

# THE GALICIAN PENTAGRAM

by Merlina Rose

**Galicia**, or Celtic Spain, is a province in the North West of Spain. It feels so different to the rest of Spain, more akin to Brittany. It is lush and green with dolmens, menhirs, the oldest rock carved labyrinths in the world, the remains of Celtic settlements, its own Mt Olympia, a climate akin to that of Britain and its own language and culture. Here in this timeless place Christianity and Paganism mix seamlessly.

Galicia is best known for its capital city of Sanitago de Compostella where the relics of St James are visited by thousands of pilgrims annually. There are several pilgrimage routes leading there from all over Europe, the most popular being the route from St Jean-Pied-de-Port in Northern France, known as the Camio Santiago (Way of St James) and nicknamed The Milky Way. Compostella itself translates as “Field of Stars”. The route was once under the protection of the enigmatic Knights Templar.

The coat of arms of Galicia depicts the Holy Grail surmounted by a crown and surrounded by seven crosses. Legend has it that the grail was brought here en route to Britain. Some suggest that the circular disc above the grail may represent the sun about to set.



Whilst planning a trip to Galicia in Autumn 2011 I discovered a landscape pentagram. I had decided to spend five days touring followed by two days in Santiago de Compostella. As I plotted the five places I wanted to visit on Google Earth, I was amazed to discover that I had just drawn a substantial landscape pentagram. If it were contained within a circle, the radius of that circle would be 49 miles.

The northern tip, or crown, of this pentagram is **A Coruna**.

The eastern tip of the pentagram is **Lugo**.

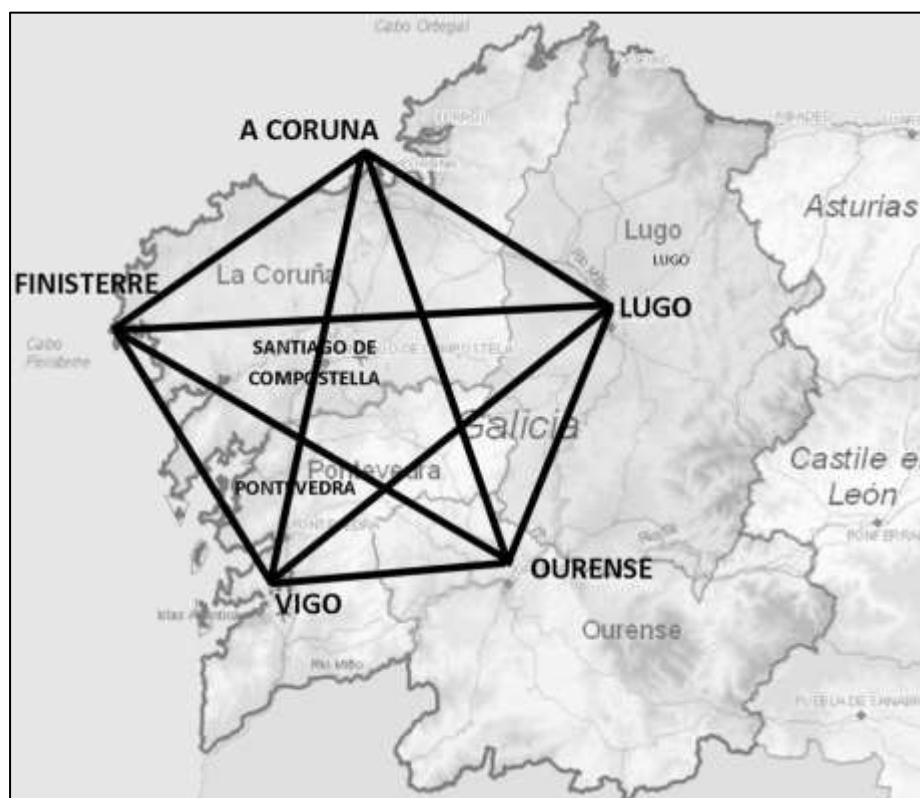
The south-eastern tip of the pentagram is **Ourense**.

The south-western tip of the pentagram is **Vigo**.

The western tip of the pentagram is **Cape Finisterre**.

Close to the centre of the pentagram is **Pico Sacro** (holy peak), a sacred mountain made of crystallised quartz.

Along the NE-SW line between A Coruna and Vigo we find the cities of **Santiago de Compostella** and **Pontevedra**.



Traversing the Pentagram in an anti-clockwise direction, we began our journey in Ourense where Samhain and Christian All Souls, celebrations were taking place in the evening. Children dressed in spooky costumes mingled with church-goers and bathers relaxed in the outdoor thermal baths, the spa being the reason for the Romans founding Ourense. Later, when the tourists had gone to their beds, the locals partook of the Queimada, the traditional Samhain fire drink ritual.

