opponent to overthrow him with momentum of horse and rider. This assumed the challenger was not a better rider able to turn the situation to his advantage. Since jousts could be fought within a confined space, they became more of a spectator sport than tournaments; however, many knights considered jousts of less value than a tournament, since the joust only tested single combat with the lance, rather than with multiple weapons in the chaos of a melee.

Behourd: An informal hastilude, virtually always fought *a plaisance*, the behourd was one of the most popular methods of training prior to being dubbed a knight, and were often held in conjunction with knighting ceremonies. Since there was no need for a specifically limited field or lists, many were organized on the spur of the moment. Behourds were sometimes restricted to squires, and sometimes fought by knights or combinations of knights and squires. Behourds in the 13th century might include informal jousts, but still focused on the tournament (melee); no ransoms were taken, but prizes were often awarded.

Round table: The “round table” that began in the 13th C was better regulated than an ordinary tournament and showed the moderating influence of the Arthurian and courteous romances (although tourneyers still died). The presence of ladies was important at Round Tables, which were prestigious occasions celebrating knightly values and glorifying those who had participated successfully in the lists. Jousting was usually the most popular contest, although melees also occurred, and the feast was a major focus. Knights took names and even characters of Arthurian heroes. The first documented Round table occurred in 1223 and round tables evolved in the following centuries into *pas d’armes*.

Tenant vs. venant: The tenants were the home team; the venants were the visiting team.

A plaisance vs. a outrance: By the 13th century, all types of hastiludes could be fought either *a plaisance* (with blunted or rebated weapons) or, less commonly, *a outrance* (with sharp weapons). *A plaisance* tournaments were the most common by the mid 13th century; also called “*pacifica*”, these were jousts or tournaments of peace in which points and edges were blunted or rebated and were often attended by ladies and other spectators. *A plaisance* tournaments included Round Tables, which evolved into *pas d’armes* in later centuries. *A outrance* encounters could be encounters of courtesy with no intent to kill, or combats to the death; these encounters were subject to intervention by an umpire — his casting of his baton could ended the combat and could prevent serious wounding or death. *A outrance* hastiludes could have spectators, but the emphasis was serious a trial of skill and strength; these were direct descendents of the great melees of earlier tournaments, and later evolved into “*feats of arms*”.

Vallettus (See **Esquire**) In early 14th C, most common description of rank below knight. Had long been applied to young son of a knight not yet dubbed, but once distraints and respites began, the word lost its connection with youth. Became the most popular word for landowners who weren’t knights. In Edward I’s reign, vallettus was the holder of a knight’s fee who had not yet assumed knighthood.

- Venant** (See **Tournament**) One of the knights arriving at a tournament to take up the challenge.
- Villein** (See **Peasant**) An unfree peasant who owed labor services to his lord, but had specified rights to land for his own use.
- Virgate** (**Yardland**) Typically 1/4 hide, or 30 acres. A hide (≈120 acres) = 4 virgates = 8 oxgangs.
- Wardship** (See **Feudal incidents**)

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