

"Galicia. Fisterra, the western end of the known land. Beyond these rough rocks, there is the Ocean, Gloomy, which finishes in big abysses where huge whales sail, big hostile beasts. Man's habitat finishes here, and everyday he can witness the death of the sun. Galicia is steep mountains, long plains, wide valleys at the East. Some small sierras come to the sea, which in many parts of the coast goes into land, forming the beautiful "rias", which are so typical in Galicia Ten thousand rivers run along Galician green skin, and if the beech tree grows and the wolf runs at the eastern mountains, the camellia flowers and the lemon and orange trees offer their golden fruits at the western shore".

Alvaro Cunqueiro

Language and History

Sociolinguistic status

Language policy

Laws

Català

Euskara

Cymraeg

Elsässisch



Galego



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Laws

Galicia is located on the Northwest corner of the Iberian Peninsula. It covers an area of 29,575 square kilometres. Its orography is irregular and the coast is jagged forming the so-called “rías”.

The political-administrative capital is Santiago de Compostela.

The current administrative division, established in the 19th century, divides the territory into four provinces: A Coruña, Lugo, Ourense and Pontevedra.

Galicia has 2,812,962 inhabitants. By province, the population is distributed as follows: A Coruña 1,131,404; Lugo 387,038; Ourense 362,832 and Pontevedra 931,688.

Galician population is distributed irregularly throughout the territory. It's density is 94.4 inhabitants/km². Galician population is characterized by a high level of dispersion, with small population centres. The higher density corresponds to the coastal area, mainly to the southwest corner and along the A Coruña-Santiago-Vigo axis.

The most important cities are Vigo, A Coruña, Ourense, Santiago de Compostela, Lugo, Ferrol and Pontevedra.



Galego



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Galicia has, in general, a humid Atlantic climate, although some differences could be established between the coastal and inner areas.

During the last two centuries, emigration affected the Galician population. A decrease in population growth within the last few years has been observed. Traditionally, the leading sector was the first sector; nowadays, the service sector is the most important one.

The Galician flag is white with a blue band going from the upper left angle to the lower right angle. The official flag has the coat of arms in the middle.

The Galician coat of arms has in the middle the eucharistic chalice. This figure appeared due to an ancient privilege existent in the Cathedral of Lugo: the constant exhibition of the Holy Sacrament. However, this chalice was related with the Holy Grail. The seven crosses represent the most important Galician cities in the past: Santiago, Lugo, Betanzos, Mondoñedo, Ourense, Pontevedra and Tui.

The Galician National Anthem was performed for the first time in 1907. Its music was composed by Pascual Veiga. Lyrics belong to a poem by Eduardo Pondal ■



The Map of Galicia

Galicia



Galego

Language and History



Always in Galicia:
Pórtico da Gloria
(Glory Portico).



Català

Euskara

Cymraeg

Elsässisch

Chronology

The origins

The Middle Ages

Dark Centuries

Resurgence

20th Century
Beginning and "Nós"

The Postwar
and democracy



1st century AD.

Gallaecia joins the Roman Empire. Latin starts to be assimilated in a slow process by Galician people.

5th century

The suevian, a Latinized Germanic nation, constitute in Galicia the first kingdom in Europe. The Breton migrations come, escaping from the Saxon people. These people will contribute to the Latinization of Gallaecia.

6th century

Saint Martiño de Dumio is sent by Rome to fight the autochthonous pagan practices. Church influence, main focus for Latin use.

8th century

The Arabs come to the peninsula. Although they don't settle in Galicia, they do raids. During this period, Norman and Viking attacks will be suffered too. Galicia remains as a kingdom despite the instability. Latin is used in writing.

13th-14th centuries

Top of Galician-Portuguese lyrical poetry. These compositions are kept in collections of verses (Cancioneiros) and show a great literary production. Galician language is the language used for every aim, together with Latin.

15th century

The presence of Spanish language starts with the arrival of nobility and officials from Castile.





16th-17th centuries

Spain becomes a centralist state. Galician language disappears in writing except a few literary and private texts.

18th century

Illustrated people appear, intellectuals like Feixo, Sarmiento and Cornide who are worried about Galicia situation and defend Galician language use.

