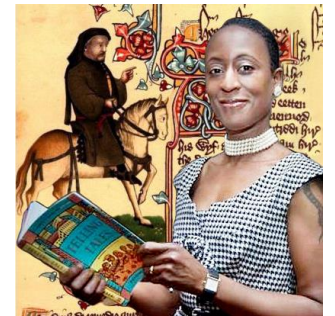
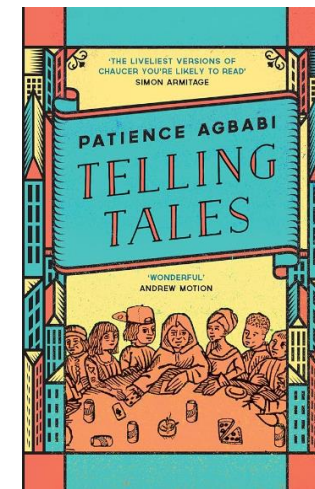
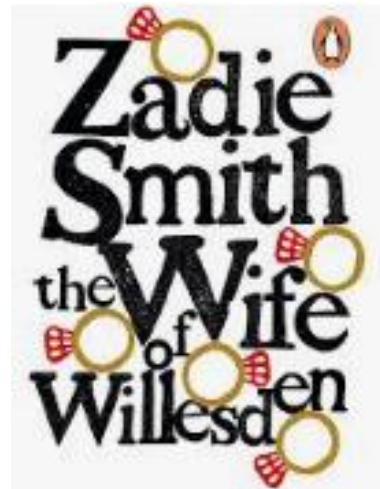
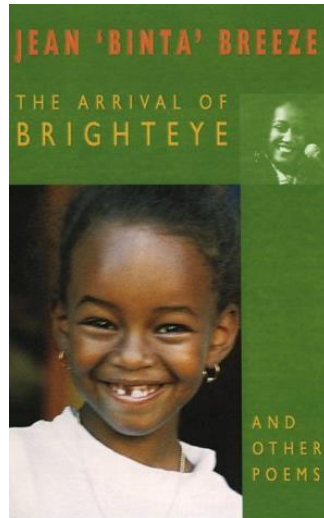
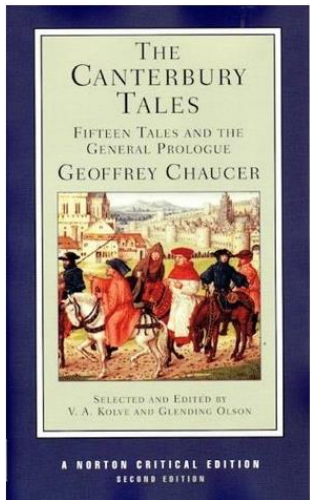


Reimagining the Wife of Bath: Intersections of Suburbanization, Gender, Power, and Identity in the Works by Geoffrey Chaucer, Jean Binta Breeze, Zadie Smith, Patience Agbabi



