

# Beowulf

Beowulf, a Geatish warrior, defeats Grendel, a monster terrorizing a Danish meadhall. After defeating Grendel, he also defeats Grendel's mother. Upon returning to Geatland, he becomes King of the Geats. After ruling for fifty years, he upsets a dragon. Beowulf and another soldier named Wiglaf fight the dragon. The dragon and Beowulf are both killed as a result of the fight.

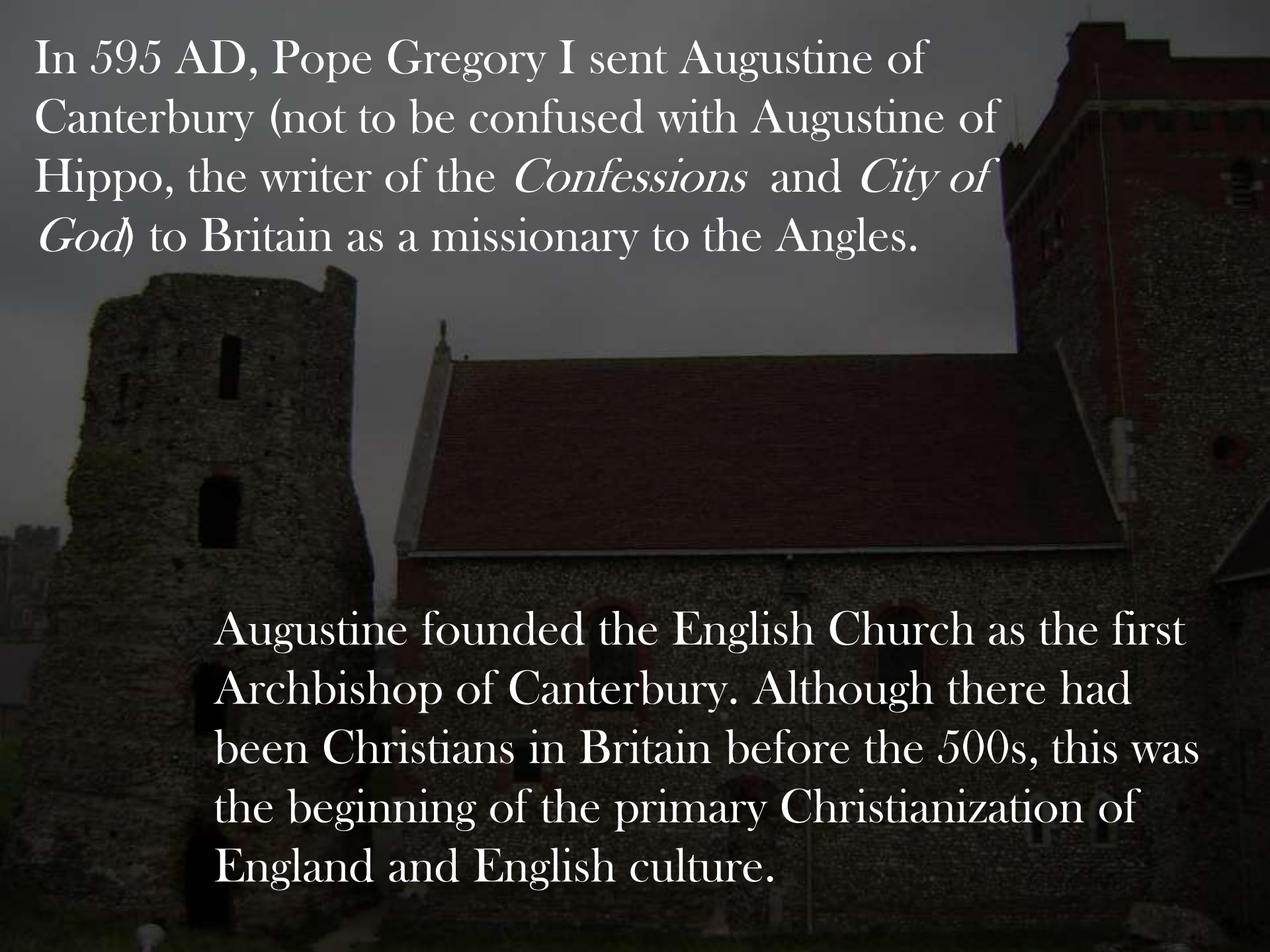


Sutton Hoo helmet, 6<sup>th</sup> Century. Courtesy of the British Museum, London.