1809

Independence War against France. Texts in Galician language encouraging people to revolt.

1846

Solís revolt and rebels' execution. The revolt had a strong nature of vindication of a status of bigger autonomy for Galicia against Madrid government.

1863

Rosalía de Castro publishes *Cantares Gallegos* (Galician Songs), a work which marks the full resurgence of our literature.

1880

Rosalía publishes *Follas Novas* (New Pages); Curros Enríquez, *Aires da miña terra* (Airs from my land); Lamas Carvajal *Saudades galegas* (Galician saudades). Galician language becomes established again as a literary language.

1886-88

The first journals in Galician language appear: *O Galiciano*, *A Monteira*, *As Burgas*.

1905

The Royal Galician Academy is created.





1916

Galician intellectual people create the "Irmandades da Fala" (Language Fraternities), an organization which has as an objective the defence of Galician language and Galicia.

1923

The Galician Studies Seminar is created for the multidisciplinary study of Galicia.

1931

It is created the "Galeguista" Party which will obtain 3 deputies at the 1936 elections.

1936

Approval of the Statute of Galicia. Civil War.

1944

Castelao, exiled in Argentina, publishes "Sempre en Galiza", which is considered the work which condenses Galician thinking.

1950

It appears Galaxia Publishing which will open on the inside the way of revival of publications in Galician language.

1978

Democratic Restoration. The Spanish Constitution recognizes the right to use the different languages apart from Spanish.

1979

Introduction of Galician language in schools.

1981

Statute of Autonomy of Galicia. Galician language is the official language of Galicia.

1983

The Parliament of Galicia approves the Law for Linguistic Normalization of Galicia ■





The first inhabitants in Galicia had preindoeuropean origin and, like the Celts, they left their imprint in our language. The Romans arrive in Galicia (1st century AD) much later than in the rest of the peninsula (3rd century BC). In this way, it starts a late romanization which carried the incorporation of Galician people to the new linguistic system: the Latin one.



The preroman substratum determined Galician language appearance

The romanization process was slow and a new language was born with the mixture of autochthonous languages and Latin: Galician language. The arrival of another nations as Suevians which created the first kingdom of Europe in Galicia and new Celtic waves coming from Brittany also influenced this evolution. The presence of Arabs in the peninsula gave rise to an autonomous development in Galicia while a new culture emerged in the rest of Hispania ■

Galician language has terminology of Celtic origin such as berce, croio...



Kings and vassals used Galician language in middle ages

From 9th century the language spoken at the northwestern end of the Peninsula was so different from Latin that we can consider the existence of two languages: Latin and Galician language. But we will not find texts written in Galician language until the end of 12th century, as Latin continued to be the language of culture in legal documents, in liturgy and in schools, not only in Gallaecia but also in all medieval Europe.



Galicia is from 8th century the main influence centre in the area which also includes Asturias, León and the North of Portugal. In this context, Galician language is the exclusive language in oral use, with a decreasing competition of Latin in writing. The pressure of this oral monolingualism leads in 13th century to a co-official situation between Latin and Galician language in notarial documents, edicts, litigation, etc., although Latin continues to have the status of universal language of culture.

The oldest literary document among the ones we know today is the satirical song *Ora faz ost'o señor de Navarra* by Joan Soares de Paiva, written about the year of 1200. The first non-literary documents in Galician language are from the beginning of 13th century, *Noticia de Torto* (News from Torto) (1211) and *Testamento de Afonso de Portugal* (Afonso of Portugal's Will) (1214), indications of the medieval tabelionic prose.





