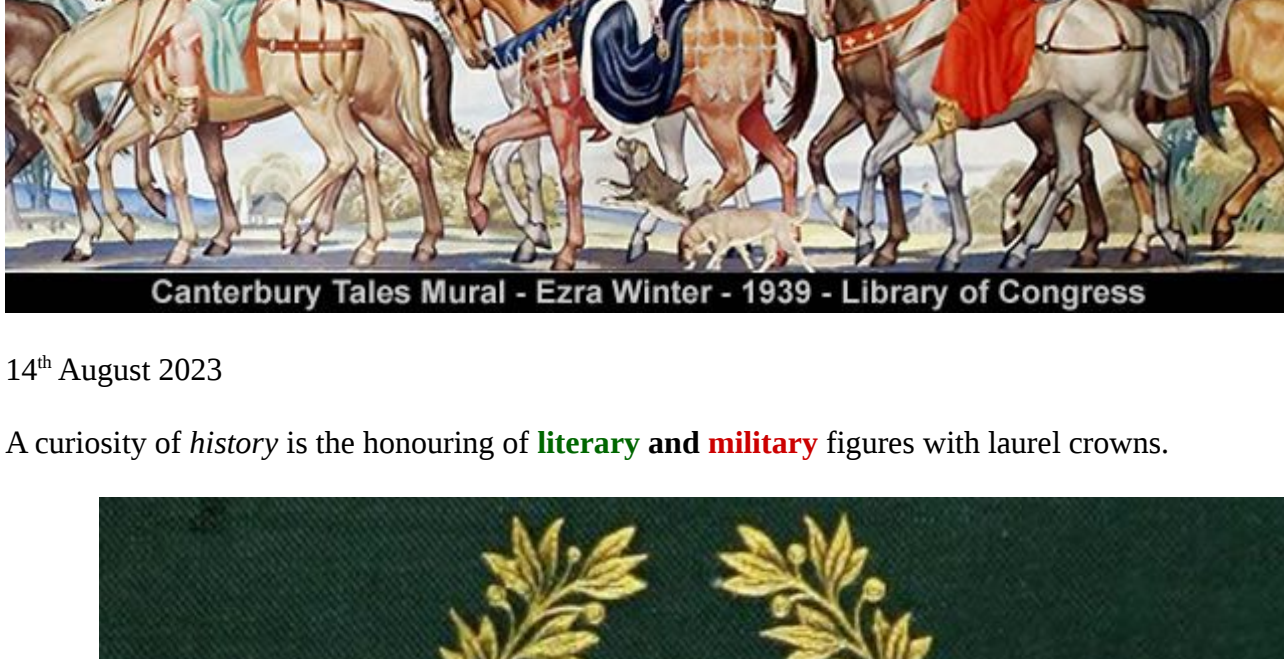
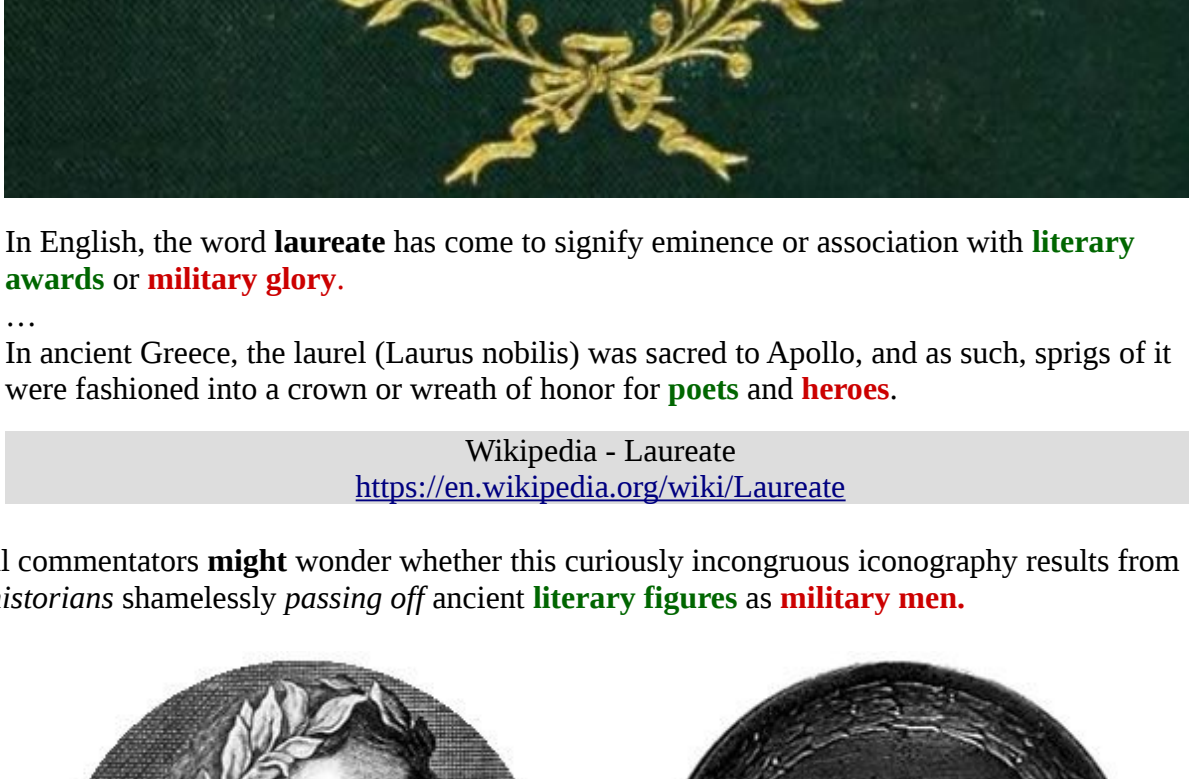


Saints & Sinners Edwin Johnson goes to Canterbury



14th August 2023

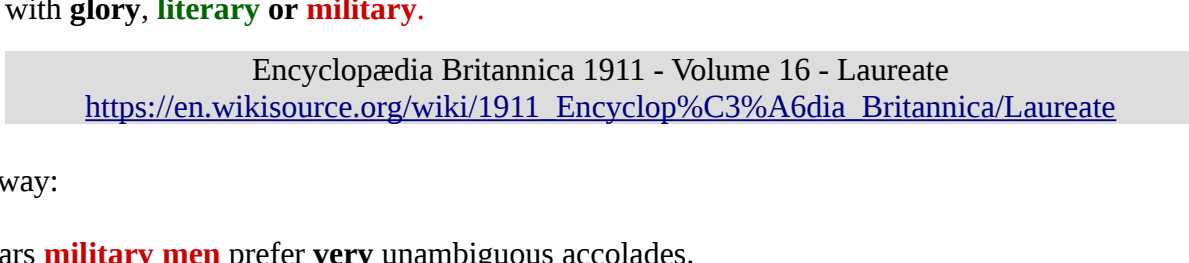
A curiosity of *history* is the honouring of **literary** and **military** figures with laurel crowns.



