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| Source: abutterflydreaming.com/2009/02/06/100-medieval-careers |
| 100 Medieval Careers |
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| February 6th, 2009 |
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| Taking a brief break from adventure design, I present a related topic:  100 jobs NPCs in your game-world might have.  Helps with creating those random NPCs — pick a job, then add a name, race, gender, and a quirk or two. |
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| I’ve broken them down into some broad categories, in case you want to go old school and turn it into multiple subtables to randomly roll on.  If you’re taking that approach, note that the “Working Class” and “Scoundrels and the Underclass” categories should be most common in the typical medieval-European-style game worlds, followed by Professionals, Entertainers, and Martial, with Learned and Lesser Nobility being least common. |
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| 100 jobs, after the jump. |
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| Learned |
|  |
| 1. Academic – a scholar or sage — astrologer, cartographer, historian, philosopher, etc. |
| 2. Architect – a master builder |
| 3. Ascetic – a hermit or wandering monk |
| 4. Barber  – a doctor, surgeon, bloodletter, dentist, and haircutter |
| 5. Barrister – a lawyer |
| 6. Bureaucrat – a local functionary, servant to some more powerful political figure |
| 7. Engineer – a builder of roads, bridges, castles, fortifications, and siege engines |
| 8. Herald – an announcer and deliverer of news on behalf of a lord |
| 9. Monk/Nun – a lay cleric devoted to prayer and spirituality |
| 10. Scribe – skilled in taking dictation or copying documents |
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| Lesser Nobility |
|  |
| 1. Adventurer – a minor scion of a noble house who’s chosen to wander the world |
| 2. Dilettante – a minor scion of a noble house who dabbles in various interests |
| 3. Diplomat – a representative of his house in dealings with other noble houses |
| 4. Knight – a well-trained warrior, skilled with sword and lance |
| 5. Minister – a political figure appointed by the ruler to govern a specific area or to oversee a domain; also lesser but important officials, such as a reeve or judge |
| 6. Page – a very young noble beginning his training to be a knight |
| 7. Squire – a young noble progressing on the path to knighthood, perhaps herself a capable warrior |
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| Professionals |
|  |
| 1. Armorer |
| 2. Artist – a painter of portraits |
| 3. Baker |
| 4. Blacksmith |
| 5. Bookbinder |
| 6. Bowyer |
| 7. Brewer – a maker of beer and ale |
| 8. Bricklayer – a laborer skilled in the building of walls and ducts |
| 9. Butcher |
| 10. Candlemaker or Chandler |
| 11. Carpenter – an elite tradesman, skilled in math as well as woodworking |
| 12. Cartwright – a maker and repairer of carts and wagons |
| 13. Clothier – a garment-maker |
| 14. Cobbler or Shoemaker – makes and mends shoes |
| 15. Cook |
| 16. Cooper – a barrel-maker |
| 17. Dyer – a maker of inks, paints, dyes, and stains |
| 18. Engraver |
| 19. Furrier |
| 20. Glassblower |
| 21. Goldsmith or Silversmith |
| 22. Hatter |
| 23. Innkeeper or Tavern-keeper |
| 24. Jeweler |
| 25. Joiner – a maker of furniture |
| 26. Leatherworker |
| 27. Locksmith |
| 28. Mason |
| 29. Merchant |
| 30. Moneylender |
| 31. Potter |
| 32. Shipwright – a builder of ships |
| 33. Tax Collector |
| 34. Tinker – a traveling craftsman who repairs tin pots and other small items, often also a peddler |
| 35. Torturer |
| 36. Trader – by land or by sea |
| 37. Vintner – a maker of wines |
| 38. Weaver |
|  |
| The Working Class |
|  |
| 1. Boatman – travel by lake or river |
| 2. Coachman – driver of a coach |
| 3. Farmer |
| 4. Fisherman |
| 5. Gravedigger |
| 6. Groom – one who tends animals |
| 7. Herdsman – a keeper of livestock |
| 8. Hunter or Trapper |
| 9. Messenger |
| 10. Miller |
| 11. Miner |
| 12. Painter or Limner |
| 13. Peddler – an itinerant merchant of goods |
| 14. Ratcatcher |
| 15. Sailor |
| 16. Seamstress |
| 17. Servant – maid, butler, attendant, steward, etc. |
| 18. Stevedore – one who loads and unloads goods from sailing ships or caravan |
|  |
| Martial |
|  |
| 1. Bodyguard |
| 2. Bounty Hunter |
| 3. Forester – a ranger or game warden, often empowered to act as law enforcement within the forest |
| 4. Gatekeeper or Toll Keeper |
| 5. Jailer |
| 6. Mercenary or Soldier |
| 7. Watchman |
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| Scoundrels and the Underclass |
|  |
| 1. Bandit, Mugger, or Thug – steals by force; often part of a gang of thieves |
| 2. Beggar |
| 3. Burglar – steals by breaking and entering |
| 4. Fence – finds buyers for stolen goods, may serve as a pawnbroker |
| 5. Gambler |
| 6. Pickpocket or Cutpurse – steals by stealth |
| 7. Procurer – streetwise specialists in finding whatever their client might be looking for |
| 8. Prostitute |
| 9. Slaver |
| 10. Smuggler – moves stolen or illegal goods |
| 11. Wanderer – a “barbarian” nomad, drifter, or rover |
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| Entertainers |
|  |
| 1. Acrobat |
| 2. Actor |
| 3. Clown |
| 4. Dancer |
| 5. Fortune-teller – might well have real power in a fantasy world |
| 6. Juggler |
| 7. Minstrel |
| 8. Prestidigitator – stage magician |
| 9. Storyteller |
|  |
|  |
| Source: https://forum.rpg.net/showthread.php?562953-Vocations-Professions-for-Medieval-Adventurers |
| Vocations/Professions for Medieval Adventurers |
