THE MEDIEVAL GLOBE

7.1 | 2021

THE MEDIEVAL GLOBE

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THE MEDIEVAL GLOBE

Volume 7.1 | 2021

THE GLOBAL NORTH: SPACES, CONNECTIONS, AND NETWORKS BEFORE 1600

Edited by
CAROL SYMES

ARC HUMANITIES PRESS

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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ISBN: 9781641894968

ISSN: 2377-3561 (print)

ISSN: 2377-3553 (online)

www.arc-humanities.org

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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THE MULTI-LAYERED SPATIALITY OF THE GLOBAL NORTH: SPATIAL REFERENCES AND SPATIAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN MEDIEVAL EAST NORSE LITERATURE

ALEXANDRA PETRULEVICH*

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY ENDEAVOUR of mapping literature has produced multiple anthologies, articles, and infrastructure resources addressing a variety of research questions on literary cartography and spatiality.¹ A more specific inquiry into the geographies and spatiality of medieval narrative, especially romances, has likewise gained much scholarly attention.² Interestingly, these two groups of scholars have arrived at almost identical conclusions: spatial descriptions within medieval romance and other literary genres are best described as geographically opaque and vague.³ Moreover, such descriptive maps, for the most part, represent strings of place-names arranged in a linear fashion and thus have much in common with the mapping tradition of contemporary itineraries.⁴ In this article, I argue that it is necessary to analyze all kinds of spatial references, not only place-names, in order to gain a proper understanding of spatiality across medieval literary corpora.⁵ Furthermore, any such analysis has to include spatial constructions: that is, descriptions of the relations between spatial references, however scarce these might be, because the relational aspects of geo-

* The author would like to express her gratitude for the input of project participants Simon Skovgaard Boeck, the Society for Danish Language and Literature, Denmark; and Jonathan Adams, Department of Scandinavian Languages, Uppsala University; as well as the anonymous reviewers of this essay.

1 To name just a few: Tally, *Literary Cartographies*; Travis, *Abstract Machine*; Borin, Dannélls, and Olsson, "Geographic Visualization"; Cooper, Donaldson, and Murrieta-Flores, *Literary Mapping*; Piatti, "Mapping Fiction"; Murrieta-Flores and Howell, "Towards the Spatial Analysis of Vague and Imaginary"; and the following three online resources: "Ein Literarischer Atlas Europas," "Icelandic Saga Map," and "Norse World."

2 Cooper, *The English Romance*; Rouse, "What Lies Between?"; Murrieta-Flores and Howell, "Towards the Spatial Analysis of Vague and Imaginary"; Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams, "Medieval Macrospace"

3 Cooper, *The English Romance*, 68–70; Howe, *Writing the Map*, 3; Rouse, "What Lies Between?" 16–20; compare Murrieta-Flores and Howell, "Towards the Spatial Analysis," 40 who challenge this view, but who base their criticism on their own identification of named localities with present-day counterparts without addressing the question of how the localities are defined or represented within the medieval narrative.

4 Compare Harvey, "Local and Regional," built upon in Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams, "Medieval Macrospace."

5 As opposed to most of the earlier scholarship: see Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams, "Medieval Macrospace."

graphical descriptions give unique insight into the texts' coordinate systems and wider medieval perceptions of geography and the surrounding world. Thus, the present article complements the existing scholarship on literary spatiality which has been heavily focused on landscapes, topography, and/or named places (especially within the literary GIS tradition) and offers a more nuanced, theoretically and methodologically informed way of approaching spatiality in a text, with or without employment of GIS (Geographic Information Systems), through the investigation of multiple categories of spatial references and spatial constructions.

This article also aims to show how geographical space is *linguistically rendered* in medieval texts of different genres, and what this linguistic information can reveal about perceptions of geography and space in medieval narrative. To fulfil its purpose, it will answer two research questions. First, what language resources (spatial references and spatial constructions) are used to convey spatial information in two Old Swedish texts: an original vernacular composition, *Erikskrönikan* (The Chronicle of Duke Erik); and a translation, *Själens tröst* (Consolation of the Soul)? Second, in what ways do the spatial profiles of these texts differ, and why? Are these differences persistent in other texts belonging to the same genres in the East Norse literary corpus, rhymed chronicles and devotional works respectively? By "linguistic rendering" of space, I mean the specific choices, among a range of language resources, used to express spatial information and relations: the relative geographic positions of landscape features and other entities (people and objects) with regard to one another.⁶ The spatial linguistic repertoire of Old Swedish is quite extensive and includes spatial references such as place-names, inhabitant designations (that is, names identifying ethnic identity or geographic provenance), landscape features, and so forth. Other types of constructions, for instance spatial words denoting cardinal directions and adverbs of place, are also included.⁷

For this case study, I have chosen to compare the spatial profiles of two manuscript versions of the two medieval Old Swedish texts named above: the rhymed chronicle henceforth called *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* (composed ca. 1320–1330 and preserved in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden MS D 2), and the devotional work *Consolation of the Soul* (translated ca. 1420–1442 and preserved in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden MS A 108).⁸ By employing spatial data referring to places outside East Scandinavia (Sweden and Denmark), the region where these texts and their manuscripts were produced, this study introduces a global perspective complemented by a survey of generically comparable texts. In my analysis, the spatial profile of *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* is mapped against the rest of the extant rhymed chronicles in Old Swedish, while the spatial information in *Consolation of the Soul* is compared with that of the Old Danish version of the text.

