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**Historia poznania Syberii dokumentowana mapami na przykładzie
wybranych zachodnioeuropejskich XVI i XVII-wiecznych map**

**Map-documented history of exploration of Siberia as exemplified
by selected West European maps of the 16th and 17th century**

SUMMARY

The paper focuses on the exploration, and later the drawing of maps, of territories that are far removed from the civilizations responsible for such attempts. In particular, it shows how the maps were at first filled with misleading images and then, along with gradual advances in the exploration of unknown lands and seas, how these were replaced by a picture more consistent with reality.

It seems that maps of Northern Asia published in Western Europe since the 16th century are a particularly good example of the potential of maps as carriers of the Europeans' knowledge and ignorance. The maps document successive stages in the exploration of inaccessible areas of Siberia. They carry both elements taken over from the knowledge of ancient Greek geographers and those that were derived from the most recent discoveries made at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries. It is interesting and quite characteristic of the maps of Siberia that fantastic and misleading content freely co-existed with bona fide information from field research. Until the second half of the 18th century, i.e. until a Russian atlas of the Russian Empire was published by the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, maps appeared on the book market of Europe whose authors had no geographical knowledge at all. A very good example is provided by how the islands of Novaya Zemlya were represented on maps published by European publishing houses after the discoveries of Willem Barents.

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