In English, the word **laureate** has come to signify eminence or association with **literary awards** or **military glory**.
 ...
 In ancient Greece, the laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) was sacred to Apollo, and as such, sprigs of it were fashioned into a crown or wreath of honor for **poets** and **heroes**.

Wikipedia - Laureate
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laureate>

Cynical commentators **might** wonder whether this curiously incongruous iconography results from *court historians* shamelessly *passing off* ancient **literary figures** as **military men**.



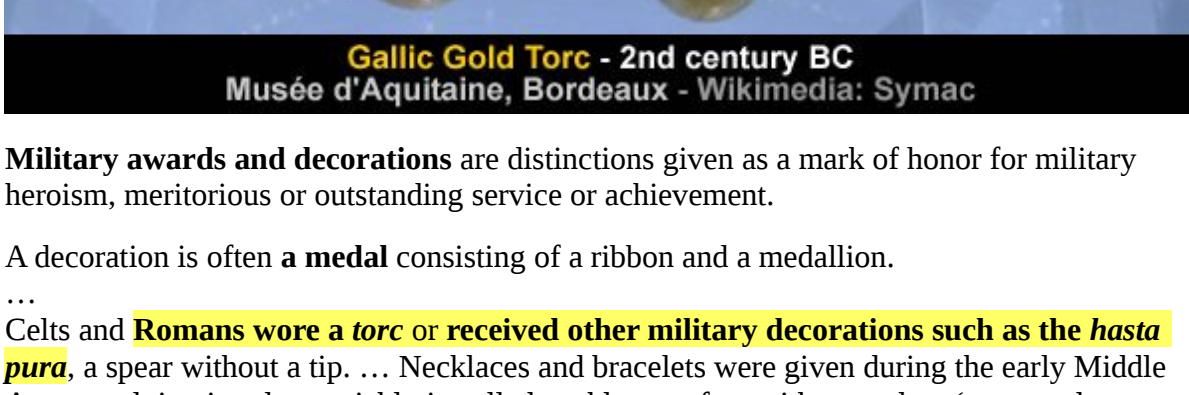
Sir William Davenant 1606-1668 Poet & Playwright. **World War I Victory Medal - 1919 The Portable Antiquities Scheme The Trustees of the British Museum**

The **laurel**, in ancient Greece, was sacred to Apollo, and as such was used to form a crown or wreath of honour for **poets** and **heroes**; and this usage has been widespread.
 The word "laureate" or "laureated" thus came in English to signify eminent, or associated with **glory**, **literary** or **military**.

Encyclopædia Britannica 1911 - Volume 16 - Laureate
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Laureate

Either way:

It appears **military men** prefer very unambiguous accolades.



Gallic Gold Torc - 2nd century BC Musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux - Wikimedia: Symac

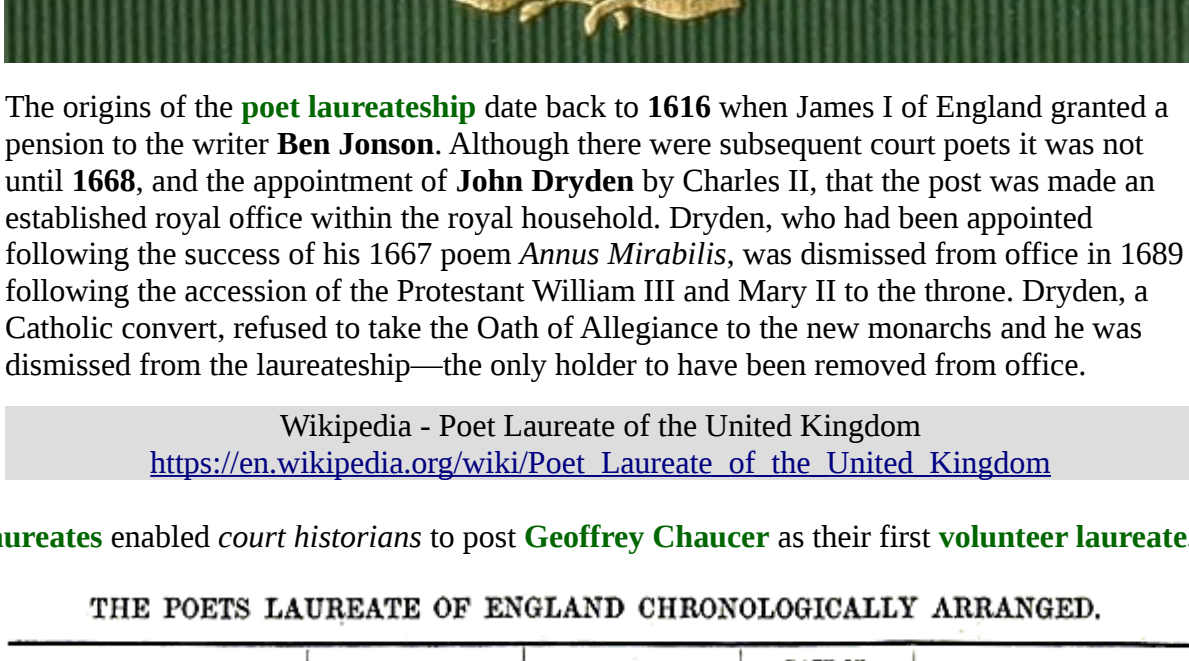
Military awards and decorations are distinctions given as a mark of honor for military heroism, meritorious or outstanding service or achievement.
 A decoration is often a **medal** consisting of a ribbon and a medallion.
 ...
 Celts and **Romans** wore a **torc** or received other military decorations such as the **hasta pura**, a spear without a tip. ... Necklaces and bracelets were given during the early Middle Ages, evolving into large, richly jewelled necklaces, often with a pendant (commonly a medal) attached.