The multi-layered spatial representations of these texts can be understood in many ways. Much scholarly effort has been put into investigating how linguistically expressed

6 Compare the definition of spatiality at "Spatiality – HYPERGEO."

7 See Söderwall, *Ordbok öfver svenska medeltids-språket* and the examples below.

8 See below for the rationale behind the choice of these texts.

spatial relations interplay and even merge with aspects of time.⁹ Spatial and temporal settings have been claimed as key generic markers across disciplines such as literary studies and philology.¹⁰ Another important, but scarcely researched, aspect is the materiality of spatial references and constructions, particularly place-names, in manuscript traditions.¹¹ An example of this approach are studies that highlight the interplay between the manuscript's representation of place-names and name variation regarding, for instance, orthography and place-name formation. Investigating the material origins of variation is the first step in establishing the likely catalysts of misinterpretation, such as line and page breaks.¹² More significantly, however, is that the spatial profiles of different manuscript versions of the same work do not have to be identical. For instance, the scribe of the manuscript Stockholm, National Library of Sweden D 5 has re-interpreted the Old Swedish expression *hosin skoder* ("with leg plates," attested in the rest of the medieval witnesses of *The Chronicle of Duke Erik*) as *holsten skogher*, which can be understood as a place-name: the Old Swedish *Holstenskogher*, "Holstein forest." Draft versions of texts containing multiple contemporaneous revisions, such as the version of *Karlskrönikan* (The Chronicle of Karl) in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden D 6 are especially challenging to work with when it comes to mapping spatial references.

Data: Spatial References and Spatial Constructions

In this article, I delimit the notion of multi-layered spatiality to strictly linguistic categories of spatial information, which together give the text a unique spatial profile; but they can also be analyzed separately as different layers of spatial information.¹³ The data collected for my primary analysis is of two kinds. Firstly, it includes spatial references from manuscripts of *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* and *Consolation of the Soul* retrieved from the "Norse World" digital resource: an interactive spatio-temporal platform for research on worldviews in medieval literature from Sweden and Denmark.¹⁴ Secondly, I have complemented this material with linguistic constructions that describe geographic spatial relations. (These spatial constructions have been collated manually: see below.)

The Chronicle of Duke Erik is the oldest surviving rhymed chronicle in Old Swedish.¹⁵ It recounts political events from 1229 to 1319 and focuses specifically on the life of its protagonist, Duke Erik Magnusson (ca. 1282–1318), and the years 1250 to 1319. The chronicle survives in no fewer than seven medieval manuscripts, with the text under

9 Compare Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of literary chronotope and its implementations in literary studies and linguistics, for instance in Bemong et al., *Bakhtin's Theory*.

10 Bemong et al., *Bakhtin's Theory*; Bampi, "Genre"; Bampi, Larrington, and Rikhardssdottir, *A Critical Companion*.

11 Touched upon in Petrulevich, *Ortnamnsanpassning som process*, chapters 2 and 5.

12 See, for instance, Petrulevich, *Ortnamnsanpassning som process*, chapter 5; and the discussion of name variation in Hjorth, *Filologiske Studier*.

13 Compare Kretzschmar Jr. and Petrulevich, "GIS for Language Study."

14 Available at <https://www.uu.se/en/research/infrastructure/norseworld>.

15 Pipping, *Erikskrönikan*

investigation here (hereafter D 2) being the oldest surviving witness. Its components are dated to a span of more than a hundred years, from 1400 to 1523; however, the quires containing *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* have a somewhat tighter dating, 1400–1500.¹⁶ D 2 also includes multiple other texts—notably *Gutasagan* (Guta Saga), *Karlskrönikan* (The Chronicle of Karl), *Hertig Fredrik av Normandie* (Duke Frederick of Normandy), and *Olav den heliges saga* (The Saga of Saint Olaf)—and is associated with the episcopal city of Norsholm. It is a folio manuscript, written on paper with two vellum folios at the beginning and end. *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* occupies 46 folios of the 250 (1r–46v), measuring approximately 29.5 × 10.5 cm.¹⁷

The *Consolation of the Soul* is a translation of the Middle Low German *Seelentrost*, dated to ca. 1420–1442.¹⁸ The work is centred on the Ten Commandments but contains other types of material, such as saints' lives, legends, prayers, and confessional works. The Swedish translation is a larger compilation and incorporates narratives from a variety of Old Swedish sources, including the *Pentateuch Paraphrase* and some saints' lives.¹⁹ In addition to the manuscript studied here (hereafter A 108), a fragment is preserved in Copenhagen, Arnamagnæan Manuscript Collection AM 191. A 108 is a single-text vellum manuscript comprising 166 folios and measuring 30 × 22 cm. No details of its provenance are known.²⁰

Assigning fixed generic labels to textual entities with complex transmission histories and material backgrounds, as in this case, is naturally a challenging and at times controversial exercise. Nevertheless, generic categories tend to differ depending on the scale of a given investigation; while focused studies of single texts and their dissemination can be elaborate and reveal nuanced generic concepts with fuzzy boundaries, overviews of literary corpora as a whole tend to rely on more traditional definitions.²¹ I strongly support the dynamic applications inspired by Hans-Jürgen Jauss, rooted in manuscript evidence, which have been under discussion in recent studies of both Old Norse and East Norse texts; however, at the moment, it is both infeasible and impractical to convey genre hybridities and heterogeneities when approaching larger literary corpora from a macro-perspective. In this case, I have adopted the taxonomy of the “Norse World” project that underlies the genre filter of the project's interactive platform. This taxonomy goes back to the distinctions introduced and reinforced through influential editions, introductions, and commentaries on East Norse literature: for instance, the editions of Old Danish texts published by Samfund til Udgivelse af Gammel Nordisk Literatur (STUA-

16 In addition to D 2, these manuscripts are: Stockholm, National Library of Sweden D 4a, D 3, and D 5; Uppsala, Uppsala University Library C 62; Lund, Lund University Library, Medeltidshandskrift 32; and Linköping, Linköping Diocesan Library H 131.