# Sixth Century (500s) Europe

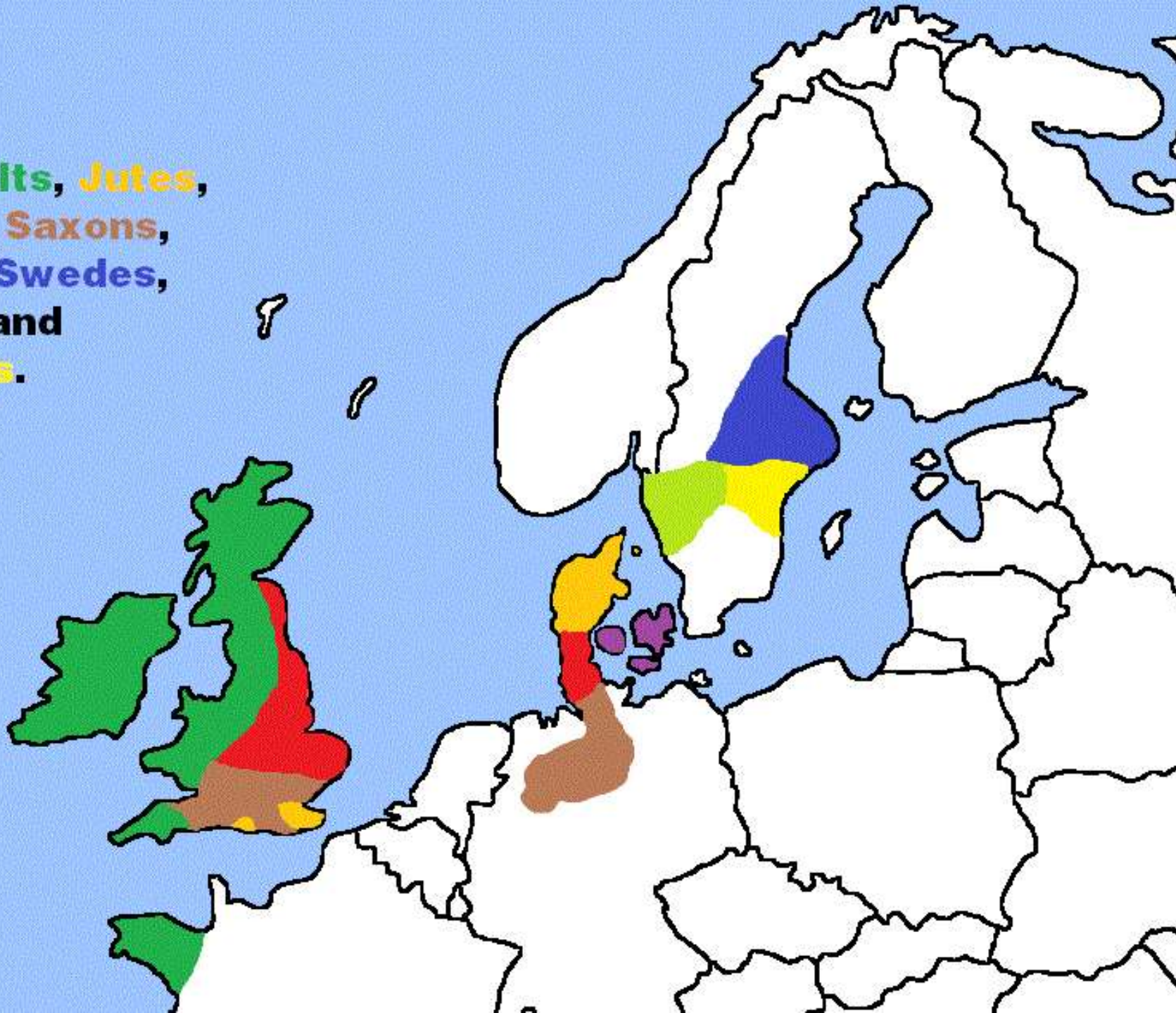
The western portion of the Roman Empire fell in 476 AD, while the rest continued as the Byzantine Empire. Various Germanic and Celtic tribes controlled the northern part of Europe.



