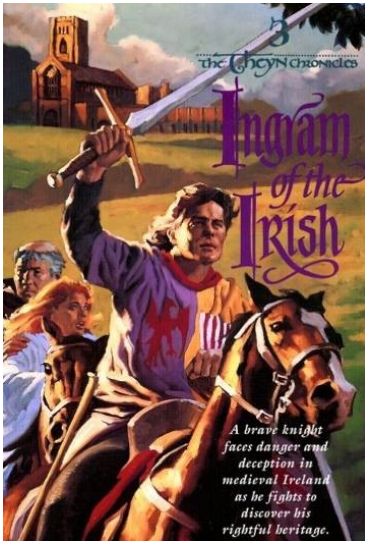
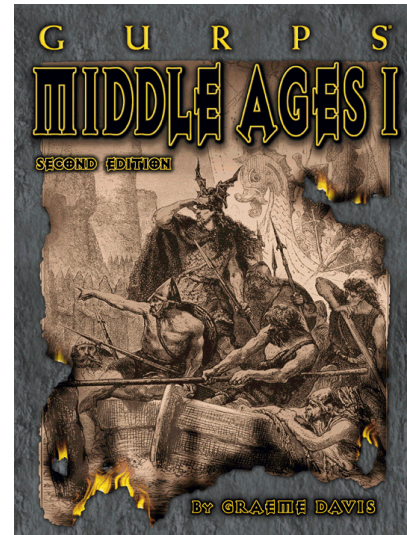


## Medieval Europe: Myth and Reality



In film and in literature, medieval life seems heroic, entertaining, and romantic.

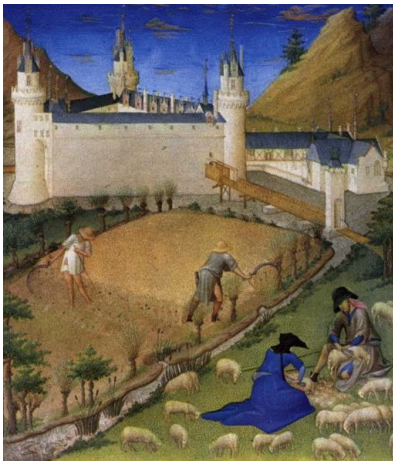


We think of knights in shining armor, banquets, minstrels, kings, queens, and glorious pageantry.

In reality, life in the Middle Ages could also be harsh, uncertain, and dangerous.

## The Manor

Most people lived on a manor, which consisted of the castle, the church, the village, and the surrounding farmland.



For safety and defense, people in the Middle Ages formed small communities around a central lord or master.

Each manor grew or produced all of the basic items needed for food, clothing, and shelter.

To meet these needs, the manor had buildings devoted to special purposes, such as:

- the mill
- the bake house
- the blacksmith shop





# The Feudal System

Under the feudal system, the king awarded land grants or fiefs to nobles in return for their contribution of soldiers.

## Nobles and Vassals

Nobles divided their land among the lesser nobility, who became their vassals.

## Peasants

At the lowest level of society were the peasants.

The lord offered his peasants protection in exchange for living and working on his land.

Peasants worked hard but they were heavily taxed and had to give much of what they harvested back to the lord of the manor.



# The Feudal System

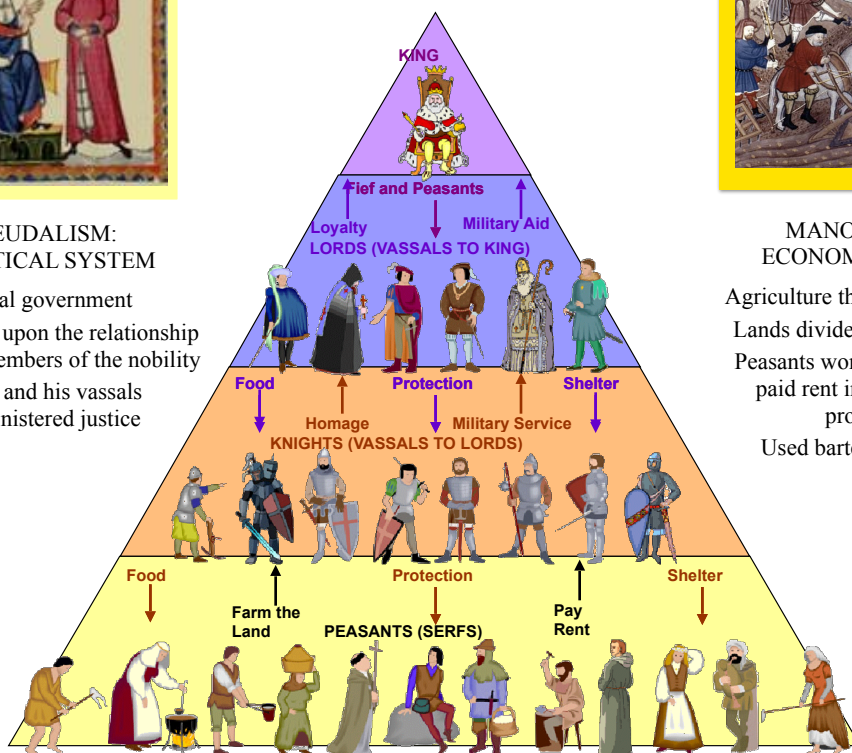


## FEUDALISM: POLITICAL SYSTEM

Local government  
Dependent upon the relationship  
between members of the nobility  
Lord and his vassals  
administered justice

