

# **Imagination or reality? Hydrography depiction on maps of Polish lands from 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century**

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Hydrography plays an important role in the development of mankind. Not only does it serve as a natural resource of water and food but also it has a power of dividing people as rivers often define borders between states and nations, but on the other hand can connect settlements since rivers are used as water routes. For these reasons, hydrography and its cartographic depiction on archival maps is of great importance. The aim of the paper is to analyse selected maps of Polish lands elaborated in early-modern period: from 16<sup>th</sup> c. to the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> c. in order to establish patterns of similarities and differences in hydrography symbolisation. In the paper following map aspects will be studied: cartographic means of representing hydrography, amount of rivers and lakes depicted – deliberate generalisation or lack of materials?, course of rivers in comparison with contemporary maps and names and labels connected with hydrography. Finally, an answer to the question stated in the title will be given: if the representation of hydrography on archival maps is more cartographers' imagination or it come to reality?