| My medieval homebrews use ‘vocation cards’ and ‘(social) classes cards’ that function rather like ‘careers’ in WHFRP. However, up ‘till now, I’ve only been using classes and haven’t included vocations. This isn’t too much of a problem, as for many people in the medieval world, one’s class is one’s vocation. However, in the towns in particular, people will tend to have vocations that are not inherent to their social class, and so I’d like to get some vocations cards up and running in playtesting. However, to begin with, I’d like to focus ONLY on vocations that will be particularly relevant to adventurers. |
|  |
| My basic theory is that, in a medieval world, ‘adventurers’ (i.e. freelance mercenaries) will tend to come either from the lower knighthood (especially second sons) or from the dregs of urban or itinerant society, as these are the sorts of backgrounds that tend to produce the skill-sets needed by adventurers. |
|  |
| So, I’ve got an initial list of vocation cards below and would like to appeal for help in checking if there are any obvious vocations that I’ve missed. Can you think of any to add (keeping in mind that for now I’m only interested in those vocations that would be useful for adventuring)? |
|  |
| For reference, the game world is: |
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|  |
| Low fantasy (magic is subtle and rare). |
| Human only (‘orcs’ exist, but they’re really just humans who have been subject to a dozen or so generations of selective breeding). |
| Obsessively medieval (specifically, modelling itself after the mid-to-late 14th C, with a few earlier, more feudal elements added to the mix for reasons of setting logic/consistency). |
|  |
| Here's the list so far (the stuff in brackets is either a list of specific professions that would use this vocation card and/or a brief explanation of the vocation). |
|  |
| Armourer (not so much to make armour as to repair/maintain it) |
| Barber (combines the modern professions of barber, dentist and surgeon) |
| Buffoon\* (gypsy, jester, troupe member) |
| Investigator (bailiff, constable, coroner, inquisitor, magistrate, sheriff, sheriff’s man) |
| Lawyer |
| Minstrel (commoners, gypsies, troupe members) or Troubadour (knightly/noble variant) |
| Negotiator (envoy, merchant, noble with a significant estate, priests who regularly deal with the noble elite) |
| Physician (i.e. the person who administers medicines based on medical theory, but doesn't perform surgery, which is beneath him/her) |
| Pickpocket (beggar, street urchin) |
| Steward (i.e. someone with experience in logistics and managing money) |
| Ruffian (constable, guard, housebreaker, robber, outlaw, sheriff's man, thug, watchman) |
| Swindler (chapman, grifter, gypsy, troupe member) |
| Thief (burglar, street urchin) |
| Weaponsmith (as Armourer) |
| Woodsman (forester, furrier, huntsman, outlaw, poacher) |
|  |
| Dungeoneer (a sort of D&D dungeon thief, or Veitnam-era tunnel rat, who would have learned his or her craft on the job) |
| Siege Engineer (itinerant siege engineers & nobles who have learned seigecraft in the field) |
|  |
| Alchemist |
| Cunning Man/Wisewoman (a sort of village fortune teller, physician and practitioner of magic all rolled into one) |
| Witch (i.e. cunning man or wisewoman who trucks with devils) |
| Practitioner of the Craft (a person licensed by the church--under very strict conditions--to practice deviltrous magic) |
| Astrologer (divines the future through careful observation of heavenly bodies) |
| Occultist (i.e. literate person who reads grimmoires and trucks with devils) |
|  |
| \*Buffoon = juggling, tumbling, japing, jesting, telling rude stories, singing comedic songs, etc. |
|  |
| Note: Priest, monk, friar and knight are not included among vocation cards, because these vocations are incorporated into the relevant class cards. |
|  |
| So, any ideas? |
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| I'm not sure how they would map to your vocations exactly, but maybe |
|  |
| caravan master |
| ship master/pilot/navigator |
| troubadour |
| also you've got armorer/weaponsmith, but no other crafts. Maybe tinker? Bowyer? Fletcher? |
|  |
| Explorer(Cartographer, Expidition Leader, Scholar, Mountain Climber) |
|  |
| The church was such huge part of medieval society that it feels like they should straddle both the class and vocation cards. Anyway, some other suggestions: |
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| 1. Shepherd (they spend lond periods of time alone tending flocks) |
|  |
| 2. Horse Wrangler (there's probably a word I'm forgetting, someone who breeds and trains horses and even warhorses) |
|  |
| 3. As Epengar pointed out, you've got nothing nautical. Definitely a sailor. Unless the setting is landlocked, it's the easiest way to travel. |
|  |
| 4. Outlaw. As distinct from your thieves who can still be part of town society, this is a bandit who has actually been outlawed (if he's lucky using only his pseudonym) and survives by robbing travelers. |
|  |
| 5. Traveling Merchant (someone who makes his living traveling between towns, buying and selling from town-based merchants) |
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| You may want to check out the old computer rpg Darklands. It took place in the Holy Roman Empire in the year 1400. Character creation consisted of picking a background (essentially your caste) then different professions. |
|  |
| Here's a list I made a while back of all the professions. Obviously some of them couldn't be taken right away. |
|  |
| Recruit |
| Soldier |
| Veteran |
| Captain |
| Hunter |
| Bandit |
| Peasant |
| Schulz |
| Noble Heir |
| Courtier |
| Knight |
| Manorial Lord |
| Hermit |
| Novice Monk/Nun |
| Monk/Nun |
| Friar |
| Priest |
| Abbot |
| Bishop |
| Oblate |
| Student |
| Clerk |
| Physician |
| Professor |
| Alchemist |
| Master Alchemist |
| Vagabond |
| Peddler |
| Local Trader |
| Travelling Merchant |
| Merchant-Proprietor |
| Laborer |
| Apprentice Craftsman |
| Journeyman Craftsman |
| Master Craftsman |
| Thief |
| Swindler |