17 See the full description and digitized manuscript at “Manuscripta.Se.”

18 Henning, *Siælinna thrøst*; Thorén, *Studier över Själens Tröst*.

19 Thorén, *Studier över Själens Tröst*. See also Johansson, “Birgittines.”

20 See the full description and digitized manuscript at “Manuscripta.Se.”

21 Jauss, “Theory of Genres”; for an overview of genre in Old Norse studies, see Bampi, “Genre”; and Bampi, Larrington, and Rikhardsdottir, *A Critical Companion*, with further references; Bampi, “Yvain i dansk dprådrækt” is an example of an ongoing genre discussion in East Norse studies.

GNL) and the Universitets-Jubilæets danske Samfund, as well as the principal series of Old Swedish editions produced by Svenska fornskriftsällskapet. Here, though, the project's traditional approach to genre serves as a point of departure for a journey towards a more nuanced discussion of spatiality in generically different in traditional terms, as well as generically similar, texts.

The primary texts chosen for this case study thus differ in their genre, length (46 folios against 166 of a slightly larger format), mode of composition (a versed chronicle and a prose devotional work), "originality" (an original composition and a translation), and material setting. Accordingly, multiple factors need to be accounted for when comparing the spatial profiles of these works. At the same time, this study has the potential to uncover quite striking differences in their linguistic construction of spatiality and thus inspire further exploration across the entire corpus of the East Norse literature. In other words, it is not a question of *whether* the spatial profiles of these two texts differ, but rather of *how and why* they differ.²²

As noted above, my analysis of the data derived from *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* and *Consolation of the Soul* is complemented by a quantitative investigation of spatial references attested in texts attributed to the same genres. Thus, the former is compared to the other extant Old Swedish rhymed chronicles, *Karlskrönikan* (The Chronicle of Karl, composed 1430–1452) in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden D 6; and *Sturekrönikorna* (Sture's Chronicles, composed 1470) in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden D 5: the first named after its principal character, the Swedish king Karl Knutsson Bonde and preoccupied with political events between 1390 and 1452;²³ the second taking off where *The Chronicle of Karl* finishes, continuing the story of the Swedish high nobility from 1452 to 1496 and named after their main protagonist, Sten Sture the Elder (1440–1503).²⁴ To date, *Consolation of the Soul* is the only Old Swedish devotional work included in the "Norse World" database, since the project is still ongoing. For this reason, I have turned to the similar Old Danish prose text, *Sjælens Trøst* (1415–1435) in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden A 109²⁵ for comparable devotional material. The remaining Old Danish devotional texts available, *Digte* (Poems) in Copenhagen, Arnemagnæan MS 76 8vo and *Mariaklagen* (The Lament of the Virgin Mary) in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden A 120 contain just a handful of spatial attestations, seventeen and two respectively. It is of course not ideal to introduce another parameter into this comparison; however, the Old Danish *Sjælens Trøst* (albeit a fragment) is a translation of the Old Swedish *Consolation of the Soul*, which makes it generically similar.

²² I have worked very closely with both texts as a result of my involvement with the Norse Perception of the World project, which was responsible for producing the Norse World gazetteer of East Norse literature: IN16-0093:1, funded by the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, 2017–2020.

²³ Klemming, *Svenska medeltidens rimkrönikor*. D. 2; Adams, "Karlskrönikan."

²⁴ Klemming, *Svenska medeltidens rimkrönikor*. D. 3; Adams, "Sturekrönikorna."

²⁵ Stockholm, National Library of Sweden, A 109; there is one more manuscript witness of the work, Uppsala, University Library, C 529, but only the A 109 version of the text is analyzed in this study.

"Norse World" is an interactive platform for research on spatiality that applies a global perspective to medieval literature from Sweden and Denmark. The primary aim of the project is to track "foreign" spatial references in the East Norse literary corpus.²⁶ "Norse World" data includes two types of spatial references, place-names and non-names. Place-names include, for instance, the Old Swedish *Rom* (Rome) and *Ryzaland* (Russia). Non-names is a capacious and heterogeneous onomastic category comprising: adjectives, like the Old Danish *thythisk*, "Teuton" or "German"; adverbs, like the Old Swedish *utlændis* "outland" or "abroad"; types of foreign coins, for instance the Old Swedish *flören* for the Florentine florin; inhabitant designations, for instance Old Danish *vende* "Wende," referring to a person from Wendland (the southern shore of the Baltic); references to foreign languages, like the Old Swedish *greska*, "Greek"; proper names derived from places, like *Ascolonita* "of Ascalon, or Ashkelon"; words indicating geographic provenance, like the Old Danish *nerdisk*, "a type of cloth from Nérac" in Bordeaux; and other words that convey spatial meanings. Although the ambition of the resource has always been to provide data from the close reading of original manuscripts, modern editions still constitute the primary sources since most of the East Norse manuscript collections are still unavailable in digitized form or have been digitized only recently.²⁷

The "Norse World" project divides the corpus of East Norse literature into two major categories, religious and secular works. Religious works include devotional texts, such as saints' legends and miracle narratives, as well as dreams, visions, and revelations; while romances, encyclopaedic and didactic works, chronicles and histories, and travel tales belong among secular works.²⁸ Spatial references in these texts are extracted and aggregated into an open-source relational database that forms the core of the "Norse World" infrastructure.²⁹ The database is mapped via a user interface that employs a clustering plugin to quantify the data, to visualize how frequently spatial references are attested in the corpus. The "Norse World" resource thus offers a unique opportunity to quantify literary references to specific locations and other spatial signifiers, outlining the spatial profiles of single texts and entire manuscript compilations, as well as offering a much-needed complement to any kind of qualitative data analysis. The dots shown in Plate 6.1, for example, provide the number of spatial references associated with a given locale in the corpus, accompanied by the dataset used for that visualization, indicating how attestations are linked to actual locations.³⁰ "Norse World" also offers a variety of download options; for instance, it is possible to filter the data according to the user's preferences and retrieve the dataset from the platform. Work on the resource is ongoing; the database now contains more than 6,000 attestations and is still under construction.