Pavlna Flajšarová, Palacký University, Olomouc, Czech Republic

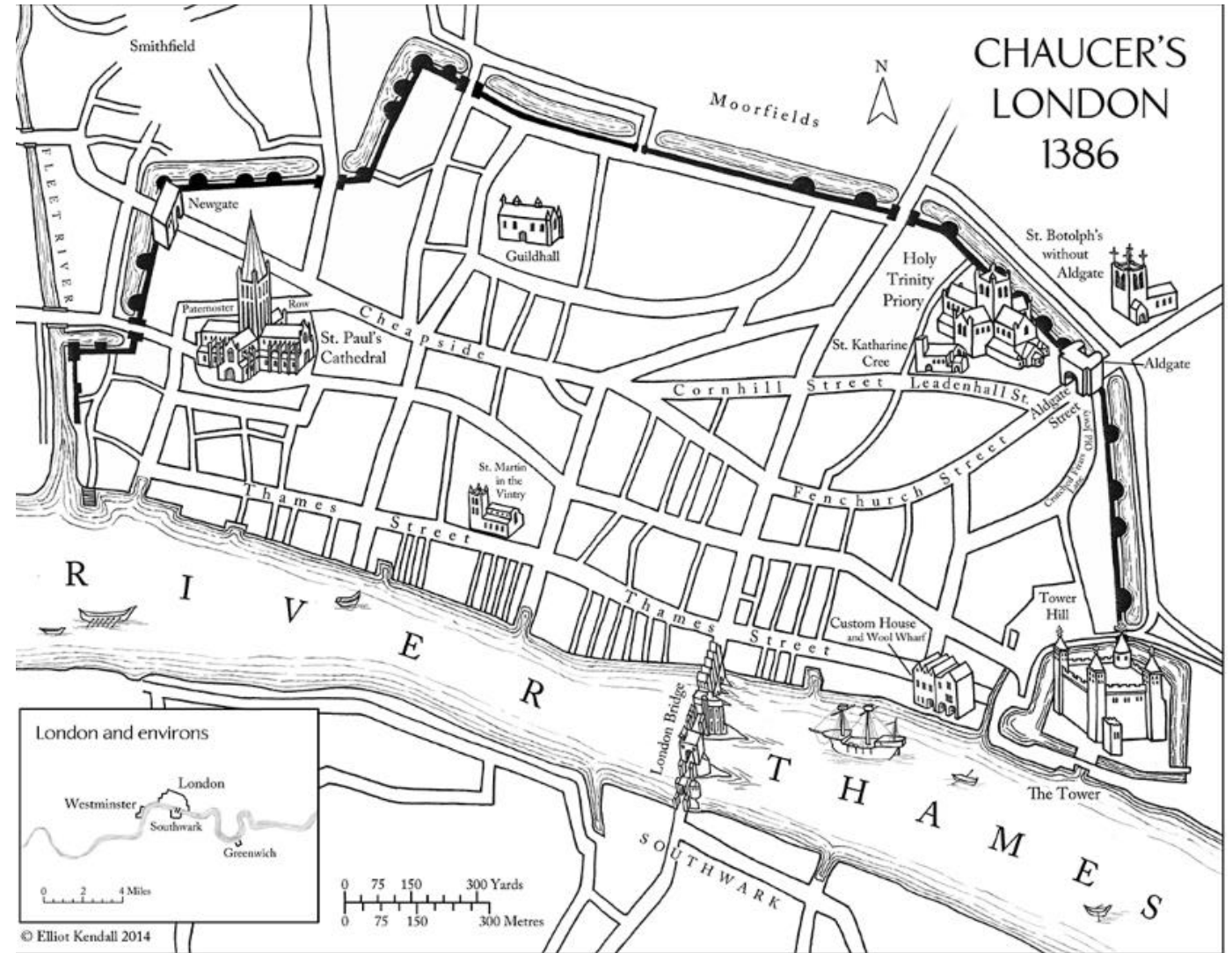
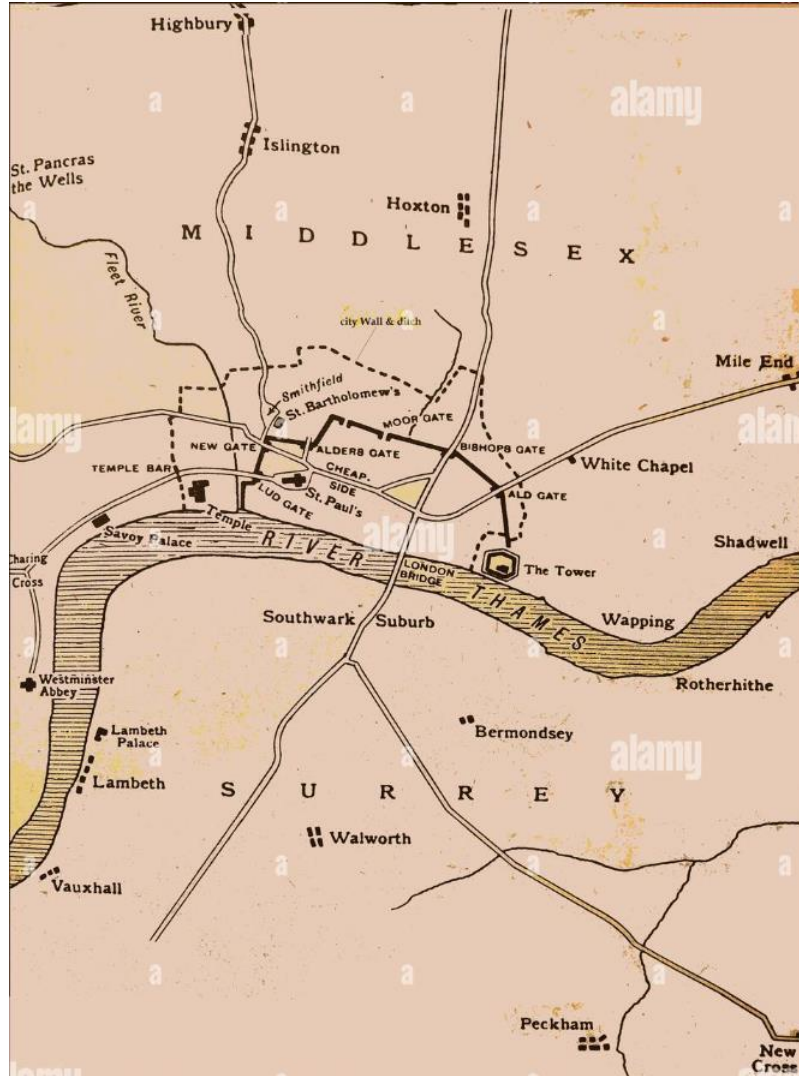
The lecture is co-financed by the Erasmus+ programme under the project Urbanism and Suburbanization in the EU Countries and Abroad: Reflection in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts (2021-1-CZ01-KA220-HED-000023281).



Funded by
the European Union



CHAUCER'S LONDON (Chaucer (1340 - 1400))