Re: Vocations/Professions for Medieval Adventurers

Surveyor (The oldest professionally licensed trade in the world)

Actor

Prostitute

Sutler

Messenger

Spies

Day Labourer

Porter

The last two may be more useful for NPCs than PCs, admittedly.

Re: Vocations/Professions for Medieval Adventurers

A lot of people underestimate the complexity of the Western medieval economy. There were bankers, investors, and land speculators, many of them making a very good living.

Also, always look to the last names (the ones we got based on what our ancestors did for a living): Brewer, Butcher, Butler (although I'm thinking it meant something different back then), Miller.

Then there's cobbler. I just like to say cobbler. And I didn't research what a yeoman does, but I don't think anyone's mentioned it yet.

Re: Vocations/Professions for Medieval Adventurers

Assessors, tax collectors and excisemen are interesting ideas as well. Once again, there's a lot of travelling involved, the work can be controversial or political, it pays well, and people who do it have to be skilled at math and evaluating goods, which could be useful skills for a party.

Source: <https://forum.rpg.net/showthread.php?514672-Re-imagining-the-fantasy-medieval-adventuring-party>

Re-imagining the fantasy medieval adventuring party

WARNING: Long Post.

When Ron Moore re-imagined Battlestar Galactica, he brought with him an obsession with verisimilitude, an obsession that I share. In Moore's words, the goal with the new BSG was to ‘…introduce realism into what has heretofore been an aggressively unrealistic genre.' Moore talks about many ways that he tried to inject verisimilitude into BSG, but what I’d like to focus on now is the way that he made everything ‘make sense’ in terms of how the fleet worked. Instead of, in Moore’s words, going with ‘"the cocky guy," "the fast-talker," "the brain," "the wacky alien sidekick" or any of the other usual characters who populate a space series,’ Moore carefully thought about what roles a space military ship would need and how they would be fulfilled. This led to all sorts of interesting departures from standard sci-fi fare, for example a command staff that is fortified in the middle of the spaceship (the CIC) instead watching the action from a ‘bridge’ or gallivanting planetside as part of an ‘away team.’

I want to do this sort of re-imagining with a typical fantasy medieval adventuring party. Specifically, I want to figure out what the party roles would be. I’ve already introduced many changes from FRPG cannon into my Dungeoneers! and Heavy Medieval homebrew settings. A few of the most important are:

- Adventuring parties exist within a feudal legal framework. They have charters (similar to later letters of marquee), allowing them to keep a large portion of the loot they get (the loot would normally belong to the local feudal lord), with the loot being divided between church, adventuring party and local lord in prize courts analogous to those of medieval Genoa.

- Adventuring parties have the PC-type 'adventurers,' as in standard FRPG, but also have a large baggage train and many guards. A typical party is between a dozen and two-dozen people in total.

- All adventuring parties must, by law, have a priest with them in order to mitigate the bad behaviour that adventurers are notorious for.

However, I want to think a lot more deeply about typical roles within an adventuring party. Here’s what I’ve got so far. Are there any additional roles you can think of?

Division of Responsibilities in a Chartered Adventuring Party

The basic division is between ‘principals’ (PCs in game terms), who are expected to undertake the most dangerous work, and 'auxiliaries' (NPCs in game terms), who are mainly guards (but who also serve as ready replacements when a PC dies and the player wants a new character quickly). Under a typical party charter, principals receive six shares of loot each, while auxiliaries normally receive one or two shares plus pay, though an auxiliary who plays an important role, such as an auxiliary mage or priest, is an exception and typically receives three or four shares in addition to pay. A typical chartered party consists of between three and eight principles, and a dozen or more auxiliaries.

The Basic Role of Principals

Hand-to-Hand Fighter

Being able to fight hand-to-hand is a general requirement for being a principal in a chartered party. All principals probably have another role as well (mage, priest, etc.), but that is in addition to being able to fight, not instead of it.

Additional Roles of Principals

In terms of verisimilitude, these are all the roles an adventuring party would need to survive in a fantasy medieval world. In game terms, these roles help to differentiate the PCs in a campaign world where ‘everyone’s a fighter.’ The roles make sure that every PC has a set of skills that lets him or her shine in particular situations. Note that PCs will often take on more than one of these roles.

Archers

Although most serious fighting is hand-to-hand, it’s useful to have a principal or two who can strike from a distance before the melee starts (or even obviate the need for hand-to-hand combat by shooting down a lone sentry at range).

Cantoner

The cantoner is an expert in fortifications. He or she chooses the site for the party’s camp at night and makes sure that temporary fortifications are put up (Roman-legionary-style) in case of ambush or ‘wandering monsters.’ The cantoner also helps the party to defeat enemy fortifications or even to lay siege to an enemy fastness.

Captain

The captain is elected from among the principals. He or she has absolute command during battle. In addition, although decisions in chartered parties are usually made by majority vote among the principals, the captain casts the deciding vote in case of a tie. Some charters grant the captain an extra share or two, some don’t.

Council

Orc tribes, unlike civilised humans, tend to be divided among innumerable nations, clans, alliances and languages. The responsibility of the council is to know something about the customs and perhaps language of various orc tribes, and to negotiate with orc tribes on behalf of the party. The council is very often an orc him or herself.

Dungeoneer

The dungeoneer is an expert in spotting and avoiding traps, and in gaining entrance to fortified or guarded places without raising the alarm. He or she was often a thief before joining the party and it should be noted that the term ‘dungeoneer’ can be something of a euphemism, as chartered parties often get up to more skulduggery in civilised lands than they do in dungeons where they're supposed to.

