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Red roses, pink champagne, love letters . . . of course we all know what Valentine's Day is about. Or do

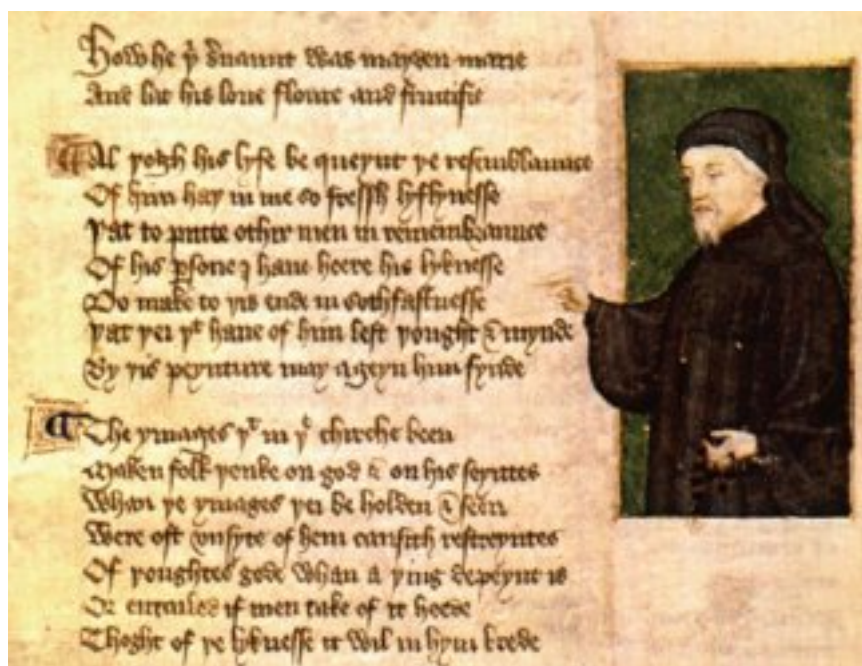
The word 'Valentine' has become synonymous with romantic love, but that's apparently not the way

Poem

It was only in the 14th century that the day became associated with love. In 1382 Geoffrey Chaucer

A line out of this poem reads: "For this was Saint Valentine's Day, when every bird cometh there to

Mid-February, however, is an unlikely time for birds to be mating in England. The month of May is



Geoffrey Chaucer, who first associated Valentine's Day with romantic love, by Thomas Occleve in

Saints

It is said that about 14 martyred saints of ancient Rome were named Valentine. The Valentines h

The 'Catholic Encyclopaedia' associates a third saint Valentine with 14 February. The only thing k



An 1883 advertisement for Prang's Valentine's cards

### Legend

Contrary to modern legends, no romantic elements were present in these martyrs's lives – only an

Apparently he wanted to grow his army and was convinced that married men would not make good

What really happened, according to Catholic lore, was that St Valentine was persecuted as a Chris



Saint Valentine of Terni with his disciples, from a 14th century French manuscript  
Photos: Wikipedia

#### Ancient

Scholars have taken Chaucer's 1382 poem to mean that Valentine's Day was already an old tradition.

In the ancient Athenian calendar, the month of Gamelion – between mid-January and mid-February

In pagan Rome, Lupercalia was the name of an archaic fertility rite performed from 13 to 15 February.



A handwritten poem, "To Susanna"; dated Valentine's Day, 1850 and mailed in Cork,

## Court

Eighteen years after Chaucer published his poem, Valentine's Day was honoured in a highly unusual

References to Valentine's Day in literature became more frequent and in 1600 Ophelia mentions V

In 1969, Pope Paul VI removed Saint Valentine's Day from the General Roman Calendar of saints

Most distinctions between Valentine of Rome and Valentine of Terni, both buried there, were lost. So