Norse World
Mapping foreign place names in medieval Swedish and Danish texts

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The Norse Perception of the World Project
The Norse perception of the world project is funded for three years (2017–2020) by the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, to create an online, searchable index with mapping capabilities of foreign place names and other spatial references in medieval Swedish and Danish texts.

East Norse (Old Swedish and Old Danish) literature is a mine of information on how foreign lands were visualised in the Middle Ages: What places were written about and where? Are some places more popular in certain text types or at certain times? How do place names link different texts? Is there a shared concept of spatiality? How is space gendered? Any research aiming to uncover what pre-modern Scandinavians understood about places abroad requires as a minimum an index of foreign place names in East Norse literature, an infrastructure that has not existed until now.

As philologists our focus is on the forms of the language, for instance spelling variation, context and other linguistic features.

By clicking on the markers, the map can be freely explored without preconceived notions. When something specific is sought, the search bar or the filters may be used.

Technical specifications
- bespoke MySQL database
- Leaflet library for mapping
- REST-API with JSON and GeoJSON and JSON-LD compatibility

Why not LOD?
- When we started the application process we did not know about LOD
- Project group’s lack of experience with ontologies (where to start, which to use, onomastic ontologies?)
- Developers’ lack of experience with LD and public procurement reasons for choosing our developers

How we have tried to bridge the gap to LOD
- Use of and linking to open resources: GeoNames, Libris (The National Library of Sweden’s catalogue of books in Swedish libraries), Manuscripta – A Digital Catalogue of Manuscripts in Sweden (using IIIF)
- REST-API with GeoJSON and JSON-LD compatibility
- Linkable detailed views of attestations, Works, Sources, Variant forms, Lemma forms and Standard forms
- Data is CC-BY 4.0

The Chronicles and histories deal mainly with Sweden and Denmark’s neighbouring countries in the north, Devotional works are centred around Rome and the Holy Land, the latter is also a centre for Encyclopaedic and didactic works and Romances usually take place in Western Europe.

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