Lawyer

The middle ages were a legalistic era obsessed with who had what rights, and a lawyer or two is an absolute must for a chartered company. This is especially true when it comes to prize courts, where it is decided what portion of the party’s loot goes to the church (as a tithe) and to the local feudal lord, but it is also true for everyday legal wrangles like whether the party is obliged to pay fees for using a local lord’s roads, which prize court has jurisdiction over the party at the moment and whether or not a local lord is obliged to provision the party while it operates in his lands. A particular danger for adventuring parties is being hauled before a church court, as chartered parties tend to do a lot of things that can be interpreted as violating church law (and thus attracting a fine that the church court is entitled to levy on the party). As a result, many parties have two lawyers: one secular and one ecclesiastical.

Priest

The party chaplain is, along with the captain, mage, scouts and purser, one of the most essential people in the party. All chartered parties are legally obliged to have a chaplain whose job it is to reign in the notoriously bad behaviour of adventuring parties. However, adventurers are also a very superstitious lot and would never dream of undertaking the things they do without knowing that the proper prayers had been said and the proper blessings given before battle.

Mage

Mages are only just barely tolerated under church law, and are in constant danger of being charged with having consorted with or made a pact with the Devil. As a result, magicians are usually shunned by society. Many towns have laws specifying that all mages must camp outside the city walls and only enter the town in the daytime under escort. Chartered adventuring parties are one of the few places where mages can find a home, and every adventuring party wants a mage: whatever the moral questions surrounding the practice of magic, its value in small-scale military operations is beyond question.

Purser

The purser handles all financial aspects of the company, keeps its treasury and also keeps the loot until such time as it can be confirmed by a prize court and divvied out among the members.

Scouts

Scouts reconnoitre areas of interest and also act as outriders or pickets, forming a screen around the party to detect any trouble before it’s too late (the equivalent of Battlestar Galactica’s CAP). Only the most reliable and competent party members are chosen as scouts, because any failure by a scout leaves the party open to ambush, the greatest fear of all adventuring parties.

Woodsman

Woodsmen help the party by hunting and foraging for food, and by finding or supervising the building of shelter in the wilderness. Woodsmen also frequently serve as scouts.

Source: <http://www.svincent.com/MagicJar/Economics/MedievalOccupations.html>

What did people do in a Medieval City?

What did people do in the Middle Ages? If you meet a random person on the street, what is his likely occupation? Or did people work at all? Were the Middle Ages some Communist utopia, where everybody laid around all day and things were magically produced by fairies?

Of course not. They didn't have electronics engineers and computer programmers, but they did have coopers, bakers, blacksmiths, and many other jobs that made their society go around. If you do a little research, there were tons of medieval occupations. Luckily, I've done it for you, so you don't have to!

In the following list, I have made a link to the online version of Webster's Dictionary, so you can find out what things are. In some cases, the definition is also included locally. I am slowly making local definitions for all these occupations, for your convenience.

Is there something on this page you'd like to see that isn't here? Send me an email at svincent@svincent.com -- let me know what you were looking for -- maybe I can help. Also, do you know more occupations that aren't on this list? Do you have definitions that I'm missing? Send them in! I'd love to improve this page!

Open Questions

This site gets me a fair few questions via email, many of which I can just answer. Some of them have stumped me. This is my current list of stumpers:

•currently none!

If you can answer any of these, or even have some clues, mail me. I and my questioners would be ever grateful.

Governmental Occupations

These are the people who run things. They keep society moving smoothly, if they're good at what they do, and can bring society to a crunching halt, if they're not. Rife for corruption, government officials can play a significant role in many campaigns.

•bailiff - the man who makes arrests and executions. Bailiff was not primarily used for the office of policeman. Etymologically, bailiffs were those in charge of the bailey - in effect, manager of the craftsmen and servants in a castle or manor house.

•catchpole - literally 'chicken catcher', one who finds and brings in debtors.

•chancellor - a secretary to a noble or royal

•constable - the warden of a town or castle

•diplomat - the person who negotiates with foreign nations

•emperor - the ruler of an empire

•exchequer - the man responsible for the king's revenue

•hayward - an officer in charge of fences and hedges

•herald - had two responsibilities: a man in charge of making pronouncements and proclamations, and one who is an expert in the field of heraldry (the various insignias used by the rich to identify themselves.) These two responsibilities were one in the same. Medieval Europeans wouldn't have thought it possible to separate them; much less would they have considered them separate roles.

•jailer - the man responsible for a jail: he keeps the criminals from getting out

•judge - a man who is responsible for deciding questions brought to court

•king - ruler of a kingdom

•knight

•lady

•liner - an officer in charge of tracing property boundaries in the city

•master of the revels - official in charge of court entertainment, and later of the theaters [note: the first Master of the Revels was not appointed until Henry VII in the 15th century]

•nobleman

•prince

•pursuivant - officer of arms, ranks below herald, similar duties

•reeve - church warden. Note that the word 'reeve' applies to much more than the Church. Reeves usually came out to be combination administrators and business managers of estates, towns and small territories (i.e. shires) - something like a chief bailiff.

•sherrif

•summoner - officer of the court who serves subpoenas (see also religious version)

•watchman

•woodward - the keeper of a forest

Military Occupations

Who keeps the country safe from encroaching enemies and wild monsters? Why, the military, of course. These brave men - and sometimes women train against the possibility that they'll have to protect their country with their lives.

•Arbalestier - one who fires an arbalest (a type of metal crossbow)

•archer - one who shoots arrows

•bowman

•camp follower - people following an army, making money off of the soldiers

•cannoneer

•crossbowman

•drummer

•engineer

•guardsman

•halberdier

•Knifeman - one skilled with a knife; specifically, a soldier trained to disembowel horses

•mercenary

•pikeman

•pioneer - an early term for military engineer

•sapper - specialist in field fortifications

•scout

•siege engineer

•sergeant

•sergeant-at-arms

•spearman

•spy

Criminal Occupations

Wherever there is society, there are criminals. These occupations include only the so-called "professional criminal": it ignores those people who are corrupt at every level of society who has a legal "front", from kings to beggars.