Wikipedia - Military Awards and Decorations
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_awards_and_decorations

The Roman Titus Manlius in 361 BC challenged a Gaul to single combat, killed him, and then took his torc. Because he always wore it, he received the nickname *Torquatus* (the one who wears a torc), and it was adopted by his family. After this, **Romans adopted the torc as a decoration for distinguished soldiers and elite units during Republican times**. A few Roman torcs have been discovered. Pliny the Elder records that after a battle in 386 BC (long before his lifetime) the Romans recovered 183 torcs from the Celtic dead, and similar booty is mentioned by other authors.

Wikipedia - Torc
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torc>

While the British establishment enjoys emphasising it's **poet laureates**.



The origins of the **poet laureateship** date back to **1616** when James I of England granted a pension to the writer **Ben Jonson**. Although there were subsequent court poets it was not until **1668**, and the appointment of **John Dryden** by Charles II, that the post was made an established royal office within the royal household. Dryden, who had been appointed following the success of his 1667 poem *Annus Mirabilis*, was dismissed from office in 1689 following the accession of the Protestant William III and Mary II to the throne. Dryden, a Catholic convert, refused to take the Oath of Allegiance to the new monarchs and he was dismissed from the laureateship—the only holder to have been removed from office.

Wikipedia - Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poet_Laureate_of_the_United_Kingdom

Poet laureates enabled *court historians* to post **Geoffrey Chaucer** as their first **volunteer laureate**.

POETS LAUREATE.	BIRTHPLACE.	WHERE EDUCATED.	DATE OF APPOINTMENT.	DEATH AND BURIAL.
GEORFFREY CHAUCER	London . . . 1328	Cambridge (!) . . . . .	..... 1368	25 Oct., 1400, Westminster Abbey.
SIR JOHN GOWER	Yorkshire . . . 1320	.....	..... 1400	..... 1402, St. Mary Overy, Southwark.
HENRY SCOGAN . . . . .	.....	Poet Laureate to Henry IV.	.....	.....
JOHN KAY . . . . .	.....	Poet Laureate to Edward IV.	.....	.....
ANDREW BERNARD	Toulouse	Poet Laureate to Henries VII. & VIII.	November, 1486	..... 1523
JOHN SKELTON	Norwich . . . 1460	Oxford & Cambridge	..... 1489	June, 1529, St. Margaret's Church, Westminster.
ROBERT WHITTINGTON . . . . .	..... . . 1480	Oxford . . . . .	..... 1512	..... 1530 (?)
RICHARD EDWARDS	Somersetshire 1523	Corpus Christi, Oxford.	..... 1561	..... 1566
EDMUND SPENSER	London . . . 1553	Pembroke Hall, Cambridge.	February, 1580	16 Jan., 1599, Westminster Abbey.
SAMUEL DANIEL	Taunton . . . 1562	Magdalen Hall, Oxford.	..... 1598	13 Oct., 1619, Beekington.

NOTE.—The above have been styled Volunteer Laureates.
Poets Laureate of England - Walter Hamilton - 1879

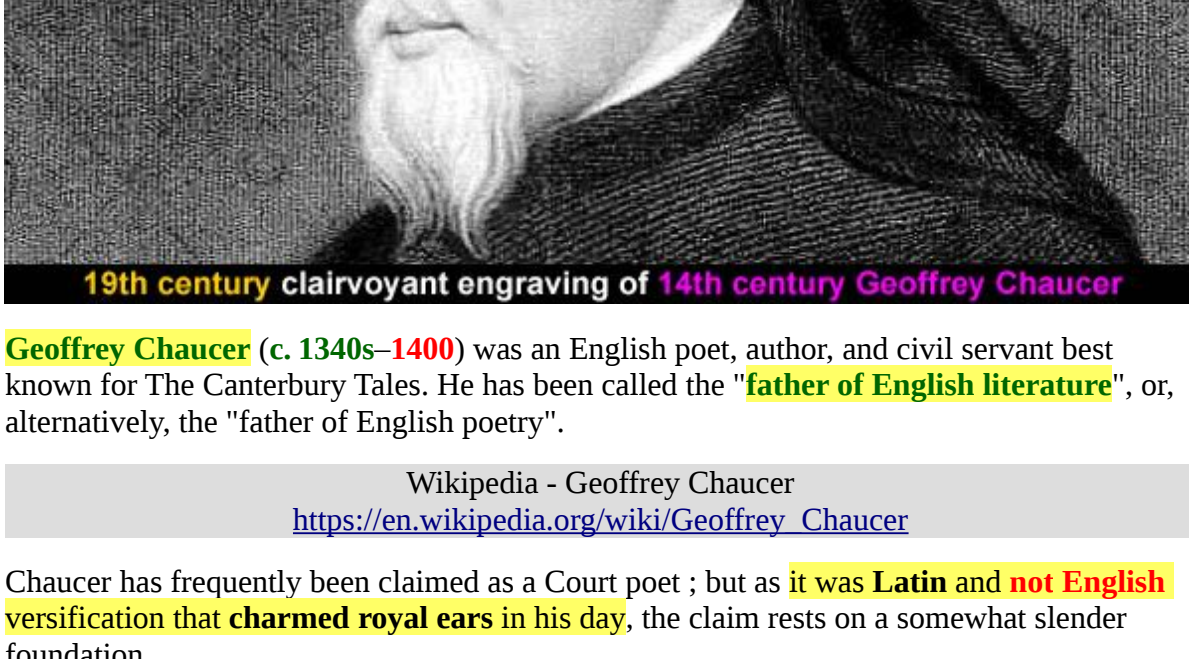
Poets Laureate of England - Walter Hamilton - 1879
<https://archive.org/details/poetslaureateofe000walti/page/n29/mode/1up>

In England, the term "poet laureate" is restricted to the official office of Poet Laureate, attached to the royal household. However, no authoritative historical record exists of the office of Poet Laureate of England.
 The office developed from earlier practice when minstrels and versifiers were members of the king's retinue. Richard Cœur-de-Lion had a versificator regis (English: king's poet), Gulielmus Peregrinus (William the Pilgrim), and Henry III had a versificator named Master Henry. In the fifteenth century, John Kay, a versifier, described himself as Edward IV's "humble poet laureate".

