17th Century Pictorial Map of Galway City Ireland

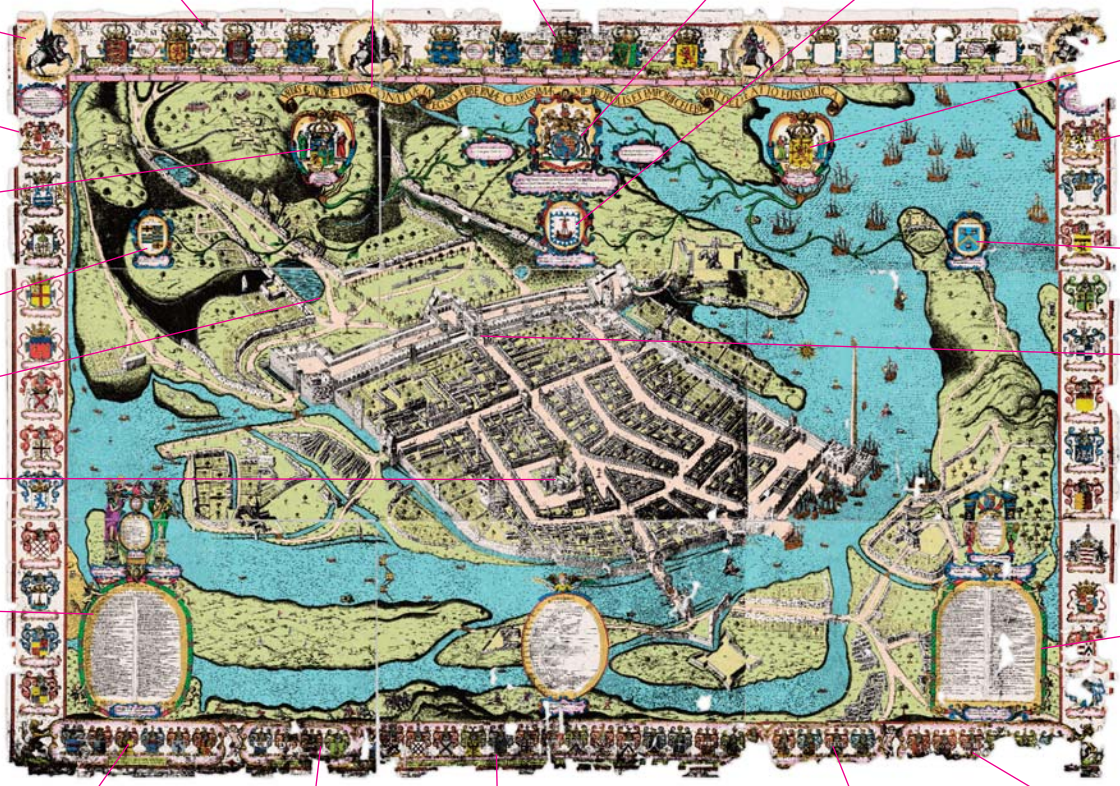
Galway city is situated at the mouth of Galway Bay on the west coast of Ireland. It is both a picturesque and lively city with a wonderful avant-garde culture and a long interesting history.

The 17th Century Pictorial Map of Galway is one of the most important documents in the city's history. This map (circa. 1651) is a bird's eye view of a town (Galway City) surrounded on three sides by water, the River Corrib in the foreground, its tributaries, and the sea.

The map gives a wonderful view of what the city landscape looked like in the middle of the 17th century, complete with beautiful depictions of men and women going about everyday life - including fishing, bathing, jousting, harvesting and herding cattle.

Map Features

Map Title (translated into English): **An historical delineation of the town of Galway, the most renowned metropolis, and celebrated emporium of all Connaught, in the kingdom of Ireland.**



Armorial bearings of; England and the Saxons; Scotland; Wales and the Britons; and France

Armorial bearings of; Munster; Connaught; Meath; Leinster; and Ulster

Arms of England

Modern Arms of Galway (1578-circa 1661)

Four circular engravings of Charles II

Left Margin: Armorial bearings of distinguished families

The arms of Ireland, viz. those of the four provinces.

The most ancient arms of Galway (circa 1369-1485)

Area now known as Eyre Square

St. Nicholas' Collegiate Church

A table of reference (in Latin) with seventy seven figures and several letters: relating to figures/letters within the town walls

Arms of Scotland

Right Margin: Armorial bearings of distinguished families

More recent arms of Galway (1485-1588)

The Great Gate of Galway would have been first built in the 1270s in the initial phase of wall-building which would eventually enclose the town.