•boothaler - marauder, plunderer

•burglar - one who breaks into, and steals things from, other people's houses. (If you break into and steal stuff from your own house, you're just a nut.)

•diver - fig. a pickpocket

•fence - one who trades in stolen goods

•footpad - one who robs pedestrians

•outlaw - a man wanted by the law

•pickpocket - one who picks pockets

•poacher - one who illegally kills animals, usually on somebody else's land

•silk-snatcher - one who steals bonnets

•stewsman - probably a brothel keeper - "since the words stew and stewholder both mean a bawd, I'm guessing that a stewsman would be a brothel-keeper as well. Whether bawdry counts as a criminal activity varies at different times and places."

•thimblerigger - a professional sharper who runs a thimblerig (a game in which a pea is ostensibly hidden under a thimble and players guess which thimble it is under)

Religious Occupations

If Government officials run the affairs of earthly beings, then those occupied with religious pursuits mediate between earth and the gods.

Priests are relatively common in role playing games. These men and women are the people behind the church: not typically "adventuring priests", but vitally important to the church nonetheless.

•abbess - superior of a convent

•abbot - superior of a monastery

•almoner - a distributer of money and food to the poor

•archbishop

•beadle - church official -- ushers preserves order at sermons

•beguine - member of certain Netherland lay sisterhoods

•bishop

•canon - a prebend attached to a cathedral (the definition is somewhat wider, but that's the most common usage)

•cantor - a choir leader in churches, the man who sings hymns and leads the congregation in prayer in a synagogue

•cardinal

•chantry priest - a priest employed to say prayers for the dead; often taught on the side (thus so-called chantry schools)

•chaplain

•clark - see clerk

•clerk - a priest

•curate - priest in charge of a church

•friar - a wandering monk, especially a Franciscan

•metropolitan - a bishop in charge of other bishops; an archbishop

•monk

•nun

•ostiary - a church's doorkeeper

•palmer - a pilgrim who's been to the Holy Land

•pardoner - seller of indulgences

•parish priest

•pilgrim -

•pope

•priest

•primate - head of the Church in a country or region (i.e. the Archbishop of Canterbury was Primate of England)

•sacristan - a person in charge of the relics and religious items of a church

•sexton - minor church officer - rings bells, digs graves

•summoner - officer who brings people to episcopal courts (see also government version)

Merchants

In a society based on trade - either with hard currency or barter, there are always those who spend their lives in the pursuit of selling things to others.

Note that most craftsmen also sell the results of their labor, farmers typically must sell their crops themselves, people in service trades often must hawk their own wares. This section does not include them. It includes only those people who spend their entire lives devoted to selling things, and nothing more.

•acater - a provisioner (food)

•alewife - a female alehouse keeper

•apothecary - a preparer and merchant for drugs and medicines

•banker

•beer seller

•boothman - one who sells grains

•chapman - travelling merchant

•collier - one who makes or sells charcoal (later coal) [can also fit under craftsmen]

•colporteur - seller of religious books

•costermonger - fruit seller

•drover - one who drives sheep or cattle to market

•eggler - an egg-merchant

•fishmonger

•fruiterer - a seller of fresh fruit

•fruitier - fruitseller

•fueller - one who sells charcoal, wood, or other fuels

•glass seller

•greengrocer - seller of vegetables and fruits

•grocer

•harberdasher - seller of men's clothing

•hay merchant

•hetheleder - one who sells heather as fuel

•innkeeper

•ironmonger - one who sells things made of iron

•lighterman - one who ferries goods from ship to shore on a small boat

•linen-draper - one who deals in linens, calicos, etc.

•mercer - a dealer in expensive clothing (silk, etc.)

•merchant

•milkmaid - a female servant who milks cows

•oil merchant

•old-clothes dealer

•oynter - an oil-merchant

•peddler

•pie seller

•plumer - a dealer in feathers

•poulter - seller of poultry

•shrimper - one who catches shrimp

•skinner - a dealer in furs and skins (essentially, the same thing as a furrier)

•spice merchant

•spicer - grocer or dealer in spices

•stationer - seller of books, etc.; also, a copyist

•taverner - innkeeper

•thresher - one who thrashes grain, separating it from straw

•unguentary - one who sells unguents

•waferer - confectioner (a dealer in 'wafers', a kind of cake)

•waterseller

•weirkeeper - a keeper of fish traps

•wine seller

•wood seller

•woodmonger - a seller of fuel wood

•wool stapler - one who buys and sells wool wholesale

Artists/Entertainers

In any society, there is the need for spare time. And what did people do before television? Well, they mostly sang songs, told stories, and danced. From this, some professional entertainers developed.

Also included in this section are artists: those who devote their lives to creating works of beauty and expressiveness. There is enormous overlap between artists and entertainers... I won't get into the argument of whether art should be used to entertain or express the artist's true feelings. That's beyond my scope here, certainly.

•bard - a Welsh minstrel

•barker - one who advertises at the entrance to a show

•bear-ward - the owner of a performing bear

•fiddler - this is an unfair translation, "geiger" is applied to any player of bowed and stringed instruments

•fool

•fresco painter

•glasspainter

•harper

•illuminator

•jester

•limner - illuminator of books

•lutenist - a lute player

•minnesinger - a German minstrel who specialized in love songs

•mummer - actor, specifically the predecessors to mimes

•musician

•nakerer - a player of the naker a small kettle drum

•organist

•painter - portraits and landscapes

•piper

•player

•playwright

•poet

•sculptor

•singer

•troubadour - most properly a minstrel from the southern part of France (though it can be used of any minstrel who specializes in romances).