According to Wharton, [citation needed] King Henry I paid 10 shillings a year, to a versificator regis. **Geoffrey Chaucer (1340–1400)** was called Poet Laureate, being granted in 1389 an annual allowance of wine.
 W. Hamilton describes Chaucer, Gower, Kay, Andrew Bernard, John Skelton, Robert Whittington, Richard Edwards and Samuel Daniel as "**volunteer Laureates**".

Wikipedia - Poet Laureate
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poet_Laureate#United_Kingdom

Geoffrey Chaucer enabled *court historians* to launch their **father of English literature** narrative.



19th century clairvoyant engraving of 14th century Geoffrey Chaucer
Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340s–1400) was an English poet, author, and civil servant best known for *The Canterbury Tales*. He has been called the "**father of English literature**", or, alternatively, the "father of English poetry".

Wikipedia - Geoffrey Chaucer
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Chaucer

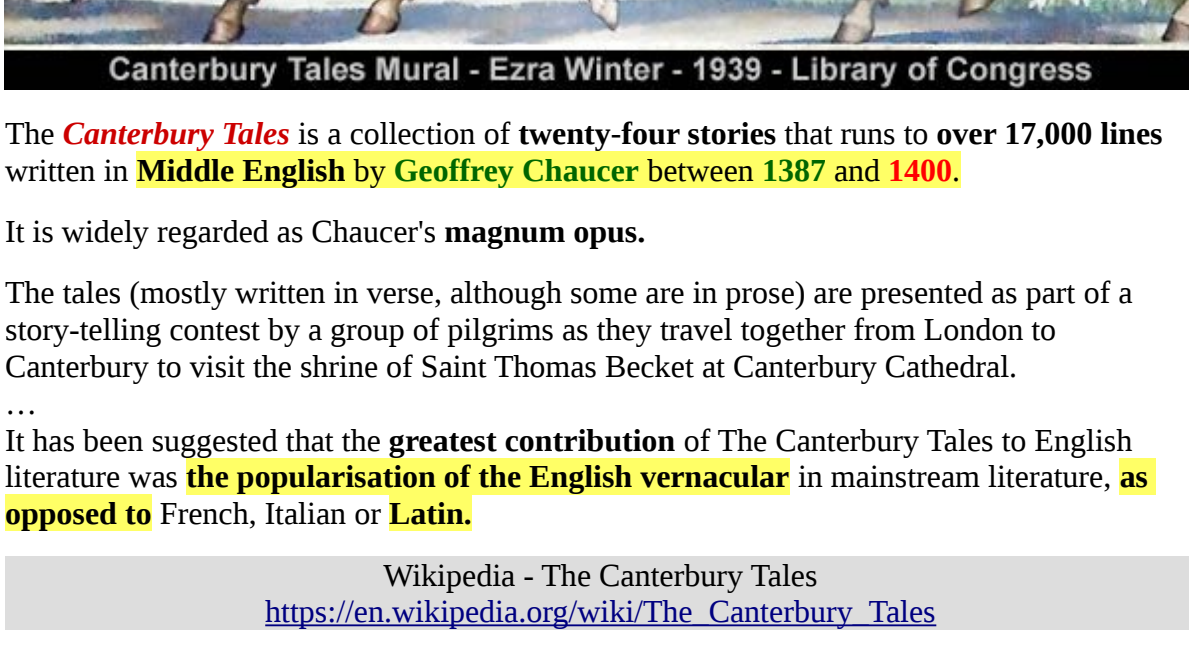
Chaucer has frequently been claimed as a Court poet ; but as **it was Latin and not English versification that charmed royal ears in his day**, the claim rests on a somewhat slender foundation.
 It is true that Edward III granted Chaucer two pensions of £13 6s. 8d. each, together with a daily pitcher of wine, which was commuted by Richard II into an annual payment of 20 marks ; **but there is nothing to show that the royal bounty was a mark of appreciation of his poetical worth.**

The Poets Laureate of England - William Forbes Gray - 1915
<https://archive.org/details/poetslaureateofe00gray/page/8/mode/1up>

The part played by **Chaucer** in the development of the English language **has often been overrated**. He neither corrupted it, as used to be said, by introducing French words which it would otherwise have avoided, nor bore any such part in fixing it as was afterwards played by the translators of the Bible.

1911 Encyclopædia Britannica - Volume 6 - Geoffrey Chaucer by Alfred William Pollard
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Chaucer,_Geoffrey

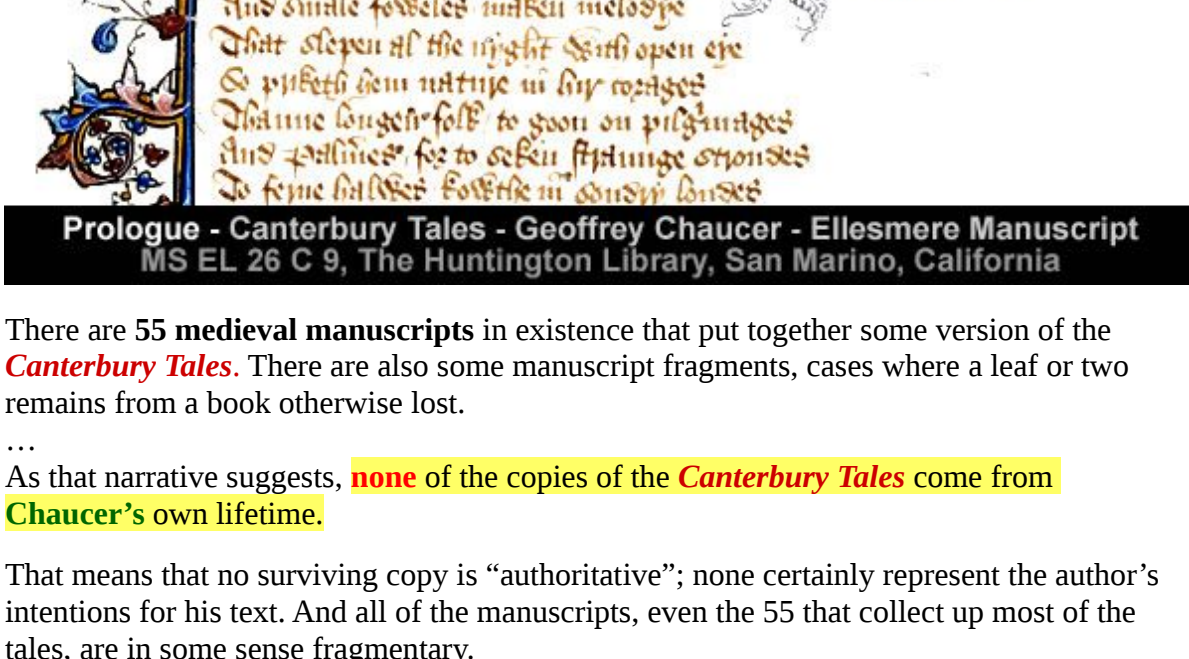
It's said the **father of English literature** finished his *magnum opus* in **1400**.



