

# The date and geography of assibilation in Cornish

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The assibilation of the dental stops [t, d] to s is the most distinctive feature differentiating Cornish from Welsh and Breton in the medieval period (Welsh, Breton *tad*, Cornish *tas* 'father'). But its date and nature are not fully understood; even the meaning of the written s (sometimes **g** or **j**) is uncertain. It is well known that place-names in west Cornwall usually (but not always) show the change, whereas most place-names in east Cornwall do not show it – but a few do. Various interpretations have been put upon the distribution of such spellings and their chronology. The paper will re-examine the chronology, distribution and context of such names, and what they tell us about the date of the change and the history of the language in east Cornwall.