The next day we headed northwards to the Roman walled city of Lugo, which was eerily quiet, being mostly closed for the bank holiday which follows the celebrations. After a night spent in a converted farmhouse in a lush river valley near a waterfall, we headed to the northern coast and A Coruna.

**A Coruna** was once the capital of Galicia before Santiago de Compostella. The Spanish Armada set sail from here and the city repelled the attentions of Sir Francis Drake. On the northernmost tip of the A Coruna peninsula is the famous Torre de Hercules (Tower of Hercules), the oldest lighthouse in the world, built by the Romans. We slept nearby in a hotel on the Avenue des Menhirs where a modern version of a stone circle, with square holes cut into the centre of each of the 12 menhirs, looks out to sea and a large Stonehenge-like sculpture stands atop the rugged coast in tribute to those people who died fighting for Galicia's freedom against General Franco.

Close to the Tower of Hercules is a huge mosaic compass rose, known as Rosa dos Ventos (Rose of the Winds). It is a tribute to each of the seven Celtic nations (Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, the Isle of Man, Brittany and Galicia) with the eighth mosaic being a skull and crossbones, which also appears on the coat of arms of A Coruna itself.

From A Coruna we headed for Finisterre. En route we stopped at the fishing village of **Muxia** on the Costa de Morte (coast of death), so named due to the large number of shipwrecks. This is one of the final destinations for pilgrims en route from Santiago de Compostella to Finisterre at the end of the Camino Santiago. On the rocky coastline a mile or so outside the village is a simple Basilica known as Santuario da Virxe do Barca (Sanctuary of the Virgin of the Boat). Legend has it that the Virgin Mary came ashore here in a stone boat to give encouragement to the apostle James in his preaching. This spot is a place of amazing energy and it is hard to envisage that a decade ago this area of coast was devastated when the Prestige oil tanker ran aground. Here too can be found a large rocking stone known as the Pedra de Barca (rock/stone of the boat). Pedra also translates as Peter, and one wonders if Mary's stone boat arriving here on the coast of death was actually an allusion to a Roman style coffin or St Peter's Boat, which is said to carry the souls of the dead across the celestial river (the Milky Way). Perhaps those very souls who had been sent on their way by the Queimada in Ourense three nights earlier.

**Finisterre** is said to be the most westerly point in Europe where the sun sets into the sea, although geographically speaking that point is actually a few miles up the coast.

Travelling around Galicia was like walking a labyrinth and arriving at Finisterre felt like reaching the top of Glastonbury Tor. Tired but satisfied Pilgrims sat on the rocks each having left their own little momento, a stone or another treasured item to mark their physical and spiritual accomplishment. From here the pyramid-shaped granite mountain of Mt Pindo, the Celtic Mt Olympia, can be seen across the water. It was in the fishing village of O Pindo at its foot that we spent the night watching the sun set into the sea over Finisterre.

Before returning back to the field of stars in the centre of the pentagram, we visited Vigo, the only place where I felt bad vibes and didn't care to linger.

In the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostella I felt an initial disappointment not to find the amazing energies I had expected. I then realised that Santiago is only the start and end of the Galician labyrinth. The centre is actually Muxia and Finisterre where the pilgrimage (and energy) reaches its peak and we contemplate the journey so far whilst having thoughts of re-turning homewards.

So we have the legend of Mary arriving in stone boat at Muxia, one of the most western points in Europe. In issue 8, Alex Langstone told us of the legend of St. Bega arriving in a boat at St. Bee's Head, the most western point in Cumbria. Two Goddess archetypes arrive by sea, after a seemingly impossible journey, at the point where land meets ocean and where the sun sets into that sea at the ends of the earth. Could these legends be allusions to female earth energy currents coming ashore?

Could there be any links between the two legends? Well, there is another legend linking A Coruna with Ireland, and it was from the Isles of Aran in south-west Ireland that St. Bega is said to have set sail across the Irish Sea to Cumbria. Legend has it that Broegan the Celt had a huge tower built at A Coruna (the Torre de Hercules) and from the top he could see a land mass. He sent his sons out to find this land mass, which turned out to be Ireland, a country that they duly conquered.

A further synchronicity is the fact that A Coruna was called "Brigantia" by the Celts. Brigantia is also the Celtic name given to a large part of northern England and the Brigantes were a tribe in Ireland. Brigantia is the name of the Celtic Goddess who became Brigid, later christianised as St. Brigit, and whose name may well be the base for the names of "Britain" and "Brittany".

So could (or should) all the energy that pours into Galicia along the European pilgrim paths travel across the Atlantic to Ireland and from thence to Cumbria, possibly even linking up with the Belinus Line, or Spine of Albion, carrying the souls of the dead on a never-ending journey northwards towards the celestial pole?