²⁶ Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams, "Medieval Macrospace"; "Norse World."

²⁷ For more details see Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams; Petrulevich, "Med ortnamnsvarianten i centrum."

²⁸ For a complete presentation of the genre taxonomy see Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams, "Data and Metadata – Norse World."

²⁹ Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams, "Medieval Macrospace."

³⁰ For more details on visualization including a critical discussion of using standard gazetteers see Petrulevich, "Data Visualisation – Norse World."

Plate 6.1a-b. An example of the visualization and interactive clustering techniques employed by the “Norse World” resource and an extract of the data used for the visualization, based on a dataset comprising more than 6,000 attestations of spatial references downloaded on August 13, 2020. © 2020 Norse World, © Leaflet, © OpenStreetMap, © CartoDB.

Spatial Frames of Reference and Spatial Constructions

Languages have a number of ways to account for and express spatial cognition. For instance, people frequently use spatial metaphors to describe positive or negative emotions, where feeling “happy” or “unhappy” is to *feel up* or *down*, or to be experiencing *the ups and downs of life*; moreover, spatial metaphors help us understand abstract domains, such as time: a day can be imagined as *far in the future* or *coming near*.³¹ Researchers have identified a set of linguistically-anchored frames of reference that people invoke

31 Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*; Boroditsky, “Metaphoric Structuring.”

Figure 6.1. A representation of the three types of non-geographic frames of reference adapted from Majid et al., “Can Language Restructure Cognition?”

when they talk about spatial relations.³² These frames are the abstract coordinate systems that we use to locate objects in physical space with respect to other objects.³³ And they are also used in studies on spatial cognition and the linguistic constructions used to describe spatial relations in non-geographic space.³⁴ For example, Asifa Majid and colleagues distinguish between three types of such non-geographic frames of reference.³⁵ The *relative* frame of reference takes the viewer’s perspective and is based on purely egocentric coordinates: in Figure 6.1, the spatial relations between the two objects would be “the fork is to the left of the spoon.” The *absolute* frame of reference takes an external coordinate system as its point of departure: accordingly, the same spatial relation can be described as “the fork is to the north of the spoon.” Finally, the *intrinsic* frame of reference is based on object-centred coordinates and functions without reference to the viewer or an external coordinate systems. An appropriate description of the spatial relations in accordance with this frame of reference would be “the fork is at the nose of the spoon.” Obviously, the frames of reference presented above are always relative with respect to certain reference points, but the terms *relative*, *absolute*, and *intrinsic* make it easier to distinguish among the different types.

Medieval literary texts include descriptions of geographic space that clearly indicate the use of these particular frames of reference. In the following diplomatic transcriptions of examples from *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* and *Consolation of the Soul*, respectively, place-names are underlined, while spatial words and constructions are marked in bold.

³² O’Meara, “Spatial Frames”; Burenhult and Levinson, “Language and Landscape”; Majid et al., “Can Language Restructure Cognition?”; Levinson, *Space in Language*.

³³ Levinson, *Space in Language*, chapter 2.

³⁴ For instance, Shusterman and Li, “Frames of Reference”; O’Meara, “Spatial Frames”; Majid et al., “Can Language Restructure Cognition?”

³⁵ Majid et al., “Can Language Restructure Cognition?,” 109.

(1) swa at nya hon raan **sunnan** wider | ok swærto aa ran **nordan** husit nider = “so that the Neva (*Nya*) ran closely to the south and the Okhta (*Svartbäcken*) ran down to the north of the castle” [passage describing the location of the Swedish fortification Landskrona].³⁶

(2) Ther æfter wardh *sancte* pether bidhin at han skulde fara til ena øø som laa **siex wiku sio længer bort j mærið** = “After that Saint Peter had to travel to a certain island that lay six sea-miles longer away in the Mediterranean Sea” [that is, from Antioch].³⁷

The first example describes spatial relations based on the absolute frame of reference, because the adverbs of place incorporate the cardinal directions.³⁸ The description of the island’s location in the second example illustrates the intrinsic framing of spatial relations, which takes Antioch on the Orontes as its point of reference. According to the hypothesis of this case study, *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* uses linguistic resources to convey spatial information in a different way than *Consolation of the Soul* and, more importantly, incorporates absolute frames of reference into its spatial descriptions. The translated devotional text, however, uses an intrinsic frame of reference.

Why do I attach such importance to spatial constructions suggesting the use of absolute frame of reference? Spatial descriptions utilizing cardinal directions are attested in a wide range of older Scandinavian sources, East Scandinavian runic inscriptions from the Viking Age, Scandinavian place-names, and Old Icelandic literature. For instance, the runic inscription Ög 83 in the province of Östergötland, Sweden, reads “* **pura * sati * stin * pasi * aftir * suin * sun * sin * rs * urstr * o * ualu ***.”³⁹ The transliteration can be normalized as *Pora satti stæin þannsi æftir Svæinn, sun sinn, es vestr a <ualu>*: “Pora placed this stone in memory of Svæinn, her son, who died in the west in <ualu>.” Here, the place-name <ualu> (unfortunately, not yet identified)⁴⁰ is complemented with information on the locale’s whereabouts, in this case “the west,” or the western quarter of the world known to Scandinavians. In the same way, the place-name *Norrby* in Hallsbergs parish (Kumla hundred, Sweden) contains the adverb *norr* “north” (Old Swedish *nordher*) and the generic *-by* that can be interpreted as “farmland” and even “new settlement.”⁴¹ The adverb therefore indicates a cardinal direction and describes the relative position of the newer Norrby with respect to the older settlement in the area, Berga.⁴² Directional adverbs are also quite frequent in medieval West Norse: for instance, *Knýtlinga saga* (Saga of Cnut’s Heirs) contains 172 instances of such words.⁴³ I see these spatial descriptions as traces of a much-debated Scandinavian system of orientation based on external absolute coordinates.⁴⁴ For this reason, we may expect to see

36 D 2, fol. 16v.

37 *Consolation of the Soul* in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden, A 108, fol. 23v.