The *Canterbury Tales* is a collection of **twenty-four** stories that runs to **over 17,000 lines** written in **Middle English** by **Geoffrey Chaucer** between **1387** and **1400**.
 It is widely regarded as Chaucer's **magnum opus**.
 The tales (mostly written in verse, although some are in prose) are presented as part of a story-telling contest by a group of pilgrims as they travel together from London to Canterbury to visit the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral.
 ...
 It has been suggested that the **greatest contribution** of *The Canterbury Tales* to English literature was **the popularisation of the English vernacular** in mainstream literature, **as opposed to** French, Italian or **Latin**.

Wikipedia - The Canterbury Tales
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Canterbury_Tales

It's also said **none** of the *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts were written during Chaucer's lifetime.



Prologue - Canterbury Tales - Geoffrey Chaucer - Ellesmere Manuscript MS EL 26 C 9, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California

There are **55 medieval manuscripts** in existence that put together some version of the *Canterbury Tales*. There are also some manuscript fragments, cases where a leaf or two remains from a book otherwise lost.
 ...
 As that narrative suggests, **none of the copies of the Canterbury Tales come from Chaucer's own lifetime**.

That means that no surviving copy is "authoritative"; none certainly represent the author's intentions for his text. And all of the manuscripts, even the 55 that collect up most of the tales, are in some sense fragmentary.
 ...
 To put it plainly, **the manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales are a mess**.

Manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales
 Alexandra Gillespie and Julianna Chianelli - 2017
<https://opencanterburtales.dsl.lsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Manuscripts-of-the-Canterbury-Tales.pdf>

The ... **Ellesmere Manuscript** of the *Canterbury Tales* ... is considered one of the most significant copies of the *Tales*. ... Written most likely in the first or second decade of the fifteenth century, **the early history of the manuscript is uncertain**, but it seems to have been owned by John de Vere, 12th Earl of Oxford (1408–1462).
 The manuscript takes its popular name from the fact that it later belonged to Sir Thomas Egerton (1540–1617), **Baron Ellesmere** and Viscount Brackley, who apparently **obtained it from Roger North**, 2nd Baron North (1530/31–1600).

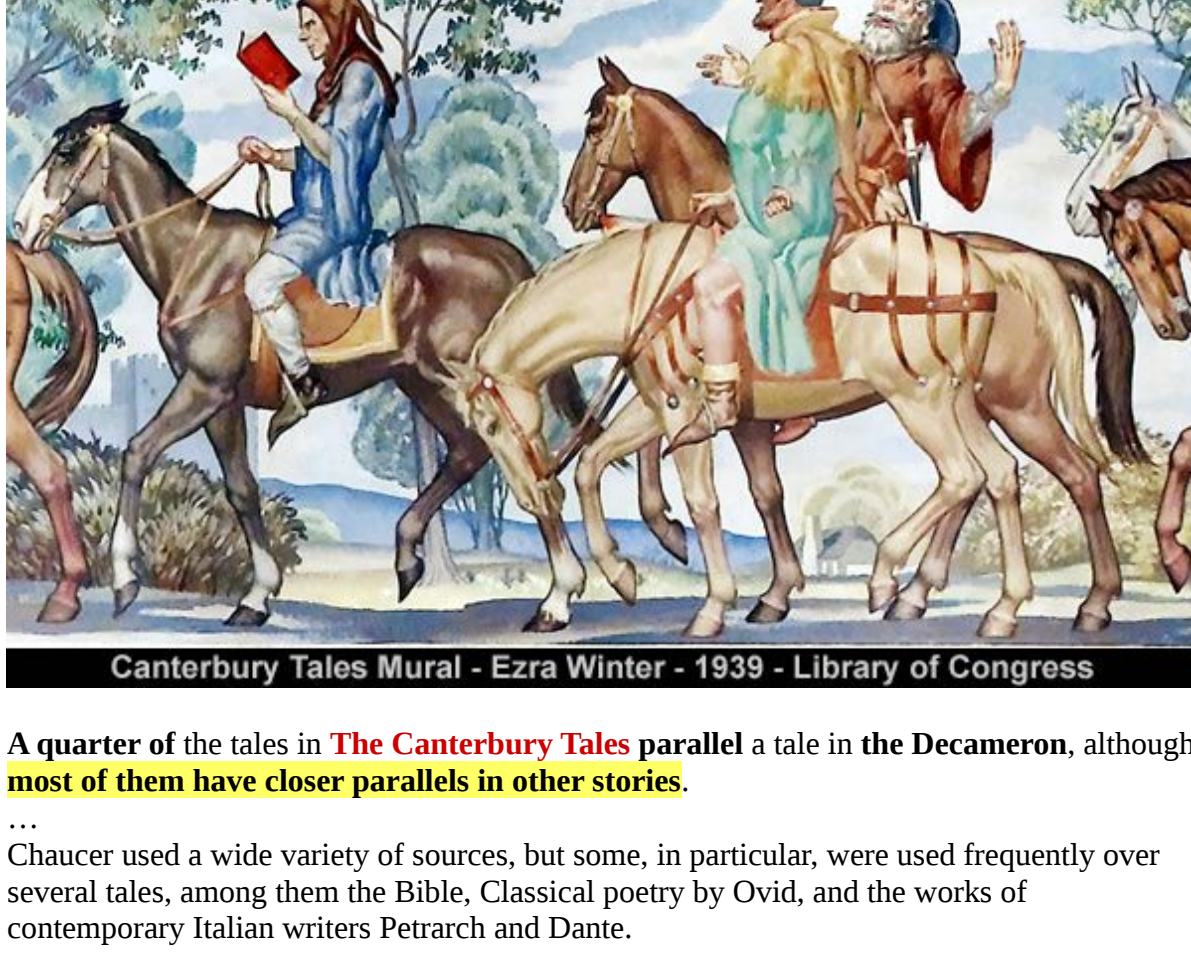
Wikipedia - Ellesmere Chaucer
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellesmere_manuscript

Roger North, 2nd Baron North (1530-1600) ... **politician at the court of Elizabeth I.**

Wikipedia - Roger North, 2nd Baron North
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_North,_2nd_Baron_North

Furthermore:

Most of the *Canterbury Tales* are unoriginal derivative works.



