

LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHIES: The Gough Map of Great Britain



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INTRODUCTION

The Gough Map is internationally-renowned as one of the earliest maps to show Britain in a geographically-recognizable form. Yet to date, questions remain of how the map was made, who made it, when and why. *Linguistic Geographies* is an AHRC-funded research project that seeks to address these key questions.

The project team brings together specialists in cartographic and geographical history, medieval linguistics and palaeography, and the digital humanities in the application of an innovative interdisciplinary approach that focuses on the Gough Map's 'language', particularly its textual content, to see what this can tell of about those involved in its making. The project forms part of the AHRC's Beyond Text programme.



Image courtesy of Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

Sample of palaeographic and linguistic analysis of the Gough Map



Cambridge

Modern name: Cambridge
Object ID: 589
Icon: two buildings, spired church
Transcript: Cau(n)teb'ege
Earlier editors: Cantebreg (Parsons, 1958)
Etymology: Cante-, earlier Granta- (river name) + Old English brycg
Spelling: the spelling '-bregre' shows the development of Old English 'y' characteristic of the Middle English south-eastern dialect area (Kent)
Script: the scribe uses the Secretary form of 'a'; the presence of the Secretary letter forms suggests a late 14th-century, or 15th-century date.
Appearance: slightly faded; there seems to be a macron over the third letter, suggesting that the spelling is -aun-, rather than -an- as recorded by Parsons; macron as an abbreviation for 'n' is commonly used by the scribe elsewhere (e.g. hunt(n)gton, south of Cambridge)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Linguistic Geographies seeks to establish:

- ◆ *Who made the map; when, how and why?*
- ◆ *What methods can be used to help answer questions of the map's production?*
- ◆ *How does the Gough Map's linguistic and palaeographical features and content relate to other manuscript sources of the same period?*



London

York

Norwich

This project seeks to address these questions by using an innovative approach to explore the map's 'linguistic geographies', that is the writing used on the map by the (unknown) scribes who created it. This technique involves specialist palaeographic and linguistic skills that are normally applied to text manuscripts, but with this project they are being tried on a map manuscript, somewhat experimentally, with the aim of not only finding more about the Gough Map's making but also the transferability of particular methods from linguistic to cartographic history.