The biggest splendour period of Galician literature is between 12th and 15th centuries. Galician language becomes the lyric language all over the Peninsula except in Catalonia (trobadoresque poetry). We must speak properly about Galician-Portuguese lyric. Galician language has now the rank of international language, as it is present either in Galician, Portuguese, Castilian, Occitan, Sicilian, etc authors or in royal and aristocratic courts (Santiago, Toledo, Coimbra, Lissabon). In this way, our literature produces universal figures like Meendiño, Xohan Airas, Eáns do Cotón, Pero da Ponte or Martín Codax and it achieves such perfect levels that they situate it as one of the biggest universal literary creations ■



Sacrificios. Book by Alfonso The Chast. This medieval period is the most glorious in Galician literature





The language flame
always kept alive in
the nation and in
the most conscious
intellectual elites



At the end of the medieval period (14th-15th centuries), the most glorious of galician letters, galician language and literature go into a decadence period. Several facts provoke the progressive decadence, among which we can stand out: the autochthonous nobility displacement, who lost in the dynastic fights for the Crown of Castile, supporting Pedro I against Henrique II of Trastámara and later (1475-1479) Xoana the Beltranexa against the future Isabel the Catholic; the defenceless in which galician middle-class, who dedicated themselves to a flourishing trading which mainly used our maritime routes, was left; the loss of autonomy of galician church, etc.

During the long period of three centuries -16th, 17th and 18th, called DARK CENTURIES- Galician language was absent from written uses, opposite to Spanish which enters a process of fixing and codification which gives it the category of cultural language. But it is still the normal communication way of almost all its population.

The reign of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand marks the beginning of the period known as "The Dark Centuries"





Sarmiento defended the use of the Galician language in the education, administration and justice systems

Our literature remains apart from Renaissance and Baroque, coinciding this darkest period with the Golden Century in Spanish literature. Anyway, we have some letters, documents and a few literary examples which let us see the language of the period. Parallel to this emptiness in erudite literature, it survives the line from popular lyric in the form of cradle songs, blind songs, carnival, prophecies, legends, romances, tales, farces, etc. Many of them came to present time by oral transmission.

In 18th century the denouncing voices from the "illustrated" emerge and show their worry about the underdevelopment of Galicia and offer renewing proposals in the economic, social and cultural life. Some organizations are created, like the Country Friends Economic Societies and the Galicia Kingdom Agricultural Academy ■





The resurgence gave us the great classics of our literature



"Rexurdimento" (Resurgence) is the name with which we know 19th century in the history of our literature and it expresses a recovery evolution not only literary, but also cultural, politic and historical.

All over the century, after the end of absolutism and the beginning of constitutional monarchy, different galician movements based on the defence of Galicia singularity and its different personality are born. The first of them, appeared about the 40's, was the "Provincialismo" (provincialism), which denounced the social isolation of the country and secured the social valuation of its art, habits and history. These movements were removed from politics after their support to Solís' unsuccessful military revolt, -Carral martyrs' execution- and they sheltered under the cultural and literary world.

The publication of Cantares Gallegos (Galician Songs) in 1863, a totally written in galician language work by Rosalía de Castro, is what inaugurates the full resurgence. 1880 was a productive year in publications. The compositions of the most famous authors in this period are published: Follas Novas (New Pages), by Rosalía de Castro, Aires da miña Terra (Airs from my land), by Curros Enríquez and Saudades Gallegas (Galician Saudades), by Lamas Carvajal.

In 1880, Rosalía de Castro publishes "Follas Novas"





Rosalía de Castro spreads out from our frontiers with the quality of her work so that she incorporates to the history of universal literature. Her verses have been the object of a lot of studies and translations to different languages.

Curros Enríquez was one of the favourite writers for the readers of his time. Undoubtedly because his poetry denounced injustices (forums, oppression, emigration, ...) and defended progressive ideas.

Pondal, author of the Galician hymn, searched the Celtic roots of his town, standing out the cultural element, to magnify it, starting from its individuality.

The consolidation of galician prose isn't achieved until 20th century, but at the end of 19th century we found outstanding precedents: *Maxina ou a filla espúrea* (1880) by Marcial Valladares, first galician contemporary novel. An outstanding work was *O Catecismo do Labrego*, due to its marked vindication and denounce character.

The presence of galician language in newspapers contributes to give prestige to the language. In 1876, promoted by Valentín Lamas Carvajal, pioneer of newspapers totally written in galician language, it is published *O Tio Marcos da Portela*. Between 1886 and 1888 galician journalism is getting consolidated with the appearance of new monolingual initiatives: *O Galiciano* in Pontevedra, *A Monteira* in Lugo and *As Burgas* in Ourense.