Canterbury Tales Mural - Ezra Winter - 1939 - Library of Congress

A quarter of the tales in *The Canterbury Tales* parallel a tale in the Decameron, although most of them have closer parallels in other stories.

...

Chaucer used a wide variety of sources, but some, in particular, were used frequently over several tales, among them the Bible, Classical poetry by Ovid, and the works of contemporary Italian writers Petrarch and Dante.

Wikipedia - The Canterbury Tales
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Canterbury_Tales

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE PROLOGUE.

1—8.

WHANNE that April with his shoures sote¹
The droughte of March hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veine in swiche² licour,
Of whiche vertue engendred is the flour ;
Whan Zephirus eke with his sote brethe
Espired hath in every holt³ and hethe
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram⁴ his halfe cours yronne,

¹ Sweet.

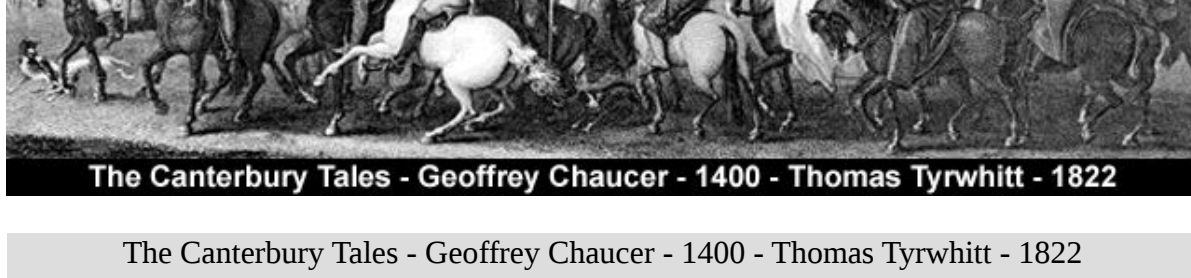
² Such.

³ Grove.

⁴ It seems to have been the intention of Chaucer, in the first lines of the Prologue, to mark with some exactness the time of his supposed pilgrimage; but unluckily the two circumstances of his description, which were most likely to answer that purpose, are each of them irreconcilable to the other. When he tells us that "the shoures of April had perced to the rote the drought of March," we must suppose, in order to allow due time for such an operation, that April was far advanced; while, on the other hand, the place of the sun, "having just run half his course in the Ram," restrains us to some day in the very latter end of March; as the vernal equinox, in the age of Chaucer, according to his own treatise on the Astrolabe, was computed to happen on the 12th of March. This difficulty may, and I think should, be removed by reading in ver. 8, *the Bull*, instead of the *Ram*. All the parts of the description will then be consistent."—*Tyrwhitt*.

An ingenious writer (to whom we shall hereafter be frequently indebted), in *Notes and Queries*, v. iii. p. 316, has opposed this conjecture, remarking, that "there are no less than two ways of understanding the seventh and eighth lines of the Prologue so as to be perfectly in accordance with the rest of the description. One of these would be to suppose the sign Aries divided into two portions (not necessarily equal in the phraseology of the time), one of which would appertain to March and the other to April; and that Chaucer, by the 'halfe cours yronne,' meant the last, or the April, half of the sign Aries.

The Canterbury Tales - Geoffrey Chaucer - 1400 - Thomas Tyrwhitt - 1855
<https://archive.org/details/canterburytales00chauiala/page/n7/mode/2up>