38 Söderwall, *Ordbok öfver svenska medeltids-språket*, 2:116, 2:553.

39 “Scandinavian Runic-Text Database,” pt. Ög 83.

40 An investigation is underway: see Petrulevich and Williams, “Ög 83.”

41 Hellberg, *Kumlabygden*, 175–76; 431.

42 Hellberg, 175–76; 431.

43 Jackson, “Spatial Orientation,” 2.

44 Earlier scholarship never reached a consensus on how such abbreviated geographical descriptions in Old Norse literature and related sources should be interpreted. According to one

Standard form	Place-name or non-name	Type of locality	Type of non-name	Frequency
Russian	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	38
Norwegian	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	25
Norway	Place-name	Country		17
German	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	13
Foreign ⁴⁷	Non-name		Adjective	5
Germany	Place-name	Country		5
Karelian	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	5
Oslo	Place-name	City		5
Foreign land ⁴⁸	Place-name	Country		3
Neva River	Place-name	River		3

Table 6.1. Top ten spatial references attested in *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden D 2. For definitions of the terms, see Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams, "Definitions – Norse World."

a continuing usage of this absolute frame of reference in descriptions of spatial relations in East Norse medieval sources, at least in original compositions.

Spatial Profiles in *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* and *Consolation of the Soul*

In order to determine the spatial profiles of these two manuscript texts, I have compared spatial references and spatial constructions with special emphasis on words indicating an absolute frame of reference. The raw data downloaded from the "Norse World" resource has been processed by a Python script to calculate frequencies of spatial references for further quantitative and qualitative analyses.

The Chronicle of Duke Erik contains 165 spatial attestations. These can be divided into 98 attestations of non-names (59 percent) and 67 of place-names (41 percent). The absolute majority of non-name attestations, 93 of 98, are inhabitant designations: "Russian" (38 attestations) and "Norwegian" (25 attestations), as well as the place-name

line of argumentation, the system of orientation in Scandinavia was deflected by 45 (or even 60) degrees clockwise from the absolute cardinal directions. However, as has since been shown by Einar Haugen and Alvar Ellegård, "anomalies" in the descriptions of spatial relations are better explained as pertaining to different modes of orientation: the proximate orientation used at sea and the ultimate orientation associated with coastal travel, where the former utilizes cardinal directions while the latter is heavily influenced by the itinerary model that recognizes only two directions, towards the goal and away from it. Compare Simek, *Altnordische Kosmographie*, 148; Ellegård, "De gamla nordbornas väderstrecksuppfattning"; Haugen, "Semantics of Icelandic Orientation"; Ellegård, "Old Scandinavian System of Orientation"; Jackson, "Spatial Orientation."

Plate 6.2 a–b. Visualization of spatial references in *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden D 2 as attested in the “Norse World” resource. The visualization is based on a dataset of 165 spatial attestations downloaded on January 31, 2020.

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“Norway” (17 attestations), closely followed by “German” (13 attestations), constitute the top three spatial references in the text: see Table 6.1 and Plate 6.2.⁴⁵

The quantified data for *Consolation of the Soul* presents a different picture: 580 attestations divided into 460 place-name attestations (79 percent) and 120 attestations of non-names, mostly inhabitant designations (21 percent). The top three spatial references are “Rome” (71 attestations), “Egypt” (56 attestations), and “Jerusalem” (53 attestations).⁴⁶ There are only two inhabitant designations, “Judean” (45 attestations) and “Roman” (16 attestations), on the list of top ten spatial references: see Table 6.2 and Plate 6.3.

⁴⁵ For more details on visualization, including a critical discussion of using standard gazetteers, see Petrulevich, “Data Visualisation – Norse World”; Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams, “Medieval Macrospace.”

⁴⁶ For more details on visualization, including a critical discussion of using standard gazetteers, see Petrulevich, “Data Visualisation – Norse World”; Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams, “Medieval Macrospace.”

Standard form	Place-name or non-name	Type of locality	Type of non-name	Frequency
Rome	Place-name	City		71
Egypt	Place-name	Country		56
Jerusalem	Place-name	City		53
Judean	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	45
Israel	Place-name	Country		24
Mediterranean Sea	Place-name	Sea		20
Paradise ⁵⁰	Place-name	Region		16
Roman	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	16
Babylon	Place-name	City		12
Temple in Jerusalem	Place-name	Church		11

Table 6.2. Top ten spatial references attested in *Consolation of the Soul* in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden A 108.

The quantification of this data yields two major findings. First, *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* is preoccupied with the Baltic Sea region and especially the neighbours of the Swedish crown: Russians, Norwegians, and Germans (usually acting as mercenaries in Swedish military forces).⁴⁷ *Consolation of the Soul* is, in its turn, centred on the territories surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. This is perhaps the least surprising result, given that the texts are generically different. Second, spatial information is conveyed differently in the two texts. *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* mostly makes use of inhabitant designations that constitute about 60 percent of the dataset; the linguistic rendering of geographic space in the text thus prioritizes agency and animate actors. By contrast, the major source of spatial information in *Consolation of the Soul* is place-names (80 percent of the entire dataset). This difference is more surprising and may suggest that different ways of encoding spatial information can be seen as a genre-specific feature. In this way, the chronicle can be labelled as a dynamic actor-oriented spatial narrative, while the agenda of the devotional work, spiritual edification, resulted in a more place-oriented text.