•tumbler

•writer

Farming and Workers with Flora and Fauna

Ah -- the farmers. Without them, we'd starve. Wresting sustenence from the very earth itself. There's a large number of occupations associated with farming: you need people to watch the animals, work the fields. In fact, probably most people in a medieval society were farmers.

Also included are hunters and gatherers: those who travel into nature and grab things to eat, as well as all those who work with animals.

•ackerman(acreman) - an oxherder

•falconer - breeds, trains, hunts with falcons

•farmer

•fewterer - one who keeps the hunting dogs [put it in whatever category you put falconers and hawkers]

•fisherman

•forester - game warden or forest ranger

•fowler - one who hunts for wildfowl

•gamekeeper

•goatherd - one who looks after a herd of goats

•hawker - breeds, trains, hunts with hawks

•hayward - a tender of hedges

•horse trainer

•hunter

•huntsman

•master of hounds

•molecatcher

•ostler - cares for horses

•oyster raker - worker on an oyster fishing boat

•oysterer - one who catches oysters

•parker - caretaker of a park

•plowman

•rat catcher

•reaper

•sheepshearer

•shepherd - one who looks after a herd of sheep

•swineherd - one who looks after a herd of swine (sometimes pigherd)

•thresher

•tillerman

•trapper

•woolcomber

•woolman - sorts wool into differing grades

Scholars

They may have called it the dark ages for lack of scientific output, but there were still people interested in the world around them, willing to poke and prod it until something broke.

•alchemist - a medieval chemist

•astrologer

•astronomer

•bearleader - a travelling tutor (a silly name) - related to the figurative use of the word bear to describe a boor.

•dean

•librarian

•mathematician

•philosopher

•professor

•scholar

•scrivener - scribe

•tutor

•theologian - a scholar specializing in the study of God and doctorine

Sailors

The lure of the sea, the crash of the waves: a boat-filled life was the norm for a great many medieval people. Some sailed on rivers, some on the ocean. Exciting and dangerous trade missions with far-off empires, exploring strange new places, and always coming back home to tell exciting stories in the local tavern.

•bargeman

•boatman

•canaller - canal boat worker

•ferryman

•hobbler - boat tower on a river or canal

•lighter man - worker on a flat-bottomed boat

•mariner

•navigator

•pilot

•sailor

•sea captain

•ship's captain

•shipchandler - ship provisioner

•waterman - riverboat sailor

Regular Folks

One of the problems with coming up with a list of Medieval Occupations is that lots of people in a feudal economy didn't have occupations at all. They were just tenants of other folks. Also, there are in any society, a large number of homeless and impoverished.

This section deals with people like that.

There's a fun story about a peasant, who had a bit of an adventure, at Stefan's Florilegium.

I've also heard that the book A Medieval Life: Cecilia Penifader of Brigstock, c. 1297-1344, by Judith Bennett, is recommended by some schools. It reconstructs the life of Cecilia Penifader, a medieval peasant, from various legal records. I've never read it, but it seems to get good reviews!

•begger

•buffoon - publically amusing person

•clown - a peasant

•crofter - tenant of a small piece of land

•dwarf

•franklin - a freeholder

•gardner - one who gardens

•hermit

•housewife

•jew - a class of their own in the Medieval Period

•landlord

•palmer - one who had been, or pretended to have been, to the Holy Land

•peasant

•pilgrim

•spinster

•tenter - an unskilled workman's assistant

Craftsmen

Game worlds typically have armorers and blacksmiths, but then it breaks down, and everything else is available from the marketplace or the "general store". Add a bit of spice to a campaign by having the player's harness become damaged, and have to deal with the local harness maker - who is also the town shoemaker and his loud wife!

Most of the occupations on this list are craftsmen and service occupations. Because of this, I have seperated out the most common craftsmen from the bulk of the list, so that the gentle reader can make sense of it. The list of common occupations was derived from the tax list for Paris in 1292, from the book Life in a Medieval City, by Francis and Joseph Gies. The number indicates how many there in the city.

Common Craftsmen - sorted by frequency

•366 - shoemaker - one who makes and repairs shoes

•214 - furrier - one who makes and repairs goods made of furs - esp. clothes

•197 - tailor - one who makes and repairs clothing

•131 - jeweler - maker of jewelry

•106 - pastrycook - baker specializing in pastries

•104 - mason - bricklayer

•95 - carpenter - one who constructs things from wood

•86 - weaver - weaver of cloth

•71 - chandler - one who makes candles, also grocer. Often associated with ships (see shipchandler)

•70 - cooper - one who makes and repairs barrels and tubs

•62 - baker - one who makes bread and other baked goods

•58 - scabbard maker - maker of scabbards

•54 - hatmaker - maker of hats

•51 - saddler - maker of saddles

•51 - chicken butcher - butcher of chickens

•45 - purse maker - maker of purses

•42 - meat butcher - butcher of all sorts of meats, esp beef

•36 - buckle maker - maker of buckles

•34 - blacksmith - one who works with iron to form metal implements: esp farm tools.