One of the last manifes-tations of the Resurgence in 20th century was the constitution of the Royal Galician Academy (1905) ■



20th Century Beginning and "Nós"



Nós generation consolidated and matched the commitment with Galicia, with the defence of its language.

At the beginning of 20th century, it is produced an advance in the identification with the language, provoking a quality jump in its use. The Irmandades da Fala (Language Fraternities) are born and Galicia is included in the Nations Society in Geneva.

In 1920 the publication of *Nós* starts, a magazine which gives the name to a generation who secured (and achieved) to extract galician literature from folklore and from Castilian culture unilateral influence. Galician culture goes in contact with European aesthetic ideas and galician language is used in scientific works.

In the 20's it is created the Galician Studies Seminar and the van European movements appear with the so-called "Xeración do 25" (1925 Generation), showing a great creative originality. The most outstanding figure in this period is Castelao, a classic in galician culture in every area in which he showed his art and with a great political significance, represented either by his essayist work -*Sempre en Galiza*- or by his work at the Galeguista (Galician) Party, playing an important role in the approval of the Statute of Autonomy of Galicia in 1936. Galician language reaches for the first time the recognition of "Galicia official language" in this Statute, although it didn't manage to have a practical application due to the beginning of the Civil War ■

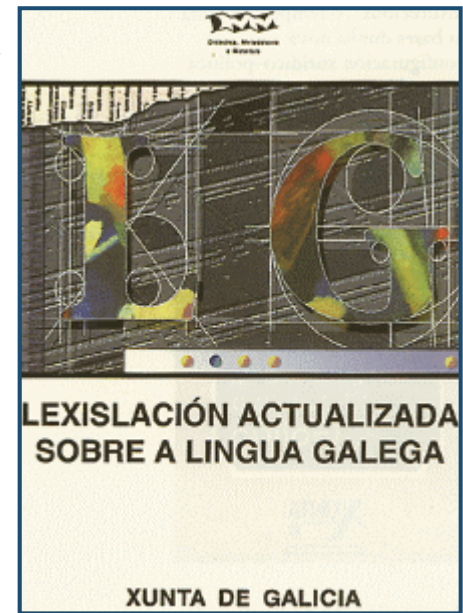
The magazine "Nós" gives name to a generation





The Law for Linguistic Normalization is the legal tool for the exercise of the linguistic rights of galician people

The end of the Civil War and the beginning of the "long night" provoked the disappearance of galician language in the public scene, education and socioeconomic activities. Those men who had the exile as the only way -Castelao, E. Blanco Amor, Luís Seoane, Rafael Dieste...- managed to keep alive the culture flame, the language and Galicia identity. Galician cultural development has its scenery now in Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico and Cuba, among other countries.



The key piece for the recovering of writing uses on the inside is the creation of Galaxia Publishing in 1950. Its main promoters, Otero Pedrayo, Ramón Piñeiro, F. Fernández del Riego and others, made evident again the value of galician language for any genre or theme. Galaxia becomes the axle of different periodical publications: Revista de Economía de Galicia (Galicia Economy Magazine), the culture and art magazine Atlántida, and the thinking magazine Grial.

Poster of the "Day of Galician Literature", 1963





From the 60's there are going to be changes in the economic and social sector and a small attenuation of censorship. The Galician Letters Day is established and the publishing world is extended with Edicións do Castro (Castro Publishing), the cultural associations defending Galician language... Galician university is not isolated from these worries and takes an active role in the process of recovering with the creation in 1965 of the Galician Language and Literature Lectureship and six years later, the Galician Language Institute.

The restoration of the democratic regime in Spain fixes the conditions for the normalization of Galician language. According to what is disposed in the Spanish Constitution of 1978, the Statute of Autonomy of Galicia (1981) establishes that Galician language is, together with Spanish, the official language of Galicia.

In the 15th of June in 1983, Galician Parliament approved, with the consensus of every parliamentary group, the Law for the Linguistic Normalization of Galicia which becomes the legal tool for the exercise of the linguistic rights of Galician people ■



Galician regained, together with Spanish, the status of Official Language of Galicia