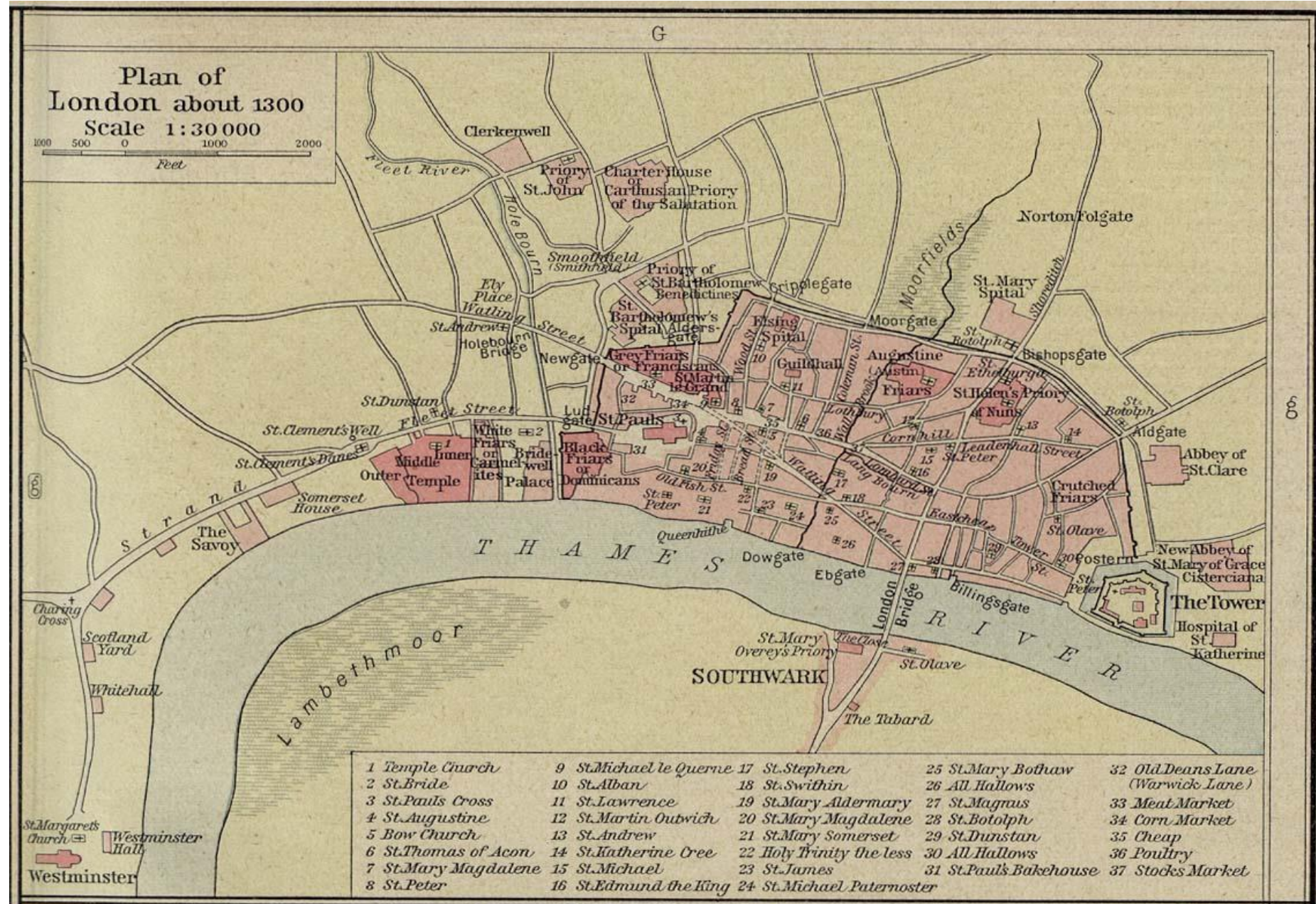


CHAUCER'S LONDON circa 1300.

Much of Medieval London was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666.

Source: William R. Shepherd, 1926 *Historical Atlas*.

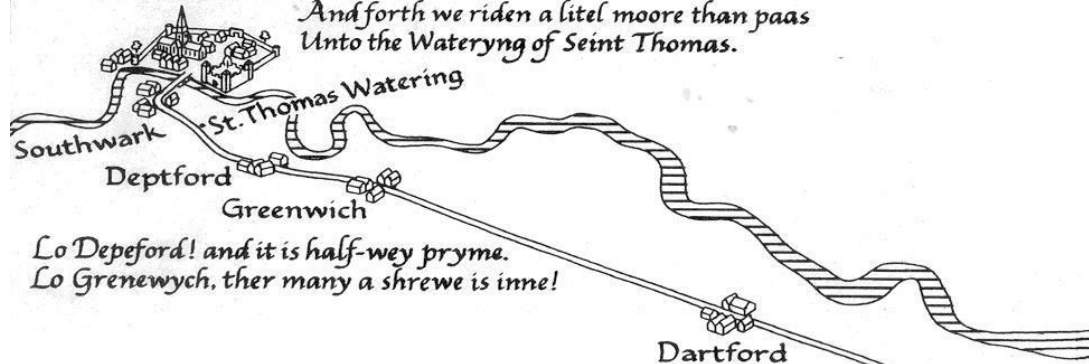
[Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.](#)



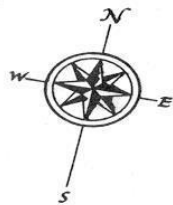
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage....

LONDON

And forth we riden a litel moore than paas
Unto the Wateryng of Seint Thomas.



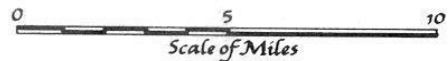
Lo Depeford! and it is half-wey pryme.
Lo Grenewych, ther many a shrewe is inne!