Most scholars would agree that temporal and geographical narrative frames constitute a fundamental point of departure for any discussion of a text's genre.⁴⁸ Interrogating the narrative's spatiality is thus a complementary procedure, and is by no means limited to place-names; authors, scribes, compilers, and others responsible for shaping the text have access to a wide range of linguistic resources for conveying spatial information. Central to the spatial analysis of medieval narrative is the question of which spatial markers are used and why, not only what locations these spatial markers represent or evoke. It is therefore significant that our two primary texts, attributed to differ-

⁴⁷ See the article by Martin Neuding Skoog in this issue.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, Bemong et al., *Bakhtin's Theory*; Bampi, "Genre"; Kedwards, "Geography"; Bampi, Larrington, and Rikhardsdottir, *A Critical Companion*.

Original form	Variant form	Lemma form	Standard form	Type of place name	Type of locality	Type of non-name	Latitude	Longitude	Language	Work	Source
J them stadhenom babilonia	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
Han war konunger j babilonia	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
Antechristus skal fœdhas j bā Babilonia	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
babiloniam sagh iak alregh	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
in til babiloniam	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
j iwdha lande lank fran babil	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
j babilonia	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
j bablonia	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
til babiloniam	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
wan babiloniam	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
aff iherusalem til babiloniam	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
Nabogodonoror babilonia ki	Babilonia	Babilonia	Babylon	settlement name	city		32,5408	44,42417	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
in j sancti bonifaci mōnster	Sancti Bonifaci	Sancti Bonifaci	Basilica dei Santi	sacral name	church		41,8836	12,47885	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
cristnadhe han them badha	Sancti Saluatoris	Sancti Saluatoris	Basilica of Saint	sacral name	church		41,8858	12,5058	Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
j basilli kyrkio	Basilli kyrkia	Basilli kyrkia	Basilli kyrkia	sacral name	church				Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
Thet ær oc witande at fœm cēla	Bela	Bela	Bela	settlement name	city				Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
belaghdhe bericanos j swā	berikan	berikan	Bericanus			inhabitant designation			Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
Thæntidh amelius saa berica	berikan	berikan	Bericanus			inhabitant designation			Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108
Amicus swardhe sik wara fr	Berikano	Berikano	Berry	choronym	region		47		2 Old Swedish	Själens tröst	A 108

Plate 6.3 a–b. Visualization of spatial references in *Consolation of the Soul* in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden A 108, as collated by the “Norse World” resource. The visualization is based on a dataset of 580 spatial attestations downloaded on January 31, 2020.

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ent genres, demonstrate a clear difference in their construction of geographies and the choice of spatial linguistic resources.

However, a survey of the complementary texts in each generic corpus only partially supports these findings and thus raises a few issues regarding genre definitions and expectations. The frequency of place-names and non-names in the Old Danish *Sjælens Tröst* is consistent with the pattern revealed by the analysis of its Old Swedish counterpart. Although only a fragment, *Sjælens Tröst* still shows a clear dominance of named places: 114 out of 133 attestations or 86 percent. The inhabitant designations “Auvergnat” and “Roman,” mentioned five times each, are the only representatives of the non-names category in the list of the top ten spatial references in the text: see Table 6.3.

At the same time, the geographical frame of the Old Danish translation is somewhat less focused. The map overlay of spatial references attested in both the Old Swedish and Old Danish versions (see Plate 6.4) shows that the Mediterranean Sea and the surrounding areas still predominate; in the latter, however, the geography includes multiple mentions of France and the French region of Berry, as well as of India. The fact that the Old

Standard form	Place-name or non-name	Type of locality	Type of non-name	Frequency
Egypt	Place-name	Country		21
Rome	Place-name	City		15
Berry	Place-name	Region		7
France	Place-name	Country		7
India	Place-name	Country		6
Jerusalem	Place-name	City		6
Auvergnat	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	5
Paradise	Place-name	Region		5
Roman	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	5
Mediterranean Sea	Place-name	Sea		4

Table 6.3. Top ten spatial references attested in the Old Danish *Sjælens Trøst* in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden, A 109.

Danish text is a fragment provides the most likely explanation for these differences. In the A 109 manuscript of *Consolation of the Soul*, the spatial patterns not discernible in the quantified data of the manuscript A 108 come to the fore; this supports the point that manuscript evidence and transmission should always be taken into consideration in any nuanced genre discussion.

Overall, the evidence from the rest of the available rhymed chronicles does not fully support the hypothesis of persistent functional connections between the types of spatial references and traditional genre affiliations. In *The Chronicle of Karl*, featuring 219 attestations, place-names prevail (127 attestations, or 58 percent); non-names in the dataset are nevertheless almost as frequent (92 attestations, or 42 percent). Moreover, non-names in general and inhabitant designations in particular dominate the list of the top ten spatial references in the text. While not being too close to *The Chronicle of the Duke Erik* in its choices of spatial markers, the spatial profile of *The Chronicle of Karl* also does not match the characteristics established for the two devotional texts in the “Norse World” corpus, since the Old Swedish and Old Danish versions of *Consolation of the Soul* only include a couple of frequently-used inhabitant designations each (see above).

Sture's Chronicles is the work that contradicts my analysis of the primary texts the most. On the one hand, the majority of its 229 spatial references (158 or 69 percent) refer to named places, while only a third refer to non-names (71 attestations or 31 percent). Moreover, there is only one inhabitant designation among its top ten spatial references. On the other hand, the share of non-names in the chronicle is still larger than that in the devotional texts (21 percent and 14 percent respectively). The most frequent spatial reference in the chronicle, furthermore, is the inhabitant designation “Russian,” with 59 mentions. In other words, *Sture's Chronicles* is more similar to *Consolation of the Soul* in its communication of spatial information. The geographical settings of the chronicles remain, for the most part, stable: spatial references pertaining to neighbouring regions

Standard form	Place name or non-name	Type of locality	Type of non-name	Frequency
Norway	Place-name	Country		17
Vyborg	Place-name	Castle		17
German	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	14
Turku Castle (Abo Castle)	Place-name	Castle		14
Norwegian	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	12
German	Non-name		Adjective	11
Bavarian	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	10
Foreign	Non-name		Adjective	7
Lubeck	Place-name	City		7
Foreigner	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	6

Table 6.4. Top ten spatial references attested in *The Chronicle of Karl* in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden, D 6.

and the region around the Baltic Sea still dominate the list of the most frequent spatial items in the texts dating from the 1470s as in the text from the 1330s.

