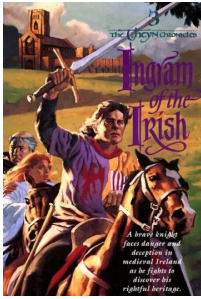
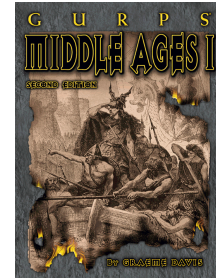


Medieval Europe: Myth and Reality



Life in the Middle Ages (5th through 15th century) is often depicted with knights in shining armor, kings, queens, and glorious pageantry, but in truth it was often harsh, uncertain, and dangerous.



People in the Middle Ages were organized according to the feudal system, under which the king awarded land grants known as fiefs to nobles (also known as lords).

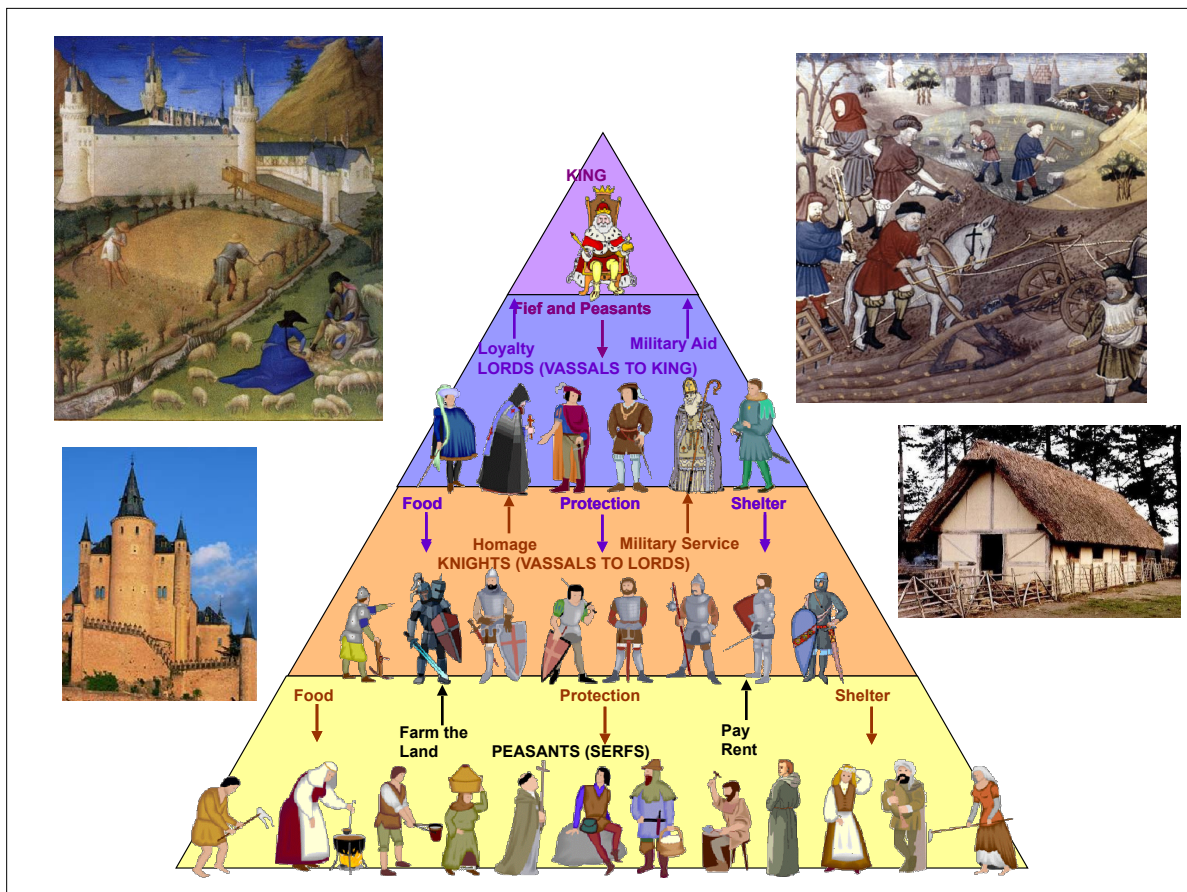
In return for these fiefs, the lords promised to provide soldiers to the king for any battles he waged.

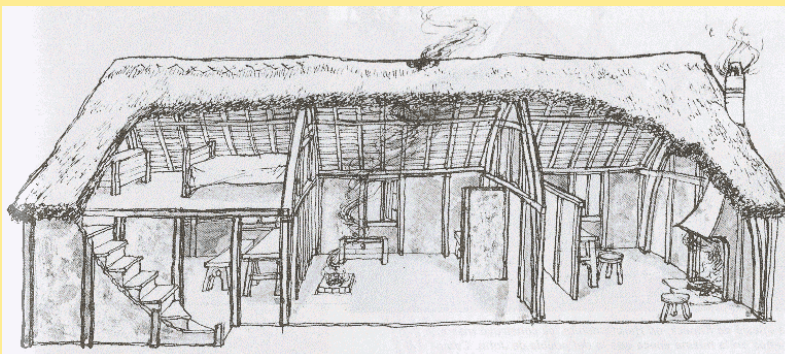
The lord lived in and governed a manor, which consisted of a castle, church, village, and surrounding farmland.