Dartford

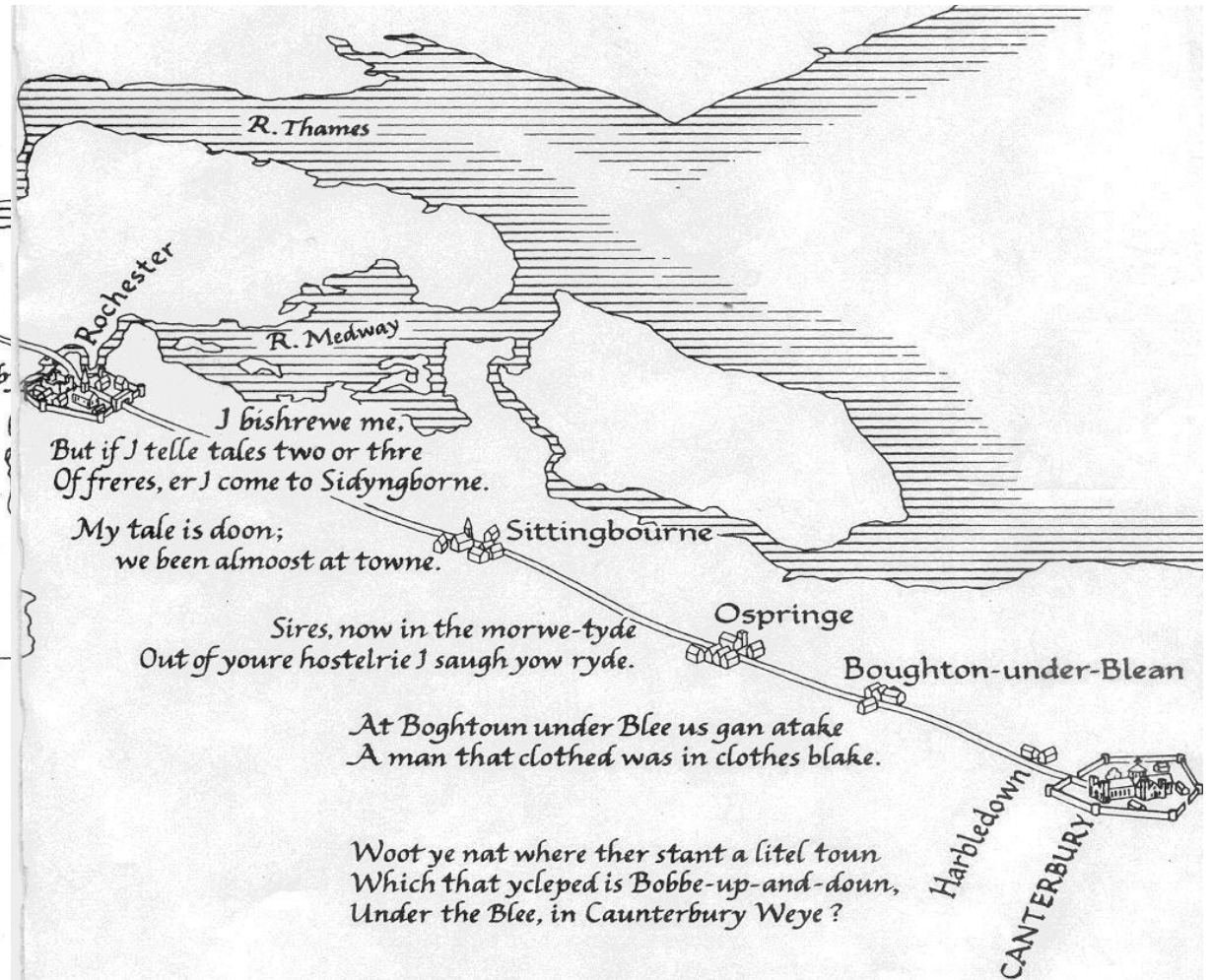
Lo, Rouchestre stant heer faste b

K E N T



E

The Pilgrims' Way from LONDON to CANTERBURY



R. Thames

Rochester

R. Medway

J bishrewe me.

But if I telle tales two or thre
Of freres, er I come to Sidingborne.

My tale is doon;
we been almoost at towne.

Sittingbourne

Sires, now in the morwe-tyde
Out of youre hostelrie I saugh yow ryde.

Ospringe

Boughton-under-Blean

At Boghtoun under Blee us gan atake
A man that clothed was in clothes blake.

Woot ye nat where ther stant a litel town
Which that ycleped is Bobbe-up-and-down,
Under the Blee, in Caunterbury Weye?

Harbledown

CANTERBURY

LONDON – 17TH CENTURY – BY HOLLAR



English: 17th century map of London, originally started by W.Hollar, student of German engraver Mattheus Merian. Published in the Netherlands. It is not clear where this town plan of London was published. Judging by the double portrait at the top, the map was published after Parliament installed joint monarchs William III and Mary Stuart in 1689. The map was composed by the famous designer and engraver from Prague Wenceslaus Hollar (1607-1677). He adopted, and excelled in, a style best suited to chorography or delineation of cities. He received instructions from Mattheus Merian (1593-1650) in Frankfurt and was active in several European towns. From 1652 until his death Hollar lived and worked in London

Source Atlas van der Hagen - http://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=urn:gvn:KONB01:1049B11_020&size=large - Source page at the Geheugen van Nederland / Memory of the Netherlands website

TABARD INN



A coloured lithograph titled, *Tabard Inn, Southwark*, 1810 by English artist Philip Norman (1842–1931).

In **Chaucer's** *Canterbury Tales*, his pilgrims gather in the Tabard Inn, in Southwark. As an area just south of **London Bridge** the inns of Southwark would have been ideal gathering-places for pilgrims travelling as individuals or in groups to gather together in parties to make the trip to Canterbury, which could take around four days each way.

Now have I told you briefly, in a clause,
The state, the array, the number, and the cause
Of the assembling of this company
In Southwark, at this noble hostelry
Known as the Tabard Inn, closely to the Bell.
But now the time has come wherein to tell
How we conducted ourselves that very night
When at the hostelry we did alight.
And afterward the story I begin
To tell you of our pilgrimage we're in.



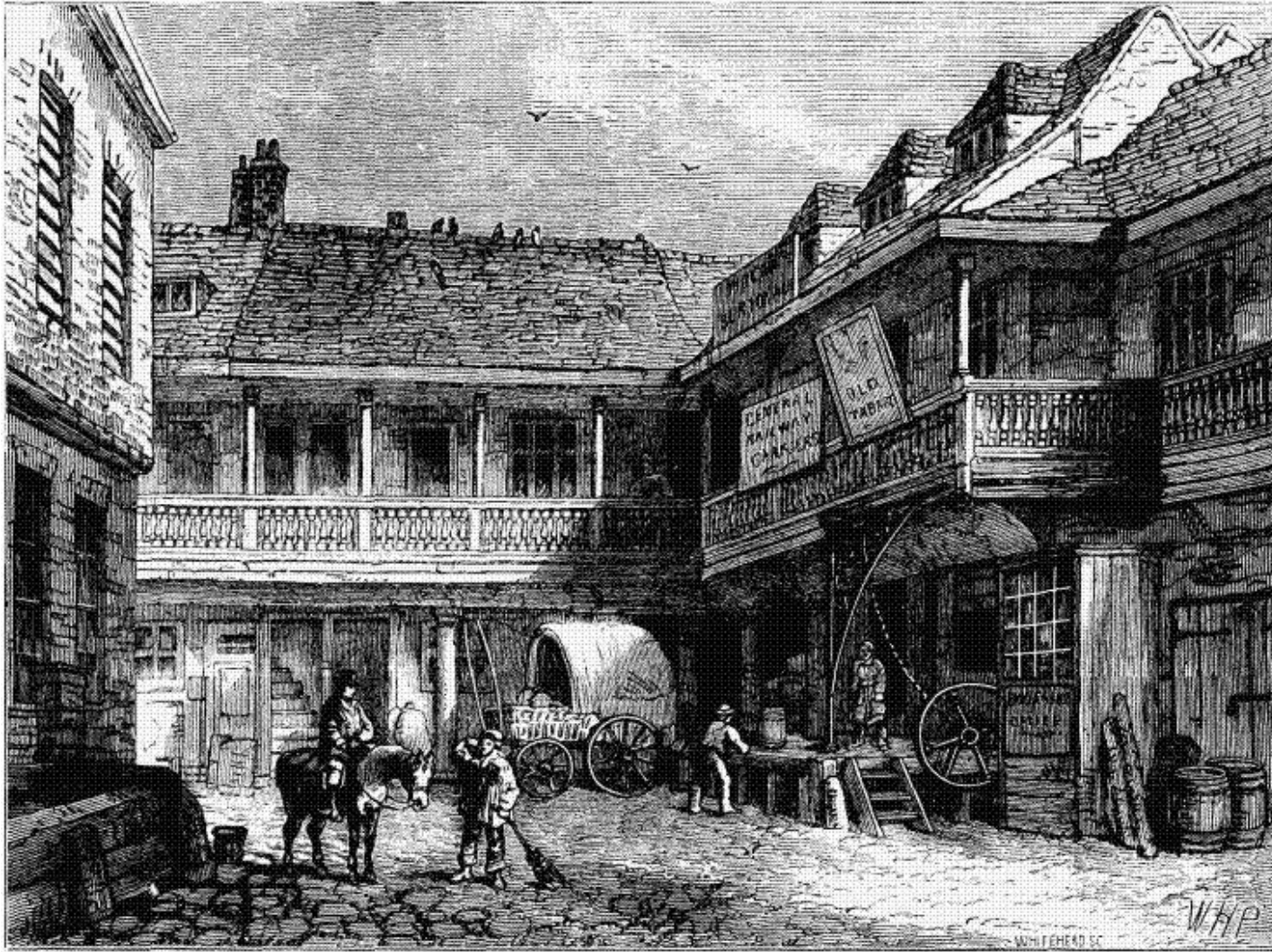
The Canterbury pilgrims share a meal in Southwark.

Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer

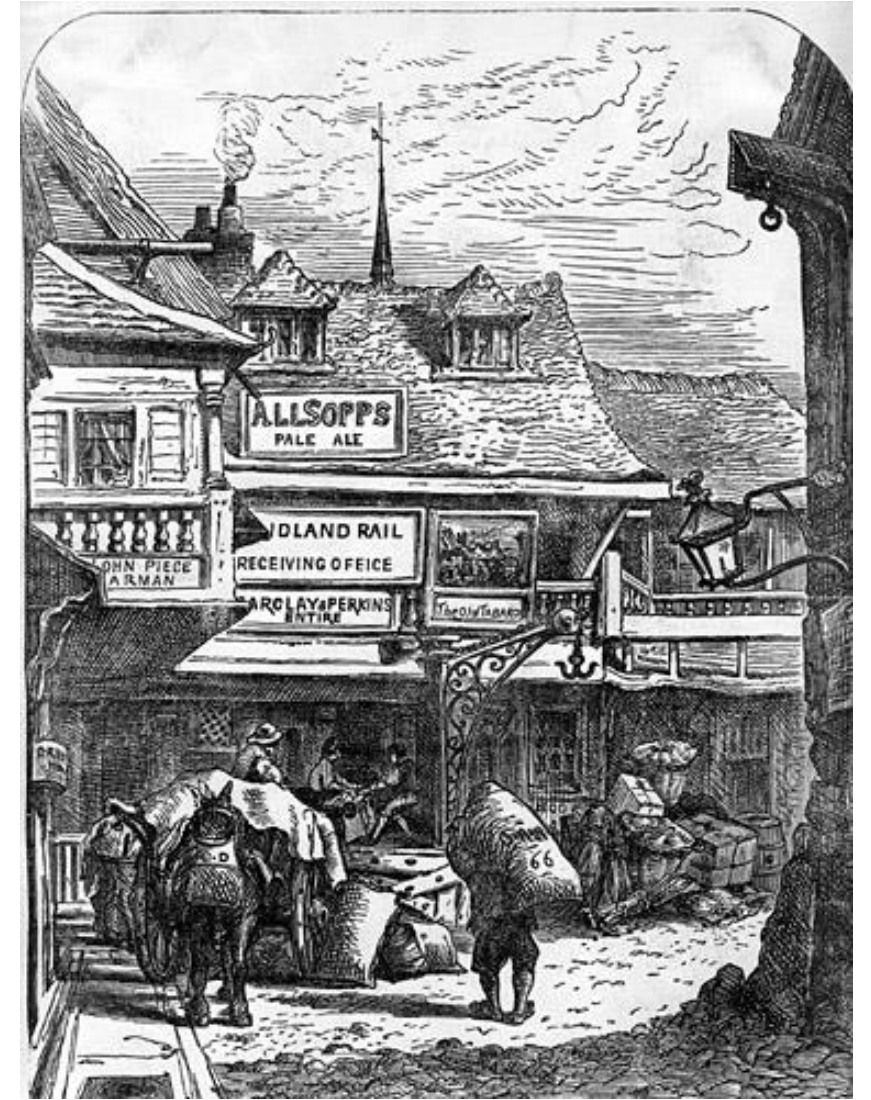
© British Library Board, MS G 11586 page 20

Origin/Date: published by Caxton, Westminster || 1485?