However, a closer look at the data indicates a clear temporal development in the granularity of spatial information. In *The Chronicle of Duke Erik*, the names of countries and their inhabitants constitute the majority of the most frequent attestations, with Oslo and the Neva River being the only exceptions (see above, Table 6.1). This pattern is still evident in the text's continuation, *The Chronicle of Karl*, with the addition of a couple more spatial references that denote exact locations: Vyborg, Turku Castle, and Lübeck (Table 6.4). The final chapter of the story of the Swedish nobility, *Sture's Chronicles*, offers much more precision, by repeatedly naming castles in Finland and Russia that outnumber other types of spatial references (Table 6.5). These results suggest that the spatial characteristics of texts belonging to the same genre (in a traditional genre taxonomy) are not necessarily compatible. A reasonable interpretation of these findings would instead require a dynamic concept of genre and an analysis of variation in the types of spatial markers as a possible consequence of temporal as well as cross-genre developments within the corpus of the East Norse literature. Central to such dynamic approaches is the idea that genres are best understood "as groups or historical families" rather than "genera (classes),"⁴⁹ a stance that presupposes descriptive rather than deductive formalistic methodologies.

The present case study has identified substantial differences in the ways that spatial information is conveyed in the oldest of the chronicles and the Old Swedish *Consolation of the Soul*. While the choice of spatial markers remains stable in the two devotional texts, the action-oriented spatial profile of the oldest chronicle gradually gives way to

49 Jauss, "Theory of Genres," 131; compare Bampi, "Genre," 7.

Plate 6.4 a–b. Visualization of spatial references in the Old Swedish *Consolation of the Soul* (Search 1) and the Old Danish *Sjælens Trøst* (Search 2) in the “Norse World” resource. Search 1 is based on a dataset of 580 spatial attestations downloaded on January 31, 2020. Search 2 is based on a dataset of 133 spatial attestations downloaded on August 14, 2020. © 2020 Norse World, © Leaflet, © OpenStreetMap, © CartoDB.

a narrative dominated by named places. *The Chronicle of Karl* occupies an intermediary position in this process, while the assumed development seems to reach its final stages in *Sture's Chronicles*. This explanation is indirectly supported by a similar temporal development towards more differentiated, precise geographies in the more recent chronicle. It is beyond the scope of this article to consider cross-genre influences as another possible line of interpretation for the tendencies outlined above, since such a discussion would require a detailed analysis of the manuscript transmission of all these texts within entire compilations. In other words, additional research across the corpus of the East Norse literature is needed to deepen the argument and test the plausibility of these suggested explanations.

As for spatial constructions, close reading of these two primary texts reveals that the absolute (cardinal) frame of reference is used quite rarely, if at all. *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* contains only six such passages, while *Consolation of the Soul* lacks spatial descriptions of this sort altogether. Indeed, this translation does not include detailed spatial descriptions of any kind, which is even more surprising given its length and great inter-

Standard form	Place-name or non-name	Type of locality	Type of non-name	Frequency
Russian	Non-name		Inhabitant designation	59
Vyborg (Viborg)	Place-name	Castle		25
Finland	Place-name	Country		19
Norway	Place-name	Country		18
Olofsborg	Place name	Castle		11
Turku Castle (Abo Castle)	Place-name	Castle		11
Raseborg Castle	Place-name	Castle		8
Aland Islands	Place-name	Island		8
Hameenlinna (Tavastehus)	Place-name	Castle		4
Ivangorod Fortress	Place-name	Castle		4

Table 6.5. Top ten spatial references attested in *Sture's Chronicles* in Stockholm, National Library of Sweden, D 5.

est in places. Instead, an intrinsic frame of reference is used, whereby the geographical locales are related to each other. In the following examples, place-names are underlined, while cardinal directions are marked in bold. Example 3 below from *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* contains two adverbs of place, *østan sunnan* “in the east–southern direction of” and *norþan* “to the north of,”⁵⁰ that describe the locations of Russia and Karelia with respect to Lake Ladoga. In example 4 from *Consolation of the Soul*, the place-names *Rom* (Rome), *Mæret* (Mediterranean Sea), and *Edissa* (Edessa) follow each other in a linear fashion.

(3) hwita træsk er som eth haaff | swa som bokin sigher här aff | rytzland ligger **østan sunnan** til | ok karela **nordhan** swa at sion them skiil = “Lake Ladoga (*Hvita þræsk*) can be compared to a sea, as it is told in the book; Russia (*Ryzland*) lies in the east-southern direction from it, while Karelia is to the north so that the lake lies between them.”⁵¹

(4) Oc gig [Alexius] swa genstan sama nattena fran sinne brudh | aff sins fadhers gardh vth aff room | ok oc kom sik *medh* skip ofwer mærit til een stadh som kalas edissa = “and [Alexius] went right away the same night from his bride and out of his father’s house, out of Rome and went by boat over the Mediterranean Sea to the city called Edessa (*Sanliurfa*).”⁵²

These examples differ not only regarding the chosen frame of reference but also the amount of spatial detail. *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* delivers a precise description of the