A table of reference (in Latin) divided into east and west: relating to figures/letters outside the walls

Armorial bearings of; Bareth; Bermingham; Burke; Butler; Crena; and Penreice

Armorial bearings of; Deane; Joyce; Martine; and Skereth

Armorial bearings of; Athey; Blake; Bodkin; Browne; Deane; Dorsie; Fonte; Frinch; Joyce; Kirowan; Linche; Martine; Morech and Skereth

Various Armorial bearings of the Lynch family

Armorial bearings of; Fallone; Labarth; Nolan; Quinne; Tully and Port.

This is one of the earliest maps of Galway City (circa. 1651) of which there are but two copies now known; one in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, and the second in the archives of the Hardiman Library at NUI, Galway. This, a coloured version of the map is based on the Hardiman Library copy.

A full description and translation of the 1651 map is included in Hardimans History of Galway (1820).

You can download this book for free ***at www.surnamecrest.com***

James Joyce, Irish novelist and poet, found the map fascinating and wrote of it: "The strangest and most interesting historical document in the city archives is the map of the city….".

The map is composed of nine separate sheets, and is six feet six inches broad, and four feet six inches high; it is surrounded by a border; four inches deep. The arms of the Fourteen Tribes of Galway are depicted as are those of allied families and the arms of many of the most important personages of the day are to be found in the elaborately decorated margins of the map. This map contains the earliest known reference to the fourteen tribes of Galway.

The origins and purpose of the map are inconclusive. It is believed that the map was printed in Antwerp, Belgium. This is supported by a letter dated 1684 which has the earliest historical reference to the map by a William Molyneux of Dublin, addressed to his brother Thomas, who was then studying in Holland.

The map is dedicated in Latin to Charles II. James Hardiman in his *History of Galway* published in 1820 suggests that the map was originally commissioned in support of a 1651 treaty between the marquis of Clanricarde and the duke of Lorraine. In return for £20,000 to support the Royalist cause, the cities of Limerick and Galway were to be given to the French aristocrat as security. It was on this occasion that an elaborate map of the town of Galway was drawn up.

However, some modern scholars suggest a more complicated history. They suggest it may have been issued by the wealthy Roman Catholic families, as an expression of their wealth and of their unswerving loyalty and devotion to the Throne.

Whatever its original purpose it remains a very interesting and beautiful record of life in the 17th century.

A glimpse of Galway life as depicted in the 17th Century Pictorial Map

Close inspection of the map gives us a glimpse of life in Galway city in the 1600's. We also see the layout of the early town and notice that much of its layout has not changed in the intervening centuries.

Harvesting

Herding

Going to Market

Fishing

St. Nicholas' Collegiate Church

Prominent in the centre of the map St. Nicholas Church has remained a place of worship for seven hundred years.

The gallows area, complete with its victim is depicted which stood approximately half-way between where is now the Browne Doorway and the Bank of Ireland at 43 Eyre Square, was known locally as 'Gallows Green'.

'Gallows Green"

Soldiers outside the city wall

Dedicated to Charles II the map depicts a city loyal to the Crown, resisting besieging Parliamentary forces outside the town walls, while continuing to be linked with the Royalist cause through the many naval vessels shown in Galway Bay.

Navy vessels and trading ships are seen throughout the map

Jousting/Tilting

In the Pictorial Map of Galway there is an interesting illustration of a horseman at a barrier about to charge at a ring. From this we learn that tilting or running at the ring was a regular sport of the young men of the upper classes.

A tilting green [Eyre Square]

At various places throughout the map hunting is depicted. All classes would have hunted as the food caught was a major part of the diet of that time.

The Fourteen Tribes of Galway

Galway is famous today as the City of the Tribes. The story of the Tribes begins with the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland during the late 12th century. Among the invaders were those of the powerful de-Burgo family. The de-Burgos took a keen interest in the province of Connaught, and wrestled the land from the natives.

The map shows Galway as a busy trading port.

Following de-Burgo's claim, many families of Norman descent swept into the area. In a short time, fourteen of these families distinguished themselves as merchants. The merchant families profited from Galway's important role as a major sea port with trading connections with France and Spain and later with the New World (America) to build up large fortunes and become very powerful.

The 17th Century Pictorial Map of Galway contains the earliest known reference to the fourteen tribes of Galway.

17th Century Pictorial Map of Galway City Ireland

The 17th Century Pictorial Map of Galway is available in two print sizes for convenient framing.

Medium Size (A2) 594mm x 420mm
Large Size (A1) 841mm x 594mm

Copies of this Map are available at various shops in Galway city and online from www.surnamecrest.com

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