## MANORIALISM: ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Agriculture the basis for wealth  
Lands divided up into manors  
Peasants worked the land and  
paid rent in exchange for  
protection  
Used bartering for trade





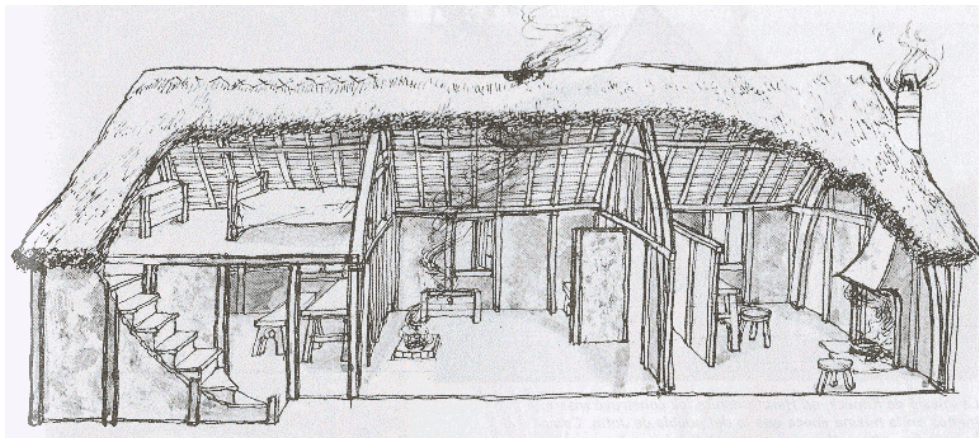
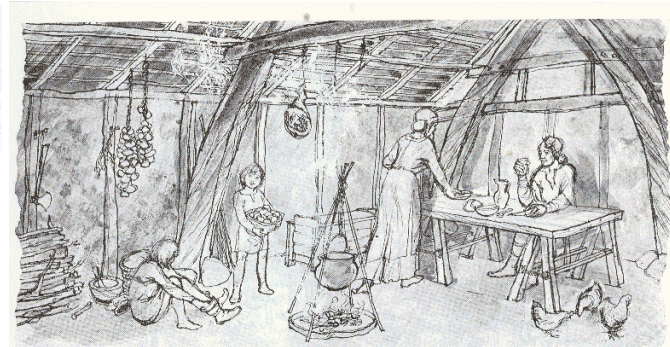
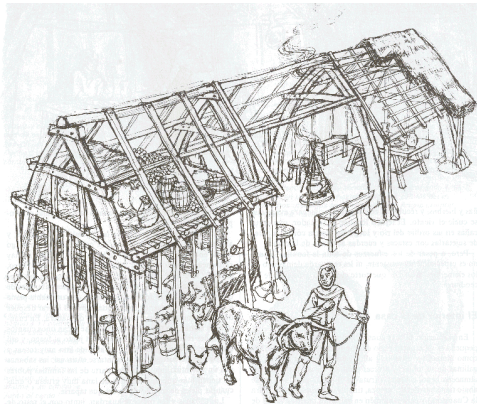
# Medieval Homes

Medieval homes were cold, damp, and dark.  
Sometimes it was warmer and lighter outside the home than within its walls.

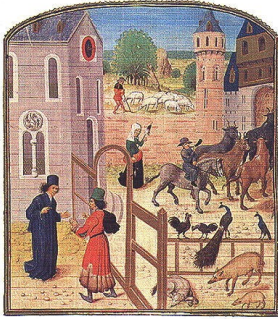


## Peasant Homes

Many peasant families ate, slept, and spent time together in very small quarters, rarely more than one or two rooms with floors strewn with rushes and herbs. The houses had thatched roofs and were easily destroyed.







## Homes of the Wealthy

The homes of the rich were more elaborate than the peasants' homes.