50 Söderwall, *Ordbok öfver svenska medeltids-språket*, 2:116; 2:1183.

51 D 2, fol. 17r.

52 A 108, fol. 33v.

Plate 6.5. Map overlay visualization of attested spatial references in *The Chronicle of Duke Erik* (Search 1), *The Chronicle of Carl* (Search 2), and *Sture's Chronicles* (Search 3) in the “Norse World” resource. Search 1 is based on a dataset of 165 spatial attestations downloaded on January 31, 2020. Searches 2 and 3 in are based on datasets of 219 and 229 spatial attestations respectively downloaded on August 14, 2020.
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location of Ladoga and the two surrounding regions in absolute terms. Recent findings on linguistic frames of reference suggest that spatial descriptions invoking absolute frames require the computation of direction by means of a “mental compass”;⁵³ in other words, the speaker has to know where their fixed reference points are. By analogy, the description in the chronicle suggests a solid, most probably empirical knowledge of the places and their whereabouts on behalf of the text’s informants, author(s), and/or audiences. In this respect, the spatial narrative of *Consolation of the Soul* is rather vague. Indeed, the linearity of the protagonist’s movement from one place to the other is reminiscent of both medieval romances and medieval itineraries, as noted above.

It is tempting to suggest that such chosen frames of reference could also be interpreted as a generic marker. At least, all the rhymed chronicles in Old Swedish include examples of the absolute frame.⁵⁴ However, a survey of some of the other texts in East Norse shows that other factors might be at play, as well. As expected, spatial constructions in Euphemia’s lays, versed translations of *Yvain or the Knight of the Lion*, *Duke Frederick of Normandy*, and *Floris and Blancheflour*, seem to lack cardinal directions.⁵⁵ In the same way, saints’ lives’ in Old Swedish, in a collection of devotional texts, include only some.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, there are a few instances of cardinal terms in the *Romance of*

53 Majid et al., “Can Language Restructure Cognition?” 109.

54 Klemming, *Svenska medeltidens rimkrönikor. D. 2*, for instance, 43, 49, 51, 76, 200, 208; Klemming, *Svenska medeltidens rimkrönikor. D. 3*, for instance, 47, 123, 128, 139.

55 Olson, *Flores och Blanzeflor*; Noreen, *Herr Ivan*.

56 Stephens, *Ett Fornsvenskt Legendarium*, 2: 155–56, 2: 238–39.

Alexander, a rhymed Old Swedish translation of a Latin prose text, and it is possible that they are utilized for alliteration purposes in this case.⁵⁷ Interestingly, the Old Swedish version of *Consolation of the Soul* includes a prose version of the Alexander legend, but without directional terms.⁵⁸ So whether the chosen frames of reference has potential as a generic marker, or as a marker of vernacularity, in medieval narrative will remain an open question until the East Norse literary corpus is analyzed in its entirety by future scholarship. However, the findings of this study make it evident that an assessment of medieval literature's spatial characteristics of should build on the analysis of a wide range of linguistic resources that complement landscape- and topography-oriented surveys of named places.

Conclusions

This case study shows that the original Old Swedish composition, *The Chronicle of Duke Erik*, and the translation, *Consolation of the Soul*, use different language resources to convey spatial information and spatial relations. The rhymed chronicle employs inhabitant designations as its most frequent type of spatial reference and thus applies an actor-oriented perspective to geographic space. By contrast, the devotional text can be seen as static and place-oriented, since place-names comprise almost eighty percent of the spatial dataset. Furthermore, the chronicle is the only text that includes spatial constructions based on an absolute frame of reference, while detailed descriptions of spatial relations occur very rarely in *Consolation of the Soul*. If the relations in the constructed geography of the narrative are explicated, the intrinsic frame of reference is preferred.

Analysis of the complementary texts in each of these genres only partially supports these findings; while the spatial profiles of other devotional texts remain similar, the spatial characteristics of the rhymed chronicles indicate a possible temporal development from an action-oriented to a place-oriented narrative, indirectly supported by a gradual change in the accumulation of geographical information in the same texts. Although this study uses a traditional genre taxonomy as its point of departure, a more dynamic perspective better accounts for these differences and enables a more nuanced interpretation of the empirical data. The differences in the ways spatial information is encoded in the texts under study can possibly be explained as genre-specific features and/or markers of vernacularity. And yet only the most frequent spatial references have been considered thus far and there is a need for more research on spatiality in medieval narrative based on the entire corpus of the East Norse literature in order to further substantiate the arguments introduced in this study.

Moreover, as noted in my introduction, the study of geographical descriptions in medieval literature has revealed that spatial knowledge was textually rather than visually coded.⁵⁹ The descriptive maps of medieval narrative are further characterized by

⁵⁷ Klemming, *Konung Alexander*, 311–12.

⁵⁸ Henning, *Siælinna thrøst*.

⁵⁹ Cooper, *English Romance*; Howe, *Writing the Map*; Rouse, "What Lies Between?," 18–19, 26; Petrulevich, Backman, and Adams, "Medieval Macrospace through GIS."

vague spatial descriptions and structural linearity. This article showcases that linguistic renderings of geographic space differ across the corpus of medieval literature based on the circumstances of their composition, amount of detail, and, most importantly, their underlying spatial frames of reference. Further study of the cognitive underpinnings at the heart of spatial constructions across medieval literary corpora can, therefore, help us to access the medieval audience's knowledge and perception of geographic space and the surrounding world.

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Abstract This article investigates how geographical space is linguistically rendered in two Old Swedish texts, an original vernacular composition, *Erikskrönikan* (The Chronicle of Duke Erik), and a translation, *Själens tröst* (Consolation of the Soul), and what this linguistic information can reveal about perceptions of geography and space in medieval narrative.

Keywords East Norse, Norse world, spatiality, spatial constructions, frame of reference, spatial humanities, Scandinavian philology, medieval literature, Consolation of the Soul, Chronicle of Duke Erik, place names, inhabitant designations