

# **“Eastern Europe” in the Mental Map of an English Traveller from the 16th to the 18th Century**

## Abstract

The thesis aims to interpret the early modern English/British travel writings about (Central) Eastern Europe. It results in the reconstruction of mental maps of the selected travellers with regard to a typology (merchants, professionals, intellectuals, clergymen, and women). The special attention is paid to the images of marginality, such as inconvenience and danger, ignorance and backwardness, exaggeration and pomp, former splendour and present lamentation, pleasant and unpleasant landscape. The primary sources comprise a selection of fifteen travel writings which are read and interpreted with respect to the development of the genre and to the broader cultural and historical context. The covering concept is a mental map conceived as an imaginary representation of space and as a tool for cultural orientation and self-identification. The reconstruction of the mental maps is performed in four steps. Firstly, by defining the subject (a traveller) within the typology. Secondly, the landmarks (centres) in the mental maps are reconstructed. Thirdly, the images of marginality are presented. Finally, the mental maps are concluded. Methodologically, the thesis is based on the interpretation and language analysis of the sources. The places of interest and their evaluation are focused and explained as the landmarks in the mental maps. The forms of evaluation, including comparisons, are considered as a mental map scale. Moreover, the thesis discusses and challenges the concept of “Eastern Europe” by Larry Wolff as the intellectual invention of Western Enlightenment.

**Keywords:** early modern, English British identities, mental map, marginality, travel writing, Central Eastern Europe.