



Editor's Note: First, I want to thank everyone who entered the drawing for a free garment! Your enthusiasm and response was very much appreciated! Congratulations to Terri Lord for winning the drawing!

Second: Our goal is to promote interest in the middle-class; one's persona, costume, social information and more. This newsletter is about what *can* be done. We will strive to bring you **researched** information on period style, color, society and the arts, and offer creative interpretations to enhance the experience of Renaissance Faire enthusiasts, SCA members, professional and amateur costumers alike. Feel free to submit articles or suggestions for topics to the email address below. I hope you enjoy our time together.

The Middle Class as a Social Entity

by Martina

"It is the best of all estates; they live very nobly, can wear clothes fit for a king; they have falcons... fine saddle horses... when the knights are obliged to go to the army, the bourgeoisie stay in bed; when the knights go to be massacred in battle, the bourgeoisie go on swimming parties and picnics."

by Renard le Contrefait, 14th Century

The Middle Class encompasses varying levels of social strata, from wealthy businessmen to small merchant - artisans alike. All in all, the Middle Class can be defined as the 'bourgeoisie' (boo-zhwa-zee), or professional and freemen with no landed titles or noble blood.

The middle class begin to rise in prominence during the later Middle Ages, around 1200 AD. It was during this time of increasing trade and productivity that freemen and townspeople became recognized as an independent social class. Increased trading and exploration furthered this growth.

As the Middle Classes grew wealthier, they attempted to imitate their 'betters' with their dress,

department and education. Sons that previously would have been trained in the family business were sent to college or university to achieve a noble education; the wealthier individuals became patrons of the arts; and everyone attempted to dress as expensively as they could!

By the time of the Renaissance, capitalism and trading opportunities in Europe and the New World had spurred the growth of a wealthy social class that exhibited political force, considerable financial power, and supported kings, emperors, and clergy through financial assistance and by means of trade and industry.

Members of the Middle Class were Merchants, Bankers and Financiers, Dyers, Fullers, Bakers, Money-lenders, Ship's Captains, Ship's Owners, and Government employees just to name a few. The variety of occupation and opportunity afforded to this portion of society is a reflection of the social flowering of Renaissance period itself.



The next edition of this newsletter will cover textile information from the early ages to the Renaissance, focusing on the Middle Class especially. Until then, anon.

- Martina aka Rachel of Wyllt

- Shameless Plug -

It's off-season for Faire, War is months away! Have you thought about your costume recently? Or is it in a heap at the bottom of your laundry pile? The back of your closet?

Now is the time beef up your wardrobe with some new items - you can start the new season in style with some great additions at www.mlhdesigns.com/costuming.

Call our office or email with any question about sizes, pricing and our new line of WOMENS garb!