TABARD INN

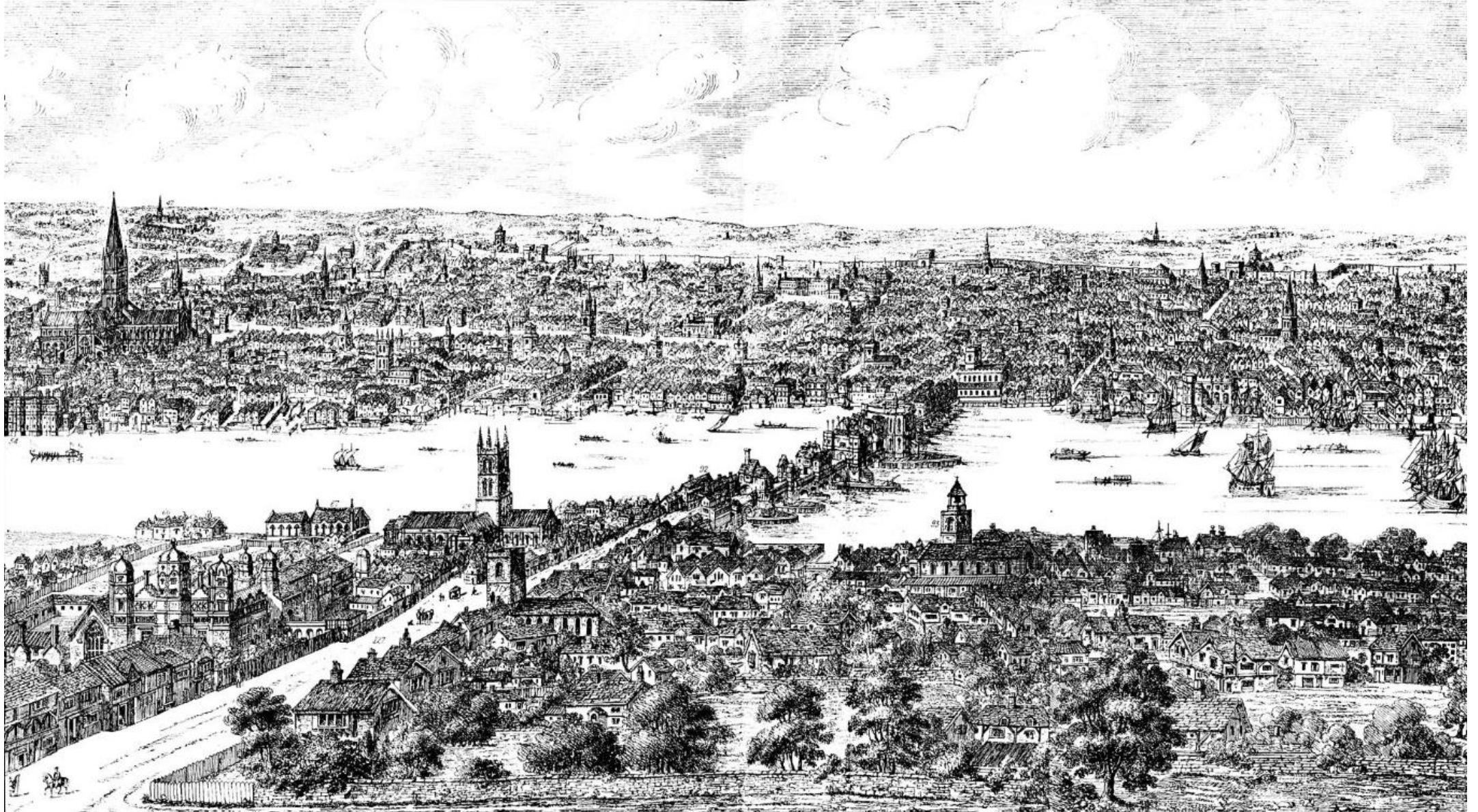


The Tabard inn, Southwark, mid-19th century. From a mid-19th century engraving.



Drawing of the [Tabard Inn](#), Southwark, London SE1, created just before it was demolished in 1873, and published in 1878.

SOUTHWARK



Part of the Panorama by Wyngaerde (Section 2), with Southwark in the foreground and what is today Southwark Cathedral and the old London Bridge at center in 1543

LONDON BRIDGE



Detail of Old London Bridge on the 1632 oil painting View of London Bridge by Claude de Jongh, in the Yale Center for British Art



Houses and shops

The bridge was a vibrant commercial area and one of the city's four or five main shopping streets. At the peak of the bridge's prosperity in the 14th century, the bridge wardens received rents from around 140 properties. By the time de Jongh made this painting in 1630, many of the houses had merged and there were only 91 separate dwellings. Originally the houses had only two storeys but they were gradually enlarged, until by the 17th century most had four or five storeys.

Becket as London's Patron Saint

In life **Thomas Becket**? had an often hostile relationship with London, the city of his birth. Yet after his murder Londoners flocked to his **shrine**? and soon adopted him as **patron saint**? of the city alongside St Paul. As early as 1173 one of Becket's biographers, William FitzStephen, was writing about the connection between London and the new saint, claiming that he had 'glorified' two cities: 'London by the rising and Canterbury by the setting of his sun.' Building on this imagery, a popular **hymn**? praised him as 'the light of Londoners' (*lux Londoniarum*).

As well as his being the 'rising sun' of London, the aftermath of Becket's murder saw the city itself physically rising as it was rebuilt on stone foundations after disastrous fires in the 1130s. The construction of **London Bridge** from 1176 was based around funds for a **chapel**? dedicated to Thomas Becket at its centre, and the co-operation of the citizens needed to organise such a massive project was an important factor in the development of London's civic identity.



City of London Common Seal. Becket is shown surrounded by both clergy and merchants, with the City of London below.

© Museum of London

Origin/Date: England || c. 1219 (?)

The **seal**? of the City, designed in the late 12th century, shows St Paul on one side and Becket on the other sitting '**in majesty**? over London as patron and protector of the citizens. The inscription, asking Becket to guard the interests of the City, reads 'Do not cease, St Thomas, to protect me who brought you forth'. He also appeared, alongside St Paul, on the seals of the mayors of London.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

CANTERBURY TALES – GENERAL PROLOGUE

- Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
• 20
- In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
- Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
- To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
- [2: T. 23-58.]At night was come in-to that hostelrye
- Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
• 25
- Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
- In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
- That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
- The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
- And wel we weren esed atte beste.
• 30
- And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
- So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
- That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
- And made forward erly for to ryse,
- To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.

Befell that, in that season, on a day
In Southwark, at the Tabard, as I lay
Ready to start upon my pilgrimage
To Canterbury, full of devout homage,
There came at nightfall to that hostelry
Some nine and twenty in a company
Of sundry persons who had chanced to fall
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all
That toward Canterbury town would ride.
The rooms and stables spacious were and wide,
And well we there were eased, and of the best.
And briefly, when the sun had gone to rest,
So had I spoken with them, every one,
That I was of their fellowship anon,
And made agreement that we'd early rise
To take the road, as you I will apprise.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