Peasants lived and worked on the farmland and promised to provide protection for the manor and fight in the king's battles.

All the food, clothing, and shelter the manor needed was produced within the manor, using special buildings such as a mill, bake house, and blacksmith shop

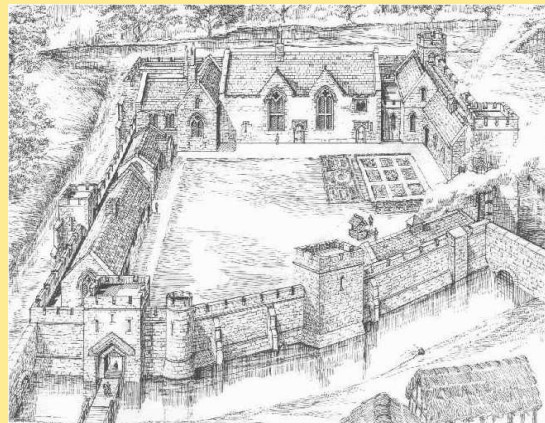
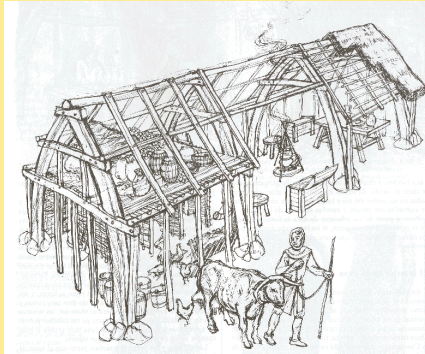
Peasants worked hard but they were heavily taxed and had to give much of what they harvested back to the lord of the manor.





manor house,
below

peasant homes, top and bottom left



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.



The Medieval Church



In Medieval Europe, the Catholic Church was the dominant spiritual influence; the only entity that spanned the continent and was found in every social and political level

Hierarchy of the Church



religious leaders who lived “in the world” were called the *secular clergy*

the parish priest was the lowest rank
was responsible for the religious instruction of his community



a bishop managed a group of parishes called a diocese

many bishops were feudal lords or vassals

an archbishop managed several dioceses



a cardinal was the highest rank of clergy
who advised the pope on legal and
spiritual matters



the pope was elected by a gathering of
cardinals and was the supreme authority
of the church



Practicing Religion in the Medieval Period

The Sacraments

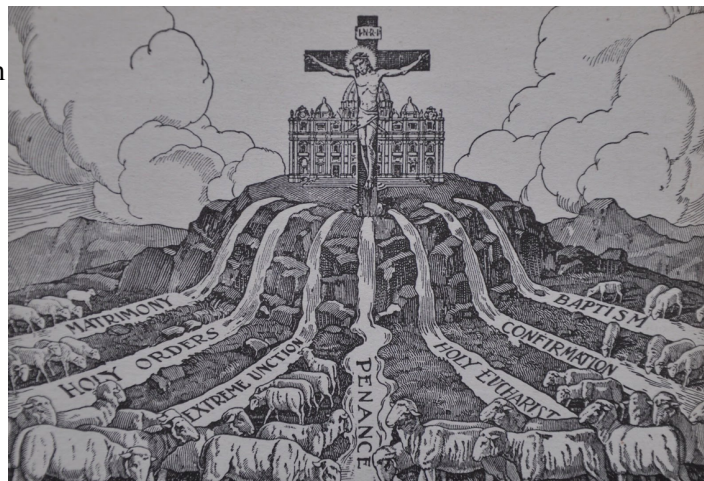
to receive God’s grace one must take part in the seven sacraments
(church rituals)

Baptism

done at birth to
cleans original sin

Confirmation

the education of
children in the
ways of the church



Penance and Reconciliation

an attempt to
remove sin from
the soul before
death

Eucharist

the taking of
Communion

Anointing of the sick

Holy Orders

when men and women joined the church.

Matrimony

marriage

Practicing Religion in the Medieval Period



The dismembered, mummified head of the revered Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) is set in an ornate reliquary in the Basilica San Domenico in Siena, Italy.

Saints were men and women who were especially holy and had earned a special place in Heaven

objects connected with saints called relics were believed capable of producing miracles

people would make pilgrimages to visit relics



Her right thumb resides in a smaller reliquary.



Reliquary Casket with Scenes from the Martyrdom of Saint Thomas Becket, ca. 1173–80

Powers of the Church



A practice known as simony developed where lords would sell church offices.

When an Abbot or Bishop was appointed to the church they were given a ring and a staff which symbolized the spiritual authority which was being *invested* in them by the church. Political rulers began to appoint church leaders (bishops, priests, etc.) in a practice known as lay investiture.

The church could excommunicate individuals, or deny them the ability to receive the sacraments.

The church could also place an interdict over an entire country. All churches would be closed and clergy would be forbidden to perform marriages, burials, other sacraments.