

GLOSSARY OF MEDIEVAL TERMS



ALMS PURSE:	A small purse. suspended from the belt, worn by both sexes.
AMBLE:	A four-beat gait of a riding horse, faster than a walk and smoother than a trot.
BASINET:	A metal head-protector, ovoid in shape.
BUTLER:	A servant responsible for the wine service at a meal.
CANONICAL HOURS:	The hours of the Divine Office, extended from monastic to general use. The first office was that of matins (around midnight) followed by lauds, then by prime around daybreak, and thereafter at roughly three-hour intervals by terce, sext (midday), nones, vespers, and compline.
CAROL:	A round dance accompanied by singing.
CASTLE:	A walled and fortified town, or the fortified stronghold within it.
CHAPLET:	A wreath of flowers or leaves, worn by both men and women.
CHATELAINE:	The lady of a castle.
DAMSEL:	An unmarried girl of the noble class.
DINNER:	The midday meal.
DOUBLET:	A close-fitting man's garment with sleeves, reaching to the hips and usually made of thick and sturdy material.
GOWN:	A long garment with sleeves.
HALBERD:	A staff tipped with a short, broad blade.
HAUBERK:	A mail shirt covering the trunk and upper legs.
HOMAGE:	A ritual by which a man (and sometimes a woman) swore loyalty and service to an overlord and became his or her vassal. The vassal-to-be, kneeling, placed his or her joined hands between the hands of the lord-to-be when taking the oath. The relationship was often sealed with a kiss and with a glove symbolizing the transfer of authority over a specified area (fief).
KNEE COP:	A convex metal shield covering the knee.
LADY:	A married noblewoman.
LEAGUE:	A measure of distance (about three miles).
MARK:	A large unit of money.

NONES:	See CANONICAL HOURS.
PALFREY:	A riding horse used by men and women.
PANTLER:	A servant in charge of the bread for a meal.
PATERNOSTER:	The Lord's Prayer.
PRIME:	See CANONICAL HOURS.
PROVOST:	An official appointed to keep order in a town (rather like a chief of police).
QUOTIDIAN FEVER:	One that recurs daily.
RELIEF:	The customary payment by vassal to lord on the conferral of a fief, even one previously held by the vassal's parent.
SCARLET:	Fine, dyed, and hence expensive cloth (not necessarily red).
SEIZIN:	Possession, as of a fief. See HOMAGE.
SENECHAL:	The chief administrator of a lord's household and estates.
SOU:	A coin of middling value.
SQUIRE:	A young nobleman in a knight's service and in training for knighthood.
SUMPTER:	A packhorse.
TERCE:	See CANONICAL HOURS.
TUNIC:	A garment worn over the chemise or shirt and under the overdress or mantle. A woman's tunic (or gown) came down to the ground, a man's to the ankle.
VASSAL:	The "man" of an overlord, obliged to give him military service. In the context of armed conflict, it is conventionally used as a challenge.
VESPER:	See CANONICAL HOURS.