

KINGDOM OF GALICIA

Description

The first printed map of Galicia with dedicated cartographic plotting was the "Descripción del Reyno de Galizia" (Description of the Kingdom of Galicia) by Hernando Ojea (circa 1560–1615). That map appeared in the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theater of the world) of Abraham Ortelius (1527–98), in the edition by Antwerp publisher Jan Baptista Vrients of 1603. The map, despite its many errors, was not soon improved on, and was copied many times, giving rise to a long well-documented history. The version of the map presented here, "Gallaecia Regnum" (Kingdom of Galicia), comes from the fourth edition of the *Gerardi Mercatoris Atlas Sive Cosmographicae Meditationes De Fabrica Mundi et Fabricati Figura* (Atlas of the world by Gerard Mercator: finely engraved and drawn), published around 1611 by Jodocus Hondius (1563–1612) following the work of Gerhard Mercator (1512–94).

It is on a scale similar to the original and maintains the general configuration and the disproportion of some areas, but some slight changes are introduced in the profile of the western coast of Galicia, and in the larger number of mountains. The map title, legend, cardinal directions, and neighboring territories are given in Latin; the Atlantic is labeled Oceanus Occidentalis (Western Ocean). Place-names are in Spanish. Two of the most significant buildings shown are the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and the Tower of Hercules at La Coruña—the only fully preserved Roman lighthouse still in use for maritime signaling and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Scale is expressed in the legend in two units of measurement: seven Spanish leagues, and six German common miles, each equal to 6.2 centimeters. The verso, pages 117–18 from the Hondius-Mercator atlas, shows text in French entitled "Galice," with an ornate capital, and marginal headings. The text gives information about Galicia's climate, livestock, politics and government, towns, rivers, ports, mountains, and the major churches and public figures of Santiago de Compostela.

Source: World Digital Library. <https://www.wdl.org/en/>



1. Find in the text words or expressions that mean:

- a. about/approximately
- b. although it has
- c. originating
- d. elegantly/delicately
- e. keeps
- f. imbalance in size
- g. small/unimportant
- h. outline/contour
- i. bigger
- j. important
- k. general weather conditions
- l. farm animals

2. Answer these questions in your own words:

- a. Why is this document important?
- b. Who made the map?
- c. When was it probably first published?
- d. How many languages are used in the map?
- e. What monuments are represented? Why?
- f. What other information is given in the map?

3. Rewrite the sentences so that they keep their meaning. Use the words given.

- a. The map was not soon improved on, and was copied many times.

(DIDN'T)

- b. It's the only fully preserved Roman lighthouse still in use for maritime signaling and a UNESCO World Heritage site

(WHICH)

4. Now that you know about the photo and what importance it had in real life, write a FORMAL LETTER to the World Digital Library. Imagine this map is unknown, never published and you have just found that you own it. Tell who you are, where you have found it and how, describe it briefly and offer to donate it to the library to authenticate it and make it public.