CANTERBURY TALES – WIFE OF BATH TALE

"There, as the fresh flowers, as one might write,

Are in their kind, sweet and dewy and white,

Full of flavor, and larger in stature Than any growing in our

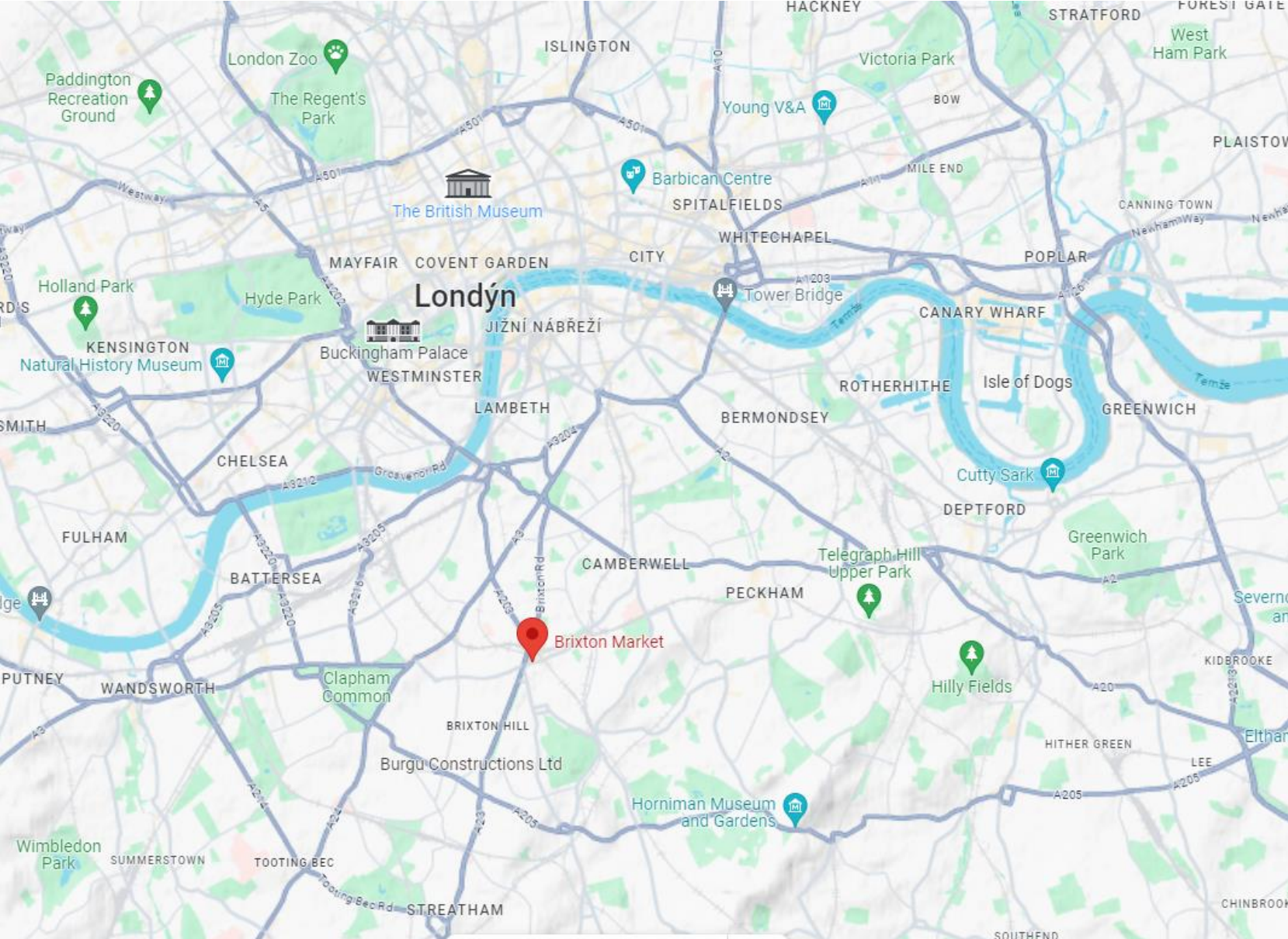
earth, by nature,

And clothed all in green and white flowers,

Such seen I never in my life before this."

„She is one of the few female narrators in *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer giving her a prominent voice to express her views on marriage, sexuality, and gender roles. In her lengthy prologue, the Wife of Bath openly discusses her five marriages and her belief that women should have sovereignty over their husbands. This directly contradicts the expected submissive role of women at the time.“ (Joan Acocella)

Brixton Market



Brixton Market



Brixton Market Today



JEAN BINTA BREEZE

THE WIFE OF BATH AT BRIXTON MARKET



“really like all the women [she] kn[e]w in Lucea market”

“...like putting a well fitted pair of gloves on.”

„Chaucer’s broken beat“ can have its solution in discovering words “moving / in their music”

MIDELSEXE.
Wellesdone tenent canonici Spauli. pxx
liud' se defendebat sep' tra. & x. car. Ibi uilli.
viii. car. 7 vii poss' fieri. Ibi xxx uilli. 7 v. bord.
Silua quingent' port'. In totis ualentis ualet vi lib'
7 vi. set. 7 vi. den. gdo recep' similit'. T.R.E. xii. lib'.
hoc an tenent uilli ad firmam canonicam. In dno
nil habet. h' maner' fiat de dnico uictu. T.R.E.

WILLESDEN

A copy of the entry for Willesden in the Domesday Book. (From "Brent: A Pictorial History" by Len Snow)



St Mary's Church, Willesden, in a print by E. Orme, 1799.



A pictorial map of Willesden in 1840. (Based on a map in "The Willesden Survey, 1949")

WILLESDEN



WILLESDEN GREEN WASSAIL

Held since 2009, we are a free, joyful, family-friendly walking, talking, singing, drumming, celebration of local shopkeepers, community groups, and performing artists.

