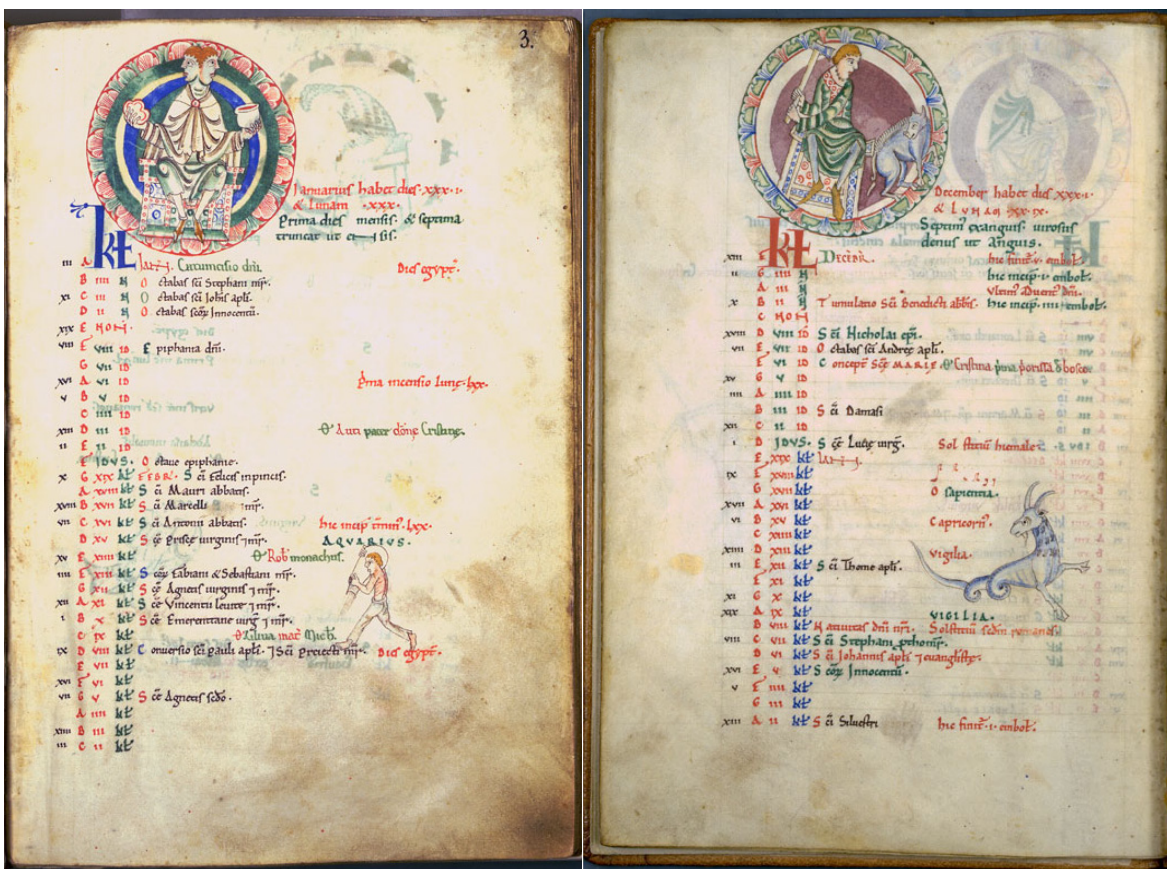


# The Medieval Calendar



## Then and Now

By Lord Dmitri Skomorochov, AOA, OBL  
House Blackfeather

# Calendars as a Period Science

This project's main goal is to examine and explain the differences between period and modern methods of reckoning time, in much the same way that a typical poet would study period grammar and syntax to recreate a style of poetry. In this, the language being used is made up of days, months, and years, but there are still significant differences from one age and culture to another. And like a poet, I am using a specific date as my theme, much like that same poet would choose to focus on pastoral landscapes or romantic liaisons.

Just as a poet would study period works of literature to create a new poem, I am examining closely the period use of calendars in the Middle Ages, and from that I am creating a new calendar page. Calendar recreation relies much more on mathematics and astrological calculations than on prose and meter, but in both cases, there are rules to be followed, and these rules change over the years.

One important detail of this project is that it is focused on the calculations themselves, not the reasons for the changes, except for how they would directly affect the calculations. Therefore, very little of the reference material will actually be referenced,, since they were primarily used as a guide for the calculations.

I proudly present today's date (1 July, 2006), rendered in a style that Geoffrey Chaucer would have recognized in 14th century London, using the Julian Calendar of his time, with all of the supporting explanations and calculations included for your perusal.

# Table of Contents

Cover Page	I
Introduction	II
Table of Contents	III
Today's Date on the Julian Calendar	IV
Calendar Calculations and Notes	V
Calendar Examples	VI
Calendar Examples	VII
Bibliographie	VIII
Reference Photocopies	



# Calendar Calculations and Notes

18 June, 2006

Date of Summer Art/Sci

As Reckoned by Geoffrey Chaucer in 1396

- XIV Kalends Julius
- 17th Day of Corpus Christi
- First Day of St. Mark
- First Day of St. Marcellian
- 6 Days until Midsummer
- LV Elizabeth II
- Zodiac sign - Cancer (O.S., June)  
Gemini (N.S., 21 May - 20 June)

(All holidays and feasts were taken from “Daily Life...” by Jeffrey Singman.)