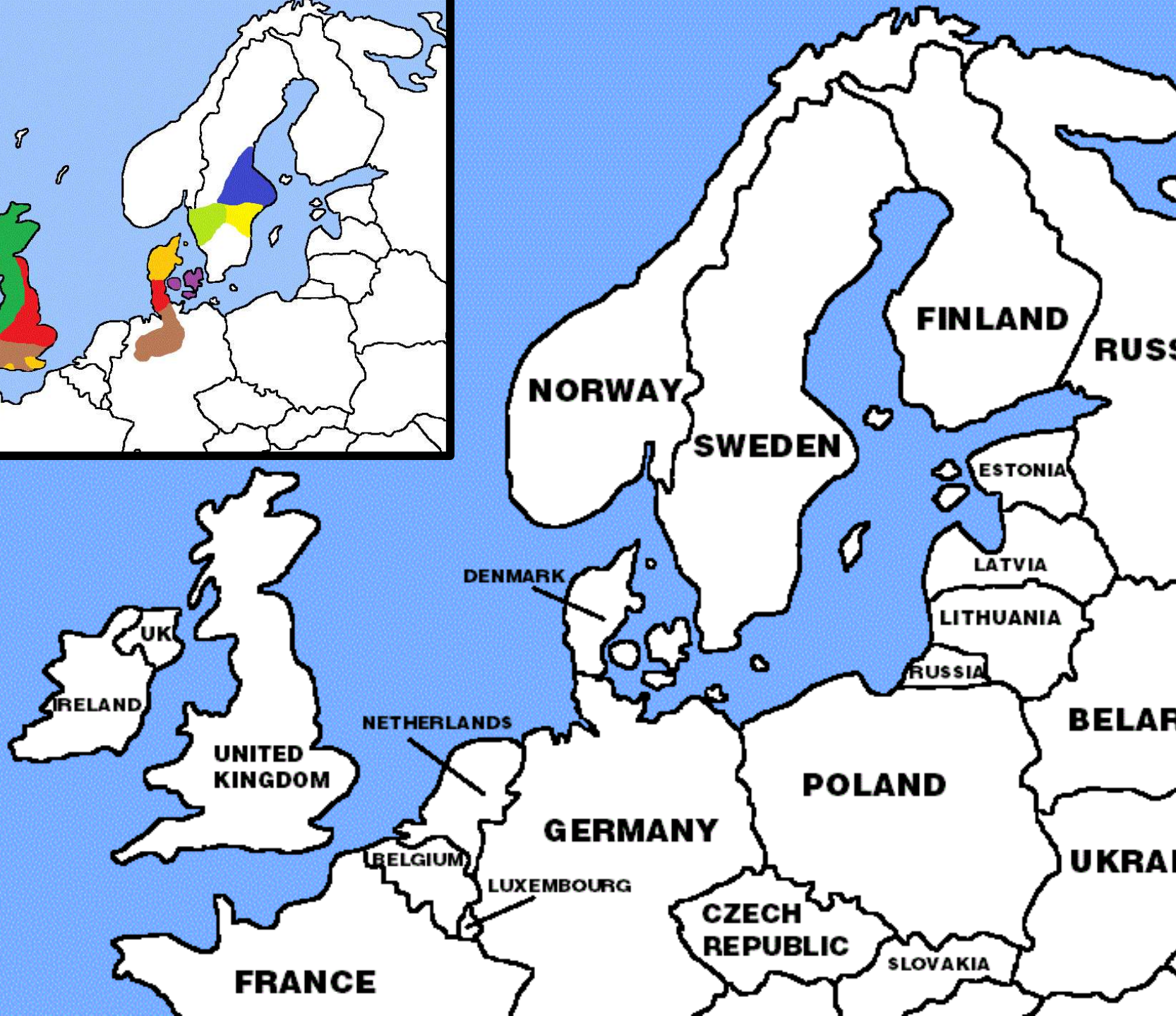
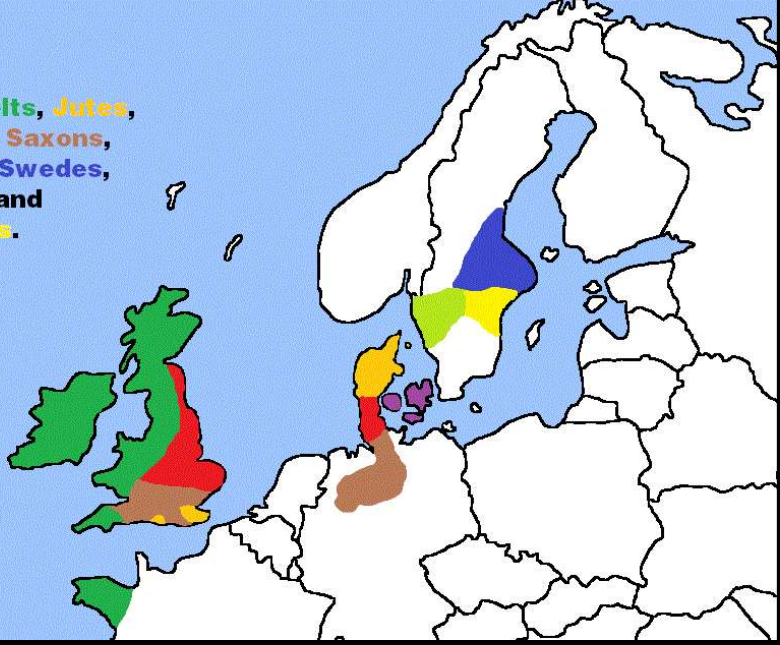
In 595 AD, Pope Gregory I sent Augustine of Canterbury (not to be confused with Augustine of Hippo, the writer of the *Confessions* and *City of God*) to Britain as a missionary to the Angles.