MEET AT WILLESDEN GREEN

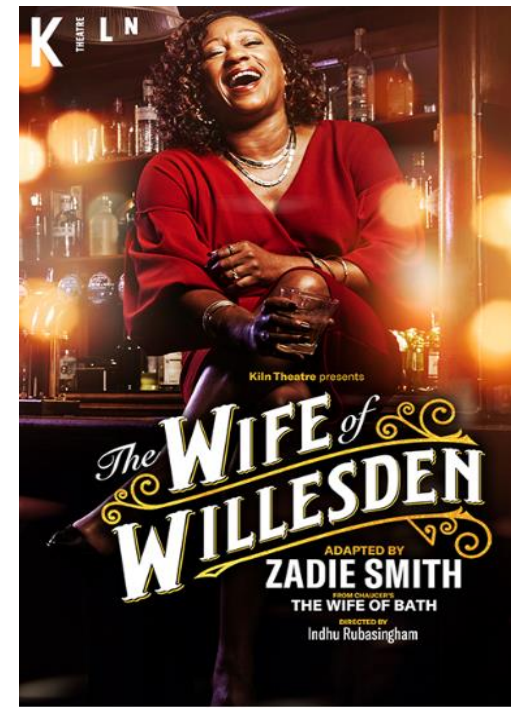

WILLESDEN



She shared that Willesden is a "well-appointed country living for those tired of the city. Fast forward. Willesden is a place of many stories, many lives, many languages. It's a place that has always been a place of arrival, a place of transition, a place of new beginnings. And that's what I wanted to capture in this play - the vibrancy, the diversity, the constant reinvention of a neighborhood like Willesden."



Zadie Smith the Wife of Willesden



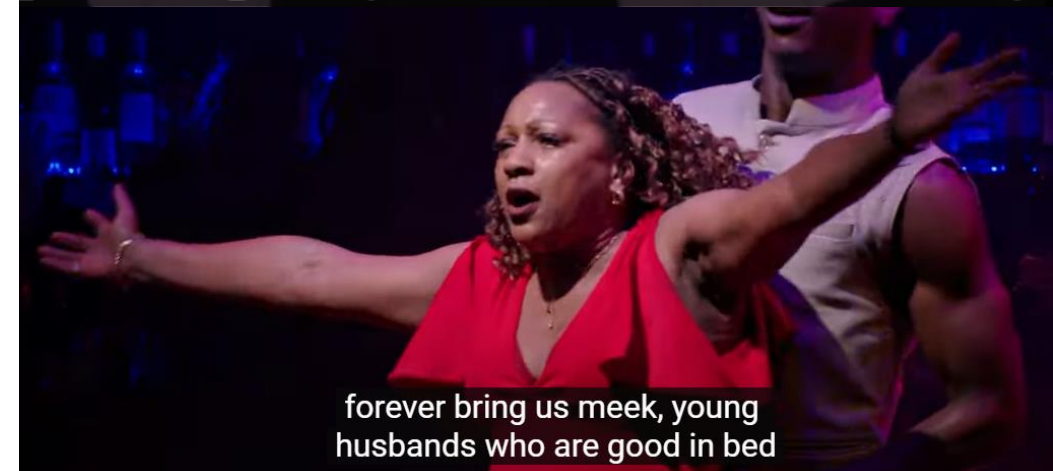
THE WIFE OF WILLESDDEN



let me tell you something I don't need
no permissions or college degrees to
speak on how marriage is stress
I've been married five damn times
since I was 19



[Alvita] Oh, Lord Jesus Christ,



forever bring us meek, young
husbands who are good in bed

and may we long outlive
the men that we wed.

„Whoever's behind the wheel drives the car.“

THE WIFE OF WILLESDEN

"You want to know what I am?

I am a woman who knows what she wants.

I am a woman who knows what she needs.

I am a woman who knows what she deserves.

...

"I'm not a saint, I'm a sinner.

I'm not a sinner, I'm a wife.

I'm not a wife, I'm a wife of Willesden."

I'm not a victim, I'm a survivor.

I'm not a survivor, I'm a thriver.

I'm not a thriver, I'm a wife of Willesden."



Me can't find no one, enslaved or free,

Fi give me answers wat mek wi all agree!

"I can't find anyone, be they enslaved or free,

To give me answers that make us all agree!"

THE WIFE OF WILLESDEN

Me can't find no one, enslaved or free,
Fi give me answers wat mek wi all agree!
"I can't find anyone, be they enslaved or free,
To give me answers that make us all agree!"

**"Queen Nanny, the formidable ruler of this land,
Women desire one thing, you must understand:
To have their husbands willingly agree,
To yield to their wives' wishes, naturally.
In love, submission should be mutual,
For in love, we willingly fall.
To retain authority, with no man above,
This is the desire all women hold, with love.
You may punish me, but my words are true,
Do as you wish, my fate I leave to you."**



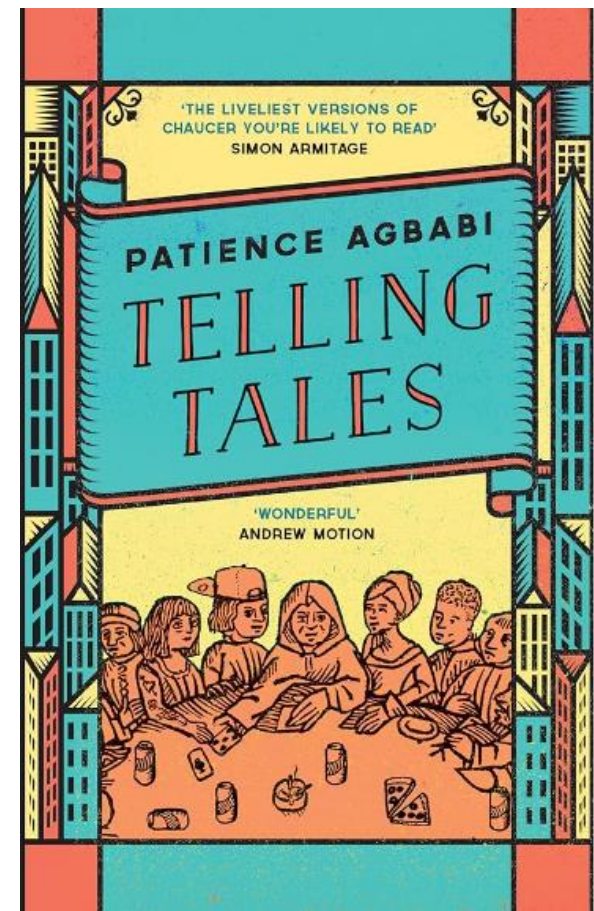
PATIENCE AGBABI

TELLING TALES



„Her poetry has a musical quality which truly comes to life when spoken aloud.“

(Lyndsay Stark)



I am not a feminax,

I do not believe women are equal to men,

women are better!