•28 - roofer - one who makes and repairs roofs

•27 - locksmith - one who makes and repairs locks

•26 - ropemaker - maker of rope

•24 - tanner - preparer of leather

•24 - rugmaker - maker of rugs

•24 - harness maker - maker of harnesses

•23 - bleacher

•22 - cutler - one who makes and repairs cutlery

•21 - glover - a glovemaker

Less common craftsmen - sorted alphabetically

•accoutrement maker - makes military accessories

•alabasterer - worker in alabaster

•architect - a designer of buildings and other constructions

•arkwright - a maker of "arks" -- wooden chests or coffers

•armorer

•balancemaker

•basketmaker

•beekeeper - also known as apiarist

•beerbrewer

•bellfounder

•bellmaker - these are the little bells that go on sleighs and clothing, as opposed to the large civic bells cast by the bellfounder

•besom maker - one who makes brooms (known as besoms in the middle ages: 'broom' was the name of the plant use to make them)

•billier - axe-maker

•blockcutter - for block printing

•bodger - itinerant wood turners (read more)

•bonecarver

•bookbinder

•bookprinter

•bottelier - maker of leather bottles

•bowyer - maker of bows

•brazier - makes brassware

•brewer

•bricker - brick baker, not mason

•bricker - brick-maker

•bricklayer

•broderer - embroiderer

•bronzefounder

•broom-dasher - maker of brooms

•brushbinder

•builder

•buttonmaker

•cabinetmaker

•campaner - maker of large bells (church-bells, for example)

•canvasser - canvas-maker

•carder - one who cards wool (combs out wool in preparation for spinning it)

•cardmaker

•cartwright

•chainmaker

•charcoalburner

•cheesemaker

•clockmaker

•clothier

•cobbler - shoe maker

•coiner

•combmaker

•compasssmith

•confectioner

•coppersmith, redsmith - a worker in copper and brass

•cordwainer - worker in fine leather

•corsetier - maker of corsets and other undergarments

•currier - one who cures leather

•delver - ditchdigger

•diamantaire - diamond-cutter (actually, diamond-cutting wasn't discovered until after the Middle Ages, but once it was diamantaires usually had their own guilds)

•disher - a potter who makes dishes

•draper - Originally, drapers were clothiers, though today the British use the word for a dry goods merchant.

•drycooper

•drywaller

•dyer - one who dyes cloth

•embroiderer - one who decorates fabric with stitched designs

•engraver - for printing, not to decorate items

•fabricshearer - trims the nap and makes pleats for customers

•feltmaker

•fewtrer - felt-maker

•fletcher - maker of arrows

•founder - foundryman

•fuller - cloth worker who shrinks, beats, presses cloth

•fuller - someone who cleans and thickens cloth by beating it

•furniture maker

•gemcutter

•gilder - one who gilds (applies gold leaf to something)

•girdler - leather worker who made girdles and belts, chiefly for the Army

•girdler - belt-maker

•glassblower - one who makes glass objects by blowing

•glazier - maker of stained glass

•goldbeater - one who makes gold foil

•goldsmith - a worker in precious metals. In the Middle Ages, all people who worked in precious metals were called goldsmiths; the term silversmith is a much later word.

•gravedigger

•grinder - knife sharpener

•gunsmith

•gunstocker

•hacker - hoe-maker

•hatter - one who makes and repairs hats

•horner - craftsman who works in horn -- spoons, combs, musical instruments

•ivorist - an ivory-carver

•joiner - skilled carpenter

•knacker - harness-maker

•knapper - a worker in flint

•knifesmith

•lacemaker

•lampwright - maker of lamps and lanterns

•lancier - a maker of lances

•lanternmaker

•lapidary - worker with precious stones -- usu. other than diamonds

•latoner - worker in brass and latten (a brass-like alloy)

•leadworker

•lensgrinder

•limner - someone who illuminates manuscripts

•linen-armorer - one who makes cloth armor [same as a merchant taylor]

•linener - a shirt maker [also, a linen-draper]

•linenspinner

•lorimer - maker of horse gear

•lutemaker

•luthier - a maker of stringed instruments (lutes, guitars, etc.)

•mailer - enameller -- not a maker of armor

•mailmaker

•malemaker - a maker of leather trunks

•mapmaker - also known as cartographer

•marler - one who digs 'marl', a type of soil used as fertilizer.

•marleywoman - a maker of marli, a type of fabric (gauze used for embroidery). Note that embroidery on this material is also known as marli.

•master builder - chief architect

•merchant taylor - tailors and "linen armourers"; they made the padded tunics soldiers would wear under metal armor

•milliner - maker of womens' hats and clothing

•miner

•miniaturist - painter of miniatures (small paintings usually found on icons or in books)

•minter, mintmaster, moneyer - one who mints coins

•mirrorer - one who makes mirrors?

•nailmaker

•nedeller - maker of needles

•netmaker

•oilmaker

•papermaker

•parchmenter

•parchmenter - a parchment-maker

•pasteler - a pastry-maker

•pattenmaker

•perukier - a wig-maker [I don't know if the word was used in the Middle Ages; the oldest use of the word peruke I can find is 1548]

•pewterer

•physician

•pinmaker

•plasterer

•plattner - beat out sheets of metal

•plumber - worker in lead

•pointer - lace-maker

•poleturner - maker of polearms (spears, pikes, halberds, etc.)

•pot mender

•potter

•printer

•purser - a purse-maker

•quarryman

•quilter - a quilt-maker

•rectifier - one who distilled alcohol

•reedmaker - a maker of flutes and other wind instruments

•roper - maker of ropes, nets

•rugweaver - one who makes rugs

•sailmaker

•saltboiler - makes salt by boiling water

•salter - makes or deals in salt

•sawyer - saws timbers to boards

•scythesmith

•seamstress

•shingler - wooden roof tiler

•shipwright - a ship builder

•siever - a maker of sieves (a picture)

•silkmaid, silkwoman - a woman who makes items out of silk.

•silk-dresser, silk-maker, silk-mercer, silk-dyer, silk-carder - various individuals making silk articles.