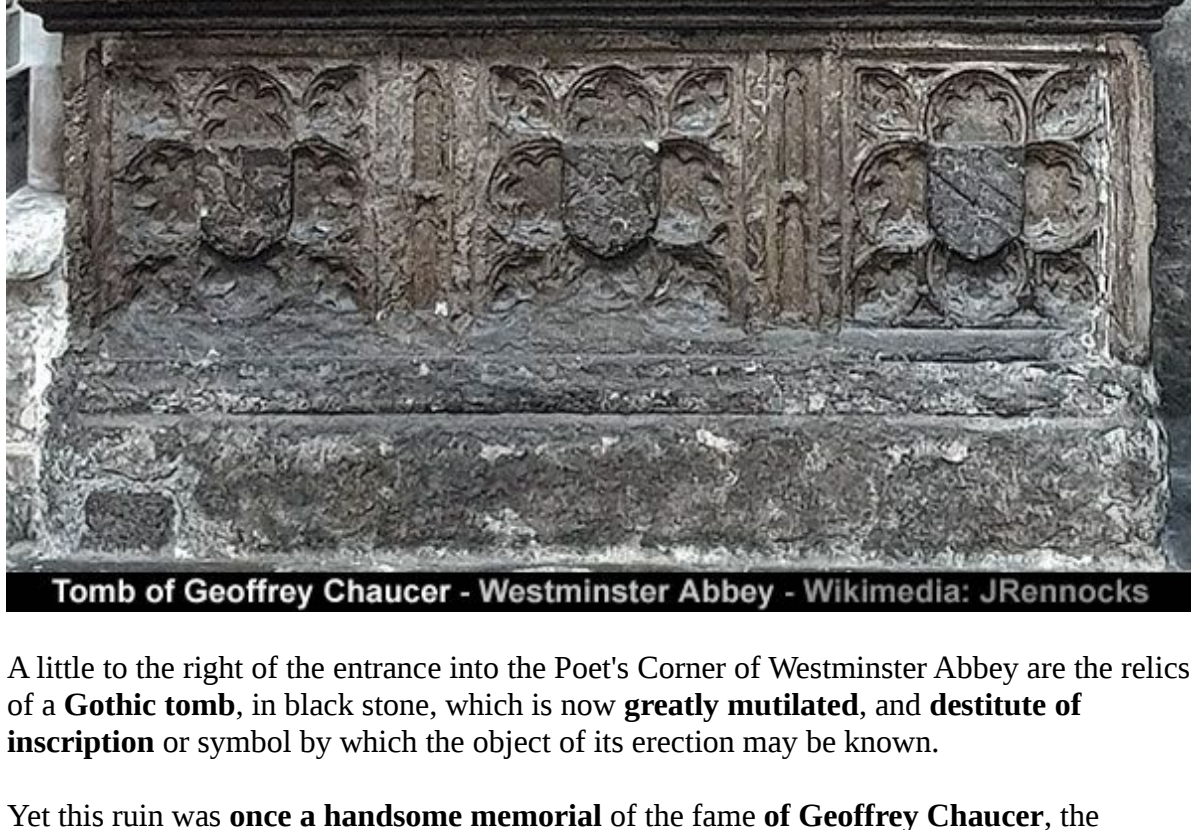


The Canterbury Tales - Geoffrey Chaucer - 1400 - Thomas Tyrwhitt - 1822

The Canterbury Tales - Geoffrey Chaucer - 1400 - Thomas Tyrwhitt - 1822
<https://archive.org/details/canterburytales01chau/page/n239/mode/1up>

In other words:

Chaucer is another excellent advocate for Edwin Johnson.



Tomb of Geoffrey Chaucer - Westminster Abbey - Wikimedia: JRennocks

A little to the right of the entrance into the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey are the relics of a Gothic tomb, in black stone, which is now greatly mutilated, and destitute of inscription or symbol by which the object of its erection may be known.

Yet this ruin was once a handsome memorial of the fame of Geoffrey Chaucer, the venerable father of English poetry; whose earthly remains, as well as can be conjectured from the description of the spot given by Caxton the printer, were deposited somewhere near the front of the contiguous monument to Dryden.

...

About the year 1655 or 1656, according to Wood, Mr. Nicholas Brigham, who was a student in the University of Oxford, and a writer of verses, went to the expense of that erection which, in fact, still exists. Above the sarcophagus he placed a picture of the poet, copied from the head in Oocleve's book, and upon it inserted a Latin inscription, which was legible in 1766, and in English may run thus :—

Of old the bard who struck the noblest strains
Great Geoffrey Chaucer, now this tomb retains.
If for the periods of his life you call,
The signs are under that will note you all.

In the year of our Lord 1400,
on the 25th day of October.

Death is the repose of cares.

Biographical Illustrations of Westminster Abbey - George Lewis Smyth - 1843
<https://archive.org/details/biographicalillu00smytuoft/page/n20/mode/1up>

Edwin Johnson (1842–1901) was an English historian, best known for his radical criticisms of Christian historiography.

...

In *The Pauline Epistles* and *The Rise of English Culture* Johnson made the radical claim that the whole of the so-called Dark Ages between 700 and 1400 A. D. had never occurred, but had been invented by Christian writers who created imaginary characters and events.

Wikipedia - Edwin Johnson (historian)
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_Johnson_\(historian\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_Johnson_(historian))

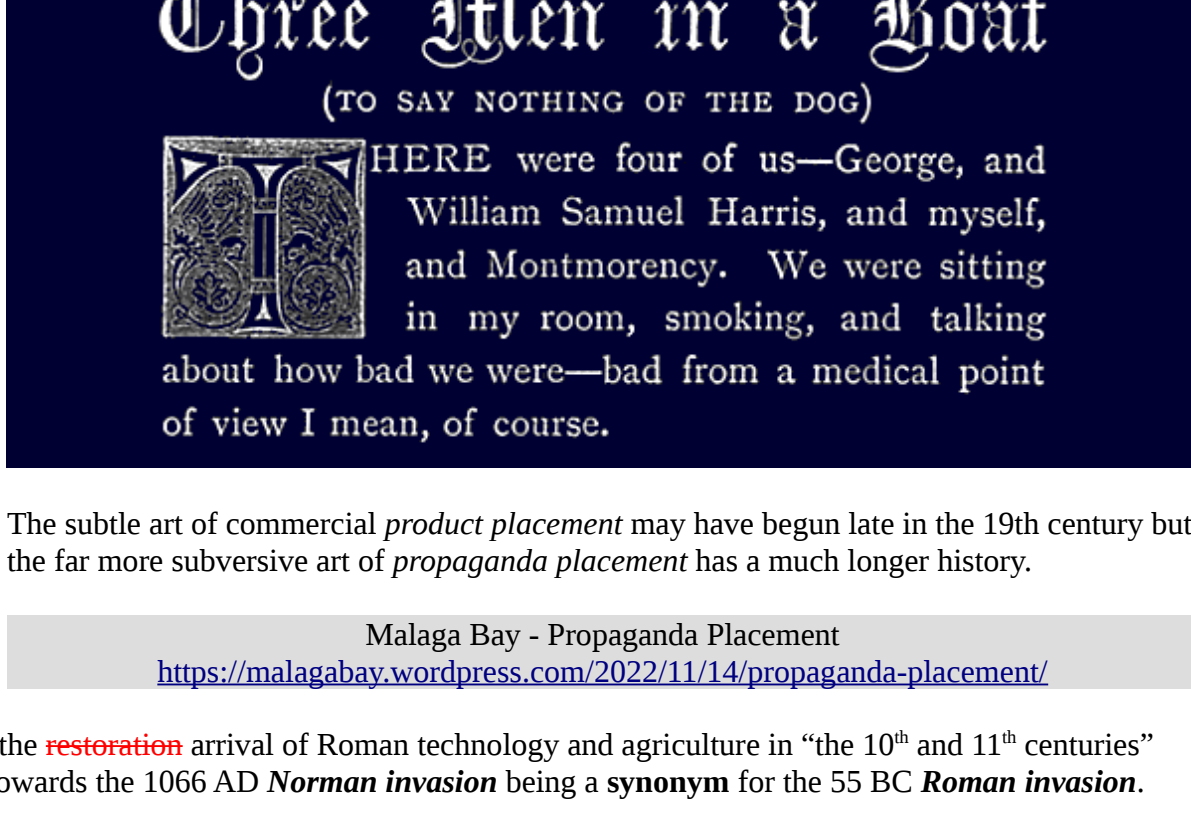
This suggests the *Canterbury Tales* are just another part of the great British propaganda portfolio of placebo fictions that includes [amongst many others] *Magna Charta* and *Three Men In A Boat*.