Augustine founded the English Church as the first Archbishop of Canterbury. Although there had been Christians in Britain before the 500s, this was the beginning of the primary Christianization of England and English culture.

**Key: Celts, Jutes,**  
**Angles, Saxons,**  
**Danes, Swedes,**  
**Geats, and**  
**Wulfings.**



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# Six Celtic Nations

People	Language	Place	Speakers
<b>Irish</b>	Irish (Gaelic)	Ireland	2 million
<b>Scottish</b>	Scottish Gaelic	Scotland	92,000
<b>Manx</b>	Manx	Isle of Man	100
<b>Welsh</b>	Welsh	Wales	770,00
<b>Cornish</b>	Cornish	Cornwall (part of England)	3,500
<b>Breton</b>	Breton	Brittany	206,000



# The English Language

## Old English

*Beowulf*

Unknown



## Middle English

*The Canterbury Tales*

Geoffrey Chaucer



## Early Modern English

*Macbeth*

William Shakespeare



## Modern English

*Pride and Prejudice*

Jane Austen

**H**WÆT WE GARDEN  
na in gear-dagum. þeod cýninga  
þrym se frunon huda æþelingas elles  
fre medon. of seýld scepms sceapen  
þreatum monegū mæghum meodo secla  
of tealh esode eopl syddan aqerst þæt  
feal sceapen funden he þæs troppes seba  
þeox under polenum þeod mýndam þalu  
od þ him æghpyle þara ymb sitten þra  
of þe hron. made hyran scolde somban  
syldan þæs god cýning. ðæm ærþra þæs  
æfter cenned seong in gear-dum þone god  
sende folce to troppes þynan ðærfe on  
geat þine ær þurzon aldo. lange  
hpyle him þæs lif þra. pul þra. þealder  
þeald aþe þe geat. þeapule þæs þren e  
bled þide sprang. seýda. seýda secla  
landum in. Spas seýda. seýda secla  
se þra. seýda. seýda seýda seýda

Hwæt. We Gardena in  
gear-dagum,  
þeodcýninga, þrym  
gefrunon,  
hu ða æþelingas ellen  
fremedon.



Translator	Translation
Literal Translation	What. We of the Spear-Danes in old days of the people-kings, power heard, how the princes brave deeds did.
R. M. Liuzza (2000)	Listen! We have heard of the glory in bygone days of the folk-kings of the spear-Danes, how those noble lords did lofty deeds.
Burton Raffel (1963—Textbook)	Hear me! We've heard of Danish heroes, Ancient kings and the glory they cut For themselves, swinging mighty swords!
Seamus Heaney (2001)	So. The Spear-Danes in days gone by and the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness. We have heard of these princes' heroic campaigns.
Michael Alexander (2003)	Attend! We have heard of the thriving of the throne of Denmark, how the folk-kings flourished in former days, how those royal athelings earned that glory.

# Great Writers Inspire: Beowulf

- Beowulf Audio:
- <http://writersinspire.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/content/beowulf-0>
- Beowulf Video:
- <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/beowulf-video>