•silversmith

•smelter - refines raw ore into pure metals

•smith - blacksmith

•spectaclesmaker

•spooner - a spoon-maker

•spurrer - maker of spurs

•stonecarver

•stonecutter

•swordsmith

•tallowchandler

•tapestrymaker

•tapicer - tapestry maker

•tasseler - one who makes tassels

•thacker, thatcher - one who covers roofs with thatch

•thonger - maker of leather straps or laces

•threadmaker

•tile-burner - one who forms clay into tiles and bricks

•tiler, tile-theeker, tyler - one who roofs with tile

•tile maker - tile-maker

•tinker

•tinsmith

•treen maker - one who makes various small wood items

•turner - lathe worker (makes turned wooden objects, like chair legs)

•typefounder

•upholder - an upholsterer

•vaginarius - scabbard-maker (pl. vaginarii)

•vintner - a winemaker

•waxchandler

•webber - weaver

•wheeler - maker of spinning wheels

•wheelwright - a maker of wheels

•wiredrawer - maker of gold and silver wire

•woodcarver

•woodcutter

•woodturner

Service Occupations

There are many important positions in society for those who do not produce, but serve their fellow man. When they're done their job for the day, there are no new products, no changes in physical objects, but people are moved, jobs get done, and society keeps moving. These are the service workers.

Service workers can play an enormous role in your campaign. All the time, characters need to get their hair cut, have water fetched, or have something written down.

Unfortunately, since this list is so enormous, I've again taken the liberty of separating out the common occupations, again, as defined by the Geis book. The numbers are the count of the occupation in Paris, in 1292.

Common Service Occupations - Sorted by Frequency

•199 - maidservant

•151 - barber - one who cuts hair, also performed surgery and pulled teeth.

•130 - restaurateur - one who owns or runs a restaurant

•58 - water carrier

•43 - laundress - also known as lavendar

•42 - porter - one who carries burdens, or one who waits at doors. Probably the former

•29 - doctor

•26 - bather - owner of a bath

•24 - copyist - one who copies books and documents -- not all of them can read

Less common service occupations - sorted alphabetically

•accomptant - an accountant

•accoucheur - midwife

•accoucheus - midwife

•accountant - man who does financial bookkeeping

•actuary - man who does financial bookkeeping, clerk

•attendent

•bagger

•bailiff - the man who makes arrests and executions. Bailiff was not primarily used for the office of policeman. Etymologically, bailiffs were those in charge of the bailey - in effect, manager of the craftsmen and servants in a castle or manor house.

•barrister - solicitor or lawyer

•bath attendent

•bather - owner of a bath

•bodyservant

•butler - one in charge of the buttery (where alcohol was kept)

•carman - one who drives a vehicle for transporting goods

•carter - one who drives carts

•cartier

•carver - the servant who cut the meat

•ceiler - one who installs ceilings

•cellarer - one in charge of the wine cellar

•chamberlain - a private attendant who waits on his lord in his bedchamber

•chimney sweep - one who cleans chimneys and smokestacks.

•chirurgeon - surgeon

•clouter - one who fixes things, a tinkerer

•cook - one who cooks, especially food.

•cowherd - one who looks after a herd of cows. A medieval cowboy, as it were.

•currier - see tanner

•dairymaid

•dapifer - a servant who brings the meat to the table

•dentist

•ditcher - one who digs ditches

•diver - one who dives for a living.

•dog trainer

•drayman - cart driver

•dung carter

•executioner

•famulus - "a servant or attendant, esp. of a scholar or a magician" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)

•farrier - maker of tack, esp. horeshoes; also a horse-veteranarian

•groom - one who takes care of the horses

•harlot - vagabond, beggar, rogue, 14th century male servant, attendant or menial, and 15th century, loose woman

•horseleech - veterinarian, farrier

•hurdle maker - made 'wattle fences' for sheep

•lawyer - a master of the law.

•link boy - boy who will carry a torch to guide people through the night

•link man - like a link boy, only older

•maid - a female household servant. A maid is always female; the word literally means virgin.

•marshal - a horse tender

•midwife - humorously known as a babycatcher

•miller - the person who turns grains into flour.

•napier - the person who manages royal linens

•nurse

•panter - keeper of the pantry

•paperer - needlemaking industry -- inserted needles into paper to prepare for selling

•pavior - one who lays pavement

•pavyler - put up pavilions/tents

•pissprophet - doctors who would diagnose disease from a patient's urine, specifically from the sight, smell, and taste of the urine.

•potboy - cleans out chamber pots

•privycleaner

•procurator - or proctor, this is a kind of legal agent or representative

•prostitute - one who sells sex

•quartermaster

•ragpicker - sorts through leftover rags, find re-usable ones

•raker - street sanitation worker

•riveter - one who rivets (a rivet being a nail designed to secure metal to metal)

•scullion - the bottom-rung servant in a household

•seneschal - senior steward

•solicitor - lawyer

•sperviter - a keeper of sparrow-hawks

•stainer - one who stains wood

•stillroom maid

•surgeon

•tapster - one who draws ale, etc. at an inn; innkeeper/bartender/barmaid

•teamster - one who drives a team of oxen or horses

•trencherman - carver, trench-digger

•userer - a moneylender, specifically a Jewish moneylender (the only people allowed to hold such a job in the Middle Ages)

•wagoner - wagon or cart driver

•waller - one who builds walls

•wattler - made 'wattle fences' for sheep

•weeper

•wetnurse

Other

These are occupations that I can't identify. Any help here would be appreciated. Thanks!

•basinbeater - ? a maker of metal basins ?

•belter - ? maker of belts ?

•fool for money - ?

•gluttonous fool - ?

•nailer - ? one who makes nails ?

•rivener - ?

•tentsman - ?

•terrazo grinder/mosaic layer - ?

•thimbler - ?

Credits

Some of this material comes from Stefan's Florilegium, an online archive of interesting articles from the SCA's newsgroup, The Rialto (at rec.org.sca).

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Adminstrative Details...

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