(The Zodiacal signs for each month were taken from the “St. Albans Psalter”.)

Easter date was determined by looking for the first Sunday after the first full moon after March 21st, which should have been the equinox, but was drifting away from the correct alignment. However, the determination of Easter was based on the date of 21 March, NOT on the actual equinox. It was this discrepancy, more than anything else, that encouraged the correction of the old calendar ( Richards, pg. 239 )

To confirm this problem, Chaucer’s version of the calendar would have Midsummer being six days in the future, whereas in our modern reckoning, Midsummer was ten days past.

- What would have been March 21st Julian would have been April 4th on Gregorian.
- The first full moon would have been 31 March Julian.
- Easter, the first Sunday after the first full moon would have been April 3rd.
- Rogation Sunday was 5 weeks after Easter, so it landed on May 8th.
- Whitsunday was 2 weeks after Rogation, so it landed on May 22nd.
- Trinity Day was 1 week after Whitsunday, so it landed on May 29th.
- Corpus Christi Day was the Thursday after Trinity Day, so it landed on June 2nd.
- The date also includes the year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, who was crowned on 6 February, 1952.

At the time of the transition in Rome in 1582, the number of days added to the calendar would have been ten. Both Julian and Gregorian Calendars counted 1600 and 2000 as leap years, but Gregorian would not have included 1700, 1800, or 1900, putting the Julian Calendar three more days behind. To make up the difference, I had to push the date thirteen days back to match the Julian Calendar’s schedule.

# Calendar Examples

## 17 April, 1387

Presumed Beginning of Canterbury Tales

- N.S. - Thursday, 25 April, 1387
- VII Kalends May
- X Richard II (he was crowned on 22 June, 1377)
- 11th day of Easter (7 April, O.S., 15 April, N.S.)
- Day of St. Mark the Evangelist and the 2nd day of St. George.
- Zodiac sign - Taurus (O.S., April)  
Taurus (N.S., 20 April - 20 May)

King Richard II was crowned on 22 June, 1377, and would therefore be nearing the end of his tenth year as King of England. 22 June 1387 would be the start of his eleventh.

This example takes place almost two hundred years before the Gregorian Calendar change, but the dates can be interpreted by considering the number of days changed in 1582, ten days, and count backward. Since 1500 and 1400 were both leap years in a Julian Calendar, but would not have been on the Gregorian Calendar, those are two days less of a difference in the calculations. Therefore, to find the New Style date, we only need to add eight days instead of ten.

## 2 November, 1976

Date of My Birth

- O.S. - Tuesday, 20 October, 1976
- XIII Kalends November
- XXV Elizabeth II
- 3rd day of St. Luke the Evangelist
- Eve of the Feast of 11,000 Virgins
- Zodiac sign - Scorpio (O.S., October)  
Scorpio (N.S., 23 October - 21 November)

Similar to the example for today's date, both calendars counted 1600 as a leap year, but Gregorian would not have included 1700, 1800, or 1900, putting the Julian Calendar three more days behind. To make up the difference, I had to push the date thirteen days back to match the Julian Calendar's schedule. The good news is, I'm still a Scorpio!

# Calendar Examples

## 14 February, 1602

Valentine's Day, England (O.S.)

- The French actually called -24 February, 1603
- VI Kalends March
- XLII Elizabeth I
- Day of St. Matthe the Apostle
- 5th day of Lent
- Zodiac sign - Pisces (O.S., February)  
Pisces (N.S., 19 February - 20 March)

Easter in 1602 (O.S.) was 28 March (Julian), 7 April (Gregorian). Shrove Tuesday was 47 days before Easter, so 19 February, and Ash Wednesday - the first day of Lent - was 20 February. Both of the calendars, Julian and Gregorian, would have reckoned 1600 as a leap year, so the difference between the two nations would still have been the ten days that were at issue in 1582.

However, the major difference in this case was the start of the new year. While many nations had switched to using 1 January as the beginning of the year - regardless of which calendar they were using - England still counted off the new year on 25 March, the Annunciation. 24 March, 1602 would have been followed by 25 March, 1603. When England finally converted to the Gregorian Calendar, they not only lost eleven days - 2 through 13 September, 1752 - they also lost what would have been 1 January to 25 March, 1571! ( Richards, pgs. 250-51 )

In this case, the date of Valentine's Day for the year of 1602 for England and France were approximately 375 days apart!

## 14 February, 1602

Valentine's Day, France (N.S.)

- The English actually called - 4 February, 1601
- Pride Nones February
- XLI Elizabeth I
- 3rd day of Candlemas
- Day of St. Agatha the Virgin
- Not quite Lent!
- Zodiac sign - Pisces (O.S., February),  
Aquarius (N.S., 20 January - 18 February)

# Bibliography

- 1) Abbot Geoffrey de Gorham  
“St. Albans Psalter”  
St. Albans Abbey, Hertfordshire, England  
© 1119-1146
- 2) Singman, Jeffrey L. & McLean, Will  
“Daily Life in Chaucer’s England”  
Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut  
© 1995
- 3) Richards, E. G.  
“Mapping Time - The Calendar and its History”  
Oxford University Press, Oxford, England  
© 1998
- 4) Henisch, Bridget Ann  
“The Medieval Calendar Year”  
Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania  
© 1999