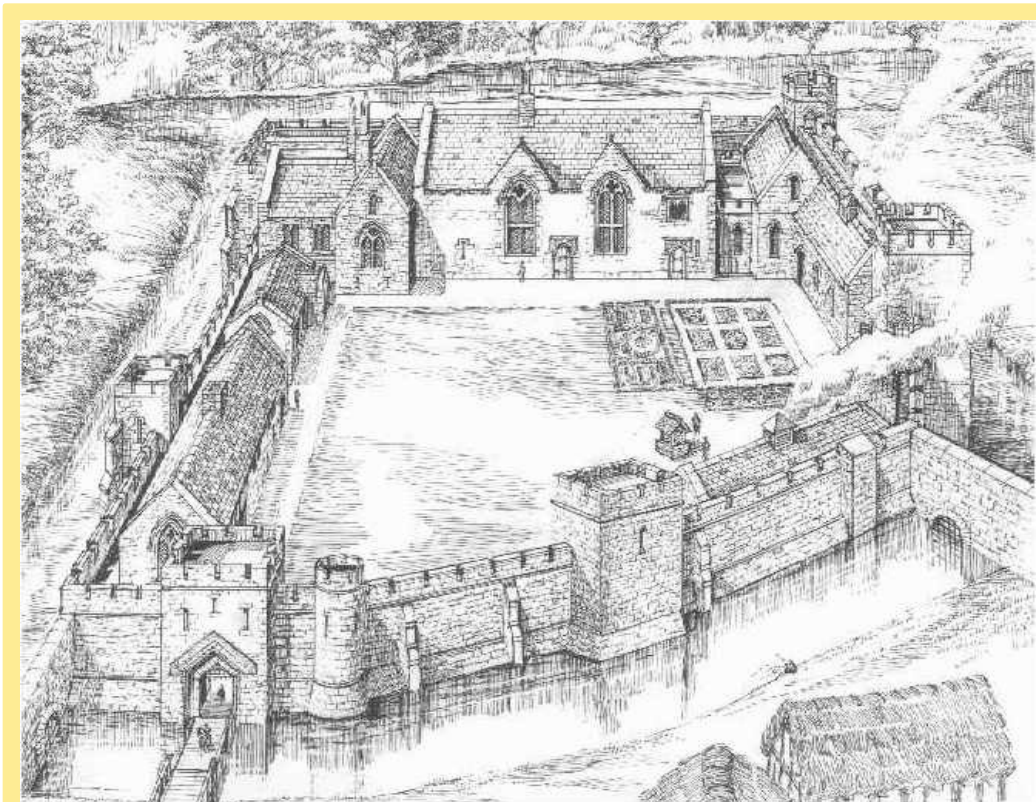
Their floors were paved and sometimes decorated with tiles.



Tapestries were hung on the walls.

Windows were very small openings with wooden shutters that were closed at night or in bad weather.

The small size of the windows allowed those inside to see out, but kept outsiders from looking in.

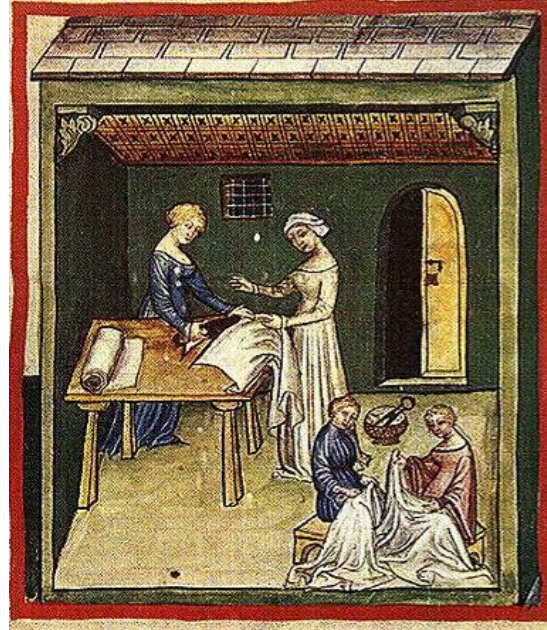


# Clothing

Most people in the Middle Ages wore woolen clothing with linen undergarments.



Peasant men wore stockings and tunics, while women wore long gowns with sleeveless tunics and wimples to cover their hair. Leather boots were covered with wooden patens to keep the feet dry.



The outer clothes were almost never laundered, but the linen underwear was regularly washed. The smell of wood smoke that permeated the clothing seemed to act as a deodorant.

# Clothing of the Wealthy

Brighter colors, better materials, and longer jackets were usually signs of wealth.

The clothing of the aristocracy and wealthy merchants tended to be elaborate.

Women of the wealthy classes wore flowing gowns and elaborate headwear, such as headdresses shaped like hearts or butterflies.



Men sported hose and a jacket, often with pleating or skirting, or a tunic with a surcoat.





# Medieval Medicine

In Medieval Europe, the body was viewed as a part of the universe.

Four humors, or body fluids, were directly related to the four elements:

Fire: yellow bile

Water: phlegm

Earth: black bile

Air: blood

These four humors had to be balanced, for example, too much black bile could create melancholy.



Bloodletting was a popular method of restoring a patient's health and "humors."

*Fun Facts:*

*Diseases were almost impossible to cure - no antibiotics.  
Early surgery was often done by barbers without anesthesia.*

# Medieval Economy

As peace and order grew, peasants began to expand their farms and villages further into the countryside.

A merchant class of peddlers went from village to village selling their goods.

Tradesmen became wealthier and began to resent having to give their profits to their lords.



The tradesmen established guilds to gain higher wages for their members.

As the guilds grew in number, wealth, and power, they began taking an active role in civic affairs.

A new merchant class included artisans, masons, bakers, shoemakers, dyers, and other skilled workers.

As a result of this, the power of feudalism declined.