Canterbury Tales Mural - Ezra Winter - 1939 - Library of Congress

Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340s–1400) was an English poet, author, and civil servant ...

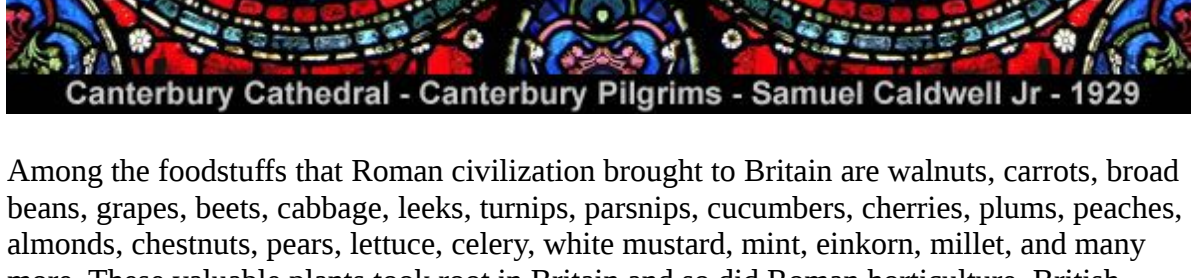
Wikipedia - Geoffrey Chaucer
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Chaucer



The subtle art of commercial product placement may have begun late in the 19th century but the far more subversive art of propaganda placement has a much longer history.

Malaga Bay - Propaganda Placement
<https://malagabay.wordpress.com/2022/11/14/propaganda-placement/>

While the restoration of Roman technology and agriculture in "the 10th and 11th centuries" point towards the 1066 AD *Norman invasion* being a synonym for the 55 BC *Roman invasion*.



Canterbury Cathedral - Canterbury Pilgrims - Samuel Caldwell Jr - 1929

Among the foodstuffs that Roman civilization brought to Britain are walnuts, carrots, broad beans, grapes, beets, cabbage, leeks, turnips, parsnips, cucumbers, cherries, plums, peaches, almonds, chestnuts, pears, lettuce, celery, white mustard, mint, einkorn, millet, and many more. These valuable plants took root in Britain and so did Roman horticulture. British gardens produced a bounty of tasty and nourishing foods.

But I was astonished to hear Prof. Fleming say that, following the collapse of Roman rule after 400 AD, almost all of these food plants vanished from Britain, as did Roman horticulture itself.

"Post-Roman Britons," Prof. Fleming said, "suddenly went from gardening to foraging. Even Roman water mills vanished from British streams. But similar mills came back in large numbers in the 10th and 11th centuries, along with Roman food plants and farming techniques."

...

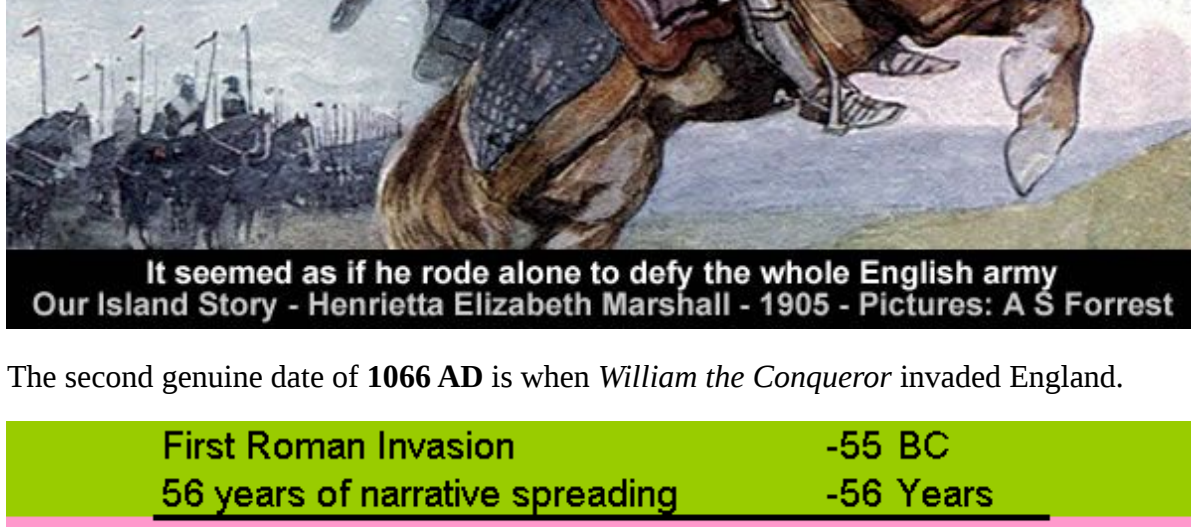
The apparent restoration of Roman technology and agriculture cited by Prof. Fleming in the 10th and 11th centuries is in fact the recovery of post-Roman pre-Norman Britain from the 930 AD catastrophe, the impact of which can be seen in that heartrending image of a wrecked and ruined Canterbury, which, along with the rest of Europe, entered the High Middle Ages around the year we call 1000 AD.

A Canterbury Tale by Saucy Chaucer
<https://malagabay.wordpress.com/2016/10/06/a-canterbury-tale-by-saucy-chaucer/>



The shore was covered with men ready for battle
Our Island Story - Henrietta Elizabeth Marshall - 1905 - Pictures: A S Forrest

The first genuine date of 55 BC is when Julius Caesar initially invaded England.



It seemed as if he rode alone to defy the whole English army
Our Island Story - Henrietta Elizabeth Marshall - 1905 - Pictures: A S Forrest

The second genuine date of 1066 AD is when William the Conqueror invaded England.

First Roman Invasion	-55 BC
56 years of narrative spreading	-56 Years

First Roman Invasion - Revised	-111 BC
Early Roman Rulers Adjustment	1180 Years

First Roman Invasion - Adjusted	1069 CE
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The Roman invasion of 55 BC is a synonym for the Norman invasion of 1066 AD.

Malaga Bay - 1066 And All That
<https://malagabay.wordpress.com/2023/08/07/1066-and-all-that/>

As always:

Review the evidence and draw your own conclusions.



Canterbury Tales Mural - Ezra Winter - 1939 - Library of Congress