



FAMOUS MEN OF THE MIDDLE AGES

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DOCERE, DELECTARE, MOVERE

FAMOUS MEN OF THE MIDDLE AGES DICTIONARY

A

abbey- monastery supervised by an abbot

absolve- to relieve from an obligation; to grant pardon

abyss- deep cavern

accolade- ceremonial bestowal of knighthood; expression of approval

allegiance- loyalty to a nation, sovereign or cause

anoint- to apply oil, often in a ritual or religious ceremony

ascend- to go up

austere- stern, severe, somber

austerity- severity; economical or material meagerness

avenge- to inflict punishment in return for a wrong

B

ballad- narrative poem to be sung

banish- to drive out, expel as punishment

barbarous- savage and cruel; crude and uncivilized

battle-ax- heavy broad-headed ax used as a weapon

bazaar- Arab marketplace

besiege- to surround with hostile forces

block-printing- printing from blocks containing a page of text

borough- district of a city

brandish- to wave in a menacing way, as a sword

burnish- to polish to a shine

C

caliph- successor to Mohammed; Islamic leader

canonize- to officially make a saint (Chapter 5); to declare a saint (Chapter 23)

canton- small territorial division of a country
caravan- train of camels for transporting goods
cathedral- principal church of a bishop's diocese
celibacy- abstinence from marital relations
censure- official rebuke
chancellor- secretary to a monarch
citadel- fortress in a commanding position
clad- clothed
coat of mail- type of armor made of a fabric of small linked metal rings
codify- to organize and write as a code
conciliation- overcoming dispute; making peace or friendship
confer- to bestow an honor
confessor- one who confesses; persistent follower of Christianity
coronation- ceremony and act of crowning a monarch
courtier- attendant at and monarch's court (Chapter 16)
courtier- attendant at a sovereign's court (Chapter 9)
cunning- artfully ingenious and devious
curfew- regulation requiring people to leave the streets at a certain time

D

depose- to remove from office or a throne
descend- to go down
dialect- variant of a language; not considered a separate language
dialectician- expert or teacher of the art of determining truth through question and answer
discontented- unhappy, dissatisfied
doctrine- principle or system for a belief
domain- territory under rule

dominion- sovereign territory or state (Chapter 3); realm (Chapter 30)

duchy- territory ruled by a duke

E

emaciated- extremely thin through starvation

embassy- mission to a foreign government

enraged- in a rage; extremely angry

envoy- government representative on diplomatic mission

F

fagot- bundle of sticks

falconry- technique and sport of hunting game with a falcon

fast- to go without food

feeble- weak

fervent- showing great emotion or zeal

flatter- to compliment insincerely to gain favor

fortress- large permanent fortified stronghold

fowler- a person who raises and keeps birds for hunting

G

garrison- military post, usually permanent

gilded- covered with a thin layer of gold (or appearance of)

goblet- drinking vessel with a stem and base

H

habit- distinctive costume of a monk

harassment- tormenting persistently

hoard- hidden treasure

homage- demonstration of allegiance to a feudal lord (Chapter 13)

homage- ceremonial acknowledgment by a vassal of allegiance to a lord (Chapter 28)

hostage- person held for ransom or as security

I

imposter- one who poses as what he is not

infantry- branch of an army consisting of foot soldiers

infidel- nonbeliever of a particular religion

insufferable- intolerable; obnoxious and difficult to endure

invincible- unconquerable

J

jeer- to abusively mock

K

L

lame- disabled so that walking is difficult

leper- one suffering from leprosy

M

mail- armor made of small interlocking metal rings

manuscript- hand-written copy of a book, paper, composition

mark- unit of money

mead- wine made of honey

meditation- contemplative or devotional exercise

minaret- tower for the call to prayer

minstrel- itinerant poet-singer of the Middle Ages

mire- area of wet, muddy ground; bog

mistletoe- parasitic shrub with evergreen leaves and waxy white berries

mosque- Islamic place of worship

movable type- type consisting of individual letters and marks

muezzin- caller to prayer in Islam

N

Norman- native of Normandy descended from Norse Vikings

Norse- ancient Scandinavian; today Norwegian

notoriety- fame for bad behavior or character

O

P

parchment- sheep skin treated to use as a writing medium

parliament- national representative governing body

patrician- male member of Roman upper class; senator

patrimony- inheritance or endowment, often of land and properties

penance- voluntary act of self-punishment for sin

penitent- person performing acts expressing remorse for sins

peripheral- at the outer edge of; of minor significance

petition- to formally request or apply for (Chapter 5)

petition- collection of signatures making a demand (Chapter 34)

pillage- to plunder in war

pious- having religious reverence

pirate- plunderer on the sea

pomp- dignified or magnificent display or ceremony

posthaste- rapidly; with great speed

prostration- lying face down on the ground in submission

provisions- supplies; especially food

Q

quadrangle- rectangular plaza surrounded by buildings

R

ransom- payment for release of hostage or threat

rebuke- to sharply reprimand

revelry- partying

rhetorician- expert or teacher of the art of speaking effectively

rout- to utterly defeat; to drive off in disorder

ruddy- of a healthy, reddish color

S

sack- the looting of a captured town; (also verb)

sally- to rush out from a fortified position

scimitar- curved sword with the blade on the convex edge

scourge- whip used to inflict punishment; (also verb)

sentry- guard

sepulcher- burial chamber

skirmish- minor battle

sojourn- to stay, visit; a visit

solemn- impressive in a serious and somber way

sorcery- witchcraft

sovereign- ruler, monarch

spoils- goods taken in war from a defeated enemy

standard- flag or banner, usually on a pole

stockade- fortification made of timbers or posts

sultan- ruler of Turkey

T

Tatar- a central Asian people

tempest- violent storm, especially at sea

temporal- (in this context) worldly

Teuton- collective name for Germanic peoples

toil- very hard work

tragedy- drama whose main character is brought down by a character flaw

traitor- one who betrays an army or a people to their enemy

treason- act or charge of betrayal of a state or sovereign

treaty- formal agreement between states or forces

trudge- to walk slow and heavy-footed; to plod

U

usurp- seize and hold power that rightfully belongs to another

usurper- one who seizes and holds the power of another

V

vandal- destroyer of public or private property

vanquish- to defeat in battle

venerate- to regard with reverence

W

waft- to carry gently through the air, as on a breeze

warder- guard; gate watchman

X

Y

Z